BRAHMAN
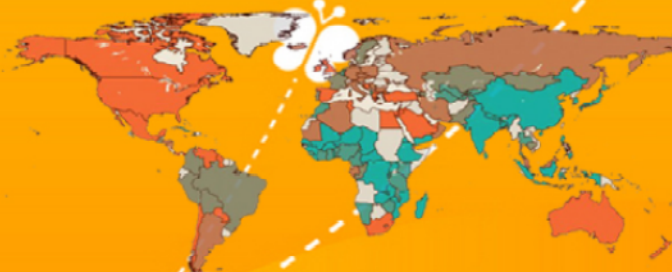## PHILOSOPHY, ORIGINS, ROLES, DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTRIBUTION

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Brahman International
in association with
Confederation of Indian Universities
New Delhi

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PREFACE

We have great pleasure in presenting this unique Book titled "Brahman : Philosophy, Origins, Roles, Duties, Responsibilities and Contribution" for the perusal of the Indian as well as the world citizenry with a view to enabling one and all in understanding the outstanding contribution of Brahmans.

Brahmin is a varna in Hinduism specialising as priests, teachers (acharya) (yogi)and protectors of sacred learning across generations.

Brahmins were traditionally responsible for religious rituals in temples, as intermediaries between temple deities and devotees, as well as rite of passage rituals such as solemnising a wedding with hymns and prayers. Theoretically, the Brahmins were the highest ranking of the four social classes. In practice, Indian texts suggest that Brahmins were agriculturalists, warriors, traders and have held a variety of other occupations in India.

The earliest inferred reference to "Brahmin" as a possible social class is in the Rigveda, occurs once, and the hymn is called Purusha Sukta. Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, a professor of Sanskrit and Religious studies, state, "there is no evidence in the Rigveda for an elaborate, much-subdivided and overarching caste system", and "the varna system seems to be embryonic in the Rigveda and, both then and later, a social ideal rather than a social reality".

Ancient texts describing community-oriented Vedic yajna rituals mention four to five priests: the hotar, the adhvaryu, the udgatar, the Brahmin and sometimes the ritvij. The functions associated with the priests were:

- The *Hotri* recites invocations and litanies drawn from the Rigveda.
- The *Adhvaryu* is the priest's assistant and is in charge of the physical details of the ritual like measuring the ground, building the altar explained in the Yajurveda. The adhvaryu offers oblations.
- The *Udgatri* is the chanter of hymns set to melodies and music (sāman) drawn from the Samaveda. The udgatar, like the hotar, chants the introductory, accompanying and benediction hymns.
- The *Brahmin* recites from the Atharvaveda.
- The *Ritvij* is the chief operating priest.

The term Brahmin in Indian texts has signified someone who is good and virtuous, not just someone of priestly class. Both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, states Patrick Olivelle, repeatedly define "Brahmin" not in terms of family of birth, but in terms of personal qualities. These virtues and characteristics mirror the values cherished in Hinduism during the Sannyasa stage of life, or the life of renunciation for spiritual pursuits. Brahmins, states Olivelle, were the social class from which most ascetics came.

The Dharmasutras and Dharmasatras text of Hinduism describe the expectations, duties and role of Brahmins. The rules and duties in these Dharma texts of Hinduism, are primarily directed at Brahmins. The Gautama's Dharmasutra, the oldest of surviving Hindu Dharmasutras, for example, states in verse 9.54–9.55 that a Brahmin should not participate or perform a ritual unless he is invited to do so, but he may attend. Gautama outlines the following rules of conduct for a Brahmin, in Chapters 8 and 9:

- Be always truthful
- Conduct himself as an Aryan
- Teach his art only to virtuous men
- Follow rules of ritual purification
- Study Vedas with delight
- Never hurt any living creature
- Be gentle but steadfast
- Have self-control
- Be kind, liberal towards everyone

Chapter 8 of the Dharmasutra, states Olivelle, asserts the functions of a Brahmin to be to learn the Vedas, the secular sciences, the Vedic supplements, the dialogues, the epics and the Puranas; to understand the texts and pattern his conduct according to precepts contained in this texts, to undertake Sanskara (rite of passage) and rituals, and lead a virtuous life.

The text lists eight virtues that a Brahmin must inculcate: compassion, patience, lack of envy, purification, tranquility, auspicious disposition, generosity and lack of greed, and then asserts in verse 9.24–9.25, that it is more important to lead a virtuous life than perform rites and rituals, because virtue leads to achieving liberation (moksha, a life in the world of Brahman).

The revised edition of this Book will be brought out shortly after compiling all the suggestions to be given by the readers from different States and Union Territories besides all those living in other countries of the world.

We dedicate this Book to the enlightened Brahmans who have given a new direction to the human beings on this mother earth.

15 August 2017   Chancellor Dr. Priya Ranjan Trivedi
Independence Day   CA. Manindra Kumar Tiwari

Chapter 1
WHAT DOES BRAHMAN CONNOTE ?

In Hinduism, Brahman connotes the highest Universal Principle, the Ultimate Reality in the universe. In major schools of Hindu philosophy, it is the material, efficient, formal and final cause of all that exists. It is the pervasive, genderless, infinite, eternal truth and bliss which does not change, yet is the cause of all changes. Brahman as a metaphysical concept is the single binding unity behind the diversity in all that exists in the universe.

Brahman is a Vedic Sanskrit word, and it is conceptualized in Hinduism, states Paul Deussen, as the "creative principle which lies realized in the whole world". Brahman is a key concept found in the Vedas, and it is extensively discussed in the early Upanishads. The Vedas conceptualize Brahman as the Cosmic Principle. In the Upanishads, it has been variously described as *Sat-cit-ānanda* (truth-consciousness-bliss) and as the unchanging, permanent, highest reality.

Brahman is discussed in Hindu texts with the concept of Atman (Soul, Self), personal, impersonal or Para Brahman, or in various combinations of these qualities depending on the philosophical school. In dualistic schools of Hinduism such as the theistic Dvaita Vedanta, Brahman is different from Atman (soul) in each being, and therein it shares conceptual framework of God in major world religions. In non-dual schools such as the monist Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is identical to the Atman, is everywhere and inside each living being, and there is connected spiritual oneness in all existence.

Etymology and related terms

Sanskrit *Brahman* (an *n*-stem, nominative *bráhmā*) from a root *bṛh-* "to swell, expand, grow, enlarge" is a neutral noun to be distinguished from the masculine *brahmán*—denoting a person associated with Brahman, and from Brahmā, the creator God in the Hindu Trinity, the Trimurti. Brahman is thus a gender-neutral concept that implies greater impersonality than masculine or feminine conceptions of the deity. Brahman is referred to as the supreme self. Puligandla states it as "the unchanging reality amidst and beyond the world", while Sinar states Brahman is a concept that "cannot be exactly defined".

In Vedic Sanskrit:

- *Brahma* (ब्रह्म) (nominative singular), *brahman* (ब्रह्मन्) (stem) (neuter gender) from root *bṛh-*, means "to be or make firm, strong, solid, expand, promote".
- *Brahmana* (ब्रह्मन) (nominative singular, never plural), from stems *brha* (to make firm, strong, expand) + Sanskrit *-man-* from Indo-European root *-men-* which denotes some manifest form of "definite power, inherent firmness, supporting or fundamental principle".

In later Sanskrit usage:

- *Brahma* (ब्रह्म) (nominative singular), *brahman* (stem) (neuter gender) means the concept of the transcendent and immanent ultimate reality, Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hinduism. The concept is central to Hindu philosophy, especially Vedanta; this is discussed below. *Brahm* is another variant of *Brahman*.
- *Brahmā* (ब्रह्मा) (nominative singlular), *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्) (stem) (masculine gender), means the deity or deva Prajāpati Brahmā. He is one of the members of the Hindu trinity and associated with creation, but does not have a cult in present-day India. This is because Brahmā, the creator-god, is long-lived but not eternal i.e. Brahmā gets absorbed back into Purusha at the end of an aeon, and is born again at the beginning of a new kalpa.

These are distinct from:

- A *brāhmaṇa* (ब्राह्मण) (masculine, pronounced [ˈbrɑːhmən̩ə]), (which literally means "pertaining to prayer") is a prose commentary on the Vedic mantras—an integral part of the Vedic literature.
- A *brāhmaṇa* (ब्राह्मण) (masculine, same pronunciation as above), means priest; in this usage the word is usually rendered in English as "Brahmin". This usage is also found in the Atharva Veda. In neuter plural form, Brahmāṇi. See Vedic priest.
- *Ishvara*, (lit., Supreme Lord), in Advaita, is identified as a partial worldly manifestation (with limited attributes) of the ultimate reality, the attributeless Brahman. In Visishtadvaita and Dvaita, however, Ishvara (the Supreme Controller) has infinite attributes and the source of the impersonal Brahman.
- *Devas*, the expansions of Brahman/God into various forms, each with a certain quality. In the Vedic religion, there were 33 devas, which later became exaggerated to 330 million devas. In fact, devas are themselves regarded as more mundane manifestations of the One and the Supreme Brahman (See Para Brahman). The Sanskrit word for "ten million" also means group, and 330 million devas originally meant 33 types of divine manifestations.

History and literature
Vedic

Brahman is a concept present in Vedic Samhitas, the oldest layer of the Vedas dated to the 2nd millennium BCE. For example,
The *Ṛcs* are limited (*parimita*),
The *Samans* are limited,
And the *Yajuses* are limited,
But of the Word *Brahman*, there is no end.

— *Taittiriya Samhita VII.3.1.4, Translated by Barbara Holdrege*

The concept *Brahman* is referred to in hundreds of hymns in the Vedas. For example, it is found in Rig veda hymns such as 2.2.10, 6.21.8, 10.72.2 and in Atharva veda hymns such as 6.122.5, 10.1.12, and 14.1.131. The concept is found in various layers of the Vedic literature; for example: Aitareya Brahmana 1.18.3, Kausitaki Brahmana 6.12, Satapatha Brahmana 13.5.2.5, Taittiriya Brahmana 2.8.8.10, Jaiminiya Brahmana 1.129, Taittiriya Aranyaka 4.4.1 through 5.4.1, Vajasaneyi Samhita 22.4 through 23.25, Maitrayani Samhita 3.12.1:16.2 through 4.9.2:122.15. The concept is extensively discussed in the Upanishads embedded in the Vedas (see next section), and also mentioned in the vedāṅga (the limbs of Vedas) such as the Srauta sutra 1.12.12 and Paraskara Gryhasutra 3.2.10 through 3.4.5.

Jan Gonda states that the diverse reference of *Brahman* in the Vedic literature, starting with Rigveda Samhitas, convey "different senses or different shades of meaning". There is no one single word in modern Western languages that can render the various shades of meaning of the word *Brahman* in the Vedic literature, according to Jan Gonda. In verses considered as the most ancient, the Vedic idea of *Brahman* is the "power immanent in the sound, words, verses and formulas of Vedas". However, states Gonda, the verses suggest that this ancient meaning was never the only meaning, and the concept evolved and expanded in ancient India.

Barbara Holdrege states that the concept *Brahman* is discussed in the Vedas along four major themes: as the Word or verses (*Sabdabrahman*), as Knowledge embodied in Creator Principle, as Creation itself, and a Corpus of traditions. Hananya Goodman states that the Vedas conceptualize Brahman as the Cosmic Principles underlying all that exists. Gavin Flood states that the Vedic era witnessed a process of abstraction, where the concept of *Brahman* evolved and expanded from the power of sound, words and rituals to the "essence of the universe", the "deeper foundation of all phenomena", the "essence of the self (Atman, soul)", and the deeper "truth of a person beyond apparent difference".

Upanishads

Swan (Hansa, हंस) is the symbol for Brahman-Atman in Hindu iconography.

The primary focus on the early Upanishads is *Brahmavidya* and *Atmavidya*, that is the knowledge of Brahman and the knowledge of Atman (self, soul), what it is and how it is understood. The texts do not present a single unified theory, rather they present a variety of themes with multiple possible interpretations, which flowered in post-Vedic era as premises for the diverse schools of Hinduism.

Paul Deussen states that the concept of *Brahman* in the Upanishads expands to metaphysical, ontological and soteriological themes, such as it being the "primordial reality that creates, maintains and withdraws within it the universe", the "principle of the world", the "absolute", the "general, universal", the "cosmic principle", the "ultimate that is the cause of everything including all gods", the "divine being, Lord, distinct God, or God within oneself", the "knowledge", the "soul, sense of self of each human being that is fearless, luminuous, exalted and blissful", the "essence of liberation, of spiritual freedom", the "universe within each living being and the universe outside", the "essence and everything innate in all that exists inside, outside and everywhere".

Gavin Flood summarizes the concept of *Brahman* in the Upanishads to be the "essence, the smallest particle of the cosmos and the infinite universe", the "essence of all things which cannot be seen, though it can be experienced", the "self, soul within each person, each being", the "truth", the "reality", the "absolute", the "bliss" (*ananda*).

According to Radhakrishnan, the sages of the Upanishads teach Brahman as the ultimate essence of material phenomena that cannot be seen or heard, but whose nature can be known through the development of self-knowledge (*atma jnana*).

The Upanishads contain several *mahā-vākyas* or "Great Sayings" on the concept of Brahman:

Text	Upanishad	Translation	Reference
अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि *aham brahmāsmi*	Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10	"I am Brahman"	
अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म *ayam ātmā brahma*	Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5	"The Self is Brahman"	
सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म *sarvam khalvidam brahma*	Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1	"All this is Brahman"	
एकमेवाद्वितीयम् *ekam evadvitiyam*	Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1	"That [Brahman] is one, without a second"	
तत्त्वमसि *tat tvam asi*	Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7 et seq.	"Thou art that" ("You are Brahman")	
प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म *prajnānam brahma*	Aitareya Upanishad 3.3.7	"Knowledge is Brahman"	

The Upanishad discuss the metaphysical concept of Brahman in many ways, such as the Śāṇḍilya doctrine in Chapter 3 of the Chandogya Upanishad, among of the oldest Upanishadic texts. The Śāṇḍilya doctrine on Brahman is not unique to Chandogya Upanishad, but found in other ancient texts such as the Satapatha Brahmana in section 10.6.3. It asserts that Atman (Soul, Self inside man) exists, the Brahman is identical with Atman, that the Brahman is inside man—thematic quotations that are frequently cited by later schools of Hinduism and modern studies on Indian philosophies.

This whole universe is Brahman. In tranquility, let one worship It, as *Tajjalan* (that from which he came forth, as that into which he will be dissolved, as that in which he breathes).

— Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1

Man is a creature of his *Kratumaya* (क्रतुमयः, will, purpose). Let him therefore have for himself this will, this purpose: The intelligent, whose body is imbued with life-principle, whose form is light, whose thoughts are driven by truth, whose self is like space (invisible but ever present), from whom all works, all desires, all sensory feelings encompassing this whole world, the silent, the unconcerned, this is me, my Self, my Soul within my heart.

— Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1 – 3.14.3

This is my Soul in the innermost heart, greater than the earth, greater than the aerial space, greater than these worlds. This Soul, this Self of mine is that Brahman.

— Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.3 – 3.14.4

Paul Deussen notes that teachings similar to above on Brahman, re-appeared centuries later in the words of the 3rd century CE Neoplatonic Roman philosopher Plotinus in Enneades 5.1.2.

Discussion

Brahman as a metaphysical concept

Brahman is the key metaphysical concept in various schools of Hindu philosophy. It is the theme in its diverse discussions to the two central questions of metaphysics: what is ultimately real, and are there principles applying to everything that is real? Brahman is the ultimate "eternally, constant" reality, while the observed universe is a different kind of reality but one which is "temporary, changing" Māyā in various orthodox Hindu schools. Māyā pre-exists and co-exists with Brahman—the Ultimate Reality, The Highest Universal, the Cosmic Principles.

In addition to the concept of Brahman, Hindu metaphysics includes the concept of Atman—or soul, self—which is also considered ultimately real. The various schools of Hinduism, particularly the dual and non-dual schools, differ on the nature of Atman, whether it is distinct from Brahman, or same as Brahman. Those that consider Brahman and Atman as distinct are theistic, and Dvaita Vedanta and later Nyaya schools illustrate this premise. Those that consider Brahman and Atman as same are monist or pantheistic, and Advaita Vedanta, later Samkhya and Yoga schools illustrate this metaphysical premise. In schools that equate Brahman with Atman, Brahman is the sole, ultimate reality. The predominant teaching in the Upanishads is the spiritual identity of soul within each human being, with the soul of every other human being and living being, as well as with the supreme, ultimate reality *Brahman*.

In the metaphysics of the major schools of Hinduism, Maya is perceived reality, one that does not reveal the hidden principles, the true reality—the Brahman. Maya is unconscious, Brahman-Atman is conscious. Maya is the literal and the effect, Brahman is

the figurative *Upādāna*—the principle and the cause. Maya is born, changes, evolves, dies with time, from circumstances, due to invisible principles of nature. Atman-Brahman is eternal, unchanging, invisible principle, unaffected absolute and resplendent consciousness. Maya concept, states Archibald Gough, is "the indifferent aggregate of all the possibilities of emanatory or derived existences, pre-existing with Brahman", just like the possibility of a future tree pre-exists in the seed of the tree.

While Hinduism sub-schools such as Advaita Vedanta emphasize the complete equivalence of *Brahman* and *Atman*, they also expound on Brahman as *saguna Brahman*—the Brahman with attributes, and *nirguna Brahman*—the Brahman without attributes. The *nirguna Brahman* is the Brahman as it really is, however, the *saguna Brahman* is posited as a means to realizing *nirguna Brahman*, but the Hinduism schools declare *saguna Brahman* to be ultimately illusory. The concept of the *saguna Brahman*, such as in the form of avatars, is considered in these schools of Hinduism to be a useful symbolism, path and tool for those who are still on their spiritual journey, but the concept is finally cast aside by the fully enlightened.

Brahman as an ontological concept

Brahman, along with Soul/Self (Atman) are part of the ontological premises of Indian philosophy. Different schools of Indian philosophy have held widely dissimilar ontologies. Buddhism and Carvaka school of Hinduism deny that there exists anything called "a soul, a self" (individual Atman or Brahman in the cosmic sense), while the orthodox schools of Hinduism, Jainism and Ajivikas hold that there exists "a soul, a self".

Brahman as well the Atman in every human being (and living being) is considered equivalent and the sole reality, the eternal, self-born, unlimited, innately free, blissful Absolute in schools of Hinduism such as the Advaita Vedanta and Yoga. Knowing one's own self is knowing the God inside oneself, and this is held as the path to knowing the ontological nature of Brahman (universal Self) as it is identical to the Atman (individual Self). The nature of Atman-Brahman is held in these schools, states Barbara Holdrege, to be as a pure being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and full of bliss (*ananda*), and it is formless, distinctionless, nonchanging and unbounded.

In theistic schools, in contrast, such as Dvaita Vedanta, the nature of Brahman is held as eternal, unlimited, innately free, blissful Absolute, while each individual's soul is held as distinct and limited which can at best come close in eternal blissful love of the Brahman (therein viewed as the Godhead).

Other schools of Hinduism have their own ontological premises relating to Brahman, reality and nature of existence. Vaisheshika school of Hinduism, for example, holds a substantial, realist ontology. The Carvaka school denied Brahman and Atman, and held a materialist ontology.

Brahman as an axiological concept

Brahman and Atman are key concepts to Hindu theories of axiology: ethics and aesthetics. *Ananda* (bliss), state Michael Myers and other scholars, has axiological importance to the concept of Brahman, as the universal inner harmony. Some scholars equate Brahman with the highest value, in an axiological sense.

The axiological concepts of Brahman and Atman is central to Hindu theory of values. A statement such as 'I am Brahman', states Shaw, means 'I am related to everything,' and this is the underlying premise for compassion for others in Hinduism, for each individual's welfare, peace, or happiness depends on others, including other beings and nature at large, and vice versa. Tietge states that even in non-dual schools of Hinduism where Brahman and Atman are treated ontologically equivalent, the theory of values emphasize individual agent and ethics. In these schools of Hinduism, states Tietge, the theory of action are derived from and centered in compassion for the other, and not egotistical concern for the self.

The axiological theory of values emerges implicitly from the concepts of Brahman and Atman, states Bauer. The aesthetics of human experience and ethics are one consequence of self-knowledge in Hinduism, one resulting from the perfect, timeless unification of one's soul with the Brahman, the soul of everyone, everything and all eternity, wherein the pinnacle of human experience is not dependent on an afterlife, but pure consciousness in the present life itself. It does not assume that an individual is weak nor does it presume that he is inherently evil, but the opposite: human soul and its nature is held as fundamentally unqualified, faultless, beautiful, blissful, ethical, compassionate and good. Ignorance is to assume it evil, liberation is to know its eternal, expansive, pristine, happy and good nature. The axiological premises in the Hindu thought and Indian philosophies in general, states Nikam, is to elevate the individual, exalting the innate potential of man, where the reality of his being is the objective reality of the universe. The Upanishads of Hinduism, summarizes Nikam, hold that the individual has the same essence and reality as the objective universe, and this essence is the finest essence; the individual soul is the universal soul, and Atman is the same reality and the same aesthetics as the Brahman.

Brahman as a soteriological concept: Moksha

The orthodox schools of Hinduism, particularly Vedanta, Samkhya and Yoga schools, focus on the concept of Brahman and Atman in their discussion of moksha. The Advaita Vedanta holds there is no being/non-being distinction between Atman and Brahman. The knowledge of Atman (Self-knowledge) is synonymous to the knowledge of Brahman inside the person and outside the person. Furthermore, the knowledge of Brahman leads to sense of oneness with all existence, self-realization, indescribable joy, and moksha (freedom, bliss), because Brahman-Atman is the origin and end of all things, the universal principle behind and at source of everything that exists, consciousness that pervades everything and everyone.

The theistic sub-school such as Dvaita Vedanta of Hinduism, starts with the same premises, but adds the premise that individual souls and Brahman are distinct, and thereby reaches entirely different conclusions where Brahman is conceptualized in a manner similar to God in other major world religions. The theistic schools assert that moksha is the loving, eternal union or nearness of one's soul with the distinct and separate Brahman (Vishnu, Shiva or equivalent henotheism). Brahman, in these sub-schools of Hinduism is considered the highest perfection of existence, which every soul journeys towards in its own way for moksha.

Schools of thought

Vedanta

The concept of Brahman, its nature and its relationship with Atman and the observed universe, is a major point of difference between the various sub-schools of the Vedanta school of Hinduism.

Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta espouses nondualism. *Brahman* is the sole unchanging reality, there is no duality, no limited individual souls nor a separate unlimited cosmic soul, rather all souls, all of existence, across all space and time, is one and the same. The universe and the soul inside each being is Brahman, and the universe and the soul outside each being is Brahman, according to Advaita Vedanta. Brahman is the origin and end of all things, material and spiritual. *Brahman* is the root source of everything that exists. He states that Brahman can neither be taught nor perceived (as an object of knowledge), but it can be learned and realized by all human beings. The goal of Advaita Vedanta is to realize that one's Self (*Atman*) gets obscured by ignorance and false-identification ("Avidya"). When Avidya is removed, the Atman (Soul, Self inside a person) is realized as identical with Brahman. The Brahman is not outside, separate, dual entity, the Brahman is within each person, states Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism. *Brahman* is all that is eternal, unchanging and that is truly exists. This view is stated in this school in many different forms, such as "*Ekam sat*" ("Truth is one"), and all is *Brahman*.

The universe does not simply come from Brahman, it *is* Brahman. According to Adi Shankara, a proponent of Advaita Vedanta, the knowledge of Brahman that shruti provides cannot be obtained in any other means besides self inquiry.

In Advaita Vedanta, nirguna Brahman, that is the Brahman without attributes, is held to be the ultimate and sole reality. Consciousness is not a property of Brahman but its very nature. In this respect, Advaita Vedanta differs from other Vedanta schools.

Example verses from Bhagavad-Gita include:

The offering is Brahman; the oblation is Brahman;
offered by Brahman into the fire of Brahman.

Brahman will be attained by him,
who always sees Brahman in action. – Hymn 4.24

He who finds his happiness within,
His delight within,
And his light within,
This yogin attains the bliss of Brahman, becoming Brahman. – Hymn 5.24

— Bhagavad Gita

Dvaita Vedanta

Brahman of Dvaita is a concept similar to God in major world religions. Dvaita holds that the individual soul is dependent on God, but distinct.

Dvaita propounds Tattvavada which means understanding differences between Tattvas (significant properties) of entities within the universal substrate as follows:

1. Jîva-Îshvara-bheda — difference between the soul and Vishnu
2. Jada-Îshvara-bheda — difference between the insentient and Vishnu
3. Mitha-jîva-bheda — difference between any two souls
4. Jada-jîva-bheda — difference between insentient and the soul
5. Mitha-jada-bheda — difference between any two insentients

Achintya Bheda Abheda

The Acintya Bheda Abheda philosophy is similar to Dvaitadvaita (differential monism). In this philosophy, Brahman is not just impersonal, but also personal. That Brahman is Supreme Personality of Godhead, though on first stage of realization (by process called jnana) of Absolute Truth, He is realized as impersonal Brahman, then as personal Brahman having eternal Vaikuntha abode (also known as Brahmalokah sanatana), then as Paramatma (by process of yoga–meditation on Supersoul, Vishnu-God in heart)— Vishnu (Narayana, also in everyone's heart) who has many abodes known as Vishnulokas (Vaikunthalokas), and finally (Absolute Truth is realized by bhakti) as Bhagavan, Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is source of both Paramatma and Brahman (personal, impersonal, or both).

Vaishnavism

All Vaishnava schools are panentheistic and perceive the Advaita concept of identification of Atman with the impersonal Brahman as an intermediate step of self-realization, but not Mukti, or final liberation of complete God-realization through Bhakti Yoga. Gaudiya Vaishnavism, a form of Achintya Bheda Abheda philosophy, also concludes that Brahman is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. According to them, Brahman is Lord Vishnu/Krishna; the universe and all other manifestations of the Supreme are extensions of Him.

Bhakti movement

The Bhakti movement of Hinduism built its theosophy around two concepts of Brahman—*Nirguna* and *Saguna*. *Nirguna* Brahman was the concept of the Ultimate Reality as formless, without attributes or quality. *Saguna* Brahman, in contrast, was envisioned and developed as with form, attributes and quality. The two had parallels in the ancient panthestic unmanifest and theistic manifest traditions, respectively, and traceable to Arjuna-Krishna dialogue in the Bhagavad Gita. It is the same Brahman, but viewed from two perspectives, one from *Nirguni* knowledge-focus and other from *Saguni* love-focus, united as Krishna in the Gita. *Nirguna* bhakta's poetry were *Jnana-shrayi*, or had roots in knowledge. *Saguna* bhakta's poetry were *Prema-shrayi*, or with roots in love. In Bhakti, the emphasis is reciprocal love and devotion, where the devotee loves God, and God loves the devotee.

Jeaneane Fowler states that the concepts of Nirguna and Saguna Brahman, at the root of Bhakti movement theosophy, underwent more profound development with the ideas of Vedanta school of Hinduism, particularly those of Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta, Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, and Madhvacharya's Dvaita Vedanta. Two 12th-century influential treatises on bhakti were *Sandilya Bhakti Sutra*—a treatise resonating with Nirguna-bhakti, and *Narada Bhakti Sutra*—a treatise that leans towards Saguna-bhakti.

Nirguna and *Saguna* Brahman concepts of the Bhakti movement has been a baffling one to scholars, particularly the *Nirguni* tradition because it offers, states David Lorenzen, "heart-felt devotion to a God without attributes, without even any definable personality". Yet given the "mountains of *Nirguni* bhakti literature", adds Lorenzen, bhakti for *Nirguna Brahman* has been a part of the reality of the Hindu tradition along with the bhakti for *Saguna Brahman*. These were two alternate ways of imagining God during the bhakti movement.

Buddhist understanding of Brahman

Buddhism rejects the Upanishadic doctrine of Brahman and Atman (soul, permanent self, essence). According to Damien Keown, "the Buddha said he could find no evidence for the existence of either the personal soul (*atman*) or its cosmic counterpart (*brahman*)". The metaphysics of Buddhism rejects Brahman (ultimate being), Brahman-like essence, soul and anything metaphysically equivalent through its Anatta doctrine.

According to Merv Fowler, some forms of Buddhism have incorporated concepts that resemble that of Brahman. As an example, Fowler cites the early Sarvastivada school of Buddhism, which "had come to accept a very pantheistic religious philosophy, and are important because of the impetus they gave to the development of Mahayana Buddhism". According to William Theodore De Bary, in the doctrines of the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism, "the Body of Essence, the Ultimate Buddha, who pervaded and underlay the whole universe [...] was in fact the World Soul, the Brahman of the Upanishads, in a new form". According to Fowler, some scholars have identified the

Buddhist *nirvana*, conceived of as the Ultimate Reality, with the Hindu Brahman/atman; Fowler claims that this view "has gained little support in Buddhist circles." Fowler asserts that the authors of a number of Mahayana texts took pains to differentiate their ideas from the Upanishadic doctrine of Brahman.

Brahma as a surrogate for Brahman in Buddhist texts

The spiritual concept of Brahman is far older in the Vedic literature, and some scholars suggest deity Brahma may have emerged as a personal conception and icon with form and attributes (saguna version) of the impersonal, nirguna (without attributes), formless universal principle called Brahman. In the Hindu texts, one of the earliest mention of deity Brahma along with Vishnu and Shiva is in the fifth *Prapathaka* (lesson) of the Maitrayaniya Upanishad, probably composed in late 1st millennium BCE, after the rise of Buddhism.

The early Buddhists attacked the concept of Brahma, states Gananath Obeyesekere, and thereby polemically attacked the Vedic and Upanishadic concept of gender neutral, abstract metaphysical Brahman. This critique of Brahma in early Buddhist texts aim at ridiculing the Vedas, but the same texts simultaneously call *metta* (loving-kindness, compassion) as the state of union with Brahma. The early Buddhist approach to Brahma was to reject any creator aspect, while retaining the value system in the Vedic Brahmavihara concepts, in the Buddhist value system. According to Martin Wiltshire, the term "Brahma loka" in the Buddhist canon, instead of "Svarga loka", is likely a Buddhist attempt to choose and emphasize the "truth power" and knowledge focus of the Brahman concept in the Upanishads. Simultaneously, by reformulating Brahman as Brahma and relegating it within its Devas and Samsara theories, early Buddhism rejected the Atman-Brahman premise of the Vedas to present of its own *Dhamma* doctrines (anicca, dukkha and anatta).

Brahman in Sikhism

Ik Onkar (left) is part of the Mul Mantar in Sikhism, where it means "Onkar [God, Reality] is one".
The Onkar of Sikhism is related to Om—also called Omkāra—in Hinduism.
The ancient texts of Hinduism state Om to be a symbolism for the Highest Reality, Brahman.

The metaphysical concept of Brahman, particularly as *nirguni Brahman*—attributeless, formless, eternal Highest Reality—is at the foundation of Sikhism. This belief is observed through *nirguni Bhakti* by the Sikhs.

In Gauri, which is part of the Guru Granth Sahib, Brahman is declared as "One without a second", in Sri Rag "everything is born of Him, and is finally absorbed in Him", in Var Asa "whatever we see or hear is the manifestation of Brahman". Nesbitt states that the first two words, *Ik Onkar*, in the twelve-word Mul Mantar at the opening of the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib, has been translated in three different ways by scholars: "There is one god", "This being is one", and as "One reality is".

Similar emphasis on "One without a second" for metaphysical concept of Brahman, is found in ancient texts of Hinduism, such as the Chandogya Upanishad's chapter 6.2. The ideas about God and Highest Reality in Sikhism share themes found in the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* concepts of Brahman in Hinduism.

The concept of Ultimate Reality (Brahman) is also referred in Sikhism as *Nam*, *Sat-naam* or *Naam*, and *Ik Oankar* like Hindu Om symbolizes this Reality.

Brahman in Jainism

Scholars contest whether the concept of Brahman is rejected or accepted in Jainism. The concept of a theistic God is rejected by Jainism, but *Jiva* or "Atman (soul) exists" is held to be a metaphysical truth and central to its theory of rebirths and Kevala Jnana.

Bissett states that Jainism accepts the "material world" and "Atman", but rejects Brahman—the metaphysical concept of Ultimate Reality and Cosmic Principles found in the ancient texts of Hinduism. Goswami, in contrast, states that the literature of Jainism has an undercurrent of monist theme, where the self who gains the knowledge of Brahman (Highest Reality, Supreme Knowledge) is identical to Brahman itself. Jaini states that Jainism neither accepts nor rejects the premise of Ultimate Reality (Brahman), instead Jain ontology adopts a many sided doctrine called *Anekantavada*. This doctrine holds that "reality is irreducibly complex" and no human view or description can represent the Absolute Truth. Those who have understood and realized the Absolute Truth are the liberated ones and the Supreme Souls, with Kevala Jnana.

Comparison of Brahma, Brahman, Brahmin and Brahmanas

Brahma is distinct from Brahman. Brahma is a male deity, in the post-Vedic Puranic literature, who creates but neither preserves nor destroys anything. He is envisioned in some Hindu texts to have emerged from the metaphysical Brahman along with Vishnu (preserver), Shiva (destroyer), all other gods, goddesses, matter and other beings. In theistic schools of Hinduism where deity Brahma is described as part of its cosmology, he is a mortal like all gods and goddesses, and dissolves into the abstract immortal Brahman when the universe ends, thereafter a new cosmic cycle (kalpa) restarts again.

Brahman is a metaphysical concept of Hinduism referring to the ultimate unchanging reality, that, states Doniger, is uncreated, eternal, infinite, transcendent, the cause, the foundation, the source and the goal of all existence. It is envisioned as either the cause or that which transforms itself into everything that exists in the universe as well as all beings, that which existed before the present universe and time, which exists as current universe and time, and that which will absorb and exist after the present universe and time ends. It is a gender neutral abstract concept. The abstract Brahman concept is predominant in the Vedic texts, particularly the Upanishads; while the deity Brahma finds minor mention in the Vedas and the Upanishads. In the Puranic and the Epics literature, deity Brahma appears more often, but inconsistently. Some texts suggest that god Vishnu created Brahma (Vaishnavism), others suggest god Shiva created Brahma (Shaivism), yet others suggest goddess Devi created Brahma (Shaktism), and these texts then go on to state that Brahma is a secondary creator of the world working respectively on their behalf. Further, the medieval era texts of these major theistic traditions of Hinduism assert that the *saguna* Brahman is Vishnu, is Shiva, or is Devi respectively, they are different names or aspects of the Brahman, and that the Atman (soul, self) within every living being is same or part of this ultimate, eternal Brahman.

Brahmin is a varna in Hinduism specialising in theory as priests, preservers and transmitters of sacred literature across generations.

The Brahmanas are one of the four ancient layers of texts within the Vedas. They are primarily a digest incorporating myths, legends, the explanation of Vedic rituals and in some cases philosophy. They are embedded within each of the four Vedas, and form a part of the Hindu *śruti* literature.

Chapter 2
WHO IS A BRAHMIN ?

Brahmin is a varna in Hinduism specialising as priests, teachers (acharya) (yogi)and protectors of sacred learning across generations.

Brahmins were traditionally responsible for religious rituals in temples, as intermediaries between temple deities and devotees, as well as rite of passage rituals such as solemnising a wedding with hymns and prayers. Theoretically, the Brahmins were the highest ranking of the four social classes. In practice, Indian texts suggest that Brahmins were agriculturalists, warriors, traders and have held a variety of other occupations in India.

Vedic sources

Purusha Sukta

The earliest inferred reference to "Brahmin" as a possible social class is in the Rigveda, occurs once, and the hymn is called Purusha Sukta. Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, a professor of Sanskrit and Religious studies, state, "there is no evidence in the Rigveda for an elaborate, much-subdivided and overarching caste system", and "the varna system seems to be embryonic in the Rigveda and, both then and later, a social ideal rather than a social reality".

Shrauta Sutras

Ancient texts describing community-oriented Vedic yajna rituals mention four to five priests: the hotar, the adhvaryu, the udgatar, the Brahmin and sometimes the ritvij. The functions associated with the priests were:

- The *Hotri* recites invocations and litanies drawn from the Rigveda.
- The *Adhvaryu* is the priest's assistant and is in charge of the physical details of the ritual like measuring the ground, building the altar explained in the Yajurveda. The adhvaryu offers oblations.
- The *Udgatri* is the chanter of hymns set to melodies and music (sāman) drawn from the Samaveda. The udgatar, like the hotar, chants the introductory, accompanying and benediction hymns.
- The *Brahmin* recites from the Atharvaveda.
- The *Ritvij* is the chief operating priest.

Brahmin and renunciation tradition in Hinduism

The term Brahmin in Indian texts has signified someone who is good and virtuous, not just someone of priestly class. Both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, states Patrick Olivelle, repeatedly define "Brahmin" not in terms of family of birth, but in terms of personal qualities. These virtues and characteristics mirror the values cherished in

Hinduism during the Sannyasa stage of life, or the life of renunciation for spiritual pursuits. Brahmins, states Olivelle, were the social class from which most ascetics came.

Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras

The Dharmasutras and Dharmasatras text of Hinduism describe the expectations, duties and role of Brahmins. The rules and duties in these Dharma texts of Hinduism, are primarily directed at Brahmins. The Gautama's Dharmasutra, the oldest of surviving Hindu Dharmasutras, for example, states in verse 9.54–9.55 that a Brahmin should not participate or perform a ritual unless he is invited to do so, but he may attend. Gautama outlines the following rules of conduct for a Brahmin, in Chapters 8 and 9:

- Be always truthful
- Conduct himself as an Aryan
- Teach his art only to virtuous men
- Follow rules of ritual purification
- Study Vedas with delight
- Never hurt any living creature
- Be gentle but steadfast
- Have self-control
- Be kind, liberal towards everyone

Chapter 8 of the Dharmasutra, states Olivelle, asserts the functions of a Brahmin to be to learn the Vedas, the secular sciences, the Vedic supplements, the dialogues, the epics and the Puranas; to understand the texts and pattern his conduct according to precepts contained in this texts, to undertake Sanskara (rite of passage) and rituals, and lead a virtuous life.

The text lists eight virtues that a Brahmin must inculcate: compassion, patience, lack of envy, purification, tranquility, auspicious disposition, generosity and lack of greed, and then asserts in verse 9.24–9.25, that it is more important to lead a virtuous life than perform rites and rituals, because virtue leads to achieving liberation (moksha, a life in the world of Brahman).

Baudhayana Dharmasutra add charity, modesty, refraining from anger and never being arrogant as duties of a Brahmin. The Vasistha Dharmasutra in verse 6.23 lists discipline, austerity, self-control, liberality, truthfulness, purity, Vedic learning, compassion, erudition, intelligence and religious faith as characteristics of a Brahmin. In 13.55, the Vasistha text states that a Brahmin must not accept weapons, poison or liquor as gifts.

The Dharmasastras such as Manusmriti, like Dharmsutras, are codes primarily focussed on how a Brahmin must live his life, and their relationship with a king and warrior class. Manusmriti dedicates 1,034 verses, the largest portion, on laws for and expected virtues of Brahmins. It asserts, for example,

Left: Brahmin woman, Right: Brahmin girl
(both paintings by Lady Lawley, 1914)

The later Dharma texts of Hinduism such

A well disciplined Brahmin, although he knows just the Savitri verse, is far better than an undisciplined one who eats all types of food and deals in all types of merchandise though he may know all three Vedas.

— Manusmriti 2.118, Translated by Patrick Olivelle

John Bussanich states that the ethical precepts set for Brahmins, in ancient Indian texts, are similar to Greek virtue-ethics, that "Manu's dharmic Brahmin can be compared to

Aristotle's man of practical wisdom", and that "the virtuous Brahmin is not unlike the Platonic-Aristotelian philosopher" with the difference that the latter was not sacerdotal.

History

According to Abraham Eraly, "Brahmin as a varna hardly had any presence in historical records before the Gupta Empire era" (3rd century to 6th century CE), and "no Brahmin, no sacrifice, no ritualistic act of any kind ever, even once, is referred to in any Indian text" dated to be from the first century CE or before. Their role as priests and repository of sacred knowledge, as well as their importance in the practice of Vedic Shrauta rituals grew during the Gupta Empire era and thereafter. However, the knowledge about actual history of Brahmins or other varnas of Hinduism in and after 1st-millennium is fragmentary and preliminary, with little that is from verifiable records or archeological evidence, and much that is constructed from a-historical Sanskrit works and fiction. Michael Witzel writes,

Toward a history of the Brahmins: Current research in the area is fragmentary. The state of our knowledge of this fundamental subject is preliminary, at best. Most Sanksrit works are a-historic or, at least, not especially interested in presenting a chronological account of India's history. When we actually encounter history, such as in *Rajatarangini* or in the *Gopalavamsavali* of Nepal, the texts do not deal with brahmins in great detail.

— *Michael Witzel, Review (1993)*

Normative occupations

Brahmins in white dress performing the Bhumi Puja ritual yajna around fire

The Gautama Dharmasutra states in verse 10.3 that it is obligatory on a Brahmin to learn and teach the Vedas. Chapter 10 of the text, according to Olivelle translation, states that he may impart Vedic instructions to a teacher, relative, friend, elder, anyone who offers

exchange of knowledge he wants, or anyone who pays for such education. The Chapter 10 adds that a Brahmin may also engage in agriculture, trade, lend money on interest, while Chapter 7 states that a Brahmin may engage in the occupation of a warrior in the times of adversity. Typically, asserts Gautama Dharmasutra, a Brahmin should accept any occupation to sustain himself but avoid the occupations of a Shudra, but if his life is at stake a Brahmin may sustain himself by accepting occupations of a Shudra. The text forbids a Brahmin from engaging in the trade of animals for slaughter, meat, medicines and milk products even in the times of adversity.

The Apastamba Dharmasutra asserts in verse 1.20.10 that trade is generally not sanctioned for Brahmins, but in the times of adversity he may do so. The chapter 1.20 of Apastamba, states Olivelle, forbids the trade of the following under any circumstances: human beings, meat, skins, weapons, barren cows, sesame seeds, pepper, and merits.

The 1st millennium CE Dharmasastras, that followed the Dharmasutras contain similar recommendations on occupations for a Brahmin, both in prosperous or normal times, and in the times of adversity. The widely studied Manusmriti, for example, states:

Except during a time of adversity, a Brahmin ought to sustain himself by following a livelihood that causes little or no harm to creatures. He should gather wealth just sufficient for his subsistence through irreproachable activities that are specific to him, without fatiguing his body. – 4.2–4.3

He must never follow a worldly occupation for the sake of livelihood, but subsist by means of a pure, upright and honest livelihood proper to a Brahmin. One who seeks happiness should become supremely content and self controlled, for happiness is rooted in contentment and its opposite is the root of unhappiness. – 4.11–4.12

— Manusmriti, Translated by Patrick Olivelle

An ascetic from renunciation tradition (1914)

The Manusmriti recommends that a Brahmin's occupation must never involve forbidden activities such as producing or trading poison, weapons, meat, trapping birds and others. It also lists six occupations that it deems proper for a Brahmin: teaching, studying,

offering yajna, officiating at yajna, giving gifts and accepting gifts. Of these, states Manusmriti, three which provide a Brahmin with a livelihood are teaching, officiating at yajna, and accepting gifts. The text states that teaching is best, and ranks the accepting of gifts as the lowest of the six. In the times of adversity, Manusmriti recommends that a Brahmin may live by engaging in the occupations of the warrior class, or agriculture or cattle herding or trade. Of these, Manusmriti in verses 10.83–10.84 recommends a Brahmin should avoid agriculture if possible because, according to Olivelle translation, agriculture "involves injury to living beings and dependence of others" when the plow digs the ground and injures the creatures that live in the soil. However, adds Manusmriti, even in the times of adversity, a Brahmin must never trade or produce poison, weapons, meat, soma, liquor, perfume, milk and milk products, molasses, captured animals or birds, beeswax, sesame seeds or roots.

Actual occupations

Adi Shankara a proponent of Advaita Vedanta, was born in a Brahmin family,
and is credited with unifying and establishing the main currents of thought in Hinduism.

Historical records, state scholars, suggest that Brahmin varna was not limited to a particular status or priest and teaching profession. Historical records from mid 1st millennium CE and later, suggest Brahmins were agriculturalists and warriors in medieval India, quite often instead of as exception. Donkin and other scholars state that Hoysala Empire records frequently mention Brahmin merchants "carried on trade in horses, elephants and pearls" and transported goods throughout medieval India before the 14th-century.

The Pali Canon expresses Hindu Brahmins as the most prestigious and elite non-Buddhist figures. These and other Buddhist texts record the livelihood of Brahmins to have included handicrafts and artisan work such as carpentry and architecture. Buddhist sources extensively attest, state Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, that Brahmins were "supporting themselves not by religious practice, but employment in all manner of secular occupations", in the classical period of India. Some of the Hindu Brahmin occupations mentioned in the Buddhist texts such as *Jatakas* and *Sutta Nipata* are very lowly.

According to Haidar and Sardar, in the Islamic sultanates of the Deccan region, and unlike the Mughal Empire, Telugu Niyogi Brahmins served the Muslim sultans in many different roles such as accountants, ministers, revenue administration and in judicial service..The Deccan sultanates also heavily recruited Marathi brahmins at different levels of their administrationDuring the days of Maratha Empire in the 17th and 18th century, the occupation of Marathi Brahmins ranged from administration, being warriors to being de facto rulers After the collapse of Maratha empire, Brahmins in Maharashtra region were quick to take advantage of opportunities opened up by the new British rulers.They were the first community to take up Western education and therefore dominated lower level of British administration in the 19th century

Eric Bellman states that during the Islamic Mughal Empire era Brahmins served as advisers to the Mughals, later to the British Raj. The East India Company recruited from the Brahmin communities of the present day Uttar pradesh and Bihar regions for the Bengal army Many Brahmins, in other parts of South Asia lived like other varna, engaged in all sorts of professions. Among Nepalese Hindus, for example, Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels report the actual observed professions of Brahmins from 18th- to early 20th-century included being temple priests, minister, merchants, farmers, potters, masons, carpenters, coppersmiths, stone workers, barbers, gardeners among others.

Other 20th-century surveys, such as in the state of Uttar Pradesh, recorded that the primary occupation of almost all Brahmin families surveyed was neither priestly nor Vedas-related, but like other varnas, ranged from crop farming (80 per cent of Brahmins), dairy, service, labour such as cooking, and other occupations. The survey reported that the Brahmin families involved in agriculture as their primary occupation in modern times plough the land themselves, many supplementing their income by selling their labor services to other farmers.

Brahmins, bhakti movement and social reform movements

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Brahmin, founded Brahmo Samaj.

Many of the prominent thinkers and earliest champions of the Bhakti movement were Brahmins, a movement that encouraged a direct relationship of an individual with a

personal god. Among the many Brahmins who nurtured the Bhakti movement were Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Madhvacharya of Vaishnavism, Ramananda, another devotional poet sant. Born in a Brahmin family, Ramananda welcomed everyone to spiritual pursuits without discriminating anyone by gender, class, caste or religion (such as Muslims). He composed his spiritual message in poems, using widely spoken vernacular language rather than Sanskrit, to make it widely accessible. His ideas also influenced the founders of Sikhism in 15th century, and his verses and he are mentioned in the Sikh scripture Adi Granth. The Hindu tradition recognises him as the founder of the Hindu Ramanandi Sampradaya, the largest monastic renunciant community in Asia in modern times.

Other medieval era Brahmins who led spiritual movement without social or gender discrimination included Andal (9th-century female poet), Basava (12th-century Lingayatism), Dnyaneshwar (13th-century Bhakti poet), Vallabha Acharya (16th-century Vaishnava poet), among others.

Many 18th and 19th century Brahmins are credited with religious movements that criticised idolatry. For example, the Brahmins Raja Ram Mohan Roy led Brahmo Samaj and Dayananda Saraswati led the Arya Samaj.

Modern demographics and economic condition

According to 2007 reports, Brahmins in India are about five percent of its total population. The Himalayan states of Uttarakhand (20%) and Himachal Pradesh (14%) have the highest percentage of Brahmin population relative to respective state's total Hindus.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, an estimated 65 percent of the Brahmin households in India, with about 40 million people, lived on less than $100 a month in 2004; this number dropped to about 50% in 2007. Brahmins have also included wealthier and politically successful members.

In Buddhist and Jaina texts

The term Brahmin appears extensively in ancient and medieval Sutras and commentary texts of Buddhism and Jainism. In Buddhist Pali Canon, such as the *Majjhima Nikaya* and *Devadaha Sutta*, first written down about 1st century BCE, the Buddha is attributed to be mentioning Jain Brahmins and ascetics, as he describes their karma doctrine and ascetic practices:

The Blessed One [Buddha] said,
"There are, o monks, some ascetics and Brahmins who speak thus and are of such opinion:
'Whatever a particular person experiences, whether pleasant or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful, all this has (...) Thus say, o monks, those free of bonds [Jainas].
"O Niganthas, you ...

— *Cula Dukkha Kkhandha Sutta, early Buddhist text, Translated by Piotr Balcerowicz*

Modern scholars state that such usage of the term Brahmin in ancient texts does not imply a caste, but simply "masters" (experts), guardian, recluse, preacher or guide of any tradition. An alternate synonym for Brahmin in the Buddhist and other non-Hindu tradition is *Mahano*.

Outside India: Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia

Among the Hindus of Bali, Indonesia, Brahmins are called *Pedandas*. The role of Brahmin priests, called *Sulinggih*, has been open to both genders since medieval times. A Hindu Brahmin priestess is shown above.

Some Brahmins formed an influential group in Burmese Buddhist kingdoms in 18th- and 19th-century. The court Brahmins were locally called *Punna*. During the Konbaung dynasty, Buddhist kings relied on their court Brahmins to consecrate them to kingship in elaborate ceremonies, and to help resolve political questions. This role of Hindu Brahmins in a Buddhist kingdom, states Leider, may have been because Hindu texts provide guidelines for such social rituals and political ceremonies, while Buddhist texts don't.

The Brahmins were also consulted in the transmission, development and maintenance of law and justice system outside India. Hindu Dharmasastras, particularly Manusmriti written by the Brahmin Manu, states Anthony Reid, were "greatly honored in Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), Cambodia and Java-Bali (Indonesia) as the defining documents of law and order, which kings were obliged to uphold. They were copied, translated and incorporated into local law code, with strict adherence to the original text in Burma and Siam, and a stronger tendency to adapt to local needs in Java (Indonesia)".

The mythical origins of Cambodia are credited to a Brahmin prince named Kaundinya, who arrived by sea, married a Naga princess living in the flooded lands. Kaudinya founded Kambuja-desa, or Kambuja (transliterated to Kampuchea or Cambodia). Kaundinya introduced Hinduism, particularly Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Harihara (half Vishnu, half Shiva), and these ideas grew in southeast Asia in the 1st millennium CE.

Brahmins have been part of the Royal tradition of Thailand, particularly for the consecration and to mark annual land fertility rituals of Buddhist kings. A small Brahmanical temple Devasathan, established in 1784 by King Rama I of Thailand, has been managed by ethnically Thai Brahmins ever since. The temple hosts *Phra Phikhanesuan* (Ganesha), *Phra Narai* (Narayana, Vishnu), *Phra Itsuan* (Shiva), Uma, Brahma, Indra (*Sakka*) and other Hindu deities. The tradition asserts that the Thai Brahmins have roots in Hindu holy city of Varanasi and southern state of Tamil Nadu, go by the title *Pandita*, and the various annual rites and state ceremonies they conduct has been a blend of Buddhist and Hindu rituals.

Chapter 3
PURUSHA SUKTA

Purusha sukta (*puruṣasūkta*) is hymn 10.90 of the Rigveda, dedicated to the Purusha, the "Cosmic Being".

One version of the suktam has 16 verses, 15 in the anuṣṭubh meter, and the final one in the triṣṭubh meter. Another version of the suktam consists of 24 verses with the first 18 mantras designated as the *Purva-narayana* and the later portion termed as the *Uttara-narayana* probably in honour of Rishi Narayana. Some scholars state that certain verses of Purusha sukta are later interpolations to the Rigveda.
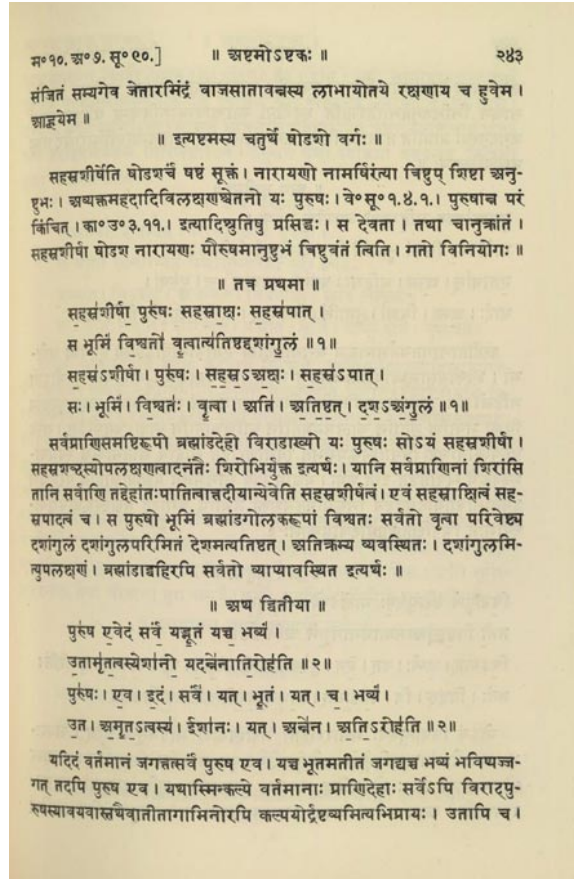
The first two verses of the Purusha sukta, with Sayana's commentary.
Page of Max Müller's Rig-Veda-sanhita, the Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans (reprint, London 1974).

Content

The Purusha sukta gives a description of the spiritual unity of the universe. It presents the nature of Purusha or the cosmic being as both immanent in the manifested world and yet transcendent to it. From this being, the sukta holds, the original creative will (Identified with Viswakarma, Hiranyagarbha or Prajapati) proceeds which causes the

projection of the universe in space and time. The Purusha sukta, in the seventh verse, hints at the organic connectedness of the various classes of society.

Purusha

The Purusha is defined in verses 2 to 5 of the sukta. He is described as a being who pervades everything conscious and unconscious universally. He is poetically depicted as a being with thousand heads, eyes and legs, enveloping not just the earth, but the entire universe from all sides and transcending it by ten fingers length - or transcending in all 10 directions. All manifestation, in past present and future, is held to be the Purusha alone. It is also proclaimed that he transcends his creation. The immanence of the Purusha in manifestation and yet his transcendence of it is similar to the viewpoint held by panentheists. Finally, his glory is held to be even greater than the portrayal in this sukta.

Creation

Verses 5-15 hold the creation of the Rig Veda. Creation is described to have started with the origination of Virat or the cosmic body from the Purusha. In Virat, omnipresent intelligence manifests itself which causes the appearance of diversity. In the verses following, it is held that Purusha through a sacrifice of himself, brings forth the avian, forest-dwelling and domestic animals, the three Vedas, the metres (of the mantras). Then follows a verse which states that from his mouth, arms, thighs, feet the four Varnas (classes) are born. This four varna-related verse is controversial and is believed by many scholars, such as Max Müller, to be a corruption and a medieval or modern era insertion into the text.

After the verse, the sukta states that the moon takes birth from the Purusha's mind and the sun from his eyes. Indra and Agni descend from his mouth and from his vital breath, air is born. The firmament comes from his navel, the heavens from his head, the earth from his feet and quarters of space from his ears. Through this creation, underlying unity of human, cosmic and divine realities is espoused, for all are seen arising out of same original reality, the Purusha.

Yajna

The Purusha sukta holds that the world is created by and out of a Yajna or sacrifice of the Purusha. All forms of existence are held to be grounded in this primordial Yajna. In the seventeenth verse, the concept of Yajna itself is held to have arisen out of this original sacrifice. In the final verses, Yajna is extolled as the primordial energy ground for all existence.

Context

The sukta gives an expression to immanence of radical unity in diversity and is therefore, seen as the foundation of the Vaishnava thought, Bhedabheda school of philosophy and Bhagavata theology.

The concept of the Purusha is from the Samkhya Philosophy which is traced to the Indus Valley period. It seems to be an interpolation into the Rig veda since it is out of character with the other hymns dedicated to nature gods.

The Purusha sukta is repeated with some variations in the Atharva Veda (19.6). Sections of it also occur in the Panchavimsha Brahmana, Vajasaneyi Samhita and the Taittiriya Aranyaka. Among Puranic texts, the sukta has been elaborated in the Bhagavata Purana (2.5.35 to 2.6.1-29) and in the Mahabharata (Mokshadharma Parva 351 and 352).

Authenticity

Many 19th and early 20th century western scholars questioned as to when parts or all of Purusha Sukta were composed, and whether some of these verses were present in the ancient version of Rigveda. They suggest it was interpolated in post-Vedic era, and is a relatively modern origin of Purusha Sukta.

As compared with by far the largest part of the hymns of the Rigveda, the Purusha Sukta has every character of modernness both in its diction and ideas. I have already observed that the hymns which we find in this collection (Purusha Sukta) are of very different periods.

—John Muir

That the Purusha Sukta, considered as a hymn of the Rigveda, is among the latest portions of that collection, is clearly perceptible from its contents.

—Albrecht Weber

That remarkable hymn (the Purusha Sukta) is in language, metre, and style, very different from the rest of the prayers with which it is associated. It has a decidedly more modern tone, and must have been composed after the Sanskrit language had been refined.

—Henry Thomas Colebrooke

There can be little doubt, for instance, that the 90th hymn of the 10th book (Purusha Sukta) is modern both in its character and in its diction. (...) It mentions the three seasons in the order of the Vasanta, spring; Grishma, summer; and Sarad, autumn; it contains the only passage in the Rigveda where the four castes are enumerated. The evidence of language for the modern date of this composition is equally strong. Grishma, for instance, the name for the hot season, does not occur in any other hymn of the Rigveda; and Vasanta also does not belong to the earliest vocabulary of the Vedic poets.

—Max Müller

B. V. Kamesvara Aiyar, another 19th century scholar, on the other hand, disputed this idea:

The language of this hymn is particularly sweet, rhythmical and polished and this has led to its being regarded as the product of a later age when the capabilities of the language had been developed. But the polish may be due to the artistic skill of the particular author, to the nature of the subject and to several other causes than mere posteriority in time. We might as well say that Chaucer must have lived centuries after Gower, because the language of the former is so refined and that of the latter, so rugged. We must at the same time confess that we are unable to discover any distinct linguistic peculiarity in the hymn which will stamp it as of a later origin.

Modern scholarship

The Purusha Sukta varna verse is now generally considered to have been inserted at a later date into the Vedic text, possibly as a charter myth. Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, a professor of Sanskrit and Religious studies, state, "there is no evidence in the Rigveda for an elaborate, much-subdivided and overarching caste system", and "the varna system seems to be embryonic in the Rigveda and, both then and later, a social ideal rather than a social reality".

Chapter 4
YAJNA

Yajna literally means "sacrifice, devotion, worship, offering", and refers in Hinduism to any ritual done in front of a sacred fire, often with mantras. Yajna has been a Vedic tradition, described in a layer of Vedic literature called Brahmanas, as well as Yajurveda. The tradition has evolved from offering oblations and libations into sacred fire to symbolic offerings in the presence of sacred fire (Agni).

Yajna rituals-related texts have been called the *Karma-kanda* (ritual works) portion of the Vedic literature, in contrast to *Jnana-kanda* (knowledge) portion contained in the Vedic Upanishads. The proper completion of Yajna-like rituals was the focus of Mimansa school of Hindu philosophy. Yajna have continued to play a central role in a Hindu's rites of passage, such as weddings. Modern major Hindu temple ceremonies, Hindu community celebrations, or monastic initiations may also include Yajna vedic rites, or alternatively be based on agamic rituals.

A yajna being performed.

Etymology

The word yajna (Sanskrit: यज्ञ; yajña or yajJa) has its root in the Sanskrit *yaj* meaning "to worship, adore, honor, revere" and appears in the early Vedic literature, composed in 2nd millennium BCE. In Rigveda, Yajurveda (itself a derivative of this root) and others, it means "worship, devotion to anything, prayer and praise, an act of worship or devotion, a

form of offering or oblation, and sacrifice". In post-Vedic literature, the term meant any form of rite, ceremony or devotion with an actual or symbolic offering or effort.

A Yajna included major ceremonial devotions, with or without a sacred fire, sometimes with feasts and community events. It has, states Nigal, a threefold meaning of worship of the deities (*devapujana*), unity (*sangatikarana*) and charity (*dána*).

The Sanskrit word is related to the Avestan term *yasna* of Zoroastrianism. Unlike the Vedic *yajna*, however, the *Yasna* is the name of a specific religious service, not a class of rituals, and they have "to do with water rather than fire".

History

Yajna has been a part of an individual or social ritual since the Vedic times. When the ritual fire – the divine Agni, the god of fire and the messenger of gods – were deployed in a Yajna, mantras were chanted. The hymns and songs sung and oblations offered into the fire were a form of hospitality for the Vedic gods. The offerings were carried by *Agni* to the gods, the gods in return were expected to grant boons and benedictions, and thus the ritual served as a means of spiritual exchange between gods and human beings. The Vedangas, or auxiliary sciences attached to the Vedic literature, define Yajna as follows,

Definition of a Vedic sacrifice

Yajña, sacrifice, is an act by which we surrender something for the sake of the gods. Such an act must rest on a sacred authority (*āgama*), and serve for man's salvation (*śreyortha*). The nature of the gift is of less importance. It may be cake (puroḍāśa), pulse (*karu*), mixed milk (*sāṃnāyya*), an animal (*paśu*), the juice of soma-plant (soma), etc; nay, the smallest offerings of butter, flour, and milk may serve for the purpose of a sacrifice.

— *Apastamba Yajna Paribhasa-sutras 1.1, Translator: M Dhavamony*

In the Upanishadic times, or after 500 BCE, states Sikora, the meaning of the term Yajna evolved from "ritual sacrifice" performed around fires by priests, to any "personal attitude and action or knowledge" that required devotion and dedication. The oldest Vedic Upanishads, such as the Chandogya Upanishad (~700 BCE) in Chapter 8, for example state,

अथ यद्यज्ञ इत्याचक्षते ब्रह्मचर्यमेव
 तद्ब्रह्मचर्येण ह्येव यो ज्ञाता तं
विन्दतेऽथ यदिष्टमित्याचक्षते ब्रह्मचर्यमेव
 तद्ब्रह्मचर्येण ह्येवेष्ट्वात्मानमनुविन्दते ॥ १ ॥

What is commonly called **Yajna** is really the chaste life of the student of sacred knowledge, for only through the chaste life of a student does he who is a knower find that, What is commonly called *Istam* (sacrificial offering) is really the chaste life of the student

of sacred knowledge,for only having searched with chaste life of a student does one find Atman (Soul, Self) || 1 ||

— *Chandogya Upanishad 8.5.1*

The later Vedic Upanishads expand the idea further by suggesting that Yoga is a form of *Yajna* (devotion, sacrifice). The Shvetashvatara Upanishad in verse 1.5.14, for example, uses the analogy of *Yajna* materials to explain the means to see one's soul and God, with inner rituals and without external rituals. It states, "by making one's own body as the lower friction sticks, the syllable Om as the upper friction sticks, then practicing the friction of meditation, one may see the Deva who is hidden, as it were".

Protocols

Vedic (Shrauta) yajnas are typically performed by four priests of the Vedic priesthood: the hotar, the adhvaryu, the udgatar and the Brahmin. The functions associated with the priests were:

- The *Hotri* recites invocations and litanies drawn from the Rigveda.
- The *Adhvaryu* is the priest's assistant and is in charge of the physical details of the ritual like measuring the ground, building the altar explained in the Yajurveda. The adhvaryu offers oblations.
- The *Udgatri* is the chanter of hymns set to melodies and music (sāman) drawn from the Samaveda. The udgatar, like the hotar, chants the introductory, accompanying and benediction hymns.
- The *Brahmin* is the superintendent of the entire performance, and is responsible for correcting mistakes by means of supplementary verses.

Offerings and style

There were usually one, or three, fires lit in the center of the offering ground. Oblations are offered into the fire. Among the ingredients offered as oblations in the yajna are ghee, milk, grains, cakes and soma. The duration of a yajna depends on its type, some last only a few minutes whereas, others are performed over a period of hours, days or even months. Some yajnas were performed privately, while others were community events. In other cases, yajnas were symbolic, such as in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad hymn 3.1.6, where "the mind is the Brahmin of sacrifice" and the goal of sacrifice was complete release and liberation (moksha).

The benedictions proffered ranged from long life, gaining friends, health and heaven, more prosperity, to better crops. For example,

May my rice plants and my barley, and my beans and my sesame, and my kidney-beans and my vetches, and my pearl millet and my proso millet, and my sorghum and my wild rice, and my wheat and my lentils, prosper by sacrifice (*Yajna*).

Yajnas, where milk products, fruits, flowers, cloth and money are offered, are called *homa* or *havanam*. A typical Hindu marriage involves a Yajna, where Agni is taken to be the witness of the marriage.

Methods

*A Yajna Vedi (square altar) with Samagri (offerings)
on left, and a Yajna in progress (right).*

The Vedic yajna ritual is performed in modern era in a square altar called *Vedi* (*Bedi* in Nepal), set in a *mandapa* or *mandala* or *kundam*, wherein wood is placed along with oily

seeds and other combustion aids. However, in ancient times, the square principle was incorporated into grids to build large complex shapes for community events. Thus a rectangle, trapezia, rhomboids or "large falcon bird" altars would be built from joining squares. The geometric ratios of these Vedi altar, with mathematical precision and geometric theorems, are described in Shulba Sutras, one of the precursors to the development of mathematics in ancient India. The offerings are called *Samagri* (or *Yajāka*, *Istam*). The proper methods for the rites are part of Yajurveda, but also found in Riddle Hymns (hymns of questions, followed by answers) in various Brahmanas. When multiple priests are involved, they take turns as in a dramatic play, where not only are praises to gods recited or sung, but the dialogues are part of a dramatic representation and discussion of spiritual themes.

The Vedic sacrifice (*yajna*) is presented as a kind of drama, with its actors, its dialogues, its portion to be set to music, its interludes, and its climaxes.

— Louis Renou, Vedic India

A miniature illustration of a falcon bird Athirathram yajna altar built using the square principle.

The Brahmodya Riddle hymns, for example, in Shatapatha Brahmana's chapter 13.2.6, is a *yajna* dialogue between a *Hotri* priest and a *Brahmin* priest, which would be played out during the yajna ritual before the attending audience.

Who is that is born again?
  It is the moon that is born again.
And what is the great vessel?
  The great vessel, doubtless, is this world.
Who was the smooth one?
  The smooth one, doubtless, was the beauty (Sri, Lakshmi).
What is the remedy for cold?
  The remedy for cold, doubtless, is fire.

— Shatapatha Brahmana, 13.2.6.10-18

Yajna during weddings

Agni and yajna play a central role in Hindu weddings. Various mutual promises between the bride and groom are made in front of the fire, and the marriage is completed by actual or symbolic walk around the fire. The wedding ritual of *Panigrahana*, for example, is the 'holding the hand' ritual as a symbol of their impending marital union, and the groom announcing his acceptance of responsibility to four deities: Bhaga signifying wealth, Aryama signifying heavens/milky way, Savita signifying radiance/new beginning, and Purandhi signifying wisdom. The groom faces west, while the bride sits in front of him with her face to the east, he holds her hand while the Rig vedic mantra is recited in the presence of fire.

A Vedic Yajna plays a central role in Hindu weddings.

The *Saptapadi* (Sanskrit for *seven steps/feet*), is the most important ritual in Hindu weddings, and represents the legal part of Hindu marriage. The couple getting married walk around the Holy Fire (*Agni*), and the yajna fire is considered a witness to the vows they make to each other. In some regions, a piece of clothing or sashes worn by the bride and groom are tied together for this ceremony. Each circuit around the fire is led by either the bride or the groom, varying by community and region. Usually, the bride leads the groom in the first circuit. The first six circuits are led by the bride, and the final one by the groom. With each circuit, the couple makes a specific vow to establish some aspect of a happy relationship and household for each other. The fire altar or the Yajna Kunda is square.

Types

Different types of yajna.

Kalpa Sutras lists the following yajna types:

- The Pakayajnas — They are the aṣṭaka, sthālipāka, parvana, srāvaṇi, āgrahayani, caitri and āsvīyuji. These yajnas involve consecrating cooked items.
- Soma Yajnas — Agnistoma, atyagnistoma, uktya, shodasi, vājapeya, atirātra and aptoryama are the Soma Yajnas.
- Havir Yajnas — They are the agniyādhāna, agni hotra, Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa, āgrayana, cāturmāsya, niruudha paśu bandha, sautrāmaṇi. These involve offering havis or oblations.
- The five panca mahā Yajñās, which are mentioned below.
- Vedavratas, which are four in number, done during Vedic education.
- The remaining sixteen Yajnas, which are one-time samskāras or "rituals with mantras", are Sanskara (rite of passage): garbhādhānā, pumsavana, sīmanta, jātakarma, nāmakaraṇa, annaprāśana, chudākarma/caula, niskramana, karnavedha, vidyaarambha, upanayana, keshanta, snātaka and vivāha, nisheka, antyeshti. These are specified by the gṛhya sūtrās.

The changing nature of a Vedic sacrifice
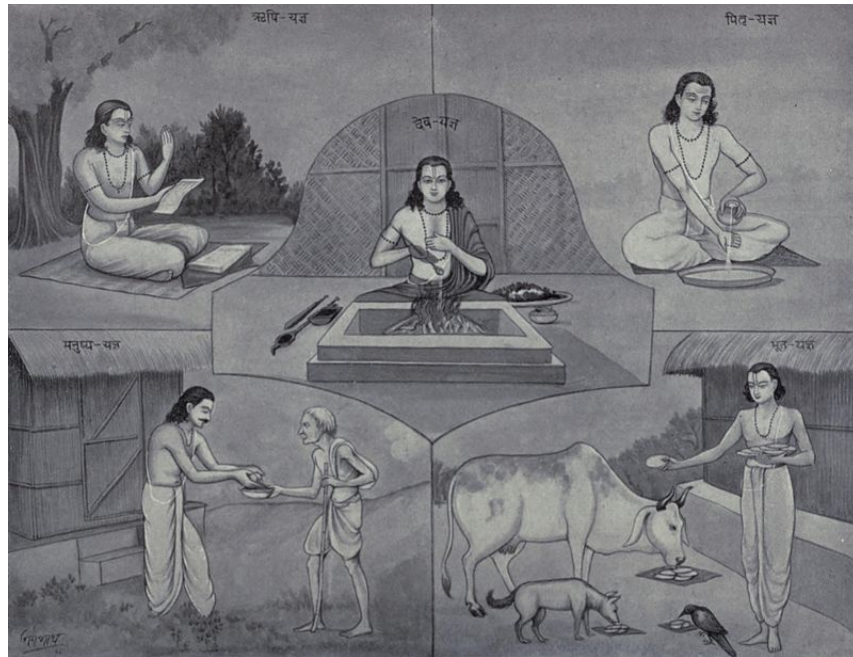
(clockwise from left top corner) Rishi, Pitri, Bhuta, Manushya and (centre) Deva yajnas.

The nature of vedic sacrifice and rituals evolved over time, with major changes during the 1st millennium BCE, changes that influenced concepts later adopted by other traditions such as Buddhism. Early vedic period sacrifices involved animal sacrifice, but the rituals were progressively reinterpreted over time, substituting the offerings and making it non-violent or symbolic, with the superiority of knowledge and celebration of sound of mantra replacing the physical offerings. Ultimately, the external rituals were reformulated and replaced with "internal oblations performed within the human body". These ideas of substitution, evolution from external actions (karma-kanda) to internal knowledge (jnana-kanda), were highlighted in many rituals-related sutras, as well as specialized texts such as the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (~800 BCE), Chandogya Upanishad, Kaushitaki Upanishad and Pranagnihotra Upanishad.

The Vedic text Satapatha Brahmana defines a sacrifice as an act of abandonment of something one holds of value, such as oblations offered to god and *Dakshina* (fees, gifts) offered during the yajna. For gifts and fees, the text recommends giving cows, clothing, horses or gold. The oblations recommended are cow milk, ghee (clarified butter), seeds, grains, flowers, water and food cakes (rice cake, for example). Similar recommendations are repeated in other texts, such as in the *Taittiriya Shakha* 2.10 of the Krishna Yajurveda).

Tadeusz Skorupski states that these sacrifices were a part of ritual way of life, and considered to have inherent efficacy, where doing these sacrifices yielded repayment and results without the priests or gods getting involved. These Vedic ideas, adds Skorupski, influenced "the formulation of Buddhist theory of generosity". Buddhist ideas went further, criticizing "the Brahmins for their decadence and failure to live in conformity with

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the Brahmanic legacy of the ancient Brahmins", who claimed the Vedic ancients "lived in self restraint, were ascetics, had no cattle, no gold, and no wealth". The Buddha sought return to more ancient values, states Tadeusz Skorupski, where the Vedic sages "had study as their grain and wealth, guarded the holy life as their treasure, praised morality, austerity and nonviolence; they performed sacrifices consisting of rice, barley and oil, but they did not kill the cows".

The five great Vedic sacrifices (*Mahasattra*)			
Name of sacrifice	What is sacrificed?	To whom?	Frequency
Bhuta-yajna	Food cakes	Sacrifice to living beings (animals, birds, etc.)	Daily
Manushya-yajna	Alms and water (service, charity)	Sacrifice to fellow human beings	Daily
Pitr-yajna	Libations and water	Sacrifice to fathers	Daily
Deva-yajna	Firewood	Sacrifice to gods	Daily
Brahma-yajna	Words, read the Vedas	Sacrifice to Brahman (ultimate reality)	When possible

Chapter 5
BRAHMIN DYNASTIES AND STATES

Brahmins claim to occupy the highest ritual position among the four varnas of Hinduism. Since the Late Vedic period the Brahmins, who were generally classified as priests, were sometimes also rulers, zamindars, and holders of other administrative posts.

List of Brahmin dynasties

Shown here is the Chandramahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The following is the list of Brahmin dynasties who ruled or were chiefs in the Indian subcontinent:

- The Shunga Empire of Magadha was established by Pushyamitra Shunga.
- The Kanva dynasty replaced the Shunga Empire in Magadha and ruled in the Eastern regions of India.
- Shalankayana dynasty of ancient India ruled a part of Coastal Andhra from 300 to 440 CE.
- Parivrajaka dynasty ruled parts of central India during the 5th and 6th centuries. The kings of this dynasty bore the title Maharaja, and probably ruled as feudatories of the Gupta Empire. The royal family came from a lineage of Brahmins of Bharadvaja Gotra.
- Kadamba dynasty (345 – 525 CE) was a dynasty that ruled northern Karnataka and the Konkan from Banavasi in present-day Uttara Kannada district.

- Pallava dynasty {c.285 -905 CE} was a dynasty of the Bharadvaja gotra that ruled Andhra (Krishna-Guntur) and North and Central Tamil Nadu.
- The Chalukyas of Badami were an indigenous Brahmin family with Kannada as their mother tongue.
- The Oinwar dynasty, based in Mithila were Maithil Brahmins.
- Vakataka dynasty was a dynasty from the Indian subcontinent that is believed to have extended from the southern edges of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the south as well as from the Arabian Sea in the west to the edges of Chhattisgarh in the east.
- Varman dynasty was an ancient dynasty in Assam, alongside Davaka. All the rulers of this dynasty were Kamrupi Brahmins.
- Brahmin dynasty was founded by Chach of Alor, later ruled by Chandar of Sindh and Raja Dahir.
- Bhurshut dynasty was a medieval Hindu dynasty spread across what is now Howrah and Hooghly districts in the Indian state of West Bengal;which was ruled by a royal Brahmin family.
- Kabul Shahi dynasty belonged to Bali clan of Mohyal Brahmin.

Princely states and jagirs

An old painting by Edwin Lord Weeks showing the
barge of the Maharaja of Benares (c. 1883).

Following is the list of those Brahmin States of the Indian Subcontinent:

- Aundh State was a princely state in the Deccan States Agency division of the Bombay Presidency. All the rulers of the state belonged to Deshastha Brahmin family and used the titles of Raja and *Pant Pratinidhi*.
- Bhor State was 9 gun Salute princely state;which was ruled by Deshastha Brahmin family and used the titles of Raja and *Pant Sachiv*
- Gaurihar State was a princely state which was ruled by Deshastha Brahmin family.The rulers bore the title *Sardar Sawai* and from 1859 the title 'Rao'.

- Jalaun State was a princely state ruled by a Deshastha Brahmin family. The rulers of Jalaun State bore the title 'Raja'.
- Jamkhandi State was a princely state whose rulers belonged to the Patwardhan clan, a Chitpavan Brahmin family and used the title of Raja.
- Ramdurg State rulers were Hindu and belonged to the Konkanasth Brahmin dynasty. They used the title of Raja.
- Miraj Junior and Miraj Senior rulers belonged to the Patwardhan clan of Chitpavans and used the title of Rao and Raja.
- Kurundvad Senior and Kurundvad Junior rulers belonged to the Patwardhan clan of Chitpavans family and used the title of Rao.
- Sangli State was 11 gun Salute princely state;which was ruled by Chitpavan Brahmin family. They used the titles Rao and Raja.
- Panth-Piploda Province was British India's province;which was ruled by a Deshastha Brahmin family.
- Chaube Jagirs were a group of five feudatory princely states of Central India during the period of the British Raj. which were ruled by different branches of Brahmin family. They were

    o Bhaisunda State - the rulers of Bhaisunda were titled 'Chaube' and from 1885, 'Rao Chaube'.
    o Kamta-Rajaula State - the rulers of Kamta-Rajaula were titled 'Rao'.
    o Pahra State - the rulers of Pahra state were titled 'Rao Chaube'
    o Paldeo State - the rulers bore the title 'Rao'.
    o Taraon State - the rulers bore the title 'Chaube

- Benares State was a 13 gun salute (15 gun salute local) state ruled by Brahmins. The state acceded to the Union of India in 1948, but even today the Kashi Naresh (the titular ruler) is deeply revered by the people of Varanasi.They used titles Raja and Maharaja.
- Arni State was a jagir in the erstwhile Madras Presidency;which was ruled by Deshastha Brahmins and used the titles of Rao and Raja. The town of Arni was the administrative headquarters.
- Yelandur estate was a jagir in the erstwhile Mysore State. It was ruled by Madhwa Brahmin family.The estate was established by Shri Krishnacharya Purnaiya;who was also the Dewan of Kingdom of Mysore.
- Baudh State was a princely state ruled by a Brahmin family who adopted as successor a nephew of the Raja of Keonjhar.
- Kuba State was a non-salute princely state on Saurashtra peninsula in Gujarat. All the rulers of the state belonged to Nagar Brahmins family.
- Vishalgad Jagir was a jagir of the Deccan States Agency during the British Raj

Brahmin zamindaris

This is a list of zamindaris controlled by members of the Brahmin caste.

The palace complex at Raj Darbhanga

List of Brahmin zamindar estates

- Rajshahi Raj was a large zamindari (feudatory kingdom) which occupied a vast position of Bengal.All the zamindars of the raj belonged to Varendra Brahmin family.
- Raj Darbhanga were a Maithil dynasty of Zamindars and the rulers of territories that are now part of the Mithila region of Bihar. Their seat was at the city of Darbhanga.All the zamindars of the Darbhanga belonged to Maithil Brahmin royal family They succeeded and replaced the Oinwar dynasty as rulers of the region.
- Banaili Estate rulers and zamindars were Maithil Brahmins.
- Bhawal Estate was a large zamindari estate in Bengal in modern-day Bangladesh.The holders of this estate were Srotriya Brahmin zamindars.
- Muktagacha Raj was a *zamindari* (feudatory kingdom) which was part of Bengal (present day West Bengal, India and Bangladesh).The Muktagacha royal family are Varendra Brahmins.
- Susanga Raj was a zamindari estate in Bengal.The holders of this estate were Varendra Brahmins.

Chapter 6
VEDIC PRIESTHOOD

Priests of the Vedic religion are officiants of the *yajna* service. As persons trained for the ritual and proficient in its practice, they were called ṛtvij ("regularly-sacrificing"). As members of a social class, they were generically known as vipra "sage" or kavi "seer". Specialization of roles attended the elaboration and development of the ritual corpus over time. Eventually a full complement of sixteen *ṛtvija*s became the custom for major ceremonies. The sixteen consisted of four chief priests and their assistants.

Chief priests

The older references uniformly indicate the *hotṛ* as the presiding priest, with perhaps only the *adhvaryu* as his assistant in the earliest times. The phrase "seven hotars" is found more than once in the Rgveda. Hymn 2.1.2 of Rigveda states it as follows,

तवाग्ने **होत्रं** तव **पोत्रमृत्वियं** तव **नेष्ट्रं** त्वमग्निद्दतायतः । तव **प्रशास्त्रं** त्वम**ध्वरीयसि** ब्रह्मा चासि गृह्पतिश्च नो दमे ॥२॥

Thine is the Herald's task and Cleanser's duly timed; Leader art thou, and Kindler for the pious man. Thou art Director, thou the ministering Priest: thou art the Brahman, Lord and Master in our home.

—Rigveda 2.1.2

The above hymn enumerate the priests as the *hotṛ, potṛ, neṣṭṛ, agnīdh, prashāstṛ* (meaning the *maitrāvaruna*) and *adhvaryu*.

- The **hotṛ** was the reciter of invocations and litanies. These could consist of single verses (*ṛca*), strophes (triples called *tṛca* or pairs called *pragātha*), or entire hymns (*sukta*), drawn from the *ṛgveda*. As each phase of the ritual required an invocation, the *hotṛ* had a leading or presiding role.
- The **adhvaryu** was in charge of the physical details of the sacrifice (in particular the *adhvara*, a term for the Somayajna). According to Monier-Williams, the *adhvaryu* "had to measure the ground, to build the altar, to prepare the sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring the animal and immolate it," among other duties. Each action was accompanied by supplicative or benedictive formulas (*yajus*), drawn from the *yajurveda*. Over time, the role of the *adhvaryu* grew in importance, and many verses of the *ṛgveda* were incorporated, either intact or adapted, into the texts of the *yajurveda*.
- The **udgātṛ** was a chanter of hymns set to melodies (*sāman*) drawn from the *sāmaveda*. This was a specialized role in the major soma sacrifices: a characteristic

function of the *udgātṛ* was to sing hymns in praise of the invigorating properties of *soma pavamāna*, the freshly pressed juice of the soma plant.

- The **brahman** was the reciter of hymns from the *atharvaveda* who was largely silent and observes the procedures and uses Atharvaveda mantras to 'heal' it when mistakes have been made.

The term Brahman in the above hymn 2.1.2 refers to deity Agni of hymn 2.1.1.

The rgvedic Brahmanas, Aitareya and Kausitaki, specify seven *hotraka*s to recite *shastra*s (litanies): *hotṛ, brāhmanācchamsin, maitrāvaruna, potṛ, neṣṭṛ, agnīdh* and *acchāvāka*. They also carry a legend to explain the origin of the offices of the *subrahmanya* and the *grāvastut*.

Purohita

The requirements of the fully developed ritual were rigorous enough that only professional priests could perform them adequately. Thus, whereas in the earliest times, the true sacrificer, or intended beneficiary of the rite, might have been a direct participant, in Vedic times he was only a sponsor, the *yajamāna*, with the *hotṛ* or *brahman* taking his stead in the ritual. In this seconding lay the origins of the growing importance of the **purohita** (literally, "one who is placed in front"), a term originally for a domestic chaplain, especially of a prince. It was not unusual for a *purohita* to be the *hotṛ* or *brahman* at a sacrifice for his master, besides conducting other more domestic (*gṛhya*) rituals for him also. In latter days, with the disappearance of Vedic ritual practice, *purohita* has become a generic term for "priest".

Assistants

In the systematic expositions of the *shrauta sutras*, which date to the fifth or sixth century BCE, the assistants are classified into four groups associated with each of the four chief priests, although the classifications are artificial and in some cases incorrect:

- With the *hotṛ*:
  - the **maitrāvaruna**
  - the **acchāvāka**
  - the **grāvastut** (praising the Soma stones)
- With the *udgātṛ*:
  - the **prastotṛ** (who chants the Prastâva)
  - the **pratihartṛ** ("averter")
  - the **subrahmanya**
- With the *adhvaryu*:
  - the **pratiprasthātṛ**
  - the **neṣṭṛ**
  - the **unnetṛ** (who pours the Soma juice into the receptacles)
- With the *brahman*:
  - the **brāhmanācchamsin**

- o the **agnīdh** (priest who kindles the sacred fire)
- o the **potṛ** ("purifier")

This last classification is incorrect, as the formal assistants of the *brahman* were actually assistants of the *hotṛ* and the *adhvaryu*.

Philological comparisons

Comparison with the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, a distinct religion with the same origins, shows the antiquity of terms for priests such as **atharwan* (Vedic *atharvan*; cognate to Avestan *āθrauuan / aθaurun*) and **zhautar* (Ved. *hotar*; Av. *zaotar*) "invoker, sacrificer". While **zhautar* is well understood, the original meaning of **atharwan* is unknown. The word *atharvan* appears in the Rig Veda (e.g., in RV 6.16.13 where Agni is said to have been churned by Atharvan from the mind of every poet). In the Younger Avesta, *āθrauuan / aθaurun* appears in a context that suggests "missionary," perhaps by metathesis from Indo-Iranian **arthavan* "possessing purpose." However, a recent theory indicates that Proto Indo-Iranian **atharwan* likely represents a substrate word from the unknown language of the BMAC civilization of Central Asia. It can be analyzed as BMAC **athar-* plus the Indo-Iranian possessive suffix **-wan*, in which case **atharwan* would be "one who possesses **athar*". Though the meaning of **athar* is unknown, Pinault speculates that it meant "superior force" and connects it to the Tocharian word for "hero". In the Upanishads, *atharvan* appears for example in *atharvāṅgiras*, a compound of *atharvan* and *angiras*, either two eponymous rishis or their family names.

In present-day Indian Zoroastrian (Parsi) tradition the word *athornan* is used to distinguish the priesthood from the laity (the *behdin*). These subdivisions (in the historical Indian context, *castes*), and the terms used to describe them, are relatively recent developments specific to Indian Zoroastrians and although the words themselves are old, the meaning that they came to have for the Parsis are influenced by their centuries-long coexistence with Hinduism. It appears then that the Indian Zoroastrian priests re-adopted the older *āθrauuan / aθaurun* (in preference to the traditional, and very well attested derivative *āsron*) for its similarity to Hinduism's *atharvan*, which the Parsi priests then additionally assumed was derived from Avestan *ātar* "fire". This folk-etymology, which may "have been prompted by what is probably a mistaken assumption of the importance of fire in the ancient Indo-Iranian religion" (Boyce, 1982:16).

There is no evidence to sustain the supposition that the division of priestly functions among the Hotar, the Udgatar and the Adhvaryu is comparable to the Celtic priesthood as reported by Strabo, with the Druids as high priests, the Bards doing the chanting and the Vates performing the actual sacrifice.

Chapter 7
ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF BRAHMINS

This is a list of people who belong to the Brahmin caste.

Historical figures

Peshwas (Prime Ministers) and Senapatis (Commander-in-Chiefs) of Maratha Empire

- Moropant Pingle -was the Peshwe in Shivaji Maharaj's Asthapradhan mandal

- Bapuji Mudgal Deshpande- Military officer in Shivaji Raje's Army

- Parshuram Tryambak-was the Pradhan and (*Sardar*) of the Maratha Empire. He served as *Pratinidhi* (Chief Delegate) during Chhatrapati Rajaram.He was also the founder of the princely states of Vishalgad and Aundh in Maharashtra.

- Balaji Vishwanath - was the 1st hereditary Peshwa of the great Maratha empire during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu maharaj.

- Baji Rao I - was the 2nd hereditary Peshwa of the great Maratha empire during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu maharaj . Bajirao was a powerful warrior;who fought more than 41 battles, not losing even one of them.

- Chimaji Appa - was an able military commander who liberated the western coast of India from Portuguese rule.

- Nanasaheb Peshwa - was the 3rd hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

- Sadashiv Rao Bhau - was the **Sardar Senapati** (Commander-in-Chief) of the Maratha army at the third battle of Panipat.

- Madhavrao I - was the 4th hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

- Narayanrao Peshwa - was the 5th hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

- Raghunathrao - was the 6th hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

- Madhavrao II - was the 7th hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

- Baji Rao II - was the 8th hereditary Peshwa (prime minister) of the Maratha Empire.

Statue of 1st Peshwa from Bhatt family Balaji Vishwanath

An equestrian statue of Peshwa Bajirao I outside the Shaniwar Wada (Shaniwar Palace) in Pune

Statue of Sardar Senapati Chimaji Appa

Actors

- Vasundhara Das
- Gemini Ganesan
- Hema Malini
- Radhika Pandit
- Manoj Bajpayee

India independence activists

- Mangal Pandey, associated with the 1857 rebellion
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale, political guru of Mahatma Gandhi
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a member of the Indian National Congress
- C. Rajagopalachari, the last Governor-General of India; former Chief Minister of Madras State

Intellectuals

- Shakuntala Devi

Military

- Param Veer Chakra: Somnath Sharma- First recipient of India's highest gallantry award

Musicians

- Thyagaraja, composer
- Bhimsen Joshi, singer
- Bharathwaj, composer
- Shankar Mahadevan, singer

Politicians

MPs and MLAs

- Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya- engineer, Diwan of Mysore
- Pramod Mahajan, minister in the government of Vajpayee

Chief Ministers

Photo	Name	Born	Death	Brahmin Sub-Caste	Notes
	Manohar Joshi	2 December 1937			Chief Minister of Maharashtra (1995–99), Speaker of Loksabha (2002–04)
	Tanguturi Prakasam	23 August 1872	20 May 1957	Telugu Brahmin	Chief Minister of Madras Presidency (1946–47), Chief Minister of Andhra state (1953–54)
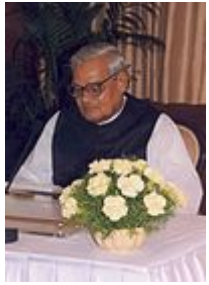
Photo	Name	Born	Death	Brahmin Sub-Cast	In Office
	E. M. S. Namboodiripad	13 June 1909	19 March 1998	Nambudiri Brahmin	Chief Minister of Kerala (1957–59 & 1967–69)
	Jayalalithaa Jayaraman	24 February 1948	5 December 2016	Iyengar	Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu (1991–96, May 2001-Sept 2001, 2002–06, 2011–16)
	Mamata Banerjee	5 January 1955		Bengali Brahmin	Chief Minister of West Bengal (2011-present)
	Vijay Bahuguna	28 February 1947			Chief Minister of Uttarakhand (2012-14)
	Govind Ballabh Pant	10 September 1887	7 March 1961		Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1950-54)

Presidents of India

Photo	Name	Born	Death	Brahmin Sub-Cast	In Office
	Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan	5 September 1888	17 April 1975	Telugu Brahmin	Second President (13 May 1962 – 13 May 1967)

	Shankar Dayal Sharma	19 August 1918	26 December 1999	Gaur Brahmin	Ninth President (25 June 1992 – 25 July 1997)

Prime Ministers of India

Photo	Name	Born	Death	Brahmin Sub-Cast	In Office
	Jawaharlal Nehru	14 November 1889	27 May 1964	Kashmiri Pandit	First PM (15 August 1947 – 27 May 1964)
	Morarji Desai	29 February 1896	10 April 1995		Fourth PM (24 March 1977 – 28 July 1979)
	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	25 December 1924		Kanyakubja Brahmin	10th PM (16 May 1996 – 1 June 1996 and 19 March 1998 – 22 May 2004)

Social service

- Bharat Ratna: Vinoba Bhave, social service (Bhudan Movement)

Spiritual people

- Dayanand Saraswati
- Swaminarayan
- Tulsidas
- Gopalanand Swami
- Akhandanand
- Eknath, according to legend

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- Dayananda Saraswati
- Madhvacharya
- Lokenath Brahmachari
- Vasudevanand Saraswati
- Brahmananda Saraswati
- Hariharananda Giri
- Gnanananda Giri
- Swami Lakshmanananda
- Lahiri Mahasaya
- Raghavendra Swami
- Ramakrishna
- Ramana Maharshi
- Ram Mohan Roy, co-founder of the Brahmo Samaj movement in 1828
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a social reformer who promoted widow remarriage
- Swami Rama
- Samarth Ramdas
- Vallabha Acharya
- Upasni Maharaj
- Ramprasad Sen

Sports

- Murali Kartik

Writers and poets

- Chanakya, managed the first Maurya emperor Chandragupta's rise to power; author of *Arthashastra*
- Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham, playwright
- D. R. Bendre
- Masti Venkatesha Iyengar
- Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature

Chapter 8
PARA BRAHMAN

Para Brahman is the "Highest Brahman" that which is beyond all descriptions and conceptualisations. In Advaita Vedanta *Nirguna Brahman* (Brahman without qualities) is Para Brahman. In Vaishnavism and Shaivism Vishnu and Shiva, respectively, are Para Brahman.

Para is a Sanskrit word that means "higher" in some contexts, and "highest or supreme" in others.

Brahman connotes the Highest Universal Principle in Hinduism, the Ultimate Reality in the universe. In major schools of Hindu philosophy it is the material, efficient, formal and final cause of all that exists. Brahman is a key concept found in Vedas, and extensively discussed in the early Upanishads.

Para Brahman means the "Highest Brahman". It is found in early Advaita Vedanta literature.

Advaita Vedanta - Nirguna Brahman

Nirguna Brahman, Brahman without form or qualities, is Para Brahman, the highest Brahman. According to Adi Shankara, Nirguna Brahman is Para Brahman, and is a state of complete knowledge of self as being identical with the transcendental Brahman, a state of mental-spiritual enlightenment (Jnana yoga). It contrasts with Saguna Brahman which is a state of loving awareness (Bhakti yoga). Advaita Vedanta non-dualistically holds that Brahman is divine, the Divine is Brahman, and this is identical to that which is Atman (one's soul, innermost self) and nirguna (attribute-less), infinite, love, truth, knowledge, "being-consciousness-bliss". According to Eliot Deutsch, *Nirguna Brahman* is a "state of being" in which all dualistic distinctions between one's own soul and Brahman are obliterated and are overcome. In contrast, *Saguna Brahman* is where the distinctions are harmonized after duality between one's own soul and Brahman has been accepted.

Advaita describes the features of a nondualistic experience, in which a subjective experience also becomes an "object" of knowledge and a phenomenal reality. The Absolute Truth is both subject and object, so there is no qualitative difference:

- "Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān." (Bhagavata Purana 1.2.11)
- "Whoever realizes the Supreme Brahma attains to supreme felicity. That Supreme Brahma is Eternal Truth (satyam), Omniscient (jnanam), Infinite (anantam)." (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1.1)

The Upanishads state that the Supreme Brahma is Eternal, Conscious, and Blissful sat-chit-ânanda. The realisation of this truth is the same as *being* this truth:

- "The One is Bliss. Whoever perceives the Blissful One, the reservoir of pleasure, becomes blissful forever." (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.7.1-2) "Verily know the Supreme One to be Bliss." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.9.28)

Vaishnavism - Narayana Vishnu, Krishna

In Vaishnavism it is Narayana, Vishnu or Krishna who is para-Brahman or the Supreme personality of Godhead. A wide range of Vedic scriptures is quoted by Vaishnavas as pointing to Narayana as the Supreme Being:

- "He is the prime eternal among all eternals. He is the supreme living entity of all living entities, and He alone is maintaining all life." (Katha Upanishad 2.2.13)
- "All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. All of them appear on planets whenever there is a disturbance created by the atheists. The Lord incarnates to protect the theists." (Bhagavata Purana 1.3.28)
- "Lord Krishna is the supreme absolute controller, whose form comprises immortality, omniscience, and bliss. He is without beginning, the origin of all, the cause of all causes and the source of the Vedas." (Brahma Samhita 5.1)
- "There is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." (Bhagavad Gita 7.7)[
- "Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahma, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original Person, the unborn, the greatest." (Bhagavad Gita 10.12)
- Krishna says in Bhagavad-Gita: "And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness, and which is immortal, imperishable and eternal." (Bg 14.27)
- "Narayana is, Para Jyoti, the greatest light, Para Atma, the super soul (Paramatman), Para Tatvam, the best of essences, Para Dhyata, the greatest meditator, Para Dhyanam, the best of meditations." (Narayana verse 4)

Shiva and Shakti philosophy

In Shaivism, Shiva is Para Brahman, Parameshvara , Maha Kameswara, Maheshwara (Param + Isha + Vara, the Transcendent Lord), and Satchitananda. Shiva itself is changeless, but his female consort Shakti is that Power of the formless and static Param Brahma that is necessary for creation. Shakti is the first desire (Kama) of Shiva, the Primordial Will to be that pervades all manifestation. The cosmos enables the Supreme Self to know, see, and live the Supreme Consciousness through its own self-willed limitation. The penultimate purpose of the cosmos is mergence of the created drop with the ocean that is its Mother.

Chapter 9
BRAHMANA

The Brahmanas are a collection of ancient Indian texts with commentaries on the hymns of the four Vedas. They are a layer or category of Vedic Sanskrit texts embedded within each Veda, and form a part of the Hindu *śruti* literature. They are primarily a digest incorporating myths, legends, the explanation of Vedic rituals and in some cases speculations about natural phenomenon or philosophy.

The *Brahmanas* are particularly noted for their instructions on the proper performance of rituals, as well as explain the original symbolic meanings- translated to words and ritual actions in the main text. *Brahmanas* lack a homogeneous structure across the different Vedas, with some containing chapters that constitute Aranyakas or Upanishads in their own right.

Each Vedic *shakha* (school) has its own *Brahmana*. Numerous *Brahmana* texts existed in ancient India, many of which have been lost. A total of 19 Brahmanas are extant at least in their entirety.

The dating of the final codification of the *Brahmanas* and associated Vedic texts is controversial, which occurred after centuries of verbal transmission. The oldest is dated to about 900 BCE, while the youngest Brahmanas (such as the Shatapatha Brahmana), were complete by about 700 BCE. According to Jan Gonda, the final codification of the four Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and early Upanishads took place in pre-Buddhist times (ca. 600 BCE).

Discussion

The Brahmana are a layer of texts in Vedic Sanskrit embedded within each Veda, and form a part of the *śruti* literature of Hinduism. They are primarily a digest incorporating mythology and Vedic rituals and in some cases speculations about natural phenomenon or philosophy.

Mythology and rituals

The *Brahmanas* layer of Vedic literature contain the exposition of the Vedic rites and rituals. For example, the first chapter of the Chandogya Brahmana, one of the oldest Brahmanas, includes eight *suktas* (hymns) for the ceremony of marriage and rituals at the birth of a child. The first hymn is a recitation that accompanies offering a Yajna oblation to deity Agni (fire) on the occasion of a marriage, and the hymn prays for prosperity of the couple getting married. The second hymn wishes for their long life, kind relatives, and a numerous progeny. The third hymn is a mutual marriage pledge, between the bride and groom, by which the two bind themselves to each other, as follows (excerpt),

यदेतद्धृदयं तव तदस्तु हृदयं मम ।
यदिदं हृदयं मम तदस्तु हृदयं तव ॥

That heart of thine shall be mine,
and this heart of mine shall be thine.

—*Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa, Chaper 1, Translated by Max Muller*

The next two hymns of the first chapter of the Chandogya Brahmana invoke deities *Agni*, *Vayu*, *Kandramas*, and *Surya* to bless the couple and ensure healthful progeny. The sixth through last hymn of the first chapter in Chandogya Brahmana are not marriage-related, but related to hymns that go with ritual celebrations on the birth of a child, and wishes for health, wealth and prosperity with a profusion of milch-cows and artha.

The Brahmanas are particularly noted for their instructions on the proper performance of rituals, as well as explain the symbolic importance of sacred words and ritual actions in the main text. These instructions insist on exact pronunciation (accent), *chhandas* (छन्द:, meters), precise pitch, with coordinated movement of hand and fingers – that is, perfect delivery. Satapatha Brahamana, for example, states that verbal perfection made a mantra infallible, while one mistake made it powerless. Scholars suggest that this orthological perfection preserved Vedas in an age when writing technology was not in vogue, and the voluminous collection of Vedic knowledge were taught to and memorized by dedicated students through Svādhyāya, then remembered and verbally transmitted from one generation to the next.

Speculations about nature and philosophy

The Brahmanas are a complex layer of texts within the Vedas. Some embed speculations about natural phenomenon such as sunrise and sunset. For example, section 3.44 of the Aitareya Brahmana speculates whether sun really rises or sets.

The sun does never rise nor set. When people think the sun is setting it is not so. For after having arrived at the end of the day, it makes itself produce two opposite effects, making night to what is below and day to what is on the other side.

When they believe it rises in the morning this supposed rising is thus to be accounted for. Having reached the end of the night, it makes itself produce two opposite effects, making day to what is below and night to what is on the other side.

—*Aitareya Brahmana 3.44, Translator: J.S. Speyer*

The Panchavimsha Brahmana speculates on rivers starting in mountains, fed by snow and rain, flowing over the ground and underground, both emptying into the sea. These speculations, however, are in the context of rituals. Each Vedic *shakha* (school) has its own Brahmana, many of which have been lost. A total of 19 Brahmanas are extant at least in

their entirety: two associated with the Rigveda, six with the Yajurveda, ten with the Samaveda and one with the Atharvaveda. Additionally, there are a handful of fragmentarily preserved texts. They vary greatly in length; the edition of the Shatapatha Brahmana fills five volumes of the Sacred Books of the East. The Brahmanas were seminal in the development of later Indian thought and scholarship, including Hindu philosophy, predecessors of Vedanta, law, astronomy, geometry, linguistics (Pāṇini), the concept of Karma, or the stages in life such as brahmacarya, grihastha, vanaprastha and eventually, sannyasa.

Brahmanas also lack a homogeneous structure across the different Vedas, with some containing sections that are Aranyakas or Upanishads in their own right. The Shathapatha Brahmana discusses ontological and soteriological questions.

Language and chronology

The language of the Brahmanas is a separate stage of Vedic Sanskrit, younger than the text of the samhitas (the *mantra* texts of the Vedas proper), ca. 1000 BCE, but for the most part are older than the text of the Sutras. The dating of the Brahmanas is controversial, with oldest being dated to about 900 BCE, while the youngest Brahmanas (such as the Shatapatha Brahmana), were complete by about 700 BCE.

According to Jan Gonda, the final codification of the four Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and early Upanishads took place in pre-Buddhist times (ca. 600 BCE). Erdosy suggests that the later Brahmanas were composed during a period of urbanisation and considerable social change. This period also saw significant developments in mathematics, geometry, biology and grammar.

List of Brahmanas

Each Brahmana is associated with one of the four Vedas, and within the tradition of that Veda with a particular shakha or school:

Rigveda

- Shakala shakha
    - Aitareya Brahmana, rarely also known as Ashvalayana Brahmana (AB). It consists of 40 *adhyayas* (lessons, chapters), dealing with Soma sacrifice, and in particular the fire sacrifice ritual. Parts of the Aitareya Brahmana reads like an *Aranyaka*.
- Bashkala or Iksvakus shakha (unclear)
    - Kaushitaki Brahmana (also called Śāṅkhāyana Brahmana) (KB, ŚānkhB). It consistes of 30 chapters, the first six of which are dedicated to food sacrifice, and the remaining to Soma sacrifice in a manner matching the Aitareya Brahmana.

Keith has published his translation of Aitereya Brahmana, and the Kaushitaki Brahmana.

Samaveda

- Kauthuma and Ranayaniya shakhas
  - Tandya Mahabrahmana or Panchavimsha Brahmana (Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa) (PB) is the principal Brahmana of both the Kauthuma and Ranayaniya shakhas. This is one of the oldest Brahmanas and includes twenty five books. It is notable for its important ancient legends and *Vratyastomas*.
  - Sadvimsha Brahmana (Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa) (ṢadvB) is considered as an appendix to the Panchavimsha Brahmana and its twenty-sixth *prapathaka*.
  - Samavidhana Brahmana, and the following Samaveda "Brahmanas" are in Sutra style; it comprises 3 prapathakas.
  - Arsheya Brahmana is an index to the hymns of Samaveda.
  - Devatadhyaya or Daivata Brahmana comprises 3 khandas, having 26, 11 and 25 kandikas respectively.
  - Chandogya Brahmana is divided into ten *prapathaka*s (chapters). Its first two *prapathaka*s (chapters) form the Mantra Brahmana (MB) and each of them is divided into eight *khanda*s (sections). Prapathakas 3–10 form the Chandogya Upanishad.
  - Samhitopanishad Brahmana has a single *prapathaka* (chapter) divided into five *khanda*s (sections).
  - Vamsa Brahmana consists of one short chapter, detailing successions of teachers and disciples.
- Jaiminiya shakha
  - Jaiminiya Brahmana (JB) is the principal Brahmana of the Jaiminiya shakha, divided into three *kanda*s (sections). One of the oldest Brahmanas, older than Tandya Mahabrahmana, but only fragments of manuscript have survived.
  - Jaiminiya Arsheya Brahmana is also an index to the hymns of Samaveda, belonging to the Jaiminiya shakha.
  - Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana (JUB) also known as Talavakara Upanishad Brahmana, is to some extent parallel to the Chandogya Upanisad, but older.

Yajurveda

Krishna Yajurveda

- In the Krishna Yajurveda, Brahmana style texts are integrated in the Samhitas; they are older than the Brahmanas proper.
  - Maitrayani Samhita (MS) and an Aranyaka (= accented Maitrayaniya Upanishad)

- o (Caraka) Katha Samhita (KS); the Katha school has an additional fragmentary Brahmana (KathB) and Aranyaka (KathA)
- o Kapisthalakatha Samhita (KpS), and a few small fragments of its Brahmana
- o Taittiriya Samhita (TS). In addition to the Brahmana style portions of the Samhita, the Taittiriya school has an additional Taittiriya Brahmana (TB) and Aranyaka (TA) as well as the late Vedic Vadhula Anvakhyana (Br.). It includes a description of symbolic sacrifices, where meditation substitutes an actual sacrifice.

Shukla Yajurveda

- Madhyandina Shakha
  - o Shatapatha Brahmana, Madhyandina recension (SBM)
- Kanva Shakha
  - o Shatapatha Brahmana, Kanva recension (SBK)

The Satapatha Brahmana consists of a hundred *adhyayas* (chapters), and is the most cited and famous among the Brahmanas canon of texts. Much of the text is commentaries on Vedic rituals, such as the preparation of the fire altar. It also includes Upanayana, a ceremony that marked the start of Brahmacharya (student) stage of life, as well as the Vedic era recitation practice of Svadhyaya. The text describes procedures for other important Hindu rituals such as a funeral ceremony. The old and famous Brhadaranyaka Upanishad form the closing chapters of Śatapatha Brahmana.

Atharvaveda

- Shaunaka and Paippalada Shakhas
  - o The very late Gopatha Brahmana probably was the Aranyaka of the Paippaladins whose Brahmana is lost.

Chapter 10
ĀTMAN

Ātman is a Sanskrit word that means inner self or soul. In Hindu philosophy, especially in the Vedanta school of Hinduism, Ātman is the first principle, the *true* self of an individual beyond identification with phenomena, the essence of an individual. In order to attain liberation (moksha), a human being must acquire self-knowledge (atma jnana), which is to realize that one's true self (Ātman) is identical with the transcendent self Brahman.

The six orthodox schools of Hinduism believe that there is Ātman (soul, self) in every being, a major point of difference with Buddhism, which does not believe that there is either soul or self.

Etymology and meaning

"Ātman" (Atma, आत्मा, आत्मन्) is a Sanskrit word which means "essence, breath, soul." It is related to the PIE *etmen (a root meaning "breath"; cognates: Dutch *adem*, Old High German *atum* "breath," Modern German *atmen* "to breathe" and *Atem* "respiration, breath", Old English *eþian*).

Ātman, sometimes spelled without a diacritic as *atman* in scholarly literature, means "real self" of the individual, "innermost essence", and soul. Atman, in Hinduism, is considered as eternal, imperishable, beyond time, states Roshen Dalal, "not the same as body or mind or consciousness, but is something beyond which permeates all these". Atman is a metaphysical and spiritual concept for the Hindus, often discussed in their scriptures with the concept of Brahman.

Development of the concept

Vedas

The earliest use of word "Ātman" in Indian texts is found in the Rig Veda (RV X.97.11). Yāska, the ancient Indian grammarian, commenting on this Rigvedic verse, accepts the following meanings of Ātman: the pervading principle, the organism in which other elements are united and the ultimate sentient principle.

Other hymns of Rig Veda where the word Ātman appears include I.115.1, VII.87.2, VII.101.6, VIII.3.24, IX.2.10, IX.6.8, and X.168.4.

Upanishads

Ātman is a central idea in all of the Upanishads, and "know your Ātman" is their thematic focus. These texts state that the core of every person's self is not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego, but "Ātman", which means "soul" or "self". Atman is the spiritual essence in

all creatures, their real innermost essential being. It is eternal, it is the essence, it is ageless. Atman is that which one is at the deepest level of one's existence.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* describes Atman as that in which everything exists, which is of the highest value, which permeates everything, which is the essence of all, bliss and beyond description. In hymn 4.4.5, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad describes Atman as Brahman (universal absolute; supreme soul), and associates it with everything one is, everything one can be, one's free will, one's desire, what one does, what one doesn't do, the good in oneself, the bad in oneself.

That *Atman* (self, soul) is indeed Brahman. It [Ātman] is also identified with the intellect, the Manas (mind), and the vital breath, with the eyes and ears, with earth, water, air, and ākāśa (sky), with fire and with what is other than fire, with desire and the absence of desire, with anger and the absence of anger, with righteousness and unrighteousness, with everything — it is identified, as is well known, with this (what is perceived) and with that (what is inferred). As it [Ātman, self, soul] does and acts, so it becomes: by doing good it becomes good, and by doing evil it becomes evil. It becomes virtuous through good acts, and vicious through evil acts. Others, however, say, "The self is identified with desire alone. What it desires, so it resolves; what it resolves, so is its deed; and what deed it does, so it reaps.

— *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5, 9th century BCE*

This theme of Ātman, that is soul and self of oneself, every person, every being is the same as Brahman, is extensively repeated in Brihadāranyaka Upanishad. The Upanishad asserts that this knowledge of "I am Brahman", and that there is no difference between "I" and "you", or "I" and "him" is a source of liberation, and not even gods can prevail over such a liberated man. For example, in hymn 1.4.10, Brahman was this before; therefore it knew even the Ātma (soul, himself). I am Brahman, therefore it became all. And whoever among the gods had this enlightenment, also became That. It is the same with the sages, the same with men. Whoever knows the self as "I am Brahman," becomes all this universe. Even the gods cannot prevail against him, for he becomes their Ātma. Now, if a man worships another god, thinking: "He is one and I am another," he does not know. He is like an animal to the gods. As many animals serve a man, so does each man serve the gods. Even if one animal is taken away, it causes anguish; how much more so when many are taken away? Therefore it is not pleasing to the gods that men should know this.

— *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10*

Katha Upanishad

Along with the *Brihadāranyaka*, all the earliest and middle Upanishads discuss Ātman as they build their theories to answer how man can achieve liberation, freedom and bliss. The *Katha Upanishad*, for example, explains Atman as immanent and transcendent innermost

essence of each human being and living creature, that this is one, even though the external forms of living creatures manifest in different forms, for example, in hymns 2.2.9 and others, its states

As the one fire, after it has entered the world, though one, takes different forms according to whatever it burns,

so does the internal Ātman of all living beings, though one, takes a form according to whatever He enters and is outside all forms.

—Katha Upanishad, 2.2.9

Katha Upanishad, in Book 1, hymns 3.3 to 3.4, describes the widely cited analogy of chariot for the relation of "Soul, Self" to body, mind and senses. Stephen Kaplan translates these hymns as, "Know the Self as the rider in a chariot, and the body as simply the chariot. Know the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins. The senses, they say are the horses, and sense objects are the paths around them". The Katha Upanishad then declares that "when the Self [Ātman] understands this and is unified, integrated with body, senses and mind, is virtuous, mindful and pure, he reaches bliss, freedom and liberation".

Chandogya Upanishad

The *Chandogya Upanishad* explains Ātman as that which appears to be separate between two living beings but isn't, that essence and innermost, true, radiant self of all individuals which connects and unifies all. In hymn 4.10.1 through 4.10.3, for example, it explains it with example of rivers, some of which flow to the east and some to the west, but ultimately all merge into the ocean and become one. In the same way, the individual souls are pure being, states the *Chandogya Upanishad*; an individual soul is pure truth, and an individual soul is a manifestation of the ocean of one universal soul.

Other Upanishads

Ātman is a key topic of the Upanishads, but they express two distinct, somewhat divergent themes. Some teach that Brahman (highest reality; universal principle; being-consciousness-bliss) is identical with Ātman, while others teach that Ātman is part of Brahman but not identical to it. This ancient debate flowered into various dual and non-dual theories in Hinduism.

The Brahmasutra by Badarayana (~100 BCE) synthesized and unified these somewhat conflicting theories, stating that Atman and Brahman are different in some respects, particularly during the state of ignorance, but at the deepest level and in the state of self-realization, Atman and Brahman are identical, non-different (advaita). This synthesis overcame the dualistic tradition of Samkhya-Yoga schools and realism-driven traditions of Nyaya-Vaiseshika schools, enabling it to become the foundation of Vedanta as Hinduism's enduring spiritual tradition.

Schools of thought

All major orthodox schools of Hinduism –Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta– accept the foundational premise of the Vedas and Upanishads that "Ātman exists". Jainism too accepts this premise, though it has its own idea of what that means. In contrast, both Buddhism and the Charvakas deny that there is anything called "Ātman/soul/self".

Knowing Ātman, also referred to as self-knowledge, is one of the defining themes of all major orthodox schools of Hinduism, but they diverge on how. In Hinduism, self-knowledge is the knowledge and understanding of Atman, what it is, and what it is not. Hinduism considers Atman as distinct from the ever-evolving individual personality characterized with *Ahamkara* (ego, non-spiritual psychological I-ness Me-ness), habits, prejudices, desires, impulses, delusions, fads, behaviors, pleasures, sufferings and fears. Human personality and *Ahamkara* shift, evolve or change with time, state the schools of Hinduism; while, Atman doesn't. Atman, state these schools, is the unchanging, eternal, innermost radiant self that is unaffected by personality, unaffected by ego of oneself, unaffected by ego of others; Atman is that which is ever-free, never-bound, one that seeks, realizes and is the realized purpose, meaning, liberation in life. Puchalski states, "the ultimate goal of Hindu religious life is to transcend individually, to realize one's own true nature", the inner essence of oneself, which is divine and pure.

Vedanta school

Philosophical schools such as Advaita (non-dualism) see the "spirit/soul/self" within each living entity as being fully identical with Brahman– the universal soul. The Advaita school believes that there is one soul that connects and exists in all living beings, regardless of their shapes or forms, and there is no distinction, no superior, no inferior, no separate devotee soul (Atman), no separate god soul (Brahman). The oneness unifies all beings, there is divine in every being, and that all existence is a single reality, state the Advaita Vedanta Hindus. In contrast, devotional sub-schools of Vedanta such as Dvaita (dualism) differentiate between the individual Atma in living beings, and the supreme Atma (Paramatma) as being separate.

Advaita Vedanta philosophy considers Atman as self-existent awareness, limitless and non-dual. To Advaitins, the Atman is the Brahman, the Brahman is the Atman, each self is non-different from the infinite. Atman is the universal principle, one eternal undifferentiated self-luminous consciousness, the truth asserts Advaita Hinduism. Human beings, in a state of unawareness of this universal self, see their "I-ness" as different than the being in others, then act out of impulse, fears, cravings, malice, division, confusion, anxiety, passions, and a sense of distinctiveness. To Advaitins, Atman-knowledge is the state of full awareness, liberation, and freedom that overcomes dualities at all levels, realizing the divine within oneself, the divine in others, and in all living beings; the non-dual oneness, that God is in everything, and everything is God. This identification of individual living beings/souls, or jiva-atmas, with the 'one Atman' is the non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta position.

The monist, non-dual conception of existence in Advaita Vedanta is not accepted by the dualistic/theistic Dvaita Vedanta. Dvaita Vedanta calls the Atman of a supreme being as *"Paramatman"*, and holds it to be different from individual Atman. Dvaita scholars assert that God is the ultimate, complete, perfect, but distinct soul, one that is separate from incomplete, imperfect *jivas* (individual souls). The Advaita sub-school believes that self-knowledge leads to liberation in this life, while the Dvaita sub-school believes that liberation is only possible in after-life as communion with God, and only through the grace of God (if not, then one's Atman is reborn). God created individual souls, state Dvaita Vedantins, but the individual soul never was and never will become one with God; the best it can do is to experience bliss by getting infinitely close to God. The Dvaita school, therefore, in contrast to monistic position of Advaita, advocates a version of monotheism wherein Brahman is made synonymous with Vishnu (or Narayana), distinct from numerous individual Atmans. Dvaita school, states Graham Oppy, is not strict monotheism, as it does not deny existence of other gods and their respective Atman.

The Vedanta sub-schools of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta and Achintya Bheda Abheda combine ideas about Ātman from dual and non-dual schools.

Mimamsa school

Ātman, in the ritualism-based Mīmāṃsā school of Hinduism, is an eternal, omnipresent, inherently active essence that is identified as I-consciousness. Unlike all other schools of Hinduism, Mimamsaka scholars considered ego and Atman as the same. Within Mimamsa school, there was divergence of beliefs. Kumārila, for example, believed that Atman is the object of I-consciousness, whereas Prabhakara believed that Atman is the subject of I-consciousness. Mimamsaka Hindus believed that what matters is virtuous actions and rituals completed with perfection, and it is this that creates merit and imprints knowledge on Atman, whether one is aware or not aware of Atman. Their foremost emphasis was formulation and understanding of laws/duties/virtuous life (dharma) and consequent perfect execution of *kriyas* (actions). The Upanishadic discussion of Atman, to them, was of secondary importance. While other schools disagreed and discarded the Atma theory of Mimamsa, they incorporated Mimamsa theories on ethics, self-discipline, action, and dharma as necessary in one's journey toward knowing one's Atman.

Vaiśeṣika school

The Vaisheshika school of Hinduism, using its non-theistic theories of atomistic naturalism, posits that Ātman is one of the four eternal non-physical substances without attributes, the other three being *kala* (time), *dik* (space) and *manas* (mind). Time and space, stated Vaiśeṣika scholars, are *eka* (one), *nitya* (eternal) and *vibhu* (all pervading). Time and space are indivisible reality, but human mind prefers to divide them to comprehend past, present, future, relative place of other substances and beings, direction and its own coordinates in the universe. In contrast to these characteristics of time and space, Vaiśeṣika scholars considered Ātman to be many, eternal, independent and spiritual substances that cannot be reduced or inferred from other three non-physical and

five physical *dravya* (substances). Mind and sensory organs are instruments, while consciousness is the domain of "atman, soul, self".

The knowledge of Ātman, to Vaiśeṣika Hindus, is another knowledge without any "bliss" or "consciousness" moksha state that Vedanta and Yoga school describe.

Nyaya school

Early atheistic Nyaya scholars, and later theistic Nyaya scholars, both made substantial contributions to the systematic study of Ātman. They posited that even though "self/soul" is intimately related to the knower, it can still be the subject of knowledge. John Plott states that the Nyaya scholars developed a theory of negation that far exceeds Hegel's theory of negation, while their epistemological theories refined to "know the knower" at least equals Aristotle's sophistication. Nyaya methodology influenced all major schools of Hinduism.

The Nyaya scholars defined Ātman as an imperceptible substance that is the substrate of human consciousness, manifesting itself with or without qualities such as desires, feelings, perception, knowledge, understanding, errors, insights, sufferings, bliss, and others. Nyaya school not only developed its theory of Atman, it contributed to Hindu philosophy in a number of ways. To the Hindu theory of Ātman, the contributions of Nyaya scholars were twofold. One, they went beyond holding it as "self evident" and offered rational proofs, consistent with their epistemology, in their debates with Buddhists, that "Atman exists". Second, they developed theories on what "Atman is and is not". As proofs for the proposition "self/soul exists", for example, Nyaya scholars argued that personal recollections and memories of the form "I did this so many years ago" implicitly presume that there is a self that is substantial, continuing, unchanged, and existent.

Nyayasutra, a 2nd-century CE foundational text of Nyaya school of Hinduism, states that the soul is a proper object of human knowledge. It also states that soul is a real substance that can be inferred from certain signs, objectively perceivable attributes. For example, in book 1, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10, Nyayasutra states

Ātman, body, senses, objects of senses, intellect, mind, activity, error, *pretyabhava* (after life), fruit, suffering and bliss are the objects of right knowledge. Desire, aversion, effort, happiness, suffering and cognition are the *Linga* (लिङ्ग, mark, sign) of the *Ātman*.

—*Nyaya Sutra, I.1.9-10*

In book 2, chapter 1, verses 1 to 23, Nyayasutras text posits that the sensory act of looking is different than perception and cognition, that perception and knowledge arise from the seekings and actions of Ātman (soul). Naiyayikas emphasize that Ātman has qualities, but is different than its qualities. For example, desire is one of many quality of Ātman in Nyaya school, but they state that Ātman need not always have desire, and in the state of

liberation, for instance, Atman is without desire. Atman is the object, and the conventional "I, me" is one of its subjects, to Nyaya school.

Samkhya school

The concept of Ātman in Samkhya, the oldest school of Hinduism, is quite similar to one in Advaita Vedanta school. Both Samkhya and Advaita consider the ego (asmita, ahamkara) rather than the Ātman to be the cause of pleasure and pain. They both consider Ātman as self, soul that is innermost essence of any individual being. Further, they both consider self-knowledge as the means of liberation, freedom and bliss. The difference between Samkhya and Advaita is that Samkhya holds there are as many *Atmans* as there are beings, each distinct reality unto itself, and self-knowledge a state of Ipseity. In contrast, the monism theme of Advaita holds that there is one soul, and that the self of all beings are connected and unified with Brahman. The essence and spirit of everything is related to each self, asserts Advaita Vedanta, and each Atman is related to the essence and spirit of everything; all is one; self is Brahman and Brahman is self. Samkhya asserts that each being's Atman is unique and different.

Yoga school

The Yogasutra of Patanjali, the foundational text of Yoga school of Hinduism, mentions *Atma* in multiple verses, and particularly in its last book, where Samadhi is described as the path to self-knowledge and kaivalya. Some earlier mentions of Atman in Yogasutra include verse 2.5, where evidence of ignorance includes "confusing what is not Atman as Atman".

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या

Avidya (अविद्या, ignorance) is regarding the transient as eternal, the impure as pure, the pain-giving as joy-giving, and the non-Atman as Atman.

— Yogasutra 2.5

In verses 2.19-2.20, Yogasutra declares that pure ideas are the domain of the soul, the perceivable universe exists to enlighten the soul, but while the soul is pure, it may be deceived by complexities of perception or its intellect. These verses also set the purpose of all experience as a means to self-knowledge.

द्रष्टा दृशिमात्रः शुद्धोऽपि प्रत्ययानुपश्यः
तदर्थ एव दृश्यस्यात्मा

The seer (soul) is the absolute knower. Though pure, modifications are witnessed by him by coloring of intellect.

The spectacle exists only to serve the purpose of the Atman.

— Yogasutra 2.19 - 2.20

In Book 4, Yogasutra states spiritual liberation as the stage where the yogin achieves distinguishing self-knowledge, he no longer confuses his mind as his soul, the mind is no longer affected by afflictions or worries of any kind, ignorance vanishes, and "pure consciousness settles in its own pure nature".

The Yoga school is similar to the Samkhya school in its conceptual foundations of Ātman. It is the self that is discovered and realized in the Kaivalya state, in both schools. Like Samkhya, this is not a single universal Ātman. It is one of the many individual selves where each "pure consciousness settles in its own pure nature", as a unique distinct soul/self. However, Yoga school's methodology was widely influential on other schools of Hindu philosophy. Vedanta monism, for example, adopted Yoga as a means to reach *Jivanmukti* – self-realization in this life – as conceptualized in Advaita Vedanta.

Influence of Atman theory on Hindu Ethics

Ahimsa, non-violence, is considered the highest ethical value and virtue in Hinduism. The virtue of Ahimsa follows from the Atman theories of Hindu traditions.

The Atman theory in Upanishads had a profound impact on ancient ethical theories and dharma traditions now known as Hinduism. The earliest Dharmasutras of Hindus recite Atman theory from the Vedic texts and Upanishads, and on its foundation build precepts of dharma, laws and ethics. Atman theory, particularly the Advaita Vedanta and Yoga versions, influenced the emergence of the theory of Ahimsa (non-violence against all creatures), culture of vegetarianism, and other theories of ethical, dharmic life.

Dharma-sutras

The Dharmasutras and Dharmasastras integrate the teachings of Atman theory. Apastamba Dharmasutra, the oldest known Indian text on dharma, for example, titles Chapters 1.8.22 and 1.8.23 as "Knowledge of the Atman" and then recites,

There is no higher object than the attainment of the **knowledge of Atman**. We shall quote the verses from the Veda which refer to the attainment of the knowledge of the Atman. All living creatures are the dwelling of him who lies enveloped in matter, who is immortal, who is spotless. A wise man shall strive after the knowledge of the Atman. It is he [Self] who is the eternal part in all creatures, whose essence is wisdom, who is immortal, unchangeable, pure; he is the universe, he is the highest goal. – 1.8.22.2-7

Freedom from anger, from excitement, from rage, from greed, from perplexity, from hypocrisy, from hurtfulness (from injury to others); Speaking the truth, moderate eating, refraining from calumny and envy, sharing with others, avoiding accepting gifts, uprightness, forgiveness, gentleness, tranquility, temperance, amity with all living creatures, yoga, honorable conduct, benevolence and contentedness – These virtues have been agreed upon for all the ashramas; he who, according to the precepts of the sacred law, practices these, becomes **united with the Universal Self**. – 1.8.23.6

— Knowledge of the Atman, Apastamba Dharma Sūtra, ~ 400 BCE

Ahimsa

The ethical prohibition against harming any human beings or other living creatures (Ahimsa, अहिंसा), in Hindu traditions, can be traced to the Atman theory. This precept against injuring any living being appears together with Atman theory in hymn 8.15.1 of Chandogya Upanishad (ca. 8th century BCE), then becomes central in the texts of Hindu philosophy, entering the dharma codes of ancient *Dharmasutras* and later era *Manu-Smriti*. Ahimsa theory is a natural corollary and consequence of "Atman is universal oneness, present in all living beings. Atman connects and prevades in everyone. Hurting or injuring another being is hurting the Atman, and thus one's self that exists in another body". This conceptual connection between one's Atman, the universal, and Ahimsa starts in Isha Upanishad, develops in the theories of the ancient scholar Yajnavalkya, and one which inspired Gandhi as he led non-violent movement against colonialism in early 20th century.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति । सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥६॥

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः । तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥७॥

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणम् अस्नाविरँ शुद्धमपापविद्धम् । कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूःयाथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥८॥

And he who sees everything in his atman, and his atman in everything, does not seek to hide himself from that.

In whom all beings have become one with his own atman, what perplexity, what sorrow, is there when he sees this oneness?

He [the self] prevades all, resplendent, bodiless, woundless, without muscles, pure, untouched by evil; far-seeing, transcendent, self-being, disposing ends through perpetual ages.

Atman – the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism

All orthodox schools of Hinduism hold the premise, "Atman exists, as self evident truth". Buddhism, in contrast, holds the premise, "Atman does not exist (or, An-atman) as self evident".

Buddhists do not believe that at the core of all human beings and living creatures, there is any "eternal, essential and absolute something called a soul, self or atman". Buddhists reject the concept and all doctrines associated with atman, call atman as illusion (*maya*), asserting instead the theory of "no-self" and "no-soul". Buddhism, from its earliest days, has denied the existence of the "self, soul" in its core philosophical and ontological texts. In its soteriological themes, Buddhism has defined nirvana as that blissful state when a person realizes that he or she has "no self, no soul". Hindus believe in Atman. They hold that at the core of all human beings and living creatures, there is "eternal, innermost essential and absolute something called a soul, self that is atman." Within the diverse schools of Hinduism, there are differences of opinion on whether souls are distinct, whether a supreme soul or god exists, whether the nature of Atman is dual or non-dual, how to reach moksha– the knowledge of self that liberates one to blissful content state of existence, and whether moksha is achievable in this life (Advaita Vedanta, Yoga) or is achievable only in after-life (Dvaita Vedanta, Nyaya). However, despite these diversity of ideas and paths in different schools of Hinduism, unlike Buddhism, the foundation premise of Hinduism is that "soul/self exists", and there is bliss in seeking self, knowing self, and self-realization. While the *Upanishads* recognized many things as being not-Self, they felt that a real, true Self could be found. They held that when it was found, and known to be identical to Brahman, the basis of everything, this would bring liberation. In the Buddhist *Suttas*, though, literally everything is seen is non-Self, even Nirvana. When this is known, then liberation – *Nirvana* – is attained by total non-attachment. Thus both the *Upanishads* and the Buddhist *Suttas* see many things as not-Self, but the Suttas apply it, indeed non-Self, to *everything*.

Buddhist texts chronologically placed in the 1st millennium of common era, such as the Mahayana tradition's *Tathāgatagarbha sūtras* suggest self-like concepts, variously called *Tathagatagarbha* or *Buddha nature*. These have been controversial idea in Buddhism, and "eternal self" concepts have been generally rejected. In modern era studies, scholars such as Wayman and Wayman state that these "self-like" concepts are neither self nor sentient being, nor soul, nor personality. Some scholars posit that the *Tathagatagarbha Sutras* were written to promote Buddhism to non-Buddhists.

In Theravada tradition, the Dhammakaya Movement in Thailand teaches that it is erroneous to subsume nirvana under the rubric of *anatta* (non-self); instead, nirvana is taught to be the "true self" or *dhammakaya*. Similar interpretations have been put forth by the then Thai Sangharaja in 1939. According to Williams, the Sangharaja's interpretation echoes the *tathāgatagarbha* sutras. The Dhammakaya Movement teaching that nirvana is atta (atman) in 1999, has been criticized as heretical in Buddhism by Ven. Payutto, a well-known scholar monk, who added that 'Buddha taught nibbana as being non-self". This dispute on the nature of teachings about 'self' and 'non-self' in Buddhism has led to arrest warrants, attacks and threats.

According to Johannes Bronkhorst, a professor of Indology specializing in early Buddhism and Hinduism, while there may be ambivalence on the existence or non-existence of self in early Buddhist literature, it is clear from these texts that seeking self-knowledge is not the Buddhist path for liberation, and turning away from self-knowledge is.

Atman jnana and know thyself

The Atman concept and its discussions in Hindu philosophy, parallel with *psuchê* (soul) and its discussion in ancient Greek philosophy. Eliade notes that there is a capital difference, with schools of Hinduism asserting that liberation of Atman implies "self-knowledge" and "bliss". Similarly, self-knowledge conceptual theme of Hinduism (*Atman jnana*) parallels the "know thyself" conceptual theme of Greek philosophy. Max Müller summarized it thus,

There is not what could be called a philosophical system in these Upanishads. They are, in the true sense of the word, guesses at truth, frequently contradicting each other, yet all tending in one direction. The key-note of the old Upanishads is "know thyself," but with a much deeper meaning than that of the *γνῶθι σεαυτόν* of the Delphic Oracle. The "know thyself" of the Upanishads means, know thy true self, that which underlines thine Ego, and find it and know it in the highest, the eternal Self, the One without a second, which underlies the whole world.

— Max Müller

Chapter 11
MOKSHA

Moksha, also called *vimoksha*, *vimukti* and *mukti*, is a term in Hinduism and Hindu philosophy which refers to various forms of emancipation, liberation, and release. In its soteriological and eschatological senses, it refers to freedom from *saṃsāra*, the cycle of death and rebirth. In its epistemological and psychological senses, *moksha* refers to freedom from ignorance: self-realization and self-knowledge.

In Hindu traditions, *moksha* is a central concept and included as one of the four aspects and goals of human life; the other three goals are *dharma* (virtuous, proper, moral life), *artha* (material prosperity, income security, means of life), and *kama* (pleasure, sensuality, emotional fulfillment). Together, these four aims of life are called Puruṣārtha in Hinduism.

Two Hindu sadhus near Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal.
Usually sadhus live by themselves, and spend their days in their pursuit of moksha.

The concept of *moksha* is found in Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. In some schools of Indian religions, *moksha* is considered equivalent to and used interchangeably with other terms such as *vimoksha*, *vimukti*, *kaivalya*, *apavarga*, *mukti*, *nihsreyasa* and *nirvana*. However, terms such as moksha and nirvana differ and mean different states between various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The term nirvana is more common in Buddhism, while moksha is more prevalent in Hinduism.

Moksha is derived from the root Sanskrit: मुच्, *muc*, which means free, let go, release, liberate. In Vedas and early Upanishads, the word Sanskrit: मुच्यते, *mucyate* appears, which means to be set free or release - such as of a horse from its harness.

Definition and meanings

The definition and meaning of *moksha* varies between various schools of Indian religions. Moksha means freedom, liberation; from what and how is where the schools differ. Moksha is also a concept that means liberation from rebirth or *saṃsāra*. This liberation can be attained while one is on earth (*jivanmukti*), or eschatologically (*karmamukti*, *videhamukti*). Some Indian traditions have emphasized liberation on concrete, ethical

action within the world. This liberation is an epistemological transformation that permits one to see the truth and reality behind the fog of ignorance.

Moksha has been defined not merely as absence of suffering and release from bondage to *saṃsāra*, various schools of Hinduism also explain the concept as presence of the state of *paripurna-brahmanubhava* (the experience of oneness with Brahman, the One Supreme Self), a state of knowledge, peace and bliss. For example, Vivekachudamani - an ancient book on *moksha*, explains one of many meditative steps on the path to *moksha*, as:

जाति नीति कुल गोत्र दूरगं
नाम रूप गुण दोष वर्जितम् |
देश काल विषया तिवर्ति यद्
ब्रह्म तत्वमसि भाव यात्मनि ||२५४||

Beyond caste, creed, family or lineage,
That which is without name and form, beyond merit and demerit,
That which is beyond space, time and sense-objects,
You are that, God himself; Meditate this within yourself. ||Verse 254||

— *Vivekachudamani, 8th Century AD*

Moksha in eschatological sense

Moksha is a concept associated with *saṃsāra* (birth-rebirth cycle). *Samsara* originated with religious movements in the first millennium BCE. These movements such as Buddhism, Jainism and new schools within Hinduism, saw human life as bondage to a repeated process of rebirth. This bondage to repeated rebirth and life, each life subject to injury, disease and aging, was seen as a cycle of suffering. By release from this cycle, the suffering involved in this cycle also ended. This release was called *moksha*, *nirvana*, *kaivalya*, *mukti* and other terms in various Indian religious traditions.

Eschatological ideas evolved in Hinduism. In earliest Vedic literature, heaven and hell sufficed soteriological curiosities. Over time, the ancient scholars observed that people vary in the quality of virtuous or sinful life they lead, and began questioning how differences in each person's *puṇya* (merit, good deeds) or *pāp* (demerit, sin) as human beings affected their afterlife. This question led to the conception of an afterlife where the person stayed in heaven or hell, in proportion to their merit or demerit, then returned to earth and were reborn, the cycle continuing indefinitely.

The rebirth idea ultimately flowered into the ideas of *saṃsāra*, or transmigration - where one's balance sheet of *karma* determined one's rebirth. Along with this idea of *saṃsāra*, the ancient scholars developed the concept of *moksha*, as a state that released a person from the *saṃsāra* cycle. *Moksha* release in eschatological sense in these ancient literature of Hinduism, suggests van Buitenen, comes from self-knowledge and consciousness of oneness of supreme soul.

Moksha in epistemological and psychological sense

The meaning of *moksha* in epistemological and psychological sense has been variously explained by scholars. For example, according to Deutsche, *moksha* is transcendental consciousness, the perfect state of being, of self-realization, of freedom and of "realizing the whole universe as the Self".

Moksha in Hinduism, suggests Klaus Klostermaier, implies a setting free of hitherto fettered faculties, a removing of obstacles to an unrestricted life, permitting a person to be more truly a person in the full sense; the concept presumes an unused human potential of creativity, compassion and understanding which had been blocked and shut out. *Moksha* is more than liberation from life-rebirth cycle of suffering (*samsara*); Vedantic school separates this into two: *jivanmukti* (liberation in this life) and *videhamukti* (liberation after death). Moksha in this life includes psychological liberation from *adhyasa* (fears besetting one's life) and *avidya* (ignorance or anything that is not true knowledge).

Moksha as a state of perfection

Gajendra Moksha (pictured) is a symbolic tale in Vaishnavism.
The elephant Gajendra enters a lake where a crocodile Huhu clutches his
leg and becomes his suffering. Despite his pain, he constantly remembers God Vishnu.
God liberates him. Gajendra symbolically represents man, Huhu represents sins and the lake is saṃsāra.

Moksha is, in many schools of Hinduism according to Daniel Ingalls, a state of perfection. The concept was seen as a natural goal beyond *dharma*. *Moksha*, in the Epics and ancient literature of Hinduism, is seen as achievable by the same techniques necessary to practice

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dharma. Self-discipline is the path to *dharma*, *moksha* is self-discipline that is so perfect that it becomes unconscious, second nature. *Dharma* is thus a means to *moksha*.

Samkhya school of Hinduism, for example, suggests one of the paths to *moksha* is to magnify one's *sattvam*. To magnify one's *sattvam*, one must develop oneself where one's *sattvam* becomes one's instinctive nature. *Dharma* and *moksha* were thus understood by many schools of Hinduism as two points of a single journey of life, a journey for which the *viaticum* was discipline and self training. Over time, these ideas about *moksha* were challenged.

Nagarjuna's challenge

Dharma and *moksha*, suggested Nagarjuna in the 2nd century, cannot be goals on the same journey. He pointed to the differences between the world we live in, and the freedom implied in the concept of *moksha*. They are so different that *dharma* and *moksha* could not be intellectually related. *Dharma* requires worldly thought, *moksha* is unworldly understanding, a state of bliss. How can the worldly thought process lead to unworldly understanding, asked Nagarjuna? Karl Potter explains the answer to this challenge as one of context and framework, the emergence of broader general principles of understanding from thought processes that are limited in one framework.

Adi Shankara's challenge

Adi Shankara in 8th century AD, like Nagarjuna earlier, examined the difference between the world one lives in and *moksha*, a state of freedom and release one hopes for. Unlike Nagarjuna, Shankara considers the characteristics between the two. The world one lives in requires action as well as thought; our world, he suggests, is impossible without *vyavahara* (action and plurality). The world is interconnected, one object works on another, input is transformed into output, change is continuous and everywhere. *Moksha*, suggests Shankara, is that final perfect, blissful state where there can be no change, where there can be no plurality of states. It has to be a state of thought and consciousness that excludes action. How can action-oriented techniques by which we attain the first three goals of man (*kama*, *artha* and *dharma*) be useful to attain the last goal, namely *moksha*?

Scholars suggest Shankara's challenge to the concept of *moksha* parallels those of Plotinus against the Gnostics, with one important difference: Plotinus challenged Gnostics that they have exchanged anthropocentric set of virtues with a theocentric set in pursuit of salvation; Shankara challenged that the concept of *moksha* implied an exchange of anthropocentric set of virtues (*dharma*) with a blissful state that has no need for values. Shankara goes on to suggest that anthropocentric virtues suffice.

Vaisnavas challenge

Vaishnavism is one of the *bhakti* schools of Hinduism and devoted to the worship of God, that sings his name, anoints his image or idol, and has many sub-schools. Vaishnavas

suggest that *dharma* and *moksha* cannot be two different or sequential goals or states of life. Instead, they suggest God should be kept in mind constantly to simultaneously achieve *dharma* and *moksha*, so constantly that one comes to feel one cannot live without God's loving presence. This school emphasized love and adoration of God as the path to "moksha" (salvation and release), rather than works and knowledge. Their focus became divine virtues, rather than anthropocentric virtues. Daniel Ingalls calls Vaishnava's position on *moksha* as similar to Christian position on salvation, and the school whose views on *dharma*, *karma* and *moksha* dominated the initial impressions and colonial era literature on Hinduism, through the works of Thibaut, Max Müller and others.

Scientific understanding

The closest western scientific concept is ego death, which has various proposed neuroscientific and psychological explanations.

History

The concept of *moksha* appears much later in ancient Indian literature than the concept of *dharma*. The proto-concept that first appears in the ancient Sanskrit verses and early Upanishads is *mucyate*, which means freed or released. It is the middle and later Upanishads, such as the Svetasvatara and Maitri, where the word moksha appears and begins becoming an important concept.

Kathaka Upanishad, a middle Upanishadic era script dated to be about 2500 years old, is among the earliest expositions about *saṃsāra* and *moksha*. In Book I, Section III, the legend of boy Naciketa queries Yama, the lord of death to explain what causes *saṃsāra* and what leads to liberation. Naciketa inquires: what causes sorrow? Yama explains that suffering and *saṃsāra* results from a life that is lived absent-mindedly, with impurity, with neither the use of intelligence nor self-examination, where neither mind nor senses are guided by one's *atma* (soul, self). Liberation comes from a life lived with inner purity, alert mind, led by *buddhi* (reason, intelligence), realization of the Supreme Self (*purusha*) who dwells in all beings. Kathaka Upanishad asserts knowledge liberates, knowledge is freedom. Kathaka Upanishad also explains the role of yoga in personal liberation, *moksha*.

Svetasvatara Upanishad, another middle era Upanishad written after Kathaka Upanishad, begins with questions such as why is man born, what is the primal cause behind the universe, what causes joy and sorrow in life? It then examines the various theories, that were then existing, about saṃsāra and release from bondage. Svetasvatara claims bondage results from ignorance, illusion or delusion; deliverance comes from knowledge. The Supreme Being dwells in every being, he is the primal cause, he is the eternal law, he is the essence of everything, he is nature, he is not a separate entity. Liberation comes to those who know Supreme Being is present as the Universal Spirit and Principle, just as they know butter is present in milk. Such realization, claims Svetasvatara, come from self-knowledge and self-discipline; and this knowledge and realization is liberation from transmigration, the final goal of the Upanishad.

Starting with the middle Upanishad era, moksha - or equivalent terms such as mukti and kaivalya - is a major theme in many Upanishads. For example, Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, one of several Upanishads of the bhakti school of Hinduism, starts out with prayers to Goddess Sarasvati. She is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning and creative arts; her name is a compound word of "sara" and "sva", meaning "essence of self". After the prayer verses, the Upanishad inquires about the secret to freedom and liberation (mukti). Sarasvati's reply in the Upanishad is:

It was through me the Creator himself gained liberating knowledge,
I am being, consciousness, bliss, eternal freedom: unsullied, unlimited, unending.
My perfect consciousness shines your world, like a beautiful face in a soiled mirror,
Seeing that reflection I wish myself you, an individual soul, as if I could be finite!

A finite soul, an infinite Goddess - these are false concepts,
in the minds of those unacquainted with truth,
No space, my loving devotee, exists between your self and my self,
Know this and you are free. This is the secret wisdom.

—*Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad, Translated by Linda Johnsen*

Evolution in the concept of mokṣa

Moksha concept, according to Daniel Ingalls, represented one of many expansions in Hindu Vedic ideas of life and afterlife. In the Vedas, there were three stages of life: studentship, householdship and retirement. During Upanishadic era, Hinduism expanded this to include a fourth stage of life: complete abandonment. In Vedic literature, there are three modes of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. The Upanishadic era expanded it to include *turiyam* - the stage beyond deep sleep. The Vedas suggest three goals of man: kama, artha and dharma. To these, Upanishadic era added moksha.

The acceptance of concept of moksha in Hinduism was slow. Several schools of Hinduism refused to recognize moksha for centuries, considered it irrelevant. The Mimamsa school, for example, denied the goal and relevance of moksha well into the 8th century AD, till the arrival of Mimamsa scholar named Kumarila. Instead of moksha, Mimamsa school of Hinduism considered the concept of heaven as sufficient to answer the question: what lay beyond this world after death. Other schools of Hinduism, over time, accepted the Moksha concept and refined it over time.

It is unclear when core ideas of samsara and moksha were developed in ancient India. Patrick Olivelle suggests these ideas likely originated with new religious movements in the first millennium BCE. Mukti and moksha ideas, suggests J. A. B. van Buitenen, seem traceable to yogis in Hinduism, with long hair, who chose to live on the fringes of society, given to self-induced states of intoxication and ecstasy, possibly accepted as medicine-men and "sadhus" by the ancient Indian society. Moksha to these early concept developers, was the abandonment of the established order, not in favor of anarchy, but in favor of self-realization, to achieve release from this world.

Mokṣa is a key concept in Yoga, where it is a state of "awakening", liberation and freedom in this life.

In its historical development, the concept of moksha appears in three forms: Vedic, yogic and bhakti forms. In Vedic period, moksha was ritualistic. Mokṣa was claimed to result from properly completed rituals such as those before *Agni* - the fire deity. The significance of these rituals was to reproduce and recite the cosmic creation event described in the Vedas; the description of knowledge on different levels - *adhilokam*, *adhibhutam*, *adhiyajnam*, *adhyatmam* - helped the individual transcend to moksa. Knowledge was the means, the ritual its application. By middle to late Upanishadic period, the emphasis shifted to knowledge, and ritual activities were considered irrelevant to attainment of moksha. Yogic moksha replaced Vedic rituals with personal development and meditation, with hierarchical creation of the ultimate knowledge in self as the path to moksha. Yogic moksha principles were accepted in many other schools of Hinduism, albeit with differences. For example, Adi Shankara in his book on moksha suggests:

अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तितः |
न स्नानेन न दानेन प्राणायमशतेन वा || १३ ||

By reflection, reasoning and instructions of teachers, the truth is known,
Not by ablutions, not by making donations, nor by performing hundreds of breath control exercises. || Verse 13 ||

— Vivekachudamani, 8th Century AD

Bhakti moksha created the third historical path, where neither rituals nor meditative self-development were the way, rather it was inspired by constant love and contemplation of God, where over time results a perfect union with God. Some Bhakti schools evolved their ideas where God became the means and the end, transcending moksha; the fruit of bhakti is bhakti itself.

In the history of Indian religious traditions, additional ideas and paths to moksha beyond these three, appeared over time.

Moksha, nirvana and kaivalya

The words moksha, nirvana (*nibbana*) and kaivalya are sometimes used synonymously, because they all refer to the state that liberates a person from all causes of sorrow and suffering. However, in modern era literature, these concepts have different premises in different religions. Nirvana, a concept common in Buddhism, is a state of realization that there is no self (no soul) and Emptiness; while moksha, a concept common in many schools of Hinduism, is acceptance of Self (soul), realization of liberating knowledge, the consciousness of Oneness with Brahman, all existence and understanding the whole universe as the Self. Nirvana starts with the premise that there is no Self, moksha on the other hand, starts with the premise that everything is the Self; there is no consciousness in the state of nirvana, but everything is One unified consciousness in the state of moksha.

Kaivalya, a concept akin to moksha, rather than nirvana, is found in some schools of Hinduism such as the Yoga school. Kaivalya is the realization of aloofness with liberating knowledge of one's self and union with the spiritual universe. For example, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra suggests:

तस्य हेतुरविद्या,

तदभावात्संयोगाभावो हानं तद् दृशेः कैवल्यम् |

After the dissolution of avidya (ignorance),
comes removal of communion with material world,
this is the path to Kaivalyam.

— *Yoga Sutra (Sadhana Pada), 2:24-25*

Nirvana and moksha, in all traditions, represents a state of being in ultimate reality and perfection, but described in a very different way. Some scholars, states Jayatilleke, assert that the Nirvana of Buddhism is same as the Brahman in Hinduism, a view other scholars and he disagree with. Buddhism rejects the idea of Brahman, and the metaphysical ideas about soul (atman) are also rejected by Buddhism, while those ideas are essential to moksha in Hinduism. In Buddhism, nirvana is 'blowing out' or 'extinction'. In Hinduism, moksha is 'identity or oneness with Brahman'. Realization of *anatta* (anatman) is essential to Buddhist nirvana. Realization of *atman* (atta) is essential to Hindu moksha.

Hinduism

Ancient literature of different schools of Hinduism sometimes use different phrases for moksha. For example, *Keval jnana* or *kaivalya* ("state of Absolute"), *Apavarga*, *Nihsreyasa*, *Paramapada*, *Brahmabhava*, *Brahmajnana* and *Brahmi sthiti*. Modern literature additionally uses the Buddhist term nirvana interchangeably with moksha of Hinduism. There is difference between these ideas, as explained elsewhere in this article, but they are all soteriological concepts of various Indian religious traditions.

The six major orthodox schools of Hinduism have had a historic debate, and disagree over whether moksha can be achieved in this life, or only after this life. Many of the 108 Upanishads discuss amongst other things moksha. These discussions show the differences between the schools of Hinduism, a lack of consensus, with a few attempting to conflate the contrasting perspectives between various schools. For example, freedom and deliverance from birth-rebirth, argues Maitrayana Upanishad, comes neither from the Vedanta school's doctrine (the knowledge of one's own Self as the Supreme Soul) nor from the Samkhya school's doctrine (distinction of the Purusha from what one is not), but from Vedic studies, observance of the *Svadharma* (personal duties), sticking to *Asramas* (stages of life).

The six major orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy offer the following views on moksha, each for their own reasons: the Nyaya, Vaisesika and Mimamsa schools of Hinduism consider moksha as possible only after death. Samkhya and Yoga schools consider moksha as possible in this life. In Vedanta school, the Advaita sub-school concludes moksha is possible in this life, while Dvaita and Visistadvaita sub-schools of Vedanta tradition believes that moksha is a continuous event, one assisted by loving devotion to God, that extends from this life to post-mortem. Beyond these six orthodox schools, some heterodox schools of Hindu tradition, such as Carvaka, deny there is a soul or after life moksha.

Sāmkhya, Yoga and mokṣa

Both Sāmkhya and Yoga systems of religious thought are *mokshaśāstras*, suggests Knut Jacobsen, they are systems of salvific liberation and release. Sāmkhya is a system of interpretation, primarily a theory about the world. Yoga is both a theory and a practice. Yoga gained wide acceptance in ancient India, its ideas and practices became part of many religious schools in Hinduism, including those that were very different from Sāmkhya. The eight limbs of yoga can be interpreted as a way to liberation (moksha).

In Sāmkhya literature, liberation is commonly referred to as *kaivalya*. In this school, kaivalya means the realization of *purusa*, the principle of consciousness, as independent from mind and body, as different from *prakrti*. Like many schools of Hinduism, in Sāmkhya and Yoga schools, the emphasis is on the attainment of knowledge, *vidyā* or *jñāna*, as necessary for salvific liberation, moksha. Yoga's purpose is then seen as a means to remove the *avidyā* - that is, ignorance or misleading/incorrect knowledge about one self and the universe. It seeks to end ordinary reflexive awareness (*cittavrtti nirodhah*) with deeper, purer and holistic awareness (*asamprājñāta samādhi*). Yoga, during the pursuit of moksha, encourages practice (*abhyāsa*) with detachment (*vairāgya*), which over time leads to deep concentration (*samādhi*). Detachment means withdrawal from outer world and calming of mind, while practice means the application of effort over time. Such steps are claimed by Yoga school as leading to samādhi, a state of deep awareness, release and bliss called *kaivalya*.

Yoga, or *mārga*, in Hinduism is widely classified into four spiritual practices. The first mārga is Jñāna Yoga, the way of knowledge. The second mārga is Bhakti Yoga, the way of loving devotion to God. The third mārga is Karma Yoga, the way of works. The fourth

mārga is Rāja Yoga, the way of contemplation and meditation. These mārgas are part of different schools in Hinduism, and their definition and methods to moksha. For example, the Advaita Vedanta school relies on Jñāna Yoga in its teachings of moksha.

Vedanta and mokṣa

The three main sub-schools in Vedanta school of Hinduism - Advaita Vedanta, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita - each have their own views about moksha.

The Vedantic school of Hinduism suggests the first step towards mokṣa begins with *mumuksutva*, that is desire of liberation. This takes the form of questions about self, what is true, why do things or events make us happy or cause suffering, and so on. This longing for liberating knowledge is assisted by, claims Adi Shankara of Advaita Vedanta, guru (teacher), study of historical knowledge and viveka (critical thinking). Shankara cautions that the guru and historic knowledge may be distorted, so traditions and historical assumptions must be questioned by the individual seeking moksha. Those who are on their path to moksha (samnyasin), suggests Klaus Klostermaier, are quintessentially free individuals, without craving for anything in the worldly life, thus are neither dominated by, nor dominating anyone else.

Vivekachudamani, which literally means "Crown Jewel of Discriminatory Reasoning", is a book devoted to moksa in Vedanta philosophy. It explains what behaviors and pursuits lead to moksha, as well what actions and assumptions hinder moksha. The four essential conditions, according to Vivekachudamani, before one can commence on the path of moksha include (1) *vivekah* (discrimination, critical reasoning) between everlasting principles and fleeting world; (2) *viragah* (indifference, lack of craving) for material rewards; (3) *samah* (calmness of mind), and (4) *damah* (self restraint, temperance). The *Brahmasutrabhasya* adds to the above four requirements, the following: *uparati* (lack of bias, dispassion), *titiksa* (endurance, patience), *sraddha* (faith) and *samadhana* (intentness, commitment).

The Advaita tradition considers moksha achievable by removing avidya (ignorance). Moksha is seen as a final release from illusion, and through knowledge (*anubhava*) of one's own fundamental nature, which is Satcitananda. Advaita holds there is no being/non-being distinction between *Atman*, *Brahman*, and *Paramatman*. The knowledge of Brahman leads to moksha, where Brahman is described as that which is the origin and end of all things, the universal principle behind and at source of everything that exists, consciousness that pervades everything and everyone. Advaita Vedanta emphasizes Jnana Yoga as the means of achieving moksha. Bliss, claims this school, is the fruit of knowledge (vidya) and work (karma).

The Dvaita (dualism) traditions define moksha as the loving, eternal union with God (Vishnu) and considered the highest perfection of existence. Dvaita schools suggest every soul encounters liberation differently. Dualist schools (e.g. Vaishnava) see God as the object of love, for example, a personified monotheistic conception of Shiva or Vishnu. By immersing oneself in the love of God, one's karmas slough off, one's illusions decay, and

truth is lived. Both the worshiped and worshiper gradually lose their illusory sense of separation and only One beyond all names remains. This is salvation to dualist schools of Hinduism. Dvaita Vedanta emphasizes Bhakti Yoga as the means of achieving moksha.

The Vishistadvaita tradition, led by Ramanuja, defines avidya and moksha differently from the Advaita tradition. To Ramanuja, avidya is a focus on the self, and vidya is a focus on a loving god. The Vishistadvaita school argues that other schools of Hinduism create a false sense of agency in individuals, which makes the individual think oneself as potential or self-realized god. Such ideas, claims Ramanuja, decay to materialism, hedonism and self worship. Individuals forget *Ishvara* (God). Mukti, to Vishistadvaita school, is release from such avidya, towards the intuition and eternal union with God (Vishnu).

Mokṣa in this life

Among the Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism, liberation and freedom reached within one's life is referred to as *jivanmukti*, and the individual who has experienced this state is called *jivanmukta* (self-realized person). Dozens of Upanishads, including those from middle Upanishadic period, mention or describe the state of liberation, *jivanmukti*. Some contrast *jivanmukti* with *videhamukti* (moksha from samsara after death). Jivanmukti is a state that transforms the nature, attributes and behaviors of an individual, claim these ancient texts of Hindu philosophy. For example, according to Naradaparivrajaka Upanishad, the liberated individual shows attributes such as:

- he is not bothered by disrespect and endures cruel words, treats others with respect regardless of how others treat him;
- when confronted by an angry person he does not return anger, instead replies with soft and kind words;
- even if tortured, he speaks and trusts the truth;
- he does not crave for blessings or expect praise from others;
- he never injures or harms any life or being (ahimsa), he is intent in the welfare of all beings;
- he is as comfortable being alone as in the presence of others;
- he is as comfortable with a bowl, at the foot of a tree in tattered robe without help, as when he is in a mithuna (union of mendicants), grama (village) and nagara (city);
- he doesn't care about or wear ṣikha (tuft of hair on the back of head for religious reasons), nor the holy thread across his body. To him, knowledge is sikha, knowledge is the holy thread, knowledge alone is supreme. Outer appearances and rituals do not matter to him, only knowledge matters;
- for him there is no invocation nor dismissal of deities, no mantra nor non-mantra, no prostrations nor worship of gods, goddess or ancestors, nothing other than knowledge of Self;
- he is humble, high-spirited, of clear and steady mind, straightforward, compassionate, patient, indifferent, courageous, speaks firmly and with sweet words.

Mokṣa in Balinese Hinduism

Balinese Hinduism incorporates moksha as one of five tattwas. The other four are: *brahman* (the one supreme god head, not to be confused with Brahmin), *atma* (soul or spirit), karma (actions and reciprocity, causality), *samsara* (principle of rebirth, reincarnation). Moksha, in Balinese Hindu belief, is the possibility of unity with the divine; it is sometimes referred to as nirwana.

Buddhism

In Buddhism the most common term for liberation is Nirvana (Pali: Nibbana). It literally means "blowing out", "quenching", or "becoming extinguished". This Buddhist concept is intimately tied as in later Hinduism and Jainism, states Steven Collins, to the ancient Indian idea of the world of rebirth and redeath.

In Theravada Buddhism moksha is attained with nirvana, which ends the cycle of *Dukkha* and rebirth in the six realms of Saṃsāra (Buddhism). It is part of the Four Noble Truths doctrine of Buddhism, which plays an essential role in Theravada Buddhism. Nirvana has been described in Buddhist texts in a manner similar to other Indian religions, as the state of complete liberation, enlightenment, highest happiness, bliss, fearless, freedom, dukkha-less, permanence, non-dependent origination, unfathomable, indescribable. It has also been described as a state of release marked by "emptiness" and realization of *non-Self*. Such descriptions, states Peter Harvey, are contested by scholars because nirvana in Buddhism is ultimately described as a state of "stopped consciousness (blown out), but one that is not non-existent", and "it seems impossible to imagine what awareness devoid of any object would be like".

Jainism

In Jainism, *moksha* and *nirvana* are one and the same. Jaina texts sometimes use the term Kevalya, and call the liberated soul as Kevalin. As with all Indian religions, moksha is the ultimate spiritual goal in Jainism. It defines moksha as the spiritual release from all karma.

Jainism is a Sramanic non-theistic philosophy, that like Hinduism and unlike Buddhism, believes in a metaphysical permanent self or soul often termed *Jiva*. Jaina believe that this soul is what transmigrates from one being to another at the time of death. The moksa state is attained when a soul (*atman*) is liberated from the cycles of rebirths and redeaths (*Saṃsāra*), is at the apex, is omniscient, remains there eternally, and is known as a *Siddha*. It is in Jainism, believed to be a stage beyond enlightenment and ethical perfection, states Paul Dundas, because they can perform physical and mental activities such as teach, without accruing karma that leads to rebirth.

Jaina traditions believe that there exist *Abhavya* (incapable), or a class of souls that can never attain moksha (liberation). The *Abhavya* state of soul is entered after an intentional and shockingly evil act, but Jaina texts also polemically applied *Abhavya* condition to

those who belonged to a competing ancient Indian tradition called Ājīvika. A male human being is considered closest to the apex of moksha, with the potential to achieve liberation, particularly through asceticism. The ability of women to attain moksha has been historically debated, and the sub-traditions with Jainism have disagreed. In the Digambra tradition of Jainism, women must live an ethical life and gain karmic merit, to be reborn as a man, because only males can achieve spiritual liberation; in contrast, the Shvetambara tradition has believed that women too can attain moksha just like men.

Sikhism

The Sikh concept of mukti (moksha) is similar to other Indian religions, and refers to spiritual liberation. It is described in Sikhism as the state that breaks the cycle of rebirths. Mukti is obtained according to Sikhism, states Singha, through "God's grace". According to the teachings in the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib, the devotion to God is viewed as more important than the desire for *Mukti*.

I desire neither worldly power nor liberation. I desire nothing but seeing the Lord. Brahma, Shiva, the Siddhas, the silent sages and Indra - I seek only the Blessed Vision of my Lord and Master's Darshan.

I have come, helpless, to Your Door, O Lord Master; I am exhausted - I seek the Sanctuary of the Saints.

Says Nanak, I have met my Enticing Lord God; my mind is cooled and soothed - it blossoms forth in joy.

— Guru Granth Sahib, P534

Sikhism recommends Naam Simran as the way to mukti, which is meditating and repeating the *Naam* (names of God).

Chapter 12
ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment is the "full comprehension of a situation". The term is commonly used to denote the Age of Enlightenment, but is also used in Western cultures in a religious context. It translates several Buddhist terms and concepts, most notably *bodhi*, *kensho* and *satori*. Related terms from Asian religions are *moksha* (liberation) in Hinduism, *Kevala Jnana* in Jainism, and *ushta* in Zoroastrianism.

In Christianity, the word "enlightenment" is rarely used, except to refer to the Age of Enlightenment and its influence on Christianity. Roughly equivalent terms in Christianity may be illumination, kenosis, metanoia, revelation, salvation and conversion.

Perennialists and Universalists view enlightenment and mysticism as equivalent terms for religious or spiritual insight.

Asian cultures and religions

Buddhism

The English term "enlightenment" has commonly been used to translate several Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese and Japanese terms and concepts, especially *bodhi*, *prajna*, *kensho*, *satori* and buddhahood.

Bodhi is a Theravada term. It literally means "awakening" and "understanding". Someone who is awakened has gained insight into the workings of the mind which keeps us imprisoned in craving, suffering and rebirth, and has also gained insight into the way that leads to *nirvana*, the liberation of oneself from this imprisonment.

Prajna is a Mahayana term. It refers to insight into our true nature, which according to Madhyamaka is empty of a personal essence in the stream of experience. But it also refers to the *Tathāgata-garbha* or Buddha-nature, the essential basic-consciousness beyond the stream of experience.

In Zen, *kensho* means "seeing into one's true nature". *Satori* is often used interchangeably with *kensho*, but refers to the *experience* of *kensho*.

Buddhahood is the attainment of full awakening and becoming a Buddha. According to the Tibetan Thubten Yeshe, enlightenment

[means] full awakening; buddhahood. The ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, attained when all limitations have been removed from the mind and one's positive potential has been completely and perfectly realized. It is a state characterized by infinite compassion, wisdom and skill.

Hinduism

In Indian religions *moksha* or *mukti* is the final extrication of the soul or consciousness (*purusha*) from *samsara* and the bringing to an end of all the suffering involved in being subject to the cycle of repeated death and rebirth (reincarnation).

Advaita Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta is a philosophical concept where followers seek liberation/release by recognizing identity of the Self (Atman) and the Whole (Brahman) through long preparation and training, usually under the guidance of a guru, that involves efforts such as knowledge of scriptures, renunciation of worldy activities, and inducement of direct identity experiences. Originating in India before 788 AD, Advaita Vedanta is widely considered the most influential and most dominant sub-school of the Vedānta (literally, *end or the goal of the Vedas*, Sanskrit) school of Hindu philosophy. Other major sub-schools of Vedānta are *Viśishṭādvaita* and *Dvaita*; while the minor ones include Suddhadvaita, Dvaitadvaita and Achintya Bhedabheda.

Advaita (literally, *non-duality*) is a system of thought where "Advaita" refers to the identity of the Self (*Atman*) and the Whole (Brahman). Recognition of this identity leads to liberation. Attaining this liberation takes a long preparation and training under the guidance of a guru.

The key source texts for all schools of Vedānta are the Prasthanatrayi—the canonical texts consisting of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras. The first person to explicitly consolidate the principles of Advaita Vedanta was Shankara Bhagavadpada, while the first historical proponent was Gaudapada, the guru of Shankara's guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.

Philosophical system

Shankara systematized the works of preceding philosophers. His system of Vedanta introduced the method of scholarly exegesis on the accepted metaphysics of the Upanishads. This style was adopted by all the later Vedanta schools.

Shankara's synthesis of Advaita Vedanta is summarized in this quote from the Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, one of his Prakaraṇa graṃthas (philosophical treatises):

In half a couplet I state, what has been stated by crores of texts;

that is Brahman alone is real, the world is mithyā (not independently existent),

and the individual self is nondifferent from Brahman.

Neo-Vedanta

In the 19th century Vivekananda played a major role in the revival of Hinduism, and the spread of Advaita Vedanta to the West via the Ramakrishna Mission. His interpretation of Advaita Vedanta has been called "Neo-Vedanta". In a talk on "The absolute and manifestation" given in at London in 1896 Swami Vivekananda said,

I may make bold to say that the only religion which agrees with, and even goes a little further than modern researchers, both on physical and moral lines is the Advaita, and that is why it appeals to modern scientists so much. They find that the old dualistic theories are not enough for them, do not satisfy their necessities. A man must have not only faith, but intellectual faith too".

Vivekananda emphasized samadhi as a means to attain liberation. Yet this emphasis is not to be found in the Upanishads nor in Shankara. For Shankara, meditation and Nirvikalpa Samadhi are means to gain knowledge of the already existing unity of Brahman and Atman, not the highest goal itself:

[Y]oga is a meditative exercise of withdrawal from the particular and identification with the universal, leading to contemplation of oneself as the most universal, namely, Consciousness. This approach is different from the classical yoga of complete thought suppression.

Vivekenanda's modernisation has been criticized:

Without calling into question the right of any philosopher to interpret Advaita according to his own understanding of it, [...] the process of Westernization has obscured the core of this school of thought. The basic correlation of renunciation and Bliss has been lost sight of in the attempts to underscore the cognitive structure and the realistic structure which according to Samkaracarya should both belong to, and indeed constitute the realm of māyā.

Neo-Advaita

Neo-Advaita is a new religious movement based on a modern, Western interpretation of Advaita Vedanta, especially the teachings of Ramana Maharshi. Neo-Advaita is being criticized for discarding the traditional prerequisites of knowledge of the scriptures and "renunciation as necessary preparation for the path of *jnana*-yoga". Notable neo-advaita teachers are H. W. L. Poonja, his students Gangaji Andrew Cohen, Madhukar and Eckhart Tolle.

Yoga

The prime means to reach moksha is through the practice of yoga (Sanskrit, Pāli: योग, /ˈjəʊɡə/, *yoga*) is a commonly known generic term for physical, mental, and spiritual

disciplines which originated in ancient India. Specifically, yoga is one of the six *āstika* ("orthodox") schools of Hindu philosophy. It is based on the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. Various traditions of yoga are found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

Pre–philosophical speculations and diverse ascetic practices of first millennium BCE were systematized into a formal philosophy in early centuries CE by the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. By the turn of the first millennium, Hatha yoga emerged as a prominent tradition of yoga distinct from the Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. While the *Yoga Sutras* focus on discipline of the mind, Hatha yoga concentrates on health and purity of the body.

Hindu monks, beginning with Swami Vivekananda, brought yoga to the West in the late 19th century. In the 1980s, yoga became popular as a physical system of health exercises across the Western world. Many studies have tried to determine the effectiveness of yoga as a complementary intervention for cancer, schizophrenia, asthma and heart patients. In a national survey, long-term yoga practitioners in the United States reported musculo–skeletal and mental health improvements.

Jnana yoga

Classical Advaita Vedanta emphasises the path of *jnana yoga*, a progression of study and training to attain moksha. It consists of four stages:

- *Samanyasa* or *Sampatti*s, the "fourfold discipline" (*sādhana-catustaya*), cultivating the following four qualities:
  - *Nityānitya vastu viveka* (नित्यानित्य वस्तु विवेकम् (– The ability (viveka) to correctly discriminate between the eternal (*nitya*) substance (*Brahman*) and the substance that is transitory existence (*anitya*).
  - *Ihāmutrārtha phala bhoga virāga* (इहाsमुत्रार्थ फल भोगविरागम् (– The renunciation (*virāga*) of enjoyments of objects (*artha phala bhoga*) in this world (*iha*) and the other worlds (*amutra*) like heaven etc.
  - *Śamādi ṣatka sampatti* (शमादि षट्क सम्पत्ति (– the sixfold qualities,
    - *Śama* (control of the antahkaraṇa).
    - *Dama* (the control of external sense organs).
    - *Uparati* (the cessation of these external organs so restrained, from the pursuit of objects other than that, or it may mean the abandonment of the prescribed works according to scriptural injunctions).
    - *Titikṣa* (the tolerating of tāpatraya).
    - *Śraddha* (the faith in Guru and Vedas).
    - *Samādhāna* (the concentrating of the mind on God and Guru).
  - *Mumukṣutva* (मुमुक्षुत्वम् (– The firm conviction that the nature of the world is misery and the intense longing for *moksha* (*release from the cycle of births and deaths*).

- *Sravana*, listening to the teachings of the sages on the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, and studying the Vedantic texts, such as the Brahma Sutras. In this stage the student learns about the reality of Brahman and the identity of atman;
- *Manana*, the stage of reflection on the teachings;
- *Dhyana*, the stage of meditation on the truth "that art Thou".

Bhakti yoga

The paths of *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga* are subsidiary.

In bhakti yoga, practice centers on the worship God in any way and in any form, like Krishna or Ayyappa. Adi Shankara himself was a proponent of devotional worship or *Bhakti*. But Adi Shankara taught that while Vedic sacrifices, *puja* and devotional worship can lead one in the direction of *jnana* (true knowledge), they cannot lead one directly to *moksha*. At best, they can serve as means to obtain moksha via shukla gati.

Karma yoga

Karma yoga is the way of doing our duties, in disregard of personal gains or losses. According to Sri Swami Sivananda,

Karma Yoga is consecration of all actions and their fruits unto the Lord. Karma Yoga is performance of actions dwelling in union with the Divine, removing attachment and remaining balanced ever in success and failure.

Karma Yoga is selfless service unto humanity. Karma Yoga is the Yoga of action which purifies the heart and prepares the Antahkarana (the heart and the mind) for the reception of Divine Light or attainment if Knowledge of the Self. The important point is that you will have to serve humanity without any attachment or egoism.

Jainism

Jainism is an Indian religion that prescribes a path of non-violence towards all living beings. Its philosophy and practice emphasize the necessity of self-effort to move the soul toward divine consciousness and liberation. Any soul that has conquered its own inner enemies and achieved the state of supreme being is called a *jina* ("conqueror" or "victor"). The ultimate status of these perfect souls is called siddha. Ancient texts also refer to Jainism as *shramana dharma* (self-reliant) or the "path of the nirganthas" (those without attachments or aversions).

In Jainism highest form of pure knowledge a soul can attain is called Kevala Jnana (Sanskrit : केवलज्ञान)or Kevala Ṇāṇa (Prakrit : केवल णाण). which means "absolute or perfect" and Jñāna, which means "knowledge". Kevala is the state of isolation of the jīva from the ajīva attained through ascetic practices which burn off one's karmic residues, releasing one from bondage to the cycle of death and rebirth. Kevala Jñāna thus means

infinite knowledge of self and non-self, attained by a soul after annihilation of the all ghātiyā karmas. The soul which has reached this stage achieves moksa or liberation at the end of its life span.

Mahavira, 24th thirthankara of Jainism, is said to have practised rigorous austerities for 12 years before he attained enlightenment,

During the thirteenth year, in the second month of summer, in the fourth fortnight, the light (fortnight) of Vaisakha, on its tenth day, when the shadow had turned towards the east and the first wake was over, on the day called Suvrata, in the Muhurta called Vigaya, outside of the town Grimbhikagrama on the bank of the river Rjupalika, not far from an old temple, in the field of the householder Samaga, under a Sal tree, when the moon was in conjunction with the asterism Uttara Phalguni, (the Venerable One) in a squatting position with joined heels, exposing himself to the heat of the sun, after fasting two and a half days without drinking water, being engaged in deep meditation, reached the highest knowledge and intuition, called Kevala, which is infinite, supreme, unobstructed, unimpeded, complete, and full.

Kevala Jñāna is one of the five major events in the life of a Tirthankara and is known as Jñāna Kalyanaka and supposedly celebrated by all gods. Mahavira's Kaivalya was said to have been celebrated by the demi-gods, who constructed the Samosarana or a grand preaching assembly for him.

Western understanding

In the Western world the concept of *enlightenment* in a religious context acquired a romantic meaning. It has become synonymous with self-realization and the true self, which is being regarded as a substantial essence which is covered over by social conditioning.

As 'Aufklärung'

The use of the Western word *enlightenment* is based on the supposed resemblance of *bodhi* with *Aufklärung*, the independent use of reason to gain insight into the true nature of our world. As a matter of fact there are more resemblances with Romanticism than with the Enlightenment: the emphasis on feeling, on intuitive insight, on a true essence beyond the world of appearances.

Awakening: Historical period of renewed interest in religion

The equivalent term "awakening" has also been used in a Christian context, namely the Great Awakenings, several periods of religious revival in American religious history. Historians and theologians identify three or four waves of increased religious enthusiasm occurring between the early 18th century and the late 19th century. Each of these "Great Awakenings" was characterized by widespread revivals led by evangelical Protestant ministers, a sharp increase of interest in religion, a profound sense of conviction and

redemption on the part of those affected, an increase in evangelical church membership, and the formation of new religious movements and denominations.

Illumination

Another equivalent term is Illuminationism, which was also used by Paul Demieville in his work *The Mirror of the Mind*, in which he made a distinction between "illumination subie" and "illumination graduelle". Illuminationism is a doctrine according to which the process of human thought needs to be aided by divine grace. It is the oldest and most influential alternative to naturalism in the theory of mind and epistemology. It was an important feature of ancient Greek philosophy, Neoplatonism, medieval philosophy, and in particular, the Illuminationist school of Islamic philosophy.

Augustine was an important proponent of Illuminationism, stating that everything we know is taught to us by God as He casts His light over the world, saying that "The mind needs to be enlightened by light from outside itself, so that it can participate in truth, because it is not itself the nature of truth. You will light my lamp, Lord and "You hear nothing true from me which you have not first told me. Augustine's version of illuminationism is not that God gives us certain information, but rather gives us insight into the truth of the information we received for ourselves.

Romanticism and transcendentalism

This romantic idea of enlightenment as insight into a timeless, transcendent reality has been popularized especially by D.T. Suzuki. Further popularization was due to the writings of Heinrich Dumoulin. Dumoulin viewed metaphysics as the expression of a transcendent truth, which according to him was expressed by Mahayana Buddhism, but not by the pragmatic analysis of the oldest Buddhism, which emphasizes anatta. This romantic vision is also recognizable in the works of Ken Wilber.

In the oldest Buddhism this essentialism is not recognizable. According to critics it doesn't really contribute to a real insight into Buddhism:

...most of them labour under the old cliché that the goal of Buddhist psychological analysis is to reveal the hidden mysteries in the human mind and thereby facilitate the development of a transcendental state of consciousness beyond the reach of linguistic expression.

Experience

A common reference in Western culture is the notion of "enlightenment *experience*". This notion can be traced back to William James, who used the term "religious experience" in his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Wayne Proudfoot traces the roots of the notion of "religious experience" further back to the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), who argued that religion is based on a feeling of the infinite.

The notion of "religious experience" was used by Schleiermacher to defend religion against the growing scientific and secular critique.

It was popularised by the Transcendentalists, and exported to Asia via missionaries. Transcendentalism developed as a reaction against 18th Century rationalism, John Locke's philosophy of Sensualism, and the predestinationism of New England Calvinism. It is fundamentally a variety of diverse sources such as Hindu texts like the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, various religions, and German idealism.

It was adopted by many scholars of religion, of which William James was the most influential.

The notion of "experience" has been criticised. Robert Sharf points out that "experience" is a typical Western term, which has found its way into Asian religiosity via western influences. The notion of "experience" introduces a false notion of duality between "experiencer" and "experienced", whereas the essence of kensho is the realisation of the "non-duality" of observer and observed. "Pure experience" does not exist; all experience is mediated by intellectual and cognitive activity. The specific teachings and practices of a specific tradition may even determine what "experience" someone has, which means that this "experience" is not the *proof* of the teaching, but a *result* of the teaching. A pure consciousness without concepts, reached by "cleaning the doors of perception", would be an overwhelming chaos of sensory input without coherence.

Nevertheless, the notion of religious experience has gained widespread use in the study of religion, and is extensively researched.

Western culture

Christianity

The word "enlightenment" is not generally used in Christian contexts for religious understanding or insight. More commonly used terms in the Christian tradition are religious conversion and revelation.

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952), one of the founders of Dispensationalism, uses the word "illuminism". Christians who are "illuminated" are of two groups, those who have experienced true illuminism (biblical) and those who experienced false illuminism (not from the Holy Spirit).

Christian interest in eastern spirituality has grown throughout the 20th century. Notable Christians, such as Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle and AMA Samy, have participated in Buddhist training and even become Buddhist teachers themselves. In a few places Eastern contemplative techniques have been integrated in Christian practices, such as centering prayer. But this integration has also raised questions about the borders between these traditions.

Western esotericism and mysticism

Western and Mediterranean culture has a rich tradition of esotericism and mysticism. The Perennial philosophy, basic to the New Age understanding of the world, regards those traditions as akin to Eastern religions which aim at awakening/ enlightenment and developing wisdom. The hypothesis that all mystical traditions share a "common core", is central to New Age, but contested by a diversity of scientists like Katz and Proudfoot.

Judaism includes the mystical tradition of Kabbalah. Islam includes the mystical tradition of Sufism. In the Fourth Way teaching, enlightenment is the highest state of Man (humanity).

Nondualism

A popular western understanding sees "enlightenment" as "nondual consciousness", "a primordial, natural awareness without subject or object". It is used interchangeably with Neo-Advaita.

This nondual consciousness is seen as a common stratum to different religions. Several definitions or meanings are combined in this approach, which makes it possible to recognize various traditions as having the same essence. According to Renard, many forms of religion are based on an experiential or intuitive understanding of "the Real"

This idea of nonduality as "the central essence" is part of a modern mutual exchange and synthesis of ideas between western spiritual and esoteric traditions and Asian religious revival and reform movements. Western predecessors are, among others, New Age, Wilber's synthesis of western psychology and Asian spirituality, the idea of a Perennial Philosophy, and Theosophy. Eastern influences are the Hindu reform movements such as Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and Vivekananda's Neo-Vedanta, the Vipassana movement, and Buddhist modernism. A truly syncretistic influence is Osho and the Rajneesh movement, a hybrid of eastern and western ideas and teachings, and a mainly western group of followers.

Cognitive aspects

Religious experience as cognitive construct

"Religious experiences" have "evidential value", since they confirm the specific worldview of the experiencer:

These experiences are *cognitive* in that, allegedly at least, the subject of the experience receives a reliable and accurate view of what, religiously considered, are the most important features of things. This, so far as their religious tradition is concerned, is what is most important about them. This is what makes them "salvific" or powerful to save.

Yet, just like the very notion of "religious experience" is shaped by a specific discourse and habitus, the "uniformity of interpretation" may be due to the influence of religious traditions which shape the interpretation of such experiences.

Various religious experiences

Yandell discerns various "religious experiences" and their corresponding doctrinal settings, which differ in structure and phenomenological content, and in the "evidential value" they present. Yandell discerns five sorts:

1. Numinous experiences – Monotheism (Jewish, Christian, Vedantic)
2. Nirvanic experiences – Buddhism, "according to which one sees that the self is but a bundle of fleeting states"
3. Kevala experiences – Jainism, "according to which one sees the self as an indestructible subject of experience"
4. Moksha experiences – Hinduism, Brahman "either as a cosmic person, or, quite differently, as qualityless"
5. Nature mystical experience

Cognitive science

Various philosophers and cognitive scientists state that there is no "true self" or a "little person" (homunculus) in the brain that "watches the show," and that consciousness is an emergent property that arise from the various modules of the brain in ways that are yet far from understood. According to Susan Greenfield, the "self" may be seen as a composite, whereas Douglas R. Hofstadter describes the sense of "I" as a result of cognitive process.

This is in line with the Buddhist teachings, which state that

[...] what we call 'I' or 'being,' is only a combination of physical and mental aggregates which are working together interdependently in a flux of momentary change within the law of cause and effect, and that there is nothing, permanent, everlasting, unchanging, and eternal in the whole of existence.

To this end, Parfit called Buddha the "first bundle theorist".

The idea that the mind is the result of the activities of neurons in the brain was most notably popularized by Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of DNA, in his book The Astonishing Hypothesis. The basic idea can be traced back to at least Étienne Bonnot de Condillac. According to Crick, the idea was not a novel one:

[...] an exceptionally clear statement of it can be found in a well known paper by Horace Barlow.

Entheogens

Several users of entheogens throughout the ages have claimed spiritual enlightenment with the use of these substances, their use and prevalence through history is well recorded, and continues today. In modern times we have seen increased interest in these practices, for example the rise of interest in Ayahuasca. The psychological effects of these substances have been subject to scientific research focused on understanding their physiological basis.

Chapter 13
ADVAITA VEDANTA

Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy and religious practice, and one of the classic Indian paths to spiritual realization. The term *Advaita* refers to its idea that the soul (true Self, Atman) is the same as the highest metaphysical Reality (Brahman). The followers of this school are known as Advaita Vedantins, or just Advaitins, and they seek spiritual liberation through acquiring vidyā (knowledge) of one's true identity as Atman, and the identity of Atman and Brahman.

Advaita Vedanta traces its roots in the oldest Upanishads. It relies on three textual sources called the Prasthanatrayi. It gives "a unifying interpretation of the whole body of Upanishads", the *Brahma Sutras*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Advaita Vedanta is the oldest extant sub-school of Vedanta, which is one of the six orthodox (*āstika*) Hindu philosophies (*darśana*). Though its roots trace back to the 1st millennium BCE, the most prominent exponent of the Advaita Vedanta is considered by the tradition to be 8th century scholar Adi Shankara.

Advaita Vedanta emphasizes *Jivanmukti*, the idea that moksha (freedom, liberation) is achievable in this life in contrast to Indian philosophies that emphasize Videhamukti, or moksha after death. The school uses concepts such as Brahman, Atman, Maya, Avidya, meditation and others that are found in major Indian religious traditions, but interprets them in its own way for its theories of moksha. Advaita Vedanta is one of the most studied and most influential schools of classical Indian thought. Many scholars describe it as a form of monism, others describe the *Advaita* philosophy as non-dualistic.

Advaita influenced and was influenced by various traditions and texts of Hindu philosophies such as *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, other sub-schools of Vedanta, *Vaishnavism*, *Shaivism*, the *Puranas*, the *Agamas*, other sub-schools of *Vedanta*, as well as social movements such as the Bhakti movement. Beyond Hinduism, Advaita Vedanta interacted and developed with the other traditions of India such as Jainism and Buddhism. Advaita Vedanta texts espouse a spectrum of views from idealism, including illusionism, to realist or nearly realist positions expressed in the early works of *Shankara*. In modern times, its views appear in various Neo-Vedanta movements. It has been termed as the paradigmatic example of Hindu spirituality.

Etymology and nomenclature

The Advaita Vedanta school has been referred to historically by various names, such as *Advaita-vada* (speaker of Advaita), *Abheda-darshana* (view of non-difference), *Dvaita-vada-pratisedha* (denial of dual distinctions), and *Kevala-dvaita* (non-dualism of the isolated).

According to Richard King, a professor of Buddhist and Asian studies, the term *Advaita* first occurs in a recognizably Vedantic context in the prose of Mandukya Upanishad. In contrast, according to Frits Staal, a professor of Philosophy specializing in Sanskrit and Vedic studies, the word *Advaita* is from the Vedic era, and the Vedic sage Yajnavalkya (8th or 7th-century BCE) is credited to be the one who coined it. Stephen Phillips, a professor of philosophy and Asian studies, translates the *Advaita* containing verse excerpt in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, as follows:

सलिले एकस् द्रष्टा **अद्वैतस्** भवति एष ब्रह्मलोकस् सम्राट् ति ह एनम् उवाच अनुशशास याज्ञवल्क्यस् एषा अस्य परमा गतिस् एषास्य परमा सम्पद्	An ocean, a single seer **without duality** becomes he whose world is Brahman, O King, Yajnavalkya instructed This is his supreme way. This is his supreme achievement.
—*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.32*	—*Transl: Stephen Phillips*

Darśana (philosophy) - central concerns

Advaita is a subschool of Vedanta, the latter being one of the six classical Hindu *darśanas*. It, like nearly all these philosophies, has an integrated body of textual interpretations and religious practices for what Hinduism considers four proper aims of life: virtue (*dharma*), material prosperity (*artha*), desire (*kama*) and the fourth and final aim being *moksha*, the spiritual liberation or release from cycles of rebirth (samsara). Traditional Advaita Vedanta centers on the study of the *sruti* especially the Principal Upanishads, along with the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita.

Within the Vedanta tradition of Hinduism are many sub-schools, of which Advaita is one. Unlike Buddhism, but like Jainism, all Vedanta schools consider the existence of Atman (real self, soul) as self evident. The Vedanta tradition also posits the concept of Brahman as the eternal, unchanging metaphysical reality. The sub-schools of Vedanta disagree on the relation between *Atman* and *Brahman*. The Advaita *darsana* considers them to be identical.

Advaita Vedanta believes that the knowledge of one's true self or Atman is liberating. Along with self-knowledge, it teaches that *moksha* can be achieved by the correct understanding of one's true identity as Ātman, the dispassionate and unmoveable observer, and the identity of Ātman and Brahman. Correct knowledge, which destroys *avidya*, psychological and perceptual errors related to Atman and Brahman, is obtained through three stages of practice, *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (thinking) and *nididhyasana* (meditation).

The Vedanta tradition of Hinduism rejects the dualism of Samkhya. The Samkhya school of Hindu thought proposes two metaphysical realities, namely Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (inert primal matter), then states that Purusha is the efficient cause of all existence while Prakriti is its material cause. Advaita, like all Vedanta schools, states that Brahman is both the efficient and the material cause, "that from which the origination, subsistence, and dissolution of this universe proceed." What created all existence is also present in and reflected in all beings and inert matter, the creative principle was and is everywhere, always. This Brahman it postulates is *sat-cit-ananda* (truth-consciousness-bliss). By accepting this postulation, various theoretical difficulties arise which Advaita and other Vedanta traditions offer different answers for: first, how did *sat* Brahman without any distinction become manifold universe? second, how did *cit* Brahman create material world? third, if *ananda* Brahman is pure bliss, why did the empirical world of sufferings arise? These are the questions that Advaita Vedanta thinkers have historically attempted to answer, as did the non-Advaita schools of Hinduism.

Advaita establishes its truths, in part, from the oldest Principal Upanishads (*sruti*), the Brahma Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita and numerous other Hindu texts. Reason is used to support revelation, the *sruti*, the ultimate source of truth. Reason clarifies the truth and removes objections, according to the Advaita school, however it believes that pure logic cannot lead to philosophical truths and only experience and meditative insights do. The *Sruti*, it believes is a collection of experience and meditative insights about liberating knowledge. The Advaita literature also provide a criticism of opposing systems, including the dualistic school of Hinduism, as well as non-Hindu philosophies such as Buddhism.

Ideas and aims

Atman

Ātman is a central idea in Hindu philosophy and a foundational premise of Advaita Vedanta. It is a Sanskrit word that means "real self" of the individual, "essence" and soul.

Ātman is the first principle in Advaita Vedanta, along with its concept of Brahman, with Atman being the perceptible personal particular and Brahman the inferred unlimited universal, both synonymous and interchangeable. It is, to an Advaitin, the unchanging, enduring, eternal absolute. It is the "true self" of an individual, a consciousness, states Sthaneshwar Timalsina, that is "self-revealed, self-evident and self-aware (*svaprakashata*)". Atman, states Eliot Deutsch, is the "pure, undifferentiated, supreme power of awareness", it is more than thought, it is a state of being, that which is conscious and transcends subject-object divisions and momentariness.

Advaita Vedanta philosophy considers Atman as self-existent awareness, limitless and non-dual. It asserts that there is "spirit, soul, self" (Atman) within each living entity, which are same as each other and identical to the universal eternal Brahman. It is an experience of "oneness" which unifies all beings, in which there is the divine in every being, in which all existence is a single Reality, and in which there is no "divine" distinct from the individual Atman.

Atman is not the constantly changing body, not the desires, not the emotions, not the ego, nor the dualistic mind in Advaita Vedanta. It is the introspective, inwardly self-conscious "on-looker" (*saksi*). To Advaitins, human beings, in a state of unawareness and ignorance, see their "I-ness" as different than the being in others, then act out of impulse, fears, cravings, malice, division, confusion, anxiety, passions, and a sense of distinctiveness.

Brahman

According to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is the highest Reality, That which is unborn and unchanging, and "not sublatable", and cannot be superseded by a still higher reality. Other than *Brahman*, everything else, including the universe, material objects and individuals, are ever-changing and therefore maya. Brahman is *Paramarthika Satyam*, "Absolute Truth", and

the true Self, pure consciousness ... the only Reality (*sat*), since It is untinged by difference, the mark of ignorance, and since It is the one thing that is not sublatable".

In Advaita, Brahman is the substrate and cause of all changes. Brahman is considered to be the material cause and the efficient cause of all that exists. Brahman is the "primordial reality that creates, maintains and withdraws within it the universe." It is the "creative principle which lies realized in the whole world".

Advaita's Upanishadic roots state Brahman's qualities to be *Sat-cit-ānanda* (being-consciousness-bliss) It means "true being-consciousness-bliss," or "Eternal Bliss Consciousness". Adi Shankara held that *satcitananda* is identical with Brahman and Atman. The Advaitin scholar Madhusudana Sarasvati explained Brahman as the Reality that is simultaneously an absence of falsity (sat), absence of ignorance (cit), and absence of sorrow/self-limitation (ananda). According to Adi Shankara, the knowledge of Brahman that Shruti provides cannot be obtained in any other means besides self inquiry.

Puruṣārtha - the four goals of human life

Advaita, like other schools, accepts Puruṣārtha - the four goals of human life as natural and proper:

- Dharma: the right way to life, the "duties and obligations of the individual toward himself and the society as well as those of the society toward the individual";
- Artha: the means to support and sustain one's life;
- Kāma: pleasure and enjoyment;
- Mokṣa: liberation, release.

Of these, much of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy focuses on the last, gaining liberation in one's current life. The first three are discussed and encouraged by Advaitins, but usually in the context of knowing Brahman and Self-realization.

Moksha - liberation

The soteriological goal, in Advaita, is to gain self-knowledge and complete understanding of the identity of Atman and Brahman. Correct knowledge of Atman and Brahman leads dissolution of all dualistic tendencies and to liberation, Moksha is attained by realizing one's true identity as Ātman, and the identity of Atman and Brahman, the complete understanding of one's real nature as Brahman in this life. This is stated by Shankara as follows:

I am other than name, form and action.
My nature is ever free!
I am Self, the supreme unconditioned Brahman.
I am pure Awareness, always non-dual.

—Adi Shankara, Upadesasahasri 11.7,

According to Advaita Vedanta, liberation can be achieved while living, and is called *Jivanmukti*. The Atman-knowledge, that is the knowledge of true Self and its relationship to Brahman is central to this liberation in Advaita thought. Atman-knowledge, to Advaitins, is that state of full awareness, liberation and freedom which overcomes dualities at all levels, realizing the divine within oneself, the divine in others and all beings, the non-dual Oneness, that Brahman is in everything, and everything is Brahman.

According to Rambachan, in Advaita, this state of liberating self-knowledge includes and leads to the understanding that "the self is the self of all, the knower of self sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self."

Jivanmukta

In Advaita Vedanta, the interest is not in liberation in after life, but in one's current life. This school holds that liberation can be achieved while living, and a person who achieves this is called a *Jivanmukta*.

The concept of *Jivanmukti* of Advaita Vedanta contrasts with *Videhamukti* (moksha from samsara after death) in theistic sub-schools of Vedanta. Jivanmukti is a state that transforms the nature, attributes and behaviors of an individual, after which the liberated individual shows attributes such as:

- he is not bothered by disrespect and endures cruel words, treats others with respect regardless of how others treat him;
- when confronted by an angry person he does not return anger, instead replies with soft and kind words;
- even if tortured, he speaks and trusts the truth;
- he does not crave for blessings or expect praise from others;
- he never injures or harms any life or being (ahimsa), he is intent in the welfare of all beings;

- he is as comfortable being alone as in the presence of others;
- he is as comfortable with a bowl, at the foot of a tree in tattered robe without help, as when he is in a mithuna (union of mendicants), grama (village) and nagara (city);
- he doesn't care about or wear sikha (tuft of hair on the back of head for religious reasons), nor the holy thread across his body. To him, knowledge is sikha, knowledge is the holy thread, knowledge alone is supreme. Outer appearances and rituals do not matter to him, only knowledge matters;
- for him there is no invocation nor dismissal of deities, no mantra nor non-mantra, no prostrations nor worship of gods, goddess or ancestors, nothing other than knowledge of Self;
- he is humble, high spirited, of clear and steady mind, straightforward, compassionate, patient, indifferent, courageous, speaks firmly and with sweet words.

Vidya, Svādhyāya and Anubhava

Sruti (scriptures), proper reasoning and meditation are the main sources of knowledge (*vidya*) for the Advaita Vedanta tradition. It teaches that correct knowledge of Atman and Brahman is achievable by *svādhyāya*, study of the self and of the Vedic texts, and three stages of practice: *sravana* (perception, hearing), *manana* (thinking) and *nididhyasana* (meditation), a three-step methodology that is rooted in the teachings of chapter 4 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Sravana literally means hearing, and broadly refers to perception and observations typically aided by a counsellor or teacher (guru), wherein the Advaitin listens and discusses the ideas, concepts, questions and answers.

Manana refers to thinking on these discussions and contemplating over the various ideas based on *svadhyaya* and *sravana*. *Nididhyāsana* refers to meditation, realization and consequent conviction of the truths, non-duality and a state where there is a fusion of thought and action, knowing and being.

Bilimoria states that these three stages of Advaita practice can be viewed as *sadhana* practice that unifies *Yoga* and *Karma* ideas, and was most likely derived from these older traditions.

Adi Shankara uses *anubhava* interchangeably with *pratipatta*, "understanding". Dalal and others state that *anubhava* does not center around some sort of "mystical experience," but around the correct knowledge of Brahman. Nikhalananda states that (knowledge of) *Atman* and *Brahman* can only be reached by *buddhi*, "reason," stating that mysticism is a kind of intuitive knowledge, while *buddhi* is the highest means of attaining knowledge.

Mahavakya – The Great Sentences

Several *Mahavakyas*, or "the great sentences", have Advaitic theme, that is "the inner immortal self and the great cosmic power are one and the same".

Sr. No.	Vakya	Meaning	Upanishad	Veda
1	प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म (pragñānam brahma)	*Prajñānam is Brahman*	Aitareya V.3	Rgveda
2.	अहं ब्रह्मास्मि (aham brahmāsmi)	*I am Brahman*, or *I am Divine*	Brhadāranyaka I.4.10	Shukla Yajurveda
3.	तत्त्वमसि (tat tvam asi)	*That thou art*	Chandogya VI.8.7	Samaveda
4.	अयमात्मा ब्रह्म (ayamātmā brahma)	*This Atman is Brahman*	Mandukya II	Atharvaveda

Stages and practices

Advaita Vedanta entails more than self-inquiry or bare insight into one's real nature, but also includes self-restraint, textual studies and ethical perfection. It is described in classical Advaita books like Shankara's Upadesasahasri and the Vivekachudamani, which is also attributed to Shankara.

Jnana Yoga – path of practice

Classical Advaita Vedanta emphasises the path of Jnana Yoga, a progression of study and training to attain moksha. It consists of fourfold qualities, or behavioral qualifications (*Samanyasa, Sampattis, sādhana-catustaya*):

- *Nityānitya vastu viveka* (नित्यानित्य वस्तु विवेकम्) — The ability (viveka) to correctly discriminate between the real and eternal (*nitya*) and the substance that is apparently real, aging, changing and transitory (*anitya*).
- *Ihāmutrārtha phala bhoga virāga* (इहाऽमुत्रार्थ फल भोगविरागम्) — The renunciation (*virāga*) of petty desires that distract the mind (*artha phala bhoga*), willing to give up everything that is an obstacle to the pursuit of truth and self-knowledge.
- *Śamādi ṣatka sampatti* (शमादि षट्क सम्पत्ति) — the sixfold virtues or qualities,
  - *Śama* (mental tranquility, ability to focus the mind).
  - *Dama* (self-restraint, the virtue of temperance).
  - *Uparati* (dispassion, ability to be quiet and disassociated from everything; "discontinuation of religious ceremonies")
  - *Titikṣa* (endurance, perseverance, ability to be patient during demanding circumstances).
  - *Śraddhā* (the faith in teacher and Sruti texts).
  - *Samādhāna* (attention, intentness of mind).
- *Mumukṣutva* (मुमुक्षुत्वम्) — A positive longing for freedom and wisdom, driven to the quest of knowledge and understanding.

Correct knowledge, which destroys *avidya*, psychological and perceptual errors related to Atman and Brahman, is obtained in *jnanayoga* through three stages of practice, *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (thinking) and *nididhyasana* (meditation). This three-step methodology is rooted in the teachings of chapter 4 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*:

- *Sravana*, listening to the teachings of the sages on the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, studying the Vedantic texts, such as the Brahma Sutras, and discussions with the guru (teacher, counsellor);
- *Manana*, refers to thinking on these discussions and contemplating over the various ideas based on *svadhyaya* and *sravana*. It is the stage of reflection on the teachings;
- *Nididhyāsana*, the stage of meditation and introspection. This stage of practice aims at realization and consequent conviction of the truths, non-duality and a state where there is a fusion of thought and action, knowing and being.

Samadhi

While Shankara emphasized sravana ("hearing"), manana ("reflection") and nididhyasana ("repeated meditation"), later texts like the *Dṛg-Dṛśya-Viveka* (14th century) and *Vedantasara (of Sadananda)* (15th century) added samadhi as a means to liberation, a theme that was also emphasized by Swami Vivekananda.

Guru

Advaita Vedanta school has traditionally had a high reverence for Guru (teacher), and recommends that a competent Guru be sought in one's pursuit of spirituality. However, the Guru is not mandatory in Advaita school, states Clooney, but reading of Vedic literature and followed by reflection is. Adi Shankara, states Comans, regularly employed compound words "such as *Sastracaryopadesa* (instruction by way of the scriptures and the teacher) and *Vedantacaryopadesa* (instruction by way of the Upanishads and the teacher) to emphasize the importance of Guru".

This reflects the Advaita tradition which holds a competent teacher as important and essential to gaining correct knowledge, freeing oneself from false knowledge, and to self-realization.

A guru is someone more than a teacher, traditionally a reverential figure to the student, with the *guru* serving as a "counselor, who helps mold values, shares experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student.

The guru, states Joel Mlecko, is more than someone who teaches specific type of knowledge, and includes in its scope someone who is also a "counselor, a sort of parent of mind and soul, who helps mold values and experiential knowledge as much as specific knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who reveals the meaning of life."

Ontology - the nature of Being

Levels of Reality, Truths

The classical Advaita Vedanta explains all reality and everything in the experienced world to be same as the Brahman. To Advaitins, there is a unity in multiplicity, and there is no dual hierarchy of a Creator and the created universe. All objects, all experiences, all matter, all consciousness, all awareness, in Advaita philosophy is not the property but the very nature of this one fundamental reality Brahman. With this premise, the Advaita school states that any ontological effort must presuppose a knowing self, and this effort needs to explain all empirical experiences such as the projected reality while one dreams during sleep, and the observed multiplicity of living beings. This Advaita does by positing its theory of three levels of reality, the theory of two truths, and by developing and integrating these ideas with its theory of errors (*anirvacaniya khyati*).

The swan is an important motif in Advaita. It symbolises two things: first, the swan is called hamsah in Sanskrit (which becomes hamso if the first letter in the next word is /h/). Upon repeating this hamso indefinitely, it becomes so-aham, meaning, "I am That". Second, just as a swan lives in a lake but its feathers are not soiled by water, similarly a liberated Advaitin lives in this world but is not soiled by its maya.

Shankara proposes three levels of reality, using sublation as the ontological criterion:

- *Pāramārthika* (*paramartha*, absolute), the Reality that is metaphysically true and ontologically accurate. It is the state of experiencing that "which is absolutely real and into which both other reality levels can be resolved". This reality is the highest, it can't be sublated (assimilated) by any other.
- *Vyāvahārika* (*vyavahara*), or *samvriti-saya*, consisting of the empirical or pragmatical reality. It is ever changing over time, thus empirically true at a given time and context but not metaphysically true. It is "our world of experience, the phenomenal world that we handle every day when we are awake". It is the level in which both *jiva* (living creatures or individual souls) and *Iswara* are true; here, the material world is also true but this is incomplete reality and is sublatable.
- *Prāthibhāsika* (*pratibhasika*, apparent reality, unreality), "reality based on imagination alone". It is the level of experience in which the mind constructs its

own reality. Well-known examples of *pratibhasika* is the imaginary reality such as the "roaring of a lion" fabricated in dreams during one's sleep, and the perception of a rope in the dark as being a snake.

Advaita Vedanta acknowledges and admits that from the empirical perspective there are numerous distinctions. It states that everything and each reality has multiple perspectives, both absolute and relative. All these are valid and true in their respective contexts, states Advaita, but only from their respective particular perspectives. This "absolute and relative truths" explanation, Advaitins call as the "two truths" doctrine. John Grimes, a professor of Indian Religions specializing on Vedanta, explains this Advaita doctrine with the example of light and darkness. From sun's perspective, it neither rises nor sets, there is no darkness, and "all is light". From the perspective of a person on earth, sun does rise and set, there is both light and darkness, not "all is light", there are relative shades of light and darkness. Both are valid realities and truths, given their perspectives. Yet, they are contradictory. What is true from one point of view, states Grimes, is not from another. To Advaita Vedanta, this does not mean there are two truths and two realities, but it only means that the same one Reality and one Truth is explained or experienced from two different perspectives.

As they developed these theories, Advaita Vedanta scholars were influenced by some ideas from the Nyaya, Samkhya and Yoga schools of Hindu philosophy. These theories have not enjoyed universal consensus among Advaitins, and various competing ontological interpretations have flowered within the Advaita tradition.

Three states of consciousness and Turiya

Advaita posits three states of consciousness, namely waking (jagrat), dreaming (svapna), deep sleep (suṣupti), which are empirically experienced by human beings, and correspond to the Three Bodies Doctrine:

1. The first state is the waking state, in which we are aware of our daily world. This is the gross body.
2. The second state is the dreaming mind. This is the subtle body.
3. The third state is the state of deep sleep. This is the causal body.

Advaita also posits the fourth state of Turiya, which some describe as pure consciousness, the background that underlies and transcends these three common states of consciousness. Turiya is the state of liberation, where states Advaita school, one experiences the infinite (*ananta*) and non-different (*advaita/abheda*), that is free from the dualistic experience, the state in which ajativada, non-origination, is apprehended. According to Candradhara Sarma, Turiya state is where the foundational Self is realized, it is measureless, neither cause nor effect, all prevading, without suffering, blissful, changeless, self-luminous, real, immanent in all things and transcendent. Those who have experienced the Turiya stage of self-consciousness have reached the pure awareness of their own non-dual Self as one with everyone and everything, for them the knowledge, the knower, the known becomes one, they are the *Jivanmukta*.

Advaita traces the foundation of this ontological theory in more ancient Sanskrit texts. For example, chapters 8.7 through 8.12 of Chandogya Upanishad discuss the "four states of consciousness" as awake, dream-filled sleep, deep sleep, and beyond deep sleep. One of the earliest mentions of *Turiya*, in the Hindu scriptures, occurs in verse 5.14.3 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. The idea is also discussed in other early Upanishads.

Identity of Atman and Brahman

According to Advaita Vedanta, Atman is identical to Brahman. This is expressed in the *mahavakya "tat tvam asi"*, "thou are that." There is "a common ground, viz. consciousness, to the individual and Brahman." Each soul, in Advaita view, is non-different from the infinite. According to Shankara, Atman and Brahman seem different at the empirical level of reality, but this difference is unreal, and at the highest level of reality they are really identical.

Moksha is attained by realizing the identity of Atman and Brahman, the complete understanding of one's real nature as Brahman in this life. This is frequently stated by Advaita scholars, such as Shankara, as:

I am other than name, form and action.
My nature is ever free!
I am Self, the supreme unconditioned Brahman.
I am pure Awareness, always non-dual.

—*Adi Shankara, Upadesasahasri 11.7,*

Empirical reality - illusion and ignorance

According to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is the sole reality. The status of the phenomenal world is an important question in Advaita Vedanta, and different solutions have been proposed. The perception of the phenomenal world as real is explained by *maya* (constantly changing reality) and *avidya* ("ignorance"). Other than *Brahman*, everything else, including the universe, material objects and individuals, are ever-changing and therefore maya. Brahman is *Paramarthika Satyam*, "Absolute Truth", and "the true Self, pure consciousness, the only Reality (*sat*), since It is untinged by difference, the mark of ignorance, and since It is the one thing that is not sublatable".

Causality

All schools of Vedanta subscribe to the theory of *Satkāryavāda*, which means that the effect is pre-existent in the cause. But there are different views on the causal relationship and the nature of the empirical world from the perspective of metaphysical Brahman. The *Brahma Sutras*, the ancient Vedantins, most sub-schools of Vedanta, as well as Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy, support *Parinamavada*, the idea that the world is a real transformation (*parinama*) of Brahman.

Scholars disagree on the whether Adi Shankara and his Advaita system explained causality through *vivarta*. According to Andrew Nicholson, instead of *parinama-vada*, the competing causality theory is *Vivartavada*, which says "the world, is merely an unreal manifestation (*vivarta*) of Brahman. Vivartavada states that although Brahman appears to undergo a transformation, in fact no real change takes place. The myriad of beings are unreal manifestation, as the only real being is Brahman, that ultimate reality which is unborn, unchanging, and entirely without parts". The advocates of this illusive, unreal transformation based causality theory, states Nicholson, have been the Advaitins, the followers of Shankara. "Although the world can be described as conventionally real", adds Nicholson, "the Advaitins claim that all of Brahman's effects must ultimately be acknowledged as unreal before the individual self can be liberated".

However, other scholars such as Hajime Nakamura and Paul Hacker disagree. Hacker and others state that Adi Shankara did not advocate *Vivartavada*, and his explanations are "remote from any connotation of illusion". According to these scholars, it was the 13th century scholar Prakasatman who gave a definition to *Vivarta*, and it is Prakasatman's theory that is sometimes misunderstood as Adi Shankara's position. Andrew Nicholson concurs with Hacker and other scholars, adding that the *vivarta-vada* isn't Shankara's theory, that Shankara's ideas appear closer to *parinama-vada*, and the *vivarta* explanation likely emerged gradually in Advaita subschool later.

According to Eliot Deutsch, Advaita Vedanta states that from "the standpoint of Brahman-experience and Brahman itself, there is no creation" in the absolute sense, all empirically observed creation is relative and mere transformation of one state into another, all states are provisional and a cause-effect driven modification.

Māyā (illusion)

The doctrine of Maya is used to explain the empirical reality in Advaita. Jiva, when conditioned by the human mind, is subjected to experiences of a subjective nature, states Vedanta school, which leads it to misunderstand Maya and interpret it as the sole and final reality. Advaitins assert that the perceived world, including people and other existence, is not what it appears to be". It is Māyā, they assert, which manifests and perpetuates a sense of false duality or divisional plurality. The empirical manifestation is real but changing, but it obfuscates the true nature of metaphysical Reality which is never changing. Advaita school holds that liberation is the unfettered realization and understanding of the unchanging Reality and truths – the Self, that the Self (Soul) in oneself is same as the Self in another and the Self in everything (Brahman).

In Advaita Vedanta philosophy, there are two realities: *Vyavaharika* (empirical reality) and *Paramarthika* (absolute, spiritual Reality). Māyā is the empirical reality that entangles consciousness. Māyā has the power to create a bondage to the empirical world, preventing the unveiling of the true, unitary Self—the Cosmic Spirit also known as Brahman. This theory of māyā was expounded and explained by Adi Shankara. Competing theistic Dvaita scholars contested Shankara's theory, and stated that Shankara did not offer a theory of the relationship between Brahman and Māyā. A later Advaita scholar

Prakasatman addressed this, by explaining, "Maya and Brahman together constitute the entire universe, just like two kinds of interwoven threads create a fabric. Maya is the manifestation of the world, whereas Brahman, which supports Maya, is the cause of the world."

Brahman is the sole metaphysical truth in Advaita Vedanta, Māyā is true in epistemological and empirical sense; however, Māyā is not the metaphysical and spiritual truth. The spiritual truth is the truth forever, while what is empirical truth is only true for now. Complete knowledge of true Reality includes knowing both *Vyavaharika* (empirical) and *Paramarthika* (spiritual), the Māyā and the Brahman. The goal of spiritual enlightenment, state Advaitins, is to realize Brahman, realize the unity and Oneness of all reality.

Avidya (ignorance)

Due to ignorance (avidyā), Brahman is perceived as the material world and its objects (nama rupa vikara). According to Shankara, Brahman is in reality attributeless and formless. Brahman, the highest truth and all (Reality), does not really change; it is only our ignorance that gives the appearance of change. Also due to avidyā, the true identity is forgotten, and material reality, which manifests at various levels, is mistaken as the only and true reality.

The notion of avidyā and its relationship to Brahman creates a crucial philosophical issue within Advaita Vedanta thought: how can avidyā appear in Brahman, since Brahman is pure consciousness? Sengaku Mayeda writes, in his commentary and translation of Adi Shankara's Upadesasahasri:

Certainly the most crucial problem which Sankara left for his followers is that of avidyā. If the concept is logically analysed, it would lead the Vedanta philosophy toward dualism or nihilism and uproot its fundamental position.

To Advaitins, human beings, in a state of unawareness and ignorance of this Universal Self, see their "I-ness" as different than the being in others, then act out of impulse, fears, cravings, malice, division, confusion, anxiety, passions, and a sense of distinctiveness.

Subsequent Advaitins gave somewhat various explanations, from which various Advaita schools arose.

Epistemology - ways of knowing

The ancient and medieval texts of Advaita Vedanta and other schools of Hindu philosophy discuss *Pramana* (epistemology). The theory of Pramana discusses questions like how correct knowledge can be acquired; how one knows, how one doesn't; and to what extent knowledge pertinent about someone or something can be acquired. Advaita Vedānta, accepts the following six kinds of pramāṇas:

1. *Pratyakṣa* (प्रत्यक्षाय) - perception
2. *Anumāṇa* (अनुमान) - inference
3. *Upamāṇa* (उपमान) - comparison, analogy
4. *Arthāpatti* (अर्थापत्ति) - postulation, derivation from circumstances
5. *Anupalabdi* (अनुपलब्धि) - non-perception, negative/cognitive proof
6. *Śabda* (शब्द) - relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts

Pratyakṣa (perception)

Pratyakṣa (प्रत्यक्षाय), perception, is of two types: external - that arising from the interaction of five senses and worldly objects, and internal - perception of inner sense, the mind. Advaita postulates four pre-requisites for correct perception: 1) *Indriyarthasannikarsa* (direct experience by one's sensory organ(s) with the object, whatever is being studied), 2) *Avyapadesya* (non-verbal; correct perception is not through hearsay, according to ancient Indian scholars, where one's sensory organ relies on accepting or rejecting someone else's perception), 3) *Avyabhicara* (does not wander; correct perception does not change, nor is it the result of deception because one's sensory organ or means of observation is drifting, defective, suspect) and 4) *Vyavasayatmaka* (definite; correct perception excludes judgments of doubt, either because of one's failure to observe all the details, or because one is mixing inference with observation and observing what one wants to observe, or not observing what one does not want to observe). The internal perception concepts included *pratibha* (intuition), *samanyalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of induction from perceived specifics to a universal), and *jnanalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of perception of prior processes and previous states of a 'topic of study' by observing its current state).

Anumāṇa (inference)

Anumāṇa (अनुमान), inference, is defined as applying reason to reach a new conclusion about truth from one or more observations and previous understanding of truths. Observing smoke and inferring fire is an example of *Anumana*. This epistemological method for gaining knowledge consists of three parts: 1) *Pratijna* (hypothesis), 2) *Hetu* (a reason), and 3) *drshtanta* (examples). The hypothesis must further be broken down into two parts: 1) *Sadhya* (that idea which needs to proven or disproven) and 2) *Paksha* (the object on which the *Sadhya* is predicated).

The inference is conditionally true if *Sapaksha* (positive examples as evidence) are present, and if *Vipaksha* (negative examples as counter-evidence) are absent. For rigor, the Indian philosophies further demand *Vyapti* - the requirement that the *hetu* (reason) must necessarily and separately account for the inference in "all" cases, in both *sapaksha* and *vipaksha*.

A conditionally proven hypothesis is called a *nigamana* (conclusion).

Upamāṇa (comparison, analogy)

Upamāṇa (उपमान), comparison, analogy. Some Hindu schools consider it as a proper means of knowledge. *Upamana*, states Lochtefeld, may be explained with the example of a traveler who has never visited lands or islands with endemic population of wildlife. He or she is told, by someone who has been there, that in those lands you see an animal that sort of looks like a cow, grazes like cow but is different from a cow in such and such way. Such use of analogy and comparison is, state the Indian epistemologists, a valid means of conditional knowledge, as it helps the traveller identify the new animal later. The subject of comparison is formally called *upameyam*, the object of comparison is called *upamanam*, while the attribute(s) are identified as *samanya*.

Arthāpatti (postulation)

Arthāpatti (अर्थापत्ति), postulation, derivation from circumstances. In contemporary logic, this *pramana* is similar to circumstantial implication. As example, if a person left in a boat on river earlier, and the time is now past the expected time of arrival, then the circumstances support the truth postulate that the person has arrived. Many Indian scholars considered this *Pramana* as invalid or at best weak, because the boat may have gotten delayed or diverted. However, in cases such as deriving the time of a future sunrise or sunset, this method was asserted by the proponents to be reliable.

Anupalabdi (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof)

Anupalabdi (अनुपलब्धि), non-perception, negative/cognitive proof. *Anupalabdhi pramana* suggests that knowing a negative, such as "there is no jug in this room" is a form of valid knowledge. If something can be observed or inferred or proven as non-existent or impossible, then one knows more than what one did without such means. In Advaita school of Hindu philosophy, a valid conclusion is either *sadrupa* (positive) or *asadrupa* (negative) relation - both correct and valuable. Like other *pramana*, Indian scholars refined *Anupalabdi* to four types: non-perception of the cause, non-perception of the effect, non-perception of object, and non-perception of contradiction. Only two schools of Hinduism accepted and developed the concept "non-perception" as a *pramana*. Advaita considers this method as valid and useful when the other five *pramanas* fail in one's pursuit of knowledge and truth. A variation of *Anupaladbi*, called Abhava (अभाव) has also been posited as an epistemic method. It means non-existence. Some scholars consider *Anupalabdi* to be same as *Abhava*, while others consider *Anupalabdi* and *Abhava* as different. *Abhava-pramana* has been discussed in Advaita in the context of *Padartha* (पदार्थ, referent of a term). A *Padartha* is defined as that which is simultaneously *Astitva* (existent), *Jneyatva* (knowable) and *Abhidheyatva* (nameable). *Abhava* was further refined in four types, by the schools of Hinduism that accepted it as a useful method of epistemology: *dhvamsa* (termination of what existed), *atyanta-abhava* (impossibility, absolute non-existence, contradiction), *anyonya-abhava* (mutual negation, reciprocal absence) and *pragavasa* (prior, antecedent non-existence).

Śabda (relying on testimony)

Śabda (शब्द), relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts. Hiriyanna explains *Sabda-pramana* as a concept which means reliable expert testimony. The schools of Hinduism which consider it epistemically valid suggest that a human being needs to know numerous facts, and with the limited time and energy available, he can learn only a fraction of those facts and truths directly. He must rely on others, his parent, family, friends, teachers, ancestors and kindred members of society to rapidly acquire and share knowledge and thereby enrich each other's lives. This means of gaining proper knowledge is either spoken or written, but through *Sabda* (words). The reliability of the source is important, and legitimate knowledge can only come from the *Sabda* of reliable sources. The disagreement between Advaita and other schools of Hinduism has been on how to establish reliability.

Ethics

Some claim, states Deutsch, "that Advaita turns its back on all theoretical and practical considerations of morality and, if not unethical, is at least 'a-ethical' in character". However, adds Deutsch, ethics *does* have a firm place in this philosophy. Its ideology is permeated with ethics and value questions enter into every metaphysical and epistemological analysis, and it considers "an independent, separate treatment of ethics are unnecessary". According to Advaita Vedanta, states Deutsch, there cannot be "any absolute moral laws, principles or duties", instead in its axiological view Atman is "beyond good and evil", and all values result from self-knowledge of the reality of "distinctionless Oneness" of one's real self, every other being and all manifestations of Brahman. Advaitin ethics includes lack of craving, lack of dual distinctions between one's own soul and another being's, good and just Karma.

The values and ethics in Advaita Vedanta emanate from what it views as inherent in the state of liberating self-knowledge. This state, according to Rambachan, includes and leads to the understanding that "the self is the self of all, the knower of self sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self." Such knowledge and understanding of the indivisibility of one's and other's Atman, Advaitins believe leads to "a deeper identity and affinity with all". It does not alienate or separate an Advaitin from his or her community, rather awakens "the truth of life's unity and interrelatedness". These ideas are exemplified in the Isha Upanishad – a *sruti* for Advaita, as follows:

One who sees all beings in the self alone, and the self of all beings,
feels no hatred by virtue of that understanding.
For the seer of oneness, who knows all beings to be the self,
where is delusion and sorrow?

— *Isha Upanishad 6-7, Translated by A Rambachan*

Adi Shankara, a leading proponent of Advaita, in verse 1.25 to 1.26 of his *Upadeśasāhasrī*, asserts that the Self-knowledge is understood and realized when one's mind is purified by

the observation of Yamas (ethical precepts) such as Ahimsa (non-violence, abstinence from injuring others in body, mind and thoughts), Satya (truth, abstinence from falsehood), Asteya (abstinence from theft), Aparigraha (abstinence from possessiveness and craving) and a simple life of meditation and reflection. Rituals and rites can help focus and prepare the mind for the journey to Self-knowledge, however, Shankara discourages ritual worship and oblations to *Deva* (God), because that assumes the Self within is different than Brahman. The "doctrine of difference" is wrong, asserts Shankara, because, "he who knows the Brahman is one and he is another, does not know Brahman".

Elsewhere, in verses 1.26-1.28, the Advaita text Upadesasahasri states the ethical premise of equality of all beings. Any *Bheda* (discrimination), states Shankara, based on class or caste or parentage is a mark of inner error and lack of liberating knowledge. This text states that the fully liberated person understands and practices the ethics of non-difference.

One, who is eager to realize this highest truth spoken of in the Sruti, should rise above the fivefold form of desire: for a son, for wealth, for this world and the next, and are the outcome of a false reference to the Self of Varna (castes, colors, classes) and orders of life. These references are contradictory to right knowledge, and reasons are given by the Srutis regarding the prohibition of the acceptance of difference. For when the knowledge that the one non-dual Atman (Self) is beyond phenomenal existence is generated by the scriptures and reasoning, there cannot exist a knowledge side by side that is contradictory or contrary to it.

—*Adi Shankara, Upadesha Sahasri 1.44,*

Texts

The Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and Brahma Sutras are the central texts of the Advaita Vedanta tradition, providing the truths about the identity of *Atman* and *Brahman* and their changeless nature.

Adi Shankara gave a nondualist interpretation of these texts in his commentaries. Adi Shankara's *Bhashya* (commentaries) have become central texts in the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, but are one among many ancient and medieval manuscripts available or accepted in this tradition. The subsequent Advaita tradition has further elaborated on these sruti and commentaries.

Prasthanatrayi

The *Vedanta* tradition provides exegeses of the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras*, and the *Bhagavadgita*, collectively called the *Prasthanatrayi*, literally, *three sources*.

1. **The *Upanishads*, or *Śruti prasthāna*;** considered the *Śruti* (Vedic scriptures) foundation of *Vedanta*. Most scholars, states Eliot Deutsch, are convinced that the Śruti in general, and the Upanishads in particular, express "a very rich diversity" of

ideas, with the early *Upanishads* such as *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and *Chandogya Upanishad* being more readily amenable to *Advaita Vedanta* school's interpretation than the middle or later *Upanishads*. In addition to the oldest *Upanishads*, states Williams, the *Sannyasa Upanishads* group composed in pre-*Shankara* times "express a decidedly *Advaita* outlook".

2. **The *Brahma Sutras*, or *Nyaya prasthana / Yukti prasthana***; considered the reason-based foundation of *Vedanta*. The *Brahma Sutras* attempted to synthesize the teachings of the *Upanishads*. The diversity in the teachings of the *Upanishads* necessitated the systematization of these teachings. The only extant version of this synthesis is the *Brahma Sutras* of *Badarayana*. Like the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sutras* is also an aphoristic text, and can be interpreted as a non-theistic *Advaita Vedanta* text or as a theistic *Dvaita Vedanta* text. This has led, states Stephen Phillips, to its varying interpretations by scholars of various sub-schools of *Vedanta*. The *Brahmasutra* is considered by the Advaita school as the *Nyaya Prasthana* (canonical base for reasoning).

3. **The *Bhagavad Gita*, or *Smriti prasthāna***; considered the *Smriti* (remembered tradition) foundation of *Vedanta*. It has been widely studied by *Advaita* scholars, including a commentary by *Adi Shankara*.

Textual authority

The identity of *Atman* and *Brahman*, and their unchanging, eternal nature, are basic truths in Advaita Vedanta. The school considers the knowledge claims in the Vedas to be the crucial part of the Vedas, not its *karma-kanda* (ritual injunctions). The knowledge claims about self being identical to the nature of Atman and Brahman are found in the Upanishads, which Advaita Vedanta has regarded as "errorless revealed truth." Nevertheless, states Koller, Advaita Vedantins did not entirely rely on revelation, but critically examined their teachings using reason and experience, and this led them to investigate and critique competing theories.

Advaita Vedanta, like all orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, accepts as an epistemic premise that Śruti (Vedic literature) is a reliable source of knowledge. The Śruti includes the four Vedas including its four layers of embedded texts - the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the early Upanishads. Of these, the Upanishads are the most referred to texts in the Advaita school.

The possibility of different interpretations of the Vedic literature, states Arvind Sharma, was recognized by ancient Indian scholars. The Brahmasutra (also called Vedanta Sutra, composed in 1st millennium BCE) accepted this in verse 1.1.4 and asserts the need for the Upanishadic teachings to be understood not in piecemeal cherrypicked basis, rather in a unified way wherein the ideas in the Vedic texts are harmonized with other means of knowledge such as perception, inference and remaining pramanas. This theme has been central to the Advaita school, making the Brahmasutra as a common reference and a consolidated textual authority for Advaita.

The Bhagavad Gita, similarly in parts can be interpreted to be a monist Advaita text, and in other parts as theistic Dvaita text. It too has been widely studied by Advaita scholars, including a commentary by Adi Shankara.

History of Advaita Vedanta

Adi Shankara with Disciples, by Raja Ravi Varma (1904)

Advaita Vedanta existed prior to Adi Shankara but found in him its most influential expounder.

Pre-Shankara Advaita Vedanta

Of the Vedanta-school before the composition of the Brahma Sutras (400–450 CE), wrote Nakamura in 1950, almost nothing is known. The two Advaita writings of pre-Shankara period, known to scholars such as Nakamura in the first half of 20th-century, were the *Vākyapadīya*, written by Bhartṛhari (second half 5th century), and the *Māndūkya-kārikā* written by Gaudapada (7th century CE).

Scholarship after 1950 suggests that almost all Sannyasa Upanishads have a strong Advaita Vedanta outlook. Six of these Sannyasa Upanishads – Aruni, Kundika, Kathashruti, Paramahamsa, Jabala and Brahma – were composed before the 3rd-century

CE, likely in the centuries before or after the start of the common era, states Sprockhoff; the Asrama Upanishad is dated to the 3rd-century.

The strong Advaita Vedanta views in these ancient texts may be, states Patrick Olivelle, because major Hindu monasteries of this period (early 1st millennium CE) belonged to the Advaita Vedanta tradition.

Earliest Vedanta - *Upanishads* and *Brahma Sutras*

The Upanishads form the basic texts, of which Vedanta gives an interpretation. The Upanishads do not contain "a rigorous philosophical inquiry identifying the doctrines and formulating the supporting arguments". This philosophical inquiry was performed by the darsanas, the various philosophical schools.

Bādarāyana's Brahma Sutras

The Brahma Sutras of Bādarāyana, also called the *Vedanta Sutra*, were compiled in its present form around 400–450 CE, but "the great part of the *Sutra* must have been in existence much earlier than that". Estimates of the date of Bādarāyana's lifetime differ between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

The Brahma Sutra is a critical study of the teachings of the Upanishads. It was and is a guide-book for the great teachers of the Vedantic systems. Bādarāyana was not the first person to systematise the teachings of the Upanishads. He refers to seven Vedantic teachers before him:

From the way in which Bādarāyana cites the views of others it is obvious that the teachings of the Upanishads must have been analyzed and interpreted by quite a few before him and that his systematization of them in 555 sutras arranged in four chapters must have been the last attempt, most probably the best.

Between Brahma Sutras and Shankara

According to Nakamura, "there must have been an enormous number of other writings turned out in this period, but unfortunately all of them have been scattered or lost and have not come down to us today". In his commentaries, Shankara mentions 99 different predecessors of his Sampradaya. In the beginning of his commentary on the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Shankara salutes the teachers of the Brahmavidya Sampradaya. Pre-Shankara doctrines and sayings can be traced in the works of the later schools, which does give insight into the development of early Vedanta philosophy.

The names of various important early Vedanta thinkers have been listed in the *Siddhitraya* by Yamunācārya (c.1050), the *Vedārthasamgraha* by Rāmānuja (c.1050–1157), and the *Yatīndramatadīpikā* by Śrīnivāsa-dāsa. Combined together, at least fourteen thinkers are known to have existed between the composition of the Brahman Sutras and Shankara's lifetime.

Although Shankara is often considered to be the founder of the Advaita Vedanta school, according to Nakamura, comparison of the known teachings of these early Vedantins and Shankara's thought shows that most of the characteristics of Shankara's thought "were advocated by someone before Śankara". Shankara "was the person who synthesized the *Advaita-vāda* which had previously existed before him". In this synthesis, he was the rejuvenator and defender of ancient learning. He was an unequalled commentator, due to whose efforts and contributions the Advaita Vedanta assumed a dominant position within Indian philosophy.

Gaudapada and *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*

Statue of Gaudapada.

Gaudapada (6th century) was the teacher of Govinda Bhagavatpada and the grandteacher of Shankara. Gaudapada uses the concepts of Ajativada and Maya to establish "that from the level of ultimate truth the world is a cosmic illusion," and "suggests that the whole of our waking experience is exactly the same as an illusory and insubstantial dream." In contrast, Adi Shankara insists upon a distinction between waking experience and dreams.

Mandukya Karika

Gaudapada wrote or compiled the *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*, also known as the *Gauḍapāda Kārikā* or the *Āgama Śāstra*. The *Māṇḍukya Kārikā* is a commentary in verse form on the *Mandukya Upanishad*, one of the shortest Upanishads consisting of just 13 prose sentences. Of the ancient literature related to Advaita Vedanta, the oldest surviving complete text is the *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*. Many other texts with same type of teachings and which were older than *Māṇḍukya Kārikā* existed and this is unquestionable because other

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scholars and their views are cited by Gaudapada, Shankara and Anandagiri, according to Hajime Nakamura. Gaudapada relied particularly on *Mandukya Upanishad*, as well as *Brihadaranyaka* and *Chandogya Upanishads*.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* was considered to be a Śruti before the era of Adi Shankara, but not treated as particularly important. In later post-Shankara period its value became far more important, and regarded as expressing the essence of the Upanishad philosophy. The entire *Karika* became a key text for the Advaita school in this later era.

Shri Gaudapadacharya Math

Around 740 AD Gaudapada founded Shri Gaudapadacharya Math, also known as Kavaḷē maṭha. It is located in Kavale, Ponda, Goa, and is the oldest matha of the South Indian Saraswat Brahmins.

Adi Shankara

Adi Shankara (788–820), also known as Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya and Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, represents a turning point in the development of Vedanta. After the growing influence of Buddhism on Vedanta, culminating in the works of Gaudapada, Adi Shankara gave a Vedantic character to the Buddhistic elements in these works, synthesising and rejuvenating the doctrine of Advaita. Using ideas in ancient Indian texts, Shankara systematized the foundation for Advaita Vedanta in the 8th century CE, though the school was founded many centuries earlier by Badarayana. His thematic focus extended beyond metaphysics and soteriology, and he laid a strong emphasis on *Pramanas*, that is epistemology or "means to gain knowledge, reasoning methods that empower one to gain reliable knowledge". Rambachan, for example, summarizes the widely held view on one aspect of Shankara's epistemology before critiquing it as follows,

According to these [widely represented contemporary] studies, Shankara only accorded a provisional validity to the knowledge gained by inquiry into the words of the Śruti (Vedas) and did not see the latter as the unique source (*pramana*) of *Brahmajnana*. The affirmations of the Śruti, it is argued, need to be verified and confirmed by the knowledge gained through direct experience (*anubhava*) and the authority of the Śruti, therefore, is only secondary.

Sengaku Mayeda concurs, adding Shankara maintained the need for objectivity in the process of gaining knowledge (*vastutantra*), and considered subjective opinions (*purushatantra*) and injunctions in Śruti (*codanatantra*) as secondary. Mayeda cites Shankara's explicit statements emphasizing epistemology (*pramana-janya*) in section 1.18.133 of Upadesasahasri and section 1.1.4 of Brahmasutra-bhasya.

Adi Shankara cautioned against cherrypicking a phrase or verse out of context from Vedic literature, and remarked that the *Anvaya* (theme or purport) of any treatise can only be correctly understood if one attends to the *Samanvayat Tatparya Linga*, that is six characteristics of the text under consideration:

1. The common in *Upakrama* (introductory statement) and *Upasamhara* (conclusions)
2. *Abhyasa* (message repeated)
3. *Apurvata* (unique proposition or novelty)
4. *Phala* (fruit or result derived)
5. *Arthavada* (explained meaning, praised point)
6. *Yukti* (verifiable reasoning).

While this methodology has roots in the theoretical works of Nyaya school of Hinduism, Shankara consolidated and applied it with his unique exegetical method called *Anvaya-Vyatireka*, which states that for proper understanding one must "accept only meanings that are compatible with all characteristics" and "exclude meanings that are incompatible with any".

Hacker and Phillips note that this insight into rules of reasoning and hierarchical emphasis on epistemic steps is "doubtlessly the suggestion" of Shankara in Brahma-sutra, an insight that flowers in the works of his companion and disciple Padmapada. Merrell-Wolff states that Shankara accepts Vedas and Upanishads as a source of knowledge as he develops his philosophical theses, yet he never rests his case on the ancient texts, rather proves each thesis, point by point using *pranamas* (epistemology), reason and experience.

Historical context

Shankara lived in the time of the so-called "Late classical Hinduism", which lasted from 650 to 1100 CE. This era was one of political instability that followed Gupta dynasty and King Harsha of the 7th century CE. It was a time of social and cultural change as the ideas of Buddhism, Jainism, and various traditions within Hinduism were competing for members. Buddhism in particular influenced India's spiritual traditions in the first 700 years of the 1st millennium CE. Shankara and his contemporaries made a significant contribution in understanding Buddhism and the ancient Vedic traditions; they then transformed the extant ideas, particularly reforming the Vedanta tradition of Hinduism, making it India's most important tradition for more than a thousand years.

Writings

Adi Shankara is best known for his systematic reviews and commentaries (*Bhasyas*) on ancient Indian texts. Shankara's masterpiece of commentary is the *Brahmasutrabhasya* (literally, commentary on Brahma Sutra), a fundamental text of the Vedanta school of Hinduism. His commentaries on ten Mukhya (principal) Upanishads are also considered authentic by scholars. Other authentic works of Shankara include commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita (part of his Prasthana Trayi Bhasya).

Shankara's *Vivarana* (tertiary notes) on the commentary by Vedavyasa on Yogasutras as well as those on Apastamba Dharma-sũtras (*Adhyatama-patala-bhasya*) are accepted by scholars as authentic works of Adi Shankara. Among the *Stotra* (poetic works), the Daksinamurti Stotra, Bhajagovinda Stotra, Sivanandalahari, Carpata-panjarika, Visnu-satpadi, Harimide, Dasa-shloki, and Krishna-staka are likely to be authentic. He also

authored Upadesasahasri, his most important original philosophical work. Of other original *Prakaranas* (प्रकरण, monographs, treatise), 76 works are attributed to Adi Shankara. Modern era Indian scholars Belvalkar and Upadhyaya accept five and thirty nine works, respectively, as authentic.

Several commentaries on Nrisimha-Purvatatapaniya and Shveshvatara Upanishads have been attributed to Adi Shankara, but their authenticity is highly doubtful. Similarly, commentaries on several early and later Upanishads attributed to Shankara are rejected by scholars as his works, and are likely works of later Advaita Vedanta scholars; these include the Kaushitaki Upanishad, Maitri Upanishad, Kaivalya Upanishad, Paramahamsa Upanishad, Sakatayana Upanishad, Mandala Brahmana Upanishad, Maha Narayana Upanishad, and Gopalatapaniya Upanishad.

The authenticity of Shankara being the author of Vivekacūḍāmaṇi has been questioned, but scholars generally credit it to him. The authorship of Shankara of his Mandukya Upanishad *Bhasya* and his supplementary commentary on Gaudapada's *Māṇḍukya Kārikā* has been disputed by Nakamura. However, other scholars state that the commentary on Mandukya, which is actually a commentary on Madukya-Karikas by Gaudapada, may be authentic.

Influence of Shankara

Shankara's status in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta is unparallelled. He travelled all over India to help restore the study of the Vedas. His teachings and tradition form the basis of Smartism and have influenced Sant Mat lineages. He introduced the Pañcāyatana form of worship, the simultaneous worship of five deities – Ganesha, Surya, Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi. Shankara explained that all deities were but different forms of the one Brahman, the invisible Supreme Being.

Benedict Ashley credits Adi Shankara for unifying two seemingly disparate philosophical doctrines in Hinduism, namely Atman and Brahman. Isaeva states that Shankara's influence extended to reforming Hinduism, founding monasteries, edifying disciples, disputing opponents, and engaging in philosophic activity that, in the eyes of Indian tradition, helped revive "the orthodox idea of the unity of all beings" and Vedanta thought.

Some scholars doubt Shankara's early influence in India. According to King and Roodurmun, until the 10th century Shankara was overshadowed by his older contemporary Mandana-Misra, who was considered to be the major representative of Advaita. Other scholars state that the historical records for this period are unclear, and little reliable information is known about the various contemporaries and disciples of Shankara.

Several scholars suggest that the historical fame and cultural influence of Shankara grew centuries later, particularly during the era of the Muslim invasions and consequent devastation of India. Many of Shankara's biographies were created and published in and after the 14th century, such as the widely cited Vidyaranya's Śankara-vijaya. Vidyaranya,

also known as Madhava, who was the 12th Jagadguru of the Śṛingeri Śarada Pītham from 1380 to 1386, inspired the re-creation of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire of South India in response to the devastation caused by the Islamic Delhi Sultanate. He and his brothers, suggest Paul Hacker and other scholars, wrote about Śankara as well as extensive Advaitic commentaries on the Vedas and Dharma. Vidyaranya was a minister in the Vijayanagara Empire and enjoyed royal support, and his sponsorship and methodical efforts helped establish Shankara as a rallying symbol of values, spread historical and cultural influence of Shankara's Vedanta philosophies, and establish monasteries (*mathas*) to expand the cultural influence of Shankara and Advaita Vedanta.

Sureśvara and Maṇḍana Miśra

Sureśvara (fl. 800-900 CE) and Maṇḍana Miśra were contemporaries of Shankara, Sureśvara often (incorrectly) being identified with Maṇḍana Miśra. Both explained Sankara "on the basis of their personal convictions". Sureśvara has also been credited as the founder of a pre-Shankara branch of Advaita Vedanta.

Maṇḍana Miśra was a Mimamsa scholar and a follower of Kumarila, but also wrote a seminal text on Advaita that has survived into the modern era, the *Brahma-siddhi*. According to tradition, Maṇḍana Miśra and his wife were defeated by Shankara in a debate, after which he became a follower of Shankara.

Yet, his attitude toward Shankara was that of a "self-confident rival teacher of Advaita", and his influence was such that some regard the *Brahma-siddhi* to have "set forth a non-Shankaran brand of Advaita"" The "theory of error" set forth in this work became the normative Advaita Vedanta theory of error. It was Vachaspati Misra's commentary on this work that linked it to Shankara's teaching.

His influential thesis in the Advaita tradition has been that errors are opportunities because they "lead to truth", and full correct knowledge requires that not only should one understand the truth but also examine and understand errors as well as what is not truth.

Hiriyanna and Kuppuswami Sastra have pointed out that Sureśvara and Maṇḍana Miśra had different views on various doctrinal points:

- The locus of *avidya*: according to Maṇḍana Miśra, the individual *jiva* is the locus of *avidya*, whereas Suresvara contends that the *avidya* regarding Brahman is located in Brahman. These two different stances are also reflected in the opposing positions of the Bhamati school and the Vivarana school.
- Liberation: according to Maṇḍana Miśra, the knowledge that arises from the Mahavakya is insufficient for liberation. Only the direct realization of Brahma is liberating, which can only be attained by meditation. According to Suresvara, this knowledge is directly liberating, while meditation is at best a useful aid.

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Advaita Vedanta sub-schools

After Shankara's death, several sub-schools developed. Two of them still exist today, the Bhāmatī and the Vivarana. Two defunct schools are the *Pancapadika* and *Istasiddhi*, which were replaced by Prakasatman's Vivarana school.

These schools worked out the logical implications of various Advaita doctrines. Two of the problems they encountered were the further interpretations of the concepts of māyā and avidya.

Padmapada - Pancapadika school

Padmapada (c. 800 CE) was a direct disciple of Shankara who wrote the *Pancapadika*, a commentary on the *Sankara-bhaya*. Padmapada diverged from Shankara in his description of *avidya*, designating *prakrti* as *avidya* or *ajnana*.

Vachaspati Misra – Bhamati school

Vachaspati Misra (800–900 CE) wrote the *Brahmatattva-samiksa*, a commentary on Maṇḍana Miśra's *Brahma-siddhi*, which provides the link between Mandana Misra and Shankara and attempts to harmonise Shankara's thought with that of Mandana Misra. According to Advaita tradition, Shankara reincarnated as Vachaspati Misra "to popularise the Advaita System through his Bhamati". Only two works are known of Vachaspati Misra, the *Brahmatattva-samiksa* on Maṇḍana Miśra's *Brahma-siddhi*, and his *Bhamati* on the *Sankara-bhasya*, Shankara's commentary on the Brahma-sutras. The name of the Bhamati sub-school is derived from this *Bhamati*.

The Bhamati school takes an ontological approach. It sees the Jiva as the source of avidya. It sees meditation as the main factor in the acquirement of liberation, while the study of the Vedas and reflection are additional factors.

Prakasatman - Vivarana school

Prakasatman (c. 1200–1300) wrote the *Pancapadika-Vivarana*, a commentary on the *Pancapadika* by Padmapadacharya. The *Vivarana* lends its name to the subsequent school. According to Roodurmum, "[H]is line of thought [...] became the leitmotif of all subsequent developments in the evolution of the Advaita tradition."

The Vivarana school takes an epistemological approach. Prakasatman was the first to propound the theory of *mulavidya* or *maya* as being of "positive beginningless nature", and sees Brahman as the source of avidya.

Critics object that Brahman is pure consciousness, so it cannot be the source of avidya. Another problem is that contradictory qualities, namely knowledge and ignorance, are attributed to Brahman.

Vimuktatman - Ista-Siddhi

Vimuktatman (c. 1200 CE) wrote the *Ista-siddhi*. It is one of the four traditional *siddhi*, together with Mandana's *Brahma-siddhi*, Suresvara's *Naiskarmya-siddhi*, and Madusudana's *Advaita-siddhi*. According to Vimuktatman, absolute Reality is "pure intuitive consciousness". His school of thought was eventually replaced by Prakasatman's Vivarana school.

Later Advaita Vedanta tradition

According to Sangeetha Menon, prominent names in the later Advaita tradition are:

- Prakāsātman, Vimuktātman, Sarvajñātman (10th century),
- Śrī Harṣa, Citsukha (12th century),
- ānandagiri, Amalānandā (13th century),
- Vidyāraṇya, Śaṅkarānandā (14th century),
- Sadānandā (15th century),
- Prakāṣānanda, Nṛsiṁhāśrama (16th century),
- Madhusūdhana Sarasvati, Dharmarāja Advarindra, Appaya Dīkṣita (17th century),
- Sadaśiva Brahmendra (18th century),
- Candraśekhara Bhārati, Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal, Sacchidānandendra Saraswati (20th century).

Contemporary teachers are the orthodox Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham; the more traditional teachers Sivananda Saraswati (1887–1963), Chinmayananda Saraswati, and Dayananda Saraswati (Arsha Vidya); and less traditional teachers such as Narayana Guru.

Sampradaya

Monastic order: Advaita Mathas

(Vidyashankara temple) at Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Shringeri

Advaita Vedanta is not just a philosophical system, but also a tradition of renunciation. Philosophy and renunciation are closely related:

Most of the notable authors in the advaita tradition were members of the sannyasa tradition, and both sides of the tradition share the same values, attitudes and metaphysics.

Shankara organized monks under 10 names and established mathas for them. These mathas contributed to the influence of Shankara, which was "due to institutional factors". The mathas which he built exist until today, and preserve the teachings and influence of Shankara, "while the writings of other scholars before him came to be forgotten with the passage of time".

Shri Gaudapadacharya Math

Shri Gaudapadacharya MathAround 740 CE, Gaudapada founded Shri Gaudapadacharya Math, also known as Kavaḷē maṭha. It is located in Kavale, Ponda, Goa, and is the oldest matha of the South Indian Saraswat Brahmins.

Shankara's monastic tradition

Shankara, himself considered to be an incarnation of Shiva, established the Dashanami Sampradaya, organizing a section of the Ekadandi monks under an umbrella grouping of ten names. Several Hindu monastic and Ekadandi traditions, however, remained outside the organisation of the Dasanāmis.

Sankara organised the Hindu monks of these ten sects or names under four Maṭhas (Sanskrit: मठ) (monasteries), called the *Amnaya Mathas*, with the headquarters at Dvārakā in the West, Jagannatha Puri in the East, Sringeri in the South and Badrikashrama in the North. Each math was first headed by one of his four main disciples, and the tradition continues since then. According to another tradition in Kerala, after Sankara's samadhi at Vadakkunnathan Temple, his disciples founded four mathas in Thrissur, namely Naduvil Madhom, Thekke Madhom, Idayil Madhom and Vadakke Madhom.

The table below gives an overview of the four *Amnaya Mathas* founded by Adi Shankara, and their details.

Shishya (lineage)	Direction	Maṭha	Mahāvākya	Veda	Sampradaya
Padmapāda	East	Govardhana Pīṭham	Prajñānam brahma (*Consciousness is Brahman*)	Rig Veda	Bhogavala
Sureśvara	South	Sringeri Śārada Pīṭham	Aham brahmāsmi (*I am Brahman*)	Yajur Veda	Bhūrivala
Hastāmalakācārya	West	Dvāraka Pīṭham	Tattvamasi (*That thou art*)	Sama Veda	Kitavala
Toṭakācārya	North	Jyotirmaṭha Pīṭham	Ayamātmā brahma (*This Atman is Brahman*)	Atharva Veda	Nandavala

Monks of these ten orders differ in part in their beliefs and practices, and a section of them is not considered to be restricted to specific changes made by Shankara. While the dasanāmis associated with the Sankara maths follow the procedures enumerated by Adi Śankara, some of these orders remained partly or fully independent in their belief and practices; and outside the official control of the Sankara maths. The advaita sampradaya is not a Saiva sect, despite the historical links with Shaivism. Nevertheless, contemporary Sankaracaryas have more influence among Saiva communities than among Vaisnava communities.

Relationship with other forms of Vedanta

The Advaita Vedanta ideas, particularly of 8th century Adi Shankara, were challenged by theistic Vedanta philosophies that emerged centuries later, such as the 11th-century Vishishtadvaita (qualified nondualism) of Ramanuja, and the 14th-century Dvaita (theistic dualism) of Madhvacharya.

Vishishtadvaita

Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita school and Shankara's Advaita school are both nondualism Vedanta schools, both are premised on the assumption that all souls can hope for and achieve the state of blissful liberation; in contrast, Madhvacharya and his Dvaita subschool of Vedanta believed that some souls are eternally doomed and damned. Shankara's theory posits that only Brahman and causes are metaphysical unchanging reality, while the empirical world (Maya) and observed effects are changing, illusive and of relative existence. Spiritual liberation to Shankara is the full comprehension and realization of oneness of one's unchanging Atman (soul) as the same as Atman in everyone else as well as being identical to the *nirguna* Brahman. In contrast, Ramanuja's theory posits both Brahman and the world of matter are two different absolutes, both metaphysically real, neither should be called false or illusive, and *saguna* Brahman with attributes is also real. God, like man, states Ramanuja, has both soul and body, and all of the world of matter is the glory of God's body. The path to Brahman (Vishnu), asserted Ramanuja, is devotion to godliness and constant remembrance of the beauty and love of personal god (*saguna* Brahman, Vishnu), one which ultimately leads one to the oneness with *nirguna* Brahman.

Shuddhadvaita

Vallabhacharya (1479–1531 CE), the proponent of the philosophy of Shuddhadvaita Brahmvad enunciates that Ishvara has created the world without connection with any external agency such as Maya (which itself is his power) and manifests Himself through the world. That is why shuddhadvaita is known as 'Unmodified transformation' or 'Avikṛta Pariṇāmavāda'.

Brahman or Ishvara desired to become many, and he became the multitude of individual souls and the world. Vallabha recognises Brahmn as the whole and the individual as a 'part' (but devoid of bliss).

Dvaita

Madhvacharya was also a critic of Advaita Vedanta. Advaita's nondualism asserted that Atman (soul) and Brahman are identical, there is interconnected oneness of all souls and Brahman, and there are no pluralities. Madhva in contrast asserted that Atman (soul) and Brahman are different, only Vishnu is the Lord (Brahman), individual souls are also different and depend on Vishnu, and there are pluralities. Madhvacharya stated that both Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism were a nihilistic school of thought. Madhvacharya wrote four major texts, including *Upadhikhandana* and *Tattvadyota*, primarily dedicated to criticizing Advaita.

Historical influence
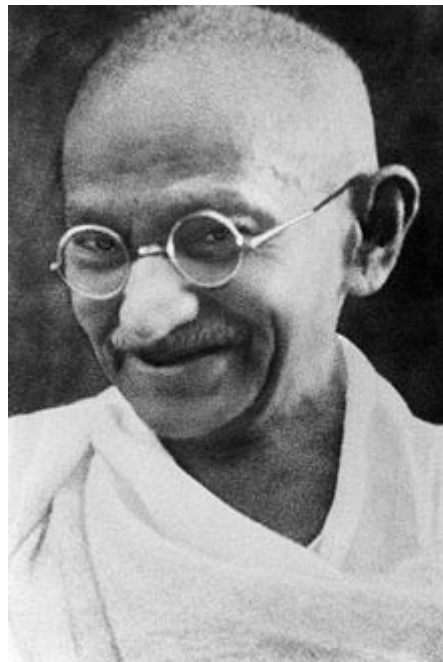
Mahatma Gandhi stated "I am an advaitist".

Scholars are divided on the historical influence of Advaita Vedanta. Some Indologists state that it is one of the most studied Hindu philosophy and the most influential schools of classical Indian thought. Advaita Vedanta, states Eliot Deutsch, "has been and continues to be the most widely accepted system of thought among philosophers in India, and it is, we believe, one of the greatest philosophical achievements to be found in the East or the West".

Smarta Tradition

The Smarta tradition of Hinduism is an ancient tradition, particularly found in south and west India, that revers all Hindu divinities as a step in their spiritual pursuit. Their worship practice is called *Panchayatana puja*. The worship symbolically consists of five deities: Shiva, Vishnu, Devi or Durga, Surya and an Ishta Devata or any personal god of devotee's preference.

In the Smarta tradition, Advaita Vedanta ideas combined with bhakti are its foundation. Adi Shankara is regarded as the greatest teacher and reformer of the Smarta. According to Alf Hiltebeitel, Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and practices became the doctrinal unifier of previously conflicting practices with the *smarta* tradition.

Philosophically, the Smarta tradition emphasizes that all images and statues (murti), or just five marks or any anicons on the ground, are visibly convenient icons of spirituality *saguna Brahman*. The multiple icons are seen as multiple representations of the same idea, rather than as distinct beings. These serve as a step and means to realizing the abstract Ultimate Reality called nirguna Brahman. The ultimate goal in this practice is to transition past the use of icons, then follow a philosophical and meditative path to understanding the oneness of Atman (soul, self) and Brahman – as "That art Thou".

Other Hindu traditions

Within the ancient and medieval texts of Hindu traditions, such as Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism, the ideas of Advaita Vedanta have had a major influence. Advaita Vedanta influenced Krishna Vaishnavism in the different parts of India. One of its most popular text, the *Bhagavata Purana*, adopts and integrates in Advaita Vedanta philosophy. The *Bhagavata Purana* is generally accepted by scholars to have been composed in the second half of 1st millennium CE.

In the ancient and medieval literature of Shaivism, called the *Āgamas*, the influence of Advaita Vedanta is once again prominent. Of the 92 *Āgamas*, ten are *Dvaita* texts, eighteen are *Bhedabheda*, and sixty-four are *Advaita* texts. According to Natalia Isaeva, there is a evident and natural link between 6th-century Gaudapada's Advaita Vedanta ideas and Kashmir Shaivism.

Shaktism, the Hindu tradition where a goddess is considered identical to Brahman, has similarly flowered from a syncretism of the monist premises of Advaita Vedanta and dualism premises of Samkhya–Yoga school of Hindu philosophy, sometimes referred to as *Shaktadavaitavada* (literally, the path of nondualistic *Shakti*).

Other influential ancient and medieval classical texts of Hinduism such as the *Yoga Yajnavalkya*, *Yoga Vashishta*, *Avadhuta Gita*, *Markandeya Purana* and *Sannyasa Upanishads* predominantly incorporate premises and ideas of Advaita Vedanta.

Development of central position

Already in medieval times, Advaita Vedanta came to be regarded as the highest of the Indian religious philosophies, a development which was reinforced in modern times due to western interest in Advaita Vedanta, and the subsequent influence on western perceptions on Indian perceptions of Hinduism.

In contrast, King states that its present position was a response of Hindu intellectuals to centuries of Christian polemic aimed at establishing "Hindu inferiority complex" during

the colonial rule of the Indian subcontinent. The "humanistic, inclusivist" formulation, now called Neo-Vedanta, attempted to respond to this colonial stereotyping of "Indian culture was backward, superstitious and inferior to the West", states King. Advaita Vedanta was projected as the central philosophy of Hinduism, and Neo-Vedanta subsumed and incorporated Buddhist ideas thereby making the Buddha a part of the Vedanta tradition, all in an attempt to reposition the history of Indian culture. Thus, states King, neo-Vedanta developed as a reaction to western Orientalism and Perennialism. With the efforts of Vivekananda, modern formulation of Advaita Vedanta has "become a dominant force in Indian intellectual thought", though Hindu beliefs and practices are diverse.

Unifying Hinduism

Advaita Vedanta came to occupy a central position in the classification of various Hindu traditions. To some scholars, it is with the arrival of Islamic rule, first in the form of Delhi Sultanate thereafter the Mughal Empire, and the subsequent persecution of Indian religions, Hindu scholars began a self-conscious attempts to define an identity and unity. Between the twelfth and the fourteen century, according to Andrew Nicholson, this effort emerged with a classification of astika and nastika systems of Indian philosophies. Certain thinkers, according to Nicholson thesis, began to retrospectively classify ancient thought into "six systems" (*saddarsana*) of mainstream Hindu philosophy.

Other scholars, acknowledges Nicholson, present an alternate thesis. The scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, texts such as Dharmasutras and Puranas, and various ideas that are considered to be paradigmatic Hinduism are traceable to being thousands of years old. Unlike Christianity and Islam, Hinduism as a religion does not have a single founder, rather it is a fusion of diverse scholarship where a gallaxy of thinkers openly challenged each other's teachings and offered their own ideas. The term "Hindu" too, states Arvind Sharma, appears in much older texts such as those in Arabic that record the Islamic invasion or regional rule of Indian subcontinent. Some of these texts have been dated to between the 8th and the 11th century. Within these *doxologies* and records, Advaita Vedanta was given the highest position, since it was regarded to be most inclusive system.

Hindu nationalism

According to King, along with the consolidation of the British imperialist rule came orientalism wherein the new rulers viewed Indians through "colonially crafted lenses". In response, emerged Hindu nationalism for collective action against the colonial rule, against the caricature by Christian and Muslim communities, and for socio-political independence. In this colonial era search of identity, Vedanta came to be regarded as the essence of Hinduism, and Advaita Vedanta came to be regarded as "then paradigmatic example of the mystical nature of the Hindu religion" and umbrella of "inclusivism". This umbrella of Advaita Vedanta, according to King, "provided an opportunity for the construction of a nationalist ideology that could unite Hindus in their struggle against colonial oppression".

Among the colonial era intelligentsia, according to Anshuman Mondal, a professor of Literature specializing in post-colonial studies, the monistic Advaita Vedanta has been a major ideological force for Hindu nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi professed monism of Advaita Vedanta, though at times he also spoke with terms from mind-body dualism schools of Hinduism. Other colonial era Indian thinkers, such as Vivekananda, presented Advaita Vedanta as an inclusive universal religion, a spirituality that in part helped organize a religiously infused identity, and the rise of Hindu nationalism as a counter weight to Islam-infused Muslim communitarian organizations such as the Muslim League, to Christianity-infused colonial orientalism and to religious persecution of those belonging to Indian religions.

Swami Vivekananda

A major proponent in the popularisation of this Universalist and Perennialist interpretation of Advaita Vedanta was Vivekananda, who played a major role in the revival of Hinduism, and the spread of Advaita Vedanta to the west via the Ramakrishna Mission. His interpretation of Advaita Vedanta has been called "Neo-Vedanta". Vivekananda discerned a universal religion, regarding all the apparent differences between various traditions as various manifestations of one truth. He presented karma, bhakti, jnana and raja yoga as equal means to attain moksha, to present Vedanta as a liberal and universal religion, in contrast to the exclusivism of other religions.

Vivekananda emphasised *nirvikalpa* samadhi as the spiritual goal of Vedanta, he equated it to the liberation in Yoga and encouraged Yoga practice he called *Raja yoga*. This approach, however, is missing in historic Advaita texts. In 1896, Vivekananda claimed that Advaita appeals to modern scientists:

I may make bold to say that the only religion which agrees with, and even goes a little further than modern researchers, both on physical and moral lines is the Advaita, and that is why it appeals to modern scientists so much. They find that the old dualistic theories are not enough for them, do not satisfy their necessities. A man must have not only faith, but intellectual faith too".

According to Rambachan, Vivekananda interprets *anubhava* as to mean "personal experience", akin to religious experience, whereas Shankara used the term to denote liberating understanding of the *sruti*.

Vivekananda's claims about spirituality as "science" and modern, according to David Miller, may be questioned by well informed scientists, but it drew attention for being very different than how Christianity and Islam were being viewed by scientists and sociologists of his era.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, first a professor at Oxford University and later a President of India, further popularized Advaita Vedanta, presenting it as the essence of Hinduism.

According to Michael Hawley, a professor of Religious Studies, Radhakrishnan saw other religions, as well as "what Radhakrishnan understands as lower forms of Hinduism," as interpretations of Advaita Vedanta, thereby "in a sense Hindusizing all religions". To him, the world faces a religious problem, where there is unreflective dogmatism and exclusivism, creating a need for "experiential religion" and "inclusivism". Advaita Vedanta, claimed Radhakrishnan, best exemplifies a Hindu philosophical, theological, and literary tradition that fulfills this need. Radhakrishnan did not emphasize the differences between Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism versus Hinduism that he defined in terms of Advaita Vedanta, rather he tended to minimize their differences. This is apparent, for example, in his discussions of Buddhist "Madhyamika and Yogacara" traditions versus the Advaita Vedanta tradition.

Radhakrishnan metaphysics was grounded in Advaita Vedanta, but he reinterpreted Advaita Vedanta for contemporary needs and context. He acknowledged the reality and diversity of the world of experience, which he saw as grounded in and supported by the transcendent metaphysical absolute concept (*nirguna* Brahman). Radhakrishnan also reinterpreted Shankara's notion of *maya*. According to Radhakrishnan, *maya* is not a strict absolute idealism, but "a subjective misperception of the world as ultimately real."

Mahatama Gandhi

Gandhi declared his allegiance to Advaita Vedanta, and was another popularizing force for its ideas. According to Nicholas Gier, this to Gandhi meant the unity of God and humans, that all beings have the same one soul and therefore equality, that *atman* exists and is same as everything in the universe, ahimsa (non-violence) is the very nature of this *atman*. Gandhi called himself advaitist many times, including his letters, but he believed that others have a right to a viewpoint different than his own because they come from a different background and perspective. According to Gier, Gandhi did not interpret *maya* as illusion, but accepted that "personal theism" leading to "impersonal monism" as two tiers of religiosity.

New religious movements

Neo-Advaita

Neo-Advaita is a New Religious Movement based on a popularised, western interpretation of Advaita Vedanta and the teachings of Ramana Maharshi. Neo-Advaita is being criticised for discarding the traditional prerequisites of knowledge of the scriptures and "renunciation as necessary preparation for the path of *jnana*-yoga". Notable neo-advaita teachers are H. W. L. Poonja, his students Gangaji Andrew Cohen, and Eckhart Tolle.

Non-dualism

Advaita Vedanta has gained attention in western spirituality and New Age, where various traditions are seen as driven by the same non-dual experience. Nonduality points to "a primordial, natural awareness without subject or object". It is also used to refer to

interconnectedness, "the sense that all things are interconnected and not separate, while at the same time all things retain their individuality".

Relationship with Buddhism

Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism share similarities and have differences, their relationship a subject of dispute among scholars. The similarities between Advaita and Buddhism have attracted Indian and Western scholars attention, and have also been criticised by concurring schools. The similarities have been interpreted as Buddhist influences on Advaita Vedanta, while others deny such influences, or see them as variant expressions. According to Daniel Ingalls, the Japanese Buddhist scholarship has argued that Adi Shankara did not understand Buddhism.

Some Hindu scholars criticized Advaita for its *Maya* and non-theistic doctrinal similarities with Buddhism. Ramanuja, the founder of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, accused Adi Shankara of being a *Prachanna Bauddha*, that is, a "crypto-Buddhist", and someone who was undermining theistic Bhakti devotionalism. The non-Advaita scholar Bhaskara of the Bhedabheda Vedanta tradition, similarly around 800 CE, accused Shankara's Advaita as "this despicable broken down Mayavada that has been chanted by the Mahayana Buddhists", and a school that is undermining the ritual duties set in Vedic orthodoxy.

A few Buddhist scholars made the opposite criticism in the medieval era toward their Buddhist opponents. In the sixth century CE, for example, the Mahayana Buddhist scholar Bhaviveka redefined Vedantic concepts to show how they fit into Madhyamaka concepts, and "equate[d] the Buddha's Dharma body with Brahman, the ultimate reality of the Upanishads." In his *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikaḥ*, Bhaviveka stages a Hinayana (Theravada) interlocutor, who accuses Mahayana Buddhists of being "crypto-Vedantins". Medieval era Tibetan Gelugpa scholars accused the Jonang school of being "crypto-Vedantist." Contemporary scholar David Kalupahana called the seventh century Buddhist scholar Chandrakirti a "crypto-Vedantist", a view rejected by scholars of Madhayamika Buddhism.

The Advaita Vedanta tradition has historically rejected accusations of crypto-Buddhism highlighting their respective views on *Atman*, *Anatta* and *Brahman*.

Similarities with Buddhism

According to scholars, the influence of Mahayana Buddhism on Advaita Vedanta has been significant. Advaita Vedanta and various other schools of Hindu philosophy share numerous terminology, doctrines and dialectical techniques with Buddhism. According to a 1918 paper by the Buddhism scholar O. Rozenberg, "a precise differentiation between Brahmanism and Buddhism is impossible to draw."

Both traditions hold that "the empirical world is transitory, a show of appearances", and both admit "degrees of truth or existence". Both traditions emphasize the human need for spiritual liberation (moksha, nirvana, kaivalya), however with different assumptions. Adi

Shankara, states Natalia Isaeva, incorporated "into his own system a Buddhist notion of *maya* which had not been minutely elaborated in the Upanishads". Similarly, there are many points of contact between Buddhism's Vijnanavada and Shankara's Advaita.

According to Frank Whaling, the similarities between Advaita Vedanta and Buddhism are not limited to the terminology and some doctrines, but also includes practice. The monastic practices and monk tradition in Advaita are similar to those found in Buddhism.

Dasgupta and Mohanta suggest that Buddhism and Shankara's Advaita Vedanta represent "different phases of development of the same non-dualistic metaphysics from the Upanishadic period to the time of Sankara." The influence of Mahayana Buddhism on other religions and philosophies was not limited to Vedanta. Kalupahana notes that the Visuddhimagga of Theravada Buddhism tradition contains "some metaphysical speculations, such as those of the Sarvastivadins, the Sautrantikas, and even the Yogacarins". According to John Plott,

We must emphasize again that generally throughout the Gupta Dynasty, and even more so after its decline, there developed such a high degree of syncretism and such toleration of all points of view that Mahayana Buddhism had been Hinduized almost as much as Hinduism had been Buddhaized.

Gaudapada

The influence of Buddhist doctrines on Gaudapada has been a vexed question.

One school of scholars, such as Bhattacharya and Raju, state that Gaudapada took over the Buddhist doctrines that ultimate reality is pure consciousness (*vijñapti-mātra*) and "that the nature of the world is the four-cornered negation, which is the structure of Māyā".

Of particular interest is Chapter Four of Gaudapada's text *Karika*, in which according to Bhattacharya, two karikas refer to the Buddha and the term *Asparsayoga* is borrowed from Buddhism. According to Murti, "the conclusion is irresistible that Gaudapada, a Vedanta philosopher, is attempting an Advaitic interpretation of Vedanta in the light of the Madhyamika and Yogcara doctrines. He even freely quotes and appeals to them." However, adds Murti, the doctrines are unlike Buddhism. Chapter One, Two and Three are entirely Vedantin and founded on the Upanishads, with little Buddhist flavor. Further, state both Murti and King, no Vedanta scholars who followed Gaudapada ever quoted from Chapter Four, they only quote from the first three. According to Sarma, "to mistake him [Gaudapada] to be a hidden or open Buddhist is absurd". The doctrines of Gaudapada and Buddhism are totally opposed, states Murti:

We have been talking of borrowing, influence and relationship in rather general terms. It is necessary to define the possible nature of the borrowing, granting that it did take place. (...) The Vedantins stake everything on the Atman (Brahman) and accept the authority of the Upanishads. We have pointed out at length the Nairatmya standpoint of Buddhism

and its total opposition to the Atman (soul, substance, the permanent and universal) in any form.

— TRV Murti, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism

Advaitins have traditionally challenged the Buddhist influence thesis. Modern scholarship generally accepts that Gaudapada was influenced by Buddhism, at least in terms of using Buddhist terminology to explain his ideas, but adds that Gaudapada was a Vedantin and not a Buddhist. Gaudapada adopted some Buddhist terminology and borrowed its doctrines to his Vedantic goals, much like early Buddhism adopted Upanishadic terminology and borrowed its doctrines to Buddhist goals; both used pre-existing concepts and ideas to convey new meanings. While there is shared terminology, the Advaita doctrines of Gaudapada and Buddhism are fundamentally different.

Differences from Buddhism

Atman and anatta

Advaita Vedanta holds the premise, "Soul exists, and Soul (or self, Atman) is a self evident truth". Buddhism, in contrast, holds the premise, "Atman does not exist, and An-atman (or *Anatta*, non-self) is self evident".

In Buddhism, *Anatta* (Pali, Sanskrit cognate An-atman) is the concept that in human beings and living creatures, there is no "eternal, essential and absolute something called a soul, self or atman". Buddhist philosophy rejects the concept and all doctrines associated with atman, call atman as illusion (*maya*), asserting instead the theory of "no-self" and "no-soul". Most schools of Buddhism, from its earliest days, have denied the existence of the "self, soul" in its core philosophical and ontological texts. In contrast to Advaita, which describes knowing one's own soul as identical with Brahman as the path to *nirvana*, in its soteriological themes Buddhism has defined nirvana as that blissful state when a person realizes that he or she has "no self, no soul".

Some Buddhist texts chronologically placed in the 1st millennium of common era, such as the Mahayana tradition's *Tathāgatagarbha sūtras* suggest self-like concepts, variously called *Tathagatagarbha* or *Buddha nature*. These have been controversial idea in Buddhism, and "eternal self" concepts have been generally rejected. In modern era studies, scholars such as Wayman and Wayman state that these "self-like" concepts are neither self nor sentient being, nor soul, nor personality. Some scholars posit that the *Tathagatagarbha Sutras* were written to promote Buddhism to non-Buddhists.

Epistemology

The epistemological foundations of Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta are different. Buddhism accepts two valid means to reliable and correct knowledge – perception and inference, while Advaita Vedanta accepts six (described elsewhere in this article). However, some Buddhists in history, have argued that Buddhist scriptures are a reliable

source of spiritual knowledge, corresponding to Advaita's *Śabda* pramana, however Buddhists have treated their scriptures as a form of inference method.

Ontology

Advaita Vedanta posits a substance ontology, an ontology which holds that underlying the change and impermanence of empirical reality is an unchanging and permanent absolute reality, like an eternal substance it calls Atman-Brahman. In its substance ontology, as like other philosophies, there exist a universal, particulars and specific properties and it is the interaction of particulars that create events and processes.

In contrast, Buddhism posits a process ontology, also called as "event ontology". According to the Buddhist thought, particularly after the rise of ancient Mahayana Buddhism scholarship, there is neither empirical nor absolute permanent reality and ontology can be explained as a process. There is a system of relations and interdependent phenomena (*pratitya samutpada*) in Buddhist ontology, but no stable persistent identities, no eternal universals nor particulars. Thought and memories are mental constructions and fluid processes without a real observer, personal agency or cognizer in Buddhism. In contrast, in Advaita Vedanta, like other schools of Hinduism, the concept of self (atman) is the real on-looker, personal agent and cognizer.

The Pali Abdhidhamma and Theravada Buddhism considered all existence as *dhamma*, and left the ontological questions about reality and the nature of *dhamma* unexplained.

According to Renard, Advaita's theory of three levels of reality is built on the two levels of reality found in the Madhyamika.

Shankara on Buddhism

A central concern for Shankara, in his objections against Buddhism, is what he perceives as nihilism of the Buddhists. Shankara states that there "must be something beyond cognition, namely a cognizer," which he asserts is the self-evident *Atman* or witness. Buddhism, according to Shankara, denies the cognizer. He also considers the notion of Brahman as pure knowledge and "the quintessence of positive reality."

The teachings in Brahma Sutras, states Shankara, differ from both the Buddhist realists and the Buddhist idealists. Shankara elaborates on these arguments against various schools of Buddhism, partly presenting refutations which were already standard in his time, and partly offering his own objections. Shankara's original contribution in explaining the difference between Advaita and Buddhism was his "argument for identity" and the "argument for the witness". In Shankara's view, the Buddhist are internally inconsistent in their theories, because "the reservoir-consciousness that [they] set up, being momentary, is no better than ordinary consciousness. Or, if [they] allow the reservoir-consciousness to be lasting, [they] destroy [their] theory of momentariness." In response to the idealists, he notes that their *alaya-vijnana*, or store-house consciousness, runs counter to the Buddhist theory of momentariness. With regard to the *Sunyavada* (Madhyamaka),

Shankara states that "being contradictory to all valid means of knowledge, we have not thought worth while to refute" and "common sense (*loka-vyavahara*) cannot be denied without the discovery of some other truth".

Reception

Advaita Vedanta is most often regarded as an idealist monism. According to King, Advaita Vedanta developed "to its ultimate extreme" the monistic ideas already present in the Upanishads. In contrast, states Milne, it is misleading to call Advaita Vedanta "monistic," since this confuses the "negation of difference" with "conflation into one." *Advaita* is a negative term (a-dvaita), states Milne, which denotes the "negation of a difference," between subject and object, or between perceiver and perceived.

According to Deutsch, Advaita Vedanta teaches monistic oneness, however without the multiplicity premise of alternate monism theories. According to Jacqueline Hirst, Adi Shankara positively emphasizes "oneness" premise in his Brahma-sutra Bhasya 2.1.20, attributing it to all the Upanishads.

Nicholson states Advaita Vedanta contains realistic strands of thought, both in its oldest origins and in Shankara's writings.

Chapter 14
MAHĀVĀKYAS

The Mahavakyas (*sing.:* mahāvākyam, महावाक्यम्; *plural:* mahāvākyāni, महावाक्यानि) are "The Great Sayings" of the Upanishads, as characterized by the Advaita school of Vedanta.

Most commonly, *Mahavakyas* are considered four in number,

1. *Prajnanam Brahma (प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म)*
2. *Aham Brahma Asmi (अहम् ब्रह्म अस्मि)*
3. *Tat Tvam Asi (तत् त्वम् असि)*
4. *Ayam Atma Brahma (अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म)*

The four principal Mahavakyas

Though there are many Mahavakyas, four of them, one from each of the four Vedas, are often mentioned as "the Mahavakyas".

According to the Vedanta-tradition, the subject matter and the essence of all Upanishads is the same, and all the Upanishadic Mahavakyas express this one universal message in the form of terse and concise statements. In later Sanskrit usage, the term *mahāvākya* came to mean "discourse", and specifically, discourse on a philosophically lofty topic.

According to the Advaita Vedanta tradition the four Upanishadic statements indicate the ultimate unity of the individual (Atman) with Supreme (Brahman).

The Mahavakyas are:

1. **prajñānam brahma** - "Prajñāna is Brahman" , or "Brahman is Prajñāna" (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3 of the Rig Veda)
2. **ayam ātmā brahma** - "This Self (Atman) is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad 1.2 of the Atharva Veda)
3. **tat tvam asi** - "Thou art That" (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7 of the Sama Veda)
4. **aham brahmāsmi** - "I am Brahman", or "I am Divine" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10 of the Yajur Veda)

People who are initiated into sannyasa in Advaita Vedanta are being taught the four [principal] mahavakyas as four mantras, "to attain this highest of states in which the individual self dissolves inseparably in Brahman".

Other Mahavakyas

- **brahma satyam jagan mithyā** - Brahman is real; the world is unreal - Vivekachudamani
- **ekam evadvitiyam brahma** - Brahman is one, without a second - Chāndogya Upaniṣad
- **so 'ham** - He am I - Isha Upanishad
- **sarvam khalvidam brahma** - All of this is brahman - Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.1

Prajñānam Brahma

Several translations, and word-orders of these translations, are possible:

Prajñānam:

- *jñā* can be translated as "consciousness", "knowledge", or "understanding."
- *Pra* is an intensifier which could be translated as "higher", "greater", "supreme" or "premium", or "being born or springing up", referring to a spontaneous type of knowing.

Prajñānam as a whole means:

- प्रज्ञान, "prajñāna",
    - o Adjective: prudent, easily known, wise
    - o Noun: discrimination, knowledge, wisdom, intelligence. Also: distinctive mark, monument, token of recognition, any mark or sign or characteristic, memorial
- "Consciousness"
- "Intelligence"
- "Wisdom"

Related terms are *jñāna*, *prajñā* and *prajñam*, "pure consciousness". Although the common translation of *jñānam* is "consciousness", the term has a broader meaning of "knowing"; "becoming acquainted with", "knowledge about anything","awareness","higher knowledge".

Brahman:

- "The Absolute"
- "Infinite"
- "The Highest truth"

Most interpretations state: "Prajñānam (noun) is Brahman (adjective)". Some translations give a reverse order, stating "Brahman is Prajñānam", specifically "Brahman (noun) is Prajñānam (adjective)": "The Ultimate Reality is wisdom (or consciousness)".

Sahu explains:

Prajnanam iti Brahman - wisdom is the soul/spirit. *Prajnanam* refers to the intuitive truth which can be verified/tested by reason. It is a higher function of the intellect that ascertains the *Sat* or Truth in the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or truth-consciousness-bliss, i.e. the *Brahman/Atman/Self/*person [...] A truly wise person [...] is known as *Prajna* - who has attained *Brahman*hood itself; thus, testifying to the *Vedic Maha Vakya* (great saying or words of wisdom): *Prajnanam iti Brahman*.

And according to David Loy,

The knowledge of Brahman [...] is not intuition *of* Brahman but itself *is* Brahman.

Chapter 15
JNANA YOGA

Jñāna yoga, also known as Jnanamarga, is one of the several spiritual paths in Hinduism that emphasizes the "path of knowledge", also known as the "path of self-realization". It is one of the three classical paths (*margas*) for moksha (salvation, liberation). The other two are karma yoga (path of action, *karmamarga*) and bhakti yoga (path of loving devotion to a personal god, *bhaktimarga*). Later, new movements within Hinduism added raja yoga as the fourth spiritual path, but this is not universally accepted as distinct to other three.

Adi Shankara with Disciples, by Raja Ravi Varma (1904), propounding Advaita philosophy.

The *jnana yoga* is a spiritual practice that pursues knowledge with questions such as "who am I, what am I" among others. The practitioner studies usually with the aid of a counsellor (guru), meditates, reflects, and reaches liberating insights on the nature of his own Self (Atman, soul) and its relationship to the metaphysical concept called Brahman in Hinduism. The *jnanamarga* ideas are discussed in ancient and medieval era Hindu scriptures and texts such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Jñāna in Sanskrit means "knowledge". The root jñā- is cognate to English *know*, as well as to the Greek γνώ- (as in γνῶσις *gnosis*). Its antonym is *ajñāna* "ignorance".

Definition

Jnana is knowledge, and refers to any cognitive event that is correct and true over time. It particularly refers to knowledge inseparable from the total experience of its object, especially about reality (non-theistic schools) or supreme being (theistic schools). In Hinduism, it is knowledge which gives Moksha, or spiritual release while alive

(jivanmukti) or after death (videhamukti). According to Bimal Matilal, *jnana yoga* in Advaita Vedanta connotes both primary and secondary sense of its meaning, that is "self-consciousness, awareness" in the absolute sense and relative "intellectual understanding" respectively.

According to Jones and Ryan, *jnana* in *jnana yoga* context is better understood as "realization or gnosis", referring to a "path of study" wherein one knows the unity between self and ultimate reality called Brahman in Hinduism. This explanation is found in the ancient Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

Jñāna yoga is the path towards attaining *jnana*. It is one of the three classical types of yoga mentioned in Hindu philosophies, the other two being karma yoga and bhakti. In modern classifications, classical yoga, being called Raja yoga, is mentioned as a fourth one, an extension introduced by Vivekananda. Jnana yoga, states Stephen Phillips, is the "yoga of meditation".

Of the three different paths to liberation, *jnana marga* and *karma marga* are the more ancient, traceable to Vedic era literature. All three paths are available to any Hindu, chosen based on inclination, aptitude and personal preference, and typically elements of all three to varying degrees are practiced by many Hindus.

The classical yoga emphasizes the practice of dhyana (meditation), and this is a part of all three classical paths in Hinduism, including *jñāna yoga*. The path of knowledge is intended for those who prefer philosophical reflection and it requires study and meditation.

Upanishads

In the Upanishads, '*jnana yoga* aims at the realization of the oneness of the individual self (Atman) and the ultimate Self (Brahman). These teachings are found in the early Upanishads. According to Chambliss, the mystical teachings within these Upanishads discuss "the way of knowledge of the Self", a union, the realization that the Self (Atman) and the Brahman are identical.

The teachings in the Upanishads have been interpreted in a number of ways, ranging from non-theistic monism to theistic dualism. In former, rituals are not necessary and a path of introspection and meditation is emphasized for the correct knowledge (*jnana*) of self. In latter, it is the full and correct knowledge of a Vishnu avatar or Shiva or Shakti (Goddess) that is emphasized. In all its various interpretations, the paths are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A *Jnana yogi* may also practice *Karma yoga* or *Bhakti yoga* or both, and differing levels of emphasis.

According to Robert Roeser, the precepts of *Jnana yoga* in Hinduism were likely systematized by about 500 BCE, earlier than *Karma yoga* and *Bhakti yoga*.

Bhagavad Gita

In the Bhagavad Gita, *jnana yoga* is also referred to as *buddhi yoga* and its goal is self-realization. The text considers *jnana marga* as the most difficult, slow, confusing for those who prefer it because it deals with "formless reality", the *avyakta*. It is the path that intellectually oriented people tend to prefer.

The chapter 4 of the *Bhagavad Gita* is dedicated to the general exposition of *jnana yoga*, while chapters 7 and 16 discuss its theological and axiological aspects. Krishna says that jñāna is the purest, and a discovery of one's Atman:

Truly, there is nothing here as pure as knowledge. In time, he who is perfected in yoga finds that in his own Atman.

—*Bhagavad Gita 4.38, Translator: Jeaneane D. Fowler*

Traditions

The Advaita philosopher Adi Shankara gave primary importance to jñāna yoga for the "knowledge of the absolute" (Brahman), while the Vishishtadvaita commentator Ramanuja regarded knowledge only as a condition of devotion.

Classical Advaita Vedanta

Behaviors

Classical Advaita Vedanta emphasises the path of Jnana Yoga to attain moksha. It consists of fourfold attitudes, or behavioral qualifications:

1. Discrimination (*Nityānitya vastu viveka* (नित्यानित्य वस्तु विवेकम्), or simply *viveka*) — The ability (viveka) to correctly discriminate between the unchanging, permanent, eternal (*nitya*) and the changing, transitory, temporary (*anitya*).
2. Dispassion of fruits (*Ihāmutrārtha phala bhoga virāga* (इहाऽमुत्रार्थ फल भोगविरागम्), or simply *viraga*) — The dispassionate indifference (*virāga*) to the fruits, to enjoyments of objects (*artha phala bhoga*) or to the other worlds (*amutra*) after rebirth.
3. Six virtues (*Śamādi ṣatka sampatti* (शमादि षट्क सम्पत्ति), or simply *satsampat*) —
    1. *Śama*, temperance of mind
    2. *Dama*, temperance of sense organs (voluntary self restraints
    3. *Uparati*, withdrawal of mind from sensory objects
    4. *Titikṣa*, forbearance
    5. *Śraddhā*, faith
    6. *Samādhāna*, concentration of mind
4. Drive, longing (*Mumukṣutva* (मुमुक्षुत्वम्) — intense yearning for *moksha* from the state of ignorance

Practices

Jnanayoga for Advaitins consists of three practices: *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (thinking) and *nididhyasana* (meditation). This three-step methodology is rooted in the teachings of chapter 4 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*:

- *Sravana* literally means hearing, and broadly refers to perception and observations typically aided by a counsellor or teacher (guru), wherein the Advaitin listens and discusses the ideas, concepts, questions and answers.
- *Manana* refers to thinking on these discussions and contemplating over the various ideas based on *svadhyaya* and *sravana*.
- *Nididhyāsana* refers to meditation, realization and consequent conviction of the truths, non-duality and a state where there is a fusion of thought and action, knowing and being.

These practices, with the help of a guru are believed to lead to correct knowledge, which destroys *avidya*, psychological and perceptual errors related to Atman and Brahman.

Saivism

Both the theistic and monistic streams of Shaivism include *jnana yoga* ideas, along with those related to *karma yoga*, and in the case of Saiva Siddhanta ideas related to *bhakti yoga*. The Shaivism traditions do not consider renunciation necessary for practicing jnana yoga, leaving ascetic yogi lifestyle optional. Spirituality can be pursued along with active life (*karma*), according to Shaiva traditions, and it believes that this does not hinder ones ability to journey towards self (Shiva within) realization. The traditions dwell into this integration of karma yoga with jnana yoga, such as by ranking daily behavior and activity that is done by choice and when not necessary as higher in spiritual terms than activity that is impulsive or forced.

The methodology of sravana, manana and nididhyasana similar to Advaita Vedanta are also found in various traditions of Shaivism. However, *nistha* or *samadhi* is sometimes added in Shaiva methodology. The meditational aspects of Shaivism focus on the nirguna form of Supreme Reality (Shiva).

Vaishnavism

The *Pancharatra* (agama) texts of Vaishnavism, along with its Bhagavata (Krishna, Rama, Vishnu) tradition, are strongly influenced by *jnana yoga* ideas of the Upanishads. However, Vaishnavism also incorporates Bhakti yoga concepts of loving devotion to the divine Supreme personally selected by the devotee, in saguna form, both in silent meditational and musical expressive styles.

The aim of jnana yoga in Vaishnavism differs from that in other schools. Advaita, for example, considers jnana yoga as the path to nondual self-knowledge and moksha. Vaishnavism, in contrast, considers it a condition of devotion.

Shaktism

The Shaktism literature on goddess such as *Kularnava Tantra* highlight *jnana marga* as important to liberation. It differentiates between two kings of *jnana*: one it calls knowledge that comes from Agama texts, and another it calls *viveka* (insight). The Shaktism literature then adds that both lead to the knowledge of Brahman, but the first one is in the form of sound (*shabdabrahman*), while the insight from within is the ultimate truth (*parabrahman*).

Some Shakta texts, such as the *Sita Upanishad*, combine yoga of action and knowledge as a path to liberation. The *Devi Gita*, a classic text of Shaktism, dedicates chapter 4 to *Jnana yoga*, stating that a Jnana yogi understands and realizes that there is no difference between the individual soul and herself as the supreme Self. The discussion of Jnana yoga continues through the later chapters of the *Devi Gita*.

Chapter 16
GURU

Guru is a Sanskrit term that connotes someone who is a "teacher, guide, expert, or master" of certain knowledge or field. In pan-Indian traditions, *guru* is someone more than a teacher, traditionally a reverential figure to the student, with the *guru* serving as a "counselor, who helps mold values, shares experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student". The term also refers to someone who primarily is one's spiritual guide, who helps one to discover the same potentialities that the *guru*s already realized.

The oldest references to the concept of *guru* are found in the earliest Vedic texts of Hinduism. The *guru*, and *gurukul* – a school run by *guru*, were an established tradition in India by the 1st millennium BCE, and these helped compose and transmit the various Vedas, the Upanishads, texts of various schools of Hindu philosophy, and post-Vedic Shastras ranging from spiritual knowledge to various arts. By about mid 1st millennium CE, archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggest numerous larger institutions of *gurus* existed in India, some near Hindu temples, where guru-shishya tradition helped preserve, create and transmit various fields of knowledge. These gurus led broad ranges of studies including Hindu scriptures, Buddhist texts, grammar, philosophy, martial arts, music and painting.

The tradition of *guru* is also found in Jainism, referring to a spiritual preceptor, a role typically served by a Jain ascetic. In Sikhism, the *guru* tradition has played a key role since its founding in the 15th century, its founder is referred to as Guru Nanak, and its scripture as Guru Granth Sahib. The guru concept has thrived in Vajrayāna Buddhism, where the tantric guru is considered a figure to worship and whose instructions should never be violated.

In the West, the term is sometimes used in a derogatory way to refer to individuals who have allegedly exploited their followers' naiveté, particularly in certain tantra schools, self help, hippie and other new religious movements.

Definition and etymology

The word *guru* (Sanskrit: गुरु), a noun, connotes "teacher" in Sanskrit, but in Indian traditions it has contextual meanings with significance beyond what teacher means in English. The *guru* is more than someone who teaches specific type of knowledge, and includes in its scope someone who is also a "counselor, a sort of parent of mind and soul, who helps mold values and experiential knowledge as much as specific knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who reveals the meaning of life." The word has the same meaning in other languages derived from or borrowing words from Sanskrit, such as Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Bengali,

Gujarati and Nepali. The Malayalam term Acharyan or Asan are derived from the Sanskrit word Acharya.

As a noun the word means the imparter of knowledge (*jñāna*; also Pali: *ñāna*). As an adjective, it means 'heavy,' or 'weighty,' in the sense of "heavy with knowledge," heavy with spiritual wisdom, "heavy with spiritual weight," "heavy with the good qualities of scriptures and realization," or "heavy with a wealth of knowledge." The word has its roots in the Sanskrit *gri* (to invoke, or to praise), and may have a connection to the word *gur*, meaning 'to raise, lift up, or to make an effort'.

Sanskrit *guru* is cognate with Latin *gravis* 'heavy; grave, weighty, serious' and Greek βαρύς *barus* 'heavy'. All three derive from the Proto-Indo-European root $*g^{w}er\partial$-, specifically from the zero-grade form $*g^{w}\mathring{r}\partial$-.

Darkness and light

गुशब्दस्त्वन्धकारः स्यात् रुशब्दस्तन्निरोधकः।
अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते॥ १६॥

The syllable *gu* means darkness, the syllable *ru*, he who dispels them,
Because of the power to dispel darkness, the guru is thus named.

—Advayataraka Upanishad, Verse 16

Another etymological theory considers the term "guru" to be based on the syllables *gu* (गु) and *ru* (रु), which it claims stands for darkness and "light that dispels it", respectively. The guru is seen as the one who "dispels the darkness of ignorance."

Reender Kranenborg disagrees, stating that darkness and light have nothing to do with the word *guru*. He describes this as a folk etymology.

Joel Mlecko states, "*Gu* means ignorance, and *Ru* means dispeller," with *guru* meaning the one who "dispels ignorance, all kinds of ignorance", ranging from spiritual to skills such as dancing, music, sports and others.

Karen Pechelis states that, in the popular parlance, the "dispeller of darkness, one who points the way" definition for *guru* is common in the Indian tradition.

In *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, Pierre Riffard makes a distinction between "occult" and "scientific" etymologies, citing as an example of the former the etymology of 'guru' in which the derivation is presented as *gu* ("darkness") and *ru* ('to push away'); the latter he exemplifies by "guru" with the meaning of 'heavy'.

In Hinduism

The *Guru* is an ancient and central figure in the traditions of Hinduism. The ultimate liberation, contentment, freedom in the form of moksha and inner perfection is considered achievable in the Hindu belief by two means: with the help of *guru*, and with evolution through the process of karma including rebirth in some schools of Hindu philosophy. At an individual level in Hinduism, the Guru is many things, including being a teacher of skills, a counselor, one who helps in the birth of mind and realization of one's soul, who instils values and experiential knowledge, an exemplar, an inspiration and who helps guide a student's (*śiṣya*) spiritual development. At a social and religious level, the Guru helps continue the religion and Hindu way of life. Guru thus has a historic, reverential and an important role in the Hindu culture.

Scriptures

The word *Guru* is mentioned in the earliest layer of Vedic texts. The hymn 4.5.6 of Rigveda, for example, states Joel Mlecko, describes the guru as, "the source and inspirer of the knowledge of the Self, the essence of reality," for one who seeks.

The Upanishads, that is the later layers of the Vedic text, mention *guru*. Chandogya Upanishad, in chapter 4.4 for example, declares that it is only through *guru* that one attains the knowledge that matters, the insights that lead to Self-knowledge. The Katha Upanisad, in verse 1.2.8 declares the guru as indispensable to the acquisition of knowledge. In chapter 3 of Taittiriya Upanishad, human knowledge is described as that which connects the teacher and the student through the medium of exposition, just like a child is the connecting link between the father and the mother through the medium of procreation. In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the *guru* then urges a student, states Mlecko, to "struggle, discover and experience the Truth, which is the source, stay and end of the universe."

The ancient tradition of reverence for the *guru* in Hindu scriptures is apparent in 6.23 of the Shvetashvatara Upanishad, which equates the need of reverence and devotion for *guru* to be the same as for god,

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा **गुरौ** ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ २३ ॥

He who has highest *Bhakti* (love, devotion) of *Deva* (god),
just like his *Deva*, so for his **Guru**,
To him who is high-minded,
these teachings will be illuminating.

— Shvetashvatara Upanishad 6.23

The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue where Krishna speaks to Arjuna of the role of a guru, and similarly emphasizes in verse 4.34 that those who know their subject well are eager for good students, and the student can learn from such a *guru* through reverence, service, effort and the process of inquiry.

Capabilities, role and methods for helping a student

The 8th century Hindu text *Upadesasahasri* of the Advaita Vedanta philosopher Adi Shankara discusses the role of the guru in assessing and guiding students. In Chapter 1, he states that teacher is the pilot as the student walks in the journey of knowledge, he is the raft as the student rows. The text describes the need, role and characteristics of a teacher, as follows,

When the teacher finds from signs that knowledge has not been grasped or has been wrongly grasped by the student, he should remove the causes of non-comprehension in the student. This includes the student's past and present knowledge, want of previous knowledge of what constitutes subjects of discrimination and rules of reasoning, behavior such as unrestrained conduct and speech, courting popularity, vanity of his parentage, ethical flaws that are means contrary to those causes. The teacher must enjoin means in the student that are enjoined by the Śruti and Smrti, such as avoidance of anger, Yamas consisting of Ahimsa and others, also the rules of conduct that are not inconsistent with knowledge. He [teacher] should also thoroughly impress upon the student qualities like humility, which are the means to knowledge.

—Adi Shankara, Upadesha Sahasri 1.4-1.5

The teacher is one who is endowed with the power of furnishing arguments pro and con, of understanding questions [of the student], and remembers them. The teacher possesses tranquility, self-control, compassion and a desire to help others, who is versed in the Śruti texts (Vedas, Upanishads), and unattached to pleasures here and hereafter, knows the subject and is established in that knowledge. He is never a transgressor of the rules of conduct, devoid of weaknesses such as ostentation, pride, deceit, cunning, jugglery, jealousy, falsehood, egotism and attachment. The teacher's sole aim is to help others and a desire to impart the knowledge.

—Adi Shankara, Upadesha Sahasri 1.6

Adi Shankara presents a series of examples wherein he asserts that the best way to guide a student is not to give immediate answers, but posit dialogue-driven questions that enable the student to discover and understand the answer.

Gurukula and the guru-shishya tradition

Traditionally, the *Guru* would live a simple married life, and accept *shishya* (student, Sanskrit: शिष्य) where he lived. A person would begin a life of study in the Gurukula (the household of the *Guru*). The process of acceptance included proffering firewood and sometimes a gift to the guru, signifying that the student wants to live with, work and help the *guru* in maintaining the *gurukul*, and as an expression of a desire for education in

return over several years. At the Gurukul, the working student would study the basic traditional vedic sciences and various practical skills-oriented sastras along with the religious texts contained within the Vedas and Upanishads. The education stage of a youth with a *guru* was referred to as Brahmacharya, and in some parts of India this followed the Upanayana or Vidyarambha rites of passage.
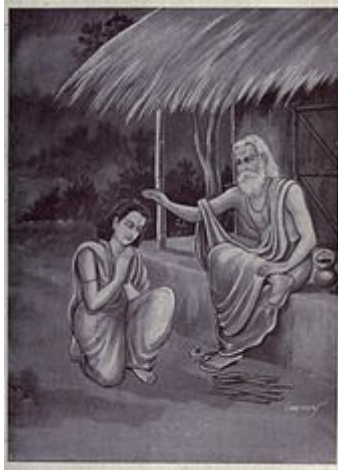
Kacha meets the Asura Guru Shukracharya with firewood,
to begin his studies, in Mahabharata.

The gurukul would be a hut in a forest, or it was, in some cases, a monastery, called a *matha* or *ashram* or *sampradaya* in different parts of India. These had a lineage of gurus, who would study and focus on certain schools of Hindu philosophy or trade, and these were known as guru-shishya *parampara* (teacher-student tradition). This *guru*-driven tradition included arts such as sculpture, poetry and music.

Inscriptions from 4th century CE suggest the existence of *gurukuls* around Hindu temples, called *Ghatikas* or *Mathas*, where the Vedas were studied. In south India, 9th century Vedic schools attached to Hindu temples were called *Calai* or *Salai*, and these provided free boarding and lodging to students and scholars. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggests that ancient and medieval era gurukuls near Hindu temples offered wide range of studies, ranging from Hindu scriptures to Buddhist texts, grammar, philosophy, martial arts, music and painting.

The *Guru (teacher) Shishya (disciple) parampara* or guru parampara, occurs where the *knowledge* (in any field) is passed down through the succeeding generations. It is the traditional, residential form of education, where the Shishya remains and learns with his Guru as a family member. The fields of study in traditional guru-sisya parampara were diverse, ranging from Hindu philosophy, martial arts, music, dance to various Vedangas.

Gender and caste

The Hindu texts offer a conflicting view of whether access to *guru* and education was limited to men and to certain *varna* (castes). The Vedas and the Upanishads never mention any restrictions based either on gender or on *varna*. The Yajurveda and

Atharvaveda texts state that knowledge is for everyone, and offer examples of women and people from all segments of society who are *guru* and participated in vedic studies. The Upanishads assert that one's birth does not determine one's eligibility for spiritual knowledge, only one's effort and sincerity matters.

In theory, the early Dharma-sutras and Dharma-sastras, such as Paraskara Grhyasutra, Gautama Smriti and Yajnavalkya smriti, state all four varnas are eligible to all fields of knowledge; while verses of Manusmriti state that Vedic study is available only to men of three varnas, unavailable to Shudra and women. In practice, state Stella Kramrisch and others, the guru tradition and availability of education extended to all segments of ancient and medieval society. Lise McKean states the *guru* concept has been prevalent over the range of class and caste backgrounds, and the disciples a guru attracts come from both genders and a range of classes and castes. During the bhakti movement of Hinduism, which started in about mid 1st millennium CE, the *gurus* included women and members of all *varna*.

Attributes

The Advayataraka Upanishad states that the true teacher is a master in the field of knowledge, well-versed in the Vedas, is free from envy, knows yoga, lives a simple life that of a yogi, has realized the knowledge of the *Atman* (Soul, Self). Some scriptures and gurus have warned against false teachers, and have recommended that the spiritual seeker test the guru before accepting him. Swami Vivekananda said that there are many incompetent gurus, and that a true guru should understand the spirit of the scriptures, have a pure character and be free from sin, and should be selfless, without desire for money and fame.

According to the Indologist Georg Feuerstein, in some traditions of Hinduism, when one reaches the state of Self-knowledge, one's own soul becomes the *guru*. In Tantra, states Feuerstein, the guru is the "ferry who leads one across the ocean of existence." A true *guru* guides and counsels a student's spiritual development because, states *Yoga-Bija*, endless logic and grammar leads to confusion, and not contentment. However, various Hindu texts caution prudence and diligence in finding the right *guru*, and avoiding the wrong ones. For example, in *Kula-Arnava* text states the following guidance:

Gurus are as numerous as lamps in every house. But, O-Goddess, difficult to find is a guru who lights up everything like a sun. Gurus who are proficient in the Vedas, textbooks and so on are numerous. But, O Goddess, difficult to find is a guru who is proficient in the supreme Truth. Gurus who rob their disciples of their wealth are numerous. But, O Goddess, difficult to find is a guru who removes the disciples' suffering. Numerous here on earth are those who are intent on social class, stage of life and family. But he who is devoid of all concerns is a guru difficult to find. An intelligent man should choose a guru by whom supreme Bliss is attained, and only such a guru and none other.

— Kula-Arnava, 13.104 - 13.110, Translated by Georg Feuerstein

A true guru is, asserts *Kula-Arnava*, one who lives the simple virtuous life he preaches, is stable and firm in his knowledge, master yogi with the knowledge of Self (soul) and Brahman (ultimate reality). The guru is one who initiates, transmits, guides, illuminates, debates and corrects a student in the journey of knowledge and of self-realization. The attribute of the successful guru is to help make the disciple into another guru, one who transcends him, and becomes a *guru* unto himself, driven by inner spirituality and principles.

In modern Hinduism

In modern neo-Hinduism, Kranenborg states *guru* may refer to entirely different concepts, such as a *spiritual advisor*, or someone who performs traditional rituals outside a temple, or an *enlightened master* in the field of tantra or yoga or eastern arts who derives his authority from his experience, or a reference by a group of devotees of a sect to someone considered a god-like *Avatar* by the sect.

The tradition of reverence for *guru* continues in several denominations within modern Hinduism, but he or she is typically never considered as a prophet, but one who points the way to spirituality, Oneness of being, and meaning in life.

In Buddhism

In some forms of Buddhism, states Rita Gross, the concept of Guru is of supreme importance.

In Vajrayana Buddhism's Tantric teachings, the rituals require the guidance of a guru. The guru is considered essential and to the Buddhist devotee, the guru is the "enlightened teacher and ritual master", states Stephen Berkwitz. The guru is known as the *vajra guru* (literally "diamond guru"). Initiations or ritual empowerments are necessary before the student is permitted to practice a particular tantra, in Vajrayana Buddhist sects found in Tibet and South Asia. The tantras state that the guru is equivalent to Buddha, states Berkwitz, and is a figure to worship and whose instructions should never be violated.

The guru is the Buddha, the guru is the Dhamma, and the guru is the Sangha. The guru is the glorious Vajradhara, in this life only the guru is the means [to awakening]. Therefore, someone wishing to attain the state of Buddhahood should please the guru.

—*Guhyasanaya Sadhanamala 28, 12th - century*

There are Four Kinds of Lama (Guru) or spiritual teacher (Tib. lama nampa shyi) in Tibetan Buddhism:

1. gangzak gyüpé lama — the individual teacher who is the holder of the lineage
2. gyalwa ka yi lama — the teacher which is the word of the buddhas
3. nangwa da yi lama — the symbolic teacher of all appearances
4. rigpa dön gyi lama — the absolute teacher, which is rigpa, the true nature of mind

In various Buddhist traditions, there are equivalent words for *guru*, which include *Shastri* (teacher), *Kalyana Mitra* (friendly guide, Pali: Kalyāṇa-mittatā), *Acarya* (master), and *Vajra-Acarya* (hierophant). The *guru* is literally understood as "weighty", states Alex Wayman, and it refers to the Buddhist tendency to increase the weight of canons and scriptures with their spiritual studies. In Mahayana Buddhism, a term for Buddha is Bhaisajya guru, which refers to "medicine guru", or "a doctor who cures suffering with the medicine of his teachings".

In Jainism

Guru is the spiritual preceptor in Jainism, and typically a role served by Jain ascetics. The *guru* is one of three fundamental *tattva* (categories), the other two being *dharma* (teachings) and *deva* (divinity). The *guru-tattva* is what leads a lay person to the other two *tattva*. In some communities of the Śvētāmbara sect of Jainism, a traditional system of *guru-disciple* lineage exists.

The *guru* is revered in Jainism ritually with *Guru-vandan* or *Guru-upashti*, where respect and offerings are made to the *guru*, and the *guru* sprinkles a small amount of *vaskep* (a scented powder mixture of sandalwood, saffron, and camphor) on the devotee's head with a mantra or blessings.

In Sikhism

In Sikhism, **Guru** is the source of all knowledge which is Almighty. In Chopai Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh states about who is the Guru:

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਜੋਗੀ ਸਿਵ ਕੀਯੋ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਰਾਜ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਜੂ ਥੀਯੋ ॥

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਮਸ਼ਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਾਹਿ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੪॥

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਜਗਤ ਬਨਾਯੋ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਜੱਛਨ ਉਪਜਾਯੋ ॥

ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਏਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ॥ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਝਿਯਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੫॥

The Temporal Lord, who created Shiva, the Yogi; who created Brahma, the Master of the Vedas;

The Temporal Lord who fashioned the entire world; I salute the same Lord.

The Temporal Lord, who created the whole world; who created gods, demons and yakshas; He is the only one form the beginning to the end; **I consider Him only my Guru**.

—*Dasam Granth, 384-385*

The Sikh Gurus were fundamental to the Sikh religion, however the concept in Sikhism differs from other usages. Sikhism is derived from the Sanskrit word *shishya*, or disciple and is all about the relationship between the teacher and a student. The concept of Guru in Sikhism stands on two pillars i.e. Miri-Piri. 'Piri' means spiritual authority and 'Miri' means temporal authority. Therefore, Guru in Sikhism is a teacher-leader. Traditionally, the concept of Guru is considered central in Sikhism, and its main scripture is prefixed as a *Guru*, called Guru Granth Sahib, the words therein called *Gurbani*.

Western perspective

As an alternative to established religions, some people in Europe and the USA looked to spiritual guides and gurus from India and other countries. Gurus from many denominations traveled to Western Europe and the USA and established followings. One of the first to do so was Swami Vivekananda who addressed the World Parliament of Religions assembled in Chicago, Illinois in 1893. Paramahansa Yogananda, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Prabhupada (founder of ISKCON), Sri Chinmoy and Swami Rama also established a following.

In particular during the 1960s and 1970s many gurus acquired groups of young followers in Western Europe and the USA. According to the American sociologist David G. Bromley this was partially due to the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1965 which permitted Asian gurus entrance to the USA. According to the Dutch Indologist Albertina Nugteren, the repeal was only one of several factors and a minor one compared with the two most important causes for the surge of all things 'Eastern': the post-war cross-cultural mobility and the general dissatisfaction with established Western values. According to the professor in sociology Stephen A. Kent at the University of Alberta and Kranenborg (1974), one of the reasons why in the 1970s young people including hippies turned to gurus was because they found that drugs had opened for them the existence of the transcendental or because they wanted to get *high* without drugs. According to Kent, another reason why this happened so often in the USA then, was because some anti-Vietnam War protesters and political activists became worn out or disillusioned of the possibilities to change society through political means, and as an alternative turned to religious means. Some gurus and the groups they lead attracted opposition. One example of such group was the Hare Krishna movement (ISKCON) founded by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in 1966, many of whose followers voluntarily accepted the demandingly ascetic lifestyle of bhakti yoga on a full-time basis, in stark contrast to much of the popular culture of the time.

According to Kranenborg (1984), Jesus Christ fits the Hindu definition and characteristics of a guru.

Viewpoints

Gurus and the Guru-shishya tradition have been criticized and assessed by secular scholars, theologians, anti-cultists, skeptics, and religious philosophers.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti, groomed to be a world spiritual teacher by the leadership of the Theosophical Society in the early part of the 20th century, publicly renounced this role in 1929 while also denouncing the concept of gurus, spiritual leaders, and teachers, advocating instead the unmediated and direct investigation of reality.
- U. G. Krishnamurti, [no relation to Jiddu], sometimes characterized as a "*spiritual anarchist*", denied both the value of gurus and the existence of any related worthwhile "teaching".
- Dr. David C. Lane proposes a checklist consisting of seven points to assess gurus in his book, *Exposing Cults: When the Skeptical Mind Confronts the Mystical*. One of his points is that spiritual teachers should have high standards of moral conduct and that followers of gurus should interpret the behavior of a spiritual teacher by following Ockham's razor and by using common sense, and, should not naively use mystical explanations unnecessarily to explain immoral behavior. Another point Lane makes is that the bigger the claim a guru makes, such as the claim to be God, the bigger the chance is that the guru is unreliable. Dr. Lane's fifth point is that self-proclaimed gurus are likely to be more unreliable than gurus with a legitimate lineage.
- Highlighting what he sees as the difficulty in understanding the guru from Eastern tradition in Western society, Dr. Georg Feuerstein, a well-known German-American Indologist, writes in the article *Understanding the Guru* from his book *The Deeper Dimension of Yoga: Theory and practice*:"The traditional role of the guru, or spiritual teacher, is not widely understood in the West, even by those professing to practice Yoga or some other Eastern tradition entailing discipleship. [...] Spiritual teachers, by their very nature, swim against the stream of conventional values and pursuits. They are not interested in acquiring and accumulating material wealth or in competing in the marketplace, or in pleasing egos. They are not even about morality. Typically, their message is of a radical nature, asking that we live consciously, inspect our motives, transcend our egoic passions, overcome our intellectual blindness, live peacefully with our fellow humans, and, finally, realize the deepest core of human nature, the Spirit. For those wishing to devote their time and energy to the pursuit of conventional life, this kind of message is revolutionary, subversive, and profoundly disturbing.". In his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga* (1990), Dr. Feuerstein writes that the importation of *yoga* to the West has raised questions as to the appropriateness of spiritual discipleship and the legitimacy of spiritual authority.
- A British professor of psychiatry, Anthony Storr, states in his book, *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*, that he confines the word guru (translated by him as "revered teacher") to persons who have "special knowledge" who tell, referring to their special knowledge, how other people should lead their lives. He argues that gurus share common character traits (e.g. being loners) and that some suffer from a mild form of schizophrenia. He argues that gurus who are authoritarian, paranoid, eloquent, or who interfere in the private lives of their followers are the ones who are more likely to be unreliable and dangerous. Storr also refers to Eileen Barker's checklist to recognize false gurus. He contends that some so-called gurus claim special spiritual insights based on personal revelation, offering new ways of spiritual development and paths to salvation. Storr's criticism of gurus includes the

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possible risk that a guru may exploit his or her followers due to the authority that he or she may have over them, though Storr does acknowledge the existence of morally superior teachers who refrain from doing so. He holds the view that the idiosyncratic belief systems that some gurus promote were developed during a period of psychosis to make sense of their own minds and perceptions, and that these belief systems persist after the psychosis has gone. Storr applies the term "guru" to figures as diverse as Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Gurdjieff, Rudolf Steiner, Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, Jim Jones and David Koresh. The Belgian Indologist Koenraad Elst criticized Storr's book for its avoidance of the term prophet instead of guru for several people. Elst asserts that this is possibly due to Storr's pro-Western, pro-Christian cultural bias.

- Rob Preece, a psychotherapist and a practicing Buddhist, writes in *The Noble Imperfection* that while the teacher/disciple relationship can be an invaluable and fruitful experience, the process of relating to spiritual teachers also has its hazards. He writes that these potential hazards are the result of *naiveté* amongst Westerners as to the nature of the guru/devotee relationship, as well as a consequence of a lack of understanding on the part of Eastern teachers as to the nature of Western psychology. Preece introduces the notion of transference to explain the manner in which the guru/disciple relationship develops from a more Western psychological perspective. He writes: "*In its simplest sense transference occurs when unconsciously a person endows another with an attribute that actually is projected from within themselves.*" In developing this concept, Preece writes that, when we transfer an inner quality onto another person, we may be giving that person a power over us as a consequence of the projection, carrying the potential for great insight and inspiration, but also the potential for great danger: "In giving this power over to someone else they have a certain hold and influence over us it is hard to resist, while we become enthralled or spellbound by the power of the archetype".

- According to a professor of religious studies at Dawson College in Quebec, Susan J. Palmer, the word guru has acquired very negative connotations in France.

- The psychiatrist Alexander Deutsch performed a long-term observation of a small cult, called *The Family* (not to be confused with Family International), founded by an American guru called *Baba* or *Jeff* in New York in 1972, who showed increasingly schizophrenic behavior. Deutsch observed that this man's mostly Jewish followers interpreted the guru's pathological mood swings as expressions of different Hindu deities and interpreted his behavior as *holy madness*, and his cruel deeds as punishments that they had earned. After the guru dissolved the cult in 1976, his mental condition was confirmed by Jeff's retrospective accounts to an author.

- Jan van der Lans (1933–2002), a professor of the psychology of religion at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, wrote, in a book commissioned by the Netherlands-based Catholic Study Center for Mental Health, about followers of gurus and the potential dangers that exist when personal contact between the guru and the disciple is absent, such as an increased chance of idealization of the guru by the student (myth making and deification), and an increase of the chance of false mysticism. He further argues that the deification of a guru is a traditional element of Eastern spirituality, but, when detached from the Eastern cultural element and

copied by Westerners, the distinction between the person who is the guru and that which he symbolizes is often lost, resulting in the relationship between the guru and disciple degenerating into a boundless, uncritical personality cult.

- In their 1993 book, *The Guru Papers*, authors Diana Alstad and Joel Kramer reject the guru-disciple tradition because of what they see as its structural defects. These defects include the authoritarian control of the guru over the disciple, which is in their view increased by the guru's encouragement of surrender to him. Alstad and Kramer assert that gurus are likely to be hypocrites because, in order to attract and maintain followers, gurus must present themselves as purer than and superior to ordinary people and other gurus.

- According to the journalist Sacha Kester, in a 2003 article in the Dutch newspaper De Volkskrant, finding a guru is a precarious matter, pointing to the many holy men in India and the case of Sathya Sai Baba whom Kester considers a swindler. In this article he also quotes the book *Karma Cola* describing that in this book a German economist tells author Gita Mehta, "It is my opinion that quality control has to be introduced for gurus. Many of my friends have become crazy in India". She describes a comment by Suranya Chakraverti who said that some Westerners do not believe in spirituality and ridicule a true guru. Other westerners, Chakraverti said, on the other hand believe in spirituality but tend to put faith in a guru who is a swindler.

Chapter 17
METAPHYSICS

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy exploring the fundamental nature of reality.

While various views and methods have been called 'metaphysics' across history, this article approaches metaphysics first from the perspective of contemporary analytical philosophy, and then explores metaphysics in other traditions. In this vein, metaphysics seeks to answer two basic questions:

1. Ultimately, what is *there*?
2. What is *it like*?

Topics of metaphysical investigation include existence, objects and their properties, space and time, cause and effect, and possibility. A central branch of metaphysics is ontology, the investigation into the basic categories of being and how they relate to one another.

There are two broad conceptions about what "world" is studied by metaphysics. The strong, classical view assumes that the objects studied by metaphysics exist independently of any observer, so that the subject is the most fundamental of all sciences. The weaker, more modern view assumes that the objects studied by metaphysics exist inside the mind of an observer, so the subject becomes a form of introspection and conceptual analysis. Some philosophers, notably Kant, discuss both of these "worlds" and what can be inferred about each one.

Some philosophers and scientists, such as the logical positivists, reject the entire subject of metaphysics as meaningless, while others disagree and think that it is legitimate.

Metaphysics in science

Prior to the modern history of science, scientific questions were addressed as a part of metaphysics known as natural philosophy. Originally, the term "science" (Latin *scientia*) simply meant "knowledge". The scientific method, however, transformed natural philosophy into an empirical activity deriving from experiment unlike the rest of philosophy. By the end of the 18th century, it had begun to be called "science" to distinguish it from philosophy. Thereafter, metaphysics denoted philosophical enquiry of a non-empirical character into the nature of existence.

Metaphysics continues asking "why" where science leaves off. For example, any theory of fundamental physics is based on some set of axioms, which may postulate the existence of entities such as atoms, particles, forces, charges, mass, and/or fields. Stating such postulates is considered to be the "end" of a science theory. Metaphysics takes these postulates and explores what they mean as human concepts. For example, do all theories of physics require the existence of space and time, objects, and properties? Or can they be expressed using only objects, or only properties? Do the objects have to retain their

identity over time or do they change? If they change, then are they still the same object? Can theories be reformulated by converting properties or predicates (such as "red") into entities (such as redness or redness fields). Is the distinction between objects and properties fundamental to the physical world and/or to our perception of it?

Much recent work has been devoted to analyzing the role of metaphysics in scientific theorizing. Alexandre Koyré led this movement, declaring in his book *Metaphysics and Measurement*, "It is not by following experiment, but by outstripping experiment, that the scientific mind makes progress." Imre Lakatos maintained that all scientific theories have a metaphysical "hard core" essential for the generation of hypotheses and theoretical assumptions. Thus, according to Lakatos, "scientific changes are connected with vast cataclysmic metaphysical revolutions."

An example from biology of Lakatos' thesis: David Hull has argued that changes in the ontological status of the species concept have been central in the development of biological thought from Aristotle through Cuvier, Lamarck, and Darwin. Darwin's ignorance of metaphysics made it more difficult for him to respond to his critics because he could not readily grasp the ways in which their underlying metaphysical views differed from his own.

In physics, new metaphysical ideas have arisen in connection with quantum mechanics, where subatomic particles arguably do not have the same sort of individuality as the particulars with which philosophy has traditionally been concerned. Also, adherence to a deterministic metaphysics in the face of the challenge posed by the quantum-mechanical uncertainty principle led physicists such as Albert Einstein to propose alternative theories that retained determinism. A. N. Whitehead is famous for creating a process philosophy metaphysics inspired by electromagnetism and special relativity.

In chemistry, Gilbert Newton Lewis addressed the nature of motion, arguing that an electron should not be said to move when it has none of the properties of motion.

Katherine Hawley notes that the metaphysics even of a widely accepted scientific theory may be challenged if it can be argued that the metaphysical presuppositions of the theory make no contribution to its predictive success.

Rejections of metaphysics

A number of individuals have suggested that much or all of metaphysics should be rejected. In the eighteenth century, David Hume took an extreme position, arguing that all genuine knowledge involves either mathematics or matters of fact and that metaphysics, which goes beyond these, is worthless. He concludes his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* with the statement:

If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it*

contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

Thirty-three years after Hume's *Enquiry* appeared, Immanuel Kant published his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Although he followed Hume in rejecting much of previous metaphysics, he argued that there was still room for some *synthetic a priori* knowledge, concerned with matters of fact yet obtainable independent of experience. These included fundamental structures of space, time, and causality. He also argued for the freedom of the will and the existence of "things in themselves", the ultimate (but unknowable) objects of experience.

The logical atomist Ludwig Wittgenstein introduced the concept that metaphysics could be influenced by theories of Aesthetics, via Logic, vis. a world composed of "atomical facts".

In the 1930s, A. J. Ayer and Rudolf Carnap endorsed Hume's position; Carnap quoted the passage above. They argued that metaphysical statements are neither true nor false but meaningless since, according to their verifiability theory of meaning, a statement is meaningful only if there can be empirical evidence for or against it.

Thus, while Ayer rejected the monism of Spinoza, noted above, he avoided a commitment to pluralism, the contrary position, by holding both views to be without meaning. Carnap took a similar line with the controversy over the reality of the external world. This logical positivist school is now generally considered to have run its course, with AJ Ayer in particular saying "it was false" when asked what was wrong with it during a television interview.

Arguing against such rejections, the Scholastic philosopher Edward Feser has observed that Hume's critique of metaphysics, and specifically Hume's fork, is "notoriously self-refuting". Feser argues that Hume's fork itself is not a conceptual truth and is not empirically testable.

Some living philosophers, such as Amie Thomasson, have argued that many metaphysical questions can be dissolved just by looking at the way we use words; others, such as Ted Sider, have argued that metaphysical questions are substantive, and that we can make progress toward answering them by comparing theories according to a range of theoretical virtues inspired by the sciences, such as simplicity and explanatory power.

History and schools of metaphysics

Classical India

Sāṃkhya

Sāṃkhya is an ancient system of Indian philosophy based on a dualism involving the ultimate principles of consciousness and matter. It is described as the rationalist school of Indian philosophy. It is most related to the Yoga school of Hinduism, and its method was most influential on the development of Early Buddhism.

The Sāmkhya is an enumerationist philosophy whose epistemology accepts three of six pramanas (proofs) as the only reliable means of gaining knowledge. These include *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference) and *śabda* (*āptavacana*, word/testimony of reliable sources).

Samkhya is strongly dualist. Sāmkhya philosophy regards the universe as consisting of two realities; puruṣa (consciousness) and prakṛti (matter). Jiva (a living being) is that state in which puruṣa is bonded to prakṛti in some form. This fusion, state the Samkhya scholars, led to the emergence of *buddhi* ("spiritual awareness") and *ahaṅkāra* (ego consciousness). The universe is described by this school as one created by purusa-prakṛti entities infused with various permutations and combinations of variously enumerated elements, senses, feelings, activity and mind. During the state of imbalance, one of more constituents overwhelm the others, creating a form of bondage, particularly of the mind. The end of this imbalance, bondage is called liberation, or moksha, by the Samkhya school.

The existence of God or supreme being is not directly asserted, nor considered relevant by the Samkhya philosophers. Sāmkhya denies the final cause of Ishvara (God). While the Samkhya school considers the Vedas as a reliable source of knowledge, it is an atheistic philosophy according to Paul Deussen and other scholars. A key difference between Samkhya and Yoga schools, state scholars, is that Yoga school accepts a "personal, yet essentially inactive, deity" or "personal god".

Samkhya is known for its theory of guṇas (qualities, innate tendencies). Guṇa, it states, are of three types: *sattva* being good, compassionate, illuminating, positive, and constructive; *rajas* is one of activity, chaotic, passion, impulsive, potentially good or bad; and *tamas* being the quality of darkness, ignorance, destructive, lethargic, negative. Everything, all life forms and human beings, state Samkhya scholars, have these three guṇas, but in different proportions. The interplay of these guṇas defines the character of someone or something, of nature and determines the progress of life. The Samkhya theory of guṇas was widely discussed, developed and refined by various schools of Indian philosophies, including Buddhism. Samkhya's philosophical treatises also influenced the development of various theories of Hindu ethics.

Vedānta

Realization of the nature of Self-identity is the principal object of the Vedanta system of Indian metaphysics. In the Upanishads, self-consciousness is not the first-person indexical self-awareness or the self-awareness which is self-reference without identification, and also not the self-consciousness which as a kind of desire is satisfied by another self-consciousness. It is Self-realisation; the realisation of the Self consisting of consciousness that leads all else.

The word *Self-consciousness* in the Upanishads means the knowledge about the existence and nature of Brahman. It means the consciousness of our own real being, the primary reality. Self-consciousness means Self-knowledge, the knowledge of Prajna i.e. of Prana which is Brahman. According to the Upanishads the Atman or Paramatman is

phenomenally unknowable; it is the object of realisation. The Atman is unknowable in its essential nature; it is unknowable in its essential nature because it is the eternal subject who knows about everything including itself. The Atman is the knower and also the known.

Metaphysicians regard the Self either to be distinct from the Absolute or entirely identical with the Absolute. They have given form to three schools of thought – a) the *Dualistic school*, b) the *Quasi-dualistic school* and c) the *Monistic school*, as the result of their varying mystical experiences. Prakrti and Atman, when treated as two separate and distinct aspects form the basis of the Dualism of the Shvetashvatara Upanishad. Quasi-dualism is reflected in the Vaishnavite-monotheism of Ramanuja and the absolute Monism, in the teachings of Adi Shankara.

Self-consciousness is the Fourth state of consciousness or *Turiya*, the first three being *Vaisvanara*, *Taijasa* and *Prajna*. These are the four states of individual consciousness.

There are three distinct stages leading to Self-realisation. The First stage is in mystically apprehending the glory of the Self within us as though we were distinct from it. The Second stage is in identifying the "I-within" with the Self, that we are in essential nature entirely identical with the pure Self. The Third stage is in realising that the Atman is Brahman, that there is no difference between the Self and the Absolute. The Fourth stage is in realising "I am the Absolute" - *Aham Brahman Asmi*. The Fifth stage is in realising that Brahman is the "All" that exists, as also that which does not exist.

Buddhist metaphysics

In Buddhist philosophy there are various metaphysical traditions that have proposed different questions about the nature of reality based on the teachings of the Buddha in the early Buddhist texts. The Buddha of the early texts does not focus on metaphysical questions but on ethical and spiritual training and in some cases, he dismisses certain metaphysical questions as unhelpful and indeterminate Avyakta, which he recommends should be set aside. The development of systematic metaphysics arose after the Buddha's death with the rise of the Abhidharma traditions. The Buddhist Abhidharma schools developed their analysis of reality based on the concept of *dharmas* which are the ultimate physical and mental events that make up experience and their relations to each other. Noa Ronkin has called their approach "phenomenological".

Later philosophical traditions include the Madhyamika school of Nagarjuna, which further developed the theory of the emptiness (shunyata) of all phenomena or dharmas which rejects any kind of substance.

This has been interpreted as a form of anti-foundationalism and anti-realism which sees reality has having no ultimate essence or ground. The Yogacara school meanwhile promoted a theory called "awareness only" (vijnapti-matra) which has been interpreted as a form of Idealism or Phenomenology and denies the split between awareness itself and the objects of awareness.

Rationalism and Continental rationalism

Kant

Immanuel Kant attempted a grand synthesis and revision of the trends already mentioned: scholastic philosophy, systematic metaphysics, and skeptical empiricism, not to forget the burgeoning science of his day. As did the systems builders, he had an overarching framework in which all questions were to be addressed. Like Hume, who famously woke him from his 'dogmatic slumbers', he was suspicious of metaphysical speculation, and also places much emphasis on the limitations of the human mind. Kant described his shift in metaphysics away from making claims about an objective noumenal world, towards exploring the subjective phenomenal world, as a Copernican Revolution, by analogy to (though opposite in direction to) Copernicus' shift from man (the subject) to the sun (an object) at the center of the universe.

Kant saw rationalist philosophers as aiming for a kind of metaphysical knowledge he defined as the *synthetic apriori*—that is knowledge that does not come from the senses (it is a priori) but is nonetheless about reality (synthetic). Inasmuch as it is about reality, it differs from abstract mathematical propositions (which he terms analytical apriori), and being apriori it is distinct from empirical, scientific knowledge (which he terms synthetic aposteriori).

The only synthetic apriori knowledge we can have is of how our minds organise the data of the senses; that organising framework is space and time, which for Kant have no mind-independent existence, but nonetheless operate uniformly in all humans. Apriori knowledge of space and time is all that remains of metaphysics as traditionally conceived.

There *is* a reality beyond sensory data or phenomena, which he calls the realm of noumena; however, we cannot know it as it is in itself, but only as it appears to us. He allows himself to speculate that the origins of phenomenal God, morality, and free will *might* exist in the noumenal realm, but these possibilities have to be set against its basic unknowability for humans. Although he saw himself as having disposed of metaphysics, in a sense, he has generally been regarded in retrospect as having a metaphysics of his own, and as beginning the modern analytical conception of the subject.

Kantians

Nineteenth century philosophy was overwhelmingly influenced by Kant and his successors. Schopenhauer, Schelling, Fichte and Hegel all purveyed their own panoramic versions of German Idealism, Kant's own caution about metaphysical speculation, and refutation of idealism, having fallen by the wayside. The idealistic impulse continued into the early twentieth century with British idealists such as F. H. Bradley and J. M. E. McTaggart. Followers of Karl Marx took Hegel's dialectic view of history and re-fashioned it as materialism.

Early analytical philosophy and positivism

During the period when idealism was dominant in philosophy, science had been making great advances. The arrival of a new generation of scientifically minded philosophers led to a sharp decline in the popularity of idealism during the 1920s.

Analytical philosophy was spearheaded by Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore. Russell and William James tried to compromise between idealism and materialism with the theory of neutral monism.

The early to mid twentieth century philosophy also saw a trend to reject metaphysical questions as meaningless. The driving force behind this tendency was the philosophy of logical positivism as espoused by the Vienna Circle.

At around the same time, the American pragmatists were steering a middle course between materialism and idealism. System-building metaphysics, with a fresh inspiration from science, was revived by A. N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne.

Process metaphysics

There are two fundamental aspects of everyday experience: change and persistence. Until recently, the Western philosophical tradition has arguably championed substance and persistence, with some notable exceptions, however. According to process thinkers, novelty, flux and accident do matter, and sometimes they constitute the ultimate reality.

In a broad sense, process metaphysics is as old as Western philosophy, with figures such as Heraclitus, Plotinus, Duns Scotus, Leibniz, David Hume, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, Charles Renouvier, Karl Marx, Ernst Mach, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Émile Boutroux, Henri Bergson, Samuel Alexander and Nicolas Berdyaev. It seemingly remains an open question whether major "Continental" figures such as the late Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, or Jacques Derrida should be included.

In a strict sense, process metaphysics may be limited to the works of a few founding fathers: G. W. F. Hegel, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Henri Bergson, A. N. Whitehead, and John Dewey. From a European perspective, there was a very significant and early Whiteheadian influence on the works of outstanding scholars such as Émile Meyerson (1859–1933), Louis Couturat (1868–1914), Jean Wahl (1888–1974), Robin George Collingwood (1889–1943), Philippe Devaux (1902–1979), Hans Jonas (1903–1993), Dorothy M. Emmett (1904–2000), Maurice Merleau Ponty (1908–1961), Enzo Paci (1911–1976), Charlie Dunbar Broad (1887–1971), Wolfe Mays (1912–), Ilya Prigogine (1917–2003), Jules Vuillemin (1920–2001), Jean Ladrière (1921–), Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–), and Reiner Wiehl (1929–2010).

Later analytical philosophy

While early analytic philosophy tended to reject metaphysical theorizing, under the influence of logical positivism, it was revived in the second half of the twentieth century. Philosophers such as David K. Lewis and David Armstrong developed elaborate theories on a range of topics such as universals, causation, possibility and necessity and abstract objects. However, the focus of analytical philosophy generally is away from the construction of all-encompassing systems and toward close analysis of individual ideas.

Among the developments that led to the revival of metaphysical theorizing were Quine's attack on the analytic–synthetic distinction, which was generally taken to undermine Carnap's distinction between existence questions internal to a framework and those external to it.

The philosophy of fiction, the problem of empty names, and the debate over existence's status as a property have all come of relative obscurity into the limelight, while perennial issues such as free will, possible worlds, and the philosophy of time have had new life breathed into them.

The analytic view is of metaphysics as studying phenomenal human concepts rather than making claims about the noumenal world, so its style often blurs into philosophy of language and introspective psychology. Compared to system-building, it can seem very dry, stylistically similar to computer programming or mathematics. Despite, or perhaps because of, this scientific dryness, it is generally regarded as having made "progress" where other schools have not. For example, concepts from analytical metaphysics are now routinely employed and cited as useful guides in computational ontologies for databases and to frame computer natural language processing and knowledge representation software.

Etymology

The word "metaphysics" derives from the Greek words μετά (*metá*, "beyond", "upon" or "after") and φυσικά (*physiká*, "physics"). It was first used as the title for several of Aristotle's works, because they were usually anthologized after the works on physics in complete editions. The prefix *meta-* ("after") indicates that these works come "after" the chapters on physics. However, Aristotle himself did not call the subject of these books "Metaphysics": he referred to it as "first philosophy." The editor of Aristotle's works, Andronicus of Rhodes, is thought to have placed the books on first philosophy right after another work, *Physics*, and called them τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ βιβλία (*tà metà tà physikà biblía*) or "the books that come after the [books on] physics". This was misread by Latin scholiasts, who thought it meant "the science of what is beyond the physical".

However, once the name was given, the commentators sought to find intrinsic reasons for its appropriateness. For instance, it was understood to mean "the science of the world beyond nature" (φύσις - *phýsis* in Greek), that is, the science of the immaterial. Again, it was understood to refer to the chronological or pedagogical order among our philosophical

studies, so that the "metaphysical sciences" would mean "those that we study after having mastered the sciences that deal with the physical world" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio in librum Boethii De hebdomadibus*, V, 1).

A person who does, or is doing, metaphysics is called a *metaphysician*.

There is a widespread use of the term in current popular literature which replicates this understanding, i.e. that the metaphysical equates to the non-physical: thus, "metaphysical healing" means healing by means of remedies that are not physical.

Chapter 18
ONTOLOGY

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence and/or reality, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations. Traditionally listed as a part of the major branch of philosophy known as metaphysics, ontology often deals with questions concerning what entities exist or may be said to exist and how such entities may be grouped, related within a hierarchy, and subdivided according to similarities and differences. Although ontology as a philosophical enterprise is highly hypothetical, it also has practical application in information science and technology, such as ontology engineering. A very simple definition of ontology is that it is the examination of what is meant, in context, by the word 'thing'.
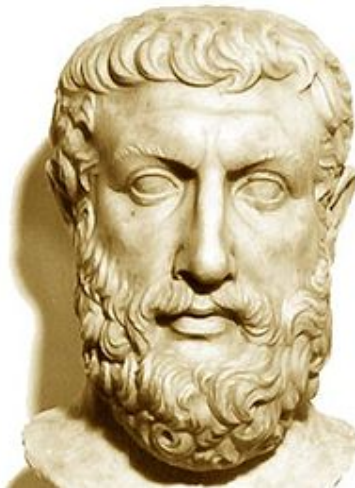
Parmenides was among the first to propose an ontological characterization of the fundamental nature of reality.

Overview

Some philosophers, notably of the Platonic school, contend that all nouns (including abstract nouns) refer to existent entities. Other philosophers contend that nouns do not always name entities, but that some provide a kind of shorthand for reference to a collection of either objects or events. In this latter view, *mind*, instead of referring to an entity, refers to a collection of *mental events* experienced by a *person*; *society* refers to a collection of *persons* with some shared characteristics, and *geometry* refers to a collection of a specific kind of intellectual activity. Between these poles of realism and nominalism, stand a variety of other positions. An ontology may give an account of which words refer to entities, which do not, why, and what categories result.

Some fundamental questions

Principal questions of ontology include:

- "What can be said to exist?"
- "What is a thing?"
- "Into what categories, if any, can we sort existing things?"
- "What are the meanings of being?"
- "What are the various modes of being of entities?"

Various philosophers have provided different answers to these questions. One common approach involves dividing the extant subjects and predicates into groups called categories. Of course, such lists of categories differ widely from one another, and it is through the co-ordination of different categorical schemes that ontology relates to such fields as library science and artificial intelligence. Such an understanding of ontological categories, however, is merely taxonomic, classificatory. Aristotle's categories are the ways in which a being may be addressed simply as a being, such as:

- what it is (its 'whatness', quiddity, haecceity or essence)
- how it is (its 'howness' or qualitativeness)
- how much it is (quantitativeness)
- where it is, its relatedness to other beings

Further examples of ontological questions include:

- What is existence, i.e. what does it mean for a being to be?
- Is existence a property?
- Is existence a genus or general class that is simply divided up by specific differences?
- Which entities, if any, are fundamental?
- Are all entities objects?
- How do the properties of an object relate to the object itself?
- Do physical properties actually exist?
- What features are the essential, as opposed to merely accidental attributes of a given object?
- How many levels of existence or ontological levels are there? And what constitutes a "level"?
- What is a physical object?
- Can one give an account of what it means to say that a physical object exists?
- Can one give an account of what it means to say that a non-physical entity exists?
- What constitutes the *identity* of an object?
- When does an object go *out* of existence, as opposed to merely *changing*?
- Do beings exist other than in the modes of objectivity and subjectivity, i.e. is the subject/object split of modern philosophy inevitable?

Concepts

Essential ontological dichotomies include:

- universals and particulars

- substance and accident
- abstract and concrete objects
- essence and existence
- determinism and indeterminism
- monism and dualism
- idealism and materialism

Types

Philosophers can classify ontologies in various ways using criteria such as the degree of abstraction and field of application:

1. *Upper ontology*: concepts supporting development of an ontology, meta-ontology
2. *Domain ontology*: concepts relevant to a particular topic or area of interest, for example, information technology or computer languages, or particular branches of science
3. *Interface ontology*: concepts relevant to the juncture of two disciplines
4. *Process ontology*: inputs, outputs, constraints, sequencing information, involved in business or engineering processes

History

Etymology

The compound word *ontology* combines *onto-*, from the Greek ὄν, *on* (gen. ὄντος, *ontos*), i.e. "being; that which is", which is the present participle of the verb εἰμί, *eimí*, i.e. "to be, I am", and -λογία, *-logia*, i.e. "logical discourse", see classical compounds for this type of word formation. While the etymology is Greek, the oldest extant record of the word itself, the New Latin form *ontologia*, appeared in 1606 in the work *Ogdoas Scholastica* by Jacob Lorhard (*Lorhardus*) and in 1613 in the *Lexicon philosophicum* by Rudolf Göckel (*Goclenius*). The first occurrence in English of *ontology* as recorded by the *OED* (*Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition, 2008) came in a work by Gideon Harvey (1636/7–1702): *Archelogia philosophica nova; or, New principles of Philosophy. Containing Philosophy in general, Metaphysicks or Ontology, Dynamilogy or a Discourse of Power, Religio Philosophi or Natural Theology, Physicks or Natural philosophy*, London, Thomson, 1663. The word was first used in its Latin form by philosophers based on the Latin roots, which themselves are based on the Greek.

Leibniz is the only one of the great philosophers of the 17th century to have used the term *ontology*.

Origins

Ontology was referred to as Tattva Mimamsa by ancient Indian philosophers going back as early as Vedas. Ontology is an aspect of the Samkhya school of philosophy from the first millenium B.C.E. The concept of Guna which describes the three properties (sattva, rajas

and tamas) present in differing proportions in all existing things, is a notable concept of this school.

Parmenides and monism

Parmenides was among the first in the Greek tradition to propose an ontological characterization of the fundamental nature of existence. In his prologue or proem he describes two views of existence; initially that nothing comes from nothing, and therefore existence is eternal. Consequently, our opinions about truth must often be false and deceitful. Most of western philosophy — including the fundamental concepts of falsifiability — have emerged from this view. This posits that existence is what may be conceived of by thought, created, or possessed. Hence, there may be neither void nor vacuum; and true reality neither may come into being nor vanish from existence. Rather, the entirety of creation is eternal, uniform, and immutable, though not infinite (he characterized its shape as that of a perfect sphere). Parmenides thus posits that change, as perceived in everyday experience, is illusory. Everything that may be apprehended is but one part of a single entity. This idea somewhat anticipates the modern concept of an ultimate grand unification theory that finally describes all of existence in terms of one inter-related sub-atomic reality which applies to everything.

Ontological pluralism

The opposite of eleatic monism is the pluralistic conception of Being. In the 5th century BC, Anaxagoras and Leucippus replaced the reality of Being (unique and unchanging) with that of Becoming and therefore by a more fundamental and elementary ontic plurality. This thesis originated in the Hellenic world, stated in two different ways by Anaxagoras and by Leucippus. The first theory dealt with "seeds" (which Aristotle referred to as "homeomeries") of the various substances. The second was the atomistic theory, which dealt with reality as based on the vacuum, the atoms and their intrinsic movement in it.

The materialist atomism proposed by Leucippus was indeterminist, but then developed by Democritus in a deterministic way. It was later (4th century BC) that the original atomism was taken again as indeterministic by Epicurus. He confirmed the reality as composed of an infinity of indivisible, unchangeable corpuscles or atoms (*atomon*, lit. 'uncuttable'), but he gives weight to characterize atoms while for Leucippus they are characterized by a "figure", an "order" and a "position" in the cosmos. They are, besides, creating the whole with the intrinsic movement in the *vacuum*, producing the diverse flux of being. Their movement is influenced by the *parenklisis* (Lucretius names it clinamen) and that is determined by the chance. These ideas foreshadowed our understanding of traditional physics until the nature of atoms was discovered in the 20th century.

Plato

Plato developed this distinction between true reality and illusion, in arguing that what is real are eternal and unchanging Forms or Ideas (a precursor to universals), of which

things experienced in sensation are at best merely copies, and real only in so far as they copy ('partake of') such Forms. In general, Plato presumes that all nouns (e.g., 'Beauty') refer to real entities, whether sensible bodies or insensible Forms. Hence, in *The Sophist* Plato argues that Being is a Form in which all existent things participate and which they have in common (though it is unclear whether 'Being' is intended in the sense of existence, copula, or identity); and argues, against Parmenides, that Forms must exist not only of Being, but also of Negation and of non-Being (or Difference).

In his *Categories*, Aristotle identifies ten possible kinds of things that may be the subject or the predicate of a proposition. For Aristotle there are four different ontological dimensions:

1. according to the various categories or ways of addressing a being as such
2. according to its truth or falsity (e.g. fake gold, counterfeit money)
3. whether it exists in and of itself or simply 'comes along' by accident
4. according to its potency, movement (energy) or finished presence (*Metaphysics* Book Theta).

According to Avicenna, and in an interpretation of Greek Aristotelian and Platonist ontological doctrines in medieval metaphysics, being is either necessary, contingent *qua* possible, or impossible. Necessary being is that which cannot but be, since its non-being entails a contradiction. Contingent *qua* possible being is neither necessary nor impossible for it to be or not to be. It is ontologically neutral, and is brought from potential existing into actual existence by way of a cause that is external to its essence. Its being is borrowed unlike the necessary existent, which is self-subsisting and is impossible for it not to be. As for the impossible, it necessarily does not exist, and the affirmation of its being is a contradiction.

Other ontological topics

Ontological formations

The concept of 'ontological formations' refers to formations of social relations understood as dominant ways of living. Temporal, spatial, corporeal, epistemological and performative relations are taken to be central to understanding a dominant formation. That is, a particular ontological formation is based on how ontological categories of time, space, embodiment, knowing and performing are lived—objectively and subjectively. Different ontological formations include the customary (including the tribal), the traditional, the modern and the postmodern. The concept was first introduced by Paul James' *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism* together with a series of writers including Damian Grenfell and Manfred Steger.

In the engaged theory approach, ontological formations are seen as layered and intersecting rather than singular formations. They are 'formations of being'. This approach avoids the usual problems of a Great Divide being posited between the modern and the pre-modern.

Ontological and epistemological certainty

René Descartes, with "je pense donc je suis" or "cogito ergo sum" or "I think, therefore I am", argued that "the self" is something that we can know exists with epistemological certainty. Descartes argued further that this knowledge could lead to a proof of the certainty of the existence of God, using the ontological argument that had been formulated first by Anselm of Canterbury.

Certainty about the existence of "the self" and "the other", however, came under increasing criticism in the 20th century. Sociological theorists, most notably George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman, saw the Cartesian Other as a "Generalized Other", the imaginary audience that individuals use when thinking about the self. According to Mead, "we do not assume there is a self to begin with. Self is not presupposed as a stuff out of which the world arises. Rather, the self arises in the world". The Cartesian Other was also used by Sigmund Freud, who saw the superego as an abstract regulatory force, and Émile Durkheim who viewed this as a psychologically manifested entity which represented God in society at large.

Body and environment, questioning the meaning of being

Schools of subjectivism, objectivism and relativism existed at various times in the 20th century, and the postmodernists and body philosophers tried to reframe all these questions in terms of bodies taking some specific action in an environment. This relied to a great degree on insights derived from scientific research into animals taking instinctive action in natural and artificial settings—as studied by biology, ecology, and cognitive science.

The processes by which bodies related to environments became of great concern, and the idea of being itself became difficult to really define. What did people mean when they said "A is B", "A must be B", "A was B"...? Some linguists advocated dropping the verb "to be" from the English language, leaving "E Prime", supposedly less prone to bad abstractions. Others, mostly philosophers, tried to dig into the word and its usage. Heidegger distinguished *human being* as *existence* from the being of things in the world. Heidegger proposes that our way of being human and the way the world is for us are cast historically through a fundamental ontological questioning. These fundamental ontological categories provide the basis for communication in an age: a horizon of unspoken and seemingly unquestionable background meanings, such as human beings understood unquestioningly as subjects and other entities understood unquestioningly as objects. Because these basic ontological meanings both generate and are regenerated in everyday interactions, the locus of our way of being in a historical epoch is the communicative event of language in use. For Heidegger, however, communication in the *first* place is not among human beings, but language itself shapes up in response to questioning (the inexhaustible meaning of) being. Even the focus of traditional ontology on the 'whatness' or 'quidditas' of beings in their substantial, standing presence can be shifted to pose the question of the 'whoness' of human being itself.

Ontology and language

Some philosophers suggest that the question of "What is?" is (at least in part) an issue of *usage* rather than a question about facts. This perspective is conveyed by an analogy made by Donald Davidson: Suppose a person refers to a 'cup' as a 'chair' and makes some comments pertinent to a cup, but uses the word 'chair' consistently throughout instead of 'cup'. One might readily catch on that this person simply calls a 'cup' a 'chair' and the oddity is explained. Analogously, if we find people asserting 'there are' such-and-such, and we do not ourselves think that 'such-and-such' exist, we might conclude that these people are not nuts (Davidson calls this assumption 'charity'), they simply use 'there are' differently than we do. The question of *What is?* is at least partially a topic in the philosophy of language, and is not entirely about ontology itself. This viewpoint has been expressed by Eli Hirsch.

Hirsch interprets Hilary Putnam as asserting that different concepts of "the existence of something" can be correct. This position does not contradict the view that some things do exist, but points out that different 'languages' will have different rules about assigning this property. How to determine the 'fitness' of a 'language' to the world then becomes a subject for investigation.

Common to all Indo-European copula languages is the double use of the verb "to be" in both stating that entity X exists ("X is.") as well as stating that X has a property ("X is P"). It is sometimes argued that a third use is also distinct, stating that X is a member of a class ("X is a C"). In other language families these roles may have completely different verbs and are less likely to be confused with one another. For example they might say something like "the car has redness" rather than "the car is red". Hence any discussion of "being" in Indo-European language philosophy may need to make distinctions between these senses.

Ontology and human geography

In human geography there are two types of ontology: small "o" which accounts for the practical orientation, describing functions of being a part of the group, thought to oversimplify and ignore key activities. The other "o", or big "O", systematically, logically, and rationally describes the essential characteristics and universal traits. This concept relates closely to Plato's view that the human mind can only perceive a bigger world if they continue to live within the confines of their "caves". However, in spite of the differences, ontology relies on the symbolic agreements among members. That said, ontology is crucial for the axiomatic language frameworks.

Reality and actuality

According to A.N. Whitehead, for ontology, it is useful to distinguish the terms 'reality' and 'actuality'.

In this view, an 'actual entity' has a philosophical status of fundamental ontological priority, while a 'real entity' is one which may be actual, or may derive its reality from its logical relation to some actual entity or entities. For example, an occasion in the life of Socrates is an actual entity. But Socrates' being a man does not make 'man' an actual entity, because it refers indeterminately to many actual entities, such as several occasions in the life of Socrates, and also to several occasions in the lives of Alcibiades, and of others. But the notion of man is real; it derives its reality from its reference to those many actual occasions, each of which is an actual entity. An actual occasion is a concrete entity, while terms such as 'man' are abstractions from many concrete relevant entities.

According to Whitehead, an actual entity must earn its philosophical status of fundamental ontological priority by satisfying several philosophical criteria, as follows.

- There is no going behind an actual entity, to find something more fundamental in fact or in efficacy. This criterion is to be regarded as expressing an axiom, or postulated distinguished doctrine.
- An actual entity must be completely determinate in the sense that there may be no confusion about its identity that would allow it to be confounded with another actual entity. In this sense an actual entity is completely concrete, with no potential to be something other than itself. It is what it is. It is of course a source of potentiality for the creation of other actual entities, of which it may be said to be a part cause. Likewise it is the concretion or realization of potentialities of other actual entities which are its partial causes.
- Causation between actual entities is essential to their actuality. Consequently, for Whitehead, each actual entity has its distinct and definite extension in physical Minkowski space, and so is uniquely identifiable. A description in Minkowski space supports descriptions in time and space for particular observers.
- It is part of the aim of the philosophy of such an ontology as Whitehead's that the actual entities should be all alike, *qua* actual entities; they should all satisfy a single definite set of well stated ontological criteria of actuality.

Whitehead proposed that his notion of an occasion of experience satisfies the criteria for its status as the philosophically preferred definition of an actual entity. From a purely logical point of view, each occasion of experience has in full measure the characters of both objective and subjective reality. Subjectivity and objectivity refer to different aspects of an occasion of experience, and in no way do they exclude each other.

Examples of other philosophical proposals or candidates as actual entities, in this view, are Aristotle's 'substances', Leibniz' monads, and Descartes *'res verae'* , and the more modern 'states of affairs'. Aristotle's substances, such as Socrates, have behind them as more fundamental the 'primary substances', and in this sense do not satisfy Whitehead's criteria. Whitehead is not happy with Leibniz' monads as actual entities because they are "windowless" and do not cause each other. 'States of affairs' are often not closely defined, often without specific mention of extension in physical Minkowski space; they are therefore not necessarily processes of becoming, but may be as their name suggests, simply static states in some sense. States of affairs are contingent on particulars, and

therefore have something behind them. One summary of the Whiteheadian actual entity is that it is a process of becoming. Another summary, referring to its causal linkage to other actual entities, is that it is "all window", in contrast with Leibniz' windowless monads.

This view allows philosophical entities other than actual entities to really exist, but not as fundamentally and primarily factual or causally efficacious; they have existence as abstractions, with reality only derived from their reference to actual entities. A Whiteheadian actual entity has a unique and completely definite place and time. Whiteheadian abstractions are not so tightly defined in time and place, and in the extreme, some are timeless and placeless, or 'eternal' entities. All abstractions have logical or conceptual rather than efficacious existence; their lack of definite time does not make them unreal if they refer to actual entities. Whitehead calls this 'the ontological principle'.

Microcosmic ontology

There is an established and long philosophical history of the concept of atoms as microscopic physical objects.They are far too small to be visible to the naked eye. It was as recent as the nineteenth century that precise estimates of the sizes of putative physical atoms began to become plausible. Almost direct empirical observation of atomic effects was due to the theoretical investigation of Brownian motion by Albert Einstein in the very early twentieth century. But even then, the real existence of atoms was debated by some. Such debate might be labeled 'microcosmic ontology'. Here the word 'microcosm' is used to indicate a physical world of small entities, such as for example atoms.

Subatomic particles are usually considered to be much smaller than atoms. Their real or actual existence may be very difficult to demonstrate empirically. A distinction is sometimes drawn between actual and virtual subatomic particles. Reasonably, one may ask, in what sense, if any, do virtual particles exist as physical entities? For atomic and subatomic particles, difficult questions arise, such as do they possess a precise position, or a precise momentum? A question that continues to be controversial is 'to what kind of physical thing, if any, does the quantum mechanical wave function refer?'.

Ontological argument

Can ontology prove the existence, nature and attributes of God? The Ontological argument first formulated by Anslem deals with the foundations of ontology.

Chapter 19
CAUSE AND EFFECT IN ADVAITA VEDANTA

Cause and effect are an important topic in all schools of Vedanta. These concepts are discussed in ancient and medieval texts of Hinduism, and other Indian religions, using synonymous terms. Cause is referred to as *kāraṇa* (कारण), *nidana* (निदान), *hetu* (हेतु) or *mulam* (मूलम्), while effect is referred to as *kārya* (कार्य), *phala* (फल), *parinam* (परिणाम) or *Shungam* (शुङ्ग). Vedanta sub-schools have proposed and debated different causality theories.

Adi Guru Shri Gaudapadacharya, the grand guru of Shri Adi Shankaracharya and the first historical proponent of Advaita Vedanta, also believed to be the founder of Shri Gaudapadacharya Math

Causality

All schools of Vedanta subscribe to the theory of *Satkāryavāda*, which means that the effect is pre-existent in the cause. But there are different views on the causal relationship and the nature of the empirical world from the perspective of metaphysical Brahman. The *Brahma Sutras*, the ancient Vedantins, most sub-schools of Vedanta, as well as Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy, support *Parinamavada*, the idea that the world is a real transformation (*parinama*) of Brahman.

Scholars disagree on the whether Adi Shankara and his Advaita Vedanta explained causality through *vivarta*. According to Andrew Nicholson, instead of *parinama-vada*, the competing causality theory is *Vivartavada*, which says "the world, is merely an unreal manifestation (*vivarta*) of Brahman. Vivartavada states that although Brahman appears to undergo a transformation, in fact no real change takes place. The myriad of beings are unreal manifestation, as the only real being is Brahman, that ultimate reality which is unborn, unchanging, and entirely without parts". The advocates of this illusive, unreal transformation based causality theory, states Nicholson, have been the Advaitins, the followers of Shankara. "Although the world can be described as conventionally real", adds

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Nicholson, "the Advaitins claim that all of Brahman's effects must ultimately be acknowledged as unreal before the individual self can be liberated".

However, other scholars such as Hajime Nakamura and Paul Hacker disagree. Hacker and others state that Adi Shankara did not advocate *Vivartavada*, and his explanations are "remote from any connotation of illusion". According to these scholars, it was the 13th century scholar Prakasatman who gave a definition to *Vivarta*, and it is Prakasatman's theory that is sometimes misunderstood as Adi Shankara's position. To Shankara, the word *maya* has hardly any terminological weight. Andrew Nicholson concurs with Hacker and other scholars, adding that the *vivarta-vada* isn't Shankara's theory, that Shankara's ideas appear closer to *parinama-vada*, and the *vivarta* explanation likely emerged gradually in Advaita subschool later. According to Eliot Deutsch, Advaita Vedanta states that from "the standpoint of Brahman-experience and Brahman itself, there is no creation" in the absolute sense, all empirically observed creation is relative and mere transformation of one state into another, all states are provisional and a cause-effect driven modification.

Nimitta kāraṇa and Upādāna kāraṇa

Two sorts of causes are recognised:

1. Nimitta kāraṇa, the efficient cause.
2. Upādāna kāraṇa, the material cause.

kārya-kāraṇa ananyatva

Advaita states that effect (*kārya*) is non-different from cause (*kāraṇa*), but the cause is different from the effect:

> *kārya is not different from* kāraṇa*; however* kāraṇa *is different from* kārya

This principle is called *kārya-kāraṇa ananyatva*.

Effect is not different from cause

When the cause is destroyed, the effect will no longer exist. For example, cotton cloth is the effect of the cotton threads, which is the material cause. Without threads there will be no cotton cloth. Without cotton there will be no thread. According to Swami Sivananda, in his comments on the Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya 2.1.9, Adi Shankara describes this as follows:

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

Chapter 20
MAYA

Maya literally "illusion" or "magic", has multiple meanings in Indian philosophies depending on the context. In ancient Vedic literature, Māyā literally implies extraordinary power and wisdom. In later Vedic texts and modern literature dedicated to Indian traditions, Māyā connotes a "magic show, an illusion where things appear to be present but are not what they seem". Māyā is also a spiritual concept connoting "that which exists, but is constantly changing and thus is spiritually unreal", and the "power or the principle that conceals the true character of spiritual reality".

In Buddhism, Maya is the name of Gautama Buddha's mother. In Hinduism, Maya is also an epithet for goddess, and the name of a manifestation of Lakshmi, the goddess of "wealth, prosperity and love". Maya is also a name for girls.

Etymology and terminology

Māyā is a word with unclear etymology, probably comes from the root *mā* which means "to measure".

According to Monier Williams, *māyā* meant "wisdom and extraordinary power" in an earlier older language, but from the Vedic period onwards, the word came to mean "illusion, unreality, deception, fraud, trick, sorcery, witchcraft and magic". However, P. D. Shastri states that the Monier Williams' list is a "loose definition, misleading generalization", and not accurate in interpreting ancient Vedic and medieval era Sanskrit texts; instead, he suggests a more accurate meaning of *māyā* is "appearance, not mere illusion".

According to William Mahony, the root of the word may be *man-* or "to think", implying the role of imagination in the creation of the world. In early Vedic usage, the term implies, states Mahony, "the wondrous and mysterious power to turn an idea into a physical reality".

Franklin Southworth states the word's origin is uncertain, and other possible roots of *māyā* include *may-* meaning mystify, confuse, intoxicate, delude, as well as *māy-* which means "disappear, be lost".

Jan Gonda considers the word related to *mā*, which means "mother", as do Tracy Pintchman and Adrian Snodgrass, serving as an epithet for goddesses such as Lakshmi. Maya here implies art, is the maker's power, writes Zimmer, "a mother in all three worlds", a creatrix, her magic is the activity in the Will-spirit.

A similar word is also found in the Avestan *māyā* with the meaning of "magic power".

Hinduism

Literature

The Vedas

Words related to and containing *Māyā*, such as *Mayava*, occur many times in the Vedas. These words have various meanings, with interpretations that are contested, and some are names of deities that do not appear in texts of 1st millennium BCE and later. The use of word Māyā in Rig veda, in the later era context of "magic, illusion, power", occurs in many hymns. One titled Māyā-bheda (मायाभेद:, Discerning Illusion) includes hymns 10.177.1 through 10.177.3, as the battle unfolds between the good and the evil, as follows,

पतंगमक्तमसुरस्य **माय**या हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपश्चितः ।
समुद्रे अन्तः कवयो वि चक्षते मरीचीनां पदमिच्छन्ति वेधसः ॥१॥
पतंगो वाचं मनसा बिभर्ति तां गन्धर्वोऽवदद्गर्भे अन्तः ।
तां द्योतमानां स्वर्यं मनीषामृतस्य पदे कवयो नि पान्ति ॥२॥
अपश्यं गोपामनिपद्यमानमा च परा च पथिभिश्चरन्तम् ।
स सध्रीचीः स विषूचीर्वसान आ वरीवर्ति भुवनेष्वन्तः ॥३॥

The wise behold with their mind in their heart the Sun, made manifest by the illusion of the Asura;

The sages look into the solar orb, the ordainers desire the region of his rays. The Sun bears the word in his mind; the Gandharva has spoken it within the wombs; sages cherish it in the place of sacrifice, brilliant, heavenly, ruling the mind. I beheld the protector, never descending, going by his paths to the east and the west; clothing the quarters of the heaven and the intermediate spaces. He constantly revolves in the midst of the worlds.

—*Rig veda X.177.1-3, Translated by Laurie Patton*

The above Maya-bheda hymn discerns, using symbolic language, a contrast between mind influenced by light (sun) and magic (illusion of Asura). The hymn is a call to discern one's enemies, perceive artifice, and distinguish, using one's mind, between that which is perceived and that which is unperceived. Rig veda does not connote the word Māyā as always good or always bad, it is simply a form of technique, mental power and means. Rig veda uses the word in two contexts, implying that there are two kinds of Māyā: divine Māyā and undivine Māyā, the former being the foundation of truth, the latter of falsehood.

Elsewhere in Vedic mythology, Indra uses Maya to conquer Vritra. Varuna's supernatural power is called Maya. *Māyā*, in such examples, connotes powerful magic, which both *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons) use against each other. In the Yajurveda, *māyā* is an unfathomable plan. In the Aitareya Brahmana Maya is also referred to as Dirghajihvi,

hostile to gods and sacrifices. The hymns in Book 8, Chapter 10 of Atharvaveda describe the primordial woman *Virāj* (विराज्, chief queen) and how she willingly gave the knowledge of food, plants, agriculture, husbandry, water, prayer, knowledge, strength, inspiration, concealment, charm, virtue, vice to gods, demons, men and living creatures, despite all of them making her life miserable. In hymns of 8.10.22, *Virāj* is used by Asuras (demons) who call her as Māyā, as follows,

She rose. The Asuras saw her. They called her. Their cry was, "Come, O Māyā, come thou hither" !!
Her cow was Virochana Prahradi. Her milking vessel was a pan of iron.
Dvimurdha Artvya milked this Māyā.
The Asuras depend for life on Māyā for their sustenance.
One who knows this, becomes a fit supporter [of gods].

—*Atharva veda VIII.10.22*

The contextual meaning of Maya in Atharvaveda is "power of creation", not illusion. Gonda suggests the central meaning of Maya in Vedic literature is, "wisdom and power enabling its possessor, or being able itself, to create, devise, contrive, effect, or do something". Maya stands for anything that has real, material form, human or non-human, but that does not reveal the hidden principles and implicit knowledge that creates it. An illustrative example of this in Rig veda VII.104.24 and Atharva veda VIII.4.24 where Indra is invoked against the Maya of sorcerers appearing in the illusory form – like a *fata morgana* – of animals to trick a person.

The Upanishads
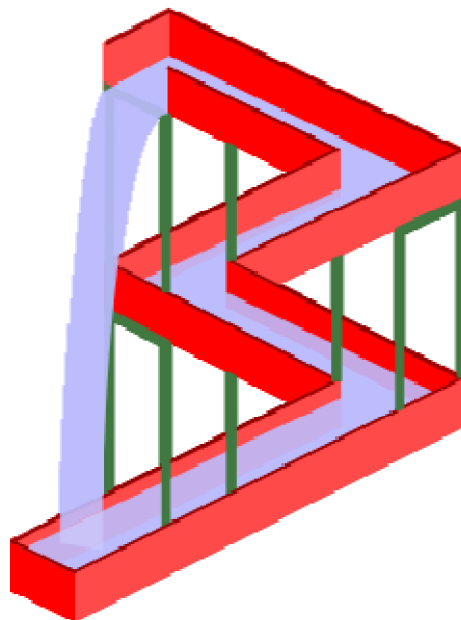
M. C. Escher paintings such as the Waterfall – redrawn in this sketch – demonstrates the Hindu concept of Maya, states Jeffrey Brodd. The impression of water-world the sketch gives, in reality is not what it seems.

The Upanishads describe the universe, and the human experience, as an interplay of Purusha (the eternal, unchanging principles, consciousness) and Prakṛti (the temporary, changing material world, nature). The former manifests itself as Ātman (Soul, Self), and the latter as Māyā. The Upanishads refer to the knowledge of Atman as "true knowledge" (*Vidya*), and the knowledge of Maya as "not true knowledge" (*Avidya*, Nescience, lack of awareness, lack of true knowledge). Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, states Ben-Ami Scharfstein, describes Maya as "the tendency to imagine something where it does not exist, for example, atman with the body". To the Upanishads, knowledge includes empirical knowledge and spiritual knowledge, complete knowing necessarily includes understanding the hidden principles that work, the realization of the soul of things.

Hendrick Vroom explains, "The term *Maya* has been translated as 'illusion,' but then it does not concern normal illusion. Here 'illusion' does not mean that the world is not real and simply a figment of the human imagination. *Maya* means that the world is not as it seems; the world that one experiences is misleading as far as its true nature is concerned." Lynn Foulston states, "The world is both real and unreal because it exists but is 'not what it appears to be'." According to Wendy Doniger, "to say that the universe is an illusion (māyā) is not to say that it is unreal; it is to say, instead, that it is not what it seems to be, that it is something constantly being made. Māyā not only deceives people about the things they think they know; more basically, it limits their knowledge."

Māyā pre-exists and co-exists with Brahman – the Ultimate Principle, Consciousness. Maya is perceived reality, one that does not reveal the hidden principles, the true reality. Maya is unconscious, Atman is conscious. Maya is the literal, Brahman is the figurative *Upādāna* – the principle, the cause. Maya is born, changes, evolves, dies with time, from circumstances, due to invisible principles of nature, state the Upanishads. Atman-Brahman is eternal, unchanging, invisible principle, unaffected absolute and resplendent consciousness. Maya concept in the Upanishads, states Archibald Gough, is "the indifferent aggregate of all the possibilities of emanatory or derived existences, pre-existing with Brahman", just like the possibility of a future tree pre-exists in the seed of the tree.

The concept of Maya appears in numerous Upanishads. The verses 4.9 to 4.10 of Svetasvatara Upanishad, is the oldest explicit occurrence of the idea that Brahman (Supreme Soul) is the hidden reality, nature is magic, Brahman is the magician, human beings are infatuated with the magic and thus they create bondage to illusions and delusions, and for freedom and liberation one must seek true insights and correct knowledge of the principles behind the hidden magic. Gaudapada in his Karika on Mandukya Upanishad explains the interplay of Atman and Maya as follows,

The Soul is imagined first, then the particularity of objects, External and internal, as one knows so one remembers. As a rope, not perceived distinctly in dark, is erroneously imagined, As snake, as a streak of water, so is the Soul (Atman) erroneously imagined. As when the rope is distinctly perceived, and the erroneous imagination withdrawn, Only the rope remains, without a second, so when distinctly perceived, the Atman.

When he as Pranas (living beings), as all the diverse objects appears to us,
Then it is all mere Maya, with which the Brahman (Supreme Soul) deceives himself.

<div align="right">

— Gaudapada, Māṇḍukya Kārikā 2.16-19

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Sarvasara Upanishad refers to two concepts: *Mithya* and *Maya*. It defines *Mithya* as illusion and calls it one of three kinds of substances, along with Sat (Be-ness, True) and Asat (not-Be-ness, False). *Maya*, Sarvasara Upanishad defines as all what is not Atman. Maya has no beginning, but has an end. Maya, declares Sarvasara, is anything that can be studied and subjected to proof and disproof, anything with Guṇas. In the human search for Self-knowledge, Maya is that which obscures, confuses and distracts an individual.

The Puranas and Tamil texts

Markandeya sees Vishnu as an infant on a fig leaf in the deluge.

In Puranas and Vaishnava theology, *māyā* is described as one of the nine shaktis of Vishnu. *Māyā* became associated with sleep; and Vishnu's *māyā* is sleep which envelopes the world when he awakes to destroy evil. Vishnu, like Indra, is the master of *māyā*; and *māyā* envelopes Vishnu's body. The *Bhagavata Purana* narrates that the sage Markandeya requests Vishnu to experience his *māyā*. Vishnu appears as an infant floating on a fig leaf in a deluge and then swallows the sage, the sole survivor of the cosmic flood. The sage sees various worlds of the universe, gods etc. and his own hermitage in the infant's belly. Then the infant breathes out the sage, who tries to embrace the infant, but everything disappears and the sage realizes that he was in his hermitage the whole time and was given a flavor of Vishnu's *māyā*. The magic creative power, *Māyā* was always a monopoly of the central Solar God; and was also associated with the early solar prototype of Vishnu in the early Aditya phase.

In Sangam period Tamil literature, Krishna is found as *māyon*; with other attributed names are such as Mal, Tirumal, Perumal and Mayavan. In the Tamil classics, Durga is referred to by the feminine form of the word, viz., *māyol*; wherein she is endowed with unlimited creative energy and the great powers of Vishnu, and is hence *Vishnu-Maya*.

Maya, to Shaiva Siddhanta sub-school of Hinduism, states Hilko Schomerus, is reality and truly existent, and one that exists to "provide Souls with *Bhuvana* (a world), *Bhoga* (objects of enjoyment), *Tanu* (a body) and *Karana* (organs)".

Schools of Hinduism

Need to understand Māyā

The various schools of Hinduism, particularly those based on naturalism (Vaiśeṣika), rationalism (Samkhya) or ritualism (Mimamsa), questioned and debated what is Maya, and the need to understand Maya. The Vedanta and Yoga schools explained that complete realization of knowledge requires both the understanding of ignorance, doubts and errors, as well as the understanding of invisible principles, incorporeal and the eternal truths. In matters of Self-knowledge, stated Shankara in his commentary on Taittiriya Upanishad, one is faced with the question, "Who is it that is trying to know, and how does he attain Brahman?" It is absurd, states Shankara, to speak of one becoming himself; because "Thou Art That" already. Realizing and removing ignorance is a necessary step, and this can only come from understanding Maya and then looking beyond it.

The need to understand Maya is like the metaphorical need for road. Only when the country to be reached is distant, states Shankara, that a road must be pointed out. It is a meaningless contradiction to assert, "I am right now in my village, but I need a road to reach my village." It is the confusion, ignorance and illusions that need to be repealed. It is only when the knower sees nothing else but his Self that he can be fearless and permanent. Vivekananda explains the need to understand Maya as follows (abridged), The Vedas cannot show you Brahman, you are That already. They can only help to take away the veil that hides truth from our eyes. The cessation of ignorance can only come when I know that God and I are one; in other words, identify yourself with Atman, not with human limitations. The idea that we are bound is only an illusion [Maya]. Freedom is inseparable from the nature of the Atman. This is ever pure, ever perfect, ever unchangeable.

— Adi Shankara's commentary on Fourth Vyasa Sutra, Swami Vivekananda

The text Yoga Vasistha explains the need to understand Maya as follows,

Just as when the dirt is removed, the real substance is made manifest; just as when the darkness of the night is dispelled, the objects that were shrouded by the darkness are clearly seen, when ignorance [Maya] is dispelled, truth is realized.

— Vashistha, Yoga Vasiṣṭha

Samkhya school

The early works of Samkhya, the rationalist school of Hinduism, do not identify or directly mention the Maya doctrine. The discussion of Maya theory, calling it into question, appears after the theory gains ground in Vedanta school of Hinduism. Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on the *Samkhyakarika*, for example, questions the Maya doctrine saying "It is not possible to say that the notion of the phenomenal world being real is false, for there is no evidence to contradict it". Samkhya school steadfastly retained its duality concept of Prakrti and Purusha, both real and distinct, with some texts equating Prakrti to be Maya that is "not illusion, but real", with three Guṇas in different proportions whose changing state of equilibrium defines the perceived reality.

James Ballantyne, in 1885, commented on Kapila's Sánkhya aphorism 5.72 which he translated as, "everything except nature and soul is uneternal". According to Ballantyne, this aphorism states that the mind, ether, etc. in a state of cause (not developed into a product) are called Nature and not Intellect. He adds, that scriptural texts such as Shvetashvatara Upanishad to be stating "He should know Illusion to be Nature and him in whom is Illusion to be the great Lord and the world to be pervaded by portions of him'; since Soul and Nature are also made up of parts, they must be uneternal". However, acknowledges Ballantyne, Edward Gough translates the same verse in Shvetashvatara Upanishad differently, 'Let the sage know that Prakriti is Maya and that Mahesvara is the Mayin, or arch-illusionist. All this shifting world is filled with portions of him'. In continuation of the Samkhya and Upanishadic view, in the Bhagavata philosophy, Maya has been described as 'that which appears even when there is no object like silver in a shell and which does not appear in the atman'; with maya described as the power that creates, maintains and destroys the universe.

Nyaya school

The realism-driven Nyaya school of Hinduism denied that either the world (Prakrti) or the soul (Purusa) are an illusion. Naiyayikas developed theories of illusion, typically using the term *Mithya*, and stated that illusion is simply flawed cognition, incomplete cognition or the absence of cognition. There is no deception in the reality of Prakrti or *Pradhana* (creative principle of matter/nature) or Purusa, only confusion or lack of comprehension or lack of cognitive effort, according to Nyaya scholars. To them, illusion has a cause, that rules of reason and proper *Pramanas* (epistemology) can uncover. Illusion, stated Naiyayikas, involves the projection into current cognition of predicated content from memory (a form of rushing to interpret, judge, conclude). This "projection illusion" is misplaced, and stereotypes something to be what it is not. The insights on theory of illusion by Nyaya scholars were later adopted and applied by Advaita Vedanta scholars.

Yoga school

Maya in Yoga school is the manifested world and implies divine force. Yoga and Maya are two sides of the same coin, states Zimmer, because what is referred to as Maya by living beings who are enveloped by it, is Yoga for the Brahman (Universal Principle, Supreme

Soul) whose yogic perfection creates the Maya. Maya is neither illusion nor denial of perceived reality to the Yoga scholars, rather Yoga is a means to perfect the "creative discipline of mind" and "body-mind force" to transform Maya.

The concept of Yoga as power to create Maya has been adopted as a compound word *Yogamaya* (योगमाया) by the theistic sub-schools of Hinduism. It occurs in various mythologies of the Puranas; for example, Shiva uses his *yogamāyā* to transform Markendeya's heart in Bhagavata Purana's chapter 12.10, while Krishna counsels Arjuna about *yogamāyā* in hymn 7.25 of Bhagavad Gita.

Vedanta school

Maya is a prominent and commonly referred to concept in Vedanta philosophies. Maya is often translated as "illusion", in the sense of "appearance". Human mind constructs a subjective experience, states Vedanta school, which leads to the peril of misunderstanding Maya as well as interpreting Maya as the only and final reality. Vedantins assert the "perceived world including people are not what they appear to be". There are invisible principles and laws at work, true invisible nature in others and objects, and invisible soul that one never perceives directly, but this invisible reality of Self and Soul exists, assert Vedanta scholars. Māyā is that which manifests, perpetuates a sense of false duality (or divisional plurality). This manifestation is real, but it obfuscates and eludes the hidden principles and true nature of reality. Vedanta school holds that liberation is the unfettered realization and understanding of these invisible principles – the Self, that the Self (Soul) in oneself is same as the Self in another and the Self in everything (Brahman). The difference within various sub-schools of Vedanta is the relationship between individual soul and cosmic soul (Brahman). Non-theistic Advaita sub-school holds that both are One, everyone is thus deeply connected Oneness, there is God in everyone and everything; while theistic Dvaita and other sub-schools hold that individual souls and God's soul are distinct and each person can at best love God constantly to get one's soul infinitely close to His Soul.

Advaita Vedanta

In Advaita Vedanta philosophy, there are two realities: *Vyavaharika* (empirical reality) and *Paramarthika* (absolute, spiritual reality). Māyā is the empirical reality that entangles consciousness. Māyā has the power to create a bondage to the empirical world, preventing the unveiling of the true, unitary Self—the Cosmic Spirit also known as Brahman. The theory of māyā was developed by the ninth-century Advaita Hindu philosopher Adi Shankara. However, competing theistic Dvaita scholars contested Shankara's theory, and stated that Shankara did not offer a theory of the relationship between Brahman and Māyā. A later Advaita scholar Prakasatman addressed this, by explaining, "Maya and Brahman together constitute the entire universe, just like two kinds of interwoven threads create a fabric. Maya is the manifestation of the world, whereas Brahman, which supports Maya, is the cause of the world."

Māyā is a fact in that it is the appearance of phenomena. Since Brahman is the sole metaphysical truth, Māyā is true in epistemological and empirical sense; however, Māyā is not the metaphysical and spiritual truth. The spiritual truth is the truth forever, while what is empirical truth is only true for now. Since Māyā is the perceived material world, it is true in perception context, but is "untrue" in spiritual context of Brahman. Māyā is not false, it only clouds the inner Self and principles that are real. True Reality includes both *Vyavaharika* (empirical) and *Paramarthika* (spiritual), the Māyā and the Brahman. The goal of spiritual enlightenment, state Advaitins, is to realize Brahman, realize the fearless, resplendent Oneness.

Vivekananda said: "When the Hindu says the world is Maya, at once people get the idea that the world is an illusion. This interpretation has some basis, as coming through the Buddhistic philosophers, because there was one section of philosophers who did not believe in the external world at all. But the Maya of the Vedanta, in its last developed form, is neither Idealism nor Realism, nor is it a theory. It is a simple statement of facts — what we are and what we see around us."

Buddhism

Theravada

In Theravada Buddhism māyā is the name of the mother of the Buddha. This name may have some symbolic significance given the place of māyā in Indian thought, but it does not seem to have led this tradition to give to the concept of māyā much of a philosophical role. The Pali language of Theravada speaks of distortions (*vipallasa*) rather than illusion (*māyā*).

Mahayana

In Mahayana Buddhism, illusion seems to play a somewhat larger role. Here, the magician's illusion exemplifies how people misunderstand themselves and their reality, when we could be free from this confusion. Under the influence of ignorance, we believe objects and persons to be independently real, existing apart from causes and conditions. We fail to perceive them as being empty of a real essence, whereas in fact they exist much like māyā, the magical appearance created by the magician. The magician's illusion may exist and function in the world on the basis of some props, gestures, and incantations, yet the show is illusory. The viewers participate in creating the illusion by misperceiving and drawing false conclusions. Conversely, when appearances arise and are seen as illusory, that is considered more accurate.

Altogether, there are "eight examples of illusion (the Tibetan sgyu ma translates māyā and also other Sanskrit words for illusion): magic, a dream, a bubble, a rainbow, lightning, the moon reflected in water, a mirage, and a city of celestial musicians." Understanding that what we experience is less substantial than we believe is intended to serve the purpose of liberation from ignorance, fear, and clinging and the attainment of enlightenment as a Buddha completely dedicated to the welfare of all beings.

Depending on the stage of the practitioner, the magical illusion is experienced differently. In the ordinary state, we get attached to our own mental phenomena, believing they are real, like the audience at a magic show gets attached to the illusion of a beautiful lady. At the next level, called actual relative truth, the beautiful lady appears, but the magician does not get attached. Lastly, at the ultimate level, the Buddha is not affected one way or the other by the illusion. Beyond conceptuality, the Buddha is neither attached nor non-attached. This is the middle way of Buddhism, which explicitly refutes the extremes of both eternalism and nihilism.

Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy discusses *nirmita*, or illusion closely related to māyā. In this example, the illusion is a self-awareness that is, like the magical illusion, mistaken. For Nagarjuna, the self is not the organizing command center of experience, as we might think. Actually, it is just one element combined with other factors and strung together in a sequence of causally connected moments in time. As such, the self is not substantially real, but neither can it be shown to be unreal. The continuum of moments, which we mistakenly understand to be a solid, unchanging self, still performs actions and undergoes their results. "As a magician creates a magical illusion by the force of magic, and the illusion produces another illusion, in the same way the agent is a magical illusion and the action done is the illusion created by another illusion." What we experience may be an illusion, but we are living inside the illusion and bear the fruits of our actions there. We undergo the experiences of the illusion. What we do affects what we experience, so it matters. In this example, Nagarjuna uses the magician's illusion to show that the self is not as real as it thinks, yet, to the extent it is inside the illusion, real enough to warrant respecting the ways of the world.

For the Mahayana Buddhist, the self is māyā like a magic show and so are objects in the world. Vasubandhu's Trisvabhavanirdesa, a Mahayana Yogacara "Mind Only" text, discusses the example of the magician who makes a piece of wood appear as an elephant. The audience is looking at a piece of wood but, under the spell of magic, perceives an elephant instead. Instead of believing in the reality of the illusory elephant, we are invited to recognize that multiple factors are involved in creating that perception, including our involvement in dualistic subjectivity, causes and conditions, and the ultimate beyond duality. Recognizing how these factors combine to create what we perceive ordinarily, ultimate reality appears. Perceiving that the elephant is illusory is akin to seeing through the magical illusion, which reveals the dharmadhatu, or ground of being.

Tantra

Buddhist Tantra, a further development of the Mahayana, also makes use of the magician's illusion example in yet another way. In the completion stage of Buddhist Tantra, the practitioner takes on the form of a deity in an illusory body (māyādeha), which is like the magician's illusion. It is made of wind, or prana, and is called illusory because it appears only to other yogis who have also attained the illusory body. The illusory body has the markings and signs of a Buddha. There is an impure and a pure illusory body, depending on the stage of the yogi's practice.

The concept that the world is an illusion is controversial in Buddhism. The Buddha does not state that the world is an illusion, but *like* an illusion. In the Dzogchen tradition the *perceived reality* is considered literally unreal, in that objects which make-up perceived reality are known as objects within one's mind, and that, *as we conceive them*, there is no pre-determined object, or assembly of objects in isolation from experience that may be considered the "true" object, or objects. As a prominent contemporary teacher puts it: "In a real sense, all the visions that we see in our lifetime are like a big dream [...]". In this context, the term *visions* denotes not only visual perceptions, but appearances perceived through all senses, including sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations.

Different schools and traditions in Tibetan Buddhism give different explanations of the mechanism producing the illusion usually called "reality".

" The real sky is (knowing) that samsara and nirvana are merely an illusory display. "

—*Mipham Rinpoche, Quintessential Instructions of Mind, p. 117*

Even the illusory nature of apparent phenomena is itself an illusion. Ultimately, the yogi passes beyond a conception of things either existing or not existing, and beyond a conception of either samsara or nirvana. Only then is the yogi abiding in the ultimate reality.

Jainism

Jainism

Maya, in Jainism, means appearances or deceit that prevents one from *Samyaktva* (right belief). Maya is one of three causes of failure to reach right belief. The other two are *Mithyatva* (false belief) and *Nidana* (hankering after fame and worldly pleasures).

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Maya is a closely related concept to *Mithyatva*, with Maya a source of wrong information while Mithyatva an individual's attitude to knowledge, with relational overlap.

Svetambara Jains classify categories of false belief under *Mithyatva* into five: *Abhigrahika* (false belief that is limited to one's own scriptures that one can defend, but refusing to study and analyze other scriptures); *Anabhigrahika* (false belief that equal respect must be shown to all gods, teachers, scriptures); *Abhiniviseka* (false belief resulting from pre-conceptions with a lack of discernment and refusal to do so); *Samsayika* (state of hesitation or uncertainty between various conflicting, inconsistent beliefs); and *Anabhogika* (innate, default false beliefs that a person has not thought through on one's own).

Digambara Jains classify categories of false belief under *Mithyatva* into seven: *Ekantika* (absolute, one sided false belief), *Samsayika* (uncertainty, doubt whether a course is right or wrong, unsettled belief, skepticism), *Vainayika* (false belief that all gods, gurus and scriptures are alike, without critical examination), *Grhita* (false belief derived purely from habits or default, no self-analysis), *Viparita* (false belief that true is false, false is true, everything is relative or acceptable), *Naisargika* (false belief that all living beings are devoid of consciousness and cannot discern right from wrong), *Mudha-drsti* (false belief that violence and anger can tarnish or damage thoughts, divine, guru or dharma).

Māyā (deceit) is also considered as one of four *Kaṣaya* (faulty passion, a trigger for actions) in Jain philosophy. The other three are *Krodha* (anger), *Māna* (pride) and *Lobha* (greed). The ancient Jain texts recommend that one must subdue these four faults, as they are source of bondage, attachment and non-spiritual passions.

When he wishes that which is good for him, he should get rid of the four faults — Krodha, Māna, Māyā and Lobha — which increase evil. Anger and pride when not suppressed, and deceit and greed when arising: all these four black passions water the roots of re-birth.

—Ārya Sayyambhava, Daśavaikālika sūtra, 8:36–39

Sikhism

Sikhism

In Sikhism, the world is regarded as both transitory and relatively real. God is viewed as the only reality, but within God exist both conscious souls and nonconscious objects; these created objects are also real. Natural phenomena are real but the effects they generate are unreal. māyā is as the events are real yet māyā is not as the effects are unreal. Sikhism believes that people are trapped in the world because of five vices: lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. Maya enables these five vices and makes a person think the physical world is "real," whereas, the goal of Sikhism is to rid the self of them. Consider the following example: In the moonless night, a rope lying on the ground may be mistaken for a snake. We know that the rope alone is real, not the snake. However, the failure to perceive the rope gives rise to the false perception of the snake. Once the darkness is removed, the rope alone remains; the snake disappears.

- *Sakti adher jevarhee bhram chookaa nihchal siv ghari vaasaa.*
  In the darkness of māyā, I mistook the rope for the snake, but that is over, and now I dwell in the eternal home of the Lord.
  (Sri Guru Granth Sahib 332).
- *Raaj bhuiang prasang jaise hahi ab kashu maram janaaiaa.*
  Like the story of the rope mistaken for a snake, the mystery has now been explained to me. Like the many bracelets, which I mistakenly thought were gold; now, I do not say what I said then. (Sri Guru Granth Sahib 658).

In some mythologies the symbol of the snake was associated with money, and māyā in modern Punjabi refers to money. However, in the Guru Granth Sahib māyā refers to the "grand illusion" of materialism. From this māyā all other evils are born, but by understanding the nature of māyā a person begins to approach spirituality.

- *Janam baritha jāt rang mā˖i˖ā kai. ||1|| rahā˖o.*
  You are squandering this life uselessly in the love of māyā.
  Sri Guru Granth Sahib M.5 Guru Arjan Dev ANG 12

The teachings of the Sikh Gurus push the idea of sewa (selfless service) and simran (prayer, meditation, or remembering one's true death). The depths of these two concepts and the core of Sikhism comes from sangat (congregation): by joining the congregation of true saints one is saved. By contrast, most people are believed to suffer from the false consciousness of materialism, as described in the following extracts from the Guru Granth Sahib:

- *Mā˖i˖ā mohi visāri˖ā jagat pitā partipāl.*
  In attachment to māyā, they have forgotten the Father, the Cherisher of the World.
  Sri Guru Granth Sahib M3 Guru Amar Das ANG 30
- *Ih sarīr mā˖i˖ā kā putlā vich ha˖umai dustī pā˖ī.*
  This body is the puppet of māyā. The evil of egotism is within it.
  Sri Guru Granth Sahib M3 Guru Amar Das
- *Bābā mā˖i˖ā bharam bhulā˖e.*
  O Baba, māyā deceives with its illusion.
  Sri Guru Granth Sahib M1 Guru Nanak Dev ANG 60

- "For that which we cannot see, feel, smell, touch, or understand, we do not believe. For this, we are merely fools walking on the grounds of great potential with no comprehension of what is."
  Buddhist monk quotation

Meher Baba

The spiritual teacher Meher Baba stated that Maya is not the illusion of creation but the ignorance that makes one see the illusion as real: "How does the false world of finite things come into existence? Why does it exist? It is created by Maya or the principle of ignorance. Maya is not illusion, it is the creator of illusion. Maya is not false, it is that which gives false impressions. *Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal appear real.* Maya is not duality, it is that which causes duality." Ultimately, one finds that Maya itself is not real: "From the point of view of the last and the only Truth of realisation, nothing exists except infinite and eternal God. There the illusion of finite things as separate from God has vanished, and with it has also vanished Maya, the creator of this illusion."

Chapter 21
PRAMANA

Pramāṇa literally means "proof" and "means of knowledge". It refers to epistemology in Indian philosophies, and is one of the key, much debated fields of study in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, since ancient times. It is a theory of knowledge, and encompasses one or more reliable and valid means by which human beings gain accurate, true knowledge. The focus of Pramana is how correct knowledge can be acquired, how one knows, how one doesn't, and to what extent knowledge pertinent about someone or something can be acquired.

Ancient and medieval Indian texts identify six *pramanas* as correct means of accurate knowledge and to truths: perception (Sanskrit *pratyakṣa)*, inference (*anumāna*), comparison and analogy(*upamāna*), postulation, derivation from circumstances (*arthāpatti*), non-perception, negative/cognitive proof (a*nupalabdhi*) and word, testimony of past or present reliable experts (*Śabda*). Each of these are further categorized in terms of conditionality, completeness, confidence and possibility of error, by each school of Indian philosophies.

The various schools of Indian philosophies vary on how many of these six are epistemically reliable and valid means to knowledge. For example, Carvaka school of Hinduism holds that only one (perception) is a reliable source of knowledge, Buddhism holds two (perception, inference) are valid means, Jainism holds three (perception, inference and testimony), while Mimamsa and Advaita Vedanta schools of Hinduism hold all six are useful and can be reliable means to knowledge. The various schools of Indian philosophy have debated whether one of the six forms of *pramana* can be derived from other, and the relative uniqueness of each. For example, Buddhism considers Buddha and other "valid persons", "valid scriptures" and "valid minds" as indisputable, but that such testimony is a form of perception and inference *pramanas*.

The science and study of *Pramanas* is called *Nyaya*.

Pramāṇa literally means "proof". The word also refers to a concept and field of Indian philosophy. The concept is derived from the Sanskrit root, *prama* (प्रमा) which means "correct notion, true knowledge, basis, foundation, accurate notion". Thus, the concept *Pramana* implies that which is a "means of acquiring *prama* or certain, correct, true knowledge".

Pramāṇa forms one part of a tripuṭi (trio) of concepts, which describe the ancient Indian view on how knowledge is gained. The other two concepts are knower and knowable, each discussed in how they influence the knowledge, by their own characteristic and the process of knowing. The two are called *Pramātṛ* (प्रमातृ, the subject, the knower) and *Prameya* (प्रमेय, the object, the knowable).

The term *Pramana* is commonly found in various schools of Hinduism. In Buddhist literature, *Pramana* is referred to as *Pramāṇavāda*. *Pramana* is also related to the Indian concept of *Yukti* (युक्ति) which means active application of epistemology or what one already knows, innovation, clever expedients or connections, methodological or reasoning trick, joining together, application of contrivance, means, method, novelty or device to more efficiently achieve a purpose. *Yukti* and *Pramana* are discussed together in some Indian texts, with *Yukti* described as active process of gaining knowledge in contrast to passive process of gaining knowledge through observation/perception. The texts on *Pramana*, particularly by Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Advaita Vedanta schools of Hinduism, include in their meaning and scope "Theories of Errors", that is why human beings make error and reach incorrect knowledge, how can one know if one is wrong, and if so, how can one discover whether one's epistemic method was flawed, or one's conclusion (truth) was flawed, in order to revise oneself and reach correct knowledge.

Hinduism

Hinduism identifies six *pramanas* as correct means of accurate knowledge and to truths: *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *Anumāna* (inference), *Upamāna* (comparison and analogy), *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts). In some texts such as by Vedvyasa, ten *pramanas* are discussed, Krtakoti discusses eight epistemically reliable means to correct knowledge. The most widely discussed *pramanas* are:

- ***Pratyakṣa*** (प्रत्यक्षाय) means perception. It is of two types in Hindu texts: external and internal. External perception is described as that arising from the interaction of five senses and worldly objects, while internal perception is described by this school as that of inner sense, the mind. The ancient and medieval Indian texts identify four requirements for correct perception: *Indriyarthasannikarsa* (direct experience by one's sensory organ(s) with the object, whatever is being studied), *Avyapadesya* (non-verbal; correct perception is not through hearsay, according to ancient Indian scholars, where one's sensory organ relies on accepting or rejecting someone else's perception), *Avyabhicara* (does not wander; correct perception does not change, nor is it the result of deception because one's sensory organ or means of observation is drifting, defective, suspect) and *Vyavasayatmaka* (definite; correct perception excludes judgments of doubt, either because of one's failure to observe all the details, or because one is mixing inference with observation and observing what one wants to observe, or not observing what one does not want to observe). Some ancient scholars proposed "unusual perception" as *pramana* and called it internal perception, a proposal contested by other Indian scholars. The internal perception concepts included *pratibha* (intuition), *samanyalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of induction from perceived specifics to a universal), and *jnanalaksanapratyaksa* (a form of perception of prior processes and previous states of a 'topic of study' by observing its current state). Further, some schools of Hinduism considered and refined rules of accepting uncertain knowledge from *Pratyakṣa-pranama*, so as to

contrast *nirnaya* (definite judgment, conclusion) from *anadhyavasaya* (indefinite judgment).

- *Anumāṇa* (अनुमान) means inference. It is described as reaching a new conclusion and truth from one or more observations and previous truths by applying reason. Observing smoke and inferring fire is an example of *Anumana*. In all except one Hindu philosophies, this is a valid and useful means to knowledge. The method of inference is explained by Indian texts as consisting of three parts: *pratijna* (hypothesis), *hetu* (a reason), and *drshtanta* (examples). The hypothesis must further be broken down into two parts, state the ancient Indian scholars: *sadhya* (that idea which needs to proven or disproven) and *paksha* (the object on which the *sadhya* is predicated). The inference is conditionally true if *sapaksha* (positive examples as evidence) are present, and if *vipaksha* (negative examples as counter-evidence) are absent. For rigor, the Indian philosophies also state further epistemic steps. For example, they demand *Vyapti* - the requirement that the *hetu* (reason) must necessarily and separately account for the inference in "all" cases, in both *sapaksha* and *vipaksha*. A conditionally proven hypothesis is called a *nigamana* (conclusion).

- *Upamāṇa* (उपमान) means comparison and analogy. Some Hindu schools consider it as a proper means of knowledge. *Upamana*, states Lochtefeld, may be explained with the example of a traveller who has never visited lands or islands with endemic population of wildlife. He or she is told, by someone who has been there, that in those lands you see an animal that sort of looks like a cow, grazes like cow but is different from a cow in such and such way. Such use of analogy and comparison is, state the Indian epistemologists, a valid means of conditional knowledge, as it helps the traveller identify the new animal later. The subject of comparison is formally called *upameyam*, the object of comparison is called *upamanam*, while the attribute(s) are identified as *samanya*. Thus, explains Monier Williams, if a boy says "her face is like the moon in charmingness", "her face" is *upameyam*, the moon is *upamanam*, and charmingness is *samanya*. The 7th century text Bhaṭṭikāvya in verses 10.28 through 10.63 discusses many types of comparisons and analogies, identifying when this epistemic method is more useful and reliable, and when it is not. In various ancient and medieval texts of Hinduism, 32 types of *Upanama* and their value in epistemology are debated.

- *Arthāpatti* (अर्थापत्ति) means postulation, derivation from circumstances. In contemporary logic, this *pramana* is similar to circumstantial implication. As example, if a person left in a boat on river earlier, and the time is now past the expected time of arrival, then the circumstances support the truth postulate that the person has arrived. Many Indian scholars considered this *pramana* as invalid or at best weak, because the boat may have gotten delayed or diverted. However, in cases such as deriving the time of a future sunrise or sunset, this method was asserted by the proponents to be reliable. Another common example for *arthapatti* in ancient Hindu texts is, that if "Devadatta is fat" and "Devadatta does not eat in day", then the following must be true: "Devadatta eats in the night". This form of postulation and deriving from circumstances is, claim the Indian scholars, a means to discovery, proper insight and knowledge. The Hindu schools that accept this

means of knowledge state that this method is a valid means to conditional knowledge and truths about a subject and object in original premises or different premises. The schools that do not accept this method, state that postulation, extrapolation and circumstantial implication is either derivable from other *pramanas* or flawed means to correct knowledge, instead one must rely on direct perception or proper inference.

- ***Anupalabdi*** (अनुपलब्धि) means non-perception, negative/cognitive proof. *Anupalabdhi pramana* suggests that knowing a negative, such as "there is no jug in this room" is a form of valid knowledge. If something can be observed or inferred or proven as non-existent or impossible, then one knows more than what one did without such means. In the two schools of Hinduism that consider *Anupalabdhi* as epistemically valuable, a valid conclusion is either *sadrupa* (positive) or *asadrupa* (negative) relation - both correct and valuable. Like other *pramana*, Indian scholars refined *Anupalabdi* to four types: non-perception of the cause, non-perception of the effect, non-perception of object, and non-perception of contradiction. Only two schools of Hinduism accepted and developed the concept "non-perception" as a *pramana*. The schools that endorsed *Anupalabdi* affirmed that it as valid and useful when the other five *pramanas* fail in one's pursuit of knowledge and truth.

    Abhava (अभाव) means non-existence. Some scholars consider *Anupalabdi* to be same as *Abhava*, while others consider *Anupalabdi* and *Abhava* as different. *Abhava-pramana* has been discussed in ancient Hindu texts in the context of *Padartha* (पदार्थ, referent of a term). A *Padartha* is defined as that which is simultaneously *Astitva* (existent), *Jneyatva* (knowable) and *Abhidheyatva* (nameable). Specific examples of *padartha*, states Bartley, include *dravya* (substance), *guna* (quality), *karma* (activity/motion), *samanya/jati* (universal/class property), *samavaya* (inherence) and *vishesha* (individuality). *Abhava* is then explained as "referents of negative expression" in contrast to "referents of positive expression" in *Padartha*. An absence, state the ancient scholars, is also "existent, knowable and nameable", giving the example of negative numbers, silence as a form of testimony, *asatkaryavada* theory of causation, and analysis of deficit as real and valuable. *Abhava* was further refined in four types, by the schools of Hinduism that accepted it as a useful method of epistemology: *dhvamsa* (termination of what existed), *atyanta-abhava* (impossibility, absolute non-existence, contradiction), *anyonya-abhava* (mutual negation, reciprocal absence) and *pragavasa* (prior, antecedent non-existence).

- ***Śabda*** (शब्द) means relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts. Hiriyanna explains *Sabda-pramana* as a concept which means reliable expert testimony. The schools of Hinduism which consider it epistemically valid suggest that a human being needs to know numerous facts, and with the limited time and energy available, he can learn only a fraction of those facts and truths directly. He must rely on others, his parent, family, friends, teachers, ancestors and kindred members of society to rapidly acquire and share knowledge and thereby enrich each

other's lives. This means of gaining proper knowledge is either spoken or written, but through *Sabda* (words). The reliability of the source is important, and legitimate knowledge can only come from the *Sabda* of reliable sources. The disagreement between the schools of Hinduism has been on how to establish reliability. Some schools, such as Carvaka, state that this is never possible, and therefore *Sabda* is not a proper pramana. Other schools debate means to establish reliability.

Different schools of Hindu philosophy accept one or more of above *pramanas* as valid epistemology.

Carvaka school

Carvaka school accepted only one valid source of knowledge - perception. It held all remaining methods as outright invalid or prone to error and therefore invalid.

Vaisheshika school

Epistemologically, the Vaiśeṣika school considered the following as the only proper means of knowledge:

1. Perception (*Pratyakṣa*)
2. Inference (*Anumāna*)

Sankhya, Yoga, Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, and Dvaita Vedanta schools

According to the Sankhya, Yoga, and two sub-schools of Vedanta, the proper means of knowledge must rely on these three pramanas:

1. Pratyakṣa — perception
2. Anumāna — inference
3. Śabda — testimony/word of reliable experts

Nyaya school

The Nyāya school accepts four means of obtaining knowledge (*pramāṇa*), viz., Perception, Inference, Comparison and Word.

1. Perception, called *Pratyakṣa*, occupies the foremost position in the Nyaya epistemology. Perception is defined by sense-object contact and is unerring. Perception can be of two types - ordinary or extraordinary. Ordinary (*Laukika* or *Sādhārana*) perception is of six types, viz., visual-by eyes, olfactory-by nose, auditory-by ears, tactile-by skin, gustatory-by tongue and mental-by mind. Extraordinary (*Alaukika* or *Asādhārana*) perception is of three types, viz., *Sāmānyalakṣana* (perceiving generality from a particular object), *Jñānalakṣana* (when one sense organ can also perceive qualities not attributable to it, as when

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seeing a chilli, one knows that it would be bitter or hot), and *Yogaja* (when certain human beings, from the power of *Yoga*, can perceive past, present and future and have supernatural abilities, either complete or some). Also, there are two modes or steps in perception, viz., *Nirvikalpa*, when one just perceives an object without being able to know its features, and *Savikalpa*, when one is able to clearly know an object. All laukika and alaukika pratyakshas are savikalpa. There is yet another stage called *Pratyabhijñā*, when one is able to re-recognise something on the basis of memory.

2. Inference, called *Anumāna*, is one of the most important contributions of Nyaya. It can be of two types – inference for oneself (*Svārthānumāna*, where one does not need any formal procedure, and at the most the last three of their 5 steps), and inference for others (*Parāthānumāna*, which requires a systematic methodology of 5 steps). Inference can also be classified into 3 types: *Pūrvavat* (inferring an unperceived effect from a perceived cause), *Śeṣavat* (inferring an unperceived cause from a perceived effect) and *Sāmānyatodṛṣṭa* (when inference is not based on causation but on uniformity of co-existence). A detailed analysis of error is also given, explaining when anumāna could be false.

3. Comparison, called *Upamāna*. It is produced by the knowledge of resemblance or similarity, given some pre-description of the new object beforehand.

4. Word, or *Śabda* are also accepted as a *pramāṇa*. It can be of two types, *Vaidika* (Vedic), which are the words of the four sacred Vedas, or can be more broadly interpreted as knowledge from sources acknowledged as authoritative, and *Laukika*, or words and writings of trustworthy human beings.

Prabhakara Mimamsa school

In Mimamsa school of Hinduism linked to Prabhakara considered the following pramanas as proper:

1. *Pratyakṣa* (perception)
2. *Anumāṇa* (inference)
3. *Śabda* (word, testimony)
4. *Upamāṇa* (comparison, analogy)
5. *Arthapatti* (postulation, presumption)

Advaita Vedanta and Bhatta Mimamsa schools

In Advaita Vedānta, and Mimamsa school linked to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the following pramanas are accepted:

1. Pratyakṣa (perception)
2. Anumāṇa (inference)
3. Śabda (word, testimony)
4. Upamāṇa (comparison, analogy)
5. Arthāpatti (postulation, presumption)
6. Anupalabdi, Abhava (non-perception, cognitive proof using non-existence)

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Buddhism

Padmākara Translation Group (2005: p. 390) annotates that:

Strictly speaking, pramana (*tshad ma*) means "valid cognition." In (Buddhism) practice, it refers to the tradition, principally associated with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, of logic (*rtags rigs*) and epistemology (*blo rigs*).

Buddhism accepts only two *pranama* (*tshad ma*) as valid means to knowledge: Pratyaksha (*mngon sun tshad ma*, perception) and Anumāṇa (*rjes dpag tshad ma*, inference). Rinbochay adds that Buddhism also considers scriptures as third valid *pramana*, such as from Buddha and other "valid minds" and "valid persons". This third source of valid knowledge is a form of perception and inference in Buddhist thought. Valid scriptures, valid minds and valid persons are considered in Buddhism as *Avisamvadin* (*mi slu ba*, incontrovertible, indisputable). Means of cognition and knowledge, other than perception and inference, are considered invalid in Buddhism.

In Buddhism, the two most important scholars of pramāṇa are Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.

Sautrantrika

Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are usually categorized as expounding the view of the Sautrāntika tenets, though one can make a distinction between the Sautrāntikas Following Scripture (Tibetan: ལུང་གི་རྗེས་འབྲང་གི་མདོ་སྡེ་པ Wylie: lung gi rjes 'brang gi mdo sde pa) and the Sautrāntikas Following Reason (Tibetan: རིགས་པ་རྗེས་འབྲང་གི་མདོ་སྡེ་པ Wylie: rigs pa rjes 'brang gi mdo sde pa) and both these masters are described as establishing the latter. Dignāga's main text on this topic is the *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*.

These two rejected the complex Abhidharma-based description of how in the Vaibhāṣika school and the Sautrāntika Following Scripture approach connected an external world with mental objects, and instead posited that the mental domain never connects directly with the external world but instead only perceives an aspect based upon the sense organs and the sense consciousnesses. Further, the sense consciousnesses assume the form of the aspect (Sanskrit: Sākāravāda) of the external object and what is perceived is actually the sense consciousness which has taken on the form of the external object. By starting with aspects, a logical argument about the external world as discussed by the Hindu schools was possible. Otherwise their views would be so different as to be impossible to begin a debate. Then a logical discussion could follow.

This approach attempts to solve how the material world connects with the mental world, but not completely explaining it. When pushed on this point, Dharmakīrti then drops a presupposition of the Sautrāntrika position and shifts to a kind of Yogācāra position that extramental objects never really occur but arise from the habitual tendencies of mind. So he begins a debate with Hindu schools positing external objects then later to migrate the discussion to how that is logically untenable.

Note there are two differing interpretations of Dharmakīrti's approach later in Tibet, due to differing translations and interpretations. One is held by the Gelug school leaning to a moderate realism with some accommodation of universals and the other held by the other schools who held that Dharmakīrti was distinctly antirealist.

Apoha

A key feature of Dignāga's logic is in how he treats generalities versus specific objects of knowledge. The Nyāya Hindu school made assertions about the existence of general principles, and in refutation Dignāga asserted that generalities were mere mental features and not truly existent. To do this he introduced the idea of *Apoha*, that the way the mind recognizes is by comparing and negating known objects from the perception. In that way, the general idea or categories of objects has to do with differences from known objects, not from identification with universal truths. So one knows that a perceived chariot is a chariot not because it is in accord with a universal form of a chariot, but because it is perceived as different from things that are not chariots. This approach became an essential feature of Buddhist epistemology.

Madhyamaka

The contemporary of Dignāga but before Dharmakīrti, Bhāvaviveka, incorporated a logical approach when commenting upon Nāgārjuna. He also started with a Sautrāntika approach when discussing the way appearances appear, to debate with realists, but then took a Middle Way view of the ultimate nature of phenomenon. But he used logical assertions and arguments about the nature of that ultimate nature.

His incorporation of logic into the Middle Way system was later critiqued by Candrakīrti, who felt that the establishment of the ultimate way of abiding since it was beyond thought and concept was not the domain of logic. He used simple logical consequence arguments to refute the views of other tenet systems, but generally he thought a more developed use of logic and epistemology in describing the Middle Way was problematic. Bhāvaviveka's use of autonomous logical arguments was later described as the Svātantrika approach.

In Tibet

Modern Buddhist schools employ the 'three spheres' (Sanskrit: trimaṇḍala; Tibetan: 'khor gsum):

1. subject
2. object, and
3. action.

When Madhyamaka first migrated to Tibet, Śāntarakṣita established a view of Madhyamaka more consistent with Bhāvaviveka while further evolving logical assertions as a way of contemplating and developing one's viewpoint of the ultimate truth.

In the 14th Century Je Tsongkhapa presented a new commentary and approach to Madhyamaka, which became the normative form in Tibet. In this variant, the Madhyamaka approach of Candrakīrti was elevated instead of Bhāvaviveka's yet Tsongkhapa rejected Candrakirti's disdain of logic and instead incorporated logic further.

The exact role of logic in Tibetan Buddhist practice and study may still be a topic of debate, but it is definitely established in the tradition. Ju Mipham remarked in his 19th century commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṅkāra*:

" The Buddha's doctrine, from the exposition of the two truths onward, unerroneously sets forth the mode of being of things as they are. And the followers of the Buddha must establish this accordingly, through the use of reasoning. Such is the unerring tradition of Śakyamuni. On the other hand, to claim that analytical investigation in general and the inner science of pramana, or logic, in particular are unnecessary is a terrible and evil spell, the aim of which is to prevent the perfect assimilation, through valid reasoning, of the Buddha's words

Chapter 22
EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge.

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief. Much of the debate in epistemology centers on four areas: (1) the philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge and how it relates to such concepts as truth, belief, and justification, (2) various problems of skepticism, (3) the sources and scope of knowledge and justified belief, and (4) the criteria for knowledge and justification.

The term 'Epistemology' was first used by Scottish philosopher James Frederick Ferrier in 1854. However, according to Brett Warren, King James VI of Scotland had previously personified this philosophical concept as the character Epistemon in 1591.

Epistemon

In a philosophical dialogue, King James VI of Scotland penned the character *Epistemon* as the personification of a philosophical concept to debate on arguments of whether the ancient religious perceptions of witchcraft should be punished in a politically fueled Christian society. The arguments King James poses, through the character Epistemon, are based on ideas of theological reasoning regarding society's belief, as his opponent *Philomathes* takes a philosophical stance on society's legal aspects but seeks to obtain greater knowledge from Epistemon, whose name is Greek for *scientist*.

This philosophical approach signified a Philomath seeking to obtain greater knowledge through *epistemology* with the use of theology. The dialogue was used by King James to educate society on various concepts including the history and etymology of the subjects debated.

Epistemology

The word *epistemology* is derived from the ancient Greek *epistēmē* meaning "knowledge" and the suffix *-logy*, meaning "logical discourse" (derived from the Greek word *logos* meaning "discourse"). J.F. Ferrier coined *epistemology* on the model of 'ontology', to designate that branch of philosophy which aims to discover the meaning of knowledge, and called it the 'true beginning' of philosophy.

The word is equivalent to the concept *Wissenschaftslehre*, which was used by German philosophers Johann Fichte and Bernard Bolzano for different projects before it was taken up again by Husserl. French philosophers then gave the term *épistémologie* a narrower meaning as 'theory of knowledge *[théorie de la connaissance]*.' E.g., Émile Meyerson opened his *Identity and Reality*, written in 1908, with the remark that the word 'is becoming current' as equivalent to 'the philosophy of the sciences.'

Knowledge

In mathematics, it is known *that* 2 + 2 = 4, but there is also knowing *how* to add two numbers, and knowing a *person* (e.g., oneself), *place* (e.g., one's hometown), *thing* (e.g., cars), or *activity* (e.g., addition). Some philosophers think there is an important distinction between "knowing that" (know a concept), "knowing how" (understand an operation), and "acquaintance-knowledge" (know by relation), with epistemology being primarily concerned with the first of these.

While these distinctions are not explicit in English, they are defined explicitly in other languages (N.B. some languages related to English have been said to retain these verbs, e.g. Scots: "wit" and "ken"). In French, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch *to know (a person)* is translated using *connaître, conhecer,, conocer,* and *kennen* respectively, whereas *to know (how to do something)* is translated using *savoir*, *saber*, *weten*. Modern Greek has the verbs *γνωρίζω* (gnorízo) and *ξέρω* (kséro). Italian has the verbs *conoscere* and *sapere* and the nouns for *knowledge* are *conoscenza* and *sapienza.* German has the verbs *wissen* and *kennen. Wissen* implies knowing a fact, *kennen* implies knowing in the sense of being acquainted with and having a working knowledge of; there is also a noun derived from *kennen,* namely *Erkennen,* which has been said to imply knowledge in the form of recognition or acknowledgment. The verb itself implies a process: you have to go from one state to another, from a state of "not-*erkennen*" to a state of true *erkennen.* This verb seems to be the most appropriate in terms of describing the "episteme" in one of the modern European languages, hence the German name "Erkenntnistheorie". The theoretical interpretation and significance of these linguistic issues remains controversial.

In his paper *On Denoting* and his later book *Problems of Philosophy* Bertrand Russell stressed the distinction between "knowledge by description" and "knowledge by acquaintance". Gilbert Ryle is also credited with stressing the distinction between knowing how and knowing that in *The Concept of Mind.* In *Personal Knowledge,* Michael Polanyi argues for the epistemological relevance of knowledge how and knowledge that; using the example of the act of balance involved in riding a bicycle, he suggests that the theoretical knowledge of the physics involved in maintaining a state of balance cannot substitute for the practical knowledge of how to ride, and that it is important to understand how both are established and grounded. This position is essentially Ryle's, who argued that a failure to acknowledge the distinction between knowledge that and knowledge how leads to infinite regress.

In recent times, epistemologists including (Sosa, Greco, Kvanvig, Zagzebski) and Duncan Pritchard have argued that epistemology should evaluate people's "properties" (i.e., intellectual virtues) and not just the properties of propositions or of propositional mental attitudes.

Belief

In common speech, a "statement of belief" is typically an expression of faith or trust in a person, power or other entity—while it includes such traditional views, epistemology is

also concerned with what we believe. This includes 'the' truth, and everything else we accept as 'true' for ourselves from a cognitive point of view.

Truth

Whether someone's belief is true is not a prerequisite for (its) belief. On the other hand, if something is actually *known*, then it categorically cannot be false. For example, if a person believes that a bridge is safe enough to support him, and attempts to cross it, but the bridge then collapses under his weight, it could be said that he *believed* that the bridge was safe but that his belief was mistaken. It would *not* be accurate to say that he *knew* that the bridge was safe, because plainly it was not. By contrast, if the bridge actually supported his weight, then he might say that he had believed that the bridge was safe, whereas now, after proving it to himself (by crossing it), he *knows* it was safe.

Epistemologists argue over whether belief is the proper truth-bearer. Some would rather describe knowledge as a system of justified true propositions, and others as a system of justified true sentences. Plato, in his Gorgias, argues that belief is the most commonly invoked truth-bearer.

Justification

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates considers a number of theories as to what knowledge is, the last being that knowledge is true belief "with an account" (meaning explained or defined in some way). According to the theory that knowledge is justified true belief, in order to know that a given proposition is true, one must not only believe the relevant true proposition, but one must also have a good reason for doing so. One implication of this would be that no one would gain knowledge just by believing something that happened to be true. For example, an ill person with no medical training, but with a generally optimistic attitude, might believe that he will recover from his illness quickly. Nevertheless, even if this belief turned out to be true, the patient would not have *known* that he would get well since his belief lacked justification.

The definition of knowledge as justified true belief was widely accepted until the 1960s. At this time, a paper written by the American philosopher Edmund Gettier provoked major widespread discussion. (See theories of justification for other views on the idea.)

Gettier problem

Edmund Gettier is best known for a short paper entitled 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?' published in 1963, which called into question the theory of knowledge that had been dominant among philosophers for thousands of years. This, in turn, called into question the actual value of philosophy if such an obvious and easy counterexample to a major theory could exist without anyone noticing it for thousands of years. In a few pages, Gettier argued that there are situations in which one's belief may be justified and true, yet fail to count as knowledge. That is, Gettier contended that while justified belief in a true proposition is necessary for that proposition to be known, it is not sufficient. As in the

diagram, a true proposition can be believed by an individual (purple region) but still not fall within the "knowledge" category (yellow region).
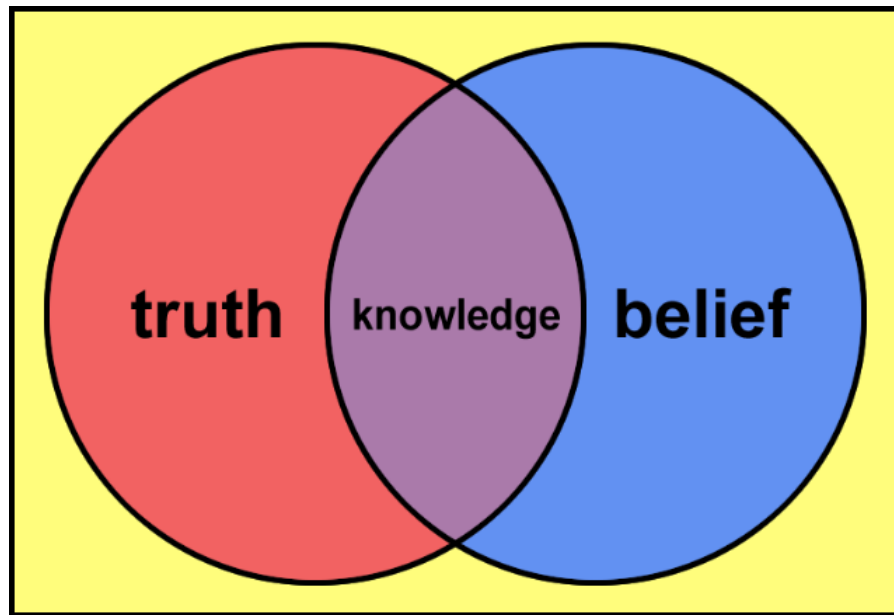
Euler diagram representing a definition of knowledge.

According to Gettier, there are certain circumstances in which one does not have knowledge, even when all of the above conditions are met. Gettier proposed two thought experiments, which has come to be known as "Gettier cases", as counterexamples to the classical account of knowledge. One of the cases involves two men, Smith and Jones, who are awaiting the results of their applications for the same job.

Each man has ten coins in his pocket. Smith has excellent reasons to believe that Jones will get the job and, furthermore, knows that Jones has ten coins in his pocket (he recently counted them). From this Smith infers, "the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket." However, Smith is unaware that he also has ten coins in his own pocket. Furthermore, Smith, not Jones, is going to get the job. While Smith has strong evidence to believe that Jones will get the job, he is wrong.

Smith has a justified true belief that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket; however, according to Gettier, Smith does not *know* that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket, because Smith's belief is "...true by virtue of the number of coins in *Jones's* pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket, and bases his belief...on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job."

These cases fail to be knowledge because the subject's belief is justified but only happens to be true by virtue of luck. In other words, he made the correct choice (in this case predicting an outcome) for the wrong reasons. This example is similar to those often given when discussing belief and truth, wherein a person's belief of what will happen can coincidentally be correct without his or her having the actual knowledge to base it on.

Responses to Gettier

The responses to Gettier have been varied. Usually, they have involved substantial attempts to provide a definition of knowledge different from the classical one, either by recasting knowledge as justified true belief with some additional fourth condition, or proposing a completely new set of conditions, disregarding the classical ones entirely.

Infallibilism, indefeasibility

In one response to Gettier, the American philosopher Richard Kirkham has argued that the only definition of knowledge that could ever be immune to all counterexamples is the infallibilist one. To qualify as an item of knowledge goes the theory, a belief must not only be true and justified, the justification of the belief must *necessitate* its truth. In other words, the justification for the belief must be infallible.

Yet another possible candidate for the fourth condition of knowledge is *indefeasibility.* Defeasibility theory maintains that there should be no overriding or defeating truths for the reasons that justify one's belief. For example, suppose that person *S* believes he saw Tom Grabit steal a book from the library and uses this to justify the claim that Tom Grabit stole a book from the library. A possible defeater or overriding proposition for such a claim could be a true proposition like, "Tom Grabit's identical twin Sam is currently in the same town as Tom." When no defeaters of one's justification exist, a subject would be epistemologically justified.

The Indian philosopher B. K. Matilal has drawn on the Navya-Nyāya fallibilism tradition to respond to the Gettier problem. Nyaya theory distinguishes between *know p* and *know that one knows p*—these are different events, with different causal conditions. The second level is a sort of implicit inference that usually follows immediately the episode of knowing p (knowledge *simpliciter*). The Gettier case is examined by referring to a view of Gangesha Upadhyaya (late 12th century), who takes any true belief to be knowledge; thus a true belief acquired through a wrong route may just be regarded as knowledge simpliciter on this view. The question of justification arises only at the second level, when one considers the knowledgehood of the acquired belief. Initially, there is lack of uncertainty, so it becomes a true belief. But at the very next moment, when the hearer is about to embark upon the venture of *knowing whether he knows p*, doubts may arise. "If, in some Gettier-like cases, I am wrong in my inference about the knowledgehood of the given occurrent belief (for the evidence may be pseudo-evidence), then I am mistaken about the truth of my belief – and this is in accordance with Nyaya fallibilism: not all knowledge-claims can be sustained."

Reliabilism

Reliabilism has been a significant line of response to the Gettier problem among philosophers, originating with work by Alvin Goldman in the 1960s. According to reliabilism, a belief is justified (or otherwise supported in such a way as to count towards knowledge) only if it is produced by processes that typically yield a sufficiently high ratio

of true to false beliefs. In other words, this theory states that a true belief counts as knowledge only if it is produced by a reliable belief-forming process. Examples of reliable processes include: standard perceptual processes, remembering, good reasoning, and introspection.

Reliabilism has been challenged by Gettier cases. Another argument that challenges reliabilism, like the Gettier cases (although it was not presented in the same short article as the Gettier cases), is the case of Henry and the barn façades. In the thought experiment, a man, Henry, is driving along and sees a number of buildings that resemble barns. Based on his perception of one of these, he concludes that he has just seen barns. While he has seen one, and the perception he based his belief that the one he saw was of a real barn, all the other barn-like buildings he saw were façades. Theoretically, Henry does not know that he has seen a barn, despite both his belief that he has seen one being true and his belief being formed on the basis of a reliable process (i.e. his vision), since he only acquired his true belief by accident.

Other responses

Robert Nozick has offered the following definition of knowledge: *S* knows that *P* if and only if:

- *P*;
- *S* believes that *P*;
- if *P* were false, *S* would not believe that *P*;
- if *P* were true, *S* would believe that *P*.

Nozick argues that the third of these conditions serves to address cases of the sort described by Gettier. Nozick further claims this condition addresses a case of the sort described by D. M. Armstrong: A father believes his daughter innocent of committing a particular crime, both because of faith in his baby girl and (now) because he has seen presented in the courtroom a conclusive demonstration of his daughter's innocence. His belief via the method of the courtroom satisfies the four subjunctive conditions, but his faith-based belief does not. If his daughter were guilty, he would still believe her innocent, on the basis of faith in his daughter; this would violate the third condition.

The British philosopher Simon Blackburn has criticized this formulation by suggesting that we do not want to accept as knowledge beliefs, which, while they "track the truth" (as Nozick's account requires), are not held for appropriate reasons. He says that "we do not want to award the title of knowing something to someone who is only meeting the conditions through a defect, flaw, or failure, compared with someone else who is not meeting the conditions." In addition to this, externalist accounts of knowledge, such as Nozick's, are often forced to reject closure in cases where it is intuitively valid.

Timothy Williamson has advanced a theory of knowledge according to which knowledge is not justified true belief plus some extra condition(s), but primary. In his book *Knowledge and its Limits,* Williamson argues that the concept of knowledge cannot be broken down

into a set of other concepts through analysis—instead, it is *sui generis.* Thus, though knowledge requires justification, truth, and belief, the word "knowledge" can't be, according to Williamson's theory, accurately regarded as simply shorthand for "justified true belief".

Alvin Goldman writes in his Causal Theory of Knowing that in order for knowledge to truly exist there must be a causal chain between the proposition and the belief of that proposition.

Externalism and internalism

A central debate about the nature of justification is a debate between epistemological externalists on the one hand, and epistemological internalists on the other.

Externalists hold that factors deemed "external", meaning outside of the psychological states of those who gain knowledge, can be conditions of justification. For example, an externalist response to the Gettier problem is to say that, in order for a justified true belief to count as knowledge, there must be a link or dependency between the belief and the state of the external world. Usually this is understood to be a causal link. Such causation, to the extent that it is "outside" the mind, would count as an external, knowledge-yielding condition. Internalists, on the other hand, assert that all knowledge-yielding conditions are within the psychological states of those who gain knowledge.

Though unfamiliar with the internalist/externalist debate himself, many point to René Descartes as an early example of the internalist path to justification. He wrote that, because the only method by which we perceive the external world is through our senses, and that, because the senses are not infallible, we should not consider our concept of knowledge to be infallible. The only way to find anything that could be described as "indubitably true", he advocates, would be to see things "clearly and distinctly". He argued that if there is an omnipotent, good being who made the world, then it's reasonable to believe that people are made with the ability to know. However, this does not mean that man's ability to know is perfect. God gave man the ability to know, but not omniscience. Descartes said that man must use his capacities for knowledge correctly and carefully through methodological doubt. The dictum "Cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) is also commonly associated with Descartes' theory, because in his own methodological doubt, doubting everything he previously knew in order to start from a blank slate, the first thing that he could not logically bring himself to doubt was his own existence: "I do not exist" would be a contradiction in terms; the act of saying that one does not exist assumes that someone must be making the statement in the first place. Though Descartes could doubt his senses, his body and the world around him, he could not deny his own existence, because he was able to doubt and must exist in order to do so. Even if some "evil genius" were to be deceiving him, he would have to exist in order to be deceived. This one sure point provided him with what he would call his Archimedean point, in order to further develop his foundation for knowledge. Simply put, Descartes' epistemological justification depended upon his indubitable belief in his own existence and his clear and distinct knowledge of God.

Value problem

We generally assume that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. If so, what is the explanation? A formulation of the value problem in epistemology first occurs in Plato's Meno. Socrates points out to Meno that a man who knew the way to Larissa could lead others there correctly. But so, too, could a man who had true beliefs about how to get there, even if he had not gone there or had any knowledge of Larissa. Socrates says that it seems that both knowledge and true opinion can guide action. Meno then wonders why knowledge is valued more than true belief, and why knowledge and true belief are different. Socrates responds that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief because it is tethered, or justified. Justification, or working out the reason for a true belief, locks down true belief.

The problem is to identify what (if anything) makes knowledge more valuable than mere true belief, or that makes knowledge more valuable than a more minimal conjunction of its components, such as justification, safety, sensitivity, statistical likelihood, and anti-Gettier conditions, on a particular analysis of knowledge that conceives of knowledge as divided into components (to which knowledge-first epistemological theories, which posit knowledge as fundamental, are notable exceptions). The value problem reemerged in the philosophical literature on epistemology in the twenty-first century following the rise of virtue epistemology in the 1980s, partly because of the obvious link to the concept of value in ethics.

The value problem has been presented as an argument against epistemic reliabilism by philosophers including Linda Zagzebski, Wayne Riggs and Richard Swinburne. Zagzebski analogizes the value of knowledge to the value of espresso produced by an espresso maker: "The liquid in this cup is not improved by the fact that it comes from a reliable espresso maker. If the espresso tastes good, it makes no difference if it comes from an unreliable machine." For Zagzebski, the value of knowledge deflates to the value of mere true belief. She assumes that reliability in itself has no value or disvalue, but Goldman and Olsson disagree. They point out that Zagzebski's conclusion rests on the assumption of veritism: all that matters is the acquisition of true belief. To the contrary, they argue that a reliable process for acquiring a true belief adds value to the mere true belief by making it more likely that future beliefs of a similar kind will be true. By analogy, having a reliable espresso maker that produced a good cup of espresso would be more valuable than having an unreliable one that luckily produced a good cup because the reliable one would more likely produce good future cups compared to the unreliable one.

The value problem is important to assessing the adequacy of theories of knowledge that conceive of knowledge as consisting of true belief and other components. According to Kvanvig, an adequate account of knowledge should resist counterexamples and allow an explanation of the value of knowledge over mere true belief. Should a theory of knowledge fail to do so, it would prove inadequate.

One of the more influential responses to the problem is that knowledge is not particularly valuable and is not what ought to be the main focus of epistemology. Instead,

epistemologists ought to focus on other mental states, such as understanding. Advocates of virtue epistemology have argued that the value of knowledge comes from an internal relationship between the knower and the mental state of believing.

Acquiring knowledge

A priori and *a posteriori* knowledge

The nature of this distinction has been disputed by various philosophers; however, the terms may be roughly defined as follows:

- *A priori* knowledge is knowledge that is known independently of experience (that is, it is non-empirical, or arrived at beforehand, usually by reason). It will henceforth be acquired through anything that is independent from experience.
- *A posteriori* knowledge is knowledge that is known by experience (that is, it is empirical, or arrived at afterward).

A priori knowledge is a way of gaining knowledge without the need of experience. In Bruce Russell's article "A Priori Justification and Knowledge" he says that it is "knowledge based on a priori justification," (1) which relies on intuition and the nature of these intuitions. A priori knowledge is often contrasted with posteriori knowledge, which is knowledge gained by experience. A way to look at the difference between the two is through an example. Bruce Russell gives two propositions in which the reader decides which one he believes more. Option A: All crows are birds. Option B: All crows are black. If you believe option A, then you are a priori justified in believing it because you don't have to see a crow to know it's a bird. If you believe in option B, then you are posteriori justified to believe it because you have seen many crows therefore knowing they are black. He goes on to say that it doesn't matter if the statement is true or not, only that if you believe in one or the other that matters.

The idea of a priori knowledge is that it is based on intuition or rational insights. Laurence BonJour says in his article "The Structure of Empirical Knowledge", that a "rational insight is an immediate, non-inferential grasp, apprehension or 'seeing' that some proposition is necessarily true." (3) Going back to the crow example, by Laurence BonJour's definition the reason you would believe in option A is because you have an immediate knowledge that a crow is a bird, without ever experiencing one.

Evolutionary psychology takes a novel approach to the problem. It says that there is an innate predisposition for certain types of learning. "Only small parts of the brain resemble a tabula rasa; this is true even for human beings. The remainder is more like an exposed negative waiting to be dipped into a developer fluid"

Analytic–synthetic distinction

Immanuel Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, drew a distinction between "analytic" and "synthetic" propositions. He contended that some propositions are such that we can know

them to be true just by understanding their meaning. For example, consider, "My father's brother is my uncle." We can know it to be true solely by virtue of our understanding what its terms mean. Philosophers call such propositions "analytic". Synthetic propositions, on the other hand, have distinct subjects and predicates.

An example would be, "My father's brother has black hair." Kant stated that all mathematical and scientific statements are analytic a priori propositions because they are necessarily true but our knowledge about the attributes of the mathematical or physical subjects we can only get by logical inference.

The American philosopher W. V. O. Quine, in his *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, famously challenged the distinction, arguing that the two have a blurry boundary. Some contemporary philosophers have offered more sustainable accounts of the distinction.

Branches or schools of thought

Historical

The historical study of philosophical epistemology is the historical study of efforts to gain philosophical understanding or knowledge of the nature and scope of human knowledge. Since efforts to get that kind of understanding have a history, the questions philosophical epistemology asks today about human knowledge are not necessarily the same as they once were. But that does not mean that philosophical epistemology is itself a historical subject, or that it pursues only or even primarily historical understanding.

Empiricism

In philosophy, empiricism is generally a theory of knowledge focusing on the role of experience, especially experience based on perceptual observations by the senses. Certain forms treat all knowledge as empirical, while some regard disciplines such as mathematics and logic as exceptions.

There are many variants of empiricism, positivism, realism and common sense being among the most commonly expounded. But central to all empiricist epistemologies is the notion of the epistemologically privileged status of sense data.

Idealism

Many idealists believe that knowledge is primarily (at least in some areas) acquired by *a priori* processes or is innate—for example, in the form of concepts not derived from experience. The relevant theoretical processes often go by the name "intuition". The relevant theoretical concepts may purportedly be part of the structure of the human mind (as in Kant's theory of transcendental idealism), or they may be said to exist independently of the mind (as in Plato's theory of Forms).

Rationalism

By contrast with empiricism and idealism, which centres around the epistemologically privileged status of sense data (empirical) and the primacy of Reason (theoretical) respectively, modern rationalism adds a third 'system of thinking', (as Gaston Bachelard has termed these areas) and holds that all three are of equal importance: The empirical, the theoretical and the *abstract*. For Bachelard, rationalism makes equal reference to all three systems of thinking.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a view in philosophy according to which all "knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions", "not the neutral discovery of an objective truth". Whereas objectivism is concerned with the "object of our knowledge", constructivism emphasises "how we construct knowledge". Constructivism proposes new definitions for knowledge and truth that form a new paradigm, based on inter-subjectivity instead of the classical objectivity, and on viability instead of truth. Piagetian constructivism, however, believes in objectivity—constructs can be validated through experimentation. The constructivist point of view is pragmatic; as Vico said: "The norm of the truth is to have made it."

Regress problem

The regress problem is the problem of providing a complete logical foundation for human knowledge. The traditional way of supporting a rational argument is to appeal to other rational arguments, typically using chains of reason and rules of logic. A classic example that goes back to Aristotle is deducing that *Socrates is mortal.* We have a logical rule that says *All humans are mortal* and an assertion that *Socrates is human* and we deduce that *Socrates is mortal.* In this example how do we know that Socrates is human? Presumably we apply other rules such as: *All born from human females are human.* Which then leaves open the question how do we know that all born from humans are human? This is the regress problem: how can we eventually terminate a logical argument with some statement(s) that do not require further justification but can still be considered rational and justified?

As John Pollock stated:

... to justify a belief one must appeal to a further justified belief. This means that one of two things can be the case. Either there are some beliefs that we can be justified for holding, without being able to justify them on the basis of any other belief, or else for each justified belief there is an infinite regress of (potential) justification [the nebula theory]. On this theory there is no rock bottom of justification. Justification just meanders in and out through our network of beliefs, stopping nowhere.

The apparent impossibility of completing an infinite chain of reasoning is thought by some to support skepticism. It is also the impetus for Descartes' famous dictum: *I think,*

therefore I am. Descartes was looking for some logical statement that could be true without appeal to other statements.

Response to the regress problem

Many epistemologists studying justification have attempted to argue for various types of chains of reasoning that can escape the regress problem.

Foundationalism

Foundationalists respond to the regress problem by asserting that certain "foundations" or "basic beliefs" support other beliefs but do not themselves require justification from other beliefs. These beliefs might be justified because they are self-evident, infallible, or derive from reliable cognitive mechanisms. Perception, memory, and a priori intuition are often considered to be possible examples of basic beliefs.

The chief criticism of foundationalism is that if a belief is not supported by other beliefs, accepting it may be arbitrary or unjustified.

Coherentism

Another response to the regress problem is coherentism, which is the rejection of the assumption that the regress proceeds according to a pattern of linear justification. To avoid the charge of circularity, coherentists hold that an individual belief is justified circularly by the way it fits together (coheres) with the rest of the belief system of which it is a part. This theory has the advantage of avoiding the infinite regress without claiming special, possibly arbitrary status for some particular class of beliefs. Yet, since a system can be coherent while also being wrong, coherentists face the difficulty of ensuring that the whole system corresponds to reality. Additionally, most logicians agree that any argument that is circular is trivially valid. That is, to be illuminating, arguments must be linear with conclusions that follow from stated premises.

However, Warburton writes in 'Thinking from A to Z', "Circular arguments are not invalid; in other words, from a logical point of view there is nothing intrinsically wrong with them. However, they are, when viciously circular, spectacularly uninformative. (Warburton 1996)."

Foundherentism

A position is known as "foundherentism", advanced by Susan Haack, is meant to be a unification of foundationalism and coherentism. One component of this theory is what is called the "analogy of the crossword puzzle."

Whereas, for example, infinitists regard the regress of reasons as "shaped" like a single line, Susan Haack has argued that it is more like a crossword puzzle, with multiple lines mutually supporting each other.

Infinitism

An alternative resolution to the regress problem is known as "infinitism". Infinitists take the infinite series to be merely potential, in the sense that an individual may have indefinitely many reasons available to them, without having consciously thought through all of these reasons when the need arises. This position is motivated in part by the desire to avoid what is seen as the arbitrariness and circularity of its chief competitors, foundationalism, and coherentism.

Indian pramana

Indian philosophical schools such as the Hindu Nyaya, and Carvaka, and later, the Jain and Buddhist philosophical schools, developed an epistemological tradition which is termed "pramana" independently of the Western philosophical tradition. Pramana can be translated as "instrument of knowledge" and refers to various means or sources of knowledge which were held to be reliable by Indian philosophers. Each school of Indian philosophy had their own theories about which pramanas were valid means to knowledge and which was unreliable (and why). In the Indian traditions, the most widely discussed pramanas are: *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *Anumāṇa* (inference), *Upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy), *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts). While the Nyaya school (beginning with the Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama, 2nd century CE) were a proponent of realism and supported four pramanas (perception, inference, comparison/analogy and testimony), the Buddhist epistemologists (Dignaga and Dharmakirti) generally accepted only perception and inference.

The theory of knowledge of the Buddha in the early Buddhist texts has been interpreted as a form of pragmatism as well as a form of correspondence theory. Likewise, the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakirti has been interpreted both as holding a form of pragmatism or correspondence theory for his view that what is true is what has effective power (*arthakriya*). The Buddhist Madhyamika school's theory of emptiness (shunyata) meanwhile has been interpreted as a form of philosophical skepticism.

The main Jain contribution to epistemology has been their theory of "many sided-ness" or "multi-perspectivism" (Anekantavada) which says that since the world is multifaceted, any single viewpoint is limited (*naya* — a partial standpoint). This has been interpreted as a kind of pluralism or perspectivism. According to Jain epistemology, none of the pramanas gives absolute or perfect knowledge since they are each limited points of view. The Carvaka school of materialists only accepted the pramana of perception and hence were one of the first empiricists. There was also another school of philosophical skepticism, the Ajñana.

Skepticism

Skepticism is a position that questions the validity of some or all of human knowledge. Skepticism does not refer to any one specific school of philosophy, rather it is a thread that

runs through many philosophical discussions of epistemology. The first well known Greek skeptic was Socrates who claimed that his only knowledge was that he knew nothing with certainty. In Indian philosophy, Sanjaya Belatthiputta was a famous skeptic and the Buddhist Madhyamika school has been seen as taking up a form of skepticism. Descartes' most famous inquiry into mind and body also began as an exercise in skepticism. Descartes began by questioning the validity of all knowledge and looking for some fact that was irrefutable. In so doing, he came to his famous dictum: I think, therefore I am.

Foundationalism and the other responses to the regress problem are essentially defenses against skepticism. Similarly, the pragmatism of William James can be viewed as a coherentist defense against skepticism. James discarded conventional philosophical views of truth and defined truth to be based on how well a concept works in a specific context rather than objective rational criteria. The philosophy of Logical Positivism and the work of philosophers such as Kuhn and Popper can be viewed as skepticism applied to what can truly be considered scientific knowledge.

Chapter 23
BRAHMA SUTRAS

The *Brahma sūtras* is a Sanskrit text, attributed to Badarayana, estimated to have been completed in its surviving form some time between 450 BCE and 200 CE. The text systematizes and summarizes the philosophical and spiritual ideas in the Upanishads. It is one of the foundational texts of the Vedānta school of Hindu philosophy.

The Brahma sutras consists of 555 aphoristic verses (sutras) in four chapters. These verses are primarily about the nature of human existence and universe, and ideas about the metaphysical concept of Ultimate Reality called Brahman. The first chapter discusses the metaphysics of Absolute Reality, the second chapter reviews and addresses the objections raised by the ideas of competing orthodox schools of Hindu philosophies as well as heterodox schools such as Buddhism and Jainism, the third chapter discusses epistemology and path to gaining spiritually liberating knowledge, and the last chapter states why such a knowledge is an important human need.

The Brahmasutra is one of three most important texts in Vedanta along with the Principal Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. It has been influential to various schools of Indian philosophies, but interpreted differently by the non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta sub-school, the theistic Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita Vedanta sub-schools, as well as others. Several commentaries on the Brahma-sutras are lost to history or yet to be found; of the surviving ones, the most well studied commentaries on the Brahmasutra include the bhashya by Adi Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Bhaskara and many others.

It is also known as the Vedanta Sutra, deriving this name from *Vedanta* which literally means the "final aim of the Vedas". Other names for Brahma Sutra is Sariraka Sutra, wherein *Sariraka* means "that which lives in the body (*Sarira*), or the Self, Soul", and Bhikshu-sutra, which literally means "Sutras for monks or mendicants".

Author and chronology

The Brahma Sutras or Brahmasutra are attributed to Badarayana. In some texts, Badarayana is also called *Vyasa*, which literally means "one who arranges".

Bādarāyana was the Guru (teacher) of Jaimini, the latter credited with authoring Mimamsa Sutras of the Mimamsa school of Hindu philosophy. This is likely, given that both Badarayana and Jaimini quote each other as they analyze each other's theories, Badarayana emphasizing knowledge while Jaimini emphasizes rituals, sometimes agreeing with each other, sometimes disagreeing, often anti-thesis of the other.

The Brahma-sutra text is dated to centuries that followed Buddha and Mahavira, because it mentions and critiques the ideas of Buddhism and Jainism in Chapter 2. The text's relative chronology is also based on the fact that Badarayana quotes all major known

orthodox Hindu schools of philosophy except Nyaya. The exact century of its composition or completion in final form is unknown, but scholars such as Lochtefeld suggest that the text was complete sometime between 500 to 200 BCE, while Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Dasgupta independently suggest the 2nd century BCE as more likely. Paul Deussen places it between 200 BCE and 400 CE.

Hermann Jacobi in early 20th century suggested that Madhyamaka Buddhist concepts such as *Sunyavada*, acknowledged in the Brahma-sutras, may be a late invention, and suggests that both Sunyavada and Brahma-sutras may therefore have emerged between 200-450 CE. Daniel Ingalls disagreed with Jacobi chronology in his 1954 paper, critiquing Jacobi's assumptions and interpretation of sutras 2.2.28-32 in dating the entire document, and stating that "the Brahma-sutra could not have been composed later than the start of the common era". According to a 2013 review by Andrew Nicholson, the Brahma Sutras were composed over many centuries by multiple authors, and likely complete in the current form between 450 to 400 BCE. The existence of earlier versions of the Brahmasutras, and multiple authors predating Badarayana, is supported by textual evidence.

Some scholars, such as Sengaku Mayeda, state Brahmasutra that has survived into the modern times may be the work of multiple authors but those who lived after Badarayana, and that these authors composed the currently surviving Brahmasutra starting about 300 BCE through about 400-450 CE. Nakamura states that the original version of Brahma sutra is likely very ancient and its inception coincides with the Kalpa Sutras period (1st-millennium BCE).

Natalia Isaeva states, "on the whole, scholars are rather unanimous, considering the most probable date for Brahmasutra sometime between the 2nd-century BCE and the 2nd-century CE.

Structure

The Brahma Sūtras consist of 555 aphorisms or sūtras, in four chapters (*adhyāya*), with each chapter divided into four parts (*pāda*). Each part is further subdivided into sections called *Adhikaraṇas* with *sutras*. Some scholars, such as Francis Clooney, call the *Adhikaraṇas* as "case studies" with a defined hermeneutic process.

Sutras distribution in the Brahma-sutra					
Section	1st Pada	2nd Pada	3rd Pada	4th Pada	Total
Adhyaya 1	31	32	43	28	134
Adhyaya 2	37	45	53	22	157
Adhyaya 3	27	41	66	52	186
Adhyaya 4	19	21	16	22	78
Total Sutras:					555

Each *Adhikaraṇa* of Brahma-sutra has varying numbers of sutras, and most sections of the text are structured to address the following:

1. *Vishaya* (विषय): subject, issue or topic
2. *Vismaya* (विस्मय): doubt, uncertainty or perplexity
3. *Purva-paksha* (पूर्वपक्ष): prima facie view, or prior art and arguments
4. *Siddhanta* (सिद्धान्त): theory and arguments presented, proposed doctrine, or conclusions
5. *Sangati* (सङ्गति): connection between sections, synthesis, or coming together of knowledge

The Brahmasutra text has 189 *Adhikaranas*. Each section (case study) in the text opens with the *Mukhya* (chief, main) sutra that states the purpose of that section, and the various sections of the Brahma-sutras include *Vishaya-Vakyas* (cite the text sources and evidence they use).

Sutras were meant to assist the memory of the student who had gone through long discussions with his guru, as memory aids or clues and maximum thoughts were compressed in a few words which were unambiguous, giving the essence of the arguments on the topic. The Sutras of the text, states Adi Shankara in his commentary, are structured like a string that ties together the Vedanta texts like a garland of flowers.

Contents

The Brahmasutra, states Sengaku Mayeda, distills and consolidates the extensive teachings found in a variety of Upanishads of Hinduism, summarizing, arranging, unifying and systematizing the Upanishadic theories. Prior to the creation of the Brahmasutras, the Vedic literature had grown into an enormous collection of ideas and practices, ranging from practical rituals (karma-kanda) to abstract philosophy (jnana-kanda). Different and conflicting theories on metaphysical problems, diverse mutually contradicting unsystematized teachings on rituals and philosophies multiplied in the four Vedas, creating the need for consolidated and systematized content summary of the Sruti. This was achieved by Jaimini's Mimamsa-sutra which focussed on externalized rituals as the spiritual path, while Badarayana's Brahma-sutra focussed on internalized philosophy as the spiritual path.

The opening sutra

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा

Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman

—*Brahma sutra 1.1.1*

The text reviews and critiques most major orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy as well as all heterodox Indian philosophies such as Buddhism, with the exception of Samkhya and Yoga philosophies which it holds in high regards and recurrently refers to them in all its four chapters, adding in sutras 2.1.3 and 4.2.21 that Yoga and Samkhya are similar. The text cites and quotes from the ten Principal Upanishads often, the Kaushitaki Upanishad and the Shvetashvatara Upanishad in several sutras, but also mentions Upanishads now unknown and lost. The contents of the text also acknowledge and analyze the various Vedic schools, and mentions the existence of multiple, diverging versions of the same underlying text.

The sutras of the Brahmasutra are aphorisms, which Paul Deussen states to be "threads stretched out in weaving to form the basis of the web", and intelligible "when the woof is added" with a commentary.

Chapter 1: What is Brahman?

The first chapter is regarded in Vedanta tradition as *Samanvaya* (Harmony), because it distills, synchronizes and brings into a harmonious whole the seemingly diverse and conflicting passages in various Sruti texts. It consists of 134 sutras, with eleven *Adhikaranas* in the first *Pada*, seven *Adhikaranas* in second, fourteen *Adhikaranas* in third, and eight in the fourth *Pada*. The different sub-schools of Vedanta have interpreted the sutras in the last *Pada* differently, and some count only seven *Adhikaranas* in the fourth *Pada*.

Perception, Inference and Word

शब्द इतिचेन्नातः प्रभवात्प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्याम्

If it be said that a contradiction will result in regard to Word (Vedas), we say that it is not so because the origination of everything is from perception and inference.

Adi Shankara commentary: "Perception means Sruti; for its validity it is not dependent on anything else; inference is Smriti".

—*Brahma sutra 1.3.28*

This Brahmasutra chapter asserts that all the Upanishads primarily aim and coherently describe the knowledge and meditation of Brahman, the ultimate reality. Brahman is the source from which the world came into existence, in whom it inheres and to which it returns. The only source for the knowledge of this Brahman is the Sruti or the Upanishads.

The sutras 1.1.5-11 quotes the Samkhya school's view that the Principle of the world is unconscious, and instead asserts that the Principle of the world is conscious and the Brahman itself. The remaining sutras in Pada 1.1, all sutras of 1.2 and 1.3 assert that Brahman is the primary focus of the Upanishads, is various aspects of empirical reality, quoting various verses in support, from Taittiriya Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad,

Kaushitaki Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and Prashna Upanishad.

The first chapter in sutras 1.4.1-15 presents the Samkhya theories on Prakriti, and presents its arguments that these are inconsistent and misinterpretation of the Katha, Brihadaranyaka, Shvetashvatara and Taittiriya Upanishad. Sutras 1.4.23 through 1.4.27 state that Brahman is the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. The last sutra of the first chapter states that the arguments on the refutation of Samkhya theories also apply to the atomists (Vaisheshika school of Hindu philosophy).

Review of competing theories

Second chapter (*Avirodha*: non-conflict, non-contradiction): discusses and refutes the possible objections to Vedānta philosophy, and states that the central themes of Vedanta are consistent across the various Vedic texts. The Brahma sutra states, examines and dismisses the refutations raised by other schools of thoughts, those now classified under Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. The second chapter consists of 157 sutras, with thirteen *Adhikaranas* in the first *Pada*, eight in second, seventeen *Adhikaranas* in third, and nine in the fourth *Pada*.

The second Brahmasutra chapter has been variously interpreted by various monist, theistic and other sub-schools of Vedanta. The Advaita school for example, states Francis Clooney, asserts that the "identity of Atman and Brahman" based Advaita system is the coherent system while other systems conflict with the Upanishads, or are internally inconsistent, or incoherent with observed reality and cosmos. The theistic sub-schools interpret the text to be stating that Atman is different than Brahman, and thereafter each explains how other systems conflict with the Upanishads or are incoherent.

The Pada 2.1 opens with *Adhikarana* on Samkhya and Vaisheshika schools arguments that Smritis should be a basis for examining the concept of Brahman, and their objections to the Vedanta theory of reflection. The Brahmasutra asserts in 2.1.13 through 2.1.20 that the subject and object are one in Brahman, that agrees with Samkhya there is an identity in cause and effect, adding that the Brahman and the empirical world are therefore one. The sutras 2.1.21 through 2.1.36 present the problem of evil, offering its own doctrine to address it, asserting that Brahman is neither unjust nor cruel, and that inequality and evil exists in the world because of will, choices and circumstances created by actions of living beings over time.

The sutras in Pada 2.1 are variously interpreted by Advaita, Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and other sub-schools of Vedanta. The monist Advaita school holds that ignorance or *Avidya* (wrong knowledge) is the root of "problem of evil"; in contrast, dualistic Vedanta schools hold karma and samsara to be the root.

The atomistic physico-theological theories of Vaisheshika and Samkhya school are the focus of the first seventeen sutras of Pada 2.2. The theories of Buddhism are refuted in

sutras 2.2.18 through 2.2.32, while the theories of Jainism are analyzed by the text in sutras 2.2.33 through 2.2.36.

The theories of other orthodox traditions are discussed in 2.2.37 through 2.2.45. Ramanuja and Shankara disagree in their formulation as well as critique of then extant orthodox traditions, in their respective commentaries, but both agree that the theory on emergence of *Pradyumna* (intellect) in the competing orthodox system is the primary flaw.

The first eight case studies in the third *Pada* of chapter 2 discuss whether the world has an origin or not, whether the universe is co-eternal with Brahman or is an effect of Brahman (interpreted as dualistic God in theistic sub-schools of Vedanta), and whether the universe refunds into Brahman periodically. The last nine *Adhikaranas* of the third *Pada* discuss the nature of soul, whether it is eternal, is soul an agent, soul's relationship to Brahman, and states its proof that the soul exists and is immortal.

The last *Pada* of the second chapter extracts and summarizes the theories of human body, sensory organs, action organs and their relationship to *Prana* (vital breath) in the various Vedic Brahmanas and Upanishads. The Brahma-sutra states that the organs inside a living being are independent principles, in the seventh and eighth *Adhikarana* of the fourth *Pada*. The various sub-schools of Vedanta interpret the sutras in the fourth *Pada* differently.

The means to spiritual knowledge

The Vedanta texts, state sutras 3.1.1-4 and 3.3.5-19 of Brahmasutra, describe different forms of meditation. These should be combined, merged into one and practiced, because there is nondifference of their basic import, that of Self, mind, knowledge and a state.

Third chapter (*Sādhana*: the means): describes the process by which ultimate emancipation can be achieved. The topics discussed are diverse. The third chapter is the

longest and consists of 186 sutras, with six *Adhikaranas* in its first *Pada*, eight in second, thirty six in third, and fourteen *Adhikaranas* in the fourth *Pada*.

The third Brahmasutra chapter focuses on the nature of spiritual knowledge and epistemic paths to it. The theory of death and rebirth, karma and importance of conduct and free will, and the connection between Atman (Self, Soul) and the Brahman are discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the text.

अपि संराधने प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्याम्

And (Brahman is apprehended) in perfect meditation also, according to perception (Sruti, *Pratyakṣa*) and inference (Smriti, *Anumāṇa*).

प्रकाशवच्चावैशेष्यं प्रकाशश्च कर्मण्यभ्यासात्

And as is the case of (physical) light and the like, there is the non-distinction (of two Selves), the light (Self) by its activity, on account of repeated declarations (in the Scripture).

अतोऽनन्तेन तथा हि लिङ्गम्

Therefore (the individual soul enters into unity) with the infinite (the highest Self), for thus (is the scriptural) indication.

— *Brahma sutra 3.2.24 - 3.2.26,*

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 describe the need for self-study, reflection of texts read, meditation, steps as one makes progress and the role of sannyasa (monk, mendicant) in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge.

Meditation

The third *pada*, states George Thibaut, opens a new section and theme in chapter 3 of the Brahma-sutras, asserting that meditation is central to the Vedic texts, and summarizing the Vedic theories, from different *Shakha* (Vedic schools), on "how the individual soul is enabled by meditation on Brahman to obtain final release". These sutras constitute a significant part of the text, extensively refer to the oldest Upanishads, and their commentaries by different Vedanta sub-schools have been extensive, signifying the large historic tradition around meditation, and acceptance of Yoga-sutras teachings in Vedanta.

Meditation is defined in Vedanta texts commenting on the Sutras, states Klaus Witz, as "a continuous succession of comparable basic conceptions, beliefs, not interspersed with dissimilar ones, which proceeds according to the scriptures and relates to an object enjoined in the scriptures". It is described by Vedantins as a practice of concentrating on an object of meditation, states Witz, a state of "absorption or immersion into essentially a single thought" and "concentrating on it, excluding conventional notions, till one if as completely identified with it as with one's body". While this practice is discussed in Vedic texts, their formulations were differently described by different Vedic schools. The

Brahma-sutra, in *Adhikaranas* of third and fourth pada, states Thibaut, assert that there is no contradiction in these teachings and that "the different Upanishads have to be viewed as teaching the same matter, and therefore the ideas must be combined in one meditation".

सैव हि सत्यादयः

For the True are so on (in different texts), are one and the same knowledge.

—Brahma sutra 3.3.38,

The most referred to texts in these sections are the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Chandogya Upanishad, the Kaushitaki Upanishad, the Katha Upanishad, and the non-Upanishadic parts of Shatapatha Brahmana and *Aitereya Aranyaka*. The topic of meditation, state the Brahma-sutras, is the spiritual knowledge of Brahman; the object of this knowledge, states Thibaut, is "Brahman viewed as the inner Self of all". The Brahma Sutras, in addition to recommending meditation, suggest that rituals and rites are unnecessary because it is knowledge that achieves the purpose.

And for this very reason there is no need of the lighting of the fire and so on.

—Brahma sutra 3.4.25,

In sutras 3.4.26 and 3.4.27, the text adds that rituals, however, can spiritually prepare a mind, remove impurities within, empower calmness and distractions from sensory pursuits, and therefore assist in its ability to meditate and gain the ultimate knowledge. The text also discusses, in sutras 3.4.28 to 3.4.31 whether there are restrictions on food (meat) one can ingest, during the spiritual journey. The sutras, translates Thibaut, derive from the Vedic texts that there is "a prohibition of doing harm to any living creature", however, the scriptures state, "only in danger of life, in cases of highest need, food of any kind is permitted to be eaten".

The last three sutras of the chapter 3 assert that a person, pursuing means to spiritual knowledge, should seek a childlike state of innocence, a psychological state that is free of anger, self centeredness, pride and arrogance. The text declares that according to the Vedic literature knowledge is possible in this life, that one is one's own obstruction in this journey, that liberation and freedom is the fruit of knowledge.

The benefits of spiritual knowledge

Fourth chapter (*Phala*: the fruit): talks of the state that is achieved in final emancipation. This is the shortest chapter with 78 sutras and 38 adhikaranas. The last chapter contains fourteen *Adhikaranas* in its first *Pada*, eleven in second, six in third, and seven *Adhikaranas* in the fourth. The last chapter of the Brahmasutra discusses the need and fruits of self-knowledge, the state of freedom and liberation.

The opening sutras of chapter 4 continue the discussion of meditation as means to knowledge, with sutra 4.1.3 summarizing it to be the state where the person accepts, "I am Brahman, not another being" (Adi Shankara), as "Thou indeed I am, O holy divinity, and I indeed thou art, O holy divinity" (Jabalas), and "God is to be contemplated as the Self" and the individual is as the body of God (Ramanuja).

On the Soul's having attained the Highest light, there is manifestation of its real nature, as we infer from the word own.

The Self whose true nature has manifested itself is released; according to the promise (made by scripture).

The light into which the soul enters is the Self, owing to the subject-matter of the chapter. The released soul abides in non-division from the highest Self (Brahman), because that is seen.

— Brahma sutra 4.4.1 - 4.4.4,

The liberated soul, asserts the Brahma-sutra, is of the nature of Brahman, with inner power and knowledge, free from evil, free from grief, free from suffering, one of bliss and "for such there is freedom in all worlds".

Commentaries

Numerous commentaries have been written on the Brahma-sutra text, but many such as that of Bodhayana, Upavarsa, and eighteen out of twenty one mentioned by Narayana in *Madhvavijaya-bhava-prakashika* are considered lost. Of the surviving commentaries, the earliest extant one is by Adi Shankara.

The diversity of Brahma-sutra commentaries by various sub-schools of Hinduism (see table) attests to the central importance of the Upanishads, that the text summarizes.

Some commentaries on Brahma-sutra			
Scholar	**Century**	**School**	**Theme/Influence**
Shankara	8th-century	Advaita	Idealist Monism
Bhaskara, Yadava Prakasha	10th-century	Bhedabheda	Bhakti movement
Ramanuja	11th-century	Vishishtadvaita	Qualified Advaita Vaishnavism
Madhva, also known as Purnaprajna and Ananda Teertha	13th-century	Dvaita	Dualism
Nimbarka	13th-century	Dvaitadvaita	Differential monism

Some commentaries on Brahma-sutra			
Scholar	**Century**	**School**	**Theme/Influence**
Srikantha	13th-century	Kashmir/Pashupata Shaivism	Theistic Monism Saiva Siddhanta
Vallabha	16th-century	Shuddhadvaita	Pure non-dualism
Shuka	16th-century	Bhedavada	Revised dualism
Baladeva Vidyabhushana	16th-Century	Acintyabhedābheda (Gaudiya Vaishnavism)	Inconceivable Oneness and Difference

Exegesis

The sutras in the text can be, and have been read in different ways. Some commentators read each line separately, while others sometimes read two as one treating some sutras as contextually connected. Creative readers have read the last word of a sutra as the starting word for the next, some treat a given verse as *Purva-paksha* (prior art, or opposing viewpoint) while others read the same verse as *Siddhanta* (proposed doctrine, or conclusion). For example, states Gregory Darling, Adi Shankara in his commentary on sutra 4.3.14 considers *saguna* Brahman mentioned therein as *Purva-paksha*, but acknowledges that some scholars interpret this sutra as a *Siddhanta*.

Translations

The Brahma Sutra has been translated into German by Paul Deussen, and in English by George Thibaut. The Thibaut translation is, state De Bary and Embree, "probably the best complete translation in English".

Influence

The text is part of the Prasthanatrayi, or the three starting points for the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy. The Brahma sutras constitute the *Nyāya prasthāna* (न्याय प्रस्थान) or "starting point of reasoning canonical base", while the Principal Upanishads constitute the *Sruti prasthāna* or "starting point of heard scriptures", and the Bhagavad Gita constitutes the *Smriti prasthāna* or the "starting point of remembered canonical base". The Brahma sutras they are also referred to as the *Yukti prasthāna*, since Yukti (युक्ति) also means reasoning or logic.

The nature and influence of Brahma-sutra, states Paul Deussen, "stands to the Upanishad's in the same relation as the Christian Dogmatics to the New Testament: it investigates their teaching about God, the world, the soul, in its conditions of wandering and of deliverance, removes apparent contradictions of the doctrines, binds them

systematically together, and is specially concerned to defend them against the attacks of the opponents".

The Vedas, according to Vedanta, consists of two parts, states Deussen, which show "far reaching analogy with the Old and New Testaments", a Part of Works (karma-kanda) which includes the benedictory mantras, sacrifices and ceremonies like the Old Testament, and a Part of Knowledge (jnana-kanda) which focuses on metaphysical questions about the world, creator, soul, theology, morals and virtues like the New Testament. The respective influence of the two documents, of the New Testament on Christianity, and the Brahma-sutra on Hinduism has been very significant. This analogy of influence has many common elements but, states Arvind Sharma, there are differences in the role and influence of New Testament in Christianity and the Brahma-sutra in the Hindu traditions, because in Hinduism texts were never considered as closed, the means and the meaning of soteriology differed, and a diversity of ideas on duality and monism as well as God was accepted.

The impact of Brahma-sutra text on Vedanta, and in turn Hinduism, has been historic and central, states Nakamura:

The prevalence of Vedanta thought is found not only in philosophical writings but also in various forms of (Hindu) literature, such as the epics, lyric poetry, drama and so forth. What is especially worthy of attention is that the Hindu religious sects, the common faith of the Indian populace, looked to Vedanta philosophy for the theoretical foundations for their theology. The influence of Vedanta is prominent in the sacred literatures of Hinduism, such as the various Puranas, Samhitas, Agamas and Tantras. Many commentaries on the fundamental scripture of Vedanta, the Brahmasutra, were written by the founders or leading scholars of the various sects of Hinduism, and they are transmitted to this day as documents indispensable in the respective sectarian traditions. The majority of the traditional and conservative scholars in India today, called Pandits, are students of Vedanta, and an overwhelming number belong to the lineage of Shankara – five sixths of all Pandits, according to some authorities.

— *Hajime Nakamura (2004), A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy, Volume 2*

Frithjof Schuon states the role of Brahmasutra in Hinduism as follows,

The Vedanta contained in the Upanishads, then formulated in the *Brahma Sutra*, and finally commented and explained by Shankara, is an invaluable key for discovering the deepest meaning of all the religious doctrines and for realizing that the *Sanatana Dharma* secretly penetrates all the forms of traditional spirituality.

— *Frithjof Schuon (1975), One of the Great Lights of the World*

Chapter 24
VEDAS

The Vedas are a large body of knowledge texts originating in the ancient Indian subcontinent. Composed by ancient Aryans in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism. Hindus consider the Vedas to be *apauruṣeya*, which means "not of a man, superhuman" and "impersonal, authorless".
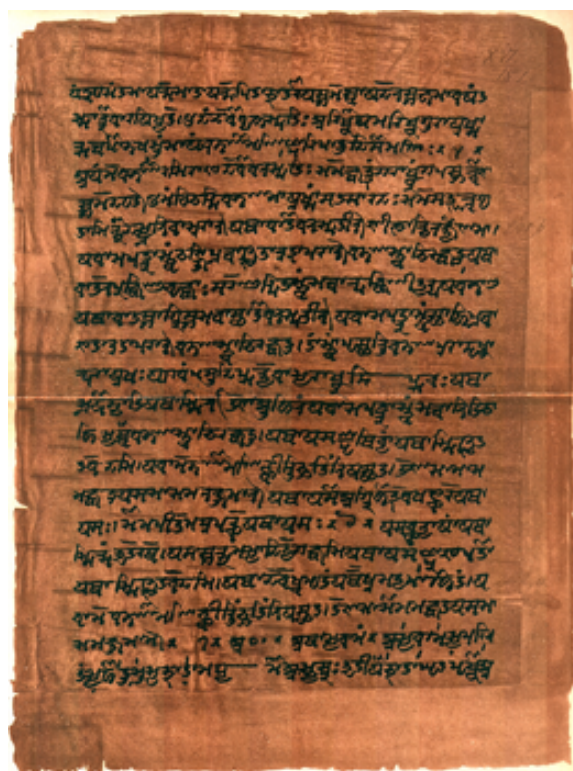
The Vedas are ancient Sanskrit texts of Hinduism.
Above: A page from the Atharvaveda.

Vedas are also called *śruti* ("what is heard") literature, distinguishing them from other religious texts, which are called *smṛti* ("what is remembered"). The Veda, for orthodox Indian theologians, are considered revelations seen by ancient sages after intense meditation, and texts that have been more carefully preserved since ancient times. In the Hindu Epic the Mahabharata, the creation of Vedas is credited to Brahma. The Vedic hymns themselves assert that they were skillfully created by *Rishis* (sages), after inspired creativity, just as a carpenter builds a chariot.

There are four Vedas: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda. Each Veda has been subclassified into four major text types – the Samhitas (mantras and benedictions), the Aranyakas (text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices and symbolic-sacrifices), the Brahmanas (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices), and the Upanishads (texts discussing meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge). Some scholars add a fifth category – the Upasanas (worship).

The various Indian philosophies and denominations have taken differing positions on the Vedas. Schools of Indian philosophy which cite the Vedas as their scriptural authority are classified as "orthodox" (āstika). Other śramaṇa traditions, such as Lokayata, Carvaka, Ajivika, Buddhism and Jainism, which did not regard the Vedas as authorities, are referred to as "heterodox" or "non-orthodox" (nāstika) schools. Despite their differences, just like the texts of the śramaṇa traditions, the layers of texts in the Vedas discuss similar ideas and concepts.

Etymology and usage

The Sanskrit word *véda* "knowledge, wisdom" is derived from the root *vid-* "to know". This is reconstructed as being derived from the Proto-Indo-European root *u̯eid-*, meaning "see" or "know".

The noun is from Proto-Indo-European *u̯eidos*, cognate to Greek (ϝ)εἶδος "aspect", "form" . Not to be confused is the homonymous 1st and 3rd person singular perfect tense *véda*, cognate to Greek (ϝ)οἶδα *(w)oida* "I know". Root cognates are Greek ἰδέα, English *wit*, etc., Latin *videō* "I see", etc.

The Sanskrit term *veda* as a common noun means "knowledge". The term in some contexts, such as hymn 10.93.11 of the *Rigveda*, means "obtaining or finding wealth, property", while in some others it means "a bunch of grass together" as in a broom or for ritual fire.

A related word *Vedena* appears in hymn 8.19.5 of the *Rigveda*. It was translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith as "ritual lore", as "studying the Veda" by the 14th century Indian scholar Sayana, as "bundle of grass" by Max Müller, and as "with the Veda" by H.H. Wilson.

Vedas are called *Maṛai* or *Vaymoli* in parts of South India. Marai literally means "hidden, a secret, mystery". In some south Indian communities such as Iyengars, the word Veda includes the Tamil writings of the Alvar saints, such as Divya Prabandham, for example Tiruvaymoli.

Chronology

The Vedas are among the oldest sacred texts. The Samhitas date to roughly 1700–1100 BC, and the "circum-Vedic" texts, as well as the redaction of the Samhitas, date to c. 1000-500 BC, resulting in a Vedic period, spanning the mid 2nd to mid 1st millennium BC, or the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age. The Vedic period reaches its peak only after the composition of the mantra texts, with the establishment of the various shakhas all over Northern India which annotated the mantra samhitas with Brahmana discussions of their meaning, and reaches its end in the age of Buddha and Panini and the rise of the Mahajanapadas (archaeologically, Northern Black Polished Ware). Michael Witzel gives a time span of c. 1500 to c. 500-400 BC. Witzel makes special reference to the Near Eastern Mitanni material of the 14th century BC the only epigraphic record of Indo-Aryan contemporary to the Rigvedic period. He gives 150 BC (Patañjali) as a terminus ante quem

for all Vedic Sanskrit literature, and 1200 BC (the early Iron Age) as terminus post quem for the Atharvaveda.

Transmission of texts in the Vedic period was by oral tradition, preserved with precision with the help of elaborate mnemonic techniques. A literary tradition is traceable in post-Vedic times, after the rise of Buddhism in the Maurya period, perhaps earliest in the Kanva recension of the Yajurveda about the 1st century BC; however oral tradition of transmission remained active. Witzel suggests the possibility of written Vedic texts towards the end of 1st millennium BCE. Some scholars such as Jack Goody state that "the Vedas are not the product of an oral society", basing this view by comparing inconsistencies in the transmitted versions of literature from various oral societies such as the Greek, Serbia and other cultures, then noting that the Vedic literature is too consistent and vast to have been composed and transmitted orally across generations, without being written down. However, adds Goody, the Vedic texts likely involved both a written and oral tradition, calling it a "parallel products of a literate society".

Due to the ephemeral nature of the manuscript material (birch bark or palm leaves), surviving manuscripts rarely surpass an age of a few hundred years. The Sampurnanand Sanskrit University has a Rigveda manuscript from the 14th century; however, there are a number of older Veda manuscripts in Nepal that are dated from the 11th century onwards.

Ancient universities

The Vedas, Vedic rituals and its ancillary sciences called the Vedangas, were part of the curriculum at ancient universities such as at Taxila, Nalanda and Vikramashila.

Categories of Vedic texts
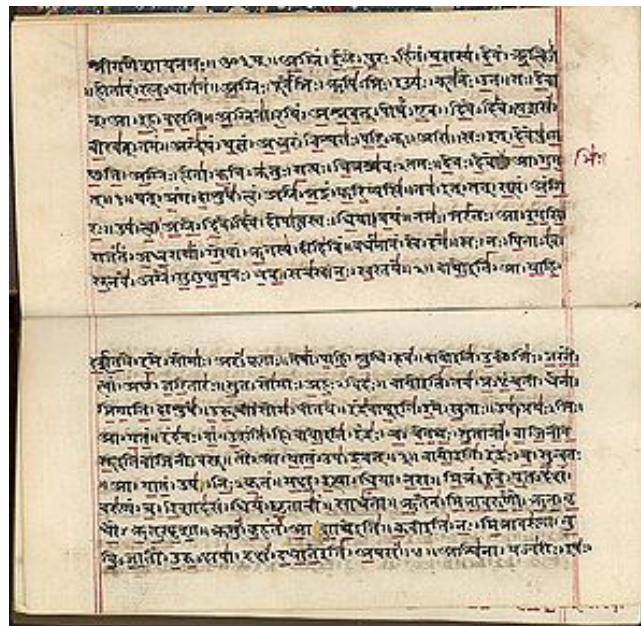
Rigveda manuscript in Devanagari

The term "Vedic texts" is used in two distinct meanings:

1. Texts composed in Vedic Sanskrit during the Vedic period (Iron Age India)
2. Any text considered as "connected to the Vedas" or a "corollary of the Vedas"

Vedic Sanskrit corpus

The corpus of Vedic Sanskrit texts includes:

- The Samhitas (Sanskrit *saṃhitā*, "collection"), are collections of metric texts ("mantras"). There are four "Vedic" Samhitas: the Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharva-Veda, most of which are available in several recensions (*śākhā*). In some contexts, the term *Veda* is used to refer to these Samhitas. This is the oldest layer of Vedic texts, apart from the Rigvedic hymns, which were probably essentially complete by 1200 BC, dating to c. the 12th to 10th centuries BC. The complete corpus of Vedic mantras as collected in Bloomfield's *Vedic Concordance* (1907) consists of some 89,000 padas (metrical feet), of which 72,000 occur in the four Samhitas.
- The Brahmanas are prose texts that comment and explain the solemn rituals as well as expound on their meaning and many connected themes. Each of the Brahmanas is associated with one of the Samhitas or its recensions. The Brahmanas may either form separate texts or can be partly integrated into the text of the Samhitas. They may also include the Aranyakas and Upanishads.
- The Aranyakas, "wilderness texts" or "forest treaties", were composed by people who meditated in the woods as recluses and are the third part of the Vedas. The texts contain discussions and interpretations of ceremonies, from ritualisitic to symbolic meta-ritualistic points of view. It is frequently read in secondary literature.
- Older Mukhya Upanishads (Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chandogya, Kaṭha, Kena, Aitareya, and others).

The Vedas (sruti) are different from Vedic era texts such as Shrauta Sutras and Gryha Sutras, which are smriti texts. Together, the Vedas and these Sutras form part of the Vedic Sanskrit corpus.

While production of Brahmanas and Aranyakas ceased with the end of the Vedic period, additional Upanishads were composed after the end of the Vedic period.

The Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads, among other things, interpret and discuss the Samhitas in philosophical and metaphorical ways to explore abstract concepts such as the Absolute (Brahman), and the soul or the self (Atman), introducing Vedanta philosophy, one of the major trends of later Hinduism. In other parts, they show evolution of ideas, such as from actual sacrifice to symbolic sacrifice, and of spirituality in the Upanishads. This has inspired later Hindu scholars such as Adi Shankara to classify each Veda into *karma-kanda* (कर्म खण्ड, action/ritual-related sections) and *jnana-kanda* (ज्ञान खण्ड, knowledge/spirituality-related sections).

Shruti literature

The texts considered "Vedic" in the sense of "corollaries of the Vedas" is less clearly defined, and may include numerous post-Vedic texts such as the later Upanishads and the Sutra literature. Texts not considered to be *shruti* are known as *smriti* (Sanskrit: *smṛti*; "the remembered"), or texts of remembered traditions. This indigenous system of categorization was adopted by Max Müller and, while it is subject to some debate, it is still widely used. As Axel Michaels explains:

These classifications are often not tenable for linguistic and formal reasons: There is not only *one* collection at any one time, but rather several handed down in separate Vedic schools; Upaniṣads ... are sometimes not to be distinguished from Āraṇyakas...; Brāhmaṇas contain older strata of language attributed to the Saṃhitās; there are various dialects and locally prominent traditions of the Vedic schools. Nevertheless, it is advisable to stick to the division adopted by Max Müller because it follows the Indian tradition, conveys the historical sequence fairly accurately, and underlies the current editions, translations, and monographs on Vedic literature."

The Upanishads are largely philosophical works, some in dialogue form. They are the foundation of Hindu philosophical thought and its diverse traditions. Of the Vedic corpus, they alone are widely known, and the central ideas of the Upanishads are at the spiritual core of Hindus.

Vedic schools or recensions

The four Vedas were transmitted in various śākhās (branches, schools). Each school likely represented an ancient community of a particular area, or kingdom. Each school followed its own canon. Multiple recensions are known for each of the Vedas. Thus, states Witzel as well as Renou, in the 2nd millennium BC, there was likely no canon of one broadly accepted Vedic texts, no Vedic "Scripture", but only a canon of various texts accepted by each school. Some of these texts have survived, most lost or yet to be found. Rigveda that survives in modern times, for example, is in only one extremely well preserved school of Śākalya, from a region called Videha, in modern north Bihar, south of Nepal. The Vedic canon in its entirety consists of texts from all the various Vedic schools taken together.

Each of the four Vedas were shared by the numerous schools, but revised, interpolated and adapted locally, in and after the Vedic period, giving rise to various recensions of the text. Some texts were revised into the modern era, raising significant debate on parts of the text which are believed to have been corrupted at a later date. The Vedas each have an Index or Anukramani, the principal work of this kind being the general Index or *Sarvānukramaṇī*.

Prodigious energy was expended by ancient Indian culture in ensuring that these texts were transmitted from generation to generation with inordinate fidelity. For example, memorization of the sacred *Vedas* included up to eleven forms of recitation of the same text. The texts were subsequently "proof-read" by comparing the different recited versions.

Forms of recitation included the *jaṭā-pāṭha* (literally "mesh recitation") in which every two adjacent words in the text were first recited in their original order, then repeated in the reverse order, and finally repeated again in the original order.

That these methods have been effective, is testified to by the preservation of the most ancient Indian religious text, the *Rigveda*, as redacted into a single text during the *Brahmana* period, without any variant readings within that school.

The Vedas were likely written down for the first time around 500 BC. However, all printed editions of the Vedas that survive in the modern times are likely the version existing in about the 16th century AD.

Four Vedas

The canonical division of the Vedas is fourfold (*turīya*) viz.,

1. Rigveda (RV)
2. Yajurveda (YV, with the main division TS vs. VS)
3. Samaveda (SV)
4. Atharvaveda (AV)

Of these, the first three were the principal original division, also called "*trayī vidyā*", that is, "the triple science" of reciting hymns (Rigveda), performing sacrifices (Yajurveda), and chanting songs (Samaveda). The Rigveda is the oldest work, which Witzel states are probably from the period of 1900 to 1100 BC.

Witzel, also notes that it is the Vedic period itself, where incipient lists divide the Vedic texts into three (trayī) or four branches: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva.

Each Veda has been subclassified into four major text types – the Samhitas (mantras and benedictions), the Aranyakas (text on rituals, ceremonies such as newborn baby's rites of passage, coming of age, marriages, retirement and cremation, sacrifices and symbolic-sacrifices), the Brahmanas (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices), and the Upanishads (text discussing meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge).

The Upasanas (short ritual worship-related sections) are considered by some scholars as the fifth part. Witzel notes that the rituals, rites and ceremonies described in these ancient texts reconstruct to a large degree the Indo-European marriage rituals observed in a region spanning the Indian subcontinent, Persia and the European area, and some greater details are found in the Vedic era texts such as the Grhya Sūtras. Only one version of the Rigveda is known to have survived into the modern era.

Several different versions of the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda are known, and many different versions of the Yajur Veda have been found in different parts of South Asia.

Rigveda

Nasadiya Sukta (Hymn of non-Eternity):

Who really knows?
Who can here proclaim it?
Whence, whence this creation sprang?
Gods came later, after the creation of this universe.

Who then knows whence it has arisen?
Whether God's will created it, or whether He was mute;
Only He who is its overseer in highest heaven knows,

He only knows, or perhaps He does not know.

—Rig Veda 10.129.6-7

The Rigveda Samhita is the oldest extant Indic text. It is a collection of 1,028 Vedic Sanskrit hymns and 10,600 verses in all, organized into ten books (Sanskrit: *mandalas*). The hymns are dedicated to Rigvedic deities.

The books were composed by poets from different priestly groups over a period of several centuries from roughly the second half of the 2nd millennium BC (the early Vedic period), starting with the Punjab (Sapta Sindhu) region of the northwest Indian subcontinent. The Rigveda is structured based on clear principles – the Veda begins with a small book addressed to Agni, Indra and other gods, all arranged according to decreasing total number of hymns in each deity collection; for each deity series the hymns progress from longer to shorter ones; yet, the number of hymns per book increases; finally, the meter too is systematically arranged from jagati and tristubh to anustubh and gayatri as the text progresses. In terms of substance, the nature of hymns shift from praise of deities in early books to Nasadiya Sukta with questions such as, "what is the origin of the universe?, do even gods know the answer?", the virtue of Dāna (charity) in society, and other metaphysical issues in its hymns.

There are similarities between the mythology, rituals and linguistics in Rigveda and those found in ancient central Asia, Iranian and Hindukush (Afghanistan) regions.

Samaveda

The Samaveda Samhita consists of 1549 stanzas, taken almost entirely (except for 75 mantras) from the Rigveda. The Samaveda samhita has two major parts. The first part includes four melody collections (gāna, गान) and the second part three verse "books" (ārcika, आर्चिक). A melody in the song books corresponds to a verse in the *arcika* books. Just as in the Rigveda, the early sections of Samaveda typically begin with hymns to Agni and Indra, but shift to the abstract. Their meters shift also in a descending order. The songs in the later sections of the Samaveda have the least deviation from the hymns derived from the Rigveda.

In the Samaveda, some of the Rigvedic verses are repeated more than once. Including repetitions, there are a total of 1875 verses numbered in the Samaveda recension translated by Griffith. Two major recensions have survived, the Kauthuma/Ranayaniya and the Jaiminiya. Its purpose was liturgical, and they were the repertoire of the *udgātṛ* or "singer" priests.

Yajurveda

The Yajurveda Samhita consists of prose mantras. It is a compilation of ritual offering formulas that were said by a priest while an individual performed ritual actions such as those before the yajna fire.

The earliest and most ancient layer of Yajurveda samhita includes about 1,875 verses, that are distinct yet borrow and build upon the foundation of verses in Rigveda. Unlike the Samaveda which is almost entirely based on Rigveda mantras and structured as songs, the Yajurveda samhitas are in prose and linguistically, they are different from earlier Vedic texts. The Yajur Veda has been the primary source of information about sacrifices during Vedic times and associated rituals.

There are two major groups of texts in this Veda: the "Black" (*Krishna*) and the "White" (*Shukla*). The term "black" implies "the un-arranged, motley collection" of verses in Yajurveda, in contrast to the "white" (well arranged) Yajurveda. The White Yajurveda separates the Samhita from its Brahmana (the Shatapatha Brahmana), the Black Yajurveda intersperses the Samhita with Brahmana commentary. Of the Black Yajurveda, texts from four major schools have survived (Maitrayani, Katha, Kapisthala-Katha, Taittiriya), while of the White Yajurveda, two (Kanva and Madhyandina). The youngest layer of Yajurveda text is not related to rituals nor sacrifice, it includes the largest collection of primary Upanishads, influential to various schools of Hindu philosophy.

Atharvaveda

The Artharvaveda Samhita is the text 'belonging to the Atharvan and Angirasa poets. It has about 760 hymns, and about 160 of the hymns are in common with the Rigveda. Most of the verses are metrical, but some sections are in prose. Two different versions of the text – the Paippalāda and the Śaunakīya – have survived into the modern times. The Atharvaveda was not considered as a Veda in the Vedic era, and was accepted as a Veda in late 1st millennium BC. It was compiled last, probably around 900 BC, although some of its material may go back to the time of the Rigveda, or earlier.

The Atharvaveda is sometimes called the "Veda of magical formulas", an epithet declared to be incorrect by other scholars. The Samhita layer of the text likely represents a developing 2nd millennium BC tradition of magico-religious rites to address superstitious anxiety, spells to remove maladies believed to be caused by demons, and herbs- and nature-derived potions as medicine. The text, states Kenneth Zysk, is one of oldest surviving record of the evolutionary practices in religious medicine and reveals the

"earliest forms of folk healing of Indo-European antiquity". Many books of the Atharvaveda Samhita are dedicated to rituals without magic, such as to philosophical speculations and to theosophy.

The Atharva veda has been a primary source for information about Vedic culture, the customs and beliefs, the aspirations and frustrations of everyday Vedic life, as well as those associated with kings and governance. The text also includes hymns dealing with the two major rituals of passage – marriage and cremation. The Atharva Veda also dedicates significant portion of the text asking the meaning of a ritual.

Embedded Vedic texts

Brahmanas

The Brahmanas are commentaries, explanation of proper methods and meaning of Vedic Samhita rituals in the four Vedas. They also incorporate myths, legends and in some cases philosophy. Each regional Vedic *shakha* (school) has its own operating manual-like Brahmana text, most of which have been lost. A total of 19 Brahmana texts have survived into modern times: two associated with the Rigveda, six with the Yajurveda, ten with the Samaveda and one with the Atharvaveda. The oldest dated to about 900 BC, while the youngest Brahmanas (such as the Shatapatha Brahmana), were complete by about 700 BC. According to Jan Gonda, the final codification of the Brahmanas took place in pre-Buddhist times (ca. 600 BC).

The substance of the Brahmana text varies with each Veda. For example, the first chapter of the Chandogya Brahmana, one of the oldest Brahmanas, includes eight ritual *suktas* (hymns) for the ceremony of marriage and rituals at the birth of a child. The first hymn is a recitation that accompanies offering a Yajna oblation to *Agni* (fire) on the occasion of a marriage, and the hymn prays for prosperity of the couple getting married. The second hymn wishes for their long life, kind relatives, and a numerous progeny. The third hymn is a mutual marriage pledge, between the bride and groom, by which the two bind themselves to each other. The sixth through last hymn of the first chapter in Chandogya Brahmana are ritual celebrations on the birth of a child, and wishes for health, wealth and prosperity with a profusion of cows and artha. However, these verses are incomplete expositions, and their complete context emerges only with the Samhita layer of text.

Aranyakas and Upanishads

The Aranyakas layer of the Vedas include rituals, discussion of symbolic meta-rituals, as well as philosophical speculations.

Aranyakas, however, neither are homogeneous in content nor in structure. They are a medley of instructions and ideas, and some include chapters of Upanishads within them. Two theories have been proposed on the origin of the word *Aranyakas*. One theory holds that these texts were meant to be studied in a forest, while the other holds that the name came from these being the manuals of allegorical interpretation of sacrifices, for those in

Vanaprastha (retired, forest-dwelling) stage of their life, according to the historic age-based Ashrama system of human life.

The Upanishads reflect the last composed layer of texts in the Vedas. They are commonly referred to as *Vedānta*, variously interpreted to mean either the "last chapters, parts of the Vedas" or "the object, the highest purpose of the Veda". The concepts of Brahman (Ultimate Reality) and Ātman (Soul, Self) are central ideas in all the Upanishads, and "Know your Ātman" their thematic focus. The Upanishads are the foundation of Hindu philosophical thought and its diverse traditions. Of the Vedic corpus, they alone are widely known, and the central ideas of the Upanishads have influenced the diverse traditions of Hinduism.

Aranyakas are sometimes identified as *karma-kanda* (ritualistic section), while the Upanishads are identified as *jnana-kanda* (spirituality section). In an alternate classification, the early part of Vedas are called Samhitas and the commentary are called the Brahmanas which together are identified as the ceremonial *karma-kanda*, while *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* are referred to as the *jnana-kanda*.

Post-Vedic literature

Vedanga

The Vedangas developed towards the end of the vedic period, around or after the middle of the 1st millennium BC. These auxiliary fields of Vedic studies emerged because the language of the Vedas, composed centuries earlier, became too archaic to the people of that time. The Vedangas were sciences that focused on helping understand and interpret the Vedas that had been composed many centuries earlier.

The six subjects of Vedanga are phonetics (Śikṣā), poetic meter (Chandas), grammar (Vyākaraṇa), etymology and linguistics (Nirukta), rituals and rites of passage (Kalpa), time keeping and astronomy (Jyotiṣa).

Vedangas developed as ancillary studies for the Vedas, but its insights into meters, structure of sound and language, grammar, linguistic analysis and other subjects influenced post-Vedic studies, arts, culture and various schools of Hindu philosophy. The Kalpa Vedanga studies, for example, gave rise to the Dharma-sutras, which later expanded into Dharma-shastras.

Parisista

Pariśiṣṭa "supplement, appendix" is the term applied to various ancillary works of Vedic literature, dealing mainly with details of ritual and elaborations of the texts logically and chronologically prior to them: the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Sutras. Naturally classified with the Veda to which each pertains, Parisista works exist for each of the four Vedas. However, only the literature associated with the Atharvaveda is extensive.

- The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Pariśiṣṭa* is a very late text associated with the Rigveda canon.
- The *Gobhila Gṛhya Pariśiṣṭa* is a short metrical text of two chapters, with 113 and 95 verses respectively.
- The *Kātiya Pariśiṣṭas*, ascribed to Kātyāyana, consist of 18 works enumerated self-referentially in the fifth of the series (the Caraṇavyūha) and the *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra Pariśiṣṭa*.
- The *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda has 3 parisistas The* Āpastamba Hautra Pariśiṣṭa, *which is also found as the second* praśna *of the* Satyasāḍha Śrauta Sūtra', the *Vārāha Śrauta Sūtra Pariśiṣṭa*
- For the Atharvaveda, there are 79 works, collected as 72 distinctly named parisistas.

Upaveda

The term **upaveda** ("applied knowledge") is used in traditional literature to designate the subjects of certain technical works. Lists of what subjects are included in this class differ among sources. The Charanavyuha mentions four Upavedas:

- Archery (Dhanurveda), associated with the Rigveda
- Architecture (Sthapatyaveda), associated with the Yajurveda.
- Music and sacred dance (Gāndharvaveda), associated with the Samaveda
- Medicine (Āyurveda), associated with the Atharvaveda .

"Fifth" and other Vedas

Some post-Vedic texts, including the Mahabharata, the Natyasastra and certain Puranas, refer to themselves as the "fifth Veda". The earliest reference to such a "fifth Veda" is found in the Chandogya Upanishad in hymn 7.1.2.

Let drama and dance (Nātya, नाट्य) be the fifth vedic scripture. Combined with an epic story, tending to virtue, wealth, joy and spiritual freedom, it must contain the significance of every scripture, and forward every art. Thus, from all the Vedas, Brahma framed the Nātya Veda. From the Rig Veda he drew forth the words, from the Sama Veda the melody, from the Yajur Veda gesture, and from the Atharva Veda the sentiment.

— First chapter of Nātyaśāstra, Abhinaya Darpana

"Divya Prabandha", for example Tiruvaymoli, is a term for canonical Tamil texts considered as Vernacular Veda by some South Indian Hindus.

Other texts such as the Bhagavad Gita or the Vedanta Sutras are considered *shruti* or "Vedic" by some Hindu denominations but not universally within Hinduism. The Bhakti movement, and Gaudiya Vaishnavism in particular extended the term *veda* to include the Sanskrit Epics and Vaishnavite devotional texts such as the Pancaratra.

Puranas

The *Puranas* is a vast genre of encyclopedic Indian literature about a wide range of topics particularly myths, legends and other traditional lore. Several of these texts are named after major Hindu deities such as Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. There are 18 *Maha Puranas* (Great Puranas) and 18 *Upa Puranas* (Minor Puranas), with over 400,000 verses.

The Puranas have been influential in the Hindu culture. They are considered *Vaidika* (congruent with Vedic literature). The Bhagavata Purana has been among the most celebrated and popular text in the Puranic genre, and is of non-dualistic tenor. The Puranic literature wove with the Bhakti movement in India, and both Dvaita and Advaita scholars have commented on the underlying Vedanta themes in the *Maha Puranas*.

Western Indology

The study of Sanskrit in the West began in the 17th century. In the early 19th century, Arthur Schopenhauer drew attention to Vedic texts, specifically the Upanishads. The importance of Vedic Sanskrit for Indo-European studies was also recognized in the early 19th century. English translations of the Samhitas were published in the later 19th century, in the *Sacred Books of the East* series edited by Müller between 1879 and 1910. Ralph T. H. Griffith also presented English translations of the four Samhitas, published 1889 to 1899.

Voltaire regarded Vedas to be exceptional, he remarked that:

The Veda was the most precious gift for which the West had ever been indebted to the East.

Rigveda manuscripts were selected for inscription in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2007.

Chapter 25
UPANISHADS

The Upanishads are a collection of ancient Sanskrit texts that contain some of the central philosophical concepts of Hinduism, some of which are shared with Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. They are among the most important literature in the history of Indian religions and culture. The Upanishads played an important role in the development of spiritual ideas in ancient India, and they marked a transition from Vedic ritualism to new ideas and institutions. Early Upanishads are considered by Hindus as part of their scriptures (*śruti*) that discuss the nature of ultimate reality (*brahman*) and the character of and path to spiritual liberation (*mokṣa* or *mukti*).

The Upanishads are commonly referred to as *Vedānta*, variously interpreted to mean either the "last chapters, parts of the Veda" or "the object, the highest purpose of the Veda". The concepts of Brahman (ultimate reality) and Ātman (soul, self) are central ideas in all of the Upanishads, and "know your Ātman" is their thematic focus. The Upanishads are the foundation of Hindu philosophical thought and its diverse traditions. Of the Vedic corpus, they alone are widely known, and the central ideas of the Upanishads are at the spiritual core of Hindus.

More than 200 Upanishads are known, of which the first dozen or so are the oldest and most important and are referred to as the principal or main (*mukhya*) Upanishads. The *mukhya* Upanishads are found mostly in the concluding part of the *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas* and were, for centuries, memorized by each generation and passed down orally. The early Upanishads all predate the Common Era, five of them in all likelihood pre-Buddhist (6th century BCE), down to the Maurya period.

Of the remainder, 95 Upanishads are part of the Muktika canon, composed from about the last centuries of 1st-millennium BCE through about 15th-century CE. New Upanishads, beyond the 108 in the Muktika canon, continued to be composed through the early modern and modern era, though often dealing with subjects which are unconnected to the Vedas.

Along with the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra, the *mukhya* Upanishads (known collectively as the *Prasthanatrayi*) provide a foundation for the several later schools of Vedanta, among them, two influential monistic schools of Hinduism.

With the translation of the Upanishads in the early 19th century they also started to attract attention from a western audience. Arthur Schopenhauer was deeply impressed by the Upanishads and called it "the production of the highest human wisdom".

Modern era Indologists have discussed the similarities between the fundamental concepts in the Upanishads and major western philosophers.

Etymology

The Sanskrit term *Upaniṣad* (upa = by, ni = nether, shat =sitting) translates to "sitting down near", referring to the student sitting down near the teacher while receiving esoteric knowledge. Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit Dictionary* adds that, "According to native authorities Upanishad means 'setting to rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit.'"

Adi Shankara explains in his commentary on the Kaṭha and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that the word means *Ātmavidyā*, that is, "knowledge of the self", or *Brahmavidyā* "knowledge of Brahma". Other dictionary meanings include "esoteric doctrine" and "secret doctrine". The word appears in the verses of many Upanishads, such as the fourth verse of the 13th volume in first chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad. Max Muller as well as Paul Deussen translate the word *Upanishad* in these verses as "secret doctrine", Robert Hume translates it as "mystic meaning", while Patrick Olivelle translates it as "hidden connections".

Development

Authorship

The authorship of most Upanishads is uncertain and unknown. Radhakrishnan states, "almost all the early literature of India was anonymous, we do not know the names of the authors of the Upanishads".

The ancient Upanishads are embedded in the Vedas, the oldest of Hinduism's religious scriptures, which some traditionally consider to be *apauruṣeya*, which means "not of a man, superhuman" and "impersonal, authorless". The Vedic texts themselves assert that they were skillfully created by *Rishis* (sages), after inspired creativity, just as a carpenter builds a chariot.

The various philosophical theories in the early Upanishads have been attributed to famous sages such as Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka Aruni, Shvetaketu, Shandilya, Aitareya, Balaki, Pippalada, and Sanatkumara. Women, such as Maitreyi and Gargi participate in the dialogues and are also credited in the early Upanishads.

There are exceptions to the anonymous tradition of the Upanishads and other Vedic literature. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad, for example, includes closing credits to sage *Shvetashvatara*, and he is considered the author of the Upanishad.

Scholars believe that early Upanishads, were interpolated and expanded over time, because of the differences within manuscripts of the same Upanishad discovered in different parts of South Asia, differences in non-Sanskrit version of the texts that have survived, and differences within each text in terms of the meter, the style, the grammar and the structure. The texts as they exist now are believed to be the work of many authors.

Chronology

Scholars are uncertain about the exact centuries in which the Upanishads were composed. The chronology of the early Upanishads is difficult to resolve, states philosopher and Sanskritist Stephen Phillips, because all opinions rest on scanty evidence and analysis of archaism, style and repetitions across texts, and are driven by assumptions about likely evolution of ideas, and presumptions about which philosophy might have influenced which other Indian philosophies. Indologist Patrick Olivelle says that "in spite of claims made by some, in reality, any dating of these documents [early Upanishads] that attempts a precision closer than a few centuries is as stable as a house of cards". Some scholars have sought to analyse similarities between Hindu Upanishads and Buddhist literature to establish chronology for the Upanishads.

Patrick Olivelle gives the following chronology for the early Upanishads, also called the Principal Upanishads:

- The Brhadaranyaka and the Chandogya are the two earliest Upanishads. They are edited texts, some of whose sources are much older than others. The two texts are pre-Buddhist; they may be placed in the 7th to 6th centuries BCE, give or take a century or so.
- The three other early prose Upanisads—Taittiriya, Aitareya, and Kausitaki come next; all are probably pre-Buddhist and can be assigned to the 6th to 5th centuries BCE.
- The Kena is the oldest of the verse Upanisads followed by probably the Katha, Isa, Svetasvatara, and Mundaka. All these Upanisads were composed probably in the last few centuries BCE.
- The two late prose Upanisads, the Prasna and the Mandukya, cannot be much older than the beginning of the common era.

Stephen Phillips places the early Upanishads in the 800 to 300 BCE range. He summarizes the current Indological opinion to be that the Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Isha, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, and Prasna Upanishads are all pre-Buddhist and pre-Jain, while Svetasvatara and Mandukya overlap with the earliest Buddhist and Jain literature.

The later Upanishads numbering about 95, also called minor Upanishads, are dated from the late 1st-millennium BCE to mid 2nd-millennium CE. Gavin Flood dates many of the twenty Yoga Upanishads to be probably from the 100 BCE to 300 CE period. Patrick Olivelle and other scholars date seven of the twenty Sannyasa Upanishads to likely have been complete sometime between the last centuries of the 1st-millennium BCE to 300 CE. About half of the Sannyasa Upanishads were likely composed in 14th- to 15th-century CE.

Geography

The general area of the composition of the early Upanishads was northern India, the region bounded on the west by the upper Indus valley, on the east by lower Ganges region,

on the north by the Himalayan foothills, and on the south by the Vindhya mountain range. There is confidence about the early Upanishads being the product of the geographical center of ancient Brahmanism, comprising the regions of Kuru-Panchala and Kosala-Videha together with the areas immediately to the south and west of these. This region covers modern Bihar, Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, eastern Rajasthan, and northern Madhya Pradesh.

While significant attempts have been made recently to identify the exact locations of the individual Upanishads, the results are tentative. Witzel identifies the center of activity in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as the area of Videha, whose king, Janaka, features prominently in the Upanishad.

The Chandogya Upanishad was probably composed in a more western than eastern location in the Indian subcontinent, possibly somewhere in the western region of the Kuru-Panchala country. Compared to the Principal Upanishads, the new Upanishads recorded in the Muktikā belong to an entirely different region, probably southern India, and are considerably relatively recent. In the fourth chapter of the Kaushitaki Upanishad, a location named Kashi (modern Varanasi) is mentioned.

Classification

Muktika canon: major and minor Upanishads

There are more than 200 known *Upanishads*, one of which, *Muktikā* Upanishad, predates 1656 CE and contains a list of 108 canonical Upanishads, including itself as the last. The earliest ones such as the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads date to the early centuries of the 1st millennium BCE, and the latest to around the mid 2nd-millennium CE during a period of Islamic invasions and political instability. Various scholars include the earliest 10, 11, 12 or 13 *Upanishads* as Mukhya (major) or Principal Upanishads, all composed in the 1st-milliennium BCE. The remainder 95 to 98 are called "minor Upanishads", and were likely composed between the last centuries of the 1st-millennium BCE and about mid 2nd-millennium CE. These are further divided into Upanishads associated with Shaktism (goddess Shakti), Sannyasa (renunciation, monastic life), Shaivism (god Shiva), Vaishnavism (god Vishnu), Yoga, and *Sāmānya* (general, sometimes referred to as Samanya-Vedanta).

Some of the Upanishads are categorized as "sectarian" since they present their ideas through a particular god or goddess of a specific Hindu tradition such as Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, or a combination of these such as the Skanda Upanishad.

These traditions sought to link their texts as Vedic, by asserting their texts to be an Upanishad, thereby a *Śruti*. Most of these sectarian Upanishads, for example the Rudrahridaya Upanishad and the Mahanarayana Upanishad, assert that all the Hindu gods and goddesses are the same, all an aspect and manifestation of Brahman, the Vedic concept for metaphysical ultimate reality before and after the creation of the Universe.

Mukhya Upanishads

The *Mukhya Upanishads* can be grouped into periods. Of the early periods are the *Brihadaranyaka* and the *Chandogya*, the oldest.
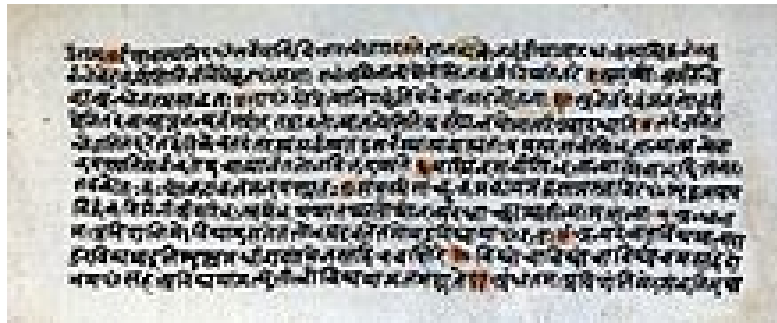
A page of Isha Upanishad manuscript

The Aitareya, Kauṣītaki and Taittirīya Upanishads may date to as early as the mid 1st millennium BCE, while the remnant date from between roughly the 4th to 1st centuries BCE, roughly contemporary with the earliest portions of the Sanskrit epics. One chronology assumes that the *Aitareya, Taittiriya, Kausitaki, Mundaka, Prasna*, and *Katha Upanishads* has Buddha's influence, and is consequently placed after the 5th century BCE, while another proposal questions this assumption and dates it independent of Buddha's date of birth. After these Principal Upanishads are typically placed the *Kena, Mandukya* and *Isa Upanishads*, but other scholars date these differently. Not much is known about the authors except for those, like Yajnavalkayva and Uddalaka, mentioned in the texts. A few women discussants, such as Gargi and Maitreyi, the wife of Yajnavalkayva, also feature occasionally.

Each of the principal *Upanishads* can be associated with one of the schools of exegesis of the four Vedas (*shakhas*). Many Shakhas are said to have existed, of which only a few remain. The new *Upanishads* often have little relation to the Vedic corpus and have not been cited or commented upon by any great Vedanta philosopher: their language differs from that of the classic *Upanishads*, being less subtle and more formalized. As a result, they are not difficult to comprehend for the modern reader.

Veda-Shakha-Upanishad association			
Veda	**Recension**	**Shakha**	**Principal Upanishad**
Rig Veda	Only one recension	Shakala	Aitareya
Sama Veda	Only one recension	Kauthuma	Chāndogya
		Jaiminiya	Kena
		Ranayaniya	
Yajur Veda	Krishna Yajur Veda	Katha	Kaṭha
		Taittiriya	Taittirīya and Śvetāśvatara
		Maitrayani	Maitrāyaṇi
		Hiranyakeshi (Kapishthala)	

		Kathaka	
	Shukla Yajur Veda	Vajasaneyi Madhyandina	Isha and Bṛhadāraṇyaka
		Kanva Shakha	
Atharva	Two recensions	Shaunaka	Māṇḍūkya and Muṇḍaka
		Paippalada	Prashna Upanishad

The Kauśītāki and Maitrāyaṇi Upanishads are sometimes added to the list of the mukhya Upanishads.

New Upanishads

There is no fixed list of the *Upanishads* as newer ones, beyond the Muktika anthology of 108 Upanishads, have continued to be discovered and composed. In 1908, for example, four previously unknown Upanishads were discovered in newly found manuscripts, and these were named *Bashkala*, *Chhagaleya*, *Arsheya*, and *Saunaka*, by Friedrich Schrader, who attributed them to the first prose period of the Upanishads. The text of three of them, namely the *Chhagaleya*, *Arsheya*, and *Saunaka*, were incomplete and inconsistent, likely poorly maintained or corrupted.

Ancient Upanishads have long enjoyed a revered position in Hindu traditions, and authors of numerous sectarian texts have tried to benefit from this reputation by naming their texts as Upanishads. These "new Upanishads" number in the hundreds, cover diverse range of topics from physiology to renunciation to sectarian theories. They were composed between the last centuries of the 1st millennium BCE through the early modern era (~1600 CE). While over two dozen of the minor Upanishads are dated to pre-3rd century CE, many of these new texts under the title of "Upanishads" originated in the first half of the 2nd millennium CE, they are not Vedic texts, and some do not deal with themes found in the Vedic Upanishads.

The main Shakta Upanishads, for example, mostly discuss doctrinal and interpretative differences between the two principal sects of a major Tantric form of Shaktism called Shri Vidya upasana. The many extant lists of authentic *Shakta Upaniṣads* vary, reflecting the sect of their compilers, so that they yield no evidence of their "location" in Tantric tradition, impeding correct interpretation. The Tantra content of these texts also weaken its identity as an Upaniṣad for non-Tantrikas. Sectarian texts such as these do not enjoy status as shruti and thus the authority of the new Upanishads as scripture is not accepted in Hinduism.

Association with Vedas

All Upanishads are associated with one of the four Vedas—Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda (there are two primary versions or *Samhitas* of the Yajurveda: Shukla Yajurveda, Krishna Yajurveda), and Atharvaveda. During the modern era, the ancient Upanishads that were embedded texts in the Vedas, were detached from the Brahmana and Aranyaka layers of Vedic text, compiled into separate texts and these were then gathered into anthologies of

Upanishads. These lists associated each Upanishad with one of the four Vedas, many such lists exist, and these lists are inconsistent across India in terms of which Upanishads are included and how the newer Upanishads are assigned to the ancient Vedas. In south India, the collected list based on Muktika Upanishad, and published in Telugu language, became the most common by the 19th-century and this is a list of 108 Upanishads. In north India, a list of 52 Upanishads has been most common.

The Muktikā Upanishad's list of 108 Upanishads groups the first 13 as *mukhya*, 21 as Sāmānya Vedānta, 20 as Sannyāsa, 14 as Vaishnava, 12 as Shaiva, 8 as Shakta, and 20 as Yoga. The 108 Upanishads as recorded in the Muktikā are shown in the table below. The mukhya Upanishads are the most important and highlighted.

Veda-Upanishad association								
Veda	Num ber	Mukhya	Sāmāny a	Sannyāsa	Śākta	Vaiṣṇava	Śaiva	Yoga
Ṛigveda	10	Aitareya, Kauśītāki	Ātmabod ha, Mudgala	Nirvāṇa	Tripura, Saubhāg ya-lakshmi, Bahvṛca	-	Akṣamāli ka	Nādabindu
Samave da	16	Chāndogy a, Kena	Vajrasūc hi, Maha, Sāvitrī	Āruṇi, Maitreya, Brhat-Sannyāsa, Kuṇḍika (Laghu-Sannyāsa)	-	Vāsudeva, Avyakta	Rudrākṣa , Jābāli	Yogachūḍām aṇi, Darśana
Krishna Yajurve da	32	Taittiriya, Katha, Śvetāśvat ara, Maitrāyaṇ i	Sarvasār a, Śukaraha sya, Skanda, Garbha, Śārīraka, Ekākṣara , Akṣi	Brahma, (Laghu, Brhad) Avadhūta, Kaṭhasruti	Sarasvatī -rahasya	Nārāyaṇa, Kali-Saṇṭāraṇa	Kaivalya, Kālāgnir udra, Dakṣiṇā mūrti, Rudrahṛd aya, Pañcabra hma	Amṛtabindu, Tejobindu, Amṛtanāda, Kṣurika, Dhyānabind u, Brahmavidy ā, Yogatattva, Yogaśikhā, Yogakuṇḍali ni, Varāha
Shukla Yajurve da	19	Bṛhadāraṇ yaka, Īśa	Subala, Mantrika , Niralamb a, Paingala, Adhyatm a,	Jābāla, Paramahaṃ sa, Bhikṣuka, Turīyātītava dhuta, Yājñavalkya ,	-	Tārasāra	-	Advayatāra ka, Haṃsa, Triśikhi, Maṇḍalabrā hmaṇa

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Atharva veda	31	Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Praśna	Muktika	Śāṭyāyaniya				
			Ātmā, Sūrya, Prāṇāgnihotra	Āśrama, Nārada-parivrājaka, Paramahaṃsa parivrājaka, Parabrahma	Sītā, Devī, Tripurātapini, Bhāvana	Nṛsiṃhatāpanī, Mahānārāyaṇa (Tripād vibhuti), Rāmarahasya, Rāmatāpaṇi, Gopālatāpani, Kṛṣṇa, Hayagrīva, Dattātreya, Gāruḍa	Atharvasiras, Atharvaśikha, Bṛhajjābāla, Śarabha, Bhasma, Gaṇapati	Śāṇḍilya, Pāśupata, Mahāvākya
Total Upanishads	108	13	21	19	8	14	13	20

Philosophy

The Upanishadic age was characterized by a pluralism of worldviews. While some Upanishads have been deemed 'monistic', others, including the Katha Upanishad, are dualistic. The Maitri is one of the Upanishads that inclines more toward dualism, thus grounding classical Samkhya and Yoga schools of Hinduism, in contrast to the non-dualistic Upanishads at the foundation of its Vedanta school. They contain a plurality of ideas.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan states that the Upanishads have dominated Indian philosophy, religion and life ever since their appearance. The Upanishads are respected not because they are considered revealed (*Shruti*), but because they present spiritual ideas that are inspiring. The Upanishads are treatises on Brahman-knowledge, that is knowledge of Ultimate Hidden Reality, and their presentation of philosophy presumes, "it is by a strictly personal effort that one can reach the truth". In the Upanishads, states Radhakrishnan, knowledge is a means to freedom, and philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom by a way of life. The Upanishads include sections on philosophical theories that have been at the foundation of Indian traditions. For example, the Chandogya Upanishad includes one of the earliest known declaration of Ahimsa (non-violence) as an ethical precept. Discussion of other ethical premises such as Damah (temperance, self-restraint), Satya (truthfulness), Dāna (charity), Ārjava (non-hypocrisy), Daya (compassion) and others are found in the oldest Upanishads and many later Upanishads. Similarly, the Karma doctrine is presented in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which is the oldest Upanishad.

Development of thought

While the hymns of the Vedas emphasize rituals and the Brahmanas serve as a liturgical manual for those Vedic rituals, the spirit of the Upanishads is inherently opposed to ritual. The older Upanishads launch attacks of increasing intensity on the ritual. Anyone who worships a divinity other than the self is called a domestic animal of the gods in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The Chāndogya Upanishad parodies those who indulge in the acts of sacrifice by comparing them with a procession of dogs chanting *Om! Let's eat. Om! Let's drink.*

The Kaushitaki Upanishad asserts that "external rituals such as Agnihotram offered in the morning and in the evening, must be replaced with inner Agnihotram, the ritual of introspection", and that "not rituals, but knowledge should be one's pursuit". The Mundaka Upanishad declares how man has been called upon, promised benefits for, scared unto and misled into performing sacrifices, oblations and pious works. Mundaka thereafter asserts this is foolish and frail, by those who encourage it and those who follow it, because it makes no difference to man's current life and after-life, it is like blind men leading the blind, it is a mark of conceit and vain knowledge, ignorant inertia like that of children, a futile useless practice. The Maitri Upanishad states,

The performance of all the sacrifices, described in the Maitrayana-Brahmana, is to lead up in the end to a knowledge of Brahman, to prepare a man for meditation. Therefore, let such man, after he has laid those fires, meditate on the Self, to become complete and perfect.

—Maitri Upanishad

The opposition to the ritual is not explicit in the oldest Upanishads. On occasions, the Upanishads extend the task of the Aranyakas by making the ritual allegorical and giving it a philosophical meaning. For example, the Brihadaranyaka interprets the practice of horse-sacrifice or *ashvamedha* allegorically. It states that the over-lordship of the earth may be acquired by sacrificing a horse. It then goes on to say that spiritual autonomy can only be achieved by renouncing the universe which is conceived in the image of a horse.

In similar fashion, Vedic gods such as the *Agni*, *Aditya*, *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Visnu*, *Brahma*, and others become equated in the Upanishads to the supreme, immortal, and incorporeal Brahman-Atman of the Upanishads, god becomes synonymous with self, and is declared to be everywhere, inmost being of each human being and within every living creature. The one reality or *ekam sat* of the Vedas becomes the *ekam eva advitiyam* or "the one and only and sans a second" in the Upanishads. Brahman-Atman and self-realization develops, in the Upanishad, as the means to moksha (liberation; freedom in this life or after-life).

According to Jayatilleke, the thinkers of Upanishadic texts can be grouped into two categories. One group, which includes early Upanishads along with some middle and late Upanishads, were composed by metaphysicians who used rational arguments and empirical experience to formulate their speculations and philosophical premises. The

second group includes many middle and later Upanishads, where their authors professed theories based on yoga and personal experiences. Yoga philosophy and practice, adds Jayatilleke, is "not entirely absent in the Early Upanishads". The development of thought in these Upanishadic theories contrasted with Buddhism, since the Upanishadic inquiry assumed there is a soul (Atman), while Buddhism assumed there is no soul (*Anatta*), states Jayatilleke.

Brahman and Atman

Two concepts that are of paramount importance in the Upanishads are *Brahman* and *Atman*. The Brahman is the ultimate reality and the Atman is individual self (soul). Brahman is the material, efficient, formal and final cause of all that exists. It is the pervasive, genderless, infinite, eternal truth and bliss which does not change, yet is the cause of all changes. Brahman is "the infinite source, fabric, core and destiny of all existence, both manifested and unmanifested, the formless infinite substratum and from which the universe has grown". Brahman in Hinduism, states Paul Deussen, as the "creative principle which lies realized in the whole world".

The word *Atman* means the inner self, the soul, the immortal spirit in an individual, and all living beings including animals and trees. Ātman is a central idea in all the Upanishads, and "Know your Ātman" their thematic focus. These texts state that the inmost core of every person is not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego, but *Atman* – "soul" or "self". Atman is the spiritual essence in all creatures, their real innermost essential being. It is eternal, it is ageless. Atman is that which one is at the deepest level of one's existence.

Atman is the predominantly discussed topic in the Upanishads, but they express two distinct, somewhat divergent themes. Some state that Brahman (Highest Reality, Universal Principle, Being-Consciousness-Bliss) is identical with *Atman*, while others state *Atman* is part of Brahman but not identical. This ancient debate flowered into various dual, non-dual theories in Hinduism. The Brahmasutra by Badarayana (~ 100 BCE) synthesized and unified these somewhat conflicting theories, stating that Atman and Brahman are different in some respects particularly during the state of ignorance, but at the deepest level and in the state of self-realization, Atman and Brahman are identical, non-different.

The idea put forth by the Upanishadic seers that Atman and Brahman are one and the same is one of the greatest contributions made to the thought of the world.

Reality and Maya

Two different types of the non-dual Brahman-Atman are presented in the Upanishads, according to Mahadevan. The one in which the non-dual Brahman-Atman is the all inclusive ground of the universe and another in which empirical, changing reality is an appearance (Maya).

The Upanishads describe the universe, and the human experience, as an interplay of Purusha (the eternal, unchanging principles, consciousness) and Prakṛti (the temporary, changing material world, nature). The former manifests itself as Ātman (soul, self), and the latter as Māyā. The Upanishads refer to the knowledge of *Atman* as "true knowledge" (*Vidya*), and the knowledge of *Maya* as "not true knowledge" (*Avidya*, Nescience, lack of awareness, lack of true knowledge).

Hendrick Vroom explains, "the term *Maya* [in the Upanishads] has been translated as 'illusion,' but then it does not concern normal illusion. Here 'illusion' does not mean that the world is not real and simply a figment of the human imagination. *Maya* means that the world is not as it seems; the world that one experiences is misleading as far as its true nature is concerned." According to Wendy Doniger, "to say that the universe is an illusion (māyā) is not to say that it is unreal; it is to say, instead, that it is not what it seems to be, that it is something constantly being made. Māyā not only deceives people about the things they think they know; more basically, it limits their knowledge."

In the Upanishads, Māyā is the perceived changing reality and it co-exists with Brahman which is the hidden true reality. *Maya*, or "illusion", is an important idea in the Upanishads, because the texts assert that in the human pursuit of blissful and liberating self-knowledge, it is *Maya* which obscures, confuses and distracts an individual.

Schools of Vedanta

Adi Shankara, expounder of Advaita Vedanta and commentator (bhashya) on the Upanishads

The Upanishads form one of the three main sources for all schools of Vedanta, together with the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutras. Due to the wide variety of philosophical teachings contained in the Upanishads, various interpretations could be grounded on the Upanishads. The schools of Vedānta seek to answer questions about the relation between atman and Brahman, and the relation between Brahman and the world. The schools of Vedanta are named after the relation they see between atman and Brahman:

- According to Advaita Vedanta, there is no difference.
- According to Vishishtadvaita the jīvātman is a part of Brahman, and hence is similar, but not identical.
- According to Dvaita, all individual souls (jīvātmans) and matter as eternal and mutually separate entities.

Other schools of Vedanta include Nimbarka's *Dvaitadvaita*, Vallabha's *Suddhadvaita* and Chaitanya's *Acintya Bhedabheda*. The philosopher Adi Sankara has provided commentaries on 11 mukhya Upanishads.

Advaita Vedanta

Advaita literally means non-duality, and it is a monistic system of thought. It deals with the non-dual nature of Brahman and Atman. Advaita is considered the most influential sub-school of the *Vedanta* school of Hindu philosophy. Gaudapada was the first person to expound the basic principles of the Advaita philosophy in a commentary on the conflicting statements of the Upanishads. Gaudapada's Advaita ideas were further developed by Shankara (8th century CE). King states that Gaudapada's main work, Māṇḍukya Kārikā, is infused with philosophical terminology of Buddhism, and uses Buddhist arguments and analogies. King also suggests that there are clear differences between Shankara's writings and the *Brahmasutra*, and many ideas of Shankara are at odds with those in the Upanishads. Radhakrishnan, on the other hand, suggests that Shankara's views of Advaita were straightforward developments of the Upanishads and the *Brahmasutra*, and many ideas of Shankara derive from the Upanishads.

Shankara in his discussions of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy referred to the early Upanishads to explain the key difference between Hinduism and Buddhism, stating that Hinduism asserts that Atman (soul, self) exists, whereas Buddhism asserts that there is no soul, no self.

The Upanishads contain four sentences, the Mahāvākyas (Great Sayings), which were used by Shankara to establish the identity of Atman and Brahman as scriptural truth:

- "Prajñānam brahma" - "Consciousness is Brahman" (Aitareya Upanishad)
- "Aham brahmāsmi" - "I am Brahman" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)
- "Tat tvam asi" - "That Thou art" (Chandogya Upanishad)
- "Ayamātmā brahma" - "This Atman is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad)

Although there are a wide variety of philosophical positions propounded in the Upanishads, commentators since Adi Shankara have usually followed him in seeing idealist monism as the dominant force.

Vishishtadvaita

The second school of Vedanta is the Vishishtadvaita, which was founded by Ramanuja (1017–1137 CE). Ramanuja disagreed with Adi Shankara and the Advaita school.

Visistadvaita is a synthetic philosophy bridging the monistic Advaita and theistic Dvaita systems of Vedanta. Ramanuja frequently cited the Upanishads, and stated that Vishishtadvaita is grounded in the Upanishads.

Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita interpretation of the Upanishad is a qualified monism. Ramanuja interprets the Upanishadic literature to be teaching a body-soul theory, states Jeaneane Fowler – a professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, where the Brahman is the dweller in all things, yet also distinct and beyond all things, as the soul, the inner controller, the immortal. The Upanishads, according to the Vishishtadvaita school, teach individual souls to be of the same quality as the Brahman, but quantitatively they are distinct.

In the Vishishtadvaita school, the Upanishads are interpreted to be teaching a Ishwar (Vishnu), which is the seat of all auspicious qualities, with all of the empirically perceived world as the body of God who dwells in everything. The school recommends a devotion to godliness and constant remembrance of the beauty and love of personal god. This ultimately leads one to the oneness with abstract Brahman. The Brahman in the Upanishads is a living reality, states Fowler, and "the Atman of all things and all beings" in Ramanuja's interpretation.

Dvaita

The third school of Vedanta called the Dvaita school was founded by Madhvacharya (1199–1278 CE). It is regarded as a strongly theistic philosophic exposition of Upanishads. Madhvacharya, much like Adi Shankara claims for Advaita, and Ramanuja claims for Vishishtadvaita, states that his theistic Dvaita Vedanta is grounded in the Upanishads.

According to the Dvaita school, states Fowler, the "Upanishads that speak of the soul as Brahman, speak of resemblance and not identity". Madhvacharya interprets the Upanishadic teachings of the self becoming one with Brahman, as "entering into Brahman", just like a drop enters an ocean. This to the Dvaita school implies duality and dependence, where Brahman and Atman are different realities. Brahman is a separate, independent and supreme reality in the Upanishads, Atman only resembles the Brahman in limited, inferior, dependent manner according to Madhvacharya.

Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita school and Shankara's Advaita school are both nondualism Vedanta schools, both are premised on the assumption that all souls can hope for and achieve the state of blissful liberation; in contrast, Madhvacharya believed that some souls are eternally doomed and damned.

Similarities with Platonic thought

Several scholars have recognised parallels between the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato and that of the Upanishads, including their ideas on sources of knowledge, concept of justice and path to salvation, and Plato's allegory of the cave. Platonic psychology with

its divisions of reason, spirit and appetite, also bears resemblance to the three *gunas* in the Indian philosophy of Samkhya.

Various mechanisms for such a transmission of knowledge have been conjectured including Pythagoras traveling as far as India; Indian philosophers visiting Athens and meeting Socrates; Plato encountering the ideas when in exile in Syracuse; or, intermediated through Persia.

However other scholars, such as Arthur Berriedale Keith, J. Burnet and A.R. Wadia, believe that the two systems developed independently. They note that there is no historical evidence of the philosophers of the two schools meeting, and point out significant differences in the stage of development, orientation and goals of the two philosophical systems.

Wadia writes that Plato's metaphysics were rooted in *this* life and his primary aim was to develop an ideal state. In contrast, Upanishadic focus was the individual, the self (atman, soul), self-knowledge, and the means of an individual's moksha (freedom, liberation in this life or after-life).

Translations

The Upanishads have been translated into various languages including Persian, Italian, Urdu, French, Latin, German, English, Dutch, Polish, Japanese, Spanish and Russian. The Moghul Emperor Akbar's reign (1556–1586) saw the first translations of the Upanishads into Persian. His great-grandson, Sultan Mohammed Dara Shikoh, produced a collection called *Oupanekhat* in 1656, wherein 50 Upanishads were translated from Sanskrit into Persian.

Anquetil Duperron, a French Orientalist received a manuscript of the *Oupanekhat* and translated the Persian version into French and Latin, publishing the Latin translation in two volumes in 1801–1802 as *Oupneck'hat*. The French translation was never published. The Latin version was the initial introduction of Upanishadic thought to Western scholars. However, according to Deussen, the Persian translators took great liberties in translating the text and at times changed the meaning.

The first Sanskrit to English translation of the Aitareya Upanishad was made by Colebrooke, in 1805 and the first English translation of the Kena Upanishad was made by Rammohun Roy in 1816.

The first German translation appeared in 1832 and Roer's English version appeared in 1853. However, Max Mueller's 1879 and 1884 editions were the first systematic English treatment to include the 12 Principal Upanishads. Other major translations of the Upanishads have been by Robert Ernest Hume (13 Principal Upanishads), Paul Deussen (60 Upanishads), Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (18 Upanishads), and Patrick Olivelle (32 Upanishads in two books).

Reception in the West
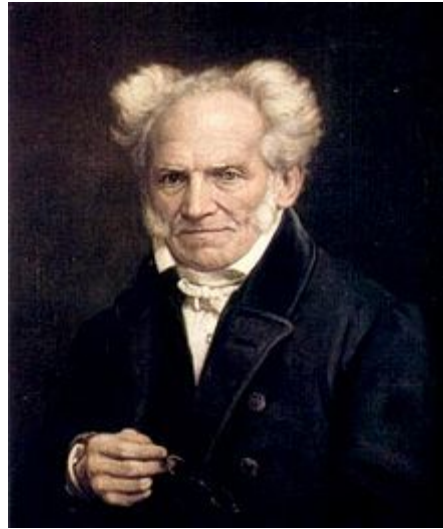
German 19th century philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, impressed by the Upanishads, called the texts "the production of the highest human wisdom".

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer read the Latin translation and praised the Upanishads in his main work, *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), as well as in his *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851). He found his own philosophy was in accord with the Upanishads, which taught that the individual is a manifestation of the one basis of reality. For Schopenhauer, that fundamentally real underlying unity is what we know in ourselves as "will". Schopenhauer used to keep a copy of the Latin *Oupnekhet* by his side and commented,

It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.

Another German philosopher, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, praised the ideas in the Upanishads, as did others. In the United States, the group known as the Transcendentalists were influenced by the German idealists. Americans, such as Emerson and Thoreau embraced Schelling's interpretation of Kant's Transcendental idealism, as well as his celebration of the romantic, exotic, mystical aspect of the Upanishads. As a result of the influence of these writers, the Upanishads gained renown in Western countries.

The poet T. S. Eliot, inspired by his reading of the Upanishads, based the final portion of his famous poem *The Waste Land* (1922) upon one of its verses. According to Eknath Easwaran, the Upanishads are snapshots of towering peaks of consciousness.

Juan Mascaró, a professor at the University of Barcelona and a translator of the Upanishads, states that the Upanishads represents for the Hindu approximately what the New Testament represents for the Christian, and that the message of the Upanishads can be summarized in the words, "the kingdom of God is within you".

Paul Deussen in his review of the Upanishads, states that the texts emphasize Brahman-Atman as something that can experienced, but not defined. This view of the soul and self are similar, states Deussen, to those found in the dialogues of Plato and elsewhere. The Upanishads insisted on oneness of soul, excluded all plurality, and therefore, all proximity in space, all succession in time, all interdependence as cause and effect, and all opposition as subject and object. Max Muller, in his review of the Upanishads, summarizes the lack of systematic philosophy and the central theme in the Upanishads as follows,

There is not what could be called a philosophical system in these Upanishads. They are, in the true sense of the word, guesses at truth, frequently contradicting each other, yet all tending in one direction. The key-note of the old Upanishads is "know thyself," but with a much deeper meaning than that of the *γνῶθι σεαυτόν* of the Delphic Oracle. The "know thyself" of the Upanishads means, know thy true self, that which underlines thine Ego, and find it and know it in the highest, the eternal Self, the One without a second, which underlies the whole world.

— Max Muller

Chapter 26
HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Hindu philosophy refers to a group of *darśanas* (philosophies, world views, teachings) that emerged in ancient India. The mainstream ancient Indian philosophy includes six systems (*ṣaḍdarśana*) – Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta. These are also called the Astika (orthodox) philosophical traditions and are those that accept the Vedas as authoritative, important source of knowledge. Ancient and medieval India was also the source of philosophies that share philosophical concepts but rejected the Vedas, and these have been called *nāstika* (heterodox or non-orthodox) Indian philosophies. Nāstika Indian philosophies include Buddhism, Jainism, Cārvāka, Ājīvika, and others.

Scholars have debated the relationship and differences within āstika philosophies and with nāstika philosophies, starting with the writings of Indologists and Orientalists of the 18th and 19th centuries, which were themselves derived from limited availability of Indian literature and medieval doxographies. The various sibling traditions included in Hindu philosophies are diverse, and they are united by shared history and concepts, same textual resources, similar ontological and soteriological focus, and cosmology. While Buddhism and Jainism are considered distinct philosophies and religions, some heterodox traditions such as Cārvāka are often considered as distinct schools within Hindu philosophy.

Hindu philosophy also includes several sub-schools of theistic philosophies that integrate ideas from two or more of the six orthodox philosophies, such as the realism of the Nyāya, the naturalism of the Vaiśeṣika, the dualism of the Sāṅkhya, the monism and knowledge of Self as essential to liberation of Advaita, the self-discipline of yoga and the asceticism and elements of theistic ideas. Examples of such schools include Pāśupata Śaiva, Śaiva siddhānta, Pratyabhijña, Raseśvara and Vaiṣṇava. Some sub-schools share Tantric ideas with those found in some Buddhist traditions. The ideas of these sub-schools are found in the Puranas and Āgamas.

Each school of Hindu philosophy has extensive epistemological literature called *pramāṇaśāstras*, as well as theories on metaphysics, axiology and other topics.

Classifications

In the history of Hinduism, the six orthodox schools had emerged by sometime between the start of the Common Era and the Gupta Empire, or about the fourth century. Some scholars have questioned whether the orthodox and heterodox schools classification is sufficient or accurate, given the diversity and evolution of views within each major school of Hindu philosophy, with some sub-schools combining heterodox and orthodox views.

Since medieval times Indian philosophy has been categorized into *āstika* and *nāstika* schools of thought. The orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy have been called

ṣaḍdarśana ("six systems"). This schema was created between the 12th and 16th centuries by Vedantins.[:2–3] It was then adopted by the early Western Indologists, and pervades modern understandings of Hindu philosophy.

Āstika

There are six āstika (orthodox) schools of thought. Each is called a darśana, and each darśana accepts the Vedas as authoritative and the premise that *ātman* (soul, eternal self) exists. The āstika schools are:

1. Samkhya, an atheistic and strongly dualist theoretical exposition of consciousness and matter.
2. Yoga, a school emphasising meditation, contemplation and liberation.
3. Nyāya or logic, which explores sources of knowledge. *Nyāya Sūtras*.
4. Vaiśeṣika, an empiricist school of atomism.
5. Mīmāṃsā, an anti-ascetic and anti-mysticist school of orthopraxy.
6. Vedānta, the last segment of knowledge in the Vedas, or *jñānakāṇḍa*. Vedānta came to be the dominant current of Hinduism in the post-medieval period.

Nāstika

Schools that do not accept the authority of the Vedas are nāstika philosophies, of which four nāstika (heterodox) schools are prominent:

1. Cārvāka, a materialism school that accepted the existence of free will.
2. Ājīvika, a materialism school that denied the existence of free will.
3. Buddhism, a philosophy that denies existence of ātman (soul, self) and is based on the teachings and enlightenment of Gautama Buddha.
4. Jainism, a philosophy that accepts the existence of the ātman (soul, self), and is based on the teachings and enlightenment of twenty-four teachers known as tirthankaras, with Rishabha as the first and Mahavira as the twenty-fourth.

Other schools

Besides the major orthodox and non-orthodox schools, there have existed syncretic sub-schools that have combined ideas and introduced new ones of their own. The medieval scholar Madhva Acharya (CE 1238–1317) includes the following, along with Buddhism and Jainism, as sub-schools of Hindu philosophy:

- Pashupata Shaivism, developed by Nakulisa
- Shaiva Siddhanta, the theistic Sankhya school
- Pratyabhijña, the recognitive school of Kashmir Shaivism
- Raseśvara, a Shaiva school that advocated the use of mercury to reach immortality
- The Ramanuja school
- The Pūrṇaprājña (Madhvācārya) school
- The Pāṇinīya

The above sub-schools introduced their own ideas while adopting concepts from orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy such as realism of the Nyāya, naturalism of Vaiśeṣika, monism and knowledge of Self (Atman) as essential to liberation of Advaita, self-discipline of Yoga, asceticism and elements of theistic ideas. Some sub-schools share Tantric ideas with those found in some Buddhist traditions.

Characteristics

School	Samkhya	Yoga	Nyāya	Vaiśeṣika	Mīmāṃsā	Advaita	Vishishtadvaita	Dvaita	Achintya Bheda Abheda	Pashupata	Shaiva Siddhanta	Kashmir Shaivism	Raseśvara	Pāṇini Darśana
Classification	rationalism, dualism, atheism	dualism, spiritual practice	realism, logic, analytic philosophy	naturalism, atomism	exegesis, philology, ritualism	monism, non-dualism	qualified monism, panentheism	dualism, theology	simultaneous monism and dualism	theism, spiritual practice	Monotheism	theistic monism, idealism	alchemy	linguistics, philosophy of language
Philosophers	Kapila, Iśvarakṛṣṇa, Vācaspati Miśra, Guṇaratna more..	Patañjali, Yajnavalkya, Vyasa[N 2]	Aksapada Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Udayana, Jayanta Bhatta more..	Kanada, Praśastapāda, Śridhara's Nyāyakandalī more..	Jaimini, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara more..	Gaudapada, Adi Shankara, Madhusudana Saraswati, Vidyaranya more..	Yamunacharya, Ramanuja more..	Madhvacharya, Jayatirtha, Vyasatirtha, Raghavendra Swami	Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Six Goswamis of Vrindavana, Visvanatha Chakravarti, Krishnadasa Kaviraja, Baladeva Vidyabhushana, Rupa Goswami, more..	Haradattacharya, Lakulish	Tirumular, Meikandadevar, Appayya Dikshita, Sadyojyoti, Aghorasiva	Vasugupta, Abhinavagupta, Jayaratha	Govinda Bhagavat, Sarvajña Rāmeśvara	Pāṇini, Bhartrhari, Kātyāyana

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School	Samkhya	Yoga	Nyaya	Vaiśeṣika	Mīmāṃsā	Advaita	Vishishtadvaita	Dvaita	Achintya Bheda Abheda	Pashupata	Shaiva Siddhanta	Kashmir Shaivism	Raseśvara	Pāṇini Darśana
Texts	Samkhyapravachana Sutra, Samkhyakarika, Sāṃkhya tattvakaumudī more..	Yoga Sutras, Yoga Yajnavalkya, Samkhyapravacana bhasya	Nyāya Sūtras, Nyāya Bhāṣya, Nyāya Vārttika more..	Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, Padārtha dharma saṁgraha, Daśapadārtha śāstra more..	Purva Mimamsa Sutras, Mimamsasutra bhāshyam more..	Brahma Sutras, Prasthanatrayi, Avadhuta Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Pañcadaśī more..	Siddhi trayam, Sri Bhasya, Vedartha Sangraha	AnuVyakhana, Brahma Sutra Bahshya, Sarva Shāstrārtha Sangraha, Tattva prakashika, Nyaya Sudha, Nyayamruta, Tarka Tandava, Dwaita Dyumani	Bhagavata Purana, Bhagavad Gita, Sat Sandarbhas, Govinda Bhashya, Chaitanya Charitamrita,	Gaṇakārikā, Pañchārtha bhāshyadipikā, Rāśikara bhāshya	Sivagamas, Tirumurais, Meikanda Sastras	Shiva Sutras of Vasugupta, Tantraloka	Rasārṇava, Rasahṛidaya, Raseśvara siddhānta	Vākyapadīya, Mahabhashya, Vārttikakāra
Concepts Originated	Purusha, Prakṛti, Guṇa, Satkāryavāda	Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhāraṇā, Dhyana, Samadhi	Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, Upamāna, Anyathakyati vada, Niḥśreyasa more..	Padārtha, Dravya, Sāmānya, Viśeṣa, Samavāya, Paramāṇu	Apauruṣeyātva, Arthāpatti, Anuapalabdhi, Satah prāmāṇyavāda	Jivanmukta, Mahāvākyas, Sādhana Chatuṣṭaya, three orders of reality, Vivartavada	Hita, Antarvyāpi, Bahuvyāpi more..	Prapacha, Mukti-yogyas, Nitya-samsarins, Tamo-yogyas	Sambandha, Abhidheya, Prayojana (Relationship, Process, Ultimate Goal)	Pashupati, eight pentads	Charya, Mantramārga, Rodha Śakti	Citi, Mala, Upaya, Anuttara, Aham, Svatantrya	Pārada, three modes of mercury	Sphoṭa, Ashtadhyayi

1. Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita have evolved from an older Vedanta school and all of them accept Upanishads and Brahma Sutras as standard texts.

2. Vyasa wrote a commentary on the Yoga Sutras called Samkhyapravacanabhasya. (Radhankrishnan, Indian Philosophy, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971 edition, Volume II, p. 344.)

Overview

Epistemology

Epistemology is called pramāṇa. It has been a key, much debated field of study in Hinduism since ancient times. Pramāṇa is a Hindu theory of knowledge and discusses means by which human beings gain accurate knowledge. The focus of pramāṇa is how correct knowledge can be acquired, how one knows, how one doesn't, and to what extent knowledge pertinent about someone or something can be acquired.

Ancient and medieval Hindu texts identify six pramāṇas as correct means of accurate knowledge and truths: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference), *upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy), *arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), *anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and *śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts) Each of these are further categorized in terms of conditionality, completeness, confidence and possibility of error, by the different schools. The schools vary on how many of these six are valid paths of knowledge. For example, the Cārvāka nāstika philosophy holds that only one (perception) is an epistemically reliable means of knowledge, the Samkhya school holds that three are (perception, inference and testimony), while the Mīmāṃsā and Advaita schools hold that all six are epistemically useful and reliable means to knowledge.

Sāmkhya

Samkhya is the oldest of the orthodox philosophical systems in Hinduism, with origins in the 1st millennium BCE. It is a rationalist school of Indian philosophy, and had a strong influence on other schools of Indian philosophies. Sāmkhya is an enumerationist philosophy whose epistemology accepted three of six *pramāṇas* as the only reliable means of gaining knowledge. These were *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference) and *sabda* (*Āptavacana*, word/testimony of reliable sources).

Samkhya school espouses dualism between consciousness and matter. It regards the universe as consisting of two realities: *Puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakriti* (matter). *Jiva* (a living being) is that state in which *puruṣa* is bonded to *prakriti* in some form. This fusion, state the Samkhya scholars, led to the emergence of *buddhi* (awareness, intellect) and *ahankara* (individualized ego consciousness, "I-maker"). The universe is described by this school as one created by Purusa-Prakriti entities infused with various permutations and combinations of variously enumerated elements, senses, feelings, activity and mind.

Samkhya philosophy includes a theory of gunas (qualities, innate tendencies, psyche). Guna, it states, are of three types: *Sattva* being good, compassionate, illuminating, positive, and constructive; *Rajas* guna is one of activity, chaotic, passion, impulsive, potentially good or bad; and *Tamas* being the quality of darkness, ignorance, destructive, lethargic, negative. Everything, all life forms and human beings, state Samkhya scholars, have these three *gunas*, but in different proportions. The interplay of these *gunas* defines the character of someone or something, of nature and determines the progress of life. Samkhya theorises a pluralism of souls (*Jeevatmas*) who possess consciousness, but denies the existence of Ishvara (God). Classical Samkhya is considered an atheist or non-theistic Hindu philosophy.

The *Samkhya karika*, one of the key texts of this school of Hindu philosophy, opens by stating its goal to be "three kinds of human suffering" and means to prevent them. The text then presents a distillation of its theories on epistemology, metaphysics, axiology and soteriology. For example, it states,

From the triad of suffering, arises this inquiry into the means of preventing it. That is useless - if you say so, I say: No, because suffering is not absolute and final. – Verse 1. The Guṇas (qualities) respectively consist in pleasure, pain and dullness, are adapted to manifestation, activity and restraint; mutually domineer, rest on each other, produce each other, consort together, and are reciprocally present. – Verse 12 Goodness is considered to be alleviating and enlightening; foulness, urgent and persisting; darkness, heavy and enveloping. Like a lamp, they cooperate for a purpose by union of contraries. – Verse 13.

There is a general cause, which is diffuse. It operates by means of the three qualities, by mixture, by modification; for different objects are diversified by influence of the several qualities respectively. – Verse 16. Since the assemblage of perceivable objects is for use (by man); Since the converse of that which has the three qualities with other properties must exist (in man); Since there must be superintendence (within man); Since there must be some entity that enjoys (within man); Since there is a tendency to abstraction (in man), therefore soul is. – Verse 17

—*Samkhya Karika,*

The soteriology in Samkhya aims at the realization of Puruṣa as distinct from Prakriti; this knowledge of the Self is held to end transmigration and lead to absolute freedom (kaivalya).

Yoga

In Indian philosophy, Yoga is, among other things, the name of one of the six āstika philosophical schools. The Yoga philosophical system aligns closely with the dualist premises of the Samkhya school. The Yoga school accepts Samkhya psychology and metaphysics, but is considered theistic because it accepts the concept of personal god (Ishvara), unlike Samkhya. The epistemology of the Yoga school, like the Sāmkhya school,

relies on three of six prāmaṇas as the means of gaining reliable knowledge: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference) and *śabda* (*āptavacana*, word/testimony of reliable sources).

The universe is conceptualized as a duality in Yoga school: puruṣa (consciousness) and prakṛti (matter); however, the Yoga school discusses this concept more generically as "seer, experiencer" and "seen, experienced" than the Samkhya school.

A key text of the Yoga school is the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Patanjali may have been, as Max Müller explains, "the author or representative of the Yoga-philosophy without being necessarily the author of the Sutras." Hindu philosophy recognizes many types of Yoga, such as rāja yoga, jñāna yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, tantra yoga, mantra yoga, laya yoga, and hatha yoga. The Yoga school builds on the Samkhya school theory that jñāna (knowledge) is a sufficient means to moksha. It suggests that systematic techniques/practice (personal experimentation) combined with Samkhya's approach to knowledge is the path to moksha. Yoga shares several central ideas with Advaita Vedanta, with the difference that Yoga is a form of experimental mysticism while Advaita Vedanta is a form of monistic personalism. Like Advaita Vedanta, the Yoga school of Hindu philosophy holds that liberation/freedom in this life is achievable, and that this occurs when an individual fully understands and realizes the equivalence of Atman (soul, self) and Brahman.

Vaiśeṣika

The Vaiśeṣika philosophy is a naturalist school. It is a form of atomism in natural philosophy. It postulates that all objects in the physical universe are reducible to *paramāṇu* (atoms), and that one's experiences are derived from the interplay of substance (a function of atoms, their number and their spatial arrangements), quality, activity, commonness, particularity and inherence. Knowledge and liberation are achievable by complete understanding of the world of experience, according to Vaiśeṣika school. The Vaiśeṣika darśana is credited to Kaṇāda Kaśyapa from the second half of the first millennium BCE. The foundational text, the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, opens as follows: Dharma is that from which results the accomplishment of Exaltation and of the Supreme Good. The authoritativeness of the Veda arises from its being an exposition of *dharma*. The Supreme Good results from knowledge, produced from a particular *dharma*, of the essence of the Predicables, Substance, Attribute, Action, Genus, Species and Combination, by means of their resemblances and differences.

—Vaiśeṣika Sūtra 1.1.1-1.1.4,

The Vaiśeṣika school is related to the Nyāya school but features differences in its epistemology, metaphysics and ontology. The epistemology of the Vaiśeṣika school, like Buddhism, accepted only two means to knowledge as reliable – perception and inference. The Vaiśeṣika school and Buddhism both consider their respective scriptures as indisputable and valid means to knowledge, the difference being that the scriptures held to be a valid and reliable source by Vaiśeṣikas were the Vedas.

Vaiśeṣika metaphysical premises are founded on a form of atomism, that reality is composed of four substances (earth, water, air, and fire). Each of these four are of two types: atomic (paramāṇu) and composite. An atom is, according to Vaiśeṣika scholars, that which is indestructible (anitya), indivisible, and has a special kind of dimension, called "small" (aṇu). A composite, in this philosophy, is defined to be anything which is divisible into atoms. Whatever human beings perceive is composite, while atoms are invisible. The Vaiśeṣikas stated that size, form, truths and everything that human beings experience as a whole is a function of atoms, their number and their spatial arrangements, their guṇa (quality), *karma* (activity), *sāmānya* (commonness), *viśeṣa* (particularity) and *amavāya* (inherence, inseparable connectedness of everything).

Nyāya

The Nyāya school is a realist āstika philosophy. The school's most significant contributions to Indian philosophy were its systematic development of the theory of logic, methodology, and its treatises on epistemology. The foundational text of the Nyāya school is the *Nyāya Sūtras* of the first millennium BCE. It is credited to Aksapada Gautama and its composition is variously dated between the sixth and second centuries BCE.

Nyāya epistemology accepts four out of six *prāmaṇas* as reliable means of gaining knowledge – *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāṇa* (inference), *upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy) and *śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

In its metaphysics, the Nyāya school is closer to the Vaiśeṣika school than others. It holds that human suffering results from mistakes/defects produced by activity under wrong knowledge (notions and ignorance). Moksha (liberation), it states, is gained through right knowledge. This premise led Nyāya to concern itself with epistemology, that is the reliable means to gain correct knowledge and to remove wrong notions. False knowledge is not merely ignorance to Naiyayikas, it includes delusion. Correct knowledge is discovering and overcoming one's delusions, and understanding true nature of soul, self and reality. The Nyāya Sūtras begin:

Perception, Inference, Comparison and Word – these are the means of right knowledge. Perception is that knowledge which arises from the contact of a sense with its object and which is determinate, unnameable and non-erratic. Inference is knowledge which is preceded by perception, and is of three kinds: a priori, a posteriori, and commonly seen. Comparison is the knowledge of a thing through its similarity to another thing previously well known. Word is the instructive assertion of a reliable person. It [knowledge] is of two kinds: that which is seen, and that which is not seen.

Soul, body, senses, objects of senses, intellect, mind, activity, fault, transmigration, fruit, suffering and release – are the objects of right knowledge.

—*Nyāya Sūtras 1.1.3-1.1.9,*

Mīmāṃsā

The Mīmāṃsā school emphasized hermeneutics and exegesis. It is a form of philosophical realism. Key texts of the Mīmāṃsā school are the *Purva Mimamsa Sutras* of Jaimini. The classical Mīmāṃsā school is sometimes referred to as *pūrvamīmāṃsā* or *Karmamīmāṃsā* in reference to the first part of the Vedas.

The Mīmāṃsā school has several sub-schools defined by epistemology. The Prābhākara subschool of Mīmāṃsā accepted five means to gaining knowledge as epistimetically reliable: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison and analogy), *arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), and *śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts). The Kumārila Bhaṭṭa sub-school of Mīmāṃsā added a sixth way of knowing to its canon of reliable epistemology: *anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof).

The metaphysics of the Mīmāṃsā school consists of both atheistic and theistic doctrines, and the school showed little interest in systematic examination of the existence of God. Rather, it held that the soul is an eternal, omnipresent, inherently active spiritual essence, then focussed on the epistemology and metaphysics of *dharma*. To them, dharma meant rituals and duties, not devas (gods), because devas existed only in name. The Mīmāṃsakas held that the Vedas are "eternal authorless infallible", that Vedic *vidhi* (injunctions) and mantras in rituals are prescriptive *karya* (actions), and that the rituals are of primary importance and merit. They considered the Upanishads and other texts related to self-knowledge and spirituality to be of secondary importance, a philosophical view that the Vedanta school disagreed with.

Mīmāṃsā gave rise to the study of philology and the philosophy of language. While their deep analysis of language and linguistics influenced other schools, their views were not shared by others. Mīmāṃsakas considered the purpose and power of language was to clearly *prescribe* the proper, correct and right. In contrast, Vedantins extended the scope and value of language as a tool to also *describe*, *develop* and *derive*. Mīmāṃsakas considered orderly, law-driven, procedural life as the central purpose and noblest necessity of dharma and society, and divine (theistic) sustenance means to that end.

The Mimamsa school was influential and foundational to the Vedanta school, with the difference that Mīmāṃsā developed and emphasized *karmakāṇḍa* (the portion of the śruti which relates to ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites, the early parts of the Vedas), while the Vedanta school developed and emphasized *jñānakāṇḍa* (the portion of the Vedas which relates to knowledge of monism, the latter parts of the Vedas).

Vedānta

The Vedānta school built upon the teachings of the Upanishads and Brahma Sutras from the first millennium BCE and is the most developed and best-known of the Hindu schools. The epistemology of the Vedantins included, depending on the sub-school, five or six methods as proper and reliable means of gaining any form of knowledge: *pratyakṣa*

(perception), *anumāṇa* (inference), *upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy), *arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances), *anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and *śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts). Each of these have been further categorized in terms of conditionality, completeness, confidence and possibility of error, by each sub-school of Vedanta.

The emergence of Vedanta school represented a period when a more knowledge-centered understanding began to emerge. These focussed on *jnana* (knowledge) driven aspects of the Vedic religion and the Upanishads. This included metaphysical concepts such as ātman and Brahman, and an emphasis on meditation, self-discipline, self-knowledge and abstract spirituality, rather than ritualism. The Upanishads were variously interpreted by ancient- and medieval-era Vedanta scholars. Consequently, the Vedanta separated into many sub-schools, ranging from theistic dualism to non-theistic monism, each interpreting the texts in its own way and producing its own series of sub-commentaries.

Advaita

Advaita literally means "not two, sole, unity". It is a sub-school of Vedanta, and asserts spiritual and universal non-dualism. Its metaphysics is a form of absolute monism, that is all ultimate reality is interconnected oneness. This is the oldest and most widely acknowledged Vedantic school. The foundational texts of this school are the Brahma Sutras and the early Upanishads from the 1st millennium BCE. Its first great consolidator was the 8th century scholar Adi Shankara, who continued the line of thought of the Upanishadic teachers, and that of his teacher's teacher Gaudapada. He wrote extensive commentaries on the major Vedantic scriptures and is celebrated as one of the major Hindu philosophers from whose doctrines the main currents of modern Indian thought are derived.

According to this school of Vedanta, all reality is Brahman, and there exists nothing whatsoever which is not *Brahman*. Its metaphysics includes the concept of māyā and ātman. Māyā connotes "that which exists, but is constantly changing and thus is spiritually unreal". The empirical reality is considered as always changing and therefore "transitory, incomplete, misleading and not what it appears to be". The concept of ātman is of soul, self within each person, each living being. Advaita Vedantins assert that ātman is same as Brahman, and this Brahman is within each human being and all life, all living beings are spiritually interconnected, and there is oneness in all of existence. They hold that dualities and misunderstanding of *māyā* as the spiritual reality that matters is caused by ignorance, and are the cause of sorrow, suffering. Jīvanmukti (liberation during life) can be achieved through Self-knowledge, the understanding that ātman within is same as ātman in another person and all of Brahman – the eternal, unchanging, entirety of cosmic principles and true reality.

Viśiṣṭādvaita

Ramanuja (c. 1037–1137) was the foremost proponent of the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita or qualified non-dualism. Viśiṣṭādvaita advocated the concept of a Supreme Being with

essential qualities or attributes. Viśiṣṭādvaitins argued against the Advaitin conception of Brahman as an impersonal empty oneness. They saw Brahman as an eternal oneness, but also as the source of all creation, which was omnipresent and actively involved in existence. To them the sense of subject-object perception was illusory and a sign of ignorance. However, the individual's sense of self was not a complete illusion since it was derived from the universal beingness that is Brahman. Ramanuja saw Vishnu as a personification of Brahman.

Dvaita

Dvaita refers to a theistic sub-school in Vedanta tradition of Hindu philosophy. Also called as *Tattvavāda* and *Bimbapratibimbavāda*, the Dvaita sub-school was founded by the 13th-century scholar Madhvacharya. The Dvaita Vedanta school believes that God (Vishnu, supreme soul) and the individual souls (jīvātman) exist as independent realities, and these are distinct.

Dvaita Vedanta is a dualistic interpretation of the Vedas, espouses dualism by theorizing the existence of two separate realities. The first and the only independent reality, states the Dvaita school, is that of Vishnu or Brahman. Vishnu is the supreme Self, in a manner similar to monotheistic God in other major religions. The distinguishing factor of Dvaita philosophy, as opposed to monistic Advaita Vedanta, is that God takes on a personal role and is seen as a real eternal entity that governs and controls the universe. Like Vishishtadvaita Vedanta subschool, Dvaita philosophy also embraced Vaishnavism, with the metaphysical concept of Brahman in the Vedas identified with Vishnu and the one and only Supreme Being. However, unlike Vishishtadvaita which envisions ultimate qualified nondualism, the dualism of Dvaita was permanent.

Salvation, in Dvaita, is achievable only through the grace of God Vishnu.

Dvaitādvaita (Bhedabheda)

Dvaitādvaita was proposed by Nimbarka, a 13th-century Vaishnava Philosopher from the Andhra region. According to this philosophy there are three categories of existence: Brahman, soul, and matter. Soul and matter are different from Brahman in that they have attributes and capacities different from Brahman. Brahman exists independently, while soul and matter are dependent. Thus soul and matter have an existence that is separate yet dependent. Further, Brahman is a controller, the soul is the enjoyer, and matter the thing enjoyed. Also, the highest object of worship is Krishna and his consort Radha, attended by thousands of *gopis*; of the Vrindavan; and devotion consists in self-surrender.

Śuddhādvaita

Śuddhādvaita is the "purely non-dual" philosophy propounded by Vallabha Acharya (1479–1531). The founding philosopher was also the guru of the Vallabhā sampradāya ("tradition of Vallabh") or *Puṣṭimārga*, a Vaishnava tradition focused on the worship of

Krishna. Vallabhacharya enunciates that Brahman has created the world without connection with any external agency such as Māyā (which itself is His power) and manifests Himself through the world. That is why Shuddhadvaita is known as 'Unmodified transformation' or 'Avikṛta Pariṇāmavāda'. Brahman or Ishvara desired to become many, and he became the multitude of individual souls and the world. The Jagat or Maya is not false or illusionary, the physical material world is. Vallabha recognises Brahman as the whole and the individual as a 'part' (but devoid of bliss) like sparks and fire.

Acintya Bheda Abheda

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534), stated that the soul or energy of God is both distinct and non-distinct from God, whom he identified as Krishna, Govinda, and that this, although unthinkable, may be experienced through a process of loving devotion (*bhakti*). He followed the Dvaita concept of Madhvacharya. This philosophy of "inconceivable oneness and difference".

Cārvāka

The Cārvāka school is one of the nāstika or "heterodox" philosophies . It rejects supernaturalism, emphasizes materialism and philosophical skepticism, holding empiricism, perception and conditional inference as the proper source of knowledge Cārvāka is an atheistic school of thought. It holds that there is neither afterlife nor rebirth, all existence is mere combination of atoms and substances, feelings and mind are an epiphenomenon, and free will exists.

Bṛhaspati is sometimes referred to as the founder of Cārvāka (also called Lokayata) philosophy. Much of the primary literature of Carvaka, the Barhaspatya sutras (ca. 600 BCE), however, are missing or lost. Its theories and development has been compiled from historic secondary literature such as those found in the shastras, sutras and the Indian epic poetry as well as from the texts of Buddhism and from Jain literature.

One of the widely studied principles of Cārvāka philosophy was its rejection of inference as a means to establish valid, universal knowledge, and metaphysical truths. In other words, the Cārvāka epistemology states that whenever one infers a truth from a set of observations or truths, one must acknowledge doubt; inferred knowledge is conditional.

Shaivism

Early history of Shaivism is difficult to determine. However, the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (400 – 200 BCE) is considered to be the earliest textual exposition of a systematic philosophy of Shaivism. Shaivism is represented by various philosophical schools, including non-dualist (*abheda*), dualist (*bheda*), and non-dualist-with-dualist (*bhedābheda*) perspectives. Vidyaranya in his works mentions three major schools of

Shaiva thought—Pashupata Shaivism, Shaiva Siddhanta and Pratyabhijña (Kashmir Shaivism).

Pāśupata Shaivism

Pāśupata Shaivism (*Pāśupata*, "of Paśupati") is the oldest of the major Shaiva schools. The philosophy of Pashupata sect was systematized by *Lakulish* in the 2nd century CE. *Paśu* in Paśupati refers to the effect (or created world), the word designates that which is dependent on something ulterior. Whereas, Pati means the cause (or principium), the word designates the Lord, who is the cause of the universe, the pati, or the ruler. Pashupatas disapproved of Vaishnava theology, known for its doctrine servitude of souls to the Supreme Being, on the grounds that dependence upon anything could not be the means of cessation of pain and other desired ends. They recognised that those depending upon another and longing for independence will not be emancipated because they still depend upon something other than themselves. According to Pāśupatas, soul possesses the attributes of the Supreme Deity when it becomes liberated from the 'germ of every pain'.

Pāśupatas divided the created world into the insentient and the sentient. The insentient was the unconscious and thus dependent on the sentient or conscious. The insentient was further divided into effects and causes. The effects were of ten kinds, the earth, four elements and their qualities, colour etc. The causes were of thirteen kinds, the five organs of cognition, the five organs of action, the three internal organs, intellect, the ego principle and the cognising principle. These insentient causes were held responsible for the illusive identification of Self with non-Self. Salvation in Pāśupata involved the union of the soul with God through the intellect.

Shaiva Siddhanta

Considered normative Tantric Shaivism, Shaiva Siddhanta provides the normative rites, cosmology and theological categories of Tantric Shaivism. Being a dualistic philosophy, the goal of Shaiva Siddhanta is to become an ontologically distinct Shiva (through Shiva's grace). This tradition later merged with the Tamil Saiva movement and expression of concepts of Shaiva Siddhanta can be seen in the bhakti poetry of the Nayanars.

Kashmir Shaivism

Kashmir Shaivism arose during the eighth or ninth century CE in Kashmir and made significant strides, both philosophical and theological, until the end of the twelfth century CE. It is categorised by various scholars as monistic idealism (absolute idealism, theistic monism, realistic idealism, transcendental physicalism or concrete monism). It is a school of Śaivism consisting of Trika and its philosophical articulation Pratyabhijña.

Even though, both Kashmir Shaivism and Advaita Vedanta are non-dual philosophies which give primacy to Universal Consciousness (*Chit* or *Brahman*), in Kashmir Shavisim, as opposed to Advaita, all things are a manifestation of this Consciousness. This implies that from the point of view of Kashmir Shavisim, the phenomenal world (*Śakti*) is real,

and it exists and has its being in Consciousness (*Chit*). Whereas, Advaita holds that Brahman is inactive (*niṣkriya*) and the phenomenal world is an illusion (*māyā*). The objective of human life, according to Kashmir Shaivism, is to merge in Shiva or Universal Consciousness, or to realize one's already existing identity with Shiva, by means of wisdom, yoga and grace.

Chapter 27
ADI SHANKARA

Adi Shankara was an early 8th century Indian philosopher and theologian from India who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.) He is credited with unifying and establishing the main currents of thought in Hinduism.

His works in Sanskrit discuss the unity of the ātman and Nirguna Brahman "brahman without attributes". He wrote copious commentaries on the Vedic canon (*Brahma Sutras*, Principal Upanishads and *Bhagavad Gita*) in support of his thesis. His works elaborate on ideas found in the Upanishads. Shankara's publications criticised the ritually-oriented Mīmāṃsā school of Hinduism. He also explained the key difference between Hinduism and Buddhism, stating that Hinduism asserts "Atman (Soul, Self) exists", while Buddhism asserts that there is "no Soul, no Self".

Shankara travelled across the Indian subcontinent to propagate his philosophy through discourses and debates with other thinkers. He established the importance of monastic life as sanctioned in the Upanishads and Brahma Sutra, in a time when the Mīmāṃsā school established strict ritualism and ridiculed monasticism. He is reputed to have founded four mathas ("monasteries"), which helped in the historical development, revival and spread of Advaita Vedanta of which he is known as the greatest revivalist. Adi Shankara is believed to be the organiser of the Dashanami monastic order and unified the Shanmata tradition of worship. He is also known as Adi Shankaracharya, Shankara Bhagavatpada, sometimes spelled as Sankaracharya, (Ādi) Śaṅkarācārya, Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and Śaṅkara Bhagavatpādācārya.

Biography

Sources

There are at least fourteen different known biographies of Adi Shankara's life. Many of these are called the *Śaṅkara Vijaya*, while some are called *Guruvijaya*, *Sankarabhyudaya* and *Shankaracaryacarita*. Of these, the *Brhat-Sankara-Vijaya* by Citsukha is the oldest hagiography but only available in excerpts, while *Sankaradigvijaya* by Vidyaranya and *Sankaravijaya* by Anandagiri are the most cited. Other significant biographies are the *Mādhavīya Śaṅkara Vijayaṃ* (of Mādhava, c. 14th century), the *Cidvilāsīya Śaṅkara Vijayaṃ* (of Cidvilāsa, c. between the 15th and 17th centuries), and the *Keraḷīya Śaṅkara Vijayaṃ* (of the Kerala region, extant from c. the 17th century). These, as well as other biographical works on Shankara, were written many centuries to a thousand years after Shankara's death, in Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit languages, and the biographies are filled with legends and fiction, often mutually contradictory.

Scholars note that one of the most cited Shankara hagiography by Anandagiri includes stories and legends about historically different people, but all bearing the same name of

Sri Shankaracarya or also referred to as Shankara but likely meaning more ancient scholars with names such as Vidya-sankara, Sankara-misra and Sankara-nanda. Some biographies are probably forgeries by those who sought to create a historical basis for their rituals or theories.

Adi Shankara died in the thirty third year of his life, and reliable information on his actual life is scanty.

Birth-dates

The birthplace of Adi Shankara at Kalady

The Sringeri records state that Shankara was born in the 14th year of the reign of "VikramAditya", but it is unclear as to which king this name refers. Though some researchers identify the name with Chandragupta II (4th century CE), modern scholarship accepts the VikramAditya as being from the Chalukya dynasty of Badami, most likely Vikramaditya II (733–746 CE),

Several different dates have been proposed for Shankara:

- 509–477 BCE: This dating, is based on records of the heads of the Shankara's cardinal institutions Maṭhas at Dvaraka Pitha, the Govardhana matha and Badri and the Kanchi Peetham. This conforms to the chronology calculated based off the Hindu Puranas.
- 44–12 BCE: the commentator Anandagiri believed he was born at Chidambaram in 44 BCE and died in 12 BCE.
- 6th century CE: Telang placed him in this century. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar believed he was born in 680 CE.
- 788–820 CE: This was proposed by early 20th scholars and was customarily accepted by scholars such as Max Müller, Macdonnel, Pathok, Deussen and Radhakrishna, and others. The date 788–820 is also among those considered acceptable by Swami Tapasyananda, though he raises a number of questions.
- sometime between 700-750 CE: late 20th-century scholarship has questioned the 788-820 CE dates, placing Adi Shankara's life of 32 years in the first half of the 8th century.

- 805–897 CE: Venkiteswara not only places Shankara later than most, but also had the opinion that it would not have been possible for him to have achieved all the works apportioned to him, and has him live ninety two years.

The popularly accepted dating places Adi Shankara to be a scholar from the first half of the 8th century CE.

Life

Shankara was most likely born in the southern Indian state of Kerala, according to the oldest biographies in a village named Kaladi sometimes spelled as Kalati or Karati, but some texts suggest the birthplace to be Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. His father died while Shankara was very young. Shankara's upanayanam, the initiation into student-life, had to be delayed due to the death of his father, and was then performed by his mother.[full citation needed]

Idol of Adi Shankara at his Samadhi Mandir, behind Kedarnath Temple, in Kedarnath, India

Shankara's hagiography describe him as someone who was attracted to the life of Sannyasa (hermit) from early childhood. His mother disapproved. A story, found in all hagiographies, describe Shankara at age eight going to a river with his mother, *Sivataraka*, to bathe, and where he is caught by a crocodile. Shankara called out to his mother to give him permission to become a *Sannyasin* or else the crocodile will kill him. The mother agrees, Shankara is freed and leaves his home for education. He reaches a Saivite sanctuary along a river in a north-central state of India, and becomes the disciple of a teacher named Govinda Bhagavatpada. The stories in various hagiographies diverge in details about the first meeting between Shankara and his *Guru*, where they met, as

well as what happened later. Several texts suggest Shankara schooling with Govindapada happened along the river Narmada in Omkareshwar, a few place it along river Ganges in Kashi (Varanasi) as well as Badari (Badrinath in the Himalayas).

The biographies vary in their description of where he went, who he met and debated and many other details of his life. Most mention Shankara studying the Vedas, Upanishads and Brahmasutra with Govindapada, and Shankara authoring several key works in his youth, while he was studying with his teacher. It is with his teacher Govinda, that Shankara studied Gaudapadiya Karika, as Govinda was himself taught by Gaudapada. Most also mention a meeting with scholars of the Mimamsa school of Hinduism namely Kumarila and Prabhakara, as well as Mandana and various Buddhists, in *Shastrarth* (an Indian tradition of public philosophical debates attended by large number of people, sometimes with royalty). Thereafter, the biographies about Shankara vary significantly. Different and widely inconsistent accounts of his life include diverse journeys, pilgrimages, public debates, installation of yantras and lingas, as well as the founding of monastic centers in north, east, west and south India.

Philosophical tour and disciples

While the details and chronology vary, most biographies mention Adi Shankara traveling widely within India, Gujarat to Bengal, and participating in public philosophical debates with different orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, as well as heterodox traditions such as Buddhists, Jains, Arhatas, Saugatas, and Carvakas. During his tours, he is credited with starting several *Matha* (monasteries), however this is uncertain. Ten monastic orders in different parts of India are generally attributed to Shankara's travel-inspired *Sannyasin* schools, each with Advaita notions, of which four have continued in his tradition: Bharati (Sringeri), Sarasvati (Kanchi), Tirtha and Asramin (Dvaraka). Other monasteries that record Shankara's visit include Giri, Puri, Vana, Aranya, Parvata and Sagara – all names traceable to Ashrama system in Hinduism and Vedic literature.

Adi Shankara had a number of disciple scholars during his travels, including Padmapada (also called Sanandana, associated with the text *Atma-bodha*), Sureshvara, Tothaka, Citsukha, Prthividhara, Cidvilasayati, Bodhendra, Brahmendra, Sadananda and others, who authored their own literature on Shankara and Advaita Vedanta.

Death

Adi Sankara is believed to have died aged 32, at Kedarnath in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand, a Hindu pilgrimage site in the Himalayas. Some texts locate his death in alternate locations such as Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu) and somewhere in the state of Kerala.

Works

Adi Shankara's works are the foundation of Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism, and his doctrine, states Sengaku Mayeda, "has been the source from which the main currents of

modern Indian thought are derived". Over 300 texts are attributed to his name, including commentaries (*Bhāṣya*), original philosophical expositions (*Prakaraṇa grantha*) and poetry (*Stotra*). However most of these are not authentic works of Adi Shankara and are likely to be works of his admirers or scholars whose name was also Shankaracharya. Piantelli has published a complete list of works attributed to Adi Sankara, along with issues of authenticity for most.

Authentic works

Adi Shankara is most known for his systematic reviews and commentaries (*Bhasyas*) on ancient Indian texts. Shankara's masterpiece of commentary is the *Brahmasutrabhasya* (literally, commentary on Brahma Sutra), a fundamental text of the Vedanta school of Hinduism.

His commentaries on ten Mukhya (principal) Upanishads are also considered authentic by scholars, and these are: *Bhasya* on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Chandogya Upanishad, the Aitareya Upanishad, the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Kena Upanishad, the Isha Upanishad, the Katha Upanishad, the Mundaka Upanishad, the Prashna Upanishad, and the Mandukya Upanishad. Of these, the commentary on Mandukya, is actually a commentary on Madukya-Karikas by Gaudapada.

Other authentic works of Shankara include commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita (part of his Prasthana Trayi Bhasya). His *Vivarana* (tertiary notes) on the commentary by Vedavyasa on Yogasutras as well as those on Apastamba Dharma-sũtras (*Adhyatama-patala-bhasya*) are accepted by scholars as authentic works of Adi Shankara. Among the *Stotra* (poetic works), the Daksinamurti Stotra, the Bhajagovinda Stotra, the Sivanandalahari, the Carpata-panjarika, the Visnu-satpadi, the Harimide, the Dasa-shloki, and the Krishna-staka are likely to be authentic.

Shankara also authored Upadesasahasri, his most important original philosophical work. Of other original *Prakaranas* (प्रकरण, monographs, treatise), seventy six works are attributed to Adi Shankara. Modern era Indian scholars such as Belvalkar as well as Upadhyaya accept five and thirty nine works respectively as authentic.

Shankara's stotras considered authentic include those dedicated to Krishna (Vaishnavism) and one to Shiva (Shaivism) – often considered two different sects within Hinduism. Scholars suggest that these *stotra* are not sectarian, but essentially Advaitic and reach for a unified universal view of Vedanta. Adi Shankara's commentary on the Brahma Sutras is the oldest surviving. However, in that commentary, he mentions older commentaries like those of Dravida, Bhartrprapancha and others which are either lost or yet to be found.

Works of doubtful authenticity or not authentic

Commentaries on Nrisimha-Purvatatapaniya and Shveshvatara Upanishads are attributed to Adi Shankara, but their authenticity is highly doubtful. Similarly, commentaries on several early and later Upanishads attributed to Shankara are rejected

by scholars to be his works, and are likely works of later scholars; these include: Kaushitaki Upanishad, Maitri Upanishad, Kaivalya Upanishad, Paramahamsa Upanishad, Sakatayana Upanishad, Mandala Brahmana Upanishad, Maha Narayana Upanishad, Gopalatapaniya Upanishad. However, in Brahmasutra-Bhasya, Shankara cites some of these Upanishads as he develops his arguments, but the historical notes left by his companions and disciples, along with major differences in style and the content of the commentaries on later Upanishad have led scholars to conclude that the commentaries on later Upanishads were not Shankara's work.

The authenticity of Shankara being the author of Vivekacūḍāmaṇi has been questioned, but scholars generally credit it to him.

Aparoksha Anubuti and *Atmabodha* are also attributed to Shankara, as his original philosophical treatises, but this is doubtful. Paul Hacker has also expressed some reservations that the compendium *Sarva-darsana-siddhanta Sangraha* was completely authored by Shankara, because of difference in style and thematic inconsistencies in parts. Similarly, *Gayatri-bhasya* is doubtful to be Shankara's work. Other commentaries that are highly unlikely to be Shankara's work include those on *Uttaragita*, *Siva-gita*, *Brahma-gita*, *Lalita-shasranama*, *Suta-samhita* and *Sandhya-bhasya*. The commentary on the Tantric work *Lalita-trisati-bhasya* attributed to Adi Shankara is also unauthentic.

Adi Shankara is also widely credited with commentaries on other scriptural works, such as the Vishnu sahasranāma and the Sānatsujātiya, but both these are considered apocryphal by scholars who have expressed doubts. *Hastamalakiya-bhasya* is also widely believed in India to be Shankara's work and it is included in *Samata*-edition of Shankara's works, but some scholars consider it to be the work of Shankara's student.

Themes

Using ideas in ancient Indian texts, Shankara systematized the foundation for Advaita Vedanta in 8th century CE, one of the six orthodox schools of Hinduism founded many centuries earlier by Badarayana. His thematic focus extended beyond metaphysics and soteriology, and he laid a strong emphasis on *Pramanas*, that is epistemology or "means to gain knowledge, reasoning methods that empower one to gain reliable knowledge". Rambachan, for example, summarizes the widely held view on one aspect of Shankara's epistemology before critiquing it as follows,

According to these [widely represented contemporary] studies, Shankara only accorded a provisional validity to the knowledge gained by inquiry into the words of the Śruti (Vedas) and did not see the latter as the unique source (*pramana*) of *Brahmajnana*. The affirmations of the Śruti, it is argued, need to be verified and confirmed by the knowledge gained through direct experience (*anubhava*) and the authority of the Śruti, therefore, is only secondary.

— *Anantanand Rambachan*

Sengaku Mayeda concurs, adding Shankara maintained the need for objectivity in the process of gaining knowledge (*vastutantra*), and considered subjective opinions (*purushatantra*) and injunctions in Śruti (*codanatantra*) as secondary. Mayeda cites Shankara's explicit statements emphasizing epistemology (*pramana-janya*) in section 1.18.133 of Upadesasahasri and section 1.1.4 of Brahmasutra-bhasya. According to Michael Comans, Adi Shankara considered perception and inference as primary most reliable epistemic means, and where these means to knowledge help one gain "what is beneficial and to avoid what is harmful", there is no need for or wisdom in referring to the scriptures. In certain matters related to metaphysics and ethics, says Shankara, the testimony and wisdom in scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upanishads become important.

Adi Shankara cautioned against cherrypicking a phrase or verse out of context from Vedic literature, and remarks in the opening chapter of his Brahmasutra-Bhasya that the *Anvaya* (theme or purport) of any treatise can only be correctly understood if one attends to the *Samanvayat Tatparya Linga*, that is six characteristics of the text under consideration: (1) the common in *Upakrama* (introductory statement) and *Upasamhara* (conclusions); (2) *Abhyasa* (message repeated); (3) *Apurvata* (unique proposition or novelty); (4) *Phala* (fruit or result derived); (5) *Arthavada* (explained meaning, praised point) and (6) *Yukti* (verifiable reasoning). While this methodology has roots in the theoretical works of Nyaya school of Hinduism, Shankara consolidated and applied it with his unique exegetical method called *Anvaya-Vyatireka*, which states that for proper understanding one must "accept only meanings that are compatible with all characteristics" and "exclude meanings that are incompatible with any".

Hacker and Phillips note that this insight into rules of reasoning and hierarchical emphasis on epistemic steps is "doubtlessly the suggestion" of Shankara in Brahma-sutra, an insight that flowers in the works of his companion and disciple Padmapada. Merrell-Wolff states that Shankara accepts Vedas and Upanishads as a source of knowledge as he develops his philosophical theses, yet he never rests his case on the ancient texts, rather proves each thesis, point by point using *pranamas* (epistemology), reason and experience.

Adi Shankara, in his text *Upadesasahasri*, discourages ritual worship such as oblations to *Deva* (God), because that assumes the Self within is different from the Brahman. The "doctrine of difference" is wrong, asserts Shankara, because, "he who knows the Brahman is one and he is another, does not know Brahman". However, Shankara also asserts that Self-knowledge is realized when one's mind is purified by an ethical life that observes Yamas such as *Ahimsa* (non-injury, non-violence to others in body, mind and thoughts) and Niyamas. Rituals and rites such as yajna (a fire ritual), asserts Shankara, can help draw and prepare the mind for the journey to Self-knowledge. He emphasizes the need for ethics such as Akrodha and *Yamas* during Brahmacharya, stating the lack of ethics as causes that prevent students from attaining knowledge.

Adi Shankara has been varyingly called as influenced by Shaivism and Shaktism. However, his works and philosophy suggest greater overlap with Vaishnavism, influence

of Yoga school of Hinduism, but most distinctly his Advaitin convictions with a monistic view of spirituality.

Philosophy and practice

Atma Shatkam (The song of the Self):

I am Consciousness, I am Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

Without hate, without infatuation, without craving, without greed;
Neither arrogance, nor conceit, never jealous I am;
Neither *dharma*, nor *artha*, neither *kama*, nor *moksha* am I;
I am Consciousness, I am Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

Without sins, without merits, without elation, without sorrow;
Neither mantra, nor rituals, neither pilgrimage, nor Vedas;
Neither the experiencer, nor experienced, nor the experience am I,
I am Consciousness, I am Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

Without fear, without death, without schism, without *jati*;
Neither father, nor mother, never born I am;
Neither kith, nor kin, neither teacher, nor student am I;
I am Consciousness, I am Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

Without form, without figure, without resemblance am I;
Vitality of all senses, in everything I am;
Neither attached, nor released am I;

I am Consciousness, I am Bliss, I am Shiva, I am Shiva.
—*Adi Shankara, Nirvana Shatakam, Hymns 3–6*

Knowledge of Brahman

Adi Shankara systematised the works of preceding philosophers. His system marks a turn from realism to idealism. His Advaita ("non-dualism") interpretation of the *sruti* postulates the identity of the Self (Atman) and the Whole (Brahman). According to Adi Shankara, the one unchanging entity (Brahman) alone is real, while changing entities do not have absolute existence. The key source texts for this interpretation, as for all schools of Vedānta, are the Prasthanatrayi—the canonical texts consisting of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras.

Practice

Advaita Vedanta is based on śāstra ("scriptures"), yukti ("reason") and anubhava ("experiential knowledge"), and aided by karmas ("spiritual practices"). Starting from childhood, when learning has to start, the philosophy has to be a way of life. Shankara's

primary objective was to understand and explain how moksha is achievable in this life, what it is means to be liberated, free and a Jivanmukta. His philosophical thesis was that jivanmukti is self-realization, the awareness of Oneness of Self and the Universal Spirit called Brahman.

Shankara considered the purity and steadiness of mind achieved in Yoga as an aid to gaining moksha knowledge, but such yogic state of mind cannot in itself give rise to such knowledge. To Shankara, that knowledge of Brahman springs only from inquiry into the teachings of the Upanishads. The method of yoga, encouraged in Shankara's teachings notes Michael Comans, includes withdrawal of mind from sense objects as in Patanjali's system, but it is not complete thought suppression, instead it is a "meditative exercise of withdrawal from the particular and identification with the universal, leading to contemplation of oneself as the most universal, namely, Consciousness". Shankara rejected those yoga system variations that suggest complete thought suppression leads to liberation, as well the view that the Shrutis teach liberation as something apart from the knowledge of the oneness of the Self. Knowledge alone and insights relating to true nature of things, taught Shankara, is what liberates. He placed great emphasis on the study of the Upanisads, emphasizing them as necessary and sufficient means to gain Self-liberating knowledge. Sankara also emphasized the need for and the role of *Guru* (Acharya, teacher) for such knowledge.

Shankara's Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism

Shankara's Vedanta shows similarities with Mahayana Buddhism; opponents have even accused Shankara of being a "crypto-Buddhist," a qualification which is rejected by the Advaita Vedanta tradition, given the differences between these two schools. According to Shankara, a major difference between Advaita and Mahayana Buddhism are their views on Atman and Brahman. According to both Loy and Jayatilleke, more differences can be discerned.

Differences

Atman

According to Shankara, Hinduism believes in the existence of Atman, while Buddhism denies this. Shankara citing Katha Upanishad, asserted that the Hindu Upanishad starts with stating its objective as

... this is the investigation whether after the death of man the soul exists; some assert the soul exists; the soul does not exist, assert others." At the end, states Shankara, the same Upanishad concludes with the words, "it exists."

Buddhists and Lokāyatas, wrote Shankara, assert that soul does not exist.

There are also differences in the understanding of what "liberation" means. Nirvana, a term more often used in Buddhism, is the liberating realization and acceptance that there

is no Self (anatman). Moksha, a term more common in Hinduism, is liberating realization and acceptance of Self and Universal Soul, the consciousness of one's Oneness with all existence and understanding the whole universe as the Self.

Logic versus revelation

Stcherbatsky in 1927 criticized Shankara for demanding the use of logic from Madhyamika Buddhists, while himself resorting to revelation as a source of knowledge. Sircar in 1933 offered a different perspective and stated, "Sankara recognizes the value of the law of contrariety and self-alienation from the standpoint of idealistic logic; and it has consequently been possible for him to integrate appearance with reality."

Recent scholarship states that Shankara's arguments on revelation are about *apta vacana* (Sanskrit: आप्तवचन, sayings of the wise, relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts). It is part of his and Advaita Vedanta's epistemological foundation. Advaita Vedanta school considers such testimony epistemically valid asserting that a human being needs to know numerous facts, and with the limited time and energy available, he can learn only a fraction of those facts and truths directly. Shankara considered the teachings in the Vedas and Upanishads as *apta vacana* and a valid source of knowledge. He suggests the importance of teacher-disciple relationship on combining logic and revelation to attain moksha in his text Upadeshasahasri. Rambachan and others state Shankara methodology did not rely exclusively on Vedic statements, but included a range of logical methods, reasoning methodology and pramanas.

Similarities

Despite Adi Shankara's criticism of certain schools of Mahayana Buddhism, Shankara's philosophy shows strong similarities with the Mahayana Buddhist philosophy which he attacks. According to S.N. Dasgupta,

Shankara and his followers borrowed much of their dialectic form of criticism from the Buddhists. His Brahman was very much like the sunya of Nagarjuna [...] The debts of Shankara to the self-luminosity of the Vijnanavada Buddhism can hardly be overestimated. There seems to be much truth in the accusations against Shankara by Vijnana Bhiksu and others that he was a hidden Buddhist himself. I am led to think that Shankara's philosophy is largely a compound of Vijnanavada and Sunyavada Buddhism with the Upanisad notion of the permanence of self superadded.

According to Mudgal, Shankara's Advaita and the Buddhist Madhyamaka view of ultimate reality is compatible because they are both transcendental, indescribable, non-dual and only arrived at through a via negativa (neti neti). Mudgal concludes therefore that

... the difference between Sunyavada (Mahayana) philosophy of Buddhism and Advaita philosophy of Hinduism may be a matter of emphasis, not of kind.

Historical and cultural impact

Adi Sankara Keerthi Sthampa Mandapam, Kalady, Kerala

Historical context

Shankara lived in the time of the so-called "Late classical Hinduism", which lasted from 650 till 1100 CE. This era was one of political instability that followed Gupta dynasty and King Harsha of the 7th century CE. It was a time of social and cultural change as the ideas of Buddhism, Jainism and various traditions within Hinduism were competing for members. Buddhism in particular had emerged as a powerful influence in India's spiritual traditions in the first 700 years of the 1st millennium CE. Shankara, and his contemporaries, made a significant contribution in understanding Buddhism and the ancient Vedic traditions, then transforming the extant ideas, particularly reforming the Vedanta tradition of Hinduism, making it India's most important tradition for more than a thousand years.

Influence on Hinduism

Shankara has an unparallelled status in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta. He travelled all over India to help restore the study of the Vedas. His teachings and tradition form the basis of Smartism and have influenced Sant Mat lineages.

He introduced the Pañcāyatana form of worship, the simultaneous worship of five deities – Ganesha, Surya, Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. Shankara explained that all deities were but different forms of the one Brahman, the invisible Supreme Being.

Benedict Ashley credits Adi Shankara for unifying two seemingly disparate philosophical doctrines in Hinduism, namely Atman and Brahman. Isaeva states Shankara's influence included reforming Hinduism, founding monasteries, edifying disciples, disputing opponents and engaging in philosophic activity that, in the eyes of Indian tradition, help revive "the orthodox idea of the unity of all beings" and Vedanta thought.

Prior to Shankara, views similar to his already existed, but did not occupy a dominant position within the Vedanta. Nakamura states that the early Vedanta scholars were from the upper classes of society, well-educated in traditional culture. They formed a social elite, "sharply distinguished from the general practitioners and theologians of Hinduism." Their teachings were "transmitted among a small number of selected intellectuals". Works of the early Vedanta schools do not contain references to Vishnu or Shiva. It was only after Shankara that "the theologians of the various sects of Hinduism utilized Vedanta philosophy to a greater or lesser degree to form the basis of their doctrines," while the Nath-tradition established by him, led "its theoretical influence upon the whole of Indian society became final and definitive."

Critical assessment

Some scholars doubt Shankara's early influence in India. The Buddhist scholar Richard E. King states,

Although it is common to find Western scholars and Hindus arguing that Sankaracarya was the most influential and important figure in the history of Hindu intellectual thought, this does not seem to be justified by the historical evidence.

According to King and Roodurmun, until the 10th century Shankara was overshadowed by his older contemporary Mandana-Misra, the latter considered to be the major representative of Advaita. Other scholars state that the historical records for this period are unclear, and little reliable information is known about the various contemporaries and disciples of Shankara. For example, Advaita tradition holds that Mandana-Misra is the same person as Suresvara, a name he adopted after he became a disciple of Shankara after a public debate which Shankara won.

Some scholars state that Maṇḍana-Miśra and Sureśvara must have been two different scholars, because their scholarship is quite different. Other scholars, on the other hand, state that Mandana-Miśra and Shankara do share views, because both emphasize that Brahman-Atman can not be directly perceived, rather it is discovered and defined through elimination of division (duality) of any kind. The Self-realization (Soul-knowledge), suggest both Mandana Misra and Shankara, can be described cataphatically (positive liberation, freedom through knowledge, jivanmukti moksha) as well as apophatically (removal of ignorance, negation of duality, negation of division between people or souls or spirit-matter). While both share core premises, states Isaeva, they differ in several ways, with Mandana Misra holding Vedic knowledge as an absolute and end in itself, while Shankara holds Vedic knowledge and all religious rites as subsidiary and means to the human longing for "liberation, freedom and moksha".

Several scholars suggest that the historical fame and cultural influence of Shankara grew centuries later, particularly during the era of Muslim invasions and consequent devastation of India. Many of Shankara's biographies were created and published in and after 14th century, such as the widely cited Vidyaranya's Śankara-vijaya. Vidyaranya, also known as Madhava, who was the 12th Jagadguru of the Śringeri Śarada Pītham from 1380 to 1386, inspired the re-creation of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire of South India in response to the devastation caused by the Islamic Delhi Sultanate. He and his brothers, suggest Paul Hacker and other scholars, wrote about Śankara as well as extensive Advaitic commentaries on Vedas and Dharma. Vidyaranya was a minister in Vijayanagara Empire and enjoyed royal support, and his sponsorship and methodical efforts helped establish Shankara as a rallying symbol of values, and helped spread historical and cultural influence of Shankara's Vedanta philosophies. Vidyaranya also helped establish monasteries (*mathas*) to expand the cultural influence of Shankara. It may be these circumstances, suggest scholars, that grew and credited Adi Shankara for various Hindu festive traditions such as the Kumbh Mela – one of the world's largest periodic religious pilgrimages.

Mathas

(Vidyashankara temple) at Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Shringeri

Shankara is regarded as the founder of the Daśanāmi Sampradāya of Hindu monasticism and Ṣaṇmata of Smarta tradition. He unified the theistic sects into a common framework of Shanmata system. Advaita Vedanta is, at least in the west, primarily known as a philosophical system. But it is also a tradition of renunciation. Philosophy and renunciation are closely related:

Most of the notable authors in the advaita tradition were members of the sannyasa tradition, and both sides of the tradition share the same values, attitudes and metaphysics.

Shankara, himself considered to be an incarnation of Shiva, established the Dashanami Sampradaya, organizing a section of the Ekadandi monks under an umbrella grouping of ten names. Several other Hindu monastic and Ekadandi traditions remained outside the organisation of the Dasanāmis.

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Adi Sankara organised the Hindu monks of these ten sects or names under four Maṭhas (Sanskrit: मठ) (monasteries), with the headquarters at Dvārakā in the West, Jagannatha Puri in the East, Sringeri in the South and Badrikashrama in the North. Each math was headed by one of his four main disciples, who each continues the Vedanta Sampradaya.

Yet, according to Pandey, these Mathas were not established by Shankara himself, but were originally ashrams established by Vibhāṇḍaka and his son Ṛṣyaśṛnga. Shankara inherited the ashrams at Dvārakā and Sringeri, and shifted the ashram at Śṛngaverapura to Badarikāśrama, and the ashram at Angadeśa to Jagannātha Purī.

Monks of these ten orders differ in part in their beliefs and practices, and a section of them is not considered to be restricted to specific changes made by Shankara. While the dasanāmis associated with the Sankara maths follow the procedures enumerated by Adi Śankara, some of these orders remained partly or fully independent in their belief and practices; and outside the official control of the Sankara maths.

The advaita sampradaya is not a Saiva sect, despite the historical links with Shaivism:

Advaitins are non-sectarian, and they advocate worship of Siva and Visnu equally with that of the other deities of Hinduism, like Sakti, Ganapati and others.

Nevertheless, contemporary Sankaracaryas have more influence among Saiva communities than among Vaisnava communities. The greatest influence of the gurus of the advaita tradition has been among followers of the Smartha Tradition, who integrate the domestic Vedic ritual with devotional aspects of Hinduism. According to Nakamura, these mathas contributed to the influence of Shankara, which was "due to institutional factors". The mathas which he built exist until today, and preserve the teachings and influence of Shankara, "while the writings of other scholars before him came to be forgotten with the passage of time".

The table below gives an overview of the four Amnaya Mathas founded by Adi Shankara, and their details.

Shishya (lineage)	Direction	Maṭha	Mahāvākya	Veda	Sampradaya
Padmapāda	East	Govardhana Pīṭhaṃ	Prajñānam brahma (Consciousness is Brahman)	Rig Veda	Bhogavala
Sureśvara	South	Sringeri Śārada Pīṭhaṃ	Aham brahmāsmi (I am Brahman)	Yajur Veda	Bhūrivala
Hastāmalakācārya	West	Dvāraka Pīṭhaṃ	Tattvamasi (That thou art)	Sama Veda	Kitavala
Toṭakācārya	North	Jyotirmaṭha Pīṭhaṃ	Ayamātmā brahma (This Atman is Brahman)	Atharva Veda	Nandavala

According to the tradition in Kerala, after Sankara's samadhi at Vadakkunnathan Temple, his disciples founded four mathas in Thrissur city, namely Edayil Madhom, Naduvil Madhom, Thekke Madhom and Vadakke Madhom.

Smarta Tradition

Traditionally, Shankara is regarded as the greatest teacher and reformer of the Smarta.

According to Alf Hiltebeitel, Shankara established the nondualist interpretation of the Upanishads as the touchstone of a revived *smarta* tradition:

Practically, Shankara fostered a rapprochement between Advaita and *smarta* orthodoxy, which by his time had not only continued to defend the *varnasramadharma* theory as defining the path of *karman*, but had developed the practice of *pancayatanapuja* ("five-shrine worship") as a solution to varied and conflicting devotional practices. Thus one could worship any one of five deities (Vishnu, Siva, Durga, Surya, Ganesa) as one's *istadevata* ("deity of choice").

Film

- In 1977 Jagadguru Aadisankaran, a Malayalam film directed by P. Bhaskaran was released in which *Murali Mohan* plays the role of Adult Aadi Sankaran and Master Raghu plays childhood.
- In 1983 a film directed by G. V. Iyer named *Adi Shankaracharya* was premiered, the first film ever made entirely in Sanskrit language in which all of Adi Shankaracharya's works were compiled. The movie received the Indian National Film Awards for Best Film, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Audiography.
- In 2013, a film *Sri Jagadguru Aadi Sankara* directed by J. K. Bharavi in Telugu Language was completed and released.

Chapter 28
ARE BRAHMINS MARGINALIZED ?

The public image of the Brahmins, for instance, is that of an affluent, pampered class. But is it so today?

There are 50 Sulabh Shauchalayas (public toilets) in Delhi; all of them are cleaned and looked after by Brahmins (this very welcome public institution was started by a Brahmin). A far cry from the elitist image that Brahmins have!

There are five to six Brahmins manning each Shauchalaya. They came to Delhi eight to ten years back looking for a source of income, as they were a minority in most of their villages, where Dalits are in majority (60 per cent to 65 per cent). In most villages in UP and Bihar, Dalits have a union which helps them secure jobs in villages.

Did you know that you also stumble upon a number of Brahmins working as coolies at Delhi's railway stations? One of them, Kripa Shankar Sharma, says while his daughter is doing her Bachelors in Science he is not sure if she will secure a job.

"Dalits often have five to six kids, but they are confident of placing them easily and well," he says. As a result, the Dalit population is increasing in villages. He adds: "Dalits are provided with housing, even their pigs have spaces; whereas there is no provision for gaushalas (cowsheds) for the cows of the Brahmins."

You also find Brahmin rickshaw pullers in Delhi. 50 per cent of Patel Nagar's rickshaw pullers are Brahmins who like their brethren have moved to the city looking for jobs for lack of employment opportunities and poor education in their villages.

Even after toiling the whole day, Vijay Pratap and Sidharth Tiwari, two Brahmin rickshaw pullers, say they are hardly able to make ends meet. These men make about Rs 100 to Rs 150 on an average every day from which they pay a daily rent of Rs 25 for their rickshaws and Rs 500 to Rs 600 towards the rent of their rooms which is shared by 3 to 4 people or their families.

Did you also know that most rickshaw pullers in Banaras are Brahmins?

This reverse discrimination is also found in bureaucracy and politics. Most of the intellectual Brahmin Tamil class has emigrated outside Tamil Nadu. Only 5 seats out of 600 in the combined UP and Bihar assembly are held by Brahmins(2006) — the rest are in the hands of the Yadavs.

400,000 Brahmins of the Kashmir valley, the once respected Kashmiri Pandits, now live as refugees in their own country, sometimes in refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi in appalling conditions. But who gives a damn about them? Their vote bank is negligible.

And this is not limited to the North alone. 75 per cent of domestic help and cooks in Andhra Pradesh are Brahmins. A study of the Brahmin community in a district in Andhra Pradesh (Brahmins of India by J Radhakrishna, published by Chugh Publications) reveals that today all purohits live below the poverty line.

Eighty per cent of those surveyed stated that their poverty and traditional style of dress and hair (tuft) had made them the butt of ridicule. Financial constraints coupled with the existing system of reservations for the 'backward classes' prevented them from providing secular education to their children.

Who are the real 'Dalits' of India?

In fact, according to this study there has been an overall decline in the number of Brahmin students. With the average income of Brahmins being less than that of non-Brahmins, a high percentage of Brahmin students drop out at the intermediate level. In the 5 to 18 year age group, 44 per cent Brahmin students stopped education at the primary level and 36 per cent at the pre-matriculation level.

The study also found that 55 per cent of all Brahmins lived below the poverty line — below a per capita income of Rs 650 a month. Since 45 per cent of the total population of India is officially stated to be below the poverty line it follows that the percentage of destitute Brahmins is 10 per cent higher than the all-India figure.

There is no reason to believe that the condition of Brahmins in other parts of the country is different. In this connection it would be revealing to quote the per capita income of various communities as stated by the Karnataka finance minister in the state assembly(2006): Christians Rs 1,562, Vokkaligas Rs 914, Muslims Rs 794, Scheduled castes Rs 680, Scheduled Tribes Rs 577 and Brahmins Rs 537.

Appalling poverty compels many Brahmins to migrate to towns leading to spatial dispersal and consequent decline in their local influence and institutions. Brahmins initially turned to government jobs and modern occupations such as law and medicine. But preferential policies for the non-Brahmins have forced Brahmins to retreat in these spheres as well.

Caste shouldn't overwrite merit

According to the Andhra Pradesh study, the largest percentage of Brahmins today are employed as domestic servants. The unemployment rate among them is as high as 75 per cent. Seventy percent of Brahmins are still relying on their hereditary vocation. There are hundreds of families that are surviving on just Rs 500 per month as priests in various temples (Department of Endowments statistics).

Priests are under tremendous difficulty today, sometimes even forced to beg for alms for survival. There are innumerable instances in which Brahmin priests who spent a lifetime studying Vedas are being ridiculed and disrespected.

At Tamil Nadu's Ranganathaswamy Temple, a priest's monthly salary is Rs 300 (Census Department studies) and a daily allowance of one measure of rice. The government staff at the same temple receive Rs 2,500 plus per month. But these facts have not modified the priests' reputation as 'haves' and as 'exploiters.' The destitution of Hindu priests has moved none, not even the parties known for Hindu sympathy.

The tragedy of modern India is that the combined votes of Dalits/OBC and Muslims are enough for any government to be elected. The Congress quickly cashed in on it after Independence, but probably no other government than Sonia Gandhi's has gone so far in shamelessly dividing Indian society for garnering votes.

The Indian Government gives Rs 1,000 crores (Rs 10 billion) for salaries of imams in mosques and Rs 200 crores (Rs 2 billion) as Haj subsidies. But no such help is available to Brahmins and upper castes. As a result, not only the Brahmins, but also some of the other upper castes in the lower middle class are suffering in silence today, seeing the minorities slowly taking control of their majority.

How reservations fracture Hindu society

Anti-Brahminism originated in, and still prospers in anti-Hindu circles. It is particularly welcome among Marxists, missionaries, Muslims, separatists and Christian-backed Dalit movements of different hues. When they attack Brahmins, their target is unmistakably Hinduism.

Chapter 29
BRAHMINS THEN, BRAHMINS NOW, AND THE ROAD AHEAD FOR BRAHMINS

'By luck, I am a Brahmin" replied the unemployed youth on being asked why he was not working despite having a diploma in mechanical engineering. The year was 1993 and he was standing on the platform of Nanded Railway Station, waiting for the train that may arrive with scheduled delay. My friend, a non-Brahmin looked at me apprehensively, how I will be reacting to such a ludicrous response.

'You are not a Brahmin", I replied to him confusing him further "It is said that Brahmins have lots of self-confidence. Brahmins are supposed to have intelligence and someone who couldn't find work despite being educated cannot claim to be a Brahmin". His face flushed and he explained how poor his father was and how having no reservations are affecting his employment opportunities, like many others who oppose reservations.

Though this incident happened more than two decades ago, somehow, I could never forget it.

It is apt to remember the following shloka, with reference to this incidence

janmana jayate sudrah samskarat dwij uchchte

veda pathnat bhavet viprah brahma janati iti brahmanah

"By birth one is a sudra, by the culture he possesses one becomes a dvija, by study of the Vedas one becomes a vipra, and one who knows Brahman is a Brahmana."

To simplify, we can distinguish the spelling difference between Brahmin and Brahman. Brahmin is used mostly when it is denoting the caste, acquired at birth from the patriarchal lineage, whereas Brahman is used to denote those people with higher spiritual wisdom.

Given current conditions and standards of living how many people could qualify to be Brahmana? A difficult question to answer, for caste system or Varna Vyavastha had already transformed our society (for worse, I am sure) from a knowledge/skill based one to a hereditary one.

In India, despite the deep entrenchment of caste system, it never was clear to define who is what. The case of Viswamitra (Kaushika), born into a Kshatriya family became a Brahman may help to understand how Brahmans were defined in ancient days. Viswamitra became a Brahman by doing penance. And Parashurama remained a Brahman, despite killing scores of Kshatriyas. Valmiki was revered despite being a hunter, before his transformation. Krishna remained Yadava, despite being born into a

Kshatriya family. Ravana and Kamsa were called Rakshasas, though they were born into Brahman and Kshatriya families respectively. Dronacharya and Kripacharya practised archery, the art that was needed for Kshatriyas, but continued being Brahmans. Though Vyas was born to a fisherwoman, he was called Brahman; but his offspring Dhritarashtra and Pandu and their sons became Kshatriyas.

It was clear from these evidences that the caste in those days was defined by the ambient in which a child grew and the character he possessed as an adult. Now, humans live their lives for their next generations and so there creeps in a bias that forces those having power to wish to pass it on to their off spring.

So, slowly the caste system mutated into its present form wherein caste is inherited. Entire human history is an evidence how people with power exploited others. This continued in medieval India and even now. It is on record that Brahmins enjoyed power exploiting others for long in Indian society. But then, this happens in every society.

The Church had a stranglehold over the King in Britain. The Jewish priests condemned the Christ. Entire civilisations of Africa were crushed and the natives were 'exported' by the white men, as if they were commodities. The British even exported Indians only to work in their plantations as 'slaves'.

Equality is the law of nature. But, equilibrium was never stable. The instability existed in the nature forces the inequality towards equality so that stability could be attained – only to move to the other side of stability that will increase inequality.

Another incident:

In a party, when I noticed one was not eating chicken, I asked whether he is a vegetarian.

"Well, I eat chicken, but rarely", he replied.

"You should have at least to give company to others", I suggested despite being a vegetarian myself. Coming out of his initial inhibitions, he ate some. I joked "Well Thakur, this was how we Brahmins ruled the country through you".

In a serious vein, there always were Brahmins behind the rulers, who wielded actual power exploiting everyone else, including the King. Then there were another class of Brahmans who were dirt poor trying hard to make their ends meet. Distribution of Brahmans across India is not uniform, like their customs and habits that vary every hundred kilometres and with every hundred years.

In South, Brahmins hardly comprise two percent, unlike in north where Brahmins are still a vote bank. Then, all three philosophies postulated in modern Hinduism, Advaita, Dwaita and Visishtadwaita came from south. In south, Shaivism and Vaishnavism had taken shape of true religion that was different from the ancient Vedic way of living. There were killings of Shaivas by Kings following Vaishnava sect and vice-versa. The medieval society

of south was full of internal conflicts. Though Ramanjujacharya worked to eradicate caste differences, society largely remained divided on caste lines.

In Kerala, even during the initial decades of last century, women from lower castes were not allowed to cover their chest before Brahmins. In Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamilnadu, pariahs were supposed to carry their footwear in their hands, while walking in the streets of main villages.

They walk with palm leaves tied to their backs so that the street gets automatically swept off. And this was the same time some Brahmins like Subramania Bharathi and Veeresalingam were trying to eradicate caste differences in the society, for they believed the nation could never be freed by people that were divided themselves.

It was the time when a Brahmin teacher gave his family name to the person who led the committee that drafted our constitution but the Brahmin surname couldn't prevent Ambedkar from being discriminated against. It was the time Gandhi was trying to eliminate caste differences by calling them 'Harijan', but at the same time decided against the Patel, favouring Nehru for the top position. It was a time of contradictions; in fact contradictions rule always.

Of course, the North was already fallen into the hands of invaders, but the administrative Brahmins retained power through all changes that happened in over a period of thousand years. Yes, there were many Brahmins who stood for the values, but those in power – retained power. During the Mughal rule and thereafter, with the weakening of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, Brahmins became more powerful.

Though the power or control over society was initially a result of respect towards the learned men, with the increasing greed Brahmins started exploitation of others. This could be seen even today in the temples like Vindhyachal, controlled by individuals where devotees are fleeced in the name of God.

Brahmins could administer the North for many centuries only because they exercised power with a restraint. However, with the falling levels of education, the restraint had gone and subsequent generations could not digest power leading to excesses being committed.

The final blow to the Brahmin supremacy came in the form of Emergency. Opposing emergency, a new generation of leaders, mostly from backward castes emerged, who could successfully stop the Brahmin domination.

When Mulayam Singh Yadav and Laloo Prasad Yadav became chief ministers, for the first time people from backward classes started believing in themselves. As repeated in Indian philosophy, whatever happens, happens for the good – good not for an individual or a particular community, but for the masses.

Could Brahmins prevent the rise of backward class leaders? No! Neither in the South, nor in the North. In South, freedom movement played the role of equality among people eradicating caste guidelines. Then came the Dravidian movement. The British identified themselves with higher caste Hindus by propagating the Aryan invasion theory.

Though Dravid simply means the land with water on three sides – a peninsula and thus Dravidians would be peninsular Indians, for the political parties, Brahmins represented the Aryan domination over Dravidians, who as per them are the original inhabitants of South. The fact that Dravid is a Brahmin surname was overlooked, while Aadi Dravidians were recognised as most backward sections of the society. Everyone used and abused history by interpreting to suit to their immediate needs.

Long before the rise or Yadavas in the North, Brahmins had experienced the wrath of other classes in the South, when they had to migrate leaving the lands that they never tilled. With reservations in educational institutions and employment opportunities at about 70%, Brahmins were forced to search for fresh avenues to survive. And, they survived – on an average and grew.

The credit for the survival of South Indian Brahmins goes to their women. Realising the futility of crying hoarse on the reservations issues, mothers ensured their off spring got the best education they can afford.

While many kids of sixties got advantage of the education, by the turn of century, most of Brahmin kids rose in the social ladder, to a better position than their fathers ever experienced. Same thing happened in Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala. Those families without a 'mother with vision' remained poor – even after five decades.

In the North, however Brahmins continued to be at the morally high position till nineties. During riots post Babri Masjid demolition, it was recorded how many Brahmins saved lives of Muslims from the rioters.

But, the community could not economically progress in line with its socially higher position owing to the restricted freedom of women in some families. Competing for 30% unreserved positions was relatively easier for Southern Brahmins, but their own numbers being high in North had become an impediment to the progress of their northern cousins.

Though considerable population from other castes acknowledge the inequalities that exist within Brahmins, but there are equal number who feel Brahmins of current generations should suffer for the sins of their forefathers. And, they remind to the Brahmins asking for reservations or opposing reservations for other castes that there never was any level playing ground for all masses.

Brahmins opposing the reservations often claim that by continuously extending the reservations the caste wheel is being simply inverted instead of paving way for a society where all are equal.

Many Brahmins of current generation feel they are being punished for the sins of their ancestors, which is injustice to the current generation and the future one. The fact that Brahmins in Kerala and Gujarat are asking for reservations, though ridiculed by many, remains a truth of their current condition.

But then, if one takes a holistic view, there are many people from other castes who still are in worse conditions. Almost all people living in forests and many Dalit communities like Bhangis in Maharashtra and Valmikis in Gujarat fare worse.

It is time for Brahmins to realise that the fight for inequality in a society ruled by democracy is meaningless. And asking for reservations for Brahmins will have many negative impacts on the future generations.

For one, due to the socialist policies of Nehru, there were two generations of Indians that expected their children to study and 'do a job' killing the entrepreneurial zeal amongst Indians. Thus came to live were the cinemas with dialogues like 'I have a BA degree that could not get me a job'. People failed to realise that to get jobs, skills are needed and not degrees.

Dignity of Labour was one thing people were not inculcated by earlier generations, as parents wanted their kids to sit in the office under a ceiling fan with some files before them and return home by evening. Can that happen to all in the society? Never. People shall work or in other words – they should make something.

However, after seven decades of independence, due to lack of moral guidance from the leaders, the society is looking at freebies. We want the government to set up educational institutions, hospitals. We expect government to provide employment opportunities. After independence, our dependence on the government has increased manifold. The concept of State providing citizens was so deeply instilled in our minds, one will ask for two coffees, if one is offered free.

Brahmins or for that matter, even Dalits should take cue from Marwaris. Marwaris have a common fund from where poor in their community get loan to start a business.

Of course, he shall return the loan with interest once he is established resulting into the kitty increasing forever. One shall note that foundations of Marwari way of doing business were laid by mutual trust.

However, with deep rooted classification in Indian masses irrespective of religion and caste, there exist a trust deficit amongst the populace. This trust deficit hampers the growth of the society in general. That is the exact reason we see even prolific persons promote their relatives after achieving success.

Irrespective of castes, if there is a rally asking for reservations, everyone goes and disrupt trains, buses and everything that was already struggling to function in this country. But,

when asked to depart some of their money to help fellow community member, only a few comes to the fore.

And, this characteristic is not only associated with Brahmins, but in people of all castes. As long as people do not trust one another, whatever the government does will not have the required impact on the ground.

For Brahmins and others who want to see themselves shall remember the ancient man lived in this country, who worked hard and observed things and thought logically. Emulate him, for he believed in an equal society without prejudices.

When Krishna told to follow 'Swa Dharma', it was not about the religion, but of one's own character. It is about not worrying over flaws of oneself, but to work on improving the strengths. And try to excel in whatever one does.

Being successful means to have Peace attained from self-satisfaction, for it is above the materialistic success. And for any community that doesn't help itself, not only the government but even the God himself couldn't help.

Chapter 30
ARE BRAHMINS TODAY'S DALITS IN INDIA?

At a time when nearly all political parties are vying with each other to please Dalits or other backward classes advocating reservations for them, ignoring the Brahmins, French Journalist Francois Gautier, having spent nearly two decades in India, finds it a prejudiced trend based on misconceptions.

In a write up "Are Brahmins the Dalits of today?" (May 26, 2006) posted on Rediffmail.com, Gautier has pointed out how much ill-found are the facts about the 'prosperity' of Hindus, especially, the Brahmins in today's India.

He lashes out at the UPA Government for following an appeasement policy, which appears to be based on obsolete data about the actual state of Dalits in India.

"At a time when the Congress Government wants to raise the quota for Other Backward Classes to 49.5 per cent in private and public sectors, nobody talks about the plight of the upper castes," says Gautier in his write up.

According to Gautier, today's Brahmins can be easily found cleaning public toilets, a menial job that the government projects as if it is being done only by Dalits since ages.

"There are 50 Sulabh Shauchalayas (public toilets) in Delhi; all of them are cleaned and looked after by Brahmins (this very welcome public institution was started by a Brahmin).

There are five to six Brahmins manning each Shauchalaya. In most villages in UP and Bihar, Dalits have a union which helps them secure jobs in villages," Gautier states.

Fifty per cent of rickshaw-pullers in Delhi's Patel Nagar are Brahmins. Did you also know that most rickshaw pullers in Banaras are Brahmins?," Gautier asks.

He questions: "Do our institutes connect with the real India?" while pointing out the reverse discrimination existing in bureaucracy and politics of the country.

Talking about Kashmiri Pandits, Gautier mentions they are living as refugees in their own country.

"400,000 Brahmins of the Kashmir Valley, the once respected Kashmiri Pandits, now live as refugees in their own country, sometimes in refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi, in appalling conditions. Their vote bank is negligible," says Gautier.

In South India, the state of Brahmins as stated by various agencies speaks for itself.

Seventy five per cent of domestic help and cooks in Andhra Pradesh are Brahmins.

"A study of the Brahmin community in a district in Andhra Pradesh (Brahmins of India by J Radhakrishna, published by Chugh Publications) reveals that today all Purohits live below the poverty line," quotes Gautier.

Gautier questions: "Who are the real Dalits of India?"

"In fact, according to this study there has been an overall decline in the number of Brahmin students. With the average income of Brahmins being less than that of non-Brahmins, a high percentage of Brahmin students drop out at the intermediate level," Gautier quotes.

"The study also found that 55 per cent of all Brahmins lived below the poverty line -- below a per capita income of Rs 650 a month," adding there is no reason to believe that the condition of Brahmins in other parts of the country is different.

Gautier quotes the per capita income of various communities as stated by the Karnataka finance minister in the State assembly: Christians Rs 1,562, Vokkaligas Rs 914, Muslims Rs 794, Scheduled castes Rs 680, Scheduled Tribes Rs 577 and Brahmins Rs 537.

But preferential policies for the non-Brahmins in government jobs and modern occupations such as law and medicine have forced Brahmins to retreat in these spheres as well.

Gautier suggests that caste shouldn't overwrite merit while quoting an Andhra Pradesh study, the largest percentage of Brahmins today are employed as domestic servants. The unemployment rate among them is as high as 75 per cent. There are hundreds of families that are surviving on just Rs 500 per month as priests in various temples (Department of Endowments statistics).

Gautier says : "There are innumerable instances in which Brahmin priests who spent a lifetime studying Vedas are being ridiculed and disrespected."

"At Tamil Nadu's Ranganathaswamy Temple, a priest's monthly salary is Rs 300 (Census Department studies) and a daily allowance of one measure of rice. The government staff at the same temple receive Rs 2,500 plus per month," Gautier states.

Gautier observes and lashes out at the Congress-led government observing "the tragedy of modern India is that the combined votes of Dalits/OBC and Muslims are enough for any government to be elected. The Congress quickly cashed in on it after Independence, but probably no other government than Sonia Gandhi's has gone so far in shamelessly dividing Indian society for garnering votes."

Gautier also quotes from *The Indian Express* newspaper's report: 'These measures will not achieve social justice'

"The Indian government gives Rs 1,000 crores (Rs 10 billion) for salaries of imams in mosques and Rs 200 crores (Rs 2 billion) as Haj subsidies. But no such help is available to Brahmins and upper castes."

Writing about how reservations fracture Hindu society, Gautier observed that Anti-Brahminism originated in, and still prospers in anti-Hindu circles. It is particularly welcome among Marxists, missionaries, Muslims, separatists and Christian-backed Dalit movements of different hues. When they attack Brahmins, their target is unmistakably Hinduism.

Chapter 31
GIVE RESERVATION TO BRAHMINS, AIADMK MEMBER HAD ASKED JAYALALITHAA

Brahmin Youth Federation of India also wants a welfare board for poor amongst upper castes, extension of welfare schemes to poor Brahmins and minority status to Brahmins

K. Ramasubramanian, a senior representative of the AIADMK from Coimbatore, has appealed to party general secretary and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa to give 10 per cent reservation to Brahmins in education and employment.

Ramasubramanian is a convenor of Brahmin Youth Federation of India (BYFI) and, in a formal letter to Jayalalithaa, he made six requests.

Apart from reservation to Brahmins, he said the BYFI wanted a welfare board for poor amongst upper castes, extension of government welfare schemes to poor Brahmins, minority status to Brahmins in the state, carrying out caste-based census in the state on priority and adequate representation in the legislative assembly.

"Spearheaded by anti-Brahminical groups and their affiliates for over 50 years, Brahmins have been meted out ill-treatment, denied social justice and marginalised for reasons no longer relevant today," Ramasubramanian told Indiatoday.in.

He said there were only Rajalakshmi, an MLA from Mylapore in Chennai, and V. Maiytrayan, leader of the AIADMK in the Rajya Sabha, in the party's list of Brahmin lawmakers.

He said Brahmins are being denied not only adequate political space but were also deliberately kept out of welfare schemes.

"Today, Brahmins are at the top of the discriminatory caste order. In the name of anti-Brahminism, the whole community has been subjected to humiliation," he said.

He said Brahmins constituted about six per cent of the seven and a half crore population of the state. Out of which, 30 per cent (around 13 lakh) are economically backward and live below the poverty line.

"Many poor Brahmins do not have access to good education, healthcare and housing. It is a myth that all Brahmins are leading a comfortable life. Social welfare schemes are still elusive to the deserving poor among them," he said.

Ramasubramanian is a public affairs consultant and an expert on Intellectual Property Rights.

He contested the Lok Sabha elections from Coimbatore on a Bahujan Samaj Party ticket and lost.

He created a controversy that time by raking up the issue of paid news.

He lodged a complaint with the Press Council of India (PCI) against some leading Tamil dailies and forced an inquiry. Later, a high-level probe found proof in his allegations and submitted in a report.

In spite of stiff resistance from these newspapers against the release the report, the council published the report on its website after Justice Katju became the chairman.

Chapter 32
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY OF BRAHMINS SOON

The Government of Andhra Pradesh will soon undertake a survey on 'Brahmana' community so as to assess their socio-economic status and design development schemes for them.

Endowments Minister P. Manikyala Rao said this in the Assembly on Wednesday while answering a question by member Kona Raghupathi during question hour.

The survey report will be out in three months.

Reminding about the ruling party's election promise to set up a Brahmin Finance Corporation with Rs.500 crore corpus, Mr. Raghupathi sought to know if any survey had been conducted so far.

Mr. Rao informed that Rs.60 crore had been allocated to the AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation in 2014-15 and 2015-16, which, together with a release of Rs.20 crore as grant to the AP Brahmin Cooperative Credit Society, was expected to be spent by the end of the financial year.

So far, Rs.16.85 crore had been spent on various welfare schemes in the areas of education, coaching for competitive exams, skill development, and for creation of fixed assets and administrative expenditure.

Sugar factories

To a question on salary payment to employees of cooperative sugar factories, Finance Minister Y. Ramakrishnudu said an expert committee had been constituted for modernisation of the factories, which submitted its report.

VIMS issue

Another question was about the launch of Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS), the proposal for which had been long-pending.

MLA K. Sarveshwara Rao reminded that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had promised to launch the hospital in three months with Rs.60 crore.

Minister for Health Kamineni Srinivas said that the out-patient services in VIMS would be launched from April this year.

Chapter 33
LIST OF BRAHMIN GOTRAS

The word "*gotra*" means "lineage" in the Sanskrit language. Among those of the Brahmin caste, *gotras* are reckoned patrilineally. Each *gotra* takes the name of a famous Rishi or sage who was the patrilineal forebear of that clan. And each Gotra is addressed by the suffix 'sa' or 'asa' as relevant.

The following is a partial list of gotras found in the Brahmin community of Hindus:

- Agastya
- Atreya/ Atri
- Alamban
- Angirasa
- Bali
- Bakshi
- Bhalki
- Bharadvaja,Bharadwaja
- Bhargava
- Bhanot
- Chandratra
- Charora
- Chibber
- Chikitasa
- Chyavana
- Dalabhya
- Dandotia
- Darbhas
- Devgun
- Dhananjaya
- Galvasaya
- Garga
- Gautam
- Gargheyasa
- Gaubhilya
- Harita/ Haritasa
- Jamadagni
- Kalabodhana/ Kalaboudha
- Kamakayana Vishwamitra
- Kapil
- Kaushika
- Kashyapa
- Kowndinya
- Kaunsh
- Kaushal

- Katyayana
- Kutsa
- Lakhi
- Lohit
- Lomasha
- Maitreya / Mitra
- Mandavya
- Mauna Bhargava
- Matanga
- Mudgala (Maudgalya, Moudgil, Modgil)
- Mudgal
- Munjhal
- Nydravakashyapa
- Nrisimhadevara
- Parashara
- Pourguthsa
- Pourguthsa
- polistya
- Rohinya
- Sangar
- Sankrithi
- Sankyanasa
- Sankyayanasa,Samkyayanasa
- Sathamarshana
- Shandilya
- Saawarna
- Somnasser
- Soral
- Srivatsa
- Sumarkanth
- Suryadhwaja
- Tugnait
- Upadhyay
- Upmanyu
- Vadula
- Valmiki
- Vashisth
- Vatsa
- Veetahavya
- Vishnu
- Vasudev
- Vishnu Vardasa
- Viswamitra
- Yaska

Gotras

Many lines of descent from the major rishis were later grouped separately. Accordingly, the major *gotras* were divided into ganas (subdivisions), and each gana was further divided into groups of families. The term *gotra* was then frequently started being applied to the ganas and to the sub-ganas.

Every brahmin claims to be a direct patrilineal descendant of one of the founding rishis of a certain gana or sub-gana. It is the gana or sub-gana that is now commonly referred to as *gotra*.

Over the years, the number of *gotras* increased due to:

1.   Descendants of original rishi also started new family lineage or new *gotras*,
2.   By inter marriage with other sub-groups of the same caste, and
3.   Inspired by another rishi whose name they bear as their own *gotra*.

Pravara is the number of the most excellent (-cf. reference, Sanskrit-English Dictionary,Monier-Williams) rishis who belonged to that particular gotra to which a person belongs. Gotra is the name of the founding father. In vedic ritual, the importance of the pravara appears to be in its use by the ritualist for extolling his ancestry and proclaiming, "as a descendant of worthy ancestors, I am a fit and proper person to do the act I am performing." The sacred thread yajnopavita worn on upanayana has close connection with the concept of pravaras related to brahmin gotra system. While tying the knots of sacred thread, an oath is taken in the name of each one of these three or five of the most excellent rishis belonging to one's gotra.

The full affiliation of a brāhamana consists of (1)gotra, (2)pravaras (3)sutra (of Kalpa), (4)shakha.

(Example :) A brahmana named 'X' introduces himself as follows : I am 'X', of Shrivatsa gotra, of Āpastamba sutra, of Taittiriya shākha of Yajurveda, of five pravaras named Bhārgava, Chyāvana, Āpnavan, Aurva and Jāmdagnya (This example is based upon the example given by Pattābhirām Shastri in the introduction to Vedārtha-Pārijata, cf. ref.).

While the *gotras* were classified initially according to nine (?) rishis, the pravaras were classified under the names of the following seven rishis:

▪   Agastya
▪   Angirasa
▪   Atri
▪   Bhrigu
▪   Kashyapa
▪   Vasishtha
▪   Vishvamitra

According to the listing of authors included in the verses in Rigved, the rishi Jamadagni was a descendant of rishi Bhrigu while the rishis Gautam and Bharadvaja were the descendants of rishi Angirasa.

The pravara identifies the association of a person with three or sometimes five of the above-mentioned rishis.

For example, Kashyapa Gothram has 3 rishis associated with it viz. Kashyapa, Daivala and Aavatsaara

Gothras and Pravaras

1. Suryadhwaja: Lakhi (Mehrishi), Soral, Binju
2. Bharadwaj: Angirasa, Baaryhaspatya (i.e. bRhaspati), Bharadwaja
3. Rathitara: Angirasa, Baaryhaspatya, Rathitara
4. Vadula: Bhargava,Vaitahavya,Saavedasa
5. Srivatsa: Bhargava,Syaavana,AApnavaana,Owrva,Jaamadaghnya
6. Salankayana: Viswaamitra, Aghamarshana, Devavrata
7. Shatamarshana: Angirasa, Powrukutsa,Traasatasya
8. Atreya: Atreya,Aarchanaasa,Syaavaasva
9. Kowsika: Vishwamitra,Aghavarshana,Kowsika
10. Kalabodhana/Kalaboudha: Viswaamitra,AAgamarshana,Kalabodhana/Kalaboudha
11. Viswamitra: Vaiswaamitra,Devaraata, Owtala
12. Kaundinya: Vaasishta,Maitraavaruna, Kaundinya
13. Haritasa: Angirasa, Ambarisha,Yuvanasva
14. Gautamasa: Angirasa,Aayasyasa,Gautama
15. Mowdkalya(3 Variations)
    1. Angirasa,Bharmyasva,Mowdgalya
    2. Tarkshya,Bharmyasva,Mowdgalya
    3. Angirasa, Dhavya, Mowdgalya
16. Sandilya (3 Variations)
    1. Kasyapa,Aavatsaara,Daivala
    2. Kasyapa,Aavatsaara,Sandilya
    3. Kasyapa, Daivala, Asitha
17. Naitruvakaasyapa: Kasyapa,Aavatsara,Naitruva
18. Kutsa: Angirasa,Maandhatra,Kowtsa
19. Kanva (2 Variations)
    1. Angirasa,Ajameeda,Kaanva
    2. Angirasa,Kowra, Kaanva
20. Paraasara: Vaasishta, Saaktya, Paarasarya
21. Aagastya: Aagastya,Tardhachyuta,Sowmavaha
22. Gargi (2 Variations)
    1. Angirasa,Bharhaspatya,Bharadwaja,upadhyay
    2. Angirasa, Sainya, Gaargya
23. Bhadarayana: Angirasa,Paarshadaswa, Raatitara
24. Kasyapa (3 Variations)
    1. Kasyapa, Aavatsaara, Daivala

2. Kasyapa, Aavatsaara, Naidruva(Naitruva)
3. Kasyapa, Aavatsaara, Naidruva(Naitruva), Rebha, Raibha , Sandila, Saandilya
25. Sunkriti (2 Variations)
    1. Angirasa,Kowravidha,Saankritya
    2. Sadhya,Kowravidha,Saankritya
26. Angirasa, Pourukutsya, Thraasadasya
27. goutam/gowtamasa Aangeerasa, ayasya, gowtama
28. Vadhoola: Bhargava, Vaitahavya, Savedasa
29. AgniVaiwaswatha: Angirasa, Brahaspthayasa, Bharadwaja, Srukva, Agnivaiwaswathasa

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Implications

Although people belonging to the same *gotra* are, in theory, related to each other patrilineally, and belong to the same Brahmin caste, there may be very little else in common between them. In fact, as per the Vedic system, a man and a woman belonging to the same *gotra* are considered to be a brother and sister, and hence, a marriage between a man and a woman belonging to the same *gotra* (known as sa-gotra) is forbidden as it will cause anomalies in the progeny that come out of such a marriage. The fact that people belong to a certain *gotra* says nothing about their domicile, original place of residence, mother tongue or family occupation, which can be known from than lower lever classification below gotra: pravaras, sutra (of Kalpa) and shakha.

Please add Vadhryashwa Gotra to your list of Gotras.Many Deshastha Brahmins near Nagpur Mahrashtra have this Gotra including me.Reference to Vadhryashwa Rishi is found in Rigveda

Chapter 34
REVERSAL OF FORTUNE
ISOLATES INDIA'S BRAHMINS

CHENNAI, India -- Brahmins, as Hinduism's priestly and scholarly caste, have traditionally occupied a place of privilege in India.

Brahmins have been advisers to Maharajas, Mughals and military rulers. Under British rule, they served as administrators, a position they kept after Indian independence in 1947.

But in today's India, high-caste privileges are dwindling, and with the government giving extensive preferences to the lower-caste majority, many Brahmins are feeling left out of the economy's rapid expansion.

R. Parameswaran has suffered that reversal of fortune. The 29-year-old starts every day with a prayer to the Hindu god Shiva, marking his forehead with red and white powder to let the world know he is a Brahmin. In his home village, his caste's mark brought him respect, but since he moved to Chennai, a sprawling high-tech city in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, in the late 1990s, he has found his status a liability.

In Tamil Nadu, nearly 70% of government jobs and public-college slots are reserved for people from lower castes and other historically disadvantaged groups. Although he says he graduated near the top of his high-school class and had strong test scores, Mr. Parameswaran couldn't get into any of the state engineering colleges. His family had to borrow from friends to send him to a second-rate private college.

He now teaches English at a small vocational school. On a salary of $100 a month, Mr. Parameswaran can't afford an apartment, so he sleeps in the classroom at night. "I am suffering," says the intense young man, using the exaggerated enunciation of an English teacher. "Unfortunately, I was born as a Brahmin."

Although the role of Brahmins has never been synonymous with accumulating wealth, many are affluent enough to educate their children in the better private schools. On average, members of the caste, who make up about 5% of India's population of 1.1 billion, are better educated and better paid than the rest of Indian people.

The term Brahmin has come to be used globally to describe those at the top of the heap with an attitude to match, as in Boston Brahmins. Yet close to half of Brahmin households earn less than $100 a month, according to the Center for a Study of Developing Societies, a New Delhi think tank. For these Brahmins, the array of state-mandated preferences for other groups present a high hurdle.

The reverse discrimination is rooted in Indian history and politics. For decades, Brahmins were resented for their dominance of the government, economy and culture. Indeed, political parties in Tamil Nadu sprang from anti-Brahmin feelings. "If you see a Brahmin and a snake, kill the Brahmin first" was an old slogan.

A national constitution adopted in 1950 reserved more than 20% of government jobs for lower castes. In 1990, an additional 27% were set aside for what were called "other backward castes." Some states set higher quotas, including Tamil Nadu, which reserves 69% of government jobs for lower castes and other needy groups.

The ugliest Brahmin bashing in India ended years ago, but Mr. Parameswaran says that in college in the late 1990s, he still faced ridicule as a Brahmin. He says one student tried to break his sacred thread, a simple circle of twine Brahmins wear under their clothes.

After college, he had an internship in a state-owned chemical company, but says he was told he wouldn't be hired, as there were openings only for lower-caste applicants. He says he took exams to join national railways, state banks and other government agencies, such as the immigration department, but found most posts closed to all Brahmins except the most brilliant.

From his makeshift home where he sleeps with a blanket on a desk most nights, Mr. Parameswaran still applies for government jobs. He pulls out his latest application form and shows a visitor where he always gets stuck: the three squares where he has to write the abbreviation indicating his caste. "I want government work," he says, shaking the application, "but they have no jobs for Brahmins."

Mr. Parameswaran has tried to adapt to the lessening of caste distinctions taking place in many parts of India today, especially in cities. The changes are less in villages such as the one where he grew up some 200 miles away. There, his grandfather, who is 101 years old, still won't wear Western clothes and won't eat outside of his home for fear of mixing with lower castes.

Mr. Parameswaran's father has a job with the state telephone company and is more liberal. He dresses in shirts and pants, doesn't mind eating at restaurants and doesn't expect lower-caste neighbors to take off their sandals in his presence.

Mr. Parameswaran has had good friends from lower castes all his life, many of whom have used their communities to grab good government jobs, he says. He won't eat meat but has no qualms sharing a meal with people of any caste or creed. His 22-year-old sister, R. Dharmambal, is even more liberal, he says. "She will take non-vegetarian food," he exclaims, using the common Indian term for eating meat.

Mr. Parameswaran often visits the sister in the Brahmin enclave of Mylapore. On a recent day there, dozens of shirtless priests in the traditional Brahmin uniform of a white dhoti and partially shaved head were standing around at a Hindu-scriptures school, hoping for

work. For as little as 100 rupees, about $2.50, they offered to perform complicated rituals and blessings required when any Hindu has a baby, a wedding or a new home.

"My sons can't support me, so I have to survive by performing Hindu rituals," says K. Narayana, an 81-year-old scholar. "If we had been from another community, we would have had better opportunities."

Nearby stands the Kapaleeshwara Temple, with towering gates of colorful carvings from Hindu mythology. It is one of the most important places for worship for followers of Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction. The temple used to be surrounded by rows of simple single-story homes, each with its own courtyard and well so the Brahmin families wouldn't have to share water with other castes. Most houses have been replaced by concrete apartment blocks and small stores.

At the temple's back gate, Brahmins beg for spare change or look for odd jobs as cooks or even bearers of bodies to funeral pyres, normally a lower-caste pursuit.

"I see so many Brahmins begging" in Mylapore, Mr. Parameswaran says. "It's very difficult to see. It makes me totally upset."

Chapter 35
NOTABLE BRAHMINS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION

It is a misconception that Brahmins were only priests. Fact is only a subset of Brahmins was involved in the priestly duties. Brahmins also took up various other professions since late Vedic ages like doctors, writers, poets, land owners, ministers, etc. Most of India was ruled by Brahmin Kings from 180 B.C. to 6th century A.D. Shungs who succeeded Mauryan kings were Bharadwaj gotriiya by father side and Kashayap from mother side. Saat-Vahans who dominated south India were Brahmins. The famous Gupta dynasty was a Brahmin dynasty. "Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya", the most famous emperors of all times was a Brahmin. This Gupta Period is known as "Golden period of India". This period is considered best not only in Indian history but in history of the whole world. Never a country was ever blessed with peace, literature, wealth, commerce, science, and also in military might. Aryabhatt, Varahmirih, Kalidas are few of the very famous personalities of this time whose contribution we still remember with pride. They were all Brahmins.

We will not here mention great 'Rishis' of ancient India who made contribution in many fields, including science, spiritual wisdom or the Smritis which were first codified laws (post Vedic period) in the history of the mankind and their clarity in administration of justice, dealing in all spheres of life surprises even today.

We will confine ourselves to Brahmin contributors starting from 19th century which is also known as 'Renaissance' of 19th century India.

- **GREAT REVOLT OF 1957**- Mangal Pandey who shot the first bullet, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Tatya Topey.
- **SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORMERS -** Raja Rammohan Rai called Father of modern India, Debendranath Tagore, Pratap Chandra Majumdar (reformers), Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar (scholar), Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sri V Narayan Agnohotri, R G Bhandarkar, M G Ranade, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, K T Teelang, C V Joshi, G G Agarkar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Vishnu Bhikaji - crusaded against irrationality and other evils present at that time in the Indian societies.
- Ramakrishna Paramhans spiritual saint who is more known by name of his disciple Swami Vivekanand who introduced principles of Hinduism to the world.
- First Hindu spiritual teacher to visit U S A was Mr. Joshi, followed by others like P C Majumdar. B B Nagarkar, Narsimhacharya, Swami Ramtirath and Dr S Radhakrishnan.
- Surinder Venkatesh Ketkar- First Indian to receive Doctorate from American University
- **NOBLE LAURITES** - Rabindra Nath Tagore, C V Raman, Amartya Sen
- **FIRST TO CRITICISE BRITISH RULE -** Bankim Chandra Chaterji, MG Ranade, Surendra Nath Banerji

- **FIRST PRESIDENT OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS -** Vyomesh Chandra Banerji
- **One of most prominent leaders of Garam Dal and Naram Dal of then Congress party were Lokmanya Tilak and Gopal Krishan Gokhle.**
- **KRANTI AGAINST BRITISH RAJ -** Vasudeo Vasant Phadke, Chapekar brothers,Vishnu Ganesh Pingale, Bhai Parmanad, Birendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Bagvati Charan Bohra, Chandra Shekhar Azad, and Durga Bhabhi
- **NATIONALISTIC SLOGANS - "VANDE MATARAM", "SWARAJ IS MY BIRTH RIGHT" and 'SARFAROSHI KI TAMMANNA AB HAMAREY DIL ME HAI' were written by Bankim, Tilak and Ram Prasad Bismil**
- **REVOLUTIONERY WOMEN WHO SUFFERED UNDER BRITISH RAJ -** Bala Devi, Vimal Pratibha Devi, Kalpana Dutt, Suhasini Ganguli, The Mukerji sisters – Usha and parul.
- Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Nehru, Vijai luxmi Pandit- participated in Gandhian movement.
- **FIRSTS IN INDIA –**
  - Satyendra Nath Tagore - First I C S Officer
  - Rabindra Nath Tagore Nobel Prize
  - Sarojini Naidu 1st Woman Congress President and governor of UP
  - Chakravarti Rajgopalachari- 1st Governor General of India and 1st Bharat Ratna Award Winner
  - Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru- 1st Prime minister
  - Vjai luxmi Pandit 1st Woman Ambassador and Minister of State
  - CD Deshmukh 1st Finance Minister to present General budget
  - Ganeshvasudeo Malvankar 1st Speaker of Lok Sabha
  - S Mukherji 1st Chief of Air Staff
  - Vinoba Bhave 1st Roman Magasaysay Award winner
  - Dr S Radhakrishnan 1st elected President of India
  - Sucheta Kriplani, 1st Woman Chief Minister
  - G Sankar Kurup 1st Janpith Award Winner
  - Drba Banerji, 1st Woman Pilot of Indian Airlines
  - Mihir Sen 1st to swim across English Cannel
  - Udai Shankar 1st dancer to perform abroad
  - Atal Bihari Vajpaye 1st Hindi Speaker at UNO
  - Indira Gandhi 1st woman Prime minister of India
  - Rakesh Sharma 1st Indian Astronaut
  - Morarji Desai 1st Nishane-Pakistan winner
  - Sushmita Sen 1st Miss Universe
  - Saurav Ganguli 1st Cricketer in the world to win four consecutive "Man of the Match" awards in one day internationals

Present status of Brahmins in the society

Brahmins should have gained more respect in independent India. Although some of them have risen to highest political position in their own states and centre becoming President, Vice Presidents, Prime Minister or Chief election commissioners (as R K Trivedi and T N

Sheshan),won literary and military awards and excelled in other fields, the status of Brahmins as a community has come under a cloud.

It is due to various political and religious moves to tarnish image of Brahmins, on public platform, in the media and in history books, and also to relegate their positive contribution to society in the background.

The decline in the position of Brahmins is as much due to changing social and political milieu, rise of heterodox cults and sects, and anti- Brahmin movements during last century.

This phenomenon is also due to the fact that majority of Brahmins are ignorant about their pristine heritage and their involvement in internal feuds. Moreover they also lack in knowledge and are no more a moral guide to society for which they were revered in past. This may be the reason that they are unable to face the onslaught of disinformation campaign against them and their scriptures.

Chapter 36
WHAT BRAHMINS SHOULD DO ?

To safeguard the welfare and security of Brahmins in the Indian Continent, in the United States, and throughout the world.

To strengthen the basic principles of pluralism around the world, as the best defense against anti-Brahmanism and other forms of bigotry.

To enhance the quality of Brahmin life by helping to ensure Brahmin continuity and deepen ties between Indian Brahmins, American Brahmins and the Brahmins world over.

Goals Should be:

Committed to strengthening understanding and communication across religious lines. Our goals should include communicating concerns and sensitivities of the community to those of other tribes, castes and faiths, and helping the Brahmin community understand the concerns and sensitivities of others. The Brahmin organizations like *Brahmana Sadassu*, *Telangana Archaka Samakhya*, *Archaka Congress*, *Archaka Sevasamiti* etc. should encourage inter-religious/tribal/caste dialogue throughout the world through exchanges among seminaries, colleges, universities, and learned societies. Through organizational partnerships and coalitions, formal and informal discussions and conversations, academic conferences, publications, and personal interaction, our efforts have made major contributions to cooperation and mutual respect among peoples of all faiths.

In a world of increasing pluralism, efforts that bring together representatives of a growing number of religions and faiths are crucial. These organizations should work with established organizations to foster understanding and lay the groundwork for joint statements and efforts based on common values and dreams. At the same time, these organizations should be committed to pursue new opportunities and fostering new initiatives with individuals, institutions, and organizations representing other faiths, castes, and tribal communities.

Education and Identity

Background

The mission of Brahmin organizations like *Brahmana Sadassu* should include safeguarding the continuity and ensuring the future quality of Brahmin life. It is recognized the centrality of education to efforts to ensure Brahmin continuity (or any community that is interested in preserving its culture and heritage). One must recognize the importance of broad efforts to intensify Brahmin education on all levels, including increasing the number of contact hours and years of schooling, creation of realistic goals, introduction of Brahmin studies into public and nonsectarian private education,

broadening of Brahmin studies on university campuses, intensification and broadening of day school education, and greater communal investment in Brahmin education broadly conceived.

The classroom time usually devoted to education generally omits Brahmin education altogether. The critical years of adolescence, which research has demonstrated are the most crucial years for impacting upon long-term identity are completely neglected. Day school education, once considered marginal to the system, now has become a viable option within each of the religious movements as well as under communal or trans-denominational auspices.

Alumni of Jewish day schools, particularly on high school levels, report continued long-term Jewish identification and involvement underscoring the effectiveness of day school instruction. On college campuses, where once academic Jewish studies was limited to handful of elite Universities, today virtually every university of note boasts a substantial Jewish studies program signaling the legitimization of Jewish culture by the canons of American university life. Similarly, the Hillel Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, in recent years, increasingly has enhanced its presence and programs on college campuses. The total population of Jewish community is approximately 5 million in Israel, where as the Brahmin community in Andhra Pradesh is about 2 million and in India and around world is more than 20 million (by an extrapolation of 2% in Andhra Pradesh). Brahmin community has to learn a lot from Jewish organizations and religion in developing the identity and maintaining the Brahmin identity and continuity.

A Brahmin who is literate in Brahminical education is simply far more likely to become a committed Brahmin. Moreover, Brahminical education should become a potential bridge issue around which diverse sectors in the Brahmin community may cooperate in the pursuit of common goals of enhancing the Brahmin future.

Recommendations
A. Brahmin Education as Communal Priority

1. Brahmin education, broadly conceived, must become a critical priority in the allocation of communal resources for domestic needs.

2   To ensure educational effectiveness, Brahmin education must target the entire Brahmin family, enabling parents to create a Brahmin-supportive environment in which the education of their children can occur. Therefore, emphasis upon adult and parental education is critical for the success of Brahmin education generally.

3. No single model of Brahmin education will work for all Brahmins. Therefore it is imperative that the community create a variety of successful models of formal and informal education including day schools, supplementary schools, and community-based schools so as to maximize parental choice in seeking models that best fit the Brahmin needs of particular children and families.

As the Brahmin community forges ahead in the new millennium, its greatest challenge lies in confronting the prospect of continued erosion and assimilation of Brahmins and loss of Brahminical culture. Brahminical/Vedic education remains the primary response to that danger. To collectively meet the challenge of securing Brahmin continuity, Brahminical education on all levels must be strengthened and enhanced.

The scheme of Education framed by ancient Brahmins to initiate the young men for preparing them for membership of the community marked a great advance over the primitive idea of initiation. Without the *Upanayana* no Brahmin could call himself a twice-born, *Dwija*. One who would not undergo this *samskara* was excommiunicated and debarred from all the privileges of the Brahmin community. The *Upanayana* initiation was a passport to the literary treasures of Brahmins that were orally transmitted for several millennia and religiosity and without it none could marry a Brahmin girl. Thus the Brahmin ideal made the education an indispensable test and insignia of the Brahmin community and religiosity. This Upanayana should be performed for both boys and girls as we move forward in the new millennium.

(*This initiation is limited to boys only. A Brahmin boy is initiated at about fifth year. The corresponding Iranian rite is called Naujat, by which Persian children, both boys and girls, receive religious initiation after they have attained six years and three months. The Kshatriya Upanayana rite is performed in the sixth year, Vaishya community performs the Upanayana initiation at the age of eight and the Jewish initiation is performed at the age of twelve for a boy and at the age of thirteen for a girl. The corresponding Jewish rite is called Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This similarity indicates that the Naujat, Upanayana and Bar/Bat Mitzvah initiations had their origins in common ancestry of Persians, Jews, Brahmins, Vaishyas and Kshatriyas. While Persians and Jews perform this initiation to both girls and boys, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas limit it to the boys only. Jewish children begin for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah by going to Hebrew/Religious school some years before they actually turn Bar/Bat Mitzvah age. In fact, some children begin attending afternoon religious school from the time they enter kindergarten. The purpose of going to religious school is to learn about Jewish customs, holidays, history, and the Hebrew language. In the year leading up to the event the person begins more intense training focused specifically on their Torah portion and the accompanying prayers. The day the young person is Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the first time he/she will have ever been called to the Torah. To say the blessings over the Torah one must be Bar/Bat Mitzvah age. The age difference between Jews and others is probably due to the fact that the Jewish child starts religious education several years before and is declared knowledgeable after the performance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, where as Iranians, Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaisyas begin their religious education after the initiation.*)

B. Cost and Affordability

Quality Brahmin education must be regarded as a matter of right rather than privilege. The entire Brahmin community must assume the responsibility for funding Brahmin education. We recommend creation of a communal endowment fund established for the express purpose of providing per-student subsidies determined by family income and

tuition levels and applicable towards any form of quality Brahmin education for children and youth. Creation of such a system would insure the principle of affordability funded entirely by the Brahmin community without recourse to governmental assistance. As a symbolic step in this direction, creation of a Brahmin communal fund to enable children of communal professionals to pursue quality Brahmin education is recommended.

C. Supplementary Schools

1. The supplementary schools should be created with high expectations, greater communal investment in personnel and teacher training, and exploration of alternative programs and models.

2. We must establish the principle within supplementary education of continuing Brahmin schooling after the *Upanayanam* (at the age of 5), as the child enters the secular education in public and private schools.

To ensure Brahmin continuity, the supplementary school must be created and enhanced and in some cases rethought so as to enable effective transmission of Brahmin heritage.

D. Continuing Brahmin Education

1. Successful models of adult Brahmin educational programs need to be created for a broader cross section of Brahmins.

2. Brahmin organizations must play a particular role in adult education for their own members.

Programs along the lines of the adult Jewish history curriculum developed by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) merit adaptation and utilization for Brahmin community.

E. Brahmin Day Schools

Existing research on Jewish day schools both in the United States and in other Jewish communities demonstrates high levels of communal involvement among their adult graduates. This has been particularly the case among those who pursue day school education through the high school years. Moreover, those high schools that have studied their alumni, over succeeding years, report both continued Jewish communal involvement for the overwhelming majority of graduates.

It is crucial that in the absence of governmental funding in secular society the Brahmin community should ensure sufficient Brahmin communal funding so as to enable any Brahmin child who chooses to do so to afford Brahmin day school education. Therefore we recommend that the Brahmin community must be challenged to ensure the affordability and availability of day school education for all Brahmins who desire it.

F. Adolescence

As stated earlier, based on AJC research, the teenage years for formative Brahmin learning and experiences is critical. To strengthen Brahmin education on secondary levels, we recommend the following:

1. Secondary Education

1. The community must establish the principle of continuing Brahmin education on secondary levels.

2. We urge advocacy efforts to enable the movements to provide quality Brahmin day school educational models on adolescent models.

2. Funding for Adolescent Education

Greater communal funding should be awarded to those who pursue Brahmin education through the high school years. If the communal budget does not permit subsidizing all forms of Brahmin education, we recommend targeting of subsidies toward programs geared to adolescents, including summer camp, informal education, and formal high school education. Initiatives such as those proposed here will encourage greater continuity in Brahmin education.

3. Sanskrit Language Instruction

We recommend advocacy for the inclusion of Sanskrit language instruction within secondary school language curricula.

Of particular concern in recent years has been the decline of Sanskrit-language literacy among Brahmins.

G. Intra-Brahmin Relations

We urge Brahmin organizations, chapters, foundations etc. to make Brahmin education an agenda item for intra-Brahmin dialogue and coalition building for advocacy purposes within the Brahmin community. Brahmin education constitutes a potential bridge issue between the diverse Brahmin religious movements. All Brahmins have a stake in quality Brahmin education as a vehicle of securing Brahmin continuity. At a time of increased polarization within the Brahmin community, the concepts of Brahmin unity and people-hood may be significantly strengthened through common efforts to enhance Brahmin education.

Continuity

Background:
Brahmin Community is experiencing two narratives. Brahmins enjoy greater

opportunities than ever before to lead a creative Brahmin life, and many are doing so to degrees never imagined by their parents and grandparents. Conversely, a larger number are choosing to withdraw from Brahmin communal life. Secular education by government and the danger of casteism are some reasons for educated Brahmins to avoid participation in any kind of Brahmin related associations and programs. Further, most secular Brahmins shun any education related to Vedas and Brahmin scriptures as it is viewed as Sangh Parivar related activity. Therefore, communal leaders have to debate how to respond to the crisis in Brahmin continuity.

The Brahmin community's challenge for the next generation is ensuring the future survival and quality of Brahmin life. Brahmin Federations have to earmark special funding for temple-based programming and have to strengthen the Associations and Foundations, wihtout the fear of being branded as non-secular and casteist. Brahmin Community Centers have to be created and focused on ways to strengthen Brahmin content and educational programming. Brahmin day schools have to grow significantly, *especially when all the waking time of a school going child is spent in school, homework, tutorials etc. to compete in a hostile environment, as Brahmin kids are constrained with limited avenues in every aspect of educational, social and vocational life in India through constitutionally mandated and unfair reservations and other quota systems.*

Little has been done to address the high cost of leading an intensive Brahmin life. The community remains incapable of adopting a language of distinctive values and norms, articulating both what it is and what it is not.

The crisis is real, yet forms only part of the contemporary Brahmin story. At the very same time that intermarriage has risen and rates of conversion to Brahmanism in mixed-marriages doesn't exist. Vehicles for nurturing a creative Brahmin life, e.g. Brahmin day schools, summer camps, have to be developed within the Brahmin community.

In responding to the continuity crisis, communal leaders face a number of critical challenges. A lively debate about how to direct limited communal resources is taking place over questions such as: What initiatives are best able to combat widespread apathy to Brahmin life? Who are the most likely targets for continuity initiatives--the unaffiliated or the marginally affiliated Brahmins interested in Brahmin experiences but who lack the knowledge and capacity to transmit Brahmin heritage? What do we mean by continuity and what is the goal of continuity initiatives? What can the community do to make Brahmin life sufficiently compelling to retain current members and attract new adherents? Answers to these questions will guide principles and strategies for communal action.

Recommendations:

The goal of continuity efforts should be development of knowledgeable Brahmins who can make informed choices about the nature of their commitment to Brahmanism and the Brahmin people. In a free society, many will choose to leave, and for that reason some

losses are virtually inevitable. Our goal should be to ensure that the choices Brahmins make are informed choices rather than out of ignorance. More knowledgeable Brahmins are, in all likelihood, going to choose to be more spiritual Brahmins and committed vegetarians even if they are agnostic or atheistic.

1. Brahmin organizations should initiate study courses and programs in chapters designed for their own members. Leadership enhancement programs for both volunteers and professionals are necessary to transform the Brahmin culture of Brahmin organizations. If Brahmin continuity is indeed the primary challenge for this generation of American and Indian Brahmins, it will require a brahminly-informed leadership to mobilize the community towards that elusive goal. The community should both minimize entry barriers and maintain high standards of involvement. Certainly, the community should be open and welcoming to all interested in leading a Brahmin life. Programming itself, however, should aim to create highly involved Brahmins. There can be no continuity absent sincere commitment to Brahmanism. Vedas have a claim upon all Brahmins-as record of revelations and as inspired texts.

2. Family, temple, youth activities, and school are the primary vehicles of securing Brahmin continuity. Funding and initiatives should be targeted to those institutions that can help Brahmins religiously and spiritually, strengthen Brahmin families, and enhance Brahmin/Vedic/Scriptural knowledge. All Brahmin institutions should be challenged to broaden their Brahmin content and self-image through study programs, seminars, and Vedic literacy institutes. All Brahmin institutions should be encouraged to pursue Brahmin experiences for their members and constituencies. However, there can be no substitute for home, temple, and school as the primary settings for meaningful Brahmin experiences. Ensuring Brahmin continuity remains primarily an individual and family as well as communal responsibility. Religious pluralism is critical to Brahmin continuity. Different Brahmins will require different avenues to connect with and experience Brahmin tradition and civilizations. Religious pluralism--the availability of diverse models--is critical to nurturing that serious commitment. Ideological disagreements between the religious movements are healthy, as expressed with moderation and respect, both as correctives to excesses of one another and as a statement of the depth of our passionate commitment. All Brahmins regardless of ideological conviction ought to affirm the importance of plurality of religious expression within Brahmanism and Hinduisms.

3. Brahmin organizations should harness their human relations skills to foster greater understanding, dialogue, and ties between various Brahmin sects. Consideration should also be given to an ongoing publication on Brahmin-Brahmin relations. There is no single "magic bullet" to attain Brahmin continuity. Brahmin continuity requires long and hard work at transmitting Brahmin heritage, culture and Sanskrit language. We must not place excessive faith in a single solution as the answer to our problems. We cannot content ourselves with a "business as usual" approach even if accompanied by worthwhile programs.

4.   In pursuing continuity, the community needs to know which continuity initiatives are working and which are not. In particular, Brahmin communities should undertake a study of what models of temples/synagogues/churches in each of the religious movements have been especially effective in recent years.   Brahmins should be challenged with the task of making Brahmanism attractive. Brahmanism is more than a religion and a set of moral teachings. It requires identification with the Brahmin people as a whole, with its historical language, and a familial closeness with Brahmins of all kinds everywhere. Brahmins, whether by birth or by choice, must consider themselves links in a great chain of Brahmin tradition that stretches across the generations binding Brahmins across time and across geographically as well as ideologically diverse boundaries.

5. Exchange programs sponsored by the Brahmin organizations to foster greater sense of people-hood and ties to Diaspora of Brahmins within the Indian education system. Brahmins ought to address the broader issue of the meaning of a Brahmin people for the 21st century. Similarly, encounters with Brahmins in other Diaspora communities and engaging Indians with Diaspora Brahmins foster greater bonds of people-hood. A minority such as the Brahmin people, living within a democratic Telugu/other Indian/American culture, must both affirm what it is and define what it is not. Therefore, Brahmin leaders have to define boundaries in Brahmin life. Clearly, we must be inclusive in being open to any Brahmin interested in pursuing the meaning of his or her Brahmin identity. Yet at the same time we must be exclusive in clearly defining what we are not. This need for operational inclusivity accompanied by ideological exclusivity challenges the entire Brahmin community. Brahmin continuity depends upon maintaining a distinctively Brahmin culture that is clear both about what it is and about what it is not.

The Brahmin community must develop a multi-track approach to strengthen Brahmin identity and positive Brahmin experience in both in-marriages and mixed-marriages. We must reach-in and reach out.

6.   The rapidly rising number of intermarriages represents a serious risk to the vitality of the Brahmin community, Brahmin continuity, and identity. Clearly the Brahmin community prefers that Brahmins marry other Brahmins.

The challenge for the Brahmin community is to offer positive communal and personal connection to intermarried.

We should acknowledge that conversion remains the ideal response to the reality of mixed-marriage. However, the community ought to maintain open doors to all Brahmins, those seeking to be Brahmins, and those who wish to raise their children as Brahmins. Brahmins should undertake careful research of who is currently converting and why, what the trends have been, and with what results.

Studies repeatedly indicate the high correlation between intensive education and continuity. Research sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies underscored the critical importance of the adolescent years in developing attitudes towards marriage, family, and commitments to leading a Jewish life. Brahmins don't have to reinvent the wheel. These adolescent experiences include both formal and informal Brahmin education (day schools, supplementary high schools, youth groups, and summer camps). So, we should study and learn from the experiences of Jews to ensure that Brahmin education should be considered as a continuum throughout one's life. Upanayanam should be seen as a significant step on the continuum and a beginning of the road toward the continuity of Brahmin culture. The principle should be ensuring availability of quality Brahmin education for all Brahmins, and no one should be denied such quality education for reasons of cost. In particular, the Brahmin community must focus on the high cost of day school education and find ways to make intensive Brahmin experiences and quality Brahmin education more affordable for a broader cross-section of Brahmins.

Intra-Brahmin Relations

Brahmins everywhere are connected by ties of history and heritage. Although we often disagree vigorously over the interpretation of tradition and over a vision for the future, these disagreements reflect our passionate concern for the Brahmin tribe and its future. Brahmanism/Sanathana Dharma/Vedic religion represents the shared treasure of all Brahmins, Hindus and Indians. Ideological differences are a measure of our communal health, as they reflect our commitment to Brahmanism as our common heritage. Currently, we confront serious divides within the Brahmins over politics, ideology, religion, and culture. Growing fissures prevail, both in India and the Brahmin Diaspora, between Brahmins who define themselves as religious secular or secular agnostics, atheist communists, traditionalists or liberals or leftist liberals. Differences over fundamental issues--who is a Brahmin, what does it mean to be a Brahmin and the future agenda of the Brahmins -- are real and warrant significant attention. Artificial statements of unity are illusory at best and harmful at worst.

In spite of our differences, ties of Brahmin-hood and heritage remain deep. We must never permit our disagreements, no matter how passionately debated, to undermine our commitment to our devotion to one another. Our disagreements should not be permitted to spill over into de-legitimating of one group of Brahmins by another.

Brahmins the world over confront the problem of continuity, of insuring that future generations remain Brahmins. An obvious and major challenge for world Brahmin community lies in strengthening the connection of Brahmins to their religious, linguistic and cultural heritage. Today we are facing a troubling indifference and apathy to the Brahmin heritage.

The availability of diverse avenues for expression of Brahmin identity, wherever Brahmins live, enriches the entire Brahmin community. Policies that limit the full expression of Brahmin religious options will have real negative impact on the goal of

Brahmin continuity. The existence of varied Brahmin religious and cultural options is a positive force in India, in the U.S. and in those other countries where similar conditions prevail. They could have a very positive impact as well on the way many Brahmins relate to Brahmanism. We believe that apathy and indifference to Brahmanism and Brahmin heritage constitute fundamental threats to the Brahmin future.

Historically, the ability of Brahmins to marry one another has been critical to preserving Brahmin unity and Brahmin-hood. When sectarian differences arose over defining who is a Brahmin, making marriage an impossibility between particular Brahmin groupings, e.g. Niyogis and Vaidikis, a schism resulted that split these groups. Today, the problem of preserving marriage eligibility among Brahmins is quite real given conflicting criteria of defining who is a Brahmin. Therefore it is imperative that greater attention be paid once again to seeking common conversion procedures, acceptable to all the major religious streams of Brahmins. In addition, the same liberal principles of conversion into Brahmanism should be applied to people of other castes/tribes/religions with an emphasis on Brahminical education and principles of vegetarianism.

Actions taken within India ought to recognize the legitimacy of these movements. Political institutions should refrain from action that would result in the de-legitimating of the major religious streams within Brahmanism. Therefore, all the religious movements will be far better served by working to expose all Brahmins to the beauties inherent in Brahmin tradition.

Conclusion

"The Brahmin community will thrive only if it is prepared to invest massively in serious, sustained Brahmin education. A Brahmanism without walls can endure only if individual Brahmins are saturated with Brahmin memory and music, texts and traditions, values and beliefs. A well-formed Brahmin identity in our children is the best bulwark against their turning a cold shoulder to the Brahmin community as adults."

Chapter 37
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The Gurav are an occupational community comprising several castes. They are among the traditional service providers found in villages, for whom they act in a priestly role, and are found in several states of India.

Etymology

The origin of the word *Gurav* is uncertain. The community claim it derives from the Sanskrit plural of *guru*. While known as *Gurav* in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, they are also called *Gorava* in Karnataka and *Tapodhan Brahmin* in Gujarat.

Function

Both Gurav women and men perform the traditional occupations of their community. They are neither cultivators nor village officers but rather providers of a service deemed necessary for the functioning of the village, as with artisans. They traditionally serve as priests, maintainers and managers in temples devoted to Shiva, mostly in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Some act in a role similar to shamans, being intermediaries between the temple idol and the soliciting believer, and others also serve as priests to the families of the temple dancers. Their other traditional roles are also connected to Shaivite worship, such as musicianship and the sale both of leaf plates and symbolic flowers. Local testimony suggests that the Gurav also act in a religious capacity outside temple grounds: at harvest time in the Mawal region, they are called upon to provide a symbolic sprinkling of water at threshing grounds

Composition

The Bhavika, Lingayat and Saiva are the most prominent among the distinct endogamous castes that comprise the Gurav.

These groups are in turn subdivided; for example, the Saiva Gurav have Nagari, Nilakantha and Swayambhu as subcastes, while the Lingayat Gurav are split into the Hugara, Jira and Malgara .

Bhavika Gurav

The Bhavika Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and comprise mostly members drawn from the Kunbi caste. Few are literate or formally educated even in their own rituals, and the temples that they serve are very rudimentary in style.

During folk festivals, members of this community often perform animal sacrifices in honour of the village deities whose shrines they serve.

Lingayat Gurav

The Lingayat Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region and on the borders between Maharashtra and Karnataka except Omerga-basavakalyan Region(Ladwanti village). They do not know from which caste they originate but claim to have migrated to their present regions from Karnataka when they suffered persecution after the death of Basava, the founder of their sect. They are strict vegetarians and believe their high degree of devotion to Shiva makes them superior to other Gurav subgroups. It is this zeal that also causes them to disdain being grouped with other castes.

Saiva Gurav

According to Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat, a Hindu priest and academic, although the Lingayat Gurav believe themselves to be superior among the various Gurav subgroups, it is the Saiva Gurav who are most respected by the people of Maharashtra This family members perform an sacred tread ceremony .

Mostly literate and educated, the Maharashtrian members of the Saiva Gurav developed a myth of origin in the early 19th century and prefer to call themselves *Saiva Brahmin*. Their self-published research, in the form of a clan history known as a *jatipurana*, proposes a lineal connection with the sage Dadhichi through his son Sudarsana and thus a Brahmin status. The legend says that Sudarsana was stripped of certain Vedic powers by an offended Shiva but was also granted the right to perform the puja rituals. The claims of the community to Brahminhood were accepted both by a *sankaracharya* (a respected authority and arbitrator of the Hindu faith) and colonial law courts but are not accepted in general Maharashtrian society, although Brahmins do acknowledge the right of the Saiva Gurav to offer the first daily puja.

Socio-economic status

In areas other than Maharashtra, the Brahmin status of the Gurav is commonly accepted but they are nonetheless considered to be of a low rank in the social structure.

The sociologist M. N. Srinivas noted this peculiarity of low-status Brahminhood in particular regarding the Tapodhan of Gujarat. In Maharashtra they are considered to be a Shudra community in the Hindu ritual ranking system known as *varna*.

It is probable that the Gurav are among the less well-paid among the various *balutedhar* communities, perhaps because the product of their labours, being mostly intangible, is less apparent than that of, say, the carpenters and blacksmiths.

They are not among those groups who have noticeably suffered historically from the effects of social degradation or lack of access to opportunity, although in Maharashtra they are listed among the Other Backward Classes under India's system of positive discrimination.

Nayi brahmin

The Nayi brahmin or Nada brahmin is a caste originating in India. This caste is also called *mangala brahmin (auspicious).* The members were traditionally occupied as temple musicians and temple vocalists in Andhrapradesh.
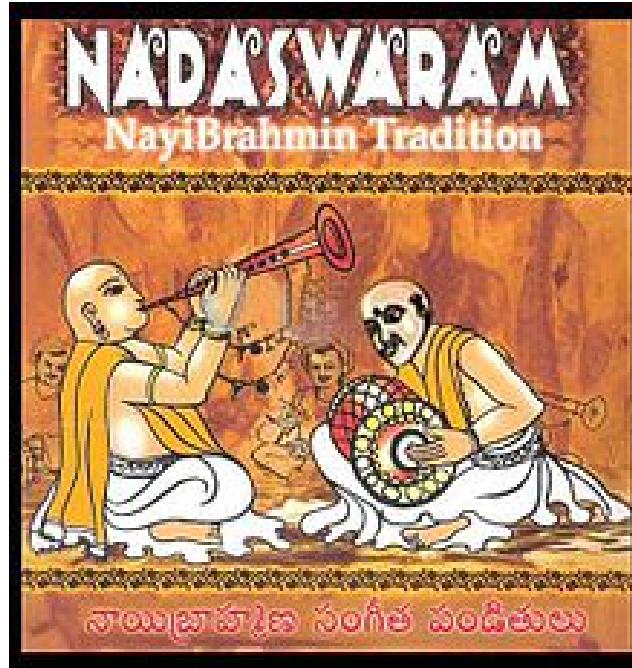
Nayi Brahmin temple musicians

List of Nayi brahmins

- Vaidya Narayana Dhanvantari - Nayi brahmin main kuladev
- Acharya Charaka
- Acharya Sushruta
- Manikkavacakar - Tamil poet
- Kambar, Tamil ramayana writer
- Padmasri Mandolin Srinivas, mandolin player
- Mandolin U.Rajesh
- Dr G. Ethirajulu the first qualified orthopaedic surgeon in Andhrapradesh
- Dr J. Naresh babu - first spine surgeon in Andhrapradesh M. S. (orho), F. N. B. (Spine surgery) - mallika spine center Guntur
- Dr Rallapati Aravind, the first guynic doctor in uttarandhra
- Annavarapu Ramaswamy, violin player
- Daliparthi Pichhahhari, nadhaswara vidhwan
- Domada Chittabbayi, nadhaswara vidhwan
- Dr Dandamudi Sumathi - mridanga vidhwan. She is the only lady who got a presented an award doctorate in mridangam and ugadi puraskar
- Dr Narayana Rao (Orthopaedi guntur gov hospital)
- Dr G. Vijaya Saradi Ms (Gen. Surgery And ap medical council Vice-Chairman)
- Dr G. Lakshmi (gynic and professor)

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Nayi brahmin titles

- Nayibrahmin
- Dhanvantaris
- Nada brahmin
- Pandithar
- Pandith or Pandit
- Mangala brahmin
- Vaidya, baidya
- Sharma
- Maran
- Moily
- Sen

Chapter 38
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN ASSAM

Kamrupi Brahmins, also known as Kamarupi Brahmana and Kamrupi Bamon; are those brahmins who claimed their descent from the Kanauji immigrant brahmins whom settled in Kamarupa(present day Assam). They brought with them different Hindu epics and became the torch-bearers of Aryan culture in the region.

Background

Kamrupi brahmins are those brahmins who claimed their descent from the Kanauji immigrant brahmins of a very early period. They settled in Kamrup and later on spread out.

Rites and rituals

Kamrupi Brahmins differed from fellow Indo-Aryans in their rituals. During a ritual named Amati, mother earth is believed passing through menstrual period and thus to be in an unclean state. Hence on those days farmers would not till the soil or plant any seeds. Orthodox widows and Brahmins abstain from any food except fruits. Devi, a special synthesized form of both Durga of the Hindu pantheon and a tribal female deity, is still being worshiped in Cooch Behar. Worship of Devi is generally performed by a Kamrupi Brahmin of North Bengal.

History

Kamrupi Brahmins were prosperous during the Varman dynasty's reign of Kamarupa. The Kamrupi king Bhaskar Varman regularly gave land grants to the Kamrupi Brahmins. With these land grants they were also given copper plates grants. A portion of the copper-plate grant of Bhaskar Varman states: Rigvedic, Samavedic and Yajurvedic Brahmins lived in Kamarupa before the time of Bhaskar Varman. Of these three classes of Brahmins the followers of the Bahvrichya branch of the Rigveda were divided into the gotras of: - Kasyapa, - Kausika, - Gautama, - Parasarya, - Bharadvaja, - Varaha, - Vatsya, - Varhaspatya and - Saunaka ; Of those following the Chhandoga branch of the Samaveda belonged to the gotras of : - Paskalya The followers of the Taittiriya branch of the Yajurveda belonged to the gotra of: - Kasyapa And those of the Charaka branch to the gotra of: - Katyayana ; The followers of the Vajasaneya branch belonged to the gotras of: - Angirasa, - Alambayana, - Gargya, - Gautama, - Bharadvaja, - Yaska, - Sakatayana, and - Salankayana besides the six gotras mentioned before. In all these three groups of Brahmanas living in Kamarupa had 26 gotras at the time of their greatest power and standing. In later ages any traces of the Samavedic and Rigvedic Brahmanas disappeared. Most probably they had changed their residence or their lines came to an end. The following lines occur in Raja Harendra Narayan's Raja vansabali -

" The Brahmanas living on the northern bank of the Lauhitya were all followers of the Yajurveda. They were all saddcharis and ritvijas (Vedic sacrificers).

Chapter 39
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN BIHAR

Bhumihar Brahmin

Bhumihars are a Hindu caste mainly found in Bihar (including the Mithila region), the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh, and Nepal.

The Bhumihars claim Brahmin status, and are also referred to as Bhumihar Brahmin. In Bihar, they are also known as Babhan and they have also been called Bhuinhar.

The Bhumihars were a prominent land-owning group of eastern India until the 20th century, and controlled nine small princely states in the region. The Bhumihar community played an important role in the peasant movements of India, and was highly influential in politics of Bihar in the 20th century.

Etymology

The word Bhumihar is of relatively recent origin, first used in the records of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1865. It derives from the word *bhoomi* ("land"), referring to the caste's landowner status. The term *Bhumihar Brahmin* was adopted by the community in the late-19th century to emphasise their claim of belonging to the priestly Brahmin class. The alternate name "Babhan" has been described as a distorted colloquial term for "Brahmin".

History

As with many castes in India, there are numerous myths regarding the origins of the Bhumihar community. One legend claims that their ancestors were Brahmins who were set up to take the place of the Kshatriyas slain by Parashurama but some non-Bhumihars have implied that they are the mixed-race offspring of Brahmin men and Kshatriya women. Other legends state that they are the offspring of a union between Rajput men and Brahmin women, or that they derive from Brahman-Buddhists who lost their high position in Hindu society. The Bhumihars themselves dislike these narratives involving "hybridity" or "fallen status", and claim to be pure Brahmins.

By the 16th century, the Bhumihars controlled vast stretches of land in eastern India, particularly in north Bihar. By the late eighteenth century, along with Bihari Rajputs, they had established themselves as the most prominent landholders of the region. Oral legends suggest that along with Muslims and Rajputs, they displaced the Bhar and Chero natives of the region. The weakening of the Mughal suzerainty over the region gave rise to several small Bhumihar states. For example, the revenue contractors for the Mughal province of Awadh declared themselves the Maharaja of Benares. They successfully defended their independence against the Nawab of Awadh in the 1750s and 1760s, before

becoming a British dependency. Other princely states and fiefdoms ruled by Bhumihars included Bettia, Tekari, Hathwa, Tamukhi, Sheohar, Mahishadal, Pakur and Maheshpur.

The distinctive Bhumihar caste identity was largely created through military service. During early days of British expansion in India, a large number of Bhumihars participated in battles and revolts against the East India Company. The Company also recruited Bhumihar sepoys in large numbers.

Ruler of the Benares State in 1870s

Campaign for higher varna status

Bhumihars claim to be descendants of Brahmins who held land grants, a theory supported by scholars such as Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya. However, other communities did not give them the ritual status of Brahmins, as most of them were cultivators during the British Raj. Some of the early censuses of British India categorised Bhumihars as Shudras, the lowest of the four varnas. This was considered insulting, especially since several zamindars (land-owning aristocrats) were Bhumihars.

Like many other aspirational castes, the Bhumihars followed the process of sanskritisation to achieve their end. The Bhumihar zamindars and princely state rulers established caste-based associations (*sabha*s) to form a community network and to advance their claims to Brahmin status. The *Pradhan Bhumihar Brahman Sabha* ("Chief Assembly of Bhumihar Brahmins") was established in Patna in 1889. Its objective was "to improve moral, social and educational reforms of the community and to represent the wants of the community to the government". The Bhumihar Brahmin Mahasabha ("great assembly") was established in 1896. The local *Bhumihar Brahmin Sabha*s included the ones at Muzaffarapur (1899), Patna (1899), Gaya (1900) and Saran (1908). These associations filed numerous petitions to be classified as Brahmins in the 1901 census report. Edward Albert Gait, the author of the census report, stated that the Bhumihars did not remain Brahmins, although there was evidence favouring their Brahmin origin. He wrote that the general Hindu public considered them a separate caste, which is "generally, but not always, regarded as slightly superior" to the Rajput Kshatriyas.

Herbert Hope Risley, the Census Commissioner of British India, believed them to be an offshoot of the Rajputs. Persistent pressure from the Mahasabha, who glorified the history of the community, led to official recognition of the Bhumihars as Brahmins in the later Raj censuses. According to Ashwani Kumar, the Bhumihar claim to Brahmin status means that today "unlike other upper castes, [they] guard the local caste hierarchy more zealously for they perpetually feel the pressure of being dislocated and discredited in the topsy-turvy world of caste."

Besides campaigning for the Brahmin status, the caste associations also played an important role in general welfare of the community. In 1899, the Bhumihar Brahmin Mahasabha, with financial aid from a zamindar, established a college at Muzaffarpur. This was accredited to award degrees in the following year and it was a significant development because education in the area was improving rapidly but students desirous of furthering it had to travel to Bhagalpur, Calcutta or Patna. By 1920, 10 per cent of Bhumihars in Bihar were literate, making them one of the few literate castes; in this achievement, however, they were well behind the Kayasthas (33 per cent) and some other groups. In the first half of the 20th century, the Bhumihars suffered increasing economic hardships due to the steady fragmentation of land rights among heirs and the decline in agricultural prices during the Great Depression. During this period, the Bhumihar associations served as community networks that facilitated access to English education and urban employment. As with the Rajputs, Kayasthas and other high castes of Bihar — and as opposed to the methods used by most lower castes — neither the Mahasabha nor any other formal body exercised power to make and enforce caste rules.

The Bhumihar Brahmin Mahasabha held annual sessions in different parts of present-day Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Among its prominent leaders was Sahajanand Saraswati, a leader of the Bhumihar Brahmin Sabha of Patna. During the Balia session of 1914, Sahajanand defended the Brahmin status of the Bhumihars, using quotes from Hindu scriptures to argue that priestly functions do not alone define Brahmins. In 1916, he published a book titled *Bhumihar Brahmin Parichay* ("Introduction to Bhumihar Brahmins"), which outlined these arguments. He classified Brahmins into two categories — begging (*yachak*) and non-begging (*ayachak*) — and stated that the Bhumihars were among the non-begging Brahmins. The Bhumihars of Uttar Pradesh attempted to popularize the term "Bhumihar Brahmin", while discarding the term "Babhan". However, the term "Babhan" remained popular in Bihar. The recognized Brahmins did not favour the Bhumihar attempts to claim an equal status, and even stopped going to Bhumihar homes to perform ceremonies.

Political influence

Being traditional landlords and one of the early literate castes, the Bhumihars have been influential in the politics of Bihar since the British days. Noted Bhumihar princely state rulers included Harendra Kishore Singh (Raja of Bettiah) and Vibhuti Narayan Singh (Raja of the Benares).

The Bhumihars played a pioneering role in organizing peasant, leftist and independence movements since 1910s. In 1914 and 1916, the Bhumihars of Pipra and Turkaulia revolted against indigo cultivation. When Mahatma Gandhi launched satyagraha against indigo cultivation in Motihari in 1917, a number of Bhumihar intellectuals joined the protest. These included Krishna Singh (or Sinha), Ram Dayalu Singh, Ramnandan Mishra, Shilbhadra Yaji, Karyanand Sharma and Sahajanand Saraswati.

While a section of Bhumihars were landowners, the vast majority belonged to tenantry. Starting in 1914, two factions emerged in the Bhumihar Mahasabha: the landowner-dominated faction led by Ganesh Dutt, and the tenant-dominated faction led by Sahajanand Saraswati. Sahajanand came from a zamindar family, which had been reduced to tenant status. He attracted a large number of followers who, as tenants, were exploited by the rich landlords. His support for the non-cooperation movement also alarmed the landlords, who were loyal to the British colonial administration. The growing differences between the two factions resulted in a split in the Mahasabha, in 1925-26. Sahajanand established an ashram at Bihta, which started attracting tenants and peasants from other castes as well. When the rich Bhumihar landlords stopped supporting Sahajanand's activities, he declared that caste associations were a means to continue their supremacy. He established a caste-agnostic peasants movement, which later evolved into All India Kisan Sabha. In Bihar, Kisan Sabha, as well as the Communist Party of India (which was heavily inspired by Kisan Sabha), were identified as Bhumihar-dominated organizations for years.

After Sahajanand gave up caste politics, Ganesh Dutt emerged as the leader of Bhumihar Mahasabha. He later entered the Legislative Council, and distributed patronage to other members of his caste. This patronage was extended further, when Krishna Singh, a Bhumihar, became the Premier and Chief Minister of Bihar. His tenure saw the rise of a number of influential Bhumihar leaders including Mahesh Prasad Sinha, Krishnakant Singh, LP Shahi, Basawan Sinha, and Kailashpati Mishra. Singh also worked for the welfare of the lower castes. He was the first chief minister in India to abolish the zamindari system. He also led Dalits' entry into Baidyanath Temple.

After Krishna Singh's death in 1961, the Bhumihar political hegemony gradually declined. A small number of Bhumihar leaders continued to play a significant role in the state unit of the Indian National Congress. These included Ramashray Prasad Singh, Rajo Singh, Ramjatan Sinha, Shyam Sunder Singh Dhiraj and Maha Chandra Singh. The Congress parliamentarians Ganga Sharan Singh (Sinha) and Shyam Nandan Prasad Mishra also belonged to the Bhumihar community. Chandrashekhar Singh, the Chief Minister of Bihar during 1983-85, was also a Bhumihar.

The Bhumihar influence in Bihar politics declined considerably after electoral defeat of Congress in the Bihar Legislative Assembly election, 1990. The backward OBC castes like Yadav, led by Lalu Prasad Yadav, replaced them in the political circles. In the Indian general election, 1999, only three Bhumihars were elected: C. P. Thakur (BJP), Kailashpati Mishra (BJP) and Rajo Singh (Congress). A few Bhumihar leaders also

emerged in the political parties dominated by the lower castes. These included Akhilesh Prasad Singh (RJD) and Arun Kumar (Samata Dal; now Rashtriya Lok Samata Party).

As their power in the electoral politics declined, a number of Bhumihars were attracted to Ranvir Sena, a private militia established in 1994. The group has carried out armed operations against the Naxals in the region, and has been involved in atrocities against the lower castes, such as the Laxmanpur Bathe massacre.

Influence in other fields

Being one of the early literate groups of British India, the Bhumihar community produced several prominent literary figures. These include Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Rahul Sankrityayan, Rambriksh Benipuri and Gopal Singh Nepali. The ancestors of the Nobel Prize-winning author V. S. Naipaul were also Bhumihars.

Customs and traditions

The Bhumihars follow a subset of the Brahmin rituals, and claim to be "tri-karma" Brahmins. The Christian missionary M. A. Sherring wrote in 1872 that the Bhumihars performed only three of the six prescribed Brahmanical duties: "They give alms, but do not receive them; they offer sacrifices to their idols, but do not perform the duties and offices of a priesthood; they read the sacred writings, but do not teach them."

Some Bhumihars in Muzaffarpur trace their lineage to Husseini Brahmins, and participate in the Muharram processions. The Bhumihars outside Purvanchal-Bihar region may follow the respective local customs and traditions. For example, in Chandipur village of Murshidabad district (West Bengal), a section of Bhumihars became the landlords after death of the British indigo plantation owners. They are now "thoroughly Bengali": they worship Kali as their primary deity, and are regarded as Brahmins by others in the village.

Common surnames

Bhumihars use the same surnames as those of north Indian Brahmins as well as some surnames in common with Rajputs. In Bihar, the Bhumihars started using the surname Sharma and the title Pandit in the 20th century. Other common traditional Brahmin surnames used by the Bhumihars include Mishra, Dikshit, Tivan, Patak, Pande and Upadhyaya. It is also common for Bhumihars to affix Singh (usually identified with Kshatriyas, especially Rajputs) to their name.

Maithil Brahmin

Maithil Brahmins are a Hindu Brahmin community from the Mithila region that lies in northern and eastern Bihar of India and Province No. 2 of Nepal. They are one of the five Pancha-Gauda Brahmin communities.

History

Maithil Brahmins have been influential in the Mithila with many of the dynasties belong to the community such as the Oinwar dynasty and Raj Darbhanga, both whom were noted for there patronisation of Maithil culture and Maithili literature.Raj Banaili was also controlled by Maithil Brahmins.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Maithil Brahmins became politically significant in Bihar. Binodanand Jha, Lalit Narayan Mishra, and Jagannath Mishra emerged as prominent political leaders of the community. Under the Chief Ministry of Jagannath Mishra, many Maithil Brahmins assumed important political positions in Bihar. Parmanand Jha is a Nepalese politician who served as the Vice President of Nepal from 23 July 2008 to 31 October 2015. Durgananda Jha was Nepalese democratic fighter.

Divisions

According to the Vedic *Sanghita*, Maithil Brahmins are divided into the Bachasnai and the Chhandog and each group is strictly exogamous. They are also further classified by four main Mulgrams, the Strotiyas, the Yogs, the Panjis and the Jaiwars. They are all expected to be endogamous however these days this is no longer enforced strictly.

Religious practices

They are mainly practitioners of Shaktism in various forms, however some are also Shaivites and Vaishnavites.

Panjis

Panjis or Panji Prabandh are extensive genealogical records maintained among Maithil Brahmins similar to the Hindu genealogy registers at Haridwar. They are used mainly when fixing marriages and delineate the last 14 generations of the bride and grooms family.

Notable persons

- Jagannath Mishra – Former Chief Minister of Bihar
- Vācaspati Miśra – Founder of the Bhāmatī school of Advaita Vedanta philosophy

Sakaldwipiya

Sakaldwipiya Brahmins (or Bhojaka Brahmins or Maga Brahmins) is a class of Hindu Brahmin priests and Ayurveda teachers (*acharyas*) and practitioners, with significant concentrations of their populations occurring in Western and Northern India with Iranian roots. The name can also be spelled as *Shakdvipi*, *Shakdwipi*, *Shakdweepi*, *Shakdvipiya*, *Shakdwipiya*, *Shakdweepiya*, *Shakadwipi*, and *Sakadwipi*.

Origin myth

The Sakaldwipiya Brahmin community of India identify them selves as having Iranian roots, and assert that they inherit their by-name *mragha* from a group of priests who established themselves in India as the Mragha-Dias or Maga-Brahmins. The doctrinal basis for that assertion is found in *Bhavishya Purana* 133.

> Krishna's son Samba was afflicted with leprosy, which was cured after he worshiped Surya, Hinduism's god of the Sun. In response, he built a temple to Surya on the banks of the Chandrabhaga river, but no Brahmin could be found willing to take up the role of a temple priest, as they could not accept offerings made to gods. So Samba sought help of Gauramukha("white face"), the adviser of the Yadu chief, Ugrasena.:Gauramukha responded with a suggestion that Samba go to Shakdvipa (see note on Mahabharata 6:11, below) and invite their priests to worship Surya. Further, asked Samba, "tell me, oh Brahmin, what are the antecedents of these worshipers of the Sun?" To which Gauramukha replied... "The first of the Brahmins amidst the Śakas was called *Sujihva* ("good tongue") [...] He had a daughter of the name Nikshubha, who so enamored Surya that she was impregnated by him. Thus she gave birth to Jarashabda who was the founding father of all the *Maga-Ācārya*. They are distinguished by the sacred girdle called the *Avyanga* that they wear around their waist." And so Samba called on Krishna to send him Garuda, on whose back he then flew to Shakadwipa. He collected the *Maga-Ācārya* ("Maga teacher"), brought them back to India and installed them as priests of his Surya temple.
>
> Of the pious representatives of 18 families Samba invited to resettle in the city of Sambapura, eight were Mandagas, and their descendants became Shudras. The other 10 were Maga Brahmins, who married Bhoja vamsa women and so their descendants came to be known as Bhojakas.

As such, the Sakaldwipiya are one of only two Brahmin groups who are said to have originated outside India, even if about half their clan names (*gotra*s) are the same as those of other Brahmins.

In epigraphy

The tale of the arrival of the Sakaldwipiyas appears to have been part of living tradition for many centuries. The Govindpur inscription of 1137-1138 refers to a *maga* family of Gaya, Bihar that was celebrated for its learning, Vedic scholarship and poetic faculty, and who descended from one of the original Samb invitees.[*full citation needed*]

Internal structures

The Bhojakas and sewaks are also historically associated with several Jain temples in Gujarat and Rajasthan, where they serve as priests and attendants. Some of the Sakaldwipiya Brahmins of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are Ayurvedic physicians, some are priests in Rajput families, while yet others are landholders.

Saryupareen Brahmin

Saryupareen Brahmins, also known as Sarvariya Brahmins or Saryupariya Brahmins, are North Indian Brahmins residing near Sarayu river in Uttar Pradesh .The area inhabited by Saryupareen Brahmins was part of ancient Kashi, Kosala and Vatsa Mahajanpadas.Tripathi,Shukla,Mishra,Pandey,Upadhyay,Dikshit,Pathak,Dwivedi, Ojha and Chaturvedi are surnames used by them. They are mostly concentrated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Notable personalities

- Tulsidas
- Ramanand
- Rambhadracharya
- Kripalu Maharaj
- Akhandanand
- Swami Karpatri

Chapter 40
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN DELHI

Bias Brahmin

The Bias (or Vyas) are a Brahmin community found in the Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. They trace their origin to Gujarat.

Origin

The word *bias* means a preacher in Sanskrit. The *Bias* is an umbrella term for the members of the three Gujarati Brahmin communities named *Nagar*, *Audichya* and *Bardai* who migrated from Gujarat centuries ago and got settled in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan. These three sub-communities of the group intermarry. They speak Haryanvi, Punjabi, Hindi or other local dialects. In Haryana, the community is found mainly in the districts of Bhiwani, Hisar, Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Karnal.

Present circumstances

The Bias are strictly endogamous and practice clan exogamy. Their clans are referred to as gotras, and theoretically all gotra claim descent from a respected saint or rishi. Among the larger gotras are the Gautam, Kaushik, Angira, Vashishta, Gargas, Bhargav, Bhardwaj, Parashar, Koshish, Monish, Sandal etc. that are further divided into sub-clans known as *shashans*. In some respects, they are regarded as the highest class of Brahmins.

The traditional occupation of the Bias is that of village priests. A small number were large landowners, but most of the community are petty landowners. Like other Brahmin groupings, they have been more successful in taking up higher education, and generally are economically well off. Nowadays, their intermarriage with Gaurs is quite common.

Surnames

The Bias use various surnames including their respective clan-names, Sharma, Pandit and Vyas.

Chapter 41
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN GOA

Chitpavan

The Chitpavan Brahmin or Kokanastha Brahmin (i.e. "Brahmins native to the Konkan"), is a Hindu Brahmin community from Konkan, the coastal region of the state of Maharashtra in India. The community came into prominence during the 18th century when the heirs of Peshwa from the Bhat family of Balaji Vishwanath became the de facto rulers of the Maratha empire. Under the British Raj, they were the one of the Hindu community in Maharashtra to flock to western education and as such they provided the bulk of social reformers, educationalists and nationalists of the late 19th century. Until the 18th century, the Chitpavans were held in low esteem by the Deshastha, the older established Brahmin community of Maharashtra region.

Origin

There are two common mythological theories of origin among the Chitpavans. The more contemporary theory is based on the etymology of their name meaning "pure of mind", while an older belief uses the alternate etymology of "pure from the pyre" and is based on the tale of Parashurama in the *Sahyadrikhanda* of the *Skanda Purana*. The Parashurama myth of origin is identical to the myth that claimed by the Bene Israel of the Kolaba district. According to Bene Israeli myth, the Chitpavan and Bene Israel are descendants from a group of 14 people shipwrecked off the Konkan coast. One group converted to Hinduism as Chitpavan Brahmins, the other remained Jewish or Bene Israel.

Originally the myth pertained to Chitpavans only, but a certain section of society was obsessed with their lineage, hence furthered the name of Bene israel.

The Konkan region has witnessed the immigration of various groups, such as the Bene Israeli,and Kudaldeshkars. Each of these settled in distinct parts of the region and there was little mingling between them. The Chitpavans were apparently the last major community to arrive there and consequently the area in which they settled, around Ratnagiri, was both the least fertile and that with a relative scarcity of good ports for trading. While the other groups generally took up trade as their primary occupation, the Chitpavans became known as administrators.

History

Rise and fall during the Maratha rule

Very little is known of the Chitpavans before 1707 A.D. Around this time, Balaji Vishwanth Bhat, a Chitpavan arrived from Ratnagiri to the Pune-Satara area. He was brought there on the basis of his reputation of being an efficient administrator. He quickly

gained the attention of Chhatrapati Shahu. Balaji's work so pleased the Chhatrapati that he was appointed the Peshwa or Prime Minister in 1713. He ran a well-organized administration, and, by the time of his death in 1720, he had laid the groundwork for the expansion of the Maratha Empire. Since this time until the fall of the Maratha Empire, the seat of the Peshwa would be held by the members of the Bhat family.,

With the accession of Balaji Baji Rao and his family to the supreme authority of the Maratha Empire, Chitpavan immigrants began arriving *en masse* from the Konkan to Pune where the Peshwa offered all important offices to his fellow castemen. The Chitpavan kin were rewarded with tax relief and grants of land. Historians cite nepotism and corruption as causes of the fall of the Maratha Empire in 1818. Richard Maxwell Eaton states that this rise of the Chitpavans is a classic example of social rank rising with political fortune. The alleged haughty behavior by the upstart Chitpavans caused conflicts with other communities which manifested itself as late as in 1948 in the form of anti-Brahminism after the killing of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, a Chitpavan.

The Peshwa rule forced untouchability treatment on the Mahars as a result Mahars served in the armies of the East India company On 1 January 1818 in the Battle of Koregaon between forces of the East India Company and the Peshwa,Mahars soldiers formed the biggest contingent of the Company force. The battle effectively ended Peshwa rule

Role in Indian politics

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

After the fall of the Maratha Empire in 1818, the Chitpavans lost their political dominance to the British. The British would not subsidize the Chitpavans on the same scale that their caste-fellow, the Peshwas had done in the past. Pay and power was now

significantly reduced. Poorer Chitpavan students adapted and started learning English because of better opportunities in the British administration.

Some of the prominent figures in the Hindu reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries came from the Chitpavan Brahmin community. These included Dhondo Keshav Karve, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vinoba Bhave.*Wolpert, Stanley A. (April 1991). Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 32. ISBN 978-0195623925.</ref>* Some of the strongest resistance to change also came from the very same community.The vanguard and the old guard clashed many times. D. K. Karve was ostracised. Even Tilak offered penance for breaking caste or religious rules.One was for taking tea at Poona Christian mission in 1892 and the second was going overseas to England in 1919

The Chitpavan community includes two major politicians in the Gandhian tradition: Gopal Krishna Gokhale whom Gandhi acknowledged as a preceptor, and Vinoba Bhave, one of his outstanding disciples. Gandhi describes Bhave as the *Jewel of his disciples*, and recognized Gokhale as his political guru. However, strong opposition to Gandhi also came from within the Chitpavan community. V D Savarkar, the founder of the Hindu nationalist political ideology Hindutva, was a Chitpavan Brahmin. Several members of the Chitpavan community were among the first to embrace the Hindutva ideology, which they thought was a logical extension of the legacy of the Peshwas and caste-fellow Tilak. These Chitpavans felt out of place with the Indian social reform movement of Mahatama Phule and the mass politics of Mahatama Gandhi. Large numbers of the community looked to Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha and finally the RSS. Gandhi's assassins Narayan Apte and Nathuram Godse, drew their inspiration from fringe groups in this reactionary trend.

Military

The Chitpavans have considered themselves to be both warriors and priests. The willingness of the Chitpavans to enter military and other services earned them both high status and power in the Deccan.

The active involvement of Chitpavans in military affairs started with the rise of the Peshwas.

Culture

During the British rule in India, Lokmanya Tilak transformed the household worshipping of Ganesha into a grand public event *(Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav)* to spread the message of freedom struggle and to defy the British who had banned public assemblies.Students often would celebrate Hindu and national glory and address political issues including patronage of *Swadeshi* goods.Today large-scale Ganesh festival celebrations take place in Maharashtra with millions of people visiting the various community Ganesh Pandals.

Traditionally, the Chitpavan Brahmins were a community of astrologers and priests who offer religious services to other communities. The 20th century descriptions of the Chitpavans list inordinate frugality, phlegmatism, hard work, cleanliness and intelligence among their attributes. Agriculture was the second major occupation in the community, practised by the those who possess arable land. Later, Chitpavans became prominent in various white collar jobs and business.

Language

Most of the Chitpavan Brahmins in Maharashtra have adopted Marathi as their language. A minority of Chitpavans spoke a dialect of Konkani called Chitpavani Konkani in their homes. Even at that time, reports recorded Chitpavani as a fast disappearing language. But in Dakshina Kannada District and Udupi Districts of Karnataka, this language is being spoken in places like Durga and Maala of Karkala taluk and also in places like Shishila and Mundaje of Belthangady Taluk. There are no inherently nasalised vowels in standard Marathi whereas the Chitpavani dialect of Konkani does have nasalised vowels.

The Marathi spoken by Chitpavans in Pune, is the standard form of language used all over Maharashtra today. This form of Marathi has many Sansrkrit derived words. It has also retained the Sanskrit pronunciation of many words, misconstrued by non standard speakers as "nasalized pronunciation" .

Social status

Earlier, the Deshastha Brahmins believed that they were the highest of all Brahmins, and looked down upon the Chitpavans as *parvenus* (a relative newcomer to a socioeconomic class), barely equal to the noblest of dvijas. Even the Peshwa was denied the rights to use the ghats reserved for Deshasth priests at Nashik on the Godavari.,

The rise in prominence of the Chitpavans compared to the Deshastha Brahmins resulted in intense rivalry between the two communities. The 19th century records also mention *Gramanyas* or village-level debates between the Chitpavans, and two other communities, namely the Daivajnas, and the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhus. This lasted for about ten years.

Notable people

- Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and his descendants, Bajirao I, Chimaji Appa, Balaji Bajirao, Raghunathrao, Sadashivrao Bhau, Madhavrao I, Narayanrao, Madhavrao II, and Bajirao II
- Nana Phadnavis - Regent to young Peshwa Madhavrao II
- The Patwardhans - Military leaders under the Peshwa
- Lokhitwadi (Gopal Hari Deshmukh) (1823-1892)- Social reformer
- Mahadev Govind Ranade - Judge and Social reformer

- Vishnushastri Krushnashastri Chiplunkar -Essayist.Educator.Mentor to Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar.Founder of the influential Chitrashala press
- Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar .- Writer, Journalist, Nationalist leader. Served on the imperial council.
- Vasudev Balwant Phadke - Educator. Led an armed rebellion against the British
- Keshavsut(Krishnaji Keshav Damle)- 19th century Marathi poet
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak -Educator, Writer and Early Nationalist Leader with widespread appeal
- Gopal Ganesh Agarkar -(1856 – June 1895) - Journalist, Educator and Social reformer
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale - Early Nationalist leader on the moderate wing of the Congress party
- Dhondo Keshav Karve - Social reformer and advocate of Women's education
- Pandita Ramabai Dongre - Social reformer and Christian convert
- Anandibai Joshi - First Maharashtrian Lady Doctor
- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, -(28 May 1883 – 26 February 1966)Freedom fighter, social reformer and Formulator of the Hindutva philosophy
- Dadasaheb Phalke- (30 April 1870 – 16 February 1944) Pioneer of Indian film industry
- Krushnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar-(25 November 1872 – 26 August 1948) Editor of Kesari and Navakal
- Nathuram Godse- (19 May 1910 – 15 November 1949) Mahatma Gandhi's assassin
- Narhar Vishnu Gadgil-(10 January 1896 – 12 January 1966) Congress leader and Member of Nehru's cabinet
- Vinoba Bhave-(1895 – 1982) Gandhian leader and freedom fighter
- Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860 – 1936) -Eminent Maestro of Hindustani classical music
- Shreeram Shankar Abhyankar(1930-2012) Mathematician and Professor

Goud Saraswat Brahmin

Goud (also spelt as Gaud or Gawd) Saraswat Brahmins are a Hindu Brahmin community in India and a part of the larger Saraswat Brahmin community. They belong to the Pancha (five) Gauda Brahmana groups. They are popularly referred to by the acronym GSB. They primarily speak Konkani as their mother tongue.

History

Reference to Saraswat names are found in Shilaharas as well as Kadamba copper plate inscriptions.The inscriptions found in Goa bear testimony to the arrival of Brahmin families in the Konkan region. Sahyadrikhanda and *Mangesh Mahatmya* allude to migrations of Saraswat brahmins, constituting sixty-six families, who settled in eight villages of Goa. There were regional variations among the Saraswats, such as those among *Bardeskars*, *Pednekars* and *Sastikars*. The *Konkana mahatmya*, from the 17th century CE, deals with the internal rivalry of the Saraswats and strained relations between these

groups. In Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (12th century CE), the Saraswats are mentioned as one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities residing to the north of the Vindhyas.

Parshurama with Saraswat Brahmin settlers commanding
Varuna to make the seas recede to make the Konkan Region

The GSB ancestors identified themselves as of the Saraswat section of the northern Gaud division, in contrast to their Maharashtra and Karnataka Brahman neighbors of the southern division. Many Saraswats left Goa after the invasion of Malik Kafur to the neighbouring regions and during the period of religious persecution of the Portuguese also Saraswats migrated to Uttar Kannada, Dakshina Kannada and North Konkan. The Saraswat Brahmins particularly served as Administrators,village Kulkarnis, financiers,landlords,Priests and Merchants in the intra-Asian trade, and diplomats. Many sources of government income in Goa, Konkan and elsewhere, including taxes on commodities and customs duties, remained in their hands.

Founding myths

The River Saraswati

The Saraswat Brahmins believe themselves to be named after the mythical Saraswati river, which was thought to arise in the Himalayas and flow through the present Punjab and Rajasthan region to the western sea near Dwaraka, in Gujarat. Saraswat brahmins are mentioned in the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhavishya Purana.The Saraswati river of Rigvedic and Vedic texts has been historically identified with parts of watercourses near Lake Pushkar in Rajasthan, Sidhpur in Northern Gujarat and Somnath in Saurashtra, Gujarat. A popular belief identifies it with an underground flow at Prayag, Allahabad, emerging at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna to form the Triveni Sangam. It has been suggested that around 1000 BCE the Yamuna breached and permanently drained the Sarwasati, the most important water course of the Swati Valley civilisation and early Vedic Civilisation; the desertification of their homeland would have compelled the Saraswati migration to the other parts of Bharat Khanda.According to the *Sahyadrikhanda* of the Skanda Purana, ninety-six Brahmin families belonging to ten

gotras migrated to Goa from western India, along with Parashurama. Linguistic evidence for such a migration of Saraswats to Konkan and Deccan is based on distribution of Indo-Aryan linguistic expansions, beginning before 500 BCE.

Bhatt Prabhu

The Bhatt Prabhu Brahmin (commonly known as Parabhu in Konkani) community belongs to the Panch Darvida category of Brahmins, and claims to be a sub-caste of the Karhade Brahmin community.

About the clan

It is said that certain Padye families were excommunicated for some reason during the 14th or 15th century, which led to the formation of a new community known as the *Bhatt Prabhus*. But unlike Padyes they did not migrate to any other state and chose to remain in Goa.

This group of Brahmins are found only in Goa. For the last 80 years they have been considered a subsect of the "Padye" Brahmins of Goa. There are not many differences between Padyes and Bhatt Prabhus, differing mainly in language (Bhatt Prabhus speak pure Konkani). In 1926 CE, Bhatt Prabhus of Goa requested the Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar to recognise them and include them among the Padyes, hence they are now a part of the Padye clan.

They hail from Borim and Shiroda villages of Ponda, in the Indian state of Goa. *Konkanakhyan* refers to them as *Deshmukha*s of the eight *Agraharas*.

Almost all of them are landowning farmers, though many prominent families were in the money-lending business. Unlike most of the Padyes they are not engaged as priests who are either employed by the temples or perform rituals for others.

Some common surnames of Bhatt Prabhu Brahmins

- Prabhu Miringkar
- Prabhu Desai
- Prabhu Borkar
- Devari
- Prabhu Sawkar
- Prabhu Gaonkar
- Upadhye
- Prabhu Shirodkar
- Borkar

Kuldevtas of Bhatt Prabhu Brahmins

- Navadurga

- Shivnath Mahamaya
- Mahalasa
- Mahalakshmi

Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin

Chitrapur Saraswats are a small Konkani-speaking community of Hindu Brahmins in India. They are traditionally found along the Kanara coast and call themselves *Bhanaps* in the Konkani language.

Daivadnya Brahmin

The Daivadnya or Daivajña is an ethno-religious community and a Hindu Brahmin caste of the west coast of India, predominantly residing in the states of Goa, coastal Karnataka, and coastal Maharashtra. The state of Goa is considered to be the original homeland of Daivadnyas. They are believed to have flourished and prospered in Goa and hence sometimes they are called *Gomantaka Daivadnya* but popularly termed as Sonars in konkan region.

Shet gentlemen from Goa, from late 18th to early 19th century
(Courtesy: Gomant Kalika, Nutan Samvatsar Visheshank, April 2002)

Due to many socio-economic reasons, they emigrated to different parts of India within the last few centuries. Today, members of the community can be found in diverse economic conditions ranging from extremely well-off to poor.They are classified by the National Commission for Backward Classes of India under Other Backward Class(OBC) category as per Gazette of Government of India One of the few brahmin castes to enjoy this benefit.

They are commonly known as *Śeṭ* in the coastal region. The word Śeṭ is a corrupt form of the word *Śreṣṭha* or *Śreṣṭhin* Over time the word was transformed from Śreṣṭha to Śeṭ. Most of the older generation from the Daivadnya community in Goa call themselves *Śeṭ Bāmaṇ*, which is a corrupt form of *Śreṣṭhi Brāhmaṇa*. The Portuguese referred these people as *Xete* (cf. *Xett, Xete*) or sometimes *Chatim* (cf. *Xatim*), which is now *Cyātī* in the Konkani language, the word was a Portuguese appellation for "trader" derived from the local word Śreṣṭhin. Śeṭs are often called *Suvarṇakara* in Sanskrit and Sonar in Konkani(cf. *Svarṇakāra*).

Etymology

Their name has many alternate spellings, including *Daivajna*, *Daivajnya*,*Daivagna*, *Daiwadnya*, and *Daivadnea*. It is pronounced [ḍaivaɡna] in Karnataka and [ḍəivaɟɟɲa] in Goa and Maharashtra.

It is possible that Vadirajatirtha bestowed the appellation *Daivadnya* when many of the community adopted the Madhwa religion under leadership of Vadiraja.

Daiva jānati iti daivajñaḥ is literally translated as *the one who knows the fate is Daivadnya* or "the one who knows about God is Daivadnya", and can be interpreted as the one who knows about the future is a Daivadnya; or the one is well versed in *Śilpaśāstra* and can craft an idol of God is called a Daivadnya.

An alternate proposition relates to the Vedas Taittariya Samhita and Shatapatha Brahmana in which the sage Kashyapa is recorded as an eminent artisan. His book *Kashyapa Samhita*, along with *Bhrigu Samhita* and *Maya Samhita* recognises *Daivadnya* as an assistant engineer. Their work was like that of a draughtsman or evaluator. It is said that astrology began from this class of Vedic Daivadnyas, so the term Daivadnya became equivalent to astrologer but there is no proof for this as astrology was founded by saints.

Appellations

They commonly call themselves *Śeṭ* to distinguish themselves from other groups who were of mixed origin and claim superiority over them but there is no perfect evidence for this claim since in other part of country the set,shet,shetty(derived from word srestha) is used by trading communities(vaishyas). The guild or members of the guilds of traders, merchants, and their employees who were mainly artisans, craftsmen, and husband-men in ancient Goa like elsewhere in ancient India, were called Śreṇī, and the head of the guilds were called Śreṣṭha or Śreṣṭhī which meant *His Excellency*.

Old Portuguese documents mention them as *Arie Brahmavranda Daivadnea* or *Aria Daivadnea Orgon Somudai*, transliterated as *Ārya Daivajña Varga Samudāya*, translated as *Aryans of the Daivadnya community*. They are sometimes mentioned as *Daivdneagotris*.

Being inhabitants of Konkan they were also called as *Konkanastha Daivadnya*.

History

Perception of their ancient history

The Seṭs are descendants of the Bhojakas and have inherited the art of crafting an idol from the Bhojakas. Bhojakas are also called Gaṇakas, which is synonymous with Daivadnya.

According to the mythological chronicle Sahyadrikhanda of Skanda Purana, 96 Brahmin families belonging to ten gotras migrated to Goa from Brahmāvarta via Saurashtra, and settled in different Agrahāras (Brahmin streets or neighbourhoods). The Daivadnyas claim that they came in 2500 BC to the south to assist those Brahmins who came with parashurama to perform *yajna* (ritualistic sacrifices) and are believed to have settled in various Agrahāras with Brahmins.But there is no written evidence for this claim as in Sahyadrikhanda of Skanda Purana only origin of chitpavan Brahmins,karade Brahmins and migration of Saraswath brahmins from Brahmavart of saraswath river to Gomantaka(konakan) is mentioned but there is no mention of Daivadnyas. Some scholars argue that this tribe migrated to Goa in the fourth to sixth century AD, some say 700 BC, and some estimate 2500 BC; this is merely a speculation and not the reality. Research by scholars like Dharmananda Damodar Kosambi and Bhau Daji claim that these mythologies serves as a symbol of the Sanskritisation that, then Goan culture experienced with the advent of Brahminical religion to this region but some scholars reject these claims by providing proofs of migration.

Many Vedic scholars like Veṅgaḍācārya and Nārāyaṇaśastri Kṣirasāgara relate the Daivadnya Brahmins with the Vedic Rathakara. Saṃskṛtā texts such as *Jātiviveka*,*Saṅkha smṛti*, and *Añjabila* state that they are one of the Rathakāras, called *Upabrāhmaṇa*, or minor Brahmins for whom vedic *Saṃskāra* are explicitly stated as mentioned in *Śaivāgama*. The Hindu doctrines *Hiraṇyakeśisutra* and *Bṛhajjātiviveka* mention different types of Rathakaras. Most of them can be called Saṅkara Jāti or mixed caste, and their social status varies from that of a Brahmin to those considered fallen or degraded. Modern scholars like Ad. Paṇḍuraṅga Puruṣottama Śiroḍkara and Bā. Da. Sātoskar disagree with this claim. Paṇḍuraṅga Puruṣottama Śiroḍkara states that if they are related to any Rathakara tribe, they belong to the Rathakara mentioned in the *Rigveda*, and not other Rathakaras, which are of impure descent but there is not perfect evidence for any claim.

Alternate theories

The Magas, Aṅgiras, Bhṛgus, and the present-day Daivadnyas

Assuming that the Indo-Aryan migration theory to be true, Indologists like Dr Ghurye have speculated that the Magas and the Aṅgiras are the same and they are Proto-Indo-Europeans who reached India before the Indo-Aryans., Vedic society was divided into

three races: the Aṅgiras, the Bhṛgus, and the others. These three groups later intermarried, and thus all the *Brahminical Gotra Ṛsis* belonging to Aṅgira and Bhṛgus lineage were born. The Magas are considered the ancestors of the Aṅgiras, and from these Magas, who married the Bhojaka women, modern-day Daivadnyas have descended. Magas are not different from the Indo-Aryans, but their period of migrations differs. According to Indologist Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi, Tvaṣṭr was a deity who belonged to the clan of the Bhṛgus and existed before the Vedic era. This claim is disputed by many.

Oral traditions

Oral tradition[g] of some of the Daivajna clans say that they came from Gauḍa Deśa with their Kuldevatās (family deities). There is no written evidence to support this traditional belief.

Medieval and modern history

Migrations

According to Viṭhṭhala Mitragotrī, the migration to Goa dates back to the early 4th to 6th century AD. Bā. Da. Sātoskār suggests that they are a part of the tribe and reached Goa around 700 BC. From 1352 to 1366 AD Goa was ruled by *Khiljī*. In 1472, the *Bahāmanī* Muslims attacked, demolished many temples, and forced the Hindus to convert to Islam. To avoid this religious persecution, several Śeṭ families fled to the neighbourhood kingdom of Sondā. Several families from western India had settled down in Kashi since the late 13th century.

In 1510 the Portuguese invaded Goa. King John III of Portugal issued a decree threatening expulsion or execution of non-believers in Christianity in 1559 AD; the Daivadnyas refused conversion and had to decamp. Thousands of Daivadnya families fled to the interior of Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka. About 12,000 families from the Sāsaṣṭī region of Goa (from Rāy, Kuṅkalī, Loṭalī, Verṇe and other places), mostly of the Śeṇavīs and the Śeṭs, including Vaiśyas, Kuṇbīs, and others, departed by ship to the southern ports of Honnāvara to Kozhikode. A considerable number of the Śeṭs from Goa settled in the Ṭhāṇe district of Maharashtra, especially the Tansa River valley, after the Portuguese conquest of Goa.

Portuguese period

Daivajnas and Christianity

The Portuguese imposed heavy restrictions on all Goan Hindus, but the Śeṭs were granted exemption from certain obligations or liabilities. It is rare to find a Christian Goan Śeṭ, while all the other castes find some representation in the convert society; this is because the economic power the Śeṭs wielded in the sixteenth century enabled them to live and work in Goa on their own terms or emigrate with their religion intact. Their commercial

knowledge and skills were held in high esteem by the Portuguese; because of the protection the Portuguese gave them, they had a little religious freedom. For example, they were permitted to wear the horizontal Vibhutī caste-mark on the forehead, and were even exempted from punishment when they committed crimes. The very few who converted were assigned the caste of *Bamonn* among the Goan Catholics. According to the gazetteer of Goa state they are called Catholic Śeṭs, but no such distinction is found amongst Goan Catholics. A detailed study of *Comunidades*[h] shows that baptised Śeṭs were categorised as *Bamonns*. A few historians have categorised them into the category of *Sudirs* or Śudras because the appellation they used, *Chatim*, was sometimes used by the lower castes. Whether Hindu or Catholic, the community always enjoyed their social status, and were permitted to remain in Christianized parts of Goa, provided they kept a low profile, observed certain disciplines, and paid a tax of three *xeraphims* of (gold mohor) annually to the Portuguese.

A few Daivadnya families who converted to Catholicism migrated to Mangalore due to attacks by the Marathas in Goa during the late 17th and early 18th century.

Relationships with other communities

The trade in Goa was mainly in the hands of three communities classes, being the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins,the Vanis and sets.

Another conflict between Daivadnyas and Vaishyas, in 1348 in *Khāṇḍepār* or *Khaṭegrāma*, is mentioned in Khāṇḍepār copperplate. The conflicts between these two communities over social status was evidenced in arguments about use of traditional Brahmin and Kshatriya emblems during religious rituals, functions and festivals. The hatred was so severe until the 19th century that only fear of the police kept the peace. Later, the Portuguese banned the use of Hindu symbols and wedding festival processions..This issue was solved in *Gaṇanātha* temple in Khāṇḍepār.

Diaspora

The Seṭs who had emigrated from Goa for socio-economic reasons during the Goa Inquisition faced many hardships. In places such as Pune they were demeaned and tortured by the Peshwas, had no religious freedom and were divested of all priestly rights. Those who continued to perform religious rites and study the Vedas were punished by methods such as having their tongues and *sikhas* cut off. The Peshwas tried to degrade them to the Shudra level in society so that the Peshwas alone would be called Brahmins.

Documents mention a *Gramanya*[j] between the Daivadnyas and the Brahmins of Pune or the *Puna Joshis*. This dispute regarding social status and ritual privilege, lasted from 1822–1825. The opponent Brahmins were against the Daivadnyas administering *Vedokta Karmas* or Vedic rituals, studying and teaching Vedas, wearing dhoti, folding hands in Namaskar. They urged the Peshwas, and later, the British to impose legal sanctions, such as heavy fines to implement non-observance of Vedokta Karmas, though the later had been always observing the Vedic rites. The Joshis denied their Brahmin claim, allegedly

argued that they are not even entitled to Upabrāhmaṇa status which they are bestowed in the 'Śaivāgama. Thus they claimed that latter were not entitled to Vedokta Karmas and should follow only *Puraṇokta* rites and they were also against the Brahmins who performed Vedic rituals for the Daivadnyas, they incriminated that Daivadnyas have an impurity of descent and have a mixed-caste status or Saṅkara Jāti. British issued orders to the Daivadnyas by which the Vedas not be applied for an improper purpose, the purity of the *Brahmin* caste be preserved and did not impose any restrictions on the Daivadnyas. This dispute almost took a pro-Daivadnya stance in *Bombay* in 1834, and were ordered to appoint the priests of their own *Jāti* and not priests of any other caste.

In 1849, the king of Kolhapur, Shahu Maharaj, provided land grants to the Daivadnyas who had migrated to princely states of Kolhapur and Satara and helped them build their hostels for the students pursuing education.

Many families like the Murkuṭes, the Paṭaṇkars, the Seṭs of Karvara and Bhaṭkala kept their tradition alive and excelled in trade, playing a major role in socio-cultural development of the major metropolis of India such as Bombay.

The Daivadnya priests who officiated at the Gokarṇa Mahabaleswara temple were prosecuted in 1927 by the Havyakas of Gokarṇa, who thought they would take over the puja authority at the temple. The case reached the Bombay High Court, which ruled in favour of the Seṭs.

Modern period

Some Goan Daivadnya families migrated to Pune and overseas.*Akhīla Bharatiya Daivajña Samajonnati Pariṣat* already existed since 1908 for betterment of the kinsmen and was founded by descendants of the native Śeṭs of Mumbai who had settled there within last few centuries.

Few Koṅkaṇe Daivadnya Brahmins have even settled in Vapi, Dharampur, Valsad, Daman and other few places in the state of Gujarat.

Similarly, about 3500 Śeṭs migrated to Beṅgalūru city after 1905 from Dakṣiṇa Kannaḍa. Many families have migrated to Mumbai and have founded organisations like *Kanara Daivajña Association*, *Daivajña Śikṣṇa Maṇḍala* etc.Śimogā, Cikkamagaluru, Koḍagu, Davaṇgere, Hubballī-Dhārvāḍa districts of Karnataka have a considerable Daivadnya population now.

Śeṭs have also migrated abroad. They are found in the Arab countries and have been migrating overseas in pursuit of higher education and employment for number of years now specially, the United States of America and England.

Very few of them are official citizens of Portugal and Kenya. A small fraction of them are also found in Karachi, Lahore Pakistan, but most of them have settled as refugees in Ulhasnagar after partition.

Religion

Their earliest religious beliefs could have been based on a mixture of Brahmanism, Bhagavata religion, sun worship and some folk practices, though it cannot be ascertained to a particular period of time or geographical region. Different schools of Shaivism have existed in Goa and Konkan since ancient times. Similarly, Shaivism was very popular amongst Goans of all walks of life, and was very widely practised. Their religious and cultural beliefs were constantly influenced by other religions such as Jainism, Buddhism and later the Nath sect when the ruling dynasties patronised them. Up to 1476 there was no proper Vaishnavism in Goa.

Deities

Daivadnya Brahmins are predominantly Devi (The mother Goddess) and Shiva worshippers. *Panchayatana puja* – a concept of worshipping God in any of the five forms, namely Shiva, Devi, Ganesha, Vishnu and Surya, that was propagated by Adi Shankara (8th century) is observed by Daivadnyas today. Daivadnyas worship the Pancayatana deities with Devi or Shiva as the principle deity. A possible Pancayatana set may be: Shantadurga, Shiva, Lakshminarayan (Vishnu with his consort Lakshmi), Ganesha and Surya. Pancayatana may also include guardian deities like Ravalnath, Bhutanath, Kala-Bhairava, Kshetrapala and deities like Gramapurusha.

Few of the Daivadnyas in the coastal track of Karnataka up to the end of Kerala – follow the Vaishnavism. They worship Vishnu and Lakshmi as their prime deities and have established many temples of Vishnu in the form of Lakshminarayan, Krishna, Venkatesha, Narasimha and Vithoba. However, their Kuladevatas (family deities) in Goa are Shakta and Shaiva – the sect centred on Shiva.

Kuladevatas

Their tutelary deities are primarily in the form of the Mother Goddess, though they revere all Vedic, Puranic and folk deities equally.

Ishtadevata

For a more comprehensive list, see List of Daivajna temples and other affiliated temples.

Ishta-devata is a term denoting a worshipper's favourite deity. Ganesha is ishta-devata of all the Śeṭs. Ganesh Chaturthi or *Siddhivināyaka Vrata* is a major festival of the Daivajñas.

Kalika, Kansarpal, Goa – is worshipped as Ishta-devata by Gomantaka Daivajñas. This temple is more than 800 years old and is located at a distance of around 14 kilometres from Mapusa. It was built by Kadambas and was renovated by a Daivajña minister who was serving Sawant Bhonsale – kings of Sawantwadi, Maharashtra. It is one of the most

important temples in the northern part of Goa. The main festivals celebrated in this temple are Śiśirotsava, Navrātrī, Rathasaptamī, Āvalībhojana and Vasantapujā.

Other Ishta-devata of Daivajñas include Rama, Dattatreya Hanuman, Vithoba of Pandharpur, Hayagriva of Udupi, Mahalakshmi, Krishna, Gayatri, Durgā Parameśvarī, Lakshmi-narayan, Mañjunātha of Dharmasthala and Gokarṇa Mahābaleśvara. Daivajñas maintain several temples in Goa, and about 38 temples in North Canara district of Kanarataka, and many temples in other parts of Karantaka, Maharashtra and few in the state of Kerala.

Daivajñas also honour various saints like Raghavendra Swami, Narasimha Saraswati, Swami Samarth Maharaj, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Sathya Sai Baba and Maṅkipura Svāmī.

Maṭha tradition and Saṃpradāyas

The *Śaṅkara* or *Smārta* sect

- Śeṭs of Goa, Maharashtra and some parts of Karnataka follow the *Smṛti*s to abide by the religious rules hence called Smārta i.e. the followers of the Smṛtis. They were followers of *Śṃgerī* maṭha like *Draviḍa* Brahmins. Śrī *Madhvacārya*, the promoter of *Dvaita* philosophy, during his return journey from North India visited Goa in 1294. Most of them refused to get converted, and very few of them adopted *Mādhvadharma*. However Mādhvas, only by tradition they became *Bhāgavata*s, continued the worship of *Śaiva* or *Śākta* deities, Vaiṣṇava Daivajñas are not found in Goa now as they had fled to other states during Inquisition.
- Due to some unavoidable conflicts between the two sects in the community a new maṭha was established in Sri Kshetra Karki, Honnāvara, in North Canara district. The maṭha is called as *Jñāneśavarī Pīṭha* and is headed by *Śrī Śrīmad Bhāratī Tīrtha* Svāmī of *Śṛṅgerī Śrī Śārada Pīṭha*'s disciple or *Śishya,Śrī Śrīmad Satcidānanda Jñāneśavara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmī* for spiritual and religious betterment of the community.

The Vaiṣṇava or Mādhva sect

- The Daivajña diaspora in North Canara, Uḍupi, South Canara and Kerala, who had migrated from Goa due to Arab and Portuguese invasions, were influenced by *Śrī Vādirāja Tīrtha* and adopted Vaiṣṇavism. History says that a Daivajña named *Gopalaśeṭ* was sculpting a Gaṇeaśa idol, but it took form of a horse or Hayagrīva, he offered that idol to Vādirāja Tīrtha, the pontiff of Sode maṭha, who later expanded his sphere of influence by taking all the Daivajñas of north Canara into the fold of his Vaiṣṇavism by extending to them *dīkṣa* and *mudra*. This idol of lord Hayagrīva is still worshipped by the pontiffs of Sode maṭha and by their Śeṭ followers.
- The 36th pontiff in the lineage *Viśvavallabha* Tīrtha Svāmī initiated into *Sanyasa* by Śrī *Viśvottama* Tīrtha Svāmī is the present guru of the maṭha and their religious teacher.

Ancestral worship

Daivajñas have a unique system of ancestral worship, the *Mūlapuruṣa* or the creator of the clan is worshipped in the form of Śiva Liṅga.

Social structure
Gotras or exogamous family stocks

Most of them share the gotras with Brahmins of the sub-continent. Though Gotra initially meant a cow-pane that symbolised a clan, later usage also implies to lineages of to Vedic seers who were from the above clans, and some were part of the clan by birth yet some had adopted it. Later Gotra was inherited from Guru at the time of Upanayana (which marks the beginning of student-hood), in ancient times, so it is a remnant of Guru-shishya tradition, but since the tradition is no longer followed, during Upanayana ceremony father acts as Guru of his son, so the son inherits his father's gotra.

- Bhāradvāja
- Kauśika cf. Kuśika
- Vatsa, cf. Vacca
- Atri
- (disambiguation)Kauṇḍinya
- Kāśyapa
- Vasiṣṭha
- Jamadagni
- Viśvāmitra, cf. Kaṃsa
- Aṅgirasa
- Gautama
- Śāṇḍilya
- Kutsa
- Bhārgava
- Sanātana
- Viśvāgni
- Sanaka, cf. Sanakasya
- Sānaga
- Pratna, cf. Pratananśya also Pradnya
- Sūrya
- Savitā
- Bhāskara
- Kaustubha
- Sāṅkhāyana
- Ahabhuna, cf. Abhuvanasya
- Suparṇa
- Sañjaya
- Karmaṇi
- Parāśara
- Śaunaka

Surnames and titles

There are no mentions of Daivajñas using surnames in their early history. They have used the honorific title Śeṭī with their name. Names like *Nāga Śeṭī*,*Soma Śeṭī*,*Viṭhṭhala Śeṭī* have been found in the copperplate dating back in the early 12th century which do not bear any surnames. It was only after their exodus from their motherland they started using village names from where their ancestors once hailed. A suffix *kār* was added to the village or place name which indicates that the person hails from that region. For example, a person hailing from the village of Rāy is known as *Rāykār*, person from Verṇe as *Verṇekār, family from Palan as Palankar* and so on. The title Śeṭī or Śeṭ has not fallen into disuse, it is still used as respectful appellation for the elders e.g. *Narāyaṇaśeṭ, Sāṃbaśeṭ, Anantaśeṭ*. Most of the Daivajñas from Karnataka still affix it to their names and do not use any village names. They have also adopted titles like *Rāv* and *Bhaṭṭa*. The maiden name of a woman was changed after marriage and usually affix the honorific title *Bāī* to their names such as *Śāntābāī*,*Durgābāī*; names like Nāgaṃmā and Śivaṃmā are common amongst Canara Daivajñas, but the new generation is too reluctant to use such names.

Other titles include *Potdār*, *Ṭāṅksālī*, *Vedaka*, *Daivajña*, and *Vedapāṭhaka*.

Some typical Daivajña surnames are *Revankar*, *Kārekār*, *Śiroḍkār*,*Coḍaṅkār*, *Peḍṇekār*, *Narvekār*, *Loṭalīkār*, *Vernekār*, *Salkār*, *Kudtadkār*, and *Hatkar*.

For a more comprehensive list, see Daivajna surnames and Gotras.

Classification

Subdivisions

Śeṭs were divided according to the place from where they hailed, the maṭha they followed and other criteria.

The Subdivisions of Gomantaka Daivajñas

Until the early 19th century, Goan Śeṭs were divided into three sub-divisions based on their geographical location, but these divisions no longer exist:

- *Vāḍkār* (from *Peḍṇe, Sattarī, Divcal*)
- *Goyṃkār* (from *Sāsaṣṭi, Mūrgānv, Tisvāḍī, Bārdes*)
- *Sauṃdekār* (from *Phoṇḍā, Kāṅkoṇ, Sāṅge, Kepe*)

These sub-divisions never intermarried nor did they accept food from their counterparts.

Diaspora in Maharashtra

There are no prominent distinctions found in Maharashtra, but there are mentions of groups of Śeṭs of Goa, especially from *Sāsaṣṭī*, *Bārdes*, *Tīsvāḍī*, landing in places like

Ṭhāṇe, *Sāvantvāḍi*, *Khārepāṭaṇ*, *Mālvaṇ*, *Kudāl* etc. They are sometimes collectively called as *Koṅkaṇastha* Daivajñas. Daivajñas from Koṅkaṇa later migrated elsewhere in Maharashtra, and hence they were also known as *Koṅkaṇe* or *Konkane Devajnas* as mentioned in old documents.

Previously, Daivajñas from Goa refrained from having matrimonial alliances outside Goa. Today they arrange them with the Daivajñas of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Śeṭs of Kerala

The emigration of Goan Śeṭs to Kerala dates back to the early 13th century, most of them settled in the port of Koccī. Some of them have migrated from Goa during the later half of the 16th century due to the religious persecution of the Portuguese and settled in places like Quilon, Trichur, Kozhikode, and Kasaragod, along the coastal line of Kerala in 1562 AD.

They have their own ancient temple dedicated to Gopalakrishna, perhaps the oldest temple in Fort Cochin.

Culture

A couple performing religious rituals

Kinship and Saṃskāras, customs

Kinship practices

Konkani people in general though speak Indo-Aryan languages follow Dravidian kinship practices (see Karve, 1965: 25 endnote 3). One's father's brother's children as well as mother's sister's children are considered as brothers and sisters, whereas mother's brother's children and father's sisters children are considered as cousins and potential mates. Cross-cousin marriages are allowed and practiised. Like dravidian people, they refer to their father's sister as *mother-in-law* or *atte*, and their mother's brother as *father-*

in-law – mama, and one's husband's mother is generally referred to as *mother-maay*. Amongst the Śeṭs of Goa the elders, sons-in-law are held with great respect and are revered as *Bābū,Bāpla,Tātū,Bāb* these words are not used much by other castes in Goa.

Adoption was common in olden days which included a ritual called as *Dattak vidhan*. Though several restrictions were imposed on adoption. Adoption by an *untonsured* widow was not valid as per their caste rules. They used to (some still continue to) follow Hindu doctrine the *Vyavahara Mayukha* which prescribes the Hindu law.

Customs

Daivajña people are not so orthodox but they strictly adhere to all the *Ṣoḍaśa Saṃskāra* or the 16 sacraments, and other brahminical rituals according to the Ṛgveda. The Saṃskāras begin to be observed right from the day of conception, but the prenatal sacraments like *Garbhadhāna*, *Puṃsavana*, are usually performed as a part of the wedding ceremony nowadays, unlike some 30 years ago these sacraments were held separately after the wedding ceremony at the right time. *Sīmantonayana* or parting of the hair, called *Phulā mālap* in Koṅkaṇī or *Ḍohāljevaṇ* in Marāṭhī, is held in 5th, 7th, 9th months of the pregnancy; the coiffure is adorn with flowers, followed by other rituals. Usually the birth of the first child is supposed to take place in woman's mother's home. After the child is born, ten days of birth pollution or *Suyer* is observed, by keeping an oil lamp lit for ten days. On the sixth day following childbirth, the goddess *Śaṣṭī* is worshipped. On the 11th day, a purification *Homa* is performed. The *Nāmakaraṇa* or the *Bārso*, a naming ceremony, is performed on the 12th day. It is sometimes held one month following the child birth if the stars are not favourable. The *Karṇavedha* or *Kān topap* ceremony is held on the 12th day in case of a male child, or for a female child, it is held a month after the birth. For *Uśṭāvaṇ*, *Annaprasana* or the *first feeding* ceremony child's maternal uncle feeds the baby with cooked soft rice mixed with milk and sugar. Another similar ritual, *Dāntolyo* is also performed by the maternal uncle when the baby gets new teeth, on the first birthday of the child. Ceremonies like the first outing or *Niṣkrāmaṇa,Jāval* or *cūḍākarma* i.e. cutting child's hair for first time,*Vidyāraṃbha* or commencement of studies, are performed as per caste rules.

When the boys grow up, and before they attain the age of 12, *Munj* or *Upanayana* is performed with great fanfare. All other sacraments related to it, like *Keśānta* or the first shave,*Vedaraṃbha* or, *Samāvartana* or *Soḍ Munj* are performed as a part of thread ceremony nowadays. In case of girls(who were always married before attaining puberty some 75–100 years ago), a ceremony associated with a girl's first menstruation was observed in olden days.

The most important sacrament for them is *Vivāha,Lagna* or the wedding. Various ceremonies held before the actual wedding ceremony are *Sākarpuḍo* or the betrothal,*Devkāre* or *Devkārya* that includes *Puṇyāhvācana,Nāndi,Halad,Tel,Uḍid muhurtaSome of their customs are different from any others castes.* etc. The actual wedding ceremony is performed as per Ṛgveda.*Sīmāntapujā, Kanyādāna, Kaṅkaṇa-bandhana, Maṅgalasutra-bandhana, Saptapadi, Lājahoma, Aṣmārohaṇa, Vāyanadāna*

form the actual parts of the wedding ceremony. Ceremonies like *Gṛhapraveśa*, changing the maiden name of the bride, and the puja are followed by some games to be played by the newly wed couple, and the visit to the family deity temple.*Pancpartavaṇ* or a feast is organised five days after marriage. They strictly observe Gotra exogamy. The custom of dowry in its strict form does not exist any more, but *Sālaṅkṛta Kanyādāna* with *Varadakṣiṇā* is followed as a custom. Intercaste marriages are not common in Daivajñas

A widower is and was allowed to remarry. Widow marriages were never practiised in the past though since last half a century due to social reforms widows are permitted to remarry but widow remarriage is still frowned upon by the society. The age for girls for marriage is from 18 to 25 and that for boys is from 25 to 30. Child marriage is absent though girls were married off before attaining puberty, this custom was prevalent till the 19th century.

Their dead are cremated according to the vedic rights, and various *Śrāddhas* and other *Kriyās*,*Tarpaṇas* are performed by the son or any other paternal relative, or in some cases by the son-in-law of the deceased. As per the Vedas, dead infants without teeth must not be cremated, and are supposed to be buried. The body is generally carried to the cremation ground by the son of the deceased and his/her close relatives. Death pollution or *Sutaka* usually lasts for twelve days. They usually own their own cremation grounds. Women are not allowed in the crematorium. If the deceased was male, his widow was tonsured and strict restrictions were imposed on widows. There was no custom of widow remarriage in the past neither is it very common nowadays nor was there any custom of divorce. They pay homage to their ancestors during Mahalaya(Mhall in Konkani) or Pitru Paksha and days like, Amavasya or the new moon day, may be in the form of Shraddha or *Kakabali*.

Their priests are usually from other caste, particularly *Karhāḍe* priests officiate their ceremonies whom they show much reverence. Brahmins never used to accept the cooked food from daivajnas. and untouchability customs still exist.

They celebrate a fish feast after all the major festivals and ceremonies.

Socio-economic background and its history

The traditional occupation of Daivajña people is the jewellery trade. Why this became their occupation is not known. There are no mentions of the Śeṭs practising this occupation in the early history, although they used to make gold and silver images for the temples, which old texts suggest they have inherited this art from the Bhojaks who made idols of the Sun god, hence were also called as Murtikāras. They were well versed in Śilpaśāstra and in Sanskrit hence received royal patronage. Dhume mentions that the Śeṭs also studied medicine, astrology, astronomy in ancient university of *Brahmapuri* in Goa.

They were renowned for their skills even in the western world and were the first to introduce exquisite jewellery designs to Europe, and were extensively involved in gold, silver, perfumes, black pepper export and even silk, cotton textiles, tobacco and import of horses during Portuguese and pre-Portuguese era. Texts maintain names of many wealthy

traders e.g. *Virūpa Śeṭī* of *Coḍaṇe*,*Āditya Śeṭī* of *Śivāpura* or *Śirodā Viṭhṭhala Śeṭī*,*Dama Śeṭī*, who was appointed as an administrator of the *Bhatkaṭa* port by the Portuguese, and others. *Ravala Śeṭī* from *Caraim* who was summoned to Lisbon by the king of Portugal, was a collaborator with *Afonso de Albuquerque* and retained a high office in Goa. Since days of yore their business has been flourishing on the banks of river *Mandovi*, historical records mention them as prosperous and wealthy traders and business class. These traders, merchants with their fellow artisans, craftsmen had organised themselves into Śreṇīs or guilds, Śreṣṭhīs or the head of the guilds were very wealthy, and made huge donations to the temples, and their guilds also served as local banks and treasuries.

Few of them also worked as interpreters in king's court and were called *Dubash*, *Gaṇa Śeṭī* from *Loutolim* village was in Kadamba *rajas* court. From the old documents it can be also seen that few of them were involved in politics, and were employed by the kings for their service. Some of them were even associated with salvage operation of the vessels, and sometimes even provided the Portuguese with troops, ships and crew.

They assisted the kings in minting and designing the coins; during Maratha rule some Daivadnya families were given a title of *Potdar*, which literally means treasurer in *Persian*, who were in charge of testing the genuineness of the minted coins and their prescribed weight, and played an important role in the revenue system of the Marāṭhas.

The tradition of studying Vedas amongst the Goan Śeṭs does not exist any more, but Daivadnyas from Gokarṇa, Honnavara and many other places in coastal Karnataka and Koṅkaṇa division of Maharashtra have kept this tradition alive. Many of them are priests who offer religious services to the community, very few of them are astrologers and temple priests.

In the Uttara Kannaḍa district of Karnataka, a few families from the poorer section of this community have taken up cultivation to support their livelihood.

Festivals and *Vratas*

Daivajñas observe all the Hindu festivals but Ganesh Chaturthi, Nag Panchami and Diwali are the most important annual festivals. Other festivals and Vratas observed by them are:

- Saṃvatsarāraṃbha, Saṃvatsar Pāḍvo or Yugādi
- Vaṭa Paurṇimā, Vadāpunav
- Ṛk Śrāvaṇi, Sūtāpunav
- Gokulashtami
- Āditya pujan, Āytārā puja
- Haritālikā Tṛtiyā, Tay or Tayī
- Navratri
- Dasaro, Āvatāñcī pujā
- Bhaubeej
- Tulaśī Lagna

- Ekadashis like Āṣāḍhī, Kārtikī
- Mālinī Paurṇimā or Mānnī Punav
- Makar Sankranti
- Shigmo
- Holi
- Mahashivratri
- Veṅkaṭapatī Samarādhanā'
- Other rituals in specific months, e.g. *Caitragaurī* (not observed by Goan Śeṭs) in the month of Chaitra, Maṅgalagaurī, Varadalakṣmī in the month of Shravana (not observed by Goan Śeṭs), Pitru Paksha in the month of Bhadrapada, and some holidays in the months of Kartika and Margashirsha.

The festival of Malini Pournima is exclusively celebrated by very few Śeṭ families of Goa, in honour of Goddess Shakti, (Malini refers to Durga). These families have a unique custom of offering cooked fish to the goddess, in the form of either Kamakshi or Mahamaya.

Several other temple and maṭha related festivals like Jātrā, Paryaya, Chaturmas are celebrated with great zeal.

See also: List of Hindu festivals

Traditional attire

Daivajña men traditionally wear *Dhotīs* called *Puḍve* or *Aṅgavastra*, which cover them from waist to foot. These are made of cotton and sometimes silk on special occasions and wore *Judi* or *Sadro* to cover upper part of their bodies, and a piece of cloth called *Uparṇe* over the shoulders. They wore turbans and *Pagdi*s, *Muṇḍāso*, a red velvet cap or *Topī* was used by the traders and merchants so that they would not be troubled by the Portuguese. Men had their ears pierced and wore *Bhikbālī*, sported *Śendī* and wore *Vibhutī* or Sandalwood or *Gopīcandana* paste on their foreheads. Men were fond of gold jewellery, too.

Traditional Daivajña woman wear a nine-yard saree, also known as *Kāppad* or *Cīre* in such a way that the back was fully covered. The fashion of wearing a blouse became popular in the 18th century. *Ghāgro* and a five yards saree was worn by unmarried girls. Women wore gold ornaments on different parts of their bodies (e.g. *Ghonṭ, Pāṭlī, Todo, Bājunband, Galesarī, Valesar, Kudī*), and wore silver ornaments to decorate their feet (e.g.;*Paijaṇ, Salle, Māsolī, Vāle*). Gold ornaments were not worn below the waist. Gold is considered a symbol of *Agni* and is said to keep the evil spirits away.

Married women wore *Kuṅkuma* on their forehead in the shape of a cucumber seed, which is not in vogue any more, and wore *Maṅgalsutra*, nose rings (a diamond stud,*Nath*), and toe rings, as a symbol of marriage. Wearing hair in plaits was considered demeaning so they always wore their hair in a bun, and decorated it with flowers and gold ornaments.

Widows wore red-coloured nine yards sarees and covered their heads, and sometimes wore Vibhuti on their foreheads.

Languages

Daivadnyas speak Koṅkaṇi and its dialects. Gomantaka Daivadnyas speak a dialect of Koṅkaṇi known as Goan Koṅkaṇi which the *Ethnologue* recognises as the *Gomāntakī* dialect, further divided into sub-dialects such as the *Bārdescī Bhās* or north Goan,*Pramāṇa* or standard Koṅkaṇī and *Sāśṭicī Bhās* or south Goan. Their Konkani sociolect is different from others and is more closer to the *Saraswat* dialect.

Daivadnyas in Maharashtra, i.e. Mumbai, Ṭhane, Pune, Kolhapura, Satara, contemporarily speak Marāṭhi. In the Koṅkaṇa region of Maharashtra they speak dialects of Koṅkaṇi such as *Malvani*, *Kudali* and others. Daivadnyas in Kanara speak different dialects of Koṅkaṇi, such as *Karvari* in the Uttara Kannada district and *Maṅgluri* in the South Canara district.

Almost all of them are bilingual, Goan seṭs can speak Marāṭhi fluently, Canara Seṭs speak Kannaḍa and Tulu outside home, likewise a very small fraction of Keralites can speak Malayalaṃ with an accent, most of them can speak English fluently. Many of them have accepted Marāṭhi/Kannaḍa as their cultural language but noticeably, this has not led to an assimilation of these languages with Koṅkaṇi. Similarly Daivadnyas settled in various parts of Gujarat use the local Gujarati language. Portuguese language is known by many members of older generation of Goans who had done their formal education during the Portuguese rule.

Historians say that the period of migration of Daivajñas and the *Kudāldeskārs*, from the northern part of India is same, and they settled in Goa in the same period, for this reason members of both the communities speak the same dialect of Koṅkaṇī in Goa.

Historically, many scripts have been used writing either Koṅkaṇī or Marāṭhī. An extinct script called as Goykanadi[i] was used by the traders in the early 16th century. The earliest document written in this script is a petition addressed by Ravala Śeṭī to the king of Portugal. Other scripts used include Devanāgarī,*Moḍi*, *Halekannaḍa* and Roman script.

Kali Bhasha secret lexicon

Daivajña traders had developed a unique slang called *Kalī Bhās*, which was used to keep the secrecy of the trade by the traders. Remnants of this jargon are still found in the language used by the Daivajña traders.

Food habits

Sets are mostly non-vegetarian , except those from the community who are still involved in priest hood activities (i.e. Pourohitya) . Śeṭs refrained from eating all meats except fish. They do not have any social or religious restrictions on consuming fish. Fish is not treated

as a meat and are euphemistically called "Sea Vegetable" (*Jal Kaay*), while oysters are referred to by the name *Samudra phala* (Sea fruit). Fish from brackish waters is generally preferred to freshwater fish. As these people migrated to different regions of Konkan and its surroundings eating habits have also changed with it. Now most of the urban population consume chicken and mutton as part of their diet. The Vaishnavite and Purohit counterparts are vegetarian.

Arts and music

They do not have their own repertoire of folk songs, but many of them are skilled in singing bhajans, in folk and classical traditions. Until recently every family had a tradition of evening bhajan and prayers with the family members in front of the family gods; a few families have still kept this tradition alive. Children recited *Shloka*s, *Shubhankaroti*, *Parvacha*, as the womenfolk lit the lamp in front of the deity, tulasi and ancestors. Womenfolk were not allowed to sing or dance which was considered demeaning, they do not have any folk songs other than *ovis* which they hummed while doing household work, some pujas, and other ceremonies such as the naming ceremony, the wedding and the thread ceremony.

Even though they do not have a tradition of folk songs, they have played a significant role in field of Hindustani classical music, drama, arts and literature.

Notable individuals

- Jagannath Shankarshet: philanthropist, reformer, architect of modern Mumbai
- Dwarkanath Madhav Pitale(1882–1928):Marathi writer, Social reformer
- Chandrakala A. Hate: Author, professor, and social worker
- Suresh Haldonkar: classical vocalist, actor
- Pandurang Purushottam Shirodkar: freedom fighter, writer, first speaker of Goa assembly
- Sachin Khedekar: Hindi, Marathi film and TV actor
- Anjali Bhagwat: Rifle shooter
- Sawlaram Haldankar: painter
- Pandit Babanrao Haldankar: classical musicologist
- Subodh Kerkar: installation artist
- Arun Paudwal: Bollywood music composer, singer; Anuradha Paudwal's husband
- Sanjay Narvekar: actor
- Prakashchandra Pandurang Shirodkar: Archaeologist
- Sudesh Lotlikar: Konkani, Marathi poet and producer/director of documentary films from Goa.

Karhade Brahmin

Karhade (also written as Karada, **Karhāḍā, Karhāḍ**e) Brahmins are a predominantly Pancha Dravida Brahmin sub-group.

Konkani Brahmins

Konkani Brahmins are Brahmins whose mother-tongue is Konkani. Konkani Brahmins hail mainly from the southern part of the Maharashtra coast, Goa and coastal Karnataka.

Most Konkani Brahmins belong to the Smartha sect, which adheres to the Advaita philosophy expounded by Adi Shankaracharya. Others belong to the Madhva sect, who follow the Dvaita philosophy expounded by Madhvacharya. A Prominent communities among the Konkani Brahmins include:

1. Goud Saraswat Brahmins—speak Konkani
2. Chitrapur Saraswats Brahmins—speak Konkani.
3. Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins—speak Konkani and Malvani(It is also a dialect of Konkani spoken in Malvan region)

Kudaldeshkar Gaud Brahman

Kudaldeshkar Gaud Saraswat Brahmin is a community hailing from the western coast of India, residing in the Konkan division of Maharashtra, Goa. This community is also known as *Kudaldeshkar Aadya Gaud Brahman*, *Kudaldeshkar* and sometimes *Kudalkar Brahman*s. They speak Marathi, Malwani dialect of Konkani.
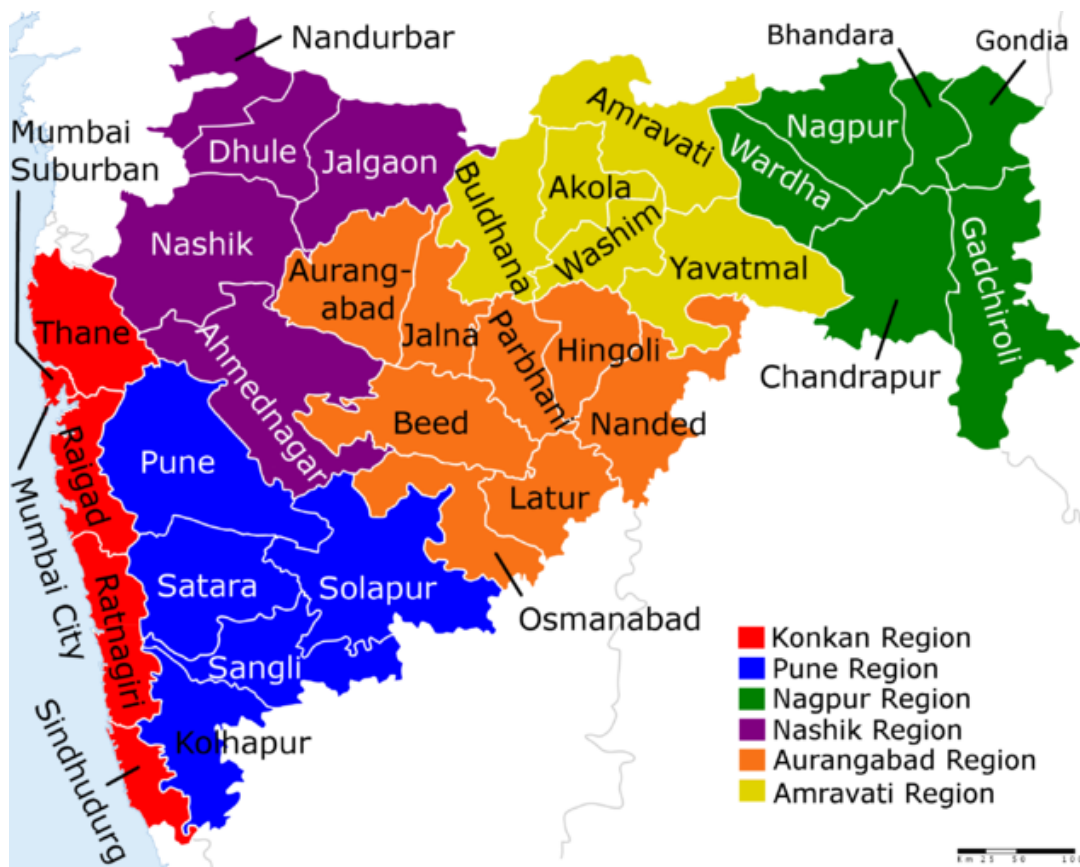
Divisions of Maharashtra. The red region is an approximate indication of Konkan, the coastal region of Maharashtra and the ancestral home of Kudaldeshkars

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Religion

Kudaldeshkar Adya Goud Brahmans follow Shankaracharya's Advait school of philosophy, and have their own three centuries old Math in Dabholi village in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The first pontiff of the Shreemat Purnanand Swamiji was initiated into Sanyasa by Vishwananda Swamiji. The present 20th pontiff of the Math is Pradyumnanand Swamiji.

Culture

They abide by all the *Shodasha Samskaras* and other *Brahminical* rituals, but are not so orthodox, and are highly educated, cultured, and flexible.

Language

The original language of Kudaldeshkars is *Malwani*. The *Malwani* dialects of Konkani (also referred to as a creoles between Konkani and Marathi). Today *Malwani* is more significantly identified as the principal language of Kudaldeshkars and also of the natives of the Sindhudurg district.

There is no special script or text characters for *Malwani* and it is generally written in Devanagari. They also speak Marathi in Maharashtra, and Konkani in Goa, and Karnataka. *Malwani* is also called *Kudali*, originally known as Kudwali. Kudwal is the ancient name for *Kudal*.

Diet

Since the community had its base in the Konkan area, food habits are naturally influenced by the sea coast Their cuisine is unique, more of humid tropical nature, rice, spices, kokums, raw mangos, cashew nuts and coconuts. Still, the Malwani diets unique characteristics are well distinguished from Goan food. Kudaldeshkars are not to keen in fruits intake. But the Konkan region is one of the biggest for growing Bananas and Alphanso Mango.

List of Goan Brahmin communities

- Goud Saraswat Brahmins
- Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins
- Karhade Brahmins
- Chitpawan Brahmins
- Daivajnya Brahmins

Padye

Padhye Brahmin community hails from Goa, commonly known as "**Bhatt**", they speak a unique dialect of Konkani known as "Bhati Bhasha".

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Early history

The reference to Padye Brahmins is found in the section of *Karahastrabrahmanotpatti* of Sahyadrikhanda. It is commonly believed that Padye Brahmins are not different from the Karhades and are a section of Karhade Brahmins. However, even now Padye Brahmins have retained their identity. There is an opinion that the Padhye Brahmins have come from Sumer.The basis of this theory and the sources are not known.

Origin of the word *Padye*

The name *Padye* is supposed to have its origin in the Sumerian word *Patesi*. But it can be also concluded that 'Padhye' or 'Padye' is a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word 'Upadhyay' which means a 'teacher'.

Later history

With due course of time,they seem to have undergone thorough Sanskritisation and have been included into Brahminic fourfold system and attained status that of a Brahmin.(i.e.:during the rule of Yadavas and Kadambas in Goa when they were given lands by the monarchs and the title of *Deshapati*(now corrupted as *Dessai*)was bestowed upon many of them).

The Padyes from Goa and are believed to have migrated to Maharashtra, then returned to Goa a few centuries later. It is believed that the name Karhade comes from the place *Karhatak* (present day Karhad) in Maharashtra, where they lived. The *Shiledar*s of Kolhapur conquered south Konkan and got these priests with them back to Goa.

Mythological origins

Skanda Purana (Sahyadri Khanda) as well as Brahmand Puran are very harsh towards these Brahmins and it is mentioned that they descended from the bones of camel and hence designated as Karhades.

Later Brahminic classification

Padhyes later were included in to the Panch Dravida group of Brahmins and are now commonly considered a sub-caste of the Karhade Brahmin community,though not historically. They are essentially Rigvedi Brahmins and follow the Ashwalayana Sutra. Padhyes belong to 13 Gotras and are predominantly Smarthas and worship different aspects of Shakti and Shiva.

Demographics

The majority of Padhye people are found in Goa, but due to many socio-economic reasons they have also settled in the neighboring states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and some parts of Kerala.

The Padhye speak 'Bhati Bhasha', a creole of Marathi and Konkani.

Kuldevatas

Padhyes worship following deities as their Kuldevta

- Navadurga
- Vijayadurga
- Aryadurga
- Mahalasa
- Kamakshi
- Mahalakshmi
- Santeri

Notable people

- Balwant Abhisheki - Noted Kirtankar, Father of Jitendra Abhisheki
- Jitendra Abhisheki
- Prabhakar Panshikar
- Shounak Abhisheki

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins (RSB) (also known as Bhalavalikar Gauda Saraswat Brahmins) are a Hindu community of India and one of the major sub-group of Konkani Saraswat Brahmins. They belong to the Pancha (five) Gauda Brahmana groups or "Gaudadi Panchakas". Konkani is their mother tongue. They also speak Kannada, Tulu in South Canara of Karnataka, and Marathi in few parts of Goa and Maharashtra.

They are classified under the Other Backward Class(OBC) list by the Government of Kerala and the Government of Karnataka.

BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN GUJARAT

The Aboti Brahmin are a Brahmin community who were recorded living in Rajasthan, India, around 1228 CE (1306 VS), where they were usually temple servants and had migrated from Dvaravati. Today, they are found in the state of Gujarat and some at least continue to work as temple servants. They perform puja at the Dwarkadhish Temple in Dwarka during the Hindu festival of Janmashtami.

Anavil Brahmin

Anavil Brahmins are a community of Brahmins who, despite not being numerically superior, are particularly dominant in the Surat and Valsad districts of south Gujarat, India, where they have been significant land-owners and have an influential role in politics.

The Anavil are among the Brahmins communities who do not perform a priestly function. They comprise two sub-groups, called the Desai and the Bhathela. The former acted as tax farmers during the era of the Mughal Empire, then as minor rulers and eventually underwent a process of sanskritisation that saw them conform more closely to the classical Brahmin practices, such as dowry marriage. The Bhathela still prefer the brideprice system for marriage. The Desai are fewer in number but superior in traditional status.

Bardai Brahmins

Trikamji Bapu, founder of the Bardai Brahmin Samaj

Bardai Brahmins refers to a group of Brahmins whose ancestors originate from the state of Gujarat in India. They are found mainly in the coastal city of Porbandar.

Origin

Being the major city in the Barda Plains, Bardai Brahmins settled in the outlying villages migrated to this city in search of a better urban life and access to various amenities including education. Porbandar became the window to the world and then essentially it became the doorway to the outside world. It was from here that migrations not only to other cities of India or Asia occurred but being a sea port it was only matter of time before Bardai Brahmins traveled via sea routes to initially (in the period 1910-1960) Africa and subsequently (chiefly from 1965 onwards) to other continents (Europe and America). Indeed, most of the Bardai Brahmins settled in the west have arrived in the west via this route. Therefore, for Bardai Brahmins who may not have set foot in India, having been born in Africa or in the west, Porbandar is still considered as the ancestral home city.

Surnames and Kuldevis

Bardai Brahmins can be identified by surnames; Bapodra, Bambhanya, Bhogayata, Chhelavda, Dave, Jani, Joshi, Kinderkhedia, Modha, Pandit, Purohit, Rajyaguru, Sanathara, Sthanakiya and Thanki. Each Surname or group of surnames (gotra) is associated with a Kuldevi (Goddess)

Kuldevis

- Annapurna - Joshi
- Ashapura, Samudri - Dave, Sthanakhya, Thanki and Pandit
- Harsidhima - Bhogayata
- Momaima - Rajyaguru
- Vindhyavasini - Bapodra, Chhelavda
- Gatradma - Sanathara
- Balvima - Modha
- vagheshwarima - Bambhanya

Bhattmewada Brahmins

Bhattmewada Brahmins are a Brahmin community found in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India.

Gauda Brahmins

Gauda is a group of Brahmin communities in India. The Gauda Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Girnara Brahmin

The Girnara Brahmin are a Hindu caste found in the state of Gujarat in India. They are a sub-group of the Brahmin community.

History and origin

The Girnara Brahmin get their name from the town of Girinagar, now Junagadh, where they lived before the arrival of the Audichya Brahmin. Another interpretation of their name is that it was acquired on the fact that they lived on the foothills of the Girnar hills. The community is said to have originated in the Himalayas, and settled in the Girnar hills, which is considered as sacred by both the Hindus and Jains of Saurashtra. They are now found mainly in the districts of Junagadh, Jamnagar and Kutch. The Girnara are a Gujarati speaking community.

Present circumstances

The Girnara have five sub-groups, the Madhavpura, Chorwadia, Ajakia,Jamnagar, Panai and Bardai. These subgroups are named after the villages where they first settled. For example, Madhavpur and Chorwad are situated near Junagadh and Ajaka near Porbander. All these groups are of equal status. The community is further divided into gotras, the main ones being the Bharadwaj, Kashyap, Kauchchas, Kaurvas, Maundas, Saudamas, Kaushas, Krishnatri, Sandilya, Vats, Bhaginas, Vashsist and Gargwa. Like other Hindu communities, they are endogamous and practice clan exogamy.

The Girnara are essentially a community of landowners and cultivators. Prior to the carrying out of land reforms after the independence of India, the Girnara together with the Nagar Brahmins were the largest landowners in Saurashtra. Many Girnara are still employed as temple priests. The community have its own caste association, the Samast Brahmin Samaj, which acts as a community welfare association.

Gurav

The Gurav are an occupational community comprising several castes. They are among the traditional service providers found in villages, for whom they act in a priestly role, and are found in several states of India.

Etymology

The origin of the word *Gurav* is uncertain. The community claim it derives from the Sanskrit plural of *guru*. While known as *Gurav* in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, they are also called *Gorava* in Karnataka and *Tapodhan Brahmin* in Gujarat.

Function

Both Gurav women and men perform the traditional occupations of their community. They are neither cultivators nor village officers but rather providers of a service deemed necessary for the functioning of the village, as with artisans.[a] They traditionally serve as priests, maintainers and managers in temples devoted to Shiva, mostly in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Some act in a role similar to shamans, being intermediaries between the temple idol and the soliciting

believer, and others also serve as priests to the families of the temple dancers. Their other traditional roles are also connected to Shaivite worship, such as musicianship and the sale both of leaf plates and symbolic flowers. Local testimony suggests that the Gurav also act in a religious capacity outside temple grounds: at harvest time in the Mawal region, they are called upon to provide a symbolic sprinkling of water at threshing grounds

Composition

The Bhavika, Lingayat and Saiva are the most prominent among the distinct endogamous castes that comprise the Gurav. These groups are in turn subdivided; for example, the Saiva Gurav have Nagari, Nilakantha and Swayambhu as subcastes, while the Lingayat Gurav are split into the Hugara, Jira and Malgara .

Bhavika Gurav

The Bhavika Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and comprise mostly members drawn from the Kunbi caste. Few are literate or formally educated even in their own rituals, and the temples that they serve are very rudimentary in style. During folk festivals, members of this community often perform animal sacrifices in honour of the village deities whose shrines they serve.

Lingayat Gurav

The Lingayat Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region and on the borders between Maharashtra and Karnataka except Omerga-basavakalyan Region(Ladwanti village). They do not know from which caste they originate but claim to have migrated to their present regions from Karnataka when they suffered persecution after the death of Basava, the founder of their sect. They are strict vegetarians and believe their high degree of devotion to Shiva makes them superior to other Gurav subgroups. It is this zeal that also causes them to disdain being grouped with other castes.

Saiva Gurav

According to Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat, a Hindu priest and academic, although the Lingayat Gurav believe themselves to be superior among the various Gurav subgroups, it is the Saiva Gurav who are most respected by the people of Maharashtra This family members perform an sacred tread ceremony .

Mostly literate and educated, the Maharashtrian members of the Saiva Gurav developed a myth of origin in the early 19th century and prefer to call themselves *Saiva Brahmin*. Their self-published research, in the form of a clan history known as a *jatipurana*, proposes a lineal connection with the sage Dadhichi through his son Sudarsana and thus a Brahmin status. The legend says that Sudarsana was stripped of certain Vedic powers by an offended Shiva but was also granted the right to perform the puja rituals. The claims of the community to Brahminhood were accepted both by a *sankaracharya* (a respected authority and arbitrator of the Hindu faith) and colonial law courts but are not accepted in

general Maharashtrian society, although Brahmins do acknowledge the right of the Saiva Gurav to offer the first daily puja.

Socio-economic status

In areas other than Maharashtra, the Brahmin status of the Gurav is commonly accepted but they are nonetheless considered to be of a low rank in the social structure. The sociologist M. N. Srinivas noted this peculiarity of low-status Brahminhood in particular regarding the Tapodhan of Gujarat. In Maharashtra they are considered to be a Shudra community in the Hindu ritual ranking system known as *varna*.

It is probable that the Gurav are among the less well-paid among the various *balutedhar* communities, perhaps because the product of their labours, being mostly intangible, is less apparent than that of, say, the carpenters and blacksmiths. They are not among those groups who have noticeably suffered historically from the effects of social degradation or lack of access to opportunity, although in Maharashtra they are listed among the Other Backward Classes under India's system of positive discrimination.

Khedaval

The Khedaval or Khedawal is a Gujarati Brahmin community better known as Baj Khedaval Brahmin. They come from the Saurashtra region in west India, while the related Gujarat Baj Khedaval Brahmin caste hails from central parts of Gujarat.

Modh

The Modh are the followers of Modheshwarimata, originating from the town of Modhera. The residents of Modhera were from the four castes: the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants), and the Shudras (service providers). From the 10th century forward, the community of Modhera consisted predominantly of the Brahmins and the Banias.

It is believed that the Modhs are further divided into Dasha and Visha, like any other Gujarati *nyat* (community). The residents who lived on the right flank (*dakshin bhag*) of townships are called *Dasha*, and those living on left flank (*vaam bhag*) are called *Visha*. While Dasha Modhs are essentially in business, a subsect of Visha Modhs are called "Gowbhuja". Reference is made in the Ramayana that during the fight between Vishwamitra and Vashishta, on the order of Vashishta, Sabala created an army from her arms to defend herself and her Ashram of Vashista; the descendents of these soldiers are also referred to as "Gowbhuja". Visha Modhs are in the land and jewellery business.

The residents of satellite townships of Modhera, e.g. Mandal, Adalaj, and Gobha, also append "Modh" to their town names (e.g. "Mandaliya Modh", "Adalja Modh", and "Gobhva Modh").

The residents of Modhera migrated to other parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra states to towns such as Surat, Bulsar, Navsari, Mandvi, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Bardoli, Billimora, Chikhli, Gandevi, Dharampur, Bombay, Varanasi etc. Hence, the descendants of the population of the township of Modhera, whether they are Brahmins, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas or Harijans are all referred to as Modhs.

In the 20th century, many people from the Modh community have migrated to countries in East Africa, to South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Fiji, and the gulf countries.

The one who worked of farms they known Modh Patel. Maximam people of Modh Patels in Sabarkatha district in Gujarat. communities comprise people who use the name and originate from Modhera in Gujarat, India. In that state and in Rajasthan, there are many examples of Hindu communities who take their name from a town and thus there exist both Modh Brahmins and Modh Vaniks [[modh Bania (caste)|Vaniks|Vaishya]]. Where two groups share a similar toponym, the Brahmin group often traditionally acted as priests for the other, although this was not always the case and sometimes there was no corresponding group at all or there were more than two. In the case of Modhera, there is at least one other group - the Modh Ghanchis - and some journalists have suggested that they have adopted the name to signify that they have become prosperous.

Famous Modhs

- Acharya Hemachandra, Jain scholar, poet, and polymath
- Bhattaraka Kumudachandra of Bardoli of Mula Sangh
- Seth Laxmidas & Laxmandas, Hyderabad - Deccan
- Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement
- Purushottam Das Tandon, Indian politician
- Devkaran Nanjee, founder of Dena Bank
- Dhirubhai Ambani, Indian business tycoon
- Rachit Dalal, founder of Ray Vision
- Deepak Parekh, chairman of the Housing Development Finance Corporation
- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India
- Ramchandrabhai Gandhi, chairman emirate of Vadilal

Nagar Brahmin

The Nagar Brahmins are found primarily in Gujarat, but also in Rajasthan, Malwa and in states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar even as far as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh in the north, West Bengal in the east and Karnataka in the south.

Origin

The oldest account of the Nagars is given in the Nagara Khanda, a part of the Skanda Purana (Hindu religious text).

Nagar princes

A few Nagar families became chieftains of (minor) princely states, notably in two in Gujarati peninsula Kathiawar's Sorath prant : Kuba State and Vasavad.

Notable people

- Narsinh Mehta (1414–1481), poet-saint
- Himmatlal Dhirajram Bhachech - Indian civil engineer, rebuilt the Ellis Bridge
- Ranchhodlal Chhotalal - Indian businessman who set up the first textile mill at Ahmedabad
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 1st Baronet - the first Hindu baronet of British India, textile mill owner and philanthropist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 2nd Baronet, baronet, independence activist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 3rd Baronet - Arjuna awardee, shooter, etc.

Iswardas Nagar-Noted Mughal historian from the reign of Aurangzeb. Author of Futuhat-i Alamgiri.

- Paresh Rawal - Indian film actor.

Sidhra-Rudhra Brahmins

Sidhdha Rudhra Brahmins are a Brahmin community found in the state of Gujarat in India.

Sompura Brahmin

The Sompura Brahmin are a Hindu caste found in the state of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India. They are a sub-group of the Brahmin community.

History and origin

According to their traditions, the Sompura Brahmin are so named because they were created by the god Chandra to perform sacred ceremonies called *Som Yajna* for the god Shiva. They are concentrated in the town of Prabas Patan and form one of the oldest Brahmin communities in Gujarat; they speak Gujarati. Skand puran gives reference for the creation of Sompura Brahmins wide its chapter 21/22/23/24 The agnihotri brahmins from chandra lok came to prabhas with hemgarbha -the chief secretory of moon god to conduct-perform a pratishtha yagya of the first temple of lord somnath and after the yagya the moon god requested these Brahmins to stay there. These Brahmins stayed near somnath so they are called Sompura brahmins. Generally the civilisations develops and moves with the source of water worldwide, but the sompura brahmin is the only class who are stable near somnath for at least 2000 years.

Present circumstances

Like other Brahmin communities, they consist of gotras which are exogamous. The Sompuras have 18 gotras. Eleven of them are spread all over Gujarat and Rajasthan and practice temple architecture with shilp-shastra. Most of the other seven gotras stay near Prabhas/Somnath; their main profession was and still is *yajman vrutti* (priestly services) in the temples, particularly in and around Somnath. Only a Sompura Brahman may be a priest in Somnath Temple. The community is moving very highly in society in both business and education. They are strict vegetarians, and avoid garlic and lentils.

Sompura Salat

Salat are a Hindu, Brahmin community of Gujarat, which have branched off from Sompura Brahmin community. They are also found in southern Rajasthan, specially in the Mewar region. Their origin is said to be from Prabhas Patan famous for the Somnath temple. The term "salat" is derived from Shilavat, the old term for a temple architect.

Culture

They are group of people, who took artistic and masonry works as an occupation and branched off from Sompura Brahmin community. They are considered as Brahmin community and have surnames like; Trivedi, Davey, Raval, Vyas, Acharya, Shukla, Bhatt etc.However, Sompura Brahmin do not accept them as Brahmin. They maintain clan exogamy as a strict rule for marriage.

The community is vegetarian in diet and also avoid eating onions, garlic, white cucumber and lentils.

They worship Ashapura Mata as their clan deity. They are basically a Shivaite community and worship Shiva as chief deity, however, also observe all other Hindu festivals like Uthasini, Ramanavami, Janamashtmi, Holi, Diwali but Shivaratri and Navaratri are the main festival for the community.

Work

They are specialized in masonry works, artistic carvings and sculpting as well as artistic stone shaping works, especially in works of idol-making. Among the notable architecture built by them are Hawa Mahal, the royal palace near Wadhwan built for the Sultanate of Gujarat and more recently the Somnath Temple built after independence of India.

Restoration and building of temples

Prabhashankar Oghadbhai of Palitana, had been one of the leading designers of Nagar style of temples. He was awarded Padmashri. The design and building of the modern Somnath Temple, known as Somnath Maha Meru Prasad, was executed by him. While their center of activity is in Gujarat and Rajasthan, they now undertake temple

architecture in different part of India, as well as overseas. They follow texts written in 15th century such as Prasad Manjari, written during the rule of Rana Raimal by brothers Mandan and Nathji. They originally hailed from Patan, Gujarat and were invited to settle in Chittorgarh. During the past five centuries they have been involved in building and restoration of numerous Jain temples in Gujarat and southern Rajasthan, as well as temples built by Jains from there regions in other parts of India.

Hutheesing Jain Temple

In 1992, Chandrakant Sompura, grandson of Prabhashankar had designed the Sompura Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar. He was asked by Ashok Singhal, chief of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to design and build the Ram Janmabhoomi temple.

The world's largest Ram Temple, a proposed replica of Angkor Wat to be built in Champaran, Bihar, is being designed by Piyush Sompura

C.P. Trivedi and Sons, founded by Chandulal P. Trivedi from the Sompura clan, were responsible for the restoration of the Delwara Jain temples and the Jain temples at Jaisalmer Fort and the Amar Sagar lake. They also designed the Kirti Stumbh at Hutheesing Wadi in Ahmedabad, Oswal Jain Temple at Nairobi, Kenya, Jain Center, Leicester, UK,Atma Vallabh Smarak, Delhi, and the Global Vipassana Pagoda at Gorai in northwest Mumbai. Hitesh Sompura in Mumbai is a qualified Architect from Mumbai who computerised and revolutionised Temple Architecture by writing English book "You & Architecture" and making many short documentary films explaining about Indian Temple Architecture. Awarded the "Best Architecture Award 2007" at London in 2007, built the first ever traditional Shikharbandhi Jain Temple in Europe, Rajesh Sompura is now having more than 35 glorious projects standing tall in India, UK, USA, Singapore, Bangkok, Nairobi and Tanzania.

Demography

The community is found thorough out Gujarat but largely concentrated in Saurashtra region. Outside India, population is found in United Kingdom and United States of America.

Trivedi Mewada Brahmin Barishi

Trivedi Mewada Brahmin also known as *Tarvadi Mewada Brahmin* or *Trivedi Mewada Brahman* is a sub caste of Brahmin people from north east Gujarat and South Rajasthan Udaipur, Dungarpur, Banswara

People

Shamlaji Temple

Brahmins of Trivedi Mewada Brahmin Barishi are devotees of Shiv. Eklingji Mahadev, a form of Shiv is Ishtdevta i.e. Clan God of these peoples & Goddess Amba (in the form goddess Katayani) as there Kuldevi i.e. Clan Goddess.

Vadadra Brahmin

Vadadra are the followers of Bala Mata, a form of Amba Maa with eighteen hands. They are Brahmins who are named after the village Vadad or Valad (other names are - Vadadras, Valadras, Varadra, Valadhra or Valandra), near to Ahmedabad. The name of the town Vadad was adopted by the community living around the temple of Bala Mata. They are Devi Bhakts.

Chapter 43
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN HARYANA

Bhargava

Bhargava, also spelled Bhargav, is a community in India who believe themselves to be descended from the sage Bhrigu. Its members originate from the Dhosi Hill area and were originally known as Dhusars.

History

A view of ancient Dhosi Hill Temple of Chyvan Rishi,
rebuilt by Bhargava Community in 1890s

The Bhargava community were originally known as Dhusars and were a trading caste (*bania* or *vaishya*). During the later part of the 19th century they successfully engineered a rise to the status of *brahmin* using a process sometimes termed sanskritisation. It was at this time that they took the name of Bhargava. The oldest known inscription mentioning the Dhusar community is at the Sakrai Mata temple at Sakrari in Sikar district, Rajasthan. Dineshchandra Sircar dates this to 879 AD, although it is dated by others to 642 A.D. They were merchants or traders at that time.

The Bhargava now believe themselves to be descended from the sage Bhrigu and his son Chyavana.

Present status

The Bhargava have well-established community associations, the Bhargava Sabhas, that operate in various cities under an umbrella organisation, the All-India Bhargava Sabha (AIBS) located at Gurgaon, Haryana. There are around 37 of these Bhargava Sabhas.

AIBS has also held international conferences. These took place in Canada (2008), USA (2009) and Dubai (2012).

Bias Brahmin

The Bias (or Vyas) are a Brahmin community found in the Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. They trace their origin to Gujarat.

Origin

The word *bias* means a preacher in Sanskrit. The *Bias* is an umbrella term for the members of the three Gujarati Brahmin communities named *Nagar*, *Audichya* and *Bardai* who migrated from Gujarat centuries ago and got settled in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan. These three sub-communities of the group intermarry. They speak Haryanvi, Punjabi, Hindi or other local dialects. In Haryana, the community is found mainly in the districts of Bhiwani, Hisar, Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Karnal.

Present circumstances

The Bias are strictly endogamous and practice clan exogamy. Their clans are referred to as gotras, and theoretically all gotra claim descent from a respected saint or rishi. Among the larger gotras are the Gautam, Kaushik, Angira, Vashishta, Gargas, Bhargav, Bhardwaj, Parashar, Koshish, Monish, Sandal etc. that are further divided into sub-clans known as *shashans*. In some respects, they are regarded as the highest class of Brahmins.

The traditional occupation of the Bias is that of village priests. A small number were large landowners, but most of the community are petty landowners. Like other Brahmin groupings, they have been more successful in taking up higher education, and generally are economically well off. Nowadays, their intermarriage with Gaurs is quite common.

Surnames

The Bias use various surnames including their respective clan-names, Sharma, Pandit and Vyas.

Bura Brahmin

The Bura Brahmin are a Brahmin caste found in the state of Haryana in India. They are known as Acharya Brahmins.

Origin

The Bura Brahmin are the funeral priests of Hinduism, as such occupy a low status within the larger Brahmin caste. . This includes receiving offerings from the deceased family ten days after the death. The offerings are known as *das gatra*. According to the community's tradition, they originated in Ujjain in Central India.

Present circumstances

The Bura Brahmin are strictly endogamous, and practice village exogamy. They speak Haryanvi among themselves and Hindi with outsiders.

Gauda Brahmins

Gauda is a group of Brahmin communities in India. The Gauda Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Hatwal

Hatwal (Garhwali/Hindi: हटवाल) is a Garhwali brahmin family name from the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand. The Hatwals were primarily a priestly class who served as pandits at the many Hindu temples in the Himalayan Kingdom of Garhwal, including Badrinath which is part of the auspicious Hindu pilgrimage circuit of Char Dham.

The Hatwals are descended from Rishi Bharadwaja and belong to the Bharadwaj gotra.

The Rajput Hatwals are very few in number and are found in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand and upper reaches of Himachal Pradesh.

Etymology and use

The origin of the surname Hatwal is from *Hat wale* (a person from a village called Haat). Most of the inhabitants of Hat, now in Garhwal, Uttarakhand were called Hatwals.

Origin

The Hatwals are Sarola Brahmins from Garhwal who first migrated to the hills of present day Uttarakhand from the plains of north-western India around the 13th century.

Chapter 44
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN KARNATAKA

Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin

Chitrapur Saraswats are a small Konkani-speaking community of Hindu Brahmins in India. They are traditionally found along the Kanara coast and call themselves *Bhanaps* in the Konkani language.

Cukkemane

Cukkemane or Kukkemane or Cuckemane is surname or a family name belonging to members of the Havyaka Brahmin Community. They belong to the Gautama gotra; they originate from and are mainly based in Kodagu (Coorg), Karnataka, a state in South India. They are from Kukke which was part of Amara Sulya district, formerly in the old kingdom of Kodagu.

Origins of Cukkemane

Many centuries ago, a Brahmin family of Gautama gotra from Sagara taluka in Shimoga (Shivamogga) district in Karnataka migrated to the hamlet *Saravu* in Kodapadavu village in Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district. During a particular point in history, there was no male heir to continue the family. The then family members went to the Kukke Subramanya Temple & prayed to Subramanya to bless them with a male heir. The bought home a *Shiva Linga* for daiy worship from the temple. Within the same temple complex, they also sought the blessings of Lakshmi Narasimha, with an assurance to him, that he would be the *kuladevaru* or Kuldevta of the family henceforth. A male heir was thus born and the family continued. Then on the descendents of this family identified themselves as belonging to Cukkemane or Kukkemane deriving it from "Kukke" - the name of the of Subramanya & "Mane" - which in Kannada means house, therefore the name meant the House of the Kukke Subramanya. Prior to accepting Lakshmi Narasimha as the Cukkemane family deity, Goddess Sri Durgaparmeshwari was the Kuladevaru or the family deity. Therefore even today some members of the Cukkemane in Saravu, worship Lakshmi Narasimha as the Mane Devaru - God of the House, at noon and Goddess Sri Durgaparameshwari as the kuladevaru - God of the Clan or family, at night.

History and myth and fact

It is said that centuries ago one of the ancestors of Cukkemane, was a staunch devotee of Shiva and possessed a Shivalinga & worshipped it with a great devotion. As he sensed his life on earth nearing an end, he was worried as to who would perform the daily rituals and care for the at all times as he did. Possessed with this thought, he decided to install this shivalinga in the *garbha gudi* - the sanctum sanctorum of the Subramanya in the Kukke Subramanya Temple. Having done so, when his time came, he died, content with the

knowledge that the would be well taken care of. However, many years later, some jealous elements, made of with the linga and it was not found for some centuries, until about 250–150 years ago it was found in the forest behind the Kukke Subramanya Temple, and re-installed. However, certain sections do not agree with the earlier part of the story and just reiterate that the latter part of it, about the idol being found in the forest is true and that nothing else is associated with it. Yet, many members of the Cukkemane family pay a yearly visit to the Temple and perform prescribed rituals for Subramanya along with this particular Shivalinga believing it to be installed there by their forefather. Rituals are also performed for Lakshmi Narasimha and Adishesha.

Caste, language and belief

The Cukkemanes belong to the Havyaka Brahmin community of Hinduism & speak mainly in *Hosa* (new) Kannada as spoken in Bangalore, Mysore etc. and Havigannada (Havyaka Kannada) dialects. They belong to the Gautama gotra. They further follow and perform the rituals as per the Yajurveda among the four veda - the holy scriptures of the Hindus & are followers of the Advaita philosophy propounded by Sri Adi Shankaracharya. Among the *Math* they follow the Ramachandrapura Math and *Pontiff* head of the *Math*, Shree Shree Raghaveshwara Bharathi Mahaswamiji is the *Kulaguru* - the divine mentor, teacher & instructor to the family as to many other Havyaka families as well.

Gurav

The Gurav are an occupational community comprising several castes. They are among the traditional service providers found in villages, for whom they act in a priestly role, and are found in several states of India.

Etymology

The origin of the word *Gurav* is uncertain. The community claim it derives from the Sanskrit plural of *guru*. While known as *Gurav* in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, they are also called *Gorava* in Karnataka and *Tapodhan Brahmin* in Gujarat.

Function

Both Gurav women and men perform the traditional occupations of their community. They are neither cultivators nor village officers but rather providers of a service deemed necessary for the functioning of the village, as with artisans.[a] They traditionally serve as priests, maintainers and managers in temples devoted to Shiva, mostly in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Some act in a role similar to shamans, being intermediaries between the temple idol and the soliciting believer, and others also serve as priests to the families of the temple dancers. Their other traditional roles are also connected to Shaivite worship, such as musicianship and the sale both of leaf plates and symbolic flowers. Local testimony suggests that the Gurav also act in a religious capacity outside temple grounds: at harvest time in the Mawal region, they are called upon to provide a symbolic sprinkling of water at threshing grounds

Composition

The Bhavika,[b] Lingayat and Saiva are the most prominent among the distinct endogamous castes that comprise the Gurav. These groups are in turn subdivided; for example, the Saiva Gurav have Nagari, Nilakantha and Swayambhu as subcastes, while the Lingayat Gurav are split into the Hugara, Jira and Malgara .

Bhavika Gurav

The Bhavika Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and comprise mostly members drawn from the Kunbi caste. Few are literate or formally educated even in their own rituals, and the temples that they serve are very rudimentary in style. During folk festivals, members of this community often perform animal sacrifices in honour of the village deities whose shrines they serve.

Lingayat Gurav

The Lingayat Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region and on the borders between Maharashtra and Karnataka except Omerga-basavakalyan Region(Ladwanti village). They do not know from which caste they originate but claim to have migrated to their present regions from Karnataka when they suffered persecution after the death of Basava, the founder of their sect. They are strict vegetarians and believe their high degree of devotion to Shiva makes them superior to other Gurav subgroups. It is this zeal that also causes them to disdain being grouped with other castes.

Saiva Gurav

According to Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat, a Hindu priest and academic, although the Lingayat Gurav believe themselves to be superior among the various Gurav subgroups, it is the Saiva Gurav who are most respected by the people of Maharashtra This family members perform an sacred tread ceremony . Mostly literate and educated, the Maharashtrian members of the Saiva Gurav developed a myth of origin in the early 19th century and prefer to call themselves *Saiva Brahmin*. Their self-published research, in the form of a clan history known as a *jatipurana*, proposes a lineal connection with the sage Dadhichi through his son Sudarsana and thus a Brahmin status. The legend says that Sudarsana was stripped of certain Vedic powers by an offended Shiva but was also granted the right to perform the puja rituals. The claims of the community to Brahminhood were accepted both by a *sankaracharya* (a respected authority and arbitrator of the Hindu faith) and colonial law courts but are not accepted in general Maharashtrian society, although Brahmins do acknowledge the right of the Saiva Gurav to offer the first daily puja.

Socio-economic status

In areas other than Maharashtra, the Brahmin status of the Gurav is commonly accepted but they are nonetheless considered to be of a low rank in the social structure. The

sociologist M. N. Srinivas noted this peculiarity of low-status Brahminhood in particular regarding the Tapodhan of Gujarat. In Maharashtra they are considered to be a Shudra community in the Hindu ritual ranking system known as *varna*. It is probable that the Gurav are among the less well-paid among the various *balutedhar* communities, perhaps because the product of their labours, being mostly intangible, is less apparent than that of, say, the carpenters and blacksmiths. They are not among those groups who have noticeably suffered historically from the effects of social degradation or lack of access to opportunity, although in Maharashtra they are listed among the Other Backward Classes under India's system of positive discrimination.

Havyaka Brahmin

Havyaka Brahmins (also referred to as Haveeka, Havika'Haiga and Haveega) are the Hindu Pancha Dravida Vedic Brahmins from the Indian state of Karnataka. Havyakas profess the Advaita philosophy propounded by Adi Shankaracharya.

Etymology

The word Havyaka is derived from the words *Haveega* or *Haveeka* which is various interpreted as one who is from Ahichchatra or as the one who performs Havana and Homa. These are known as *Havya* and the person who performs them is known as *Havyaka*. The traditional vocation of Havyaka Brahmins was to perform the rituals of Homa-Havana and therefore they came to be known by the name of their profession. Other theories have been proposed as well. In ancient times the region of today's Uttara Kannada between Konkan in the north & Tuluva in the south was known by the name of Haiva. This could be the possible source of the term 'Haiga' as Havyakas are also referred to. In fact, the name "Haiga" persists in Havyaka lexicon. The word Havyaka might also be derived from the place named Haigunda.

Present day

Most of the Havyakas of today follow either Ramachandrapura Matha (presently headed by Shri Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swamiji) or Swarnavalli Matha (presently headed by Shree Gangadharendra Saraswati Swamiji) and are guided by the advaita philosophy of Shankaracharya. Till recently Havyakas were primarily engaged in agriculture especially growing betel nut, paddy, banana, coconut etc., while some practiced vedic professions like priests. A few decades back they also started entering into other vocations like business, education, employment etc. During Indian freedom struggle, Havyaka community played a prominent part. Men and women took leading role in Salt March and No-Tax Campaign. Dodmane Hegdes of Siddapur had an important role in freedom movement at all stages.

Language

Havyaka Brahmins speak a dialect of Kannada known as Havigannada (Havyaka and Kannada). It is 60-70% similar to mainstream Kannada but draws more words from ancient Kannada. However, most mainstream Kannada speakers find it difficult to

understand Havyaka Kannada. There are multiple variations to the Havyaka dialect based on the locality. The Havyaka dialect is supposed to be quite old. Its origins, like many other things in India, are shrouded in mystery. Notably certain Havigannada speakers from Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada district, use neutral gender in place of feminine gender while addressing females. The similarity of Havigannada words with Tulu and old Kannada and variability of the gender usage with respect to the major Dravidian languages help the hypothesis that Havyaka Brahmins migrated to the region during the Proto-Dravidian languages and Havigannada was developed with the prevailing languages with North-Indian influence. But Havyaks in certain part of Karnataka, like Kundapura, Thirthahalli and Kodagu do not speak Havigannada.

Caste

Havyakas are the subsect of the Brahmin caste of Hinduism, followers of Sri Adi Shankaracharya's Advaitha philosophy. Most Havyakas are Yajurvedi Brahmins and follow the Baudhayana Shrauta Sutra. Some are Samavedi's and few Havyakas follow Rigveda which is the oldest in vedas e.g., Vaidyas.

Festivals

Havyakas celebrate almost all festivals celebrated in Hinduism.

Art, literature and culture

As Havyakas gained population in Karnataka they became influential in politics and also cultivated fine arts. The Yakshagana folk theatre has been exclusively developed by Havyakas. Music, dance and writing became very attractive to Havyakas. Karki Yakshagana group which toured Maharashtra in the mid-19th century has the credit of inspiring Marathi theatre. In 1842, Karki Mela (group) performed before the Rajasaheb of Sangli (Maharashtra State), who encouraged court artists to learn from the group acting and singing. This laid basis for Marathi Professional theatre.

The first social play in Kannada was written by *Suri Venkataramana Shastri* in 1887. The play titled *Iggappa Hegade Vivaha Prahasana* deals with child marriage and evils of incompatibility. The play has been recently translated into English with an introduction by Prof. Narayan Hegde and published by the Sahitya Akademi (New Delhi) in the journal, Indian Literature (No. 268, March/April 2012). There have been a good number of writers, singers, teachers, doctors, industrialists, scientists, engineers and executives from Havyaka community.

Yakshagana troupes of Idagunji led by Keremane Shivarama Hegde, later by Keremane Shambhu Hegde have entertained many generations. Similarly, almost every taluk had many Havyaka Yakshagana troupes. Recently, Chittani Ramachandra Hegde, a famous Yakshagana artist was awarded Padmashri for his immense contribution towards the art. Another art form, called Prasanga, was made popular by Havyakas. A good number of youngsters have taken up Hindustani classical music.

Havyaka food

They are traditionally lacto-vegetarian in their diet, and their cuisine consists of some unique food items including *Tellavu* (a light type of dosa), *Todedev* (a wafer-thin sweet preparation), *Melara*, *Balehannu Shavige* (A vermicelli preparation using banana), *Odappe*, *Holige*, *Halasinakayi huli* (very popular in Kalache-Yellapur region of Uttara Kannada district), various types of *Thambli* (buttermilk/yoghurt-based rice accompaniment) including *Korskayi Tambli*, various types of *Gojju* (gravy) including *Kocheegayi Gojju*, *Korskayi Gojju*, *Kai Gojju*, *Kadle Gojju* (famous in Sagara prantya), etc. Other commonly prepared items include *Hagalkai Hashi* (a type of salad made from bitter gourd), *Kai Rasaa*, *Karkli*, *patrode*, famous *Soppina Tambli-Swarle-kudi*, various leaf-based preparations such as *Honegone Soppu*, *Vidangada Soppu*, *Vasange Soppu*, *Yelurge kudi/soppu*, *Sorle kudi/soppu*, *Kanchi-soppu* and *Choand Gte-soppu*, *Kajale-palya*, *Huli*, *Sasame* made of mango and *Kannekudi katne*. Many dishes are prepared using jack-fruit such as sweet pappads, several types of *Thambli*s and a variety of *Chatni pudi*s, *Sandige* and *Happala* which can be preserved for a long time. They are also known for their preparations of banana *Halwa*, *Berati* of jack-fruit and *Halasina Hannina Kadubu*. "Holige" is the most popular sweet among havyakas in Mangalore. No Havyaka marriage is complete without Holige. Havyakas have a unique food system which has intrinsic medicinal values. Some of the ingredients used in food items include wild leaves, roots/herbs and barks of trees, among others. Havyakas typically lived in villages where abundant sources of these were readily available around them, from where they were directly extracted and processed fresh.

Havyaka Gotra

The Havyakas Brahmins follow the gotra system.

- Bharadwaja
- Vashistha
- Angeerasa
- Gautama
- Jamadagni
- Kashyapa
- Vishwamitra

Kota Brahmins

Kota Brahmins are an ethnic group that hail from the Kundapur and surrounding areas of Udupi district in Karnataka, Bantwal and Puttur taluk in Mangalore district. Originally thought to have been brought to Kota (Udupi Taluk) and adjacent areas from northern India by Parashurama, they speak a Kannada different from the other regional dialects. Kota Brahmins who had been originally concentrated in the villages of Kota, Saligrama, Koteshwara and Kundapura of Udupi district, have spread to other areas. Kotas are a subsect of the Brahmin caste of Hinduism.

Madhwa Brahmins

Madhwa Brahmins are a sub-caste of Brahmins;who follow Dvaita Vedanta of Jagadguru Madhvacharya in India. The following is a list of notable Madhwa Brahmins.

Religious figures

- Raghavendra Swami was a renowned Madhwa saint, philosopher and proponent of Dvaita philosophy established by Sri Madhvacharya. He is worshiped as a Guru. He served as the head of the matha in Kumbakonam from 1621 to 1671 and established the *Brindavan* in Mantralayam in the present-day Andhra Pradesh as an important place of pilgrimage.

Madhwa Brahmins

Madhwa Brahmins or Madhwa or Deshastha Madhwa Brahmin (Deshastha Brahmins who follow Madhvacharyas philosophy) or Shivalli Madhwa Brahmin (Shivalli Brahmins who follow Madhvacharyas philosophy) is subcastes of Hindu Brahmin community in India.There is also a section of Madhva Brahmins in Goud Saraswat Brahmin community who follow Madhvacharya's philosophy.The Madhwas generally follow the Dvaita school of Vedanta philosophy as espoused by Sripada Madhvacharya.

Culture and tradition

According to Madhva Sampradaya, Madhwas mark two vertical lines with Gopichandana representing Krishna's 'lotus feet'. In between a vertical black line is made from the daily coal of the dhupa (incense).Madhwas generally worship only Avataras of Vishnu or Krishna daily. The coal left after offering incense is used to mark the black line. This is called as Angara. Those who are wearing this line have finished the Devara Puja (worship). Underneath the black line, red dot is added to indicate that one has finished eating their lunch.This dot is called as Akshate. It is the ash of the banana tree flower petal mixed with turmeric paste. The shape of Angara-Akshate is like that of a gada (mace). It is supposed to be Pranadeva Sannidhi (have the presence of Vayu Devaru). Those who did not perform daily worship to Narayana wear the simple two line tilak

Mudumbai

Mudumba, Mudumbai, Mudumbi, Mudumby, Mudumbye, Mudumbe, Mudumbaiyer, Mudumbaiyar, also called Mudumbai Chakravarthi's or Mudumbaiyers, are, by heritage, a sub-sect of South Indian Brahmins known as Sri Vaishnavas or Iyengars. Their mother tongue is typically Telugu, Tamil or, infrequently, Kannada.

There have spread all over South India, mostly in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, some even to Karnataka. In the past 100 years, many have migrated abroad from India to United States, Europe, Australia, the Middle East and Africa.

History

Progenitors of Mudumbai people are Mudumbai Nambi (முடும்பை நம்பி) and Mudumbai Ammal (முடும்பை அம்மாள்) from the early 12th century A.D, ordained by Sri Ramanujacharya (Ramanuja) as one mudhali (முதலி)(Simhasanadhipathi) among 74 Iyengars, to guard and propagate Sri Vaishnava's philosophy, the Visishta Advaitam. All Mudumbais having common paternal heritage, belong to the gotram Sri Vatsa, though not all persons belonging to Srivatsa are Mudumbais. Of Mudumbais, there are both vadakalai (வடகலை-Northern) and thenkalai (தென்கலை-Southern).

The ordainment by Sri Ramanajucharya took place in Madhurantakam, Tamil Nadu. It has been suggested that Mannargudi (மன்னார்குடி) is the origin of the Mudumbaiyars. The Mudumbai village is thought to be near Kanchipuram (திருக்கச்சி (காஞ்ஜீபுரம்)) in Tamil Nadu. It is believed that Mudumbais spread to Tanjore (தஞ்சாவூர்) and then on to the Ramanathapuram (இராமநாதபுரம்) area. As with all Iyengars, Mudumbais have acquired the language inherent to the region in which they have settled. Being that Madhurantakam was a region in which both Tamil and Telugu learning were present, these languages were highly retained by the descendants. For example, many Mudumbais of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka recite the Tiruppavai daily, some even being able to retain reading ability of Tamil all the while maintaining exceptional proficiency of Telugu and Kannada.

In addition to the surnames Mudumbai, Mudumbi, Mudumby, in modern times, some Mudumbais have settled abroad in India with the general Iyengar surname Chari, Chary, Charyulu or Acharya.

Panchagrama Brahmins

The Panchagrama Brahmins are a Brahmin community that follow the Smartha Sampradaya. They belong to the Indian state of Karnataka, and reside primarily in the districts of Udupi, Shimoga and Chikmaglur, Bengaluru and other cities.

Etymology

The words *Panchagrama Brahmin* (पंचग्रामब्राह्मण) are from Sanskrit and the term translates as *one Brahmin from five villages*.

Classification

The Panchagrama Brahmins belong to the group of Pancha Dravida Brahmins in Karnataka. Though the Panchagramis primarily speak Kannada, they are classified as one of the six subdivisions of Tulu Brahmins, along with other Kannada and Tulu speaking Brahmins of South Canara. This is because Tulu is predominant in the erstwhile

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South Canara district (of which the present Udupi district was a part). Majority of the community stays in Shimoga and Chikamagalur district.

Language

The Panchagrama Brahmins speak Kannada as their first language. The standard dialect is spoken by those in Shimoga and Chikmanglur, whereas in the Kundapura taluka of Udupi district, Kundagannada is in parlance. Additionally, Sanskrit is used for religious rituals.

Family deity

The Shankaranarayana Temple at Shankaranarayana, whose deity is a confluence of both Shankara (Shiva) and Narayana (Vishnu), houses the family deity of the Panchagramis. The Udbhava Linga, a naturally formed lingam of Lord Shankara and Lord Narayana, is the main deity of this temple. The lingam is a foot below ground, inside the Garbhagudi and only its mirror image can be seen by the devotees. A legend ascribes the founding of the holy place to Maharishi Parashurama as one of seven others. The village is located in a valley near the Sahyadris in Udupi district, at a distance of 25 km from the coast. Shankaranarayana, Subrahmanya, Udupi, Kumbhakaashi, Koteshwara, Kolluru and Gokarna are the seven holy places which constitute the Parashurama Kshetra. At the same time majority of this community who are in Shimoga and Chikamagalur district also worship Lord Venkateshwara of Tirumala as family deity.

Mutt

The Panchagrama Brahmins identify with the Tirthamukthapuri Shri Matha, Tirthamuttur, located in the Thirthahalli taluk of Shimoga district. This Matha came into existence during the period of the Vijayanagara Empire. It is located on the banks of the Tunga river, along with an ancient Yoga Narasimha Swamy temple.

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins (RSB) (also known as Bhalavalikar Gauda Saraswat Brahmins) are a Hindu community of India and one of the major sub-group of Konkani Saraswat Brahmins. They belong to the Pancha (five) Gauda Brahmana groups or "Gaudadi Panchakas". Konkani is their mother tongue. They also speak Kannada, Tulu in South Canara of Karnataka, and Marathi in few parts of Goa and Maharashtra. They are classified under the Other Backward Class(OBC) list by the Government of Kerala and the Government of Karnataka.

Shivalli Smarta Brahmins

Shivallli Smartha Brahmins (SSBs) are a sect of Kannada-speaking Shivalli Brahmins. They follow Advaita Vedanta propounded by Adi Shankara. They are the disciples of Balekudru Shreematha.

Notable people

- Prof. M.Gopalakrishna Adiga
- Dr.U R Ananthamurthy
- Girish Kasaravalli
- Shivamogga Subbanna
- Ghatam Giridhara Udupa

Tuluva Brahmins

Tulu Brahmins or Tuluva Brahmins of ancient Tulu Nadu consist of following sub-sects.

Original inhabitants of Tulunadu: Whose history predates back even before 380B.C.

- Sthanika Brahmins, also called "Sthanika Tulu Brahmins" ; and/or "Tulu Brahmins".

Second migration: Later part of the 9th century

- Havyaka Brahmins

Third migration: 11th century

- Chitpavan Brahmins
- Karhade Brahmins
- Kota Brahmins
- Shivalli Brahmins
- Saraswat Brahmins

BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN KERALA

Embranthiri / *Embrandiri* (എമ്പ്രാന്തിരി) is a Royal Brahmin caste (ആഢ്യവ ഗം) in Kerala of Tulu origin.

Embranthiris are Brahmins migrated to Kerala from the Tulu Nadu/Udupi,Karnataka.Even though settled in Kerala, most of the Embranthiries still speak Tulu as mother-tongue, and are considered as Tulu Brahmins. Some sects of Embranthiris have adopted the Malayala Brahmin surnames "Namboothiri" and "Potti" after arriving kerala. They are the followers of Vyshnavisam (വൈഷ് ണവ -വിഷ്ണു ഭഗവാന്റെ പി ഗാമിക). Because of their Vishnava dharma they mainly served Vishnu Temples, Krishna Temples and Yagams more than other gods.

Sri Madhvacharya Founder and Leader of Embrandiri-Tulu Brahmin Cast

History

During AD 1238–1317 some families of Bhramins in tulu nadu started following their acharya (Spiritual leader) Madhvacharya,They created some groups and followed Madhvacharya and his views.later they are called as Tulu Bramins or Embrandriri; Under the guidance of Sri Madhvacharya the community strongly followed Vishnavism and they done Vishnu poojas and yagams on temples. Embranthiries where specialized in yagams because of their vast knowledge in vedhas and manthras. Their spiritual leader is Madhvacharya.

Madhvacharya was a critic of Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta teachings.He toured India several times, visiting places such as Bengal, Varanasi, Dwarka, Goa and Kanyakumari, engaging in philosophical debates and visiting Hindu centers of learning. Madhva established the Krishna Mutt at Udupi with a murti secured from Dwarka Gujarat in AD 1285.After that Uduppi Sree Krishna Bhagavan Became their prime god and Madhva's Krishna Mutt Uduppi Became their Capital.
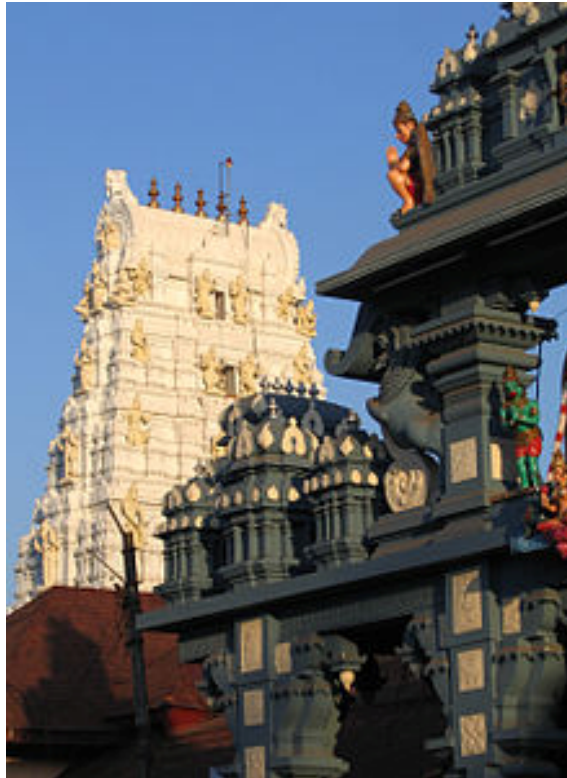
Udupi, Sri Krishna Temple established by Madhvacharya

Founder of Tulu Brahmin / Embrandhiri Cast

Madhva Acharya also known as Purna Prajña and Ananda Tīrtha, was a Hindu philosopher and the chief proponent of the Dvaita (dualism) school of Vedanta founded Tulu Brahmin Cast. Madhva called his philosophy as "Tattvavaadaa" meaning "the realist viewpoint".He was a critic of Adi Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta teachings. Madhva established the Krishna Mutt at Udupi with a murti secured from Dwarka Gujarat in AD 1285.

In several of historic book, "Madhvacharya is described as the 3rd avatar or incarnation of Vayu, wind god, the son of Vishnu".His is described as like Hanuman—the first avatar of Vayu, and Bhima,a Pandava in the Mahabharata and the second avatar of Vayu. In one of his bhasya on the Brahma Sutras, he asserts that the authority of the text is from his personal encounter with Vishnu. Tulu Brahmins or Embrandiries believed Madvacharya as avathar of Sree Vishnu Bhagavan, and he will guide the latter in their journey towards Vishnu.

Madhvacharya

Madhvācārya was born on the west coast of Karnataka state in 13th-century India. As a teenager, he became a Sanyasin (monk) joining Brahma-sampradaya guru Achyutapreksha, of the Ekadandi order. Madhva studied the classics of Hindu philosophy, particularly the Principal Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras (*Prasthanatrayi*). He commented on these, and is credited with thirty seven works in Sanskrit. His writing style was of extreme brevity and condensed expression. His greatest work is considered to be the *Anuvyakhyana*, a philosophical supplement to his bhasya on the Brahma Sutras composed with a poetic structure. In some of his works, he proclaimed himself to be an avatar of Vayu, the son of god Vishnu.

Culture/Holy Central

City of Udupi in Karnataka, India is the cultural central or holy place for Tulu Brahmins(embrandiri).The main area resembles a living ashram, a holy place for daily devotion and living. Surrounding the Sri Krishna Matha are several temples namely the Udupi Anantheshwara Temple which is over a 1,000 years old was Founded by Sri Madhvacharya.The Krishna Matha was founded by the Vaishnavite saint Shri Madhwacharya in the 13th century. He was the founder of the Dvaita school of Vedanta. It is believed that Madhwacharya found the murti of SriKrishna in a large ball of gopichandana.

Present Times of Embrandiri's

During the times of British Emperor so many embrandiri tulu Brahmin families moved from udupi to several places of India. Most of the families moved to kerala because of culture and tradition of kerala Brahmins (Namboothiri) is very much close enough to their culture. They moved to several places of kerala and founded Madams as their home. later they used madam as their familyname.

Madhva Acharya (Sanskrit pronunciation: [məd̪ʱvaːˈtʃaːrjə]; AD 1238–1317), also known as Purna Prajña and Ananda Tīrtha, was a Hindu philosopher and the chief proponent of the Dvaita (dualism) school of Vedanta. Madhva called his philosophy as "Tattvavaadaa" meaning "the realist viewpoint".

Philosophy followed

Embrandiries are the followers of Loard Vishnu,Their Acharya/Leader Sree Madvaacharya was a founded udupi math and the main god of udupi manth Udupi sree krishna became their prime goad and they followed the Vishnavism. Vaishnavism (Vaishnava dharma) is one of the major traditions within Hinduism along with Shaivism, Shaktism, and Smartism. It is also called Vishnuism, its followers are called Vaishnavas, and it considers Vishnu as the Supreme Lord.Because of their Vishnava dharma they mainly served Vishnu Temples, Krishna Temples and Yagams more than other gods.The tradition is known for the loving devotion to an avatar of Vishnu, and it has been key to

the spread of Bhakti movement in South Asia in the 2nd millennium CE. Key texts in Vaishnavism include the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Pancaratra (Agama) texts and the Bhagavata Purana. An estimated 200 million Vaishnavas live in India. Although Vishnu was a Vedic solar deity, he is mentioned less often compared to Agni, Indra and other Vedic deities, thereby suggesting that he had a minor position in the Vedic religion. Other scholars state that there are other Vedic deities, such as water deity Nara (also mentioned as Narayana-Purusha in the Brahmanas layer of the Vedas), who together form the historical roots of Vaishnavism. In the late-Vedic texts (~1000 to 500 BCE), the concept of a metaphysical Brahman grows in prominence, and the Vaishnavism tradition considered Vishnu to be identical to Brahman, just like Shaivism and Shaktism consider Shiva and Devi to be Brahman respectively.

The Vaishnava tradition has many sampradayas (denominations, sub-schools) ranging from the medieval era Dvaita school of Sri Madhvacharya to Vishishtadvaita school of Ramanuja. New Vaishnavism movements have been founded in the modern era such as the ISKCON of Prabhupada.

Kanyakumari Brahmins

Kanyakumari Brahmins are a social group of Vedic as well as Tantric Brahmin inter-dependent communities mainly found in southern India, and are basically known to represent a geographic-identity based Shaiva-Vaishnava-Shakta spiritual and political union. This unionist system of worship is supported by a monastic melting pot of Vadama people of the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala and Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, along with descendants of Nambudiris, Iyengars, Iyers, Madhwas, and other Indo-Aryan people who migrated to the region in different waves to support pilgrimage in the region. The word Kanyakumari Brahmins means the Brahmins whose common ancestors, before any schisms, had settled around the greater Kanyakumari region which includes south Kerala and Tamil Nadu and Brahmins here, irrespective of all superficial differences, respect it as a common identity and do religious rituals in the Suchindram temple together.

This region also known as Ay Kingdom was spread to the borders of Central Travancore in ancient times. Vadamas are believed to be the migrants from the north of Vindhya reaching the other coast of Tambapanni in the south crossing Pamba after Agastya and Pulastya. All sub-groups of Kanyakumari Brahmins were believed to be the ancestors of local Iyengars as well as the local Namboothiris and others in ancient Suchindram, who also share a common ancestry irrespective of their faith.

All these Hindu sub-groups have ancestors who co-existed peacefully with Buddhists and Jains and share Pali, Sanskrit, Malayali, Tamil, southern Pandyan and even ancient Yogic traditions and heritage with their neighbours. The ancient ports in this region connected the people to Sri Lanka and Maldives as international trade brought migrants from many parts of India and other kingdoms in this geographic triangle which had a common economic and melting pot cultural history until the British rule began.

Pilappalli

Pilappalli is a Hindu Brahmin caste in Kerala. They form a part of the ampalavasi community.

Potti

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Potti, also written as Potty, is a sect of Brahmins in Kerala state of India.

Etymology

Potti is a Tamil word meaning "deep respect for someone" and is used for Malayali Brahmins except the Nambudiris.

History

Pottis are often erroneously identified with Embrandiris or Tulu Brahmin immigrants. There were three classes of Pottis based on three periods of settlement in Kerala. There are Pottis of Kerala origin and Tulu origin, who came to Malabar region as temple priests in the 16th century. Those who migrated from South Kanara to the Malabar are known as Embrandiri or Embranthiri, while those who settled in Shivalli were known as "Shivalli Brahmins", they continue to be based in Udupi or Sivalli in South Kanara.

Tuluva Brahmins

Tulu Brahmins or Tuluva Brahmins of ancient Tulu Nadu consist of following sub-sects.

Original inhabitants of Tulunadu: Whose history predates back even before 380B.C.

- Sthanika Brahmins, also called "Sthanika Tulu Brahmins" ; and/or "Tulu Brahmins".

Second migration: Later part of the 9th century

- Havyaka Brahmins

Third migration: 11th century

- Chitpavan Brahmins
- Karhade Brahmins
- Kota Brahmins
- Shivalli Brahmins
- Saraswat Brahmins

Chapter 46
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN MADHYA PRADESH

Ahiwasi

Ahiwasi, sometimes spelt Ahivasi is a Brahmin sub-caste found in the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in India.

Origin

The Ahiwasi take their name from the Sanskrit *ahi* meaning dragon and *was* meaning dwelling, and their name means those who come from the abode of the dragon. They are said to have gotten this name on account of their association with Rishi Saubhari, who is said to have provided sanctuary to dragons at the village of Sunrakh, in what is now Mathura District. The Ahiwasi claim to be descendents of the rishi. Historically, the Ahiwasi were involved in the carrying trade, transporting salt from Rajasthan to other parts of North India. This led to settlements of the caste in the Narbada valley. In Madhya Pradesh, according to the traditions of the caste, Ahiwasi are descended from a Brahman father and a Kshatriya mother.

Customs and traditions

The Ahiwasi are strictly endogamous, and practice clan exogamy. There clans are known as gotras, and they are divided into seventy two such gotras, the two major ones being the Dighiya and Bajrawat.

The Ahiwasi Brahmans are small and medium-sized farmers, who never been involved in priestly duties. Trade remains an important secondary occupation. In Uttar Pradesh, they are still found mainly in Mathura District, with a second settlement in Bareilly District, and Sitapur and Saharanpur Gonda etc. while those in Madhya Pradesh are found mainly in Jabalpur District and Gwalior, Bhind, Hoshangabad, Harda, as well settlements in the Narmada River valley. in Rajsthan Bharatpur, Alwar and Jaipur, Haryan Karnal, Panipat, and many villages in south Karnataka and Kerala states.

Gauda Brahmins

Gauda is a group of Brahmin communities in India. The Gauda Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Golapurab Brahmin

Golapurab Brahmin (also sometimes called Galav) are Brahmin community in western Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh regions of India.

Gurav

The Gurav are an occupational community comprising several castes. They are among the traditional service providers found in villages, for whom they act in a priestly role, and are found in several states of India.

Etymology

The origin of the word *Gurav* is uncertain. The community claim it derives from the Sanskrit plural of *guru*. While known as *Gurav* in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, they are also called *Gorava* in Karnataka and *Tapodhan Brahmin* in Gujarat.

Function

Both Gurav women and men perform the traditional occupations of their community. They are neither cultivators nor village officers but rather providers of a service deemed necessary for the functioning of the village, as with artisans. They traditionally serve as priests, maintainers and managers in temples devoted to Shiva, mostly in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Some act in a role similar to shamans, being intermediaries between the temple idol and the soliciting believer, and others also serve as priests to the families of the temple dancers. Their other traditional roles are also connected to Shaivite worship, such as musicianship and the sale both of leaf plates and symbolic flowers. Local testimony suggests that the Gurav also act in a religious capacity outside temple grounds: at harvest time in the Mawal region, they are called upon to provide a symbolic sprinkling of water at threshing grounds

Composition

The Bhavika, Lingayat and Saiva are the most prominent among the distinct endogamous castes that comprise the Gurav. These groups are in turn subdivided; for example, the Saiva Gurav have Nagari, Nilakantha and Swayambhu as subcastes, while the Lingayat Gurav are split into the Hugara, Jira and Malgara.

Bhavika Gurav

The Bhavika Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region of Maharashtra and comprise mostly members drawn from the Kunbi caste. Few are literate or formally educated even in their own rituals, and the temples that they serve are very rudimentary in style. During folk festivals, members of this community often perform animal sacrifices in honour of the village deities whose shrines they serve.

Lingayat Gurav

The Lingayat Gurav are found mainly in the Konkan region and on the borders between Maharashtra and Karnataka except Omerga-basavakalyan Region(Ladwanti village). They do not know from which caste they originate but claim to have migrated to their

present regions from Karnataka when they suffered persecution after the death of Basava, the founder of their sect. They are strict vegetarians and believe their high degree of devotion to Shiva makes them superior to other Gurav subgroups. It is this zeal that also causes them to disdain being grouped with other castes.

Saiva Gurav

According to Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat, a Hindu priest and academic, although the Lingayat Gurav believe themselves to be superior among the various Gurav subgroups, it is the Saiva Gurav who are most respected by the people of Maharashtra This family members perform an sacred tread ceremony .

Mostly literate and educated, the Maharashtrian members of the Saiva Gurav developed a myth of origin in the early 19th century and prefer to call themselves *Saiva Brahmin*. Their self-published research, in the form of a clan history known as a *jatipurana*, proposes a lineal connection with the sage Dadhichi through his son Sudarsana and thus a Brahmin status. The legend says that Sudarsana was stripped of certain Vedic powers by an offended Shiva but was also granted the right to perform the puja rituals. The claims of the community to Brahminhood were accepted both by a *sankaracharya* (a respected authority and arbitrator of the Hindu faith) and colonial law courts but are not accepted in general Maharashtrian society, although Brahmins do acknowledge the right of the Saiva Gurav to offer the first daily puja.

Socio-economic status

In areas other than Maharashtra, the Brahmin status of the Gurav is commonly accepted but they are nonetheless considered to be of a low rank in the social structure.

The sociologist M. N. Srinivas noted this peculiarity of low-status Brahminhood in particular regarding the Tapodhan of Gujarat. In Maharashtra they are considered to be a Shudra community in the Hindu ritual ranking system known as *varna*.

It is probable that the Gurav are among the less well-paid among the various *balutedhar* communities, perhaps because the product of their labours, being mostly intangible, is less apparent than that of, say, the carpenters and blacksmiths. They are not among those groups who have noticeably suffered historically from the effects of social degradation or lack of access to opportunity, although in Maharashtra they are listed among the Other Backward Classes under India's system of positive discrimination.

Jujhautiya Brahmin

The Jujhautiya Brahmin (also spelled Jijhotia, Jajautia or Jujautia) are an endogamous Brahmin community found the Chambal and Yamuna river valleys in the north, and the Narbada valley in the south. Chhatarpur District in Madhya Pradesh is the centre and cultural focus of this community. They are a sub-group of the Kanyakubja Brahmins.

Origin

According to the community's traditions, they acquired the name Jujhautiya, when a group of Kanyakubja Brahmins performed a *yajna* for Jhujhar Singh, the Bundela Rajah. In Uttar Pradesh, they are found mainly in the districts Hamirpur, Jhansi and Banda.

Malviya Brahmin

The Malviya or Malaviya are a Brahmin sub-caste found in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in India.

The word Malviya literally means those from Malwa in Central India. They are a branch of the Panch Gauda Brahmins. Traditionally, they are said to be divided into thirteen and a half gotras, these being Bharadwaj, Chaubey Parasara, Angiras Chaubey, Bhargava Chaubey and Dube. All these gotras are Rigvedis. While the Sandilya, Kasapa Chaubey, Tivari and Kauta Dube are Yajurvedi. The remaining gotras, the Vats, Vyas, Gautam, Lohita Tivari and Kaundinya are Samavedis. In Uttar Pradesh, they are found throughout the state and speak Hindi. Their customs are similar to neighbouring Brahmin communities such as the Kanyakubja Brahmins. In Madhya Pradesh, the Malviya caste is found mainly in Hoshangabad and Betul districts. According to their traditions, they were invited to settle in Malwa by the Gond kings of Kherla. As such, they are said to be the earliest settlers in the Narbada river valley. Most Malviya, in addition to their traditional occupation are cultivators.

Nagar Brahmin

The Nagar Brahmins are found primarily in Gujarat, but also in Rajasthan, Malwa and in states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar even as far as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh in the north, West Bengal in the east and Karnataka in the south.

Nagar Brahmins in western India (c. 1855-1862)

Origin

The oldest account of the Nagars is given in the Nagara Khanda, a part of the Skanda Purana (Hindu religious text).

Nagar princes

A few Nagar families became chieftains of (minor) princely states, notably in two in Gujarati peninsula Kathiawar's Sorath prant : Kuba State and Vasavad.

Notable people

- Narsinh Mehta (1414–1481), poet-saint
- Himmatlal Dhirajram Bhachech - Indian civil engineer, rebuilt the Ellis Bridge
- Ranchhodlal Chhotalal - Indian businessman who set up the first textile mill at Ahmedabad
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 1st Baronet - the first Hindu baronet of British India, textile mill owner and philanthropist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 2nd Baronet, baronet, independence activist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 3rd Baronet - Arjuna awardee, shooter, etc.

Iswardas Nagar-Noted Mughal historian from the reign of Aurangzeb. Author of Futuhat-i Alamgiri.

- Paresh Rawal - Indian film actor.

Naramdev Brahmin

Naramdev Brahmins, also transliterated as Naramdiya, are descendants of the priests of the Somnath temple who were forced to migrate from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh are settled along the bank of the Narmada River. Their migration owes to the forays and desecration of the Somnath temple by Mahmud Ghazni

Chapter 47
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN MAHARASHTRA

Chitpavan

The Chitpavan Brahmin or Kokanastha Brahmin (i.e. "Brahmins native to the Konkan"), is a Hindu Brahmin community from Konkan, the coastal region of the state of Maharashtra in India. The community came into prominence during the 18th century when the heirs of Peshwa from the Bhat family of Balaji Vishwanath became the de facto rulers of the Maratha empire. Under the British Raj, they were the one of the Hindu community in Maharashtra to flock to western education and as such they provided the bulk of social reformers, educationalists and nationalists of the late 19th century. Until the 18th century, the Chitpavans were held in low esteem by the Deshastha, the older established Brahmin community of Maharashtra region.

Origin

There are two common mythological theories of origin among the Chitpavans. The more contemporary theory is based on the etymology of their name meaning "pure of mind", while an older belief uses the alternate etymology of "pure from the pyre" and is based on the tale of Parashurama in the *Sahyadrikhanda* of the *Skanda Purana*. The Parashurama myth of origin is identical to the myth that claimed by the Bene Israel of the Kolaba district. According to Bene Israeli myth, the Chitpavan and Bene Israel are descendants from a group of 14 people shipwrecked off the Konkan coast. One group converted to Hinduism as Chitpavan Brahmins, the other remained Jewish or Bene Israel.

Originally the myth pertained to Chitpavans only, but a certain section of society was obsessed with their lineage, hence furthered the name of Bene israel.

The Konkan region has witnessed the immigration of various groups, such as the Bene Israeli,and Kudaldeshkars. Each of these settled in distinct parts of the region and there was little mingling between them. The Chitpavans were apparently the last major community to arrive there and consequently the area in which they settled, around Ratnagiri, was both the least fertile and that with a relative scarcity of good ports for trading. While the other groups generally took up trade as their primary occupation, the Chitpavans became known as administrators.

History

Rise and fall during the Maratha rule

Peshwa Madhavrao II with Nana Fadnavis and attendants, at Pune in 1792

Very little is known of the Chitpavans before 1707 A.D. Around this time, Balaji Vishwanth Bhat, a Chitpavan arrived from Ratnagiri to the Pune-Satara area. He was brought there on the basis of his reputation of being an efficient administrator. He quickly gained the attention of Chhatrapati Shahu. Balaji's work so pleased the Chhatrapati that he was appointed the Peshwa or Prime Minister in 1713. He ran a well-organized administration, and, by the time of his death in 1720, he had laid the groundwork for the expansion of the Maratha Empire. Since this time until the fall of the Maratha Empire, the seat of the Peshwa would be held by the members of the Bhat family.,

With the accession of Balaji Baji Rao and his family to the supreme authority of the Maratha Empire, Chitpavan immigrants began arriving *en masse* from the Konkan to Pune where the Peshwa offered all important offices to his fellow castemen. The Chitpavan kin were rewarded with tax relief and grants of land. Historians cite nepotism and corruption as causes of the fall of the Maratha Empire in 1818. Richard Maxwell Eaton states that this rise of the Chitpavans is a classic example of social rank rising with political fortune. The alleged haughty behavior by the upstart Chitpavans caused conflicts with other communities which manifested itself as late as in 1948 in the form of anti-Brahminism after the killing of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse, a Chitpavan.

The Peshwa rule forced untouchability treatment on the Mahars as a result Mahars served in the armies of the East India company On 1 January 1818 in the Battle of Koregaon between forces of the East India Company and the Peshwa,Mahars soldiers formed the biggest contingent of the Company force. The battle effectively ended Peshwa rule

Role in Indian politics

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

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After the fall of the Maratha Empire in 1818, the Chitpavans lost their political dominance to the British. The British would not subsidize the Chitpavans on the same scale that their caste-fellow, the Peshwas had done in the past. Pay and power was now significantly reduced. Poorer Chitpavan students adapted and started learning English because of better opportunities in the British administration.

Some of the prominent figures in the Hindu reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries came from the Chitpavan Brahmin community. These included Dhondo Keshav Karve, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vinoba Bhave.*Wolpert, Stanley A. (April 1991). Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 32. ISBN 978-0195623925.</ref>* Some of the strongest resistance to change also came from the very same community.The vanguard and the old guard clashed many times. D. K. Karve was ostracised. Even Tilak offered penance for breaking caste or religious rules.One was for taking tea at Poona Christian mission in 1892 and the second was going overseas to England in 1919

The Chitpavan community includes two major politicians in the Gandhian tradition: Gopal Krishna Gokhale whom Gandhi acknowledged as a preceptor, and Vinoba Bhave, one of his outstanding disciples. Gandhi describes Bhave as the *Jewel of his disciples*, and recognized Gokhale as his political guru. However, strong opposition to Gandhi also came from within the Chitpavan community. V D Savarkar, the founder of the Hindu nationalist political ideology Hindutva, was a Chitpavan Brahmin. Several members of the Chitpavan community were among the first to embrace the Hindutva ideology, which they thought was a logical extension of the legacy of the Peshwas and caste-fellow Tilak. These Chitpavans felt out of place with the Indian social reform movement of Mahatama Phule and the mass politics of Mahatama Gandhi. Large numbers of the community looked to Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha and finally the RSS. Gandhi's assassins Narayan Apte and Nathuram Godse, drew their inspiration from fringe groups in this reactionary trend.

Military

The Chitpavans have considered themselves to be both warriors and priests. The willingness of the Chitpavans to enter military and other services earned them both high status and power in the Deccan.

The active involvement of Chitpavans in military affairs started with the rise of the Peshwas.

Culture

During the British rule in India, Lokmanya Tilak transformed the household worshipping of Ganesha into a grand public event *(Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav)* to spread the message of freedom struggle and to defy the British who had banned public assemblies.Students often would celebrate Hindu and national glory and address political issues including patronage

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of *Swadeshi* goods.Today large-scale Ganesh festival celebrations take place in Maharashtra with millions of people visiting the various community Ganesh Pandals.

Traditionally, the Chitpavan Brahmins were a community of astrologers and priests who offer religious services to other communities. The 20th century descriptions of the Chitpavans list inordinate frugality, phlegmatism, hard work, cleanliness and intelligence among their attributes. Agriculture was the second major occupation in the community, practised by the those who possess arable land. Later, Chitpavans became prominent in various white collar jobs and business.

Language

Most of the Chitpavan Brahmins in Maharashtra have adopted Marathi as their language. A minority of Chitpavans spoke a dialect of Konkani called Chitpavani Konkani in their homes. Even at that time, reports recorded Chitpavani as a fast disappearing language. But in Dakshina Kannada District and Udupi Districts of Karnataka, this language is being spoken in places like Durga and Maala of Karkala taluk and also in places like Shishila and Mundaje of Belthangady Taluk. There are no inherently nasalised vowels in standard Marathi whereas the Chitpavani dialect of Konkani does have nasalised vowels. The Marathi spoken by Chitpavans in Pune, is the standard form of language used all over Maharashtra today. This form of Marathi has many Sansrkrit derived words. It has also retained the Sanskrit pronunciation of many words, misconstrued by non standard speakers as "nasalized pronunciation" .

Social status

Earlier, the Deshastha Brahmins believed that they were the highest of all Brahmins, and looked down upon the Chitpavans as *parvenus* (a relative newcomer to a socioeconomic class), barely equal to the noblest of dvijas. Even the Peshwa was denied the rights to use the ghats reserved for Deshasth priests at Nashik on the Godavari.,

The rise in prominence of the Chitpavans compared to the Deshastha Brahmins resulted in intense rivalry between the two communities. The 19th century records also mention *Gramanyas* or village-level debates between the Chitpavans, and two other communities, namely the Daivajnas, and the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhus. This lasted for about ten years.

Notable people

- Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and his descendants, Bajirao I, Chimaji Appa, Balaji Bajirao, Raghunathrao, Sadashivrao Bhau, Madhavrao I, Narayanrao, Madhavrao II, and Bajirao II
- Nana Phadnavis - Regent to young Peshwa Madhavrao II
- The Patwardhans - Military leaders under the Peshwa
- Lokhitwadi (Gopal Hari Deshmukh) (1823-1892)- Social reformer
- Mahadev Govind Ranade - Judge and Social reformer

- Vishnushastri Krushnashastri Chiplunkar -Essayist.Educator.Mentor to Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar.Founder of the influential Chitrashala press
- Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar .- Writer, Journalist, Nationalist leader. Served on the imperial council.
- Vasudev Balwant Phadke - Educator. Led an armed rebellion against the British
- Keshavsut(Krishnaji Keshav Damle)- 19th century Marathi poet
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak -Educator, Writer and Early Nationalist Leader with widespread appeal
- Gopal Ganesh Agarkar -(1856 – June 1895) - Journalist, Educator and Social reformer
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale - Early Nationalist leader on the moderate wing of the Congress party
- Dhondo Keshav Karve - Social reformer and advocate of Women's education
- Pandita Ramabai Dongre - Social reformer and Christian convert
- Anandibai Joshi - First Maharashtrian Lady Doctor
- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, -(28 May 1883 – 26 February 1966)Freedom fighter, social reformer and Formulator of the Hindutva philosophy
- Dadasaheb Phalke- (30 April 1870 – 16 February 1944) Pioneer of Indian film industry
- Krushnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar-(25 November 1872 – 26 August 1948) Editor of Kesari and Navakal
- Nathuram Godse- (19 May 1910 – 15 November 1949) Mahatma Gandhi's assassin
- Narhar Vishnu Gadgil-(10 January 1896 – 12 January 1966) Congress leader and Member of Nehru's cabinet
- Vinoba Bhave-(1895 – 1982) Gandhian leader and freedom fighter
- Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860 – 1936) -Eminent Maestro of Hindustani classical music
- Shreeram Shankar Abhyankar(1930-2012) Mathematician and Professor

Deshastha Brahmin

Deshastha Brahmins are a Hindu Brahmin subcaste mainly from the Indian state of Maharashtra and northern area of the state of Karnataka. The word *Deshastha* derives from the Sanskrit *deśa* (inland, country) and *stha* (resident), literally translating to "residents of the country". The valleys of the Krishna and the Godavari rivers, and a part of Deccan plateau adjacent to the Sahyadri hills, are collectively termed the *Desha* – the original home of the Deshastha Brahmins. Over the millennia, the community produced the eighth century Sanskrit scholar Bhavabhuti, the thirteenth century Varkari saint and philosopher Dnyaneshwar, and Samarth Ramdas. All of the Peshwas during the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Sambhaji's reign (before the appointment in 1713 of Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa from the Bhat family) were Kokanasth Brahmins.

Brahmins constitute four percent of Maharashtra's population, and 60 percent of them are Deshastha Brahmins. The second largest Maharashtrian Brahmin community, the Konkanastha Brahmins, who historically remained rather obscure because their native

region, the coastal Konkan strip, was relatively distant from the great medieval cities, achieved parity with the Deshasthas only during the 18th century, after the post of Peshwa became effectively hereditary in the Bhat family of Konkanastha Brahmins.

Classification

The Hindu caste system is first mentioned in the ancient Hindu scriptures like the Vedas and the Upanishads. Various sub-classifications of the caste system exist, many based on the geographical origin of the caste.

Deshastha Brahmins fall under the Pancha Dravida Brahmin classification of the Brahmin community in India. Other Brahmin sub-castes in the region are Karhade Brahmin, Devrukhe, Konkanastha and Goud Saraswat Brahmin, but these sub-castes only have a regional significance. Goud Saraswat Brahmins fall under the Pancha Gauda Brahmin classification, i.e. North Indian Brahmins. The Vedas are the world's oldest texts that are still used in worship and they are the oldest literature of India. Four Vedas exist of which the Rig Veda is the oldest. They were handed down from one generation of Brahmins to the next verbally and memorised by each generation. They were written down sometime around 400 BC. Other Vedas include the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda and the Sama Veda. Two different versions of the Yajur Veda exist, the White (*Shukla* in Sanskrit) and the black or (*Krishna* in Sanskrit). The Shukla Yajur Veda has a two different branches (*Shakha* in Sanskrit) called the Kanva and the Madhyandin. Deshastha Brahmins are further classified in two major sub-sects, the Deshashatha Rigvedi and the Deshastha Yajurvedi, based on the Veda they follow. The Yajurvedis are further classified into two groups called the Madhyandins and the Kanavas. The Madhyandins follow the Madhyandin branch of the Shukla Yajur Veda. The word *Madhyandin* is a fusion of two words *Madhya* and *din* which mean middle and day respectively. They are so called because they perform *Sandhya Vandana* at noon.

Brahmin nomenclature used for various Deshastha sub-groups based on Veda-Shakha-Sutra			
Veda followed	**Recension or sub-part of the veda**	**Shakha or branch of the veda**	**Brahmin Nomenclature**
Rig Veda (composed: 1500 bc – 1400 bc)	No recension or sub-parts exist	Śākalya (only one survives)	Deshastha Rigvedi
Yajur Veda (composed: 900 bc – 700 bc)	Shukla (White)	Madhyandin	Yajurvedi Madhyandin
		Kannava	Yajurvedi Kannava
	Krishna (Black)	Irrelevant for Deshasthas	Irrelevant for Deshasthas

Recently, the Yajurvedi Madhyandin and Yajurvedi Kannava Brahmins have been colloquially being referred to as Deshastha Yajurvedi Madhyandin and Deshastha Yajurvedi Kannava, although not all have traditionally lived or belonged to the Desh.

The Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmins are treated as a separate and distinct caste from the Yajurvedi Madhyandina and Kannavas Brhamins by several authors, including Malhotra and Karve.

There is a significant Deshashta population in the state of Karnataka, and here, the sub-classification of Deshastha Brahmins is based on the type of Hindu philosophical system they follow. These are the Deshastha Madhwa Brahmins who follow the teachings of Madhvacharya and the Deshastha Smartha Brahmins who follow the teachings of Adi Shankaracharya. The surnames of these North Kanataka based, Kannada speaking Deshastha Brahmins, can be identical to those of Maharashtrian Deshastha Brahmins, for example, they have last names like Kulkarni, Deshpande and Joshi. Intermarriages are allowed between the Karnatak Brahmans and the Deshasthas and so the classification of the Southern India Brahmans into the Maharashtra, the Andhra (Telugu) and the Karnatic are in this respect, more of a provincial or linguistic character than an ethnographic one.

Adult literacy of Maharashtrian castes in 1911			
Varna	**Caste**	**Literate**	**In English**
Brahmin	Deshastha	83.7	35.6
	Konkanastha	63	19.3
	Saraswat	54	10.77
Intermediate Varnas	Maratha	4.6	0.22
	Kunbi	9.4	0.27
	Lingayat	13.6	0.3
Schedule Caste	Mahars	1	0.01

Demographics

Brahmins constitute 4 percent of the population of Maharashtra, and 60 percent of them are Deshastha Brahmins. The valleys of the Krishna and the Godavari rivers, and the plateaus of the Sahyadri hills, are collectively called the Desha – the original home of the Deshastha Brahmins.

The Deshastha Brahmins are equally distributed all through the state of Maharashtra, ranging from villages to urban areas. Marathi speaking Deshastha can also be found in large numbers outside Maharashtra such as in the cities of Indore, Gwalior, Baroda and Thanjavur, which were a part of or were influenced by, the Maratha Empire. The Deshastha Brahmins of Baroda are immigrants who came from the Desh for State service during the rule of Gaekwads.

The military settlers (of Thanjavur) included both Brahmins and Marathas, and by reason of their isolation from their distant home, the sub-divisions which separated these castes in their mother-country were forgotten, and they were all welded together under the common name of Deshasthas. The Brahmin migrants and the Maratha migrants both call themselves "Deshasthas" as both groups migrated to Tanjore from the Desh region of Maharashtra, but till today maintain their separate identities, despite the common "Deshastha" tag. Today's Marathi speaking Thanjavur population are descendants of the Marathi speaking immigrants who immigrated to Tamil Nadu in the 17th and 18th centuries. The isolation from their homeland has almost made them culturally and linguistically alien to Brahmins in Maharashtra. For example, Thanjavur Marathi would sound as a strange mixture of Marathi and Tamil to a Maharashtrian in Pune and would hardly be intelligible to him. Likewise a Tanjore Maharashtrian would find it difficult to follow Pune Marathi. Tanjore Maharashtrian Brahmins who call themselves Deshasthas maintain their distinct brahminical identity which can be seen in their religious and wedding customs. Almost all their customs can be traced to the practices conducted by the early Maharashtrian settlers of Tanjore. They belong to two major groups, the Madhwa Deshastha Brahmins and Smartha Deshastha Brahmins. Arranged marriages between these two groups are common. Both these sub-groups do not conduct arranged marriages with the Maratha caste of Tanjavur. However, Madhwa Deshastha Brahmins and Smartha Deshastha Brahmins of Tanjavur conduct arranged marriages with Madhwa Kannada Brahmins and Smartha Kannada Brahmins. In 2000, a 90-year-old community

member estimated that there had been 500 Marathi families in a particular neighbourhood of Tanjavur in 1950, of which only 50 remained in 2000.

History
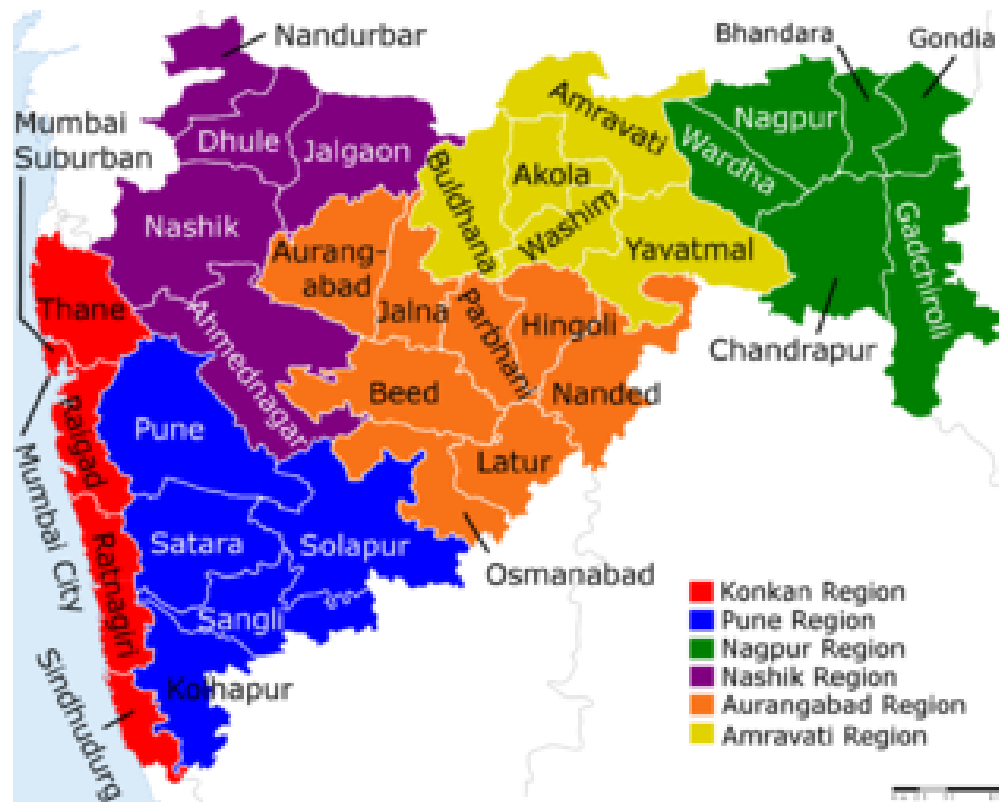
Divisions of Maharashtra. The blue region is an approximate indication of the Desh.

The word Deshastha comes from the Sanskrit words *Desha* and *Stha*, which mean inland or country and resident respectively. Fused together, the two words literally mean "residents of the country". Deshastha are the Maharashtrian Brahmin community with the longest known history, making them the original and the oldest Hindu Brahmin sub-caste from the Indian state of Maharashtra. The Deshastha community may be as old as the Vedas, as vedic literature describes people strongly resembling Deshasthas. This puts Deshastha presence on the Desh between 1100–1700 BC, thus making the history of the Deshastha Brahmins older than that of their mother tongue of Marathi, which itself originated in 1000 AD. As the original Brahmins of Maharashtra, the Deshasthas have been held in the greatest esteem in Maharashtra and they have considered themselves superior to other Brahmins. The history of Maharashtra before the 12th century is quite sparse, but Deshastha history is well documented. The traditional occupation of the Deshasthas was that of priesthood at the Hindu temples or at socio-religious ceremonies. Records show that most of the religious and literary leaders since the 13th century have been Deshasthas. In addition to being village priests, most of the village accountants belonged to the Deshastha caste. Priests at the famous Vitthal temple in Pandharpur are Deshastha, as are the priests in many of Pune's temples. Other traditional occupations included village revenue officials, academicians, astrologer, administrators and

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practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine. Deshasthas who study the vedas are called Vaidika, astrologers are called Jyotishi or Joshi, and practitioners of medical science are called Vaidyas, and reciters of the puranas are called Puraniks. Some are also engaged in farming. An author recorded in 1896 that Deshasthas have been and still continue to be, the great Pandits in almost every branch of Sanskrit learning. According to the Anthropological Survey of India, the Deshasthas are a progressive community and some of them have taken to white collar jobs. The Deshastha Brahmins helped build the Maratha Empire and once built, helped in its administration. Deshasthas have contributed to the fields of Sanskrit and Marathi literature, mathematics, and philosophy.

Mathematics, philosophy and literature

Deshasthas produced prominent literary figures in Maharashtra between the 13th and the 19th centuries. The great Sanskrit scholar Bhavabhuti was a Deshastha Brahmin who lived around 700 AD in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. His works of high Sanskrit poetry and plays are only equalled by those of Kalidasa. Two of his best known plays are *Mahāvīracarita and Mālatī Mādhava*. Mahaviracarita is a work on the early life of the Hindu god Rama, whereas Malati Madhava is a love story between Malati and her lover Madhava, which has a happy ending after several twists and turns. Mukund Raj was another poet from the community who lived in the 13th century and is said to be the first poet who composed in Marathi. He is known for the *Viveka-Siddhi* and *Parammrita* which are metaphysical, pantheistic works connected with orthodox Vedantism. Other well known Deshastha literary scholars of the 17th century were Mukteshwar and Shridhar. Mukteshwar was the grandson of Eknath and is the most distinguished poet in the *ovi* meter. He is most known for translating the Mahabharata and the Ramayana in Marathi but only a part of the Mahabharata translation is available and the entire Ramayana translation is lost. Shridhar Kulkarni came from near Pandharpur and his works are said to have superseded the Sanskrit epics to a certain extent. Other major literary contributors of the 17th and the 18th century were Vaman Pandit, Mahipati, Amritaraya, Anant Phandi and Ramjoshi.

The 17th century mathematician Kamalakara, was a forward-looking astronomer-mathematician who studied Hindu, Greek and Arabic astronomy. His most important work was the *Siddhanta-Tattvaviveka*. He studied and agreed with Ptolemaic notions of the planetary systems. He was the first and the only traditional astronomer to present geometrical optics. Kamalakara proposed a new Prime Meridian which passed through the imaginary city of Khaladatta, and provided a table of latitudes and longitudes for 24 cities within and outside of India.

The Deshastha community has produced several saints and philosophers. Most important of these were Dnyaneshwar, Eknath and Ramdas. The most revered of all Bhakti saints, Dnyaneshwar was universally acclaimed for his commentary on the Bhagvad Gita. He lived in the 13th century. Eknath was yet another Bhakti saint who published an extensive poem called the *Eknathi Bhagwat* in the 16th century. Other works of Eknath include the *Bhavartha Ramayana*, the *Rukmini Swayamwara* and the *Swatma Sukha*.

The 17th century saw the *Dasbodh* of the saint Samarth Ramdas, who was also the spiritual adviser to Shivaji.

Military and administration

Tatya Tope's Soldiery

Most of Shivaji's principal Brahmin officers were Deshasthas. Some important contributors were warriors like Neelkanth Sarnaik, Keso Narayan Deshpande, Rahuji Somanath, Balaji and Chimnaji Deshpande of Pune, Ragho Ballal Atre, Moropant Pingale, Annaji Dato Sabnis and Melgiri Pandit. At one point in the history of the Maratha Empire, seven out of eight Ashta Pradhan(Council of Eight Ministers) came from the community.Most importantly, all of the Peshwas during Shivaji's time were Deshastha. In 1713, Balaji Vishwanath Bhat, a Kokanastha brahmin was appointed as the fifth Peshwa and the seat of Peshwa remained in Konkanastha hands until the fall of the Maratha Empire. In order to obtain the loyalty of the locally powerful Deshastha Brahmins, the Konkanastha Peshwas established a system of patronage for Brahmin scholars.

The Konkanastha Peshwa Baji Rao I who coveted conquering Vasai or Bassein, sent an envoy to the Portuguese governor of Bassein. The governor, Luís Botelho, insulted the envoy by calling Baji Rao a nigger. The Peshwa then deployed his brother, Chimaji Appa in the conquest of Vasai. This was a hard fought battle with the British supplying the Portuguese with advice and the Marathas with equipment. Khanduji Mankar of the Pathare Prabhu caste and Antaji Raghunath Kavale, a Yajurvedi Brahmin, both played important roles in the battle. After the victory in 1739, the Jagir of Vasai was promised to Antaji Raghunath, but the promise was allegedly not kept by the Konkanastha Peshwas, who instead contested the claims of the Yajurvedis to be brahmin. Fed up with the humiliation, the Yajurvedi Brahmins migrated to Mumbai along with the Pathare Prabhus to work for the British.

Society and culture

The majority of Deshasthas speak Marathi, one of the major languages of the mainly northern Indo-Aryan language group. The major dialects of Marathi are called Standard

Marathi and Warhadi Marathi. Standard Marathi is the official language of the State of Maharashtra. The language of Pune's Deshastha Brahmins has been considered to be the standard Marathi language and the pronunciation of the Deshastha Rigvedi is given prominence. There are a few other sub-dialects like Ahirani, Dangi, Samavedi, Khandeshi and Puneri Marathi. There are no inherently nasalised vowels in standard Marathi as the whereas the Chitpavani dialect of Marathi, spoken in Pune does have nasalised vowels.

A Deshastha family in the early 1970s on the Munj ceremony of their boys

By tradition, like other Brahmin communities of Southern India, Deshastha Brahmins are lacto vegetarian. Typical Deshastha cuisine consists of the simple *varan* made from tuvar dal. *Metkut*, a powdered mixture of several dals and a few spices is also a part of traditional Deshastha cuisine. Deshastha use black spice mix or *kala*, literally black, masala, in cooking. Traditionally, each family had their own recipe for the spice mix. However, this tradition is dying out as modern households buy pre-packaged mixed spice directly from supermarkets. Puran poli for festivals and on the first day of the two-day marriage is another Marathi Brahmin special dish.

A Deshastha woman from the 1970s in the traditional attire

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Most middle aged and young women in urban Maharashtra dress in western outfits such as skirts and trousers or shalwar kameez with the traditionally *nauvari* or nine-yard sari, disappearing from the markets due to a lack of demand. Older women wear the five-yard sari. Traditionally, Brahmin women in Maharashtra, unlike those of other castes, did not cover their head with the end of their saree. In urban areas, the five-yard sari is worn by younger women for special occasions such as marriages and religious ceremonies. Maharashtrian brides prefer the *very Maharashtrian* saree – the Paithani – for their wedding day.

In early to mid 20th century, Deshastha men used to wear a black cap to cover their head, with a turban or a pagadi being popular before that. For religious ceremonies males wore a coloured silk dhoti called a *sovale*. In modern times, dhotis are only worn by older men in rural areas. In urban areas, just like women, a range of styles are preferred. For example, the Deshastha politician Manohar Joshi prefers white fine khadi kurtas, while younger men prefer modern western clothes such as jeans.

In the past, caste or social disputes used to be resolved by joint meetings of all Brahmin sub-caste men in the area.

Religious customs

Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmins still recite the *Rig Veda* at religious ceremonies, prayers and other occasions. These ceremonies include birth, wedding, initiation ceremonies, as well as death rituals. Other ceremonies for different occasions in Hindu life include *Vastushanti* which is performed before a family formally establishes residence in a new house, Satyanarayana Puja, originating in Bengal in the 19th century, is a ceremony performed before commencing any new endeavour or for no particular reason. Invoking the name of the family's *gotra* and the *kula daivat* are important aspects of these ceremonies. Like most other Hindu communities, Deshasthas have a shrine called a *devaghar* in their house with idols, symbols, and pictures of various deities. Ritual reading of religious texts called *pothi* is also popular.

In traditional families, any food is first offered to the preferred deity as *naivedya*, before being consumed by family members and guests. Meals or snacks are not taken before this religious offering. In contemporary Deshasthas families, the naivedya is offered only on days of special religious significance.

Deshasthas, like all other Hindu Brahmins, trace their paternal ancestors to one of the seven or eight sages, the saptarshi. They classify themselves into eight *gotras*, named after the ancestor rishi. Intra-marriage within gotras (Sagotra Vivaha) was uncommon until recently, being discouraged as it was likened to incest, although the taboo has considerably reduced in the case of modern Deshastha families who are bound by more practical considerations.

In a court case "Madhavrao versus Raghavendrarao", involving a Deshastha Brahmin couple, the German philosopher and Indologist Max Müller's definition of gotra as

descending from eight sages and then branching out to several families was thrown out by reputed judges of a Bombay High Court. The court called the idea of Brahmin families descending from an unbroken line of common ancestors as indicated by the names of their respective gotras *impossible to accept*. The court consulted relevant Hindu texts and stressed the need for Hindu society and law to keep up with the times emphasising that notions of good social behaviour and the general ideology of Hindu society had changed. The court also said that the mass of material in the Hindu texts are so vast and full of contradictions that it is almost an impossible task to reduce it to order and coherence.

A typical Deoghar or shrine in a deshastha household

Every Deshastha family has their own family patron deity or the *Kuladaivat*. This deity is common to a lineage or a clan of several families who are connected to each other through a common ancestor. The Khandoba of Jejuri is an example of a Kuladaivat of some Maharashtrian Deshastha families; he is a common Kuladaivat to several castes ranging from Brahmins to Dalits. The practice of worshiping local or territorial deities as Kuladaivats began in the period of the Yadava dynasty. Other family deities of the people of Maharashtra are Bhavani of Tuljapur, Mahalaxmi of Kolhapur, Mahalaxmi of Amravati, Renuka of Mahur, Parashuram in Konkan, Saptashringi on Saptashringa hill at Vani in Nasik district. Despite being the most popular deity amongst Deshastha and other Marathi people, very few families regard Vitthal or other popular Avatars of Vishnu such as Rama or Krishna as their Kuldaivat, with Balaji being an exception.

Ceremonies and rituals

Upon birth, a child is initiated into the family ritually according to the Rig Veda for the Rigvedi Brahmins. The naming ceremony of the child may happen many weeks or even months later, and it is called the *barsa*. In many Hindu communities around India, the naming is almost often done by consulting the child's horoscope, in which are suggested

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various names depending on the child's Lunar sign (called Rashi). However, in Deshastha families, the name that the child inevitably uses in secular functioning is the one decided by his parents. If a name is chosen on the basis of the horoscope, then that is kept a secret to ward off casting of a spell on the child during his or her life. During the naming ceremony, the child's paternal aunt has the honour of naming the infant. When the child is 11 months old, he or she gets their first hair-cut. This is an important ritual as well and is called *Jawal*.

When a male child reaches his eighth birthday he undergoes the initiation thread ceremony variously known as Munja (in reference to the Munja grass that is of official ritual specification), *Vratabandha*, or Upanayanam. From that day on, he becomes an official member of his caste, and is called a dwija which translates to "twice-born" in English, in the sense that while the first birth was due to his biological parents, the second one is due to the initiating priest and Savitri. Traditionally, boys are sent to gurukula to learn Vedas and scriptures. Boys are expected to practice extreme discipline during this period known as brahmacharya. Boys are expected to lead a celibate life, live off alms, consume selected vegetarian saatvic food and observe considerable austerity in behaviour and deeds. Though such practices are not followed in modern times by a majority of Deshasthas, all Deshasthas boys undergo the sacred thread ceremony. Many still continue to get initiated around eight years of age. Those who skip this get initiated just before marriage. Twice-born Deshasthas perform annual ceremonies to replace their sacred threads on Narali Purnima or the full moon day of the month of Shravan, according to the Hindu calendar. The threads are called *Jaanave* in Marathi and *Janavaara* in Kannada.

The Deshasthas are historically an endogamous and monogamous community for whom marriages take place by negotiation. The Mangalsutra is the symbol of marriage for the woman. Studies show that most Indians' traditional views on caste, religion and family background have remained unchanged when it came to marriage, that is, people marry within their own castes, and matrimonial advertisements in newspapers are still classified by caste and sub-caste.

While arranging a marriage, *gana*, *gotra*, *pravara*, *devak* are all kept in mind. Horoscopes are matched. Ghosal describes the marriage ceremony as, "The groom, along with the bride's party goes to the bride's house. A ritual named *Akshat* is performed in which people around the groom and bride throw *haldi* (turmeric) and *sindur* (vermilion) coloured rice grains on the couple. After the *Kanyadan* ceremony, there is an exchange of garlands between the bride and the groom. Then, the groom ties the Mangalsutra around the neck of the bride. This is followed by *granthibandhan* in which the end of the bride's *sari* is tied to the end of the groom's dhoti, and a feast is arranged at the groom's place."

A Deshasthas marriage ceremony includes many elements of a traditional Marathi Hindu wedding ceremony. It consists of *seemant poojan* on the wedding eve. The *dharmic* wedding includes the *antarpat* ceremony followed by the vedic ceremony which involves the bridegroom and the bride walking around the sacred fire seven times to complete the marriage. Modern urban wedding ceremonies conclude with an evening reception. A

Deshastha woman becomes part of her husband's family after marriage and adopts the gotra as well as the traditions of her husband's family.

After weddings and also after thread ceremonies, Deshastha families arrange a traditional religious singing performance by a Gondali group

Decades ago, Deshastha girls used to get married to the groom of their parents' choice by early teens or before. Even today, girls are married off in their late teens by rural and less educated amongst Deshastha. Urban women may choose to remain unmarried until the late 20s or even early 30s.

In the past, a Deshastha widow was never allowed to remarry, while it was acceptable for Deshastha widowers to remarry, and the widows had to lead a very austere life with little joy. Divorces were non-existent. All of these practices have gradually fallen by the wayside over the last hundred years, and modern Deshastha widows lead better lives and younger widows also remarry. Divorce takes place by mutual consent and legal approval is sought.

Deshastha Brahmins dispose their dead by cremation. The dead person's son carries the corpse to the cremation ground atop a bier. The eldest son lights the fire to the corpse at the head for males and at the feet for females. The ashes are gathered in an earthen pitcher and immersed in a river on the third day after the death. This is a 13-day ritual with the *pinda* being offered to the dead soul on the 11th and a *Śrāddha* ceremony followed by a funeral feast on the 13th. Cremation is performed according to vedic rites, usually within a day of the individual's death. Like all other Hindus, the preference is for the ashes to be immersed in the Ganges river or Godavari river. *Śrāddha* becomes an annual ritual in which all forefathers of the family who have passed on are remembered. These rituals are expected to be performed only by male descendants, preferably the eldest son of the deceased.

Festivals

Deshasthas follow the Saka calendar. They follow several of the festivals of other Hindu Marathi people. These include Gudi Padwa, Rama Navami, Hanuman Jayanti, Narali Pournima, Mangala Gaur, Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Kojagiri Purnima, Diwali, Khandoba Festival (Champa Shashthi), Makar Sankranti, Maha Shivaratri and Holi.

Of these, Ganesh Chaturthi is the most popular in the state of Maharashtra, however, Diwali, the most popular festival of Hindus throughout India, is equally popular in Maharashtra. Deshasthas celebrate the Ganesha festival as a domestic family affair. Depending on a family's tradition, a clay image or *shadu* is worshiped for one and a half, three and a half, seven or full 10 days, before ceremoniously being placed in a river or the sea. This tradition of private celebration was inspired by the public celebration introduced in 1894 by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. *Modak* is a popular food item during the festival. Ganeshotsav also incorporates other festivals, namely Hartalika and the Gauri festival,

the former is observed with a fast by women whilst the latter by the installation of idols of Gauris.

The religious amongst the Deshasthas fast on the days prescribed for fasting according to Hindu calendar. Typical days for fasting are Ekadashi, Chaturthi, Maha Shivaratri and Janmashtami. Hartalika is a day of fasting for women. Some people fast during the week in honour of a particular god, for example, Monday for Shiva or Saturday for Hanuman and the planet Saturn, Shani.
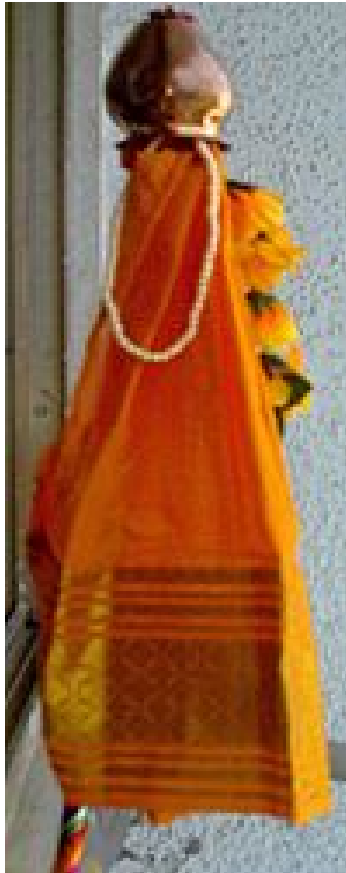
Gudi Padwa Gudi or Victory pole

Gudi Padwa is observed on the first of the day of the lunar month of Chaitra of the Hindu calendar. A victory pole or Gudi is erected outside homes on the day. The leaves of *Neem* or and shrikhand are a part of the cuisine of the day. Like many other Hindu communities, Deshasthas celebrate Rama Navami and Hanuman Jayanti, the birthdays of Rama and Hanuman, respectively, in the month of Chaitra. A snack eaten by new mothers called Sunthawada or Dinkawada is the prasad or the religious food on Rama Navami. Deshastha Brahmins observe Narali-pournima festival on the same day as the much widely known north Indian festival of Raksha Bandhan. Deshastha men change their sacred thread on this day.

An important festival for the new brides is Mangala Gaur. It is celebrated on any Tuesday of Shravana and involves the worship of lingam, a gathering of womenfolk and narrating

limericks or *Ukhane* using their husbands' first name. The women may also play traditional games such as Jhimma, and Fugadi, or more contemporary activities such as Bhendya till the wee hours of the next morning.

Krishna Janmashtami, the birthday of Krishna on which day Gopalkala, a recipe made with curds, pickle, popped millet (*jondhale* in Marathi) and chili peppers is the special dish. Sharad Purnima also called as Kojagiri Purnima, the full moon night in the month of Ashvin, is celebrated in the honour of Lakshmi or Parvati. A milk preparation is the special food of the evening. The first born of the family is honored on this day.

In Deshastha families Ganeshotsav is more commonly known as Gauri-Ganpati because it also incorporates the Gauri Festival.In some families Gauri is also known as Lakshmi puja. It is celebrated for three days; on the first day, Lakshmi's arrival is observed. The ladies in the family will bring statues of Lakshmi from the door to the place where they will be worshiped. The Kokanstha Brahmins, instead of statues, use special stones as symbols of Gauri. The statues are settled at a certain location (very near the Devaghar), adorned with clothes and ornaments. On the second day, the family members get together and prepare a meal consisting of puran poli. This day is the puja day of Mahalakshmi and the meal is offered to Mahalakshmi and her blessings sought. On the third day, Mahalakshmi goes to her husband's home. Before the departure, ladies in the family will invite the neighbourhood ladies for exchange of haldi-kumkum. It is customary for the whole family to get together during the three days of Mahalakshmi puja. Most families consider Mahalakshmi as their daughter who is living with her husband's family all the year; but visits her parents' (maher) during the three days.

Navaratri, a nine-day festival starts on the first day of the month of Ashvin and culminates on the tenth day or Vijayadashami. This is the one of three auspicious days of the year. People exchange leaves of the *Apti* tree as symbol of gold. During Navaratri women and girls hold *Bhondla* referred as bhulabai in Vidarbh region, a singing party in honour of the Goddess.

Like all Hindu Marathi people and to a varying degree with other Hindu Indians, Diwali is celebrated over five days by the Deshastha Brahmins. Deshastha Brahmins celebrate this by waking up early in the morning and having an *Abhyangasnan*. People light their houses with lamps and candles, and burst fire crackers over the course of the festival. Special sweets and savouries like Anarse, Karanjya, Chakli, Chiwda and Ladu are prepared for the festival. Colourful Rangoli drawings are made in front of the house. Marathi children make a replica mud fort in memory of Shivaji, the great Maratha king.

Deshastha Brahmins observe the Khandoba Festival or *Champa Shashthi* in the month of Mārgashirsh. This is a six-day festival, from the first to sixth lunar day of the bright fortnight. Deshastha households perform *Ghatasthapana* of Khandoba during this festival. The sixth day of the festival is called Champa Sashthi. For Deshastha, the Chaturmas period ends on Champa Sashthi. As it is customary in many families not to consume onions, garlic and eggplant (Brinjal / Aubergine) during the Chaturmas, the consumption

of these food items resumes with ritual preparation of Vangyache Bharit (Baingan Bharta) and *rodga*, small round flat breads prepared from *jwari* (white millet).

Tilgul is exchanged by Deshasthas on Makar Sankaranti. The centre shows sugarcoated sesame seeds surrounded by laddus of tilgul or sesame jaggery.

Makar Sankranti falls on 14 January when the Sun enters Capricorn. Deshastha Brahmins exchange *Tilgul* or sweets made of jaggery and sesame seeds along with the customary salutation *Tilgul Ghya aani God Bola*, which means *Accept the Tilgul and be friendly*. *Gulpoli*, a special type of chapati stuffed with jaggery is the dish of the day.

Maha Shivaratri is celebrated in the month of Magha to honour Shiva. A chutney made from the fruit of curd fruit (*Kawath* in Marathi), elephant apple, monkey fruit or wood apple is a part of the cuisine of the day. Holi falls on the full moon day in Phalguna, the last month. Deshasthas celebrate this festival by lighting a bonfire and offering Puran Poli to the fire. Unlike North Indians, Deshastha Brahmins celebrate colour throwing five days after Holi on Rangapanchami.

Social and political issues

Maharashtraian Brahmins were absentee landlords and lived off the surplus without tilling the land themselves per ritual restrictions. They were often seen as the exploiter of the tiller. This situation started to change when the newly independent India enshrined in its constitution, agrarian or land reform. Between 1949–1959, the state governments started enacting legislation in accordance with the constitution implementing this agrarian reform or *Kula Kayada* in Marathi. The legislation led to the abolition of various absentee tenures like *inams* and *jagirs*. This implementation of land reform had mixed results in different States. On official inquiry, it was revealed that not all absentee tenures were abolished in the State of Maharashtra as of 1985. Other social and political issues include anti-Brahminism and the treatment of Dalits.

Inter-caste issues

The main entrance to the Vithoba temple in Pandharpur

During British rule in 19th century, social reformers such as Jotiba Phule launched campaigned against brahmin domination of society and in government employment.The campaign was continued in early 20th century by the maharaja of Kolhapur, Shahu.In 1920s the non-brahmin political party under Keshavrao Jedhe led the campaign against brahmins in Pune and rural areas of western Maharashtra.This period saw brahmins losing their landholding and their migration o urban centers Maharashtrian Brahmins were the primary targets during the anti-Brahmin riots in Maharashtra in 1948, following Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The rioters burnt homes and properties owned by Brahmins. The violent riots exposed the social tensions between the Marathas and the Brahmins.

In recent history, on 5 January 2004, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) in Pune was vandalised by 150 members of the Sambhaji Brigade, an organisation promoting the cause of the Marathas. The organisation was protesting against a derogatory remark made by the American author James Laine, on Shivaji's Parentage in his book, *Shivaji: A Hindu King in an Islamic Kingdom*. BORI was targeted because Srikant Bahulkar, a scholar at BORI, was acknowledged in Laine's book. The incident highlighted the traditionally uncomfortable Brahmin-Maratha relationship. Recently, the same organisation demanded the removal of Dadoji Konddeo from the *Statue of Child Shivaji ploughing Pune's Land* at Lal Mahal, Pune. They also threatened that if their demands were not met, they would demolish that part of statue themselves.

Until recent times, like other high castes of Maharashtra and India, Deshastha also followed the practice of segregation from other castes considered lower in the social hierarchy. Until a few decades ago, a large number of Hindu temples, presumably with a Deshastha priest, barred entry to the so-called "untouchables" (Dalit). An example of this was the case of the 14th century saint Chokhamela. He was time and again denied entry to the Vitthal temple in Pandharpur, however, his mausoleum was built in front of the gate of the temple. In the early 20th century, the Dalit leader Dr. Ambedkar, while attempting to visit the temple, was stopped at the burial site of Chokhamela and denied

entry beyond that point for being a Mahar. Deshastha caste-fellow Dnyaneshwar and his entire family were stripped of their caste and excommunicated by the Deshasthas because of his father's return from *sanyasa* to family life. The family was harassed and humiliated to an extent that Dnyaneshwar's parents committed suicide. Other saints of the Varkari movement like Chokhamela (Mahar caste), and Tukaram (Kunbi caste) were discriminated against by the Brahmins.

The Maharashtra Government has taken away the hereditary rights of priesthood to the Pandharpur temple from the Badve and Utpat Deshastha families, and handed them over to a governmental committee. The families have been fighting complex legal battles to win back the rights. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, an organisation founded by K. B. Hedgewar advocates Dalits being head priests at Hindu temples. Deshastha Brahmins such as Dr. Govande and Mahadev Ambedkar supported and helped Dalit leaders like Mahatma Phule and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar respectively. Dr. Ambedkar expressed gratitude towards Mahadev Ambedkar many times in his speeches.

Deshastha-Konkanastha relations

The prominence of a Brahmin in Indian society was directly related to his virtues, values, knowledge and practice of the scriptures. Manu's list of virtues of a perfect Brahmin, according to Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili, in order of importance were righteousness, truthfulness, generosity, almsgiving, compassion, self-restraint and diligent work. Prior to the rise of the Konkanastha Peshwas, the Konkanastha Brahmins were considered inferior in a society where the Deshasthas held socio-economic, ritual and Brahminical superiority. As mentioned earlier, all the Pant Pradhan during Shivaji's rule were Deshastha Brahmins and many modern families who have surname, Peshwe, are in fact Deshastha Brahmins tracing descent to Shivaji's Pant Pradhans, Moropant Pingle or Sonopant Dabir. After the appointment of Balaji Vishwanath Bhat as Peshwa, Konkanastha migrants began arriving en masse from the Konkan to Pune, where the Peshwa offered some important offices to the Konkanastha caste. The Konkanastha kin were rewarded with tax relief and grants of land. Historians point out nepotism and corruption during this time.

The Konkanasthas were waging a social war on Dehasthas during the period of the Peshwas. By the late 18th century, Konkanasthas had established complete political and economic dominance in the region.As a consequence, many members of the literal classes including Deshastha and Karhade brahmins during this era left their ancestral region of Western Maharashtra and migrated to other Maratha empire regions such as areas around east Godavari basin in modern day Karnataka and Andhra states.,.Many also moved to Maratha states of indore, Baroda, Nagpur and Gwalior.Richard Maxwell Eaton states that this rise of the Konkanastha is a classic example of social rank rising with political fortune. Since then, despite being the traditional religious and social elites of Maharashtra, the Deshastha Brahmins failed to feature as prominently as the Konkanastha. However, in recent decades, there have been deshasthas who have made a mark. One such person was the late Bharatiya Janata Party politician Pramod Mahajan, who was called a brilliant strategist and had an impact nationwide. Other notables

include Manohar Joshi, who has been the only Brahmin chief minister of Maharashtra, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh founder Dr. Hedgewar, social activist, Baba Amte, BJP politician and Social activist, Nanaji Deshmukh and present chief minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis.Ironically the Deshasthas looked down upon the Konkanasthas as newcomers in the 18th and 19th centuries. They refused to socialise and intermingle with them, not considering them to be Brahmins. A Konkanstha who was invited to a Deshastha household was considered to be a privileged individual, and even the Peshwas were refused permission to perform religious rites at the Deshastha *ghats* on the Godavari at Nasik. The Konkanasthas on their part, pursued for greater intellectual ability and better political acumen. During the British colonial period of 19th and early 20th century, Deshasthas dominated professions such as government administration, music, legal and engineering fields, whereas Konkanasthas dominated fields like politics, medicine, social reform, journalism, mathematics and education. The relations have since improved by the larger scale mixing of both communities on social, financial and educational fields, as well as with intermarriages.

Community organisations

The Deshastha Rigvedi sub-caste have community organizations in many major cities such as Mumbai, Dombivali, Belgaum, Nasik, Satara etc. Most of these organizations are affiliated to Central organization of the community called Akhil Deshastha Rugvedi Brahman Madhyavarty Mandal (A. D. R. B. M.) which is located in Mumbai. The activities of ADRBM includes offering scholarships to needy students, financial aid to members, exchange of information, and Matrimonial services. The Deshastha community organizations are also affiliated to their respective local All Brahmin Umbrella Organizations. Similar to the Rigvedi community, there are organizations and trusts dedicated to the welfare of the Yajurvedi sub-caste.,

Surnames and families

A large number of Deshastha surnames are derived by adding the suffix *kar* to the village from which the family originally hailed. For example, Bidkar came from town of Bid, Nagpurkar comes from the city Nagpur, Dharwadkar from the town of Dharwad in Karnataka, and the Marathi poet V. V. Shirwadkar, colloquially knows as *Kusumagraj*, came from the town of Shirwad. The names Kulkarni, Deshpande, and Joshi are very common amongst Deshastha Brahmins, and denote their professions. For example, Kulkarni means revenue collector and Joshi means astrologer. Some surnames simply describe physical and mental characteristics such as *Hirve* which means green or *Buddhisagar* which literally translates to *ocean of intellect* or "Dharmik" which means "very religious".

Deshpande

Deshpande is a surname having origins in Maharashtra. The surname is also used in Karnataka. Deshpande surname is predominantly found among Deshastha Brahmins. It is also used as surname by some Saraswat Brahmins and CKPs. The surname dates back

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to medieval Deccan Sultanate and Maratha Empire era.It was a title conferred on officers responsible for record keeping at Pargana level (modern equivalent of county or district).Thechief of the pargana were called Deshmukh. Their equivalent at village level were Kulkarni (accountant) and Patil (Village chief).Deshpande derives from the Marathi title *dešpande*.

Notable people

- Bapuji Mudgal Deshpande - general in the early Maratha Empire, best remembered for his major role during first and second recapturing attempts of "Kondhana" fort in 1647 and 1656 respectively.
- Baji Prabhu Deshpande, Minister/Count and commander for Shivaji, known for the Battle of Pavan Khind.
- Nirmala Deshpande, a noted Indian social activist and a Padmashri award winner (2005).
- P. L. Deshpande (known as Pu. La. Deshpande); Marathi writer, playwright, actor, and songwriter.
- Vasantrao Deshpande - Hindustani classical music vocalist, contributed especially to Hindustani classical and Natya Sangeet.
- Gururao Deshpande - known as Gayanacharya, Hindustani classical music singer from Karnataka, India; avid reader, astrologist.
- Anjali Deshpande - prominent social rights activist, writer, journalist and novelist.
- Rahul Deshpande - Hindustani classical music vocalist, grandson of late Kai. Pt. Vasantrao Deshpande.
- Satyasheel Deshpande - Hindustani classical music vocalist, disciple of Pt. Kumar Gandharva and son of Vamanrao Deshpande.
- Dr. Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande - Hindustani classical music vocalist of the Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana.
- Bala Deshpande - Senior Managing Director of the venture capital firm, New Enterprise Associates (India) since 2008. NEA is the world's largest venture capital firm.
- Gururaj Deshpande - Indian-American businessman, co-founder and chairman of Sycamore Networks and chairman of A123 Systems, founder of Deshpande Foundation.
- Bhavurao Venkatrao Deshpande - late senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), one of the founding fathers of BJP in Karnataka.
- Ravi Deshpande - Indian advertising executive, headed Contract India between 2005 and June 2013 leading to 400 awards.
- Ramakant Krishnaji Deshpande - Indian surgical oncologist, pioneer of thoracoscopic surgery at the Tata Memorial Hospital, awarded with Padma Shri for contributions to medicine.
- Govind Purushottam Deshpande - (known as GoPu or GPD) Marathi playwright and academic, economist, anthologist from Nashik, Maharashtra.
- Gauri Deshpande - novelist, short story writer, and poet from Maharashtra, India.
- Kusumavati Deshpande - (1904–1961) Marathi writer from Amravati, Maharashtra, India.

- Anagha Deshpande - cricketer who has played in 20 women's One Day Internationals and seven Twenty20 internationals for India.
- Arun Deshpande - a coach of the Indian Carrom team.
- V. G. Deshpande - Indian politician, former general secretary of Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha.
- Makarand Deshpande - actor, writer, and director in Hindi and Marathi films and theatre, often playing supporting yet pivotal roles.
- Mrunmayee Deshpande - actress of Hindi Bollywood and Marathi films and TV Serials; an established leading actress in Marathi cinema and an accomplished dancer, and writer.
- Tara Deshpande - actress, writer, former model and MTV VJ, known for Is Raat Ki Subah Nahin, Kaizad Gustad's Bombay Boys.
- Sunita Deshpande - Marathi writer, wife of Kai. Shri. Pu La Deshpande, known for आहे मनोहर तरी) ...Ahe Manohar Tari...), प्रिय जी) .ए.Priya G. A.), etc.
- Madhav Kashinath Deshpande - Marathi writer, renowned professor of English language and literature, known for novel Aadhar (अंधार) (1953), Priya Kavite (प्रिय कविते) (1972).
- Prerana Deshpande - exponents of Kathak dance in India, shishyaa of Dr. Rohini Bhate, of Lucknow and Jaipur gharanas.
- Shashi Deshpande - writer of novels, essays and children's books.

Kawle (surname)

Kavle, Kawle, or Kawale, (कावळे) is a common surname in Maharashtra, India.

The surname is found in many Hindu caste / sub castes like Maratha,Deshastha Brahmin, Lingayat, Bhandari, etc.

People with this surname are predominantly found in most of the major cities in Maharashtra like Mumbai, Pune, Satara Nashik, Nagpur, Solapur, Kolhapur, Aurangabad.

Kulkarni

Kulkarni is a Brahmin family name native to the Indian State of Maharashtra and northern Karnataka.

The name Kulkarni is believed to be a combination of two words (*kula* and *karani*). *Kula* means the root of the family, and *Karanika* means one who maintains records or accounts. Traditionally, Kulkarni was a title used for people who used to maintain the accounts and records of the villages and used to collect taxes. The title of the Kulkarni was later replaced by the Talathi. The Pargana and Kulkarni *Watans* were abolished in 1950.

Most Kulkarnis belong to the oldest Brahmin caste of Maharashtra and Karnataka, the Deshastha Brahmins. The surname is also found amongst Karhade Brahmin, and the

Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu, Goud Saraswat Brahmin and Daivajna communities. Also Kulkarni is a common surname among Vaisnavas, Madhwa Brahmins & Shivalli Smarta Brahmins.

Kulkarni families who hail from Maharashtra speak Marathi and Konkani. In Northern Karnataka families speak Kannada and Konkani. Most Kulkarni families originate from Maharashtra or northern Karnataka but in more recent times migrated and settled all over the world.

Notable Kulkarnis

Many prominent landmarks and roads in several cities are named after well known Kulkarnis. Some examples are the Kulkarni Garden in Nashik, G. A. Kulkarni road in Pune and Kulkarni Galli in Belgaum. In the mathematical field of differential geometry the Kulkarni–Nomizu product is also well known.

In former times, many Kulkarni saints were pioneers of social revival. Some examples are Jñāneśvar, who is widely credited as the founder of Marathi literature, Samarth Ramdas, Brahma Chaitanya and Eknath.

In the 17th century, many Kulkarnis played important roles and contributed to the formation and expansion of the Maratha Empire. Some of the prominent personalities were Ramchandra Pant Amatya and Parshuram Trimbak Kulkarni. Dadoji Konndeo, the guru of Shivaji was from a Marathi Deshastha Brahmin of the Kulkarni family from the Daund area in Maharashtra.

In more recent times, many Kulkarnis have made immense contributions to society and left their mark in a wide variety of fields including entertainment, literature, and academia.

Saints

- Jñāneśvar 1275 - 1296
- Eknath: Pre-sainthood name: Eknāth Kulkarni : 1533 - 1599
- Samarth Ramdas: Pre-sainthood name: Narayan Kulkarni (Thosar): 1608 - 1681
- Nivruttinath: Pre-sainthood name: Nivrutti Kulkarni : Elder brother and teacher of Dnyaneshwar
- Sopan: Pre-sainthood name: Sopan Kulkarni
- Muktabai: Pre-sainthood name: Mukta Kulkarni

Literature

- G. A. Kulkarni (1923–1987): Short story writer

Entertainment

- Atul Kulkarni: Marathi film and theater actor
- Dhondutai Kulkarni: Vocalist of the Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana
- Girish Kulkarni: Marathi film actor
- Mamta Kulkarni: Bollywood actress
- Mrinal Dev-Kulkarni: Marathi television actress.
- Saleel Kulkarni: Marathi singer and composer
- Sameep Kulkarni: Indian Classical and Fusion Sitarist
- Sandeep Kulkarni: Marathi actor
- Sonali Kulkarni: Bollywood actress
- Sonalee Kulkarni: Bollywood actress
- Umesh Vinayak Kulkarni: Film Director

Sports

- Nilesh Kulkarni: Indian cricketer
- Raju Kulkarni: Former Indian cricketer
- Umesh Kulkarni: Former Indian cricketer
- Shubhangi Kulkarni: Indian woman cricketer and secretary of the Women's Cricket Association of India
- Dhawal Kulkarni: Indian Cricketer
- Vineet Kulkarni: Indian cricket umpire and member of the International Cricket Council's International Panel of Umpires and Referees

Professionals

- Ravi S. Kulkarni (born 1942): Indian mathematician
- Sudha Kulkarni Murty: Kannada writer, Founder of Sudha Murty Foundation and wife of Narayan Murthy
- Sudheendra Kulkarni : Indian politician and columnist

Patharkar

Individuals with Patharkar surname are mostly found in the following states, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka India.

Most Patharkars are Deshastha Brahmins by caste. The surname is also found amongst other Hindu castes and communities of Maharashtra. Individuals with the last name Patharkar speak Marathi as their mother tongue along with other regional and national languages.

Ghaisas

Ghaisas as a surname is prevalent only in Chitpavan brahmans of the Bharadwaj gotra who hail from the Konkan region of western Maharashtra.

Chitpavan/Kokanastha Brahmins	
Religions	Hinduism
Languages	Marathi, Chitpavani Konkani
Populated states	Maharashtra, Konkan (Goa and coastal Karnataka); some parts of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

About Ghaisas surname

This surname is quite unusual in the sense that it is neither a title, nor does it relate to a place. It is therefore interesting to know the history of its origin which can be traced back to an Eighth century stone engraving (shila lekh) from the period of Govinda II, the Third king of the Rashtrakuta Dynasty where it was being referred to as "Gahiyasahas". The word however has meaning and refers to the intellectual abilities of a person who can explore into complex subjects. Historically, Ghaisas had proficiency in astrology. This profession led them to be experts in matchmaking and also in the calculation of the precise time called "muhurta" for solemnising marriages and other religious ceremonies. Time was measured by placing a brass bowl having a minute hole in its bottom into a big urn filled with water. To arrive at the muhurta, needed skills and complex calculation of weight and area as an empty bowl was required to be filled in exactly 1 Ghatika (equivalent to 24 minutes), a measure of time in those days.

Forecasts based on Astrology as well as calculation of time was called 'Ghatit', the word was derived from 'Ghatika-paatra' i.e. bowl. The method of exploring these probables was an exercise of intellect, which very few people could achieve, and was therefore called Gahiyasahas. The person doing this was called 'Gahiyasahasik'. There is another attribute to the word 'Gahiyasahas', meaning the administrator of justice and of religious offences. Ghaisas were also holding the posts of 'Dharmadhikari', a person who used to take decisions of 'Garhya' i.e. despisable misdeeds relating to religion.The exercise needed utmost caution and deep knowledge of religious matters. These persons were called 'Dharmik Garhyasahasik'. The third attribute to the word 'Gahiyasahasik' can be found in the history of Karnataka. There were several 'Ghatika's meaning religious centers in ancient times, which used to impart advanced learning in various fields of knowledge. Since admission to these Ghatikasthana's were given only to merited students who excelled in learning, it was known as 'Ghatikasahas'. In colloquial language, the word got converted into the present surname. References to the surname are found on a Bronze plaque i.e. Tamra-pat, which dates back to eleventh century. There is an akin surname called 'Ghalasasi', however it belongs to persons of Vatsa Gotra.

*The image shows the tamra-pat dating to 1060 CE found at
Diveagar mentioning one Hrushyapp Ghaisas as being ShadangVid*

Thus it is evident that the surname has been derived from their profession. In a brass scroll of Bagewadi of 12th century, Ghaisas have been attributed with several surnames which means it belonged to various families and professions. The surname at that time was used in respect for extraordinary proficiency in Vedanta, Nyaya (Judicial matters), Tarka (Logic), Astrology, Literature (Grammar),etc. Ghaisas were also good at writing manuscripts and reports, including those on stones (shila-lekhs). This job ran through the generations in Ghaisas and a reference to that effect can be seen on a tamra-pat (bronze plaque) of the Year 1060, belonging to the King Mamruni of Shilahara Kingdom found at Diveagar in Konkan. This plaque is first of its kind and is written in Prakrut Marathi.

Current status

All Ghaisas are believed to be Chitpavan Brahman's of Bharadwaj Gotra, originating from Kelshi, a small village in the Konkan region of western Maharashtra. Over a period of time these Ghaisas migrated to different places like Pune, Mumbai, Trimbakeshwar and in the states of Karnataka, Goa and Gujarat for livelihood. Today, they have dispersed to even far off places like U.S., Australia, etc. Many of them have earned name and prosperity, by their hardwork and intellect. Ghaisas have had a great tradition of excellence in the fields of education, law, astrology and Vedic rituals and knowledge. Today's generations have embraced the newer fields of technology and software equally well.

Notable Ghaisas

- Deepak Ghaisas, entrepreneur in fields of information technology and biotechnology.

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins

Rajapur Saraswat Brahmins (RSB) (also known as Bhalavalikar Gauda Saraswat Brahmins) are a Hindu community of India and one of the major sub-group of Konkani Saraswat Brahmins. They belong to the Pancha (five) Gauda Brahmana groups or "Gaudadi Panchakas". Konkani is their mother tongue. They also speak Kannada, Tulu in South Canara of Karnataka, and Marathi in few parts of Goa and Maharashtra.

They are classified under the Other Backward Class(OBC) list by the Government of Kerala and the Government of Karnataka.

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Chapter 48
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN NEPAL

Bahun

Bahun is a local term for the Nepali-speaking Brahmins . They belong to ethics Paharis in Nepal and Indian Gorkhas in India. According to 2011 Nepal census, Bahun stands as second largest group in Nepal with 12.2% of Nepal's population (or 32,26,903 peoples).

Bahun are divided into two groups: Purbiya and Kumai on the basis of origin. Bahuns originated from Karnali region of Nepal are Purbiya Bahuns whereas Kumai are Kumaon origin Bahun. Khas Brahmins are only known as Bahuns which means Pahadi/Parvate Brahmins.
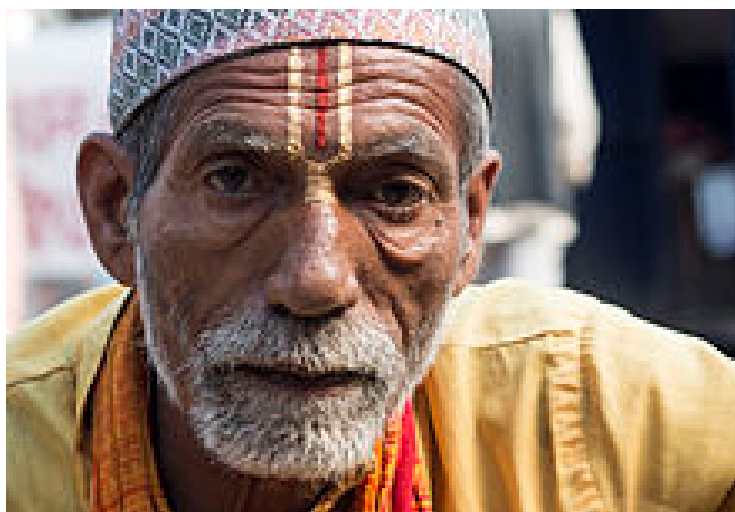
Brahmin with Nepali Dhaka topi worn at Kathmandu

Bahuns are further sub divided into two categories: Upadhyaya and Jaisi on the basis of allowance of ritual conduct. Upadhyaya Bahuns are considered high rank ritual performing Bahuns whereas Jaisi Bahuns are somewhat degraded to non-practising Bahuns.

Background

Selected ethnic groups of Nepal; Bahun are members of the wider Pahari (or Khas) community (yellow).

Traditionally, Bahuns (called "Khas Brahmins") were member of Khas community together with "Khas Rajputs" (also called Chhetri). Possibly due to political power of the Khasa Malla kingdom, Khas Bahun and Khas Rajput had high social status as immigrant plain Brahmins and Rajputs in the present-day western Nepal.
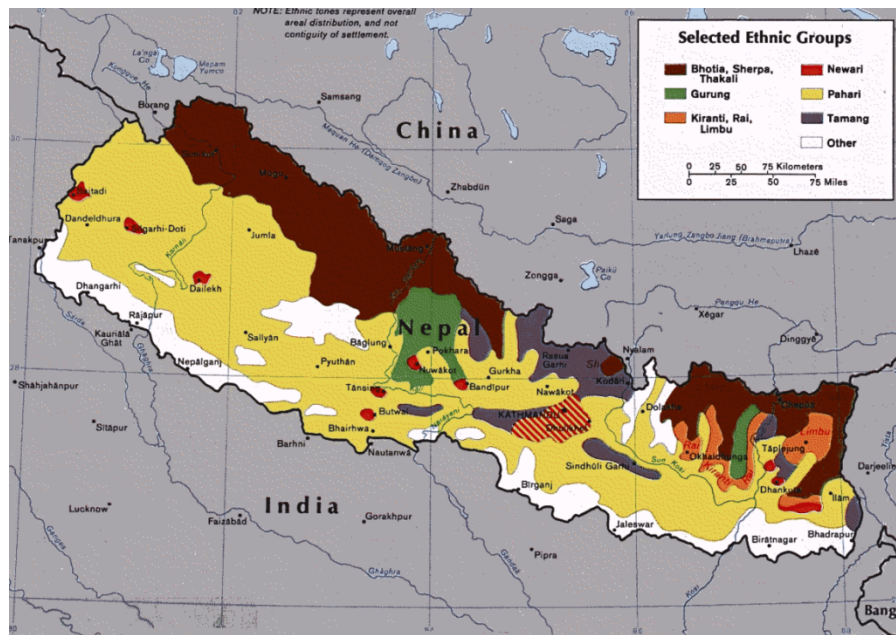
Upreti (surname)

Upreti or sometimes spelled Uprety is a surname found in Hindu community of Kumaoni Saraswat Brahmins and also in Nepali Bahuns (Brahmins) primarily living in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand state of India, all over Nepal and few are found in Sikkim too.

According to their traditions they are the descendents of the Rishi Bharadwaja. Adherent of the Shaivism sect, they worship Shiva as their prime deity.

Etymology

According to Pandit Badri Datt Pandey's book *History of Kumaon* where he quotes Pandit Rudra Datt Pant, pp.572 - "During the times of the Katyuri Kings, from the Chauki village of Doti, a Kanyakubja Brahmin Shambhu Sharma came to Preti village in Kali Kumaon, and hence the descendants were called Upretis."

History

In the same section of his book, Badri Datt Pandey mentions about the famous Pandit Ram Datt Jyotirvidji who says that Uprada/Upretyada, the estate of the then royal priests Upretis in Gangolihat was given to the Dravida Vajpayee Brahmin Shivaprasad who came to Kumaon during the reign of Mankoti kings. During the time of the Gorkhas, Pandit Jayakrishna Upreti was a famous General whose descendants continue to live in Almora.

Pandit Badri Datt Pandey mentions that within Kumaoni Brahmins, the Upretis of Patiya, Jhijhar, and Supakot have a common descent, whereas other Upretis belong to a different group (pp.572).

He also quotes that Pandit Ganga Datt Upreti claims that a few Upretis are also the original inhabitants of Maharashtra state of the Western India region who later migrated to the Kumaon region.

Thus those who claim to have Kanyakubja origins would have migrated to the Himalaya during the Islamic invasions of the twelfth century, whereas the one from Maharashtra would have moved northward along with the Marathas in the seventeenth century. The former seems more plausible as the Chand dynasty who ruled Kumaon from the tenth Century onward, after the reign of the Katyuris, came from Kannauj.

They also migrated to Nepal along with other Brahmins from Almora district under the royal patronage of the Hindu Kingdom when the Kumaon region was under the control of the Gorkhas till the Treaty of Sugauli with British India in 1814 A.D.

Notable people with Upreti surname

- Dalip Kumar Upreti; Indian lichenologist
- Kul Prasad Uprety, Nepalese politician
- Mohan Upreti; Indian playwright and theater personality
- Nikhil Upreti; Nepalese actor
- Nilkantha Upreti; Former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal
- Sanjeev Uprety; Nepalese journalist

Chapter 49
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN ODISHA

Rath (Odia Surname)

Rath or Rathasharma are Utkala Brahmins having Atreya or Krishnatreya gotra. The surname in ancient days were given according to gotra and the speciality of the job done by Brahmin scholars. They especially specialise the Vikriti Paatha of Shukla Yajurveda and Rigveda which is *Ratha Patha*. The Veda can be recited in eleven different ways among which three are Prakruti and remaining seven are Vikruti. These are Samhita (Richa), Pada, Krama (3 Prakruti) and Jataa, Rekha, Maala, Dhwaja, Shikha, Danda, Ratha and Ghana (Vikrutis). So the surname holders once mastered the Ratha tradition of chanting Veda. Sometimes they are called Rathatreya.

Tradition

These group of Brahmins have Harihara worship and Bhuvaneshwari worship as family tradition. Goddess Bhuvaneshvari is regarded as their Kula devi. Many Odia Devi Mahatmya Pandits also belong to this sub group. The revival of Utkala Brahmins is attributed to Pandit Shri Sadashiva Rathasharma who in mid 20th century re-established the Sanskrit education in around Odisha. The Sadashiva Parishad is established in Puri to keep Sanskrit education alive.

Gotra

Ātreya (Sanskrit: आत्रेय) Gotra: Generally belonging to the lineage of Maharṣi Atri, seer of the 5th maṇḍala of the Ṛk Veda. Specifically, they are the direct descendents of Maharṣi Rathātreya (रथात्रेय) one of the seers of this maṇḍala.

Utkala Brahmin

Utkala is a Brahmin caste in India. They are native to the present-day Odisha state (formerly a part of the Utkala Kingdom). The Utkala Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Chapter 50
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN PUNJAB

Mohyal Brahmin

Mohyal is a Brahmin caste of India. Alternative spellings include Muhiyal, Muhial, Mhial, Mohiyal or Mahjal. Most Mohyals are Hindus, but many are Sikhs as well.

Mohyal clans

The Mohyals are divided into seven gotras (clans):

- Bali: Parashar
- Bhimwal: Kaushal
- Chhibber/Chibber: Bhrigu
- Datt: Bharadwaja
- Lau: Vasishtha
- Mohan: Kashyap
- Vaid: Dhanvantri/Bharadwaja

Origin

The Mohyals developed a warlike culture and reputation that has led to them being compared to the Pashtuns and Rajputs.

In India, they are also called 'Hussaini Brahmins' as Muhiyals proudly claim that though being non-Muslim, a small number of them fought in the battle of Karbala on the side of Hussain. For centuries, they never or seldom paid in their revenue until coerced by a military expedition involving a number of casualties on both sides. On one occasion, they fought three sanguine battles against Babur's army as they refused to surrender a khatri girl to Mughals who had sought their protection. The testament to their chivalry is the fact that during Muslim rule, they were the only non-Muslim group on whom the title of Khan or Sultan was ever bestowed. During British rule, a number of them were residing in the military belt of Campbelpur, Rawalpindi and Jhelum area. A number of Muhiyals served with distinction in British Indian army especially cavalry. They served in many regiments especially 9th, 11th, 13th, and 19th Lancers, 3rd, 4th and 15th Punjab Cavalry and Guides Cavalry.

The legend of Rahab Sidh Datt

As per Mohyal folklore, a Mohyal of the Dutt clan had fought on behalf of Imam Hussain in the battle of Karbala, more specifically in the storming of Kufa- sacrificing his seven sons in the process. According to legend, Rahab Sidh Datt (also mentioned as Rahib Sidh or Sidh Viyog Datt in some versions) was the leader of a small band of career-soldiers

living near Baghdad around the time of the battle of Karbala. The legend mentions the place where he stayed as Dair-al-Hindiya, meaning "The Indian Quarter", which matches an Al-Hindiya in existence today. This legend occupies an important part in the Dutt clan's oral history, and is considered a source of pride for them.

Notable people

Sikh history

- Bhai Mati Das - Martyr executed by Aurangzeb. Son of Bhai Praga, a Jathedar and a martyr from Battle of Chamkaur
- Bhai Sati Das - Martyr executed by Aurangzeb. Son of Bhai Praga, a Jathedar and a martyr from Battle of Chamkaur
- Mahan Singh Mirpuri - Second-in-command General to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, deputy to Hari Singh Nalwa

Indian Army

- Ganda Singh Datt - Highly decorated soldier in the British Indian Army
- Bhai Balmukund - Revolutionary freedom fighter
- Bhai Parmanand - Revolutionary freedom fighter
- Bakshi Tirath Ram Vaid - Awarded the Order of the British Empire for gallantry displayed at the Siege of Malakand in 1897
- Madan Lal Vaid - Awarded the Military Cross for bravery in World War II]]
- Bakshi Badri Nath Chhibber - Highly decorated police officer in British and independent India
- Puneet Nath Datt - Awarded India's highest peace-time gallantry award, the Ashok Chakra
- Ravi Datt Mehta - Martyr posthumously awarded the Kirti Chakra

Chapter 51
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN RAJASTHAN

Aboti Brahmin

The Aboti Brahmin are a Brahmin community who were recorded living in Rajasthan, India, around 1228 CE (1306 VS), where they were usually temple servants and had migrated from Dvaravati. Today, they are found in the state of Gujarat and some at least continue to work as temple servants. They perform puja at the Dwarkadhish Temple in Dwarka during the Hindu festival of Janmashtami.

Bhargava

Bhargava, also spelled Bhargav, is a community in India who believe themselves to be descended from the sage Bhrigu. Its members originate from the Dhosi Hill area and were originally known as Dhusars.

History

A view of ancient Dhosi Hill Temple of Chyvan Rishi, rebuilt by Bhargava Community in 1890s

The Bhargava community were originally known as Dhusars and were a trading caste (*bania* or *vaishya*). During the later part of the 19th century they successfully engineered a rise to the status of *brahmin* using a process sometimes termed sanskritisation. It was at this time that they took the name of Bhargava. The oldest known inscription mentioning the Dhusar community is at the Sakrai Mata temple at Sakrari in Sikar district, Rajasthan. Dineshchandra Sircar dates this to 879 AD, although it is dated by others to 642 A.D. They were merchants or traders at that time.

The Bhargava now believe themselves to be descended from the sage Bhrigu and his son Chyavana.

Present status

The Bhargava have well-established community associations, the Bhargava Sabhas, that operate in various cities under an umbrella organisation, the All-India Bhargava Sabha (AIBS) located at Gurgaon, Haryana. There are around 37 of these Bhargava Sabhas.

AIBS has also held international conferences. These took place in Canada (2008), USA (2009) and Dubai (2012)

Bhattmewada Brahmins

Bhattmewada Brahmins are a Brahmin community found in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India.

Bias Brahmin

The Bias (or Vyas) are a Brahmin community found in the Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. They trace their origin to Gujarat.

Origin

The word *bias* means a preacher in Sanskrit. The *Bias* is an umbrella term for the members of the three Gujarati Brahmin communities named *Nagar*, *Audichya* and *Bardai* who migrated from Gujarat centuries ago and got settled in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan.

These three sub-communities of the group intermarry. They speak Haryanvi, Punjabi, Hindi or other local dialects. In Haryana, the community is found mainly in the districts of Bhiwani, Hisar, Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Karnal.

Present circumstances

The Bias are strictly endogamous and practice clan exogamy. Their clans are referred to as gotras, and theoretically all gotra claim descent from a respected saint or rishi. Among the larger gotras are the Gautam, Kaushik, Angira, Vashishta, Gargas, Bhargav, Bhardwaj, Parashar, Koshish, Monish, Sandal etc. that are further divided into sub-clans known as *shashans*. In some respects, they are regarded as the highest class of Brahmins.

The traditional occupation of the Bias is that of village priests. A small number were large landowners, but most of the community are petty landowners. Like other Brahmin groupings, they have been more successful in taking up higher education, and generally are economically well off. Nowadays, their intermarriage with Gaurs is quite common.

Surnames

The Bias use various surnames including their respective clan-names, Sharma, Pandit and Vyas.

Dadheech Brahmins

The Dadhich Brahmins are a subgroup of Brahmins who claim to be the descendants of Rishi Dadhichi, who is said to have given his bones to Indra for making of the vajra, the mythological weapon created to kill the demon Vritra. A temple of Dadhichi's sister, Dadhimati, is found in the village of Goth Manglod, Nagaur, Rajasthan. They are most ancient among Brahmins of the Marwad region and elsewhere.

List of common gotras

- Gautam - patodhya, palod, nawal, kumbhya, kanth, budadhara, khatod, budsuna, bagadiya, vedvant, vanansidara, lelodhya, kakda, gangvani, bhuwal, bhabhda

- Vats - Jopat, ratava, koliwal, baldawa, rolanya, cholsankhya, itodhya, polgala, nosara, namawal, ajmera, kukda, taranwa, avadig, didel, musya, mang Nagvan, Maratha

- Bhardwaj - pedwal, shukl, karesya, asopa, lyali, barmota, indorwal, harsodiya, bhataly, gadiya, solyani, upadhyay, lavania, pathak

- Bhargav - inaniya, jajhodiya, prathanya, kasalya, shilnodhya, kuradya, khebar, bisawa, ladanwa, badagana, kapdodya

- Shandilya - Maharshi, Kaushik

- Saryupari - Tiwari

- Kotchs - didwanya, mandodya, dhavdodya, jatalya, doba, mundel, manajwal, sosi, gothecha, kudal, tetrawal

- Kashyapa - borayada, derolya, namwal, shirgota, rajthala, badawa, balaya, cholakhya

- Shandilya - rinwa, bediya, bahad, dahwal, Gothdiwal

- Atrey - sunthwal, jujnodya, dubanya, sukalya

- Parasar - bheda, parasar

- Kapil - chipada

- Garga - tulachhya

- Mamm - anachar se mlechh (apavitra) ho gaye

Dadhimati mata is kuldevi(clan Goddess) of Dadhich Brahmins whose most ancient temple is situated on didwana road near rol village of Nagaur dist. in Rajasthan.

They are one of six groups of Marwar region Brahmins, of which the other five are: Pareek Brahmins,Sikhwal or Sukhwal Brahmins (also called Shringi Brahmins), Saraswat Brahmins, Gujar Gaud Brahmins, Khandelwal Brahmins.

Gauda Brahmins

Gauda is a group of Brahmin communities in India. The Gauda Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Hatwal

Hatwal is a Garhwali brahmin family name from the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand. The Hatwals were primarily a priestly class who served as pandits at the many Hindu temples in the Himalayan Kingdom of Garhwal, including Badrinath which is part of the auspicious Hindu pilgrimage circuit of Char Dham.

The Hatwals are descended from Rishi Bharadwaja and belong to the Bharadwaj gotra.

The Rajput Hatwals are very few in number and are found in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand and upper reaches of Himachal Pradesh.

Etymology and use

The origin of the surname Hatwal is from *Hat wale* (a person from a village called Haat). Most of the inhabitants of Hat, now in Garhwal, Uttarakhand were called Hatwals.

Origin

The Hatwals are Sarola Brahmins from Garhwal who first migrated to the hills of present day Uttarakhand from the plains of north-western India around the 13th century.

Hussaini Brahmin

Hussaini Brahmin is a Mohyal community with links to both Hinduism and Islam. They are spread across Sindh and Punjab in Pakistan; Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi and other parts of India, and also in Arabia. Citing source from history of the Muhiyals, published in 1911 CE it is disclosed that about 1400 Brahmins had been living in Baghdad when the event of Karbala took place. There are various opinions regarding the origins of

the community. About 125 families of Hussaini Brahmins are settled in Pune. A few families are settled in Delhi also and they observe Muharram festival every year.

Seven sons of Datt

Among various legends about Hussaini Barahmin it is also described that a childless Dutt personally visited Hussain Ibn Ali and submitted his wish to have a child. In response to his desire, he was informed that he had no child in his fate. Hearing that he cannot be a father of son Dutt became senseless and broke down in crying with pain for grant of a child by Imam Hussain with recommendations to God. At this moment, Hussain pacified him saying he will have one soon. Suddenly someone observing the event questioned Hussain stating that he had challenged the will of Allah. Upon hearing this Imam told Dutt he will have one more child. This continued till Imam gave him good news of seven children. Hussaini Brahmins used to live in Lahore till 1947 and after that date they migrated to other locations.

Other

At Pushkar in Ajmer, a place of Hindu pilgrimage, where Moinuddin Chishti lived and passed his last days, there is even today a class of people who call themselves Hussaini Brahmins, who are neither orthodox Hindus nor orthodox Muslims. Hussaini Brahmins practiced a mixed blend of Hinduism and Islamic traditions. A popular saying in Hindi/Urdu language refers to the Hussaini Brahmans thus: "Wah Datt Sultan, Hindu ka dharm, Musalman ka Iman, Adha Hindu adha Musalman (Well Datt Sultan, declaring Hindu religion and following Muslim faith, Half Hindu and Half Muslman).

Jangid

The Jangid, or Jangid Brahmins, are a jāti (sub-caste) in India, particularly Rajasthan, historically known for carpentry, especially woodcarving and furniture making. Following Sanskritisation, they were associated with the Brahmin varna. Today, the Jangid are usually known for painting and decorative works such as making seats or chariots for religious figurines.

Nagar Brahmin

This article is about the social caste. For the moth family, see Brahmaeidae. For similarly spelled words, see Nagar (disambiguation).

Nagar Brahmin

The Nagar Brahmins are found primarily in Gujarat, but also in Rajasthan, Malwa and in states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar even as far as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh in the north, West Bengal in the east and Karnataka in the south.

Origin

The oldest account of the Nagars is given in the Nagara Khanda, a part of the Skanda Purana (Hindu religious text).

Nagar princes

A few Nagar families became chieftains of (minor) princely states, notably in two in Gujarati peninsula Kathiawar's Sorath prant : Kuba State and Vasavad.

Notable people

- Narsinh Mehta (1414–1481), poet-saint
- Himmatlal Dhirajram Bhachech - Indian civil engineer, rebuilt the Ellis Bridge
- Ranchhodlal Chhotalal - Indian businessman who set up the first textile mill at Ahmedabad
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 1st Baronet - the first Hindu baronet of British India, textile mill owner and philanthropist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 2nd Baronet, baronet, independence activist
- Sir Chinubhai Madhowlal Ranchhodlal, 3rd Baronet - Arjuna awardee, shooter, etc.

Iswardas Nagar-Noted Mughal historian from the reign of Aurangzeb. Author of Futuhat-i Alamgiri.

- Paresh Rawal - Indian film actor.

Pareek

The Pareek are a caste found in the state of Rajasthan in India. They claim descent from Parashara.

Shrimali Brahmins

Shrimali Brahmins originally from Shrimal (the present-day Bhinmal) in Jalore district in the Indian state of Rajasthan.Their Patron goddess is Mahalakshmi. They have fourteen gotras and each gotra has its own kuladevi. They are divided into two different castes, Samvedi Shrimali Brahmins and Yajurvedi Shrimali Brahmins.

Chapter 52
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN TAMIL NADU

Ashtagrama Iyer

The Ashtagrama Iyers are a group of Vadama Iyers or South Indian Brahmins with their roots in the Ashtagrama villages situated in the Kolar District of Karnataka.

Ashtasahasram

Ashtasahasram is a sub-sect of the Iyer community of Tamil Brahmins from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. According to one popular view, the Ashtasahasrams originate from a village called Ennaiyiram, which translates to "eight thousand", the Tamil counterpart of the Sanskrit word "Ashtasahasram".

Etymology

The name of the community is derived from the Sanskrit word "Ashtasahasram" meaning "eight thousand". According to popular belief, Ashtasahasram are believed to have migrated to their present habitations as a body of eight thousand individuals. However, according to another belief, the Ashtasahasram originate from a village near Tindivanam called "Ennayiram", which in Tamil translates to eight thousand.

Divisions

The Ashtasahasram community is further sub-divided into four groups:

- Aththiyur
- Arivarpade
- Nandivadi
- Shatkulam

Religious Beliefs

The community are part of the Smartha sect and as such worship all the major Hindu deities. They are fewer in number as compared to Vadamas and Brahacharanams.

Traditional Occupation

The traditional occupation of the community is to function as household priests and to study and impart Vedic knowledge. However, in recent times, like other communities, they hold diversified occupations. As early as the Medieval Chola period, there have been records of Brahmins of the village of Ennaiyiram indulging in trade and commerce. Many also work as temple priests.

Brahacharanam

Brahacharanam is a sub-sect of the Iyer community of Tamil Brahmins. The word "Brahacharanam" is a corruption of the Sanskrit word Brhatcharanam. Many Brahacharanam follow the *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy propounded by Adi Sankaracharya. However, some Brahacharanam are stauchly Saivite unlike followers of Adi Sankaracharya, or else adhere to "Sivadvaita" so to speak. The Brahacharanams, along with the Vadamas, form the major portion of the Kerala Iyer community.

The Brahacharanams, like the Vadamas, have a distinctive martial tradition which differentiate them from other Iyer communities. Members of the community served as *Senapatis* or army commanders under the Chola kings Raja Raja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I.

Etymology

The word *bruhat* in Sanskrit means "great", "vast" or "significant" and the word *charanam* refers to feet. The name Brahacharanam can be thus literally translated as "feet of the greats" referring to the status of a Guru, and the Brahacharanam being those who follow in the footsteps of the Greats.

Origins

Their exact origins are not clear but their presence in the Tamil Kingdoms extends back at least to the reign of Parantaka Chola II, who is said to have *brahmarayars* as ministers. Many of the agraharam villages of the Brahacharanam also have very ancient origins.

According to some, they made their way into the Tamil country through the Satyamangalam Pass.

BrahaCharanam means Brahath means Vedas and Acharanam means one who follows verbatim. So it means strict follower of Vedic rituals.

Sub-groups

The Brahacharanam are divided into the following subgroups:

 Kandramanickam

- Milanganur
- Mangudi
- Malanadu
- Pazhamaneri
- Musanadu

- Kolathur
- Marudancheri
- Mazhavanattu
- Sathyamangalam and
- Puthur Dravida.

A significant number of Brahacharanams have migrated to Kerala, where they are part of the Kerala Iyer community. They have also migrated in large numbers to Puttur in Andhra Pradesh where they form the Puthur Dravida community.

Culture

Most Brahacharanam are worshippers of Shiva, and they cover their forehead with sacred ashes. Some used to wear Vibhuti in the Shape of the Sivalinga on their foreheads due their strong adherence to Lord Siva and no other. However, the Sathyamangalam group have some members who wear the vaishnava mark.

Women also dress like other Iyers. In the ancient times, the cloth worn by the women used to be of little more than a knee's length. Among the Milaganur Brahacharanam, the Adrishya Pondugal ceremony is celebrated in which four women, a widow and a bachelor are invited to a feast. This was done in order to propitate four women who disappeared due to the ill treatment of their mothers in law.

It has been documented that some Bracharanam who lived in places like Mangudi were such rigid saivaites that they would not even utter Govinda's name and lived a life of stern austerity.

Traditional role

The traditional function of Brahacharanams is to study and impart Vedic knowledge or officiate as priests in religious functions. However, there is evidence that in ancient times, they might have also served in the army or in civil and administrative services. During the Chola period, members of the community (especially the Pazhamaneri Brahacharanam) even served as army commanders. Senapathi Krishnan Raman was the Commander-in-chief of the Imperial Chola army of Rajendra Chola I. Brahacharanam also consider themselves to be among the first followers of Adi Shankaracharya.

Notable people

Some notable Brahacharanams are:

Chandrasekhar family (Mangudi sub-group)

- Sir C.V.Raman, Nobel Prize winner in Physics from India[page needed][need quotation to verify]
- Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Nobel Prize winner in Physics from India, nephew of C.V.Raman

Others

- Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, a Carnatic vocalist

Dikshitar

A Dīkshitar from Chidambaram sporting the Mun Kudumi

Dīkshitars or Thillai Vazh Anthaanar are a Brahmin servitor community of Tamil Nadu who are based mainly in the town of Chidambaram.

Hebbar Iyengar

Hebbar Iyengars constitute a part of the Iyengar sub-caste of the Karnataka Brahmins. They are traditionally followers of Ramanuja and Vedanta Desika.

Iyengar

Iyengar or Ayyangar is a caste of Hindu Brahmins of Tamil origin whose members follow the Visishtadvaita philosophy propounded by Ramanuja. They are found mostly in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Iyengar are divided into two religious sects, the Vadakalai and the Thenkalai. As with other Hindu communities, they are also classified based on their gotra, or patrilineal descent.

The Iyengar community trace their origin in Tamil Nadu from the period of Ramanuja. But they are also migrated and settled in other South Indian states mostly Karnataka, thus speaking Kannada.

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Iyengars display a mark on their forehead known as the Srivaishnava Urdhva Pundra as a caste mark.

Etymology

There are various opinions regarding the etymology of *Iyengar*.

- It means one who is characterised by five attributes (*Aindu angangal*).

It derives from the word ayya-garu which turned into ayyangaaru and later on into ayengar. The term "ayya" is the Prakrit version of the Sanskrit word "arya" which in Sanskrit means "noble". Robert Lester says that the word "Ayyangaar", an alternative transliteration, was first used by Kandhaadai Ramanuja Ayyangaar of Tirupathi around 1450 AD.

History

Common origins

Bhagavadh Ramanuja

The Iyengar community traces its philosophical origins to Nathamuni, the first Sri Vaishnava acharya, who lived around 900 CE. He is traditionally believed to have collected the 4,000 works of Nammalvar and other alvars, the poet-saints of southern India who were intensely devoted to Vishnu on both an emotional and intellectual plane. The belief is that he set this collection - commonly called the *Tamil Prabhandams* - to music, and he introduced the devotional hymns of the alvars into worship, thus mixing their Tamil Veda with the traditional Vedas written in Sanskrit. A scriptural equivalence was accepted by the community that formed in acceptance of his works, with the Sanskrit texts considered to be metaphysical truth and the Tamil oral variants to be based on

human experience of the same. This community became immersed in the dual-language worship in temples where issues of caste were of no concern.

A century or so later, Ramanuja became the principal among religious leaders who formalised the efforts of Nathamuni as a theology. Ramanuja developed the philosophy of Visishtadvaita and has been described by Harold Coward as "the founding interpreter of [Sri Vaisnavite] scripture." While Anne Overzee says that he was a collator and interpreter rather than an original thinker, although showing originality in his method of synthesising the Tamil and Sanskrit sources, Ranjeeta Dutta has said that the two sets of sources "continued to be parallel to each other and not incorporative" at this time.

Nathamuni and Ramanuja were both Brahmins, while Nammalvar was of the Vellala caste which their community considered to be the lowest varna, known as shudra. All three men were Tamils, although Ramanuja documented his thoughts in Sanskrit.

Schism

Vadakalai caste symbol
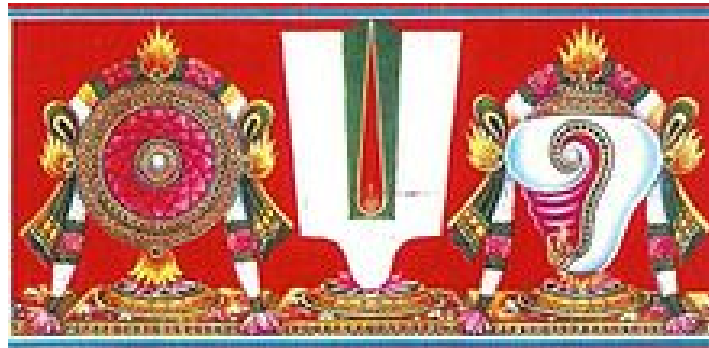
Thenkalai caste symbol

Ramanuja was initially a proponent of the traditional bhakti philosophy that demanded adherents had a good command of Sanskrit texts and a ritualised approach to life and devotion. This outlook marginalised women and members of the shudra varna because they were disbarred from learning the Sanskrit Vedas, and Ramanuja later changed his position and became more receptive to an inclusionist theory. His thoughts also contained what John Carman has described as a "significant ambiguity", of which Ramanuja may not himself have been aware: his metaphorical devices suggested that devotion through ritual "earned" salvation but also that salvation was given through the grace of god. Subsequently, some time around the fourteenth century, the Iyengar community divided

into two sects, both of which maintained a reverence for his works but which were increasingly divided due to the doctrinal uncertainties evident in them.

The Vadakalai sect are also referred to as the "northern" culture or school, and the Thenkalai sect are the "southern" variant. These cultures reference the perceived prominence given by the sects to the terse style of Sanskrit traditions and the lyrical *Tamil Prabhandams*, respectively, although S. M. Srinivasa Chari believes this linguistic differentiation to be overstated. The Vadakalai favour Vedanta Desika as their acharya and the Thenkalai prefer instead the teachings of Manavala Mamuni but Chari notes that the sects share a common allegiance to Nammalvar and Ramanuja, and that their subsequent significant thinkers "wholly accepted the authority and importance" of both linguistic styles.[c] Harold Schiffman says that the linguistic schism reflects wider underlying doctrinal differences between the populist southern school and the social conservatism of the north, with Tamil historically being a language understood by the masses while Sanskrit was elitist and caste-bound.

Vedic philosophy holds that the supreme goal in life is to attain the blissful state of Brahman through moksha, being the process of liberation of the suffering soul from the cycle of reincarnation. Although eighteen points of difference between the two Iyengar sects are generally recognised, being referred to as the *ashtadasa bhedas*, most of these are minor.[d] Abraham Eraly describes a principal difference, being

... their views on the nature of divine grace - while the Thenkalai holds that devotion is all that is necessary and that god will on his own initiative carry the devotee to salvation, like a cat carrying a kitten, the Vadakalai holds that man has to win god's grace through his efforts and he has to cling on to god, like an infant monkey clinging on to its mother.

Coward considers this to be *the* difference between the two schools of thought, and Carman says that "... both [sects] accord primacy to divine grace, but one group feels it necessary to insist that there is no human contributions at all to the attainment of salvation." These variations in interpretation of the nature of *prapatti* - loosely, "self-surrender to god" - are called *marjara nyaya* and *markata nyaya*, referring to the young of cats and monkeys. They give rise to another naming convention for the two sects, being the "monkey school" and the "cat school".

Unlike the Vadakali, the Thenkalai Iyengar sect reject the caste system and have accepted Shudras into its fold. The sect was founded by Pillai Lokacharya. Vadakalai Iyengars believe that it is necessary to offer obeisance/prostration to God multiple times, while Thenkalai Iyengars believe that it is enough if you offer obeisance/prostration to God once. This is the reason as to why a Vadakalai Iyengar is often seen prostrating four times, while Thenkalai Iyengars are seen prostrating only once.

Sectarian rivalry

The sectarian rivalry has at times been bitter and, according to Andre Beteille, "aggressive". Thomas Manninezhath notes an intensification of disputes at the time of

Thayumanavar in the eighteenth century and on other occasions legal processes have been used in attempts to settle the control of temples.

Relations with other communities

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (right) has been the most prominent Iyengar in Indian politics

Prior to the independence of India, Brahmins had a significant presence in the government posts and education system of Madras province, a part of which is now Tamil Nadu. Since independence, grievances and alleged instances of discrimination by Brahmins in Tamil Nadu are believed to be the main factors which fuelled the Self-Respect Movement and marginalised them. This, in combination with the depressed economic and social conditions of non-Brahmins, led the non-Brahmins to agitate and form the Justice Party in 1916, which later became the Dravidar Kazhagam. The Justice Party banked on vehement anti-Hindu and anti-Brahmin propaganda to ease Brahmins out of their privileged positions. Gradually, the non-Brahmin replaced the Brahmin in every sphere and destroyed the monopoly over education and the administrative services which the Brahmin had previously held.

However, with the destruction of Brahmin monopoly over the services and introduction of adequate representation for other communities, anti-Brahmin feelings did not subside. There were frequent allegations of casteism and racism against Brahmins very similar to the ones made by the lower castes against them in the decades before independence.

Some Iyengars have worked to remove caste-barriers. Sir P. Rajagopalachari, during his tenure as the Dewan of Travancore, introduced legislation to give Dalit and Ezhava children access to schools, despite protests from Malayali upper-castes. He also enabled the lifting of restrictions on the nomination of low-castes and untouchables to the Travancore State Assembly. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Madras Presidency, enacted a law similar to the *Temple Entry Proclamation* issued in Travancore that permitted the entry of Dalits into Hindu temples.

There were also accusations that they were Sanskritists who had a distorted and contemptuous attitude towards Tamil language, culture and civilisation. Kamil Zvelebil, a

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Dravidologist, argues from a study of the history of Tamil literature that this accusation is wrong.

He notes that the Brahmin was chosen as a scapegoat to answer for the decline of Tamil civilisation and culture in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

Demographics

Geographical groups

Hebbar

The Hebbar Iyengars speak a Tamil dialect known as Hebbar Tamil. Once found only in the Karnataka towns of Belur, Shanti Grama, Nuggehalli, Nonavinakere, Bindiganavile, Hampapura and Hiremagalur, Hebbar Iyengars are now found in many parts of India, across Europe, and North America. It is believed that Hebbars are the descendants of Srivaishnavas who migrated to Karnataka from Tamil Nadu, following Ramanuja.

Mandayam

Mandayam Iyengars are a sect of Iyengars, settled in various parts of Karnataka, predominantly Melkote. Mandayam Iyengars also speak a different dialect of Tamil called as Mandayam Tamil. Mandayam Iyengars follow Ramanujacharya and Manavala Mamunigal.

Language and dialect

The mother tongue of most Iyengars in Tamil Nadu is Tamil. They speak a dialect that is almost identical to Brahmin Tamil, differing only in the degree of Sanskritisation. Scholars have often refused to recognise this as a separate dialect, regarding it only as a sub-dialect of Brahmin Tamil.

However, Iyengars in Karnataka speak a dialect that has a significant Kannada substrate, which has descended from medieval prakrit. Iyengars in southern Andhra Pradesh speak both Tamil and Telugu.

Religious observances

Weddings

A typical Iyengar wedding is made up of the following events: Vethalaipakku, Pandalkal, Janwaasam, Nischayathartham, Nandi or Vratham, Kashiyathrai, Oonjal, Piddishuttal, Kanyadaanam, Mangalya Dharanam, Akshathai, Homam, Saptapadi, Nagoli, Vasthra, Gruhapravesham, Sambandhi Virandhu, Reception, and Nalangu.

List of Iyengars

Iyengars are a caste with origins in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Spiritual leaders

- Nathamuni
- Yamunacharya
- Ramanujacharya
- Vedanta Desika
- Manavala Mamuni

Diplomats, bureaucrats, administrators and politicians

- T. S. S. Rajan (1880–1953), Indian politician and freedom-fighter. Member of the Imperial Legislative Council (1934–1936), Minister of Public Health and Religious Endowments (Madras Presidency) (1937–1939), Minister of Food and Public Health (Madras Presidency) (1946–1951)
- P. Rajagopalachari, Dewan of Cochin from 1897 to 1901 and Travancore from 1904 or 1906 to 1914.
- C. Vijayaraghavachariar - The Lion of South India.
- C Rajagopalachari - Bharat Ratna, Freedom fighter, national leader, the first Indian Governor General of Independent India and also the Chief Minister of State of Madras.
- C. V. Rungacharlu (1831–1883), Indian civil servant. Diwan of Mysore kingdom from 1881 to 1883.
- Jayalalithaa (1948-2016) Telugu, Tamil and Kannada actress, and politician, who was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu five time (1991-`96, 2001 May - Sep, 2002-`06, 2011-`16)

Entertainers

- R. Madhavan (b. 1970) - Indian actor, writer, film producer and television host.
- Vasundhara Das (b. 1977) - Indian actress and singer.
- Hema Malini (b. 1948) - Indian actress and Bharathnatyam exponent
- Kamal Hasaan (b. 1954) - Indian film actor, screenwriter, director, producer, playback singer and lyricist who primarily works in Tamil cinema.

Yoga

- Tirumalai Krishnamacharya - Father of modern yoga, yogi and healer who taught B.K.S. Iyengar, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, and Indra Devi.
- B.K.S. Iyengar

Iyer

Iyer (also spelt as Ayyar, Aiyar, Ayer or Aiyer) is a caste of Hindu Brahmin communities of Tamil origin. Most Iyers are followers of the *Advaita* philosophy propounded by Adi Shankara. The majority reside in Tamil Nadu, India.

Iyers are sub-divided into various sub-sects based on cultural and regional differences. Like all Brahmins, they are also classified based on their gotra, or patrilineal descent, and the Veda they follow.

Iyers fall under the Pancha Dravida Brahmin sub-classification of India's Brahmin community and share many customs and traditions with other Brahmins. In recent times, they have felt affected by reservation policies and the Self-Respect Movement in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. This has helped encourage a large migration to other parts of India and the English-speaking world.

Apart from the prevalent practice of using the title "Iyer" as surname, Iyers also use other surnames, such as Sāstri or Bhattar.

Etymology

The word Iyer is derived from the title *Ayyā-garu* which turned into *ayyaru* it is often used by Tamils to designate respectable people. There are number of etymologies for the word *Ayyā*, generally it is thought to be derived from Proto-Dravidian term denoting an elder brother. It is used in that meaning in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. Yet others derive the word Ayya as a Prakrit version of the Sanskrit word *Aryā* which means 'noble'.

In ancient times, Iyers were also called *Anthanar* or *Pārppān*, though the usage of the word *Pārppān* is considered derogatory in modern times. Until recent times, Kerala Iyers were called *Pattars*. Like the term *pārppān*, the word *Pattar* too is considered derogatory.

Origin

Population and distribution

Today, Iyers live all over South India, but an overwhelming majority of Iyers continue to thrive in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Brahmins form an estimated less than 3 per cent of the state's total population and are distributed all over the state. However, accurate statistics on the population of the Iyer community are unavailable.

Iyers are also found in fairly appreciable number in Western and Southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Iyers of the far south are called Tirunelveli Iyers and speak the Tirunelveli Brahmin dialect.

Migration

Karnataka

Over the last few centuries, a large number of Iyers have also migrated and settled in parts of Karnataka. During the rule of the Mysore Maharajahs, a large number of Iyers from the then Madras province migrated to Mysore. The Ashtagrama Iyers are also a prominent group of Iyers in Karnataka.

First-generation descendants of Mysore S. Ramaswamy Iyer.
Ramaswamy Iyer migrated from Ganapathy Agraharam to Mysore
in the 19th century and served as the first Advocate-General of Mysore

Kerala

Iyers have been resident of the princely state of Travancore from ancient times. The Venad state (present Kanyakumari district) and the southern parts of Kerala was part of the Pandyan kingdom known as Then Pandi Nadu. There were also many Iyers in Venad which later on grew to be the Travancore state. The old capital of Travancore was Padmanabhapuram which is at present in Kanyakumari district. There has also been a continuous inflow from Tirunelveli and Ramnad districts of Tamil Nadu which are contiguous to the erstwhile princely state of Travancore. Many parts of the present Tirunelveli district were even part of the old Travancore state. These Iyers are known today as Trivandrum Iyers. Some of these people migrated to Cochin and later to Palakkad and Kozhikode districts. There were also migrations from Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu to Palakkad. Their descendants are known today as Palakkad Iyers. These Iyers are collectively now called as *Kerala Iyers*.

In Coimbatore, there are a large number of such Iyers due to its proximity to Kerala.

Sri Lanka

According to the Buddhist scripture Mahavamsa, the presence of Brahmins have been recorded in Sri Lanka as early as 500BC when the first migrations from the Indian

mainland supposedly took place. Currently, Brahmins are an important constituent of the Sri Lankan Tamil minority. Tamil Brahmins are believed to have played a historic role in the formation of the Jaffna Kingdom.

Recent migrations

Apart from South India, Iyers have also migrated to and settled in places in North India. There are significantly large Iyer communities in Mumbai, and Delhi. These migrations, which commenced during the British rule, were often undertaken in search of better prospects and contributed to the prosperity of the community.

In recent times Iyers have also migrated in significant numbers to the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States in search of better fortune.

Subsects

Iyers have many sub-sects among them, such as Vadama, Brahacharnam or Brahatcharanam, Vāthima, Sholiyar or Chozhiar, Ashtasahasram, Mukkāni, Gurukkal, Kāniyālar and Prathamasāki. Each sub-sect is further subdivided according to the village or region of origin.

A Tamil Smartha Brahmin holy man engaged in Siva-worship.
His body is covered by coat and chains made of Rudrāksha beads

Caste-mark of the Vadamas

Gotras and Shakhas

Iyers, like all other Brahmins, trace their paternal ancestry to one of the eight *rishis* or sages. Accordingly, they are classified into eight *gotras* based on the rishi they have descended from. A maiden in the family belongs to gotra of her father, but upon marriage takes the gotra of her husband.

The Vedas are further sub-divided into *shakhas* or "branches" and followers of each Veda are further sub-divided based on the shakha they adhere to. However, only a few of the shakhas are extant, the vast majority of them having disappeared. The different Vedas and the corresponding shakhas that exist today in Tamil Nadu are:

Veda	*shākhā*
Rig Veda	Shakala and Paingi
Yajur Veda	Kanva and Taittiriya
Sama Veda	Kauthuma, Jaiminiya/Talavakara, Shatyayaniya and Gautama
Atharva Veda	Shaunakiya and Paippalada

Religious practices, ceremonies and festivals

Rituals

Iyer rituals comprise rites as described in Hindu scriptures such as Apastamba Sutra attributed to the Hindu sage Apastamba. The most important rites are the *Shodasa Samaskāras* or the 16 duties. Although many of the rites and rituals followed in antiquity are no longer practised, some have been retained.

Iyers from South India performing the Sandhya Vandhanam, 1913

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Iyer priest from Tamil Nadu carrying out a small ritual with his grandson.

Iyers are initiated into rituals at the time of birth. In ancient times, rituals used to be performed when the baby was being separated from mother's umbilical cord. This ceremony is known as *Jātakarma*. However, this practice is no longer observed. At birth, a horoscope is made for the child based on the position of the stars. The child is then given a ritual name. On the child's birthday, a ritual is performed to ensure longevity. This ritual is known as *Ayushya Homam*. This ceremony is held on the child's birthday reckoned as per the Tamil calendar based on the position of the *nakshatras* or stars and not the Gregorian calendar. The child's first birthday is the most important and is the time when the baby is formally initiated by piercing the ears of the boy or girl. From that day onwards a girl is expected to wear earrings.

A second initiation (for the male child in particular) follows when the child crosses the age of seven. This is the *Upanayana* ceremony during which a Brahmana is said to be reborn. A three-piece cotton thread is installed around the torso of the child encompassing the whole length of his body from the left shoulder to the right hip. The Upanayana ceremony of initiation is solely performed for the members of the *dvija* or twice-born castes, generally when the individual is between 7 and 16 years of age. In ancient times, the Upanayana was often considered as the ritual which marked the commencement of a boy's education, which in those days consisted mostly of the study of the Vedas. However, with the Brahmins taking to other vocations than priesthood, this initiation has become more of a symbolic ritual. The neophyte was expected to perform the *Sandhya Vandanam* on a regular basis and utter a prescribed set of prayers, three times a day: dawn, mid-day, and dusk. The most sacred and prominent of the prescribed set of prayers is the Gayatri

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Mantra, which is as sacred to the Hindus as the Six Kalimas to the Muslims and Ahunwar to the Zoroastrians. Once a year, Iyers change their sacred thread. This ritual is exclusive to South Indian Brahmins and the day is commemorated in Tamil Nadu as *Āvani Avittam*.

Brahmin house with hand marks to ward off the evil eye

Other important ceremonies for Iyers include the rites for the deceased. All Iyers are cremated according to Vedic rites, usually within a day of the individual's death. The death rites include a 13-day ceremony, and regular *Tarpanam* (performed every month thereafter, on Amavasya day, or New Moon Day), for the ancestors. There is also a yearly *shrārddha*, that must be performed. These rituals are expected to be performed only by male descendants of the deceased. Married men who perform this ritual must be accompanied by their wives. The women are symbolically important in the ritual to give a "consent" to all the proceedings in it.

Festivals

Iyers celebrate almost all Hindu festivals like Deepavali, Navratri, Pongal, Vinayaka Chathurthi, Janmaashtami, Tamil New Year, Sivarathri and Karthika Deepam.

However, the most important festival which is exclusive to Brahmins of South India is the *Āvani Avittam* festival.

Weddings

A typical Iyer wedding consists of *Sumangali Prārthanai* (Hindu prayers for prosperous married life), *Nāndi* (homage to ancestors), *Nischayadhārtham* (Engagement) and *Mangalyadharanam* (tying the knot). The main events of an Iyer marriage include *Vratam* (fasting), *Kasi Yatra* (pilgrimage to Kasi), *Oonjal* (Swing), *Kanyadanam* (placing the bride in the groom's care), *Mangalyadharanam*, *Pānigrahanam* and *Saptapathi* (or *seven steps* - the final and most important stage wherein the bride takes seven steps supported by the groom's palms thereby finalizing their union). This is usually followed by *Nalangu*, which is a casual and informal event.

Lifestyle and culture

Traditional ethics

Iyers generally lead orthodox lives and adhere steadfastly to their customs and traditions. However, of recent, they have started abandoning their traditional duties as temple priests for more secular vocations, causing contemporary Iyers to be more flexible than their ancestors. Iyers follow the Grihya Sutras of Apastamba and Baudhayana apart from the Manusmriti. The society is patriarchal but not feudal.

A portrait of vocalist M. V. Sivan. The three horizontal lines visible on his chest, arms and forehead are made with holy ash (vibhuti) which is usually used by orthodox Saivites

Iyers are generally vegetarian. Some abjure onion and garlic on the grounds that they activate certain base senses. Cow milk and milk products were approved. They were required to avoid alcohol and tobacco.

Iyers follow elaborate purification rituals, both of self and the house. Men are forbidden from performing their "sixteen duties" while Women are forbidden from cooking food

without having a purificatory bath in the morning. Food is to be consumed only after making an offering to the deities.

The bathing was considered sufficiently purifying only if it confirmed to the rules of *madi*. The word *madi* is used by Tamil Brahmins to indicate that a person is bodily pure. In order to practice madi, the Brahmin had to wear only clothes which had been recently washed and dried, and the clothes should remain untouched by any person who was not *madi*. Only after taking bath in cold water, and after wearing such clothes, would the person be in a state of *madi*. This practice of *madi* is followed by Iyers even in modern times, before participating in any kind of religious ceremony.

The Iyers have taken a special liking for coffee

Until the turn of the last century, an Iyer widow was never allowed to remarry. Once her husband dies, an Iyer woman had to tonsure her head. She had to remove the *kunkumam* or the vermilion mark on her forehead, and was required to smear her forehead with the sacred ashes. All these practices have, however, greatly dimimished with the enactment of reforms.

Traditional attire

Iyer men traditionally wear *veshtis* or *dhotis* which cover them from waist to foot. These are made of cotton and sometimes silk. *Veshtis* are worn in different styles. Those worn in typical brahminical style are known as *panchakacham* (from the sanskrit terms *pancha* and *gajam* meaning "five yards" as the length of the *panchakacham* is five yards in contrast to the *veshtis* used in daily life which are four or eight cubits long). They sometimes wrap their shoulders with a single piece of cloth known as *angavastram* (body-garment). In earlier times, Iyer men who performed austerities also draped their waist or chests with deer skin or grass.

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Tamil Brahmins (Iyers and Iyengars) in traditional veshti
and angavastram at a convention of the Mylai Tamil Sangam, circa 1930s

The traditional Iyer woman is draped in a nine-yard saree, also known as $madis\bar{a}r$.

Patronage of art

For centuries, Iyers have taken a keen interest in preserving the arts and sciences. They undertook the responsibility of preserving the Bharata Natya Shastra, a monumental work on Bharatanatyam, the classical dance form of Tamil Nadu. During the early 20th century, dance was usually regarded as a degenerate art associated with devadasis. Rukmini Devi Arundale, however, revived the dying art form thereby breaking social and caste taboos about Brahmins taking part in the study and practice of the dance.

DK Pattammal (right),Classical Music Singer, in concert
with her brother, DK Jayaraman; circa early 1940s.

However, compared to dance, the contribution of Iyers in field of music has been considerably noteworthy.

Food

The main diet of Iyers is composed of vegetarian food, mostly rice which is the staple diet for millions of South Indians. Vegetarian side dishes are frequently made in Iyer households apart from compulsory additions as rasam,sambar,etc. Home-made ghee is a

staple addition to the diet, and traditional meals do not begin until ghee is poured over a heap of rice and lentils. While tasting delicious, the cuisine eschews the extent of spices and heat traditionally found in south Indian cuisine. Iyers are mostly known for their love for curd. Other South Indian delicacies such as dosas, idli, etc. are also relished by Iyers. Coffee amongst beverages and curd amongst food items form an indispensable part of the Iyer food menu.

The diet of Iyers consists mainly of Tamil vegetarian cuisine, comprising rice

Agrahāram

A house in a Tanjore agrahāram

In ancient times, Iyers, along with Iyengars and other Tamil Brahmins, lived in exclusive Brahmin quarters of their village known as an *agrahāram*. Shiva and Vishnu temples

were usually situated at the ends of an *agrahāram*. In most cases, there would also be a fast-flowing stream or river nearby.

A typical *agrahāram* consisted of a temple and a street adjacent to it. The houses on either side of the street were exclusively peopled by Brahmins who followed a joint family system. All the houses were identical in design and architecture though not in size.

With the arrival of the British and commencement of the Industrial Revolution, Iyers started moving to cities for their sustenance. Starting from the late 19th century, the *agrahārams* were gradually discarded as more and more Iyers moved to towns and cities to take up lucrative jobs in the provincial and judicial administration.

However, there are still some agrahārams left where traditional Iyers continue to reside. In an Iyer residence, people wash their feet first with water on entering the house.

Language

Tamil is the mother tongue of most Iyers residing in India and elsewhere. However, Iyers speak a distinct dialect of Tamil unique to their community. This dialect of Tamil is known as Brāhmik or Brahmin Tamil. Brahmin Tamil is highly Sanskritized and has often invited ridicule from Tamil nationalists due to its extensive usage of the Sanskrit vocabulary. While Brahmin Tamil used to be the lingua franca for inter-caste communication between different Tamil communities during pre-independence times, it has been gradually discarded by Brahmin themselves in favour of regional dialects.

Iyers today

A Tamil Brahmin couple, circa 1945

In addition to their earlier occupations, Iyers today have diversified into a variety of fields. Three of India's Nobel laureates, Sir C. V. Raman, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar and Venkatraman Ramakrishnan hail from the community.

Since ancient times, Iyers, as members of the privileged priestly class, exercised a near-complete domination over educational, religious and literary institutions in the Tamil country. Their domination continued throughout the British Raj as they used their knowledge of the English language and education to dominate the political, administrative, judicial and intellectual spectrum. Upon India's independence in 1947, they tried to consolidate their hold on the administrative and judicial machinery . Such a situation led to resentment from the other castes in Tamil Nadu, an upshot of this atmosphere was a "non-Brahmin" movement and the formation of the Justice Party. Periyar, who took over as Justice Party President in the 1940s, changed its name to Dravida Kazhagam, and formulated the view that Tamil Brahmins were Aryans as opposed to a majority of Tamils who were Dravidian based on Robert Caldwell's writings. The ensuing anti-Brahmin propaganda and the rising unpopularity of the Rajaji Government left an indelible mark on the Tamil Brahmin community ending their political aspirations. In the 1960s the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (roughly translated as "Organisation for Progress of Dravidians") and its subgroups gained political ground on this platform forming state ministries, thereby wrenching control from the Indian National Congress, in which Iyers at that time were holding important party positions. Today, apart from a few exceptions, Iyers have virtually disappeared from the political arena.

In 2006, the Tamil Nadu government took the decision to appoint non-Brahmin priests in Hindu temples in order to curb Brahmin ecclesiastical domination. This created a huge controversy. Violence broke out in March 2008 when a non-Brahmin *oduvar* or reciter of Tamil idylls, empowered by the Government of Tamil Nadu, tried to make his way into the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram.

Criticism

Relations with other communities

The legacy of Iyers have often been marred by accusations of racism and counter-racism against them by non-Brahmins and vice versa.

Grievances and alleged instances of discrimination by Brahmins are believed to be the main factors which fuelled the Dravidian Movement. With the dawn of the 20th century, and the rapid penetration of western education and western ideas, there was a rise in consciousness amongst the lower castes who felt that rights which were legitimately theirs were being denied to them. This led the non-Brahmins to agitate and form the Justice Party in 1916, which later became the Dravidar Kazhagam. The Justice Party banked on vehement anti-Hindu and anti-Brahmin propaganda to ease Brahmins out of their privileged positions. Gradually, the non-Brahmin replaced the Brahmin in every sphere

and destroyed the monopoly over education and the administrative services which the Brahmin had previously held.

The concept of "Brahmin atrocities" is refuted by some Tamil Brahmin historians. They argue that allegations of casteism against Tamil Brahmins have been exaggerated and that even prior to the rise of the Dravida Kazhagam, a significant section of Tamil Brahmin society was liberal and anti-casteist. The Temple Entry Proclamation passed by the princely state of Travancore which gave people of all castes the right to enter Hindu temples in the princely state was due to the efforts of the Dewan of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer who was an Iyer.

Dalit leader and founder of political party Pudiya Tamizhagam, Dr.Krishnasamy admits that the Anti-Brahmin Movement had not succeeded up to the expectations and that there continues to be as much discrimination of Dalits as had been before.

So many movements have failed. In Tamil Nadu there was a movement in the name of anti-Brahmanism under the leadership of Periyar. It attracted Dalits, but after 30 years of power, the Dalits understand that they are as badly-off - or worse-off - as they were under the Brahmans. Under Dravidian rule, they have been attacked and killed, their due share in government service is not given, they are not allowed to rise.

Alleged negative attitude towards Tamil language and culture

Iyers have been called Sanskritists who entertained a distorted and contemptuous attitude towards Tamil language, culture and civilization.

The Dravidologist Kamil Zvelebil says that the Brahmin was chosen as a scapegoat to answer for the decline of Tamil civilization and culture in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Agathiar, usually identified with the legendary Vedic sage Agastya is credited with compiling the first rules of grammar of the Tamil language. Moreover, individuals like U. V. Swaminatha Iyer and Subramanya Bharathi have made invaluable contributions to the Dravidian Movement. Parithimar Kalaignar was the first to campaign for the recognition of Tamil as a classical language.

Portrayal in popular media

Brahmins are mentioned for the first time in the works of Sangam poets. During the early Christian era, Brahmin saints have been frequently praised for their efforts in combating Buddhism. In modern times, when Iyers and Iyengars control a significant percentage of the print and visual media, there has been an appreciable coverage of Brahmins and Brahmin culture in magazines and periodicals and a number of Brahmin characters in novels, tele serials and films.

The first known literary work in Tamil to heap criticism on Brahmins was the *Tirumanthiram*, a treatise on Yoga from the 13th century. However, anti-Brahminism has been a more recent phenomenon and has been partly due to the efforts of Christian

missionaries of the 19th century. The writings and speeches of Iyothee Thass, Maraimalai Adigal, Periyar, Bharatidasan, C. N. Annadurai and the leaders of Justice Party in the early 20th century and of the Dravidar Kazhagam in more modern times constitute much of modern anti-Brahmin rhetoric.

Starting from the 1940s onwards, Annadurai and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam have been using films and the mass media for the propagation of their political ideology. Most of the films made, including the 1952-blockbuster *Parasakthi*, are anti-Brahminical in character.

Notable people

Some of the early members of the community to gain prominence were sages and religious scholars like Agatthiar, Tholkappiyar, Parimelazhagar and Naccinarkiniyar. Prior to the 19th century, almost all prominent members of this community hailed from religious or literary spheres. Tyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Muthuswamy Dīkshitar, who constitute the "Trinity of Carnatic music" were probably the first verified historical personages from the community, as the accounts or biographies of those who lived earlier appear semi-legendary in character. During the British Raj, Iyers and Iyengars dominated the services by their predominance in the legal and administrative professions. Most of the *Dewans* of the princely state of Travancore during the 19th century were Tamil Brahmins (Iyers and Iyengars). Some of the prominent individuals of the period as Seshayya Sastri, Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, Shungrasoobyer, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, Sir S. Subramania Iyer and C. P. Ramaswamy Ayyar all had a legal background. At the same time, they were also intimately associated with the Indian National Congress and the Indian independence movement. The most prominent freedom fighter from the community was Subrahmanya Bharati.

Kalpathi

Ganapathi Temple on the riverside

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Houses in Kalpathi

Kalpathi or Kalpathy also known as Dakshin Kasi or the 'Varanasi of the South is an early Tamil Brahmin settlement (*agraharam*) in the Palakkad District of Kerala state, south India

History

Kalpathi is very famous for Kalpathi Ratholsavam, Temple car festival held annually at the Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanatha Swamy temple where the deity is Lord Siva (Lord Viswanatha). Kalpathy is located 4 km from Palakkad town and consists of Old Kalpathy, New Kalpathy, Chathapuram and Manthakara.

Orientation

On the eastern side of Viswanatha Swamy Temple, Palakkad lies the New Kalpathy Village which consist of homes built mostly of thatched roofing. It belonged perhaps to the last batch of Tamil Brahmin migrants. Harassed by frequent fire, loss of life and property, the villagers consecrated a temple dedicated to Lord Maha Ganapathy to ward off "Sivadrishti". The idol of Mahaganapathy resting under a Banyan tree near a tank lying on the eastern side of this village (Manthakkara) was installed facing Lord Shiva (in Sri Viswanatha temple).

Scholar village

The residents of this village were well known scholars of Vedas & Shastras and purohits well versed in their profession. Most of the surrounding villages of Palakkad town used to depend on them for conducting the Vedic rituals. Any doubt on observations of rituals and interpretations of sastras used to be debated and decided here. This village is also the birthplace of many professionals, musicians, scientists and men of letters.

Chathapuram Village

New Kalpathy village was a citadel of Vedic culture and Sanathana dharma. It has produced numerous scholars of Vedas and Vedangas. They are still being remembered by villagers with reverence and devotion. Their scholarship used to be recognized by both Shringeri and Kanchi Sankaracharya Mutts. This village sent the largest contingent of delegates of Veda scholars to attend the All India Sanathana Conference held at Kasi during 1932-33 The biggest festival of this place is d annual car festival(kalpathy theru). This is celebrated in a very grand manner.

Modern Period

In the recent past many new housing colonies have sprung up in and around Kalpathi. One such colony is Kailas Nagar where some of the eminent citizens of Palakkad have built their homes. Kailas Nagar is also has the distinction of running a school for special children called "Chaitanya School". Mrs. BhagyaLaxmi of Kailas Nagar has taken keen interest in establishing this school and nurturing it. Some famous people hail from this place. Kalpathi Agoram is a well-known film maker. Ramani Karikkar was a legendary nobleman of the British times.

Srivaishnava Urdhva Pundra

The Srivaishnava Urdhva Pundra (also known as Thiruman Sricharanam) is the tilaka used by followers of Sri Vaishnava. The figure drawn is representative of the feet of Narayana with Lakshmi in the middle. It is adorned by members of the Sri Vaishnava tradition (including Pancharatra, Vaikhanasa, and Bhagavada Srivaishnavas).

Form

The full form

The two Iyengar subsects, Thenkalai and Vadakalai, wear the Thiruman Srichurnam in slightly different ways. The Thiruman in the case of the Thenkalai extends to the bridge of the nose, forming a Y shape.

Priests traditionally wear the Thiruman Srichurnam at 12 places on their body (dvadasa pundram). See: Samashrayanam.

The abbreviated form

The abbreviated Thiruman is more commonly used by Iyengars in daily life. It consists of a single thin, vertical red or yellow line in the middle of the forehead. Although the Smriti forbid wearing the Srichurnam without the Thiruman, it has become a common practice due to convenience.

Etymology and meaning

The Parashara Smriti gives a very detailed explanation on the Thiruman: where, when, and how to wear it, as well as what should be chanted while wearing the same.

Srichurnam is the yellow/red line in the middle of the white marks. The white marks are called Thiruman in Tamil. The word Srichurnam is often referred with the Thiruman and is called as Thiruman Srichurnam (or Oordhva Pundram). Particularly for the followers of Sri Sampradayam Srivaishnavas, Sriman Narayana (Vishnu) is always seen as being inseparable from his divine consort, Lakshmi, and hence the marks on

The etymology of Srichurnam is as follows: Sri refers to Lakshmi, while churanam literally means powder. The Srichurnam - the red/yellow line in the middle - represents Lakshmi. Thiruman (tiru = holy, man = clay) represents the feet Vishnu.

Composition

Apart from the main ingredients described below, several auspicious substances are added, such as Tulasi, rice, turmeric, camphor, flowers.

Thiruman

The white powder in Thiruman is derived from decayed schistose mica. It is found, among other places, in Melukote.

Shrichurnam

The yellow mark is worn using turmeric, or using sandal wood paste. (Sandal is forbidden from use for bachelors in Vedic tradition). The red mark is made of turmeric mixed with lime (churna).

Tamil Brahmin

Tamil Brahmins are Tamil-speaking Brahmins primarily living in Tamil Nadu , although a few of them have settled in other states like, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. They can be broadly divided into three religious groups, Gurukkals who follow Saivism,

Iyers who follow the Srauta and Smarthas tradition and Iyengars who follow Sri Vaishnavism. Today Brahmins form 2.75% of Tamil Nadu's population.

Groups

A Tamil Brahmin marriage ceremony

Tamil Brahmins are divided into three groups -- Iyers, Iyengars and Gurukkal. Iyers form the majority of the Tamil Brahmin population and are Smarthas, while Iyengars are Vaishnavas and Gurukkals are Saivas.

Iyer

Iyers are *Srauta-Smartha* Brahmins, most of whom follow the *Advaita* philosophy propounded by Adi Shankara. Advaita Vedanta has been in existence from way before Adi Sankara. In fact, Vedanta refers to itself as Anadi, meaning without beginning and are concentrated mainly along the Cauvery Delta districts of Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Tiruchirapalli where they form almost 10% of the total population. However the largest population reside in Nagercoil, making up to 13% of the city's population They are also found in significant numbers in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram, Palakkad and Trivandrum.

Iyengar

Iyengars follow the Visishtadvaita philosophy propounded by Sri Vikanasa or Sri Ramanujacharya. They are divided into two sub-sects: Vadakalai (Northern branch) and Thenkalai (Southern branch). most of them are stern worshippers of lord vishnu. they even name ganesha as Thumbikkai alwar, signifying their staunch worship of Lord Vishnu.

Gurukkal

The sect of Sivāchārya or Gurukkal (Tamil: **குருக்கள்)** form the hereditary priesthood or in the Siva and Sakthi temples in Tamil Nadu. They are Saivites and adhere to the philosophy of Shaiva Siddhanta. They are well versed in Vedas,Agama Sasthras and follow the Agamic rituals of these temples. Because of these cultural differences, intermarriages with other Tamil Brahmanas are rare even to this date. Gurukkals are sub-divided into Tiruvalangad, Conjeevaram and Thirukkazhukunram.

Notable people

- Subramania Bharati, Tamil Poet
- Ramana Maharshi, Sage
- Srinivasa Ramanujan, mathematician

Vadama

Vadama meaning "Northerners" are a sub-sect of the Iyer community of Tamil Brahmins. While some believe that their name is an indication of the fact that they were the most recent Brahmin migrants to the Tamil country others interpret the usage of the term "Vadama" as a reference to their strict adherence to the Sanskrit language and Vedic rituals which are of northerly origin . It may also be possible that Vadamas may be Brahmins whose origins lie in the Dravida region of northern Tamil Nadu. Like other Iyer communities, they follow the *Advaita* philosophy propounded by Adi Shankara. A significant proportion of the Vadama community adopted Vaishnavism, and are thus believed to have given rise to the Vadagalai Iyengar community. The oldest historical references to Vadamas date from the first millennium AD. A large number of Vadamas migrated to Kerala during the medieval period, so that Vadamas along with the Brahacharnam form the majority of the Kerala Iyer community. A section of the Vadama community also migrated north to the Telugu country and Maharashtra where they were known as "Dravidas". Vadamas have a martial tradition unlike most other Iyer communities. They are believed to have been the protectors of Brahmin villages or *agraharams* and served as administrators and advisors to Tamil and Telugu kings during the medieval and early modern period.

Etymology of the term

The term Vadama may have originated from the Tamil term 'Vadakku' meaning North, indicating the Northern origin of the Vadama Brahmins. This claim is supported by the fact that, unlike other subsects of Iyers, some Vadama pay oblations in their daily Sandhyavandanam to the river Narmada in Central India. However, what is not certain is whether 'North' refers to northern Tamil Nadu/Southern Deccan, or regions farther north. Other scholars are of the opinion that rather than the superficial indication of a northern origin for the people, the term *"vadama"* would rather refer to proficiency in Sanskrit and Vedic ritual, generally associated with the north prior to the first millennium A. D.

Sub-categories

Vadamas are further sub-divided into five categories

- Vadadesa Vadama (*Vadamas of the northern country*)
- Choladesa Vadama(*Vadamas of the Chola country*)
- Sabhaiyar(*member of the conference (Sabha)*)
- Injee and
- Thummagunta Dravida.

Intermarriage with other Iyer sects has been increasing in recent times, while earlier, most marriages were arranged only within the same subsect of Vadama. Such a degree of exclusion has become rather uncommon now. Exceptions did exist, such as the marriage of Kurratalwan's sons(Considered to be Vadama followers of Sri Vaishnavism), which took place outside the Vadama fold.

History

Some historians hold that all Brahmins who migrated to the far-south during and after the age of the Gupta Emperors, came to be classified as Vadama.

First millennium A.D.

There is a perception that some Kashmir-linked Vadama settled in Tirunelveli between 750 and 800 AD. An interesting fact corroborating this migration may be had from the treatise called *Natyashastra* written by Bharata Muni, held by some to have been from Kashmir and by others to be from the south, formed the basis of the dance-form Bharatanatyam which is particularly associated with Tamil Nadu.

Art Historians such as Vasundhara Filliozat claim that there are inscriptional evidences to prove the continuous migration of teachers from Kashmir to South. Such scholars also state that some other South Indian Saivaite and Tantric traditions were also introduced by teachers from Kashmir.

It appears that the Sabhaiyar group of the Vadama, were present in the Chola Empire in the 9th century, since the grant of the "entire village of Chirri[dai]yarru excluding the *kani* of Samgappadi-kilan was made to the temple of Mahadeva at Tirumalpperu as a tax-free *devadana* in the 21st year [892 A.D.] of the reign of Chola Aditya I and the administration of the charity was entrusted to the *sabhaiyar* of Puduppakkam in Purisanadu".

Second millennium

11th to the 14th century

The Srivaishnava hold that their guru Ramanujacharya, born in the first quarter of the 11th century, was a Vadama by birth.

14th and 15th centuries

Instability prevailed in Peninsular India in the aftermath of the defeat of the Yadavas of Deogiri and Kakatiyas of Warangal in the early 14th century by the Tughlaqs. In response to the Moslem irruptions the Kingdom of Vijayanagar was founded in 1336, and came to be locked in an existential struggle with the Bahmani Sultanate from 1347 to 1490, when the Moslem state broke up. This early period was marked by much strife, especially in the *jehads* of Taj ud-Din Firuz Shah (1397–1422) and his brother Ahmad Shah I Wali (1422–1435), when thousands of Hindus, especially Brahmins, were enslaved and temples of the northern Deccan desecrated. The oppression was also felt in the eastern peninsula as far as the Gajapati Kingdom where, for instance in 1478, Muhammad Shah III Lashkari (1463–1482) demolished the Great Temple of Kondavidu and was acclaimed as a *ghazi*, for personally decapitating all the Brahmins. Such excesses induced Brahmins to seek refuge in the realms of Vijayanagar, where many were appointed *karnams* (bailiffs) in preference to other castes, from the reign of Harihara I (1336–1357) onward.

Early 16th century

After the division of the Bahmani Sultanate in 1490, into the Sultanates of Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmadnagar and Berar, the armies of Vijayanagar were successful in fending of invasions and restricting the Sultanates to Central India, especially in the reign of Krishnadeva Raya (1509–1529), who also began the practice of appointing Brahmins commanders of strategically important forts.

16th and 17th centuries

Relative peace prevailed until the Battle of Talikota, in 1565, when Rama Raya of Vijayanagar was killed and the capital city razed to the ground. The land, in addition to being plundered by the combined armies of the Sultanates, came to be oppressed by renegade *polygars* and bandits whose rise commenced with the destruction of the central power. The Mogul invasion of Peninsular India and the depredations of the Deccan by the Mahrattas under Shivaji also began early in the 17th century.

A combination of these belligerent powers and the desolation they helped create appears to have made the relative peace offered in the far south of the country under the Hindu kings of Travancore, Madurai, Tanjore and Mysore, far more desirable and induced many Hindus to migrate there. A fact supporting this idea, we have from English chroniclers in the 17th century, who state that their procurement of goods along the Western Concan and Canara coasts, suffered severely after the Mogul invasions and the mass depopulation of the peninsula they caused. Another statement often encountered in their annals is that the economic growth of the factory at Fort St. George, Madras was in a large measure attributable to the fact that many people chose to settle there to escape the chaotic conditions farther north. When we consider, in conjunction with these two facts, Fort St. George's position as a newly established, well-fortified and growing settlement in Aurangzeb's time, and therefore a secure refuge, a mass exodus southwards seems to have occurred in the period in question.

The relatives and family members of C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, a Vadadesa Vadama, believed that they were descended from Brahmins of the Desh region of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh who migrated to Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh from where they migrated to the northern part of Tamil Nadu in the 16th century where they were granted the village of Chetpet by a local chieftain.

17th century to the present

During the 19th century, the Vadamas along with other Tamil Brahmins made ample use of the opportunities provided by British rule to dominate the civil services, legislature and the judiciary in the Madras Presidency. Throughout the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century there was intense political rivalry between the Vadamas and the Brahacharanams for the domination of Brahmin villages called *agraharams*.

Communities related to the Vadamas

Iyengar communities

The Vaishnavite spiritual leader Ramanuja is generally believed to have been born a Vadama. Under his tutelage, numerous Vadamas adopted Vaishnavism and are believed to have given rise to the Vadakalai Iyengar community.

The transformation of the Vadama Ramanuja into a Sri Vaishnava, which happened concurrently with his education and increasing philosophic investigation, gave rise to a Tamil proverb - *"Vadamam muthi Vaishnavam"*, *i.e.* a "Vadama ripens into a Vaishnava". Edgar Thurston recounts at the beginning of the 20th century, the widespread prevalence of inter-marriage between Vaishnavite converts from the Thummagunta Dravida sub-group and Smartha girls from the same sub-sect. Thurston also recounts that Vadamas often observed death pollution in some Vaishnavite families and vice versa.

Gurukkal Brahmins

Some of the Gurukkal in temples in Tamil Nadu, are Vadama, though not recognised as such by the community, since they have certain practices that are prohibited for the Vadama.

There is also evidence that some South Indian Brahmins settled in Kashmir. The actual sect of their origin is not known.

Aarama Dravidulu

There is a perception that the ancestors of some Aarama Dravidulu Brahmins of Andhra Pradesh migrated in the 13th and 14th centuries, from Saurashtra to the banks of the River Cauvery in Tamil Nadu, whence some of them migrated to Andhra Pradesh, by all accounts before the 18th century.

Traditional occupation

Vadama Temple Priests in Tamil Nadu

They are held to have been the land-lords and head-men of the Brahmin villages called *agraharams*. Sociologist Andre Beteille, in his thesis *Caste, class, and power: changing patterns of stratification in a Tanjore village*, describes them as the biggest *mirasidars* among the Iyer community. They may also have organised the agraharams' defence in turbulent times for though there were not many who joined the army, they were not specifically forbidden to take to arms. A proverb still prevalent amongst the Iyers indicating the supposed short-temper of Vadama Brahmins, may be indicative of their martial past. They were among the Brahmin nobles and administrators under the Nayaka, Travancore and Vijayanagar rulers. Administrative practices adopted by them were strictly in accordance with those prescribed in the Hindu Dharma-Shastras, as may be observed from the records of the kings themselves.

But, as with other Brahmins, their primary duties were to study the Vedas, teach them and perform the ceremonies they entailed. The vast majority of them, until the 19th century, were household priests with some even being temple-priests, particularly in Travancore.

Many were great scholars and served in the courts of kings. Nilakanta Dikshitar was a minister to Thirumalai Nayak of Madurai.

In the 19th century, as with other Iyers, many of the Vadama joined, the judiciary of British India as lawyers and judges, or served in the Indian Civil and Revenue Services. Many others continued in the service of the kings of the princely states of Travancore, Mysore, Pudukottai, and Ramnad.

Religious practices

*The crescent or U-mark applied with the Gopichandanam
is mostly used as caste mark by the Vadamas*

While the religious rituals of the Vadama are, in almost all respects, identical with those of other Iyers, there are a few minor deviations from them. One of these lies in the practice of some men applying *Gopi Chandanam*, an yellow pigment of mineral origin similar in appearance to that obtained from sandalwood, on the forehead, instead of *Vibhuthi*. However, others like Appayya Dikshitar's family applied only Vibhuti, being staunch devotees of Shiva. While it was more common in former times, the use of Gopi Chandanam continues, being replaced by Vibhuthi otherwise. Some Vadamas also sported the Vaishnavite *namam*. They were known as *kutthunamakarar*.

The Vadama traditionally claim to be superior to other classes of Iyers. One ritualistic difference from other Iyers, arises in their having to recite the following verse in honour of the River Narmada, and to ward of serpents, as part of their Sandhyavandanam:

> *Narmadayai namah pratah Narmadayai namo nisi*
> *Namostu Narmade tubhyam pahi mam visa-sarpatah*

Also, in some parts of Kerala, as Nambudiri Brahmacharis were not commonly found, a Brahmachari belonging to the Vadadesa Vadama was required to pour water into the hands of a Nambudiri sanyasi as part of the rituals connected with the latter's breakfast. Vadamas have also significantly contributed towards popularizing and propagating the worship of Lord Shiva and Devi.

In popular culture

- In the television series *Krishnadasi*, Rudramoorthi Dikshitar (portrayed by Gemini Ganesan), one of the main characters, sports a *Gopi chandanam*, thereby suggesting that he was a Vadama.
- In the television series *Alaigal*, the young Ranga sports a *gopi chandanam* mark on his forehead.

Notables

Religion

- Appayya Dikshitar and nephew Neelakanta Deekshitar legendary scholars who re-established Advaita philosophy's predominance in the South belonged to the Vadadesa Vadama sect and migrated from places near Nasik. They were especially patronised by the rulers of Vellore and Madurai, Chinnabomma Nayak and Tirumalai Nayak, respectively.
- Srinivasa Dikshitar of Thoopil (near Conjeeveram), father-in-law of Appayya Dikshitar of Adayapalam.
- Sundara Swamigal, a Hindu religious exponent of the mid-19th century and philosophical mentor of the famed Carnatic musician Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer
- Avadayakkal, a Saivite saint
- The Vaishnava saints Ramanuja, Tirumalai Nambi and Mudaliyandan were born Vadama.
- Swami Sivananda of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, a direct descendant of Neelakanta Deekshitar

Government

- Govinda Dikshitar, Prime Minister of the Madurai Nayak kingdom. Served under Sevappa Nayak, Achutha Nayak and Raghunatha Nayak.
- Ramayyan Dalawa, Dewan of Travancore State, in the reign of Maharajah Marthanda Varma Kulasekhara Perumal
- Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer (1832–1895), Indian lawyer, first Indian Judge of the Madras High Court
- Sir S. Subramania Aiyer (1842–1924), Jurist, first Indian Chief Justice of the Madras High Court
- C. P. Ramaswami Iyer (1879–1966), Advocate General of Madras Presidency in the 1920s, penultimate Dewan of Travancore

- Ramesh Kallidai, Former Secretary General Hindu Forum of Britain and Advisor to the British Government
- C. V. Runganada Sastri (1819–1881), Indian interpreter, civil servant and polyglot who was known for his mastery over Indian and foreign languages. Maternal great-grandfather of C. R. Pattabhiraman.
- V. Venkayya (1864–1912), Indian epigraphist. Chief Epigraphist to the Government of India 1908-12.

Politics

- S. A. Swaminatha Iyer (d. 1899), Indian lawyer and freedom-fighter
- V. V. S. Iyer (1881–1925) Tamil scholar and freedom fighter
- Dr V Hariharan (1899-1975), Indian Freedom FIghter and Social Reformer.
- C. R. Pattabhiraman (1906–2001), Indian lawyer and politician; Indian M.P. (1967–1977). Eldest son of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer
- V. S. Krishna Iyer, Indian politician and freedom-fighter; Indian M.P. (1984–1989)
- Rama Ramanathan (b. 1964), Member of Legislative Assembly, Tamil Nadu, India (1991–1996).
- Mani Shankar Aiyar (b. 1941), Indian politician from the Indian National Congress. Union Minister of Panchayat Raj, Youth Affairs and Sports.

Military

- Ramaiyan (c. 17th century AD), general in the service of Thirumalai Nayak. Led the Madurai Nayak troops in the 1639 war against the *Sethupathi* of Ramnad. Subject of the ballad *Ramayyan Ammanai*.
- Nilakanta Krishnan - Recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross (United Kingdom) for his services to the Royal Indian Navy during the Second world war. Commanded the aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant in the Bay of Bengal during Indo-Pakistani War of 1971: was also the Flag officer commanding for the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy during this war.

Arts

- Syama Sastri, one of the doyens of Carnatic Music, a descendant of a group of Vadadesa Vadama who fled Conjeeveram in the wake of a Muslim attack.
- Ramaswamy Dikshitar (1735-1817?) and his son Muthuswamy Dikshitar, eminent Carnatic musicians
- Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar (1878–1921), renowned Carnatic vocalist
- Gopalakrishna Bharathi, his father Ramaswami Bharathi and grandfather Kothandarama Bharathi, a family of eminent Carnatic musicians
- F.G. Natesa Iyer (1880–1963), founder of Rasika Ranjana Sabha, Trichy, talent scout,officer of the South Indian Railway Company,pioneered modern Tamil drama, Tamil cinema actor, also elected Mayor of Trichy in the 1920s
- M. D. Ramanathan (1923–1984), composer/vocalist
- Jayaram (b. 1964) Tamil and Malayalam film actor

- Arvind Swamy (b. 1967) Tamil and Hindi actor and entrepreneur.
- Soundarya (1971–2004), South Indian film actress. An Ashtagrama Iyer.
- Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman (b. 1935), Carnatic musician and mridangist
- Delhi Kumar, Tamil television and film actor. Father of Arvind Swamy.

Vathima

Vathima are Iyers from Tamil Nadu, India. They are Pancha Dravida Brahmins of the Smarta Tradition who follow the Advaita Vedanta propounded by Adi Shankara.

Geographical distribution

Due to their geographic concentration, it is noted that they tended to be isolated and had an insular culture. As a result, they also tended to be very late in their adoption of the English language and of western culture in general. The insular culture and resultant intermarriage can result in a high degree of consanguinity amongst Vathimas.

A. Seshayya Sastri

Historical Occupation

In ancient times, the most prevalent profession among the Vathimas was moneylending. Vathima women tended to work as well, either in farming, mat making or moneylending. They were also known for their scholarship in classical Hindu literature.

Chapter 53
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN UTTAR PRADESH

Ahiwasi

Ahiwasi, sometimes spelt Ahivasi is a Brahmin sub-caste found in the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in India.

Origin

The Ahiwasi take their name from the Sanskrit *ahi* meaning dragon and *was* meaning dwelling, and their name means those who come from the abode of the dragon. They are said to have gotten this name on account of their association with Rishi Saubhari, who is said to have provided sanctuary to dragons at the village of Sunrakh, in what is now Mathura District. The Ahiwasi claim to be descendents of the rishi.

Historically, the Ahiwasi were involved in the carrying trade, transporting salt from Rajasthan to other parts of North India. This led to settlements of the caste in the Narbada valley. In Madhya Pradesh, according to the traditions of the caste, Ahiwasi are descended from a Brahman father and a Kshatriya mother.

Customs and traditions

The Ahiwasi are strictly endogamous, and practice clan exogamy. There clans are known as gotras, and they are divided into seventy two such gotras, the two major ones being the Dighiya and Bajrawat.

The Ahiwasi Brahmans are small and medium-sized farmers, who never been involved in priestly duties. Trade remains an important secondary occupation. In Uttar Pradesh, they are still found mainly in Mathura District, with a second settlement in Bareilly District, and Sitapur and Saharanpur Gonda etc. while those in Madhya Pradesh are found mainly in Jabalpur District and Gwalior, Bhind, Hoshangabad, Harda, as well settlements in the Narmada River valley in Rajsthan Bharatpur, Alwar and Jaipur, Haryan Karnal, Panipat, and many villages in south Karnataka and Kerala states.

Belwar

The Belwar are a Hindu sanadhya Brahmin caste found in North India, and mostly in Uttar Pradesh. Sanadhya Brahmins are called Belwars in mainly Sitapur, Lakhimpur, Hardoi, Barabanki, Gonda and Lucknow. They are also called as Bilwar or Bailwar. However they did not like to be called Bilwar or Bailwar.The word Bailwar was used to insult these Sanadhya- Brahmin's by other people.

Origin

The Belwar are a community of Sanadya Brahmin from Awadh, they originally belonged to the Sanadhya Brahmin caste. According to their origin myth, they descend five brothers, one of whom had a daughter. Because of his poverty, he was unable to marry her off. Finally, he accepted whatever proposal came, and married his daughter to a boy from the other Brahmin community . As a consequence of this action, the community were outcast from the Sanadhya Brahmin caste. For a long period, both communities was distinct. Presently,the intermarriage between them are started.

Present circumstances

The Belwar are strictly endogamous, and practice clan exogamy. They are Hindu, and Mahadev is their clan deity. Their customs are similar to other Awadh Brahmin communities. They are generally vegetarian.

The Belwar are mainly a landowning community, but are now being urbanised. Those in rural Awadh live in multi-caste villages, but occupy distinct quarters. Each of their settlements contains an informal caste council, known as a biradari panchayat. The panchayat acts as an instrument of social control, dealing with issues such as divorce and adultery.

Bias Brahmin

The Bias (or Vyas) are a Brahmin community found in the Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. They trace their origin to Gujarat.

Origin

The word *bias* means a preacher in Sanskrit. The *Bias* is an umbrella term for the members of the three Gujarati Brahmin communities named *Nagar*, *Audichya* and *Bardai* who migrated from Gujarat centuries ago and got settled in Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Rajasthan. These three sub-communities of the group intermarry. They speak Haryanvi, Punjabi, Hindi or other local dialects. In Haryana, the community is found mainly in the districts of Bhiwani, Hisar, Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Karnal.

Present circumstances

The Bias are strictly endogamous and practice clan exogamy. Their clans are referred to as gotras, and theoretically all gotra claim descent from a respected saint or rishi. Among the larger gotras are the Gautam, Kaushik, Angira, Vashishta, Gargas, Bhargav, Bhardwaj, Parashar, Koshish, Monish, Sandal etc. that are further divided into sub-clans known as *shashans*. In some respects, they are regarded as the highest class of Brahmins.

The traditional occupation of the Bias is that of village priests. A small number were large landowners, but most of the community are petty landowners. Like other Brahmin

groupings, they have been more successful in taking up higher education, and generally are economically well off. Nowadays, their intermarriage with Gaurs is quite common.

Surnames

The Bias use various surnames including their respective clan-names, Sharma, Pandit and Vyas.

Gangaputra Brahmin

Gangaputra Brahmin applying tilak to a pilgrim

The Gangaputra Brahman are a Hindu Brahmin community, found in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India.

History and origin

The community is an offshoot of the Kanyakubja Brahmins. The exact date of the separation is unknown, but it is now a distinct community. *Gangaputra* in Sanskrit signifies *sons of the Ganges river*. The Gangaputra are associated with the river Ganges, and their communities are located mainly along the banks of the river. These people were also known as the Ghatiya, because they occupied the piers of the Ganges; *ghat* in Hindi signifies *pier*.

The Gangaputra Brahmin are found mainly in the Farrukhabad, Kanpur and Shahjahanpur districts. Their main occupation is to officiate at the various holy occasions which occur along the river.

Golapurab Brahmin

Golapurab Brahmin (also sometimes called Galav) are Brahmin community in western Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh regions of India.

Jujhautiya Brahmin

The Jujhautiya Brahmin (also spelled Jijhotia, Jajautia or Jujautia) are an endogamous Brahmin community found the Chambal and Yamuna river valleys in the north, and the Narbada valley in the south. Chhatarpur District in Madhya Pradesh is the centre and cultural focus of this community. They are a sub-group of the Kanyakubja Brahmins.

Origin

According to the community's traditions, they acquired the name Jujhautiya, when a group of Kanyakubja Brahmins performed a *yajna* for Jhujhar Singh, the Bundela Rajah. In Uttar Pradesh, they are found mainly in the districts Hamirpur, Jhansi and Banda.

Kanyakubja Brahmin

Kanyakubja Brahmins, also known as *Kannaujia* or *Kanojia*, are a Brahmin community found in Northern India. They are classified as one of the Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities native to the north of the Vindhyas.

Sub-groups of this community include the Saryupareen Brahmins and the Jujhautiya Brahmins.

Kattaha Brahmin

The Kattaha Brahmin are a Hindu caste found in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India.

Social organization

The Mahabrahmin are the traditional funeral priests of North India. They are said to derive their name from the Hindi word *pind-kattana*, which means to cut the flour balls, an important ritual in Hindu funerals. Little is known about the origin of this community, and their status as Brahmin is barely recognized by other Brahmin grouping. The Kattaha are found throughout Uttar Pradesh, with special concentrations in the districts of Sitapur, Hardoi, and Unnao in Awadh, and the districts of Shahjahanpur and Bareilly in Rohilkhand. They speak various dialects of Hindi, such as Awadhi.

Present circumstances

The khatta are strictly endogamous, and like Brahmin castes, practice clan exogamy. Their three main clans or gotras are the Kashyap, Bharadwaj and Sandilya. They live in multi-caste villages, but occupy their own quarters.

Malviya Brahmin

The Malviya or Malaviya are a Brahmin sub-caste found in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in India.

The word Malviya literally means those from Malwa in Central India. They are a branch of the Panch Gauda Brahmins. Traditionally, they are said to be divided into thirteen and a half gotras, these being Bharadwaj, Chaubey Parasara, Angiras Chaubey, Bhargava Chaubey and Dube. All these gotras are Rigvedis. While the Sandilya, Kasapa Chaubey, Tivari and Kauta Dube are Yajurvedi. The remaining gotras, the Vats, Vyas, Gautam, Lohita Tivari and Kaundinya are Samavedis. In Uttar Pradesh, they are found throughout the state and speak Hindi. Their customs are similar to neighbouring Brahmin communities such as the Kanyakubja Brahmins.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Malviya caste is found mainly in Hoshangabad and Betul districts. According to their traditions, they were invited to settle in Malwa by the Gond kings of Kherla. As such, they are said to be the earliest settlers in the Narbada river valley. Most Malviya, in addition to their traditional occupation are cultivators.

Nagar Brahmin

For the moth family, see Brahmaeidae. For similarly spelled words, see Nagar (disambiguation).

The Nagar Brahmins are found primarily in Gujarat, but also in Rajasthan, Malwa and in states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar even as far as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh in the north, West Bengal in the east and Karnataka in the south.

Origin

The oldest account of the Nagars is given in the Nagara Khanda, a part of the Skanda Purana (Hindu religious text).

Nagar princes

A few Nagar families became chieftains of (minor) princely states, notably in two in Gujarati peninsula Kathiawar's Sorath prant : Kuba State and Vasavad.

Radha caste

The Radha are a Hindu caste found in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. They are followers of the Radhaswami sect of Hinduism, who have evolved into a distinct caste. According to their traditions, the community are by origin Brahmins of Mathura. Radha was the consort of the god Krishna, and the Radhswami were the devotees of Rasha.

The Radha are found mainly in the districts of Kheri, Bahraich, Pilibhit, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur and Hardoi. They speak Hindi and their customs are similar to neighbouring Hindu groups. What does mark them out is the tattooing of Radha on their hands. The Radha are temple dancers and musicians.

The Radha are further divided into a number of exogamous clans such as the Kathak Vansh, and Shyamvedi Gaur, the former have their concentration in Ayodhya, whereas the Shyamvedi Gaur are found mainly in Mathura. Most Radha now claim a Brahmin origin, a claim generally accepted. The Radha are associated with a number of dances they perform, such as the *Rasila*, Ramlila, and Krishnalila. Those Radha who are no longer involved in their traditional occupation are now agriculturists or daily wage labour. They have not been granted Other Backward Classes status, which open them to a number of affirmative action schemes of the Government of India.

Sakaldwipiya

Sakaldwipiya Brahmins (or Bhojaka Brahmins or Maga Brahmins) is a class of Hindu Brahmin priests and Ayurveda teachers (*acharyas*) and practitioners, with significant concentrations of their populations occurring in Western and Northern India with Iranian roots. The name can also be spelled as *Shakdvipi*, *Shakdwipi*, *Shakdweepi*, *Shakdvipiya*, *Shakdwipiya*, *Shakdweepiya*, *Shakadwipi*, and *Sakadwipi*.

Origin myth

The Sakaldwipiya Brahmin community of India identify them selves as having Iranian roots, and assert that they inherit their by-name *mragha* from a group of priests who established themselves in India as the Mragha-Dias or Maga-Brahmins. The doctrinal basis for that assertion is found in *Bhavishya Purana* 133.

> Krishna's son Samba was afflicted with leprosy, which was cured after he worshiped Surya, Hinduism's god of the Sun. In response, he built a temple to Surya on the banks of the Chandrabhaga river, but no Brahmin could be found willing to take up the role of a temple priest, as they could not accept offerings made to gods. So Samba sought help of Gauramukha("white face"), the adviser of the Yadu chief, Ugrasena.:Gauramukha responded with a suggestion that Samba go to Shakdvipa (see note on Mahabharata 6:11, below) and invite their priests to worship Surya. Further, asked Samba, "tell me, oh Brahmin, what are the antecedents of these worshipers of the Sun?" To which Gauramukha replied... "The first of the Brahmins amidst the Śakas was called *Sujihva* ("good tongue") [...] He had a daughter of the name Nikshubha, who so enamored Surya that she was impregnated by him. Thus she gave birth to Jarashabda who was the founding father of all the *Maga-Ācārya*. They are distinguished by the sacred girdle called the *Avyanga* that they wear around their waist." And so Samba called on Krishna to send him Garuda, on whose back he then flew to Shakadwipa. He collected the *Maga-Ācārya* ("Maga teacher"), brought them back to India and installed them as priests of his Surya temple.

> Of the pious representatives of 18 families Samba invited to resettle in the city of Sambapura, eight were Mandagas, and their descendants became Shudras. The

other 10 were Maga Brahmins, who married Bhoja vamsa women and so their descendants came to be known as Bhojakas.

As such, the Sakaldwipiya are one of only two Brahmin groups who are said to have originated outside India, even if about half their clan names (*gotra*s) are the same as those of other Brahmins.

In epigraphy

The tale of the arrival of the Sakaldwipiyas appears to have been part of living tradition for many centuries. The Govindpur inscription of 1137-1138 refers to a *maga* family of Gaya, Bihar that was celebrated for its learning, Vedic scholarship and poetic faculty, and who descended from one of the original Samb invitees.

Internal structures

The Bhojakas and sewaks are also historically associated with several Jain temples in Gujarat and Rajasthan, where they serve as priests and attendants. Some of the Sakaldwipiya Brahmins of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are Ayurvedic physicians, some are priests in Rajput families, while yet others are landholders.

Sanadhya Brahmin

Sanadya Brahmin or Sanadh Brahmin, or Sanah Brahmin or Sanidya Brahmin are a community of Brahmins. Their main concentration is in Western Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh area of India. The Hindi poet Keshavdas was a Sanadhya, and praised his community in his *Ramachandrika*.

Saryupareen Brahmin

Saryupareen Brahmins, also known as Sarvariya Brahmins or Saryupariya Brahmins, are North Indian Brahmins residing near Sarayu river in Uttar Pradesh .The area inhabited by Saryupareen Brahmins was part of ancient Kashi, Kosala and Vatsa Mahajanpadas.Tripathi,Shukla,Mishra,Pandey,Upadhyay,Dikshit,Pathak,Dwivedi, Ojha and Chaturvedi are surnames used by them. They are mostly concentrated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Notable personalities

- Tulsidas
- Ramanand
- Rambhadracharya
- Kripalu Maharaj
- Akhandanand
- Swami Karpatri

Chapter 54
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN UTTARAKHAND

Dabral (surname)

Dabral is a surname found in Hindu community of Garhwali Saraswat Brahmins primarily living in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand State of India. Member of this community are also found in Kumaon region.

According to their traditions they are the descendents of the Rishi Bharadwaja. Adherent of the Shaivism sect, they do worship Shiva as their prime deity.

Etymology

The word *Dabral* is a Middle Indo-Aryan word, derived from a village named *Dabar*, meaning 'a person originated from Dabar'. Dabar word is present in many modern Indo-Aryan languages meaning a small lake or pond in a country area.

There are many villages named Dabar and its local variations like Dabra or Dabri scattered throughout Indian Subcontinent.

History

According to Pandit Badri Datt Pandey's legendary book *History of Kumaon* the Dabrals were originally inhabitants of Maharashtra state of the Western India region, from where they migrated to the Himalaya in the north as a result of the Islamic invasion in the 15th century A.D.

Some sources cite that two Brahmin brothers from Maharashtra named *Sadanand* and *Shivanand* migrated to the Garhwal region in the year 1433 A.D. where they first settled at the hilly village *Dabar* in Pauri Garhwal district near the town Lansdowne in present day Uttarakhand thus given the surname *Dabral*. Modern day Dabrals are considered their descendents.

Notable people with Dabral surname

- Manglesh Dabral; Indian poet

Gairola

Gairola is a clan of the Garhwali people and also a surname.

In an earlier period Gairolas were believed to be astrologers and Raj-Purohits.

Notable people bearing this name include:

Sarola brahmin

Sarola brahmin is the highest Garhwali Brahmin subcaste from Uttarakhand, India. Sarola Brahmins were the earliest authenticated Brahmin castes in the then small Garhwal Kingdom of 1200 years ago. The capital of this kingdom was Chandpur Garhi and twelve castes of Brahmins were settled in twelve villages surrounding the capital. These twelve villages were collectively known as "Bara Than" perhaps meaning "Barah Sthan", and the Brahmins living in these villages were known as "Sarola" Brahmins. Later the relatives of these Brahmins who joined them in Garhwal were also known as "Sarola Brahmins".

Upreti (surname)

Upreti or sometimes spelled Uprety is a surname found in Hindu community of Kumaoni Saraswat Brahmins and also in Nepali Bahuns (Brahmins) primarily living in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand state of India, all over Nepal and few are found in Sikkim too.

According to their traditions they are the descendents of the Rishi Bharadwaja. Adherent of the Shaivism sect, they worship Shiva as their prime deity.

According to Pandit Badri Datt Pandey's book *History of Kumaon* where he quotes Pandit Rudra Datt Pant, pp.572 - "During the times of the Katyuri Kings, from the Chauki village of Doti, a Kanyakubja Brahmin Shambhu Sharma came to Preti village in Kali Kumaon, and hence the descendants were called Upretis."

History

In the same section of his book, Badri Datt Pandey mentions about the famous Pandit Ram Datt Jyotirvidji who says that Uprada/Upretyada, the estate of the then royal priests Upretis in Gangolihat was given to the Dravida Vajpayee Brahmin Shivaprasad who came to Kumaon during the reign of Mankoti kings.

During the time of the Gorkhas, Pandit Jayakrishna Upreti was a famous General whose descendants continue to live in Almora.

Pandit Badri Datt Pandey mentions that within Kumaoni Brahmins, the Upretis of Patiya, Jhijhar, and Supakot have a common descent, whereas other Upretis belong to a different group.

He also quotes that Pandit Ganga Datt Upreti claims that a few Upretis are also the original inhabitants of Maharashtra state of the Western India region who later migrated to the Kumaon region.

Thus those who claim to have Kanyakubja origins would have migrated to the Himalaya during the Islamic invasions of the twelfth century, whereas the one from Maharashtra would have moved northward along with the Marathas in the seventeenth century. The former seems more plausible as the Chand dynasty who ruled Kumaon from the tenth Century onward, after the reign of the Katyuris, came from Kannauj.

They also migrated to Nepal along with other Brahmins from Almora district under the royal patronage of the Hindu Kingdom when the Kumaon region was under the control of the Gorkhas till the Treaty of Sugauli with British India in 1814 A.D.

Notable people with Upreti surname

- Dalip Kumar Upreti; Indian lichenologist
- Kul Prasad Uprety, Nepalese politician
- Mohan Upreti; Indian playwright and theater personality
- Nikhil Upreti; Nepalese actor
- Nilkantha Upreti; Former Chief Election Commissioner of Nepal
- Sanjeev Uprety; Nepalese journalist

Chapter 55
BRAHMIN COMMUNITIES IN WEST BENGAL

The Bengali Brahmins are those Hindu Brahmins who traditionally reside in the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent, currently comprising the Indian state of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Bangladesh. When the British left India in 1947, carving out separate nations, a number of families moved from the Muslim-majority East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to be within the borders of the newly defined Republic of India, and continued to migrate for several decades thereafter.

Bengali Brahmins are categorized as Pancha-Gauda Brahmins (the Brahmins who traditionally lived to the north of the Vindhyas).

History

The earliest historically verifiable presence of Brahmins in Bengal can be ascertained from Dhanaidaha copper-plate inscription of Kumargupta 1 of the Gupta Year 113 (433 C.E.) which records the grant of land to a Brahmin named Varahasvamin of the Samavedi school. A copper-plate grant from the Gupta period found in the vicinity of Somapura mentions a Brahmin donating land to a Jain vihara at Vatagohali. Literary sources like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Jain and Buddhist works, however record the presence of Brahmins in various parts of Bengal during earlier periods. Historical evidence also attests significant presence of Brahmins in Bengal during the Maurya period. The Jain Acharya Bhadrabahu, regarded to be the preceptor of Chandragupta Maurya is said to have been born in Brahmin family of Pundravardhana (or Puṇḍra, the region north of the Ganges and west of Brahmaputra in Bengal, later known as Vārendra). Such evidences suggest Puṇḍra or Vārendra and regions west of Bhagirathi (called Radha in ancient age) to be seats of Brahmins from ancient times; Rādhi and Varendra are still chief branches of Bengali Brahmins settled in these regions. Medium to large scale migrations of Brahmins from various parts of India like Mithila, Kanyakubja region, Kolancha, southern India and Pushkar in Rajasthan, among other places, occurred from time to time, especially during Pala and Sena periods.

Traditionally, Bengali Brahmins are divided into the following categories:

- Rādhi from Radh (region south-west of the Ganges)
- Varendra, from Vārendra region (North-East) or Puṇḍra. Vārendra originally meant rain-maker magicians.
- Vaidika (migrants, originally experts of Vedic knowledge)
    - Paschatya Vaidika (Vedic Brahmins from west of Bengal)
    - Dakshinatya Vaidika (Vedic Brahmins from south of Bengal)
- Madhya Sreni (Brahmins of the midland country)
- Rudraja (Brahmins associated with practice of Yoga)

- Shakdvipi(migrant Brahmins of Shakdvipa in Central Asia)
- Grahavipra (Brahmins associated with practice of Astrology) (a major surname: Acharya – although all 'Acharya's do not benlong to Grahavipra class)
- Saptaśati

Traditional accounts

The different Brahmin communities of Bengal have their own traditional accounts of origin, which are generally found in various genealogical texts known as kulagranthas or kulapanjikas. Other details may also be obtained from court chronicles of various kings of Bengal. Important writers are Harimishra (13th century C.E), Edu Mishra (13th century C.E), Devivara Ghatak (15th century C.E), Dhruvananda Mishra (post 15th century C.E), Vachaspati Mishra, Rajendralal Mitra among others.

- **Radhi and Varendra**

The traditional origin of both Radhi and Varendra Brahmins has been attributed to a king named Ādiśūra who is said to have invited five Brahmins from Kolancha (as per Edu Mishra and Hari Mishra) and/or from Kanyakubja, (as per Dhruvananda Mishra) so that he could conduct a yajña, because he could not find Vedic experts locally. Some traditional texts mention that Ādiśūra was ancestor of Ballāl Sena from maternal side and five Brahmins had been invited in 1077 C.E. Other texts like Varendrakulapanjika, Vachaspati Mishra's account and Edu Mishra's account attribute a date of 732 C.E for the migration. Additionally, other sources like Sambandhanirnaya, Kulanrava and others attribute various dates like 942 C.E, 932 C.E and others. Historians have located a ruler named Ādiśūra ruling in north Bihar, but not in Bengal. But Ballāl Sena and his predecessors ruled over both Bengal and Mithila (i.e., North Bihar). It is unlikely that the Brahmins from Kānyakubja may have been invited to Mithila for performing a yajña, because Mithila was a strong base of Brahmins since Vedic age. However some scholars have identified Ādiśūra with Jayanta, a vassal chief of the Gauda king around middle of 8th century C.E. and is also referred to as a contemporary of Jayapida (779 to 812 C.E) of Kashmir (grandson of Lalitaditya) in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

- **Paschatya Vaidikas**

Traditionally they are believed to have migrated from Kanyakubja (or Kanauj), the traditional origin of both Radhi and Varendra Brahmins, to Bengal via Tirhoot, during the commencement of Muslim rule in India. Most of the vaidikas were invited by Hindu chiefs and rajas who used to rule in various parts of Bengal during the Muslim ascendancy.

- **Dakshinatya Vaidikas**

Traditionally it is believed that during his reign, Vijaya Sena (1097 – 1160 C.E), brought Brahmins from South India to Bengal, who integrated themselves with the varendra barhmins and came to be known as Dakshinatya vaidika barahmins.

Divisions

Both Brahmins and Kayasthas in Bengal have followed a system that ranks the clans hierarchically. The Kulinas formed the higher ranking clans.

Rādhi (also Rāṭhi in some old texts) is the major branch of Western Bengali Brahmins. The descendants of these five Pancyājñika Brahmins were hierarchically organised into three categories:

- Śrotriya is the second rank among the descendants of these five Brahmins because they were deft in Vedic knowledge but were considered to be somewhat inferior to the Kulina Brahmins (possessing 8 out of 9 noble qualities).
- Vaṃśaja is the third rank which was a result of kulinas marrying outside kulinas.

Jāti-Bhāṣkar mentions that those who were given grants along the Ganges by Ballāl Sena were called Gangopādhyāya (literally 'the Vedic teachers in the regions around the Ganges').

Mukhopādhyāya means chief Vedic teacher. Bandopādhyāya is a Sanskritized form of 'Banodha + upādhyāya', Banodha being the ancient name of Raebareli-Unnāva whence their ancestors had come from.

Pirali Brahmin

A *Pirali Brahmin* is any member of a subgrouping of Brahmins found throughout Bengal, which is split between India and Bangladesh. Notably, Rabindranath Tagore and the Tagore family are members of this group. The term "Pirali" historically carried a stigmatized and pejorative connotation due to certain individuals within the lineage converting to Islam. Its eponym is the vizier Muhammad Tahir Pir Ali, who served under a governor of Jessore. Pir Ali was a Brahmin Hindu who converted to Islam; his actions resulted in the additional conversion of two of his Brahmin brothers. As a result, orthodox Hindu society shunned the brothers' Hindu relatives (who had not converted), and the descendants of these Hindu relatives became known as the Pirali Brahmins — among whom numbered the Tagores. This unorthodox background ultimately led the Tagore family to dispense with many of the customs followed by orthodox Brahmins and subsequently they embraced the Brahmo sect of Hinduism.

Notable people

Pre-1757

- Acharya Bhadrabahu (4th and 3rd centuries BC) Jain religious teacher, preceptor of the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta, author of several important texts like Upsargahara Stotra and Kalpasutra.

- Silabhadra (6th and 7th centuries CE) Buddhist monk and philosopher, expert on Yogacara, abbot of the Nalanda university and one of the teachers of the Chinese pilgrim and monk Xuanzang.
- Sridhara (870–930) mathematician.
- Krittibas Ojha (1381–1461) composer of the Bengali Ramayan.
- Raghunatha Siromani (1477–1547) a noted Nyaya philosopher.
- Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) Hindu religious teacher of the cult of Bhakti yoga, ascetic, social reformer, humanist, supporter of universal brotherhood, rejected caste-system, founder of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.
- Nityananda (1474–1532), companion and disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
- Advaita Acharya (1434–1539), companion and disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
- Krishnananda Agamavagisha (probably 1650-????) , aTantrasadhak and guru of Sadhak Ramprashad Sen and author of "Brihat Tsntrasara" and advent Dakshina Kali idol.

1757–present

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774–1833) socio-religious reformer (mostly remembered for the abolition of sati), educationist.
- Sourav Ganguly (1973) former indian cricketer and former cricket captain.
- Dwarkanath Tagore (1794–1846) one of the first Indian industrialists and enterprueners
- Pranab Mukherjee (1935) current President of India born into Bengali Brahim Family
- Niharranjan Ray (1903-1981)Indian historian
- Kisari Mohan Ganguli first translator of the Mahabharata to English in prose form
- Ramtanu Lahiri (1813–1898) Young Bengal leader, teacher, and social reformer
- Debendranath Tagore (1817–1905) socio-religious reformer, leader of the Brahmo Samaj, educationist
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891) polymath, writer, social reformer (mostly remembered for the introduction of widow remarriage) and educationist
- Harish Chandra Mukherjee (1824–1861) journalist, associated with the Hindu Patriot, supported the Indigo Revolt and fought against the indigo planters for the rights of the peasants
- Ramakrishna (Gadadhar Chattopadhyay) (1836–1886) Hindu religious teacher and saint, humanist, one of the earliest advocaters of universal brotherhood and equality of world religions, responsible for Hindu revival through the efforts of his disciple Swami Vivekananda
- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838–1894), writer and novelist who coined Vande Mataram which became the war-cry of the Indian revolutionaries.
- Dwijendranath Tagore (1840–1926) poet, lyricist, philosopher, mathematician, and a pioneer in Bengali shorthand and musical notations
- Satyendranath Tagore (1842–1923) author, lyricist, linguist social reformer
- Dwarkanath Ganguly (1844–1898) social reformer, writer
- Womesh Chandra Banerjee (1844–1908) politician, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress

- Sivanath Sastri (1847–1919) scholar, writer, historian, educationist and socio-religious reformer
- Troilokyanath Mukhopadhyay (1847–1919) author
- Surendranath Banerjee (1848–1925) one of the founders of the Indian National Congress
- Jyotirindranath Tagore (1849–1925) playwright, lyricist, musician, editor and painter
- Sarada Devi (1853–1920) "Holy Mother", religious leader, wife of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa
- Swarnakumari Devi (1855–1932) writer, poet, novelist, musician and social-worker
- Nabin Chattopadhyay (d. 1930) philosopher, saint, advocater of an amalgamation of Advaita Vedanta and Mahayana doctrines
- Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) polymath, writer, poet, novelist, lyricist, musician, painter, playwright, educationist, social-reformer, the first Nobel Laureate of Asia.

Bhattacharyya

Bhattacharya, Bhattacharyya and Bhattacharjee (all pronounced *Bhôṭṭāchārjo* in Bengali and *Bhôttāsairjyô* in Assamese) are three common spellings of a prominent aristocratic title among the Assamese and Bengali Brahmins.

Etymology

Bhattacharya was a noble title or *upādhi* conferred upon those Bengali Brahmins who were involved in sacred rituals by Indian kings and emperors in ancient and medieval times. In modern times, however, the Bhattacharyas are found almost in every quarter of the society. Commonly used as a surname, the word is a combination of the Sanskrit titles Bhaṭṭa ("Vedic priest") and Ācārya ("teacher, preceptor"). Bhaṭṭa is itself a title common in many parts of India. Together with Mukherjees, Banerjees, Bhattacharjees and Gangulys, Chatterjees form the Kulin Brahmins, the highest tier of the Bengali caste system. Almost all Brahmins in Southern Bengal trace their origins from the Kanyakubja region. They are Bandyopadhyay , Chattopadhyay , Mukhopadhyay , Gangopadhyay , Bhattacharya , Mishra , Bagchi etc.

Notable people

Notable people with the name include:

- A. Bhattacharya, Indian statistician who worked at the Indian Statistical Institute in the 1930s and early 40s
- Abhi Bhattacharya (1921–1993), Indian actor of Hindi and Bengali cinema
- Abhijeet Bhattacharya (born 1958), Indian celebrity, Bollywood playback singer and composer
- Abhinash Bhattacharya, leader in revolutionary movement for Indian independence
- Aditya Bhattacharya (born 1965), Indian film director and screenwriter, *Raakh*

- Amitabh Bhattacharya, Indian lyricist and playback singer who works in Bollywood
- Anupam Bhattacharya, Indian actor
- Arindam Bhattacharya, Indian politician, Member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and President, West Bengal Youth Congress
- Arindam Bhattacharya, Indian footballer
- Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairman, State Bank of India
- Atanu Bhattacharya, Indian football goalkeeper coach
- B. B. Bhattacharya, Indian economist and educationist
- Basu Bhattacharya (1934–1997), Hindi film director
- Bibhu Bhattacharya (1944–2011), Bengali Indian male actor
- Bidhayak Bhattacharya (1907–1986), Indian playwright, litterateur and journalist
- Bijon Bhattacharya (1917–1978), Indian theatre and film personality from Bengal
- Bikash Bhattacharya, Indian politician
- Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (1924–1997), Indian writer and one of the pioneers of modern Assamese Literature
- Biswajit Bhattacharya, head coach of George Telegraph SC in the Calcutta Football League
- Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (born 1944), Indian politician, member of the politburo of the Communist Party of India, Chief Minister of West Bengal (2000–2011)
- Chandan Kumar Bhattacharya, bilingual (Bengali and English) writer, poet, composer and mail artist
- Chandril Bhattacharya, popular singer
- Charu Chandra Bhattacharya (1883–1961), prominent science teacher and writer of various scientific articles mainly for children in Bangla
- Chittaprosad Bhattacharya, India's most recognized political artist of the mid-20th century
- Debashish Bhattacharya (born 1963), Indian classical musician who plays the lap slide guitar
- Deben Bhattacharya (1921–2001), Bengali radio producer, record producer, ethnomusicologist, anthropologist, documentary filmmaker, photographer
- Deboleena Bhattacharjee, Hindi television actress
- Dhananjay Bhattacharya, son of Surendranath Bhattacharya was one of the finest Bengal singers
- Dipankar Bhattacharya, Indian politician
- Durjoy Bhattacharya, CEO, Medicalrecords.com
- Amitabha Bhattacharya, Indian professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur and an author of digital communication
- Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya (died 1831), Indian journalist, teacher and reformer
- Gautam Bhattacharya, Indian sports journalist, sports editor of the Ananda Bazar Patrika
- Gopal Chandra Bhattacharya (1895–1981), Indian entomologist and naturalist
- Haridas Bhattacharya (1891–1956), Bengali Indian philosopher and educationist
- Hiren Bhattacharyya, poet in Assamese language
- Jaya Bhattacharya, Indian television actress
- Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, pandit, one of a group of Hindu nationalists who held a benevolent view of the traditional role of caste in Indian society

- Kamalakanta Bhattacharya (1769–1821), Indian poet of the late 18th century
- Kankan Bhattacharyya, one of the scientists of modern non-linear laser spectroscopy
- Kumar Sanu/Kedarnath Bhattacharya (born 1957), Indian singer
- Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (1875–1949), philosopher at Calcutta University
- Kumar Bhattacharyya, Baron Bhattacharyya, CBE (born 1940), Indian-born British engineer, educator and government advisor
- Lilabati Bhattacharjee, mineralogist and former Director (Mineral Physics), Geological Survey of India
- Lokenath Bhattacharya (1927–2001), prolific Bangla writer who chose to remain in isolation
- Madhuri Bhattacharya, Indian actress and former model who has appeared in Kannada and Bollywood films
- Mahesh Chandra Nyayratna Bhattacharyya CIE (1836–1906), Indian scholar of Sanskrit, principal of the Sanskrit College for over 18 years
- Monoranjan Bhattacharya, Indian football international player and a club level coach and manager
- Nabarun Bhattacharya (born 1948), Indian Bengali writer
- Nalinidhar Bhattacharya (born 1921), poet and literary critic from Assam
- Narendra Nath Bhattacharyya (1887 – 1954), an Indian revolutionary, radical activist and political theorist, known as M. N. Roy
- Nivedita Bhattacharya, Indian actress
- P. C. Bhattacharya, the seventh Governor of the Reserve Bank of India from 1 March 1962 to 30 June 1967
- Panchanan Bhattacharya (1853–1919), chief disciple of Yogiraj Sri Shama Churun Lahiri Mahasaya
- Pannalal Bhattacharya, one of the finest Bengal singers
- Rai Sahib Nagendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Commissioner of the Berhampore Municipality from 1932 to 1948
- Rinki Bhattacharya (born 1942), Indian writer, columnist and documentary filmmaker
- Ritwik Bhattacharya, the first of the junior squash players to spurn an education in the United States to follow his dreams in squash
- Sameer Bhattacharya, guitarist for Texas rock band Flyleaf
- Sanjiv Bhattacharya, British journalist, based in the US
- Santosh Bhattacharyya (1924–2011), Bengali Indian scholar, Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta
- Santosh Chandra Bhattacharyya, teacher of Dhaka University and an intellectual martyr in the Bangladesh Liberation War
- Sharmila Bhattacharya, the head of the Biomodel Performance and Behavior laboratory at NASA Ames Research Center
- Shoumo Bhattacharya, Indian medical doctor and academic
- Siva Brata Bhattacherjee (1921–2003), Professor of Physics and crystallographer, University of Calcutta
- Soumya Bhattacharya (born 1969), Indian journalist and author

- Subrata Bhattacharya, Indian football Defender who played for India in the 1984 Asian Cup
- Suchitra Bhattacharya (1950–2015), Indian novelist
- Sukanta Bhattacharya (1926–1947), Bengali poet and playwright
- Suma Bhattacharya, Indian model and film actress
- Tarun Bhattacharya, Indian classical musician who plays the santoor, a type of hammered dulcimer
- Utpal Bhattacharya, finance professor at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business
- Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, chief architect and city planner of Jaipur

Gauda Brahmins

Gauda is a group of Brahmin communities in India. The Gauda Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Kulin Brahmins

Kulin Brahmins are the Bengali Brahmins belonging to Hindu religion, who can trace themselves to the five families of Kannauj who migrated to Bengal. The five families were of the five gotras (Shandilya, Bharadwaj, Kashyap, Vatsya and Swavarna). They are widely believed to be at the apex of Bengal's Hindu caste hierarchy. They are mainly classified under two sub-groups — Rādhi and Vārendra.

History

The earliest historically verifiable presence of Brahmins in Bengal can be ascertained from Dhanaidaha copper-plate inscription of Kumargupta 1 of the Gupta Year 113 (433 C.E.) which records the grant of land to a Brahmin named Varahasvamin of the Samavedi school. A copper-plate grant from the Gupta period found in the vicinity of Somapura mentions a Brahmin donating land to a Jain vihara at Vatagohali. Literary sources like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Jain and Buddhist works, however, record the presence of Brahmins in parts of Bengal during earlier periods.

Historical evidence attests significant presence of Brahmins in Bengal during the Maurya period. The Jain Acharya Bhadrabahu, regarded to be the preceptor of Chandragupta Maurya, is said to have been born in Brahmin family of Pundravardhana (or Puṇḍra, the region north of the Ganges and west of Brahmaputra in Bengal, later known as Vārendra). Such evidences suggest Puṇḍra or Vārendra and regions west of Bhagirathi (called Radha in ancient age) to be seats of Brahmins from ancient times; Rādhi and Varendra are still chief branches of Bengali Brahmins settled in these regions. Medium to large scale migrations of Brahmins from parts of India like Kanyakubja region, Kolancha, southern India and Pushkar in Rajasthan, among other places, occurred from time to time, especially during Pala and Sena periods.

Traditionally, Bengali Brahmins are divided into the following categories:

- Rādhi, from the Rarh region southwest of the Ganges
- Barendra, from the Varendra or Puṇḍra region. *Vārendra* originally meant rain-maker magicians.
- Vaidika (migrants, originally experts of Vedic knowledge)
  - Paschatya Vaidika (Vedic Brahmins from west of Bengal)
  - Dakshinatya Vaidika (Vedic Brahmins from south of Bengal)
- Madhya Sreni (Brahmins of the midland country)
- Rudraja (Brahmins associated with practice of Yoga)
- Shakdvipi/Grahavipra (migrant Brahmins of Shakdvipa in Central Asia)
- Saptaśati

The Brahmin communities of Bengal have their own traditional accounts of origin, which are generally found in genealogical texts known as kulagranthas or kulapanjikas. Other details may be obtained from court chronicles of kings of Bengal. Important writers are Harimishra (13th century C.E), Edu Mishra (13th century C.E), Devivara Ghatak (15th century C.E), Dhruvananda Mishra (post 15th century C.E), Vachaspati Mishra, Rajendralal Mitra among others.

The traditional origin of Radhi and Varendra Brahmins has been attributed to a king named Ādiśūra who is said to have invited five Brahmins from Kolancha (as per Edu Mishra and Hari Mishra) and/or from Kanyakubja, (as per Dhruvananda Mishra) so that he could conduct a yajña, because he could not find Vedic experts locally. Some traditional texts mention that Ādiśūra was ancestor of Ballāl Sena from maternal side and five Brahmins had been invited in 1077 C.E. Other texts like Varendrakulapanjika, Vachaspati Mishra's account and Edu Mishra's account attribute a date of 732 C.E for the migration. Additionally, other sources like Sambandhanirnaya, Kulanrava and others attribute other dates like 942 C.E, 932 C.E and others.

Historians have found a ruler named Ādiśūra ruling in north Bihar, but not in Bengal, but Ballāl Sena and his predecessors ruled over Bengal and Mithila (i.e., North Bihar). It is unlikely that the Brahmins from Kānyakubja may have been invited to Mithila for performing a yajña, because Mithila was a strong base of Brahmins since Vedic age. However, some scholars have identified Ādiśūra with Jayanta, a vassal chief of the Gauda king around middle of 8th century C.E. who is referred to as a contemporary of Jayapida (779 to 812 C.E) of Kashmir (grandson of Lalitaditya) in Kalhana's Rajatarangini.

The Brahmo Samaj and Dharma Sabha

From 1822, over 500 Kulin Brahmins of Calcutta organised themselves into a vigilante force under legal experts like Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and Prasanna Coomar Tagore known as the Brahmo Samaj to report and prosecute offences such as polygamy and sati, wherein a widowed woman would immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre. *Brahma Sabha* to report and prosecute such offences. The *Dharma Sabha*, an opposing force, was quickly formed by another set of orthodox Hindu Kulins to

excommunicate Brahmins of the Brahmo Samaj. Governor General William Bentinck outlawed *sati* in 1829. The excommunicated Brahmins formed their own religion Brahmoism in 1830 which was codified in 1850 and recognised by the British Government in 1872 and by the Supreme Courts in 1903.

Utkala Brahmin

Utkala is a Brahmin caste in India. They are native to the present-day Odisha state (formerly a part of the Utkala Kingdom). The Utkala Brahmins are one of the five Pancha Gauda Brahmin communities that originally resided to the north of the Vindhyas.

Chapter 56
BRAHMIN SURNAMES LIST

Bengali Brahmins are those who have origins in the West Bengal, Tripura, Bangladesh and parts of Jharkhand. At one time, Bengali Brahmins were famous for their scholarship, erudition and nationalism and produced the likes of Shri Shri Ramakirshna, Rabindranath Thakur, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Raghunandan Bhattacharya, Panchanan Tarkaratna, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar etc.

Today however majority Bengali Brahmins are not aware of Hindu customs, let alone Brahmin customs. For example

- Ex-CM of West Bengal openly denigrated Hinduism.
- Current CM offers Muslim prayers/ Namaz, and indulges in massive Muslim appeasement at the cost of native Hindu culture.
- Ex-mayor Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya openly eats beef.
- Many so-called Bengali Brahmins eat beef and pork.

It is not a good situation, as even demographics is against Bengali Hindus, and in all likelihood Bengali Hindus will become a minority by 2050, and extinct by end of this century.

A list of common Bengali Brahmin surnames is given below.

- Bhattacharya
- Chakraborty
- Mukhopadhyay / Mukherjee
- Bandyopadhyay / Banerjee
- Chattopadhyay / Chatterjee
- Gangopadhyay / Ganguly
- Ghoshal
- Thakur / Tagore
- Lahiri
- Bhaduri
- Sanyal
- Maitra
- Bagchi
- Patitunda
- Kanjilal
- Others Titles - Roy, Choudhury, Majumdar, Joardar

Assamese Brahmins list of Surnames

Assamese Brahmins are those who originate in Assam, Meghalaya, parts of northern Bangladesh and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. At one time, Kamarupa was an important seat of Hinduism and many Brahmin scholars were residents of Kamarupa.

Brahmon Sobha Guwahati is trying its best to preserve and promote Vedic Brahmin culture.

- Baruah
- Bez Baruah
- Bujar Barua
- Chandra Barua
- Ram Barua
- Prasad Barua
- Gobinda Barua
- Acharya / Acharjee
- Bhattacharya / Bhattacharjee
- Bhagavati
- Bardalai
- Gain
- Goswami
- Sharma
- Siddhanta
- Thakur
- Pathak

Bihari Brahmin Surnames List (Bihar/ Mithila / Jharkhand)

At one time Bihari Brahmins were famous for their scholarship and erudition and Mithila produced one Vedic scholar after another starting from Yajnavalkya. Today except for a few exceptional scholar and Vedic experts, most Bihari Brahmins lack academic rigor and are more interested in rajasic and tamasic pursuits .

List of Bihari Brahmin surnames is given below.

- Acharya
- Mishra
- Ojha/ Jha
- Thakur
- Pathak
- Upadhyay
- Choudhary
- Shandilya

- Rajhans
- Kashyap
- Jajware
- Sharma
- Chaturvedi
- Trivedi
- Tiwari
- Singh
- Pandey
- Shahi

Nepali Brahmins List of Surnames

Neplai Brahmins are also known as Bahun. Apart from indigenous Brahmin population since ancient times, Nepali Brahmins also consist of Brahmins of UP origin (Banarasi), Bengali origin, Punjabi/ Rajasthani origin and Brahma-Kayastha of Bhutanese origin.

List of Nepali Brahmin surname is given below :

- Acharya
- Lamichhane
- Rijal
- Bastola
- Bhurtel
- Bhetwal
- Gajurel
- Chudal
- Subedi

Uttar Pradesh / Uttarakhand / Other North Indian Brahmins Surname List
At one time North Indian Brahmins were famous for their scholarship and erudition and the central Gangetic basin was considered the seat of Vedic learning. Many of these Brahmins were famous for their learning, sophistication and range of knowledge. But things are really bad now - especially given the Dalit extremism and rising Islamic fundamnetalism in these regions.

Except for a handful of noted scholars especially in places like Varanasi, Allahabad - majority of these north Indian brahmins lack shastra knowledge and academic rigor. They eat vegetarian food and indluge in slogaeering like "Jai Shree Ram", "Namah Shivaya" or "Jai Parshuram" and writing against beef eating on Facebook.

Having said that, even today, UP and Uttarakand regularly churn out quite few Vedic scholars and Sanskrit experts.

- Mishra

- Dikshit
- Dubey
- Dwivedi
- Tiwari
- Trivedi
- Chaubey
- Chaturvedi
- Pandey
- Vajpayee
- Bajpai
- Pathak
- Upadhyay
- Ojha
- Goswami
- Parashara
- Tiwari
- Nirmal
- Pandit
- Bharadwaj
- Shukla
- Agnihotri
- Siritiya
- Tote
- Pujari
- Purohit
- Nayapaul

Kashmiri Pandit Surname List

Kashmir has produced brilliant Brahmins like Abhinava Gupta, Kshemeraja and Kalhana in the past - but today Kahsmiri Pandits are an almost-dying species and they are simply fighting for their survival, having been massacred and driven out of their homeland by Muslims in Kashmir.

- Kaul
- Bhat
- Raina
- Haksar
- Tikoo
- Mattoo
- Dhar
- Kak
- Sapru
- Sopori
- Razdan

- Kher
- Bachloo
- Bakshi
- Draboo
- Hangloo
- Wanchoo

Orissa Brahmins Surnames List

List of Odisha Brahmin surnames are given below.

- Samanta
- Mishra
- Acharya
- Satapati
- Pati
- Upadhyay
- Tiwari
- Dash
- Panda
- Bishi
- Vedi
- Divedi
- Trivedi
- Chaturvedi
- Dash Sharma
- Dikshit
- Debata
- Nath
- Sahu
- Panigrahi
- Mohapatra
- Rath
- Rath Sharma
- Sarongi
- Joshi
- Pattojoshi
- Purohit
- Pujari
- Devasharma
- Padhi
- Khuntia
- Nanda

Gujarati Brahmins List of Surnames

- Bhatta
- Upadhyay
- Vyasa

Maharashtrian / Karnataka Brahmins

To some extent Maharashtrian Brahmins have somewhat managed to continue their Vedic heritage in unbroken traditions and this is really a very good thing. In places like Pune, one may still find quite a few Sanskrit scholars.

- Deshmukh
- Kulkarni
- Deshpande
- Fadnavis, Phadnis or Phadnavis
- Desai
- Patil
- Joshi
- Bhatta
- Shastri
- Rao
- Sharma
- Hedge
- Garge
- Varne
- Shrirame
- Padhye

Andhara Brahmins List of Surnames

Andhra Brahmins are those who reside primarily in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. They have produced eminent scholars like the great Sayanacharya, the commentator of the Rig Veda and the first person in recorded history to mention the speed of light, centuries before western science.

Andhra Brahmins are of two types:

- Niyogi
- Vaidiki/Dravida

In general Andhra Brahmins identify themselves with gotra, and use suffixes like:

- Sharma
- Deekshitulu
- Joshyula/ Josyula

- Mishrula
- Dwibhashyula
- Bhagvatula
- Shashtrula
- Shastry/ Sastri/ Sastry
- Upadhyayula
- Suarashtrula
- Bhattula
- Saraswatula

Dravida Brahmins (Tamil / Karnataka/ Kerala)

Iyers and Iyengars are truly the only sect of Brahmis who have truly maintained their Brahmanical traditions to this day and in fact I would say that in modern day Hindusim, south Indian Brahmins are playing a much greater role than north Indians. Many south Indian Brahmins are fluent in Sanskit, highly educated in secular subjects as well and regularly follow their festivals and events. The only problem is that many Iyers and Iyengers, especially from TN are vehemently anti-Hindi and anti-North Indian, and that is a worrisome matter.

Tamil Brahmins

- Iyer / Aiyar
- Iyengar
-

Kerala Brahmins

- Namboothiri / Nampoorithiri
- Moosathu
- Unni
- Kurukkal
- Nambissan / Nambiassan/ Nambeeassan (also known as Puspakar Brahmins)
- Plappally
- Potti

BRAHMIN POPULATION IN INDIA

In this chapter we will talk about some facts and figures related to Brahmin population in India. Our analysis shows that Brahmins are less than 5% of India's population and are hence a true minority community whose traditions and cultures are under threat from communists/ leftists, Islamists, Islamo-facists, Church fundamentalists and pseudo-secularists.
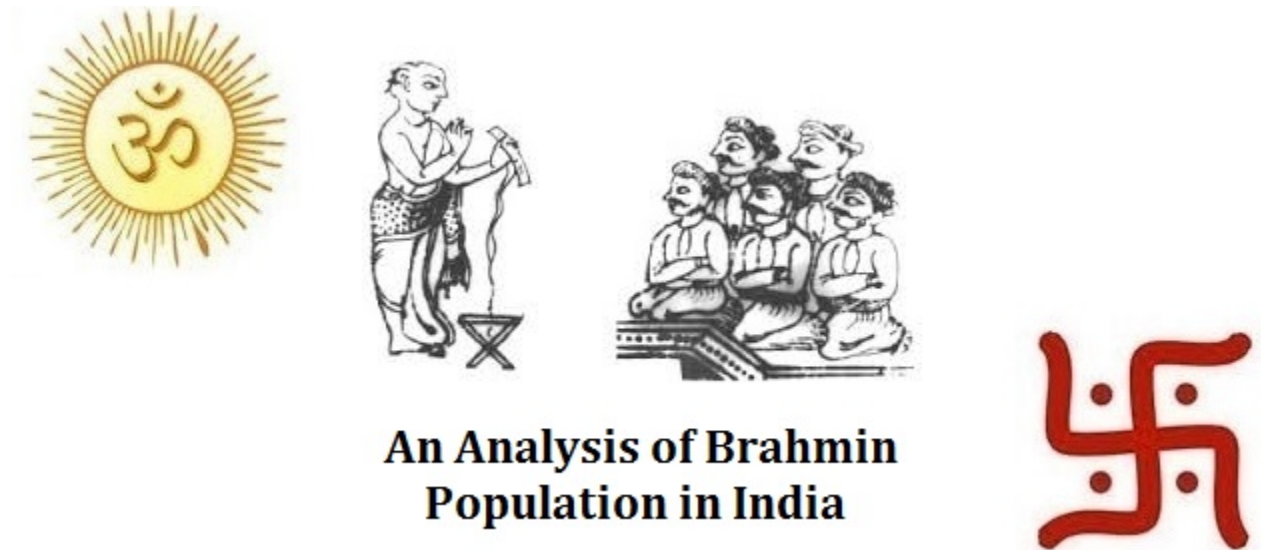
An Analysis of Brahmin Population in India

Background

Brahmins are a minority community in India in terms of numbers and percentages. Yet they receive no reservation benefits from the Government.

Not only do they not get any benefits, they are discriminated against by the governments (both State Governments as well as Central Government) who instead give benefits in terms of education and jobs to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Muslims who are more in number than Brahmins.

Officially there is no published data on Brahmin population, so we must rely on data published by surveys and (ironically) anti-Hindu Christian Church bodies like Joshua Project and the likes.

Joshua Project, which is an anti-India and anti-Hindu Christian Church initiative to convert all Hindus to Christians, has meticulously compiled caste wise data of all Indians and shared them on their website, to facilitate easy targeting and conversion.

I have used 2011 Census data along with Joshua Project state-wise Brahmin data for my analysis.

Demographics of India
As per my analysis, below is the demographics of India in terms of caste and religious groups.

Castes / Religion % Total Population India (2011)	Census & Other Sources	Recalibrated*
Other Backward Castes (OBC)	32.0%	29.5%
Non-Brahmin Upper Caste Hindus	18.4%	17.0%
Scheduled Caste	16.2%	15.0%
Muslims	14.2%	20.8%
Scheduled Tribe	8.2%	7.6%
Brahmins	5.0%	4.6%
Christianity	2.3%	2.1%
Sikhism	1.7%	1.6%
Other Religions	0.9%	0.8%
Buddhsim	0.7%	0.6%
Jainism	0.4%	0.4%

* See Analysis Below

Brahminpedia (c) 2015

- Other Backward Castes/ Classes (OBC)[4] - 32%
- Scheduled Castes[2] - 16.2%
- Muslims[1] - 14.2% (1)
- Scheduled Tribe[2] - 8.2%
- Christianity[1] - 2.3%
- Sikhism[1] - 1.7%
- Other Religions[1] - 0.9%
- Buddhism[1] - 0.7%
- Jainism[1] - 0.4%
-

The so-called Upper Caste Hindu population % is as below.
- Non-Brahmin Upper Caste Hindus - 18.4% (Balancing Figure)
- Brahmin - 5% (3)

Castes as a Percentage of Hindu Population

As a percentage of Hindu population, Brahmins are a minority, making up only 6.3% of India's Hindu population.

Castes % Hindu Population India (2011)	Census & Other Sources
Other Backward Castes (OBC)	40.1%
Non-Brahmin Upper Caste Hindus	23.1%
Scheduled Caste	20.3%
Scheduled Tribe	10.3%
Brahmins	6.3%

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As is evident from the table above, OBC, SC and SC make up more than 70% of Hindu population of India.

Re-calibration of Population to Account for Under-reporting

Legally a Muslim man can have more than one wife as per Sharia Law. This is especailly common in those areas where literacy levels are on the lower side, and it is not uncommon to find Muslim men with 2 wives and a brood of children.

However during Census estimation, many Muslim men report only their first wife and family. This grossly under-estimates the Muslim population of India.

Hence we have done a recalibration exercise where we have tried to estimate true Muslim population of India.

Inputs Used in the Re-calibration.

- Muslim Fertility Rate[5] - 3.1
- Literacy Rate by State[6]

Based on literacy rate of a state we have tried to estimate, the number of wives and hence family size of Muslims.

State	State Muslim Population (per 2011 Census)	Avg No of Families	Literacy Rate %	State Muslim Population (Recalibrated)
Uttar Pradesh	38,519,225	7,552,789	69.72%	64,435,855
Bihar	17,542,984	3,439,801	63.82%	31,646,167
Maharashtra	12,922,892	2,533,900	82.91%	17,830,240
Rajasthan	6,244,512	1,224,414	67.06%	10,815,049
Madhya Pradesh	4,791,439	939,498	70.63%	7,918,346
West Bengal	24,663,889	4,836,057	77.08%	37,224,804
Andhra Pradesh	3,654,300	716,529	67.41%	6,300,567
Karnataka	7,885,861	1,546,247	75.60%	12,161,333
Tamil Nadu	4,256,199	834,549	80.33%	6,116,449
Gujarat	5,857,212	1,148,473	79.31%	8,549,965
Odisha	922,842	180,949	73.45%	1,467,266
Uttarakhand	1,406,229	275,731	79.63%	2,042,720
Harayana	1,774,716	347,984	76.64%	2,695,901
Delhi	2,161,167	423,758	86.34%	2,817,137
Assam	10,659,891	2,090,175	73.18%	17,012,566
Jammu & Kashmir	8,570,916	1,680,572	68.74%	14,524,265
Telangana	4,474,361	877,326	67.22%	7,733,366
Himachal Pradesh	150,843	29,577	83.78%	205,208
Jharkhand	4,780,104	937,275	67.63%	8,218,257
Kerala	8,881,122	1,741,396	93.91%	10,082,917
Others	2,124,454	416,560	74.04%	3,349,909

- In the case of Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate in India, census figures of Muslim population of 88 lakhs is close to my re-calibrated figure of 1 crore.
- On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh which has a literacy rate of 69.7%, census population of Muslim is 3.8 crores whereas my re-calibrated Muslim population for Uttar Pradesh is 6.4 crore.
- Re-calibrated India Muslim population is 27.3 crores, as compared to 17.2 crores in Indian Census.
- Re-calibrated Indian population is 131 crore, as compared to 121 crore in Indian Census.

Conclusions

Brahmins are a minority group in India. Their ancient culture is threatened because of discrimination by consecutive Governments in forms of caste and minority based reservations.

As per Census data Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Muslims make up 71% of India's population. Yet they are the recipient of numerous benefits in terms of education and jobs at the cost of Brahmins who make up less than 5%. If we use my re-calibrated data above, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Muslims make up 73% of India's population, whereas Brahmins are at 4.6% only.

Dr. Priya Ranjan Trivedi (67) is the world renowned environmental scientist, institution builder and a charismatic leader with more than 45 years of teaching and training experience in different areas of ecology, environment, disaster mitigation, sustainable development, peace studies, conflict resolution, human rights, intellectual property rights, ecological tourism, geriatric care and institution building strategies. He has also been the Founder Chancellor/ Plenipotentiary of the State University "The Global Open University Nagaland" and Chancellor of the "Indira Gandhi Technological and Medical Sciences University", Aruanchal Pradesh. He has been responsible for the establishment of many universities and professional / vocational institutions in India as well as in other countries of the world.

He has authored the World Encyclopaedias on emerging subjects like environmental sciences, remote sensing, health care, global peace, production and operations management, materials management, bioinformatics, green business management, geriatric care, habitat and population studies etc.

As the President of the Confederation of Indian Universities (CIU) created during the NDA regime in the year 2004, Dr. Priya Ranjan Trivedi has tried to unite all the 900 universities in the country for optimising the available resources in the country with a view to stopping the duplication of efforts in the area of higher and tertiary education. During his visits to different countries including USA, UK, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Korea, Mongolia, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Maldives, Indonesia, Russia, Poland and Thailand, Dr. P R Trivedi has been transferring the appropriate technologies of institution building from India to the rest of the world.

He has received more than 55 international and national awards and appreciations conferred upon him in many countries of the world for his outstanding contribution in the areas of alternative dispute resolution, diplomatic studies, interfaith studies, spiritual development etc.

Dr. P R Trivedi has designed a masterplan paradigm for leading India by providing appropriate guidance to the Government of India in the areas of skill development, entrepreneurial leadership besides managerial competence among the young boys and girls by advocating the slogan "Catch Them Young".

Dr. P R Trivedi has been pioneer in introducing Environmental Education Project in 1980 and Cleanliness, Hygiene and Sanitation Education (CHASE) Project 1994 by collaborating with different Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations besides Universities, Colleges and other Educational Institutions.

The two Books namely "Narendra Modi : The Man India Needs" and "Ram Nath Kovind : From Ranks to Raisina" authored by him has been read and perused by millions of Indians as well as foreigners engaged in public policy planning, management and development.

Manindra Kumar Tiwari (41), a qualified Chartered Accountant (CA), Company Secretary (CS) and Jyotishalankar is the Partner of M/s. Tiwari & Mishra, Chartered Accountants. Besides being a professional financial expert, he is also performing his duties in the areas of philanthropy as well as social work.

He is also the Central Secretary of Brahman International, World Religious Parliament, Sarvabhaum Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha, Editor of Sanatan Vani (a monthly magazine) on the Vedic Sanatan Scriptures and Practices he is also heading the secretariat of World Hindu Foundation. The earlier Book authored by him titled "Uttishtha" has been appreciated by the important intellectuals.

During the past 15 years, he has been writing columns and articles in different magazines, journals and newspapers besides lecturing on different important subjects like Brahmanatva, Finance, Taxation, Corporate Laws etc. in important National and International Seminars, Symposia, Congresses and Conventions.

He has been felicitated by many important bodies and organisations for his outstanding contribution in the specialized areas of auditing, financial analysis and reporting, investment management, e-governance, corporate management, public finance etc.

He has designed a masterplan paradigm for strengthening the financial health of our country by proposing Statewise Action Plans for the speedy implementation of key projects without any delay with a provision of concurrent monitoring and evaluation for reducing time and investment through his project management skills he has developed under his leadership.

In this publication titled "Brahman : Philosophy, Origins, Roles, Duties, Responsibilities and Contribution", he has tried to collect information from everywhere regarding the unique facts and figures regarding the Brahmans who have led our country in being on the world map.

He has been actively engaged in promoting the cause of Brahmanism by organising periodical meetings and discussions by inviting the most successful Brahmans for encouraging them to participate in blessing the young male and female Brahmans in attaining great heights by studying and researching on contemporary issues besides playing the leading roles in shaping our country through rural as well as urban entrepreneurship also by throwing and dedicating themselves into a new environment with full of zeal and enthusiasm so that the Indian and the world citizenry could use their knowledge to the fullest extent of their abilities by not only having a networking as well as a coordinated / integrated approach among the Brahmans but also by becoming change agents for providing counselling and guidance to the younger generation belonging to all castes and creeds for translating the wishes of the Government of India in general and of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in particular.