

Notion Press (notionpress.com) Old No. 38, New No. 6

McNichols Road, Chetpet Chennai - 600 031

Also available with Amazon.com, Amazon.in both as e-book & as printed book

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Excerpt from Preface

This book attempts, even for the novice reader, a possibly enjoyable glimpse of the four-fold wings of the age-old Hindu scriptures, viz.: Shruti, Smriti, ItihAsa and PurANas.

The first Chapter gives a capsule version of what Sanatana Dharma (popularly known as Hinduism) is, by focusing briefly on the ten major tenets of the religion and its essentials. The 22 Chapters that follow present samples (in some cases, very tiny ones) of the above four categories of scriptures. This is expected to be a representative ‘trailer’ or ‘jhalak’ or let us say, ‘a bird’s eye-view’ of the scriptures. The objective is to clear the haze of a near-total ignorance of any of the massive scriptural content that prevents the majority of adherents of the religion from even trying to understand its message, much less imbibe it.

Once a reader goes through the seemingly fractal-like presentation of the scriptures in this book, one would probably realize what is before him or her is more than a glimpse. It actually has turned out to be almost a comprehensive sample, in the sense that it acquaints the reader, all at one place, with different types of samples of the scriptural ocean; along with the meanings of most of what it quotes and cross-quotes. The intent of this strategy of familiarizing oneself with the scriptures, is to evoke the interest of many and to inspire them to explore the originals for a meeting with them in their full majestic form..

V. Krishnamurthy

Two Forewords

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *SHRIMUKHAM* FROM

H.H.Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal

The 'srimukham,' benedictory note, in Sanskrit, blessed by the Acharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti PeeTham, says:

'Sanskrit' is the divine language, say the sages, based on the vedic passage '*devIm vAcham ajanayanth devAH*' [Rg Veda 8.100.11] which means 'this speech, divine, the gods created.' This language is resplendent with finding expression in the rich literature of the Veda, embellished with the corpus of the *smriti*-s, and further decorated by the *ItihAsa* and *PurANas* and the immense body of poetical literature. There are no two opinions on the need for the study of this language by those who wish to acquire *dharma*, those who aspire for liberation and those who want to enrich themselves with noble traits. Yet, in this age of Kali, when Sanskrit is sadly ignored, it is a matter of great pain that it is resorted to only by a few, just like a precious jewel is accessed only by a rare fortunate one. Even as this is so, just as the sages have, in their compassion for the humanity, given out the message of the Veda and related literature, in the manner that the ordinary man can imbibe, so too there are those who, like the autumnal season giving joy to one and all, cater to the need of those who cannot approach the original works in Sanskrit, by rendering those works in easily graspable language of the masses.

We are extremely glad to know that Sri V.Krishnamurthy of Bengaluru has extracted the juice from a variety of flowers of the Sanskrit literary corpus and adding the sugar of English to this potion is offering this rejuvenating drink to the common aspirants. We bless that this endeavour succeed due to the grace of the Lord . Chandramoullshvara accompanied by Mother Maha Tripura Sundari and also wish that the author bring more such works to the benefit of the society at large.

With Narayanasmriti,

Shrivilamba-dhanuH-shukla-ShaShhThI

Kanchipuram

12.01.2019

Swami Paramarthananda

ॐ

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Date : 26-1-2019

The scriptural literature of Hinduism is so vast that it is impossible to study all of them. The Vedas occupy the primary position among the scriptures. They are revealed to us through the Rishies. All the other scriptures are called Smritis. They are meant to help us understand the message of the Vedas. Some of the Smritis have specific names like Puranas and Itihasas. One may not study all the scriptures. But it is important to get a bird's eye view of them. This will help one in appreciating the glorious culture of Bharatavarsha. "Meet the ancient

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scriptures of Hinduism" is a wonderful book which serves this purpose exactly. Prof. V. Krishnamurthy conducts a guided tour taking the reader through several wonderful aspects of Hindu scriptural literature.

Sri Krishnamurthy is a walking encyclopaedia and a prolific age-defying author with several informative and educative books to his credit. I pray to God to bless Sri. Krishnamurthy with a long, healthy and productive life to continue his sacred mission.

With Narayana smritis
Swami Paramarthananda

Ch 2: The Vedas – Structure, Style and Content

Excerpt From Page 34

.....It is one of the amazing miracles of world heritage that, while even the written literature of great authors like Kalidasa and Shakespeare have today more than one reading or version at several points, the Vedas, which go back to (probably beyond) 3000 B.C. have, in spite of being handed down entirely through oral transmission, come down to us in a single version with a scrupulous exactitude.

How can this be? How was it possible? In spite of their massive content, (Rig veda and Yajur veda have 153,826 and 109,287 words respectively) they have been preserved from generation to generation though it was all done only orally. All this has been preserved (till today) for more than three millenia without ever having been put into writing. This must be considered a great linguistic achievement of which India should be legitimately proud. The accuracy of the transmitted text is preserved by resorting to an artifice of **nine** different techniques or modes of recital.

The first technique is the *pada pATha*, which simply recites each word of the text separately; *pada* means word; *pATha* means a reading. The system of euphonic changes that occur from the *samhita pATha* to the *pada pATha* is itself very technical (Sanskrit grammar would be crucial here) but makes sense. In addition, there are eight other techniques of recitation, the sole purpose of each is to preserve the original *samhita* text without the loss or addition of a single syllable or *svara*. The *svaras* are a significant part of the recital of the Vedas, whatever be the mode. In each mode the order of recital of the words is specified as a particular permutation of their original sequence. We give below a sentence from the Yajurveda, obviously without the *svaras*, in its original *samhita pATha* form, also its *pada* text and then the order of the words in the *ghana* recital. A pundit who has learnt the *ghana* recital of one complete veda (he takes thirteen years of whole time work to reach that stage) is called a *Ghana-pAThi*.....

Ch 3: Sri Rudram

Excerpt From Page 70

Namo bhavasya hetyai jagatAM pataye namaH

This is the third mantra in this *anuvAka*. Salutation to the one who is the weapon of destruction for the life of limitation (of creation) and who is the Lord of the universe. *Bhavasya hetih* means the keen axe which destroys this *samsAra*. **This mantra is one of the most important mantras of Sri Rudram, because it has been declared to lead to *mokshha* by a ceaseless repetition of this mantra.** Note the distinction between *pashUnAM pataye* (2nd mantra) and *jagatAM pataye* (in this mantra). Both appear to mean the same thing, but the former indicates bondage (*samsAra*) and the latter indicates Release (*mokshha*).

From page 95.

stuhi shrutaM gartasadaM yuvAnaM mRRigaM na bhImam-upahatnum-ugram/mRRiDA jaritre rudrastavAno anyante asman-navapantu senAH//

First line is a famous prayer. Second line appeals to Rudra to take pity on this frail body, make his armies avoid us but strike at our sins.

(O Speech or Indwelling Soul!) श्रुतं – Famous as ‘Parameswara’ (very reputed in all Vedas and worlds), गर्तसदं – dwelling in our heart-cave, युवानं – always youthful and handsome, उपहन्तुं– destroyer of the wicked, मृगं न – like lion, भीमं – terrible, उग्रं-fierce (unconquerable), स्तुहि praise स्तवानः – Praised (you), जरित्र – (to us) being in destructible bodies, मृ ड– give comfort. सेनाः – Your armies (which spoil our comfort), अस्मत ् अन्यं– (other than us) our enemies or sins, निवपन्तु– let destroy.

This *mantra* is directed at the sense organ of speech or the indwelling soul. Pleased with our prayer, please grant us healthy and strong bodies, though destructible and finally the bliss of *Mokshha*. Mind, praise the Lord who is revealed in the scriptures, who abides in the hearts, who is ever young, who destroys the wrong doers, who is not conquerable like an Iron piece. May you, who are being praised by us, make us happy! O Rudra, we are in this body subject to ageing. May your army destroy anyone else other than us. May your armies, opposed to our comforts, destroy the sins, (= enemies)..... ‘*Mrigam na bhimam*’ while harming evil persons, he is very terrible like a lion breaking the head of an elephant. Here ‘*na*’ conveys the meaning of a simile like ‘*iva*,’ say all commentators. But Adi Shankara in his commentary on the same passage says That *na* conveys the negation of *ugraM* and *bhImaM*. That is the great goodness and Grace of Lord Narasimha, says he.

Ch.4. Surya-Namaskara prashna of Krishna Yajur Veda (Excerpt from p.117)

Then comes the passage narrating the claims of great sages about their experience of the **seven Suns and the eighth Sun**. Two sages by name *panca-karNa*, son of *vatsa*; and *sapta-karna*, son of *plaksha*, claim to have seen the seven Suns; but, say the two, they have not been able to go to the *mahaa-meru* and see the eighth Sun. But everybody strongly recommends, says the text, that man should strive to go to the *mahaa-meru* and see that One-ness of Divinity, called *kaSyapa*. It becomes clear that they are referring to the Supreme Reality here which is the substratum of all the seven Suns. '*tasya bhaasaa sarvam idam vibhati*, say the scriptures in another place, referring thereby to the Transcendental Absolute. So, these seven Suns themselves derive their strength and dalliance from the eighth Sun, namely *kashyapa*. The seven Suns originated from *kashyapa*, says the text: *kashyapaad-uditaas-sUryaah*. The very name *kashyapa* is extolled and its meaning derived by going into its etymology. *kashyapah pashyako bhavati* is a statement occurring in the eighth *anuvAka*. It means *kashyapa* is the One that Sees—meaning, He sees rightly. The next sentence in the text explains this: *yat sarvam pari-pashyati-iti saukshhmyaat* meaning, 'because it sees everything in all its subtlety.' The root word for seeing is *drish*. When conjugated, this becomes *pashyati*. There is another esoteric significance here. The word *kashyapa* has three syllables: *ka*, *shya*, and *pa* – in that order. Reverse the order of these three syllables. We get *pa*, *shya*, and *ka*. They make up, in that order, the word *pashyaka* – which means, One Who Sees. That is why, *kashyapah pashyako bhavati! bhavati* means 'becomes.' *kashyapa* happens to be *pashyaka*. The existence of this eighth Sun in the form of the Ultimate Supreme (Who sees, as things are to be seen) is given only in the scriptures.

What is this eighth Sun? What is its implication to our sensory scientific knowledge? Who will do research on this? Who can? Should India wait until some foreign Professor from reputed Universities puts his or her mind to it and writes a monograph? Are not Indian scholars the best persons to study them? Such a study cannot be done by a person who cares only for occidental Science or by a person who is ignorant of occidental Science. The Saraswati of the East, which represents Pure Science, and Lakshmi of the West which revels in Applied Science should have to come together!

.....

Ch.5: The Crest-Jewel of the Vedas

(Excerpt From p.125)

Ordinary people think religious life means an almost impossible ascent towards a perfect God by an imperfect soul. They think that God is really unknowable because none of our senses seem to sense Him. But the beauty of the Upanishads and therefore of Hinduism is that it teaches us that while God is infinitely higher than ourselves, He is nearer to us than our hands and feet. He is the Soul of our Souls. He is the One that survives in us from childhood to adulthood through old age from birth, as the I that we talk of when we refer to ourselves. He is neither the body nor the senses, nor the mind nor the ego, nor the intellect. He is the I that is none of these, but is far distant from anything that we can call ours in a relational manner like spouse, issue, wealth, or opinion, or possession. He is the ever-present witness to all our thoughts, actions and experiences. He is the Self, our Atman. It is the highest Reality in ourselves. This fact of the Atman being our utmost Reality in each one of us is technically called the IMMANENT PRESENCE of God in us. This fact constitutes the major difference of Hinduism from the religions of the West. God is said to have 'entered' in us. Entry is not physical entry but in the sense of immanence. The Sanskrit word is 'anupraveshaM.' Several Upanishads talk about this with great emphasis and commentators spend a lot of time elucidating this concept.

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Ch.7: Great Conversations

(Excerpt From p.163)

The third Chapter of Brihadranyakopanishad describes a seminar-like discussion in the assembly of great Janaka, where *Yajnavalkya* comes out the victor. Arrayed against him are stalwarts like Uddalaka, Aswala, Arthabaga Ushastha and many more. The occasion itself constitutes an interesting anecdote. King Janaka had invited all these *brahma-vAdins* (experts in the subject of *Brahman*) for a *yajna*, provokes them into a discussion by announcing that he has earmarked one thousand cows, each with a bag of ten gold coins and all these constitute the prize for the one among them who is '*anUcAnatamaH*' (most erudite in Vedas). The entire assembly is stunned at this announcement, stupefied by the challenge of the occasion and the seriousness it demanded and kept silent. But after a little period of silence, *Yajnavalkya* rises up and with his assistant makes preparations to take possession of the cows. Then it is that the assembled scholars begin to challenge him one by one. Each one asks a few subtle questions about Knowledge of the Absolute. *Yajnavalkya* shoots forth his answers without any hesitation or confusion and with such clarity that they withdraw their challenge and sit down.

Finally, one lady, Vacaknavi Gargi, announces that she is going to ask just two questions of *Yajnavalkya*; if he answers them well, there should be no more doubt. ‘That of which they say it is above the heaven and below the earth, which is between heaven and earth as well, and which was, is and shall be – tell me, *Yajnavalkya*, in what it is woven, warp and woof?’ ‘In space (= *Akasha*),’ replies *Yajnavalkya* ‘And in what, is this *Akasha* woven, warp and woof?’ shoots back Gargi. The answer (Br.U. 3.8.8) of *Yajnavalkya* to this truth-seeking deep question gives the fundamental truth of Vedanta and is one of the most famous passages in all of Upanishadic literature; it should be engraved in letters of gold at all spiritual centres of the world. It runs thus:

Ch.8: Mahavakyas and Vedanta

(Excerpt From page 171)

Our Self, the *Atman*, seems to have an individuality of its own. The *mahAvAkya* says it is the same as the unqualified *Brahman* in the Infinite Cosmos. It appears we are trying to identify two things, one that is unlimited and unconditioned and one that is limited and conditioned. Suppose one says: "This well-dressed gentleman Mr. Sanjay is the same person whom we saw as the ill-kempt patient No.13 in the mental hospital a few years ago." The sameness here is not between the dressed-up Sanjay and the uncouth patient No.13. The sameness is between the patient minus all that made him look a patient and Sanjay minus all his present appearance, including his name. It is the essential person behind the name and behind the dress. Whenever such an identity is talked about we have to throw away all those aspects which are clearly distinctive (and exclusive) in both and cling on only to those essentials without which they are not what they are. So when *Brahman* and *Atman* are being identified, we have to see what commonality or essentialness there is in them that is being identified.

Brahman is the cause of this Universe; But that is a predication of *Brahman*, extraneous to the identity we are talking about The Self or *Atman* appears to be limited because of an apparent individuality which keeps it under the spell of ignorance. This is extraneous to the essentiality of the *Atman*. So, what we are identifying is *Brahman*, minus its feature of being the cause of the Universe and *Atman* minus its limitations of ignorance-cum-delusion. The Cosmic Maya is what makes *Brahman* be the cause of this universe. The individual Avidya (= Ignorance) is what makes the *Atman* circumscribed and delimited. MahAvAkya says ***Brahman* minus its mAyA and *Atman* minus its avidya are identical.**

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Ch. 9: Aum and the Queen-Mother of Mantras

Excerpt from p.184

The three-fold presentation of Reality, as *sat*, *cit* and *Ananda* is also reflected in the *GAyatrI*. First let us see the invocation M.N.U. AnuvAka 34) for the Gayatri Mantra, expected to be done by every seeker of Brahman three times a day:

***AyAatu varadaa devI akshharaM brahmasaMmitam.
gAyatrIM chhandasAM mAtA idaM brahma jushhasva me...***

May the boon-conferring divine *GAyatrI* come to us (in order to instruct us about) the imperishable Brahman who is determined by Vedanta. May *GAyatrI*, the mother of all meters & mantras, favour us with the intuition of the Supreme.

The word *savituH* in the first line, which indicates ‘Origin’ or ‘Birth,’ suggests Creation and makes it characteristic of the ‘**sat**’ or the ‘*satya*’ facet. This line is a **glorification** of the Absolute. A glorification of a deity simply praises the Lord as Lord, does not ask for anything and does not do anything in the wake of that praise. The first line of the *GAyatrI* does simply this.

The second line asks us to meditate as if it is the be-all and end-all of life. Yes, because the meditation itself gives the bliss, immanent in the Absolute Reality. Meditation on the Absolute is **communion** with or worship of, the Divine. It is therefore the worship aspect of the *mantra*. It corresponds to the **Ananda** (or the *ananta*, infinite) aspect of the Absolute; because the very meditation of the Absolute is Bliss. Bliss is not something that you attain after you have achieved something as a reward from the Lord. To think of Him is Bliss! The use of the words *dhiyah* and *pracodayAt* in the third line show that this line is indicative of the *cit* facet of Reality and is also the **Prayer** aspect of the *mantra* imbedded in the *GAyatrI*. It is the **cit** (Knowledge, *JnAnaM*) facet of the *sat-cid-Ananda* form or the *satyam-JnAnaM-anantam* definition of *Brahman*. It is significant that in this line it is the intellect that asks for the prompting of the Absolute and that is why this line is the *cit* facet.

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Ch. 10: The Light of All Lights

Excerpt from (P.193-194)

First note that it is wrong to say 'Light illumines itself.' For this implies that Light as illuminator is the Subject and Light as the illumined is the object. One and the same entity cannot be both subject and object. The eyes can see everything but themselves. That is why the statement of light illuminating itself is wrong. What does 'Illumination ' mean? Illumination means uncovering (*anAvRRita*) of what is covered (*AvRRita*) and not manifest. In other words, Light illumines itself is equivalent to saying, the *AvRRita* light becomes *anAvRRita* light! 'Illumining' is an action at a point of time. So before that action took place 'light' must have been *AvRta* and after that action 'Light' must be '*anAvRRita*.' But such a thing is absurd; there are no two *avasthas* (states) for Light. Therefore it is not an object of illumination! In advaita language and parlance, 'Atman knows itself ' is thus a wrong statement. (Incidentally this is an error that invariably occurs when people claim the Atman to be recognisable as a *jyoti* in *nirvikalpa-samAdhi*).

Light in Vedanta is that, in the presence of which things are known and in the absence of which things are not known. Light is the illuminator of any object. Each of the external lights described earlier, like the Sun, The Moon, the Fire, and the Sound is only a relative or empirical light. Even sense organs and Mind are Lights. But none of these is the Ultimate Light. Because all these lights do the function of being a light only when Consciousness is there. Each Light itself is an object for Consciousness. Light itself is known only by the ultimate Light of Consciousness.

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Ch. 11: Smriti
Excerpt from (P.211)

Those Hindus who have gone to Gaya (in Bihar) on pilgrimage to perform the rites due to their deceased ancestors would recall how much of an importance is given to the concept 'Mother' during the ceremonies there. At the end of all the rites, there is the rite of offering *piNDas* (balls of cooked rice ritually offered to such ancestors) at the foot of the ageless banyan tree there, called *akshaya-vaTa*. All the ancestors, other relatives, elders, other kith and kin and well-wishers who are not alive, are each offered just one *piNDa*. But the (deceased) mother, mother alone, is offered 16 *piNDas*. For each of these sixteen, a statement in the form of a *Shloka* is recited, paying gratitude to the mother for all that she did. For instance, the *Shlokas* go somewhat like this:

You bore me with great pain for ten months; this *piNDa* is in gratitude for that. You suffered kicks by me in your womb; this *piNDa* is in gratitude for that. You controlled your appetite for spicy and difficult-to-digest stuff because you did not want me in your womb to be hurt; this *piNDa* is for that. You suffered untold pangs of labour pain when I was born; this is the *piNDa* for that. After I was born you breast-fed me at the proper times, amidst all your busy schedule. This *piNDa* is for that. You suffered the pain of my biting into you, when my teeth began to grow; this *piNDa* is for that. You were on all sorts of restricted diet in order to save me from illness; this one is for that. You woke up at all odd times of nights to feed me; this one is for that.

It goes on like this sixteen times, mentioning everything that the mother must have done, and offering a *piNDa* in gratitude. You think of anything that you do to your children as a mother; it is listed there. When one hears these sixteen statements and the offering of the *piNDas* at the *akshaya-vaTa*, one will almost go into tears.

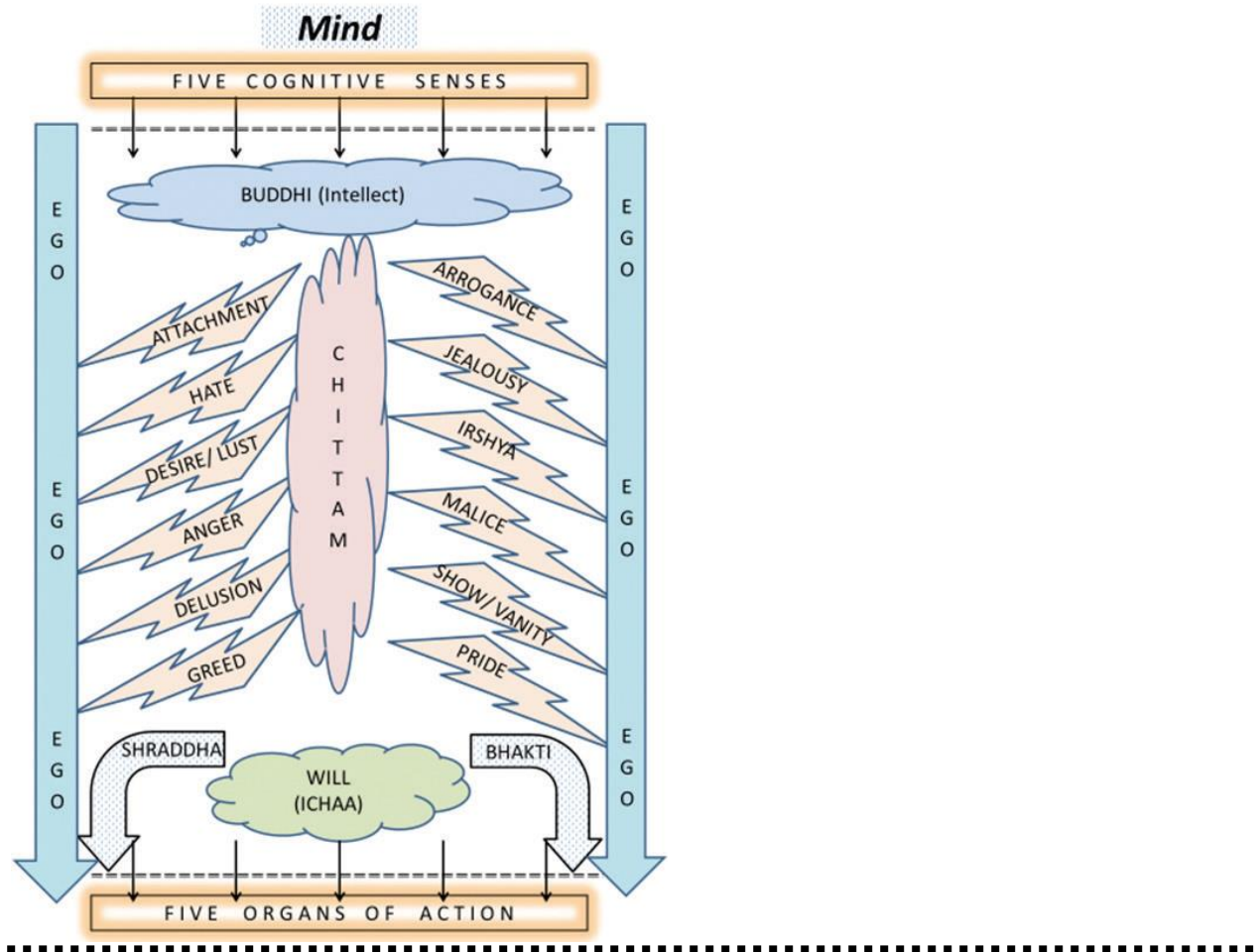
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Ch.12. Itihasa, Purana & Agama

Excerpt from (p.215)

ROLES OF MIND, WILL AND FATE

Mind is not something that you or the doctor can get hold of; it is subtle matter so subtle that it is nothing but a flow of thoughts – which is perpetually unstable, transient and volatile. It just receives all the cognitions that the senses send to it. It receives and stores. Nothing more. What acts is the will or will-power of the mind. What analyses the cognitions is the intellect within the mind. Will-power (*dhRRti* or *Ichha shakti* in Sanskrit) and Intellect (*buddhi*) are the two facets of the mind, which do these, of course, under the promptings of the mind. When *ShAstras* teach you to ‘speak the truth,’ they are telling your will-power to act in that direction of truth. If it decides to do so, it will tell the senses to follow that. Now what does Fate do? FATE is only the result or fructification of what all you have thought and done in your past lives.. It creates certain tendencies, which are the 13 channels of the mind through which all thoughts flow. This makes the mind for ever a prisoner of memories, wants and emotions



meaning, In that Rama, who was leaving the kingdom after having decided to go to the forest, not a little perturbation of mind was visible, as though he were an ascetic who has transcended everything of the world.

Ch.14: Aditya-hridayam

Excerpt from p.249

**sa ya eshhontarhRRidaya AkAshaH. tasminnayam purushho
manomayaH. amRRito hiraNmayaH. antareNa tAluke. Ya eshha stana
ivAvalambate. sendrayoniH. yatraasaukeshAnto vivartate. vyapohya
sIrshhakapaale.**

Here, in this bright space within the heart, is He, that Soul who is of thought-form, undying, full of light. In between the throat's two pillars, that which hangs down like a nipple, that is the gateway to the Supreme Lord; it passes out at the crown where the root of the hair is made to part, opening the skull in the centre.

The *AdityahRRidayastotra* propitiates this Aditya. *What we are worshipping is not the physical Sun that is visible.* He resides in our *hRRidayAkasha* and hence the name of this stotra. To nullify the powers that Creator Brahma Himself granted Ravana, our *ahamkAra*, we need to (and Rama was advised to do the same) propitiate this Aditya residing in our *hRRidayAkasha*. *This propitiation is what is done from shloka 7 to shloka 24* (eighteen *shlokas*: eighteen, by the way, is a spiritually significant number!). In contrast to Sri Rudram (Ch.3), where we said, *Svaras* (Intonations) are important and so Rudram has to be learnt from a Pandit, since *AdityahRRidayam* belongs to Ramayana and hence to the *ItihAsa* category, it is available to any one who can read Sanskrit! There is no question of *Svara*-requirements.

When getting the meaning of the words note that many of them fit both the Absolute and the Sun-God. We follow the *vyAkhyAna* of Sri Govindaraja on V.R.

[illegible]

Ch.15: An Overnight Capsule of Dharma

Excerpt from P.269

Does dharma compensate for adharma? is another question of Dhritarashtra. Do *dharma* and *adharma* cancel each other? Does one destroy the other in the life of an individual? The answer is important for the understanding of Hinduism. No, *dharma* and *adharma* do not cancel each other in the case of an individual who performs actions without detachment. Whatever *puNya-karma* one does, one reaps the fruits of that *puNya* and whatever *pApa-karma* that one does one reaps the consequences of them also. The two coexist. [Note: In the context of modern practice, it is significant to note that when ill-gotten riches find their way to the *hundi* of the Lord of Tirupati, probably in the expectation that the ills of the sources of the riches will be washed off, Sanatsujata tells us that **you may get *puNya* for your donation to Tirupati but your sins (if any) in acquiring those riches would still have to be accounted for in toto!**] It is not as if you compensate for your sins by doing good. The compensation is only in terms of *vasana* and not in terms of the fruits of your actions.

(From p.276) : The next virtue, namely, *hrIH*—a weak translation of which is ‘humility’ – is actually ‘the sense of shame when doing *adharma*’ (= *akArya-karaNe lajjA*, says Shankara). To put it more bluntly, it is a *Sense of Recoil from adharma*. The central problem in the morals of modern times is the absence of any sense of shame while going against the accepted norms of morality. The ancient Tamil work ‘*Tiruk-kuRaL*’ puts this in a succinct way: (Kural #1012):

ஊனுடைஎச்சம் உயிர்க்கெல்லாம் வேறல்ல

நாணுடைமைமாந்தர் சிறப்பு

**UNuDai echhaM uyirkkellAM vERalla
nANuDaimai mAnthar ciRappu.**

Meaning, Food, clothing and the rest are invariably common for all mankind; Sensitiveness to shame alone marks men of distinction.

It is alright in this new millenium to question the norms of a society that shaped itself by the values of the earlier millenium, but in all practice the sense of shame in doing wrong was the one sure insulation the previous generations had against a degeneration of morality. Without this virtue one goes down, by succumbing to temptations to do wrong. In fact in the modern days of fear of teenagers getting addicted to drugs, the one virtue that should be inculcated in them even as children is **hrIH**. Even if this means swinging the pendulum back towards a conformist approach our civilisation ought probably to prefer having this swing.

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Ch. 16: Litanies of One Thousand Names of God

Excerpt from p.286

An interesting observation on this aspect of Bhishma being quoted as one of the authorities on *Dharma*: In the Mahabharata, being dragged into the assembly where the dice match has been lost by Yudhishtira, Draupadi asks of everybody the most tricky question to Yudhishtira. *kiM nu pUrvaM parAjaisIH AtmAnaM mAM nu bhArata* (II – 60 – 7): “Whom did you lose first, yourself or me?” Bhishma looks upon Draupadi’s question as a legal challenge but wriggles out rather uncomfortably. He concludes in great distress that the matter is complex and he cannot resolve Draupadi’s dilemma. न धर्मसौक्ष्म्यात् सुभगे विवक्तुम् शक्नोमि ते प्रश्नम्-

इमम् यथावत् ‘*na dharmasaukshhmyAt subhage vivaktum; shaknomi te prashnam-imam yathAvat*’ (first half of II-60–40 in M.B.). In fact this was Bhishma’s greatest confrontation with *Dharma*. Well, even Homer nods!

Excerpt from p.302

padmanAbhaH appears three times in V.S. *padma* means lotus and *nAbhi* means the navel. The three meanings of *padmanAbha* are: He in whose navel stands the lotus from which the creator *brahma*, the source of the universe, originated; He whose navel is beautifully shaped like a lotus; He who resides in the central part of the heart lotus – the reference here being to the vedic passage which says: It (The Supreme) lies below the heart as an inverted lotus, the stalk of the lotus reaching just above the navel: (*M.N.U.*)

***padmakoshapratIkAshagum hRRidayam cApyadhomukham.
adho nishhTyA vitastyAnte nAbhyAmupari tishhThati...***

In addition to these three meanings *padmanAbha* has an esoteric meaning derived from the fact that the word *mahA-padma* stands for the number million-million, namely, 10^{12} . The name symbolically states that the Transcendental Supreme is the Ultimate source of Time.

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Ch. 19: The Story of Jadabharata

Excerpt from page 326

Bharata saw all this and was overpowered with compassion at the poor little deer that had now lost its mother and was about to be itself lost in the current of the river. Instinctively he caught hold of the little one, brought it to his own *ashram* and started taking care of it. From that day onwards he started feeding it, searched for the proper grass for its food, protected it from wild animals and was doing everything for its care, nourishment and growth. Gradually Bharata's time was more and more occupied with caring and tending to the needs of the infant deer. The time that he usually allotted for his spiritual disciplines got reduced steadily to almost nothing.

***Compassion and affection are not wrong;
in fact they are very noble qualities.***

But when they become an attachment, the spiritual fall is imminent.

Affection ennobles, but attachment enslaves.

Love elevates, but desire entraps.

This is what happened in the case of this great King Bharata.

Excerpt from p.328-329

The nine brothers of JaDabharata who were knowledgeable only about the *karma-KANDa* of the Vedas and had no idea of the *brahmavit* (= knower of Brahman) among them treated him as a good-for-nothing fool. Consequently they simply extracted work from him and fed him only some rotten food, that only deserved to be thrown in the garbage. JaDabharata came to be known in the entire neighborhood as a robust young man but a confirmed idiot. Whatever menial work anybody gave him he did it, but not intelligently. They put him as a sentry in the fields to ward off birds and he sat there unendingly. Some one gives him instructions to dig and he digs; someone else comes along and asks him to stop and he stops. Some one gives him a beating for not doing his work properly and he receives it without murmur or protest.

***YadA tu parata AhAraM karma-vetana IhamAnaH sva-bhrAtRRibhirapi
kedAra-karmaNi nirUpitaH tadapi karoti kintu na samaM vishhamaM
nyUnaM adhikaM iti veda kaNa-piNyAka-paI-karaNa-kulmAsha-
sthAlIpurIshhAdIny-api amRRitavad-abhyavaharati/*** /* V – 9 – 11.

Whatever he gets he accepted it, without ever caring whether it is more or less, good or bad. Whatever they gave him, be it rice flour, oil-cake, chaff, spoilt pulses, or charred food – he ate up everything as if it were nectar. It went on like this day by day, year by year. He had decided not to care for this body and so his body was usually filthy, his dhoti dirty, and his face, with a long beard, looked like that of a caveman. He was living as a *brahmavit* totally aloof from his body.

Ch.20: The Cosmic Flow of Time as per Scriptures

Excerpt from p.337

The kali-yuga that we are in now will be followed by the *satya-yuga* of the next *mahA-yuga*, namely the 29th *mahA-yuga*, and so on cyclically. When 71 *mahA-yugas* of this *manvantara* are over, there will be a twilight period as stated above and then the next (8th) *manvantara* goes on and then the 9th *manvantara*, and so on. When the 14 *manvantaras* are over, BrahmA's day is over and BrahmA's night begins. At that time the created universe (including the Sun, the stars and everything that was created at the beginning of the *kalpa*) will merge into the Absolute and Brahma Himself 'sleeps' as it were. When Brahma's night (of the same duration as His day) is over, the next *kalpa* begins and Brahma begins His work of creation again, deriving the strength and power from the Absolute once again as He did in the previous *kalpas*. This way Brahma's days and nights are counted 360 times to make one year of Brahma's life. According to the traditional time-keeping it is currently the first day in the the 51st year of Brahma now of which again five and a half 'hours' out of 'twelve' hours have elapsed of His time. Thus in Brahma's calendar the present time may be coded as his 51st year – first month – first day – 7th *manvantara* – 28th *mahA-yuga* – 4th yuga or *kaliyuga*. The period of *kali-yuga* is just 4.32 'seconds' of Brahma's time!

Excerpt from p.339

Portion of brahma's day elapsed up to the present time (2018 AD, say) consists of

6 *manvantara*-twilights (one preceding each *manvantara*): $6 \times 4\kappa$;

6 *manvantaras* completed: $6 \times 71 \times 10\kappa$;

1 *manvantara*-twilight preceding the 7th *manvantara*: 4κ ;

27 *mahA-yugas* elapsed in this *manvantara*: $27 \times 10\kappa$;

Three yugas elapsed (namely *satya*, *treta*

and *dvApara*) in this 28th *mahA-yuga*: $(4 + 3 + 2) \kappa$;

and, years elapsed in present *kaliyuga* 5120

All this adds up to $4567 \kappa + 5120 = 1,972,949,120$ human years.

This is the age of the universe in this day of BrahmA as of 2018 AD.

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Ch.21: Four character-types: the Varna System

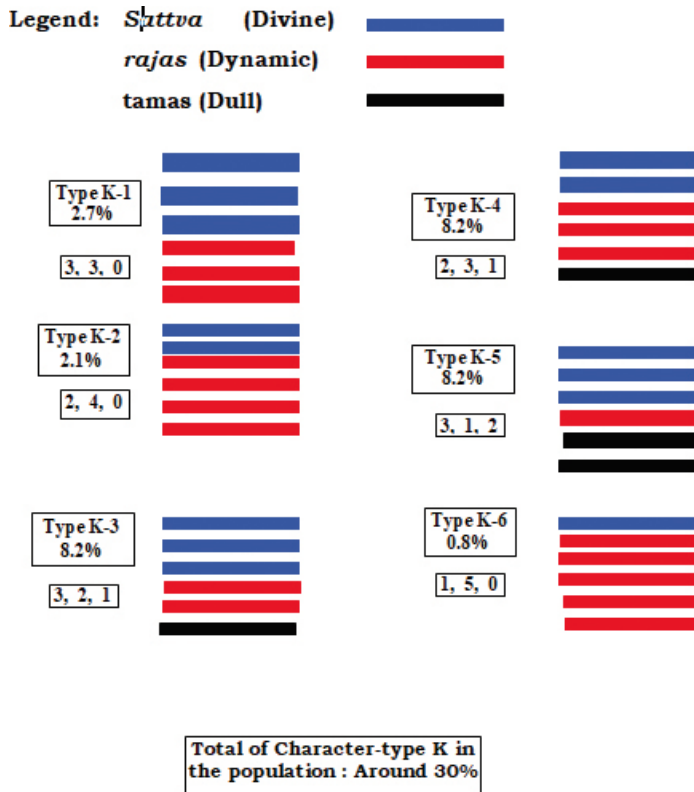
Excerpt from Ch.21 (p.341)

The character-type of a person depends upon the quality which dominates the person's essential inner nature (*svabhAva*). There are three major qualities discussed in all Hindu scriptures including the Gita. In Sanskrit they are known as *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *tamas*. Roughly they correspond to three d's, namely, divine, dynamic and dull, respectively. These are the tendencies or modes that govern our nature and are collectively called *GuNas*. Six entities are chosen by Krishna for discussion in the 18th Ch of the Gita: **Knowledge (*JnAnam*); Action (*karma*); Doer (*kartA*); Intellect (*buddhi*); Will (*dhRti*); Happiness (*sukham*)**. Each of these six is dissected by Him into what shades of behavioral response belong to which of the three modes. Thus, He delineates 18 different response-modes, devoting one verse to each.

Though no person can be counted as having any one of these tendencies in an exclusive manner, the three *guNas* constitute broad categories in which man's nature can be divided in general. The scriptures (including the Gita) specify four such broad categories **for all humans**. In his commentary on *shloka* 41 of the eighteenth Ch of the Gita, Shankara lists these four character-types of the human population as follows: The Gita names these types as BrAhmaNa, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. We shall name them, for the purpose of this article, as B-type, K-type (*Chart shown on the next page*) V-type and S-type, respectively.

1. Those in whom *sattva* is the dominating quality
2. Those in whom *rajas* dominates with *sattva* as the next dominating influence
3. Those in whom *rajas* dominates with *tamas* as the next dominating influence
4. Those in whom *tamas* is the dominating quality.

Excerpt from p.359

CHARACTER-TYPE K (comprising of six types of triads)

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Ch. 23: From the Tamil Age of Devotion

Excerpt From p.389

***Pachai mA malai pOl mEni pavaLavAy kamalac ceNkaN
achuthA amarar ERE Ayar tham kozhundhe enum
iccuvai thavira yAn pOy indhiralokam ALum
accuvai perinum vENDen arangam mA nagaruLLAne***

Meaning: Oh Lord of the great city of Srirangam! You have the physical body that looks like an Emerald mountain! Your mouth is like a Pearl! And your eyes match the red lotus. You are known not to let down those who surrender to you! You are the Lord of all the divines! You are the most pleasant one for the Gopas and Gopis of Brindavan! I would not prefer even the glory of ruling the world of the divines from heaven to this heavenly joy of chanting here itself these glories and names of Yours.

Note on TondaraDippoDi Alwar: Born as ViprANarayana, he was, as per Hindu legends, infatuated with a danceuse, whose mother stole all his money. When he was in need of money, the Lord came to his rescue and showered gold on him. He became a staunch devotee of Ranganatha of Srirangam temple and was redeemed to a spiritual life. He constructed a big Nandhavanam (flower park) where various beautiful and fragrant flower plants are grown. He worshipped all the devotees of Lord Vishnu and put the dust under their feet on his head and sang songs in praise of Sri Ranganathar. From then on, he was called as “ThondaraDippoDi Alwar,” meaning the Azhvar who bore the ‘poDi’ (= dust) under the ‘aDi’ (= feet) of the thoNDars (= devotees).

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RESPONSE TO ANY QUESTION THAT MAY ARISE OUT OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BROCHURE MAY MOST PROBABLY BE FOUND IN THE BOOK ITSELF.

Aum ShAntiH ShAntiH ShAntiH.