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[V. Madhurima](#)

Here are a few articles written by me on some aspects of vedism.

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I Introduction

Man's glory is not in what he is but in what he makes possible by the study of himself and nature [1]. Philosophy is defined as the study of elements, powers, or causes and laws that explain the facts and existences [2]. Philosophy is subjected to the influence of the race and culture [5] and the practice of religion is nothing but a quest for the facts of inner life [6]. In India philosophy and life are inter-linked and helped to withstand numerous external invasions and internal disturbances [3]. Except for Charvakas who believed that materialistic gains lead to salvation, there was no place for materialistic gains in the Indian thought. Philosophy in India deals with both the cleansing of body and mind a concept well known to Indians. Indeed philosophy in India is *Aatma vidya*, knowledge of the self and "*Aatmaanam Viddhi*", know the self, sums up the Indian thought [3].

Although Indian philosophy (*Darshana*, to see) uses reasoning extensively yet it believes that intuition is the only way by which the ultimate truth can be known because in Indian philosophy truth is not known but realised.

Acceptance of Vedas as source of ultimate knowledge, intuition and inference unifies the various philosophical schools of India. Although all schools use words like avidya, maya, purusha and jiva, their interpretation is given differently [6]. Another common feature of the different schools is in their non-acceptance of the Buddhist philosophy. This is probably because the various schools never tried to overturn the existing social settings where as the Buddhist preachers always spoke against the existing class (varna) system. [3,5]

II Periods of Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy has always been dynamic. In Rig-Veda the religious thought of the Aryan invaders takes note of the views of the native people. In Atharva Veda vague cosmic gods are added to Gods of nature. Upanishads are realisations of things already said in the Vedas. The Epics are the meeting points of highly philosophical thinking with the early nature worship. Since Indian philosophy has been a dynamic phenomenon, it has periods of similarities based on ideologies followed during that period. Indian philosophy can be broadly classified into

1. *The Vedic Period (1500 BC to 600 BC)*: Period of Aryan invasion, Vedas and Upanishads. During this period philosophy was in its infancy with a visible conflict between superstitions and thought.

The Epic Period (600 BC to 200 AD): Period of Upanishads, epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism.

3. *The Sutra Period (From 200 AD)*: As The philosophical material available during this period was large the Sutras (or rules) were devised as shorthand scheme, since the Sutras by themselves are not intelligible, commentaries were needed. It was in this period that the six systems of Indian philosophy came into existence. It is impossible to ascertain which among the six systems is the oldest since all of them have cross-references to each other. The six Indian systems (had western counterparts)

- *Nyaya* -Aristotle' peripatetic.
- *Vaisesika*-Ionian philosophy of Thales.
- *Samkhya* - Italic philosophy of Pythagoras.
- *Yoga* - Stoic philosophy of Zeno.
- *Purva Mimamsa*- Psychagogia of Socrates.
- *Vedanta*- Plato's philosophy

1. *The Scholastic Period (upto the 16C AD)*: overlaps with the previous period. Great thinkers like Shankara, Kumarila Bhattar, Ramanuja were seen in this period.

III (a) The Vedic Period

Vedas are the earliest known texts of human thought. The Vedic hymns have three aspects: polytheism (Indra, Varuna etc), monotheism (Brhaspati who represented the unification of the multitudes of gods) and monism (that there is only one supreme force of which all gods are manifestations). The notable feature of the Vedas is the conflict between primitive nature worship and an intellectual thought process trying to identify a supreme force to replace the plethora of gods. Dissatisfaction with dogmatic religion gave rise to the Upanishadic period of deep thought [2].

III (b) Philosophy of the Upanishads

Upanishad literally means secret teaching and form the end portion of the Vedas, called Vedanta. Since the teachings of the Upanishads are difficult to follow many schools of Vedanta arose at a later stage, each giving their own interpretation to the Upanishads. The period of the Upanishads was less scientific and more towards finding a tentative solution to satisfy the human curiosity [3]. There are 108 Upanishads of which 10 commented by Shankaracharya are important. It is not possible to fix the dates of composition of these Upanishads that belong to pre and post Buddhist periods.

The underlying principle of this period was monism. The entire world is a manifestation of

the supreme power called Brahman. Brahman is identified as "sachcitananda" (sat+chit +ananda) and is taken to be the ultimate reality. It is thought of as spiritual in nature and everything else in the world exists in and through it. *Sat* means truth that distinguishes the real Brahman from the non-being, *cit* means consciousness and indicates a spiritual nature, *ananda* means peace and refers to an all-embracing character.

III(c) Philosophy of Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavad Gita is set as a conversation between Arjuna and Sri Krishna in Mahabharata war. Although Gita is mentioned in Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata, many believe that it is a later addition by the same author since the setting is not congenial to a long conversation but the language and style of the Mahabharata and the Gita are the same. The doctrine of Gita is essentially a theistic one [4].

After the Upanishadic period two schools of thought were prevalent. One was the ideal of renunciation and the other the positive approach of active work. In Gita Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the path of active work (Karma Yoga) with out anticipation of any result. He further elaborates that no work is high or low provided one does the work allotted to him based on his class (Varna). This is the concept of svadharma. Gita further elaborates that the concept of renunciation of the fruit of labour is to cleanse the heart and serve God and not to make living purposeless. Although man is not to expect the results of his deeds, he is responsible for his actions and these determine the kind of life man will live in his next life.

IV Six Systems of Indian Philosophy

The period of Gita set the tone for answers that were scientific. Strenuous attempts were made to justify by reason what faith implicitly accepts [5]. Of the many schools of thought or Darshanas, six became famous. They are Gautama's *Nyaya*, Kaanada's *Vaiseshika*, Kapila's *Samkhya*, Patanjali's *Yoga*, Jaimini's *Purva Mimamsa* and Badarayana's *Uttara Mimamsa* (or *Vedanta*).

The six different systems of Indian philosophy have common ideas. All systems accept the existence of a real and immortal soul, distinct from the material body. They believe in the transmigration of soul from one body to the other ,concept of life-death cycles. All systems except *Purva Mimamsa* aim at the practical achievement of salvation. They believe in *jivanmukti* (liberation of life from the life-death cycle) achieved by knowledge and not death.

IV (A) Nyaya

The oldest existing book on *Nyaya* is the 'Nyaya sutra' by Gautama, is based on the theme of knowledge and logical analysis. Perception, inference, comparison and testimony are

accepted as the means of knowledge [5].

Nyaya accepts the plurality of souls. When this inherent, permanent and unconscious soul comes in contact with sense organs it acquires intellectual, discretionary or emotional qualities. Only by deep logical analysis based on philosophical knowledge and dissolution of doubt and ignorance, man can be liberated from the life-death cycle.

Nyaya is based on:

1. Pramana - Means to acquire knowledge.
2. Prameya - Object of knowledge.
3. Samshaya - Doubt.
4. Prayojana - Purpose.
5. Drstanta - Illustrative example.
6. Siddhanta - Conclusion
7. Avayava - Constituents of a syllogism.
8. Tarka - Hypothetical argument.
9. Nirnaya - Ascertaining the truth.
10. Vada - Discussion.
11. Jalpa - Disputation.
12. Vitanda - Refutation.
13. Hetvabhasa - Fallacy in the cause.
14. Chala - guile.
15. Jati - casuistry

16.Nigrasthana- Vulnerable point of opponent's statement [7]

Nyaya believes in the existence of a supreme God who initiates the process of world creation. Gautama defines liberation as the absolute freedom from pain. In liberation there is no feeling of bliss because soul does not have the inherent characteristics of cognition. In this state of liberation there is activity but no selfish activity in which pleasure and happiness are present but pain is absent.

IV (B) Vaiseshika

Nyaya and Vaiseshika are considered sister philosophies. The earliest extant book of Vaiseshika (vishesha = particularity) is the "Vaiseshika Sutra" by Kanada. Vaiseshika proposes the atomic nature of the world i.e. the world consists of invisible eternal atoms (earth, water, light and air) which are incapable of further division.

The system categorises all objects of valid knowledge or padartha into six:

- Dravya (Substance)
- Guna (Quality) possess real objective experience
- Karma (Action)
- Samanya (Generality)
- Visesa (Particularity) inferred
- Samavaya (Inherence)

The commentators of the Sutras accept a seventh category called abhava (non-existence). According to Vaiseshika reality consists of substances which possess qualities and there are nine such substances namely earth, water, light, air, ether, time, space, soul and mind.

Existence of soul is inferred because consciousness cannot reside in the body or sense organs but the all-pervading soul resides where the body is. The plurality of souls is inferred from their differences in status and conditions and it experiences the consequences of its deeds. Kanada does not mention God but the later commentators felt that God produced the unchangeable atoms.

IV (C) Samkhya

Samkhya is considered to be the oldest among the philosophical systems dating back to about 7c BC. Kapila, the author of 'Samkhya Sutra', is considered to be the originator of this system. The "Samkhya Karika" of Ishwarakrishna is the earliest available text on Samkhya

dating to about 3c AD. Samkhya's name is derived from root word Samkhya (enumeration) and is reflective than authoritative. Well-known commentaries are Gaudapada's bhasya, Vacaspati Misra's Tattwa-kaumudi, Vijnanabhiksu's Samkhya-pravacanbhasya, and Mathara's Matharavrtti.

The Samkhya system proposes the theory of evolution (prakriti-purusha) that is accepted by all other systems. The purusha (soul) of this system is unchanging and is a witness to the changes of prakriti. Hence the Samkhya system is based on dualism wherein nature (prakriti) and conscious spirit (purusha) are separate entities not derived from one another. There can be many purushas since one man can attain enlightenment while the rest do not, whereas prakriti is one. It is identified with pure objectivity, phenomenal reality, which is non-conscious.

Prakriti possess three fundamental natures; (1) The pure and fine Sattva (2) the active Rajas and (3) the coarse and heavy Tamas. Sattva accounts for thought and intelligibility, experienced psychologically as pleasure, thinking, clarity, understanding and detachment. Rajas accounts for motion, energy and activity and it is experienced psychologically as suffering, craving and attachment. Tamas accounts for restraint and inertia. It is experienced psychologically as delusion, depression and dullness.

The conscious Purusha excites the unconscious Prakriti and in this process upsets the equilibrium of the various gunas. According to Samkhya there are twenty-five tatvas which arise due to the union of purusha and prakriti. Their union is often described as the ride of a lame man with perfect sight (purusha) on the shoulders of a blind person of sure foot (prakriti). Their process of evolution is as given below and it accounts for the different tatvas. In Samkhya creation is the development of the different effects from mulaprakriti and destruction their dissolution into mulaprakriti.

Samkhya is essentially atheistic because it believes that the existence of god cannot be proved. Prakriti, the cause of evolution of world, does not evolve for itself but for Purusha-the ultimate consciousness. The self is immortal but due to ignorance (avidya) it confuses itself with the body, mind and senses. If avidya is replaced by vidya the self is free from suffering and this state of liberation is called kaivalya. Yoga is the practical side of Samkhya.

IV (D) Yoga

Philosophy requires a pure body and a pure mind. Yoga is the way to achieve this. Samkhya denies the presence of god whereas in Yoga the ultimate unchanging perfect Purusha is termed god and if meditated upon he takes other purushas towards salvation. Yoga is an ancient system; in fact the excavations from Indus Valley civilisation show some yogic postures. Patanjali's *Yogasutra* is regarded as the main source of codification of yoga.

The word Yoga has a variety of meanings; it means *method* (BG), *Yoking* (RV), *conjunction*

of the individual and the supreme soul (Yajnavalkya). Yoga is the methodical effort to attain perfection through the practical control of different physical and psychical elements of human nature. It gives the methods by which the body and the mind can be made to achieve vidya and hence jivanmukthi. Buddhi of Samkhya replaced by Chitt in Yoga, which undergoes modifications when in contact with the senses.

Yoga's physiology is based on a network of about 7000 Nadis (small nerves). According to Yoga the human body consists of two parts, the upper body (torso, arms and head) and the lower body (legs and feet). The centre of the human body lies at the base of the cerebro-spinal (Brahmadanda or Merudanda) column. This Merudanda has six plexus (chakras) which are the invisible to the human eye but are visible through yoga. The body is considered to be the instrument for the expression of spiritual life. In this system the physical world is not treated as unreal, instead methods to overcome the hindrances caused by the manifest world are given. There are eight such methods namely

- Yama abstention External aids
- Niyama observance
- Aasana posture
- Pranayama breath control
- Pratyahara withdrawal of senses
- Dhaarana contemplation Internal aids
- Dhyana fixed attention
- Samadhi concentration

Yama and Niyama are the ethical preparations necessary for the practice of Yoga. To be seated comfortably is described in Aasana. (*Sthiram Sukham Aasanam*). The perfect aasana is such that the body has beauty, grace, strength and hardness. The next is breath control (pranayama) which Patanjali mentions as an optional measure since serenity of mind may be attained by cultivation of virtues or by regulation of breath.

Withdrawal of the senses and shutting of the mind to external influences (pratyahara) helps man in introspection. These five are considered to be accessories to Yoga and not themselves elements in it [5]. Dhaarana is fixing the mind (chitt) on a particular spot. Dhyana is the resultant state of undisturbed mind. Samadhi is the condition to be passed through before attaining jivanmukthi.

IV (E) Purva Mimamsa

Purva Mimamsa is earlier (purva) to Uttara (later) Mimamsa in a logical sense. By the Sutra period the Vedas were beginning to lose their glory in public opinion hence some scholars began to reanalyse the Vedas in order to defend them and justify Vedic ritualism. Mimamsa is to investigate Dharma (duty) as given in the Vedas. The Purva Mimamsa is practical than speculative. Jaimini's *Mimamsa Sutra* 's date is probably 4c BC. Sabara's commentary on *Mimamsa Sutra* is the earliest extant commentary. Kumarila, a vigorous exponent of Brahminical orthodoxy commented on *Mimamsa Sutra* and its *Bhashya*.

Jaimini accepts perception, inference and testimony but rejects intuition. He also believes that there is a connection between an act and its result since an act performed today cannot give rise to a result later, it does not give rise to some unseen result before passing away. He calls this unseen force as Apurva. Apurva is the metaphysical link between work and its result. He is unwilling to trace the origin of result to God's will since one cause cannot give multiple results.

Moksha (liberation) in Purva Mimamsa is in heaven. Purva Mimamsa gives a way to heaven but not freedom from Samsara (daily life). Since the way to liberation is defined and it is set as a goal, Purva Mimamsa goes beyond being a commentary on the Vedas to being a Darshana. It was the later philosophers of this system who brought about the change. The Purva Mimamsa was an unsatisfactory system of philosophy [5], which could neither explain the working of the universe nor god. Utmost importance was given to sacrifices and rituals.

IV (F) Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta Sutra)

The Vedanta philosophy is important both for its philosophical views and its close connections with the existing Hinduism. Uttara Mimamsa (also called Vedanta Sutra or Brahma Sutra) of Badarayana deals with the Brahman doctrine. It consists of 555 sutras, each with two or three words. The sutras themselves are unintelligible and leave the interpretation to the reader and hence there are varied commentaries on the Vedanta Sutra. The chief commentators are Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbraka and Vallabha.

The Vedanta Sutra has four chapters. The first deals with the theory of Brahman and its relation to the world. The second chapter discusses the objections raised by other systems against this view. The third chapter discusses the methods by which Brahma Vidya can be attained. The fourth chapter deals with the results of Brahma Vidya. Badarayana's view on God is that of monism. The two main commentaries of Shankara and Ramanuja are discussed below.

IV (Fa) Advaita Vedanta of Shankara

The main exponent of advaita philosophy was Shankaracharya (8c AD). He could understand the philosophy of the Vedas by the age of eight [5] and lived to an age of 32 by when he established four main monasteries in India, commented upon the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita and composed many philosophical works.

Advaita literally means non-dualism and is based on the Upanishads, Brahma Sutra and Bhagavad Gita. Advaita asserts that the real self (jiva) is Brahman who is nirguna (attributeless), nishkriya (activity-less), nir-avayava (without parts) nirupadhika (unconditional absolute) and nirvishesha (simple, homogeneous entity). The world is a manifestation of this Brahman and hence much importance is given to the Upanishadic statements like *tat tvam asi* (thou art that) and *aham brahmasmi* (I am Brahman).

Brahman is the reality behind the world and is also the Antaryami (the inner dwelling one).

Liberation (moksha) is to understand that the inner self is the real Brahman. This is not a mere intellectual exercise but depends on the experiences of the person. Although the world according to Advaita is monistic the real world perceived by man is dual. This discrepancy is attributed to the presence of Maya (illusion) or Adhyasa (superimposition) and absence of knowledge. Just as a man looking at rope mistakes it to be a snake (*rajju-sarpa bhranthi*), similarly there is no real world; it is the absence of knowledge that makes man to assume the existence of one.

The root meaning of the word *Maya* is "extraordinary and inexplicable power"; and in Shankara's Vedanta the term refers to the creative power of *Brahman* to issue forth in self-manifestation as the phenomenal world. Hence Maya and the world according to Shankara are neither real nor unreal.

Vivartavada, the philosophy that this world of variegated forms is an illusion and that the individual atma (soul) is one with God, was taught by Shankara. Here a higher reality is visible as a lower one and the cause produces the effect without undergoing any change itself. For example the same clay (Brahman) takes form of pots and toys (the variety of beings in the world) without changing its true nature.

On the practical side Advaita prescribes Yoga and Karma-sanyasa as the methods to achieve moksha. It is with the help of reasoning that avidya can be removed and liberation when alive (jivanmukthi) can be attained. Man then realises that the entire world is the manifestation of Brahman

Brahma Satya Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Naparajh.

IV (Fb) Vishista Advaita of Ramanuja

Ramanuja is the 11c AD founder of Vishista-advaita Vedanta (qualified monistic Vedanta) who maintained that God himself is composed of parts; individual souls and physical world comprise the body of God. Ramanuja unified a personal theist god with the single universal god of monism. This unification made the system popular among the common folk.

The sources for Ramanuja's philosophy are twofold

- The Sanskrit Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas
- The Tamil spiritual literature which have Vedic and non-Vedic Ideas.

Ramanuja recognises three factors

- Achit: matter which has no conscious
- Chit: Soul or those which have life and can experience
- Ishvara: God

Chit and Achit are dependent on Ishvara. Chit, Achit and Ishvara are distinct but their

organic unity is accepted.

Ramanuja's Vishista Advaita consists of a seven-fold path

1. Viveka abstention
2. Vimoka freeness of mind
3. Adhyasa repetition
4. Kriya works
5. Kalyana virtuous conduct
6. Anavasada freedom from dejection
7. Anuddharasha absence of exhalation

Ramanuja's philosophy does not accept jivanmukthi. According to Ramanuja Moksha is liberation from the fetters of Samsara by seeking the rescuing love of God and the first step towards this is Nish-Kama-Karma i.e. practice of duty for duty's sake with out seeking for any pleasure from it and by this man has no bondage to the body. This paves the way for realisation of the soul. Karma Yoga hence becomes Jnana Yoga by following Bhakthi Yoga. Ethical religion hence gets transformed to religious philosophy.

V Influence of some branches of Indian philosophy on Arts

Samkhya: We have previously seen how Samkhya classifies various qualities into Satvik, Rajasik and Tamasik. This form of classification is found in Kathakali dance form. Since this dance form depicts countless characters, each with their own qualities, classification into the three gunas becomes important. Some characters have intermediate qualities. The Satvik characters are painted green to symbolise the inner refinement and moral excellence. The gait is graceful. The Tamasik characters (like demons) are painted black and have harsh movements and make loud noises.

Yoga: Just as in yoga all Indian art forms are methods of self-realisation and not of entertainment. To achieve this controlled internalisation of senses (pratyahara) is of immense consequence. On achieving this internalisation the artist experiences the full

content of life and this is the model form which he expresses through his art.

Vishistadvaita: In Indian dances the Nayika (mortal soul) yearns to be united with her Nayaka (God) and this follows the concept of Bhakti marga prescribed by Vishistadvaita.

VI Conclusion

Although Indian Philosophy is ancient it has always been dynamic. There has been place for theism and atheism, for the intelligentsia and the common man, for physical and mental development. The numerous schools of philosophy follow similar principles and ideas and have been responsible for the stability of the nation over millennia. As Kautilya's saying goes " Philosophy is the lamp of all sciences".

VII References

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Abbreviations used

BG Bhagavad Gita

RV Rig Veda





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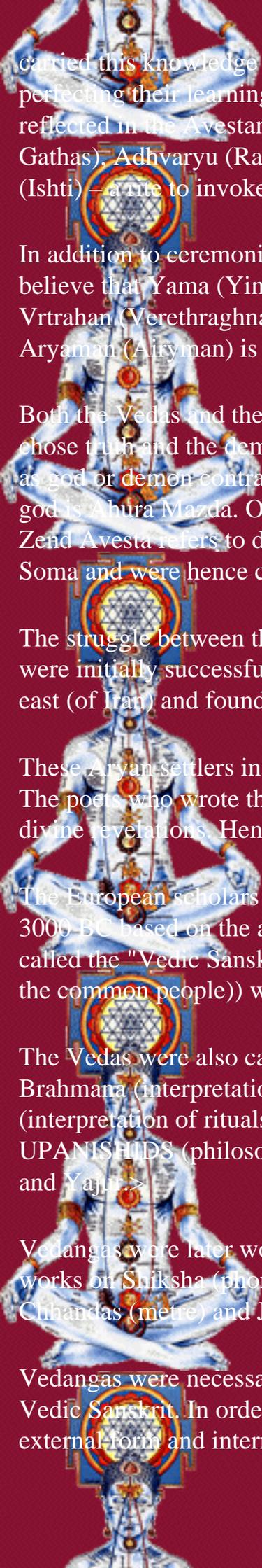
Early man is believed to have evolved in Asia or Africa about a million years ago. Man passed through the Neolithic period in Egypt and Middle East during the period between 10,000-5,000 BC. Settled communities of man evolved in Middle East, Mesopotamia and Persia in c. 6000-3500 BC, in Egypt in c. 3500-2700 BC, Indus Valley in c. 3000 BC and in America before 1000 BC [1].

It is believed that the ancestors of the Indo-Europeans branched into two-the European and the Indo-Iranian. The later branch further divided into two:- the Iranian and the Indian. This conclusion is drawn from the similarity in the language of the Avestan Gathas and the Vedas. A proto-Indo-Iranian language is thought to have evolved in c. 1500 BC, probably in Syria. Egyptian excavations indicate that Syria had rulers with Indo-Iranian names in the second millenium BC [2].

By the time the Indian branch of the Indo-Iranians reached India, Indus Valley Civilization IVC was at least a thousand years old. The IVC had a notable religion of its own. Whereas in other civilizations men built magnificent temples for gods and kings but the average citizen lived an ordinary life, in the IVC the average citizen lived in spacious houses, had access to public baths, good drainage etc, and religion was a private affair [3]. Mother goddess was worshipped as the supreme deity and the worship of a proto Shiva was known [4].

The state of India between the IVC and the coming of the Aryans (the Indians of the Indo-Iranian branch) is fuzzy. It is believed [3] that the greatest fusion of culture in India is that of the Aryans and the Dravidians (possible representatives of the IVC). If one assumes that the Aryan invasion theory is correct, the location of the original home of the Aryans is an important question. Based on the foregoing arguments Max Muller believed that they came from central Asia. Indian scholars like B.G. Tilak think of the arctic circle as the original home of Aryans since the descriptions of sunrise given in the Vedas are too detailed and beautiful to refer to the equatorial sunrise.

Aryans who came to India brought with them a well-defined religion, which was essentially a refined form of nature worship. The fusion of this religion with that already existing in India gave raise to the so-called Hinduism. It is believed that the Aryans, during their course of migration, came in contact with the Babylonians who were experts in astronomy and use of metals. The Indo-Iranians (Aryans)



carried this knowledge to an art of perfection. In addition to learning from the Babylonians and perfecting their learning, the Aryans developed religious institutions unique to them, which are reflected in the Avestan Gathas and the Vedas. Some of them are the Hotr of Vedas (Zaotar of the Gathas), Adhvaryu (Rathwi) and the Atharvan (Atharva) who were specifically trained priests; Isti (Ishti) – a rite to invoke a deity to whom Ahuti (Azuiti) or offering was made.

In addition to ceremonies, mythologies assumed a definite form. Both the Vedas and the Gathas believe that Yama (Yima) is the ancestor of all humans (Aryans); that the demon Vrtra was slain by Vrtrahan (Verethraghna); that Thrita was the first physician; Mitra (Mithra) is the sun god; and Aryaman (Airyman) is the god presiding over marriage [5].

Both the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta state that gods and demons had a common origin- the gods chose truth and the demons chose untruth. This is about as far as the two agree, for whom each calls as god or demon contradicts with the other. The Gathas call the gods Ahura and hence their greatest god is Ahura Mazda. On the other hand the Vedas call the demons Asura and the gods Deva. Deva in Zend Avesta refers to demons. It is believed that the Indo-Aryans drank a lot of the intoxicating Soma and were hence called Suras in opposition to the Iranian –Aryans who did not drink (A-suras).

The struggle between these two groups grew keener. According to Aitreya Brahmana, the Asuras were initially successful in these wars due to which the Devas were forced to take refuge in the north-east (of Iran) and found their way to India [5].

These Aryan settlers in India wrote the Vedas, which they called the Srutis i.e., that which was heard. The poets who wrote the Srutis did not claim these works to be their own but attributed them to divine revelations. Hence Srutis were also called apaurusheya or that which is not of human origin.

The European scholars date these Vedas to c 1400 BC where as the Indian scholars date them to c 3000 BC based on the astronomical data present in the Vedas. The language of the Vedas is what is called the "Vedic Sanskrit" (as opposed to the later day Classical Sanskrit and Prakrits (languages of the common people)) which evolved much later.

The Vedas were also called the Sruti or Agamas. They were divided into Samhita (original text) and Brahmana (interpretation) .The Brahmanas had three main parts namely the BRAHMANA (interpretation of rituals), ARANYAKA (work on worship and contemplation) and the UPANISHIDS (philosophical questions). There are four principle Vedas namely Rig, Sama, Atharva and Yajur >

Vedangas were later works, which were found to be necessary to understand Vedic texts. They were works on Shiksha (phonetics), Kalpa (rituals), Vyakharana (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chhandas (metre) and Jyotisha (astronomy).

Vedangas were necessary because by the time of Brahmanas, spoken Sanskrit had drifted far from Vedic Sanskrit. In order to preserve the Srutis, Shiksha and Chhandas were necessary to interpret the external form and internal structure of the Srutis.

RIGVEDA SAMHITA

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The exact period of the writing /composing of the Rigveda is attributed to different times by the European and Indian scholars. European scholars believe the period to be between 1500-1000 BC where as Indian scholars believe it to be 4500 BC, based on the astronomical evidence in the Rigveda. Rigveda consists of hymns written during different periods. Some hymns themselves speak of old and new hymns.

Overall, the Rigveda samhita has 1017 hymns called SUKTAS and 10500 verses. These are collected in 10 mandalas or books of unequal length.

MANDALA	COMPOSED BY
1	191 hymns composed by different poets belonging to different families
2	Gritasmada and his family (descendents)
3	Vishvamitra and his family
4	Vamadeva and his family
5	Atri and his family
6	Bharadwaja and his family
7	Vasista alone
8	Kanva and his family (descendents)
9	Hymns addressed to Soma Pavamana; composed by different poets belonging to different families
10	191 hymns composed by different poets belonging to different families

All the 10 mandalas were compiled by KRISHNA DVAIPAYANA VYASA who was hence called VEDA VYASA.

The Rig Vedic gods were similar to those mentioned in the Avestan Gathas and were essentially personifications of natural phenomena. As time passed, these gods took a second character. For example, by the time of Yaska, (c.500 BC), who wrote Nirukta Indra represented a typical Aryan hero who was the slayer of Vrtra, releaser of cows conqueror of the Indian Dasyus in addition to

being the lord of the clouds.

In addition to hymns addressed to various Gods, Rigveda contains a wealth of information regarding the geography, culture and social settings of the land where they settled, namely India.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The following rivers are mentioned in the Rigveda: Sindhu /Susoma (Indus), Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusni (Ravi), Sutudri (Sutlej) and Vipas/Arjikiya (Beas). Sindhu was said to flow united with Tristama and then with Susartu, Rasa, and Sveti, later uniting with Krumu, Gomati, Kubha (Kabul) and Mahatru. Ganga and Yamuna are mentioned as the eastern boundaries of the Aryan settlement.

[TOP](#)

TRIBES AND NON-ARYANS

The Rigveda speaks chiefly of the Dasyus, who are identified with the so-called Dravidians who are believed to be the descendents of the IVC [3]. These Dravidians were highly civilized and had a matriarchal family system as against the Aryan patriarchal system.

[TOP](#)

Rigveda also mentions the Rakshasas who originally denoted strong and powerful men (Max Muller). Later the term Rakshasas was used to denote short, dark thick lipped, fierce in appearance, curly haired people who were hostile to the Aryans. Unlike the civilized Dravidians, the Rakshasas engaged in guerilla warfare, attacking the Aryans at night and carrying away their cattle. The Rakshasas were called anagnitras i.e. non-worshippers of fire.

Another tribe mentioned in the Rigveda is the Pishachas who were ruddy in appearance and uttered fearful yells. The fact that the Paishachi literature masterpiece, which was later translated into Sanskrit, namely the Brihat katha was written by them proves that they too were civilized people.

The five main tribes mentioned in the Rigveda are the Yadu, Turvasu, Anu, Druhyu and the Puru [5].

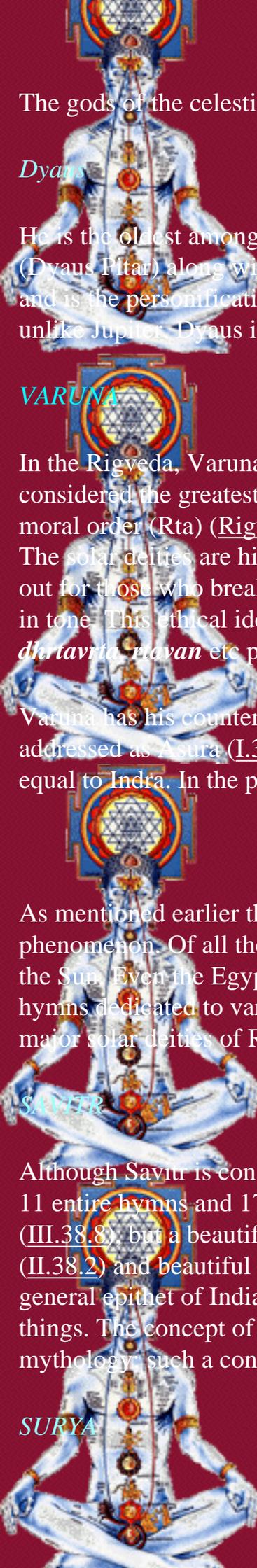
GODS AND DEITIES

According to Yaska, the original thirty three gods (twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and two Asvinis) mentioned in the Rigveda are divided equally in three planes namely the celestial plane, the mid region and the terrestrial plane, each plane having eleven gods. All gods mentioned in the Rigveda have human features such as the face, limbs etc, but their forms are shadowy. These physical features were meant to represent a specific form of nature. For example, the tongue of the fire god represents the tongue of the flames.

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All gods except Rudra were benefic; lesser evils were attributed to minor demons and greater calamities like drought to greater demons like Vritra. Rudra was a god imported from the representatives of the IVC and it is known that the worship of spirits and devils is of Dravidian origin.

GODS OF THE CELESTIAL SPHERE



The gods of the celestial sphere include Dyaus, Varuna and the solar gods.

TOP

Dyaus

He is the oldest among the celestial gods and is thought of as the universal father (Dyaus Pitar) along with mother earth (Prithvi). He is considered the greatest God and is the personification of the sky. Dyaus is equated to Jupiter of the European mythology, but unlike Jupiter, Dyaus is not considered the mightiest god.

TOP

VARUNA

In the Rigveda, Varuna is invoked in lesser hymns than Indra, Agni or Soma, but is considered the greatest of all gods. On one hand, he is regarded as the upholder of moral order (Rta) (Rigveda I.23.5) and on the other hand, he is the lord of waters (II.28.4; V.85.6). The solar deities are his eyes (I.115.1; VI.51.1) or his spies (I.25.13). They are constantly on the look out for those who break the Rta. Hence, the hymns addressed to Varuna are more devout and ethical in tone. This ethical idealization is the most outstanding feature of Varuna. His epithets *asura*, *mayin*, *dhrtavrtta*, *navan* etc point out to the same.

TOP

Varuna has his counterpart in the Avesta as the supreme god Ahura Mazda. In fact Varuna is addressed as Asura (I.35.7; II.27.10). In the Rigveda, he is considered the supreme lord or at least equal to Indra. In the post-Vedic period, he was reduced to being the lord of waters alone.

Solar Deities

As mentioned earlier the Indo-Iranian deities were personifications of natural phenomenon. Of all the natural phenomenon, the one that held all in awe was that of the Sun. Even the Egyptians had their supreme god to be the sun god Ra. The Rigveda contains hymns dedicated to various solar deities, each representing a particular aspect of the Sun. Some of the major solar deities of Rigveda are as follows.

TOP

SAVITR

Although Savitr is considered a younger member of the Vedic pantheon, there are 11 entire hymns and 170 references to this god. Savitr is considered a hermaphrodite (III.38.8) but a beautiful god with raised arms which are golden (*hiranya hasta*) (I.35.9-10), broad (II.38.2) and beautiful (III.33.6). MCDONNELL (Vedic Mythology –34) considers Savitr to be a general epithet of Indian origin which was later applied to the sun god as a typical stimulator of all things. The concept of a world sovereign with giant upraised arms is not unique to the Vedic mythology; such a concept is seen in Nordic mythology too.

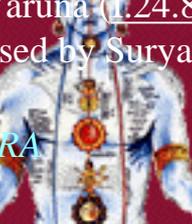
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SURYA



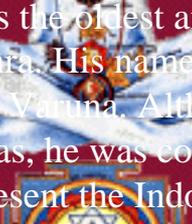
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Surya is the eye of Varuna (I.115.1; VI.51.1) or the eye of the gods (VII.77.3). He is the spy of the world (IV.13.3) whose chariot is drawn by seven steeds (V.45.9) and his path is laid by Varuna (I.24.8). He is the most concrete of all solar deities and represents the sun. Men are aroused by Surya to do their work. He is said to be the son of Dyaus and the husband of Ushas.



TOP

MITRA
He is the oldest among the solar deities and is the counter part of the Avestan Mithra. His name means a friend and he is invoked very often in the Rigveda along with Varuna. Although in the Avestan Gathas Mithra had a separate identity, by the time of the Vedas, he was considered to be identical to Varuna. It is believed that Mitra and Varuna together represent the Indo-European duality of Fire and water; of earth and spiritual power.



TOP

PUSAN
Pusan (the nourisher) is a solar deity who is the keeper of herds and brings prosperity. He is chiefly a pastoral lord who guards the roads (VI.49.8). He rides a chariot drawn by goats (I.138.4) and carries a goad. Many scholars, including MCDONNELL do not agree with the solar aspect of Pusan [7] and consider him only a pastoral god.



TOP

VISHNU
Vishnu (the pervader) initially had a lower position to that of Indra. By the time of later literature like the brahmanas was considered the supreme lord. The most important vedic myth of Vishnu is that of his three steps which is thought [6] as a creation myth based on the vedic concept that to measure out, to spread and to prop apart is creation. In the Rigveda Vishnu is described as living on the mountains and wandering like a beast [6]. He is celebrated in 5 hymns and referred to about 100 times.



TOP

ASVINS
They are the twin sons of Sun and husbands of Suryaa. Their names are Naasatya (from the nose) and Dasra (performing wondrous deeds). They are eternally young and are the celestial physicians.



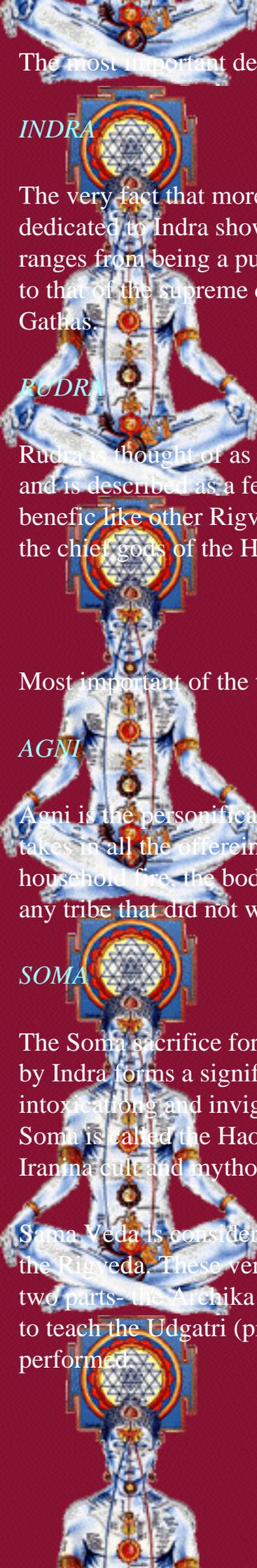
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USHAS
Ushas is the goddess of dawn. She is the only female deity addressed to in the Rigveda (in about 20 hymns). It is description of Ushas that lead to Indian Scholars like B.G.Tilak to identify the original home of the Aryans with the Arctic Circle.



GODS OF THE MID REGION





The most important deities of this region are Indra, Rudra and the Maruts.

INDRA

The very fact that more than a quarter (250 out of 1028 sukta) of the Rigveda is dedicated to Indra shows his importance in that period. The identification of Indra ranges from being a purely human Aryan warrior who had a weakness for wine (Soma) and women to that of the supreme deity of the Indo-Aryans. He is considered the greatest enemy in the Avestan Gathas.

TOP

RUDRA

Rudra is thought of as an import from the IVC. He is celebrated only in 3-4 hymns and is described as a fierce person armed with bow and arrows. He is not purely benefic like other Rigvedic gods, but he is not malevolent either. In later literature, he became one of the chief gods of the Hindu trinity.

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GODS OF THE TERRESTRIAL PLANE

Most important of the terrestrial gods are Agni, Soma, Ribhus and Brhaspati.

TOP

AGNI

Agni is the personification of the fire. He is said to be the mouth of all gods since he takes in all the offerings in a sacrifice. He has many forms – the sacrificial fire, the household fire, the bodily fire etc. The Aryans were ardent worshippers of fire and were intolerant to any tribe that did not worship fire. Such tribes were labeled anagnitras.

TOP

SOMA

The Soma sacrifice forms one of the cult activities of the Aryans. Drinking of Soma by Indra forms a significant part of the Rigveda. It is considered a divine drink and its intoxicating and invigorating properties are celebrated. Soma is sometimes identified with the moon. Soma is called the Haoma in the Avesta proving that Soma was an important feature of the Indo-Iranian cult and mythology.

TOP

Sama Veda is considered the basis for Indian classical music. Most of the verses (except 75) are from the Rigveda. These verses are chanted at the ceremonies of the Soma sacrifice. The Sama Veda has two parts- the Archika (single stanza) and the Uttarchika (Three stanzas). The Sama Veda was meant to teach the Udgatri (priest) the method to sing the Saman melodies appropriate to the rituals being performed.

YAJURVEDA SAMHITA

➤ Unlike the Samaveda Samhita, which concerns only the Soma sacrifice, the Yajurveda consists of formulae (mantra) for the entire sacrificial ceremony. Most of this work is original although some stanzas are from the Rigveda. This Samhita is divided into the Shukla Yajurveda (or the Vajasaneyi samhita), which consists only of mantras and the Krishna Yajurveda which has sacrificial rites, their discussions and mantras. The verses of the Yajurveda are called Yajus. The Yajurveda gave importance to the sacrifice itself unlike the Rigveda, which treated the sacrifice as means to propitiate gods. By the time of Yajurveda, the Rigvedic gods like Indra and Varuna lost their importance giving place to three gods; one each from the celestial (Vishnu), mid-regional (Rudra-Shiva) and the Terrestrial (Prajapati-Brahma) planes.

ATHARVAVEDA SAMHITA

The European scholars believe that this samhita was written c.900BC. A part of it taken from the Rigveda. The Atharvaveda was originally called the Athrvaangirasa. Although Atharva and Angiras were originally fire priests, these terms began to denote the magic formulae and spells. The Atharva was associated with holy magic that brought about happiness and Angiras with black magic. Later the samhita got the name Atharvaveda meaning the knowledge of magic formulae. It has 731 hymns divided into 20 chapters. Since this Veda consists of ways to appease demons, curse enemies (abhichakarani) etc, it was not recognized as a Veda for long. The different contents of Atharvaveda are

- Bhaishajyani: which are songs and spells for healing of diseases. Since this part has the various symptoms of diseases, it is important for the study of history of medicine.
- Ayushyani: these are hymns and prayers to achieve long life. These are used at the main ceremonies (samskaras) prescribed for any individual.
- Paustikani: there are benedictions to be used by common men like farmer and merchant to succeed in their work.
- Prayaschittani: ceremonies of expiation. Prayaschitta or expiation for any wrong deed done, knowingly or unknowingly is a characteristic feature of the Indian psychology and the Atharvaveda contains hymns and ceremonies for the same.
- Stikarmani: are rites for women and are two types. The peaceful ones which refer to marriage and begetting children and the exorcisms and curses to make other men/women barren and cause harm.
- Rajakarmani: are rites pertinent to a king
- Philosophical hymns: are of metaphysical nature.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES OF THE VEDAS

Female deities played a minor role in the Vedas. Although Ushas is celebrated in the Vedas, she is not offered the Soma in the sacrifices. In addition to Ushas, Aditi and Prithvi are the only other female deities mentioned in the Vedas. Both vocal and instrumental music was known in the time of the Vedas. The Sama Veda speaks of specific melodies and frequencies to be used in singing. Among the musical instruments, cymbals, flutes, drums, lutes, harps and lyres were known. The dialogue hymns of the Rigveda are thought of as precursors to later drama. The



Upanishads mention actors and dramas. Dance is referred to even in the Rigveda where Ushas is compared to a graceful dancer. There were dances for marriages, funerals, harvests, sacrifices and communal gatherings.

BRAHMANAS

TOP

Brahmanas are the explanations of the Vedas. Each Veda has its own Brahmana. Saayana says that "which in tradition is not a Sukta or a Mantra is a Brahmana and vice versa". Brahmanas are of two types:- the Vidhi (rules) and the Arthavada (explanations).

The Brahmanas contain Itihasa (history) and Purana (narrative prose of myths). In the Brahmanas, there is a complete transfer of power from Rigvedic gods Indra and Varuna to Vishnu and Rudra.

ARANYAKAS AND UPANISHADS

TOP

Aranyakas are appendices to Brahmanas and they had the secret and mystic information which could be dangerous to the uninitiated. Hence they were taught in the forests, from which they get their name. The oldest of the Upanishads were part of the Aranyakas and it is consequently difficult to differentiate between them. The Aranyakas and the Upanishads are also called the Vedantas since they occur at the end of the Vedas and form the final aim of the Vedas.

There are 12 principle Upanishads which were commented by Shankaracharya. The doctrine of Karma and the concept of transmigration of life occurs for the first time in the Upanishads.

VEDANGAS

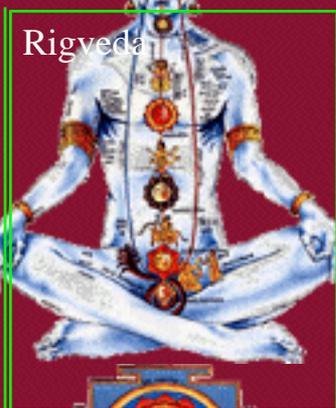
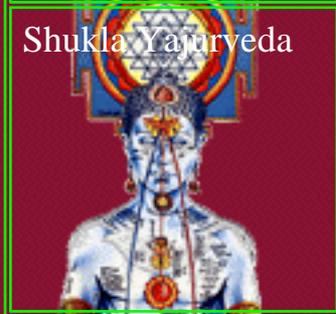
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Vedangas are the supplements to the Vedas. They were originally subjects taught in the Veda schools, which were later specialized. They were written as texts called Sutras. The different vedangas are

- Kalpa (Rituals): Kalpa Sutras deal with sacrificial ritual. They are further divided into Srautasutras dealing with domestic ceremonies, Grihyasutras dealing with daily life ceremonies (Samskaras) and Sulvasutras dealing with measurement and building of places of worship.
- Siksha (Phonetics): These deal with the correct pronunciation of the Samhitas.
- Nirukta (Etymology): It was a commentary on Nighantus (dictionary) written by Yaska.
- Chhandas (Metrics): It is the description of the metrical science of the Vedas.
- Jyotisha (Astrology): It contains mainly astronomical data.
- Vyakarana (Grammar): The older texts of Vyakarana are lost. The important text in this category is Panini's Ashtadhyayi.

• Veda	Brahmana	Exponent/ Upanishad
--------	----------	------------------------



 <p>Rigveda</p>	<p>Aitreya brahmana(B)</p> <p>Kaushitaki B</p> <p>Shamkhayana B</p>	<p>Mahidasa Aitreya</p> <p>Kaushitaki/ Kaushitaka</p> <p>Paimgya</p> <p><i>Aitreya Upanishad</i></p>
 <p>Shukla Yajurveda</p>	<p>Maadhayandina Shatapata B</p> <p>(Vajasayana B)</p> <p>Kanva Shatapata B</p>	<p>Yajnavalkya</p> <p><i>Brihadaranyaka Upanishad</i></p>
 <p>Krishna Yajurveda</p>	<p>Taittiriya B</p> <p>Tamdyā B</p> <p>Shadvimsa B</p> <p>Mantra B</p> <p>(Chandogya B)</p> <p>Daivata B</p> <p>Aarsheya B</p> <p>Samavidhana B</p> <p>Vamsa B</p> <p>Jaiminiya B</p>	<p><i>Samhitopanisad</i></p> <p>Jaiminopanishad</p>
 <p>Atharvaveda</p>	<p>Gopatha</p>	

CONCLUSIONS

Vedic literature began as a celebration of the glorious and abundant nature. Even from the earliest times the language of the Vedas was refined. The Vedas are said to be divine revelations and hence of divine (non-human) origin. Sacrifices and ceremonies, which were means to appease Gods, took over a major role and in the later periods became the most important

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part of Vedic literature. As time passed commentaries and texts were required to interpret the sacrifices, maintain the purity of the Srutis and understand the old classical Sanskrit. This gave rise to Upanishads, Aranyakas, Brahmanas and the Vedangas. The Vedic period was followed by the Epic period where specific incarnations of deities were praised in literature like Ramayana and the Mahabharata (Jaya).

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2. [The Indus Valley / Sindhu Saraswathi Civilization](#)

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[V. MADHURIMA](#)

A Brief History of India - up to independence

[V.MADHURIMA](#)

Table 1: Pre-Christian era history

Note:

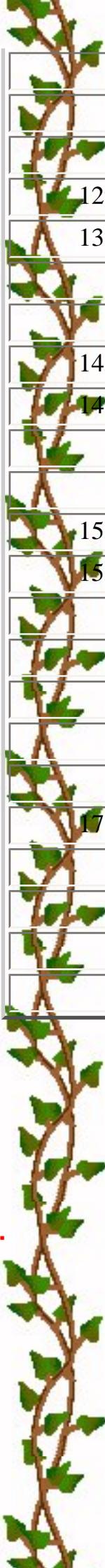
Sindhu-Saraswati Civilization (SSC) is identical to Indus valley civilization (IVC)

5000- 2600 BC	Early phase of SSC
2600 - 1900 BC	Pre-Mature phase of SSC
1900 - 1600 BC	Mature phase of SSC
1600 - 1300 BC	Post-Mature phase of SSC
1200 - 1000 BC	Compilation of Rig Veda
1000 - 500 BC	Epic Period (Ramayana & Mahabharata)
550 BC	Composition of Upanishads
623 - 544 BC	Traditional Period of Buddha
540 - 468 BC	Period of Mahavira - the 32 nd & main Tirthankara of Jainism
377 BC	Buddhist council at Vaishali
326 BC	Alexander invades India
c 322 BC	Chandragupta founds the Maurya dynasty Chanakya writes the <i>Arthashastra</i>
272-232 BC	Reign of Ashoka

185 BC	End of Maurya dynasty; beginning of Sunga dynasty Last Mauryan emperor Brihadratha overthrown by Pushyamitra who founded the Sunga dynasty
58 BC	Beginning of the <i>VIKRAM</i> era
30 BC	Satavahana dynasty of present day Andhra Pradesh & Pandya dynasty of present day Tamil Nadu
26 BC	A Pandyan King sends an ambassador to Rome

Table 2: Post Christian era history

Turn of Christian Era	Kushans ruled over north-west India
40 AD	The Sakas (or Scythians) rule over Indus Valley & Western India
78 AD	Accession of Kanishka - the Kushan king; beginning of Saka era
320 AD	Chandragupta I establishes the Gupta dynasty - beginning of Gupta era
360 AD	Samudra Gupta rules over whole of Northern India and much of Deccan
380-413 AD	Period of Chandragupta <i>Vikramaditya</i> Golden period of literature - Kalidasa
405-11 AD	Fa-Hien visits India from China
454 AD	First Hun Invasion
490 AD	Fall of Gupta dynasty
606 -647 AD	Rule of Harshavardhana
622 AD	Hejira Era begins
630-644 AD	Hiuen Tsang - the Chinese traveller visits India
711 AD	Invasion of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Kasim
735 AD	First Parsi settlement
753 AD	Rise of Rastrakuta empire
820 AD	Death of Shankaracharya
985 AD	Period of Chola dynasty in South - Rajaraja Chola
960-1200 AD	Chandellas of Bundelkhand (Madhya Pradesh)
1026 AD	Pilferage of Somnath temple by Muhammed of Ghazni
1191 & 1192 AD	First and second wars of Tarain between Prithviraj Chauhan and Muhammed Ghori
1206 AD	Establishment of slave dynasty in Delhi by Qutub-ud-din Aibak



1221 AD	Mongol invasion by Genghis Khan
1228 AD	Conquest of Assam by the Ahoms
1230 AD	Vijayanagara Kingdom founded
1290-1316 AD	Period of Khalifas at Delhi
1320-1412 AD	Period of the Tuglak dynasty at Delhi
1347 AD	Bahamani Kingdom founded in Deccan
1389 AD	Invasion by Timur lung
1451-1526 AD	Reign of Lodi Sultans of Delhi
1469-1545 AD	Life of Guru Nanak - the founder of Sikhism
1498 AD	Vasco da Gama arrives in India
1526 AD	Mughal dynasty established at Delhi by Babar
1556-1605 AD	Reign of Akbar
1556-1597 AD	Period of Rajput king - Rana Pratap
1600 AD	East India Company founded
1631 AD	Building of Taj Mahal
1639 AD	Fort St.George at Madras (Chennai)
1708 AD	Death of Guru Gobind Singh - Last Sikh guru
1748 AD	First Anglo-French war
1780-1839 AD	Period of Maharaja Ranjith Singh
1853 AD	First Indian Railway - Bombay to Thane
1857 AD	First war of Indian Independence
1947 AD	Indian independence
1950 AD	India becomes a Republic country

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Indus Valley (Sindhu-Saraswathi) Civilization

V.MADHURIMA

Impressive remains were discovered at MohenjoDaro in the Sind province and at Harappa in Western Punjab region. These are the earliest available pictures of ancient India. The civilization that was uncovered was highly developed.

The main features seen are

- A script - un deciphered to date
- Predominantly secular civilization
- Architectural/civil maintenance (sanitation) marvels
- Planned buildings that were raised from time to time to keep up with the sand & soil deposits
- Evidence of an Indian colony of (probably) merchants at *Akkad*
- Trade with markets on banks of Tigris and Euphrates
- Copying of the Sumerian Art devices, Mesopotamian toilet seats and cylindrical seals
- Trade not confined to raw materials and luxury articles
- Fish was imported from Arabic sea coasts
- Cotton was used in textiles.

All these point to the fact that the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) must have been at least a thousand years old by the time of MohenjoDaro and Harappa.

In comparison to other ancient civilizations the salient features of IVC are

- Use of cotton for textiles was exclusive to IVC. Cotton was introduced to the western world after 2500 years.
- No where else (Egypt, Mesopotamia or western Asia) do we find well built houses, baths, sanitation systems etc as seen in IVC.
- Unlike other civilizations where money and thought were spent on making the lives of Kings luxurious and in building religious places, in the IVC emphasis was on the quality of life of the average man.
- Indian civilization is probably the only civilization that follows the religion practices in circa 5000 BC, and in the same form!
- The merchant class were powerful and the civilization was trade based although the mode of currenc is not know.
- Ornaments made of silver, gold, precious stones, faience (decorated and glazed earthenware and porcelain), vessels of beaten copper, metal implements and weapons were found at the ruins.



- Maintenance of towns and drainages indicates the presence of some form of municipality.

It is seen that at the time when other civilizations were at their infancy, IVC was fully developed.

Other important features

- Iron was not known to IVC but copper was mined by them at Baluchistan. In fact archaeologists have discovered an out post in Afganistan used for the purpose of mining.
- Construction of buildings was an important feature of IVC. MohenjoDaro had three Storey high buildings. Some of them have houses of different periods, built after the previous one was buried under sand. Each new building was built EXACTLY over the previous one. All bricks used were in the ratio of 1:2:4, the actual sizes could vary from small ones used for homes to large ones used for forts. The smallest unit of length was 1.704 mm and the entire city was built in multiples of this unit.
- Mother goddess was worshiped as supreme lord. Worship of a proto-Shiva/Rudra is also know. A seal depicting the image of a male god with horns, sitting with heels touching, naked and animals surrounding him was found. This is the proto-Shiva/rudra image with Shiva in the Pashupati form. Conical stones and circular ring like stones were also found indicating the possible worship of the phallic emblem. Seals and icons with men worshipping with upheld arms (as in a Muslim prayer) were found. Reference to a similar form of prayer is found in the *Rig Veda*.
- Dance was developed as indicated by the famous "dancing girl" seal. The main designs used by the people of IVC in decorations were intervening circles, the swastika, fish-scales and peacock.
- Jewels were made of Ivory, Shell, Stones (Lapis Lazuli, Garnets etc) and gold. Glazed pottery was known.
- Governance was so good that the main road of MohenjoDaro did not have a single encroachment of even half a meter for a period of 700 years!

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1. *Discovery of India* Jawaharlal Nehru
2. *The invasion that never was* Michel Danino and Sujatha Nahar, Mira Aditi Center, Mysore.

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ARYAN INVASION THEORY [V.MADHURIMA](#)

Who were the original Indians?

This is probably the most important question in the history of the Indian sub-continent.

Various theories have been proposed in order to answer this question. The most famous of these being the so called *Aryan Invasion Theory*. There have been arguments and counter-arguments with respect to this theory. Here I present both sides of the picture.

[Pro Aryan Invasion theories](#)

[Theories opposing the Aryan invasion concept](#)

[Dravidians - the original inhabitants of India?](#)

I have always been interested in finding out who our ancestors were. For a long period I was an ardent follower of the Aryan Invasioun theory but listening to Michel Danino on 29 September 1999 at Chennai's Indian Institute of Technology -Madras changed my perspective. His talk was concerned with scientific evidences mainly archeology. He is a French researcher associated with the Aurobindo ashram -Pondicherry over the last twenty years. Subsequently I read his book "The Invasion that never was" (co-authored by Sujatha Nahar) and the web - pages of Kenoyer (archeologist). Well, to say the least, I no longer believe in the Aryan Invasion Theory, although there are a few loop-holes left. Here I present both sides of the arguments since I believe that the reader should be the final judge on what she/he wants to believe.

The references for this entire section are

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- *Complete History of Ancient India* V.S.Dalal, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi (1988)

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Here are a few articles on various aspects of literature
[V.MADHURIMA](#)

- [Scientific Literature in Ancient India](#)
- [Salient Features of Vedic Literature](#)
- [Literature - My choice](#)
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SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE OF ANCIENT INDIA

V.Madhurima

Science is essentially the systematic study of anything. It is a well known fact that science was well developed in ancient India. Science was cultivated by the brahminical schools. It was preserved and written in the form of Sutras - formulae. Later commentaries were written to explain these sutras. A vast collection of scientific literature is available in India of which a few are mentioned here.

GRAMMAR

The earliest known work on grammar is the *Asthadhyi* of Panini (circa 4-5 C BC) which refers to previous works. The *Vartikas* of Katyayana (3 C BC) are the critical, explanatory and commentary works of some rules of Panini. Patanjali's *Mahabhasha* (2 C BC) is a commentary on the *Vartikas*. *Vakyapadiya* of Bhartrihari (7 C AD) is more a work on the philosophy of language.

LEXICOGRAPHY (KOSHAS)

Koshas were a collection of rare and important works and their meanings. Unlike the modern dictionaries the Koshas were in the form of verses. They were of two types: those of synonyms and those of homonyms. The best known works are Amarasimha's *Namalinganushasana* (or AMARAKOSHA) - a three section dictionary of synonyms and Shasvata's *Anekarthasamuchchaya* - a dictionary of homonyms.

DHARMA SHASTRA

Dharma shastras consists of woks on law including religion, custom and usage written in the metrical form. The most important of these id the *Manava dharma shastra* (Manu dharma shastra or Manu smriti)of Manu (2 C BC - 2 C AD). This work deals more with religious instructions rather than on jurisdiction. Of the various commentaries of the Manusmriti the work of Yagnyavalkya caleed *Yagnyavalkya smriti* is important. Most of the Hindu dharmic rules pertaining to customs, laws and expiations are based on this work.

ARTHA SHASTRA (NITI SHASTRA)

Artha shastra includes the books on day to day affairs like domestic economy, administration, politics etc. Niti shastra is the science of governance. Brihaspati is considered to be the father of Artha shastra but the most important work is the *Artha Shastra* of Kautilya (Chanakya) (c 322 BC) - the minister of Chandragupta

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Mauya. It is a book with 15 chapters covering 180 topics including training of rulers, politics, military affairs etc. It also gives an account of cultural and social life in India during his period.

Chanakya is believed to be a brahmin from Kerala who migrated to North India. Interestingly Chanakya gives some technical details too such as

Sthambasya parikshepa shadayanaah, dviguno nighatah, chulikaya chaturbhagah

The circumference of a pillar shall be a sixth of its height, twice the circumference shall be the depth of the pillar below the Earth, at the top portion (head) the pillar shall extend to a quarter of its circumference.

The *Nitishastra* of Kamandhaka is in verse form and is a later work. Rishi Vishwamitra wrote the *Dhanurveda* - a book in four parts. It deals with arms, warcraft, army and secret weapons.

Animal Training

Ashva vaidyaka of Jayadatta Suri and *Ashva Chikitsa* of Nakula deal with breeding, training, and healing of horses. *Hastayurveda* deals with the well being of elephants.

Architecture

Manasara, mayamata, Shilpa ratna, Vishnukarma Vastu shastra, Samarangana Sutradhara, aparajita Pracha etc are important works on architecture. The former three texts form the basis of Dravidian architecture and the later three of the Nagara or the North Indian style. The *Sulva Sutras* give information about Civil Engineering i.e. planning and measurements of sacrificial sites and their sections etc. Because of this practical necessity geometry was well developed.

KAMA SHASTRA

Kama shastra deals with sexual love and the best known work is the *Kama shastra* of Malanaga Vatsyayana. This book is written in the sutra style.

MEDICINE

The ancient Indians were experts of medicine the origin of which can be traced to the Vedas. *Ayurveda* which deals with medicine is a part of the *Athrvana Veda*. The main works on medicine are (i) *Charaka samhita* of Charaka. Charaka was a physician, moralist and philopher. (ii) *Sushruta Samhita* of Sushruta is a detailed work on surgery. Sushruta was a surgeon himself. Other works on

medicine are *Asthangasangraha* and *Astanga hridaya samhita* of Vagbhata. Other physicians mentioned in literature are Dhanvantri, Atreya, Madhavakara, Vrinda and Surapala.

In fact Dhanvantri founded the 8 fold system of medicine

1. Shalya: extraction of extraneous bodies
2. Shalakya: treatment of external organ afflictions
3. Chikitsa:diagnosis
4. Bhuta vidya: treatment of diseases related to demonic possessions
5. Kaumarabhrtya:midwifery and childbirth
6. Agada:pharmacy
7. Rasayana:Chemistry
8. Vajikaranause of aphrodisiac

It is said that the body of the Videha king Nimi was emblamed with resins and oils. The indian system of medicine is quoted by Buddhist literature and translations of these to Russian and Arabic are known.In fact the medicine systems of Tibet and Cylone are based on the Indian ones.

ASTRONOMY, ASTROLOGY AND MATHEMATICS

The triple fields of Astronomy, Astrology and Mathematics formed an integral package, since the knowledge of one required the knowledge of the other to some extent. The oldest available literature is the circa 1200 BC text called *Jyotisha-Vedanga* written in the form of Shlokas. This text talks about the three natural units of time namely the Civil day, lunar month and the solar year.

The period around 500 AD saw an entirely different class of works in astronomy. The siddhanta texts contain mathematical solutions to astronomical problems including the position of planets, sunrise/sunset and the time of eclipses. *Aryabhatiya* of Aryabhata was composed around 499 AD. It is of four parts

1. The first part explains the special style of writing of numerals by Aryabhata
2. The second part is an anthology of mathematical teachings
3. The third part deals with the basics of Astronomical time
4. The fourth part deals with the celestial sphere

Varahamihira's later work *Pancha Sidhantika* talks about Siddhantas written prior to Aryabhatiya such as Bhaskara I's *Maha Bhaskariya*, *Laghu Bhaskariya and Bhasya on Aryabhatiya*; Bhahmagupta's *Sphuta Sidhanta* and *Khandakhandyaha* -later translated into Arabic as *al sind* & *al Arkhand* respectively; Vateshwara's (880AD) *Vateshwara Siddhanta*; Manjulacharya's (932 AD) *Laghumanasa*; Aryabhata II's (950AD) *Mahasiddhanta*;

BhaskaracharyaII's (1114 AD) *Sidhanta Siromani* etc.

Some of the important texts of Mathematics are

1. First part of Aryabhatiya
2. Lilavati of Bhaskara
3. Ganitadhyaya & Kuttakadhyaya of Bhrahmagupta

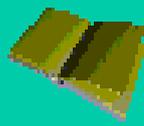
Ancient Indian mathematics was advanced in geometry, arithmetic and algebra.

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3. *Internet*

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A few words on some of my favorite works



READING

I read anything in black and white including labels on bathroom cleaners. I read in English, Hindi , Tamil and Telugu.

- TAMIL
- HINDI
- TELUGU
- ENGLISH

TAMIL

I listen more than I read in Tamil. My college (QMC) was the breeding ground for my interest in this ancient yet young language. I was introduced to Kannadasan's " Arthamulla Hindu Matam" , to Jayakanthan, Sivasankari, Kalki etc here. I am a MAJOR fan of Vairamuthu. Infact he is my mental Guru. I admire the works of

- Vairamuthu (of course)
- Sivasankari - her dedication to society is terrific
- Mahakavi Bharatiyaar - If Vairamuthu is my guru, Bharati is my GOD
- All my college friends who would come up with impromptu *POEMS*

I have lived in Tamil Nadu for almost three decades and hence it is no surprise that it is my favorite language. It is a very old language with a written history of over 2500 Years. In fact it is thought of as the aboriginal language of the country. Unlike other ancient languages of the world such as Sanskrit, Latin etc, it is a living language.

Ancient Tamil Literature

Tamil literature is known for its SANGAMs. Sangam was the collective affair of literary experts in discussing and producing literary pieces. During these periods grammar was defined.

Vairamuthu

Although I have always listened to Tamil music it was only after I began to listen to Vairamuthu's poetry that I took a deep liking to the language. Hence he

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is my "manasiga guru".

HINDI

I read basically poetry in Hindi. This interest of mine is thanks to my Hindi teacher at KV-Mrs.Jayalakshmi.

My personal favs are

- Harivansh Rai Bacchan - It is really wrong to think of him as a "Halavadi Kavi"
- Ramdhari Sinh Dinakar - His "Rashmi Rathi" is path breaking.
- Kabir - Isn't it amazing that a so called weaver with no formal knowledge can write DOHAs in the correct format?
- Premchand - No words to describe him

Well, Hindi is practically my second mother tounge, my being from Kendriya Vidyalaya!. I LOVE hindi poetry. Had I not been a Physicist I would have been a Hindi teacher. Here is a list of my favorite Hindi poets

- **Kabir**: Can you believe that he was illiterate but wrote DOHAs with the correct punctuation and syllable count?
- **Harivansh Rai "Bacchan"**: *Halavadi* or not, he is the the best poet by the definition that a poem should inspire new thoughts in the reader everytime it is read.He ia my absolute favorite poet in Hindi - I just donot find words to describe /discuss him.
- **Ramdhari Singh "Dinakar"**: Kya josh hai unke kavita mein.I reccomend "rashmirathi" and "Jayadrath Vadh" for anybody who wants to enjoy either Hindi poetry or the Indian way of thinking (intellectual -not mundane)
- **Gulzar & Javed Akhtar**: Who said Lyrics of Hindi film songs are *filmi*? Listen to these masters lyrics and I promise you, you will learn good Hindi. Specially Gulzar. Seems I require a dictinonary to understand his lyrics!

Here is a link to a beautiful site on Hindi poetry that I came across. It has poems from all my favorites.<http://manaskriti.com/kaavyaalaya/>

TELUGU

Although Telugu is my mothertounge, I have not read much. I do like

- Devulapalli Krishna Shastry
- Endamuri Verendranath
- "Sirivennala" Seetharama Sastry
- Annamacharya

Seriously I have no business to write about Telugu literature. My "reading" is confined to the works of Endaramuri and the likes. But there is one person who has inspired me to appreciate Telugu (besides my mother) and that is *Devulapalli Krishna Shastry*. I was lucky enough to have known him in my childhood and his poems are a major wealth of knowledge on Telugu literature. I like all his film songs from "*Pilichina biguvatura*" (*Mallisvari*) to "*Akulo akunai*" (*Megha sandesam*). The irony is that Akulo.. is one of his last poems on screen but the among the first ones written by him. It is the first poem in his collection "Krishna Pakshamau" (and I thought that conventional Indians did not name anything after the waning fortnight!)

Here is a link to some of his poems <http://members.tripod.com/~RKSanka/telugu/ksastri.html>

ENGLISH

My favorite authors are

- Thomas Hardy
- Issac Asimov
- John Grisham
- All of Walt Disney and M&B;

ENGLISH! The language that I read maximum in. Hmmm what do I like in English?.... ANYTHING!

Seriously, I like the works of *Thomas Hardy*. I have tried to read all his books and "Tess.." remains my favorite. Here is a link to a nice site on Hardy and his works <http://pages.ripco.net/~mws/hardy.html>.

I have just finished reading *JRR TOLKIEN's "Hobbit" and "Master of Rings"*. Just the kind of books for a child like me! Check this site for more information on Tolkien <http://www.csclub.uwaterloo.ca/u/relipper/tolkien/rootpage.html>

As far as Indian English writers are concerned, I like the works of Kushwant Singh, R.K.Narayanan and Vikram Seth.

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V. MADHURIMA

Kabir (1398-1518)

Kabir is a mystic poet par-excellence. His two line couplets called doha (dohe) are steeped in philosophy. It is really surprising that a man of no education could compose such gems. Kabir is an important person in Indian history because of the religious tolerance that he preached. To him Muslims and Hindus were equal. Speaking of God he says

Moko Kahan Dhundhere Bande
Mein To Tere Paas Mein
Na Teerath Mein, Na Moorat Mein
Na Ekant Niwas Mein
Na Mandir Mein, Na Masjid Mein
Na Kabe Kailas Mein
Mein To Tere Paas Mein Bande
Mein To Tere Paas Mein
Na Mein Jap Mein, Na Mein Tap Mein
Na Mein Barat Upaas Mein
Na Mein Kiriya Karm Mein Rehta
Nahin Jog Sanyas Mein
Nahin Pran Mein Nahin Pind Mein
Na Brahmand Akas Mein
Na Mein Prakuti Prawar Gufa Mein
Nahin Swasan Ki Swans Mein
Khoji Hoye Turat Mil Jaon
Ik Pal Ki Talas Mein
Kahet Kabir Suno Bhai Sadho
Mein To Hun Viswas Mein

(Where do search for me dear man, I am neither in the temple, nor in the mosque)

Dohas are composed of 4 segments called charans. The first and third segments have 13 mastras each and the second and fourth have eleven mastras. A guru is a count of 2 mastras and a laghu is a count of 1 mastra. The actualities of guru-laghu are too intricate to be discussed here with out a detailed account of Hindi language.

Kabira Khada bazaar mein maange sub ki khair
Na kahu say dosti na kahu say bair.

*Standing in the mart, I ask for riddance of all woe,
for I have neither friend nor foe*

Bura jo dekahn mein chala, bura na milya koi,
Jo dil khoja aapna to mujh say bura na koi

*I went in search of evil, only to find none.
Looking into myself, realized there was more evil none.*

Bade na hujai gunan bin, birad badayi paay
Kehat dhature so kanak, gehano gadhiyo na jaay.

*None becomes great, just because of fame.
Thorn-apple is called gold, what's in a name!*

Kaal karay so aaj kar, aaj karay so ab,
Pal mein pralay hogayi, bahuri karogay kab

*What is to be done tomorrow, do it today. What is to be done today - now
When will you finish your job, for catastrophe strikes in a second - and how!*

Bada hua to kya hua jaisay paid khajoor,
Panthi ko chhaya nahin, phal laagen ati door.

*Growing big is no growing, like a tree of date.
Neither shade nor fruit to the traveller, oh what a fate.*

Saat samundar masi kare, lekhani sab banraay
dharati sab kaagad kare, guru gun likha na jaay.

*Sevens seas turned to ink, into pen all forest,
all earth a sheet of paper, glory of guru can't be written yet.*

Saayin itna deejiye jaa mein kutumb samaaye,
Main bhi bhookha na rahoon, saadhu na bhookha jaaye

*Dear Lord, provide me with enough, that my family I take care,
neither do I go hungry, nor the wanderer at my door-step for death prepare.*

Mayaa mari na man mara, mar mar gaye shareer,
Aasha trishna na mari, keh gaye das Kabir.

*Neither illusions nor heart are dead, dead are bodies, for the observant.
Neither hopes nor mirages are dead, so says dear Kabir, your servant.*

Dukh mein simran sab karen, sukh mein karay na koye
Jo sukh mein simran karay, to dukh kahay ko hoye.

*All pray in woe, never once in joy.
To those who pray in joy, there is no unhappiness to annoy.*

Aisee bani boliye, man ka aapa khoye,
Auran ko seetal kare, apahu seetal hoye.

*Speak sweet words such, the woe of heart is gone.
Others hearts are endeared, and your heart of sorrow atone.*

Jaisay til mein tel hai, jyon chakmak mein aag,
Tera saayin tujh mein hai, tu jaag sakay to jaag.

*Like there is oil in linseed, the fire in the flint stone.
Your god in within you, acknowledge the unkown.*

Jaati na poocho saadhu ki, pooch lijiye gyaan
Mol karo talwar ki padi rehen do miyaan.

*Ask not the caste of the great, only knowledge he gained hard.
Evaluate the sharpness of the sword, never the scabbard.*

Maati kahe kumbhar ko tu kya roondhe mohe
Ek din aisaa aayega mai roondhoo gi tohe.

*The clay tells the potter, squeeze me as much as you can squeeze.
For a day will come when I will squeeze you with great ease!*

Aaye hai jo jaayenge Raaja rank fakir
Ek sinhaansan chadhi chale Dooja bandhe janjeer.

*Having come, all have to leave, be it prince or pauper.
Lived as they did, one on throne and one in shackles deeper.*

Kabira pyaala prem ka antar liya laggay
Rom rom me rami rahe, aur amal kya khaay?

*A cup of love, taken within that I have
seeped into every follicle, what more intoxicating can I have?*

▪



First a little about myself.

Hi. I am Madhurima. It means sweetness in Sanskrit. I am a trained Physicist and a Bharatanatyam dancer. I had been working as a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department at **Saveetha Engineering College (SEC)**. I was working previously at **National Institute of Technology & Science (NITS)** (now KCG Tech). I am presently a freelance resercher at the University of Hyderabad.

I am an alumnus of

- Vanavani School - IIT Campus- Madras - My KG!
- Kendriya Vidyalaya - IIT Campus - Madras - Class 1 to 12
- Queen Mary's College - Madras University - (On Marina Beach) - My UG
- Indian Institute of Technology - Madras - My PG and PhD
- Abhinaya Natyalaya - Under Guru "Kalaimamani" Krishnakumari Narendran (Bharatanatyam)
- Nalanda Dance Research Institute - Mumbai (Diploma in Indian Arts)

You can read my [resume](#) , or my [Honours](#) or my [research work](#)

If you are interested in my detailed resume you can read it at http://www.geocities.com/fisik_99/resume.htm.

I love to read books, any kind. Presently I am deeply interested in the Aryan invasion theory and its impact on present day Indian society. I am also interested in Hindu mythology and symbolism. I am interested in anything Indian, provided it is sensible!

Inspite of all this interest, I am not a religious fanatic/religious person. Infact I believe that being Indian has nothing to do with religion. I despise superstition of any kind, although I do have to keep myself under check from falling prey to the same.

Write to me

[Dr.V.Madhurima](#)

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