

# An Introduction to the Tattvavaada Darshana



Achyuta Bhakti  
**DEETS**

श्री नारायणाय नमः ।



Achyuta Bhakti  
**DEETS**

# An Introduction to the Tattvavaada Darshana

By Praajna Pattada Hari Kumaara Varma  
and  
Aniruddha Ashrith

© Copyrights Achyuta Bhakti Deets

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

# **An Introduction to the Tattvavaada Darshana**

**Authors:** Praajna Pattada Hari Kumaara Varma

and

Aniruddha Ashrith

**No. of Pages:** 118

**Publishing of First Edition:** 26 December 2025

## **About**

This book is a beginner's guide for learning about the philosophy of Tattvavaada, Madhva Siddhaanta, made at the request of many. It intends to provide a basic idea of the Siddhaanta for beginners who are not aware of it. It also covers certain fundamental tenets of Sanaatana Dharma in general, in relation to Madhva Siddhaanta, making it suitable for those who wish to learn about Hindu Dharma too.

<https://bhaktideets.org>

<https://elib.bhaktideets.org>

Email: [info@bhaktideets.org](mailto:info@bhaktideets.org)

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

## Acknowledgements

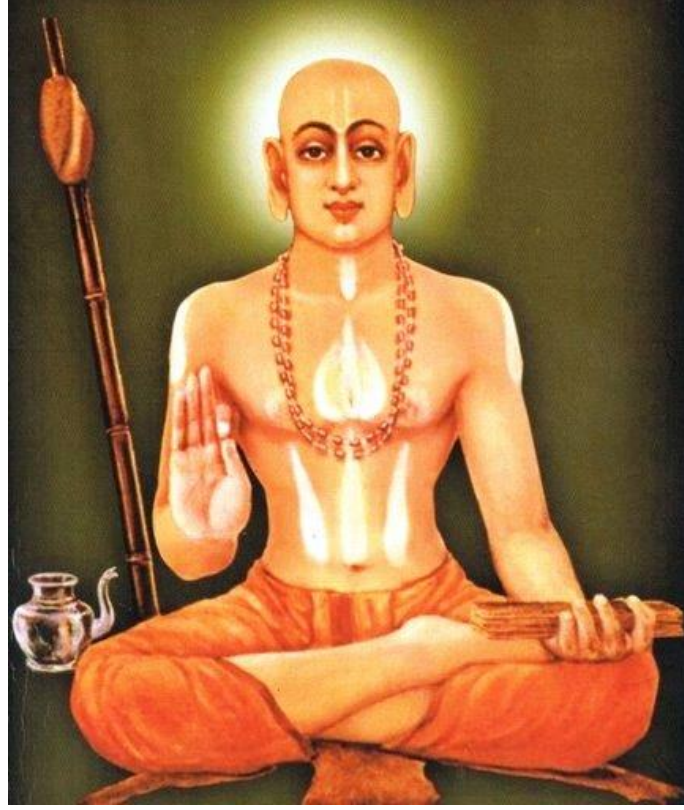


॥ श्रीहरिवायुगुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

Obeisances to Shri Hari, Vaayu and Gurus.

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ।  
प्रणतक्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥

“Salutations and salutations to Shri Krshna, Vaasudeva, Hari, Paramaatma, the destroyer of distress of His bhaktas, Govinda.” (Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 10, Adhyaaya 70, Shloka 16)



श्रीमदानन्दतीर्थभगवत्पादाचार्येभ्यो नमः ।

Salutations to Shrimat Aananda Teertha Bhagavatpaada Aachaarya.

I would like to thank all my Gurus and other superiors as well as all those who have taught me valuable life lessons, due to whom I have been able to obtain valuable and practical knowledge to write this book. I would like to especially thank my Guru, Shrimaan Bharath Raje Urs, who has taught me several concepts of Tattvavaada and the Shaastras, especially the concept of the Jagat chakra. He has also constantly motivated me to write my other publications and continue working towards benefitting all Sat-bhaktas. I would like to thank my co-author, Shri Aniruddha Ashrith, who wrote multiple parts of this book, especially the sections on the Sarvamula granthas and the Gurus of the Maadhva sampradaaya. I would also like to thank my friend, Shri Aditya Gupta, who had first given me the idea to write a book explaining the basics of Tattvavaada, to benefit aspiring Maadhvas or anyone interested to learn about the darshana, and also others who requested the same later too, along with a few of our volunteers who proofread the book and provided suggestions. This book has been finally prepared with efforts of over two years. It is hoped that it benefits the readers and enhances their knowledge of Madhva Siddhaanta.

प्राज्ञ पट्ट

—Prajna Pattada Hari Kumaara Varma

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

Tattvavada, as established by Ananda Tirtha (Madhvacharya), affirms the reality of Vishnu, the souls, the world and the differences among them. The continued growth of this tradition has been made possible by the many commentators and Yatis who developed and explained its teachings after Shrimat Acharya. The study of the early and later exponents of Tattvavaada reveals the breadth and continuity of the intellectual effort that shaped the tradition. Sri Padmanabha Tirtha, Sri Hrishiksha Tirtha and Sri Narahari Tirtha represent the earliest phase of systematization – Padmanabha Tirtha’s position as the first major commentator, Hrishiksha Tirtha’s careful transcription of the Sarvamula texts and Narahari Tirtha’s contributions as both administrator and teacher, including his role in the early Haridasa movement and his work on Madhva’s writings, each illustrate a distinct aspect of the tradition’s early consolidation. The account of Trivikrama Panditacharya is notable for the clarity with which he engaged in debate and later articulated Madhva’s thought in the Tattvapradipa. His son, Narayana Panditacharya, composed the Madhva Vijaya which remains the most important narrative source for the Acharya’s life. Together, their works provide essential material for understanding the intellectual history of the school. Akshobhya Tirtha and Jaya Tirtha represent the next major stage of doctrinal defence and exposition. Akshobhya Tirtha’s debate with Vidyanaraya became a landmark in the scholastic identity of the tradition. Jayatirtha’s extensive commentarial output, culminating in the Nyaya Sudha, established the interpretive framework that continues to guide scholarship on Tattvavaada. In the later period, figures such as Vadiraja Tirtha, Vijayindra Tirtha and Raghavendra Tirtha broadened the scope of the tradition. Vadiraja Tirtha’s multilingual works, his reforms at Udupi and his Tirtha Prabandha demonstrate remarkable range. Vijayindra Tirtha’s writings across diverse subjects and his sustained involvement in philosophical debates strengthened the school’s intellectual standing. Raghavendra Tirtha’s commentaries and compositions brought clarity and accessibility to several complex areas of the doctrine.

I would like to record my appreciation for my co-author Praajna who has authored most of the work in this book. His patience, research and dedication shaped almost every section. My own contribution is mainly the chapters on the yatis and their lives.

This book, ‘An Introduction to the Tattvavaada Darshana,’ is intended to be a concise and reliable introduction to the philosophy of Tattvavada and its major exponents. If it assists readers in approaching the primary texts and understanding the historical development of the tradition, it would have served its purpose.

—Aniruddha Ashrith

# Contents

<a href="#">Guru Parampara</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	12
1. Basic Philosophical Tenets of the Tattvavaada Darshana	
• <a href="#">Para Brahman</a> .....	14
• <a href="#">Manifestations of Brahman</a> .....	19
• <a href="#">The Various Tattvas</a> .....	22
• <a href="#">The Pancha Bhedas</a> .....	25
• <a href="#">The Lokas</a> .....	26
• <a href="#">Samsaara and Karmas</a> .....	28
• <a href="#">Gunas and Svaabhaavas</a> .....	30
• <a href="#">The Taaratamya</a> .....	32
• <a href="#">Vishnu's Avataara as Vyaasa Deva</a> .....	35
• <a href="#">Mukhya Praana Deva</a> .....	36
2. One's Purpose in Life	
• <a href="#">Dharma</a> .....	39
• <a href="#">Artha</a> .....	40
• <a href="#">Kaama</a> .....	41
• <a href="#">Moksha</a> .....	42
• <a href="#">Bhakti and Jnaana</a> .....	44
• <a href="#">The Jagat Chakra</a> .....	49
• <a href="#">Summary</a> .....	52
3. The Shaastras .....	53
• <a href="#">The Various Darshanas</a> .....	55
• <a href="#">The Sat-Agamas</a> .....	57
• <a href="#">The Pancharaatra Aagamas</a> .....	59
• <a href="#">Moha Shaastras and other Darshanas</a> .....	63
• <a href="#">The Sarvamula Granthas</a> .....	65
• <a href="#">Interpretation of the Shaastras</a> .....	67
• <a href="#">Pramaanas</a> .....	69
4. Varnaashrama	
• <a href="#">The Four Varnas</a> .....	71
• <a href="#">The Four Aashramas</a> .....	79

<a href="#">5. Fundamental Duties</a> .....	81
• <a href="#">Sat-Aachaara</a> .....	85
• <a href="#">The Ideal Vaishnava Lifestyle</a> .....	88
<b>6. The Gurus of the Maadhva Sampradaaya</b>	
• <a href="#">Shri Madhvaachaarya</a> .....	89
• <a href="#">Shri Padmanaabha Teertha</a> .....	90
• <a href="#">Shri Narahari Teertha</a> .....	91
• <a href="#">Shri Hrsheekesha Teertha</a> .....	92
• <a href="#">Shri Akshobhya Teertha</a> .....	93
• <a href="#">Shri Jaya Teertha</a> .....	94
• <a href="#">Shri Trivikrama Panditaachaarya</a> .....	96
• <a href="#">Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya</a> .....	97
• <a href="#">Shri Brahmanya Teertha</a> .....	98
• <a href="#">Shri Lakshmi Naaraayana Teertha</a> .....	99
• <a href="#">Shri Vyaasa Teertha</a> .....	100
• <a href="#">Shri Vaadiraaja Teertha</a> .....	101
• <a href="#">Shri Vijayeendra Teertha</a> .....	103
• <a href="#">Shri Raaghavendra Svaami</a> .....	105
<b>7. The Hari Daasas</b>	
• <a href="#">Shri Purandara Daasa</a> .....	108
• <a href="#">Shri Kanaka Daasa</a> .....	109
• <a href="#">Shri Vijaya Daasa</a> .....	110
• <a href="#">Shri Gopaala Daasa</a> .....	111
• <a href="#">Shri Jagannaatha Daasa</a> .....	111
• <a href="#">Shri Helavanakatte Giriyamma</a> .....	112
• <a href="#">Less Popular Panditas of the Hari-Daasa Kuta</a> .....	113
<a href="#">8. The Maadhva Mathas</a> .....	114
<a href="#">Further Reading</a> .....	116
<a href="#">About the Authors</a> .....	117

## Guru Parampara (the Disciplic Succession)



**Bhagavaan Hamsa**

Shri Durvaasa Rshi

Shri Jnaanidhi

Shri Garudavaahana

Shri Kaivalya

Shri Jnaanesha....

(a gap of about 1,000 years)

..Shri Para Teertha

Shri Satyaprajna Teertha

Shri Praajna Teertha....

(a gap of a couple of centuries)

..Shri Achyuta Prajna Teertha



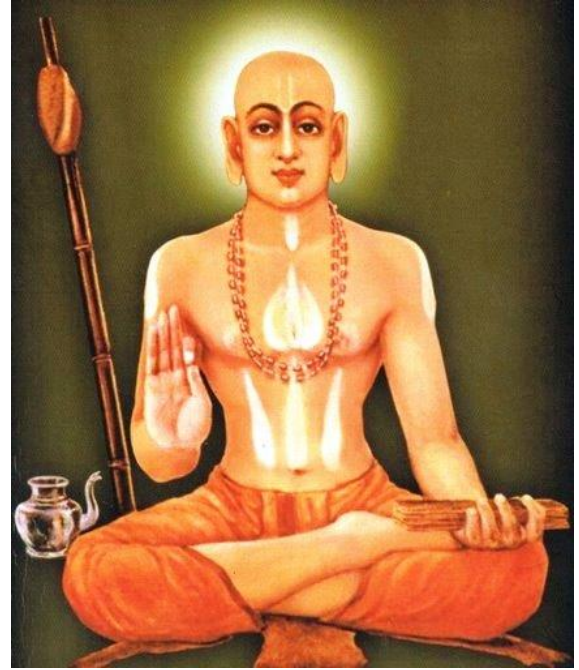
**Chaturmukha Brahmaa Deva**

Shri Sanaka Rshi

Shri Sanandana Rshi

Shri Sanatkumaara Rshi

Shri Sanaatana Rshi



**(1) Shri Aananda Teertha  
(Madhvaachaarya/Purna Prajna)**

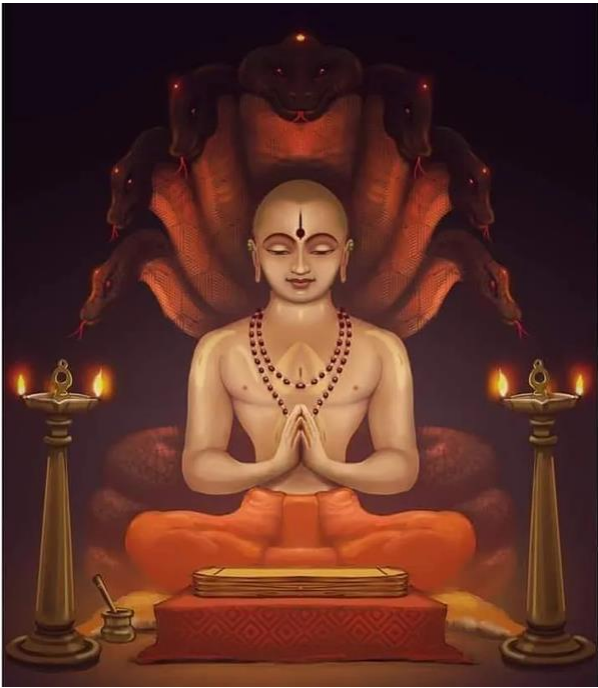
(2) Shri Padmanaabha Teertha

(3) Shri Narahari Teertha

(4) Shri Maadhava Teertha



**(5) Shri Akshobhya Teertha**



**(6) Shri Jaya Teertha**

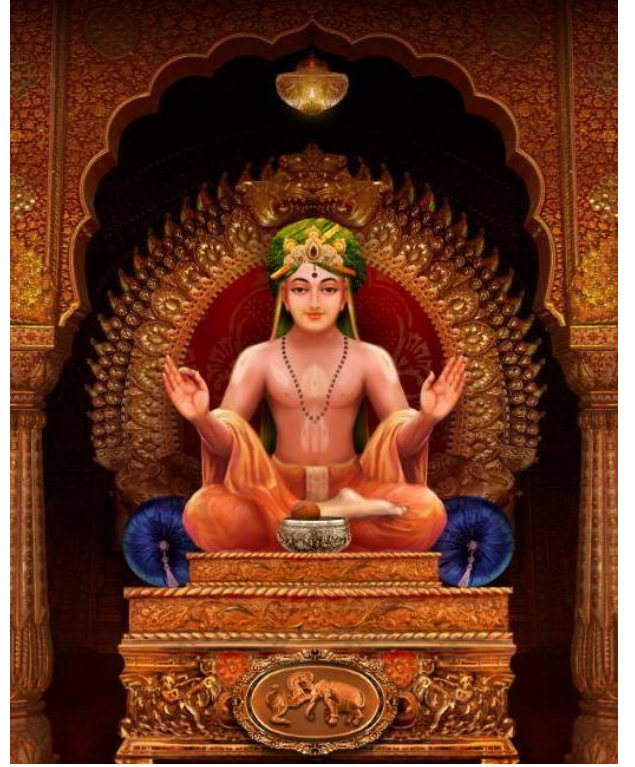
(7) Shri Vidyaadhiraaja Teertha

(8) Shri Raajendra Teertha

(9) Shri Jayadhvaja Teertha

(10) Shri Purushottama Teertha

(11) Shri Brahmanya Teertha



**(12) Shri Vyaasa Teertha**

(13) Shri Shreenivaasa Teertha

(14) Shri Raama Teertha

(15) Shri Lakshmikaanta Teertha

(16) Shri Shripati Teertha

(17) Shri Raamachandra Teertha

(18) Shri Lakshmivallabha Teertha

(19) Shri Lakshminaatha Teertha

(20) Shri Lakshmipati Teertha

(21) Shri Lakshmi Naaraayana Teertha

(22) Shri Raghunaatha Teertha

(23) Shri Jagannaatha Teertha

(24) Shri Shreenaatha Teertha

(25) Shri Vidyaanaatha Teertha

(26) Shri Vidyaapati Teertha

(27) Shri Vidyaavallabha Teertha  
(28) Shri Vidyaakaanta Teertha  
(29) Shri Vidyaanidhi Teertha  
(30) Shri Vidyaapurna Teertha  
(31) Shri Vidyaashreesindhu Teertha  
(32) Shri Vidyaashreedhara Teertha  
(33) Shri Vidyaashreenivaasa Teertha

(34) Shri Vidyaasamudra Teertha  
(35) Shri Vidyaaratnaakara Teertha  
(36) Shri Vidyaavaaridhi Teertha  
(37) Shri Vidyaaprasanna Teertha  
(38) Shri Vidyaapayonidhi Teertha  
(39) Shri Vidyaavaachaspati Teertha



(40) Shri Vidyaashreesha Teertha

DEETS

# Introduction

Bhaarata is a land of numerous philosophers and the centre of spirituality. Since centuries, different darshanas (philosophies) within Hinduism have risen to popularity and lost popularity as well. In the last one and a half thousand years, there had been a steep reduction in the popularity of the Hindu darshana, with the rising popularity of the Jaina and Bauddha philosophies. Subsequently, philosophers such as Shri Kumaarila Bhatta and others brought Vaidika Dharma back to its original popularity. During this time, three popular Gurus who arrived were Shri Aadi Shankaraachaarya, Shri Ramanujaachaarya and Shri Madhvaachaarya, who propogated the darshanas within the philosophy of Vedaanta, interpreting it differently. Today, these three are highly popular. However, despite this, Tattvavaada, the darshana of Shri Madhvacharya, remains the least studied, especially due to a relatively lesser number of followers and those who know it and propagate it. There are far fewer resources on Tattvavaada, especially in English, making it tedious for a newbie to learn the philosophy or even know its basics.

Therefore, we decided to accomplish the task of making resources to learn Tattvavaada, from its basics, easily available in English. This book serves as a preliminary material before one can explore other detailed works such as “Shri Madhva’s Teachings in His Own Words” by Shri B. N. K. Sharma. The objective of this book is to provide knowledge of the philosophy of Shri Madhvacharya to anyone who is new to learning it and wants to understand it from its basics. This may also be partly suitable for those who are new to learning about Hinduism in general too, but uses complex Samskrta terminology at certain places and does not explain some basic concepts like the Devas, the Vedas, etc., in an elaborate manner.

Tattvavaada is the darshana propogated by Shri Madhvacharya, who lived in the 13th century A.D. He was its chief propagator, born in Udupi to a family of Shivalli Brahmins. He had an elder sister, Kalyaani Devi, and a younger brother, Vishnu Teertha, who became his own disciple later on. He appeared at a time when invasions by the Islamic warriors and other foreigners had begun in the Northern part of India. Over the past few centuries, the Mayavada darshana of Shri Aadi Shankaracharya had become very popular, overpowering the popularity of other darshanas like Pancharaatra (Vaishnavism), Purva-Meemaamsa, Nyaaya, etc. Several Vaishnavas had even converted to Smaartas, having lost faith in their own doctrine and repeatedly being defeated in debates by the Smaartas, with no Pandita well-versed and knowledgeable enough to defeat the opponents. Even one parampara of Pancharaatrikas in South India had become Mayavadis, while still maintaining their Vaishnava rituals and not having much faith in the Mayavada philosophy.

It was then that Shri Yaamunaachaarya, the Guru of Shri Raamaanujaachaarya’s Guru, was born and wrote granthas like Aagama Pramaanya, defending the authority of Pancharaatra, proving that it was a philosophy preached by Shri Vishnu Himself and praised in the Shaastras. With this, the darshana of Shri Vaishnavism, propogated by Shri Ramanujacharya, © Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

became popular. However, Shri Madhvacharya was not satisfied with this and had disagreements, highlighting discrepancies in its philosophy too, with respect to the statements of the Shaastras. Therefore, he propagated the darshana of Tattvavaada, a Vaishnava philosophy, which considers Shri Naaraayana as Para Brahman, the Supreme Being, and uniquely emphasizes the importance of respecting uniqueness and differences as a truth which cannot be denied. The life of Shri Madhvacharya is known from an authentic biography, written by Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya, the son of his direct disciple, Shri Trivikrama Panditaachaarya.

Shri Madhvacharya has also authored several books, known as the 'Sarvamula granthas', explaining the fundamental principles of his philosophy. These are the prime authority for any Maadhva and to understand his darshana. This book intends to provide a brief overview about the philosophy of Shri Madhvacharya.

# 1. Basic Philosophical Tenets of Tattvavaada

This chapter shall begin with basic tenets of most Hindu darshanas and how the philosophy of Tattvavaada and how it differs from the rest.

## Para Brahman



Para Brahman is most commonly used name to refer to the Supreme Being or God, by almost all Hindu darshanas. But in reality, He is actually nameless as well as possessed of infinite names, as no names or ideas comprehensible to humans can actually be suitable to describe Him. Simultaneously, He is the root of existence of all entities and ideas, due to which all names and sounds refer to Him ultimately.

The definition of Brahman is provided in the second Sutra of the Brahma Sutras:

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

ॐ जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॐ ॥

"(Brahman is) the cause of creation, etc., (of the universe and all entities)."

—Brahma Sutras, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutra 2

In Tattvasankhyaana, Shri Madhvacharya provides the strongest argument for the existence of God, explained further by Shri Jaya Teertha, in his commentary on the same. Composite entities are made of parts. A wall exists due to combinations of bricks, which themselves exist due to their particles and so on, including atoms, as they are made of sub-atomic particles. Similarly, even the bodies of living organisms are composite, being composed of tissues, cells, molecules, atoms, etc.

So, as explained, the whole universe too is composite, since it consists of various entities, which themselves are composite. Now, there is a series of dependencies for the existence of every object in the universe and ultimately, the universe itself. A wall exists as such due to its bricks and concrete. The bricks exist due to their individual particles. This series of dependencies will have an end. Otherwise, it is not possible for the entity in question to exist. In other words, if we suppose A is made of B, B is made of C and so on, with this series being infinite, the property of existence cannot actually reach A since it would have to traverse an endless number first! Thus, there is one common entity (Tattva) upon which all others depend for their existence. This entity cannot itself be composite or dependent on any other again, due to the issue of infinite regression explained already. This entity is the Supreme Being, Para Brahman, who is said to be sarvakaarana-kaarana (the cause of all causes).

The Shaastras have described various qualities of Para Brahman, such as:

- Ananta (infiniteness): He is endless and infinite in all ways
- Jnaana (knowledge): He Himself is the ultimate knowledge and is omniscient
- Satya (true): He is truth and a real entity
- Gunaparipurna (full of qualities): He has infinite qualities, excluding negative ones
- Aja (unborn): He is unborn and free from life, birth and death

In reality, all His qualities are infinite and it is impossible to describe them. It is also not possible to know Him properly, due to this, and it is He Himself who actually knows Him! So, in the Mahaabhaarata, Bheeshma says:

आरिराधयिषुः कृष्णं वाचं जिगदिषामि याम् ।  
तया व्याससमासिन्या प्रीयतां पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १७ ॥  
शुचिं शुचिपदं हंसं तत्परं परमेष्ठिनम् ।  
युक्त्वा सर्वात्मनाऽऽत्मानं तं प्रपद्ये प्रजापतिम् ॥ १८ ॥  
अनाद्यन्तं परं ब्रह्म न देवा नर्षयो विदुः ।  
एकोऽयं वेद भगवान्धाता नारायणो हरिः ॥ १९ ॥

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

नारायणादृषिगणास्तथा सिद्धमहोरगाः ।  
देवा देवर्षयश्चैव यं विदुर्दुःखभेषजम् ॥ २० ॥  
देवदानवगन्धर्वा यक्षराक्षसपन्नगाः ।  
यं न जानन्ति को ह्येष कुतो वा भगवानिति ॥ २१ ॥  
यमाहुर्जगतः कोशं यस्मिंश्च निहिताः प्रजाः ।  
यस्मिँल्लोकाः स्फुरन्त्येते जाले शकुनयो यथा ॥ २२ ॥  
यस्मिन्विश्वानि भूतानि तिष्ठन्ति च विशन्ति च ।  
गुणभूतानि भूतेशे सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ २३ ॥  
यं च विश्वस्य कर्तारं जगतस्तस्थुषां पतिम् ।  
वदन्ति जगतोऽध्यक्षमध्यात्मपरिचिन्तकाः ॥ २४ ॥

(Bheeshma said): "Krshna, foremost of beings, be pleased with my words, due to my desire for praising You, Purushottama. He is pure and the epitome of purity. He is transcendental to all and is the Highest. I resort to Him, the Aatma of all entities, Prajaapati. Without beginning, middle and end, He is Param Brahman, whom neither the Devas nor the Rshis know. The One who does know Him is the divine Creator, Naaraayana, Hari (i.e., Himself). Due to Naaraayana, the Rshis, Ganas, Siddhas, Devas and the Devarshis know a fraction of Him, the remedy of sorrow. The Devas, Daanavas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Raakshasas and Pannagas do not know exactly who He is and from where He originated. The universe and all its residents reside in Him. All the worlds and living entities reside in Him. All of them, like in a hunter's net, the realms and living entities, are established in and enter into Him during destruction. The entities with various attributes exist in Bhutesha, like beads strung on a thread. He is the creator of the entire universe and the world, as well as its Master. The practitioners of spiritual knowledge refer to Him as the overseer and authority of the universe."

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 46/48, Shlokas 18-24

Though the Supreme Being is actually nameless, for our convenience and to know a fraction of Him in accordance with our limited capacities, the Shaastras have provided us suitable instructions and generally refer to Him by names like Brahman, Paramaatma (the Highest Self), Bhagavat/Bhagavaan, Naaraayana, etc.

अशब्दगोचरस्यापि तस्य वै ब्रह्मणो द्विज ।  
पूजायां भगवच्छब्दः क्रियते ह्युपचारतः ॥ ७१ ॥  
शुद्धे महाविभूत्याख्ये परे ब्रह्मणि शब्दिते ।  
मैत्रेय भगवच्छब्दस्सर्वकारणकारणे ॥ ७२ ॥

"During worship, the word 'Bhagavat' is indeed suitable for referring to Brahman, who is actually indescribable by any words, O Dvija. The word 'Bhagavat' expresses the Pure, Great Spirit, Para Brahman, O Maitreya, who is the cause of all causes."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsa 6, Adhyaaya 5, Shlokas 71-72

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्दते ॥

"They refer to Him by the names Brahman, Paramaatma and Bhagavaan."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 1, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 11 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in his Brahma Sutra bhaashya, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutras 7 and 12)

He is also the ultimate benefactor of all entities in the universe, which is why He is extolled as being the father, mother, brother, friend, etc., of all entities.

सर्वेषामेव भूतानां पिता माता च माधवः ।  
गच्छध्वमेनं शरणं शरण्यं कौरवर्षभाः ॥ ५६ ॥

"Maadhava is the Father and Mother of all beings, mighty Kaurava. Seek refuge in the One who grants protection."

—Mahaabhaarata, Vana Parva, Adhyaaya 192, Shloka 56

सर्वेषामात्मजो ह्यात्मा पिता माता स ईश्वरः ॥ ४२ ॥

"Bhagavaan Hari is the child, self, father and mother of everyone. He is Eeshvara."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 10, Adhyaaya 43, Shloka 42

Various darshanas of Sanaatana Dharma recognize their respective deity or Ishta Deva as Paramaatma. Tattvavaada, being a Pancharaatrika or Vaishnava darshana, recognizes Para Brahman as Shri Naaraayana, Vishnu, as said in the core Shaastras of Vaishnava Dharma, such as the Vedas, Pancharaatra texts, Mahaabhaarata and Vaishnava Puraanas. The Shaastras too commonly associate the name Naaraayana with Para Brahman.

नारायणः परं ब्रह्म तत्त्वं नारायणः परः ।

"Naaraayana is the Supreme Brahman, the Highest Tattva is Naaraayana."

This sentence is found in multiple Shaastras such as:

- Taittireeya Aaranyaka, Prapaathaka 10 (Maha-Naaraayana Upanishad), Anuvaaka 13 (Naaraayana Sukta), Mantra 4
- Mahaabhaarata, Anushaasana Parva, Adhyaaya 186, Shloka 9
- Naaraayana Samhita, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 35
- Padma Puraana, Uttara Khanda, Adhyaaya 226, Shloka 59
- Narasimha Puraana, Adhyaaya 64, Shloka 63

ब्रह्मण्यो देवकीपुत्रो ब्रह्मण्यो मधुसूदनोम् । सर्वभूतस्थमेकं नारायणम् । कारणपुरुषमकारणं परब्रह्मोम् ।

"Brahmanya is the son of Devaki. Brahmanya is Madhusudana. The One Naaraayana who is established in all elements, is the causal Purusha, is causeless and is Para Brahman."

—Naaraayana Upanishad, Khanda 4

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

While one may think that the Vaishnava darshanas consider God to be a personal being with a form, one must remember that it is not actually the case, as He actually possesses an infinite and inconceivable form, which cannot be viewed by the sight of any living being, except if He appears in a way visible to the living being, upon attainment of spiritual enlightenment, or vinishpanna-samaadhi.

सहस्रशीर्षं देवं विश्वाक्षं विश्वशम्भुवम् ।  
विश्वं नारायणं देवमक्षरं परमं पदम् ॥ १ ॥

"The Deva with a thousand heads, with His eyes everywhere, the source of delight for the universe, the bestower of the fruits of deeds, is Naaraayana, the Immutable Deva and the Highest abode."

—Taittiriya Aaranyaka, Prapaathaka 10 (Maha-Naaraayana Upanishad), Anuvaaka 13 (Naaraayana Sukta), Mantra 1

पश्यन्त्यदो रूपमदभ्रचक्षुषा सहस्रपादोरुभुजाननाद्भुतम् ।  
सहस्रमूर्धश्रवणाक्षिनासिकं सहस्रमौल्यम्बरकुण्डलोल्लसत् ॥ ४ ॥

"With their perfect eyes, they see Purusha, who has thousands of feet, thighs, arms, faces, heads, ears, eyes and noses and all extraordinary limbs, glowing with thousands of glowing earrings, dresses and garlands."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 1, Adhyaaya 3, Shloka 4

In the Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 5, it is explained that the word 'Bhagavat' or 'Bhagavaan' primarily expresses a being with the following qualities:

**(1) Aishvarya (Opulence):** He possesses all opulences and wealth.

**(2) Dharma (Righteousness):** He performs only what is correct and is inclined to Dharma.

**(3) Yashas (Glory):** His glories are infinite and He becomes well-known as an extraordinary personality.

**(4) Shree (Beauty):** He is all-attractive and infinitely beautiful than any other entity.

**(5) Jnaana (Knowledge):** He is kavi (omniscient) and knows everything, in the past, present and future.

**(6) Vairaagya (Renunciation):** He is unattached to anything. He is renounced from the thoughts of being attached to or depending upon anyone or anything. He is Self-satisfied and complete in Himself, experiencing infinite aananda (bliss).

Thus, it is natural that anyone would consider such a personality as the most ideal being, but it is possible only in case of Brahman and not anyone else.

## Manifestations of Brahman



Shri Vishnu manifests Himself in five ways as per the Aagamas:

**(1) Para (पर):** As the Supreme Being who resides at Parama Padam. He is usually visible in His eight-armed form (ashtabhuj) or four-armed form (chaturbhuj).

**(2) Vyuha (व्यूह):** Four forms acquired by Shri Vishnu, which are His manifestations in our material universe, known as 'Vyuhas'. He acquires these forms when He creates the universe. The four rupas are:

- **Vaasudeva (वासुदेव)**, who resides in the ocean of milk and is visible to the Devatas and other beings
- **Sankarshana (सङ्कर्षण)**, the originator of Mukhya Praana, Shesha and Shiva
- **Pradyumna (प्रद्युम्न)**, who performs preservation
- **Aniruddha (अनिरुद्ध)**, the originator of Brahmaa Deva and the form of Vishnu among the Trimurtis (Brahmaa, Vishnu and Shiva)

**(3) Vibhaava (विभाव):** The manifestations of Shri Vishnu in our universe in a visible form, like a human being or other entity, such as Raama, Krshna, Parashuraama, Dattaatreya, Naaraayana Rshi, etc.

**(4) Archa (अर्च):** The special presence of Shri Vishnu, residing in an idol or other medium through which He is worshiped

**(5) Antaryaamin (अन्तर्यामिन्):** As the indweller inside the soul of all beings, who controls them and is the all-seeing witness in them

Sometimes, Antaryaami and Archa are spoken of as sub-categories of Vibhaava. One must remember that Bhagavaan is actually omnipresent and He is all-pervading, similar to the atmosphere encompassing the planet or the sea enveloping all the sea creatures. The very name 'Vishnu', for this reason, itself is synonymous with "omnipresent" or 'Brahman'.

बृहत्वाद्बृंहणत्वाच्च तद्ब्रह्मेत्यभिधीयते ॥ २१ ॥

"Due to His vastness and omnipresence, He is known as 'Brahman'."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 3, Adhyaaya 3, Shloka 21

बृहत्त्वाद्ब्रह्मरुच्यते ॥

"Due to His vastness, He is known as 'Vishnu'."

—Mahaabhaarata, Udyoga Parva, Adhyaaya 69, Shloka 3

### The Concept of Avataara:

His vibhaava forms are those visible forms He acquires when He appears in our realms, in the form of a human being or some other entity. They are also known as His 'avataaras'. Since His actual form is never visible through one's eyesight, He takes up a visible form and pretends to take birth from some entities, such as human beings. Since He plays the role of a human, He sometimes exhibits defects like anger, sorrow, delusion, etc., but being Para Brahman, He seldom actually possesses them or experiences anything other than bliss.

- **Praadurbhaavas/Saakshaat Avataaras/Abhinna Amshas:**

These are avataaras of Shri Vishnu who are His own visible form and so, are infinitely powerful, omnipresent, omniscient, etc., being the same Person. They are said to be His amshas (portions), but since Para Brahman is infinite and a fraction of infinity is still infinity, they are actually the same Person and infinitely powerful. Similarly, even a hair or nail of Bhagavaan is infinitely powerful and is He Himself.

Vishnu's Chaturvyuhas, Dhanvantari, Kapila Maharshi, Mohini, Matsya, Kurma, Varaaha, Narasimha, Dattaatreya, Naaraayana Rshi, Krshna Dvaipaayana Vyaasa, Parashuraama, Raama, Krshna, Buddha and Kalki are examples of Vishnu's saakshaat avataaras.

- **Praadurbhaava-Antaras/Aaveshas/Vibhinna-Amshas:**

These are avataaras who are spoken of as Vishnu's avataaras, but are actually not Bhagavaan Himself. They are living entities such as human beings, who are pious enough to obtain a special presence of a portion of Shri Vishnu in their hearts, as a second soul, under whose influence they perform necessary tasks to be done by Shri Vishnu. Aavasha is a temporary effect and the main soul in such bodies is still a jeeva and not Eeshvara.

Rshabha, Devarshi Naarada, Nara Rshi, Shesha, Shiva and several Devatas and other beings are examples of Vishnu's aavasha-avataaras.

## The Various Tattvas

'Tattva' (तत्त्व) literally means 'truth' or 'reality' and refers to the entities in our universe. They are known so, as they are real objects which exist. In Tattvasankhyaana, where Shri Madhvacharya provided the strongest argument for the existence of God, he remarks:

स्वतन्त्रमस्वतन्त्रं च द्विविधं तत्त्वमिष्यते ।  
स्वतन्त्रो भगवान् विष्णुः भावोऽभावो द्विधेतरत् ॥ १ ॥

प्राक्प्रध्वंससदात्वेन त्रिविधोभाव इष्यते ।  
चेतनाचेतनत्वेन भावोऽपि द्विविधो मतः ॥ २ ॥

“Svatantra (independent) and Asvatantra (dependent) – these are the two types of Tattvas. Svatantra is Bhagavaan Vishnu. Bhaava (existent) and abhaava (non-existent) are of the second type. The pre-existing, destroyed and eternal are the three types of abhaava. Chetana (conscious) and achetana (non-conscious) are the two types of bhaava.”

These two shlokas summarize the concepts of the Tattvas. The philosophy of Nyaaya categorizes entities as bhaava (existent) and abhaava (non-existent). Non-existence is of three types depending upon the cause of non-existence of certain entities, such as:

- **Praak:** These entities in question have never been existing till now
- **Dhvamsa:** These entities were previously existing but have been destroyed
- **Atyanta:** They were not existing since eternity and will continue not to exist

The bhaavas (existent entities) are of two types:

- **Chetana:** Conscious/living
- **Achetana:** Non-living

Generally, the Tattvas refer to the constituents of the universe and its beings, with each Tattva having a divine being, or Devata, presiding over it and being responsible for its normal functioning. It is the presence of these Devatas which ensures the functionality of that Tattva. Most darshanas categorize the Tattvas into these major ones and Tattvavaada associates these respective Devatas with them, as explained on the next page.

Category	Tattva	Devata	Components Presided over
Panchabhutas	Prithivee (पृथिवी)	Bhu Devi	Earth
	Aapas (आपस)	Varuna	Water
	Tejas (तेजस)	Agni	Fire
	Vaayu (वायु)	Pravaaha Vaayu	Air
	Aakaash (आकाश)	Ganapati	Ether
Jnaanendriyas	Chakshu (चक्षु)	Surya	Eye
	Shrotra (श्रोत्र)	Soma	Ear
	Ghraana (घ्राण)	The two Ashvins	Nose
	Rasana (रसना)	Varuna	Taste buds
	Tvach (त्वच)	Kubera	Skin
Karmendriyas	Vaach (वाच)	Agni	Speech
	Hasta (हस्त)	Indra	Hands
	Upastha (उपस्थ)	Prajaapati	Genitals
	Paayu (पायु)	Yama	Anus
	Paada (पाद)	Jayanta	Feet
Arthas	Shabda (शब्द)	Suparni	Sound
	Sparsha (स्पर्श)		Touch
	Roopa (रूप)	Vaaruni	Sight
	Rasa (रस)		Taste
	Gandha (गन्ध)	Paarvati	Smell
The Higher Tattvas	Ahankaara (अहङ्कार)	Chandra	Ego
	Manas (मनस)	Shiva	Mind
	Buddhi (बुद्धि)	Sarasvati and Bhaarati	Intellect
	Chitta (चित्त)	Kshetrajna (Vishnu)	Consciousness
	Mahat (महत)	Brahmaa and Vaayu	All physical entities of the universe
	Avyakta/Prakrti (अव्यक्त/प्रकृति)	Lakshmi	The entire physical world
	Purusha (पुरुष)	Vishnu	The controller of all other Tattvas who uses Prakrti to create the universe
	Shri Vishnu, as Para Vaasudeva		All Tattvas

The Tattvas are categorized into these broad categories, as explained on the previous page. The Pancha-bhutas are the constituents of most physical objects and their particles in our universe. 'Prthivi' refers to the organic and inorganic compounds found throughout the Earth. The jnaanendriyas are the five sense organs, which are called so since they help in acquiring knowledge. The karmendriyas are other important organs, which are necessary for survival, but are not helpful in obtaining jnaana. The arthas are the sensations felt with the help of the sense organs, or indriyas. Each Tattva has an associated Devata, which also indicates their position in the hierarchy and their level of omnipresence. The Devatas are the personified divine beings who preside over various Tattvas and natural phenomena, enabling the existence and normal functioning of those Tattvas. However, a superior Devata is required for the functioning of a subordinate Tattva. Ultimately, without Para Brahman, Shri Vishnu, there is no possibility of any of the entities to exist or function normally. This is why the Para-Tattva or Highest Tattva, is Paramaatma alone. A proper hierarchy of the Devatas and other beings, has been provided in one of the subsequent sections, describing their taaratamya.

In the darshana of Tattvavaada, the jeevas are said to be pratibimbas (reflections) of Paramaatma, who is the bimba (the object which is reflected), a metaphor commonly used in the Shaastras. Since all Tattvas depend on Paramaatma for their existence, they also derive all their qualities from His own superior qualities, but can exhibit a negligibly small fraction of them. So, the auspicious gunas in the jeevas and other entities are minute and those of Parameshvara are infinite. Similar to how a mirror reflects the image of an object, but the image is not even comparable to the actual object, the jeevas are said to be the reflections of Paramaatma. The jeevas are also indirect reflections of Paramaatma, as they are the direct reflections of their superior jeevas. For Vaayu, his bimba-rupa is Vishnu Himself, so he is a direct pratibimba of Vishnu and all the other male Devatas down the taaratamya derive their bimba-rupas from Vaayu and his Antaryaami, Sankarshana. For the female jeevas, the main bimba-rupa is Lakshmi Devi, who herself is a reflection of Vishnu. As one comes down the taaratamya, even the human beings derive their respective forms from the Devatas and other beings superior to them. When one achieves aparoksha-jnaana, the person has the sight of Shri Vishnu, residing in their soul as their own Antaryaami, who is actually their bimba-rupa.

## The Pancha Bhedas

'Bheda' (भेद) literally means distinction or differentiation. It refers to the fact that the various entities around us are distinct and unique in their own way. It is the philosophy of Tattvavaada alone which emphasizes and highlights the idea of bheda. There are five kinds of bhedas as explained by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparya Nirnaya:

**(1) Jeeva-Eeshvara Bheda (जीव-ईश्वर भेद):** The jeevas are discrete from Para Brahman, with the former being dependent on the latter for their own existence, while the latter is independent.

**(2) Jeeva-Jeeva Bheda (जीव-जीव भेद):** Every jeeva is unique and its characteristics and natural mindset differs from another jeeva, even if seemingly identical. Even if one may seem to share the features and mentality as another Aatma, no two jeevas can be considered one and the same, since they exist as distinct entities.

**(3) Jeeva-Jada Bheda (जीव-जड भेद):** The jeevas are discrete from the physical world and its objects, which are referred to as 'jada'.

**(4) Eeshvara-Jada Bheda (ईश्वर-जड भेद):** Eeshvara is discrete from the universe and all physical objects. Like the jeevas, they too depend upon Him for their existence.

**(5) Jada-Jada Bheda (जड-जड भेद):** A discrete physical object, such as an atom or sub-atomic particle, is unique and distinct from another object of the same kind. For example, while two atoms may have exactly the same number of sub-atomic particles and share other characteristics, they are still not the same entity and physically differ, being two separate atoms. Similarly, two protons or electrons are not the same entity, since they have a separate existence and other characteristics.

Numerous other philosophies, especially Advaita and Vishishtadvaita, emphasize on lack of bheda or oneness among various entities. The Advaitins believe that there is absolutely no difference between the physical matter, the living entities and Paramaatma. They propagate the idea that the distinctions we see are due to being overcome by avidya (ignorance) and that one has to realize that even our individual existence is an illusion, with only Brahman existing in reality and the whole idea of multiple jeevas arising due to ahankaara overpowering us.

Shri Madhvacharya, however, has stated that the Pancha-bhedas are actually eternal, as stated multiple times in the Shaastras, such as the Upanishads and the last Paada of the Brahma Sutras. Even after one achieves moksha and the highest possible form of spiritual enlightenment, nothing changes the fact that the jeeva always is subordinate to Paramaatma and depends on Him for its very existence.

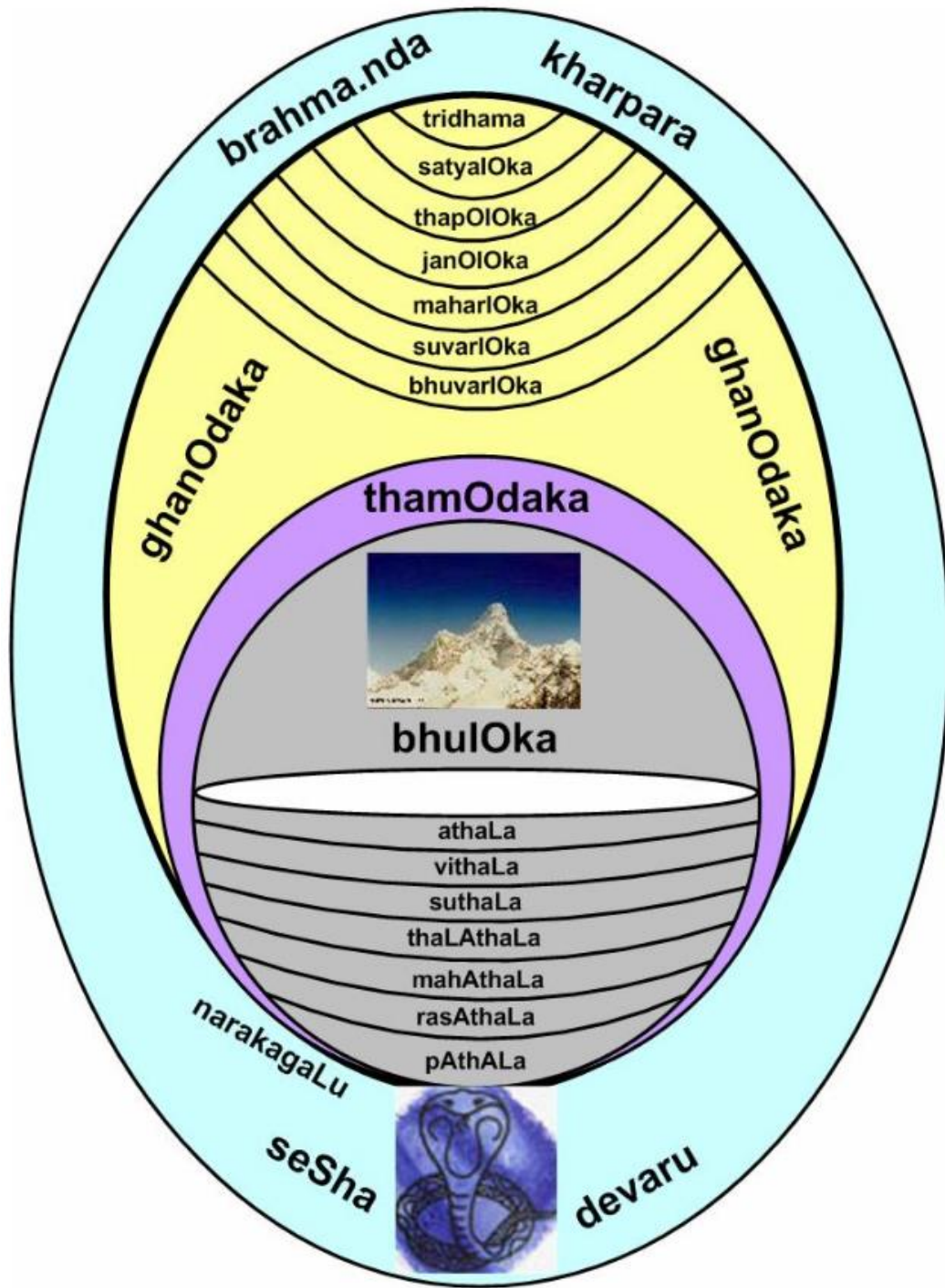
## The Lokas

The universe we reside in is known as the 'Brahmaanda', which is created by Brahmaa. One must know that in Hindu darshanas, time is cyclical and infinite. The universe continuously undergoes changes, is destroyed and is created again after a new Brahmaa is born. This is a cycle of srshti (creation), sthiti (maintenance) and pralaya (destruction). The universe is divided into multiple units, or precisely solar systems, where various planets and life forms exist. In our realms, there are 14 lokas or realms where living beings can reside. Living in the higher lokas is easier than those below it. Distinct from all of them, are Parama Padam or Vaikuntha (where the mukta jeevas reside), Andhantamas (where the taamasika jeevas reside) and the Anitya-Narakas (transient hells, where sinful jeevas are punished before their course in samsaara continues).

The 14 lokas are:

- (1) Satyaloka: The residence of Brahmaa Deva
- (2) Tapa Loka
- (3) Jana Loka: The realm of the Saptarshis
- (4) Maha Loka
- (5) Suva/Svarga Loka: The realm of Indra and other Devas
- (6) Bhuva Loka: An atmospheric realm in the Earth, where ghosts and spirits reside
- (7) Bhu Loka: The Earth where all humans, birds, animals, etc., reside
- (8) Atala
- (9) Vitala
- (10) Sutala: The realm where Bali and Vaamana reside
- (11) Talaatala
- (12) Mahaatala
- (13) Rasaatala
- (14) Paatala: The lowest realm, with most of the asuras as well as the Naagas

Starting from Atala, the lower realms are generally home to asuras and other inferior beings, or those who have committed paapa karmas. The Naagas and even Sankarshana, however, also reside in Paatala. In all these lokas, even till Satyaloka, one is not free from samsaara and faces pleasures and sorrows. All the lokas are held by Shesha, the Devata who is also the serpent-bed of Shri Vishnu. The manner in which the lokas are structured, can be better understood from the image on the next page.



Picture Credit: <https://vijayadasaru.net>

## Samsaara and Karmas

All entities in this material world are tormented by life here, called 'samsaara'. A living entity keeps facing birth and death in various realms of the universe, until he or she obtains 'moksha' or 'mukti' (liberation). This can be achieved only through knowledge of Paramaatma, obtained from the Shaastras and a Guru or preceptor who is also possessing such jnaana. Through bhakti towards Shri Vishnu, such as chanting His names and worshipping Him, while also learning and practising philosophical knowledge, one can obtain moksha and reach the realm of Shri Vishnu after death, ending the recurring cycle of birth and death. All the jeevas have been in samsaara since an infinite amount of time. As per Hindu darshanas, time is cyclical and the universe keeps undergoing srshti, sthiti and laya, while the Devatas in their positions are replaced by other suitable candidates, every time. In the beginning of a particular cycle of creation, a certain set of jeevas enter into samsaara and execute their karmas.

An action performed by a living being is called a 'karma' and depending on its intentions, it provides differing results. Generally, karmas are classified as follows:

**Punya:** An action which is non-violent and benefits everyone

**Paapa:** An action which harms others

**Paataka:** An action causing one to lose a lot of merit or fall from their position

**Kilbisha:** An unjust action

**Enasa:** An unwanted deed leading to personal troubles

In the Mahaabhaarata, punya and paapa are defined as follows:

परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥

"Punya is that which is committed for benefitting others, while paapa is that which is done to trouble others."

There are three broad categories of all karmas committed by an individual:

**(1) Sanchita Karmas:** All actions which have been performed till now by a jeeva

**(2) Praarabdha Karmas:** Actions whose results which a jeeva is currently experiencing

**(3) Kriyamaana Karmas:** The current karmas being committed by a jeeva, which will shape its future

It must be known that while the karmas are said to be so, they are actually eternal. Before the creation of the universe, the jeevas are always in an inactive and dormant state, where they perform only mental karmas depending on their svabhaava (nature).

The intention of performing any karma has the utmost importance and decides the result to be experienced. Karmas can be jnaana-purvaka (intentional) or ajnaana-purvaka (unintentional). The former provides greater results and the latter provides minute results.

As long as one is continuously performing karmas, the person remains bound to the endless chain of karmas and karma-phalas (results of actions). Thus, one must practise bhakti to free oneself from this chain, as it ensures that one continuously remembers Paramaatma as the Highest goal and does not mentally become attached to karmas and karma-phalas.

In the Vishnu Puraana's 6th Amsha's 7th Adhyaaya, it is explained that the root of samsaara is the mind. Samsaara is actually like a prison, since the jeevas here are ajnaanis (ignorant), with regard to the greatest philosophical knowledge and handling each and every situation in a Saattvika manner. There are two main causes for samsaara – (1) assuming that anything which is not one's self (Aatma) to be the self and (2) assuming that those objects which are not our possessions are our possessions. The true self is the jeeva, the soul, which is a minute particle residing in the heart. It is not a physical entity, but simply inhabits the body for a certain duration in accordance with its karmas. The body is never the self, but in almost every instance, one typically assume it is so and thinks about the body as one's own self. While one must maintain their body and health to make the best use of it, one must not be attached and forget that the body is not the self nor are its possessions actually possessed by us, since we are jeevas. The jeeva has no physical possessions and none of the worldly objects or entities are permanently with it, nor are its relationships with other living bodies, which also contain other living souls. The jeeva has three bodies – sthula deha (the physical body), anulinga deha and linga deha (subtle body), constituted by physical matter and other materials like intellect, the mind, etc.

This is said to be the most fundamental knowledge to be known, in order to be free from delusions and sorrows. Knowing this, one can one day exit samsaara, by whole-heartedly surrendering to Para Brahman, knowing that He alone is truly eternal and His remembrance and grace alone is capable of providing everlasting happiness, regardless of the situation. Even the Devatas are not eternal, but are positions for divine beings who have performed intense amounts of punya and saadhana for several janmas. They too are still in samsaara. While mukti is something one would desire, one must know that it is a futuristic goal and one must always focus on the present. Mukti is merely an upa-phala or secondary effect of bhakti. Thus, one's greatest goal should be to perfectly practise bhakti. The highest stage of bhakti is called paripakva-bhakti or vinishpanna-samaadhi, where one is continuously in a state of remembering Bhagavaan in all situations, regardless of their janma or troubles.

## Gunas and Svaabhaavas

While the fundamental broad categories of Tattvas are Para Brahman, Prakrti and the jeevas, each are characterized by their 'gunas' (qualities). A guna (गुण) is a quality of an entity, which may be innate (svaabhaavika) or acquired by influence (prabhaava). The most basic gunas are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Their characteristics are described in the Bhagavat Geeta.

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६ ॥

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।  
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।  
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

"One who is free from attachments and ego, with strong enthusiasm and equanimity in success and failures, is said to be Saattvika. One who is attached to the results of karmas, with greedy desires and is impure, being overjoyed and sorrowful, is said to be Raajasa. One who goes against protocols, is materialistic, stubborn, deceitful, who insults others and is a lazy and morose procrastinator, is said to be Taamasa."

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 18, Shlokas 26-28

While these gunas exist naturally in the world, as Praakrtika gunas, it must be known that the jeevas too are classified based on the predominance of these in terms of their svaabhaavika gunas. In other words, the jeevas have certain natural qualities, which define their personality and make them unique. This nature (svabhaava) is permanently fixed since eternity and is never caused due to any other agent. Thus, this defines their ultimate destiny and natural likes or dislikes. Some jeevas are naturally open-minded and compassionate, predominantly possessing Sattva. They would naturally prefer being spiritual and practising bhakti, aspiring to avoid harming all other entities as much as possible. Some others are extreme materialists and love to be selfish, valuing only material wealth and themselves over anything else. They are Raajasikas. Certain jeevas are naturally extreme adharmis and despise those who are righteous. Their only aim is to obtain sadistic happiness by harming others as much as possible. They are Taamasikas.

The Saattvikas are eligible for moksha and would sooner or later seriously take to the path of spirituality, finding it better than all others. The Raajasikas would remain in samsaara for all eternity, as they never truly aspire from their heart, to practise spirituality or comprehend the fact that the possessions they value are all transient and not worth treasuring to the extent they do. They keep facing death and rebirth throughout different realms, having varying amounts of punya karmas (pious actions) and paapa karmas (sinful

actions). They never become proper dharmis nor extreme adharmis. The Taamasikas reach an eternal Naraka, called 'andhantamas' (blinding darkness). They misuse every opportunity they receive when they are in samsaara, only to harm other jeevas and spread hypocrisy and hatred. They reach a destination which is permanent and never return, once they have committed sufficient paapa karmas to make them deserve the worst condition. The mukta jeevas who reach Parama Padam obtain uninterrupted bliss, aananda, while the taamasikas obtain uninterrupted sorrow, dukkha. Both are results of the actions of the respective jeevas, when they have the opportunities to perform actions they truly desire. The Devatas, Gandharvas and all other beings from Brahmaa Deva to the Saattvika manushyas (human beings) are Saattvika jeevas and are eligible for moksha. The "pure humans" are those who are predominantly Raajasika and so, have a natural liking for materialism. The jeevas from the Taamasika manushyas to the demons like the raakshasas and daityas, are Taamasika jeevas, who are adharmis by their instinct and shall attain andhantamas.

Svabhaava can be compared to how a beam of light causes different types of stones to shine differently. Similarly, while Bhagavaan behaves indifferently towards all and everyone experiences similar situations, they react differently. This is another type of jeeva-jeeva bheda and even jeevas of similar svabhaava will never share exactly identical gunas. Based on their svabhaava, the jeevas are categorized as superior or inferior in the taaratamya (hierarchy). The most important part of svabhaava is that it is the very nature and personality of a soul. Therefore, Tattvavaada stresses on the fact that one must be respected accordingly based on their svabhaava, regardless of their aupaadhika gunas, like race, sex, caste, creed, nationality, etc. It is the soul who is the identity of a person and the Aatma is defined by its svaabhaavika gunas, like the sweetness of sugar.

## The Taaratamya

The Taaratamya is the hierarchy of all the conscious entities, based on their qualities and abilities to practise bhakti. Other than the darshana of Shri Madhvacharya, no other has propagated an explicit hierarchy of all beings, while there are ample pramaanas in the Shaastras mentioning taaratamyas multiple times. The taaratamya of the jeevas is based on their svaabhaavika gunas and not their aupaadhika gunas. So, it indicates their final destiny and their superiority or inferiority.

Kaksha (Group)	Member(s)	No. of Lakshanas
<b>Para Brahman</b>		
1	Shri Vishnu	32
<b>Prakrti</b>		
2	Lakshmi Devi	32
<b>Jeevas</b>		
3	Brahmaa, Vaayu and the Rjus	32
4	Sarasvati and Bhaarati	32
5	Garuda, Shesha and Rudra	28
6	The Shanmahishis (Jaambavati, Neela*, Bhadra, Mitravinda, Kalindi and Lakshana)	27
7	Sauparni, Vaaruni and Paarvati	26
8	Indra and Kaama	25
9	Ahankaarika Praana	24
10	Aniruddha#, Shachi, Rati, Svayambhuva Manu, Brhaspati and Prajapati	23
11	Pravaaha Vaayu	22
12	Surya, Chandra, Yama and Shatarupa	21
13	Varuna	20
14	Naarada	19
15	Bhrgu, Agni, Prasuti	18
16	Vishvamisra, Marichi, Atri, Aangirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Vaivasvata Manu	17
17	Mitra, Taara, Nirrti, Pravaahi	16
18	Vishvaksena, the Ashvins, Ganesha, Kubera, the 7 Vasus, 10 Rudras, 6 Aadityas, 47 Maruts, 10 Vishvedevas, 1 Rbhu, 2 Dvayaprithivee, 3 Pitrs	15
19	The Karmaja Devatas (The Kumaara Rshis, 7 Indras, Graha Devatas, Gandharvas, Manus, Apsaras, etc.)	14
20	Ganga, Parjanya, Sanjana, Rohini, Shyaamala, Viraat	13
21	The Anaakhyaata (Unnamed) Devas	12
22	Svaaha	11

23	Budha	12
24	Usha	12
25	Shani	12
26	Pushkara	11
27	Ajaanaja Devatas (The 16,100 wives of Shri Krshna)	10
28	Chira Pitrs	8
29	Deva Gandharvas	8
30	Manushya Gandharvas	7
31	Antardarshi Raajas	6
32	Uttama Manushyas (Those eligible for mukti, classified based on their svaabhaavika varna)^	4
32-A	Braahmanas	4
32-B	Kshatriyas	4
32-C	Vaishyas	4
32-D	Shudras	4
33	Raajasika Manushyas (Nityasamsaaris)	-
34	Martyaadhamas (Taamasika humans)	-
35	Pishaachakas	-
36	Raakshasas	-
37	Daityas (Kali Purusha is the lowest among them)	-

\* Krshna's wife, not to be confused with Lakshmi Devi's rupa as Durga Devi, who is her saakshaat avataara and is also called 'Neela'

# The Devata who appeared as Krshna's grandson, who is an aavesha of Vishnu's own Vyuha rupa of the same name, not to be confused with Him

^ While Shri Madhvacharya mentions that the lowest among all those eligible for mukti are the humans who are Saattvika, namely the manushyottamas, certain Vidvaans consider manushyottamas to be a different category and Saattvika humans to be the last kaksha among the Saattvika jeevas

The existence of a taaratamya is mentioned multiple times in the Shaastras, such as:

भूतेषु वीरुद्भ्य उदुत्तमा ये सरीसृपास्तेषु सबोधनिष्ठाः ।  
ततो मनुष्याः प्रमथास्ततोऽपि गन्धर्वसिद्धा विबुधानुगा ये ॥ २१ ॥

देवासुरेभ्यो मघवत्प्रधाना दक्षादयो ब्रह्मसुतास्तु तेषाम् ।  
भवः परः सोऽथ विरिञ्चवीर्यः स मत्परोऽहं द्विजदेवदेवः ॥ २२ ॥

"Among the living beings, the motile animals are greater than the immotile (such as plants). Superior to them are those with developed intellect. Superior to them are human beings and the ghostly spirits are superior to them. The Gandharvas are greater than the ghostly spirits and the Siddhas are superior to the Gandharvas. The Devatas, the Suras, are superior to the Siddhas and superior to Indra is Daksha and the other sons of Shri Brahmaa. Shri Shiva is the greatest among them and superior to Virincha (Brahmaa) is Me."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 5, Adhyaaya 5, Shlokas 21-22

While the superiority of a particular being is determined by their jnaana, intellect and other Saattvika gunas, their bodies also display certain features indicative of their divinity. Shri Vishnu, Lakshmi Devi, the Rju Devatas and their wives have 32 qualities as mentioned in Shaastras like the Saamudrika, a text on Jyotishya:

पञ्चदीर्घः पञ्चसूक्ष्मः सप्तऋक्त्तः षडुन्नतः ।  
त्रिह्रस्वपृथुगंभीरो द्वत्रिंशलक्षणो महान् ॥

“A Maha-Purusha (great person) is distinguished by thirty-two qualities – five limbs are long, five are fine, seven are reddish, six are raised, three are small, three are broad and three are deep.”

—Saamudrika

- Five limbs are long – the nose, arms, chin, eyes and thighs
- Five limbs are fine – the skin, hair, knuckles, teeth and hairs
- Seven bodily features must be reddish: the corners of the eyes, soles of the feet, palms, palate, lips, tongue and nails
- Six limbs are raised – the chest, shoulders, nails, nose, hips and face
- Three limbs are small – the neck, waist and genitals
- Three limbs are broad – the forehead, hips and chest
- Three limbs are deep or grave – the navel, voice, and intelligence

The beings starting from the kaksha of Garuda, Shesha and Shiva, till everyone else, have a lesser and lesser number of these features. One must know that since every jeeva's position in the taaratamya is defined by its svaabhaavika gunas, it is impossible for a jeeva belonging to a certain kaksha to take birth as a being of a higher kaksha. For example, a Devata whose svabhaava is to be Indra, cannot obtain the position of Shiva or anyone else higher than himself. Similarly, in the case of Brahmaa, Praana and the Rjus, they are the Devatas presiding over Mahat-Tattva, the highest Tattva after Prakrti and Purusha. Thus, they are the greatest among all jeevas and for this reason, it is said, 'Hari Sarvottama, Vaayu Jeevottama' (Hari is the greatest and Vaayu is the ultimate jeeva). Only jeevas with the svbhaava of a Rju Devata can perform sufficient saadhana to attain those positions, and after 100 janmas as a Rju, such a jeeva attains the position of Vaayu and then, after the current Brahmaa attains moksha, he becomes the next Brahmaa during the subsequent cycle of creation.

## Vishnu's Avataara as Vyaasa Deva

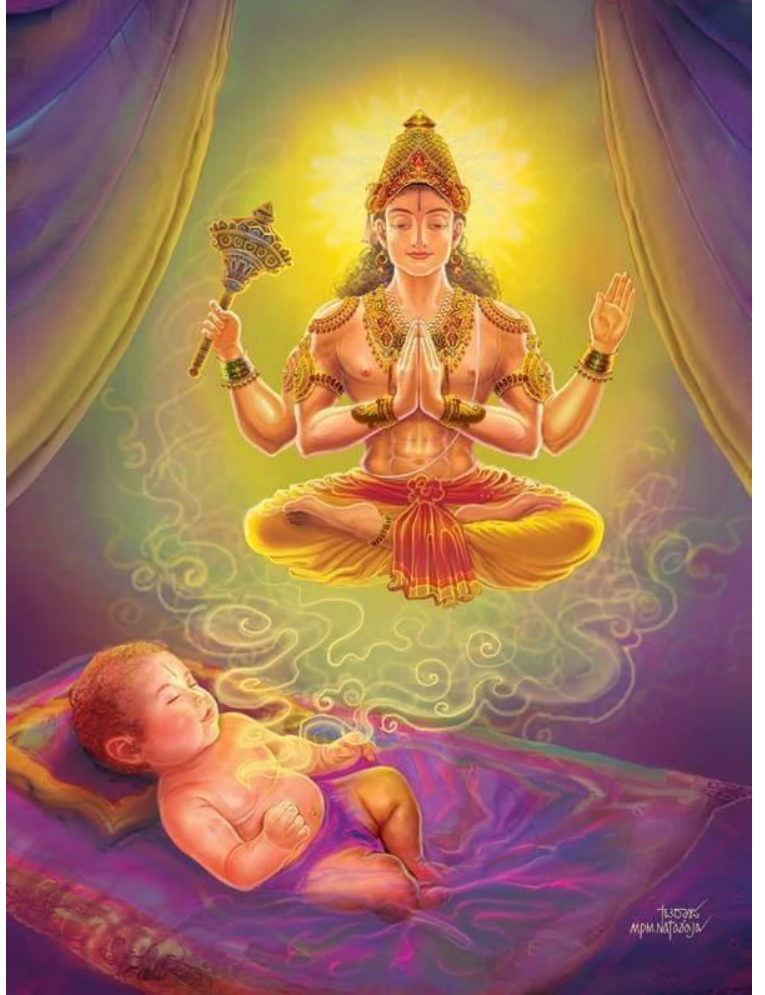


Shri Krshna Dvaipaayana Vyaasa (श्रीकृष्णद्वैपायन व्यास) is one of the Avataaras of Bhagavaan Vishnu. He appeared as the son of Paraashara Rshi and Satyavati. He appeared to compile and distribute several Shaastras, from the Vedas to the Itihaasas (the Raamaayana and Mahaabhaarata) and Puraanas. He is known so, due to being born on an island. His disciples took charge of certain Shaastras and propagating their respective ones, spreading their knowledge through the tradition of disciplic succession. The Shaastras have been propagated and preserved till date among human beings through this tradition. Vyaasa Deva simplified the Shaastras by dividing the Vedas into four parts (Rk, Yajus, Saaman and Atharvana), and the Maha-Puraanas into 18. He is renowned for His significant role in the events of the Mahaabhaarata, and authoring it as well. Being Shri Vishnu Himself, He is the ultimate Guru of all beings in the universe, including the Devas themselves. In our current age of Kali Yuga, He resides at His aashrama at Badari, away from the approach of ordinary entities and available only to the Devatas. He is also one of the most important Gurus of the Maadhva sampradaaya, acknowledged by Shri Madhvacharya as his Guru. Thus, Bhagavaan Vyaasa can be said to be the most important personality with regard to spirituality and philosophy, as far as Hindu darshanas are concerned.

## Mukhya Praana Deva

A significant Devata in the doctrine of Tattvavaada is Mukhya Praana Deva, also known as 'Vaayu'. Different from the atmospheric wind, he is a special Devata who is equivalent to Brahmaa Deva. He presides over the breath and life force of all beings and even other Devatas themselves, enabling them to exist.

There is a story in the Brhadaraanyaka Upanishad, where the Devatas aspired to know who among them was the most superior. In the process, each Devata left a human body for some time and returned later. The Devata of the eye (Surya) left and the person was blind, until Surya returned. Soma, the Devata of the ear, left and the person was deaf until his return. Agni left and the person could not speak, until his return. In a similar manner, all the Devatas including Indra, Rudra, Varuna, Chandra, Prajaapati, etc., left and returned later. In none of the cases, the person died. However, when Mukhya Praana started to leave the body, all other Devatas were dragged along with him and the person faced death. Then, one by one, all the Devatas returned and still could not revive the body. However, upon Praana's return, the body returned to life. Therefore, the Brhadaraanyaka Upanishad says:



अथाधिदैवतम् ज्वलिष्याम्येवाहमित्यग्निर्दधे तप्स्याम्यहमित्यादित्यः भास्याम्यहमिति चन्द्रमाः एवमन्या देवता यथादेवतम् स यथैषां प्राणानां मध्यमः प्राणः एवमेतासां देवतानां वायुः निम्लोचन्ति हान्या देवताः न वायुः सैषानस्तमिता देवता यद्वायुः ॥ २२ ॥

"Now with reference to the Devas: Agni took a vow, 'I will go on burning.' Surya said: 'I will give heat.' Chandra said: 'I will shine.' And so did the other Devas, according to their functions. As is the vital force in the body, Praana, among these organs, so is Vaayu among these devatas. Other devatas sink, but not Vaayu. Vaayu is the Devata that never sets."  
—Brhadaraanyaka Upanishad, Adhyaaya 1, Braahmana 5, Mantra 22

This same incident is also narrated in the Chhaandogya Upanishad (Prapaathaka 5, Khanda 1, Mantras 12) and the Skanda Puraana (Vaishnava Khanda, Vaishaakhamaasa Maahaatmya, Adhyaaya 19, Shlokas 28–36). The same chapter of the Skanda Puraana also mentions that Praana Deva accepted a curse by Kanva Rshi, due to his tapas being disturbed, that Praana's glories would diminish and his greatness would usually be forgotten by the world. Due to this, he is not at all a well-known deity, despite being glorified multiple times in the Vedas themselves. The Prashna Upanishad also explains the greatness of Praana, in its very second Prashna.

अथ हैनं भार्गवो वैदर्भिः पप्रच्छ ।

भगवन्कस्येव देवाः प्रचां विधारयन्ते कतर एतत्प्रकशयन्ते कः पुनरेषां वरिष्ठ इति ॥ १ ॥

तस्मै स होवाचाकाशो ह वा एष देवो वायुरग्निरापः पृथिवी वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च ।

ते प्रकाश्याभिवदन्ति वयमेतद्वाणमवष्टभ्य विधारयामः ॥ २ ॥

"Bhaargava of Vidarbha questioned: Oh Bhagavan, how many *Devas* support this material creation? Which of them enlighten that? Who again is of all of them, the greatest?"

(Pippalada Rshi replied): "This Deva (Mukhya Praana) is aakash, wind, fire water, earth, speech, mind, eye and ear. They (the five Praanas), revealing their glory say, "We hold together and support this body'."

—Prashna Upanishad, Prashna 2, Mantras 1–2

यो ह वै ज्येष्ठं च श्रेष्ठं च वेद ज्येष्ठश्च ह वै श्रेष्ठश्च भवति प्राणो वाव ज्येष्ठश्च श्रेष्ठश्च ॥

"He who knows the oldest and the best himself becomes the oldest and the best. It is Praana, which is the oldest and the best."

—Chhaandogya Upanishad, Prapaathaka 5, Khanda 1, Mantra 1

The Prashna Upanishad (Prashna 4, Mantra 8) also lists the various Tattvas till Mahat and refers to Praana as the highest one among them. Therefore, Tattvavaada has the principle of 'Vaayu Jeevottama'. Generally, Mukhya Praana is depicted being seated on the right lap of Shri Vishnu, as shown in paintings like the one on the next page.



## 2. One's Purpose in Life

Now, most importantly, one must enquire what one's purpose in life is. What is the use of learning such philosophies and how can it benefit one's present life? To answer this, we need to understand something known as the 'Jagat-chakra', which shall be explained subsequently in this chapter. Generally, the Shaastras prescribe four Purusharthas or purposes for people – dharma, artha, kaama and moksha, explained as follows.

### Dharma

Dharma typically means “righteousness” and is defined as follows, in the Mahaabhaarata:

धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ॥ ५८ ॥

“Due to sustaining (the world), it is known as 'Dharma', which bears all people.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Karna Parva, Adhyaaya 72, Shlokas 58-59

Shri Madhvacharya defines dharma more elaborately, as follows, in the introduction of his Geeta Taatparyya Nirnnaya:

स्वविहितवृत्त्या भक्त्या भगवदाराधनमेव परमो धर्मः तद्विरुद्धः सर्वोप्यधर्मः भगवदधीनत्वात् सर्वस्येति बोधयति भगवान् नारायणः ।

“The execution of one's duties and functions with bhakti and worshiping Bhagavaan is the highest dharma. Anything in opposition to this is adharma. It should be known that everything is subordinate to and exists due to Bhagavaan Naaraayana.”

धर्मादर्थः प्रभवति धर्मात्प्रभवते सुखम् ।  
धर्मेण लभते सर्वं धर्मसारमिदं जगत् ॥ ३१ ॥

“From dharma arises artha (wealth). Happiness results from dharma. Everything is achieved through dharma and dharma is the essence of this universe itself.”

—Vaalmiki Raamaayana, Aaranya Kaanda, Sarga 9, Shloka 31

Dharma defines whether an action is right or wrong and guides one's actions. Actions which are Saattvika are those in accordance with dharma and which must be practised. This is why it is one of the Purusharthas or necessary components in life. The Manu Smrti says:

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।  
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥ १२ ॥

“The Vedas, Smrtis, Sat-aachaara (rightful conduct and practices) and what is favourable to the self – these four themselves constitute the characteristics of dharma.”

—Manu Smrti, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 12

Dharma is that which benefits all entities. Hinduism is more popularly known by the name 'Sanaatana Dharma', which is defined as follows in the Mahaabhaarata:

अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।  
अनुग्रहश्च दानं च सतां धर्मः सनातनः ॥

“Non-maleficence towards all entities through actions, the mind and speech, as well as compassion and generosity towards them is the Sanaatana dharma (eternal dharma) of the righteous ones.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Vana Parva, Adhyaaya 298, Shloka 36

Similarly, another definition is as follows:

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधो दानमेतच्चतुष्टयम् ।  
अजातशत्रो सेवस्य धर्म एष सनातनः ॥

“Non-violence, honesty, non-maleficence and charity – these four are what must be practiced, Ajaatashatru (Yudhishtira), as it is said to be the Sanaatana dharma.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Anushaasana Parva, Adhyaaya 267, Shloka 23

Dharma includes more components, which are discussed elaborately in the Shaastras and summarized in the upcoming chapters of this book.

## Artha

Artha refers to economics or means of profiting financially. It is the manner in which one can earn their livelihood and become wealthy. It must be done through moral means alone. In the Lakshmi Tantra's 28th chapter, seven acceptable sources of income for a Vaishnava are described, which are to be understood with regard to one's varna dharma:

- (1) Daya: inherited wealth
- (2) Laabha: Profit from ethical trading and businesses
- (3) Kraya: Trading of assets such as land
- (4) Jaya: Winning wealth in a competition, through wars (for Kshatriyas), etc., without resorting to immoral methods such as cheating or gambling
- (5) Prayoga: Through the application of one's knowledge and execution of duties
- (6) Karma-yoga: Through one's duties and services to others, as a part of their routine activities and contribution to the jagat-chakra
- (7) Satpratigraha: Acceptance of donations or gifts from those whom one is allowed to receive them

For Braahmanas, earning a salaried income or trading is forbidden unless in cases of dire emergencies. Similarly, for Kshatriyas, begging is forbidden in all circumstances and gifts are to be received from other Kshatriyas only, while they themselves must provide charity for members of all other varnas, whenever they are in need. The restrictions are the least for

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

the Shudras. However, it must be known that immoral activities such as trading knowledge are forbidden for everyone, regardless of varna, unless one is in a distressful situation and needs to make money through teaching their knowledge and skills to others for a fee.

## Kaama

'Kaama' refers to desire. While it may appear to be condemned in the Shaastras, it must be known that kaama in this context refers to "desire". Unlike philosophies like Buddhism, which condemn kaama and consider it the root cause of all suffering, the Shaastras like the Mahaabhaarata mention that it is absolutely necessary.

In the 165th/167th Adhyaaya of the Shaanti Parva of the Mahaabhaarata, Bheeshma asked which among the four Purusharthas is the best – dharma, artha, kaama and moksha. Arjuna explained that artha is necessary, as one can never easily be righteous, achieve moksha or follow their passions when one does not have financial stability and proper livelihood. Vidura answered that it was dharma which was necessary, as only through dharma can one be able to achieve the other three. Bheema, however, explained that it was kaama, desire. This is because one cannot even obtain wealth, practise dharma or achieve moksha, unless one strongly desires to do so! One has to desire to be a dhaarmika to follow dharma properly. This alone can enable one to put in efforts to do the same. The same is applicable for artha and moksha. Contrary to the ideas of the Buddhists that desire is the root of all suffering, desire is actually very much necessary even to sustain life and perform all of one's responsibilities. This is highlighted by Bheema.

Importantly, one must remember not to be swayed by expectations and rely on them as a source of motivation, along with ensuring that one's desires are Saattvika, or righteous, and not very materialistic. Therefore, while one must not have many expectations, it is still important to have some motivation to achieve what is in accordance with dharma.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८ ॥

“You have the eligibility to perform your actions, but never are entitled to its fruits. Do not consider yourself as the cause for their results nor become attached to inactivity. Being united in yoga, perform your duties by abandoning attachment to them. Being in such equanimity with success and failure, is said to be 'Yoga'.”

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 2, Shlokas 47-48

## Moksha

Moksha is the state attained by an aparoksha-jnaani after death, where one enters the abode of Shri Vishnu, Vaikuntha, or Parama Padam, experiencing constant bliss for eternity and not being influenced by any negative qualities. It is attainable only by the Saattvika jeevas and is the benefit of the complete manifestation of their svabhaava. Descriptions of Vaikuntha appear in multiple parts of the Shaastras, such as:

न वर्तते यत्र रजस्तमस्तयोः सत्त्वं च मिश्रं न च कालविक्रमः ।  
न यत्र माया किमुतापरे हरेरनुव्रता यत्र सुरासुरार्चिताः ॥

श्यामावदाताः शतपत्रलोचनाः पिशङ्गवस्ताः सुरुचः सुपेशसः ।  
सर्वे चतुर्बाहव उन्मिषन्मणि प्रवेकनिष्काभरणाः सुवर्चसः ॥

प्रवाळवैडूर्यमृणालवर्चसां परिस्फुरत्कुण्डलमौलिमालिनाम् ।  
भ्राजिष्णुभिर्यः परितो विराजते लसद्विमानावलिभिर्महात्मनाम् ।  
विद्योतमानप्रमदोत्तमाभिः सविद्युदभ्रावलिभिर्यथा नभः ॥

"In that abode of His, the material qualities of rajas and tamas do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in Sattva. There is no influence of time. So what to speak of the maaya? Hari is worshiped by His worshipers, such as the suras.

The inhabitants there have a glowing sky-bluish complexion, with lotus-like eyes, yellowish dresses, an attractive and youthful appearance and four arms, and are adorned with pearl necklaces, appearing effulgent.

Their complexions are varied like coral, diamonds and the lotus-stalk, and they wear shining earrings, crowns and garlands. The region appears like the sky surrounded by clouds illuminated by lightning, being surrounded by an assembly of the brilliant vimaanas of the Mahaatmas, along with the excellent women of lustrous complexion."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 2, Adhyaaya 9, Shlokas 10-12 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Bhagavat Geeta Taatparya Nirnaya, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 18)

As said already, one cannot ascertain their svabhaava and moksha is attained after death, one the person is an aparoksha jnaani and the current Brahmaa's life ends. Therefore, it should not be one's primary goal. Rather, kaama, the desire to practise bhakti should be. So, Shri Krishna instructs Arjuna as follows, in the Bhagavat Geeta:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।  
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

"Making equanimity with both joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat, fight the war. In this manner, you will not incur any sins."

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 38

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

Similarly, Kapila Maharshi states:

सालोक्यसार्ष्टिसामीप्यसारूप्यैकत्वमप्युत ।  
दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना मत्सेवनं जनाः ॥ १३ ॥

“Saalokya, saarshti, saameepya, saarupya and saayujya – even these forms of moksha are not accepted by those who are My bhaktas, if they exclude service to Me.”

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 3, Adhyaaya 29, Shloka 13

## Bhakti and Jnaana



Now, one may ask – what is the ultimate purpose of one's life? The answer is not moksha or any of the Purusharthas. It is bhakti alone. Moksha or other such benefits are mere by-products of bhakti and not something achievable at the present moment. Thus, they are not to be striven for. The very purpose of bhakti is to feel Bhagavaan's influence at all times no matter what situation one is in, enabling one to lead a happy life from the current one itself. Bhakti is defined in the Shaastras as follows:

माहात्म्यज्ञानपूर्वस्तु सुदृढः सर्वतोऽधिकः ।  
स्नेहो भक्तिरिति प्रोक्तः तया मुक्तिर्नचान्यथा ॥

"Firm knowledge of the greatness of and love (towards Bhagavaan), which is greater than everything else, is thus, called 'bhakti'. Through this, there can be mukti and not by anything else."

—Naarada Pancharaatra (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparyya Nirrnaya, Adhyaaya 1, Shloka 85; Shri Vallabhacharya, in Tattvaartha Deepa Nibandha)

To practise bhakti, one needs to possess sufficient knowledge of Bhagavaan, in accordance with their capacity. Knowledge is known as 'jnaana'. In the Shaastras, especially the

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

Bhagavat-Geeta, various process of yoga (union of the self with Paramaatma) are described, especially bhakti-yoga, jnaana-yoga and karma-yoga. Performing karmas (actions) with the knowledge of Bhagavaan during the course of all actions and ensuring that their purpose is to perform Saattvika actions remembering Bhagavaan as the ultimate goal, is karma-yoga.

'Yoga' literally means "union" and refers to internally connecting the self, Aatma, with Para Brahman, achieving a state of spiritual bliss due to His remembrance. It can be perfectly executed only by those who have attained total spiritual enlightenment, known as 'vinishpanna-samaadhi' or 'aparoksha-jnaana'. Till then, one can partially experience similar benefits through various spiritual practices such as chanting Bhagavaan's names, chanting mantras and stutis, worshiping Him through the Taantrika procedures, etc. In the Parama Samhita, jnaana-yoga and karma-yoga are explained as follows:

यदि कर्माणि बध्नाति चित्तमस्खलितं नरः ॥ कर्मयोगो भवत्येषः सर्वपाप प्रणाशनः ।  
यदि तु ज्ञानैवार्थं चित्तं बध्नाति निर्व्यथः ॥ ज्ञानयोगः स विज्ञेयः सर्वसिद्धिकरः शुभः ।  
उभयोर्योगोर्यस्य न चित्तं विन्दतिव्यथाम् ॥ स तत्पदमवाप्नोति यद्विष्णोः प्रथितं पदं ।  
उभयस्यापि योगस्य देव एव निबन्धनः ॥

"If a human being fixes the mind in actions, it becomes karma-yoga, which destroys all paapas. But if one fixes the mind for the purpose of knowledge, it is understood to be jnaana-yoga, which is auspicious and the cause of all siddhis. One whose mind does not experience suffering in either of them, obtains that which is the well-known abode of Vishnu. The foundation of both of these (jnaana yoga and karma yoga) is the Divine Person."

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 10, Shlokas 6-9

Importantly, one must know that jnaana and karma are mutual requirements for bhakti and never exclusive of it. So, in the Padma Puraana, Shiva himself says that the idea of jnaana not being required for obtaining moksha is incorrect and intending to delude those unfit to acquire true knowledge:

परमो विष्णुरेवैकस्तज्ज्ञानं मुक्तिसाधनम् ।  
शास्त्राणां निर्णयस्त्वेषस्तदन्यन्मोहनाय च ॥ दानं विना च या मुक्तिः साम्यं च मम विष्णुना ।  
तीर्थादिमात्रतो ज्ञानं ममाधिक्यं च विष्णुतः ॥ अभेदश्चास्मदादीनां मुक्तानां हरिणा तथा ।  
इत्यादि सर्वमोहाय कथ्यते सति नान्यथा । तेनाद्वितीय महिमो जगत्पूज्योऽस्मि पार्वति ॥

(Shri Shiva said to Paarvati Devi): "Shri Vishnu alone is the Supreme One. Knowledge about Him is the method of achieving mukti. This is the nirnaya (verdict) of the Shastras and anything contradictory only leads to delusion. Claims such as mukti being attainable without knowledge, my equivalence with Vishnu, knowledge being obtained by visiting sacred places, my superiority over Vishnu, or non-difference of devotees like me, or liberated jeevas, with Vishnu – all these lead to delusion only and nothing else. Due to that my

greatness has become matchless, and I am honoured by the world, O Paarvati."  
—Padma Puraana, Uttara Khanda, Adhyaaya 71, Shlokas 114-116 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparyya Nirnnaya, Adhyaaya 1)

Philosophical knowledge or vijnaana, ultimately leading to aparoksha jnaana, can be obtained only from the philosophical Shaastras, also known as 'Aagamas', referring to knowledge passed on from the Devatas and Rshis. The Vishnu Puraana explains that there are two categories of knowledge – Aagamottha (obtained from the scriptures) and Vivekottha (obtained through wisdom), with the latter being more important to achieve realization of Para Brahman.

आगमोत्थं विवेकाच्च द्विधा ज्ञानं तदुच्यते ।  
शब्दब्रह्मागममयं परं ब्रह्म विवेकजम् ॥ ६१ ॥

"Knowledge from the Aagamas and viveka are their known two types. Shabda Brahma manifests from the Aagamas and Param Brahma manifests from viveka."  
—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 5, Shloka 61

To achieve vivekottha-jnaana, one must first have aagamottha-jnaana as well. Therefore, learning the philosophical texts are very much necessary. So, the third Sutra of the Brahma Sutras states:

ॐ शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ॐ ॥ ३ ॥

"Due to the Shaastras being the root (of knowledge of Brahman)."  
—Brahma Sutras, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutra 3

Aagamottha jnaana is said to be apara (non-supreme), while Vivekottha-jnaana is said to be para (the highest). As explained, one must remember that through knowledge of the Aagamas, one can obtain vivekottha-jnaana, leading them to the state of enlightenment, called 'vinishpanna-samaadhi'.

Shri Jaya Teertha explains that there are three major stages of bhakti:

- (1) Bhakti, which manifests before paroksha-jnaana
- (2) Pakva-bhakti, which manifests as one obtains paroksha-jnaana
- (3) Paripakva-bhakti, which manifests after one achieves aparoksha-jnaana

Paripakva-bhakti is attained through years of saadhana by only the Saattvika jeevas, as it is a result of complete manifestation of their Sattva-guna and svabhaava. Such jeevas are guaranteed to attain moksha sooner or later, since their karmas get exhausted and from that time, they are always enlightened, regardless of the condition of their janma. Their minds are always thinking of Bhagavaan constantly at all times, due to which they do not get entangled in the chain of karmas and karma-phalas.

Bhakti is not a means to achieve anything, but an end in itself. There is nothing else to achieve, especially after one achieves aparoksha-jnaana. So, unlike most other darshanas and similar to the philosophy of the Gaudiyas, Tattvavaada considers bhakti itself to be the highest goal and not a method of achieving anything else. Even after the Saattvika jeevas attains moksha, their practise of bhakti still continues for all eternity, in Vaikuntha.

भक्त्या ज्ञानं ततो भक्तिस्ततो दृष्टिस्ततश्च सा ।  
ततो मुक्तिस्ततो भक्तिः सैव स्यात्सुखरूपिणी ॥

“From bhakti, jnaani arises and due to that, (pakva) bhakti manifests, which leads to the sight of Paramaatma, from which (paripakva) bhakti arises. Thus, it leads to mukti, from which bhakti manifests again, which alone is in the form of total happiness.”

—Anuvyaakhyaana, Adhyaaya 3, Paada 4

When one achieves aparoksha-jnaana, they observe and have the divine sight of one's own Antaryaami within the aatma, Shri Vishnu, through jnaana-drshti. This never occurs through the physical sense organs, as they are incapable of seeing the true form of Bhagavaan. In the Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 1, Adhyaaya 6, Devarshi Naarada narrates his experience of the same. However, while the true form of bhakti, as paripakva-bhakti, appears after achieving aparoksha-jnaana, the complete manifestation occurs after achieving moksha, since there is no negative influence by any of the other Tattvas, at Vaikuntha. Since the very discreteness between the jeevas and Paramaatma is eternal, the subordinacy of the former with respect to Him is also eternal and the mukta jeevas continue to practise bhakti for all eternity, even at Parama Padam.

Similarly, the Parama Samhita says:

विकस्यापराधेन यथा नौर्विनिवर्तते । एवं मद्भक्त्यपायेन संसारोऽस्य विवर्धते ॥ तस्मादविकला  
भक्तिर्मद्गता देहिनां गतिः । तस्या एव विभूत्यर्थं सर्वमन्यत्पितामह ॥ यः पूजयति मां नित्यं यदुदाहरति  
स्तवम् । यो ध्यायति च मामेव तेन भक्तिर्विवर्धते ॥ भक्तावविद्यमानायां प्रयत्नः सुमहानपि ।  
लोकाडम्बरमेव स्याद्फलं प्रेत्यचेहच ॥ तस्मात्सर्वं प्रयत्नेन भक्तिमेव विवर्धयेत् ।  
सा तु वृद्धा नयत्येव वैष्णवं परमं पदम् ॥

(Shri Vishnu said): "Just as a boat goes backwards due to the sailor's fault, by giving up bhakti towards Me, samsara thrives. Therefore, the sole resort of the embodied beings is proper bhakti towards Me. Everything else should be for the secondary purpose of its growth alone, O Pitaamaha. One who worships Me daily, recites praises of Me or performs dhyaana of Me – through this their bhakti increases. In those where bhakti is absent, all efforts, even though great, result only in material benefits and brings no beneficial results. Thus, through all efforts, one should focus on advancing their bhakti. And certainly, it leads to the highest abode of Vishnu."

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 30, Shlokas 31-35

In the 4th Adhyaaya of the Parama Samhita, eight important features of bhakti are listed which can ensure that one attains the parama-siddhi, or aparoksha-jnaana.

सर्वेषामेव यागानां मानसो याग उत्तमः ॥ अप्रसादे हि मनसः कर्मयोगोऽपि निष्फलः । स्नेहपूर्वमनुध्यानं  
भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥ पूजनं हि विना भक्त्या कृतमप्यक्रतं भवत् । अष्टाङ्गा भक्तिरुद्दिष्टा वैष्णवस्य  
विशेषतः ॥ यामवाप्य परां सिद्धमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ।

"Among all forms of yaaga (worship), the mental form is the ultimate. With an infirm mind, even karma-yoga does not bear any fruit. Anudhyaana performed with proper love for Bhagavaan is thus, what is known as 'bhakti'. Any worship without bhakti leads to even performed tasks becoming as good as those not done. Precisely, there are eight specific parts of bhakti towards Vishnu, whose attainment grants the highest siddhi sooner."  
—Ibid., Adhyaaya 4, Shlokas 70-73

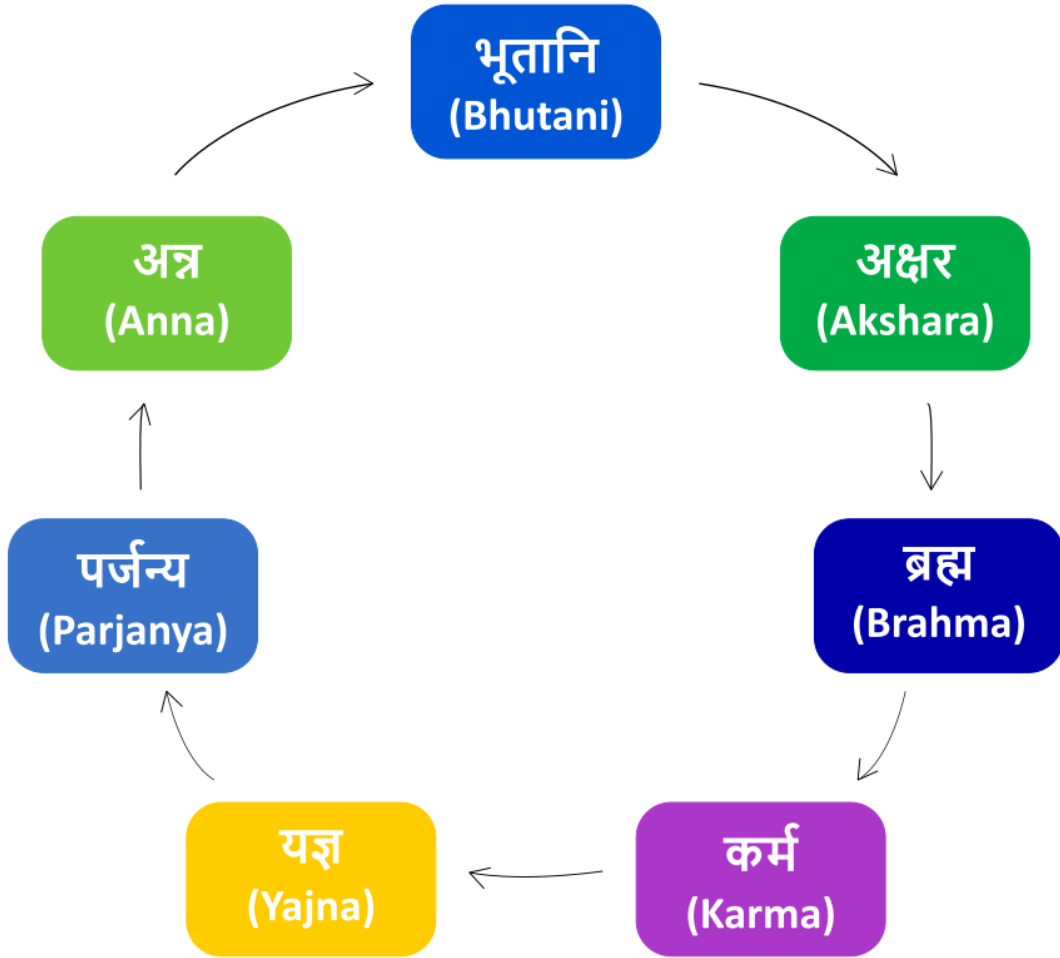
These eight portions are:

- (1) Regular worship of Shri Naaraayana
- (2) Managing one's time wisely
- (3) A trustworthy relationship with other Vaishnavas
- (4) Great interest in worshipping Vishnu
- (5) Applying one's own efforts in worshipping Vishnu
- (6) Interest in listening to the stories about Vishnu
- (7) Absence of the desire to harm other beings
- (8) Not making a living through the worship of Vishnu

These are summarized to be the most important angas of bhakti, which are essential for one to be considered a Vaishnava and to achieve aparoksha jnaana too.

## The Jagat Chakra

This is perhaps the most important of all concepts in the Shaastras with regard to Karma-yoga and how one must perform their day-to-day activities. The jagat chakra is a cycle of entities which sustain life, especially in a way convenient for human beings. Respecting this and understanding the benefits we derive from it, we must contribute to the jagat chakra in whatever way we can. It is the reason why Hindu Dharma and several ancient civilizations emphasize on worship of nature and preserving the environment. In the Bhagavat Geeta, the jagat chakra is described in the 3rd Adhyaaya.



अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।  
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।  
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।  
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६ ॥

“The living entities exist due to grains, which arise due to rainfall. Rains occur due to Yajnas, which are done by one's actions. Actions occur due to Brahman, who manifests from the words (of the Shaastras). Due to this, the omnipresent and eternal Brahman is established in Yajnas. So, one who does not contribute to the movement of this loop in this world, is one whose living itself is a sin. Such a person lives a futile life for sense gratification, Paartha.”

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 3, Shlokas 14-16

Thus, the Jagat chakra has the following seven components:

- (1) भूतानि (Bhutas): the living entities
- (2) अक्षर (Akshara): the words of the Shaastras
- (3) ब्रह्मन् (Brahman): the Supreme Being
- (4) कर्माणि (Karmas): actions committed by the living entities
- (5) यज्ञ (Yajna): the actions causing union with the Divine
- (6) पर्जन्य (Parjanya): rainfall, which sustains the environment
- (7) अन्न (Anna): any food or source of energy for the living beings

All living entities depend upon food and water as a basic necessity for survival. This is called 'anna'. But for plants to grow, rainfall (parjanya) is a vital necessity. The rains themselves are produced from yajnas, which occur due to the actions of the living entities. But for the human beings to perform the right actions, proper knowledge of it is necessary, which one achieves by propitiating Para Brahman, in accordance with the words of the Shaastras, as they provide the necessary instructions to do so.

These shlokas of the Bhagavat Geeta, due to the lack of their proper understanding by most of the present-day Hindus, has led to a perplexity and even chances for slanderers to defame Hindu Dharma by claiming that this favours pseudo-science – how can a fire ritual or prayer to Brahman produce rainfall? To answer this, we first need to understand the meaning of the word 'yajna' in this regard, is not a mere fire ritual. It literally means 'union', with the body, mind and aatma, similar to the word 'yoga'.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।  
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

“That yajna which is performed without expectations for the results, in accordance with protocols, with the understanding of what is supposed to be done and with proper equanimity of the mind, is that which is Saattvika.”

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 17, Shloka 11

Yajnas, in the context of the jagat chakra, refer to the actions through which one is aware of how the world functions as one unit and knowing the contributions one must provide to it. Unlike other animals, humans have evolved intellect and the ability to know what is right

and wrong, or the consequences of one's actions. Thus, it is necessary to use it effectively and ensure that our actions are always in accordance with dharma. Even for our mere survival, numerous microorganisms die every moment due to our breathing or eating and we have to perform some form of harm to other entities for our food. To compensate, we must make the best use of our intellect and not cause any more harm than required to other beings. This is why one has to keep the environment and other resources safe, such that they continue to sustain life and do not make one's own existence a wastage of those resources. This is the ultimate purpose of life as per the Shaastras and how for lakhs and thousands of years, people lived happily and peacefully in the land of Bhaarata. However, this had a severe downfall in the recent centuries and we can now observe the extent of damage to the environment that has occurred and how human suffering is increasing, simply due to our lack of careful thinking before misusing all resources available to us. What we see today is a result of selfishness of the humans of Kali yuga who hardly have any compassion and usually care the least about the environment or other beings, thinking that the planet and the universe are solely for us.

Thus, in reality, to actually practise non-violence and dharma, we must always be aware of the effects of our actions and know that we are actually mere insignificant creatures among billions of such souls. We must possess the qualities of compassion and non-maleficence, trying our best to realize the value of our existence and how bhakti towards Bhagavaan is what is most beneficial to us. Failing to contribute to the jagat chakra itself is considered an offense and renders the person's living itself as a sinful lifespan (aghaayu)! In the Bhagavat Geeta, what actually finally convinced Arjuna to fight the Kurukshetra war was the guidance by Shri Krshna about the jagat chakra and how it was necessary for him to execute his moral obligations, neglecting which would make his actions taamasika. This is actually the most significant part of the Geeta, which is not known to many and missed easily.

## Summary

As explained in the previous section, one's purpose in life needs to be to practise bhakti to the best of their abilities, without much expectations and without causing any violence or harm, contributing to the jagat-chakra. So, it is said:

परमसुहृदि बान्धवे कलत्रे सुततनयापितृमातृभृत्यवर्गे ।  
शठमतिरुपयाति योऽर्थतृष्णां तमधमचेष्टमवैहि नास्य भक्तम् ॥ ३० ॥

"One who is unkind towards his wife, children, parents, dependants and friends, out of selfishness, is a lowly person and not His (Vaasudeva's) bhakta."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsa 3, Adhyaaya 7, Shloka 30 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in his Geeta bhaashya, Adhyaaya 9, Shloka 34)

श्रुतिस्मृती ममैवाज्ञा यस्तामुलंध्य वर्तते ।  
आज्ञाच्छेदी मम द्रोही मद्भक्तोऽपि न वैष्णवः ॥

"The Shruti and Smrti are My commands. One who disregards them is like a traitor and even if My bhakta, is not a Vaishnava."

—Vishnu Dharmottara Puraana, Adhyaaya 76, Shloka 31 (Quoted by Shri Paraashara Bhattar, in Bhagavat Guna Darpanam, Introduction, 'Bhagavat-sambandhenaiva Teerthaadinaam Pavitrata')

So, Shri Krshna states in the Bhagavat Geeta:

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।  
स सन्न्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

Shri Bhagavaan said: "One who performs actions while being unattached to the results, is said to be a sanyaasi and a yogi, not one who merely does not perform fire-rituals and is without work."

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 6, Shloka 1

### 3. The Shaastras

The word 'Shaastra' (शास्त्र) is derived from the root word 'शास्', which means "to bind or govern." A definition from one of the Koshas is as follows:

शास्ति च त्रायते इति शास्त्र ।

"That which binds/regulates, is thus, Shaastra."

Shri Kumaarila Bhatta, a prominent philosopher of Purva-Meemaamsa, provides the following definition of Shaastra, in Shlokavaarttika:

प्रवृत्तिर्वा निवृत्तिर्वा नित्येन कृतकेन वा ।  
पुंसां येनोपदिश्येत तच्छास्त्रमभिधीयते ॥ ४ ॥

स्वरूपकथनं यत्तु कस्यचित् तत्र दृश्यते ।  
तदङ्गत्वेन तस्यापि शास्त्रत्वमवगम्यते ॥ ५ ॥

"The instructions of necessary and prohibited actions, obtained from eternally existing sources or those made by humans, is termed as 'Shaastra'. Descriptions of the true nature of anything can also be included in the term 'Shaastra', as they are subordinate to injunctions of actions."

—Shlokavaarttika, Shabdaparichchheda, Vaakyas 4-5

Thus, 'Shaastra' simply refers to knowledge, usually prescriptive or prohibitory. It also includes the knowledge of various sciences and philosophy. Various philosophers and followers of different darshanas have provided varied interpretations of the Shaastras. Ideally, one must learn the six Aastika darshanas as well as the Vedaangas, before learning the Shaastras elaborately, to be able to infer their correct meaning. The Shaastras are broadly categorized as follows:

- (1) **Shruti (श्रुति)**: That which is heard (the four Vedas, including their Samhitas, Aaranyakas, Braahmanas and Upanishads)
- (2) **Smrti (स्मृति)**: That which is remembered (All other Shaastras, including the Itihaasas, Puraanas and Dharma-Shaastras)

The Vedas are considered the root source and prime authority for knowledge, by almost all of the prominent Hindu darshanas. Such philosophies are known as 'Aastika darshanas', while those which do not consider the Vedas as an authority are known as the 'Naastika darshanas'. The Vedas are apaurusheya granthas, which are never authored by anyone, not even Para Brahman. Their mantras are revealed to Brahmaa, then the other Devatas and the Rshis during every cycle of creation, from whom human beings and others obtain their knowledge. But their statements, the mantras, are eternal and constant with no change at all. So, the Vedas are truly eternal. The Vedas are actually vast with crores of mantras, while

human beings only receive a minuscule fraction of their knowledge. There is an analogy given by Bharadvaja Rshi, comparing the Vedas to three tall mountains whose peaks are not visible and a handful of soil from them to be the knowledge of the Vedas required by human beings.

In the Chhaandogya Upanishad, Devarshi Naarada lists various Shaastras, mentioning the ones he had studied:

ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहासपुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदं पित्र्यं राशिं दैवं  
निधिं वाकोवाक्यमेकायनं देवविद्यां ब्रह्मविद्यां भूतविद्यां क्षत्रविद्यां नक्षत्रविद्यां  
सर्पदेवजनविद्यामेतद्भगवोऽध्येमि ॥ २ ॥

"I have studied the four Vedas – the Rgveda, Yajurveda, Saamaveda and Aatharvana. I have studied the fifth among the Vedas, namely the Itihaasas and Puraanas. I have learnt Vyaakarana, Pitrya-vidya, mathematics, the science of omens, archaeology, logic, Ekaayana (Pancharaatra), Deva-vidya, Brahma-vidya, Bhuta-vidya, Kshatra-vidya (warfare and archery), Nakshatra-vidya (astronomy) and the knowledge of the Sarpas and Devajanas (music, dance, etc.)."

—Chhaandogya Upanishad, Prapaathaka 7, Khanda 1, Mantra 2

The Smrtis include other Shaastras such as the Aagamas or Tantra (texts dealing with other forms of worship, such as temple worship, vighraha puja, etc.), Itihaasas (the Raamaayana and Mahaabhaarata), the 18 Puraanas, the Upa-Puraanas, Dharmashastras and Upavedas. They are considered Upabrmhanas or accessories of the Vedas, which explain their knowledge in an explicit and elaborate manner. The Vedas can be learnt only by the Dvijas, properly through adhyayana under a Guru's guidance, while learning and interpreting them with the help of all the Vedaangas. There are lesser restrictions for learning the Smrtis and so, even Advijas can read and learn them. However, other than Tattvavaada, almost no other aastika darshana believes that Advijas properly have the eligibility to perform adhyayana of the Smrtis, since others believe that they explain and quote statements of the Vedas, which Advijas are ineligible to learn. It was Shri Madhvacharya alone who explicitly stated and highlighted the fact that the very purpose of the Itihaasas and Puraanas is to provide the same knowledge of the Vedas to those who are ineligible to directly learn them, the Shaastras themselves state on multiple occasions that even Shudras who chant, hear and read them, will be benefitted. Certain Shaastras like the Bhaagavata Puraana, explicitly state that the Smrtis were authored an alternative to the Vedas especially for Advijas, and not just for Dvijas to enhance their knowledge of the Vedas.

Similarly, the Bhagavat Geeta's third Adhyaaya too, while explaining the Jagat-chakra, points out that from the aksharas (letters of the Vedas and other Shaastras), the knowledge of Brahman can be obtained and it becomes possible for the jeevas to worship Him. There are numerous such philosophical works, with the Vedas being considered the foremost authority for all the Aastika darshanas.

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

## The Various Darshanas

In Vaidika Dharma, a philosophy or ideology is referred to as a 'darshana'. Hindu Dharma includes various darshanas. Those which accord with the Vedas are known as 'aastika' and those which do not are known as 'naastika'. There are six major Aastika darshanas:

- (1) Saankhya (साङ्ख्य)
- (2) Yoga (योग)
- (3) Nyaaya (न्याय)
- (4) Vaisheshika (वैशेषिक)
- (5) Purva-Meemaamsa (पूर्वमीमांसा)
- (6) Uttara-Meemaamsa/Vedaanta (उत्तरमीमांसा/वेदान्त)

Most philosophies like Nyaaya and Purva-Meemaamsa (or simply 'Meemaamsa') do not accept the existence of a God or Supreme Being. They consider Brahman to be force of consciousness in and existence of all beings, without having a personality. Yoga was propagated by Brahmaa Deva and Patanjali Rshi, which explains philosophical aspects and the methods of attaining Paramaatma. These darshanas have their respective sets of Sutras (aphorisms) as their core texts, which specify their respective principles and ideologies.

One must remember that along with these, there are numerous other darshanas too, such as 'Pancharaatra' (Vaishnavism, which considers Shri Vishnu to be Brahman), 'Paashupata' (Shaivism, which considers Shri Shiva to be Brahman), 'Shaakta' (which considers Aadi Shakti to be Brahman), etc. Like others, these darshanas have their core granthas, which are their respective Aagama or Tantra Shaastras. The philosophy of Tattvavaada is a darshana based on Pancharaatra as well as Vedaanta. Another popular philosophy of Hindu Dharma is the Kevalaadvaita or Maayaavaada darshana of Shri Aadi Shankaracharya, which is inclined towards the Smrtis and Vedaanta Sutras rather than any specific Shaastra. Unlike others, it considers Para Brahman to be a formless being and nirguna, devoid of qualities. Since it fundamentally differs from Vaishnava and Shaiva darshanas, it is one of their rival darshanas. The most popular darshanas as of today are those based on Vedaanta, namely:

- (1) Maayaavaada (Advaita):** Propagated by Shankaracharya, it considers the universe to be not truly existent and the very identity of the jeeva to be an illusion of forgetting that the jeevas are actually Brahman, upon whom ignorance has been superimposed. The physical entities and jeevas are essentially considered non-different from Paramaatma.
- (2) Shri Vaishnavism (Vishishtadvaita):** Propagated by Ramanujacharya, it considers the Tattvas to be discrete, but each one to be qualitatively the same. While the jeevas are distinct from Paramaatma and from each other, they share similar qualities and the jeevas share exactly the same qualities, by nature. Upon attaining moksha, the major distinctions between Paramaatma and the jeevas cease to exist.

**(3) Tattvavaada (Dvaita):** Propagated by Madhvacharya, it considers the Tattvas to be eternally discrete and unique, especially each jeeva having a unique svabhaava. Even upon attaining the respective destiny to be attained by a jeeva, the pancha-bhedas never cease to exist and the jeevas are always eternally subordinate to Paramaatma, as they depend on Him for their existence.

It must be known that while most people refer to these darshanas respectively as 'Advaita', 'Vishishtaadvaita' and 'Dvaita', these names are actually misnomers and were never the actual names for the darshanas themselves. In the Shaastras, the term 'advaita' simply refers to the true knowledge of knowing that Paramaatma is single and not two or more, while 'dvaita' refers to false knowledge about this. While these are the aastika darshanas, there are other darshanas which have similar roots and principles as the aastika ones, but do not consider the Vedas as an authority. They are the naastika darshanas like Buddhism and Jainism. For the convenience of learners, the Shaastras simply refer to anyone who does not consider the Vedas as an authority, to be a naastika and all other ideologies other than the aastika ones, are called 'naastika'.

So, one must know that Hinduism is not a single philosophy, but a set of multiple, each with totally contrasting beliefs and interpretations of the Shaastras. Importantly, all darshanas and ideologies are eternally existing, as a result of jeeva-Eeshvara bheda and jeeva-jeeva bheda, since differences of opinion are natural and all sorts of interpretations are possible. So, Shri Madhvacharya remarks:

दर्शनानां प्रवृत्तत्वान्मन्दः आशङ्कते पुनः ।  
अनादिकालतो वृत्ताः समया हि प्रवाहतः ॥

"All darshanas have been existing since eternity. A few may become less popular or more popular, but none of them perish."

—Anuvyaakhyaana, Adhyaaya 2, Paada 2

## The Sat-Aagamas

Shri Madhvacharya has quoted statements in his works, indicating the importance of certain Shaastras over others, which are known as the 'Sat-Aagamas'. These alone are truly meant to be considered a direct authority for all philosophical knowledge, as they alone intend to provide the correct jnaana. Anything contradictory to them is simply meant for deluding those unfit to achieve true knowledge. This is explained by the following pramaanas:

ऋग्यजुः सामाथर्वाख्या मूलरामायणं तथा ।  
भारतं पञ्चरात्रं च वेदा इत्येव शब्दिताः ॥

पुराणानि च यानीह वैष्णवानि विदो विदुः ।  
स्वतः प्रामाण्यमेषां नात्र किञ्चिद्विचार्यते ॥

यत् तेषूक्तं न दृश्येत पूर्वकर्मात्र कारणम् ।  
नाप्रामाण्यं भवेत् तेषां दृश्यते ह्यधिकारतः ॥

इतः प्रामाण्यमन्येषां न स्वतस्तु कथञ्चन ।  
अदृश्योक्तौ ततस्तेषामप्रामाण्यं न संशयः ॥

"The ones known as the Rk, Yajus, Saaman and Atharva, and so, the Mula Raamaayana, Bhaarata and Pancharaatra, are thus known as 'Veda'. And the Puraanas, which are known to be Vaishnava – these are self-proven sources. There is no dispute about this. Not seeing the effects of what is stated by them is simply caused by one's previous karmas. They do not become unauthoritative, as their effects can indeed be seen by those with the privilege to do so. The authority of others is not by themselves. Not seeing the effects of their statements indicates their non-authority. There is no doubt."

—Bhavishyat Puraana (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in his Brahma Sutra bhaashya, Adhyaaya 2, Paada 1, Sutra 5)

ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वाश्च भारतं पञ्चरात्रकम् ।  
मूलरामायणं चैव शास्त्रमित्यभिदीयते ॥

यच्चानुकूलमेतस्य तच्च शास्त्रं प्रकीर्तितम् ।  
अतोऽन्यो ग्रन्थविस्तारो नैव शास्त्रं कुवर्त्त तत् ॥

"The Rk, Yajus, Saaman and Atharva Vedas, the Mahaabhaarata, the Pancharaatra and the Mula Raamaayana – these are known as 'Shaastra'. Whatever accords with them is also referred to as 'Shaastra'. Thus, any other granthas are definitely not Shaastra, but deceptive methods."

—Skanda Puraana (Quoted by Shripaada Madhvacharya, in his Brahma Sutra bhaashya, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutra 3; Similar to Skanda Puraana, Vaishnava Khanda, Vaishaakhamaasa-Maahatmya, Adhyaaya 19, Shloka 12)

So, the Sat-Agamas are as follows:

- The four Vedas (Samhitas, Aaranyakas, Braahmanas and Upanishads)
- Mula Raamaayana
- Mahaabhaarata
- The Pancharaatra Aagamas
- Puraanas, Dharma Shaastras and other Smrtis in accordance with them

The Mula Raamaayana is the original Raamaayana composed by Bhagavaan Hayagreeva, revealed to Brahmaa and subsequently, to other beings. The Vaalmiki Raamaayana is its summary authored by Vaalmiki Maharshi, as per the instructions of Devarshi Naarada, and so, it is not a Sat-Aagama.

The Sat-Agamas are completely authoritative works and are to be reconciled even if there are apparent contradictions in their meanings. The same is not always applicable to other texts. Among all Shaastras, it is the Vedas which are the prime authority for all darshanas, as even others like Meemaamsa mention the same, and that Smrtis can be rejected if at all any contradictions are proven.

विरोधे त्वनपेक्षं स्यादिति ह्यनुमानम् ॥

"In case of contradictions between the Smrti and Shruti, the Smrti should be disregarded; because it's only when there is no contradiction that there is presumption (of Vaidika texts in support of Smrtis)."

—Purva Meemaamsa Sutras, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 3, Sutra 3

However, it must be known that the Shaastras, especially the Sat-Agamas have been revealed to provide the same aparoksha-jnaana. Thus, they must be reconciled in cases of contradictions and not rejected. In fact, even other Shaastras need not be rejected as such, as shall be explained in the subsequent sections.

## The Pancharaatra Aagamas

As explained previously, Tattvavaada and other Vaishnava darshanas primarily follow the doctrine of Pancharaatra, the darshana of Shri Vishnu's Supremacy, which was propagated by Vishnu Himself. This darshana is the core of all philosophy for most present-day Vaishnava sampradaayas. All present-day Vaishnava sampradaayas follow either the Pancharaatra or Vaikhaanasa philosophies. These are two ancient systems of Vaishnavism, with their philosophical texts called 'Aagamas', which describe their philosophical tenets and rituals, including temple worship. These philosophies have been in practice since thousands of years and are even mentioned several times in the other Shaastras, including the Vedas, Mahaabhaarata and Puraanas.

Vaikhaanasa was founded by Maharshi Vikhaanasa, an amsha of Shri Brahmaa, while Pancharaatra was founded by Shri Naaraayana Rshi, an avataara of Shri Vishnu Himself. He provided the knowledge of Pancharaatra to many Rshis, who transferred its knowledge through the Pancharaatra Aagamas. Most of the popular present-day Vaishnava sampradaayas, such as Shri Vaishnavas, Maadhva Vaishnavas and Gaudiya Vaishnavas, are followers of the Pancharaatra darshana and are descendants of these Rshis through their disciplic succession. In the 358th Adhyaaya of the Shaanti Parva of the Mahaabhaarata, it is explained how during different ages and cycles of destruction and recreation of the various realms of the universe, this philosophy was transmitted and propagated differently by Shri Vishnu, starting with the Devatas like Brahmaa Deva and the Rshis.

The Pancharaatra philosophy is derived from the Vaidheya Shaakha, or Ekaayana Shaakha of the Shukla-Yajurveda (a currently lost branch of the Yajurveda). Therefore, it is also known by the name 'Ekaayana'. It is also called 'Saattvata' and 'Bhaagavata Dharma', with Pancharaatrika Vaishnavas also being called 'Saattvatas' or 'Bhaagavatas'. Unlike Vaikhaanasa, the doctrine of Pancharaatra is open to all and any bhakta of Shri Vishnu, with good conduct, is eligible to become a Pancharaatrika Vaishnava through the ritual of Pancharaatrika deeksha, known as 'Pancha-samskaara' (five rituals). Upon deeksha, one can learn the Aagama Shaastras and worship Shri Vishnu with their protocols. The Aagamas mention that all Sat-bhaktas, regardless of background, are eligible for Panchasamskaara, to become disciples of a Vaishnava Guru and learn the Pancharaatra philosophy. The Vishnu Samhita even mentions that those who aren't bhaktas of Vishnu are also eligible to obtain knowledge of the Vaishnava Aagamas.

अधिकारं स्वकीयं च तत्त्वं चास्मै निवेदयेत् ।  
दद्याच्च वैष्णवं ज्ञानं संसारच्छेदकारणम् ॥ ४६ ॥  
श्रावयेत् समयांश्चैतास्तन्त्रोक्तान् देशिकोत्तमः ।  
अनुग्राह्यास्त्वया शिष्या वैष्णवाः शुभचारिणः ॥ ४७ ॥

ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः शूद्रा योषित एव वा ।  
अन्यदेवरता ये तु चातुर्वर्ण्याच्च ये बहिः ॥ ४८ ॥

“One’s own people have the authority to obtain knowledge of Shri Vishnu and the Tattvas, which make one free from samsaara. An ultimate scholar well versed in the Tantras, out of compassion, should accept disciples, who should be Vaishnavas with good conduct – Braahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, women or a devotee of other Devatas, or even those who are out of the four varnas.”

—Vishnu Samhita, Patala 11, Shlokas 46-48

The five samskaaras of the procedure of Panchasamskaara are:

- (1) **Tapta**: branding one’s left and right shoulders with the heated seal of the Shankha and Chakra respectively
- (2) **Pundra**: Applying marks of Urdhvapundra tilaka with Gopi chandana on the various parts of the body
- (3) **Naama**: Receiving a new name given by the Guru, which is one of Shri Vishnu’s names
- (4) **Mantra**: Receiving upadesha, or instruction, of different mantras to chant regularly, which are used to propitiate Shri Vishnu and other Devatas
- (5) **Yaaga**: performing different kinds of worship of Shri Vishnu, as per the protocols of the Aagamas

The darshana is named ‘Pancharaatra’ due to the following reasons:

- Shri Vishnu, during the beginning of creation of the material universe, first taught the knowledge of the Pancharaatra philosophy to Shri Brahmaa and other Devatas, in five nights, giving it the name ‘Paancharaatra’.
- The Pancharaatra Aagamas provide five-fold types of knowledge, known as ‘raatras’.

Since this darshana has been propagated by Shri Vishnu Himself, it has been praised as the best in the Shaastras.

दिदं पञ्चरात्रं मे शास्त्रं परमदुर्लभम् ।  
तद्भवान् वेत्स्यते सर्वं मत्प्रसादान्न संशयः ॥  
वेदैश्च पञ्चरात्रैश्च भक्त्या यज्ञैस्तथैव च ।  
दृश्योऽहं नान्यथा दृश्यो वर्षकोटिशतैरपि ॥

(Shri Varaaha said): “You will know that this Pancharaatra Shaastra belongs to Me, in its entirety, which is the highest means and easy to follow, through My grace. There is no doubt about this. I am to be seen through the Vedas, the Pancharaatra Aagamas, bhakti and yajnas, not by any other means, even in crores of years.”

—Varaaha Puraana, Adhyaaya 66, Shlokas 17 and 18 (Shloka 18 quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in his Mundaka Upanishad bhaashya, Mundaka 1, Khanda 1, Mantra 5)

नारदेन सुसंप्राप्तः सरहस्यः ससंग्रहः ।  
एष धर्मो जगन्नाथात्साक्षान्नारायणात्पृथु ॥

एवमेव महान्धर्मे आद्यो राजन्सनातनः ।  
दुर्विज्ञेयो दुष्करश्च सात्वतैर्धार्यते सदा ॥

“This Dharma was obtained by Rishi Naarada from Him, the Master of the universe, Naaraayana Himself, with all its details. So, this great Dharma is ancient, O Raajan, and is eternal. Incapable of being comprehended with ease and exceedingly difficult of being practised, it is always upheld by the Saattvatas.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva (Moksha-Dharma Parva), Adhyaaya 358, Shlokas 54-55

पञ्चरात्रस्य कृत्स्नस्य वक्ता नारायणः स्वयम् ।  
ज्ञानेष्वेतेषु राजेन्द्र सर्वेष्वेतद्विशिष्यते ॥

(Rshi Vaishampaayana said): “The narrator of the Pancharaatra philosophy, in its entirety, is Shri Naaraayana Himself. Among the sources of knowledge, this is superior and the best, O Raajendra.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 359, Shloka 68

Most importantly, it has been said:

ज्ञानेष्वेतेषु राजेन्द्र साङ्ख्यपाशुपतादिषु ।  
यथायोगं यथान्यायं निष्ठा नारायणः परः ॥

“O King! The other philosophies like Saankhya, Paashupata and the rest are acceptable only to the extent, where they are in accordance (with Pancharaatra) and are interpreted with reference to the Supremacy of Shri Naaraayana.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 359, Shloka 69 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparya Nirnaya, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 109)

From the statements of 5th century philosophers to those of rival ones like Shri Aadi Shankaracharya, it is known that Pancharaatra or Vaishnava Dharma, had been popular for centuries before their times. Even archaeological evidences indicate the popularity of Bhaagavata Dharma. The key differences in the tenets of the Pancharaatra texts are that they preach that:

- Shri Vishnu alone is the Supreme Being, Para Brahman
- Moksha refers to attaining residence in the realm of Vaikuntha or Parama-padam, serving Shri Vishnu, after obtaining any of the five types of moksha – (1) saalokya (residing in the same loka), (2) saarshti (having the same opulence as Him), (3) saameepya (residing in proximity with Bhagavaan), (4) saarupya (having a similar

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

form like that of Bhagavaan) or (5) saayujya (merging into Vishnu and sharing His body, experiencing everything from His perspective).

- Under all circumstances, even after the jeevas merge into Bhagavaan temporarily, after Maha-pralaya, they do not lose their individual existence and are eternally subordinate to Him.
- All the Devatas from Brahmaa, as well as other entities are jeevas. Brahmaa (inclusive of Vaayu and the Rjus) is the topmost among all the jeevas.
- The other Devatas are subordinate to him.
- Shiva is also a jeeva, the son of Brahmaa, subordinate to him and is the abhimaani of Manas-Tattva. Similarly, all other jeevas are subordinate in accordance with their positions in the taaratamya.
- All entities depend on Shri Vishnu for their existence.
- Bhakti towards Him, which is inclusive of jnaana-yoga and karma-yoga, is the highest goal and aim for a Sat-bhakta.

## Moha Shaastras and other Darshanas

The importance of the Sat-Aagamas is that they have been revealed by Bhagavaan Himself, with their purpose being to provide aparoksha-jnaana. However, there are other so-called Shaastras too, which are not meant for providing true knowledge, but rather to mislead Raajasikas and Taamasikas, to prevent them from being stuck in their saadhana, as they are not qualified to actually practise the knowledge of the Sat-Aagamas for a long duration, due to it being naturally unfavourable for them. So, Shri Vishnu and other Devatas themselves authored multiple such 'Moha-Shaastras', which provide false knowledge and mislead one into believing anything which opposes the knowledge of the Sat-Aagamas. So, the Puraanas say:

एषं सृजाम्याशु योजनान् मोहयिष्यति ।  
त्वं च रुद्र महाबाहो मोहशास्त्राणि कारय ॥

अतथ्यानि वितथ्यानि दर्शयस्व महाभुज ।  
प्रकाशं कुरु चात्मानामप्रकाशं च मां कुरु ॥

(Janaardana said): "Now I shall create such things as would soon engender doubt and misconception. Mighty-armed Rudra, you too have Moha Shaastras produced. Let the people be made to see what is not true and what is against truth. Make yourself well-known to the world and make Me hidden."

—Varaaha Puraana, Adhyaaya 70, Shlokas 35-36 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in his Brahma Sutra bhaashya, Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutra 1; Shri Yamunacharya, in Aagama Pramaanya)

त्वामाराध्य तथा शंभो गृहीष्यामि वरं सदा ।  
द्वापरादौ युगे भूत्वा कलया मानुषादिषु ॥ १०६ ॥

स्वागमैः कल्पितैस्त्वं च जनान्मद्विमुखान्कुरु ।  
मां च गोपय येन स्यात्सृष्टिरेषोत्तरोत्तरा ॥ १०७ ॥

(Shri Shiva recalled Shri Vishnu's words): "O Shambhu, I shall also propitiate you and will always receive a boon from you. Being born in the ages like Dvaapara and among men in Kali Yuga, make the people averse to Me with the (Moha)Shaastras prepared by you. So also censure Me, so that the world becomes better and better. I shall produce this delusion which will delude people. You too, O mighty-armed Rudra, produce Moha Shaastras. O you of great arms, produce them, which are false and spurious. Manifest yourself and keep Me hidden."

—Padma Puraana, Uttara Khanda, Adhyaaya 71, Shlokas 106-107 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparyya Nirnnaya, Adhyaaya 1, Shlokas 53-58)

So, these sources of knowledge are not proper sources of knowledge nor are they trustworthy. They are written favouring the idea of philosophies other than Pancharaatra. Paashupata (Shaivism), Shaakta Dharma, Charvaaka, Buddha, Jaina and any philosophy in contradiction with Tattvavaada are considered mohaka, as they are based on the Moha-Shaastras. While the Moha-Shaastras were authored for such a purpose, one's destiny ultimately depends on their svabhaava, which determines which philosophy they would ultimately choose in the course of their saadhana, which may extend from years to multiple janmas. As one's svabhaava manifests, they would choose to follow a philosophy suited to their nature and only those with Saattvika svabhaava would choose to worship Shri Vishnu with bhakti, even after long durations of saadhana and manifesting their svabhaava, due to chronic exposure to different situations.

## The Sarvamula Granthas

The 37 major works authored by Shri Madhvacharya are known as the 'Sarvamula granthas'. They include the following:

### Bhaashyas (Commentaries)

- Bhaashyas on the ten Upanishads commented upon by Shankaracharya, refuting their Mayavadi interpretations – Eeshaavaasya, Katha, Mundaka/Aatharvana, Shatprashna/Prashna, Maandukya, Aitareya, Taittireeya, Brhadaraanyaka, Chhaandogya and Talavakara
- Rg Bhaashya: A commentary on the Rgveda Samhita
- Bhagavat Geeta Bhaashya
- Bhagavat Geeta Taatparya Nirnaya

### Bhaashyas on and Explanations of the Brahma Sutras

- Brahma Sutra Bhaashya: A detailed commentary on the Brahma Sutras
- Anuvyaakhyaana: An explanation of each adhikarana of the Brahma Sutras, in relation to the philosophy of Tattvavaada
- Nyayaavivarana
- Brahma Sutra Anubhaashya: A short summary of the other commentaries on the Brahma Sutras

### Works on the Mahaabhaarata

- Mahaabhaarata Taatparya Nirnaya: A summarized form of the Mahaabhaarata, explaining multiple details ignored by most other philosophers as well as apparently confusing topics.
- Yamaka Bhaarata: A short poem-like narration of the Mahaabhaarata

### Works on the Puraanas

- Bhaagavata Taatparya Nirnaya: A commentary on certain sections of the Bhaagavata Puraana, refuting their interpretation by followers of other darshanas

### The Dasha Prakarana Granthas

- Pramaanalakshana: An explanation on the method of proofs and interpreting evidences
- Kathaalakshana: A manual on the rules and methods of debates and discussions
- Tattvasankhyaana: An explanation of the various Tattvas
- Tattvaviveka: A book similar to Tattvasankhyaana
- Tattvodyota: An explanation of the Tattvas and understanding their relation
- Upaadhi-Khandana: A brief refutation of the Mayavada darshana

- Maayaavaada-Khandana: A refutation of the Mayavada darshana, similar to Upaadhi-khandana
- Mithyaatva-Anumaana-Khandana: A similar refutation of Mayavada
- Vishnu Tattva Vinirnaya: A detailed explanation on the Supremacy of Shri Vishnu and the purport of the Shaastras, in accordance with rules of Nyaaya and Meemaamsa
- Karma Nirnaya: An explanation of the relevance and purpose of karmas prescribed by the Vedas

### Stotras

- Narasimha Nakha Stuti
- The Dvaadasha (Twelve) Stotras
- Kanduka Stuti

### Miscellaneous

- Sadaachaara Smrti: A collection of statements from the Shaastras prescribing rules and those chanted during certain rituals
- Krshnaamrta Mahaarnava: A collection of important shlokas from the Shaastras, highlighting the importance of bhakti and practise of major rituals
- Tantrasaara-Sangraha: A detailed explanation and summary of the Pancharaatra Aagamas
- Yatipranava Kalpa: A short explanation of sanyaasa-dharma and its rules
- Jayanti Nirnaya: A set of instructions for celebrating Krishna-jayanti or janmaashtami

Almost all of these Sarvamula granthas were written down by Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha, one of Shri Madhvacharya's favourite disciples. Many granthas even have sub-commentaries explaining them more elaborately, especially by Shri Jaya Teertha. Shri Trvikrama Panditaachaarya and Shri Vyaasa Teertha have written major commentaries on the Brahma Sutra bhaashya of Shri Madhvacharya, while the Bhagavat Geeta commentaries have multiple commentaries by many other philosophers, including Shri Raaghavendra Svaami.

## Interpretation of the Shaastras

The Hindu Shaastras are incredibly complex and vast, unlike other such ancient texts. It was Shri Madhvacharya who highlighted other vital aspects which had been ignored by other philosophers. The Shaastras themselves have stated that they have various layers of meanings and interpretation. Shri Madhvacharya quoted the following shloka from the Skanda Puraana, in his bhaashya (commentary) on the Rk Veda Samhita:

त्रयोऽर्थाः सर्ववेदेषु दशार्थाः सर्वभारते ।  
विष्णोः सहस्रनामापि निरन्तरशतार्थकम् ॥

"There are three types of meanings in all the Vedas and ten types of meanings throughout the Mahaabhaarata. The Sahasranaama of Shri Vishnu as well, similarly, is composed of a hundred types of meanings."

To provide an example of deeper meanings in the Shaastras, let us consider the following shloka from the Raamaayana, where Sumitra instructs Lakshmana as follows, for his stay at the forest for 14 years, along with Raama and Seeta.

रामं दशरथं विद्धि मां विद्धि जनकात्मजाम् ।  
अयोध्यामटवीं विद्धि गच्छ तात यथासुखम् ॥

"Know that Raama is Dasharatha and me to be the daughter of Janaka. Know that the forest is Ayodhya. Go peacefully, my child."

—Vaalmeeki Raamaayana, Ayodhya Kaanda, Sarga 40, Shloka 10

While this can be understood as implying that Lakshmana was instructed to treat Raama and Seeta like his parents, there is a deeper meaning hidden here. 'दशरथ' (Dasharatha) literally means "One whose chariot/vehicle (ratha) is a bird (dasha)," a name of Shri Vishnu. Similarly, 'माम्' (maam) means "me," which can be interchanged with 'मा' (maa). As per the Vedaangas and other Shaastras, such as the Medini-Kosha, the letter 'अ' (A) denotes Shri Vishnu and the letters 'ई' (ee) and 'मा' (maa) denote Lakshmi Devi. 'Ayodhya' (without war/conflict) is a name of Vaikuntha. So, it also means – "Raama is Vishnu Himself and Lakshmi Devi herself is Janaka's daughter. The forest is Vaikuntha, due to their presence."

Typically, there are three types of meanings of shlokas in the Puraanas:

- (1) **Samaadhi Bhaasha (समाधि भाषा):** This is the superficial and straightforward meaning which can be understood through proper reading of the words and individually comprehending their meanings in relation to the text.
- (2) **Darshana Bhaasha (दर्शन भाषा):** This is a twisted kind of meaning, from the point of view of various darshanas or philosophies, where there may be an apparent deviation from the core message of the grantha. One cannot accept such statements at face value and must reinterpret them in accordance with the other Shaastras.

**(3) Guhya Bhaasha (गुह्य भाषा):** 'Guhya' literally means “hidden” and this refers to shlokas with an apparently misleading or nonsensical meaning. However, when interpreted differently, they convey a totally different meaning, which can be understood through the guidance of a Guru or with the help from the Shaastras.

To explain these layers of meanings better, we could consider the name 'Naaraayana' (नारायण) from the Vishnu Sahasranaama. Literally, it means “One whose residence (ayana) in water (naara),” since Shri Vishnu resided on water during the beginning of creating the universe. However, it has numerous other meanings too, such as ‘the refuge of all humans’, ‘devoid of sorrow’ or ‘devoid of ignorance’. In fact, Shri Vijayeendra Teertharu wrote a text called “Naaraayana Shabdaartha Nirvachanam,” explaining 125 meanings of the name 'Naaraayana' and its application to Vishnu! Let us consider the following shloka, which is an example of guhya bhaasha.

केशवं पतितं दृष्ट्वा पाण्डवाः हर्षं निर्भराः ।  
रुदन्ति कौरवाः सर्वे हा हा केशव केशव ॥

“Seeing the fallen Keshava, the Paandavas were overjoyed. All the Kauravas were crying and saying, 'Keshava', 'Keshava'.”

One would be convinced that this shloka is wrongly phrased. But, factually, this is not the case. 'Ke' means “in water,” 'shava' means “dead body,” 'paandava' means “born from an egg in water” (aquatic animals such as fish) and 'kaurava' means “wolf” or “crow,” or any animal which has a shrill voice. So, the meaning is – “Seeing the fallen dead body, the fish were overjoyed and all the crows cried.”

Similarly, the Vedas have three different sets of interpretations. They are mentioned in the Nirukta.

- (1) **Aadhyaatmika (आध्यात्मिक):** In relation to one's self
- (2) **Aadhidaivika (आधिदैविक):** In relation to the Divine Being, Paramaatma
- (3) **Aadhibhautika (आधिभौतिक):** In relation to all entities and the world

Therefore, it must be known that our understanding of the Shaastras is always limited to our capacity and in the current times, it is more difficult to know all the elaborate meanings in the Shaastras, as many of them are currently lost and their contents are also vast.

## Pramaanas

'Pramaana' (प्रमाण) means "proof" and refers to valid facts obtained through reliable sources. It plays the chief role in determining the correctness of any knowledge. There are six major types of pramaanas recognized by Aastika darshanas:

- **Pratyaksha (प्रत्यक्ष):** Empirical evidence directly obtained through the indriyas as well as internal perception of the mind
- **Anumaana (अनुमान):** Information obtained by analysis and logic
- **Upamaana (उपमान):** Evidence obtained through comparison of existing evidence
- **Arthaapatti (अर्थापत्ति):** Deduction from circumstances
- **Anupalabधि (अनुपलब्धि):** Usage of negative evidences or non-existence
- **Shabda (शब्द)/Aagama (आगम):** Statements of the Shaastras, namely the Vedas and Sat-Aagamas

Most darshanas, including Tattvavaada and Yoga, accept three of these as a prime authority.

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि ॥ १७ ॥

"Pratyaksha, Anumaana and Aagama are pramaanas."

—Yoga Sutras, Samaadhi Paada, Sutra 17

The Bhaagavata Puraana also repeats the same:

श्रुतिः प्रत्यक्षमैतिह्यमनुमानं चतुष्टयम् ।  
प्रमाणेष्वनवस्थानाद् विकल्पात् स विरज्यते ॥ १७ ॥

"Shruti (the Vedas), pratyaksha, aitihya (shabda pramaana) and anumaana – among the pramaanas, through these four, one can become detached from the material world, knowing its transient nature."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 11, Adhyaaya 17, Shloka 15

Tattvavaada is one of the few Vedaantic darshanas which accepts the authority of pramaanas like pratyaksha, in its entirety, emphasizing how even direct evidence is equally important and is an authority in its own way. While some darshanas try to dismiss one or more pramaanas, trying to prove contradictions in their inferences, especially between pratyaksha and aagama, Tattvavaada emphasizes how the three major ones are fully authoritative wherever they are applicable. Pramaanas like anumaana cannot be used for certain philosophical concepts, like dharma or the existence of God, due to both of these being beyond the scope of the human mind, which is the main limitation of anumaana. However, pratyaksha and anumaana are fully authoritative in other fields and even without assistance from other methods, can provide correct knowledge.

In the Mahaabhaarata, Yudhishtira asks Bheeshma as to which pramaana is the most authoritative among pratyaksha and shabda. Bheeshma explains that relying on pratyaksha or anumaana for the knowledge of dharma and Brahman, is futile and foolish. But he also does not reject their authority, but explains that doubts about apparent contradictions between them are possible and so, one must ultimately rely on aparoksha-jnaanis who are able to practise the knowledge of the Shaastras and reconcile it accordingly with pratyaksha and anumaana.

धर्मविद्वेषिणो मन्दा इत्युक्तस्तेषु संशयः ॥ १३ ॥  
अतृप्यन्तस्तु साधूनां यावदागमबुद्धयः ।  
परमित्येव सन्तुष्टास्तानुपास्व च पृच्छ च ॥ १४ ॥

“Hence, doubts arise with respect to pratyaksha, anumaana and sadaachaara. Thus, those who are unsatisfied must ask the Saadhus who are possessed of the intellect of the Aagamas, with a fixed mind, who are the foremost authority.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Anushaasana Parva, Adhyaaya 163/267, Shlokas 13-14

यद्येवं मन्यसे राजंस्त्रिधा धर्मविचारणा ॥  
एक एवेति जानीहि त्रिधा धर्मस्य दर्शनम् ।  
पृथक्त्वे च न मे बुद्धिस्त्रयाणामपि वै तथा ॥

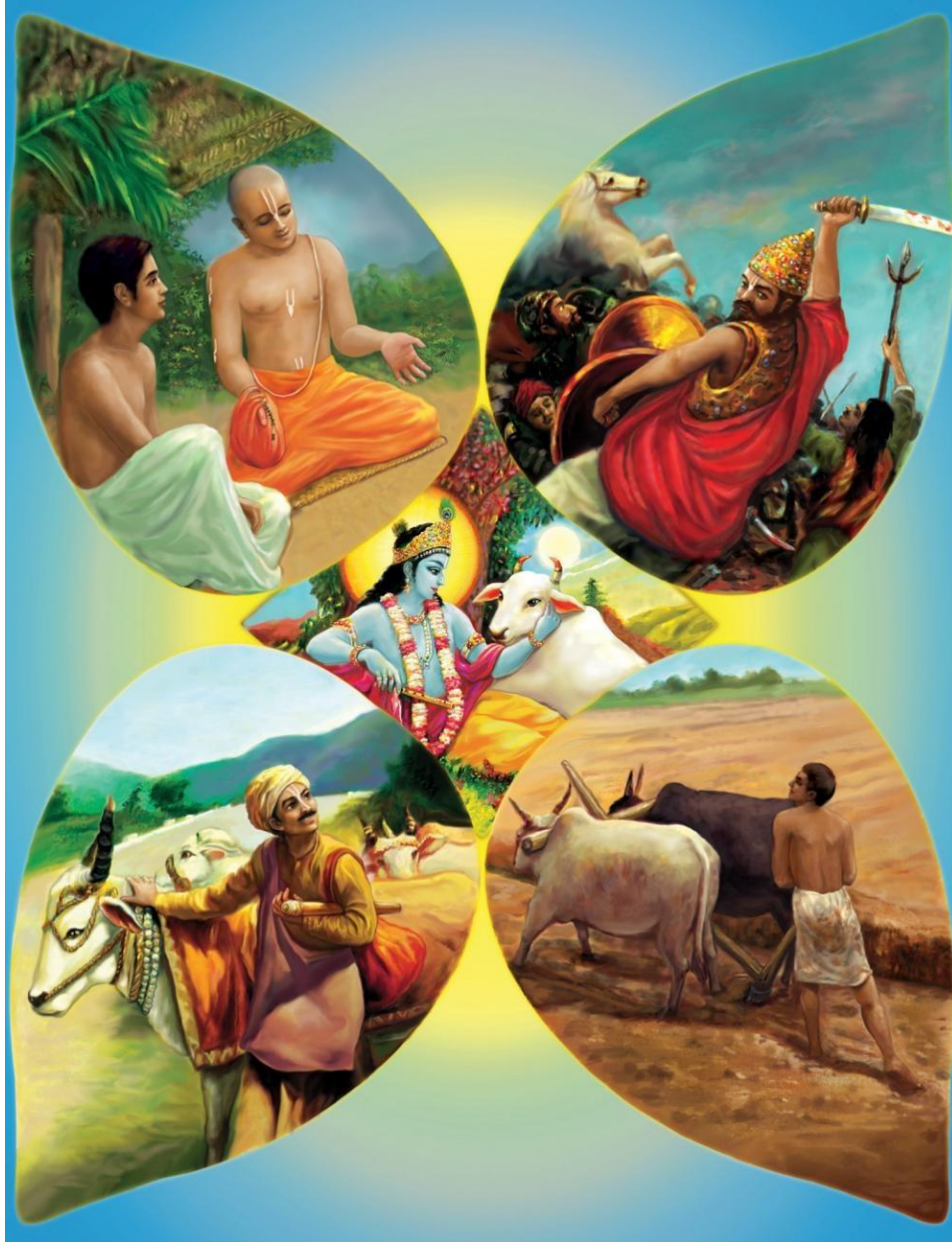
“If you opine, O king, that dharma be of three kinds, this conclusion does have some basis. Know that dharma is actually one, although it is capable of being viewed in three different ways (pratyaksha, aagama and aachaara).”

—Ibid., Shloka 20

Another important concept is the concept of 'saakshi', the observer or witness, as explained by Shri Madhvacharya, in Anuvyaakhyaana. The saakshi is actually the intuitive self, the very jeeva or aatma, which actually feels and understands all pramaanas or evidences. To absolutely prove something, it is actually the saakshi which needs to comprehend it properly, without which there would be no limit or basis to fix any number of tests or experiments to be done to arrive at any conclusion. What is convincing for one may not be so, for another. Therefore, the saakshi is the final interpreter who actually understands something in question and is convinced of it. The saakshi experiences what happens and while the capabilities of the organs and the mind may be limited, the saakshi is the final authority who is actually convinced of something being true, being able to experience and confirm it. The perception by the saakshi is not something limited to what we can understand through our bodies, which is why the saakshi's understanding is free from flaws.

## 4. Varnaashrama

### The Four Varnas



Varna and ashrama respectively refer to one's social class and stage of life. Varnaashrama is an excellent concept of Vaidika Dharma which provides the best possible structure for society, but has unfortunately been misused and misinterpreted by adharmis to suit agendas like casteism and defaming Hindu dharma. To comprehend it correctly, one needs to understand varnaashrama from the basics. To do so, one must strictly forget everything about the presently known concept of caste. Otherwise, it shall be almost impossible to understand.

One's varna in society is known as 'aupadhika varna'. There are four classes of human beings based on this classification:

**(1) Braahmanas:** those who have the realization of Para Brahma and are experts in the Vedas

**(2) Kshatriyas:** those who are warriors or kings and protect the territory

**(3) Vaishyas:** those who are traders and business experts

**(4) Shudras:** those who render services to others, and perform all such jobs which involve serving society. These included a variety of people, including those performing menial jobs and being servants, as well as reputed members with a high status in society, usually referred to as 'Sat Shudras'.

By default, one is equivalent to a Shudra at birth. To be considered a Braahmana, Kshatriya or Vaishya, one must undergo the samskaara of Upanayana, after which they are provided upadesha of the Gaayatri mantra. Henceforth, they are called 'Dvijas' (twice born), as Upanayana signifies their second birth, with the Guru as their father and the Gaayatri mantra as their mother. They must practice Brahmacharya and other nityakarmas.

After Upanayana, a young boy enters the stage of Brahmacharya and studies at the hermitage of the Guru, to learn the Vedas, the Vedaangas and other Shaastras, along with Upavedas and other skills. Once this is completed over a period of years, the person is eligible to become a householder (grhastha). The practice of Brahmacharya (focusing oneself on Para Brahma, abstaining from lustful thoughts entirely, etc.), along with regular sandhyaavandana, must continue for one to be a Dvija.

The samskaara of Upanayana, garbhadaana and all other Vaidika rituals are hereditary and must be received from one's father, who provides the upadesha of the Gaayatri mantra to his son, during the latter's Upanayana. So, it is said:

"A Braahmana is born with a threefold debt of knowledge or mantra (Brahmacharya to the Rshis, debt of Yajna, of offspring to the Pitrs). He is freed from debt when he has lived as a pupil, who performs Yajna, and has a child. This debt is repaid by him through these."

—Taittiriya Samhita, Prapaathaka 6, Anuvaaka 3, Mantra 10

Thus, in Satya Yuga, the whole human population consisted of only Braahmanas. There was no other varna. Everyone has those qualities and were focused on Para Brahma. However, once Treta Yuga began, many of them fell down from their exalted status due to misdeeds. Those who revolted and became warriors, became Kshatriyas. Those who took up trading, farming and similar occupations, became Vaishyas. Some, who totally abandoned their samskaaras or performed paapa karmas causing loss of Dvijatva, became Shudras. As a result, their descendants too lost the eligibility to become Dvijas, unlike the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas who still remained Dvijas but lost their Braahmanatva.

आदौ कृतयुगे वर्णो नृणां हंस इति स्मृतः ।  
कृतकृत्याः प्रजा जाता तस्मात् कृतयुगं विदुः ॥

"In the beginning of Krta-Yuga, there was one varna among human beings, known as 'Hamsa'. Everyone was perfect in the performance of their duties, since birth itself. Thus, the learned call it the Krta-Yuga."

विप्रक्षत्रियविट्शूद्रा मुखबाहूरुपादजाः ।  
वैराजात् पुरुषाज्जाता य आत्माचारलक्षणाः ॥

"In Treta-yuga, the Braahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras were born from the face, arms, thighs and feet of the Viraata Purusha. Each varna was recognized by its particular duties and qualities."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 11, Adhyaaya 17, Shlokas 10 and 13

However, 'varna' actually means colour and in multiple parts of the Shaastras, it is said that varna is determined by one's qualities and actions, not birth status. It was Shri Madhvacharya alone who settled this confusion and explained the true meaning of varna. Varna primarily refers to one's qualities and behaviour, which is a svaabhaavika guna. So, we say, "He showed his true colours." In the same manner, one's qualities are referred to as 'varna'.

There are two types of varna:

**(1) Aupaadhika:** the birth varna, which is used for obtaining samskaaras and a position in society

**(2) Svaabhaavika:** the varna of the soul, which determines its qualities and natural behaviour

Aupaadhika varna is the varna obtained from one's parents and does not play a major role. On the other hand, svaabhaavika varna is one's varna based on their predominant qualities of being like a Braahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra. This determines one's spiritual progress and destiny. For instance, the Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 7, Adhyaaya 11, while describing the four varnas, refers to them by their qualities:

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं सन्तोषः क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।  
ज्ञानं दयाच्युतात्मत्वं सत्यं च ब्रह्मलक्षणम् ॥ २१ ॥

"Control of the mind, control of the senses, Tapas and penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, compassion, truthfulness, and bhakti to Achyuta, are the qualities of a Braahmana."

शौर्यं वीर्यं धृतिस्तेजस्त्यागश्चात्मजयः क्षमा ।  
ब्रह्मण्यता प्रसादश्च सत्यं च क्षत्रलक्षणम् ॥ २२ ॥

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

"To be fierce in battle, unconquerable, patient, challenging and charitable, to control the bodily necessities, to be forgiving, to be attached to the brahminical nature and to be always jolly and truthful, are the qualities of a Kshatriya."

देवगुर्वच्युते भक्तिस्त्रिवर्गपरिपोषणम् ।  
आस्तिव्यमुद्यमो नित्यं नैपुण्यं वैश्यलक्षणम् ॥ २३ ॥

"Always actively having bhakti towards the Devas, Gurus and Achyuta, executing the three vargas (Dharma, artha and kaama), being an Aastika, with expertise, are the qualities of a Vaishya."

शूद्रस्य सन्नतिः शौचं सेवा स्वामिन्यमायया ।  
अमन्त्रयज्ञो ह्यस्तेयं सत्यं गोविप्ररक्षणम् ॥ २४ ॥

"The qualities of a Shudra are serving others, being clean, faithfully serving one's master, performing Yajnas without mantras, indeed, not stealing, being truthful and protecting cattle and Vipras."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 7, Adhyaaya 11, Shlokas 21–24

Similarly, the Mahaabhaarata explains:

ब्राह्मणानां सितो वर्णः क्षत्रियाणां तु लोहितः ।  
वैश्यानां पीतको वर्णः शूद्राणामसितस्तथा ॥ ५ ॥

"The colour the Braahmanas obtained was white, that which the Kshatriyas obtained was red, that which the Vaishyas got was yellow and that which was given to the Sudras was black."

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 186, Shloka 5

ब्राह्मणाः पूर्वसृष्टा हि कर्मभिर्वर्णतां गताः ॥

कामभोगप्रियास्तीक्ष्णाः क्रोधनाः प्रियसाहसाः ।  
त्यक्तस्वधर्मा रक्ताङ्गास्ते द्विजाः क्षत्रतां गताः ॥

गोषु वृत्तिं समाधाय पीताः कृष्युपजीविनः ।  
स्वधर्मान्नानुतिष्ठन्ति ते द्विजा वैश्यतां गताः ॥

हिंसानृतप्रिया लुब्धाः सर्वकर्मोपजीविनः ।  
कृष्णाः शौचपरिभ्रष्टास्ते द्विजाः शूद्रता गताः ॥

इत्येतैः कर्मभिर्व्यस्ता द्विजा वर्णान्तरं गताः ।  
धर्मो यज्ञक्रिया चैषां नित्यं न प्रतिषिध्यते ॥

"Created by Brahman, humans have, in consequence of their acts, become distributed into different varnas. Those who became fond of indulging in desire and enjoying pleasures,

possessed of the attributes of severity and wrath, endued with courage and unmindful of the duties of piety and worship – these Braahmanas possessing the attribute of Rajas, became Kshatriyas. Those Braahmanas again who, without attending to the duties laid down for them, became possessed of both Sattva and Rajas, and took to the professions of cattle-rearing and agriculture, became Vaishyas. Those Braahmanas again who became fond of untruth and injuring other creatures, possessed of cupidity, engaged in all kinds of acts for a living, and falling away from purity of behaviour, thus wedded to the attribute of tamas, became Shudras. Separated by these occupations, Braahmanas, falling away from their own varna, became members of the other three varnas. All the four orders, therefore, always have the right to the performance of dharma and Yajnas."

—Ibid., Shlokas 10-14

Thus, one having the qualities of a particular varna, though belonging to a different aupaadhika varna, should be considered to belong to the respective varna by one's qualities. So, it is said:

यस्य यल्लक्षणं प्रोक्तं पुंसो वर्णाभिव्यञ्जकम् ।  
यदन्यत्रापि दश्येत तत्तेनैव विनिर्दिशेत् ॥

"If the respective qualities of a Braahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra are seen even in one of another varna, that person should be considered accordingly with respect to their qualities."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 7, Adhyaaya 11, Shloka 35

शूद्रे चैतद्भवेल्लक्ष्यं द्विजे तच्च न विद्यते ।  
न वै शूद्रो भवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥

"If these characteristics (of a Braahmana) are observable in a Shudra, and if they are not found in a Braahmana, then such a Shudra is not a Shudra, and, such a Braahmana is not a Braahmana."

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 187, Shloka 8 (var. Adhyaaya 189)

So, Patanjali Rshi stated as follows, in his Maha-bhaashya on the Ashtaadhyaayi Sutras:

अथ वा सर्व एते शब्दा गुणसमुदायेषु वर्तन्ते ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियो वैश्यः शूद्र इति ॥

"So, all these words, such as 'Braahmana', 'Kshatriya', 'Vaishya' and 'Shudra', are thus, indicative of gunas (qualities)."

—Mahaabhaashya, Adhyaaya 2, Paada 2, Sutra 6

It was Shri Madhvacharya alone who provided such an explanation for varnaashrama, highlighting how the Shaastras give more importance to one's qualities and not to one's birth status. Everyone who possess Saattvika qualities and practise bhakti, are eligible to obtain moksha and Brahma-jnaana. Some may be oriented to the lifestyle of a Braahmana

and prefer to perform Tapas, adhyayana, etc. Some may have a natural liking for administration and ruling, some may like trading and business and others may like serving others. Cultivating the respective qualities one is naturally inclined to and using them to progress spiritually and benefit all beings is what leads to moksha. One need not be a Braahmana or a sanyaasi at all to obtain aparoksha-jnaana and achieve moksha. Of these, the most important is the Shudra. The word 'shudra' is derived from the words 'shuk' (sorrow) and 'dra' (melting). One who melts at others' sorrows is known as a 'Shudra'. One cannot be even a human being if they do not possess Shudratva! How else would one develop the desire to serve and help others? Contrary to the claim that Shudras are of a low status, peddled by those intending to defame Hinduism, it is actually vital for everyone to have the quality of a Shudra, regardless of varna.

So, in exceptional cases, where one's svabhaava can be inferred through proper and careful observation for a long time, their aupaadhika varna can change, such as Satyakaama Rshi, though born as an illicit son of a Shudra woman, Jaabaala, was initiated as a Braahmana by his Guru due to his extreme honesty, indicating his possession of the qualities of a Braahmana. Similarly, the descendants of Mahaaraaja Dhrshta became Braahmanas, as said in the Bhaagavata Puraana (Skandha 9, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 17).

Generally, people consider Braahmanas to deserve the highest respect since they are extremely pious people who have achieved the position of knowing Brahman. However, it is nothing easy and what is generally ignored is that Shudras are more fortunate in this regard, since they too can achieve the highest destiny and a similarly respectable status while not following strict rules. It is mandatory for all Dvijas to perform sandhyaavandana at least twice a day, with many other compulsory duties. A Braahmana cannot have an income source and must subsist only through donations by members of the other varnas. A Kshatriya cannot beg, even in distress. But Shudras do not have these restrictions and can also perform almost all types of jobs, from a servant to a minister or administrator, an Aachaarya and scholar in philosophy. Similarly, most common human women are Advijas and do not undergo Upanayana or obtain Dvijatva. But they too can obtain the same merits, just as Shudras can do so effortlessly. After marriage, half of the merits of a Dvija's actions go to his wife, but not his sins. Therefore, simply by serving a pious husband and serving pious and Saattvika people of the Trivarnas, Advija women and Shudras respectively can achieve the highest position, easily than others. Thus, Vyaasa Himself calls them the blessed ones, in the second Adhyaaya of the sixth Amsha of the Vishnu Puraana. Furthermore, Krshna Himself states in the Mahaabhaarata that all His bhaktas and those who serve His bhaktas are to be respected by all, even if they are avarnas.

मद्भक्ताञ्छूद्रसामान्यादवमन्यन्ति ये नराः ।  
नरकेष्वेव तिष्ठन्ति वर्षकोटिं नराधमाः ॥ २१ ॥

चण्डालमपि मद्भक्तं नावमन्येत बुद्धिमान् ।  
अवमानात्पतन्त्येव नरके रौरवे नराः ॥

मम भक्तस्य भक्तेषु प्रीतिरभ्यधिका मम ।  
तस्मान्मद्भक्तभक्ताश्च पूजनीया विशेषतः ॥

(Shri Krishna said): "Those people who insult My bhaktas who are Shudras or their equivalents, shall certainly remain situated in narakas for a crore years. An intelligent person must not insult even a Chaandaala who is My bhakta. Humans will fall into the Raurava Naraka due to such insulting. The bhaktas of My bhakta are extremely beloved to Me. Thus, a bhakta's bhakta is especially worshipable."

—Mahaabhaarata, Ashvamedhika Parva, Adhyaaya 116, Shlokas 21-23

पत्रं वाऽप्यथवा पुष्पं क फलं वाऽप्यप एव वा ।  
ददाति मम शूद्रो यच्छिरसा धारयामि तत् ॥

"If even a Shudra offers Me a leaf, flower or even water, I shall adorn that on My head."  
—Ibid., Shloka 25

While miscreants defame Sanaatana Dharma or so-called "Dhaarmikas" promote casteism, by claiming that Shudras are an inferior varna, one must know that the Shaastras are clear that the Shudras are the base of any functional society and a vital component, which is why they are metaphorically compared to the feet of Bhagavaan. While those who have the gunas of the Dvija varnas are given slightly more respect, even a Shudra who is a Vaishnava has to be given appropriate respect. For this reason, it is an offense to disrespect another Vaishnava, especially on the basis of their varna, aupaadhika or svaabhaavika, as long as they have the qualities of a Vaishnava.

As per the darshana of Tattvavaada, even Shudras and common women have the eligibility to learn the Shaastras and become knowledgeable scholars, something which is not accepted by many other orthodox aastika darshanas. In fact, in multiple granthas, Shri Madhvacharya himself and Shri Vyaasa Teertha (in Taatparya Chandrika, Apashudraadhikaranam), highlight that the very purpose of composing the Itihaasas, Puraanas and other Smrtis is to ensure that even non-Dvijas obtain the same aparoksha jnaana which is obtained by Dvijas, from the Vedas. This is why Vyaasa Deva composed the Mahaabhaarata and compiled the Puraanas, as well as one of the reasons why He propagated the philosophy of Pancharaatra, as Naaraayana Rshi.

So, in conclusion:

- Varna in society is aupaadhika and does not play a very important role other than samskaaras and adhikaara over the Vedas.
- Svaabhaavika varna is vital, which refers to one's inherent and natural varna, based on their qualities.

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

- Svaabhaavika varna should be given more importance and one deserves respect based on their qualities and merits rather than birth status.
- Saattvika manushya jeevas possess a svaabhaavika varna, which can be either one of the four varnas, depending on their natural likings and behaviours.
- In exceptional cases, where one's svabhaava can be inferred through proper and careful observation for a long time, their aupaadhika varna can change.
- The Shudra varna is the base of all other varnas, since 'Shudratva' refers to the tendency to feel for others' suffering.
- Restriction of knowledge of the Vedas does not hinder one's eligibility to become experts in spirituality, learn the Shaastras and practice Bhagavat-bhakti.
- All Bhagavat-bhaktas and Saattvika-minded people must be respected regardless of their varna.

## The Four Aashramas

The Shaastras also prescribe four aashramas or stages of life, to be followed by a person. They are as follows:

### 1. Brahmacharya

This is the first aashrama a Dvija enters after Upanayana, or is applicable to all those who are students and in the process of obtaining knowledge from a Guru. Typically, they are supposed to grow all their hair and beg for food, serving their Guru, residing at the Guru's aashrama or at one's own house if their own father is their Guru. They are supposed to lead a lifestyle like Braahmanas, not assimilating much wealth and living a simple lifestyle, while also strictly avoiding unnecessary interactions with members of the opposite sex and ignoring any thoughts of lust or marriage. Once they have completed their education, they can choose to either remain as Brahmacharis and serve their Guru permanently, or can leave and become grhasthas.

### 2. Grhastha

Grhasthas are the married householders who perform most jobs in society. They are praised in the Shaastras as being the best among all members of society and the support for all other aashramas. They must follow all the dharmas of the grhasthas strictly, performing yajnas and donating to members of the other aashramas, while supporting their spouse, children and other dependents. So, it is said:

गृहस्थ एव यजते गृहस्थस्तप्यते तपः ।  
चतुर्माणाश्रमाणां च गृहस्थश्च विशिष्यते ॥ १४ ॥  
यथा नदी नदाः सर्वे समुद्रे यान्ति संस्थितिम् ।  
एवमाश्रमिणः सर्वे गृहस्थे यान्ति संस्थितिम् ॥ १५ ॥  
यथा मातरमाश्रित्य सर्वे जीवन्ति जन्तवः ।  
एवं गृहस्थमाश्रित्य सर्वे जीवन्ति भिक्षुकाः ॥ १६ ॥

"A grhastha alone performs Yajnas, a grhastha alone performs Tapas and so, the grhastha is the most distinguished of the four aashramas. As all rivers, both great and small, rest in the ocean, even so all aashramas take refuge in grhasthas. As all living entities live due to the protection by their mothers, even so all sanyaasis live through the protection afforded by grhasthas."

—Vaasishtha Smrti, Adhyaaya 8, Shlokas 14-16

### 3. Vaanaprastha

They are forest-dwellers, who are retired grhasthas and live a simple life in a forest or outskirts of a town or village, not relying on others for their daily needs. The Shaastras

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

recommended one to become a vaanaprastha at a later stage in life, after fulfilling all responsibilities towards their children. If one's spouse wishes to accompany them, they must stay with their spouse as a vaanaprastha.

#### 4. Sannyasa

This is the last and fourth ashrama. They are renounced mendicants who are solely dedicated to practising spirituality and bhakti for the rest of their lives. They are unmarried and when one becomes a sanyaasi, their marriage with their wife is considered nullified. Only Braahmanas are eligible to become sanyaasis. Those who directly enter sanyaasa after the stage of Brahmacharya, are called 'Baala-sannyasis', as they skip passing through the stage of grhasthaashrama. Therefore, proper permission from one's spouse, parents or any other dependents is mandatory for one to become a vaanaprastha or a sanyaasi.

Ultimately, it must be known that regardless of one's ashrama or varna, it is one's bhakti and vairagya which matters, since one can still be mentally renounced from attachments to material objects and relationships, knowing their transient nature and that bhakti alone is the highest goal.

## 5. Fundamental Duties

Achieving samaadhi and aparoksha jnaana is never any easy task. As said by Shri Vishnu Himself, one's continuous practice of bhakti-yoga (inclusive of jnaana-yoga and karma-yoga) solely can grant His anugraha. For humans, the main instruments of action are the body, voice and mind. These are the three main components to be controlled. In order to practise yoga, one must follow the basic dharmas called the 'yamas' and 'niyamas', along with other important duties, as stated in multiple Shaastras. In the Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 7, Adhyaaya 12, Shlokas 8-12, the fundamental duties for all are summarized as follows:

सत्यं दया तपः शौचं तितिक्षेक्षा शमो दमः ।  
अहिंसा ब्रह्मचर्यं च त्यागः स्वाध्याय आर्जवम् ॥ ८ ॥

सन्तोषः समदृक्सेवा ग्राम्येहोपरमः शनैः ।  
नृणां विपर्ययेहेक्षा मौनमात्मविमर्शनम् ॥ ९ ॥

अन्नाद्यादेः संविभागो भूतेभ्यश्च यथार्हतः ।  
तेष्वात्मदेवताबुद्धिः सुतरां नृषु पाण्डव ॥ १० ॥

श्रवणं कीर्तनं चास्य स्मरणं महतां गतेः ।  
सेवेज्यावनतिर्दास्यं सख्यमात्मसमर्पणम् ॥ ११ ॥

नृणामयं परो धर्मः सर्वेषां समुदाहृतः ।  
त्रिशल्लक्षणवान् राजन्सर्वात्मा येन तुष्यति ॥ १२ ॥

### The Five Yamas

These are duties requiring one to abstain from wrongdoings. They are as follows:

**Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्य):** It literally means 'conducting oneself in accordance with Brahman'. It refers to leading a lifestyle suited to practising bhakti, especially by not giving in to one's lust, anger and other defects. There are eight faults which lead to breakage of Brahmacharya – seeing a member of the opposite sex in a lustful manner, desiring to touch them with lustful intentions, praising them in a sexual manner, being in a secluded place with a member of the opposite sex (except one's parent, sibling, spouse or child), desiring carnal knowledge and actually having sexual intercourse with anyone other than one's spouse for the purpose of obtaining progeny. So, these must be strictly avoided.

**Ahimsa (अहिंसा):** It is the abstinence from anything causing harm or injury to other living beings, which includes having a Saattvika diet, speaking calmly and decently regardless of the situation, and always having good thoughts without even the desire to harm or hate others.

**Satya (सत्य):** It refers to honesty and integrity in all situations. One must be truthful and speak what is true and beneficial. At the same time, one must remember that It also refers to maintaining dharma, which may require speaking falsehood. In the Shaastras, speaking the truth in situations where it would endanger dharma, is said to be sinful and equivalent to dishonesty. A Braahmana named Kaushika had to attain Naraka for mentioning where certain innocent people were hiding from dacoits, when questioned by the dacoits, due to which they were murdered. Thus, the Mahaabhaarata and other Shaastras mention that certain situations are exceptions to honesty, such as saving one's life or others Saattvika people from adharmis or maintaining dharma, where speaking the truth would lead to the paapa karma of dishonesty.

**Asteya (अस्तेय):** It is the abstinence from stealing or coveting anything which does not belongs to anyone else. Stealing valuables is also an upa-paataka which makes one lose one's varna and become a jaati-bhramsha.

**Aparigraha (अपरिग्रह):** It means "disinterest" and is supposed to be shown towards materialistic ideas and anything which motivates one to deviate from their spiritual practices. One must not provide excess importance to material objects and entities, knowing that their existence here is temporary and not show outbursts of emotions in various situations.

### The Five Niyamas

These are actions which must be performed. They are:

**Svaadhyaaya (स्वाध्याय):** Literally meaning "self-learning," it refers to learning the Shaastras and other necessary forms of knowledge which help one progress spiritually and practise yoga. It does not imply that one should learn and comprehend them by oneself, but under the guidance of a Guru and their teachings, through a reliable source, while also applying one's own effort in chanting their mantras and shlokas, learning them through proper adhyayana. While it is a compulsory duty for Dvijas, Advijas practising Sat-aachaara with good character and the desire for knowledge, must also practise it by learning Shaastras other than the Vedas.

**Shaucha (शौच):** It refers to both internal and external cleanliness, in the mind and one's external environment, living in a clean residence and maintaining one's body, house and other environments in a hygienic manner. In the Mahaabhaarata (Ashvamedhika Parva, Adhyaaya 116, Shlokas 9-10), Shri Krishna mentions that there are five types of purities: (1) of the manas (mind), (2) of the karmas, (3) of one's kula/dynasty (i.e., by raising good descendants born of legitimate and respected relationships), (4) of the body and (5) of the speech. Of these, the most vital is purity in the heart (i.e., through intentions and thoughts).

**Santosh (सन्तोष):** It refers to being self-satisfied through one's bhakti and not giving much regard to one's situation or being swayed by emotions. One must stay in equanimity in any state, knowing that pleasures and pains are temporary and only Bhagavaan's grace is permanent and worth to be striven for.

**Tapas (तपस):** It is derived from the root word 'tap', which means "to burn" or "to shine." It refers to spiritual austerities which help one in their spiritual life. In the Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 17, Shlokas 14-17, the characteristics of Tapas are explained, which are practically the yamas and niyamas described here. It is said to be of three types:

- **Shaareera (Tapas of the body):** Worship of the Supreme Being, Braahmanas, one's Gurus and the scholarly, along with practising cleanliness, brahmacharya, simplicity and aarjava
- **Vaanmaya (Tapas of speech):** Speaking words which are in accordance with the principle of satya, pleasing and beneficial, along with the practice of svaadhyaaya
- **Maanasa (Tapas of the mind):** Equanimity and satisfaction of the mind, calmness, silence, control of the mind and having pure thoughts

When these are practised without any specific desires and for one's own benefit, it is a Saattvika form of tapas which is the most beneficial.

**Niyataatmavat (नियतात्मवत्):** It refers to self-control and forcibly stopping one's mind and senses from indulging in any unwanted actions, remembering one's duties.

### Additional Dharmas

- **Titiksha (तितिक्ष):** Tolerance to all sorts of situations
- **Iksha (इक्षा):** Differentiating between dharma and adharma
- **Shama (शम):** Control of the mind
- **Dama (दम):** Control of the senses
- **Tyaaga (त्याग):** Charity and sacrifices
- **Aarjava (आर्जव):** Straightforwardness in one's thoughts, words and actions
- **Samadrk-seva (समद्रक्सेवा):** Rendering service to those who indiscriminately regard all entities as equals
- Disengaging from worldly activities, being mentally renounced from them even while performing any
- Abstaining from unnecessary activities
- Silence in most situations unless it is necessary to speak or involve oneself there
- Understanding the true nature of one's aatma (self) and the highest purpose of one's life
- Donating food and other commodities to others
- Looking upon humans and other beings like Devatas

- Hearing (shravana) about, chanting and singing (keertana) about, remembering (smarana), serving, worshiping and offering salutations to Bhagavaan Hari, like a servant as well as a friend, and surrendering oneself to Him

These thirty characteristics are said to constitute the greatest dharma for all human beings.

## Sat-Aachaara

In the Vishnu Puraana (Amsha 3, Adhyaaya 12), Eeshvara Samhita (Adhyaaya 23), Mahaabhaarata (Anushaasana Parva, Adhyaaya 162/268) and multiple other Shaastras, various rules are explained, which must be followed by a decent person and Bhagavat-bhakta, especially a grhastha, along with practise of the yamas and niyamas.

- One must always venerate the Supreme Being, cattle, Braahmanas, Gurus, Siddhas, elderly and Aachaaryas.
- One must always perform sandhyaavandana, at least during two sandhyaakaalas (sunrise and sunset), as well as perform Yajnas regularly.
- One must dress neatly and in untorn clothing, applying perfumes, ornaments, etc., to be presentable.
- One must not covet anyone else's possessions, speak harshly or rudely or defame and badmouth others.
- One should speak kindly and honestly.
- One should not associate or make friendship with a sinful or immoral person, a drunkard, a characterless or dishonest person, a beggar or slanderer. Even mingling with them should be limited to a fraction of a moment, if inevitable.
- One must not enter a waterbody with strong currents, a building on fire or climb the top of a tree.
- One must never publicly clean the teeth, blow the nose, yawn without covering the mouth, clear the throat, cough, laugh loudly, belch audibly, bite the nails, put one's hair into the mouth, etc., or even during prayers, Yajnas, eating or in front of a respectable person.
- One must not express disgust at a dead body.
- After sunset, one should avoid a place where four roads meet, a village tree, groves adjacent to crematoriums and characterless people, especially of the opposite sex.
- One should not step on the shadow of a superior or respectable person, an image or icon of a Devata or a flag.
- One must also respect the seat or other possessions of the Guru, as well as give greater regard to the Guru's Guru.
- One must not travel alone through a forest or any lonely place or spend the night with no one else at home
- One should avoid hair, bones, flesh, blood, thorns, ashes and other such impure materials.
- One should avoid receiving protection or support from dishonest or unworthy people.
- One should avoid dangerous insects and animals as well as troublesome conditions like extreme cold, heat, wind, sunshine, etc.

- One must not lie down during the day, after waking up already, or stay up in the night.
- One must not bathe, sleep or rinse their mouth while being naked.
- One must not chant prayers, perform homas, worship the Devatas, salute the Braahmanas or other respected personalities, while wearing only a single garment.
- One must avoid controversy and disputes, especially with superiors or subordinates.
- One should avoid enmity, especially when it is not beneficial in any manner.
- One should abstain from earning from any immoral methods or selling knowledge (such as teaching for a fee).
- After bathing in a river or lake, one must not wipe themselves, shake their limbs or rinse the mouth without completely exiting the waterbody first.
- In the presence of a superior, one must not sit down by placing one foot over another or by stretching the feet, but must sit in the position of Veeraasana, or else stand up. One should not be positioned on the right side of a Guru.
- One must not spit, urinate, etc., in front of the moon, fire, sun, water, wind or any respectable people, or in a public place, or step on such impurities.
- One must remain silent while having food, sleeping, urinating, etc.
- One must not disrespect those of the opposite sex nor blindly trust them out of lust, especially in important matters.
- One must try to always help the poor who are virtuous.
- One must speak kindly and wisely, as required, and speak the truth when it is beneficial for dharma.
- Starting from the age of Brahmacharya, one must have a shikha and wear the Urdhvapundra tilaka whenever possible.
- One must utilize and improve their intelligence and wisdom.
- One should not travel entirely alone through a forest or other such places, and must utilize items like umbrellas, sticks, shoes, etc., for one's protection.
- One must respect and happily venerate other Vishnu-bhaktas, regardless of their race, varna, etc., in accordance with their qualifications.
- One must suppress and at least gradually start to avoid giving in to defective emotions like anger, envy, pride, miserliness, hatred, delusion, etc.
- One should use the right hand for eating and reading books during svaadhyaaya.
- One must not step on, sit on, eat from or disrespect any stones, vessels or other objects with symbols like the shankha, chakra or padma.
- One should perform pradakshinas from a distance, to the temple of Shri Vishnu, an Aachaarya, a Pancharaatrika, a fig tree, banyan tree, cattle, a gathering of righteous people, the Guru's house and the idol of Bhagavaan near it.

- One should not invite those who are non-bhaktas, especially those who like to create controversy and portray disrespect, to any good event, into a temple or other sacred place.
- The knowledge of the Shaastras should not be explained to those who do not respect it, nor should Shaastras like the Aagamas be explained elaborately in the presence of non-Vaishnavas.
- One must not speak or propagate wrong information about the Shaastras or with incomplete knowledge.
- In accordance with one's own qualification and knowledge, one must explain the Shaastras to deekshita Vaishnavas, only the Dharma-Shaastras and certain Smrtis to others who are of a Saattvika mindset, and only their summary to other Vishnu-bhaktas.
- One must take part in whatever activities they perform, mentally remembering Bhagavaan at all times, as the instrument of the action and the actual person to be propitiated through any action.

Thus, one should always perform actions through the actions, thoughts and speech, which would provide long-term benefits and do no harm to other beings.

## The Ideal Vaishnava Lifestyle

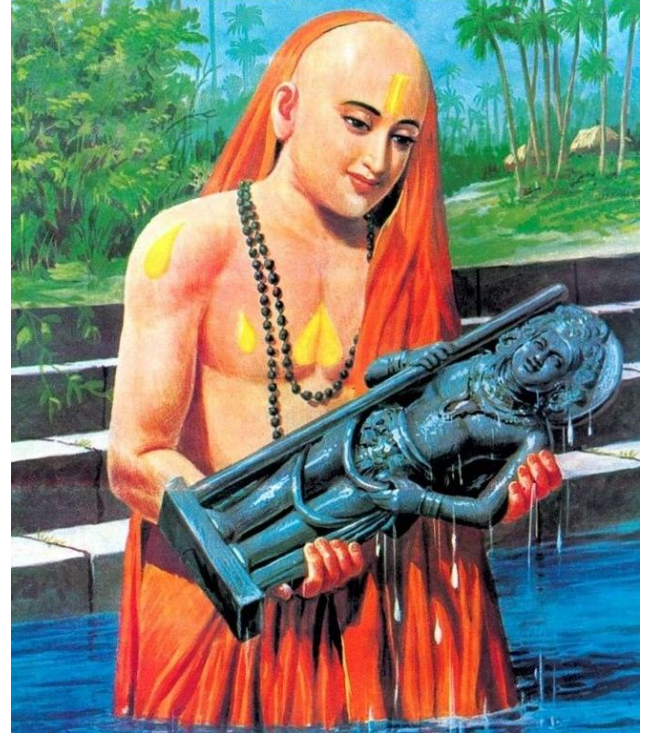
These are regulations to be followed by a Vaishnava in their everyday routine, as explained in granthas like the Parama Samhita (Adhyaaya 27).

- One must wake up early in the morning before sunrise, during the Brahma-muhurta (2 muhurtas/1 hour and 36 minutes before sunrise), and chant the name 'Naaraayana' multiple times, mentally remembering Shri Vishnu.
- Chanting the respective prayers, one must get up from the right side and facing the East.
- After urinating, cleansing oneself, etc., one must bathe or at least wash the hands, feet and face, cleanse their mouth and brush their teeth, wearing clean clothes.
- Much before sunrise, one must perform the morning sandhyaavandana rituals and then proceed to worship Shri Vishnu either through a vighraha or by other methods such as maanasika puja, etc.
- Chanting the proper mantras, shlokas and stutis, one must perform upaasana of Shri Hari, Lakshmi Devi, Mukhya Praana and other Devatas. One must also try to chant the Pancha Stutis everyday (Refer to our Tattvavaadi Vaishnava handbook for the same).
- One must perform dhyaana of Bhagavaan through practices like japa, mentally contemplating on Him with one's complete focus.
- Dvijas must also perform Agni-kaaryas and Yajnas, whenever possible.
- One must consume any edible items only after offering them, at least mentally, to Bhagavaan, the Devas, Gurus and Pitrs, and remembering Shri Vishnu in the form of Vaishvaanara-agni, while eating or drinking.
- One must similarly perform sandhyaavandana and other forms of upaasana in the evenings.
- At night, one must sleep early, preferably one yaama (3 hours) after sunset, remembering Shri Vishnu as Janaardana, who provides freedom from samsaara.

## 6. The Gurus of the Maadhva Sampradaaya

### Shri Madhvaachaarya

**Shri Madhvaachaarya** (1238-1317 A.D.), also known as 'Aananda Teertha' and 'Purna Prajna', was a 13th century Vaishnava philosopher, who propagated the philosophy of Tattvavaada, also known as Dvaita Vedaanta. He totally authored about 37 works on philosophy and bhakti, as well as commentaries on certain Shaastras. He is the avataara of Mukhya Praana Deva, also known as 'Vaayu', the divinity presiding over the vital breath and cardiovascular functioning of all living organisms. Since his childhood, he portrayed a variety of divine abilities and extreme philosophical knowledge. He became a sanyaasi at the age of about 11 years. His Guru was Shri Achyuta Prajna Teertha, a Smaarta philosopher, whose lineage originally was Vaishnava, but his Gurus had converted to Smaartas during the past few centuries. Shri Madhvacharya refuted and criticized the tenets of the Smaarta philosophy, Advaita Vedaanta, causing even his Guru to become Madhvacharya's disciple and gaining faith in Tattvavaada. Over time, Shri Madhvacharya defeated several great scholars of Advaita Vedaanta and other philosophies, gaining numerous disciples and the title 'Jagadguru'.



He is famously known for consecrating the Krishna temple of Udupi and installing the sculpture of Kadagolu Krishna, a form of Shri Krishna as young child with a stick, worshiped at the temple till date. His disciples later had eight Mathas (monasteries) built around the Shri Krishna Matha, making a square formation around it. Currently, Shri Madhvacharya resides at Badari, serving Vyaasa Deva. His later disciples have also exhibited similar scholarly achievements, such as Shri Jaya Teertha, Shri Vyaasa Teertha, Shri Vijayeendra Teertha and Shri Raaghavendra Svaami.

In recent times, notable scholars have excelled in representing Tattvavaada in academic circles too. Shri Vidyashreesha Teertha Shripaada (Prof. 'D. Prahladachar' during his purvaashrama), the present pontiff of Shri Vyaasaraaja Matha, was formerly the Vice-Chancellor of Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha. He has written over 100 research papers and has represented Tattvavaada in international circles. Shri Bannanje Govindacharya has also

contributed immensely to the propagation of Tattvavaada and unveiled several unknown facts pertaining to Hinduism, Samskrta and spirituality in general. He has helped discover rare recensions of Tattvavaadi texts as well as deciphered ambiguous Samskrta inscriptions.

## Shri Padmanaabha Teertha

**Shri Padmanaabha Teertha** (Peethaadhipati from 1317-16 November 1324 A.D.) is revered as one of the foremost disciples of Shri Madhvacharya, occupying a foundational place in the lineage of his interpreters. His writings form the first and clearest exposition of Madhvacharya's philosophical vision, bridging the concise aphoristic works of his Guru and the elaborate scholastic tradition that followed. He was known Shobhana Bhatta, in his purvaashrama and was a renowned scholar of Vedaanta, specifically the darshana of Mayavada, celebrated for his dialectical skill and command over the Shaastras. His encounter with Shri Madhvacharya initially occurred as an intellectual debate, where after realization of the strength and Shaastric accordance of Madhvacharya's arguments, he accepted the philosophy of Tattvavaada and became a disciple of Madhvacharya.

His transition from a distinguished dialectic scholar to a devoted follower and Pandita of Tattvavaada exemplifies both intellectual integrity and spiritual transformation. His literary contributions are among the earliest systematic attempts to explain and clarify Madhva's terse and highly compact works. The works found primarily are Sannyaaayatnaavali, a commentary on Anuvyaakhyaana, and Sattarkadipaavali, a commentary on the Brahma Sutra Bhaashya of Shri Madhvacharya. His style is marked by clarity, brevity, and deep fidelity to Madhvacharya's intent, earning him the enduring title 'Praacheena Teekaakaara', the earliest authoritative commentator in the Maadhva sampradaaya. Later scholars, especially Shri Jaya Teertha, often refer to Padmanaabha Teertha's works and follow his interpretative lead. Jaya Teertha, in Nyaayasudha, acknowledges his insights and frequently builds upon his arguments, refining them with additional precision.

रमानिवासोचितवासभूमिस्सन्नायरत्नावलिजन्मभूमिः ।  
वैराग्यभाग्यो मम पद्मनाभतीर्थामृताब्धेर्भवतात् विभूत्यै ॥

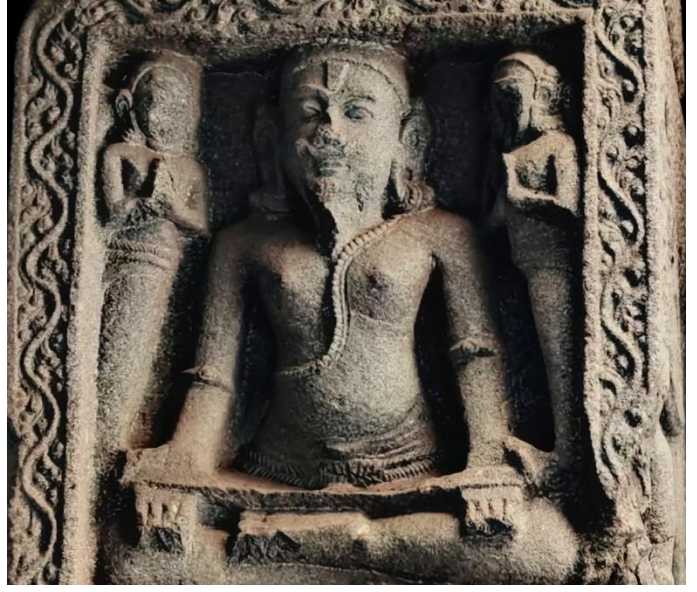
—Nyaaya Sudha, Adhyaaya 1, Introduction

From Sannyaaayatnaavali to his other prose writings, his contributions illuminate the early intellectual spirit of Tattvavaada and provided the groundwork upon which later philosophers like Jaya Teertha and Vyaasa Teertha built. A philosopher, commentator, and sanyaasi, he remains one of the most significant figures in the unfolding of Madhvacharya's philosophical tradition. His vrndaavana lies entombed at the Nava Vrndaavana island on the Tungabhadra River, near Anegondi.

## Shri Narahari Teertha

**Shri Narahari Teertha** was another direct disciple of Shri Madhvacharya and a distinguished one among them. He is remembered both as an early exponent of *Tattvavāda* (Dvaita Vedānta) and as a bridge between rigorous philosophy and popular devotion. His contributions include Samskrta commentaries, Kannada devotional poetry and cultural innovation.

Authentic information about Shri Narahari Teertha's life is preserved mainly through epigraphs discovered at the temples of Shri Varaaha Narasimha at Simhaachala



and at Shrikurmam, dated to the late 13th century. These inscriptions identify him as a respected statesman, sanyaasi and spiritual authority associated with temple activities and patronage in that region. They record his contributions to the reconstruction and administration of the Simhaachala shrine and his devotional association with the temple of Srikurmam. As a scholar, he was among the earliest to elucidate the terse writings of Madhvacharya. His principal work, *Bhaavaprakaashika*, is a lucid and philosophically rigorous commentary on Madhvacharya's *Geeta Bhaashya*. He is also credited with a commentary on the *Yamaka Bhaarata*. His clear exposition of Madhva's concepts laid the groundwork for later commentators, marking him as a key figure in the early scholastic development of Tattvavaada.

Shri Narahari Teertha is also widely regarded as the first Hari Daasa, the earliest composer of Kannada devotional songs in the Maadhva sampradaaya, with the ankita (pen name) 'Narahari'. Through his simple yet profound keertanas, he introduced philosophical devotion into the vernacular, making the principles of Tattvavaada accessible to the lay devotees. His songs, composed in clear Kannada and suffused with bhakti, are considered the first blossoms of the Daasa Koota movement, which later reached its full flowering due to the works of Shri Shreepaadaraaja, Shri Purandara Daasa and Shri Kanaka Daasa. Tradition further attributes to him a pioneering role in the early development of Yakshagaana and Bayalaata, the open-air dance-drama forms that combine music, storytelling and theology. By linking Vedaantic teaching with art and performance, he inspired a cultural synthesis that brought sacred narratives to village and temple audiences alike. His legacy thus extends beyond scholarship into the living tradition of South Indian performing arts.

Shri Narahari Teertha also retrieved the vigrahas of Mula Raama from the royal treasury of the Gajapati kings and reinstalled it for worship. This episode, cherished in oral and textual traditions alike (refer to the Raaghavendra Vijaya, Chapter 2, Shloka 7), highlights both his bhakti and his deep concern for the preservation of heritage. His life embodies the perfect synthesis of jnaana, bhakti and service that continues to inspire both scholars and devotees across centuries. His brndaavana lies entombed on a hillock in Hampi on the banks of the Tungabhadra River.

## Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha

**Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha** was one of the most important disciples of Shri Madhvacharya. While not mentioned as prominent disciple of Shri Madhvacharya by modern authors, he is the writer of almost every manuscript of the sarvamula granthas. He was one of his favourite disciples and being an eminent sanyaasi of profound bhakti and knowledge, he also played a vital role in preserving the teachings of Madhvacharya. He was responsible for transcribing all his works, the Sarvamula granthas. He later became the first peethaadhupati of the illustrious Palimaaru Matha and to this day, the original 13th century manuscripts of the sarvamula granthas, as written by him, are available there, standing as a priceless treasure of Tattvavaada, surviving intact for nearly eight centuries. Among all the sanyaasi disciples of Madhvacharya, he was the most senior, a fact documented by Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya, in the Madhva Vijaya, Sarga 13, Shloka 40, as follows:

अवदत् स कथां रथाङ्गपाणेः भगवान् भागवते भवापहन्त्रीम् ।  
अनुकूलगुणस्वरादिभाजा निजशिष्यप्रवरेण वाच्यमाने ॥

“The worshipful Aachaarya, while the Bhaagavata Puraana was being read well by his eminent disciple (Hrsheeksha Teertha), endowed with all covetable gifts like dignified voice and sonority, expatiated on the saga of Shri Krshna that ends mundane existence.”

In his commentary on Bhaavaprakaashika, Naaraayana Panditaachaarya refers to him as 'निजशिष्यप्रवरेण हृषीकेशतीर्थेन' (by his own distinguished disciple, Hrsheeksha Teertha), thereby affirming his preeminence among the disciples. When Panditaachaarya describes him in the 15th sarga, he uses the expression 'वशीकृतहृषीकाश्च'. The word 'hrsheeka' means “senses,” and 'vasheekrta' means “one who has controlled.” Thus, Hrsheeksha signifies one who has mastered his senses. Self-restraint and discipline are virtues that every individual should cultivate, more so in the case of sanyaasis. Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha, having achieved complete mastery over his senses, was most fittingly bestowed this name of Shri Vishnu, by Shri Madhvacharya himself. It is also noteworthy that all of Aachaarya’s disciples were embodiments of restraint and spiritual control.

Pleased with his bhakti, service, and mastery, Shri Madhvacharya bestowed upon him the vigrahas of Shri Raamachandra, Seeta, Lakshmana, and Aanjaneya for daily worship. These divine vigrahas, worshipped in the Palimaaru Matha lineage for over seven centuries,

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

remain resplendent even today. The murti of Shri Raama in particular, is indescribably beautiful; two eyes are scarcely enough to behold His serene and smiling lotus face. His captivating visage radiates such grace that it dispels the afflictions of worldly existence. These vigrahas, sanctified by the very touch of Aachaarya, are the presiding deities of Palimaaru Matha and continue to shower blessings upon bhaktas to this day.

Having performed numerous virtuous deeds throughout his life, Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha started his unworldly journey towards the Supreme, while meditating upon Shri Maadhava at Prayaaga during Virodhi Samvatsara, on Maagha Shukla Saptami (Ratha Saptami). The Matha preserves this sacred memory in the following verse:

विरोधिमाघार्जुनसप्तमीतिथौ वरो हृषीकेशमुनिस्तपस्विनाम् ।  
पुरुप्रबोधार्थकराब्जसम्भवो धरासुतेशाङ्घ्रिसरोजमेयिवान् ॥

### Shri Akshobhya Teertha

**Shri Akshobhya Teertha** (Peethaadhupati from 1350 to 1365 A.D.) is remembered as a very important figure in the tradition of Tattvavaada. He was the last in direct succession among the main disciples of Acharya Madhva. He came from the Uttara Karnataka region and was known as Govinda Shastri before he accepted the monastic life. Unlike some other pontiffs who are famous for many written works, Akshobhya Tirtha is remembered mainly for his strong personality and firm defence of the Tattvavaada view as a bold supporter of the system when it faced challenges from other schools. One of the greatest such challengers was the well-known Mayavadi scholar, Shri Vidyananya.

His chief claim to historical recognition rests on a legendary disputation held at Mulbagal, near Kolar. This intellectual duel was fought against Vidyananya, who later played a leading role in the foundation of the Vijayanagara empire, on the purport of the statement 'Saatmaatattvamasi'. The decision of this debate was referred to Shri Vedanta Desika, who delivered a neutral verdict, finally in favour of Akshobhya Tirtha, despite Vidyananya being his own childhood friend. This victory was immortalized in a celebrated verse:

असिना तत्त्वमसिना परजीवप्रभेदिना ।  
विद्यारण्यमहारण्यमक्षोभ्यमुनिरच्छिनत् ॥

“Akshobhya Muni cut down the great forest of Vidyananya with the sword of 'Tattvamasi', which shows the difference between the Supreme and the individual soul.”

The greatness of Akshobhya Tirtha was deeply valued by his successor, Jaya Teertha. In the opening verses of his Tattva Prakaashika, he says:

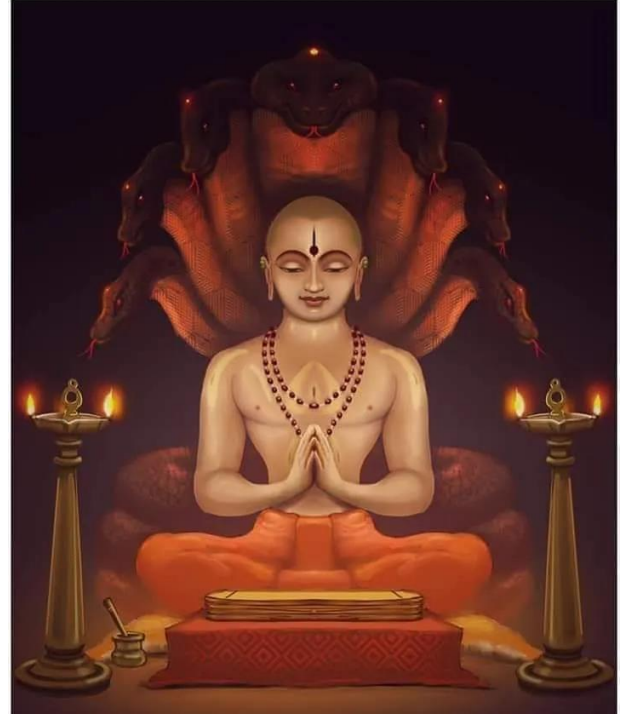
दुर्वादिधारण्यविदारणदक्षदीक्षमक्षोभ्यतीर्थमृगराजमहं नमामि ॥

“I offer salutations to Akshobhya Tirtha, the lion among scholars, who is skilled and trained in tearing apart the forest of wrong ideas.”

The story of the Mulbagal debate is supported by other sources as well, such as the Vedaanta Deshika Vaibhava-prakaashika of Mahaachaarya and older works from the Parakaala Matha. There is also physical evidence in the form of a victory pillar found at Mulbagal, although it is partly damaged today. In his final years, Akshobhya Teertha travelled to Pandharaapura, on the banks of the Bhimarathi river. Tradition says that this is where he first met his future disciple, Jaya Teertha. He trained him closely until the end of his life and he attained the lotus feet of Hari at Malkheda on the banks of the river Kagini or Manyakheta, the old capital of the Rashtrakutas.

## Shri Jaya Teertha

**Shri Jaya Teertha** was one of the last direct disciples of Shri Madhvacharya to become a peethaadhipati of a Matha. Also known as 'Teekaachaarya', he stands as one of the most brilliant philosophical minds in Indian history. Along with Madhvacharya and Vyaasa Teertharu, he forms the illustrious Munitraya (the three great scholars) of Tattvavaada. His extraordinary ability to elucidate the dense writings of Madhvacharya transformed Tattvavaada into a philosophical system that could stand equal alongside Mayavada and Shri Vaishnavism. Born as Dhondo Pant in Mangalvedhe near Pandharpur into an aristocratic Deshastha Brahmin family, he spent his youth in affluence, devoted to horse



riding and military pursuits rather than spiritual matters. His dramatic transformation came in around 1365 on the banks of the Bhimaa River when he encountered the aged sanyaasi, Shri Akshobhya Tirtha. This incident is narrated as follows, in the Raghavendra Vijaya:

Once, having mounted his horse, he came to a river on whose banks Akshobhya Teertharu was residing. Without dismounting, he drank the water directly with his thirst-afflicted mouth, and seeing this, the sage nearby observed him intently. Akshobhya Teertharu then uttered the words that would change philosophical history: 'किं पशुः पूर्वदिहे?' (What animal were you, in your previous body?) These words triggered a mystical awakening, due to which Dhondo Pant remembered his previous life as a bull who had carried Madhvacharya's books and listened to his discourses. Requested by him with devotion, Akshobhya Teertharu initiated him into sanyaasa after ten years of preparation, consecrating him to expound the works of Poornapramati (Madhvacharya).

Jaya Teertha succeeded Akshobhya Tirtha as the sixth pontiff of the Peetha of Madhvacharya and held this position for twenty-three years. In this brief span, he composed twenty-one works, among which eighteen were commentaries on Madhvacharya's works and three were independent treatises. His magnum opus is the Nyaaya Sudha (Nectar of Logic), a massive commentary of approximately 24,000 shlokas, on Madhvacharya's Anuvyaakhaana. Surendranath Dasgupta remarks, "Jayatirtha and Vyaasatirtha present the highest dialectical skill in Indian thought."

Beyond the Nyaaya Sudha, Jaya Teertha's commentarial works cover the entire range of Madhvacharya's philosophical output. His Tattva-prakaashika (तत्त्वप्रकाशिका) elucidates the Brahma Sutra Bhaashya, while his Prameya-Deepika and Nyaaya-Deepika respectively illuminate Madhvacharya's Geeta Bhaashya and Geeta Taatparya Nirnaya. He wrote teekas (commentaries) on the prakarana granthas of Madhvacharya, including the Tattva-Sankhyaana, Tattva-Viveka, Tattvodyota and Vishnu-Tattva-Vinirnaya. His commentaries on the polemical khandana texts are these on Mayavada Khandana, Prapanchamithyaatvaanumaana-Khandana and Upaadhi-Khandana, which systematically reinforced Madhvacharya's refutation of Kevalaadvaita. He also commented on Madhvacharya's Pramaanalakshana, Kathaalakshana, Karma-Nirnaya, Nyaaya-Vivarana and the Upanishad bhaashyas on the Eesha and Shatprashna Upanishads, as well as the Rk-Samhita bhaashya. Among his independent works, the Vaadaavali (वादावली) refutes the Advaita concept of world-illusoriness, the Pramaana-paddhati (प्रमाणपद्धति) establishes the darshana's epistemology and the Padyamaala deals with worship rituals from the Tantrasaara-Sangraha. These works were extensively commented upon by later luminaries, including Vyaasaraajaru, Vijayeendra Teertharu, Vaadiraaja Teertharu, Raghuttama Teertharu, Raaghavendra Svaami and Satyanaatha Teertharu.

Despite his extraordinary achievements, Jaya Teertha remained profoundly humble. In the mangalaacharana (auspicious invocation) of his Nyaaya Sudha, he declares:

न शब्दाब्धौ गाढा न च निगमचर्चासु चतुरा न च न्याये प्रौढा न च विदितवेद्या अपि मयम् ।  
परं श्रीमत्पूर्णप्रमतिगुरुकारुण्यसरणि प्रपन्ना मान्याः साः किमपि च वदन्तोऽपि महताम् ॥ ८ ॥

"I am not profound in the ocean of words, skilled in discussions on the Nigamas (Vedas), accomplished in Nyaaya or have I understood even the knowable. Yet, having taken refuge in the path of compassion of Shrimat Poornapramati Guru (Madhvaachaarya), may whatever I speak be honored among the great."

This humble acknowledgment from one of Indian philosophy's greatest dialecticians reveals his spiritual depth beyond mere intellectual achievement. Jaya Teertha entered his Vrndaavana in 1388 at only forty-three years of age, leaving behind a legacy that continues to illuminate Tattvavaada for all future generations.

## Shri Trivikrama Panditaachaarya

**Shri Trivikrama Panditaachaarya** (1258–1320 A.D.) stands as one of the most extraordinary figures in Indian philosophical history, a luminous scholar whose journey from a committed Advaitin to one of Madhvacharya's greatest disciples dramatically influenced the spread of Tattvavaada. Born in Svarama (Kaavu/Kaavugoli) near Kasaragudu in South Kanara, he belonged to the respected Pejjattaya (Likucha) lineage of Tulu Brahmins. His father, Subrahmanya Suri of the Aangirasa-gotra, was himself an outstanding scholar who nurtured his son's prodigious intellect. As a teenager, Trivikrama displayed astonishing literary genius and composed the Ushaaharana, a magnificent Sanskrit poem, in nine cantos. Despite his early achievements, inner unrest troubled him. Raised within the Advaita tradition of Shankaracharya, he became increasingly disturbed by what he perceived as contradictions in the doctrine of maaya. His father, before passing away, had cautioned him about the barrenness of worshipping a nirguna niraakaara Brahman. Seeking clarity, he repeatedly studied the Mayavadi texts but found himself unsatisfied. Though he adopted devotion to a personal deity, he still clung to Smaarta metaphysics.

It was at this time that he heard of Madhvacharya's rising fame and the waves of Advaitins who were travelling to challenge him. When he learned that Madhva was staying at Vishnumangala, only a mile from his home, Trivikrama decided to witness the discourses firsthand. As he listened day after day, Madhvacharya's teachings, which were clear and logical, reasoned his convictions. The monistic edifice he had trusted began to crumble before Madhvacharya's relentless logic. Unable to remain silent, Trivikrama finally rose to challenge him. Recognizing the brilliance and learning of the scholar who had mastered more than a lakh of Shankara's texts, Madhva gladly accepted. What followed was legendary, a debate lasting for 7-8 days, an intellectual battle of immense intensity. Trivikrama brought the entire arsenal of Mayavadi arguments, but Madhvacharya refuted each with unshakable clarity. By the end, Trivikrama, having no answers to Madhvacharya's question, was defeated intellectually but had transformed spiritually.

सप्ताष्टानि दिनान्येवम् वादं कृत्वा सहामुना । निरुत्तरं च निश्चोद्यं चक्रे चक्रायुधप्रियः ॥

“Thus, having debated with him for seven to eight days, the one dear to the wielder of the chakra (i.e., Madhvacharya) refuted him completely, leaving him with no further answers.”

Deeply impressed with his sincerity and scholarship, Madhvacharya entrusted him with a monumental task – composing Tattvapradeepa, a commentary on the Brahma Sutra bhaashya of Madhvacharya. Trivikrama completed this brilliant work and offered it at the feet of his Guru. Later, he realised that many arguments were extremely deep and difficult to grasp. With great humility, he approached Madhvacharya with a request beautifully preserved in the Madhva-Vijaya:

ग्रन्थेभ्य एभ्योऽगाधेभ्यो युक्तयो नो दुरुद्धराः ।  
मनोमाण्ड्यात् ततो ग्रन्थं व्यक्ततर्कततिं कुरु ॥

“From these profound and unfathomably deep texts, the arguments are difficult for us to fully grasp, because of the dullness of my mind. Therefore, please compose a work that lays out the logical reasoning clearly.”

Moved by this prayer, Madhvacharya composed the Anuvyaakhyaana, a metrical and highly systematic exposition that illuminated the philosophical structure of his teachings and became one of the if not the central text of the Tattvavaada and the magnum opus of Madhva himself. Trivikrama spent the remainder of his life in his native region, teaching, writing further works, and occasionally visiting Madhva. Although later tradition suggests he may have taken sanyaasa, the Madhva-Vijaya provides no confirmation. It is far more likely that he lived and passed away as a devoted grhastha, one of the brightest jewels in the lineage of Madhvacharya. His memories can be relived at his home in Kasaragodu, even till date, and his lineage continues with his present-day descendants.

## Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya

**Shri Naaraayana Panditaachaarya** (1290-1370 A.D.) stands as a monumental figure in the history of Tattvavaada, revered not only as a profound scholar but as the primary historian of the sampradaaya. While his father, Trivikrama Panditacharya, was the illustrious scholar who famously challenged and then surrendered to Madhvacharya, Narayana is celebrated for immortalizing the life and achievements of the Great Acharya. Born in the same hallowed region of Svarama (Kaavu/Kaavugoli) near Kasaragod, Narayana was the third and youngest son of Trivikrama Panditacharya. He inherited the brilliant intellect and poetic prowess of his father.

His literary genius is most visible in this very work mentioned in the verse: Shri Madhva Vijaya (The Victory of Madhva). This magnificent mahaakaavya, consisting of 16 chapters, is widely regarded as the only authentic contemporary biography of Shri Madhvacharya. Narayana Panditacharya wrote this work with immense responsibility, preserving the travels, debates, and philosophy of the Acharya for posterity. To ensure the text remained accessible and accurate, he also composed a commentary on it titled 'Bhaavaprakaashika', in which he clarified the Sanskritized names of people and places found in the poem, for instance, he explicitly defines the local equivalent of the Sanskritized city name 'Rajatapeethapura' with the following line:

रजतपीठपुरस्य ओडिपु इत्यपभ्रष्टसञ्ज्ञा

“The vernacular/corrupted name of Rajatapeethapura is Odipu [Udupi].”

Beyond his biographical masterpiece, Narayana Panditacharya is credited with over 20 literary works. He has composed the Mani-Manjari, a simpler poetic work that serves as a prequel. It traces the history of the Vaishnava Acharyas and the avatars of Rama and Krishna leading up to the advent of Madhvacharya, and is still often the first text taught to students of the tradition. His other significant contributions include the Sangraha Raamaayana (a condensed version of the Valmiki Ramayana based on Madhvacharya's Mahaabhaarata Taatparya Nirnaya), Tattvamanjari (a commentary on Vishnu Tattva Virniraya of Madhvacharya) and the Narasimha and Shiva Stutis, which demonstrates his inclusive yet distinct theological stance. Much like his father, he lived a life of intense bhakti. His ancestral home, known as Kavu Matha in Kasaragudu, continues to exist today. His legacy remains etched in the daily recitations of the Madhva Vijaya in traditional households, keeping the memory of the Aachaarya alive, even centuries later. This final shloka of his own commentary of Madhva Vijaya authenticates his position in the family and his authorship of the biography:

त्रिविक्रमविपश्चितो गुणनिधेः सुशिष्याः सुताः ।  
सतामभिमतास्त्रयो यस्तृतीयोऽत्र नारायणः ॥

स मध्वविजयं व्यधाद्गुरुगिरा सदानन्ददः ।  
प्रसीदतु ततः सदा रमापतिः सनारायणः ॥

“Of the learned Trivikrama, the repository of virtues, there were three well-disciplined sons who were liked by the virtuous. The third among them here is Narayana. He composed the Madhva Vijaya through the words of the Guru. May Ramaapati, the bestower of eternal bliss, be ever pleased with him.”

## Shri Brahmanya Teertha

**Shri Brahmanya Teertha** (Sanyaasi during 1443-1467 A.D.) was another prominent Maadhva sanyaasi and the Guru of Shri Vyaasa Teertha. He was born at Abburu and was named 'Narasimha'. He received sanyaasa at a young age from Shri Purushottama Teertha and became a scholar of Tattvavaada. Once, when he visited a village near Bannur, with his disciples, he noticed that an aged Brahmin man, Raamaachaarya, had passed away. His wife even wanted to jump into the funeral pyre with his dead body. She wished to ask permission from Brahmanya Teertharu, but even before she spoke to him about it, Brahmanya Teertharu blessed her all auspiciousness and said that her husband would live for a hundred years and have two children. With his blessing, when she went near the apparent dead body, Ramacharya woke up, as if he had been sleeping. Soon, they had two children, one of whom was adopted by Brahmanya Teertharu and later became Shri Vyaasaraaja.

He also performed multiple miracles in order to restore justice. In a small province, there was a king called Thimmarasa. His wife died and he later married a very young princess. His

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

son, Saarangadhara, was asked sexual favours by his new wife, but when he refused it and condemned her idea, she falsely alleged that he attempted to rape her, leading Thimmarasa to have Saarangadhara murdered and his body chopped and thrown into the Kanva river. Brahmanya Teertharu noticed his dead body at the Kanva river and performed abhimantrana with some clay and the dead body pieces regrew all their limbs, restoring Saarangadhara back to life. Due to this, the city became known as 'Maluru'.

Similarly, he also got rid of the famine in the Vijayanagara empire by chanting mantras for parjanya (rainfall). At Brahmanyapura, he also had the Narasimha Dhvajasthamba installed as well as consecrated a vighraha of Mukhya Praana Deva, as Hanumaan, with Shri Shreepaadaraaja and Shri Vyaasa Teertha.

## Shri Lakshmi Naaraayana Teertha

**Shri Lakshmi Naaraayana Teertha** (1406-1504 A.D.), or **Shri Shreepaadaraaja**, was a contemporary of Shri Brahmanya Teertha. He was born to Sheshagiriappa and Giryamma, at Abburu, and was named 'Lakshmi Naaraayana', which also became his sanyaasa name, when he received sanyaasa deeksha from Shri Svarnavarna Teertha, in 1412, at Shri Rangam. He is also a member of the Hari Daasa Kuta, with the ankitas 'Ranga Vitthala' and 'Gopeenaatha'. Once, when he was learning Nyaaya Sudha from his Guru, Shri Vibudhendra Teertha, Shri Raghunaatha Teertha arrived there and listening to Shri Lakshmi Naaraayana

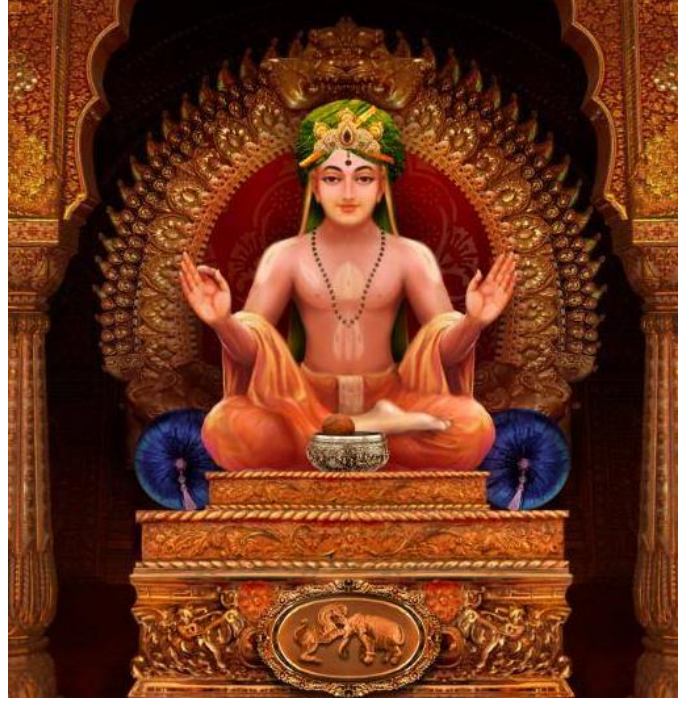


Teertha's explanation of the same, awarded him the title 'Shreepaadaraaja', saying that he was like a raaja even among themselves, who were referred to by the title 'Shreepaada'.

Once, Shri Vyaasaraaja was blessed in a dream and was asked to visit Pandaraapura. Shri Vyaasaraaja, Shri Brahmanya Teertha and Shri Shreepaadaraaja went to Pandaraapura to have the darshana of Bhagavaan Vitthala. Vitthala again appeared in a dream of Shripaadaraajaru and said that one Paandava King had a box containing vighrahas buried near Bheemarathi Pushpavati Sangama kshetra. The next morning, Shripaadaraaja had the same place dug and found the box with the vighrahas of Ranga Vitthala, with Rukmini and Satyabhaama, which had been worshipped by Jaambavati. From then on, he changed his ankita in his keertanas to 'Rangavitthala'. He also performed the prathisthaapana of Ashvattha Narasimha Deva, at Karpara Kshetra.

## Shri Vyaasa Teertha

**Shri Vyaasa Teertha** (22 April 1447-8 March 1539 A.D.), also known as '**Vyaasaraaja**', was a prominent sanyaasi who brought immense popularity to Tattvavaada both through his scholarly knowledge and propagation of bhakti. He was the Guru of noted Panditas, including Shri Vijayeendra Teertha, Shri Purandara Daasa and Shri Kanaka Daasa. He was born to his parents due to the blessings of Shri Brahmanya Teertha and was subsequently adopted by him, becoming a sanyaasi during his childhood itself. He was one of the most prominent peethaadhipatis of Purvaadhi Matha, leading it to be now known as '**Vyaasaraaja Matha**'. At a young age itself, he defeated multiple Mayavadi scholars in a debate at Kaanchi. He is also known to have consecrated over 732 vigrahas of Mukhya Praana Deva, as Hanumaan, all over the country. Over 300 were established at Penagonda, where he consecrated one every single day.



He was also the Raaja-Guru of Krshna Devaraaya, the emperor of the Vijayanagara kingdom. He taught him philosophy and also temporarily ruled the kingdom, to diminish the kuhu-yoga of Krshna Devaraaya, which was causing turmoil to the kingdom. After the period was over, he returned the kingdom to Krshna Devaraaya. At one point, the only Pujaari at the Venkateshvara temple of Tirumala had passed away, leaving only his young son and with no one else to maintain the temple. Shri Vyaasa Teertharu took charge of the temple at this time and conducted all the rituals for more than twelve years. His famous works include Nyaayaamrta, a detailed refutation of Mayavada, which led to a series of debates, refutations and counter-refutations among Mayavadis and Tattvavaadis, for the next few centuries. He also composed Tarka Taandava and Taatparya Chandrika, a detailed commentary on the Brahma Sutras and a refutation of rival views.

He is also famously noted for being the Guru of Shri Purandara Daasa and Shri Kanaka Daasa, providing deeksha to both of them and making them part of the Hari Daasa Kuta. He is the avataara of Shankukarna, the same Devata who was born as Prahlaada and later Baahlika Mahaaraaja. Subsequently, he took birth as Shri Raaghavendra Svaami.

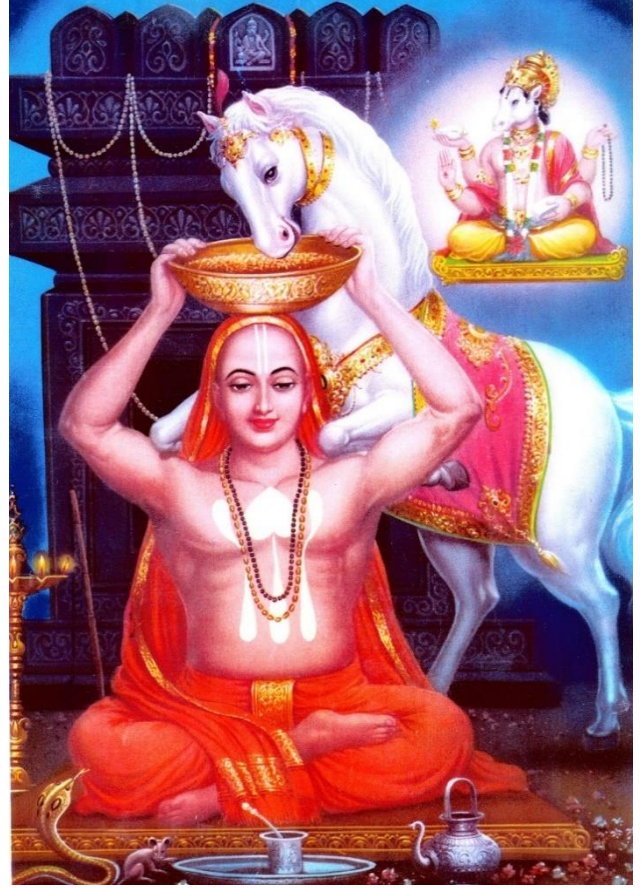
## Shri Vaadiraaja Teertha

**Shri Vaadiraaja Teertha** (1480-1600 A.D.) in the village of Huvinakere in the present-day Udupi region of Karnataka. Originally named Bhu-Varaaha, he showed spiritual promise early in life and entered the monastic order at a young age under the guidance of his guru, Vaageesha Teertha. Upon his initiation, he was given the name 'Vaadiraaja Teertha'. He eventually rose to become the head of the Sode Matha (previous Kumbhasi Matha) in the Madhva tradition. Tradition holds that he lived a remarkably long and fulfilling life of 120 years, serving until the year 1600 CE.

From the very beginning, Vadiraja Teertha's life was a unique blend of rigorous scholarship, social reform, extensive travel, and poetic creativity. While he was a master of philosophy who could debate complex metaphysical topics, he was equally focused on devotion and temple administration. One of his most lasting institutional contributions was the formalisation of the Paryaaya system at the Udupi Krishna Matha. He changed the rotation of worship privileges among the eight monasteries from a two-month cycle to a two-year cycle. This crucial reform provided the monasteries with enough time to organise pilgrimages, gather resources, and conduct the temple services with greater stability.

Vadiraja Teertha is perhaps best-known today for his vast and varied literary output. He was a polyglot who composed fluidly in Sanskrit, Kannada, and Tulu, leaving behind more than 100 distinct compositions. His works range from massive epics to short devotional songs that are still sung in households today. His command over Sanskrit allowed him to create works that served both as devotional masterpieces and philosophical defences.

- **Yukti Mallika:** This is widely considered his magnum opus. It is a massive work where he uses logical arguments to establish the nature of reality, God, and the universe. It is celebrated for using simple, unmatched analogies to explain difficult concepts.
- **Rukmineesha Vijaya:** A celebrated Mahaakaavya (great epic poem) consisting of 19 cantos. It narrates the story of Lord Krishna and his marriage to Rukmini. It is said that Vadiraja composed this complex and beautiful poem in a very short time during a scholarly assembly, proving that his poetic skill was equal to his philosophical logic.



- **Teertha Prabandha:** This is a unique travelogue in the history of Indian literature. It documents his extensive pilgrimages across the north, south, east, and west of India. In this work, he describes the rivers, deities, and sanctity of various holy sites, effectively mapping the sacred geography of India for his followers. Beyond the long-form works, he composed numerous shorter hymns known for their rhythm and devotional intensity like the
- **Dashaavataara Stuti:** A praise of the ten avatars of Vishnu in ashvadhathi
- **Hayagreeva Sampada Stotra:** A hymn dedicated to Shri Hayagreeva, the form of Vishnu who is the Devata of knowledge and Vaadiraajaru's distinct spiritual focus.
- **Krshnaashtaka:** A loving eight-verse bhajan dedicated to Shri Krishna.

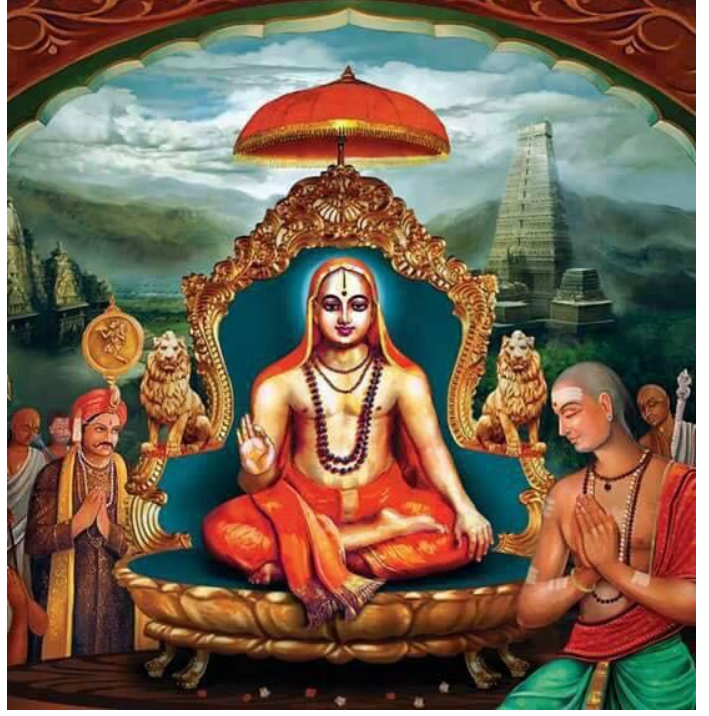
Vadiraja Teertha was instrumental in bringing the high philosophy of the Vedas to the common people through local languages. His songs are filled with folklore, humour, and deep devotion.

- **Lakshmi Shobhane:** A very popular long poem in Kannada that describes the wedding of Lakshmi and Narayana. It is considered auspicious and is traditionally chanted by women during wedding ceremonies in the region even today.
- **Vaikuntha Varnana:** A vivid description of the abode of Shri Vishnu
- **Dashaavataara Stuti:** A Tulu song set to folklore rhythm praising the 10 incarnations of Shri Vishnu

Vadiraja Teertha stands out in history because he successfully combined the roles of a scholar, a devotional poet, and a pragmatic organizer. His works reflect a rare balance of "head and heart" where rigorous logic coexists with emotional surrender to God. His travel across India helped spread his tradition's influence while his Kannada songs embedded the philosophy into the daily social life of Karnataka. To this day, he is revered not just as a pontiff of a Matha, but as a relatable saint whose songs accompany devotees during festivals, weddings, and pilgrimages.

## Shri Vijayeendra Teertha

**Shri Vijayeendra Teertha** (1514-1595 A.D.) stands as one of the greatest defenders of Madhva Siddhaanta, a polymath who mastered all sixty-four traditional arts and wrote over one hundred works for the propagation of Tattvavaada, defending it from attacks by its rivals, during the sixteenth century. Born as Vittalaachaarya, he was blessed by Vyaasaraajaru during his childhood, who personally taught him Tarka, Meemaamsa and Vedaanta. Seeing his remarkable detachment at just eight years old, he initiated him into sannyaasa, as 'Vishnu Teertha'. Later, Shri Surendra Teertha of the Vibudendra



Teertha Matha, which later became the Raaghavendra Matha, took him as his successor, due to having no suitable disciples. He was renamed as 'Vijayeendra Teertha' and soon made the head of the Matha. The name proved apt, as he remained undefeated (ajeya) throughout his entire life. He was also a major rival of Appayya Deekshita, the famous scholar who was a champion of Shaiva and Kevalaadvaita darshanas, in South India. Vijayeendra Teertharu had several debates with him and wrote several works countering his attacks on Maadhva philosophy. A famous verse captures his greatness:

चातुर्यैकाकृतिर्यश्चतुरधिकशतग्रन्थरत्नप्रणेता धूतारातिप्रबन्धः स्फुटविदितचतुःषष्टिविद्याविशेषः ।  
सोऽयं नः श्रीसुरेन्द्रव्रतिवरतनयोऽद्वैतशैवासहिष्णुः पुष्पातु श्रीजयीन्द्रस्त्रिभुवनविदितः सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

"May Shri Jayeendra protect us. He is the very form of cleverness, author of one hundred and four gem-like works, destroyer of opponents' writings, learned in all sixty-four arts, worthy successor of Surendra Yati, intolerant of Advaita and Shaiva doctrines, famous across the three worlds, and independent master of all sciences."

He spent most of his time at Kumbhakonam, receiving a ratnaabhisheka from Raamaraaja of Vijayanagar (1542-65). The Raaghavendra Vijaya records:

विद्वद्गुरोऽस्माद्विजयीन्द्रयोगी विद्यासु हृद्यास्वतुलप्रभावः ।  
रत्नाभिषेकं किल रामराजात् प्राप्याग्र्यलक्ष्मीनकृताग्रहारान् ॥

"The great scholar Vijayeendra Yogi, of incomparable brilliance in the pleasing sciences, received ratnaabhisheka from Raamaraaja and obtained foremost wealth and agraharas (land grants)."

He also obtained land grants from Sevappa Naayaka of Tanjore. The Arivilimangalam grant of 1577 A.D. praises him as follows:

पदवाक्यप्रमाणज्ञैर्मुखीजितवादिने मध्वाचार्यमतोद्धानसंचररत्नबहिणे ।  
मायावादिमतोच्छेदकोलाहलभरोक्तये ॥

“Glories to the one who defeats debaters through the mastery of words, sentences and pramaanas, who moves like a gem uplifting Madhvacharya's doctrine and who is famous for creating an uproar in destroying Maayaavaada.”

The Mysore Archaeological Report of 1917 records another grant from 1580 A.D. comparing the three great scholars of that era to the three sacred Vedic fires:

त्रेताग्रय इव स्पष्टं विजयीन्द्रयतीश्वरः ।  
ताताचार्यो वैष्णवाग्र्यो सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः ॥  
शैवाद्वैतैकसाम्राज्यः श्रीमानप्पय्यदीक्षितः ।  
यत्सभायां भतं स्वं स्वं स्थापयन्तः स्थिताश्रयः ॥

"Like the three sacred fires, Vijayeendra Teertharu, the Eeshvara among sanyaasis, including Taataachaarya, the foremost Vaishnava expert in all Shaastras, and the illustrious Appayya Deekshita, the sole emperor of Shaiva-Advaita darshana, used to meet at Sevappa's court, establishing their respective doctrines."

Vijayeendra mastered all chatusshashti vidyas (sixty-four arts), including music, sculpture, the science of mantras and debate. He personally sculpted deities, which are still worshipped at Kumbhakonam. In debates with Appayya, he gave multiple arguments for the stance that the name 'Naaraayana' exclusively refers to Shri Vishnu, in accordance with rules of the Shaastras and Samskrta grammar. In the memory of this victory, he then wrote the grantha, 'Naaraayana Shabdartha Nirvachanam', explaining over one hundred meanings for the name Naaraayana and why it refers to Vishnu. He also defeated the Shaiva leader, Lingaraajendra, at Kumbhakonam, ending forced conversions of Vaishnavas in that region and taking over his Matha, which is in the possession of Maadhvas till date. The arguments used in this debate are available in Shaiva Sarvasva Khandanam, a part of Nyaayamauktikamaala. However, unsatisfied, the Shaivas tried multiple other attempts, including deceitful means, to defame him instead, trying to lure prostitutes into mingling with him. However, even after the prostitutes visited him at his Matha, pretending to render services to him and touching him multiple times, in an attempt to make him fall for lust, to their shock, they could only hear him still muttering, "Naaraayana! Naaraayana!" Later, the Shaivas started a dispute over the ownership of a river flowing through the Matha, stating that it belonged to the Shaivas. When it was decided that a judge would examine the signs and artifacts in the river on one day, the Shaivas cleverly threw several Shiva-lingas into the river, the previous night. However, the next morning, Shri Vijayeendra Teertharu simply blessed the river and upon examination, all the Shiva-lingas had turned

into Saaligraamas, favouring the Vaishnavas again. His literary output exceeds one hundred works. Commentaries include the Pramaana Paddhati Vyaakhyaana, Nyaaya Sudhaa Vyaakhya Bindu, and Taatparya Chandrika Vyaakhya. Independent works include the Sarva Siddhaanta Saaraasaara Vivechana, refuting Chaarvaaka, Bauddha, Jaina, Saankhya, Advaita, and Vishishtaadvaita schools. The Bheda Vidya Vilaasa establishes the panchabhedas. Chakra Meemaamsa explains the authority of using Vaishnava symbols. His responses to Appayya include the Madhvatantra Mukhabhushanam, Appayya Kapola Chapetika and Paratattva Prakaashika. His Pishtapashu-Meemaamsa argues for flour substitutes in Vedic Pashubali rituals, on compassionate grounds. His main disciples were Shri Sudheendra Teertha (who later initiated Raaghavendra Svaami) and Shri Kambalur Raamachandra Teertha. His charama shloka states:

भक्तानां मानसाम्भोजभानवे कामधेनवे ।  
नमतां कल्पतरवे जयीन्द्रगुरवे नमः ॥

“Salutations to Guru Jayeendra, the sun for devotees' lotus-minds, the Kaamadhenu and Kalpavrksa for those who bow to him.”

Vijayeendra Teertharu entered his brndaavana at Kumbhakonam in 1595 A.D. His aaraadhana falls on Krishna-Trayodashi of Jyeshtha. When Tattvavaada faced threats from Shaivas, Mayavadis and post-Vijayanagara chaos, this sarvatantra-svatantra (independent master of all sciences) held the line through intellectual power and spiritual strength. His legacy lives in every Madhva institution surviving today.

## Shri Raaghavendra Svaami

**Shri Raaghavendra Svaami** (1595- A.D.) was born in the town of Bhuvanagiri in present-day Tamil Nadu. His birth name was Venkatanaatha and he came from a lineage of accomplished musicians and scholars. His father, Thimmanna Bhatta, was a renowned artist and Venkatanaatha himself grew up mastering both the arts and the Shaastras, becoming an expert Veena player during his youth. At a young age, his father passed away and even after he became a ghashtha, spent a lot of time in poverty. There is a popular incident that when he was in poverty, some utensils were robbed from his house and he composed a bhajan praising Shri Vishnu, to prevent the robbers from being affected by their sinful deeds, saying that by unknowingly robbing someone in a poverty-struck condition, the thieves had actually seized his poverty for



© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

themselves! Eventually, seeing his greatness, he was instructed by his Guru, Shri Sudheendra Teertha, to accept sannyasa, at the Kumbhakonam Matha. Upon his initiation in 1621, he was given the name 'Raaghavendra Teertha'. He served as the pontiff of the Matha until 1671, when he entered sajeeva vrndaavana at Mantraalaya. Raaghavendra Svaami was a prolific writer who authored over forty works. His contributions are unique because they bridge the gap between complex metaphysical commentaries and simple heartfelt prayer. He is famously known as 'Parimalaachaarya' because of the immense popularity of his key commentary. He is popularly referred to as 'Raayaru' (king). His works in Sanskrit are celebrated for their clarity and brevity. He had a gift for explaining the most difficult concepts of the Vedaanta in a simple and direct language.

- **Parimala:** This is his most famous work and is a gloss on the Nyaya Sudha of Jaya Teertharu. It is so essential to the tradition that it earned him his title. It systematically unpacks the dense logic of Tattvavaada for students and scholars.
- **Nyaaya Muktavali:** A short but powerful exposition on the Brahma Sutras that serves as a handbook for those studying its philosophy.
- **Khandaarthas:** He wrote word-for-word meanings or Khandaarthas for the Upanishads. These were revolutionary because they made the cryptic ancient texts accessible to a wider audience by breaking down barriers to understanding. They also refuted possible misinterpretations and gave better explanations for their meanings.
- **Mantraartha Manjari:** A commentary on the Rg-Veda that elucidates the deeper spiritual meanings of the Vedic hymns.
- **Praataha Sankalpa Gadya:** A beautiful prose composition meant to be recited in the morning which sets a spiritual intention for the day's activities.

It must be known that he even wrote commentaries on all four Vedas and their major Samhitas, Upanishads, etc., but unfortunately, most of them are lost today and only fragments remain. In his purvaashrama, his expertise in music deeply influenced his poetic style. He is one of the few pontiffs who was also a Vaggayakara or composer. He composed two popular songs:

- **Indu Enage Govinda:** A legendary Kannada song composed by him which is traditionally said to have been sung when he first saw the idol of Udupi Krishna. It is a heartfelt plea for the Lord's presence and is a staple in Carnatic music concerts today.
- **Maruta Ninnaya Mahime:** A Suladi or structured musical composition dedicated to Hanumaan. It showcases his command over rhythm and the structural complexities of classical music.

There may have been several other works authored by him too, which are unidentified or lost, as of now. Raaghavendra Svaami's legacy is perhaps the most living among the saints of his tradition. He is spiritually present in his Brndaavana at Mantraalaya which has become

one of the most significant pilgrimage sites in India. His influence extends beyond religious boundaries and there are famous historical accounts such as his interaction with the British officer Sir Thomas Munro, in the 19th century, which solidified his reputation as a saint who transcends time and empire.

## 7. The Hari Daasas

The Hari Daasas refer to the poets of the Maadhva sampradaaya, who were reputed Panditas and primarily preached through singing bhajans across villages and propagating philosophy, rather than writing detailed texts on the Shaastras or preaching the Shaastras themselves directly, unlike the sanyaasis and other Vidvaans. The original Hari-Daasa Kuta was founded by Shri Narahari Teertharu, who also authored multiple songs, along with Shri Shripaadaraaja and Shri Vyaasa Teertha. But the parampara continued and became much more popular later, due to others who were usually grhasthas and even women.

### Shri Purandara Daasa

**Shri Purandara Daasa (1480-1564 A.D.)** was one of the earliest and prominent Hari Daasas. He is said to be the Pitaamaha of Carnatic music, since he was its founder and developed a variety of techniques of singing. His father's name was Varadappa and his mother's name is unknown. He was known to be a miserly trader of gems and jewels during his young age, despite having ample wealth, more than that of even kings. But after a certain miraculous incident occurred where Shri Krishna is said to have tested him in the guise of a Braahmana, his attitude changed completely and he soon abandoned all his wealth entirely. He then devoted the rest of his life to being a Hari-Daasa, preaching about bhakti and the philosophy of Tattvavaada, through his bhajans in Kannada. He abandoned all his wealth, worth crores, and lived a simple life from then on, begging for his daily needs and singing in praise of Bhagavaan.



He highlighted deep philosophical truths in most of his bhajans, as well as boldly criticized malpractices and ideas prevalent in society. He criticizes casteism and judging anyone by their birth status, in his song 'Aavakulavaraadarenu' (ಆವಕುಲವಾದರೇನು), questioning if the sweetness of crooked sugarcane sticks or the milk from cows of different colours will differ simply due to their appearance. In his song 'Holeya Bandanendu' (ಹೊಲೆಯ ಬಂದನೆಂದು), he criticizes untouchability, mentioning how a person of so-called inferior birth is treated as an

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

untouchable, while defects and crimes such as anger, theft, etc., aren't considered untouchable entities! Similarly, he also praises his contemporary, Shri Kanaka Daasa, who was another prominent Hari-Daasa and also a Shudra, in his bhajan called 'Kanaka Daasana mele Dayamaadalu Vyaasa Muni Mathadavarella Doorikombuvaro' (ಕನಕದಾಸನ ಮೇಲೆ ದಯೆ ಮಾಡಲು ವ್ಯಾಸಮುನಿ ಮಠದವರೆಲ್ಲ ದೂರಿಕೊಂಬುವರೊ). Similarly, Purandara Daasa also believed in gender equality and promoted the idea of men and women being equally respectable, as long as one has good character.

## Shri Kanaka Daasa

**Shri Kanaka Daasa** (1508-1606 A.D.)

was a contemporary of Shri Purandara Daasa and a similarly prominent Hari Daasa. He is one of the popular Maadhva Vidvaans who was a Shudra and not a Dvija. He was a Kuruba by ancestry, belonging to a community of shepherds. His birth name was 'Thimmappa Naayaka', born to Beerappa Gauda and Bachchamma. He was also one of the best disciples of Shri Vyaasa Teertha, though there are misconceptions that he was a Shri Vaishnava or some other non-Maadhva. He is said to have been an expert in the knowledge of Tarka, Vyaakarana and Meemaamsa. He was a warrior and tax collector for the kings of the Vijayanagara empire, for some



time during his young age. He had become a bhakta of Shri Vishnu and when he found some hidden treasures, he used it to have a temple of Aadi Keshava built at Kaaginele. However, he still continued being engrossed in his material lifestyle and did not frequently visit the temple itself. It is presumed from his compositions that he ignored multiple cues from Bhagavaan Himself, in his dreams, to become a Hari-Daasa, till one day he was once injured severely during a war and finally shouted "Aadi Keshava," before losing consciousness. Then, he was left by the enemies, being presumed dead, but Vishnu Himself appeared in the form of a random man and healed his injuries. Then, he asked for a boon to have His darshana and then as instructed by Bhagavaan Himself, he met Shri Vyaasa Teertharu and received Vaishnava deeksha from him, becoming a Maadhva Vaishnava and a Hari-Daasa. He uses the ankita (signatory line) 'Kaaginele Aadi Keshavaraaya' in his bhajans. He exhibited special knowledge and performed certain miracles, even guessing what was

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

hidden in the palms of his Guru, Shri Vyaasa Teertha, astonishing his other disciples, as mentioned by Shri Purandara Daasa in 'Kanka Daasana mele Daye Maadalu Vyaasa Muni'. Despite his greatness, he also faced numerous hardships, due to jealous enemies, who misused their privileges to even discriminate against him due to his caste, ensuring he could not even enter the Udupi Krishna temple. At this time, he prayed to Krishna from outside and a part of the temple wall cracked, giving him the sight of Udupi Krishna. Similarly, he was once denied the prasaada from the temple and so, to prepare food, he would pray and Shri Krishna Himself appeared before him, giving one of the gold ornaments from the vigraha. He sold them and earned money to sustain his lifestyle, while the Braahmanas at the Matha realized that the ornaments on the deity were disappearing. Shri Vaadiraaja Teertha, knowing the situation due to his omniscience, criticized those who had discriminated against Kanaka Daasa, made them repent for their mistakes, honoured him duly and retrieved the gold ornaments from the merchant. In his honour, the crack on the wall was also transformed into a properly decorated window, through which even today one has to observe the deity, known as 'Kanakana Kindi'. There is, however, a popular myth that the vigraha of Udupi Krishna itself turned from the East to the West, which is a fabricated story. He has authored several compositions and one of the popular ones among them are 'Eesha Ninna Charana Bhajane' (ಈಶ ನಿನ್ನ ಚರಣ ಭಜನೆ), euphemistically explaining the etymology of the 24 popular names of Shri Vishnu recited during rituals, i.e., Keshava, Naaraayana, Maadhava, etc., to Hari and Krishna.

## Shri Vijaya Daasa

**Shri Vijaya Daasa** (1687-1755 A.D.) was a prominent Hari Daasa who revived the tradition after a gap of over 90 years. His birth name was Daasappa and his father's name was Shreenivaasappa and Kusamma. His ankita is 'Vijaya Vitthala'. Not much is known about his personal life. He left to Kaashi due to poverty and once had a dream where Shri Purandara Daasa invited him to become a Hari Daasa. His bhajans are noted to specially be lengthier than those composed by others. A few of his bhajans even extend up to over a hundred paragraphs. He is also known to have specifically praised Shri Madhvacharya multiple times. His prominent disciples are Shri Gopaala Daasa, Shri



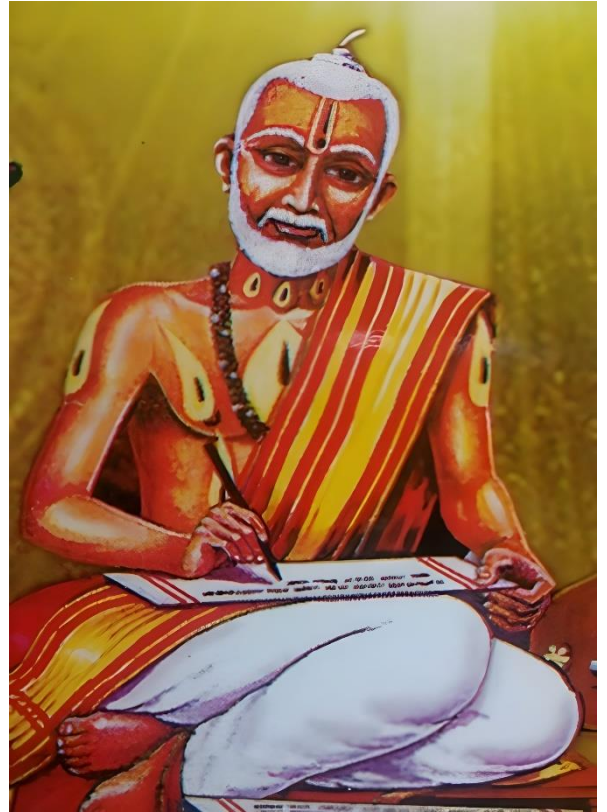
Timmanna Daasa and his adopted son, Shri Mohana Daasa. His compositions are totally over 25,000 in number.

## Shri Gopaala Daasa

**Shri Gopaala Daasa** (1721-1769 A.D.) was one of the best disciples of Shri Vijaya Daasa. His ankita was 'Gopaala Vitthala'. He was the son of Muraharappa and Giriyavva. His birth name was 'Bhaaganna'. He initially spent his childhood in poverty and escaped dangerous situations on multiple occasions. As he started learning, his Guru would refer to him as 'Bhaktiya Bhaaganna' (Bhaaganna of bhakti), appreciating his sincere bhakti towards Shri Vishnu. Once, a prophecy was made by Shri Venkateshvara, in the dream of a blind Lingaayata man that he would soon be cured of his blindness by a certain Hari Daasa. Gopaala Daasaru soon arrived at the village and while singing one of his bhajans, in the presence of a large crowd, he approached the blind man and placed his palms over his eyes, giving the man proper vision. He is said to have had the knowledge of three of his previous janmas and three of his future janmas, occasionally speaking about them. At the request of Shri Vijaya Daasa, he is said to have given away forty years of his life to Shri Shreenivaasa, to cure him of tuberculosis, enabling the latter to live a normal life and compose granthas like Shri Harikathaamrta-Saara, becoming Jagannaatha Daasa.

## Shri Jagannaatha Daasa

**Shri Jagannaatha Daasa** (1728-1809 A.D.) was one of the recent Hari-Daasas with great contributions. His original name was 'Shreenivaasa', born to Narasappa and Lakshmakka. At a young age, he became an expert scholar in Samskrta and also became arrogant, insulting Vijaya Daasaru and his disciples for inviting him for a feast, as he considered them inferior due to their usage of Kannada for preaching. Due to this, he was cursed with tuberculosis and was later forgiven by Vijaya Daasaru and cured by Gopaala Daasaru. His masterpiece is Harikathaamrta-Saara, explaining the philosophy of Tattvavaada. He has composed many such works, most of which are detailed philosophical explanations of Vaishnava Dharma. His compositions are in honour of his Purvaachaaryas, mentioning and praising them, at multiple places. He had numerous disciples, among whom only Shrida Vitthala and Praanesha Vitthala are well-known.



© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

## Shri Helavanakatte Giriyamma

**Shri Helavanakatte Giriyamma** was perhaps the very first female poet of the Daasa Kuta. She was born due to the blessings of Shri Venkateshvara, after her parents worshiped Him to have a child. She was born in Ranebennur and her father Bhishtappa Jois was a learned scholar in the Vedas. Since a young age, she had a special interest in listening to and learning stories from the Raamaayana, Mahaabhaarata and Puraanas. However, her parents passed away when she was very young, about four years old. She was then raised by her uncle and aunt, but continued pursuing her interest in philosophy. She started worshiping a vigraha of Shri Krshna, wholeheartedly



surrendering to Him and considering Him her guide and friend. Since a young age, she also had a talent of singing in a very good voice, due to the influence of her father. Once, she visited the temple of Helavanakatte Shri Lakshmi Ranganaatha at Malebennur and met Shri Gopala Daasa, who was impressed with her songs and blessed her.

She was married at the age of about 12 years, but started to face hardships later on. Some of her husband's jealous relatives condemned her poetic skills and mocked her for not having children. However, she was devoted to Ranganaatha, considering herself like His mother. Once, Shri Sumateendra Teertha from Mantraalaya had visited Malebennur and as he was about to provide some prasaada to Giriyamma, her relatives discouraged him. However, Sumateendra Teertharu simply looked at her palms and said that they indicated that Bhagavaan Himself is her son, her palms had the characteristics of those of Kausalya and Devaki, and that Shri Raama was seated on her lap. Her ankita in her compositions was 'Helavanakatte Ranga'. Though her husband and father-in-law had always supported her interest in bhakti and composing poems, she subsequently realized that the lifestyle of a grhastha was not suitable for her. She encouraged her husband to divorce her and marry another woman, renouncing grhasthaashrama. From then on, she lived alone, composing bhajans. She has composed over forty bhajans in Kannada, highlighting hardships in life generally faced by her and other people, and praising the importance of bhakti towards Shri Vishnu.

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets

## Less Popular Panditas of the Hari-Daasa Kuta

- **Shri Timmanna Daasa**, one of the prominent disciples of Shri Vijaya Daasa and a Divaan during the rule of Basalat Jang
- **Shri Tande Muddu Mohana Daasa**
- **Shri Ramakaanta Vitthala Daasa**
- **Shri Sundaramma**, the wife of Ramakaanta Vitthala Daasa
- **Shri Ambaabaayi**, the sister of Ramakaanta Vitthala Daasa
- **Shri Shreedha Vitthala**
- **Shri Yogeendra Daasa**
- **Shri Venkata Daasa**
- **Shri Bheemesha Vitthala**
- **Shri Sukhanidhi Vitthala**

Many other less prominent Hari-Daasas even belonged to several lower castes and even the so-called “untouchable” communities. Shri Tande Muddu Mohana Daasa influenced and provided deeksha to several such members, initiating them as Maadhva Vaishnavas and Hari-Daasas. To this day, the Hari-Daasa kuta continues in several villages, but without popular and exceptional stalwarts like those of the past.

## 8. The Maadhva Mathas



*The present-day temple of Udupi Shri Krishna*

Shri Madhvacharya never had any temples built except the Udupi Krishna Matha and those which were abandoned and restored by him or won from opponents through debates. The Udupi Krishna Matha and the Bhandarakkeri Matha (obtained from Shri Achyuta Prajna, after he became his disciple) were used by him as his primary residence and place of worship. The Udupi Krishna vigraha was installed facing the West and so, all other eight Mathas were built around the Udupi Krishna temple, also facing the West.

The eight principal Mathas are known as the 'Ashta Mathas,' with eight of Shri Madhvacharya's prominent disciples becoming their first Peethaadhipatis:

- Pejaavara Matha: Shri Adhokshaja Teertha
- Palimaaru Matha: Shri Hrsheeksha Teertha

- Adamaaru Matha: Shri Narasimha Teertha
- Puttige Matha: Shri Upendra Teertha
- Shirooru Matha: Shri Vaamana Teertha
- Sode Matha: Shri Vishnu Teertha
- Krshnapura Matha: Shri Janaardana Teertha
- Kaniyooru Matha: Shri Raama Teertha

The other major Mathas established elsewhere later on, are:

- Vyaasaraaja Matha: Shri Raajendra Teertha
- Uttaraadi Matha: Shri Vidyanidhi Teertha
- Raaghavendra Matha: Shri Kaveendra Teertha
- Bhandarakeri Matha: Shri Achyuta Prajna Teertha
- Bheemanakatte Matha: Shri Achyuta Prajna Teertha
- Kukke Subrahmanya Matha: Shri Vishnu Teertha
- Madhva Kanva Matha: Shri Maadhava Teertha
- Saagarakatte Vyaasaraaja Matha: Shri Lakshmipriya Teertha
- Kaashi Matha: Shri Yaadavendra Teertha
- Kundaapura Vyaasaraaja Matha: Shri Shreedhara Teertha
- Chitrapura Matha
- Partagali Jeevottama Matha/Gokarna Matha
- Baligaru Aarya Akshobhya Teertha Matha
- Kudli Aarya Akshobhya Teertha Matha
- Tambehalli Maadhava Teertha Matha
- Mulabaagilu Shreepaadaraaja Matha: Shri Padmanaabha Teertha

Along with these, there are innumerable other temples of the Maadhva sampradaaya, either as branches of these Mathas or as independent temples, though all of them ultimately share the same ancient Guru parampara, descending from Shri Madhvacharya and his direct disciples. These temples serve as centres for spirituality and worship of Shri Vishnu and other Devatas, while also contributing to the propagation of Tattvavaada.

## Further Reading

If you read this book thoroughly, you can enhance your knowledge of the Shaastras further, with the following books published by us as well as others:

- *Sri Madhva's Teachings in his own Words* by Shri B. N. K. Sharma
- *The Bhagavat Geeta with the Commentaries of Shri Madhvaacharya* (available on our E-Library)
- *Shri Vishnu Puraana: Amsa 6* (available on our E-Library, explained in English and Samskrta)
- *Shri Krshnaamrta Mahaarnava of Shri Madhvaacharya* (available on our E-Library)
- *Extracts from the Varaaha Puraana* (available on our E-Library)
- *The Brahma Sutra Bhaashya of Shri Madhvaacharya* (available on our E-Library)

## About the Authors

**Praajna Pattada Hari Kumaara Varma** is an aspiring family physician and author on spirituality, from Karnataka, India. He is also a developer of video games and websites, a cartoonist and story writer. He started his hobby of developing websites and video games at the age of 10 years and started studying spirituality and learning about different Hindu philosophies at 15 years of age. He also published his first research paper in the field of Sanskrit at the age of 21 years. He founded Achyuta Bhakti Deets in 2022, to propagate spirituality and philosophy in a way which is practically applicable and benefits the present-day society. Its objectives also include propagating the knowledge of and encouraging learning Samskrta, the Itihaasas, Puraanas, Aagamas and Vaishnava philosophy, especially Madhva Siddhaanta, among all Saattvika-minded people regardless of caste, creed, sex, race and any such identities. Along with similar-minded individuals, the project of Achyuta Bhakti Deets was started, initially as a YouTube channel and subsequently, with websites and an online E-Library to effortlessly view several Shaastras and Maadhva works.

**Aniruddha Ashrith** is a programmer, specializing in cybersecurity and analytics, with a deep interest in Indian philosophical traditions. He has been formally studying the Shaastras under the guidance of C. H. Badarinathacharya and learning Sanskrit since the age of 12. Alongside his technical pursuits, he is dedicated to understanding and preserving the wisdom of the Itihaasas, Puraanas and the darshanas of Vedaanta, with a particular engagement in Madhva Siddhaanta. At the age of 20 years, he is striving to make meaningful contributions to both the world of technology and the realm of traditional knowledge.

---

This document has been provided by Achyuta Bhakti Deets. Visit <https://bhaktideets.org> or <https://elib.bhaktideets.org> for more Shaastra related content.

श्री हरये नमः ।

श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ॥



॥ श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ॥

© Copyrights 2022-25 Achyuta Bhakti Deets