

Path to Dharma

தர்ம நெறி



News Letter

26

செய்தி மடல்

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கேதத்திர (வயல்) விநாயக ஆலயம்,
ஸ்ரீ முன்னேஸ்வரம், சிலாபம், ஸ்ரீ லங்கா.

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Editorial

Now a great amount of persons who read 'Path to Dharma', the periodical published, by Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, Sri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka, act in response optimistically to a high academic standard of this magazine.

Although comprehensive observations and remarks are spoken by the readers many are of the opinion that puranic items and the ashtothra sections to be ignored or to completely leave these out and to concentrate to give authentic answers for the questions raised by the readers.

The foremost endeavour of this magazine is to convey understanding related to Hindu religion essentially by replies to the queries raised by the anxious readers.

Some have responded to the explanation and meaning of ashtothra like Lord Siva, Lord Subramanya, Lord Ganesha etc. are as very important and good but the vast majority of the readers are not in favour of this venture. Hence, the continuation of the explanation and providing meanings of the ashtothra of other deities will not be included in future.

Many readers wish their names to be included in the questions that they ask. Due to the space problem these are not included.

I am extremely grateful to the readers of 'Path to Dharma', magazine, who are providing me colossal advise and moral support in bringing out this periodical.

B.S.Sarma,

Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, ri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka. February.2010

Suggestions from the readers

Dear Sarma,

My sincere thanks for sending me every month, the 'Path to Dharma', (Dharma Neri) the periodical published, by Kshethra Vinayaka Temple. I and my friends go through these subject matter and discuss the contents. May Almighty God bless you for the diligent services that you rendering towards to Hindu community. I look forward to your ongoing literature and your response to the question we have sent you.

With kind Regards

Suraj Prakash. Went worthville, NSW-2145. Australia

Editor, 'Path to Dharma',

It is my proud opportunity to glance through from first to last, the heavy subject matter in your monthly magazine 'Path to Dharma'. Though the magazine contain about 10 pages of A4 size the area dealt with is enormous and carried out with authority.

I have been sending my humble opinions from time to time to you mainly to persuade your service towards the eager readers who like to understand the real facts and concepts of Hinduism. I get number of copies of each issue which I receive from you by e-mail and circulate them among my friends who are actually interested.

With best regards,

Thanking you,

Ashok Rahul, Bangalore.

Dear Editor, 'Path to Dharma',

Thanks for the "path to Dharma" magazines which you send me monthly. Where are the answers for my questions sent to you?

May Almighty bless you with long life.

K.Dharmendra, Canada

1. What is Veda in brief for a person who is new to this subject?

The expression Veda comes from the root phrase "Vid"- to know. The term Veda denotes knowledge. Hence with reference to Hindu scripture, the declaration denotes a book of knowledge. The Vedas are the authoritative fundamental scriptures of the Hinduism.

The Veda is alienated into four great scriptures, which are namely;

- i. The Rig-Veda
- ii. The Yajur-Veda
- iii. The Sama-Veda
- iv. The Atharva-Veda

Each of these Vedas consists of four components, namely:

- i. The Mantra-Samhitas (hymns).
- ii. The Brahmanas (explanations of Mantras or rituals).
- iii. The Aranyakas (philosophical interpretations of the rituals).
- iv. The Upanishads (The essence or the knowledge portion of the Vedas).

This mode of division of the each Vedas into four parts is to go well with the four stages in a person's life: The Mantra portions of the Vedas namely the Mantra-Samhitas are hymns in praise of the Vedic God for accomplishing the material prosperity in this life and happiness hereafter. They are musical verses or hymns consisting of prayers, hymns and incantations addressed to a variety of Vedic deities, both personal and intentional. This Mantra-Samhita hymns of the Vedas are useful for the Brahmacharis (one who are in the first of the four Ashramas or orders of life) who lives in purity and studies the Veda; first quarter of life).

The Brahmana portions guide people to perform sacrificial rituals mentioned in Vedas. These are the prescribed Mantras, giving explanations in the prose forms, to execute Yajna (sacrifice). The Brahmana portion is suitable for the householder Grihastha or householder (one who are in the second half of the four Ashramas or orders of life)

The Aranyakas are the mystical manuscripts which provide philosophical explanations of the Vedic rituals. The Aranyakas are intended for the Vanaprasthas hermits who get ready themselves for taking Sannyasa namely Vanaprastha (one who are in the third half of the four Ashramas or orders of life) books

1. RIGVEDA: (Rk - hymn or verse) is the very ancient and most important ,dating from at least 1,200 B.C.E. and completed about 900 B.C.E. This Rig Veda is divided into ten mandalas or "cycles" (volumes) containing a total of 1,028 hymns concentrated on to various deities. Most important deities of them are namely:

- o Indra- (c. 250 hymns) powerful warrior god and executioner of Vrtra--the demon-serpent who hindered the fertile flow of the waters
- o Agni- (c. 200 hymns) god of fire
- o Soma, god of the intoxicating drink
- o Mitra and Varuna- whose main concern was the protection of rta, the sacred and divine order of the cosmos
- o Rudra- a fearsome and destructive deity has links with the later Shiva

2. SAMAVEDA : (saman –chant songs) a script of chants used by one of the Brahman priests who controls at the sacrificial rituals. Largely derived from books eight and nine of the RigVeda.

3. YAJURVEDA: (yajus - verbal ritual formula moderately a hymns) the increasing emphasis here is on the techniques of the sacrifice.

The Yajur-Veda is divided into two branches:

- o The Sukla Yajur or Vajasaneya Veda
- o The Krishna Yajur or Tattiriya Veda.

4. ATHARAVEDA: (named for a priestly family, the Atharvans) a later compilation of complete hymns and magical charms which are less directly attached to the domestic sacrificial rituals.

Vedic Concepts

There are two basic concepts underlying the Vedas

- Satya (truth)
- Rta (eternal order)

and every God or Goddess exemplifies and represents these two ideas.

Vedic theism is based on moral values which may be upheld in a non-theistic way.

2. What do you mean by the terms the Sruti and the Smriti mentioned in Hinduism ?

Sruti and Smriti are the two authoritative foundation of Hinduism. Sruti factually denotes what is heard, and Smriti signifies what is remembered. Sruti is revelation and Smriti is convention.

Sruti is unswerving experience. Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of Hindu religion and left an evidence of them for the advantage of posterity. These accounts comprise the Vedas. Therefore, Sruti is the chief authoritative. Smriti is a reminiscence of those experiences. Thus, Smriti is the secondary authoritative.. The Smritis also are manuscripts of the sages, but not the ultimate authority

The Smritis (Dharma Sastra)

The Smritis (secondary scriptures) are the earliest sacred law-codes of the Hindu religion related with the Sanatana-Varnasrama-Dharma. The Smritis enhance and give explanation to the ritualistic orders called Vidhis of the Vedas. The Smriti is established and based on the Sruti of the Vedas. The Smriti supplements the authority of the Sruti . It lays down the laws which regulate Hindu traditions and commitments.

Dharma Sastras are the law books of Hindu traditions while Smriti, as whole covers all Hindu Sastras (scriptures) serve as the custodian of the Vedas. The Smritis consists of set down rules, regulations and laws to guide the public to regulate the manners and customs of the community. The duties of Varnasramas (the four stages of life) are undoubtedly specified in these manuscripts.

The aim and objective of the Smritis are to guide the public and to make them perfect and free.

There are eighteen main Smritis (Dharma Sastras) out of which the most important Smritis are as follows;

1. Manu Smriti -The Laws of Manu are intended for the Satya Yuga
2. Yajnavalkya Smriti - The laws of Yajnavalkya are for Treta Yuga
3. Parasara Smriti - The laws of Parasara are for the Kali Yuga

The other fifteen Smritis (Dharma Sastras) are namely;

1. Vishnu Smriti
2. Daksha Smriti
3. Samvarta Smriti
4. Vyasa Smriti
5. Harita Smriti
6. Satatapa Smriti
7. Vasishtha Smriti
8. Yama Smriti
9. Apastamba Smriti
10. Gautama Smriti
11. Devala Smriti
12. Sankha-Likhita Smriti
13. Usana Smriti
14. Atri Smriti
15. Saunaka. Smriti

3. What are the sixteen sanskars mentioned in the Vedas?

The sixteen sanskars mentioned in the Vedas must be carried out ritually under assistance of a learned Guru with havan for every sanskar with the prescribed Vedic mantras. These sixteen sanskars are said to be performed in Sata yuga, Dwapara yuga, and tretha yuga. The sixteen sanskars are namely;

- 1) Garbhdhan Sanskar - performed just after marriage and before pregnancy to have a good baby.
- 2) Punsvan sanskar - performed just after pregnancy of second or third month.
- 3) Seemantonnayan sanskar -in 4th, 6th or in 8th month of pregnancy.
- 4) Jaatkaram Sanskar -just after birth of a baby i.e., the same day.
- 5) Naamkaran sanskar -after 101 days of birth in which name of the baby is announced.
- 6) Nishkraman sanskar - when the mother and baby comes out of the house. In the 3rd or 4th month to travel or to go anywhere.
- 7) Annprasahn sanskar - in the 6th month of the baby after birth on the same day of birth. In this sanskar the baby is allowed to take solid food because up to 5th month baby had been taking milk/water only.
- 8) Churakaram sanskar (Mundan sanskar) -in the first or third year.
- 9) Karanvedh sanskar - ear piercing ceremony.
- 10) Upnayan sanskar -allowing baby to go school first time.
- 11) Vedaarambh sanskar - to start study of Vedas in 6 to 8 years.
- 12) Samavartan sanskar - the baby has attained the knowledge of Vedas. It is performed in the age of fourteen years.
- 13) Vivah sanskar - marriage ceremony.
- 14) Vanprasth sanskar - in the age of 51 plus.
- 15) Sanyas sanskar - in the age of 75 plus or at any age when anyone becomes ascetic.
- 16) Anteshti sanskar - when death comes. This sanskar is of dead body which is cremation.

4. What are the Ashta siddhis and where is it mentioned?

According to Patanjali Yoga Darshan Sutra 3/45, the Ashta siddhis are namely;

- 1) Annima
- 2) Laghima
- 3) Mahima
- 4) Praapti
- 5) Prakamya
- 6) Vashitva
- 7) Ishitatva
- 8) Satya Sankalpa

5. What are the eight vasus?

There are eight vasus in Vedas which are non-alive matters.

- 1) Agni (fire)
- 2) Prithivi (earth)
- 3) Vaayu (air)
- 4) Antriksh (space)
- 5) Dyuhu (light emitting heavenly bodies)
- 6) jala (water)
- 7) Nakshtr (planetary world) planets (nakshatra).]
- 8) Chandrma. (moon)

6. What are the three lokas mentioned in Vedas?

The three lokas mentioned in Vedas are namely;

1. Dyu loka (celestial bodies emitting light)
2. Antariksh loka (space)
3. Prithvi loka (the earth)

7. What are the names of six Shastras?

Names of six shastras are also termed Darshan. They are namely;

- 1) Yoga shastra
- 2) Sankhya shastra
- 3) Vedhanta shastra
- 4) Nyaya shastra
- 5) Vaisheshika shastra
- 6) Mimansa shastra

8. What is the reason to include garlic in small amount in vegetarian food?

The main reason of including garlic in small amount in daily food is the benefit of the ayurvedic medicinal properties of garlic underground bulb.

The beneficial qualities of Garlic are namely;

- 1) It is beneficial to cure indigestion
- 2) It is beneficial to cure constipation and piles
- 3) It is beneficial to cure diabetes.
- 4) It is beneficial to control high blood pressure.
- 5) It is beneficial to kill germs of stomach.
- 6) It is beneficial to control obesity
- 7) It is beneficial in common cold
- 8) It is beneficial in urine problem.
- 9) It is beneficial to fever and brings down the body temperature
- 10) It is beneficial to loss of appetite
- 11) It is beneficial to kidney problem
- 12) It is beneficial to Treatment of boils, acne etc

9. Explain whether am I, 'That' that is whether Soul equivalent to God?

No, you are not that, that is, a soul can never be God. According to Vedas, there are three eternal matters namely, Non-alive Prakriti, alive Soul and Almighty God and these three matters are always separate from each other.

10. Can you give me the list of pedigree of Sri Rama the king of Ayodhya?

The lineage ancestry of Sri Rama is mentioned in Valmiki Ramayana starting right from Bhagwan Manu from Satya yuga. The family tree is that, Sri Rama was born in Ikshwaku family. Manu was supposed to be the first king of this earth. Then Ikshwaku was the son of Manu. Then Kukshi, Vikukshi, Bann, Anrannya, Prathu, Trishanku, Dhundumar, Yuvnashva, Mandhata, Susandhi, Dhruvsandhi, Prasenjit, Bharat, Asit, Sagar, Asmanj, Anshuman, Dileep, Bhagirath, Kakutsth, Raghu, Pravridh, Kalmashpad, Shankhan, Sudershan, Agnivarna, Sheeghrag, Maru, Prashushuruk, Ambreesh, Nahush, Yayati, Nabhag, Aj, Dashrath and then Sri Rama, Lakshman, Bharatha, Shathrugnan.

11. What is the name of Ravan's father?

The name of Ravan's father was Vishrva muni.

12. Can you Get me the names of sixteen Kalas?

The names of sixteen Kalas according to Yajurveda mantra 8/36 are, namely,

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| i. Ichha | v. jala |
| ii. pranna | vi. agni |
| iii. shraddha | vii. Vaayu |
| iv. prithivee | viii. Aakash |

- ix. Indriya
- x. Manas
- xi. Anna
- xii. Virya

- xiii. Taps
- xiv. Mantra
- xv. Loka
- xvi. naama

13. What are the characteristics of Gayathri Mantra ?

Gayathri Mantra is,

**“Aum Bhur Bhua Swaha Thath Savithur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi Dhiyoyona Prashothayath ”**

Gayatri is the embodiment of all forms of Godhead (‘ Sarva Devatha Swaroopam’). It is universal in its scope. Gayatri has **nine** important attributes namely;

- i. Aum : Sound as the basis of Creation, Brahman
- ii. Bhuh : The Earth, the gross
- iii. Bhuvah : The Atmosphere, the Ether, the Subtle.
- iv. Suvah : Heaven, the region beyond Bhuvah the Causal.
- v. Tat : Stands for That. The Ultimate Reality is simply referred to as That because it defies description through speech or language.
- vi. Savitur : Stands for Divine Savitri, equated with the vivifying power within the Sun.
- vii. Varenyum: Adore
- viii. Bhargo : Radiance, Lustre, Illumination
- ix. Devasya : Divine Radiance or Grace.

14. What are the types of marriages (Vivaha) mentioned in Manusmirti ?

According to the sloka in 3/21 Manusmriti ,**eight** types of marriages (Vivaha) have been mentioned, and out of these eight last two are prohibited. Marriage is a religious function where the holy Yajyen ceremony is carried out by a learned person who knows Vedas with appropriate Veda mantras. The Veda mantras are also recited pertaining to the future family life of the wedded couple which makes pious effects on both hearts.

- i. Brahma Vivaha - in this marriage, it is self decided marriage by a lad and a lass. In this teenager girl is married while performing holy Yajyen with the best scholarly young man searched by parents or herself and no goods nor anything is donated .
- ii. Deva Vivaha - in this marriage sacred Yajyen is carried out. To perform this homa (fire ritual), number of scholarly youngsters are also invited together with the officiating gurus and priests. In this type of marriage some clothes garments, costumes etc., are donated.
- iii. Aarsh Vivaha - in this marriage the father of bridegroom takes nothing from the bride’s party, and marriage is performed in holy Yajyen.
- iv. Prajapathya Vivaha - in this marriage a holy Yajyen, is performed by learned gurus, priests and parents and at the end of the rituals, advice both the bridegroom and the bride to continue their disciplined religious family life. In this Prajapathya type of Vivaha all the elderly learned people who are at the wedding ceremony bless the newly wedded couple.
- v. Asura Vivaha - in this marriage holy Yajyen is carried out with the officiating gurus and priests. The parents of bride give some dowry to bridegroom. In Asura Vivaha it is not blessed by learned intellectual due to the involvement of dowry system, etc.

- vi. Gandharva Vivaha- in this marriage, there is no holy Yajyen performed. In this type of marriage the no other persons, are involved except the bride and the bridegroom. Both the bride and the bridegroom agree to get married and continue their domestic family life just after the wedding.
- vii. Rakshasa Vivaha - in this type of marriage when a teen age girl is aggressively taken away from her parents and relatives and marriage is carried out. Rakshasa Vivaha is also not admitted by learned intellectuals and is not accepted as a religious marriage.
- viii. Paishacha Vivaha - in this type of marriage if a teen age girl is met in a lonely place while sleeping or in mad state etc., and someone outrages her modesty. Paishacha Vivaha is also not admitted by cultured persons and is not accepted as a religious marriage.

15 What is the basis of Hindu religion, in few words ?

Hindu religion is based on eternal philosophy of Vedas and this philosophy is well elucidated in six shastras and Manusmriti etc., written by this rishis like Manu, Atri Muni, Kamadha Muni, Mathanga Muni, Pathanjali Muni, Vashishta Muni, Vyasa Muni, who were philosophers of Vedas, did practice of ashtanga yoga, realized God and Veda mantras within their heart.

16. What are the types of Yajyen are mentioned in Veda ?

Five types of Yajyrn are mentioned. These Yajyen are namely;

- i. Deva Yajyen
- ii. Brahma Yajyen
- iii. Balivaishvdev Yajyen
- iv. Atithi Yajyen
- v. Pitar yajyen

17. What is name of the Guru of Muni Vishvamithra?

Kashyapa rishi was the guru (acharya) of Vishvamithra

18. What is meaning of Soma with reference to Yajyen performed in olden days?

The term 'Som' has been clearly defined in Vedas as 'Divine pleasure' experienced by a yogi or muni when he understands and realizes God in the Dharama-megha Samadhi. This said Dharama megha Samadhi is achieved after realizing knowledge of Vedas and tough practice of Ashtanga yoga philosophy by performing holy Yajyen, regularly. The exact meaning of Som is 'Form of divine pleasure'.

The meaning of pious word 'Som' has been defined by some people as intoxicating drink and giving the meaning of Soma is green vegetation.

Soma is the personification of a hallucinogenic plant the preparation of lay at the heart of Vedic sacrifice. The hallucinogenic mushroom *Amanita muscaria* generally known as fly agaric. *Amanita muscaria* has been used for thousands of years by siberian shamans to induce ecstatic states. This plant grows in Siberia and Afghanistan. The prosperity of Soma, the "elixir of the gods" which is, frequently discussed is the sense of euphoria and ecstasy experienced by those who drink it. Soma, like the fly agarics is thought to be red. It is supposed to have been pressed and bottled before it is drunk.

In the Rig Veda, Soma is often called madhu (honey) and pavamanu (a tawny yellowish liquid) possibly referring to the dark yellow colour of the mushroom fruit has been pressed.

Som is also the name of Almighty God and we offer aahuti in Yajyen reciting 'Aum Somaya Swaha' for God.

19. What are nine aspects of Mother Divine (Shakti)?

Nine aspects of Mother Divine Durga (Shakti) and her aspects are as follows;

- i. **Dhumavati**, eternal widow
- ii. **Bhadrakali**, a gentle Kali
- iii. **Amba** or **Jagadamba**, Mother of the Universe
- iv. **Annapurna**, The One who bestows grains
- v. **Sarvamangala**, The One who gives joy (mangal) to all (sarva)
- vi. **Bhairavi**, a fierce and terrifying form of Shakti also identified with Kalaratri
- vii. **Chandika** or **Chandi**, Supreme Goddess
- viii. **Lalita**, The One who plays
- ix. **Bhavani**, a fierce aspect of Shakti.

At the same time the aspects of nine forms Durga Nava Durga differ from the above list ,namely;

- i. Durga Shailputri
- ii. Brahmacharini
- iii. Dhumavati
- iv. Chandraghanta
- v. Skanda Mata
- vi. Kushmanda
- vii. Kaalratri
- viii. Maha Gauri
- ix. Siddhidatri

20. Can you give Sri Sankata Nasana Ganapathi stotram and the meaning of it?

Sri Sankata Nasana Ganapathi stotram from Narada Purana (Prayer to lord Ganesha which would wipe away sorrow)

Narada Uvacha:-

Sage Naradha Muni divulged:-

Pranamya sirasa devam, Gauri putram, Vinayakam,

Bhakthya vyasa smaren nithya, Mayu kama artha sidhaye.

The educated one, who desires, For more life, prosperity and love,

Should salute with his head, Lord Ganapathi who is the son of Parvathy.

Prathamam Vakra thundam cha, Ekadantham dveethiyakam,

Trithiyam Krishna pingalaksham, Gajavakthram Chathurthakam.

Imagine him foremost as god with broken trunk, subsequently as the God with one trunk,

Third as the one with rosy black eyes, Fourth as the one who has the face of an elephant.

Lambhodaram panchamam cha, Sashtam Vikatameva cha,

Sapthamam Vignarajam cha, Dhoomra varnam thadashtamam.

Fifth as the one who has a very broad paunch, Sixth as the one who is brutal to his enemies,

Seventh as the one who is eradicator of obstacles, Eighth as the one who is of the colour of smoke.

Navamam phala chandram cha, Dasamam thu Vinayakam,

Ekadasam Ganapathim, Dwadasam the gajananam.

Ninth as the one who crescent in his forehead, Tenth as the one, who is the leader of eliminator of obstructions
Eleventh as the chief of the army of Lord Shiva, And twelfth as the one who has the face of an elephant.

Dwathasaithani namani , Trisandhyam ya paden nara,

Na cha vigna bhayam thasya, Sarva sidhi karam dhruvam.

Any one reading these twelve names, At dawn, noon and dusk,

Will never have fear of defeat, And would always achieve whatever he wants.

Vidyarthi labhadhe vidhyam, Danarthi labhathe danam,

Puthrarthi labhathe puthran, Moksharthi labhathe gatheem.

One who pursues education will get knowledge, One who wants to earn money will get money,

One who wishes for a son , will get a son, And one who wants salvation will get salvation.

Japeth Ganapathi sthothram, Shadbhir masai phalam labeth,

Samvatsarena sidhim cha, Labhathe nathra samsaya.

Results of chanting this prayer, Of Ganapathi will be got within six months,

And within a year , he would get all wishes fulfilled, And there is no doubt about this.

Ashtanam Brahmanam cha, Likihithwa ya samarpoayeth,

Thasya Vidhya bhaveth Sarvaa ganesasya prasadatha.

Ithi Sri Narada Purane Samkashta nasanam Ganapathi stotram Sampoornam.

One who gets this prayer, Written by Eight Brahmanas,

And offers it to Lord Ganesa, Will become knowledgeable,

And would be blessed with all stellar qualities, By the grace of Lord Ganesa.

Thus ends the prayer from Narada Purana to Ganesa which would wipe out all griefs and troubles.

He is worshiped with red flowers.

Unfailing, merciful, the origin of the worlds,

**He appears at the beginning of creation,
alone, beyond Nature, beyond the Cosmic Person.**

**He who meditates on His form
becomes great among the yogis.**

-Ganapati Upanishad

Gaja, the elephant, is the origin and the goal.

**The stage reached by the yogi in his
experience of *samadhi* is called *ga*, the "goal,"
and the principle called *ja*, the "origin,"
is that from which the syllable
of obeisance, Aum,
is said to be issued.**

-Brahma Sutras