

Sanatana Dharma

Lesson 2: The Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



Śānti Mantras



- ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
- Om saha nāvavatu |
sa ha nau bhunaktu |
sa ha vīryam karavāvahai |
tejasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai |
Om shāntiḥ shāntiḥ shāntiḥ ||

Śānti Mantras



- **Meaning:**

1: Om, May God Protect us Both (the Teacher and the Student),

2: May God Nourish us Both,

3: May we Work Together with Energy and Vigour,

4: May our Study be Enlightening, not giving rise to Hostility,

5: Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

Symbolism of Navaratri Festival



- **Symbolism of Worship of Goddess Durga**
 - First three days of Navaratri are dedicated to Goddess Durga
 - Worship of Goddess Durga destroys our attachment to negative qualities
 - As a result they (negative qualities) lose their strength to victimize the individual.
 - Therefore, by worshipping Goddess Durga our future becomes bright.
- **What does Goddess Durga represent?**
 - The Supreme Lord has three main powers. Power to create, power to sustain and power to dissolve. These three powers put together are called MAYA SHAKTI (Mahāmāya).
 - The power to dissolve is represented by Goddess Durga (Mahakāli).

Symbolism of Navaratri Festival



- **Symbolism of worship of Goddess Mahālakshmi**

- The next three days of Navaratri are dedicated to Goddess Mahālakshmi
- Mahālakshmi represents **inner** and **outer** wealth
- Inner wealth is the Divine qualities: Love, compassion, cheerfulness, fearlessness, obedience, inner strength etc.
- Outer wealth is money, land, jewelry, dress, physical beauty, physical strength, name, fame etc.
- Without inner wealth, external wealth is used for destructive purposes.

- **What does Goddess Mahālakshmi represent?**

- The sustaining or nourishing power of the Supreme Lord is represented by Goddess Mahālakshmi
- Worship of Goddess Mahālakshmi increases the inner wealth

Symbolism of Navaratri Festival



- **Symbolism of worship of Goddess Sarasvati**
 - The final three days are dedicated to the worship of Goddess Sarasvati.
 - The purpose of life is to know our True Self (who am I?). This knowledge is called Self Knowledge.
 - Sarasvati has come from **Sara**-essence and **Sa**- own, So Sarasvati means one's own essential nature.
- **What does Goddess Sarasvati represent?**
 - The power of knowledge of the Supreme Lord is represented as Goddess Saraswati.
 - After the negative qualities are sublimated (Goddess Durga), positive qualities are developed (Goddess Mahalakshmi), one's mind will be filled with lot of energy – this energy can be used to discover our Self.

Symbolism of Navaratri Festival



- **Vijaya Dashami:**

- The Tenth day after Navaratri is the Vijaya Dashami.
- The day of victory over Mahishasura (who represents the ego in us).
- Removing the bad qualities is like just removing the leaves of weeds above the ground with root intact under the ground. The leaves will return if the root (ego) is not removed.
- By worshipping Goddess Durga all the devilish qualities (leaves = demonic forces) along with the ego (root = Mahishasura) will be completely dissolved.
- For a spiritual aspirant the dissolution of the greatest demon (ego) is celebrated as Vijaya Dashami.

Veda - Review



- What are the four Vedas?
 - Rig (ṛg)
 - Yajus (Krishna Yajur Veda & Shukla Yajur Veda)
 - Sāma
 - Atharva
- What are the components of each Veda?
 - Samhitā
 - Brāhmana
 - Āranyaka

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Life is full of choices
- Vedas, as a body of knowledge, helps people make these choices intelligently
- The two sections of the Vedas are:
 - Karma Kāṇḍa
 - Jñāna Kāṇḍa

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- It is a fact that individuals have desires
 - The Karma Kāṇḍa prescribes methods to fulfill these desires (in accordance with dharma)
 - Actions prescribed by the Karma Kāṇḍa section of the Vedas produce results
 - There are two types of results – *dṛśhta phala* (tangible or verifiable result) and *adṛśhta phala* (unverifiable result)

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



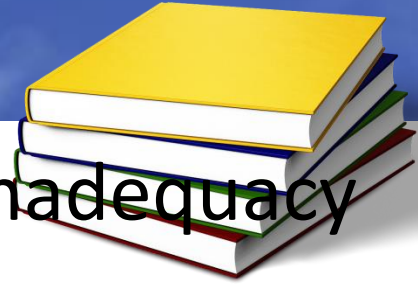
- *Karma and Dṛśhta phala*
- *Karma and Adṛśhta phala*
- Can you think of some actions which lead to some desired end result? Which type of result do they produce?
 - Sowing a seed *in order to???*
 - Eating a banana *in order to???*
 - Act of kindness or charity *in order to???*

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Everything we hope to accomplish needs three essential components:
 - Effort (yatna)
 - Kala (time)
 - Daivam (grace)
- In the previous examples can you identify the three essential components?

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- An individual is already free from any inadequacy (e.g., “Om! Pūrnamada....”)
 - The Jñāna Kāṇḍa is the means of knowledge to discover this eternal truth about ourselves
 - This liberating knowledge enables us to understand that we are eternally free (i.e., moksha is a given!)
 - How do I understand that I am free from all bondage?
 - What can help me be free?
 - Can someone who has everything need anything?

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Let us consider our senses
 - Can our nose hear?
 - Can our ears feel the texture of sand on a beach?
 - Can our eyes smell a fragrant flower?
 - Can our tongue see a monkey in front of our face?
 - Can our skin taste a delicious *gulab jamun*?
- One sense organ cannot do the job of another sense organ!

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Is the knowledge gained by a sense organ always correct?
- Yes? Really?
- Ok, what about a mirage? What about the “little” “twinkling” star? What about the “rising” sun?
- Or, what about ears being fooled by mimicry? Do you remember the story of *Dasaratha* (Ramayana) where he kills *Śravaṇakumara* mistaking him to be an elephant?

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Three essential elements of knowing:
 - Pramātā: object which is to be known
 - Prameya: knower (someone who wants to know)
 - Pramāṇa: means of knowledge

Vedas as a Means of Knowledge



- Pramāṇa is a means of knowledge
- We can **perceive or sense** an object – ***Pratyakśa***
- We can see smoke and **infer** that there is fire – ***Anumana***
- We can use **comparison** to know – ***Upamānā***
- We can **postulate** or superimpose the known on something that does not agree with the known - ***Arthāpatti***
- We can apply **scepticism** in the known on something that does not agree with the known – ***Anupalabdhi***
- None of the means of knowledge is suitable to Know the Self; the only means of Knowledge available to reveal the nature of the Self (Atman) is the ***Sabda Pramana***
- ***The Veda is the Sabda Pramana***

Concluding Śānti Mantra



- ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णात् पूर्णमदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
Om Pūrṇam-Adah Pūrṇam-Idam Pūrṇāt-Purṇam-Udacyate
Pūrṇashya Pūrṇam-Aadāya Pūrṇam-Eva-Avaśhissyate ||
Om Śāntiḥ Śhāntiḥ Śhāntiḥi ||

Meaning:

That (God) is infinite; this (world) is whole;
from the infinite the world becomes manifest.

From the infinite, even if the whole is taken away,
what remains again is the infinite.