

# Sanatana Dharma

## Lesson 4: Vedas: The Four Puruśarthas



# 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.

# Review: Vedas



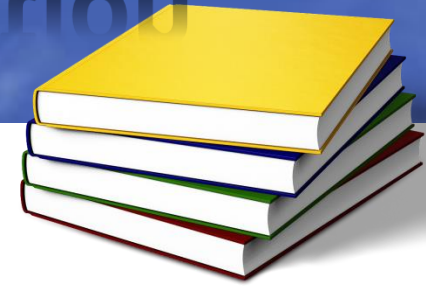
- What are the four Vedas?
  - Rig (ṛg)
  - Yajus (Krishna Yajur Veda & Shukla Yajur Veda)
  - Sāma
  - Atharva
- What are the components of each Veda?
  - Samhitā
  - Brāhmana
  - Āranyaka

# Review: 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 (Sabda = Word)*

# Review: Vedas: An Oral Tradition



- **Purity of Vedic chanting was preserved through the millennia by strict adherence to:**
  - **Chanting combinations of mantras to commit to memory**
  - **Proper intonation to evoke the bhava or attitude, which aligns the mind and intellect to the divine**

# The Four Puruśārthas



- The Vedas classify all pursuits of a human being into four categories
  - Dharma (ethics)
  - Artha (securities)
  - Kāma (pleasures)
  - Mokśa (liberation)
- Of the four puruśārthas,
  - Artha is the quest for security
  - Kāma is the quest for experiencing pleasure

# The Four Puruśārthas



- The four puruśārthas can be classified into two sets
- The set comprising of Artha and Kāma is shared by all living beings
  - How?
- The set comprising of Dharma and Mokśa is unique to human beings
  - Why?



# The Four Puruśārthas



- Why is Dharma the first of the Puruśārthas?
  - Because the struggle for security and the search for pleasures must be governed by ethical standards
- What happens if Dharma is violated in achieving security or pursuing pleasure?
  - Can you think of some examples in Mahabharata?
  - Can you think of some examples in the news?

# The Four Puruśārthas



- Artha (security) is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Puruśārtha
  - Every human being desires to live
  - Security is essential to satisfy this desire
  - Is artha enough?
- Kāma (pursuit of pleasure) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Puruśārtha
  - Merely living is not enough for human beings
  - Human beings want to live well and be happy
  - Will pursuit of pleasure bring lasting happiness?

# The Four Puruśārthas



- Mokśa, the 4<sup>th</sup> puruśārtha, is THE GOAL of all human beings, whether they are aware of it or not at any given moment
- Mokśa becomes a direct pursuit when a person realizes that he/she is seeking happiness in the wrong place and from the wrong source
- The desire to seek Mokśa comes from the inherent deep desire of every human being to be free and unlimited; something that no artha or kāma can fulfill!

# The Four Puruśārthas



- What does every human being want?
  - Does a person want to live for just a few days? (If this was the case there would be no need for hospitals & health clubs or for vitamins & vaccines!)
  - Does a person want to know just a little? (e.g., “I am OK if I know half the alphabet.”)
  - Does a person want to be happy only some of the time? (e.g., “I am OK if I can be happy on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 2 pm to 5 pm.”)

# The Four Puruśārthas



- The fact is that every human being wants:
  - To live forever
  - To know everything
  - To be happy at all times
  - To be free from all wants (have no limitations)
- The four puruśārthas help one live a life of dharma and eventually attain the goal expressed above

# The Four Puruśārthas



- Karma kaṇḍa section of the Vedas
  - Prescribes specific actions to be taken to achieve specific goals, all in accordance with Dharma
  - This helps one to satisfy one's desires
- Can you think of examples?
  - Have you ever prayed before taking an exam?
  - How you seen pujas and Vedic rituals at the temple or in someone's home?

# The Four Puruśārthas



- Jñāna kaṇḍa section of the Vedas
  - Dedicated to the fulfillment of the single desire for Mokśa or freedom from limitations
  - Vedanta (Upaniṣads) gives the seeker the knowledge about the Self, which gives one Mokśa
  - The very unfoldment and discovery of the nature is the end
  - No action or practice is needed to implement the discovery
  - Chant “Na karmaṇa na prajaya....”

# The Four Puruśārthas: Summary



- What are the four Puruśhārthas?
- Why is Dharma the first Puruśhārtha?
- Which section of the Vedas deals with artha and kāma?
- Which section deals with mokśa?
- What is the etymology of the word “Upaniṣad”?



# Concluding Śānti Mantra



- ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णात् पूर्णमदच्यते ।  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमीदाय पूर्णमैवावशिष्यते ॥  
Om Pūrṇamadah Pūrṇamidam Pūrṇāt-Purṇam-  
Udacyate  
Pūrṇasya Pūrṇamādāya Pūrṇamévāvaśiśyate ||  
Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ ||

## 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.