



Meru Institute
Yoga ~ Ayurveda ~ Community Ministry

Introduction to Indian Philosophy

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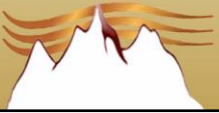
Vedic Prayer for Discernment

Asato Ma Sad Gamaya

Tamaso Ma Jyotir Gamaya

Myrityor Ma Amritam Gamaya

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti





The Rishi Way

★ You Are Here



What is philosophy?

Why does it exist? What does it address?

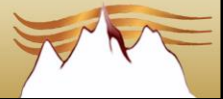
The theories and procedures described in the systems of Indian Philosophy—though originating in certain places and times and propounded by specific enlightened founders or codifiers—are not limited to any particular era, culture, or group. Rather, they address the universal and ongoing concerns of humanity and are meant for all.

–Pandit Tigunait (Seven Systems of Indian Philosophy)

All systems of Indian Philosophy have their origins in the Veda—scriptures that are “shruti, or heard”—revealed Truth: Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva

Rigveda is the oldest and longest of the Vedic texts...the pillar upon which all Vedic teachings are held...Samaveda consists almost entirely of Rigvedic verses in musical chant; Yajurveda develops the ritualistic side of Rigveda both at outer levels of fire offerings and at inner levels of mantra and meditation.

—David Frawley (Vedic Yoga: The Path of the Rishi)





Rishis

They were the illumined sages, whose wisdom burst forth in rhythmic poetry and highly symbolic language: the astounding hymns of the Vedas. These seers, who were also called poets (kavi), revealed to the ordinary, unenlightened individual the luminous Reality beyond all spiritual darkness. They also showed the pathway to that eternal Being, which is singular (eka) and unborn (aja) but is given many names.

—Georg Feuerstein (*The Yoga Tradition*)



Ṛṣikās

The Vedic mantras are the records of the spiritual realisations and experiences of the Rishis. The Rishis experienced the truth, had the revelations, or ability to receive hearing messages of the truth. They are also called seers (mantra-draṣṭārah) because they literally could observe the actions of the cosmic powers...there are at least twenty-seven women mantra-draṣṭārah in the Ṛgveda. Being able to receive and decipher a mantra has nothing to do with somebody's gender.

--Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati (*Ṛṣikās of the Ṛgveda*)



Developmental Forms of Vedas

- **Samhitās: Vedic mantras**
- **Brāhmaṇas: Interpretation of mantras**
- **Āraṇyakas: methods for training mind**
- **Upaniṣhads: philosophical insights (culmination)**

Ṣad Darśhanas: Common Characteristics

Nyāya • Vaiśeṣika • Sāṃkhya • Yoga • Mīmāṃsā • Vedānta

- Same basis in Vedas, minor differences
- Spirit as transcendent principle, proved and viewed differently
- Involvement of Purusha with Prakriti as cause of bondage
- Direct experience
- Practical approach & application (sadhana)
- Acceptance of authority
- Spirit of inquiry: value of logic, reasoning
- Value discipline, ethics, morals



Ṣad Darśhanas

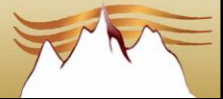
“...the basis of all the six philosophical systems is the same. [They] complement each other and the differences that separate them are minor. .. Together these philosophies form a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate Reality...the hypothesis and method of each is dependent upon the other...all lead to the same practical end...liberation.”

-Stephen Sturgess (Rāja & Kriyā Yoga)



- **Who am I? From where have I come and why have I come? What is my relationship with the manifold universe and other human beings?**
- **What is the essential nature of my being, and what is the essential nature of the manifested world and its cause?**
- **What is the relationship of the center of consciousness and the objects of the world?**
- **What is the nature of the forms and names of the objects of the world and how do they serve the essential nature of man or universal consciousness?**
- **What are the guidelines for action as long as we live in the physical body? Do we live after death?**
- **What is truth, and how do we arrive at rational conclusions on questions of truth?**

--questions compiled by Swami Rama, from the work of Dr. R.D. Ranade





Goals and Approach of the Systems

- **Name of system and its meaning**
- **Founder or codifier**
- **Main text and major commentaries**
- **Principal purpose or concern**
- **Major contribution of this school**
- **Its relevance to your Meru track**

Gayatri Mantra of the Ṛgveda

Om bhūr	Earth	Mūladhāra
Om bhuvah	Astral	Svādhiṣṭhāna
Om svaḥ	Celestial	Maṇupūra
Om māvā	Spiritual Heart	Anāhata
Om janaḥ	Power of divine Word	Viśuddha
Om tapaḥ	Power of austerities	Ājñā
Om satyam	Abode of Supreme Truth	Sahasrāra

Om̐ tat savitur vareṇyam̐ / Bhargo devasya dhīmahi /

Dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt



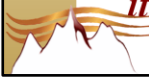
Om Tat Savitur Varenyam: that luminous essence of spiritual light, which is sought

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi: may meditation upon that light remove obstacles, and purify our mind

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat: May that (divine light) illumine our mind, enlighten our intellect, guide and inspire us

Om. Let us meditate on the light of pure awareness.

May it purify our hearts and illumine our minds. May it guide and inspire us. Om.





Hymns from the Ṛgveda

*Come together! Speak together!
Let your minds be in harmony,
As the Gods of old together
Sat in harmony to worship.
Let your aim be one and single;
Let your hearts be join in one—
The mind at rest in unison—
At peace with all, so may you be. --X.191.2, 4*