



# Vedic Literature

❁ Vedic literature is divided into two main categories:

❁ Shruti:

- ❁ that which has been heard (revealed truth)
- ❁ consisting of revelation and unquestionable truth, and is considered eternal.
- ❁ Sruti means the Vedas, Upanishads

❁ Smriti:

- ❁ that which has been remembered (realised truth)
- ❁ supplementary and may change over time.
- ❁ It is authoritative only to the extent that it conforms to the bedrock of shruti.
- ❁ smriti means derived from the Vedas such as the itihisas, Puranas

❁ So in which category is the Bhagavad Gita - shruti or smriti?

- ❁ Gita is shruti because it was directly spoken to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra by Lord Krishna himself.
- ❁ Gita is also smriti because it is within the Mahabharata which is History. History happened in the past, remembered and then it was written down by Vyasadeva.

# Vedic Literature - Vedas

❁ The Vedic science is vast and nothing have been left uncovered in the Vedic investigation of reality and the search for Truth, and in its presentation of what is God. The format of this knowledge is as follows:





## ❁ THE FOUR PRIMARY VEDAS

### ❁ Rig-veda:



- ❁ “Veda of Praise”. The hymns were mainly of praise to the gods (such as Indra - the god of heaven and rain, Agni - the fire god and Surya - the sun god) that were invoked during the Vedic ceremonies for ensuring immediate material needs.
- ❁ Parts of the Rig-veda primarily with the soma ritual, which was the extraction and purification of the juice of the soma herb – an addictive beverage!
- ❁ These were chanted by the four priests who conducted the Vedic rituals, namely the hota who calls the gods with the mantras from the Rig-veda. Only the brahmana priests who could be sure of chanting the mantras accurately can produce the desired result. If the mantra was chanted incorrectly by someone who was not qualified, the desired result would not take place and often something undesirable or horrible would happen instead.
- ❁ The important Purusha Sukta hymn in the 90th chapter of the Rig-veda’s tenth mandala.

# Vedic Literature - Vedas

## Yajur-veda:




-  The Yajur-veda is the “Veda of Rituals” containing different levels of knowledge and wisdom.
-  The Yajur-veda once had 109 branches of knowledge, but now only parts of seven branches are found.
-  The Yajur-veda, however, has two samhitas, or collections of verses, known as the White Yajur-veda (or Vajasaneyi-samhita) with the hymns and rituals, and the Black Yajur-veda (or Taittiriya-samhita) with their interpretations.
-  These were primarily for the priests to use as a guide in performing sacred rituals, such as the ashvamedha or rajasuya, since they also contain directions or formulas that the priests use along with the verses that are sung during the ceremony.


## Sama-veda:


-  The Sama-veda, the “Veda of Melodies,” contains 1549 verses meant to be used as songs in various ceremonies, primarily for the udgata priest. Most of them are taken from the Rig-veda and arranged according to their use as utilized in particular rituals.
-  From the original 1000 branches of the Sama-veda, three are still available, of which the Kauthumiya and Jaiminiya are prominent.

# Vedic Literature - Vedas

## Atharva-veda:

-  The Atharva-veda is the “Veda of Chants” containing prayers, spells, and incantations which resemble magical instructions found in the Tantras.
-  The Atharva-veda contains a small section of verses of instruction, wisdom, descriptions of the soul and God
-  However, the majority of it consists of rules for worshiping the planets, rules for oblations and sacrifices, prayers for averting evil and disease, incantations for the destruction of foes, for fulfilling personal desires, etc., mostly for the material needs of people.

 The four Vedas mainly deal with material elevation and since Lord Vishnu is the Lord of material liberation, most sacrifices were directed toward the demigods.

 The Vedas represent the accomplishment of a highly developed religious system and encourage satisfaction of material desires through worship of the demigods. They contain many directions for increasing one’s power and position, or for reaching the heavens in one’s future by properly performing particular sacrifices in worship to the devas (demigods), and so on.

# Vedic Literature

- ❁ Some people ask why there seems to be so many gods within Vedic culture:
  - ❁ Actually the position is that there one Supreme Being who has many agents or demigods who assist in managing the creation and the natural forces within.
  - ❁ When these demigods are properly approached with prayer or worship, they may help facilitate the person by granting certain wishes that may be within the jurisdiction of that demigod.
  - ❁ The names of these gods are considered offices or positions, rather than the actual name of the demigod. For example, we may call the president of the country by his personal name, or simply Mr. President. It's the position itself that allows for him to have certain powers or areas of influence.
  - ❁ In the case of the devas, it is only after accumulating much pious credit that a living being can earn the position of being a particular demigod. Then a person may become an Indra, or Vayu, or attain some other position to assume specific powers, or to control various aspects of material energy.
  - ❁ According to the Vedas, the devas are not imaginary or mythological beings, but are agents of the Supreme Will to administer different aspects of the universal affairs.

# Vedic Literature

- ❁ The main subject of the Vedas is karma-kanda. Why?
  - ❁ The karma-kanda section is meant to supply the rituals for purifying our mind and actions in the pursuit of our desires, and not merely to live with the intent of acquiring all of one's material wants and necessities from the demigods.
  - ❁ By having faith and steadiness in the performance of the ritual, one establishes purification in one's habits and thoughts.
  - ❁ This provides a gradual process of acquiring one's needs and working out one's desires while simultaneously becoming purified and free of them.
  - ❁ Such purification can then bring one to a higher level of spiritual activity.
  - ❁ This was the higher purpose of the karma-kanda rituals.
  - ❁ Without this understanding, one misses the point and remains attached to rituals in the pursuit of material desires, which will drag one further into material existence.
  - ❁ In this way, it was recommended that people could perform sacrificial rituals to obtain their desires. However, by the performance of such acts they should understand their dependent position, not only on the demigods, but ultimately on the Supreme Being.

# Vedic Literature

❁ Do those interested in spiritual knowledge do karma-kanda activities?

- ❁ In Bhagavad-gita, however, Lord Krishna points out that men of small knowledge, who are given to worldly desires, take delight in the flowery words of the Vedas that prescribe rituals for attaining power, riches, or rebirth in heaven. With their goal of enjoyment they say there is nothing else than this.
- ❁ However, Krishna goes on to explain (in Bhagavad-gita 7.21-23) that when a person desires to worship a particular demigod for the temporary and limited fruits he or she may bestow, Krishna, as the Supersoul in everyone's heart, makes that person's faith in that demigod steady.
- ❁ But all the benefits given by any demigod actually are given by Krishna alone, for without whom no one has any power. The worshipers of the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but worshipers of Krishna reach Krishna's spiritual abode.
- ❁ For one who has begun to endeavor for reaching the supreme goal of Vedic knowledge, the prescribed duties in the Vedas for worshiping the demigods are unnecessary. As Bhagavad-gita (3.17-18) explains, for one who is fully self-realized, there is no duty or need to perform the prescribed duties found in the Vedas, because he has no purpose or material desires to fulfill.



# Vedic Literature

✿ Although the four principle Vedas include the concept of spiritual perfection, it is not so thoroughly presented. Therefore, to help one understand the goal of Vedic philosophy is, there are other compositions:

## ✿ Brahmanas:

- ✿ The Brahmanas are compositions that accompany different portions of the Veda Samhitas with additional directions and details that the brahmana priests would use when performing the sacrificial rituals, along with their histories.
- ✿ The Brahmanas also hold cosmological legends and stories that explain the reason for performing the Vedic rituals, along with the esoteric significance of the mantras and sacrificial rituals

## ✿ Aranyakas:

- ✿ The Aranyakas are sacred writings, considered to be secret and dangerous to the uninitiated. The Aranyakas reveal more of the esoteric aspects of the rituals and their purposes than the Brahmanas. They are meant only for the brahmana priests and kshatriya warriors who have renounced all materialistic activities, and retired to the solitude of the forests, which is the meaning of “aranyaka.” They include a strict style of worship to particular forms or aspects of God. These instructions could consist of which mantras to use for particular purposes, how to sit, in which time of the morning to practice, and so on...

# Vedic Literature - Upanishads

## Upanishads:

- ❁ The Upanishads are meant for the continued spiritual progress of the individual. The Vedas encourage worship to the demigods for material needs and only hint at the prospect of spiritual liberation, and the Upanishads start to explain how worldly attachments need to be renounced so we can surrender to God.
- ❁ The word upanishad literally means to sit down (shad) near (upa) and below or at the feet with determination (ni). So it indicates that the student should sit near the feet of one's spiritual teacher and listen with determination to the teachings.
- ❁ The Upanishads are a collection of 108 philosophical dissertations. However, there are over 100 additional lesser Upanishads that are not actually part of the primary group, making a total of well over 200.
- ❁ Out of all the Upanishads, the following eleven are considered to be the topmost: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, and Svetasvatara.
- ❁ The Upanishads mainly focus on establishing the Absolute as nonmaterial and describe it as Brahman: the eternal, unmanifest reality, source and ultimate shelter of everything.

# Vedic Literature - Upanishads

- ❁ The Brahman is said to be incomprehensible because it is without material qualities or form. The secret to understanding Brahman according to the Upanishads is that they describe the Absolute as having no material qualities or material personality, but consists of spiritual qualities. And this can be confusing:
  - ❁ For example in the Isha Upanishad (5) it states that: “The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and yet He is outside of everything.”
  - ❁ So the point is that the Absolute has spiritual legs to run or walk with and spiritual senses that are not limited like material senses.
- ❁ Though the Upanishads generally refer to the Absolute in an impersonal way, they also begin to establish that the Supreme Reality has form, or, in other words, is a person, and that there is a Divine Abode.
- ❁ For example the GopalaTapani Upanishad (2.23) that explains the nature of the Supreme is this one:
  - ❁ “Sri Krishna has got no birth and no old age, He is always in His adolescence without any change. He is ever most effulgently shining so gloriously more than the sun. He is fond of remaining with the divine cows of Goloka Vrindavana. He is eternally fond of being with the Gopas, cowherd boys, as He feels pleasure tending the cows.

# Vedic Literature - Upanishads

- ❁ He is the very object of the Vedas, He as the Supersoul ever dwells in the heart of every living being, and He is the only Sustainer of all. He is the beloved sweet-heart of you all.”

- ❁ The Radhika Upanishad explains this a little further.

- ❁ Therein it is described that only within Lord Krishna is there the hladini power, which is the pleasure or bliss potency.

- ❁ The other forms of the Lord are but parts or expansions of the Lord, and although They may be the same in power, They are lacking in the level of bliss potency that is found within Lord Krishna.

- ❁ This means that the supreme sweetness in loving exchanges is manifested from Lord Krishna. In this way, you have the sweet, sweeter and sweetest levels of loving bliss established in the different levels of the spiritual reality, until it culminates from the Brahman and Vaikuntha on up to Goloka Vrindavan, the spiritual abode of Krishna.

- ❁ Or from the brahmajyoti to the Vishnu forms up to the supremacy of Sri Krishna. This is what is established by fully understanding the purport of the Upanishads.

- ❁ The Sri Chaitanya Upanishad (Chaitanyopanishad), only 19 verses but:

- ❁ Predicts the appearance of Lord Chaitanya, together with a description of His life and purpose, and the reasons why His process of spiritual enlightenment (of chanting the Hare Krishna Maha-Mantra is so powerful and effective in this age of Kali-yuga.

# Vedic Literature

## ❁ Upa-vedas:

❁ Upa-vedas mean following the Vedas. These are the following scriptures:

- ❁ Artha-veda (science of economics and sociology),
- ❁ Dhanur-veda (the science of defense, war, and politics),
- ❁ Gandharva-veda (art of music, dancing, and singing),
- ❁ Ayurveda (the holistic medical science).

❁ These are smaller compositions, each are attached to one of the four main samhitas (namely the Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva respectively). Unfortunately, most of these compositions are difficult to find, except for the Ayurveda, the majority of which is still available but not all of its original text.

## ❁ Vedangas:

❁ Vedangas literally mean the limbs of the Vedas. They are six in number. Just like the limbs of the body, they perform various supportive and augmenting functions in the study, preservation and protection of the Vedas and the vedic traditions.

❁ The six Vedangas are Siksha, Chanda, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa.

# Vedic Literature - Vedangas

- ✿ These subjects were an integral and essential part of ancient vedic education system, aimed to promote an all round development of the students with a better understanding of the Vedas and vedic practices.
- ✿ Vyakarana is the science of Sanskrit grammar. Without this, it is easy for a person to mistranslate the real meaning or purpose of the Vedic mantras.
- ✿ Nirukta provides the explanations of the Vedic words. These are used with the Vyakarana to understand the exact meaning of Sanskrit words to make sure the Vedic samhita mantras are not misunderstood.
- ✿ Siksha is the science of correct pronunciation of Vedic mantras, such as intonation, duration, and the accent on a word or syllable. This will determine how one “sings” each mantra. Differences in the pronunciation of a mantra can also change its meaning, and the outcome of the ritual. That is one of the reasons why the old Vedic rituals are no longer recommended for this day and age. The problem is that this is difficult to learn and almost all books on the topic have become lost.
- ✿ Chandas is the science of correctly emphasizing the meter of the Vedic verses according to the division or parts and letters, and the correct pronunciation of the words. The Vedic mantras are also named according to its parts

# Vedic Literature - Vedangas

- ❁ Jyotish is the science of Vedic astrology. This was used for a couple of reasons. Primarily it was for establishing the correct position of the stars and planets at certain times, such as one's birth, and their effects for predicting one's future life. It was also for calculating the best times to begin special activities, such as Vedic rituals. There were many books on jyotish, but most have now become lost, leaving but several left to study.
- ❁ Kalpa is the science of performing the rituals intended for the proper application of the Vedic texts. There are numerous sets of Kalpa Sutras, composed by various rishis which systematically describe about the various religious activities and ceremonies like Yajna (oblation), marriage and sacred thread ceremony etc propounded by the Vedas.

# Vedic Literature

- ❁ Most of the Shruti texts, which consist of the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads etc focus on the rituals and methods for acquiring material needs by worship of the Vedic demigods.
- ❁ When the Shruti texts go beyond this then they primarily contain :
  - ❁ knowledge of the futility of material existence,
  - ❁ the temporary nature of the material creation,
  - ❁ the bondage of the jiva souls in this existence of birth and death,
  - ❁ the spiritual nature of the individual and the Supreme Being.
  - ❁ describe that the goal of life is liberation from this material manifestation and
  - ❁ the need to return to spiritual existence through the understanding of karma, spiritual knowledge, renunciation and devotion to God (bhakti).
- ❁ However, generally they do not go beyond this, or at least not into the finer details. There is not much information about the bliss of spiritual activities and the pastimes of Goloka Vrindavana, the most intimate and confidential abode of the Lord, who is a spiritual being, a personality. Because of this additional information is supplied in Srmiti.



# Vedic Literature

## ❁ Sutras (including Nyaya & Vedanta)

- ❁ Sutras clarifies the Vedic principles so a person can focus on the ways for attaining a good life now and in the next.
- ❁ Provide logical code of rules for the Vedic rituals and worship used along with the Vedas and explains the purpose and meaning of the rituals.
- ❁ It is especially meant to help householders regulate and spiritualize their daily lives
- ❁ Vedanta sutra is meant more for those who had grown tired of materialistic existence and are ready to retire and seriously engage in spiritual pursuits - “athato brahma-jijnasa”,

## ❁ Itihasas

- ❁ helps explain the rituals of the Vedas and the highly compressed philosophy of the Vedanta-sutras by using historical events of the universe and factual stories of many great sages, demigods, and so forth.
- ❁ Included in the Itihasas is the Mahabharata, written by Srila Vyasadeva. It is an historical epic about the great kingdom of Bharatavarsa.

# Vedic Literature - Itihasas

- ❁ Mahabharat contains 110,000 couplets making it the longest poem and greatest epic in world literature.
  - ❁ It is divided into 18 sections called parvas, such as the Adi Parva, etc.
  - ❁ It is a treasure house of Bharatiya culture and holds within it a code of life for ethical, social and spiritual relations.
  - ❁ Throughout this great epic every sort of human situation is described and every kind of emotion is aroused. There is a saying that if it is not in the Mahabharata then it is not to be found.
  - ❁ The Mahabharata deals with the activities of the Pandavas and Krishna's relations, as well as topics that include
    - ❁ the creation of the world,
    - ❁ history of the sages, dharma, politics, military strategies, proper behavior of a king, and ways of spirituality and devotion to God.
    - ❁ It includes the essence of the Upanishads and Vedic teachings, and Bhagavad-gita.
- ❁ Ramayana is a similar epic, consisting of 24,000 verses:
  - ❁ It was first written during the time of Lord Ramachandra by the great poet Valmiki, which describes the life of Lord Ramachandra, an incarnation of God, and His consorts Sitadevi.

# Vedic Literature - Itihasas

- ❁ Many pastimes are included in this storehouse of wisdom that has been an inspiration for thousands of years to all people who have read it.
- ❁ In the incarnation of Lord Ramachandra, God appears as the perfect son, king and ruler, and inspires all His subjects with the greatest love for Him.
- ❁ The Itihasas are accepted as supplementary Vedic literature and acharyas such as Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva have all presented the Itihasas as valid Vedic evidence and wrote commentaries on Bhagavad-gita.
- ❁ The Chandogya Upanisad (7.1.4) mentions the Puranas and Itihasas as the fifth Veda.
- ❁ The Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.4.20) also states, “The four divisions of the original sources of knowledge [the Vedas] were made separately. But the historical facts and authentic stories mentioned in the Puranas are called the fifth Veda.”
- ❁ The Vedas themselves not only accept the four Vedas, the Upanishads, and Vedanta-sutras, but also the Mahabharata, Bhagavad-gita, the Ramayana, and the Puranas as being authentic Vedic literature. To be accepted as Vedic literature it must present the same purpose as the original texts

# Vedic Literature- Puranas

## ❁ Puranas:

- ❁ The Puranas are an important part of the Itihasas being historical accounts of the universe and containing many pastimes that took place on earth or even on other planets and dimensions, or in which superhuman powers are commonplace.
- ❁ The Puranas contain five basic subjects and in some cases ten. These include:
  - ❁ the creation of the world,
  - ❁ its destruction and re-creation,
  - ❁ the genealogy of the patriarchs and the demigods,
  - ❁ the reigns of the Manus (who are the avatars in each duration of time known as a manvantara), and
  - ❁ the history of the Solar and Lunar dynasties.
  - ❁ Many of them also include descriptions of the activities of the incarnations of God, as well as the great sages and devotees of God.
- ❁ One thing that may seem somewhat confusing is that the stories are not in any particular chronological order and may be related at any time according to need. This is primarily due to the fact that the Puranas are generally related in a dialogue of questions and answers between sages and saints, or masters and disciples. Then the histories and stories are related in the answers.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

- ❁ The Puranas explain more clearly and completely the spiritual philosophy found in the four original Veda samhitas.
- ❁ Thus, they especially are meant for all classes of people.
- ❁ Since all men are not on the same level of consciousness and are spread over many different types of thinking, feeling and desiring, the Puranas are divided so that any class of people can take advantage of them and utilize them to get out of the material entanglement either gradually or rapidly.

- ❁ 18 secondary Upa-puranas called

❁ Sanatkumara,	❁ Manava,	❁ Saura,
❁ Narasimha,	❁ Ausanasa,	❁ Parasara,
❁ Naradiya,	❁ Varuna,	❁ Aditya,
❁ Shiva,	❁ Kalika,	❁ Mahesvara,
❁ Durvasasa,	❁ Samba,	❁ Bhargava,
❁ Kapila,	❁ Nandi,	❁ Vasistha.

- ❁ 18 Mahapuranas are divided into three groups.

- ❁ Mode of tamo-guna (ignorance or lower nature)
- ❁ Mode of raja-guna (action or passion)
- ❁ Mode of sato-guna (purity or goodness)

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (1 of 9):

### ❁ Linga Purana (mode of ignorance) contains 11,000 verses

#### ❁ focuses mainly on the glories and activities of Lord Shiva

- ❁ the manifestation of the Shiva-linga and its worship,
- ❁ the worship and fasting days for Shiva,
- ❁ descriptions of the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi),
- ❁ Shiva's thousand names,
- ❁ his marriage to Parvati,
- ❁ the appearance of Ganesh, and more.

### ❁ Skanda Purana (mode of ignorance) is the largest with around 81,000 verses:

#### ❁ mostly about Lord Vishnu and Shiva

#### ❁ include the holiness of places like Kedar, Badarikashrama, Mathura, Kashi, Dwarka, and many other places and sacred rivers.

#### ❁ It also covers worship of Shiva, the austerities of Parvati,

#### ❁ worship of Vishnu and stories of prominent devotees, as well as activities and worship of Lord Rama,

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (2 of 9):

### ❁ Agni Purana (mode of ignorance) contains 15,000 verses:

#### ❁ Agni, the fire-god, explains to the sage Vashishtha many spiritual instructions.

- ❁ These include descriptions of the Lord's incarnations, the universal creation,
- ❁ the greatness of the Ganges River,
- ❁ the science of astrology,
- ❁ religious disciplines, yoga practice, Ayurveda,
- ❁ knowledge of Brahman, and
- ❁ the art of bhakti, or devotional service.

### ❁ Matsya Purana (mode of ignorance) contains 14,000 verses:

#### ❁ Conversation between Lord Matsya and Manu. it includes many topics,

- ❁ descriptions of the universal creation,
- ❁ the family and descendants of King Ikshvaku, Surya and Chandra, along with the ten avatars of God.
- ❁ It also relates the principles of worship and fasting on holy days,
- ❁ the pastimes of Parvati and Shiva, their marriage, and other stories.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (3 of 9):

### ❁ Kurma Purana (mode of ignorance) contains 15,000 verses:

- ❁ the occurrences of the day of Brahma called Lakshmi-kalpa.
- ❁ The Lord's incarnation as Kurma presents His teachings to the great sages.
- ❁ These include the manifestation and maintenance of the universe, the pastimes of Lord Krishna,
- ❁ the greatness of Kashi and other holy places,
- ❁ the effects of devotion (bhakti) to God that everyone should strive to attain,
- ❁ and the duties or dharma for liberation.

### ❁ Shiva (or Vayu) Purana, (mode of ignorance) contains 24,000 verses.

- ❁ Vayu, the wind god, describes events of the present kalpa, or day of Brahma.
- ❁ It contains the usual information that a Purana explains, such as the process of creation, the incarnations of God, the manvantaras,
- ❁ the glories of the Narmada River, and detailed accounts of Lord Shiva.



# Vedic Literature - Puranas

❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (4 of 9):

❁ Brahma Purana (mode of passion ) contains 10,000 verses:

- ❁ This includes the stories of Lord Ramachandra,
- ❁ many stories of Lord Krishna,
- ❁ along with those of Surya the sun god,
- ❁ and the birth of Parvati and her marriage to Shiva, and
- ❁ other aspects of the Vedic sciences.

❁ Brahmananda Purana (mode of passion ) contains 12,000 verses:

- ❁ This provides descriptions of future kalpas (days of Brahma).
- ❁ Included are descriptions of the holy place of Naimisharanya, Bharatvarsha and other places in the world.
- ❁ It also describes other planetary systems, Svayambhuva Manu and other manvantaras, the activities of Lord Krishna, and the dynasties of King Ikshvaku, Yadu and Vrishni, along with the dynasties and characteristics of people in the age of Kali-yuga.
- ❁ There are also descriptions of the creation and annihilation of the universe.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

✿ A review of the Mahapuranas (5 of 9):

✿ Brahma-vaivarta Purana (mode of passion ) contains 18,000 verses:

- ✿ This Purana is known for the information it provides about Lord Vishnu and Shiva, and shows their unity. It also includes the basic topics of most Puranas, such as the account of the universal creation.
- ✿ It also provides 129 chapters of many stories of the pastimes of Radha and Krishna and how to worship Him.
- ✿ It also discusses Goloka, the divinity of Krishna and appearance of Radha, and numerous descriptions of Her, the birth and marriage of Tulasi, the story of Vrinda, and more.
- ✿ There are also accounts of Narada going to Shiva's abode and receiving instructions, along with activities of Ganesh, Kartikeya, Parashurama, and others.

✿ Markandeya Purana (mode of passion ) contains 9,000 verses:

- ✿ Here we find the conversation between the sages Markandeya and Jaimini.
- ✿ A wide range of topics are discussed, a few of which include Lord Balarama's pilgrimage when He refused to take part in the war of Kurukshetra, stories of Draupadi's five sons, Dattatreya, the lineage of Vaivasvata Manu, stories of Lord Rama, Krishna, His incarnations, and various spiritual instructions.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (6 of 9):

### ❁ Bhavishya Purana (mode of passion ) contains 14,000 verses:

- ❁ This deals with the characteristics of Brahma, dharma, worship of Vishnu and Shiva for worldly prosperity as well as liberation, and information about Surya.
- ❁ There are also instructions for religious discipline, charity, etc.
- ❁ There are descriptions of the kings and characteristics of the future of this age of Kali-yuga. However, there are now parts of this Purana, namely of the fifth section, that are completely lost.

### ❁ Vamana Purana (mode of passion ) contains 10,000 verses:

- ❁ describes the occurrences that take place in the day of Brahma called the Kurma-kalpa.
- ❁ It relates the fighting between the demons and demigods,
- ❁ Daksha's unfortunate sacrificial ritual,
- ❁ the activities of Goddess Durga and Parvati,
- ❁ the greatness of Vishnu, and
- ❁ the conversation between Prahlada and King Bali, as well as the activities of Lord Krishna and His devotees.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (7 of 9):

### ❁ Varaha Purana (mode of goodness) contains 24,000 verses:

- ❁ Herein there is a conversation between Lord Varaha and Bhumidevi (the Earth Goddess) about the manifestation of Gauri (Parvati) and her sons Ganesh and Kartikeya.
- ❁ Gauri's battle with the demon Mahishasura, and
- ❁ the greatness of holy sites like Mathura and other places are also described.
- ❁ It also has more about general Vedic philosophy.

### ❁ Narada Purana (mode of goodness) contains 25,000 verses:

- ❁ the teachings of the four Kumaras who offer their advice regarding such things as duties in family life and religious practice.
- ❁ There are also descriptions of the appearance and activities of Shukadeva Gosvami who learned the knowledge of the Bhagavatam and recited it for King Pariksit, along with the pastimes and characteristics of Lord Vishnu, Surya, Ganesh, Shiva, Durga, and others.
- ❁ It also offers descriptions of the other Puranas, as well as the greatness of such holy places as Haridwar, Kashi, Kuruksetra, Mathura, Vrindavana, and other places.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

## ❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (8 of 9):

### ❁ Garuda Purana (mode of goodness) contains 19,000 verses:

- ❁ Lord Vishnu answers questions of his carrier, Garuda, on Vedic topics and activities of the day of Brahma called the Tarkshya-kalpa.
- ❁ This Purana primarily relates the glories of Lord Vishnu.
- ❁ It contains the thousand names of Vishnu (the Vishnu Sahasranama), ways of meditating on Lord Vishnu and worship of Lord Krishna.
- ❁ It also includes the pastimes of Lord Rama, the process of yoga, types of charity, Sankhya philosophy, descriptions of the spiritual domain, the celestial regions, and the process for attaining liberation from material existence.

### ❁ Padma Purana (mode of goodness) contains 55,000 verses:

- ❁ It includes the important stories of Lord Krishna and Vrindavana, Lord Rama, and
- ❁ other stories on the importance of various holy places, such as Pushkar, Jagannatha Puri, Kashi (Varanasi), Prayag (Allahabad), Gaya, and the Narmada and Ganga rivers.
- ❁ It also includes a section called the Bhagavata Mahatmya on the glories and greatness of the Bhagavata Purana.

# Vedic Literature - Puranas

❁ A review of the Mahapuranas (9 of 9):

❁ Vishnu Purana (mode of goodness) contains 23,000 verses:

- ❁ Parasara Muni describes the events of the Varáha Kalpa, expounds all duties,
- ❁ Origin of the caste system
- ❁ Describes the pastimes and worship of the Lord Vishnu, Laxmidevi, Prahlad
- ❁ Describes the descendants of Prithu, Priyavrata,
- ❁ Marriage of Vasudeva & Devaki and many of Krishna's pastimes

❁ Bhagavata Purana (mode of goodness) contains 18,000 verses:

- ❁ The Bhagavata Purana is also know known as the Srimad Bhagavatam.
- ❁ The Bhagavatam is Sri Vyasadeva's own commentary on all the Vedanta philosophy. It brings to light all the different aspects of the Absolute Truth, but especially the personal characteristics of Sri Krishna as the final conclusion of all Vedic understanding.
- ❁ It does not elaborate on worship of the other demigods or on rituals that award various temporary material benedictions as do some of the other Vedas and Puranas. Therefore, the Bhagavatam completely transcends all other philosophical viewpoints of the Vedic literature.