



***SYMBOLISM  
IN HINDUISM (SANATANA DHARMA)***

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# SYMBOLISM IN HINDUISM

- Symbols indicate the inner vision and spiritual experiences of Rishis (seers) in their deepest states of meditation. ***Symbols are not imaginations.***
- Symbols can be sounds, forms, physical objects, rituals and traditional customs, etc.
- Symbols are sacred and they are essential for spiritual practices, to represent Knowledge, as communication media to transfer spiritual knowledge, as carriers of traditional values, etc.

# What does *Sanaatana Dharma* mean?

- ❖ *Sanaatana* is Perennial and *Dharma* is universal principles and laws that govern life
- ❖ Refers to the whole process and values of life starting from inception of an idea, activity, results and beyond
- ❖ Provides a vision and a way for practice in life, both at an individual and collective level.

# What are the Objectives of Life (Purushaartha)?

1. **Dharma:** *Laws of Life, Nature and Universe*
2. **Artha:** *Wealth, Possession and Power*
3. **Kama:** *Desire and Ambition*
4. **Moksha:** *State of contentment and tranquility*

*The above order is very important and should not be interchanged.*

# How do India's *Rishis* define what goal of life is?

- “It is the view of the *Rishis* (enlightened beings) of *Bharata* that spiritual enlightenment is the ultimate goal of life. That is attainment of ultimate joy (*Ananda*). That is liberation (*Mukti*). Spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*) is that by which one merges into the light of *Atman* (One Source) as a river merges into the ocean.
- The *Rishis* or *jnanis* having attained this ultimate goal have brought forth the knowledge in science and arts (*Vijnana*) keeping in line with their roots in spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*) because *Vijnana* is the manifestation of *Jnana*.
- It is for this reason an in-depth sincere study of knowledge in science and arts at any stage of manifestation will lead to attainment of the ultimate goal of spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*)”

*Sriranga Sadguru*  
1913 - 1969



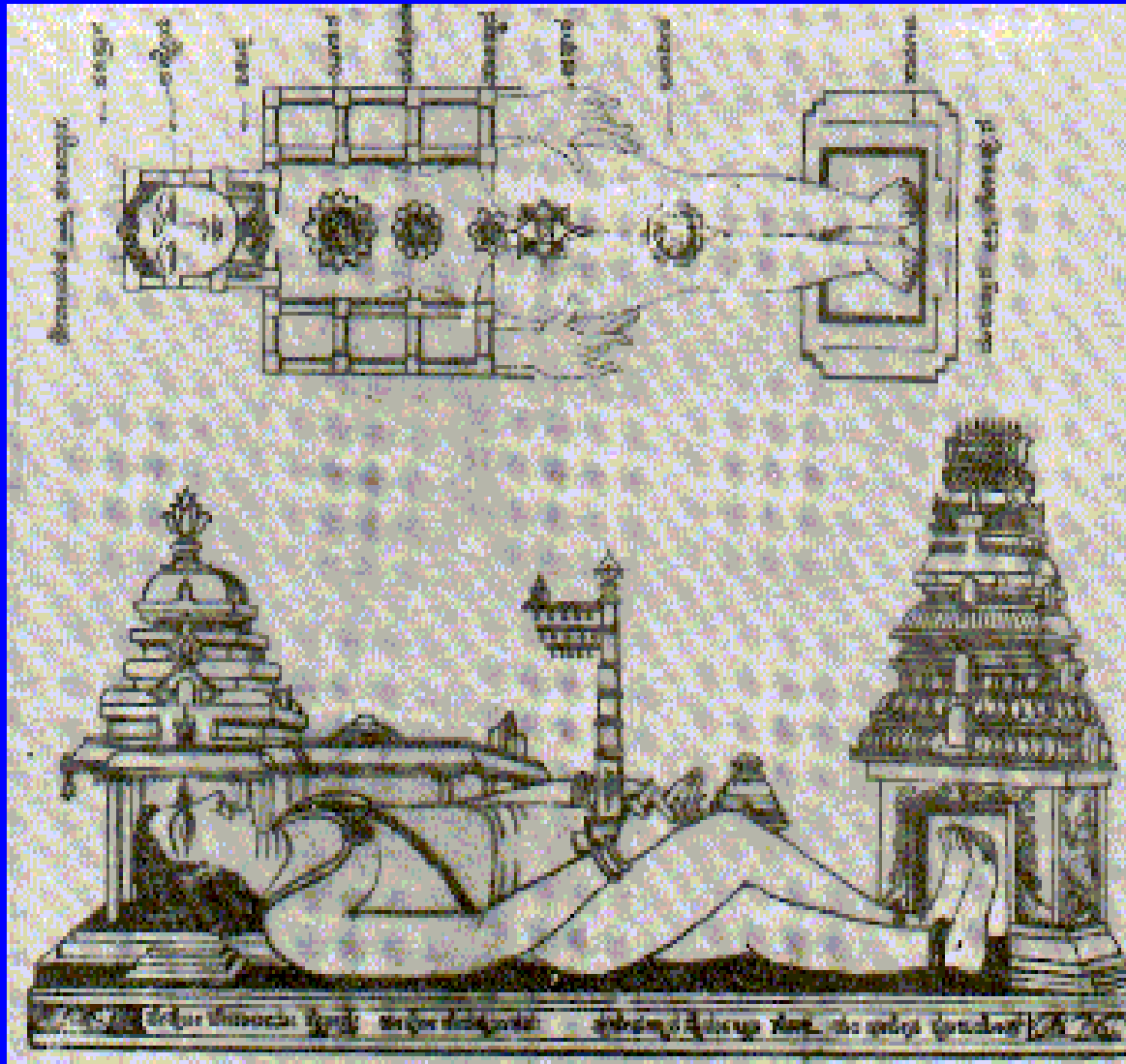
# And, *Yoga\** is the practice of *Vedic* knowledge in all aspects of life

“ The customs and habits, the dress and ornaments, the manners and etiquette, the conceptions of right and wrong and of good and evil, the learning, literature and the various arts like music, the political thoughts, views regarding all actions and the consecratory ceremonies, etc., of the Indians (*Bharatiyas*), are all permeated like the warp and woof by *Ashtanga Yoga*.”

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*\*Yoga means the union of the individual soul with the Supreme*

# Vedic Hindu Temple designed on Yogic principles of the Human Body



- Human body with *chakras* - (Abode of God) *Devaalaya*
- God indwelling in human being - (Deity) *Murti*
- Feet - *Rajagopura*
- Hands - *Prakaara*
- Abdomen - *Mandapa*
- Heart as *Antaraala* (entrance to *Garbha Griha*)
- Crown of the head - sanctum sanctorum - *Garbha Griha*
- Rituals - a guide to inner worship

# Lord Ganesha



One needs blessings of Lord Ganesha to get control of one's own mind

- Lord Ganesha is the Lord who governs the functions of mind
- In the form of energy, his location is Mooladhara chakra
- Rat represents the leaky nature of mind.
- Sweet dish in His hand refers to material and spiritual success
- Snake represents internal energy as Kundalini
- Large belly signifies the presence of universe in Him.
- Weapons in hand signify the control of senses
- Elephant face represents supreme wisdom including spiritual



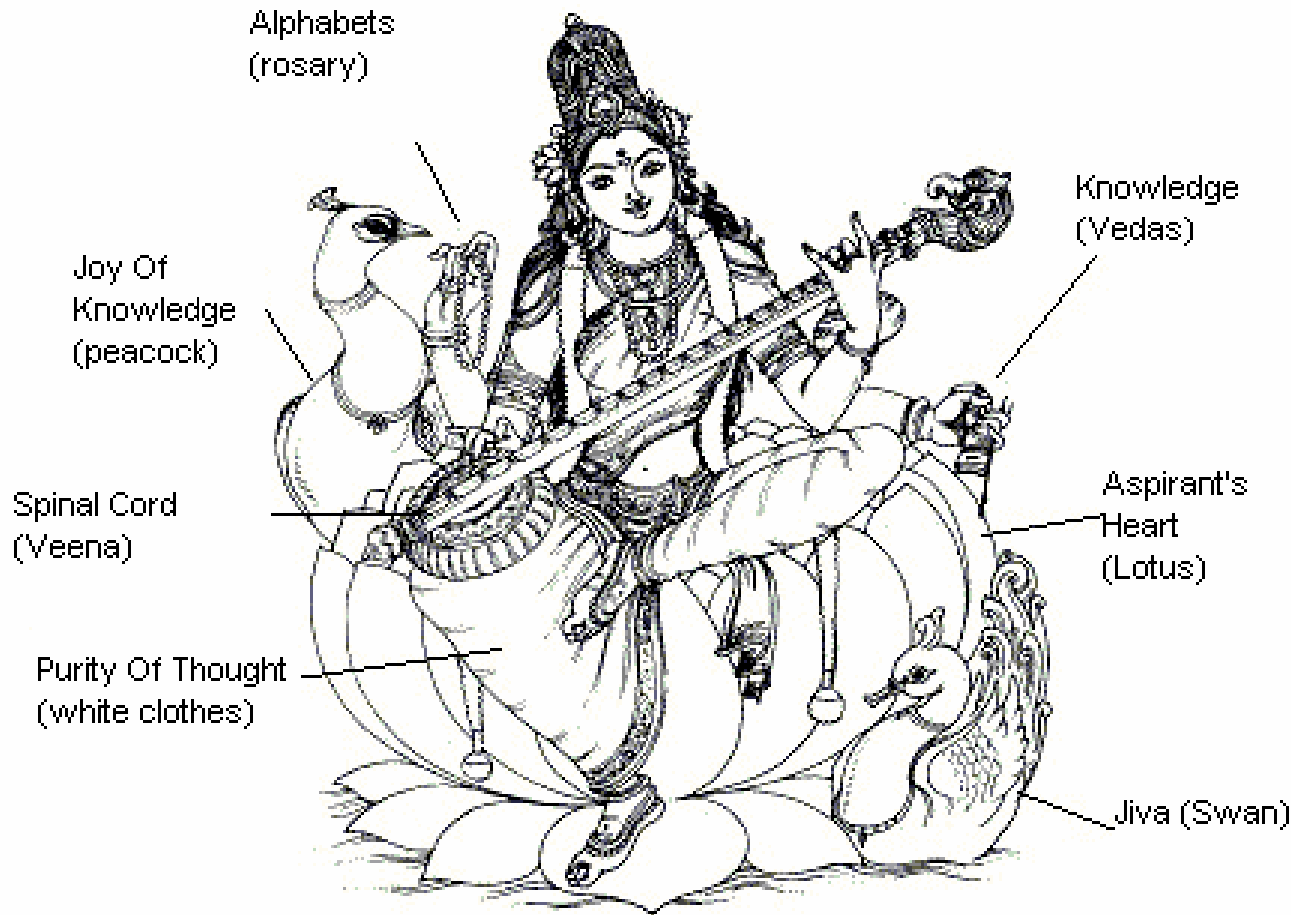
# Lord Narayana



- Lotus represents the blessings in the heart of devotees.
- Mace represents intelligence principle.
- Chakra (discuss wheel) represents mind and time principles
- Shankha (conch-shell) represents ego-identity of beings.
- Peacock feather signify sun, moon, fire principles
- Five headed snake represents inner five vital forces and Kundalini .

# Goddess Saraswati symbolizes Divine Knowledge

*Saraswati* means the one who gives the knowledge of one's own Self and Universe.



SARASWATI

# Lord Nataraja, Divine Dancer, in Spiritual Bliss of Perfect Yogic Balance



- Dwarf - demon of forgetfulness
- Snake - *Kundalini* yogic energy
- Drum - *prana* energy
- Fire - *apana* energy
- Two hands in the middle - blessing of fearlessness
- Head Ornaments - Sun, moon and fire
- (Ref: Sriranga Sadguru)

# 16 steps in Pooja

Pooja is a process to connect a devotee to the deity of worship through mind and senses with the help of materials. Pooja is a synthesis of devotion, knowledge and action.

1. Invoking God
2. Offering a seat to God
3. Washing feet of God
4. Washing hands of God
5. Water for sipping
6. Giving sacred bath
7. Offering sacred cloth
8. Offering sacred thread
9. Offering sandal paste
10. Offering flowers
11. Offering incense
12. Waving an oil lamp
13. Offering food for God
14. Offering betel leaves
15. Wave camphor light
16. Prostration to God

# ***Veda Mantras* interacting with flame...**

**Appearance of Goddess *Lakshmi* during a *Yajna***

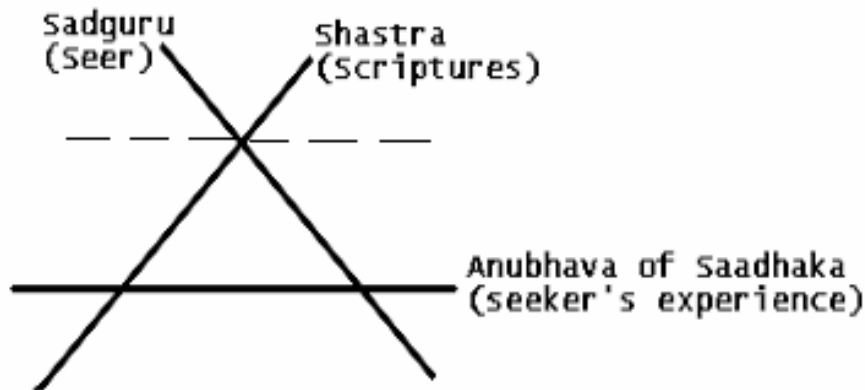


**An example: The interaction of *Veda* mantras and spiritual vibrations has a role in the appearance of the forms of the *devatas* and *devis***

# Vedic Triadic Approach to Seek Spiritual Knowledge

Three essential components for making an effort to acquire any knowledge, particularly spiritual knowledge are:

- The *Sadguru* refers to the guiding energy in the form of mother, father, acharya, spiritual mentor
- *Shastras* refers to the body of knowledge (Vedic literature)
- *Anubhava* means the experience of the seeker



Eventually, the seeker should advance towards spiritual enlightenment.