



IDC Outreach Seminar



TEN THOUGHT LEADERS FROM INDIA

Dr. Bijoy Misra
President
India Discovery Center

February 20, Saturday, 2021
Virtual Seminar through Video
9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Please register by sending mail to:
idcinboston@gmail.com

Mark Twain

A Journey around the Equator – Chapter XXXVIII

This is indeed India! the land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendor and rags, of palaces and hovels, of famine and pestilence, of genii and giants and Aladdin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great-grandmother of tradition, whose yesterdays bear date with the moldering antiquities of the rest of the nations—the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined.

January 20, 1896, Bombay, India

Yājñavalkya याज्ञवल्क्य

Approximate date – 1700BCE

The most prolific scholar of ancient India. Can be called the first scientist.

He designed three objects for himself: the mind mana, the speech vāk and the life force prāṇa.

This body is composed of these three.



त्रीण्यात्मनेऽकुरुत
इति मनो वाचं

प्राणम्

अयमात्मा

वाङ्मयो

मनोमयः

प्राणमयः

Bṛhadāraṇyaka

Upaniṣat

Ch I, Section V,

Stanza 3

vr̥hadāraṇyaka upaniṣat वृहदारण्यक उपनिषत्

Br̥hadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat is the largest of the Upaniṣat literature in India. The date cannot be ascertained.

The text is compiled and translated by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, 1934

- The discovery of mind मन as a separate entity from the body is an old Indian discovery.
- A human being is defined by his/her mind मन. The origin of the word is unknown.
- The space is three-tiered.

त्रयो लोका एत एव वागेवायं लोकः मनोऽन्तरिक्षलोकः प्राणोऽसौ लोकः।

Chapter I, Section 5, Stanza 4

There are three layers in the space. The local layer is vāk, the top layer is prāṇa, mana is the intermediate layer.

- Metaphysics of the universe:

त्रयं वा इदम् - नाम रूप कर्म Chapter I, Section 6, Stanza 1

The universe consists of three things – name, form and action.

- Definition of vāk:

तस्यै वाचः पृथिवी शरीरं ज्योतीरूपमयमग्निः तद्यावेव वाक् तावती पृथिवी तावानयमग्निः॥

Chapter I, Section 5, Stanza 11

Earth is the body of vāk, the fire is its luminous organ. Fire extends as far as the earth and so is vāk.

- Definition of mana:

अथैतस्य मनसो द्यौः शरीरम् ज्योतीरूपमसावादित्यः तद्यावदेव मनः तावती द्यौः तावानसावादित्यः

Chapter I, Section 5, Stanza 12

Sky is the body of the mind and the sun is its luminous organ. As far as mind extends, so extend the heaven and the sun.

- Definition of prāṇa:

यत्किञ्चाविज्ञातं प्राणस्य तद्रूपम् प्राणो ह्यविज्ञातः प्राण एनं तद्भूत्वावति।

Chapter I, Section 5, Stanza 10

Whatever is unknown is a form of prāṇa. Whatever is unknown, prāṇa assumes that form.

vṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣat वृहदारण्यक उपनिषत् (2)

- प्राण manifests as Self. The Self has to be realized. It cannot be reasoned.

तद्वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यर्दृष्टं द्रष्टृ अश्रुतं श्रोतृ अमतं मन्तृ अविज्ञातं विज्ञातृ नान्यदतोऽस्ति
द्रष्टृ नान्यदतोऽस्ति श्रोतृ नान्यदतोऽस्ति मन्तृ नान्यदतोऽस्ति विज्ञातृ एतस्मिन्नु
खल्वक्षरे गार्ग्याकाश ओतश्च प्रोतश्चेति

chapter III, section viii, stanza 11

This Immutable, O Gārgī, is never seen but is the Witness, it is never heard, but is the Hearer, it is never thought, but is the Thinker, it is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other witness but This, no other hearer, but This, no other thinker but This, no other knower but This. By this Immutable, O Gārgī, the space is pervaded.

- प्राण is Truth. Truth is unknown.

अथात आदेशः नेति नेति न ह्येतस्मादिति नेत्यन्यत्परमस्ति अथ नामधेयम् सत्यस्य
सत्यमिति प्राणा वै सत्यम् तेषामेष सत्यम्।

chapter II, section iii, stanza 6

So is the instruction – not this, not this. Because there is no more appropriate description than “not this”. So its name : Truth is Truth. Prāṇa is truth. This is truth of all.

- Brahman assumed all forms.

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव - chapter III, section v, stanza 19

S'rīkr̥ṣṇa श्रीकृष्ण

Approximate date – 1500BCE

The first secular teacher of the ancient world. A practitioner and a society man.
Possibly was a charioteer and a farmer.

Excellence in work is achieved by immersive concentration and practice of detachment called yoga. Equanimity is the nature of yoga.



योगस्थः कुरु
कर्माणि सङ्गं
त्यक्त्वा धनंजय।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः
समो भूत्वा
समत्वं योग
उच्यते ॥

śrīmadbhagavadgītā
Ch II, Stanza 48

Śrīmadbhagavadgītā श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

The most popular text for the followers of Hindu religion in modern India.

A Text of seven hundred verses incorporated in Mahābhārata, possibly composed by Vyāsa.

The analytic text has been admired by scholars in all cultures in the world.

The book is translated in all major languages.

The online Sanskrit text is in https://sanskritdocuments.org/doc_giitaa/bhagavadnew.html

S'amkarācārya's commentary has been translated to English by Swami Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama, 1984.

- A positive cosmic principle guides life.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च। नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः॥

śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter II, stanza 24

It cannot be severed, nor can it be burned. It cannot be dissolved or dried up. It is eternal, all-pervasive, stationary, unmoving and unchanging. (free translation)

- There is no individual work.

प्रकृतैः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः। अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते॥

śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter III, stanza 27

All work is done by the Nature. An egotistic person claims that "I am the doer." (free translation)

- Everything is the eternal Brahman.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम्। ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना॥

śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter IV, stanza 24

We offer to Brahman, the tools are Brahman, the food is Brahman, the doer in Brahman, the offering should go to Brahman in order to perform Brahman's services. (free translation)

- The principle does get stained by people and is reinstated through new teachers.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत। अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥

śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter IV, stanza 7

O' Bhārata! Whenever there is a decline of virtue and increase in vice, I (S'rīkr̥ṣṇa, the teacher) manifest myself.

Śrīmadbhagavadgītā श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (2)

- Human aptitude is in four classes – scholarship, military, business and labor.
चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टां गुणकर्मविभागशः। तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्॥
śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter IV, stanza 13
The four classes have been created by me (the eternal principle) on the basis of aptitude and work.
But know me as eternal and non-active.
- Religious are those who help others.
संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः। ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः॥
śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter XII, stanza 4
They only get to me (the eternity) who are controlled in their senses, who are even in all their dealings
and who engage themselves in helping all.
- One must let all work be an offering.
मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा। निराशीनिर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः॥
śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter III, stanza 30
Offering all work to me (the eternity), engage yourself without expectation and egotism, and without
mental hesitation.
- The elements of yoga must be practiced in order to reach the fulfillment in life.
निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः। द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ता सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत्॥
śrīmadbhagavadgītā, chapter XV, stanza 5
The non-delusional ones, who are free from pride and delusion, who are free from the mistakes through
attachment, who are spiritual, who are free from the desires, who have released themselves from the duality
of happiness and sorrow, reach the Immutable state.

Vardhamāna Mahāvīra वर्धमान महावीर

Approximate date – 600BCE. Ideas could be much older.

Raised a family before renunciation at thirty. Possibly trained as a mathematician.

Whoever is careless about his physical activities and speech, and covetous of wealth and woman, accumulates karmic dirt of attachment and aversion just as an earthworm accumulates mud by both ways (i.e. internally and externally).



कायसा वयसा
मत्ते वित्ते गिद्धे
य इत्थिसु।
दुहओ मलं
सचिणइ
सिसणगु व्व
मट्टियं॥

Samaṇasuttam
Stanza – 58
karmasūtra

Samaṇasuttam समणसुत्तम्

Compilation from the old Prakrit Agamas
Published 1993, Sarvasevasangha, India.

- Body and soul are distinct from each other. Shake off attachments to the body because it is the cause of suffering and pain.

अन्नं इमं सरीरं अन्नो जीबु ति निच्छियमईओ।

दुखपरीकेसकरं छिंद ममत्तं सरीराओ ॥ (Stanza 79, Rāgaparihārasūtra)

- To attain liberation, one must block all passages of karmic flux, curb the activities of one's sense organs and must annihilate all passions, through three modes of activity: mind, speech, and body, and in a three-fold manner of: doing, causing to be done and approving the action.

कम्मासवदाराइं निरुंभियच्चाइं इंदियाइं च।

हंतव्या य कसाया तिविहं - तिविहेण मुखत्थं ॥ (Stanza 80, Rāgaparihārasūtra)

- The body perishes, the soul takes rebirth.

सच्चागासवयवो णिच्चो । (Stanza 651, sṛṣṭisūtra)

Samaṇasuttam समणसुत्तम् (2)

Compilation from the old Prakrit Agamas
Published 1993, Sarvasevasangha, India.

- We live in the visible universe लोकाकाश lokākāśa, beyond which exists the invisible universe अलोकाकाश alokākāśa
- Living objects exist only in लोकाकाश
- Each living being can be defined by a soul.
- Number of souls in the universe is innumerable, but finite. The number is conserved.
- Doctrine on non-violence:
तुमं सि नाम स चेव जं हंतव्वं ति मन्नसि।
तुमं सि नाम स चेव जं अज्जावेयव्वं ति मन्नसि॥ (Stanza 152, Ahimsāsūtra)
The being you want to kill is the very same as you are yourself,
The being you want to be kept under obedience is the very same as yourself.
- Doctrine on forgiveness:
खम्मामि सव्वजीवाणं सव्वे जीवा खमंतु मे। (Stanza 86, Dharmasūtra)
I forgive all living beings, may all living beings forgive me.

Gautama Buddha गौतम बुद्ध

Approximate date – 500BCE. Ideas could be much older.

Born as a prince. Left wife and son at twenty nine. Became the popular teacher.

Only cessation of desire achieves purity of mind. It is not gained by walking naked, carrying matted hair, smearing body with mud, rolling on dust, by fasting or sleeping on hard ground.



न नग्गचरिया न
जटा न पङ्का
नानासका
थण्डिलसायिका
वा। रजोवजल्लं
उक्कटिकम्पधानं
सोर्धे^३न्ति मच्चं
अवितिण्णकङ्खं॥

Dhammapada (in
Pali) Stanza 141,
daṇḍavagga

Dhammapada धम्मपद

Compiled from the Buddha's discourses by his disciples in Pali language.

Edited and translated to Hindi by Rāhula Sakṛtāyana, 1933, Mahabodhisabha, Sarnath.

- Looking for a shelter does not release one from the sins.

नेतं खो सरणं खेमं नेतं सरणमुत्तमं।

नेतं सरणमागम्य सब्बदुक्खा पमुच्चति ॥ Stanza 189, Buddhavagga (11).

People visit mountains, forests, gardens, trees and temples to get relief from inner pain. Pains don't go away through such shelters. (free translation)

- Only a clean mind provides the relief.

अनवस्सुतचित्तस्य अनन्वाहतचेतसो।

पुन्नपापप्रहीणस्य नत्थि जागरतो भयं ॥ Stanza 39, Chittavagga (7).

A mind that is clean, unaffected by wandering thoughts, and is free from vice or virtue, remains fearless. (free translation)

- The clean mind is attained by understanding the four noble truths.

यो च बुद्धञ्च धम्मञ्च सङ्घञ्च सरणं गतो।

चत्तारि अर्यसच्चानि सम्मप्पण्णाय पस्सति ॥ Stanza 190, Buddhavagga (12)

One who takes shelter in the Buddha, observes righteous conduct and lives in a community of practitioners would be able to understand the four noble truths.

Dhammapada धम्मपद (2)

Compiled from the Buddha's discourses by his disciples in Pali language.

Edited and translated to Hindi by Rāhula Sakṛtāyana, 1933, Mahabodhisabha, Sarnath.

- We must reflect on the four noble truths.

दुखं दुखसमुप्पादं दुखस्स च अतिक्रमं।

अरियञ्चट्ठङ्गिकं मग्गं दुखूपसमगामिनं॥ Stanza 161, Buddhavagga (13).

Grief, the origin of grief, overcoming the grief and elimination of grief through eight noble paths: Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. (free translation)

- Grief enters through our body and mind.

जिघच्छा परमा रोगा सङ्खारा परमा दुखा।

एतं जत्वा यथाभूतं निब्बाणं परमं सुखं॥ Stanza 203, Sukhavagga (7).

Hunger is the greatest disease, the traditional codes are the greatest pain. Knowing this all should strive for nirvāṇa (extinction of grief) as much as possible.

- Life is momentary. A moment goes, does not return.

नगरं यथा पच्चन्तं गुतं सन्तरबाहिरं।

एवं गोपेथ अत्तानं खण् वे मा उपच्चगा।

खणातीता हि सोचन्ति निरयम्हि समप्पिता॥ Stanza 315, Nirayavagga (10).

Like a border town remains protected within and out, we must protect ourselves without sliding a single moment. Unprotected at the moment, we fall in Hell. (free translation).

Pāṇini पाणिनि

Approximate date – 400BCE. The compiler of the first work in grammar.
Lived in Salatura, modern Afghanistan. Possibly was trained in anatomy.
Standardized the Sanskrit language. Refers to ten previous grammarians.

Naturally and independently produced human expressive phonemes are sixty three or sixty four, both in Prākṛta and Saṁskṛta languages, as taught by the self-created S'ambhu.



त्रिषष्टिः
चतुःषष्टिर्वा
वर्णैः शम्भुमते
मताः।
प्राकृते संस्कृते
चापि स्वयं
प्रोक्ता
स्वयम्भुवा ॥

Pāṇinīyaśikṣā
Stanza 3

Aṣṭādhyāyī अष्टाध्यायी Pāṇinīyaśikṣā पाणिनीयशिक्षा

Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī is a set of eight books comprising of four thousand aphorisms.

Edited and translated by S'rīśa Candra Vasu, Motilal Banarssidas, 1891.

Pāṇinīyaśikṣā summarizes Pāṇini's thesis and analysis.

The Hindi commentary is edited by Damodar Mahato, Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

- Panini divides the speech sounds into two kinds: Consonants hal हल् and Vowels ac अच्
- The हल् and अच् comprise sets of phonemes in an algebraic compaction.
- हल् in a aphorism is represented by
हयवरट्। लण्। ञनङणमम्। झभञ्। घढधष्। खफछठथचटतङ्। कपय्। शषसर्। हल्।
hayavaratḥ | laṇ | ṅanaṅaṅamam | jhabhañ | ghaḍhadhaṣ | khaphachhaṭhathacaṭataṅ |
kapay | śaśasar | hal | (pratyāhārasūtra, Aṣṭādhyāyī)
- अच् is represented by
अइउण्। अलृक्। एओङ्। ऐऔच्। ai u ṅ | a | k | e o ṅ | ai au c |
- Letters वर्ण varṇa, are sixty three in number.
स्वरा विंशतिरेकश्च स्पर्शानां पञ्चविंशतिः।
यादयस्च स्मृता ह्यष्टौ चत्वारश्च यमाः स्मृताः॥
अनुस्वारो विंसर्गश्च र् क र् पौ चापि पराश्रितौ।
दुःस्पृष्टश्चेति विज्ञेयो लृकारः प्लुत एव च॥ Stanza 4, pāṇinīyaśikṣā
There are twenty one vowels, forty two consonants : twenty five stop consonants, eight
ya-kind consonants (य र ल व श ष स ह), four yama consonants (क ख ग घ), anusvara, visarga,
two special tongue-sounds and one extra-long pronounced लृ .

Aṣṭādhyāyī अष्टाध्यायी (2) Pāṇinīyaśikṣā पाणिनीयशिक्षा

- Stop consonants are of five types depending on the nature of production.

सोदीर्णो मूर्ध्न्यभिहतो वक्त्रमापाद्य मारुतः।

वर्णाञ्जनयते तेषां विभागः पञ्चधा स्मृतः॥ Stanza 9, Pāṇinīyaśikṣā

The expressive phoneme is created when air emanates from the body (exhalation), hits the head and is released through the mouth. These have five classes. (free translation)

- Vowels have three kinds of intonations and three kinds of time measures.

उदात्तश्चानुदात्तश्च स्वरितश्च स्वरास्त्रयः।

ह्रस्वो दीर्घः प्लुत इति कालतो नियमा अचि॥ Stanza 11, Pāṇinīyaśikṣā

Intonations in voice are three: high, low, medium.

The time measures in voice are three : short, long, prolonged.

- Aṣṭādhyāyī is algebraically brief, with beauty in brevity.

सुप्तिङन्तं पदम् suptiñantaṃ padam | Aṣṭādhyāyī, Book I, Chapter IV, Ap 14.

To be a word in use, a noun takes a suffix from a set of twenty one suffixes, called सुप् sup.

सुप् stands for सु-जौ-जस्, अम्-औद्-शस्, ता-भां-भिस्, डे-भ्यां-भ्यस्, डसि-भ्यां-भ्यस्,

डस्-ओस्-आम्, डि-ओस्-सुप् | Aṣṭādhyāyī, Book IV, Chapter I, Ap 2

su-jau-jas, am-aud-śas, tā-bhām-bhis, ñe-bhyām-bhyas, ñasi-bhyām-bhyas, ñas-os-ām, ñi-os-sup

A verb takes a suffix from eighteen conjugational suffixes that expand to one hundred and twenty.

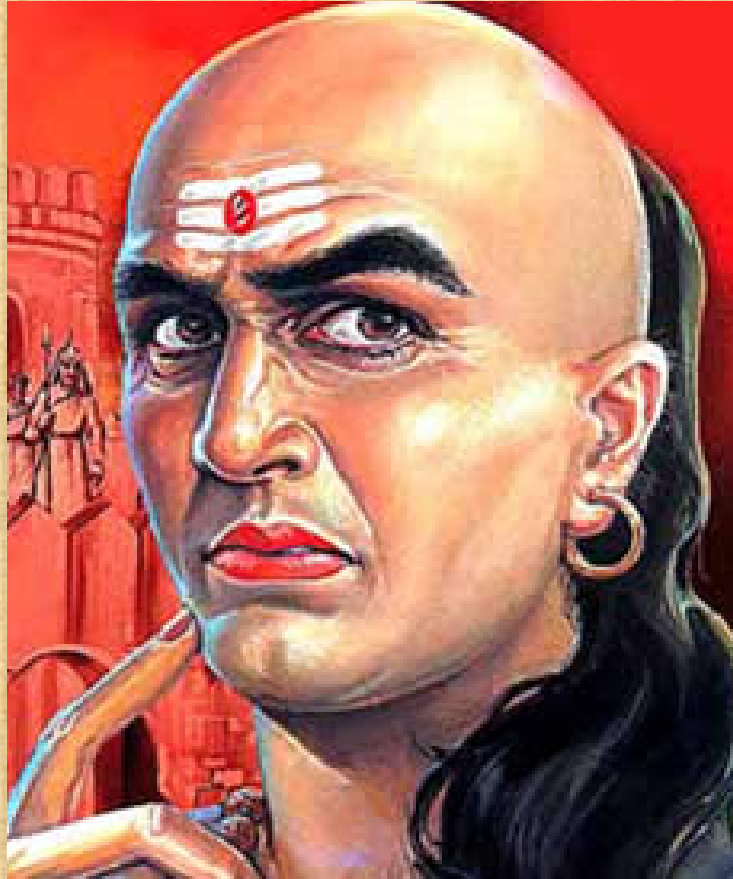
The तिङ् set is तिप्-तस्-झि-सिप्-थस्-थ-मिप्-वस्-मस्-त-आताम्-झ-थास्-आथाम्-ध्वम्-इट्-वहि-महिङ्

tip-tas-jhi-sip-thas-tha-mip-vas-mas-ta-ātām-jha-thās-āthām-dhvam-iṭ-vahi-mahiṅ

Cāṇakya Kauṭalya चाणक्य कौटल्य

Approximate date – 400BCE. Ideas could be much older
Was a Brahmin scholar and a counselor to the Mauryan kings.
Established the rule of law and governance in India.

Analytic tools of the traditional systems of Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Lokāyata illumine the knowledge in all sciences, and support all work. They serve as the basis in all religions.



प्रदीपः
सर्वविद्यानां
उपायः
सर्वकर्मणाम्।
आश्रयः
सर्वधर्माणां
शश्वद्
आन्वीक्षिकी
मता ॥

Arthaśāstra,
Book I, Chapter 2,
vidyāsamuddeśa

Arthaśāstra अर्थशास्त्र

Sanskrit commentary by T. Ganapati Shastri, Trivandrum, 1924

- A successful state is where the social order of people is respected.

स्वधर्मः स्वर्गायानन्त्याय च।

तस्यातिक्रमे लोकः सङ्करादुच्छिद्येत्॥ (Book I, Chapter 3)

One's own dutiful conduct leads to happiness and eternity. Its violation destroys the world.

- Everyone's opinion should be heard.

न कश्चिदवमन्येत सर्वस्य श्रणयान्मतम्।

बालस्याप्यर्थवद् वाक्यमुपयुञ्जीत पण्डितः॥ (Book I, Chapter 15)

One should not dismiss any and listen to all. The wise listen even to good counsel from children. (free translation).

- Fairness and objectivity must be the duty of the administration.

एवं कार्याणि धर्मस्थाः कुर्युरच्छलदर्शिनः।

समाः सर्वेषु भावेषु विश्वस्यै लोकासम्प्रियाः॥ (Book I, Chapter 77)

All decisions must be made with righteousness and without bias. The ruler must be even-handed in all situations and must be trustful and popular.

Cāṇakyanīti चाणक्यनीति

https://sanskritdocuments.org/doc_z_misc_major_works/chANakyanItisort.html

- There exists a universal rule for everything in the universe.
सत्येन धार्यते पृथ्वी सत्येन तपते रविः ।
सत्येन वाति वायुश्च सर्वं सत्ये प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ Chapter V, Stanza 19
The earth is held through Truth and the sun fires because of Truth. The air flows by the Truth, everything is established in Truth. (free translation)
- Truth lies in the heart.
न देवो विद्यते काष्ठे न पाषाणे न मृण्मये ।
भावे हि विद्यते देवस्तस्माद्भावो हि कारणम् ॥ Chapter VIII, Stanza 11
The divinity goes not exist in wood, stone or clay. It exists in your thoughts. Thoughts are the cause of events. (free translation)
- All offerings should be created by the individual to gain merit.
स्वहस्तग्रथिता माला स्वहस्तघृष्टचन्दनम् ।
स्वहस्तलिखितं स्तोत्रं शक्रस्यापि श्रियं हरेत् ॥ Chapter IX, Stanza 12
A garland made by own hands, sandal paste created by grinding with own hands or a hymn written by own hands gives one the merit of Indra. (free translation)
- Perfection is not achievable.
दोषवर्जितानि कार्याणि दुर्लभानि । nītisūtra, Chapter II, Stanza 13
It is rare to find works that are error-free. (free translation)

Vālmīki वाल्मीकि

Approximate date – 200BCE. Author of the first full Sanskrit epic.
Not much is known about his origin and family. He remains the most popular poet in India.

Who does not get complete release from this world by hearing the echos of Rama's story by Vālmīki, the "lion among the wise" who wanders in the forest of poetry?



वाल्मीकेः
मुनिसिंहस्य
कवितावनचारिणः।
शृण्वन्
रामकथानादं
को न याति
परां गतिं॥

From the traditional invocation of Rāmāyaṇa.
Unknown author.

Rāmāyaṇa रामायण

Book of twenty four thousand verses divided in seven volumes.

Retold in all Indian languages with several translations in English.

The original is published and distributed by Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India.

- Rāmāyaṇa story possibly existed as folk-legends for many centuries before Vālmīki.
- He retells it in verse form. Rāmāyaṇa is considered the first full epic in Sanskrit language.
- The poet declares that non-interference in other's life is the order of the universe. He laments the killing of a crane by a hunter while the bird was in conjugal union. The poet's curse to the hunter is considered the first poetic stanza ever uttered in Sanskrit language.

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वती समाः। यत् क्रौञ्चमिथुनदेकमवधीः काममोहितम्॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 1, Chapter 2, Stanza 15.

Let you not enjoy peace for eternity since you killed the crane who was infatuated in passion.

- The musical meter with eight syllables per quarter with four quarter stanzas has been called the अनुष्टुभ् anuṣṭubh. Each stanza is called a श्लोक śloka.

- Vālmīki extolls its musicality and its facilities for performance.

पाठ्ये गेये च मधुरं प्रमाणैस्त्रिभिरन्वितम्। जातिभिः सप्तभिर्युक्त तन्त्रीलयसमन्वितम्॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 1, Chapter IV, Stanza 8.

Composed in three measures of time, seven notes of music, rhythm and mental pause, the book is delightful to read and to sing.

- Vālmīki declares its complete aesthetics and success in its performance in meetings and assemblies.

रसैः शृङ्गारकरुणाहास्यरौद्रभयानकैः। वीरादिभी रसैर्युक्तं काव्यमेतदगायताम्॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 1, Chapter IV, Stanza 9.

Consisting of all emotions like love, compassion, laughter, wrath, terror, heroism and others, this poem was sung by two pupils (whom Vālmīki taught in the monastery).

Rāmāyaṇa रामायण (2)

- Rāmāyaṇa story is woven around the life and living of prince Rāma, a talented and gifted person.

In Vālmīki's words:

जन्म रामस्य सुमहद् वीर्यं सर्वानुकूलताम्। लोकस्य प्रियतां क्षान्तिं सौम्यतां सत्यशीलतां॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 1, Chapter 3, Stanza 10.

Rāma's birth brought strength, benevolence, popularity, forgiveness, even-handedness and truthfulness to a high degree.

- Rāma is married to Sītā, but their life is perturbed by Rāma's exile. Sītā accompanies Rāma in the exile, but is kidnapped by an ogre king called Rāvaṇa. In spite of heavy odds, Sītā displays her singular attachment to Rāma and her determination that the evil must be punished. Vālmīki writes:

यदि राम दशग्रीवमिह हत्वा सराक्षसम्। मामितो गृह्य गच्छेत् तत् तस्य सदृशं भवेत्॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 5, Chapter 37, Stanza 64.

It is only appropriate for Rāma that he takes me home after killing Rāvaṇa alongwith all the ogres.

- Along with the character of brother Lakṣmaṇa and vānara-king Sugrīva, Vālmīki creates the lovable character of vānara Hanūmān, who becomes instrumental in solving many of the difficulties in the story. While going to the war, Rāma instructs that he would ride on Hanūmān to be carried over the forest path.

यास्यामि बलमध्येऽहं बलौघमभिर्हयन्। अधिरुह्य हनूमन्तमैरावतमिवेश्वरः॥

Rāmāyaṇa Book 6, Chapter 4, Stanza 18.

Accompanying the massive troupe assembly, I would be pleased to travel riding on the back of Hanūmān like Indra rides the elephant Airāvata.

- Hanūmān has been deified in later Indian religious literature like that of Saint Tulsī Das, who rendered the text in Hindi in the sixteenth century.
- Various episodes in Rāmāyaṇa is used in dance, music and theater all over South Asia. It is the staple of popular culture in South east Asia.

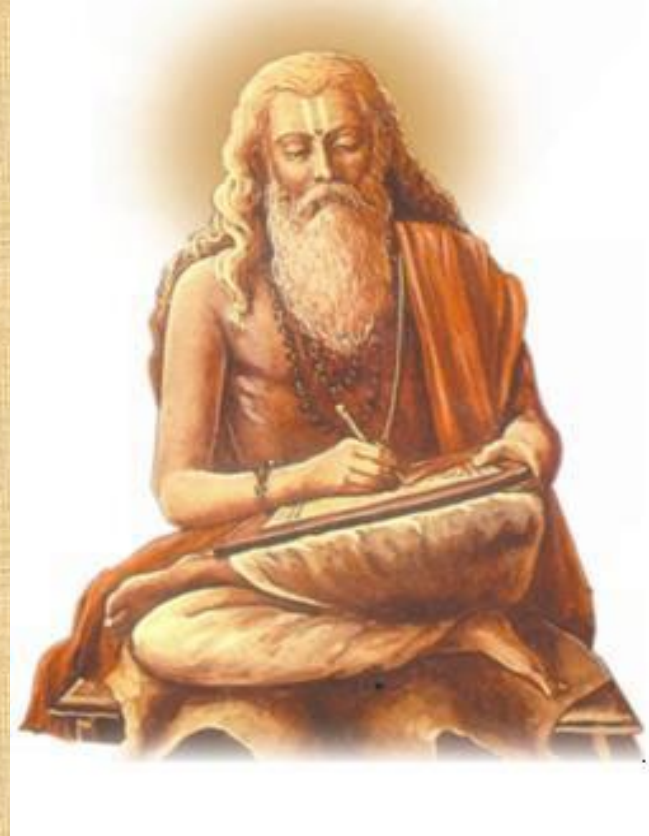
Vyāsa व्यास

Approximate date – 100BCE. Compiler of Mahābhārata and much of the interpretative literature.

It is possible that Vyāsa is a title, but he is historical through the Mahābhārata.

He is credited to have created the foundation of the modern deity worship of Nārāyaṇa.

(To initiate a project) we should seek blessings from Nārāyaṇa, the man in society and people who are skilled, along with that from Devi Sarasvatī and then uttering the word “jaya”.



नारायणं
नमस्कृत्य नरं
चैव नरोत्तमम् ।
देवीं सरस्वतीं
चैव ततो
जयमुदीरयेत् ॥०॥

The first invocation stanza from the first book in Mahābhārata

Mahābhārata महाभारत

Mahābhārata epic is in one hundred thousand stanzas divided into eighteen sequential books.

The critical Sanskrit edition is produced by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and is available online at

<https://sanskritdocuments.org/mirrors/mahabharata/mahabharata-bori.html>

- The Mahābhārata is called इतिहास itihāsa “historical narrative” though certain amount of popular mythology has entered the text.
- Stories are woven inside stories to help analyze the situation from various points of view. A word धर्म dharma is used but its application in the local context is shown not to be easy.
- The story is about a blind king named Dhṛtarāṣṭra who remains deluded with his son. The delusion leads to massive war and loss of life. It is an educational story about delusion in our everyday life. As Vyāsa says:

वृद्धं मामभ्यसूयन्ति पुत्रा मन्युपरायणाः । अहं त्वचक्षुः कार्पण्यात्पुत्रप्रीत्या सहामि तत् ॥

Mahābhārata, Book I, Chapter I, Stanza 98

My own arrogant sons despise me because I am old. Being blind, I bear the miserable state because of my parental affection!

- In most situations the narrative would compromise through empiricism. Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s charioteer consoles him:

कालः पचति भूतानि कालः संहरति प्रजाः । निर्दहन्तं प्रजाः कालं कालः शमयते पुनः ॥

Mahābhārata, Book I, Chapter I, Stanza 188

It is Time that creates and destroys. It burns out objects and then extinguishes the fire.

- The poet sums up his thesis in the last stanza of the Book I.

तपो न कल्कोऽध्ययनं न कल्कः; स्वाभाविको वेदविधिर्न कल्कः ।

प्रसह्य वित्ताहरणं न कल्कः; स्तान्येव भावोपहतानि कल्कः ॥

Mahābhārata, Book I, Chapter I, Stanza 210

Penance is innocent, study is harmless, observing Vedic rites and creating wealth through labor have no demerit. The trouble comes when they are abused.

Mahābhārata महाभारत (2)

- The Mahābhārata is a character story, each character is good in his/her ways and each displays flaws.
- Examples of interesting characters are: Bhīṣma भीष्म, Karṇa कर्ण, S'akuni शकुनि, Draupadī द्रौपदी
- Bhīṣma was the foremost warrior, S'akuni was the crooked uncle, Karṇa was the most benevolent man, Draupadī was the righteous wife.
- Bhīṣma' birth blessings were:
भविष्यति च धर्मात्मा सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः । पितुः प्रियहिते युक्तः स्त्रीभोगान्वर्जयिष्यति ॥
Mahābhārata, Book I, Chapter 93, Stanza 39
He will be learned, engage himself for the welfare of the family and friends, but will be deprived from the love of a woman.
- Karṇa was born out of wedlock. He had astounding birth marks.
तस्या दृष्टिरभूद्दिव्या सापश्यद्दिव्यदर्शनम् । आमुक्तकवचं देवं कुण्डलाभ्यां विभूषितम् ॥
Mahābhārata, Book III, Chapter 290, Stanza 5
The mother saw a divine sight. The baby was covered with a shield and had ear ornaments.
- S'akuni had the quality of causing conflict. He succeeds in convincing the parties to a game of dice where he knew the tricks. He wins everything from the opposing party and then calls for wife Draupadī as a bet. This becomes the root of the Mahābhārata war.
अस्ति वै ते प्रिया देवी ग्लह एकोऽपराजितः । पणस्व कृष्णां पाञ्चालीं तयात्मानं पुनर्जय ॥
Mahābhārata, Book II, Chapter 58, Stanza 31
You still have your wife as your bet. You commit Kṛṣṇā Pāñcālī (Draupadī) before you may offer yourself.
- Draupadī had divine birth and had high self-esteem. When troubled by the feuding Kauravas, she rebuked them.
अयं हि मां दृढं क्षुद्रः कौरवाणां यशोहरः । क्लिश्नाति नाहं तत्सोढुं चिरं शक्यामि कौरवाः ॥
Mahābhārata, Book II, Chapter 62, Stanza 12
This meanness that destroys the name of the Kurus is troubling. I cannot handle it any longer!

S'ankara शङ्कर

Approximate date – 800CE. Prolific scholar, poet and interpreter.

Established the principles of Advaita as the foundation of the modern Hindu faith.

Initiated the modern ascetic tradition by establishing monasteries and schools.

Vedānta declares that the true knowledge in the understanding that the life in us is no different than the immutable Brahman. Brahman is only real and the observable universe is an illusion.



ब्रह्म सत्यं
जगन्मिथ्या
जीवो ब्रह्मैव
नापरः ।
अनेन वेदयं
सच्छास्त्रमिति
वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥

Brahmajñānāvalī
Mālā, Verse 20

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi विवेकचूडामणि

Out of scores of books and hymns connected to S'aṅkara, vivekacūḍāmaṇi is most original.
Rendered in 579 stanzas, the book extolls the analytic abilities of viveka, the discriminatory capacity of mind.
Text compiled and translated by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, 1921.

- One must understand the Self.

वदन्तु शास्त्राणि यजन्तु देवान् कुर्वन्तु कर्माणि भजन्तु देवताः।
आत्मैक्यबोधेन विनापि मुक्तिर्न सिध्यति ब्रह्मशतान्तरैःपि॥ (Stanza 5)

Let people quote scriptures and sacrifice to the gods, let them perform rituals and worship the deities, there is no liberation in even eons of time without the realizing of one's identity with ātman

- Only the personal effort brings results.

वस्तुस्वरूपं स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा स्वेनैव वेद्यं न तु पण्डितेन।
चन्द्रस्वरूपं निजचक्षुषैव ज्ञातव्यमन्यैरवगम्यते किम्॥ (Stanza 54)

- The true nature of objects must be discerned personally through one's own discrimination and not by other wise men. What moon is exactly has to be realized by one's own eyes, can others make it known to you?

- Mind is the source of ignorance.

न ह्यस्त्यविद्या मनसोऽतिरिक्ता मनो हि अविद्य भववन्धहेतुः।
तस्मिन्विनष्टे सकलं विनष्टं विजृम्भितेऽस्मिन्सकलं विजृम्भते॥ (Stanza 169)

There is no ignorance outside the mind. The mind alone is the avidyā, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When the mind is destroyed, all else is destroyed. When the mind manifests, everything shows up. Penance is innocent, study is harmless, observing Vedic rites and creating wealth through labor have no demerit. The trouble comes when they are abused.

- One must know the object, the Knower and the knowledge to realize oneself.

विशुद्धमन्तःकरणं स्वरूपे निवेश्य साक्षिण्यवबोधमात्रे। शनैः शनैश्चलतामुपानयन् पूर्णं स्वमेवानुविलोकयेत्ततः॥ (Stanza 383)

Fixing the purified mind in the Self, the Witness and the Knowledge Absolute and slowly making it still, one realizes one's own complete Self.

Upadeśasāhasrī उपदेशसाहस्री

S'āṅkara re-established the philosophical teaching through open question and answer.

Composed in two books, one prose and the other poetry, S'āṅkara explains his theory through a thousand instructions.

Text compiled and translated by Swami Jagadānanda, The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai, India

- All life is one.

शिष्य उवाच - का सा अविद्या किं विषया वा विद्या च का यया स्वभावं प्रतिपद्ययेति। Book I, Chapter II, Stanza 49

The student asked – What is that ignorance? On what topic it is? With what knowledge I may attain my own nature?

गुरुवाच - त्वं परमात्मनं सन्तं असंसारिणं संसार्यहमस्मीति विपरीतं प्रतिपद्यसे अकर्तारं सन्तं कर्तेति अभोक्तारं सन्त भोक्तेति विद्यमानं च अविद्यमानमिति इयमविद्या | Book I, Chapter II, Stanza 50

The teacher replied – You are the supreme self, you are free but you think the opposite as bound in society, you don't do but you think yourself as the doer, you don't eat but you think yourself as the eater, you are eternal and you think yourself as local. This is ignorance!

- Knowledge resides in the object, not in the observer..

अहं कर्ता ममेदं स्यादिति कर्म प्रवर्तते। वस्त्वधीना भवेद्विद्या कर्त्रधीनो भवेद्विधिः॥ Book II, Chapter I, Stanza 13

I am the doer, this is mine constitute work. Knowledge depends on the object and the work is in the performer.

- Intellect is the reflection of Consciousness.

चैतन्यप्रतिबिम्बेन व्याप्तो बोधो हि जायते। बुद्धेः शब्दाभिर्भासस्तेन मोमुहयते जगत्॥ Book II, Chapter V, Stanza 4

Intellect is activated by the reflection of the Consciousness when pervaded. Thus, the Self gets identified as sound and people are deluded.

- There is no caste or classification.

इदं तु सत्यं मम नास्ति विक्रिया विकारहेतुर्न मेऽद्वयत्वतः। न पुण्यपापं न च मोक्षबन्धने न चास्ति वर्णाश्रमताऽशरीरतः॥

Book II, Chapter X, Stanza 6

It is true that I have no change nor have any reason to change since I am without a second. I do not possess a body, so I have no vice or virtue, I have no caste or any gradation in life!

Kabīr कबीर

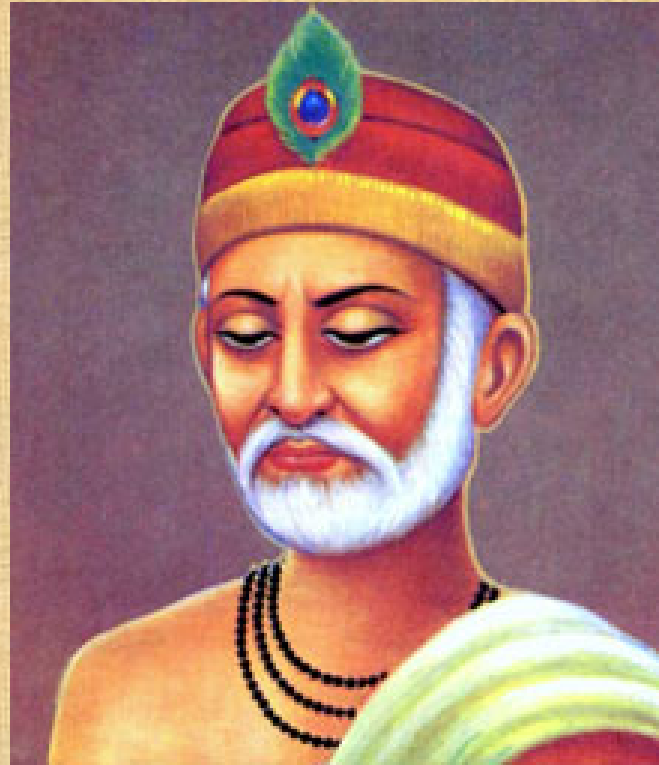
Fifteenth century mystic, known to be a weaver in profession.

Possibly was born as a Muslim and converted to Hindu faith by accepting a Vedantic teacher.

Kabīr composed orally and his poems were compiled later. He is known to have influenced the thoughts in modern Sikhism.

His compositions talk about traditional Indian folklores and remain immensely popular.

Go and ask that
learned teacher
if he has a
teacher or a
student.
One only knows
oneself and one
is always
solitary.



जा पूछो गोविंद
पढिआ पंडिता
तेरा कौन गुरु
कौन चेला।
अपने रूपको
आपहिं जाने
आपै रहै अकेला॥

Kabīr Sabad, 116
Stanza 1

Kabīr Ramainī कबीर रमैनी

Ramainī is a short philosophical story poem in Hindi ending in a gist couplet sākhī (witness).
Compiled by Dr. Jayadeva Singh and Dr. Vasudeva Singh, Visvavidyalaya Prakashana, Varanasi, 1974,
(free translation)

- It is Māyā (illusive nature) that has to be recognized.
चीन्ह चीन्ह का गावहु बौरै बानी परी न चीन्ह। आदि अंत उत्पति प्रलै आपुहि कै कै लीन्ह। Poem 4
What are you singing without understanding. Before uttering words, you should understand the nature of Māyā.
The evolution and the dissolution are due to Māyā, giving one various names.
- Self does not see itself.
कुल अभिमाना खोड़ कै जियत मुवा नहिं होय। देखत जो नाह देखिया अदिष्टि कहावै सोय॥ Poem 8
There is no death to the person who can relinquish the attachments of family and the body. One who sees all, but itself is not seen is the real self in all.
- Māyā fills up man with ignorance.
मूस बिलाई एक संग कहु कैसे रहि जाय। अचरज एक देखहु संतो हस्ती सिंघहि खाय॥ Poem 12
How can a cat and a mouse live together? It is strange that the elephant (Māyā) is eating away the lion (inner self).
- Avoid mis-steps, keep determination.
सोई कहंते सोई होहुगे निकरि न बाहर आय। हों हजूर ठाढो कहां धोखे न जन्म गवाँव॥ Poem 23
I tell you right here standing that you can become what you wish to become. Come out of the illusions, don't waste life.
- Ignore religions, ignore nationalities.
आदम आदि सुद्धि नहिं पाई मामा हौवा कहाँ ते आई। तहिया होते तुरुक न हिन्दू न मा के रुधिर पिताके विंदू॥ Poem 40
How is this understanding that some Adam and Hauva created the universe. There is no Turk or Hindu. Here is no mother nor there is any father.
- Get mind and body together.
तन रहित मन जात है मन रहित तन ज़ाय। तन मन एकै होय रहै हंस कबीर कहाय। Poem 51
Good mind without support from the body is not useful, nor a good body without a good mind. When both your body and mind are together in tune, you are a haṁsa (the illumined person).

Kabīr Dohā कबीर दोहा

Besides Sabad, Ramainī and Sākhī, Kabīr composed hundreds of instructional couplets called Dohā.

They are taught as general instructions in schools and have been put into music by generations of musicians.

- जहाँ दया तहा धर्म है, जहाँ लोभ वहाँ पाप । जहाँ क्रोध तहा काल है, जहाँ क्षमा वहाँ आप ।
Where kindness is, there is righteousness. Greed breeds vice. Anger leads to destruction, forgiveness is divine.
- पानी केरा बुदबुदा, अस मानस की जात । देखत ही छुप जाएगा है, ज्यों तारा परभात ।
Our life is like a bubble of water. It can extinguish itself momentarily like the stars disappear in the morning.
- बड़ा भया तो क्या भया, जैसे पेड़ खजूर । पंथी को छाया नहीं फल लागे अति दूर ।
By simply being big is of news like the date tree. Neither it provides shade to the traveler and the fruit is unreachable.
- काल करे सो आज कर, आज करे सो अब । पल में परलय होगी, बहुरि करेगा कब ।
Do it today what you plan for tomorrow. Do it now for the day. Things can change in a moment, when would you do more?
- दुःख में सुमिरन सब करे, सुख में करे न कोय । जो सुख में सुमिरन करे, तो दुःख काहे को होय ।
All pray when in grief, nobody does in happiness. Why would grief come if one remember in good times.
- साईं इतना दीजिये, जामे कुटुंब समाये । मैं भी भूखा न रहूँ, साधू न भूखा जाए ।
O' Lord, please give me as much such that I can manage my family. I don't starve or a guest does not leave unfed.
- कागा का को धन हरे, कोयल का को देय । मीठे वचन सुना के, जग अपना कर लेय ।
The crow does not steal nor the cuckoo gives any. Through good words you win over the whole world.
- मांगन मरण समान है, मत मांगो कोई भीख । मांगन से मरना भला, ये सतगुरु की सीख ।
Begging is like dying, nobody should beg. Dying is better than begging – so is the instruction.
- कबीरा जब हम पैदा हुए, जग हँसे हम रोये । ऐसी करनी कर चलो, हम हँसे जग रोये ।
Kabīr says that we cried at birth, but the world rejoiced. Let us do such work that we laugh and the world would cry.
- धीरे-धीरे रे मना, धीरे सब कुछ होय । माली सींचे सौ घड़ा, ऋतु आए फल होय ।
Keep patience in all work, all is done through patience. The garden drops hundred buckets of water, the fruit only comes in season.
- तन को जोगी सब करें, मन को बिरला कोई । सब सिद्धि सहजे पाइए, जे मन जोगी होइ ।
All maintain their body, rarely they care for the mind. All success comes when the mind gets connected!

Summary

Ten Thought Leaders from India

Yājñavalkya	-	Analysis
S'rīkr̥ṣṇa	-	Concentration
Mahāvīra	-	Nonviolence
Buddha	-	Friendship
Pāṇini	-	Language and Grammar
Kauṭalya	-	Social Administration
Vālmīki	-	Character
Vyāsa	-	Social Conduct
S'aṅkara	-	Equality
Kabīr	-	Personal Instruction

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