

The Ten Primordial Masters and Their Teachings

Ten times Shri Adi Guru Dattatreya has come into the world to lead humanity towards righteousness and spirituality, to establish the values of Dharma, that corresponds with building the path for the spiritual ascent of human being.

Many of these incarnations manifested themselves as prophets and gave proof of great devotion and complete surrendering to God Almighty, like in the case, for example, of Abraham who was up to sacrifice his own child as God requested to him; some of them had to struggle a lot to deliver God's word (see Abraham, Zarathustra, etc), or fight (like Mohammed did) or even undergo a death sentence (as it happened to Socrates).



Other Adi Gurus could instead manifest themselves in their Divine, complete form, like in the case of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, the last incarnation, who clearly declared to be God, to be the one who is every thing. He pervasively and unfailingly cared to spread Love and Compassion to his devotees and to everyone who looked for spiritual ascent; he prepared the field for the Great Advent: the incarnation of the Adi Shakti. His only task was to fill his disciples with vibrations of Love; he was not the severe and strict Master who needed to make rules, but he was tremendously patient like a grandfather is with his grandchildren.

This path reminds us also the path of our Holy Mother, who cared in the past to establish the Dharma in us and now is only giving us Love and the full trust that now we can fully accomplish the task of our spiritual realization. Shri Shirdi Sainath's words: *"If you stretch out the palms of your hands to Me with full Devotion, I will be immediately with you, day and night. Even if I am not physically with you, I know what you are doing beyond the seven seas. Go wherever you want, in the wide world, I am with you. I dwell in your heart and I am within you. Always worship Me that I am in your heart as in that of every other being. Blessed and lucky, in truth, who knows Me in this way."*



Shri Raja Janaka



Seeradhwaaja Janaka was a great scholar and an enlightened person. His life dates back to 5000 BC; he was the King of Mithila (the current Janakpur) and Shri Sita's father (Shri Ram's wife). It is interesting to note the composition of his city's name, Mith+Ila: 'Mith' derives from *Mithya*, that means illusory, and 'Ila' means *Atman*. The words together mean 'Illusion of *Atman*'. The result is very interesting as helping people to win over their illusions and realize their *atman* is just the main task of the Guru.

The Ashtavakra Samhita - teachings about nondualism

The *Ashtavakra Samhita* is an Advaita Vedanta scripture that documents a dialogue between the master Ashtavakra and his disciple Raja Janaka. It shows the basics of the nondualism (Advaita) – “*Nothing but the Spirit exists*”, “*The Sage is free from the pairs of opposites as it is a child*” – that leads to the comprehension of the illusoriness of all the pairs of opposites – “*I renounced to the good and the bad and I live happy*” – and to the Self Realization – “*Thinking to the Absolute you do nothing but using a form of thought. So, dropped this thought, I permanently dwell in my Self.*”

Realizing the Self, Ashtavakra emphasizes, does not mean becoming, but being the Self: “*Having realized that the Self is in everything and that everything is in the Self, free from the sense of individuality and possessiveness, be happy*”.

A great knower of Atma - Atma Jnana

One day, Raja Janaka sent a message to the people in his kingdom: “If there is a great Sage, whoever he may be, let him come and teach me the knowledge of Atma. If this person offering to teach me Atma Jnana is not able to accomplish this task of providing me an experience of instant illumination then I don't want to see him, even if he is the most learned person in the land”.

All the Pundits and Rishis were a little frightened by this requirement, except for one: a young man called *Ashtavakra*. He went straight to the King and offered to solve the problem if the King satisfied two conditions: the first one was going to the forest, that is in a pure, *sattva* place; the second one was more delicate: «You must give me your mind» said *Ashtavakra*. So they went alone into the forest and Janaka sat, close to his horse and remained silent with closed eyes, and did not move even when his officers and Ministers came and called him; only when *Ashtavakra* called him, he moved. So *Ashtavakra* questioned him: «Many people came, why didn't you

reply to their calls?» Raja Janaka answered, «Thoughts, words and deeds are associated with the mind, and I offered my mind entirely to you. Therefore before I can use the mind for anything, I need your permission. What authority do I have to speak to anyone or use this mind in any way without your permission and command?».

Then Ashtavakra said: «You have attained the state of God-realization».

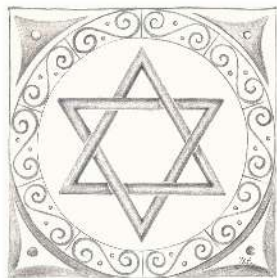
Being a devoted disciple to become a good master

Raja Janaka used to attend the lessons given by the enlightened master Suka. One day the master decided to test his disciples. The disciples were just listening to 'Atma Bodha' (the lesson saying that the Atma alone is real and that everything else is appearance, imposed on the Atma, by the fog of illusion and ignorance), when the master managed with his mystic powers so that they could see in the far distance the city of Mithila caught in flames and crumbling in the conflagration. Immediately, all the disciples ran away to save their belongings and warn the other people, while Raja Janaka, unperturbed, remained with his master, even if he had a lot to save as he was just its king. As his master asked him why he did not try to save his city, he replied: «My master and dear friend, the only treasure that I have is you!». In this way, Raja Janaka showed detachment and the true devotion of a disciple, as the only treasure he cared of was the Jnana he was getting from his master.

Being Videha - the bodiless

One day, a young sage named Narada asked: «Sir, how is it possible that they call you Videha (i.e. beyond physical bonds) if you live in such a luxurious world?». Raja Janaka replied: «It is very simple. I'll tell you tonight. But for now just follow me holding this bowl of milk. Be careful not to spill even a drop of it!». Narada did as he was told and followed the King making sure that the milk did not spill over. At the end of the day he was really exhausted. «Please answer my question now, O Great King. I can't bear any more following you everywhere and caring of this bowl at the same time!». «First, tell me: what did you see while following me?» Raja Janaka asked to Narada; «Nothing but the bowl» answered Narada «I watched it all the time so that the milk wouldn't spill!». «What?» replied the king, «There was a ceremony in my honour, then a dance performance and many other beautiful things. Is it possible that you didn't see anything of it?» «No my Lord, I didn't see anything.» «My boy» said the king finally, «I never see anything either. I spent all my time observing my attention so that it didn't go to waste, just like your milk».

So Narada understood why Raja Janaka was called Videha.



Shri Abraham

Abraham lived between the XVIII and XVI century BC and grew up in Ur (Mesopotamia). Stories about his life are narrated both in the Bible (Genesis) and in the Qu'ran.

At that time, people believed in idols and made sacrifices to them and primitive rituals that could flow into collective hysteria; in spite of this belief, a strong faith in a only one God grew up inside him since his childhood. An anecdote: while investigating the origin of the creation, he looked for his father's advice (he was just working in an shop selling idols) who promptly replied: "This idol created the world!"; surely Abraham did not believe his father and asked his uncle who told him: "the moon and the stars created the world". Abraham was not quite sure if that was true, but he got an idea that there might be an almighty up in the heavens who created the world: *Yahvè*.

And one day, finally, God talked to him: «Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you».

So Abraham left and moved, with his wife and his nephew Lot, towards the promised land that was Canaan (located in the current Israel). As a period of famine came, he and his wife went down to Egypt where they lived for some years and then returned back in Canaan.

As the time passed, the promised progeny was not yet arriving: Abraham and Sarah were already old and have not born any child! So they agreed to have a child from a servant, Hagar, and this son was called Ishmael (who is considered one of the patriarchs of the Islamic religion).

Even if Sarah had passed the age of childbearing, still God was promising a child to them and the child finally arrived (when they were more than 80) and was called Isaac.

Later, the faith of Abraham was once more tested by God, as He, the Almighty, asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac. The devoted Abraham made up an altar and was there about to kill his son, when an Angel of God stopped him as he passed the test. He died that he was 175 years old.

Teachings

The belief of a unique, eternal God

We need to empathize with the people of Abraham's time to comprehend the value of his belief and faith. Idolatry was the common practise at that time, which could flow into vicious and inhuman practices: certainly it had nothing to do with Pure Inner Devotion towards God. Abraham reached this understanding in his young age and tried with many difficulties to convert his people to this new, more evolved belief.

This aspect of Abraham is mostly reported in the Qu'ran: "And Abraham when he said to his people, 'Serve God and fear Him, which is better for you if ye did but know. ¹⁶ Ye only serve beside God idols and do create a lie. Verily, those whom ye serve beside God cannot control for themselves provision; then crave provision with God, and serve Him, and give thanks to Him; unto Him shall ye return!...' But the answer of his people was only to say 'Kill him or burn him!'. But God saved him from the fire. Verily, in that are signs unto a people who believe." It is interesting to dwell upon the word YHVH (God), the Holy Tetragram that is formed by four unutterable consonants, thing that shows that God is beyond every definition and qualification. The male letter 'I' represents the unity, the Absolute; the feminine letter 'H' corresponds to the Eternal Feminine, the Heavenly Mother and its Hebrew meaning is 'blow'; the male letter 'V' represents the son, the eternal Word base of creation. YHVH represents the complete manifestation of God, the Trinity of which God Father is only a component. (ref. Cabala)

The immeasurable faith

His life is a clear demonstration of his faith. Even under the most unbelievable requests he was ready to trust and follow God's will.

He abandoned his native land to accomplish his Divine task to start afresh in the Promised Land. And he agreed to sacrifice his beloved only son in order to respect God's will.

The sense of sacrifice and submission

His deep faith gave him a strong sense of sacrifice and submission. The sacrifice (from Latin 'to do sacred') was not intended to be a simple ritual like those performed by many people at that time, but a way of manifesting his true devotion and his deep comprehension of personal sacrifice.

Shri Moses



The third Primordial Guru was Moses, who incarnated in the 13th century BC. Stories can be found in the bible in the books: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In the Exodus account, the birth of Moses occurred at a time when an unnamed Egyptian Pharaoh had commanded that all newly born male Hebrew children be drowned in the river Nile. His

mother saved him by setting him adrift on the Nile in a small basket. He was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter and was brought up in the Egyptian court.

As he was growing up, Moses became aware of Hebrew origin. He started to be concerned about their living conditions and one day, while attempting to save a Hebrew from being beaten, killed an Egyptian guard.

After that, he fled from Egypt and reached the land of Midian, where he lived with the priest Jethro's tribe. He married Jethro's daughter Zipporah and lived happily there for many years until one day, while tending Jethro's flocks, he saw a burning bush that would not be consumed. As he got close to gaze at this marvel, God spoke to him and told him that he was entitled, as God's Messenger, to save the Hebrew people from Egypt's slavery.

So Moses went back to Egypt, repeated the Lord's words to the Hebrews and showed them some signs (miracles) as a proof. Then he went to the Pharaoh and asked him to let the Hebrew people go. The Pharaoh refused. The obstinacy of the Pharaoh caused God to react by making the Pharaoh's people suffer from horrible plagues in order to convince the Pharaoh of His existence and power. Finally the Pharaoh allowed the Hebrews to leave, but changed his mind just as the people reached the Reed Sea. It is in this moment that God's Power fully manifested by parting the waters and allowing the people to cross the sea on dry land.

So after escaping from the Egypt, the Hebrews started their wandering in search of the Promised Land. It is said that this wandering lasted about 40 years. It is during these years that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai.

Moses died before reaching the Promised Land at the age of 120 years. The legend says that God himself buried Moses in an unknown grave in a valley in the land of Moab.

❧ *Teachings* ❧

He laid the basis of Dharma and morality

Moses' main task was to lay the foundation of dharma and morality in his people: their morality level at that time was very low, they were lacking in self-discipline and were too indulgent. He gave his people a long list of laws (Bible ref: Deuteronomy) to help their purification and their leading a moral and sane social life. The Decalogue are the famous Ten Commandments spoken by God to Moses on the Mount Sinai:

1. I am the Lord your God.
2. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour.

The liberation from the slavery

Thanks to Moses, the Hebrew was liberated from slavery. They lived comfortably in Egypt for many generations, but when the Pharaoh started to consider them a threat he enslaved them in order to have more control. The Hebrews accepted this slavery for convenience, as they had become lazy because of the easy way they were used to live.

We can see a similar situation in ourselves. Because we are spoilt by our senses and our vices, we do not realize that we are ourselves slaves, and as long as this slavery exists we cannot get the freedom of our Spirit. This topic was thoroughly investigated by Socrates many years later.

The crossing of the Sea

As Shri Mataji has told us many times, the crossing of the sea represents the crossing of the Bhavasagara, the Ocean of Illusion. In fact the Hebrews had to lose the illusion of a comfortable life under slavery in order to gain their freedom.

Shri Zarathustra



Zarathustra (or Zoroaster) was the first prophet in his land to preach a monotheistic religion. He revealed that there is only one God, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord), who is not humanised but represents the good, is all pervading, abstract and eternal. His opponent Angra Mainyu (the spirit of evil) does his best to avert humans' attention from the good, while his collaborator Spenta Mainyu (the Holy Ghost) can appear sometimes as an incarnation of the unique God and sometimes as a messenger of God's will.

Zarathustra was born in Persia (present Iran) in 630 BC. He was a very intelligent and energetic young boy and had the ability to see through the surface of things and penetrate the depth of their cause and meaning. When he was 30 years old he went to fetch some water from the river. As he went into the water Vohu Mana (the angel of the Good Mind) appeared to him and opened the portal to the Divine Light of Ahura Mazda. This was the first moment of Illumination and the first Revelation to Zarathustra.

Zarathustra began preaching in the capital of his country some years after the vision. The common people listened to him without great interest, while the priests and nobles rejected him harshly.

He tried many different techniques, but having met with such vehement opposition from the rulers and priests of his own land, he decided to leave for other countries with only 23 followers. After a number of unsuccessful journeys, they finally heard that the king of a nearby country a wise and just man, King Vishtaspa, might be open to new teachings. Zarathustra was 42 when they finally reached the court of King Vishtaspa, who granted Zarathustra an audience. The King also invited all the priests and wise men of his court to attend as well. Zarathustra eloquently spoke and convincingly responded to all challenges and questions, gaining the trust of the King who embraced this new religion. This was a major breakthrough for Zarathustra and from that day on he could freely go and propagate his teachings throughout this and the neighbouring lands.

Zarathustra's only works are songs, called the *Gathas*, that are part of the Avesta, the sacred text of Zoroastrianism. The Gathas are written in an ancient Avestan dialect that is a sister language to Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. Some of the verses of the Gathas are directly addressed to the Creator; other verses, from which some aspects of Zoroaster's life have been inferred, are semi-(auto)biographical, but all revolve around Zarathustra's mission to promote his view of the Truth.

☞ *Teachings* ☜

“There is only one way to defeat the evil, that is by increasing the Good and only one way to remove the darkness, that is by diffusing the light”.

Here are a few excerpts from the Gathas, the holy songs of Zarathustra.

Love sincerely to receive love in reward

“Wise Lord, fulfill the desire of those whom you know to be just and earnest in righteousness and good mind to attain rewards. For I know, loving songs for a worthy purpose never go unanswered by You”.

Turn to Nature, hear God, and enjoy a good, progressive life

“I have always observed the principles of righteousness and good mind. Wise God, teach me to speak the thoughts of Your mind, and the words of Your mouth: the teachings by which the pristine life shall be established”.

Promotion towards true happiness in mind and body, spirit and matter

“When shall Righteousness, Good Mind, and the Divine Dominion hasten to me? Wise One, do acknowledge, with Your discernment, the order of the Great Fellowship. God, help us now. We look to Your kindness.”

True happiness radiates happiness, enriches life

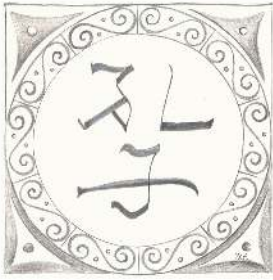
“May the Wise, Ruling-at-will God grant radiant happiness to the person who radiates happiness to any other person at large. I pray for steadfast strength and courage in order to uphold righteousness. Grant me through serenity the blessings of a rich life of good mind.”

Knowledge enlightens the way to Truth

“I realized You, God Wise, to be progressive when I was encircled by it through good mind. To its question: ‘For what purpose do you want to acquire knowledge?’ I said: ‘With the gift of homage to Your fire, I shall meditate, as long as I can, in quest of righteousness.’”

Notes: *Good Mind* or *Vohu Manah* literally stands for ‘good mind, good thinking’, is the first of ‘Primal Principles of Life’. It stands for the ‘wisdom’ and clear thinking required for leading a righteous life. *Righteousness* or *Asha* stands for ‘truth, order, righteousness’. It is the universal law of righteous precision. It may best be explained by stating that it means ‘to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, and with the right means in order to obtain the right result’.

Shri Confucius



Confucius was born in China in the state of Lu in 551 BC. Son of an aristocratic but impoverished family: his father died when he was three. With the support and encouragement of his mother, Confucius was very diligent in his studies. Living in a period when corruption, wars and anarchy were the basis of politics, he decided to put his attention to the study of the classics i.e. to rediscover of old values. Since his vocation was teaching he founded a school.

After his mother's death, according to tradition, Confucius could not exercise public office for three years; so he dedicated this time to the study of his favourite subjects: music, ancient rites and texts. This intense study allowed him to render into mottos the wisdom of the ancestors and to formulate precepts in order to regulate the behaviour of a man as a member of society.

He also wandered around China with his students, laying a foundation of rules that has been practiced by his numerous disciples and followers in China for more than two thousand years. When he was 50, the Duke Ting appointed him governor of Chung-Tu, capital of the Lu state, enabling him to realise his life-dream: to demonstrate on the practical level the grounding of his ethical beliefs and politics. His administration was so perfect that it was considered a golden age for the state and, furthermore, as there were no crimes committed during that period no criminal laws were applied! But the successful results provoked the jealousy and enmity of the court and Confucius was forced to leave Lu. So he started his wanderings that lasted for well over 13 years, offering his service to various princes. He returned to Lu when he was 69.

It is said that seven days before dying he had a dream that warned him of his death. After reciting a few lines of the Book of the Odes ("This is how the mount T'ai collapse/the big tree is fallen/and the sage wither as a flower") and once more lamenting his sorrow because he could not make the princes accept his ideas; he retired in his room and died. It was 479BC.

❧ Teachings ❧

Self-discipline

The teachings of Confucius are still actively practiced around the world and reforming societies through education. The Noble, he says, is not a Saint; Saints are born and remain such, whilst people become Noble thanks to self-education. His task is education, not contemplation.

His aim is the Noble, not the Saint: *“A man of noble mind can acquire a culture by assiduous study and by observing the ancient norms he gives it a complete order”.*

Research of Balance

“The Centre as such only respects two extremes; knowing the two extremes, the Centre will be known as an harmonic point between them. Centre is that state in which neither hope nor rage, neither pain nor happiness will be felt.”

“Harmony is the state in which these feelings are manifested, but totally obey to the right rhythm.”

“The Constant Middle is the maximum, the apex and the summit, and is few the men who are capable to keep to them for long.”

“Balance is the norm of the Heaven. Reaching it is the norm of man. This balance devoid of constrictions is the mean, which means reaching it without struggling. The superior man put the norm of the middle into practice without difficulties.”

“There are those who get the balance in one hit and who get it in 100 hits. There are those who succeed in 10 hits and who in 1000. This rule is certainly accessible to men. So the ignorant will be able to become clever and the weak strong.”

Right Action

Action together with study are for Confucius the ways that lead man towards the Constant Middle, because the knowledge has sense only if it is transformed in effective practice:

“It's necessary to know the point where we need to stop. The point at which to arrive. Knowing it, you can be quiet and obtain peace. Obtaining peace, it is possible to take decisions. After taking decisions, it is possible to act.”

“Who respects the principles of his nature is not far from the norm. Nor he is far from the norm, who behaves with others in the way he would others behave with him.”

Shri Laozi



Laozi (commonly called Lao Tsu) is an honorific title that means 'Venerable Master'. There are many legends about Lao Tsu but no actual evidence of his life's deeds exists. According to popular traditional biographies he worked as the Keeper of the Archives for the royal court of Zhou. This role would allow him broad access to the works of the Yellow Emperor and other classics of the time. The stories state that Laozi never opened a formal school, but nonetheless he attracted a large number of students and loyal disciples. There are numerous variations of a story depicting Confucius consulting Laozi about rituals.

Traditional accounts state that Laozi grew weary of the moral decay of city life and noted the kingdom's decline. According to these legends, he ventured west to live as a hermit in the unsettled frontier at the age of 160. At the Western Gate of the city, or kingdom, he was recognized by a guard. The sentry asked the old master to produce a record of his wisdom. This is the legendary origin of the *Daodejing* or *Tao Te Ching* (the great book of the way and the virtue).

As with most other ancient Chinese philosophers, Laozi often explains his ideas by way of paradox, analogy, appropriation of ancient sayings, repetition, symmetry, rhyme, and rhythm.

The main topic of the book is the Tao, the Way to find complete harmony. It starts with the faoums lines: "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao". The Tao is the Absolute, the union of the opposites, the union of being and not being, of female and male principle, of light and shadow, of strength and weakness. These opposites are represented by the Yin and the Yang: Yin is the feminine, intuitive, sensitive side, while the Yang is the masculine, rational side. When they meet, they can harmoniously combine to form the Tao.

Laozi, differently from Confucius who decided to be an active reformer of the society, claimed that by retiring from the world to immerse yourself in the Tao, spontaneously Virtue, Armony and Order come. The two Masters seem to move in opposite directions, but in reality they are like two sides of the same coin (the Ying and the Yang), both of them guided by a common intuition: how to find inner balance and values.

☯ *Teachings* ☯

About the Great Mother

“In the beginning was the Tao. All things issue from it; all things return to it. The Tao is called the Great Mother: empty yet inexhaustible, it gives birth to infinite worlds. It is always present within you. You can use it any way you want.”

“The origin of the world is its mother; understand the mother, and you understand the child; embrace the child, and you embrace the mother, who will not perish when you die.”

About Meditation and Silence

“Stop thinking and end your problems. What difference between yes and no? What difference between success and failure? Must you value what others value, avoid what others avoid? How ridiculous!”

“Who knows doesn't preach; who preaches doesn't know. Stop talking, meditate in silence, blunt your sharpness, release your worries, harmonize your inner light and become one with the dust. Nature says only a few words: high wind doesn't last long, nor does heavy rain. If nature's words do not last, why should those of man?”

About Inaction and Desires

“Not exalting the gifted prevents competition. Not collecting treasures prevents stealing. Not showing desirable things prevents confusion of hearts. In this way the sage governs people: emptying their minds, filling their bellies, weakening their ambitions and strengthening their bones; so that the people may be innocent in knowledge and desires and the cunning people shall not presume to interfere. Practice not-doing and everything will fall into place.”

“Nature does not possess desire; without desire, the heart becomes quiet; in this manner the whole world is made tranquil.”

About Innocence

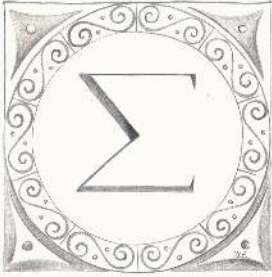
“Who is filled with harmony is like a newborn. Snakes and wasps won't bite him; hawks and tigers will not claw him. His bones are soft yet his grasp is sure, for his flesh is supple; his mind is innocent yet his body is virile, for his vigour is plentiful; his song is long-lasting yet his voice is sweet, for his grace is perfect.”

About Compassion and Love

“Compassion is the finest weapon and best defence. If you would establish harmony, compassion must surround you like a fortress.”

“Taste the flavorless, magnify the small, multiply the few, return love for hate.”

Shri Socrates



Socrates was born in Athens in 469 BC and died 70 years later. He came from a prosperous family which allowed him to study and dedicate almost all his life to philosophy. Furthermore, he was leading a frugal life, as he was not attracted by luxury and comforts. Because he did not feel the need for riches he gave free lectures to his students. He served in the Athenian arm and fought in two battles. He married Xanthippe when he was 50 and they had three sons.

At that time, Athens was meeting a period of big expansion and enrichment. This condition allowed the Athenians to develop their trades and expand their cultural horizons (architecture, art, philosophy, etc). We can have a glance, in our imagination, and see all these old philosophers walking slowly in the main square of the town (called agorà), while discussing various subjects, and being followed by young students thirsty of knowledge.

But at the same time, the ambition of the Athenians was inexorably growing up and with that the thirst of power and richness. Furthermore, a new movement of philosophy, the Sophism, was gaining ground, that called into question the conception of objective truth and was moving towards a more mind-oriented speculation of reality.

The condemn from Socrates towards this unstoppable ambition is clear: *“The desire of possession, this is the cause of all the wars, the discords, the scuffles: it is the body that gives them birth because of its passions; and if we busy ourselves in getting hold of wealth is the body we are slave of.”* Socrates wanted to lead the attention of Athenians to spirituality in order that they may lead a more moral and virtuous life. But not everybody appreciated his teachings and some of them accused him of “corrupting the younglings, not recognizing the Deities recognized by the collectivity, believing in demons and practising an unknown religious cult”. He was arrested, put on trial and found guilty of corrupting the minds of the youth of Athens and was condemned to death. He refused the help of his friends who wanted him to escape: he always stated that it was important to respect the laws and did not want to be hypocritical.

Few days after his death, the Athenians repented for their impetuous deed and in sign of grief closed schools and theatres and condemned his accusers.

☞ *Teachings* ☜

A life without the research of Truth and virtue is not worthy to be lived

“I go around trying to convince you, young and old, that you should not take care neither of the riches nor anything else if not your soul in a way that he becomes as good as possible, because the virtue does not come from the riches, but from the virtue itself come the riches and all the goods for the people, both in the private and public life”.

Meditation is the way to reach wisdom and truth

“The soul of every person, when he feels intense pain or pleasure for something, believes that what caused this intense emotion is the only reality, true and evident, whereas it is not at all... because every pleasure and every pain, almost like nails, nail the soul to the body, they bind the soul to the body in a way that the soul becomes corporeal, till you believe true the things that the body consider true.”
“The soul reasons in the best way when no sense or feeling bothers it: neither the sight, nor the hearing, nor the pleasure, or the pain; but when it gathers completely in itself, detaching from the body and approaching the complete being... The soul, remaining alone in itself makes its research and elevates to what is pure, eternal and immutable and since this is of its same nature, the soul remains always bound to it: this state of the soul is called pure knowledge.”

Immortality of the soul and reincarnation

If it is clear that by detaching from the body and getting closer to our soul, it is possible to access the pure knowledge, it is not as much clear how could the soul be considered immortal and pass from one body to another one after death. Socrates did not use miracles to induce his students to trust him, but **dialectics**. He first states that **he knows nothing** and then starts his investigation by questioning his interlocutor and by extracting out of him all the prejudices, the false ideas and the superstitions that dwell in his mind. After delivering his mind from its burden, Socrates can bring to light the truth from inside, by raising his interlocutor to a higher state of awareness so that he can witness the Absolute Truth by himself. He argues that, if the soul were not eternal, many things should result inexplicable. For example, he says that ‘knowing’ is just remembering. Otherwise, how could many concepts, like the Beauty, the Equal, the Righteousness, be so easily acquired by us (while growing-up) if they were not somehow already existing and needed only to be ‘recalled’?

Shri Muhammad



Muhammad was born in 570 in the Arabian city of Mecca. His birth was marked by exceptional events such as an immense bright light shining from East to West. He belonged to the Banu Hashim, one of the prominent families of Mecca, although they were not prosperous during Muhammad's early life. In Arabic Muhammad means 'he who is greatly praised'.

Muhammad had the chance to get in touch with the Harif, a monotheist people, who do not subscribe to any revealed religion. During business trips to Syria and Yemen with his uncle, Muhammad met several Jewish and Christian tribes. These journeys gave Muhammad the opportunity to widen his knowledge of religious and social fields. Khadija, fascinated by the high spiritual value of Muhammad, married him when Muhammad was 25. They were happily married for 25 years and had 6 children, one of them, Fatima, was an incarnation of Gruha Laxmi. When her husband received his first revelation from the Archangel Gabriel, Khadija was the first person (besides Muhammad) to convert to Islam, which she did not hesitate to embrace, trusting to her husband's teachings. She remained at his side and supported him throughout his mission to spread Islam until her death in 619.

In 610 Muhammad started to give lectures based on the Revelation received from the archangel Gabriel, which consisted of a set of rules of a monotheist religion, dedicated to the exclusive cult of God, which were unique and indivisible. But his preaching caused an immediate reaction from the other idolatry religions in Mecca. These conflicts lasted for 13 years and in the end Muhammad was forced to move and settle in Medina. This flight, the famous Egira, sanctioned the final break with the faithless and also marked the start of a period of war. In January 630, Muhammad conquered Mecca with an army of ten thousand followers and without opposition from its inhabitants.

Muhammad died 2 years later in Medina.

His teachings are collected in the Qu'ran, which was edited 40 years after the his death by the man who killed Hazrat Ali (Muhammad's son-in-law) and his two sons, so it is not clear how much of the Quran come from the Master himself. But it is nice to notice that Muhammad never made Islam an exclusive religion in the Quran and very respectfully talked about Moses, Abraham, Christ and his mother Mary.

Teachings

The teachings of Muhammad have touched on many subjects. The right behaviour was at the centre of deep and repeated reflections.

About moderation: “Don’t kill your hearts with excess of drinking and eating.”
“Closest to me are the sober men, whoever they are and wherever they are.”

About sense of guilt: “Do not torment yourself with the fear that Allah will punish you.” “God saith, ‘Verily my compassion overcometh my wrath.’”

About rest and balance of energetic centres: “Do not work too much, because by not wearing out yourself you do not fall ill.”

About compassion: “God is merciful towards those who are mercy to others.” “Once Muhammad was asked, ‘O Apostle of God! How many times are we to forgive our servant’s faults?’ He was silent. Again the questioner asked, and Muhammad gave no answer. But when the man asked a third time, he said, ‘Forgive your servants seventy times day’.”

About the true Jihad: “The most excellent Jihad (striving in the way of Allah) is that of conquering ourselves.”

“Give me advice’ someone asked to Muhammad who replied: ‘do not get angry’
“He is not so strong and powerful who flings himself against people, but he is strong who removes rage from himself.”

About education: “Humility and good manners are the qualities of mercy.”
“Certainly for a man it is better teaching good manners to his son than giving a big sack of grain in charity.”

About the middle way and the good character: “A good character, who reflects on matters and a middle way in everything, are a part of the 24 parts of the qualities of prophets.”

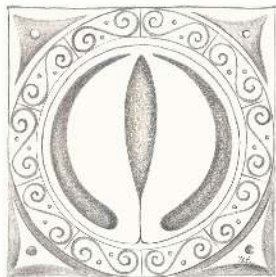
“Surely the dearest amongst you are those with the best character.”

About maryadas: “The borders have been set, so do not go beyond.” “Go straight along the way without turning, don’t go past the doors otherwise you will get lost; the open doors are the thing that Allah has forbidden, the curtains in front of the openings are the limits established by Allah.”

About devotion and love: “Not even a minimum of the devotion of a man is acceptable by Allah, if it is not expressed with intelligence and the true participation of the heart.”

“You will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another.”

Shri Guru Nanak



Guru Nanak lived in a time when moral degradation, anarchy and religious fanaticism had brought India towards a dark period of unrighteousness and instability. But thanks to the purity of his life and to his great compassion, Guru Nanak could join his communities Indus and Muslims, who he welcomed by simply calling them *Sikh* (i.e. true seeker).

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 AD in Lahore, Pakistan, and voiced an interest in divine subjects at an early age. Nevertheless his father Mehta Kalu tried to turn Nanak's mind towards worldly matters. For example, once he told his son to work on their land, but Nanak did not pay any attention to this work and instead meditated in the fields. As Mehta Kalu rebuked him for his idleness, Guru Nanak replied, «I am not idle I am busy in guarding my own fields. » Kalu asked him, «Where are your fields?» Guru Nanak replied, «My body is a field. My mind is the ploughman. Righteousness is the cultivation. Modesty is water for irrigation. I have sown the field with the seed of the sacred Name of the Lord. Contentment is my field's harrow. Humility is its hedge. The seeds will germinate into a good crop with love and devotion. Fortunate is the house in which such a crop is brought! O sir, mammon will not accompany us to the next world. It has infatuated the whole world, but there are few who understand its delusive nature.»

Guru Nanak married Mata Sulakhni, had two sons and was dedicated to his family for some years. As people began to recognise divine qualities in Guru Nanak they encouraged and supported Guru Nanak to study and travel. So at the age of around 30 he started his wanderings throughout India and beyond, travelling as far as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mecca and Medina, Turkey, Arabia, Baghdad and Siam. He held controversies with Pundits and Mohammedan priests, debated with the Pandas of Gaya, Hardwar and other places of pilgrimage.

Guru Nanak enjoined on all people to live righteously and with brotherly love and hospitality. But he was also a reformer. He attacked the corruptions in society and strongly protested against formalism and ritualism. He carried the message of peace and of love for everybody. He was very liberal in his views. He did not observe the rules of caste. He tried his level best to remove superstitions of the people. He preached purity, justice, goodness and the love of God.

After years of wandering and preaching, Guru Nanak settled down with his family at Kartarpur and died on 22 September 1539 at the Age of 69.

ॐ Teachings ॐ

His teachings are all collected and preserved in the *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs.

True love and devotion towards God

In particular he gave great importance to heartfelt prayer: “nothing can be achieved by man without divine favour”. But what should we really ask of God if not His complete love? He said: “Love God as the lotus loves water, as the bird Chatak loves rain, as the wife loves her husband. Make divine love thy pen and thy heart the writer. If you repeat God's Name, you live; if you forget it, you die. Open your heart to Him”. “A pure heart full of intense devotion is a mosque that the Almighty Creator of all makes His home”. “The silence of devotion opens the door that leads to the presence of the Great Beloved”.

Description of our evolutionary steps

In Japji (mystic poems uttered by the Master), Guru Nanak has given a vivid and concise description of the stages through which man must pass in order to reach the final resting place or abode of eternal bliss. There are five stages or *Khandas*:

Dharm Khand or ‘The Realm of Duty’: All must do this duty properly, must tread the path of righteousness and will be judged according to their actions.

Gyan Khand or ‘The Realm of Knowledge’: Where the spirit of divine knowledge reigns. The aspirant does his duty with intense faith and sincerity, has the knowledge now, that only by doing his duty in a perfect manner, he can reach the abode of bliss or the goal of life.

Sharam Khand or ‘The Realm of Ecstasy’: There is spiritual rapture. There is beauty. The Dharma has become a part of one's own nature and an ingrained habit. It is no more a mere matter of duty or knowledge.

Karam Khand or ‘The Realm of Power’: the God of power rules over this realm. The aspirant acquires power. He becomes a mighty hero. He becomes invincible. The fear of death vanishes.

Sach Khand or ‘The Realm of Truth’: the formless One reigns. Here the aspirant becomes one with God. He has attained Godhead, transmuted himself into Divinity, and attained the goal of his life. He has found out his permanent resting place. ***Now ends the arduous journey of the soul.***

Shri Shirdi Sainath



All we know for sure about Shri Shirdi Sainath's life is that he reached the village of Shirdi (in Maharashtra) in the 1859. He spent all his life in Shirdi, radiating his vibrations of Love and preparing the place that will become the birthplace of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi. **The whole life of Shri Shirdi Sainath was a continuous teaching.** At first, the people of Shirdi thought he was a mad person, who lived alone and slept on the ground. Then he settled in an abandoned mosque, where he kept a fire and oil lamp constantly alight. One day, he asked some villagers for oil, but a gang of youngsters taunted him and denied him the oil. So he very calmly went back home, with the mocking youngsters following him, and put some water in the lamps and lit them. The people who saw this miracle realized he was a holy person.

Love, compassion and tremendous patience were the means that helped him to conquer people's hearts. He was a jovial character and loved talking and joking with his followers. His Oral teachings were usually done in parables with the deepest teachings, the ones that attracted the deepest devotion of the whole country occurring through the example of his life.

Even if he had never studied, he was a deep connoisseur of both Islam and Hinduism (and their sacred texts). Many times he surprised his disciples when he gave them detailed and deep lectures on the Holy Scriptures.

He lived a frugal life even when he received donations from devotees, whom he gave to the poor. He never preached poverty to his disciples and never asked anybody to follow his life-style. He was a vegetarian, but not only he did not impose his diet on others, he never forced bigots to eat what their religion prohibited. His wore simple clothes as demanded by the Muslim custom and he declared himself to be fakir and Brahmin at the same time. He would repeat over that Ram (one of the Hindus Incarnations of God) and Rahim (one of Allah's names) were the same unique Deity.

He died on 15th of October of 1918, while sitting with his disciples in a deep state of Mahasamadhi.

ॐ Teachings ॐ

Shri Shirdi Sainath openly declared that he was a manifestation of an Avatar, a Divine Incarnation. Once he said to one of his disciples, “All this creation of Universe is me, all deities and incarnations, all living creatures, all things are in me. All sinners’ birth and death and all those who have done punyas (good deeds) and those ascending to the heaven, their liberation (moksha)... for everything I am responsible.”

The compassion and patience of a Sat Guru

Many devotees approached him, attracted by his miracles, and he used to give them what they asked, even if they disappeared afterwards. Anyway, he calmly stated: “I give to my devotees what they want, so that they start desiring what I really want to give them.”

The importance of Bhakti towards our Sat Guru

He insisted on the importance of devotion (bhakti) that one should express towards God and towards an enlightened Guru. He said, “Demolish the wall that separates you from me. The sense of separation, as I and you, is the barrier that separates the disciple from the master and since it is not destroyed, it is not possible to reach the state of yoga.” “People look for the Brahman-Jnana in books. Do not read books, but hold me in your heart. If you join and harmonize mind and heart, it will be enough.”

The all-pervasiveness and omnipresence of the Sat Guru

He showed to his disciples the capacity to have a connection with him both in form and formless. “To obtain Dyana, meditate upon me, either in my form or in formlessness, which will give even more joy.” He stated that he was in all beings and all things thanks to other people, creatures or even dreams. He gave teachings and hints, leaving aside the physical nearness or distance, still his disciples could perceive his presence everywhere despite never leaving the village of Shirdi. In many cases they could see him in other places, sometimes in person and sometimes through beggars (fakirs), who talked with his own words and gave precise instructions. He said, “I am not confined in Shirdi or in this body. I am everywhere. I am with you every time you think of me.” He told his disciples that even after death, he will continue his work and prepared them to recognize their adored Master in every thing and confided in them: “*Everything is inside yourselves. Try to listen within and follow the instructions you will get.*”

The Sahaja Yoga Italian collectivity is delighted to present this work about the Ten Incarnations of the Adi Guru Dattatreya and to dedicate it to our beloved Mother H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmla Devi, in occasion of the Guru Puja 2010. We send a heartfelt thank to the all the yogis who collaborated with us and to everyone who supported this wonderful project.

For every information about this work, please contact us by the local Italian coordinators or by email: benvenutiinparadiso@yahoo.com

