Sagarmanthan: An Interpretation of Indian Knowledge Traditions

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To understand ancient Indian intellectual practices and knowledge Traditions, *Rigved* is the prime source to begin with. It is a repository of great Knowledge practices of hundreds of years. Etymologically, *Rigved* (ऋग्वेद) is Ṛk (ऋक्) and Veda (वेद), Ṛk (ऋक्) mean praise (to praise gods) and Veda (वेद) from root word of 'Vid' (विद्) means, to know or knowledge etc. In this sense *Rigved* connotes 'Praise for Knowledge', contrary to the recently used meaning of 'praising gods'. *Rigved* being an oldest knowledge text and a treasure of ancient intellectual practices also contains a history of ideas, information on Indo-Iranian geography, rivers and tribal battles, etc. Composed in 10 *Mandals* containing 1027 *Sukta* and total of 10570 *Richas*, it has mentioning of 33 *Devas*, attributed to infinite natural elements and powers responsible for human existence.

It is noteworthy that this praising of *Devas* as infinite natural powers and elements cannot be equated with idolatry or worshiping of gods as polytheistic practices. In Rig-Vedic context worshiping of deities is like praising that particular infinite element for its attributes (*Gunas)* as perceived with Vedic Knowledge. It is neither a polytheistic nor monotheistic form of worshiping since Vedic knowledge does not contain an idea of Creator as God. *Nasadiya Sukta* (7th Mandal) of *Rigved* explains the idea of formless and attribute a system of creation or a supreme order. Similarly in 10th *Mandal* of Rigved 'Purushasukta' it further explains the unity of creation as *Brahman* by describing its manifestation in symbolic form of social order. In this way *Rigved* is a great knowledge text for the understanding of ancient Indian civilisation.

Western critical thinkers have categorized India as a polytheistic society which is a misconception in Indian civilizational context. The Indian society is *Dharma*-centric and not theo-centric, so the category of polytheism is inappropriate for it. Most Western theoreticians are familiar with theology only and have less understanding of *Dharma-shastras*, so they view Indian society from their limited perspective. It is necessary to understand *Dharma* in its true meaning as it has nothing to do with God-centric religious practices.

Dharma is not an organised religion comparable to the theocentric socio-political systems. Idea of *Dharma* is unique to Indian civilizational context. It is more of a set of fundamental moral guiding principals for a better social order. *Dharma* no where prescribe any kind of theocentric codified social order. In Indian knowledge traditions no entity or creator God exists beyond this created world. All existing world in itself is a Creator, present everywhere and in each entity, holding the entire cosmos as its supreme Order or System called *Brahman.* Thus, the Indian Social order is no theocentric and its prime structuring order is *Dharma.*

Dharma is a cultural practice which evolved from the systematic growth of human civilisation in a larger geographical space. India has been essentially a *Dharma*-centric civilization. Also, *Dharma* is not a political doctrine as is the case of some religion but a pure, naturally adoptive moral values and social conducts. It is the path of righteousness, a proper cultural practice, and one's own moral duties. *Dharayati iti Dharmaha* (धार्यति इति धर्म) means that which upholds, sustains and even uplifts is *Dharma*[1]. In Indian Knowledge traditions *Dharma* has been defined in various ways such as Cosmic order, Social order, Ethical behaviour, Duty or Responsibility, Service to the community etc,. Therefore, it has to be fundamentally differentiated from religion.

Here it is also pertinent to address the idea of some Supreme Power responsible for the human existence. The Semitic knowledge systems have defined the Supreme Power as God beyond the realm of visible world, which is responsible for the creation or destruction of the humanity and the world. So they consider themselves as *Monotheistic*

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religious systems and all others as *Polytheistic*, practicing paganism. They consider all unorganised religious beliefs as *Paganism.*

Polytheism in Indian Context:

As nature-worshiping across civilizations, *Paganism* was very much prevalent in the world regardless of time and place. It was also practiced in Pre-Vedic, Vedic and Late Vedic era representing ancient Indo-Iranian geo-cultural expansion. With the evolution of mankind and expansion of intellectual practices, great Seers (*Rishis*) engaged themselves in the quest of knowledge of existence. Over the period of time various schools of thoughts came into existence. Due to the Vedic knowledge generation, the pagan idolatry underwent perceptive changes, from pure nature worshiping to worshiping of *Gunas* or qualities of those natural forces assigned to them.

Vedic knowledge explained the nature worshiping practices in terms of *Brahman* centric understanding and it got transformed as worshiping of *Gunas* attributed to nature. With the idea of *Brahman* getting more impacted, Indian social order underwent transformation from polytheistic practices to knowledge based *Dharma* centric understanding of cultural practices. For example, worshiping of a particular idol of a deity does not put it in the non *Brahmanic* category. An *Idol* of some particular deity does not represent it as a God or creator, but an attribution of supreme quality assigned to infinite creative elements of the creation. In other words, *idols* represent the *Gunas* of various creative elements essential for the formation of all beings. *Brahman* being a supreme order, non-existent in form, qualities and manifested through its creation only, means every creation in itself is a form of *Brahman.* So this supreme or ultimate order can be realised within its manifested world and all cosmological forms are forms of *Brahman* only; all qualities of created world attributed to creative elements are part of that supreme order *Brahman.* Such qualities (*Gunas)* of creative elements representing the supreme order qualifies as the highest *Devguna* worth of inspiration and adopting in human life for social conduct. It means the social order needs to be conducted by human beings with those qualifying *Gunas* of creative elements. Those *Gunas* or qualities are guiding principals as natural qualities of human behaviour or *Dharma.* So this understanding formulated by Vedic knowledge practices to see the world and human existence as *Brahman* and live life with this perspective makes every being as *Brahman* and worth of respect; even to the extent of worshiping if it acquires *Devgunas.* That is why Indian mind can worship even a piece of stone while contemplating it as part of supreme elements, surrendering himself and ego to *Brahman.*

Idea and conceptualisation of *Brahman* is unique in Indian civilisational context. Etymologically *Brahman* consists of Sanskrit words br̥hat (बृहत) and Aham (अहम), means 'an Expanded Self'. Where *Br̥hat* means vastness, expansion, enlargement, etc and *Aham* is a connotations of 'Self 'or 'Me'. Compounding both the words, Br̥hat and Aham creates a definitive word '*Brahman* 'and in support of this joint word different definitions of *Brahman* given in Vedic texts are indicative of this definitive word. *Aham Brahmasmi* (अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि) means 'I am *Brahman'* or 'I am Expanded Self'. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman* (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म)[2], that is, whatever perceptible or visible exists everywhere is *Brahman.* Such connotations of the conceptualisation of system of creation is indicative of non-God centric explanation of the creation, not indicating a 'Creator God'. Western critical interpretations and explanations of core Indian intellectual ideas based on inadequate or wrong translations have created completely erroneous notions about Indian intellectual conceptualizations. In recent past, colonial readings of our ancient texts have discredited India's own intellectual categories. Done consciously or unconsciously, it helped to subjugate Indian mind by creating negative perception about the indigenous categories and value systems. It puts *Dharma* into the category of religion, a kind of Abrahamisation of Indian *Dharma* practices. Also, in the course of some social reforms movements in India the understanding of *Dharma* got blurred by codifying changeable socio-cultural practices into a straitjacket, after the practices of Abrahamic religions. Incidentally, it became a factor leading to create separate Hindu and Sikh identities.

In any case, the current fragmented social orders in India require a sound intellectual investigation of our *Itihasa-Purana* narratives, that have been responsible for structuring the unique Indian social order. It is so because our social system is not based on any faith or strict religious codifications or political doctrines. Our social system has been *Dharma*-centric and the idea of *Dharma* has its roots in Indian knowledge systems as explained by ancient Seers (Rishis) in Vedic knowledge texts. It is pertinent to explore the ideas of social construction having very long intellectual traditions. In this context an ancient event of "Sagarmanthan" can be mentioned here as an example of grand intellectual practices mentioned in *Vedic* and *Puranic* texts.

Sagarmanthan as an intellectual endeavor

Narrative of 'Sagarmanthan' in ancient Indian history has mentions of *Devasur Sangram*, under which a number of battles were said to be fought between Devas and Asuras. Deva and Asuras both the tribes originated from the Daksh Prajapati, another symbolic categories of cosmic

and worldly elements related to creation. They were different for their respective acquired qualities (*Gunas*). During the *Sagarmanthan*³ both agreed to work together and participate in it.

As the legend narrates, Lord Indra while riding on his divine elephant came across the sage Durvasa, who offered him a special garland given to him by an Apsara. Indra accepted the garland and placed it on the trunk of Airavata (elephant). Strong scent of the flowers attracted some bees. Annoyed by the bees, Airavata threw the garland on the ground. This enraged the sage Durvasa, as the garland was a dwelling of fortune and was to be treated as a prasada. Durvasa cursed Indra and all the *devas* to be bereft of all strength, energy, and fortune. The incidence led to another round of *Devasur* war in which the devas were defeated and the *asuras*, led by Bali, gained control over the three worlds. The *devas* sought Vishnu's help, who advised them to treat with the asuras in a diplomatic manner. The devas formed an alliance with the asuras to jointly churn the ocean for the nectar of immortality, and to share it among themselves.

Actually it was an event of 'Churning of Ideas' continued for hundreds of years. In support of this idea of common venture to explore the fundamental quest on existence, the event of *Sagarmanthan* can be interpreted from this point of view. *Sagar* (Ocean) is also referred to the vastness and in this context, it may be taken as innumerable thoughts and ideas contemplating on the quest for human existence. In this sense Manthan is churning of Ideas, that can happen in debates, dialogues and interactions over a long period of time. As the tools applied for the churning those queries and ideas can be decoded and the initial outcome of that grand process was to determine the material categories of cosmological existence. Devas and Asuras were participating equally in the grand endeavour of churning of ideas and sharing the outcomes with mutual agreements. Most of the time they were in agreement with the results transpiring from the intellectual practices. Going further, according to the legend, the mount Mandara⁴ was uprooted and used as the churning rod and Shiva's Vasuki (snake) became the churning rope. Mount Mandara was placed on the turtle (*Kurma*—Avatar of Vishnu) in midst of an ocean. The great serpent Vasuki coiled itself around Mandara, and Vishnu asked the devas to tug from the head of the serpent. The asuras, observing this, refused to hold the tail of the serpent, perceiving it as inauspicious. The devas relented and held the tail henceforth and the churning commenced. The *Sagaramanthana* bequeathed an array of substances from the Ocean of Milk. One of them was the lethal poison known as *halahala*. The poison was so powerful that it could destroy all creations. Shiva consumed the poison to protect the three worlds, the consumption of which gave a blue hue to his throat, offering him the epithet *Neelakantha*.

This event seems full of symbolic significance. One can look at this event as a 'Churning of Ideas', as enormous and vast like an ocean, mount Mandara like a massive reproductive tool to extract knowledge out of an intellectual exercise. Employing the precise methodology may be depicted as Vasuki, who was provided by Shiva, the lord of wisdom and meditation. Initially Vasuki was so large in size that only Shiva could make it smaller and wear it on his ankle, means Shiva as lord of wisdom provided a precise applicable methodology to churn out knowledge from the ocean of ideas. The lethal poison halahala appeared first and it can be perceived as the invention of some technologies capable of mass destruction. It is possible in case of most of the scientific inventions that could be used for creation or destruction both, like the know-how of nuclear power. Later in this endeavour, more valuable informations were retrieved and categorised according to their nature of use.

At one point of time, during this intellectual venture, both Devas and Asuras were on same grounds of accepting various categories. First they received 14 *ratnas* (most valuable substances) and divided among themselves. According to the quality of the treasures produced, they were claimed by Shiva, Vishnu, Maharishis, the *devas*, and the *asuras*, means those elements were attributed to the categories of Infinite and Finite ideas of creation. For example Lakshmi emerged from the ocean and she was consorted with Vishnu. Vishnu being an idea for sustainer of creation required some explanation that supports the sustainability of livelihood in the form of wealth and prosperity, Lakshmi is associated with these attributes. She is the provider force of an idea of sustainability i.e. Vishnu. Likewise, three types of supernatural animals appeared viz. *Kamadhenu* (the wish-granting cow), Airavata and several other elephants, *Uchhaihshrava* (the divine seven-headed horse). Three specific valuables were also produced: *Kaustubha* (divine jewel), *Kalpavriksha* (a divine wish-fulfilling and flowering tree) and *Sharanga* (a powerful bow). Additionally produced were; *Chandra*: a crescent, claimed by Shiva, *Dhanvantari*: the *vaidya* (doctor) of the *devas* with *amrita*, the nectar of immortality, and the *halahala*, the poison swallowed by Shiva.

There is an interesting story at the end of this event. When, *Dhanvantari* emerged with a pot containing the *Amrita* (nectar of immortality), a fierce fighting ensued between the *devas* and the *asuras* for its possession. Metaphorically, it was the final stage of that intellectual exercise when it reached to its success and the knowledge of Ultimate Truth was about to be received. *Rishis* from both the sides deliberated on the ideas emerged out of the grand intellectual effort, as the answer to all

the questions about existence. This was the resultant product of exercise as pure knowledge of creation and it was pronounced as *Amrita.* It was called *Amrita* because the knowledge of creation explained as *Brahman* liberates from the consciousness of death (*mrityu*). This knowledge of creation explained mortality as the temporal existence composed of infinite elements in finite form which is impermanence, and immortality as the realisation of permanence that is the consciousness of creative order (*Param Sat)* which is beyond birth and death. This element of permanence exists in temporal and impermanent existence as part of *Param Tatva* or *Atman.* In other words, both sides agreed on the results of this exercise as the Creator being formless and unseen. But there were some ideological differences surfaced on the issue of explaining this idea to others since it was all abstract conceptualisations and cannot be perceived. One side of *Devas* explained it in the terms of *Brahman* (creator is formless and attribute-less) that exists in Creation itself; but the Asuras disagreed with this explanation and parted ways since they believed that though the Creator is formless but it exists and cannot be seen. The followers of *Brahmanic* idea placed themselves in Vedic knowledge traditions whereas *Abrahmanic* disagreed. The other side of *Asuras* presented this knowledge in their own way, perhaps like pronouncing *Ahura Mazda* as the Creator God. There is an incidence when Asuras taken away *Amrita* with them and *Devas* appealed to Vishnu (sustainer), who took the form of Mohini, a beautiful and enchanting damsel and managed to get it back for *Devas*. It means *Asuras* at first instance agreed and tried to appropriate this knowledge of Creation but failed in its explanation while confronting the reality (*Maya).* This way the symbol of *Mohini* can be understood in this narrative where it shows that the indulgence in impermanent world due to its enchanting, desirous and illusionary character deprived the *Asuras* of this true knowledge. Whereas *Devas* succeeded in understanding and explaining this abstract conceptual knowledge of creation with metaphorical linguistic systems.

The events subsequent this exercise where *Asuras* felt cheated and deceived they got engaged in personal combat with *Devas.* There are several incidences of battles between *Devas* and *Asuras* and these were fought on ideological positions also, like "Indra fought Bali, Kartikeya fought Taraka, Varuna fought Heti, Yama fought Kalanabha, Brihaspati fought Sukra, Mitra fought Praheti, Vishvakarma fought Maya, Vrishapati fought Jambha, Shani fought Naraka, Savitri fought Vilochana, Chandra fought Rahu, Vayu fought Puloman, and Aparajita fought Namuchi. There are also descriptions of duels between groups of beings: the Ashvini twins and Vrishaparva, Surya and the hundred sons of Bali, the

sons of Brahma with Ilvala and Vatapi, the Maruts and the Nivatakavacha, Kali with Shumba and Nishumba, the Rudras and the Krodavasas, and the Vasus and the Kaleyas. Rejuvenated by the amrita, the devas emerged victorious and exiled the asuras to the Pataloka, regaining Svarga"[5].

There were lot more findings emerged out of this grand event and the great Seers of the time recorded and categories them accordingly. In a sense, *Sagarmanthan* event has also been recorded as a history of intellectual practices jointly carried on by all the intellectuals (Rishis) in hundreds of years and then it was recorded in later Vedic and Puranic texts. Before moving ahead it is pertinent to discuss about the final outcome of *Sagarmanthan* exercise, i.e., *Amrita.*

An important reference at this point was of *Soma-Rasa* known as the divine drink of *Devas* which gave them *Amritatva.* '*Soma*' as *Amrita* is a core of knowledge system that was conceptualised during a long intellectual practices. It is hard to resolve the mystery of finding the explanation of creation as *Brahman*. But the great Seers of Rigvedic knowledge practices must have employed very advanced deep meditative tools to give cosmological explanations so systematically. They explained the creation of cosmos, and the first ray of light and resonance of sound facilitated the emergence of beings on Earth, most important element was the resonance of consciousness (*Chetna*). A resonance, or sound, in a way was considered to be the vital element of existence since it is resultant of grand exploration. In the later Vedic texts *Soma* may have taken as AUM or *Om* as both are considered to be the prime element of every existence in all respects. "Soma is a Vedic Sanskrit word that literally means 'distill, extract, sprinkle', often connected in the context of rituals"[6]. In the Vedas, the same word (*soma*) is used for the drink, the plant, and its deity. Drinking *soma* produces immortality (*Rigveda*, 8.48.3)[7]. When the knowledge of creation was conceptualised, the next stage was to present it in understandable expression. *Soma*, as finest extracted drink was in use during all the major events as in Yajnas, etc. *Soma* was considered to be the end product of finest and purest fruit or plant, means in the terms of Intellectual Practices (*Yajnas*) every available and finest ideas were employed to further contemplate on the *ultimate knowledge*. So the idea of *Amrita* as finest extraction of knowledge was explained in the terms of the produce *Soma*. Likewise in the tradition of praising *Soma* as deity, its other attributes also merged in it and previously called sound *Pranav*, gets translated into its actual utterance as *AUM*. Asuras used it as Homa not AUM because later they separated their ways on the disagreements over Vedic conceptualisation of Brahman which is represented with prime symbol of '*AUM*' (ॐ).

The myth of Daksh-Prajapati

The narrative of *Daksh-Prajapati* also explains the process of creation and classification of the elements required for the Creation. The meaning of the word "Daksha" (दक्ष) is "able", "expert", "skilful" or "honest". Some of Daksha's earliest mentions are found in the *Rigveda*. He is mentioned to be an Aditya and specifically associated with the skilled actions of sacrificers. Later the Brahmanas, Taittariya Samhita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata also mentioned *Daksha* in brief. Most of the legends related to *Daksha* are narrated in the *Puranas*. There are several accounts of his birth and rebirth in various texts but in true sense '*Daksh*' is an idea of skill for creation of reality of being and the world. '*Daksh*' as sole idea of skill does not qualify it to create something concrete by its own. Therefore, an *Idea* needs some kind of effort or labour to put it in some form. So skill has creative effort in the form of *Labour* metaphorically *Prasuti* consort of *Daksh. Daksh* as an idea/skill for creation has an executory power as *Prasuti*. Along with *Prasuti Daksh* has another consort named *Askini*. *Askini* is a medium of creation as it represents various infinite and finite elements of creation and its composed forms as well. She is also known as *Panchajani* which means composition of five elements. *Daksh* along with his consorts *Prasuti* and *Askini* represents the intellectual idea behind the Creation with classifications of elements responsible for the existence. This whole conceptualisation of *Daksh-Prajapati* cannot be constructed beyond the intellectual ideas of *Rigved. Rigved* broadly has two important *Suktas* in this reference, one is *Nasdiya Sukta* and other is *Purush Sukta.* Both the S*uktas* deals with conceptualising Creator and Creation and further cosmology, anthropology and sociology based on this conceptual ideas. *Daksh-Prajapati* explains the knowledge of creation in a systematic manner.

Daksh-Prajapati has number of daughters from both the consorts. The number of *Daksha*'s daughters varies from one book to another. With *Prasuti*, *Daksha* had 16 to 60 daughters (24 is found in most texts). All of *Prasuti*'s daughters represent virtues of mind and body.[8] They were married to different deities and *Rishis*. Ascertaining exact numbers is not that important since *Daksh-Prajapati* was not in human form and also his consorts. These were generative ideas sprouted from the grand conceptualisation of *Brahman*. Likewise the daughters representing various formative elements and natural forces of existence were broadly categorised as *Infinite (Aditi)* and *Finite (Diti).* Those elements and associated attributes were explained in human form perhaps for a structured and generative understanding, otherwise the nomenclature itself explains the qualities assigned with them. The daughters were married to various deities and *Rishis* again representing different executory categories of Creation. The following were the daughter of *Daksh-Prajapati* from *Prasuti (*all of Prasuti's daughters meaningfully represent various virtues of mind and body.*)*

1. 13 daughter (*Sraddha, Lakshmi, Dhriti, Thushti, Pushti, Medha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja, Vapu, Shanti, Siddhi, Kirtti*) married the god *Dharma*. These are the elements and qualities for better structured and harmonious social order.

2. Khyati married Bhrigu
1. Sambhuti married Marichi
2. Smriti married Angiras
3. Priti married Pulastya
4. Kshama married to Pulaha
5. Sannati married Kratu
6. Urjja married Vashishtha
7. Swaha married Agni
8. Swadha married Pitrs
9. Sati married Shiva

Another listing is found in many texts, including the *Mahabharata* (*Harivamsa*), the *Devi Bhagavata Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana*. According to this version, *Daksha* had 60 daughters with *Asikni* — who were the progenitors of various species.[9] Accordingly, 10 of those daughters (*Maruvati, Vasu, Jami, Lamba, Bhanu, Urjja, Sankalp, Mahurath, Sadhya, Vishva*) were married to *Dharma*. Next, 13 daughters (*Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Tamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru, Vishva, Muni*) to sage *Kashyapa*. Then, 27 daughters (*Ashvini, Bharani, Krttika, Rohini, Mrigashira, Tarakam or Ardra, Punarvasu, Pushya, Ashlesha, Janakam or Magha, Phalguni, Uttarphalguni, Hasta, Chitra, Svati, Vishakha, Anuradha, Jyestha, Mula, Purvashadha, Uttarasadha, Srona or Shravana, Dhanistha or Shatabhisha, Abhijit or Prachetas, Purvabhadrapada, Uttarabhadrapada* and *Revati*) to *Chandra*. Fuether, 4 daughters to *Arishtanemi*, 2 daughters to *Bahuputra*, 2 daughters to sage *Angiras,* and 2 daughters married to *Krisasva*.

This could be taken as an indicative explanation of *Daksh-Prajapati* as an idea of classifying various creative elements contemplated with ancient Indian intellectual practices. There are enormous possibilities in the textual analysis of the ancient Indian narrative to explore deep and complex ideas and the meanings embedded in it.

Why it is important to view the event as an intellectual endeavour? one may ask. The possible answer lies in the outcomes of this event. Every element churned out from it can be classified in two broad categories of Infinite and Finite elements responsible for the existence. In this sense the whole narrative of *Sagarmanthan* can be decoded and re-interpreted in terms of great intellectual practices.

Although over the period of time, the intellectual history of the ancient timea was recorded in a *Itihasa* narrative system, yet it got also placed in non-historical narratives and further projected as pieces of fiction with weird and illogical stories.

However, one can argue, our *Itihasa* narrative system was never properly understood in its own terms by modern day historians and critical thinkers. Our *Itihasa narratology* is basically knowledge centric in which representation of intellectual ideas were more important than merely putting chronology of events. From this perspective the *Vedic* texts carries immense intellectual practices, later composed as knowledge texts though in metaphorical idioms. It was logical to explain and express the abstract and conceptual idea in available socio-cultural linguistic idiom for the understanding of larger population. The Indian society has definitely shaped itself on this grand knowledge traditions, and accomplished itself as the *Dharma-centric* socio-cultural system. Different narratives of *Daksh-Prajapati* also support this perspective. Since the outcome of the *Sagarmanthan* event provided fundamental knowledge of creative elements and its attributes, the classification of those elements further may prove vital in defining the structure of cosmology, anthropology and sociology of existence. There is another legend of *Daksh-Prajapati* which is metaphorical and symbolic. It is about various classifications of infinite and finite elements of creation responsible for the composition of human body and its attributions. The core elements as 14 Ratnas churned out the *Sagarmanthan* are defined as ultimate knowledge contemplated on existing intellectual ideas. Alongside, another *Daksha-Prajapati's* narrative classified those elements for further inquiry, research and study since more categories and elements were added. It can be argued, therefore, that the ancient Indian knowledge texts are major authentic source to understand the Indian Intellectual traditions.

Notes

1. The Sanskrit word *Dharma* has no direct translation into English. Among other things, it can be thought of as righteousness in thought, word, and action. It comes from the root *Dhr*, which means to uphold, sustain, or uplift. Thus another interpretation of the word in English would be 'the collection of natural and universal laws that uphold, sustain, or uplift.

2. sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma tajjalāniti śānta upāsīta | atha khalu kratumayaḥ puruṣo yathākraturasmiṁlloke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati sa kratuṃ kurvīta || 3.14.1 ||

3. The Samudra Manthana (Sanskrit: समुद्रमन्थन; lit. 'churning of the ocean') is a major episode in Hindu mythology that is elaborated in the Vishnu Purana, a major text of Hinduism.[1] The Samudra Manthana explains the origin of the elixir of eternal life, amrita. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samudra_Manthana)

4. Mandara (मन्दर) is the mountain where Śiva explained the nature of his own self.—Accordingly, the nature of Śiva's own self as explained by himself as well as by the Gods who went to see Śiva on the Mandara mountain, an eulogy of Śiva, description of the Pāśupata-vrata are told in forty five chapter while chapter forty-six contains glories of Śiva and his worship especially in the liṅga-form are described in chapter forty seven, wherein an episode concerning Kubera's birth and attainment of boon from Śiva is described. (https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/mandara)

5. Purnendu Narayana Sinha, *A Study of the Bhagavata Purana: Or, Esoteric Hinduism* (1901: Freeman & Company Limited), p.172

6. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press (1872, Reprint: 2001). pp.1136–1137.

7. The Rigveda (8.48.3) says: ápāma sómam amŕta abhūma, áganma jyótir ávidāma devā́n, kíṃ nūnám asmā́n kṛṇavad árātiḥ, kím u dhūrtír amŕta mártiyasya
   Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton translates this as: "We have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods. What can hostility do to us now, and what the malice of a mortal, o immortal one?"

8. Janet Chawla, *Birth and Birthgivers: The Power Behind the Shame* (2006: New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications)

9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daksha#cite_ref-19