



# International Journal of Sanskrit Research

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ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2020; 6(4): 61-66

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Received: 01-05-2020

Accepted: 03-06-2020

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## Significance of number sixteen in Indic tradition

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### Abstract

This paper discusses about Number Sixteen and its significance in Indic tradition. Number sixteen plays an important role in one's life. It covers us from before birth to last day in many ways. Hence our ancestors gave utmost importance to this number which has percolated into the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Indian mythology, numerology, religion, philosophy, spirituality, Tantra, physiology, Ayurveda and many more. The paper also decodes Puruṣa Sūkta of the ṛgveda, Praśna upaniṣad, Vedic astronomy, Puranas, rituals in Indic tradition regarding number sixteen. It explores as to how this number attained importance in the Epic period, Hindu religious ceremonies, offerings, Nyaya philosophy and Ayurveda while treating patients. The paper highlights on the continuity and connectivity of this number sixteen from the Vedic to the present times and inter-relationship between the micro and macrocosms for individual, family and national welfare.

**Keywords:** Āyurveda, dāna, kalā, nyāya, Puruṣa, Samskāra, sixteen

### Introduction

I am amazed by number sixteen which has covered our lives in many ways. It fascinated our sages, seers and writers from the ṛgvedic times to the present. Number sixteen plays an important role in one's life. That is the age generally when young boys and girls who enter the portals of college, breathe the nascent air of freedom, curiosity for the other gender, bubbling with energy, dream for higher goals in life, tries to do the impossible things and many more. Some boys and girls in 'Sweet Sixteen' fall in 'Love at first sight' and ruin their student career. Some may fall in love, experience it for a while, understand the futility of it, return to normalcy and pursue their higher goals. Number sixteen covers us from before birth to last day in many ways. Hence our ancestors gave utmost importance to this number which has percolated into the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Indian mythology, numerology, religion, philosophy, spirituality, Tantra, physiology and many more.

### Sixteen in Vedic and Upaniṣadic times:

Just as me and you are astonished by sixteen, our vedic and upaniṣadic seers were also attracted by it. An illustration from *Praśna upaniṣad* demonstrates it: Sukeśa, son of Bhāradwāja was asked by Hiraṇyanābha, a prince of Kosala about a *Puruṣa* possessed of sixteen limbs (*ṣoḍaśa kalā*). Sukeśa did not know the answer and he asked the same question to his teacher Pippalāda: 'Where does that *Puruṣa* (of *ṣoḍaśa kalā*) exist? Pippalāda replied: 'O amicable one, here itself inside the body is that *Puruṣa* in whom originate these sixteen digits or limbs' <sup>[1]</sup>. They are psychic breath (*prāṇa*), faith (*śraddhā*), space (*kham*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*jyoti*), water (*āpah*), earth (*pṛthivī*), sense organs (*indriya*), mind (*manas*), food (*anna*), vigor (*vīrya*), austerity or self control (*tapah*), sacred hymns (*mantra*), rites or actions (*karma*), worlds (*loka*) and name in the worlds (*nāma*) <sup>[2]</sup>.

It is understood from the above dialogue that the supreme Brahman or ultimate reality in Vedānta was also called *Puruṣa* who created *prāṇa* comprising of physical and mental energies. From that *prāṇa*, he created faith which is the source of stimulus for all the beings. From this He created five gross elements (earth, water, fire, air and space) which became the material constituents of physical body for enjoying fruits of good actions through five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin). He created mind which is the lord of all organs and is characterized by doubt (*sandeha*) and thought (*viśaya*). For the sustenance of body, He created food from which originated vigor.

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Then he created self - control for physical and mental purifications. Later He created the hymns comprising of the four Vedas, rites such as *Agnihotra*, the results of rites, worlds and finally names of beings. These sixteen digits or limbs mingle with the God, lose their names, shapes and the *Puruṣa* become shapeless and timeless. Thus the *Praśna upaniṣad* gave the creation comprising of microcosm and macrocosm originating from the supreme reality (*Brahman*).

Initially this concept of creation is found in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* (RV X.90) of the Rgveda where the *Puruṣa* covers the three worlds and surpasses them with his foot measuring ten inches (*atyatisṭhaddaśāṅgulam* I). This hymn covers all the sentient and non-sentient beings of the world, the Universe with its sun, moon and stars, gods and goddesses, righteous vedic actions, sacrifice (*yajña*) etc., [3]. Dr. Ramachandra Bhat, a renowned vedic scholar regarding this measurement of ten inches says thus:

'Vedic commentator Bhatta Bhāskara and later Sri Aurobindo have opined that this ten inches symbolically represent the eight directions, up above and down below (*daśa dik*). This *Puruṣa* of *Puruṣa Sūkta* is the *Hiraṇyagarbha* from whom the world originated and originally He stayed in *Satya loka*. The *Puruṣa* takes the people to that world who worships Him with *yajña*. The same cosmic *Puruṣa* stays in the form of individual soul (*jīvātmā*) in all living beings who has to be visualized' [4].

This measure of ten inches attains greater importance during ceremonial rites while offering libation (*tarpaṇa*) by Hindus to departed ancestors when a silver or copper foot replica of Lord Viṣṇu is worshipped which is ten inches in length. That plate called *Viṣṇupāda* has the carved pictures of lotus consisting of 16 petals, a tree of 16 leaves (may be the mythical wish yielding tree -*Kalpavṛkṣa* of heaven, or *Tulsi* plant), fish, tortoise, Sun or discus (*cakra*) with *Svastika* emblem, conch shell with outer 32 semi circles, snake, Garuda, hand fan used for service of gods, (*Cāmara*), sacred flag, parasol, amulet etc., Sixteen and multiple of sixteen is represented in those pictures. *Viṣṇupāda* is the name of a place in Gaya, Uttar Pradesh where Hindus perform ceremonial rites, offer libations and salute the stone carving of *Viṣṇupāda* there. It is believed by devout Hindus that by this ritual, their ancestors would attain eternal *Brahma Loka* which is free from the cycles of birth and death. The *Viṣṇu Sūkta* [5] and later the *Purāṇas* [6] explain as to how Lord Viṣṇu asked for three measures or feet of land from demon emperor Bali and with one measure (*pāda*) or foot (ten inches), covered the entire earth and with other two measures of foot covered the nether and heavenly regions and thus became *Trivikrama* (God of three giant strides) spanning the three worlds. According to Indian palmistry (*sāmudrika śāstra*), any person having the above symbols in his base of feet would become an Emperor (*cakravarti*) or a world renowned figure or a globe trotter [7].

### Number Sixteen in the *Rāmāyaṇam*

The number sixteen percolated into classical Sanskrit literature when the first primordial epic poem the *Rāmāyaṇam* was written in *Anuṣṭubh* metre. This is a very simple metre consisting of four parts of eight letters or syllables each and the entire verse consisting of 32 syllables [8]. It appears that sage Vālmīki was fascinated by the *śodaśa kalā Puruṣa* of *Praśna upaniṣad* and begins his epic by asking a direct question to sage Nārada thus: 'Who can possibly be full of virtues in this world at present? Nay who is possessed of prowess and knows what is right? Who is conscious of

services done, truthful of speech and of firm resolve? Who is possessed of right conduct and who is friendly to all living beings? Who is a man of knowledge? Nay, who is powerful and who has a singularly lovable appearance? Who has subdued his self? Who has conquered anger? Who is possessed of splendor and who is above fault finding, and whom do the very gods dread when his wrath has been (apparently) in battle? I wish to hear this, for there is a great curiosity in mind about it, while you are capable of knowing such a man O eminent seer!" Sage Nārada replies that, it is heard that Rāma born in *Ikṣavāku* race has all those sixteen qualities [9].

Sage Vālmīki enlists sixteen virtues which are necessary for a person who can stand as a role model for successive generations to come. Sage Vālmīki perhaps while depicting the character of Rāma had this *śodaśa kalā Puruṣa* of *Praśna upaniṣad* and *Puruṣa Sūkta* in his mind. This sixteen is elaborated in the *Bhāgavatam* where Lord Kṛṣṇa was praised as a person endowed with sixteen attributes, an echo of the *Bālakānda* of the *Rāmāyaṇam*. Sages Vālmīki and Vedavyāsa were desirous of depicting a supreme human being covering all the above sixteen attributes which could be emulated by human beings. The sixteenth chapter of the *Bhāgavadgītā* narrates the divine and demoniac virtues and appeals to human beings to adopt divine virtues and repudiate demoniac qualities. Thus the two epic poems of India, the *Rāmāyaṇam* and the *Mahābhārata* promoted great ideals for the conduct of human beings highlighting the significance of sixteen.

### Sixteen in Vedic astronomy and mythology:

The Vedic astronomy observed the waxing and waning of moon and ocean waves, and recorded that there is a link between the prosperity and adversity of human beings. The Vedic astronomers were of the view that Moon has sixteen digits which is in conformity with sixteen limbs of human body. The Moon's rays could impact sixteen limbs of the body during full moon (*śukla pakṣa*) and new moon (*kṛṣṇa pakṣa*) periods.

According to Indian myths, the gods drank the immortal juice (*rasa*) of Moon commencing with first day of New Moon. Hence his digit decreased. Later the oblations were offered at sacrifices which enhanced the digits, thereby he attained the full Moon on the sixteenth day. The gods and goddesses who drank the digits of the Moon are Sun, Viśvedeva, Varuṇa, Vaśatkāra, sages, Brahman, yama, Vāyu, Umā, Manes, Kubera, Rudra and Prajāpati. Hence his digits got deteriorated and became emaciated. Then Moon nurtures medicinal herbs. The cows eat those herbs and give milk. The priests sanctify cow's milk with Vedic hymn and offer it to the Moon in sacrifices, hence the Moon gains the digits and attains full crescent on the sixteenth day. This cycle gets repeated once in sixteen days (10). It is told in the *Kāma śāstra* that the sixteen digits (*kalā*) of moon has influence over the limbs of the human body from head to toe.

### Sixteen rites of passage (*Samskāra*)

The life of a Hindu involved sixteen rites of passage (*śodaśa samskāra*) from before the birth to the last day. They are:

1. **Garbhādāna Samskāra:** The priest performs on a married couple when they are planning to have a child. This very important *Samskāra* raises the act of conception to a sacred level, purifies and sanctifies the unborn child in the womb of the mother.
2. **Pumsavana Samskāra:** This is usually performed between the second and fourth month of pregnancy. The

purpose is to ensure good health of the foetus in the womb, proper formation of its organs and for birth of a healthy child.

3. **Simantonnayana Samskāra:** This is performed in the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy when the mind of the foetus begins to develop according to Caraka, the ancient Indian physician. Its main purpose is to protect the foetus and its emerging mind from all negative influences, and for stimulating the development of intellect of an unborn child.
4. **Jātakarma Samskāra:** This ritual is performed as soon as the child and for noting the exact time of birth star in ascendance at that time for preparing the horoscope of the child.
5. **Nāmakarāṇa Samskāra:** This is performed on the eleventh day after the child's birth and the child receives its official name.
6. **Niṣkramana Samskāra:** The baby's day out into the world, beyond the portals of home.
7. **Annaprāśana:** The first feeding of solid food to the baby through a minor ritual, usually done in the sixth month after birth.
8. **Karṇavedha Samskāra:** This minor ritual is usually done in the sixth or seventh month after birth, consisting of the piercing of the baby's ear lobes, so that earrings can be worn.
9. **Coodākarma Samskāra:** This ritual is performed at the end of first year after birth, or during the third year, the child's hair is tonsured or shaved. In some traditional families tuft of hair is maintained.
10. **Vidyārambha Samskāra:** This ritual begins a student's primary education by ceremonially introducing the child to the alphabet and is generally done along with Coodākarma.
11. **Upanayana Samskāra:** This elaborate ritual initiates the formal study of the Vedas for children. Generally it was done at the age of 8, or between 8-16 these days, and very important one as the young lad traditionally moves from home to live in the hermitage (*āśrama*) of the teacher (guru) for Vedic learning.
12. **Samāvartana Samskāra:** With this ritual, the disciple graduates from his Vedic studies in hermitage and returns to his home. Then the young boy will marry and enter the stage of householder and also raise the family for continuation of his race.
13. **Vivāha Samskāra:** The traditional Hindu wedding ceremony which is very elaborate in nature, is given great importance in Hindu tradition.
14. **Pancamahāyajña Samskāra:** The married couple perform the *pancamahāyajña*, or five great sacrifices daily. It includes honoring the sages, gods, parents and ancestors, humankind, and all living beings.
15. **Vānaprastha Samskāra:** According to the Vedas, *Vānaprastha* is the third stage of life, following life of a celibate (*brahmacarya*) and householder (*grhastha*). The parents transfer their duties to grown up children and retire to the forest (or serving the society) for leading the life of ascetics and devote their full time in the study of sacred scriptures, service and meditation for final emancipation of life (*mokṣa*).
16. **Antyeṣṭi Samskāra:** The final sacrament, the funeral rites, are known as *antyeṣṭi Samskāra* <sup>[11]</sup>.

The *Purāṇas* are ancient lore which deal with the titanic struggle between gods and demons, various types of rituals,

ceremonial rites, ways and means of worshiping gods and goddesses who gave importance to sixteen. For example, *Purāṇas* dealing with goddesses enlist sixteen divine mothers as follows: Gaurī, Padmā, śacī, Medhā, Sāvitrī, Vijayā, Jayā, Devasenā, Svāhā, Svadhā, Mātari, Lokamātā, śānti, Puṣṭi, Dhṛti and Tuṣṭi. These purāṇic goddesses became house hold deities (*Kula devatā*) in later purāṇic periods. The same goddesses assumed the form of village deities (*Grāma devatā*), which are being worshiped in India even to this date by villagers <sup>[12]</sup>.

### Sixteen in religious performances

The temple priests in India and Hindus worship deities through sixteen steps of worship (*ṣoḍaśa upacāra vidhi*) they are: 1. Invoking the presence of the deity (*āvāhana*), 2. The offering of seat (*āsana*), 3-4. The offering of sanctified water for the washing of the feet and hands (*pādya* and *arghya*), 5. The offering of water for drinking (*ācamana*), 6. The bathing of the icon (*snāna*), 7. The offering of clothes (*vastra*), 8. The offering of sacred thread (*upavīta*), 9. The offering of sandalwood paste (*gandha*), 10. The offering of flowers and ornamentation (*puṣpa*), 11. The offering of incense sticks (*dhoopa*), 12. The offering of dishes of food (*naivedya*), 13. The offering of camphor light (*dīpa*), 14. The offering of betel leaves and arecanut (*tāmboola*), 15. The recitation of Vedic hymns (*mantra puṣpa*) and 16. Obeisance to the deity (*pradakṣina*) <sup>[13]</sup>. Primarily this worship was in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* in a discreet way. Adi Shankaracharya brought this worship to homes and concretized it with a group of five abodes of Siva worship (*śiva Pancāyatana poojā*) comprising of Sun (*āditya*), goddess Pārvati (*Ambikā*), Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati (Gaṇanātha), Lord Īsvara (Maheśvara) along with family deities. This worship is popular even now in homes of Brāhmins and during religious festivals across the length and breadth of India. During festival seasons in India (August - November), goddesses such as Mangala Gaurī, Durgā, Sarasvatī are worshipped. At that time, women wear sacred thread consisting of sixteen knots, light sixteen lamps and offer *poojā* gifts to 16 ladies or girls who are yet to reach puberty. Some women worship Lord Pārvati and Siva by creating sand *Linga* on Monday evenings for sixteen consecutive weeks aspiring for health and longevity of family members. Worship of goddess Gaurī during August - September is very popular in India. On that day girls and married women worship Gaurī and offer decorative cotton ornaments made up of 16 threads, tie sacred thread containing 16 knots on their wrist and offer *poojā* and cooking stuffs to 16 elderly women and take their blessings.

### Charity covering sixteen items

Charity is called *Dāna* in Sanskrit. It has been given a superior place in Hinduism. The *Gītā* says that charity means sharing (*dānam samvibhāgaha*), sharing of our wealth and goods with the needy and oppressed. As a sense of gratitude to the Almighty, we should engage in charity. Bhartruhari in his anthology of 'Witty sayings' (*Subhāṣita*) says that the wealth can be spent in three ways - by way of charity, by enjoying it or it would be destroyed or taken away by the thieves. He who neither donates it to others nor enjoys it by himself - the third alternative becomes inevitable (*Nītiśatakam*, 34). The *Gītā* mentions three types of charity namely, *sātvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. If the gift is given in a selfless way and to a worthy person in a right place and time, then it is called *sātvika* charity. If a gift is given with an expectation and reluctantly, then it is called *rājasika* charity.

If the charity is given at the wrong place or time to unworthy persons, without respect or scorn, then it is called *tāmasika* charity [13]. Among the above three, the *sātvika* charity is considered to be the supreme one [14].

Hindu scriptures and ancient lore (*Purānas*) abound in myths and stories dealing with acts of charity. The mythical stories of Māndhātā, śibi, Dilīpa and Karṇa are well known. They sacrificed their own lives for the sake of the oppressed and needy. Our kings were well known for their munificence. An anonymous *Subhāṣita* verse says that one could get an intrepid warrior, a scholar, an eloquent speaker among ten thousand people, but it is hard to get one charitable person among them. upaniṣads say that sacrifice (*yajña*), penance (*tapas*) and charity (*dāna*) should be performed by people desirous of happiness both in this world and the world hereafter (*Yajño dānam tapascaiva pāvānāni manīṣinām*).

Sixteen types of charity are given to eligible people during religious festivals and ceremonies by Hindus. They are: piece of land (*bhoomi*), chair (*āsana*), water (*jalam*), clothes (*vastram*), lamp (*pradīpa*), rice, betel leaves and nuts (*tāmboola*), umbrella (*chatram*), perfume (*gandha*), flowers (*puṣpam*), fruits (*phalam*), bed (*śayyā*), sandals (*pādukā*), cow (*gau*), silver (*rajatam*) and gold (*swarna*) [15]. Charity was given utmost importance in Indian tradition, from Vedic times as it involved sharing of one's wealth, social and economic justice for the society. This concept of equality present in ancient Sanskrit texts finds a similar method adopted in modern constitutions. According to Justice Dr. M Rama Jois, the article 14 of the Indian constitution confers the right to equality of individual which reads thus:

"The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India". The Justice further says that 'this method of *Rāja Dharma* was created right to equality in every individual by declaring that the duty of the State towards the citizens is to provide equal protection of all [16].

### Sixteen in Indian philosophy

The Nyāya philosophy explains sixteen categories dealing with logic (*nyāya*) with examples and says that a proper understanding of these categories leads to one's liberation. The categories are:

1. Proof or valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)
2. Objects of authentic knowledge (*prameya*)
3. Doubt (*saṁśaya*)
4. Aim (*prayojana*)
5. Illustration (*dr̥ṣṭānta*)
6. Conclusion (*siddhānta*)
7. Syllogism (*avayava*)
8. Argument (*tarka*)
9. Settlement (*nirṇaya*)
10. Discussion (*vāda*)
11. Wrangling (*jalpa*)
12. Cavilling (*vitanda*)
13. Fallacy (*hetvābhāsa*)
14. Quibbling (*chala*)
15. Sophisticated refutation (*jāti*) and
16. Point of defeat (*nigraha sthāna*).

*Pramāṇa* helps person in knowing right knowledge and distinguishes it from wrong knowledge. *Prameya* deals with several philosophical subjects like soul, body, sense organs etc., *Samśaya* is the confusion in the mind regarding a subject which has opposite qualities. *Prayojana* is the final aim of a person's life. *Dr̥ṣṭānta* helps in understanding the concept

well. *Siddhānta* gives the truthful account of an argument. *Avayava* are the limbs which help in arriving at an inferential knowledge. *Tarka* is a logical argument of a precept or concept. *Nirṇaya* is the definite knowledge about a subject. *Vāda* is the discussion happening between two parties on a specific subject. *Jalpa* is the argument between two parties with an intention to win the argument. *Vitanda* is a useless and abusive argument. *Hetvābhāsa* is a fallacious argument far from reality. *Chala* is a fault finding argument in the opposite party and giving different interpretations of the concept discussed. *Jāti* is that method by which a person denies his own stand and replies. *Nigraha sthāna* is that which decides the defeat in argument and counter arguments [17]. The aphorism (*sootra*) of *Poorva mīmāṃsā* philosophy contains sixteen chapters and hence it is called *ṣoḍaśā lakṣaṇī*.

### Sixteen in Tantric cults

The tāntric cults which worshipped goddess Kālī during New Moon nights involved spinsters who were sixteen years old, and also nude worship of those girls. It is reported that a virgin or a girl who just attained puberty was sacrificed on New Moon days during such worship for obtaining desired results. In tantric cults and some rites, gods and goddesses were worshipped with hymns or incantations consisting of sixteen mystic syllabus, they are Yam, Ram etc. This mystic tantric knowledge consisting of sixteen mystic syllables is called *ṣoḍaśākṣarī vidyā*. Goddess Lalitā is the presiding deity for such secret worship.

The sixteen virgin goddesses who are worshipped in tantric verses are Kāmeswarī, Bhagamālīnī, Nityaklīnā, Bherundā, Vahnivāsīnī, Mahā vajreswarī, Sivadūtī, tvaritā, Kulasundarī, Nityā, Nilapatākā, Vijayā, Sarvamangalā, Jvālāmālīnī, Citrā, Tripurasundarī [18]. Each goddess is worshipped with one specific mystic syllable. People of West Bengal worship goddess Durgā having sixteen arms (*ṣoḍaśa bhujā*), especially during Navarātri festival.

Among the animal kingdom, a spider having limbs is called *ṣoḍaśāṅghri*. In plant kingdom, Lotus having sixteen petals is called *ṣoḍaśāra*. The conch shell has sixteen circles and is called as *ṣoḍaśāvarta*. Planet Venus is called *ṣoḍaśāmsu* and *ṣoḍaśārcis* as he has sixteen rays. A modified *Agniṣtoma* sacrifice is called *ṣoḍaśias*, as it involves sixteen procedures.

### Importance of 16 in Ayurveda

In the context of four limbs of treatment (*Cikitsā Catuspāda*) number sixteen is given importance in Ayurveda. *Cikitsā* means treatment. *Catuspāda* means four limbs. Hence for accomplishment of any treatment, four limbs play a vital role. Each limb consists of four qualities and make a total of sixteen qualities. The four limbs of treatment are 1. Physician (*Bhīṣak*), 2. Drug or Medicine (*Dravya*), 3. Nurse or Patient Attendant (*Upacāraka*) and 4. Patient (Rogi). Physician is the person who has obtained the knowledge of medical science from a preceptor. He has witnessed as well as made many practical demonstrations and also versatile in managing difficult situations and tidy in nature. Drug should be available in abundance and suitable for particular disease. It should be modified into many forms and possess superior potency in it. Nurse or Patient Attendant should have the ability to prepare medicine and modify its forms and be clever in nature. He should consider patients as his own family members. He should maintain cleanliness. A patient should possess good memory, be obedient to instructions of a

physician, brave and should have the ability to recollect experiences [19].

### Conclusion

It is summarized from the above information that: *Puruṣa* of the Rgveda was the supreme reality responsible for the creation of the animate and inanimate beings of the Universe. He was the cosmic being and the cosmic golden egg (*Hiraṇyagarbha*). The same *Puruṣa* became the *ṣoḍaśa kalā Puruṣa* in the *Praśna upaniṣad* responsible for creation of the world. This *ṣoḍaśa kalā Puruṣa* was creatively taken as a supreme human being with sixteen attributes by sage Valmīkī in the *Rāmāyānam* while depicting the character of śrī Rāma, a solar hero. In the *Bhāgavata*, sage Vedavyāsa depicted the same attributes in the character of śrī kṛṣṇa who was a cultural hero. Both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were the incarnation of Lord Mahāviṣṇu, the sustainer of the universe. The 16th chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* appeals to the people to inculcate divine attributes leading to noble life. The Vedic and classical astronomy, Kāma śāstra analyzed the sixteen digits of Moon and explained that there is an indirect impact on sixteen limbs of the body from head to toe for health or ill-health of a person. The Purāṇas gave emphasis on sixteen rites of passage or sacraments to be performed by human beings for individual and family welfare. They also brought in sixteen types of religious worship, mother goddess worship which would enhance one's virtue, peace and prosperity in the household. The Purāṇas emphasized on sixteen types of charity to be bestowed on poor and needy for societal harmony. The Nyāya philosophy brought out sixteen types of logic for arriving at right cognition (*yatārtha jñāna*) of the physical world. The leftist and sacred rites of Tantra attracted few people for mundane and mystic benefits.

Thus from the times of the Vedas to the present, there is a continuity (*sātatyā*) and connectivity of thought process as far as this number sixteen is concerned. It serves as a link between the microcosm and the macrocosm and vice versa. May that *ṣoḍaśa kalā Puruṣa* give us long life, prosperity and peace.

### References

1. *Atha hainam sukesā bhāradwājah papracha I Bhagavan Hiraṇyanā bhah kausalyo rājaputro mamupetya idam praśnamapṛchata I ṣoḍaśakalām bhāradwāja puruṣam vetha I tamaham kumārabhruvam nahamimam veda I tam tva pṛchhāmi kvasau puruṣa iti II Tasmai sa hovāca I Ehaivantah śarīre somya sa puruṣo yasminnetaḥ ṣoḍaśakalā prabhavantiti II Pr. Up., VI(1):73.*
2. *Sa prāṇamasṛjata I prāṇādsraddham vā vasujyotirāpah pṛthivindrīyam manah I annamādvīryam tapo mantraha karma loka lokaśu ca nāma ca II Pr. Up., 91.*
3. *Rgveda*, X. 90.
4. I am greatly benefited by a personal discussion I had with Dr. Ramachandra Bhat, former VC of SVYASA, Deemed to be university and currently Director Veda Vijnana Gurukulam while writing this portion of the article.
5. *Viṣṇu Sookta: Idam viṣṇurvicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam I Samoolamasya pāgam sure I Tṛiṇī padā vicakrame viṣṇurgopā adābhyah II Vi. Su. 8.*
6. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, VIII. Ch.18-22.
7. *Sāmudrika śāstra*.
8. Vaman Shivaram Apte. *The Student's Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979, 570.

*Tapah svādhyāya niratām tapasvī vāgvidām varam |  
Nāradam paripapraccha vālmīkiḥ muni puṅgavam || 1-1-1  
Kaḥ nu asmin sāmpratam loke guṇavān kaḥsca vīryavān |  
Dharmajñāḥ ca kṛtajñāḥ ca satya vākyo dhṛḍha vrataḥ || 1-1-2  
Cāritreṇa ca ko yuktaḥ sa<sup>^</sup>rva bhūteṣu ko hitaḥ |  
Vidvān kaḥ kaḥ samarthaḥ ca kaḥ ca eka priya darśanaḥ || 1-1-3  
ātmavān ko jita krodho dyutimān kaḥ anasūyakaḥ |  
Kasya bibhyati devāḥ ca jāta roṣasya saṃyuge || 1-1-4  
Etat icchāmi aham śrotum param kautūhalam hi me |  
Maharṣe tvam samartho.asi jñātum evam vidham naram || 1-1-5  
śrutvā ca etat trilokajño vālmīkeḥ nārado vacaḥ |  
śrūyatām iti ca āmaṃtrya prahrṣto vākyam abravīt || 1-1-6  
Bahavo durlabhāḥ ca eva ye tvayā kīrtitā guṇāḥ |  
Mune vakṣṣyāmi aham buddhvā taiḥ uktaḥ śrūyatām naraḥ || 1-1-7  
Ikṣvāku vaṃśa prabhavo rāmo nāma janaiḥ śrutaḥ |  
Niyata ātmā mahāvīryo dyutimān dhṛtimān vaśī || 1-1-8*

- (Transliterated verses from Internet, URL: <https://www.valmikiramayan.net/utf8/baala/sarga1/balaroman1.htm> -Ramayanam, Balakanda, I chapter, verses 1-8.
9. Vaman Shivaram Apte. *The Student's Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979, 570. 16 digits of Moon: *Amṛtā mānadā pooṣā tuṣṭih puṣṭī rati ḍṛtihi I śaśinī candrikā kāntijyotsnā śrīhī pṛtīreva ca II Angadā ca tathā poornāmṛtā ṣoḍaśā vai kalāha II*
  10. <https://www.amritapuri.org/1967/16samskaras.aum>
  11. Vaman Shivaram Apte. *The Student's Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979, 570.
  12. Sixteen divine mothers:  
*Gaurī padmā śacī medhā sāvitṛī vijayā Jayā I Devasenā svāhā svadhā mātari lokamātaraha II śānti puṣṭidhṛtistuṣṭiḥ kuladevatāmādevatāha II*
  13. Melukote Sridhar K. *Sacred Celebrations: The Role of Festivals in Nurturing Hindu Children's Spirituality in Nurturing child and adolescent spirituality: Perspectives from the world's religious traditions*, Edited by Karen Marie Yust, Aostre N. Johnson, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Maryland, USA, 2006, 226. ISBN 0-7425-4463-X
  14. 13a. Chakravarti Srinivasa Gopalacharya, Shabdārtha Kaustubha: *Sanskrit - Kannada Dictionary*, Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore. 1987; 6:642. Sixteen types of worship:  
*āsanam svāgatam pādymarghyāmācamanīyam I madhuparkācana snānam vasanābharaṇāni ca II gandha puṣpe dhoopadipau naivedyam vandanam tathā II*
  15. *Gita*. XVII 20-22.
  16. Chakravarti Srinivasa Gopalacharya, *Shabdārtha Kaustubha: Sanskrit - Kannada Dictionary*, Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore, 6.
  17. Justice Dr. Rama Jois M. *Human Rights Bharatiya Values*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, First Edition, 1987, 2636.
  18. Dr. Ganesh R. *Shaddarshanasamgraha* (Kannada), Sahitya Prakashana, Hubballi, Second Edition, 2018, 32-49.

19. Aa Ra Se. *Paramartha Padakosha: A Dictionary of theological and philosophical words of the world religions*, Kamadhenu, Bangalore -20, Second Edition, 2000, 390.
20. I am greatly benefited by a personal discussion I had with Dr. Sahana Naganand, Associate Professor, Sushruta Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bangalore while writing this portion of the article. Ref: *Caraka Samhita Sutra Sthana*.

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3. Dr. Ganesh R. *Shaddarshanasamgraha* (Kannada), Sahitya Prakashana, Hubballi, Second Edition, 2018, 32-49.
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6. Swami Gambhirananda. *Prasna Upanisad with the Commentary of Sankaracarya* (Trans), Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Pithoragarh, Himalayas, 5M 3C. 1985; 73:91-93.
7. Vaman Shivaram Apte. *The Student's Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.
8. URL: <https://www.amritapuri.org/1967/16samskaras.aum>