

Vishnu Sahasranamam - Salient Features



Vishnu sahasranamam Collection

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Description: A deep dive into the authority of Vishnu Sahasranamam, the Shat Prashni, and the path to liberation through Upayam and Upeyam.

Tags: bhishma, philosophy, moksha, dharma, vishnu sahasranamam, shat prashni



The Authority: Six Salient Features

According to the commentary *Bhagavat Guna Darpanam* by the 12th-century scholar Parashara Bhatta, there are **six distinguishing characteristics** of the *Shri Vishnu Sahasranamam*. These attributes establish its authority and efficacy.

1. Mahabharata Sarathwat (The Essence of the Mahabharata) The *Vishnu Sahasranamam* is the quintessence of the *Mahabharata*. Since the *Mahabharata* is regarded as the "Fifth Veda," reciting the Sahasranamam is technically equivalent to reciting the essence of all Vedas. The core message (*saram*) is Krishna helping his devotees, encapsulated in the name **Analaha** (the one who carries the burden of his devotees).

2. Rishi bhiv pari ganataha (Accepted and Sung by Sages) These names were not merely coined; they were "chosen" by realized Rishis who had internalized the divine. For example, the name "Rama" was chosen by Sage Vasishta. Because these names were identified by seers with direct perception (*sakshatkara*), they hold immense spiritual potency.

3. Vedacharya samaharat (Compiled by the Teacher of the Vedas) While Bhishma uttered the names, they were compiled by **Veda Vyasa**, the compiler of the Vedas.



Veda Vyasa: Divine Lineage & Cosmic Powers

1. An Illustrious Lineage Veda Vyasa belongs to one of the most significant spiritual families in Sanatana Dharma. This single lineage produced the foundational texts of the entire tradition:

- **Great-Grandfather: Vasishta** (The *Kulaguru* of the Solar Dynasty, associated with the **Ramayana**).
- **Grandfather: Shakti**.
- **Father: Parashara** (The author of the **Vishnu Purana**).
- **Son: Shuka Brahma** (The narrator of the **Srimad Bhagavatam**).

Key Insight: This one family is responsible for the Ramayana (via Vasishta's tutelage), Mahabharata (Vyasa), Vishnu Purana (Parashara), and Bhagavatam (Shuka).

2. Divine Nature: More Than a Sage Vyasa is not considered a mere human sage but a divine incarnation. He is celebrated as *Badarayana* and is described through a specific verse that highlights his divinity:

- **Achaturvadanor Brahma:** He is **Brahma**, but without four faces.
- **Dvibahur Aparoharihi:** He is **Hari (Vishnu)**, but with only two arms.
- **Aphala Lochanashyambhu:** He is **Shambhu (Shiva)**, but without the third eye.

As the *Vedacharya*, he classified and compiled the Vedas without defects like forgetfulness (*Viparyayah*), ensuring the scriptures remained eternal.

3. Extraordinary Powers

- **Intellectual Churning:** Vyasa used his intellect (*Mati*) as a churning rod to churn the ocean of the Vedas. From this, he extracted the "moon" known as the **Mahabharata** for the world's benefit.
- **Gyanadrishti (Distant Vision):** While Bhishma and Yudhishtira were on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Vyasa was physically located far away near Badrinath (Manu village). Yet, he saw and heard the events as clearly as a gooseberry in his palm (*Hastam avalakam gata*), allowing him to compile the *Vishnu Sahasranamam* perfectly.
- **Knower of Avatars:** Like Valmiki, Vyasa possessed the spiritual insight to verify and identify incarnations of the Lord entering human forms.

4. The Father's Validation (Parashara's Praise) According to the Shastras, parents are generally forbidden from praising their own children. However, there is an exception when the child's greatness is undeniable. Sage Parashara broke this rule to openly celebrate his son.

In the *Vishnu Purana*, Parashara tells his disciple Maitreya:

"Krishna Dwaipayananam Vyasa viddhi Narayanam Prabhum." (Know that Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa is the Lord Narayana himself).

He asks rhetorically, *"Who else on earth other than the Lord could have authored the Mahabharata?"*

 **The Divine Lens Analogy:** Vyasa's role can be compared to a **divine lens**. Just as a lens gathers scattered rays of light and focuses them into a potent beam, Vyasa gathered the scattered, infinite knowledge of the Vedas and focused them into the accessible and potent "Fifth Veda"—the *Mahabharata*—ensuring the light of knowledge remained preserved for future generations.

4. Bhishmotkrishta matatvataha (The Authority of Bhishma) The names were uttered by Bhishma, a great devotee (*Bhagavatottama*). His authority was so great that even Krishna felt that after Bhishma's departure, the world would face a scarcity of intellectual people. Krishna himself approved of Bhishma delivering this wisdom.

5. Parigrahaatishayatah (Universal Acceptance) The text is accepted across various disciplines:

- **Medical:** Prescribed for fevers in *Charaka Samhita*.
- **Astrological:** Used for planetary afflictions in *Hora Shastra*.
- **Philosophical:** Commented upon by Acharyas of all three major schools (Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita) with a **98% consensus** on interpretation.
- **Inclusivity:** It grants results even to those who may not believe in the Vedas (*Nastikas*), provided they recite it.

6. Gitaarthikaarthha kaschanaha (Alignment with the Gita) The *Sahasranamam* shares the same essence as the *Bhagavad Gita*. Both lead to the same conclusion: **Surrender (Sharanagati)**. The *Gita* teaches that the Lord protects those who surrender, a truth exemplified here.

 Watch the detailed explanation here: [Youtube Link](#)



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).

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