

INTRODUCTION TO
A CULTURE DERIVED FRAMEWORK
FOR DESIGN

RTA IN DESIGN



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“We are approaching the power of gods, without the wisdom of gods.”

- Daniel Schmachtenberger

“How are we collectively creating a world that none of us wants, individually?”

- Daniel Christian Wahl

Design thinking is coming full circle. Having traversed systems, integrated, business-centric and other approaches, it converges towards human-centric, modular and circular. IDEO, steward of design thinking, talks of emergent design paradigms being human-centric, fractal and circular. UK's Design Council speaks of 'designing for the planet', but its concerns are just the same- sustainability, reusability, harmony. [The Conscience Project](#) identifies three defining evolutions of design thinking:

1. **Naively Optimistic Design**- Design that assumes an intrinsic association between positive values and human-tech interfaces. But its steadfast neglect of second and third order effects has brought us in contact with catastrophic risks.
2. **Luddite Design**- Assumes only negative values for human-tech interfaces, and seeks to roll back or undo technological advancements. But the choice to opt out of technological advancement is realistically no longer available to anyone.
3. **Nihilistic Design**- Or values-agnostic design, dominated by the view that technology is only what we make of it, and the values that drive such making derive from elsewhere.

Of these, the last has brought us to the brink of disaster. Our steadfast pretense that design can be values-agnostic is laid bare when we learn that artificially intelligent software tends to inherit the biases and prejudices of its programmers.

The values-agnosticism in modern creatorship is so stark, what is called 'disruptive innovation' has- in convenience tech- created the hazardous situation of service agents rushing to deliver retail goods within unreasonably short time commitments.

And the actual incidence of this considered to be in the realm of conspiracy, we live in a world where biological products of human design can cause global pandemics.

Human creation is bringing the ruin of life, species and planet. Introspection and a radical recalibration are our only chance of reversing the situation. What's needed is a “wisdom of gods,” found encoded across culture- or dharma.



Put simply, we assert that the next evolution needed in design is that of culture-rooting. More specifically, of dhārmika design thinking.

And since dharma is the endeavor to conduct life and society in harmony with the natural order- which is ṛta (ऋत)- dharma-led design is effectively *ṛta in design*.

Ṛta in Design is not a new language for design. It is an augmentation of current design thinking with the conceptual root of dharma. We believe that Ṛta in Design can introduce constructive paradigms to converse, collaborate and co-create with existing principles of design.

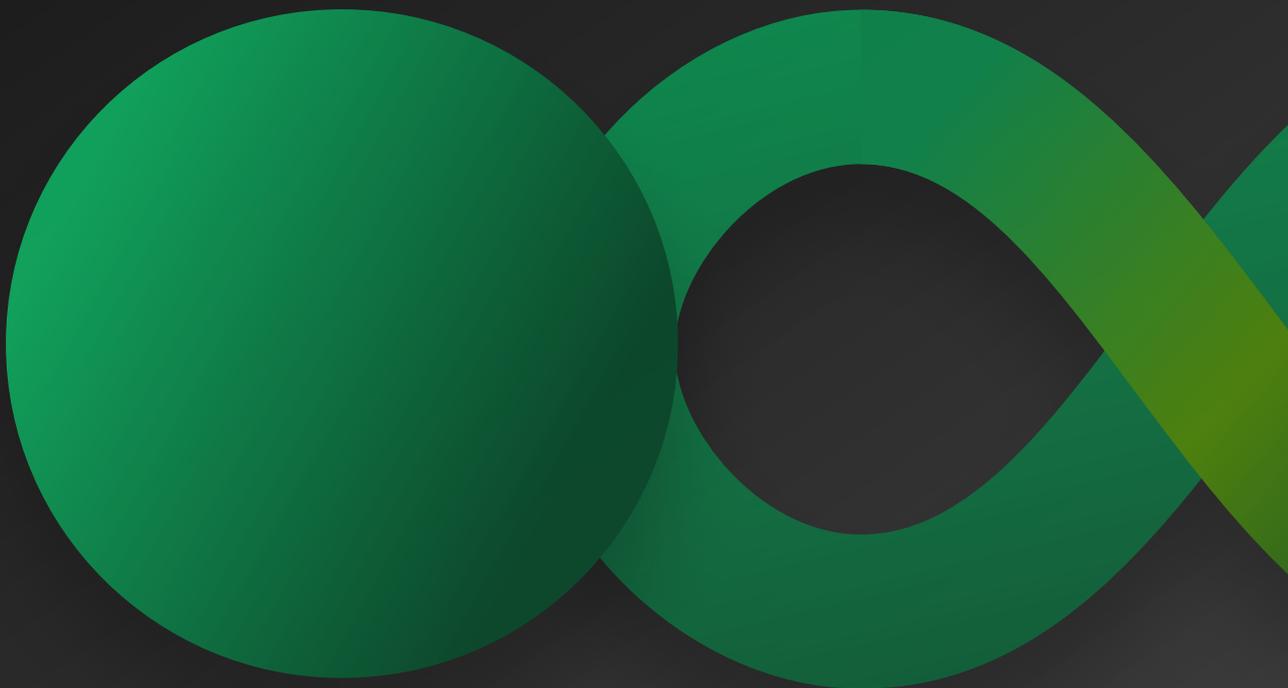
Dharma-rooted design thinking carries enormous advantage- for example on the matter of sustainability. A sensitivity to our impact on and obligation in this world, which modern design develops only now, is one that's at root of ṛta in design.

Where we do depart with contemporary design systems is on our focal center. In the dhārmika paradigm, consciousness or intent is at the center of everything, and the absolute center is occupied by Brahman, ultimate creator.

At center of the design process thus is the designer or creator- the source of intent and the driver of manifestation. Ṛta in Design is, to use a contemporary format, designer-centric. This guide is an introduction, one that articulates a basic framework in the register of modern design. Think of it as module 1 of a larger, comprehensive Ṛta in Design Playbook further down the road.

“Science converts information into knowledge. Engineering converts knowledge into utility. Design converts utility into cultural behavior in context. Art takes that cultural behavior and questions our perception of the world.”

NERI OXMAN
MIT MEDIA LAB



DESIGN AND DHARMA

THE CASE FOR APPLYING DHARMA TO DESIGN THINKING

DESIGN

To design is to create with intent, deliberation, plan and purpose; Design is the implementation of a process with reflection-in-action. Design involves creating, constructing, conceptualising, planning, framing of intent and navigation of constraining boundaries.

DHARMA

To establish, to practice a method or custom, to organize life and society in consonance with the natural flow is to establish dharma. That which is created with intent, deliberation, plan, purpose and reflection-in-action is dharma. Dharma is the dynamic cultural process of bearing and supporting a tradition of deliberate and planned consonance with the harmonics of reality.

The Anthropocene is Broken

Design today, as a thing manifest, is writ large upon the planet. But we have lost deliberation and the clarity of intent. Rushing disruptively into the future, we have designed ourselves into a lost species on a dying planet. **We need a Better Way to craft our world.** We need a 'full-stack' design system, one that brings convergence of information and knowledge at utility level and provides the cultural grist for future-formation.



In the distant past...

**The sound
instruments of
mental scientists
converted
information to
knowledge,**

**And engineers of
praxis and ritual
converted knowledge
to utility.**

**Dharma is the
conversion and
manifestation of
utility in the cultural
context, ie.:**

**DHARMA IS
DESIGN**

And what is dharma, if not the endeavor to conduct life and society in consonance with ṛta, the natural order? To bring dharma in design is to bring a ṛta-consciousness to the processes and methods of design. Dharma in design is effectively, Ṛta in Design.

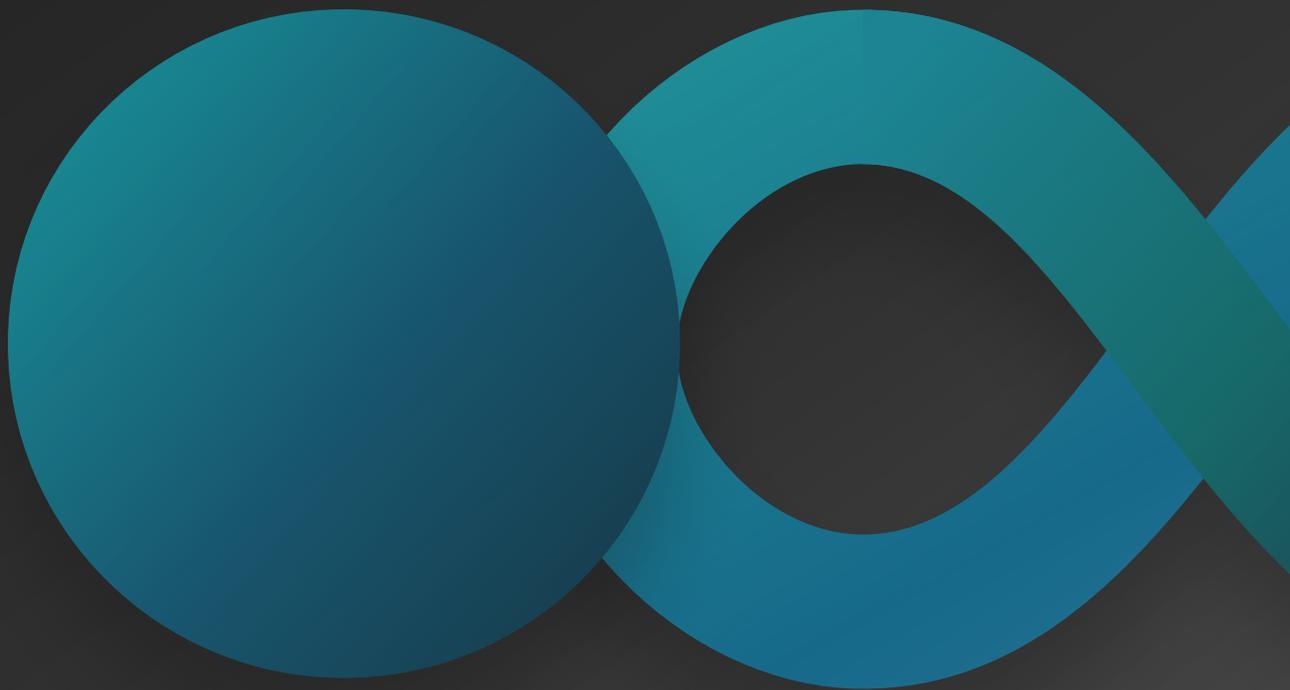
At Bṛhat, our mission is to design the self-perpetuating civilizational moment. This ambition requires scaling, it requires enabling and compounding of individual intent. To do this, we need to embed dhārmika consciousness into every aspect of modern living- culture, media, policy, governance, education, management and more. And each of these are guided by the intent of their designers. Designers embedded with a dhārmika consciousness have an exponential effect on the cultural flywheel.

Ṛta in Design is our input at seed and root- at the very intent, reflection, planning and implementing of those that craft our world. It synthesizes key aspects of the dhārmika worldview and links it to general steps in the contemporary design process. This makes it possible for designers to use the fundamentals coded in the cultural identity of our grand civilization.



*“Design creates culture.
Culture shapes values.
Values determine the
future.”*

ROBERT PETERS
CO-FOUNDER, CIRCLE DESIGN



WHAT DO WE CALL DESIGN?

A NECESSARY MENTAL PRE-CALIBRATION FOR ṚTA DESIGN THINKING

Firing up a search for the Sanskrit translation of 'design' will yield a list of words as disparate as *anusamdhāna*, *anubandha*, *cikīrṣita*, *mantra* and more. When we understand design to be a process of deliberation and reflection-in-action that ends with an implementation, it should not be surprising that a culture built upon deliberation to everything should throw up so many options for the word 'design.' It should in fact make sense that a syntactically deliberate instrument of mind- mantra- is also a design.

What this gets at is the subtle but profound difference between creating and designing, as understood by the dhārmika mind. In this framework the matter always begins with the agent- the doer. Whether it is creation or design, it is something the doer does. All of reality is artifacts of the mind manifest through an agent's will, and so the Sanskrit root of √kṛ (कृ) which means 'to do,' takes center-stage.

This is as true at the level of grammar as it is on the level of ontology- karma is one of the strongest binding operators in ṛta under the dhārmika worldview. Without action there would be no reality, and reality itself is understood as "coming into being," or bhavati- happens, becomes.

To 'design something' most accurately means to do it with a process of deliberation and planning, through an outcome of deep-thinking, reflection and crystallization of intent. In other words, design is action when done by a self-reflective consciousness. Dhārmika design thinking requires that we realize that every action, every deed ought to be by design. What is done or accomplished through such a process is consequently "well-done," or "well-effected," "refined." **There is a word to describe exactly this.**



Since it is done, it is a ‘kṛta’ (has been done), and since it is well done, it is ‘samyak.’ Well designed and well effected is thus something that is ‘saṃskṛta.’ The genuine word for design is saṃskarāṇa, and design as the output is saṃskṛti. One must take pause to internalize the implications:

- Whenever designers encounter skeptics to the claim that design impacts culture, they ought to be pointed to Indian culture, where the word for design and culture is in fact the same. They are both ‘saṃskṛtis’. Indian culture is the perfected design of our civilization.
- *The process of design is saṃskarāṇa, and designers are would-be saṃskṛtīs.* What is well designed and perfected enough to be seeded through the culture is thus called saṃskāra - great designs.

Modern design aspires to be a reflection of nature. To be in perfect harmony with it. To respect through man-made design the perfected designs of reality. This is not the first instance of such a drive in our species.

Thousand of years ago there were people that understood nature as prakṛti - the original or preceding design- and had the imperative to be in harmony with it as cardinal principle of their own design- their saṃskṛti.

Under this light, ‘dhārmika design thinking’ is arguably a redundancy of articulation. If dharma is design as we’ve established, then what does design of design thinking mean? Designers will be the first to confess- it means quite a bit. It is why a book titled ‘Design of Design’ makes sense. There is always a process to even ‘doing’ the process; a way of working behind a way that is working, a pra-kriyā before the kriyā. This is bound to happen when what we speak of involves continuous self-reflection or ping-back. This ping-back, or cintana, is what design seeks to shape over the long term.



DESIGN VS. ART: THE RESOLUTION

ON BOUNDARIES AND BOXES DHARMA NEVER CREATED

Is design art, or is art design? Are they the same, and if different then what is the difference exactly? These questions have been around as long as the idea of design has been. In disciplines like History of Design, there is little agreement on what constitutes design. Though there are compelling views on either side, consensus seems to be that “design needs functionality, art only has to exist,” or that “design is a process, not art.”

These are boundaries that never limited the Indian civilization, where the fractal patterns on a temple dome challenge the limits of intricacy in design. Why? For a simple reason- art has never “just existed” in the Indian paradigm, and it has comprised a process every bit as meticulous as any system for design. In our humble assessment, the lacuna in contemporary design systems and in modern design in general is a lack of ulterior rooting in purpose => the kind that provides shaping and direction throughout the process.

Dharma has such a rooting, for in being a refined design it contains universal principles that are found across levels and units. One such principle is expressed by *yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe, yathā brahmāṇḍe tathā piṇḍe*: as in the microcosm so in the macrocosm, and vice versa.

Art in India has been based on this principle, that the individual and the supra-individual, the micro and macro, are essentially the same despite difference in manifestations. All our art celebrates this difference, aiming at that oneness. The very word for skill- *kalā*- literally means a ‘small part of something.’

It is itself part of a deeper synthesis, where the Vedic Agni that rises from the ground and reaches the sky above is symbolic of the union between micro and macro, and is the guiding vision for a temple’s basic architecture. In other words, art in India has a function- it is to elevate us and take us to union, yoga, as much as any design would have to. The false binaries that appear so salient to design/art dissolve when seen under the dhārmika light. The focus here is on the creator, and how they shape and manifest their intent.



WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Ours is a framework for designing the design of design, ie, thinking out the methodology of good-creation. It is for:

- **Saṃskartṛs**- artists, writers, business planners, product managers, UI and graphic designers, policy formulators, curriculum designers, programmers.
- Those who are looking to enable/empower **Saṃskaraṇa**, such as business leaders, marketers, administrators, teachers.
- And finally, for you and us- or anyone who wants to (re)create **Saṃskṛti**, or Bhāratīya Sāṃskṛtika Cetanā (Indian Civilizational Consciousness). Since we at Bṛhat are designing the self-perpetuating civilizational moment, this thinking model is in fact our playbook.

It represents a defining difference between dhārmika design thinking and contemporary prevalent systems. Under de-facto stewardship of IDEO, design thinking itself pushes towards what it calls “human-centric” design. Though not at odds with it, Design Council perpetuates “planet-centered” design. The National Design Policy approved by India’s government aims for Indian design to propel itself onto the global stage- a nation-centric design framework.

The perpetuation we at Bṛhat seek is that of a civilization, and more fundamentally one of self-perpetuating nature. It keeps us tethered to the dhārmika worldview, where any matter begins with ātma, the self. Even ‘design’ is a kriyā, an action. If we are to be centered around something then, it is ātma-centered. Design thinking, the sāṃskṛtika cetanā of a designer, begins with the designer- the one who will bring something to form. And great design begins with great self-design. With the Svataḥ Siddha.



WHERE CAN IT BE APPLIED?

Bṛhat is in the territory of designing the self-perpetuating civilizational moment. Obviously, this lofty ambition will be met by building up from relatively localised branches of design.

Policy and research design will be core to our work, and in our output here we will be able to demonstrate how we apply Ṛta in Design to our own creation process. Closely related to this is curriculum design, which now increasingly requires an IKS-awareness (Indic Knowledge Systems) and expertise.

On the technology front, we will commence a regular stream of design output to showcase the in-house method to visual design- including demos of how we go about building our website and design system. In our organizational collaborations this scales to the level of user experience design, information architecture and game/journey design.

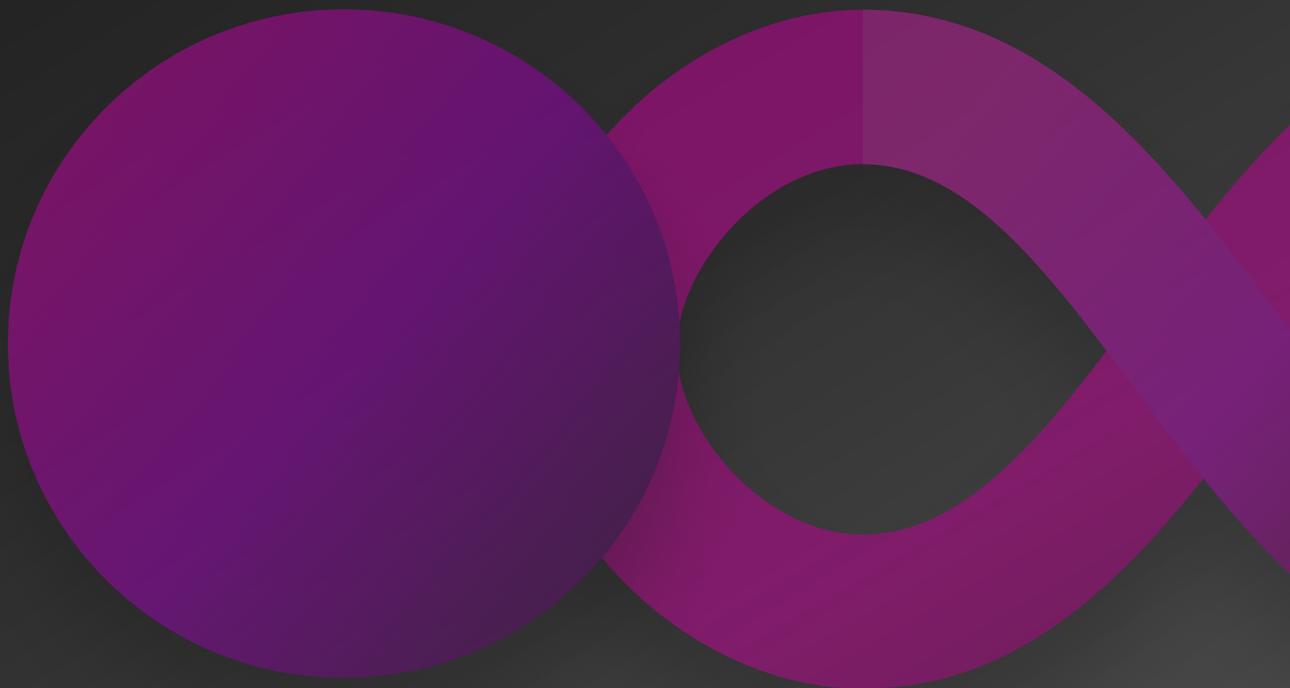
We also intend to bring Ṛta in Design to the corporate sphere, especially in the areas of product and organizational design. Our curation and consultation will span business model and strategy, transformation design, and culture-compatible design.

These articulate only the initial steps, for as we said- our ambition is lofty- and there is much in our roadmap. We are also very eager to hear from YOU, the designer and creator, the would-be-saṃskartṛ. All momentum is welcome for the civilizational flywheel to get going, and Ṛta in Design can take new shape and form with novel contributions.



"Study your predecessors' works intently, to see how they solved problems. Try to figure out why they made the design choices they did; this is the most illuminating question to ask yourself."

FRED BROOKS
AUTHOR, THE DESIGN OF DESIGN



THE SCAFFOLDING IN BRIEF

DESIGN AS THE JOURNEY FROM INTENT TO MANIFESTATION

We visualize the design process as a series of fluid, inter-connected steps that begin with the emergence of intent in the designer's mind and end one cycle of iteration at the creation of a physical (or digital) form. After this creation the cycle resets and another iteration can begin- this is how design iterates and learns through reflection. There are deeper layers here that will be released as supplementary packages. For example, our visualization is nothing but a redux of the three-śaktis- Icchā Śakti to power intent, Jñāna Śakti to power ability/capability, and Kriyā Śakti to channel action/manifestation.

This model for dhārmika design thinking aims to empower designers at each stage of this journey with the tools, methods, practices and resources needed to self-actualize into the next stage. We see the first complete framework and version 1 of the Rta in Design Playbook being ready by the end of year 2022. Along the way if we meet like-minded designers to collaborate and co-create with, the flywheel would have been set in motion. For each notion listed here, the universal principle is the same- to make fit or proper. That is, to do it well, with planning and deliberation: saṃskaraṇa.

1- Svataḥ Siddha - From Intent to the Beginning of Action

- Icchā: Will, Intent, Desire, Need
- Bhāva: Feeling, Emotion, Dispassion, Disposition
- Jñāna - Knowledge, Ontological Base, Cognitive Pool
- Yogyatā - Readiness, Capability

2- Purohita - Implementing the Design

- Upakaraṇa - Tools and Resources
- Prakriya - Methods and Processes
- Vyavahāra - Conduct, Relationships, Ethics
- Sphoṭa - Execution, Manifestation

3- Saṃskārṭṛ - Iteration and Reflection-in-action

- Anukramaṇa - Analysis of Design (meta process)
- Cintana - Self Reflection (kept here instead of in 1 to reinforce iteration)
- Karma - Consequence, Impact
- Saṃskārṭṛ - Meaning and elements of the design being



PHASE 1 – SVATAḤ SIDDHA

MIND OF THE SELF-PERPETUATING

All things begin with intent, whether that of brahman or that of ātman. In the case of design or creation this locates in the karṭṛ's (creator's) intent. In our scaffolding, emergence of intent in the mind is where the design process starts. This may emerge as a cognitive burst- a sudden impulse that translates to designed creation; or as a slow bloom of intentionality that eventually converts to action. These are already phenomena the designer needs to perceive and be aware of. Intent shaping is a vital feedback loop to induct in the process of design-oriented self-reflection.

But when we add to this words like disposition, context, knowledge, practice, thinking, conceptualization and more, we begin creating a list too cumbersome for the mind to authentically internalize. A svataḥ siddha mind is a self-actualizing mind, which is to say it can locate itself with self-awareness and conscious intent. **Our approach to the “mindset” of the dhārmika designer is to empower it with the tools and resources it needs to self-actualize.**

For the first phase of Ṛta in Design- the inner world of the designer- we model things along the hero's journey, and include game elements that encourage upskilling and exploration. The designer's inner world is an open sandbox only they can access, but we can provide some of the physics, some graphic elements, some in-game algorithms and more that let the self-organizing individual engage with the matter on their own terms. This virtual sandbox is the Karmakṣetra- the staging environment for design thinking- that the designer creates for himself/herself. It will comprise of four key elements, each element a vital node in the comprehensive karmakṣetra:

1. **Icchā**: Will, Intent, Desire, Need
2. **Bhāva**: Feeling, Emotion, Dispassion, Disposition
3. **Jñāna**: Knowledge, Ontological Base, Cognitive Pool
4. **Yogyatā**: Readiness, Capability



PHASE 2 – PUROHITA

LEADING ONE'S OWN YAJÑA

The process of design is one of manifestation. There is no design to the idea that remains an idea alone. A majority of the world's aspiring creators are held back primarily by their own inaction. The second phase seeks to address this disconnect, and to remind designers that the best ideas are those that get executed. It is better to be the writer of one finished manuscript than that of a dozen abandoned ones.

And since our theme is of self-organization, this phase requires the designer to take lead of their own yajña, ie., to don the mantle of purohita for their design process and take it to culmination. This is the phase dealing with the 'design of execution excellence.' The Ṛta in Design system will focus here on methods, toolkits, playbooks, templates and more: things that empower/enable/facilitate action and/or conduct with clients/co-creators. The four nodes here are:

1. **Upakaraṇa:** Tools and Resources
2. **Prakriyā:** Methods and Processes
3. **Vyavahāra:** Conduct, Relationships, Ethics
4. **Sphoṭa:** Execution, Manifestation

PHASE 3 – SAṂSKARṬṚ

THE DESIGN BEING

To truly understand phase 3, we must remember that design is reflection-in-action, which means it is iterative by definition. The refinement and excellence come from repeat cycles where learning and competence are accumulated layer upon layer.

The self-perpetuating designer, one who is purohita of their design yajña, *being in design* over the long end of iteration cycles, tends towards becoming the *Design Being*, the Saṁskartṛ, or the designer-in-excellence. The saṁskartṛ is not only a designer as the term is understood today, he/she is a culture-builder. And culture-design is the ultimate-design. When rooted to our culture, ie. to dharma, it leads to civilization design.

The four nodes to anchor this phase are:

1. **Anukramaṇa:** Analysis of Design (meta process)
2. **Cintana:** Self Reflection (kept here instead of in 1 to reinforce iteration)
3. **Karma:** Consequence, Impact
4. **Saṁskartṛ:** Meaning and elements of the design being



PRINCIPLES OF R̥TA IN DESIGN

THE CORE DNA THAT ROOTS THE DESIGN PROCESS TO HARMONY AND COHERENCE

Every internally consistent system is guided by a set of universal design principles. At the cosmic level we call them natural laws, such as the law of gravitation, or the speed of light. For the design process to have similar consistency, it needs to be encoded with a core DNA- the code that guides it every step of the way. Design thinking is led by five stages or steps, which act as its guiding principles: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test.

R̥ta in Design has four principles- four key ideas that run through every phase and every action, which when interlinked provide consistency to the process and the output. These are neither mutually exclusive nor sequential. They are four streams that need run parallel and constant:



INTENT

The design of the designer, the shaper of all things that get created. Recognizing the importance of Intent in design is core to our system.



GROUNDING

The higher order principle that gives telos- the ultimate aim. A lack of telos in modern creation and design is their primary lacuna.



AGENCY

The best idea in the world is one that is brought to life- our chase is not for that unfinished manuscript, that untested idea. Design takes agency.



CONSONANCE

A fully functioning r̥ta in design process, coded with three preceding principles, leads towards this, the final. Sense-making at all levels.





A: INTENT

That we collectively create a world that none of us individually want is, in significant portion, attributable to a problem of intent. More specifically, to how intent is shaped and directed, once it arises and is noticed.

When linked to the three śaktis- icchā, jñāna and kriyā- intent is the very basis of our lives. In the modern world, one shaped more and more by design, the intent that becomes of salience is that of the designer. Reality itself is an intent manifest, in its case shaped and directed by Brahman- the ultimate designer.

A designer's personal values and local ontology will impact both the function and the collateral of what they create, so implementing ṛta in design needs to begin at root- the shaping and planning out of intent.

Literature and tools of this principle will address the designer's inner world. This is the world of *cintana*- self-reflection, *svabhāva*- disposition, and *jñāna*- knowledge.

To anchor the four principles, and to articulate the epitome and vision to aspire to, each of them will be captured in a civilizational guiding statement.

GUIDING STATEMENT:

Aham Brahmāsmi

I am Brahman.

ie., designers need keep in mind the power and responsibility at their disposal. That in bringing things to life they enact the great creator, Brahman, means deep consideration and deliberation.





B: AGENCY

In the grammar-philosophy of Bhartr̥hari, one of India's greatest linguist ṛṣis, the meaning of an utterance is truly comprehended only at the end of a sentence- not before. It bursts in the listener's mind after the full *vākya*, in a flash of insight Bhartr̥hari called *sphoṭa*.

Analogously, the impact, utility and deliverance of design is with the complete implementation. Any meaning, aesthetic, harmony or function finds form only after the act of creation is complete, and the designer needs no further intervention on what they have produced.

There are sensitivities needed here for method and procedure, and also for conduct and collaboration- since while intent shaping can reside inside a designer's head, most large-scale creative endeavours require working with others.

This is the realm of prakriyā- processes and methods, of upakaraṇa- tools or enablers, and of vyavahāra- outward conduct and behavior. Material we release to help on this principle will be accordingly designed.

The first two principles are directed at the designer- at their inner world and their outward action. The next two principles are aimed at the process of design, and at design as the output/creation of a process.

GUIDING STATEMENT:

Yogaḥ Karmasu Kauśalam
Union is attained through skillfulness in action.

ie., in the journey to being a great designer, the proof is in the excellence of execution- in actually manifesting the intent inside.





C: GROUNDING

When design organizations speak of design as human-centric or planet-centric, they are displaying a specific grounding. Born of the modern era, this is a grounding that recognizes our disconnect with nature, and the degrees of damage our creations inflict on our own ecology. A human-centric or planet-centric grounding is one that no longer considers man the center and master of the universe, and understands the fragile if empowered position our species exists in.

In similar vein, Rta in Design- as the very name suggests, is grounded in dharma, which in turn is a design to orient us towards the natural flows of reality. Our system's overall structure is of course designer-centric, but what it intends is to make the designer dharma-centric.

The principal of Grounding is to lay out a base of inner principles rooted to notions like the puruṣārtha, karma and ṛṇa, and sṛṣṭi-sthiti-laya, ie., ultimate purpose, proper deed and cosmic obligations, and (creative)emission-positioning-dissolution.

GUIDING STATEMENT:

*Asato Mā Sadgamaya Tamaso
Mā Jyotirgamaya*

Move me from the untrue to the true, move me from the dark (of ignorance) to the light (of knowing).

This earnest Vedāntika entreaty is found in the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, and in the desire it displays- to always be lead by what is truth, by what takes towards the light of true comprehension- it lends us a highly appropriate design principal.





D: CONSONANCE

The first and last maṇḍalas (arrangements) of the Ṛgveda's ten maṇḍalas both contain 191 prayers each. That is, the Ṛgveda rounds up on itself as if a maṇḍala too. This is the image of an ouroboros- a snake eating its own tail. It represents the qualities of recursion and infinity, a defining Indian symbol for which is the infinitely blooming lotus.

All of this is to explain that dharma is a system with multi-level coherence, or what we are describing as Consonance- where the tiniest fractal agrees with another and with the whole, where the same consistency and consciousness is found in non-discrete immanence.

It is the highest principle to aspire to, the final piece in design patterned to ṛta. The aim is to bring a transcendent harmony, function and positioning in our creations.

While Intent and Agency are principles to embody through any design process, Purpose and Consonance come alive through iteration that's bookended by reflection-in-action. Consistent grounding on ṛta (or in dharma), in an iterative system, yield emergent consonance.

GUIDING STATEMENT:

*Yathā Piṇḍe Tathā Brahmāṇḍe
Yathā Brahmāṇḍe Tathā Piṇḍe*

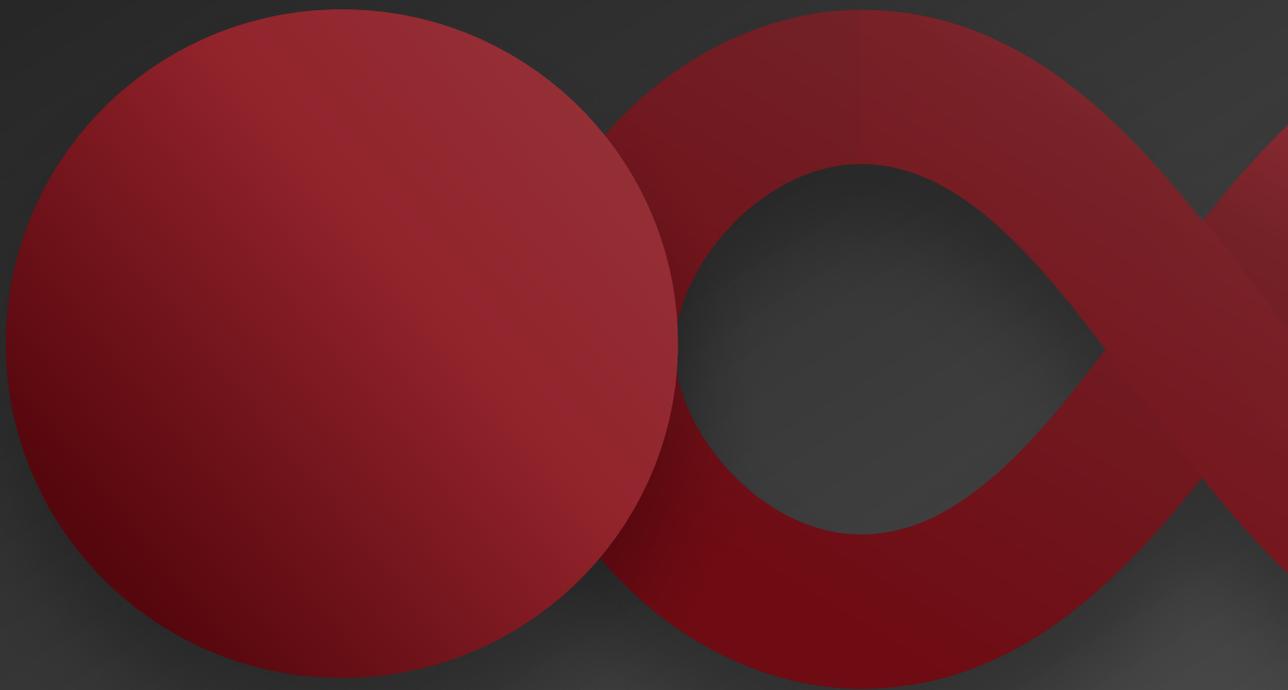
As in the microcosm so in the macrocosm, as in the macrocosm so in the microcosm.

A cardinal principle in Āyurveda, which in turn is a comprehensive ṛta in design, this statement is also known to us as- 'as above, so below.' It's a property we notice in many emergent systems, and the complete import of this can lead one to realising the truth of Brahman. The previous principle lends the root, this principle lends the super-symmetry



“Design can help to improve our lives in the present. Design thinking can help us chart a path into the future.”

TIM BROWN
CHAIR, IDEO



WHAT NEXT?

With the release of this guide, our journey to the complete Rta in Design playbook has now commenced- to culminate with the playbook's launch in a few months.

But leading up to that launch we have a slew of modular releases to demonstrate Rta in Design in action, and to enable designers with the toolkits that can help in such action. In the immediate weeks these will focus on phase 1- Svataḥ Siddha, and help in creation of the karmakṣetra for designers looking to put the system in action. **Coming up soon are two such toolkits.**

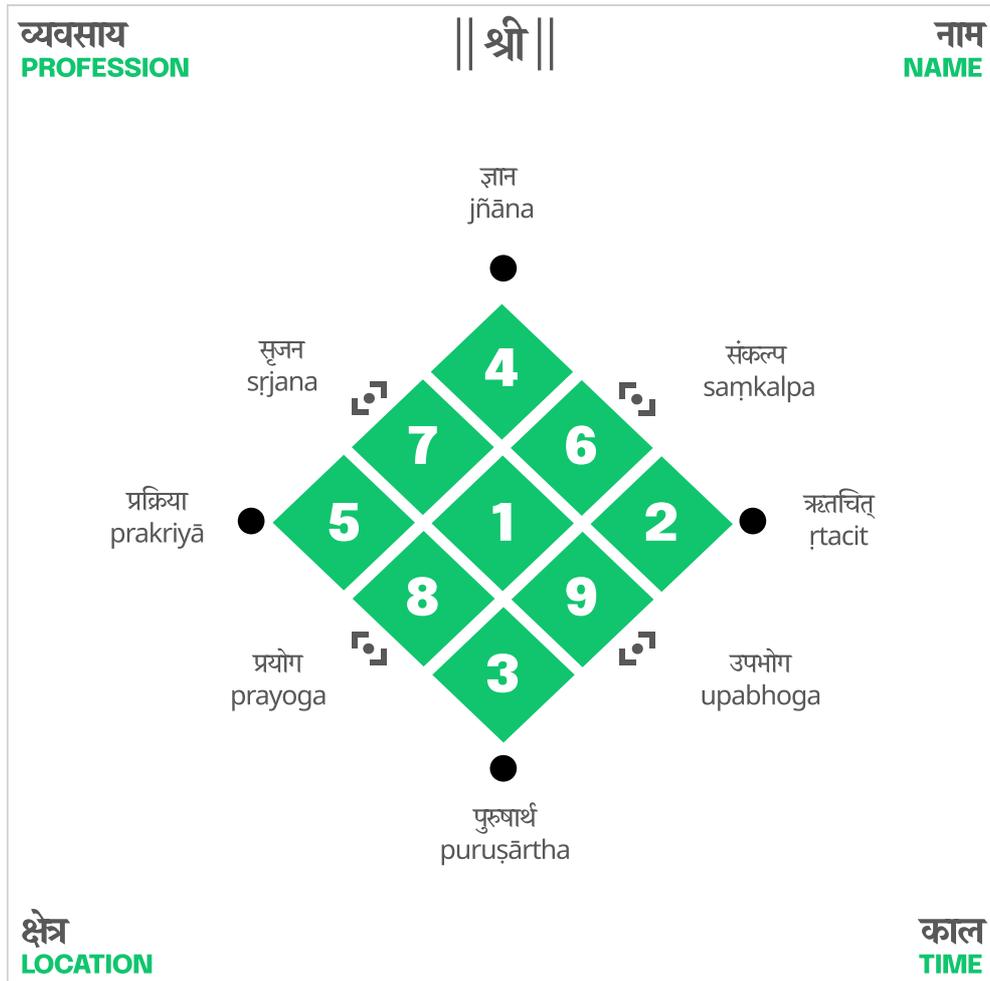
In the consequent months, Rta in Design will unfold and detail itself through periodic release of all kinds of tools, resources, curated material, literature and more. Our roadmap includes concept catalogues, evaluation matrixes, consonance checklists, knowledge bases and more. The upcoming two toolkits are given more detail in the following pages.



UPAKARAṆA

Upakaraṇa, or the instrument for dhārmika action is a cognitive device for streamlining and accelerating the design process. The chronology and nature of steps as customized for each user upon a one to one consultation are drawn from the time tested traditions of Shāstrika methods of working. The functioning of this upkaraṇa will be elaborated in the soon-to-be-released self-initiator's toolkit.

Upakaraṇa is intended to aid the designer in the creation and shaping of their mental workspace, a part of their karmakṣetra. This is the beginning of Phase 1 - Svataḥ Siddha, where we release tools, methods and literature to empower the self-organizing designer; and to guide the process through a dhārmika framework.



THE DESIGNER'S STUDY TABLE

We live scattered digital lives. Multiple social media platforms, countless streaming services, personal files in computer folders and professional on shared workspace drives, some communication on Whatsapp and some on Slack. This is before we reach the assortment a creator deals with. Writers have ideas, content and research material scattered all over the place, graphic designers have to struggle with images, stock files, templates and tools spread out ever so dauntingly, video content makers would give vivid testimony on the frustration that comes with maintaining the digital throughput of a content stream.

Things were simpler in an era not too long ago in the past. Many of us will remember fondly the study tables of our childhoods. A single study table that contained it all- the files and folders needed for study, the stationary collection from stapler and hole-puncher to gel pen refills, drawers and shelves for storage, and even the deep bottom drawer which things did not emerge from once consigned to.

Sitting on that study table was like entering a sacred workspace. One could complete their entire work there, everything they possibly needed for the work available within arm's distance.

The modern digital life has dozens of storage options, countless task and content management tools, a litany of organizers and planners, but nothing to compare to the study table of yore. Our digital lives are scattered to the forces of entropy.

The [Designer's Study Table](#) is an attempt to create a digital study table- a single place for creators to organize, plan and manage their process and workflows. We have built it as a template on Notion, the versatile and powerful software that acts as project and knowledge management tool.

It's a single place where writers can maintain notes, developing manuscripts and personal libraries, graphic designers can corral everything from stock files and imagery to tutorials, templates and created graphics, and creators of any kind can find the peace of an organized and singular workspace for them to 'enter' and run their creation workflows- a customizable and digital karmakṣetra.

Coming soon!



बृहत् | Brhat

Designing the self-perpetuating civilizational moment.



Brhat is a creative cultural research and design organization, rooted in Indian civilizational consciousness. Our intent is threefold:

1. Advance cultural belonging through visual and literary content, and enable creators in mass media, product/experience design and academia.
2. Build the foundations of a culture-compatible public policy, through framework formulation, feedback loops and institutionalization.
3. Shape civilizational leadership by designing courses, curriculum and learning pathways.

We believe that a dhārmika turn in policy, education and institution is essential not only for nation, but eventually for species and planet. To this end we position ourselves as creators, curators and consultants, working in three inter-related and mutually reinforcing areas: culture creatives, policy research, leadership development.

We are a team of creative cross-functional professionals who have come to a moment of intellectual and moral clarity through independent journeys.

We have a poet who is a professional performing artist, a doctor who is studying law and is an expert in Hindu aesthetics, a cultural anthropologist who has documented living traditions of our temples by visiting over 1000 temples, an assistant director in films and TV who quit her role in the Indian embassy to join us, a journalist who has is doing his doctoral thesis on Indian knowledge systems based learning, a product manager who is hacking reality through independent exploration of the root sounds of Sanskrit.

Our Tools

Graphic design with Figma, a web-based vector editor with collaborative functionality.

Web design with Elementor, a powerful web design tool that works with Wordpress, our web platform.

For project management, content calendar maintenance and a host of other organizational activities, we use the amazingly versatile and modular software-Notion.

Icons for Rta in Design are made by [Freepik](#) and taken from [Flaticon](#).

स्वयंभू परियोजना | Project Svayambhū

Project Svayambhū is an exploration into धार्मिक उगम - dhārmika emergence.



The idea is to manifest living realities by synthesis of theoretic and experiential knowledge of ऋत - ṛta leading to creative application through art and design methods grounded in सनातन धर्म - sanātana dharma with a crystallised धार्मिक हेतु - dhārmika intent, and made operational with bridges of strategic synergy between disciplines and competencies.

The core of this exploration has linguistics, semantics, phonetics, cryptology, future technologies and related domains meant for Bhārata as a dhārmika civilizational state - भारत एक धार्मिक राष्ट्र के लिए संस्करण.

विभव कामत धाकणकर Vibhav Kamat Dhakankar

Vibhav is an explorer of transdisciplinary paradigms in Indic Knowledge, Media Arts, Design and Technology. Hailing from मडकई - Maḍakāi village in Goa, he draws his inspiration from the living experience in a traditional Hindu environment as well as the post-independence coloniality of western modernism through a भारतीय दृष्टि - bhāratiya lens. The idea being to live a life inspired from a fresh धार्मिक चेतना dhārmika cetanā - consciousness to be able to function as a fertile seed for growing a collective धार्मिक दृष्टि dhārmika vision for the future of our world..

Professionally, Vibhav is a researcher & practitioner of Design for a collection of

The intent is to work on long duration cultural strategies through the art, design and science of communication, ranging from specific interpersonal exchange to mass dissemination to intergenerational conversation.

In broader terms, it is an ontological creative journey into the undefined paradigms between the potency of भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा - Bhāratiya jñāna paramparā - Indic Knowledge Systems and the prevailing contemporary sanātana Hindu realities - सनातन हिन्दू यथार्थ, tapping into the divine flow which has no beginning and no end.

domains from culture, education, economics, politics, technology and consciousness. He is currently working as a user experience researcher and designer in the fintech industry. When at leisure, he delves into Sacred Art as a medium of Cultural influence.

He is an alumni of Rashtram School of Public Leadership, where he got introduced to the cogitation happening in the Indic sphere in relation with the contemporary academic frameworks and public arena. He is also a Master of Design having earned his degree in New Media Design from National Institute of Design after a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Arts from Goa College of Art.



rta
∞ *in design*

INTRODUCTION TO
A CULTURE DERIVED FRAMEWORK
FOR DESIGN