



ANCIENT PAHARI CIVILIZATIONAL ETHOS

The Pahari people, dwelling across the Himalayan foothills, embody a living legacy of ancient Indian civilization. Rooted in the ethos of the **Vedic** and **post-Vedic** traditions, their way of life reflects enduring values of nature reverence, ancient Indian knowledge systems and syncretic spirituality. Their traditions resonate with the cultural and spiritual values of **Ancient Indian Civilizations**, rooted in harmony with nature, sacred kinship with animals and reverence for oral knowledge systems. Historically, Pahari communities share cultural continuities with the **Indus Valley Civilization**, the **Vedic Civilization** and later the **Mahajanapada period** (6th century BCE), especially through pastoralism, ritual life and indigenous ecological wisdom. Oral epics, animistic traditions and sacred geography of the hills reveal layered connections to the **Shramanic traditions** of Buddhism and Jainism, as well as early **Shaiva and Shakta** cults that flourished in forested terrains. Many Pahari regions hold **local Devi traditions** (such as Hadimba in Manali or Nanda Devi in Garhwal) at the center of cultural life, signifying continuity from **ancient fertility goddess cults** of the Indus Valley and **Shakta traditions** of early India.

Shloka (Rajatarangini) 6.124:

तक्षशिलामणवो नात्यन्तं पर्वतानि यत्र युयुत्सुः ।
निपीड्य पर्वतानि संग्रामेण युध्यन्ति च ये तत्र ॥

"Even the Takshashila region, with its strategic mountain passes, saw warriors from the hill tribes engaging in fierce battles, asserting their dominance over the highlands."

From the scenic valleys of Pir panjal to the pine-clad slopes of Shamshabari of north Kashmir, the ancient Pahari people have nurtured a civilization deeply rooted in India's spiritual traditions, embodying the ethos of **Sanatan Sanskriti**. Their ways reflect profound ties with the early **Shaiva, Vaishnava**, and **Nāga** cults, alongside **surya worship** that pre-dates even classical Hinduism. These intertwined ancient faiths reflect a civilization not of temples, mosques and gurdwars alone, but of **living cosmologies** where gods walked with shepherds, spirits guarded forests and myth merged with memory in every stone and stream. This association is not merely historical but cultural, linking the highlands to the broader civilizational ethos of the subcontinent.