

Study of the Classical Period (700 BC – 200 BC)

Philosophy and Religion

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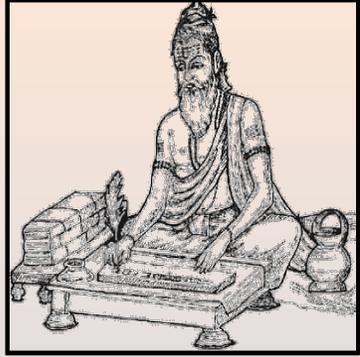
Philosophy and Religion

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VEDIC TEACHINGS

- Organization of universe in *sat* and *asat* – the universe is either knowable or unknowable.
- Manifestation of *sat* and its perception – *sat* is local and is manifested as the word around us.
- Universe is operating through *ṛta*, the over-arching universal order. It is the eternal law that must be respected and observed.
- *Ṛta* is applied to the collection of terms that include *yajña*(sacrifice), *dharma*(moral conduct) and *satya*(truth).
- Any conduct not conforming to the *ṛta* is *anṛta* and is unacceptable

Nyāya – PERCEPTION OF *Sat*

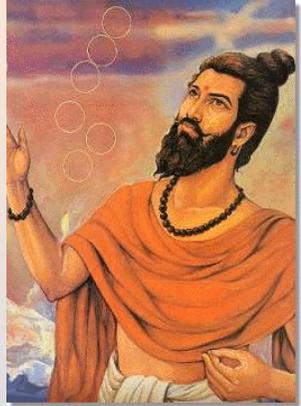


- *Nyāya* seeks to define *sat* and *asat*
- What is real can be cognized through *pramāṇa* (proof)
- These *pramāṇas* include *pratyaksha* (direct perception), *anumāna* (estimation), *upamāna* (comparison) and *shabda* (word or interpretation)
- What exists –*Sat* - is real
- Objects of cognition are stationary and do not change over time

UNDERSTANDING THE *Nyāya* PHILOSOPHY

- *Nyāya* system uses a three-fold methodology to analyze an object:
 - ✓ *uddesha* (enumeration –naming the object),
 - ✓ *lakshana* (definition – characterizing the named object)
 - ✓ *Parikshā* (examination –ascertaining the distinguishing characteristics of the objects through *pramāṇa*).
- Cognition of an object by means of *pramāṇa* is of four types and involves
 - ✓ pleasure,
 - ✓ source of pleasure
 - ✓ Pain
 - ✓ source of pain.
- False perception or misperception leads to confusion.
- Confusion (*viparyaya*) is *asat*.

Vaisheshika – THE INTRODUCTION OF *Kāla*



- *Vaisheshika* considers objects of knowledge to be transient – *kāla*.
- *Sat* is beyond *kāla*, or is perceived to be transient over a longer time scale .
- “*Vaisheshika*” derives from *vishesha* - individual characteristics at the atomic (*anu*) level that share the same attributes and activities in the classes they belong to: *Prithvi*(Earth), *āpa*(water), *teja*(Fire), *vāyu*(air), *ākāsha*(ether), *kāla*(Time), *dik*(space/dimension), *ātmā* (Individual self) and *manas* (mind).
- Knowledge is achieved through six categories (*padārtha*) – Substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), activity (*karma*), generality (*sāmānya*), particularity (*vishesha*) and inherence (*samvāya*).
- Space is a substance that has direction, and is eternal. It causes transitive relationships between objects. This means that the space is not vacuum.
- Time is similar to space; objects can be temporally separated. Time is eternal.

Sāṅkhya PHILOSOPHY: SUBJECTIVITY, *Purusha*



- *Kapila* introduced an element of subjectivity to the concept of perception – namely, how an object of knowledge is perceived depends on the perceiver.
- Thus, *Manas* (mind) influences perception.
- *Prakṛti* (nature) is *asat*, as it can have multiple views depending on the viewer.
- *Purusha* is pure consciousness, the supreme self, and is inactive. It supports the work of creation by *Prakṛti*.
- *Purusha* is *sat*, an attribute-less cosmic entity, and is beyond *Kāla*

Sāṅkhya COSMOLOGY

- In *Sāṅkhya*, existent cause -*satkārya* pre-exists in its material cause *karaṇa*
- *Prakṛti* is ever-changing and transforms into its effect *parināma*
- *Prakṛti* is apprehended through *Mahat*, which is the intellect.
- *Mahat* or *buddhi* evolves from *Pradhāna* or *Prakṛti*
- *Ahamkāra* (self) evolves from *Mahat* and in turn evolves into *Tanmātras* or subtle elements such as sound, touch, smell, form and taste
- There are ten *indriyas*: five senses of action (*karmendriyas*) – feet, hands, rectum, genitals and mouth; and five senses of perception (*jñānendriyas*) – ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin;
- *Manas* (mind) controls *indriyas*
- *Tanmātras* then give rise to gross elements (*mahābutas*) – Air, earth, fire, water and space

Yoga – Sat AND Viveka



- *Patañjali* in his *Yoga-sūtras* has said that *sat* is transcendental, and is realizable through *Viveka*
- Discovery of *Viveka* is *Yoga*
- Object is reflected in the Self
- To realize *sat* or *purusha*, one needs to go beyond *manas*
- The wayward mind can be controlled by cessation of *Vṛttis* (random thoughts)
- *Yoga* has prescribed tools to rein in these *Vṛttis*

अथ योगानुशासनम् ॥१॥
योगश्चित्तवृत्ति निरोधः ॥२॥

Yoga – DISCOVERING Purusha

- *The Chitta* is wandering of the mind (*ahamkāra*) and it perceives objects through *Vṛttis*, or thoughts that transform the mind into the object of perception
- *Vṛttis* are five-fold - *prāmaṇa* (right perception), *viparyaya* (misconception), *vikalpa* (fantasy), *nidrā* (sleep) and *smṛti* (memory)
- The *vṛttis* cause attachment (*rāga*); the only way out of this bondage is by the cessation of *vṛttis*
- *Yoga* prescribes an eight-fold methodology to bring the mind under control- *yama* (abstainment), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (posture), *prānāyāma* (breath control), *pratyahāra* (control of senses), *dhāranā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (absorption)

Mimāmsā – Vedic WORDS ARE ETERNAL



- *Vedic* schools of thought seem contradictory to each other
- *Sat* and *asat* are left undefined in the *Vedas* - how do we interpret them?
- *Mimāmāsa* sought to accept all the interpretations as correct
- Truth can be revealed in many ways

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति

- *Mimāmāsa* brought back the authority of *Vedas* in the inquiry of the meaning of true knowledge: This was the foundation of *Dharma*
- *Mimāmāsa* has six methods of right knowledge – *pratyaksha* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison), *shabda* (testimony), *arthāpatti* (hypothesis) and *anupalabdhi* (negation or non-availability)

Vedānta – THE CONCEPT OF *Brahman*



- According to *Vedānta*, multiple views do not exist
- Multiple perceptions occur because of *Māyā*
- *Bahudhā* of *Mimāmsā* has unity in one - *Brahman*
- *Vedānta* enunciated a composite *Dharma* i.e. *Brahman* is the only reality.
- *Brahdāranyaka* says - everything that is perceived is not *Brahman*
- *Brahman* is beyond *sat* and *asat*; *Brahman* is *ṛtam*
- Realization of *Brahman* is asymptotic.

Vedānta: UNDERSTANDING *Brahman*

- The main theme of *Vedānta* philosophy is the quest for *Brahman*, as stated by the very first of the *brahmasūtras* अथातो ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा
- According to the Upanishads, *Brahman* is the only reality, and the rest of the world as we perceive it is just an appearance
- The perception of the world around us is the result of *adhyāsa*, or a superimposition of *Māyā*, because of ignorance
- *Brahman* and self (*ātman*) are identical as 3 of the 5 *Mahāvākyas* state – I am *Brahman*, Self is *Brahman* and I am He
- Having the knowledge of *Brahman* would mean becoming *Brahman*. As *Mundakopanishad* puts it:

स यो ह वैतत् परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मविकुले भवति । तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥ ९॥

ORGANIZATION OF THE *Vedānta* TEXTS

- *Vedānta* Philosophy is embodied in the Upanishads. There are 108 Upanishads, including 13 main ones: *Isha*, *Kena*, *Chāndogya*, *Brahdāranyaka*, *Kath*, *Prasna*, *Mundaka*, *Māndukya*, *Shevtashvetara*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Jābāla* and *Kaushitāki*.
- The Upanishads can be grouped by their association with each of the Vedas
- The *Brahmasūtras* were created later, to further systemize the Upanishads
- A *Sūtra* is a treatise that concisely makes the essence of the argument in an unambiguous way. It is a thread that leads to the crux of the matter

VEDIC PHILOSOPHY - *Nasādiya Sukta*

- Man's Quest for the Nature of Truth has its roots in one of the earliest discussions about Creation, found in the 129th hymn of the 10th Mandala of the *Rg Veda*. In the *Nasādiya Sūkta*, we find a description of the beginning of Creation, with a speculation - what existed before *sat* (existence) and *asat* (non-existence):

नासंदासीन्नोसदासीत्तदानीम् नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा पुरो यत्।
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नभः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम् ॥१॥

FREEDOM OF ACTION- *Vidyā*

- *Brahman* pervades everything, it is universal
- Because the Self is part of the Universe, it is not affected by an individual's actions
- Likewise, the Individual Self cannot harm or affect others by its actions
- Thus *Vedānta* teaches acceptance of the Universe as a set for the welfare of the mankind

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

- This is what comprises *Vidyā*, or the knowledge, that each person must respect the freedom of action of others.
- This was the essence of *sanātana dharma*

FREEDOM OF ACTION - *Avidyā*

- In a contrarian view, an individual's independence is believed to be local.
- *Aahamkāra* comes to the fore, and leads to *mamatva* (the sense of 'I').
- Thus, an individual's freedom of action would not mean that I respect the same for others.
- This is *avidyā*, which means that the self is not recognized as part of universe as a set.
- This limiting view is reflected in *Lokāyata*, *Shākta*, *Shaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Jaina*, *Buddhism* and other denominations.

INDIAN MATERIALISM - *Lokāyatvāda*

- *Lokāyata* means the philosophy of the people.
- This system believes in perception (*prāmāṇa*) being the basis of right knowledge.
- *Lokāyata* rejects *Vedic* authority, and insists that *svabhāva* (nature) is all-pervading, and there is no immaterial entity.
- Events occur *yadrachhiyā* (by chance) and there is no higher purpose to these events.
- There are no consequences of good or bad actions.
- Penances, sacrifices and asceticism do not help in anyway.

यावज्जीवेत सुखं जीवेद ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिवेत, भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः ॥

Jaina COSMOLOGY

- Reality consists of *jiva* (soul), *pudgala* (matter), *akāsha* (space), *kāla* (time), *dharma* (motion) and *adharma* (restfulness).
- Space is infinite in all directions; thus, the universe is endless.
- Time is eternal.
- *Jiva* (soul) and *ajiva* (non-living) co-exist, and pervade the universe.
- *Jiva* has consciousness and *ajiva* is devoid of it.
- *Ajiva* substances are matter, space, time, motion, and rest.
- *Kālachakra* (time cycle) is time divided into infinite equal times.
- There are three *lokas* (worlds): *urdhva* (upper), *Madhya* (middle) and *adho* (nether).

Jaina PHILOSOPHY

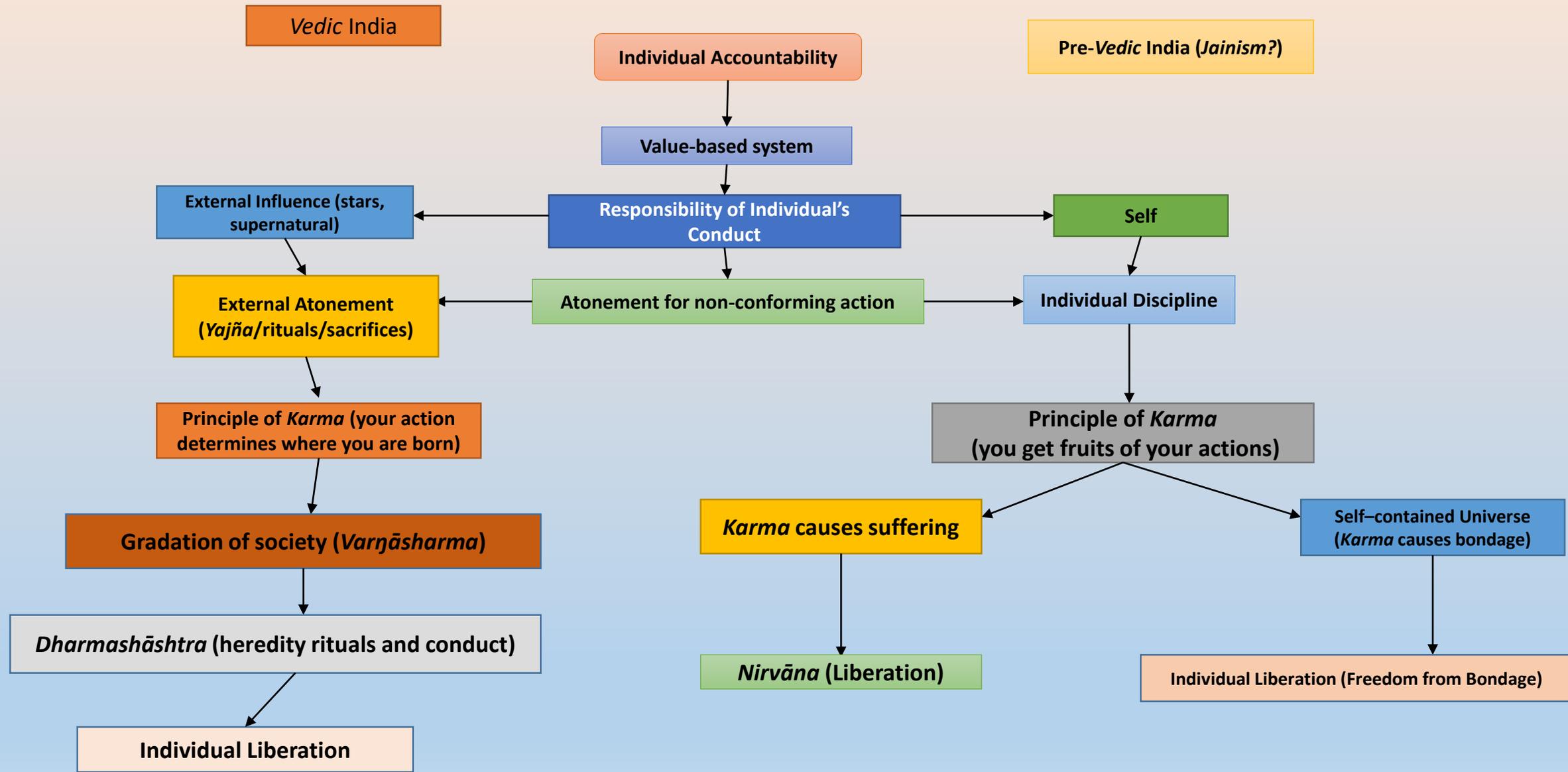
- An individual is responsible for his/her actions, and must accordingly undergo atonement.
- The cycle of birth and death is caused by accumulated *karma*.
- Release from this cycle requires purging the accumulated *karma*.
- Sources of *karma* include: attachment to worldly things, sensual enjoyment, passions, and ignorance.
- Moral life consists of – *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (coveting others possessions), *brahmcharya* (chastity) and *aparigraha* (detachment).
- This line of thinking is possibly much older than the Classical Period.

The Philosophy of *Gautama Buddha*

- *Buddha* proposed a middle ground, between the Jainism's extreme austerity to attain liberation, and *Vedic* rituals for the same.
- He contested the *Vedāntic* view on the eternity of life.
- Everything in the universe is transitory, including pain and pleasure, which are considered to be the consequences of desires, and lead to bondage.
- Bondage can be removed by following the Eight-fold *Path*: *samyak drishti*, *samyak sankalpa*, *samyak vāka*, *samyak karmanta*, *samyak ajiva*, *samyak vyāyāma*, *samyak smriti* and *samyak samādhi*.
- The ultimate goal is to achieve *Nirvana* – *and* merge with the Void.

THEORY OF *Karma*

- *Rta* eventually became basis of the law of *Karma*: one who conforms to *ṛta* will get good fruits of their actions while one is alive, and after.
- Early *Vedic Karma* theory focused more on the performance of rituals to the letter, as per *ṛta* – these were considered to be good actions while any un-prescribed action was considered to be bad.
- During the *Upanishadic* period, *Karma* went beyond ritual: good actions included living a moral and meditative life, where rituals were not motivated by desires but were meant for self-cleansing and for the general good of others - *parārthe*.
- The *Jaina theory of Karma* that was developed in parallel with the Vedic period prescribed self-atonement for bad actions, and extreme austerity as a path to liberation.
- Since these atonement measures were untenable for day-to-day life, *Krishna* in the *Bhagvadgitā* unveiled *naishkarmyatva* – or freedom from consequences of actions.



Karma Model



Dharmashāstra

- *Mīmāṃsā* upheld the *Vedas* as *āptavākya* (learning by verbal testimony), and the prescription of *Dharma* became supreme.
- One of the major consequences of following *ṛta* through Vedic rituals was that it became a part of daily life.
- The theory of *karma* led to the principle that an individual's actions determined where he/she is born, thus bringing in gradations of society – or *varnāshrama*.
- *Dharma* had a wide scope: it not only encompassed one's conduct in life but his/her duty, righteousness, religion, leading moral life, and generally appropriate behavior
- *Dhārmic* rituals were used for the fulfillment of *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*.

Jaina RELIGION

- *Jainism* prescribes three jewels for individual's ethical life:
 - ✓ Right Knowledge (*samyak jñāna*),
 - ✓ Right Perception (*samyak darshana*)
 - ✓ Right Conduct (*samyak charita*)
- Individual souls go through cycles of birth and death
- The only way out of this cycle is to follow the three jewels
- There is no Creator of the universe
- Liberated souls attain the status of divinity
- *Tirthankaras* are such souls who have broken the cycle of birth and death, and have attained eternal freedom.

BUDDHIST RELIGION

- Four noble Truths that lead to pain – *dukkha* (suffering), *samudāya* (cause of suffering), *nirodha* (end of suffering) and path to freedom from suffering (*magga*).
- The **Eight-fold path** is the way to relief from suffering.
- Buddhism has no concept of a soul or a creator.
- *Bodhisattavas* are individuals who have achieved *nirvana* by following the Eight-fold path.
- Although rituals are not prescribed in *Buddhism*, they are nevertheless practiced to keep the followers connected to the religion.
- There are three *Buddhist* schools – *theravāda*, *mahāyāna* and *vajrayāna*.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM – IMAGE WORSHIP

- Personification of God has been part of Indian religions since *Vedic* times.
- *Nārāyana sūkta* in *Yajurveda* refers to *Nārāyana* as the source of all creation.
- *An Avātara* is the personification of God, born in human form during each *Yuga* (cosmic cycle).
- Concept of *Rāma* - born in *Tretā Yuga* - as a perfect human being.
- Concept of *Kṛshna* – born in *Dvāpara Yuga* – as a preceptor teaching practical religion.
- Statues of *Buddha* – Different *Buddhist* sects transitioned from iconography to anthropomorphic images of *Buddha* and *Bodhisattvas*.
- Worship of *Bhagavāna Māhāvira* – a perfected soul who attained divinity, and was worshipped by the *Jaina* faithful.
- Caves, *chaityas* and temples – became places that housed various deities.



CONCLUSION

- *Nyāya* analyzed the *Vedic* texts; made a distinction between *sat* and *asat* through right perception.
- *Vaisheshika* added the idea of *kāla* as a method of right perception.
- *Sāṅkhya* advanced the concept of *Purusha*.
- *Yoga* provided tools to bring the mind under control, realize the *Purusha*.
- *Mīmāṃsā* advocated for the eternity of the *Vedic* teachings (*āptavākya*), giving rise to the *Dharmashāstra*.
- *Vedānta* gave us a concept of *Brahman* as the all pervading Truth.
- *Jaina* teachings involve individual responsibility for action, and a path to liberation through right knowledge.
- *Buddha* said neither great penances or rituals will help to get *nirvana*.
- The classical period gave us the important concepts of *manas*, *ahimsā* and *aparigraha*.