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Indian Philosophy on Self

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Introduction:

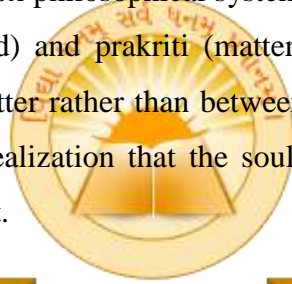
Indian Philosophy (or, in Sankrit, Darshanas), cites to any of several traditions of philosophical thought that initiated in the Indian subcontinent, admitting Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and Jain philosophy (see below for abbreviated introductions to these schools). It is conceived by Indian thinkers to be a practical discipline, and its goal should invariably be to improve human life.

Orthodox (Hindu) Schools

The primary Hindu orthodox (astika) schools of Indian doctrine are those codified during the medieval period of Brahmanic-Sanskritic scholasticism, and they accept the ancient Vedas (the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism) as their origin and scriptural authority:

Samkhya:

Samkhya is the most former of the orthodox philosophical systems, and it involves that everything in reality roots from purusha (self or soul or mind) and prakriti (matter, creative agency, energy). It is a dualist doctrine, though between the self and matter rather than between mind and body as in the Western dualist custom, and liberation passes with the realization that the soul and the dispositions of matter (firmness, activity and monotonousness) are different.



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Yoga:

The Yoga school, as elaborated by Patañjali in his 2nd Century B.C. Yoga Sutras, consents the Samkhya psychology and metaphysics, but is more theistical, with the addition of a divine entity to Samkhya's twenty-five components of reality. The relatively brief Yoga Sutras are separated into eight ashtanga (limbs), reminiscent of Buddhism's Noble Eightfold Path, the goal being to quiet one's mind and attain kaivalya (solitariness or detachment).

Nyaya:

The Nyaya school is founded on the Nyaya Sutras, written by Aksapada Gautama in the 2nd Century B.C. Its methodology is based on a system of logic that has subsequently been followed by the majority of the Indian schools, in much the same way as Aristotelian logic has shaped Western philosophy. Its followers conceive that receiving valid knowledge (the four sources of which are perception, inference, comparison and testimony) is the only way to gain release from suffering. Nyaya formulated several criteria by which



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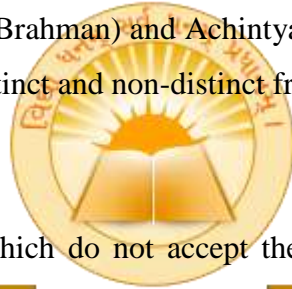
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the knowledge thus received was to be conceived valid or invalid (equivalent in some ways to Western analytic philosophy).

Vedanta:

The Vedanta, or Uttara Mimamsa, school focuses on the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads (mystic or spiritual contemplations within the Vedas), rather than the Brahmins (instructions for ritual and sacrifice). The Vedanta concentrates on meditation, self-discipline and spiritual connectivity, more than traditional ritualism. Due to the rather cryptic and poetic nature of the Vedanta sutras, the school classified into six sub-schools, each interpreting the texts in its own direction and producing its own series of sub-commentaries: Advaita (the best-known, which holds that the soul and Brahman are one and the same), Vishisthadvaita (which instructs that the Supreme Being has a definite form, name - Vishnu - and attributes), Dvaita (which espouses a belief in three distinguish realities: Vishnu, and eternal soul and matter), Dvaitadvaita (which holds that Brahman exists independently, while soul and matter are dependent), Shuddhadvaita (which believes that Krishna is the sheer form of Brahman) and Achintya Bheda Abheda (which mixes monism and dualism by stating that the soul is both distinct and non-distinct from Krishna, or God).



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Heterodox (Non-Hindu) Schools

The main heterodox (nastika) schools, which do not accept the authority of the Vedas, are talked about below:

Charvaka:

Also known as Lokayata, Charvaka is a worldly-minded, doubting and atheistic school of thought. Its founder was Charvaka, author of the *Brihaspatya Sutras* in the final centuries sc., though the original texts have been lost and our understanding of them is based largely on criticism of the ideas by other schools. As early as the 5th Century, Saddaniti and Buddhaghosha linked the Lokayatas with the Vitandas (or Sophists), and the condition Charvaka was first recorded in the 7th Century by the philosopher Purandara, and in the 8th Century by Kamalasila and Haribhadra. As a vital philosophical school, Chamara seems to have died out sometime in the 15th Century.

Jain philosophy:

The central tenets of Jain philosophy were demonstrated by Mahavira in the 6th Century BC, although Jainism as a religion is much older. A basic principle is anekantavada, the idea that reality is comprehended



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differently from different points of view, and that no single point of view is entirely true (similar to the Western philosophical doctrine of Subjectivism). According to Jainism, only Kevalis, those who have infinite knowledge, can experience the true answer, and that all others would only experience a part of the answer. It emphasizes spiritual independence and the equality of all life, with particular stress on non-violence, and posits self-control as vital for attaining the recognition of the sours true nature. Jain feeling underline the immediate consequences of one's behaviour.



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