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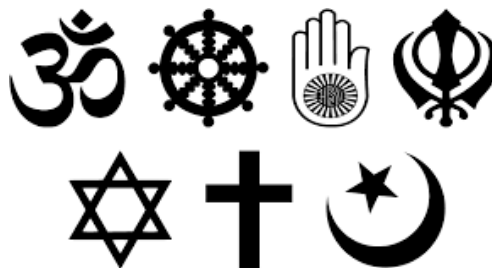
Faculty Name : **DR.M.MOHANKUMAR,** Academic Year : **2024-2025 (EVEN)**
Year & Branch : **III & AIML 'A'** Semester : **VI**
Course : **19HST105 & Essence of Indian Traditional Knowledge**

Unit 3: INDIAN RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

UNIT-3: INDIAN RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES: pre-vedic and vedic religion, Buddhism, Jainism, **six system Indian philosophy, shankaracharya**, various philosophical doctrines, other heterodox sects, bhakti movement, sofi movement, socio religious reform movement of 19th century, modern religious practices.

OUTCOMES: the outcomes of Indian religion, philosophy, and practices are:
Spiritual growth and self-realization, Ethical and moral development, improved health: Students often report improved physical and mental health as a result of incorporating these practices into their daily lives and wellbeing, **Cultural appreciation:** Students often report a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indian culture as a result of studying these traditions. **Environmental awareness:** Students often report a greater awareness and appreciation of the environment and a desire to live more sustainably as a result of studying these traditions.

RELIGION:



- Religion plays a significant role in Indian traditions, culture, and society. India is home to several major religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Islam. Each religion has its own unique traditions, rituals, and beliefs, but they share many commonalities and have influenced each other over time.
- Hinduism** is the largest religion in India and is deeply ingrained in Indian culture and society. It has a rich and diverse history and is characterized by a belief in many gods and goddesses, karma, and reincarnation. Hinduism has also influenced many aspects of Indian society, including art, literature, music, and dance.


- **Buddhism**, which originated in India, also has a significant impact on Indian culture and society. It emphasizes the importance of compassion, mindfulness, and meditation and has influenced many spiritual practices in India.
- **Jainism**, another ancient religion of India, is based on the teachings of Mahavira and emphasizes non-violence, self-control, and spiritual purity. Jains have a strong tradition of vegetarianism and are known for their respect for all forms of life.
- **Sikhism**, founded by Guru Nanak in the 16th century, emphasizes the importance of equality, social justice, and service to others. It is characterized by the belief in one God and the importance of community and selfless service.
- **Islam** is the second-largest religion in India and has had a significant impact on Indian culture and society. Muslims have made significant contributions to Indian art, music, literature, and architecture.
- Religion in Indian traditions, culture, and society is not limited to just the major religions. India is also home to many indigenous and tribal religions, each with its own unique beliefs and practices.

Overall, religion in Indian traditions, culture, and society is deeply intertwined and plays an important role in shaping the country's identity and values.

PRE-VEDIC RELIGION:

Pre Vedic Age

- Also known as Sanatana dharma or Hindu dharma.
- Veda comes from Sanskrit word vidi which means knowledge.
- also called as :
- Shruti
- Samhita
- Appraushya



The Early Vedic Period or the Rig Vedic period began in 1500 BC and continued up to 1000 BC. The religion during this period was simple, and people worshipped the natural forces – the sky, the sun, the moon, the thunder, the wind, the dawn, and the air. To praise their Gods, the Vedic people composed hymns and offered animal sacrifice. The Rig Vedic people worshipped a total of thirty-three Gods and

Goddesses. These Gods and Goddesses were divided into three categories – terrestrial, aerial, and celestial. The people believed in Karma, that is, they believed that a person would be punished or rewarded according to their deeds.

Mode of Worship:

The Early Vedic people followed a simple mode of worship. They worshipped the natural forces, and their religion primarily consisted of some obligations and prayers. Hymns were an important part of the religion. The Vedic people chanted hymns to praise their Gods. They also performed certain ritual sacrifices known as yajnas to please their Gods. Apart from offering animal sacrifices, they offered fruits, milk, ghee, wine, grains, etc., by throwing them into the fire as part of yajnas. The fire was considered sacred and believed to act as an intermediary between man and God.

Animals like cows, horses, bulls, buffaloes, and rams were offered as sacrifices. The Early Vedic people did not build any temples or shrines. They also did not worship any idols or images of Gods.

Religious Beliefs:

- The theory of rebirth and life after death was not properly formed in this period, and the idea was very vague. They believed that when a person died, their soul departed to the 'Pitralok' (land of fathers). There, the soul was received by Yama, who rewarded or punished a person according to their deeds. The idea of transmigration had not developed properly during this period.
- Even though the Rig Vedic people worshipped many Gods and Goddesses, they still believed in the concept of one God who had different names. They believed in the idea of one supreme power governing the entire universe. The Religion followed by the Rig Vedic people, that is, worshipping forces of nature and offering sacrifice, formed the base of Hinduism. Henotheism or Katheoneotheism is found in the hymns of the Early Vedic period that is, praising one God but not denying the others.

Important Gods of the Early Vedic Period

The people in the Early Vedic period worshipped the natural forces. They believed that God was capable of conferring both blessings and punishment on humankind. The Gods were divided into three categories – Terrestrial, Aerial, and Celestial:



- **Terrestrial Gods** – Agni, Soma, Brihaspati, Prithvi
 - **Aerial Gods** – Rudra, Vayu, Indra, Maruts, Prajanya
 - **Celestial Gods** – Varuna, Dyayus, Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Vishnu, Asvin, Usha, Pusha
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- The terrestrial Gods were also known as Prithvisthana, the aerial Gods were otherwise known as the Antarishastana, and the celestial Gods were known as dyusthana.
 - Indra was the most important God during the Early Vedic period. He had

many names – Vritrahan (slayer of Vritra, a demon), Purandara (breaker of forts), and Maghavan (bounteous). There are a total of 250 hymns that were devoted to him. He is also considered the rain God and warlord. Some other names of Indra were Pulushi, Tonan, Atsujit, and Purbhid.

- The second most important God during the Early Vedic period was Agni (Fire Goddess). A total of 200 hymns were devoted to Agni. People believed Agni to be an intermediary between them and the Gods. They believed that the offerings they gave to Agni were transmitted to the Gods in the form of smoke.
- The third most important God of the Early Vedic period was Varuna. He was believed as the upholder of cosmic law, and therefore, it was believed that he regulated all activities in the universe.
- Some other Gods of this period were **Rudra** (God of animals), **Dyaus** (the oldest God), **Yama** (God of death), **Aditi** (mother of Gods), **Ashwin** (God of youth, immortality, and health), and **Sindhu** (Goddess of the river).

VEDIC RELIGION:



- Vedic religion is the earliest form of Hinduism, and it was practiced in ancient India during the Vedic period, which dates back to around 1500 BCE to 500 BCE. The Vedic religion is based on the Vedas, a collection of ancient Hindu scriptures, which were composed in Sanskrit and are considered the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism.
- The Vedic religion is characterized by its emphasis on the worship of gods and goddesses, particularly Indra, Agni, and Soma, and the use of sacrifices and rituals to appease them. The Vedas describe various types of sacrifices, including the Soma sacrifice, which involved the use of a hallucinogenic plant, and the Agnihotra sacrifice, which involved offerings to the god of fire.
- The Vedic religion also placed a strong emphasis on the concept of dharma, or duty, which was seen as an individual's responsibility to uphold the natural order of the universe. The idea of karma, or the belief that our actions have consequences, also developed during the Vedic period.
- Over time, the Vedic religion evolved into what we now know as Hinduism, with the development of new religious texts, the emergence of new sects and traditions, and the incorporation of new beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, many aspects of Vedic religion continue to be important in modern-day Hinduism, particularly in the areas of ritual and worship.

BUDDHISM RELIGION



- Buddhism is a religion that originated in ancient India around the 6th century BCE. It was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who is known as the Buddha.
- Buddhism was a response to the dominant Hindu religion and its caste system, which emphasized ritualistic practices and social hierarchies.
- Buddhism challenged the Hindu belief system by rejecting the concept of caste and advocating for an individual's path to enlightenment through self-realization and the Four Noble Truths. Buddhism also emphasized the importance of compassion, morality, and mindfulness in everyday life.
- Buddhism played a significant role in Indian cultural and societal development, particularly during the Mauryan Empire under the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. Ashoka embraced Buddhism and promoted its teachings, which led to the spread of the religion throughout India and beyond.
- Buddhism influenced Indian art, architecture, and literature, particularly during the Gupta Empire (320-550 CE). Buddhist art and sculptures were prevalent during this time, and the Ajanta and Ellora Caves are some of the most significant examples of Buddhist architecture.
- However, Buddhism's popularity in India began to decline in the 12th century, as Hinduism reasserted itself as the dominant religion. Today, Buddhism is still practiced in India, particularly in regions like Ladakh and Sikkim, and it continues to have a significant influence on Indian culture and society.

TYPES OF BUDDHISM:

There are several types of Buddhism, each with its own unique beliefs and practices. Here are some of the most prominent types of Buddhism:

1. **Theravada Buddhism:** This is the oldest surviving school of Buddhism, which emphasizes the importance of personal enlightenment through meditation and the study of Buddhist scriptures. It is prevalent in Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar.
2. **Mahayana Buddhism:** This school of Buddhism emerged later than Theravada and places greater emphasis on compassion and the importance of helping others. It is prevalent in countries like China, Japan, and Korea.
3. **Vajrayana Buddhism:** Also known as Tibetan Buddhism, this is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that is prevalent in Tibet and the Himalayan regions. It emphasizes the importance of meditation and rituals and incorporates various deities and mystical practices.

4. **Zen Buddhism:** This is a school of Mahayana Buddhism that emphasizes the practice of meditation and mindfulness to achieve enlightenment. It is prevalent in Japan, where it is known as Zen, and in China and Korea, where it is known as Chan.
5. **Pure Land Buddhism:** This is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that places emphasis on the concept of rebirth and the attainment of a pure land or paradise through the invocation of the Buddha Amitabha. It is prevalent in China, Japan, and Korea.
6. **Nichiren Buddhism:** This is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that focuses on the chanting of the Lotus Sutra to achieve enlightenment. It is prevalent in Japan and has become popular in the West as well.

Each of these types of Buddhism has its own unique practices, teachings, and traditions. However, they all share a common goal of achieving enlightenment and reducing suffering in the world.

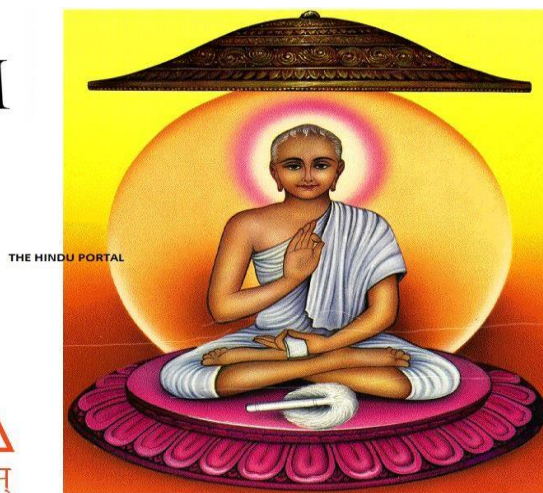
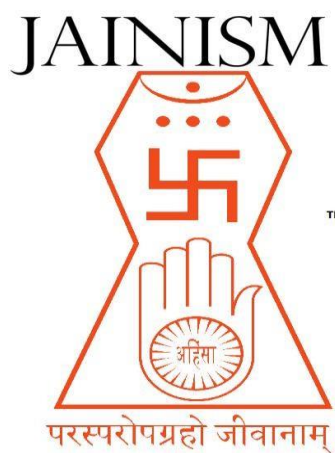
CHARACTERISTICS OF BUDDHISM RELIGION:

Buddhism is a complex philosophy with many different schools of thought and interpretations, but there are several key characteristics that are generally associated with Buddhist philosophy:

1. **The Four Noble Truths:** This is the core teaching of Buddhism, which states that suffering is an inherent part of human existence, that suffering arises from craving and attachment, that suffering can be overcome, and that the way to overcome suffering is through following the Eightfold Path.
2. **The Eightfold Path:** This is a set of guidelines for ethical and moral conduct that is necessary for achieving enlightenment. It includes right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.
3. **Non-attachment:** Buddhism emphasizes the importance of non-attachment to material possessions, relationships, and even thoughts and emotions, as attachment is seen as a source of suffering.
4. **Impermanence:** Buddhism recognizes that everything is impermanent and constantly changing, and that attachment to things that are impermanent can lead to suffering.
5. **Rebirth:** Buddhism teaches that existence is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and that one's actions in each life determine the circumstances of the next.
6. **Compassion and mindfulness:** Buddhism emphasizes the importance of compassion towards all beings and the practice of mindfulness, which involves being present in the moment and aware of one's thoughts and emotions.
7. **Emptiness:** This is a concept in Buddhism that refers to the ultimate reality of the universe, which is considered to be empty of inherent existence or self-nature.

many other aspects and nuances to this complex and rich tradition.

JAINISM RELIGION:



Jainism is an ancient religion and philosophy that originated in India around the same time as Buddhism, and shares some similarities with it. Here are some key aspects of Jainism philosophy:

1. **Non-violence (Ahimsa):** The principle of non-violence is central to Jainism. Jains believe in not causing harm to any living being, either by thought, word, or deed. This is not just limited to humans, but also extends to animals and even plants.
2. **Karma:** Jainism teaches that every action has consequences, and these consequences affect the soul's progression towards liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. This is similar to the concept of karma in Hinduism and Buddhism.
3. **Non-attachment:** Jains believe in living a simple life, avoiding material possessions and attachment to them, as it can lead to negative consequences.
4. **Multiple viewpoints:** Jainism recognizes that truth is multifaceted and that there can be many different perspectives on the same issue. Therefore, Jains believe in respecting and considering different viewpoints, even if they do not necessarily align with their own.
5. **Liberation (Moksha):** Jainism seeks to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth by following the path of righteousness, which involves practicing non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possession. This path is known as the Three Jewels of Jainism: right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.
6. **Equality:** Jainism emphasizes the importance of equality and treating all beings with respect, regardless of their caste, gender, or social status.
7. **Self-control:** Jains believe in practicing self-control and discipline, particularly with regards to desires and passions, in order to attain spiritual progress.

These are some of the key aspects of Jainism philosophy, which emphasize the importance of non-violence, karma, and liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.

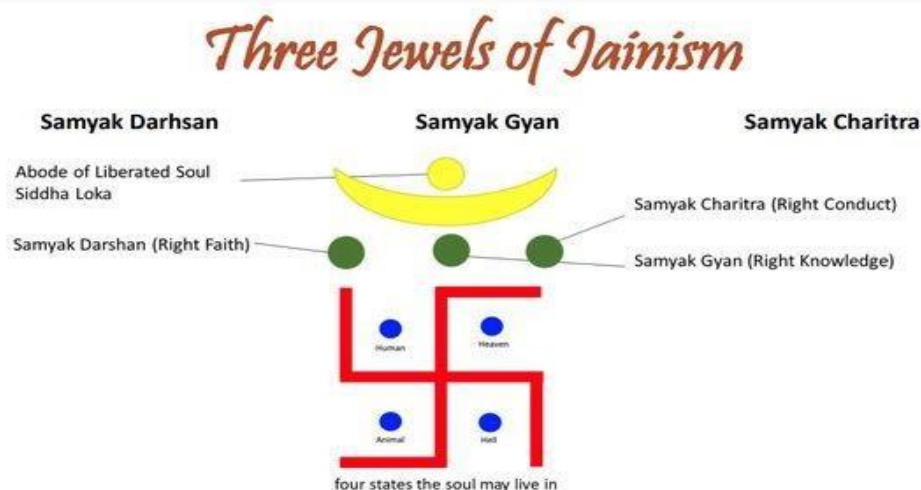
CAUSES OF THE RISE OF JAINISM:

The rise of Jainism can be attributed to various factors, including:

1. **Social and religious unrest:** Jainism emerged in the same era as Buddhism and Hinduism, during a time of social and religious upheaval in ancient India. The Vedic religion, which was dominant at the time, was being challenged by new religious and philosophical movements, including Jainism and Buddhism.
2. **Influence of Mahavira:** The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, was a charismatic spiritual leader who attracted a large following due to his teachings on non-violence and liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
3. **Appeal to the masses:** Jainism appealed to the masses as it was a non-discriminatory religion that preached equality and emphasized the importance of non-violence and compassion towards all living beings.
4. **Spread by merchants:** Jainism was spread by merchant communities, who were attracted to the religion's emphasis on non-violence and ethical conduct in business dealings. Jain merchants were known for their honesty, fair dealing, and charitable contributions, which helped to spread the religion's influence.
5. **Emphasis on personal liberation:** Jainism's emphasis on personal liberation and the pursuit of spiritual progress without the need for intermediaries or religious hierarchy appealed to many individuals who were disillusioned with the existing religious structures and practices.
6. **Encouragement of education:** Jainism encouraged education and the pursuit of knowledge, which helped to create a culture of intellectualism and scholarship, attracting many followers and scholars to the religion.

These are some of the factors that contributed to the rise of Jainism, which remains an important religion and philosophical tradition in India today.

PRINCIPLES OF JAINISM:



Once we have Right / Rational Faith in our Knowledge about Soul then it comes part of our Conduct

Right Faith -> Right Knowledge -> Right Conduct

The three principles of Jainism are known as the Three Jewels or the Ratnatraya, which are:

1. **Right Faith (Samyak Darshana):** This refers to having a correct understanding of the nature of reality, the soul, and the universe, as taught by the Jain scriptures and spiritual teachers.
2. **Right Knowledge (Samyak Jnana):** This refers to acquiring true knowledge of the nature of reality through self-reflection, meditation, and study of the Jain scriptures.
3. **Right Conduct (Samyak Charitra):** This refers to living a life of ethical conduct and non-violence, following the principles of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possession.

Together, these three principles are considered essential for achieving spiritual progress and attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Jainism teaches that by following these principles, one can purify the soul, eliminate negative karma, and achieve ultimate liberation or moksha.

SIX SYSTEM OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY:



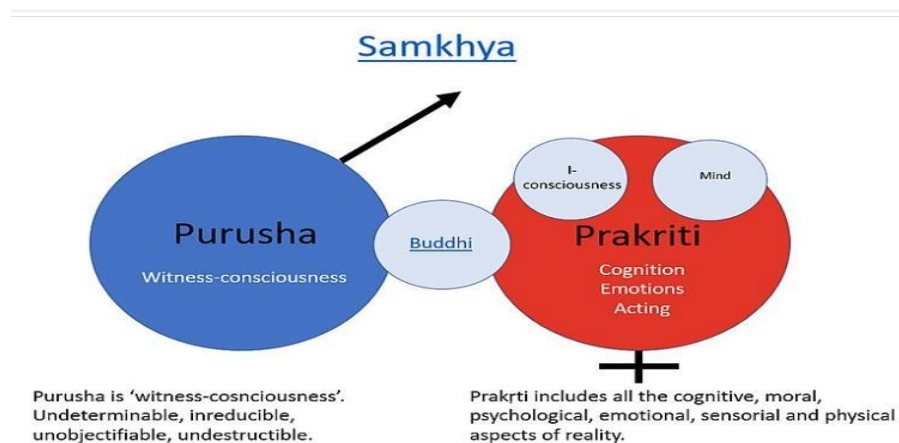
There are six systems of Indian philosophy, also known as the Shad-Darshana, which represent the major schools of philosophical thought in ancient India. These six systems are:

1. **Samkhya:** This is one of the oldest and most influential schools of Indian philosophy, which emphasizes dualism and regards the universe as Consisting of two fundamental principles - Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter).
2. **Yoga:** Yoga philosophy, as expounded by Patanjali, emphasizes the practice of physical postures, breath control, and meditation to achieve spiritual enlightenment.
3. **Nyaya:** Nyaya is a system of logic and epistemology, which emphasizes the importance of sound reasoning and critical thinking to gain knowledge and understanding.
4. **Vaisheshika:** Vaisheshika is a system of metaphysics that seeks to explain the nature of reality through the analysis of substances and their properties.

5. **Mimamsa:** Mimamsa is a system of philosophy that focuses on the interpretation of the Vedas, the ancient Hindu scriptures, and emphasizes the importance of ritual action and religious duties.
6. **Vedanta:** Vedanta is the most popular and widely accepted school of Indian philosophy, which seeks to interpret the teachings of the Upanishads and other Hindu scriptures, and emphasizes the ultimate unity of all existence.

Each of these six systems offers a unique perspective on the nature of reality, the purpose of human existence, and the means of attaining spiritual liberation. They have all had a profound influence on the development of Indian philosophy and religion, as well as on the broader cultural and intellectual history of India.

SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY:



- Samkhya is one of the oldest and most influential schools of Indian philosophy, which emphasizes dualism and regards the universe as consisting of two fundamental principles - Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter).
- According to Samkhya philosophy, Purusha is the pure, unchanging, and eternal consciousness that is independent of matter. Prakriti, on the other hand, is the material world that is constantly changing and evolving. Prakriti is composed of three fundamental qualities or gunas - sattva (purity), rajas (activity), and tamas (inertia) - which are responsible for the diversity and complexity of the material world.
- Samkhya philosophy also recognizes the importance of self-knowledge and spiritual liberation, which can be achieved through the process of discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti. The ultimate goal of Samkhya philosophy is to attain liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death, and to realize the ultimate reality of the self (Atman) and the universe (Brahman).
- The Samkhya system has had a profound influence on Indian philosophy, religion, and culture, and has contributed to the development of many other schools of Indian thought, including Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra.

YOGA PHILOSOPHY:



Yoga philosophy is a system of Indian philosophy that is based on the teachings of the ancient Indian sage Patanjali, who is believed to have lived in the 2nd century BCE. Yoga philosophy is primarily concerned with the study and practice of yoga as a means of achieving spiritual and physical well-being, and ultimately, liberation from suffering.

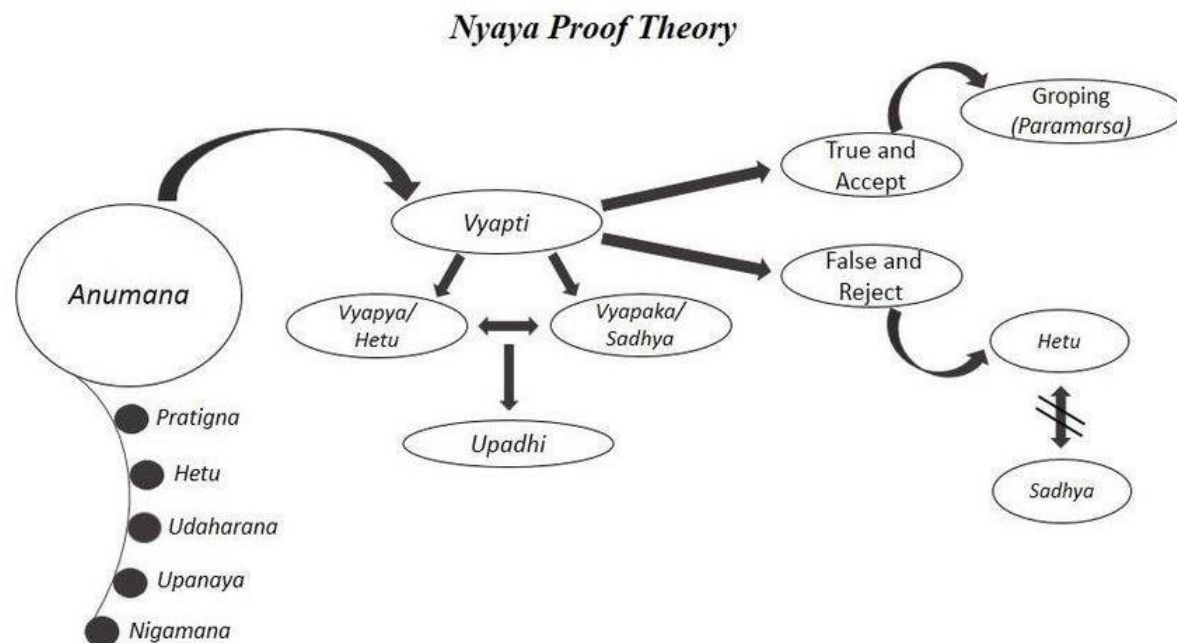
According to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, yoga consists of eight limbs or steps that are designed to help the practitioner achieve a state of mental and physical harmony. These limbs are:

1. **Yama:** The practice of ethical and moral principles, such as non-violence, truthfulness, and self-control.
2. **Niyama:** The practice of personal observances, such as purity, contentment, and self-discipline.
3. **Asana:** The practice of physical postures that are designed to promote strength, flexibility, and balance.
4. **Pranayama:** The practice of breath control, which is believed to regulate the flow of prana or life force energy in the body.
5. **Pratyahara:** The practice of withdrawal of the senses from external objects, which is believed to promote inner focus and concentration.
6. **Dharana:** The practice of concentration or one-pointedness of the mind.
7. **Dhyana:** The practice of meditation, which is believed to promote inner peace, clarity, and self-awareness.
8. **Samadhi:** The ultimate goal of yoga, which is a state of complete absorption or union with the divine.

Yoga philosophy emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, self-realization, and the cultivation of inner peace and harmony. It has had a profound influence on Indian

philosophy, religion, and culture, and has gained popularity around the world as a system of physical exercise and spiritual practice.

NYAYA PHILOSOPHY:



Nyaya is one of the six major schools of Indian philosophy, which is primarily concerned with the study of knowledge (epistemology), logic (nyaya), and metaphysics. The Nyaya system was founded by the ancient Indian philosopher Gautama (also known as Akshapada) in the 2nd century BCE.

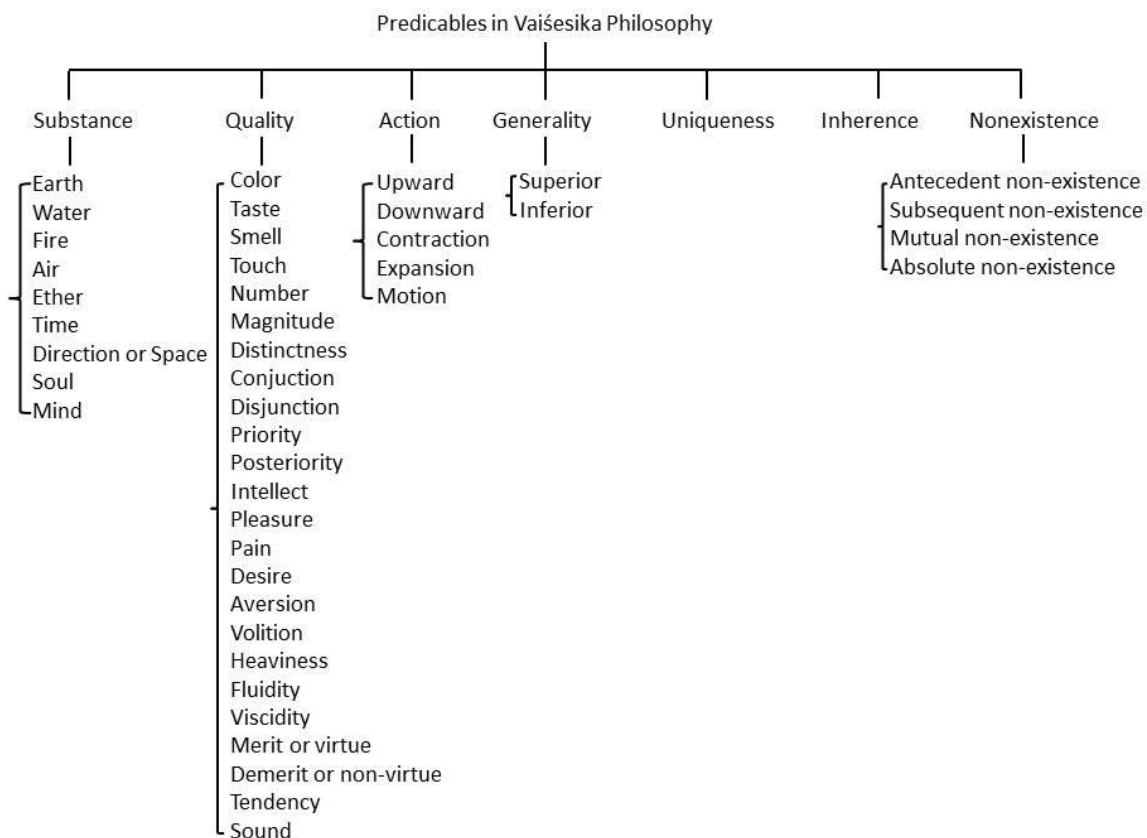
The Nyaya system is based on a set of foundational principles that are designed to help the practitioner acquire correct knowledge and understanding of the world.

These principles include:

1. **Pramanas:** Nyaya recognizes six pramanas or valid means of knowledge, which include perception, inference, comparison, testimony, presumption, and non-apprehension.
2. **Padarthas:** Nyaya identifies sixteen categories of reality or padarthas, which include substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, and others.
3. **Logic:** Nyaya emphasizes the importance of logical reasoning, analysis, and argumentation, which are essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the world.
4. **Ethics:** Nyaya recognizes the importance of ethical conduct, and emphasizes the need to act in accordance with moral and ethical principles.

The Nyaya system has had a significant influence on Indian philosophy, religion, and culture, and has contributed to the development of other schools of Indian thought, including Vedanta and Buddhism. The Nyaya system remains an important area of study in contemporary Indian philosophy, and continues to inspire new insights and discoveries in the field of epistemology and logic.

VAISHESHIKHA PHILOSOPHY:



Vaisheshika is one of the six major schools of Indian philosophy, which is primarily concerned with the study of metaphysics and ontology. The Vaisheshika system was founded by the ancient Indian philosopher Kanada in the 6th century BCE.

The Vaisheshika system is based on the idea that the universe is composed of six fundamental categories of existence or dravyas. These categories include:

1. **Substance (dravya):** This refers to the basic building blocks of the universe, such as atoms, molecules, and particles.
2. **Quality (guna):** This refers to the attributes or properties of substances, such as color, shape, and size.
3. **Motion (karma):** This refers to the movement or activity of substances, such as the motion of planets, stars, and other celestial bodies.

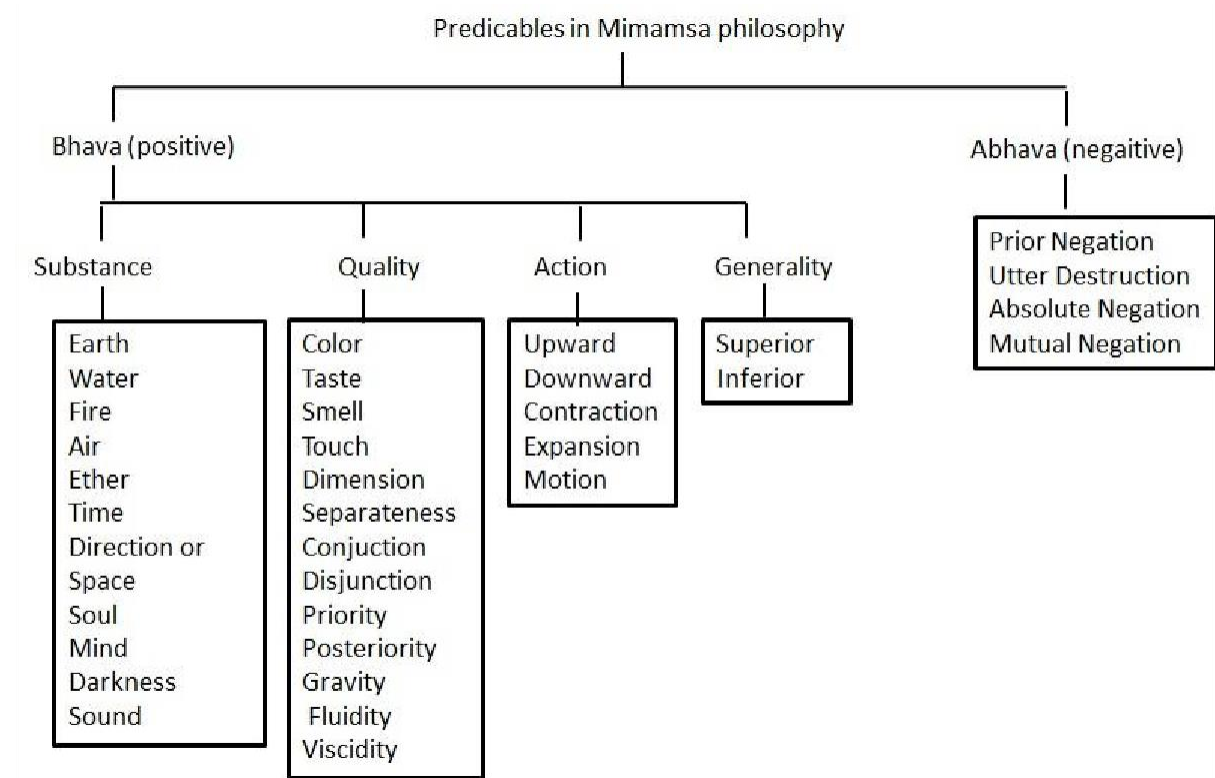
4. **Generality (samaanya):** This refers to the common or universal characteristics shared by substances, such as the fact that all living things are composed of cells.
5. **Particularity (vishesha):** This refers to the unique or specific characteristics of substances, such as the unique DNA of each individual.
6. **Inherence (samavaya):** This refers to the relationship between substances and their attributes or properties, such as the fact that color inheres in an object.

The Vaisheshika system also recognizes the importance of logic and epistemology, and emphasizes the use of rational analysis and argumentation to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of reality.

The Vaisheshika system has had a significant influence on Indian philosophy, and has contributed to the development of other schools of Indian thought, including

Nyaya and Samkhya. It remains an important area of study in contemporary Indian philosophy, and continues to inspire new insights and discoveries in the field of metaphysics and ontology.

MIMAMSA PHILOSOPHY:

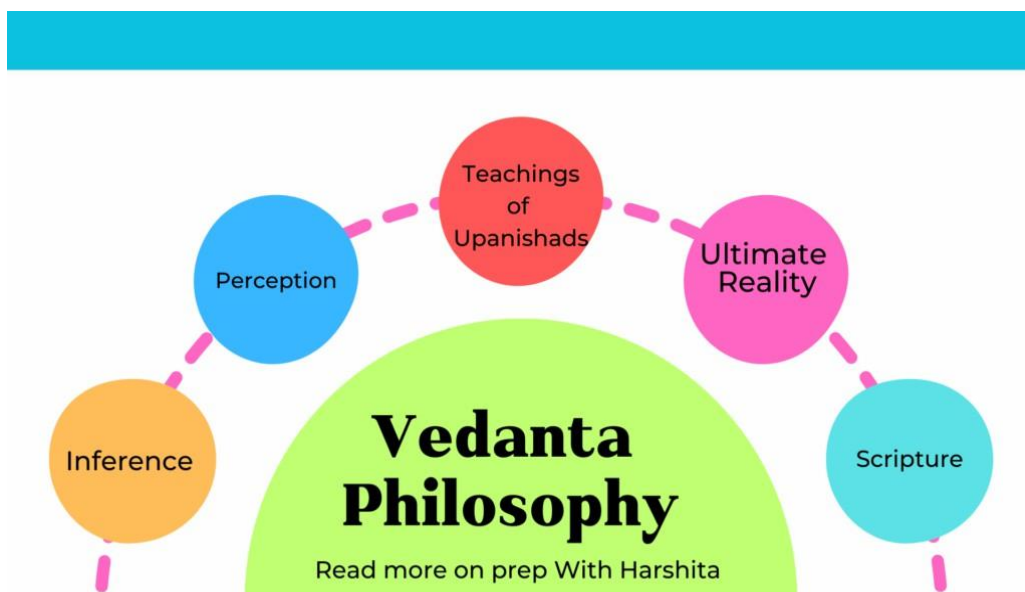


- Mimamsa is one of the six major schools of Indian philosophy, which is primarily concerned with the study of ritual action (karma) and the

interpretation of the Vedas, the ancient sacred texts of Hinduism. The Mimamsa system was founded by the ancient Indian philosopher Jaimini in the 3rd century BCE.

- The Mimamsa system is based on the idea that the Vedas are the ultimate authority on all aspects of human life, including morality, religion, and social conduct. The Mimamsa system emphasizes the importance of performing religious rituals and ceremonies, which are seen as a means of achieving spiritual liberation.
- The Mimamsa system is characterized by a rigorous methodology of interpretation, which involves analyzing the meaning and significance of the Vedas through a detailed examination of their language, grammar, and context. This methodology is known as Purva-Mimamsa or "prior inquiry", and it emphasizes the importance of precise and careful analysis in understanding the meaning of the Vedas.
- The Mimamsa system also recognizes the importance of logic and epistemology, and emphasizes the use of rational analysis and argumentation to gain a deeper understanding of the Vedas and their teaching.
- The Mimamsa system has had a significant influence on Indian philosophy, and has contributed to the development of other schools of Indian thought, including Vedanta and Yoga. It remains an important area of study in contemporary Indian philosophy, and continues to inspire new insights and discoveries in the field of ritual action and the interpretation of the Vedas.

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY:



- The Vedanta system is based on the idea that the ultimate reality is Brahman, an all-pervading and eternal consciousness that underlies all of existence. According to Vedanta, the individual self (atman) is identical with Brahman, and the realization of this identity is the goal of human life.
- Vedanta is one of the six major schools of Indian philosophy, which is primarily concerned with the study of the Upanishads, the ancient sacred texts of Hinduism, and the interpretation of the Vedas. The Vedanta system was founded by the ancient Indian philosopher Badarayana in the 3rd century BCE.
- The Vedanta system is characterized by three major schools of thought: Advaita Vedanta, Vishishtadvaita Vedanta, and Dvaita Vedanta.
- The Vedanta system has had a significant influence on Indian philosophy, and has contributed to the development of other schools of Indian thought, including Yoga and Tantra. It remains an important area of study in contemporary Indian philosophy, and continues to inspire new insights and discoveries in the field of metaphysics and spirituality.

SHANKARACHARYA:



- Shankaracharya was an ancient Indian philosopher and theologian who is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in the development of Hinduism. He lived in the 8th century CE and is credited with reviving and systematizing the Advaita Vedanta school of Indian philosophy.
- Shankaracharya was born in a Brahmin family in the village of Kaladi in Kerala, India. According to legend, he was born to his parents after they prayed to Lord Shiva for a child. From a young age, Shankaracharya showed exceptional intellectual abilities and had a deep interest in religious and spiritual matters.
- At the age of eight, Shankaracharya was initiated into the study of the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures. He studied under several great scholars of the time and quickly gained a reputation as a brilliant scholar and debater.
- In his early twenties, Shankaracharya began a series of travels throughout India, visiting and studying at various spiritual and philosophical centers.

During his travels, he wrote a number of important commentaries on Hindu scriptures, including the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Brahma Sutras.

- Shankaracharya's most significant contribution to Indian philosophy was his systematization of the Advaita Vedanta school, which emphasizes the non-dual nature of reality and the ultimate unity of the individual soul (atman) with the cosmic soul (Brahman). His writings and teachings on this subject had a profound impact on the development of Hinduism and other Indian philosophies.
- Shankaracharya is also credited with establishing four major monasteries (mathas) in India, which continue to play an important role in the promotion and preservation of Advaita Vedanta philosophy.
- Although there is some debate about the historical accuracy of certain aspects of Shankaracharya's life and teachings, there is no doubt that he was a highly influential figure in Indian philosophy and his legacy continues to shape Hinduism and other spiritual traditions to this day.

VARIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES:

Indian religion encompasses a rich and diverse array of philosophical doctrines. Here are some of the most significant philosophical doctrines in Indian religion:

1. **Samkhya:** This is one of the oldest philosophical systems in India, which is dualistic in nature, positing two fundamental principles: purusha (pure consciousness) and prakriti (nature).
2. **Yoga:** The Yoga system is based on the teachings of the sage Patanjali, and it emphasizes the practice of meditation and spiritual discipline as a means of achieving enlightenment.
3. **Vedanta:** Vedanta is a philosophical system based on the Upanishads, which are the final section of the Vedas. Vedanta emphasizes the unity of all things and the idea that Brahman (the ultimate reality) is the only true reality.
4. **Mimamsa:** Mimamsa is a philosophical system that focuses on the interpretation of Vedic scriptures and the performance of Vedic rituals. It emphasizes the importance of dharma (righteousness) and karma (action).
5. **Nyaya:** Nyaya is a philosophical system that emphasizes the importance of logic and reasoning in understanding the nature of reality.
6. **Vaisheshika:** Vaisheshika is a philosophical system that emphasizes the study of the material world and the nature of matter, atoms, and elements.
7. **Jainism:** Jainism is a non-theistic religion that emphasizes the importance of non-violence, asceticism, and the pursuit of enlightenment through the practice of self-discipline.
8. **Buddhism:** Buddhism is a non-theistic religion that teaches the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as a means of achieving enlightenment and liberation from suffering.

These philosophical systems are just a few examples of the rich and diverse philosophical traditions that have emerged from Indian religion. Each system has its own unique approach and teachings, but all share a common goal of understanding the nature of reality and achieving enlightenment or liberation.

OTHER HETRODOX SECTS:

In addition to the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy such as **Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta, Mimamsa, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika**, there are also several heterodox sects in Indian religion. These heterodox sects have different beliefs and practices from the orthodox schools and are sometimes referred to as the "**nastika**" or "non-orthodox" traditions. Here are a **few examples**:

1. **Buddhism**: Buddhism originated in India and is based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who taught the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as a means of achieving enlightenment and liberation from suffering.
2. **Jainism**: Jainism is a non-theistic religion that emphasizes the importance of non-violence, asceticism, and the pursuit of enlightenment through the practice of self-discipline.
3. **Charvaka**: Charvaka is a materialist and atheist philosophical system that rejects the existence of gods and the idea of an afterlife. It emphasizes the importance of sensory perception and enjoyment in life.
4. **Ajivika**: Ajivika is a philosophical system that emphasizes the concept of fate or determinism. It holds that everything in the universe is predetermined and that human actions are the result of past karma.
5. **Sikhism**: Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that originated in the Punjab region of India. It emphasizes the importance of meditation, devotion, and living a moral and ethical life.

These are just a few examples of the heterodox sects in Indian religion. Each sect has its own unique beliefs and practices, and together they represent the rich and diverse spiritual traditions of India.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT:



- **The Bhakti Movement** was a significant social and religious movement that emerged in medieval India and had a profound impact on Indian religions, particularly Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism.
- **In Hinduism**, the Bhakti Movement emphasized the importance of devotion (bhakti) to a chosen deity as a means of achieving spiritual liberation. This devotional approach to spirituality challenged the traditional Vedic rituals and caste system of Hinduism, which had become formal and ritualistic. The Bhakti Movement created a more egalitarian and personal approach to spirituality that emphasized the universal nature of the divine and the importance of love, compassion, and devotion in the pursuit of spiritual goals.
- **In Sikhism**, the Bhakti Movement influenced the teachings of Guru Nanak and the other Sikh gurus, who emphasized the importance of devotion to God, compassion for all living beings, and the rejection of caste and other social hierarchies. Sikhism promoted the idea of the oneness of God and the unity of all religions, emphasizing that all individuals, regardless of their religion or social status, could achieve spiritual liberation through devotion to God.
- **In Buddhism**, the Bhakti Movement influenced the development of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, which emphasized the importance of devotion to the Buddha and other bodhisattvas as a means of achieving spiritual liberation. The Mahayana school rejected the strict monasticism and asceticism of earlier Buddhist traditions and promoted the idea that all individuals could achieve enlightenment through devotion to the Buddha and the practice of compassion and other virtues.

Overall, the Bhakti Movement had a significant impact on Indian religions, promoting a more personal, direct, and egalitarian approach to spirituality that emphasized the importance of devotion, love, and compassion in the pursuit of spiritual goals. The Bhakti Movement remains an important part of Indian religious and cultural traditions today.

SUFI MOVEMENT:



- The Sufi Movement is a mystical and devotional movement that originated in the Islamic world and spread to India during the 8th century CE. The Sufis were Islamic mystics who emphasized the inward spiritual journey and the attainment of a direct personal experience of God through practices such as meditation, prayer, and devotion.
- In India, the Sufi Movement played an important role in the development of Islamic culture and society, as well as in the interaction between Islamic and Hindu cultures. The Sufis were known for their tolerance and acceptance of other religions and cultures, and their teachings often incorporated elements of Hindu and other local traditions.
- The Sufi saints and mystics in India, known as "**pirs**" or "**sufis**," established spiritual centers and communities known as "khanqahs" or "dargahs," where they taught their disciples and engaged in spiritual practices. The Sufi saints also composed devotional poetry and songs in various regional languages, which expressed their love and devotion for God.
- The Sufi Movement had a significant impact on Indian society, particularly in the areas of music, art, and literature. Sufi music and poetry, which emphasized the themes of love, devotion, and spiritual union, became an integral part of Indian culture and influenced the development of classical Indian music and poetry.
- The Sufi Movement also played a significant role in promoting interfaith harmony and peace in India. The Sufi saints and mystics emphasized the importance of tolerance, compassion, and understanding among people of different religions and cultures, and their teachings helped to bridge the divide between Hindus and Muslims in India.

Today, the Sufi Movement remains an important part of Indian religious and cultural traditions, and the dargahs and khanqahs of the Sufi saints continue to attract thousands of devotees and visitors from all over the world.

SOCIO RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENT OF 19TH CENTURY:

- The Indian society in the first half of the 19th century was caste-ridden, decadent and rigid.
- The conquest of India by the British during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exposed some serious weaknesses and drawbacks of Indian social institutions.
- When the British came to India, they introduced the English language as well as certain modern ideas. These ideas were those of liberty, social and economic equality, fraternity, democracy and justice which had a tremendous impact on Indian society.
- As a consequence, several individuals and movements sought to bring about changes in social and religious practices with a view to reforming and revitalizing society.

Types of Reform Movements:

Basically, there were two kinds of reform movements in the 19th century in India.

1. Reformist

These movements responded with the time and scientific temper of the modern era.

2. Revivalist

These movements started reviving ancient Indian traditions and thoughts and believed that western thinking ruined Indian culture and ethos.

Reformist Movements

Some of the reformist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries are discussed below:

1. Brahmo Samaj



The Brahmo Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, and it aimed to promote monotheism, social reform, and the eradication of social evils like caste, idol worship, and the practice of Sati. The Brahmo Samaj emphasized the importance of reason, rationality, and humanism.

2. Aligarh Movement



The Aligarh Movement was founded by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the late 19th century, and it aimed to promote modern education, scientific temperament, and social reform among the Muslims of India. The Aligarh Movement emphasized the importance of education, social upliftment, and the modernization of Muslim society.

3. Prarthana Samaj

- In 1863, Keshub Chandra Sen helped found the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay.
- The Prarthana Samaj preached monotheism and denounced priestly domination and caste distinctions.
- Its activities also spread to South India, through the efforts of the Telugu reformer, Veeresalingam.
- Chandavarkar, basically a philosopher, was a great leader of the Prarthana Samaj.

Revivalist Movements

Some of the revivalist movements are discussed below:

1. Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875, and it aimed to promote Vedic knowledge, Hindu reform, and the eradication of social evils like caste, idol worship, and child marriage. The Arya Samaj emphasized the importance of monotheism, moral values, and social service.



2. Ramakrishna Mission:

The Ramakrishna Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, and it aimed to promote the universal message of Vedanta and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The Ramakrishna Mission emphasized the importance of spiritual and moral values, social service, and the promotion of interfaith harmony.



- These socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century played a significant role in shaping modern India and promoting progressive and liberal ideas in Indian society. They challenged the traditional and conservative practices prevalent in Indian society and promoted more rational, scientific,

- and humanistic ideas. The ideas and values promoted by these reform movements continue to influence Indian society today.

MODERN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES:

India is known for its diverse religious practices, which include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, and many other faiths. Modern religious practices in Indian religions reflect a variety of trends and changes, some of which are discussed below:

1. **Emphasis on Personal Experience:** Many modern religious practices in India emphasize personal experience and spiritual exploration. This includes practices like meditation, yoga, and mindfulness, which help individuals connect with their inner selves and deepen their understanding of their faith.
2. **Social Justice:** Many religious organizations in India are involved in social justice and activism, working to address issues like poverty, discrimination, and environmental degradation. For example, the Ramakrishna Mission, a Hindu organization, runs schools, hospitals, and other social service projects across the country.
3. **Interfaith Dialogue:** India is a country of many faiths, and interfaith dialogue has become an important part of modern religious practices. Organizations like the Interfaith Foundation of India work to promote understanding and cooperation among people of different faiths.
4. **Women's Empowerment:** Women's empowerment has become an important issue within many Indian religions. For example, the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahila Parishad is a women's organization that advocates for gender equality and works to address issues like domestic violence and discrimination.
5. **Modernization of Religious Institutions:** Many religious institutions in India are undergoing modernization, incorporating new technologies and social media platforms to reach a wider audience. For example, the Art of Living Foundation, a Hindu organization, has a strong online presence and offers many of its courses and teachings online.
6. **Emphasis on Yoga and Meditation:** Yoga and meditation have become increasingly popular in India and around the world, as people seek to improve their physical and mental health. Many modern Indian religious practices incorporate these practices as a way to deepen spiritual connection and achieve inner peace.
7. **Use of Technology:** Technology is increasingly being used in religious practice, from live streaming religious services to the use of apps and social media to facilitate communication and connection among members of a religious community.

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