

**ART & SCIENCE  
OF  
MEDITATION**



**DR. VINUBHAI D. SHAH**



# ART & SCIENCE OF MEDITATION

This book is dedicated to  
My Parents  
&  
Dr. Shivanand Adhvaryoo

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## **FOREWORD**

Summer vacations in India meant that my older brother and I had several wonderful daily rituals in store for us. Freshly cut mangoes, bigger and juicier than the ones in California. Rides on our cousins' scooters, with the thrill of dodging motorists and scattered cattle on our way to get milkshakes at the market. Games of carrom that lasted hours, as we tried our hands against the skillful flicks of the seasoned veterans in our family. But most of all, time with our grandparents, which always began with us hurrying downstairs in time to watch Dr. Vinubhai Shah (or Pappa, as we affectionately call him) shaving at the breakfast table.

This particular ritual fascinated us. Perhaps it was because we were not yet old enough to shave. Perhaps it was because everyone in America shaved standing up in the bathroom, and we could not understand a different way. So every morning we bounded down the stairs to see Pappa set up his portable mirror, his bowl of water, his shaving brush, and his razor...then watched him slather on a white fluffy beard that was destined for a slow and methodical disappearance.

One year, old enough to wield a razor myself, I finally thought to ask Pappa the question - why did he choose to



shave in this way? His simple and profound answer began a conversation that eventually led to the book you hold in your hands.

“You see, everything we do in life can cause tension, or can reduce it. I choose to sit while shaving so I do not have tension. So it is with everything - anything you do, you can choose for it to bring you tension, or to bring you peace.” And just like that, shaving was transformed. No longer merely the chore of slicing away stubble, it became the embodiment of a reasoned philosophy. I needed to dig deeper. Over the next few weeks, Pappa and I shared many hours together on his pair of lounge chairs, discussing his philosophy and accumulated wisdom. The topics were broad and complex - religion, spirituality, meditation, yoga - yet he brought them to life in a way that felt immediately applicable to my own daily routines, and emphasized personal thought processes.

Pappa is uniquely qualified to bring a psychological perspective to Eastern philosophy. He has been a practicing psychiatrist in Ahmedabad, Gujarat for over 50 years, having started the first psychiatry clinic in the city. He opened the first Psychiatry Department at the Vadilal Sarabhai hospital and served as its head for 25 years. He would go on to become a professor at Gujarat University,

the President of the Gujarat Psychiatry Society, the President of the West Zone of India Psychiatry Society, and the President of the Ahmedabad Medical Association. A pioneer in the field clinically, academically, and administratively, he has helped to shape the practice of psychiatry in Gujarat. He has also sought spiritual guidance from many Jain saints, read extensively on yoga and meditation, and embraced an openness of mind that has allowed for a true appreciation of the many facets of mental and spiritual health.

Fortunately, through our conversations, Pappa realized the extent to which his words could help inspire and guide later generations. He organized his knowledge and his ruminations into this book, which has been dutifully transcribed and edited by those close to him. This is a family endeavor to bring his wisdom to you.

When I think of my visits to India now, one precious ritual stands above all others - the two of us settling into lounge chairs, preparing to take another journey into the realms of philosophy. In a world that seems to constantly accelerate, his teachings have become essential reminders that we must actively cultivate mental peace. Our whole family invites you to sit, breathe away your tension, and dip your brush into the water.

**Dr. Rishi R. Doshi**

**Dr. Neel R. Doshi**

## **PREFACE**

I had interest in the philosophy from the beginning, but I wanted to know it scientifically. Hence I took up psychiatry as a post graduate speciality. I studied the science of brain and mind. Psychology and Philosophy are inter-related.

My mentors were my parents and Dr. Shivanand Adhvaryoo, who lived his life philosophically and spiritually setting examples for others. I had personal blessings and teaching by many pious and knowledgeable Jain saints. I had personal blessings and teachings from Swami Shivanandji, Swami Chidanandji and Swami Adhyatmanandji – gurus of the Divine Life Society. I had satsang with Swami Ranchhoddasji Maharaj. In USA I met Shri J. Krishnamurthy – a well-known guru on Meditation who believed that the knowledge comes from within, not from without.

Lord Mahavir preached the same philosophy about knowledge. Similarly, Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Rama and Lord Vishnu gave us wonderful philosophical principles in the ancient times.

I read books on meditation by Rohit Mehta, Mahesh Yogi, etc. Then I thought and thought within myself to find out scientifically nature of the true knowledge. I started writing down my own experiences on science of

psychology, principles of various philosophies, meditation and basic principles of nature. I wanted to know about self-realization, and the existence of soul. I believed that basic principles of all the above subjects should be kept in mind. We have to think in harmony with all the principles. We should have holistic approach of the principles because all of them are inseparable. The nature's basic principle is to change. Science also changes with new discoveries, but the ancient basic philosophical principles do not change. Keeping all these factors in mind we should live a divine life to achieve our goals.

Inspiration to write this small book came from my family members – In particular, Dr Rishi R Doshi when we discussed meditation for almost six hours. He was impressed, so I thought that others can also take advantage if I write a book. I thank him and the following family members who assisted me in writing this book on computer: Purvi Kamdar, Manan Shah, Harsh Shah, Pradeep Shah and Ramesh Doshi. Thanks to my sons, Dr Apurva Shah, Dr Pranav Shah and Ramesh Doshi for editing and my grandsons, Dr Rishi Doshi and Dr Neel Doshi for writing the foreword. Thanks to my granddaughter, Nikita, for the book cover design. Thanks to my wife, Bhanu, for inspiring me. Thanks to Hemantbhai Parikh and Bindi Doshi for getting this book printed.



In writing this book I have used my experience as psychiatrist; knowledge gathered from discussions with Dr. Shivanand Adhvaryoo, Swami Shivanandji, Swami Chidanandji, Swami Adhyatmanandji and Swami Ranchhoddasji Maharaj; reading books by Shri J. Krishnamurthy, Rohit Mehta, Mahesh Yogi, etc.; Speaking Tree articles in Times of India; and Wikipedia – I thank them all.

**Dr. Vinubhai D. Shah**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains his mind and induces a mode of consciousness either to realize some benefit or as an end in itself.

The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices, including techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy of life force (qi, ki, prana, etc.) and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness. A particularly ambitious form of meditation aims at effortlessly sustained single pointed concentration meant to enable its practitioner to enjoy an indestructible sense of well-being while engaging in any life activity.

The word meditation carries different meanings in different contexts. Meditation has been practised since antiquity as a component of numerous religionstraditions and beliefs. Meditation often involves an internal effort to self-regulate the mind in some way. Meditation is often used to clear the mind and ease many health issues such as high blood pressure, mild depression and anxiety. It may be done sitting or in an active way – for instance, Buddhist monks involve awareness in their day-to-day activities as a form of mind-training. Prayer beads or other ritual objects are commonly used during meditation in order to keep track of or remind the practitioner about some aspect of the training.

Meditation may involve generating an emotional state for the purpose of analyzing that state such as anger, hatred etc., or cultivating particular mental response to various phenomena such as compassion. The term ‘Meditation’ can refer to the state itself, as well as to practices or techniques employed to cultivate the state. Meditation may also involve repeating a mantra and closing the eyes. The mantra is chosen based on its suitability to the individual meditator. Meditation has a calming effect and directs awareness inward until pure awareness is achieved, described as being awake inside without being aware of anything except awareness itself. In brief, there are dozens of specific styles of meditation practices, and many different types of activity commonly referred to as meditative practices.

Darkness is simply the absence of light. In the same way, societal ills are simply the result of erosion of human values. What can we do today to live fearlessly in society?

Our scriptures speak of six major vices – lust, anger, obsession, greed, arrogance and jealousy. Any one of these can bring our downfall. Under their influence the values of caring and sharing are lost. This has to be addressed at the root and the only way is to educate people on morality and human values. Even in schools today, moral science is such a sidelined subject.



How do you prevent these vices? Practising yoga and meditation, and developing a spiritual life help by giving us a broader understanding of one's self. They give us inner strength, peace and clarity of perception.

Doubts and insecurities that lead to vices are simply signs of low prana or low energy; even the complacency in society is a sign of low prana. We are neither able to take quick and prompt decisions nor any action – only procrastination and regret results. When low prana reigns over society, simple practices like yoga and meditation help to raise 'sattva' (purity, calmness, positive energy), and help reduce the prevalence of vices (and consequently crime) in our society.

You don't have to be a theist or god-believing to practise meditation. Atheists as well as agnostics can practise meditation or can be spiritual if they choose to be. Meditation is not related to any religion, hence anybody can practise meditation if they want to improve the quality of their life or awareness of their inner selves for permanent peace, bliss and happiness.

**Meditation is not an easy practice to learn as mind keeps wandering, but once learned, it is the easiest and most natural practice. Keep patience and remember:**

1. You clean your house and body regularly; why not also clean your mind regularly with meditation?
2. Do not be down or frustrated under any circumstance – we have to accept the natural reality as it is.
3. Under problematic or dangerous situations, animals have only two alternatives; but human beings are gifted with intellect, consciousness and awareness. We have a third alternative to solve any problem – not to fight or flight or submit or suppress yourself, but find an alternative that is positive, constructive or creative for the situation. Remember that every problem has a solution.
4. Mind is a very restless organ. If you cannot control your mind, it will control you.
5. Keep an open mind to accept the truth. No rigidity or obstinacy or closed mind, but open and dynamic mind to accept the truth.
6. Mind is an instrument of your soul. One can use it positively or negatively.
7. Soul is attached to physical body and brain in every living being. Soul can be defined as consciousness, intellect, energy, divinity, etc.

8. Soul is attached to actions, thoughts, emotions and perceptions. All our actions and reactions are registered in the limbic system of our brain. Hence our karma are always registered in the brain and attached to our soul. All our positive and negative actions will have reactions from the brain – positive actions will have positive results and negative actions will have negative results.

9. Always listen to intuition, and respect it. It will create awareness.

10. The questions that can be answered through meditation are: Who are we? Why are we born? What should be the goals of our lives? What should be our destination? How to achieve it? What should be the Values of our lives?

*"I believe that the very effort to convert anybody is violence, it is interfering in his individuality, in his uniqueness, into his freedom." - Shree Rajneesh "Osho"*

*"Only the search for truth is valid, the desire for wisdom the motive. The method is assimilation, not study."*

**- Idries Shah**

## 2 PATANJALI'S EIGHT STAGES OF YOGA AND MEDITATION

Patanjali was a great saint in ancient India. He developed the system of Yoga and Meditation for all mankind. It not related to any religion. The goal of meditation is “Satt-Chitta-Anand. It means permanent peace and bliss in one’s life.

### **Eight Stages of Patanjali’s Yoga and Meditation:**

Yama	Ethical & moral guidelines to live by
Niyama	The “do’s” – virtuous habits, behaviours and observances
Yogasan	Postures that can help us improve our physical health
Pranayam	Conscious regulation of breath, both inhalation and exhalation
Pratyahara	Withdrawing of the self from external materialistic world
Dharana	Concentration, or introspective focus of the mind
Dhyana	Contemplation, reflection
Samadhi	To merge with God



1. Yama and 2. Niyama – For improving your mental health positively & controlling your negative thoughts, emotions and behaviour. Always be positive in all your karma, so that your mental health improves thoroughly. A healthy mind is necessary for the practice of meditation.

3. Yogasan and 4. Pranayam – For improving your physical health so that you are totally physically fit and mentally fit to achieve your goal of self-realization.

5. Pratyahara means to withdraw self from external materialistic world.

We should work without expecting any positive or negative results because results are in the hands of nature. Instead of getting frustrated when we get negative results, we should detach ourselves from the results of our actions, either positive or negative. What is important is that we have done our duty sincerely and we should be satisfied with it.

### ***Journeying From Desire To Dispassion***

*by Pranav Khuller (The speaking Tree, The Times of India)*

*“A central theme running through Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra is that of pratyahara, that is, withdrawal of the mind from its scattered externality to interiorising it and focusing it upon the very origin of thought. And while Patanjali details several practical steps to initiate this withdrawal, like yama, niyama, svadhyaya and satsang, he emphasizes the need for*

*vairagya or dispassion as the crucial prerequisite temperament to be developed for pratyahara.*

### ***Real and momentary***

*The distinction between real and momentary, vairagya is repeatedly emphasized in Vedanta. It is said that even Brahmana-vichara, the enquiry into the self and all yogic practices are rendered redundant if the mind has not yet fully turned away from all externals, and real vairagya is absent. Sages state that most people go through a sort of momentary phase of dispassion, arising out of personal disillusionment with a situation, but they are unable to sustain this attitude for long, especially when faced with external charms of wealth, beauty, position and fame.*

*Then there are those who hypnotize themselves into believing that this 'accidental' vairagya is the real state of renunciation, and renunciation itself becomes a means to seek the same external vanities. Real vairagya, sages say, can only arise when there is genuine inner discrimination developed through vichara, to be able to distinguish between the outer 'glamorous drama' that is transient at best, and the witness-Self, which is beckoning to a dimension beyond the transitory.*

### ***A vicious cycle***

*It is this real vairagya that Bhartihari alludes to in his classic work `Vairagya-Shatakam, Hundred Verses on Renunciation, where he points out how, despite the transitory nature of the world staring us in the face ¬ whether it is death or disease, old age or deceit ¬ we continue to desire and continue to want endlessly, trapping ourselves in a vicious cycle of pleasure and pain. Nothing seems to stop us from desiring more, Bhartihari says, and this arises from our wrong notion of what is real and permanent.*

*In perceiving outer empirical reality as the only reality, and in perpetuating this notion, we keep desiring external 'enjoyments' and become addicted to them. Desire begets more desire and triggers a self-consuming 'mind-reality,' desperate to possess just that bit more, be it riches, fame or position. This play of the mind keeps defining an identity for us, which inevitably makes us dissatisfied and restless. The true yoga practitioner tries to reverse this notion through pratyahara and vairagya.*

### ***Intense vairagya***

*"What vairagya also does not entail is to go to the other extreme, of the abnegation of social responsibilities by running away on a whim. If the mind is not disciplined*

*enough, the same desires will follow the mind even in the most secluded of spots. The path of a Buddha or Shankara must be taken only when the seeker has developed intense vairagya, a state of total disregard for all material things; not merely momentary disenchantment.*

*Vedanta states that the mind itself must be used as an enquiring tool, to probe deeper into the purpose of life, journeying beyond the visual-auditory sensory matrix of impressions. What is required is a discriminating mind that is able to distinguish between the essential and the perishable, even as one goes about one's duties in life.”*

6. Concentration – Concentrate on the present moment, present work, with a peaceful, relaxed and cheerful mind. Give your total attention to the present moment. Do not worry about the past or future or results, but do your duties & responsibilities & actions without any attachment to them. Whatever you are doing, do it with full concentration and enjoy it, without worrying about the result. Do your duties and carry out your responsibilities with pleasure, full ability and full concentration. This will greatly improve any activity, for example, your performance in sports, like cricket or karate.

Concentration is most important phase of meditation. After achieving high concentration level you can go to any



goal of life of your choice. Self-realization is the ultimate goal of meditation, but a high level of concentration can be used to improve upon other goals in life, like sports or art, music, work, studies, etc. All these goals require high concentration level.

Lord Krishna plays the flute with so much joy and concentration. Similarly, Lord Shiva dances with full concentration. His dance has a symbolic meaning – all atoms and sub-atomic particles of the world are dancing around its nucleus. Earth is also dancing on its own axis and also around the Sun. The whole Solar system is dancing around its own Galaxy. And so on. It requires not only high concentration level, but also meditation because through meditation they have to know their own weaknesses, correct them and become perfect in their art.

7. Meditation – Meditation is best done in a comfortable position by concentrating on any object, subject or your breathing – inhalation and exhalation. During meditation let your thoughts come and go, observe them objectively and not subjectively, and analyze them objectively to find out your own weaknesses, without blaming yourself or others. During meditation, you create awareness about your own self, including your weaknesses. Gradually awareness helps you resolve these weaknesses, leading your mind

this purity of mind, your thoughts, behaviour, emotions, and intellect become increasingly more transparent, and you develop harmony. This helps you reach to the bottom of the unconscious mind where there is divinity so you become more and more divine.

8. Samadhi – After self-realization, you want to devote yourself completely to your God. God is present everywhere. All living beings have divinity in their unconscious mind. If you devote yourself completely you realize yourself that there is some super natural force which we call God. Hence, gradually by devotion and submission to the God, you realize the presence of God, and your soul gets attached to God completely.

After achieving Samadhi you are totally liberated from miseries and pains of birth and death. You are totally free and attached to the divinity, from where we are born in the first stage of existence. And the final goal of life is reunion with our God from we were born. What Patanjali yoga says is non-religious so that anybody can practice it independently if one wants to do so. It requires lots of willpower to control your mind, instincts, prejudices and complexes willingly without any suppression, and improving your physical and mental health and spirituality to achieve the final goal through continuous meditation.

## ***The Science of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras***

*Anil K Rajvanshi (The speaking Tree, The Times of India)*

*"The 2,500-year-old Patanjali Yoga Sutras is the earliest treatise on yoga. Sage Patanjali enunciates in a scientific manner how to control thought - a process which makes the mind powerful enough to focus on any subject; hence the result is complete knowledge.*

*The book, divided into four sections, consists of 195 sutras. The first two sections give instructions on how to do yoga for control of thought waves; the third section is on physical powers that a yogi obtains by practising yoga and the last section is on how to get librated from the cycle of birth and death."*

### ***Laws of the universe***

*Thus in Vibhuti Pada of Yoga Sutras, Patanjali talks about how by concentrating on various subjects like akaash (space) or various parts of the body, a yogi understands the laws of the universe and human body and gains mastery over natural forces so that he attains super powers. He could walk on water, fly in space or enter another body at will, for instance.*

*However, at the end of Vibhuti Pada that has 56 sutras, Patanjali discusses the concept of space and time in two sutras with uncanny resemblance to what Einstein talked about almost 2,500 years later.*

*Patanjali says, "By making Sanyam - combination of concentration, meditation and samadhi - on a single moment and on the sequence of moments, a yogi gets vivek, exalted knowledge, so that he can comprehend all objects in the universe simultaneously, irrespective of their location and sequence of change." In other words, the Mind of God!*

### **Theory of relativity**

*An expert on relativity John A Wheeler says Einstein's theory of gravitation can be simply stated as "Events and the interval between events build space-time." The geometric nature of space-time gives rise to gravity, tells the mass how to move, and is the basis of the universe and the movement of all heavenly bodies.*

*Similarly, there are other sutras that bear close resemblance to modern scientific theories. For example, in the first section, Patanjali describes God as a special entity beyond time and space, identified by the original word or sound. According to existing scientific theories about the origin of the universe, the first thing that came out was sound - even before light and matter. Later commentaries on the Yoga Sutras talk about this sound as Aum, but Patanjali never mentioned Aum - he just mentioned that it is the original word or sound.*

*Again in Vibhuti Pada, he says that by doing Sanyam on the hollow of throat, one overcomes hunger and thirst.*

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*Recently scientists have discovered that by stimulation of the vagus nerve hunger pangs can be suppressed. Vagus nerve is concentrated near the oesophagus tube - close to the hollow of the throat. Last year, the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approved a device, which can electrically stimulate the vagus nerve so that the brain gets the signal that the stomach is full.*

### **Knowledge space**

*The comparison of Patanjali sutras with modern science is neither to belittle the latter nor to glorify our ancient traditions (both are important in their own ways), but to show that all great thoughts originate from the same Knowledge Space irrespective of person and time of their discovery."*

### **Mahesh Yogi's scientific research on meditation:**

In 1970 the first scientific study on the Transcendental Meditation technique was published in the Journal of Science. In the early 70s, courses on the Science of Creative Intelligence and Maharishi's unified theory of life were offered at universities such as Stanford, Yale, University of Colorado, University of Wisconsin and Oregon State University. From the mid-1970s, the Maharishi began to target businesses, professionals, adapting his message to promise *"increased creativity and flexibility, increased productivity, improved job satisfaction, improved relations with supervisors and co-workers."* Maharishi began teaching advanced mental techniques called the TM-Siddhi Program which included a technique for the development of what he termed Yogic Flying. The program was said to create the Maharishi Effect. Based on studies which reported that in US cities where 1 percent of the population meditated the crime rate dropped. Maharishi stated that 30 minutes of TM morning and evening by 1 percent of the population would *"dispel the clouds of war for thousands of years."*

Maharishi believed the knowledge of the Vedas had been lost and found many times and its recurrence is outlined in the Bhagavad-Gita and in the teachings of Buddha and Shankara. He came out to teach with the "avowed intention"



to change "the course of human history." When he first began teaching he had three main aims: to revive the spiritual tradition in India, to explain that meditation was for everyone and not just for recluses, and to show that Vedanta is compatible with science. He had a message of happiness - "being happy is of the utmost importance. Success in anything is through happiness. Under all circumstances be happy. Just think of any negativity that comes at you as a raindrop falling into the ocean of your bliss." His philosophy featured the concept that "within everyone is an unlimited reservoir of energy, intelligence and happiness." He emphasized the naturalness of his meditation technique is a simple way of developing this potential. He said "Transcendental meditation is something that can be defined as a means to do what one wants to do in a better way, a right way, for maximum results." Maharshi Mahesh Yogi had done lots of research on TM in universities in USA, and proved that TM is very useful for relaxation and mental peace. He also proved that meditation can unite the functions of both the halves of brain and function in harmony.

*"A Karma-yogi performs action by body, mind, intellect, and senses, without attachment (or ego), only for self-purification."*  
- Bhagvad Gita

*"Strive to still your thoughts. Make your mind one-pointed in meditation."*  
- Bhagvad Gita

*"Those who eat too much or eat too little, who sleep too much or sleep too little, will not succeed in meditation. But those who are temperate in eating and sleeping, work and recreation, will come to the end of sorrow through meditation."*  
- Bhagvad Gita

### 3 YOGA AND MEDITATION

Ancient saints in India were introverts. They had rejected material world, the worldly affairs and relations, and lived a simple life with high thinking. There were many such philosophers who derived thorough knowledge of the self through meditation and prayers.

Hindu philosophy is traditionally divided into six *astika* (Sanskrit: आस्तिका "orthodox") schools of thought, or *darsanas*, which accept the Vedas as supreme revealed scriptures. Three other *nastika* (अनास्तिका "heterodox") schools don't draw upon the Vedas as the sole primary authoritative text, but may emphasize other traditions of thought. The āstika schools are:

Samkhya	an atheistic and strongly dualist theoretical exposition of consciousness and matter.
Yoga	a school emphasizing meditation, contemplation and liberation.
Nyaya or logic	explores sources of knowledge. Nyaya Sutras.
Vaisheshika	an empiricist school of atomism
Mimansaa	an anti-ascetic and anti- mysticist school of orthopraxy
Vedanta	the last segment of knowledge in the Vedas, or the 'gnan' (knowledge) 'Kanda' (section). Vedanta came to be the dominant current of Hinduism in the post-medieval period.

## 1. **SAMKHYA**

Samkhya is the oldest of the orthodox philosophical systems in Hinduism. It espouses dualism between consciousness and matter by postulating two "irreducible, innate and independent realities 1) consciousness itself or Purusha 2) primordial materiality or Prakriti (creative agency or energy)." The unconscious primordial materiality, Prakriti consists of varying levels of three dispositions or categories of qualities: (gunas) activity (rajas), inactivity (tamas) and harmony (sattva). An imbalance in the intertwined relationship of these three dispositions causes the world to evolve from Prakriti. This evolution from Prakriti causes the creation of 23 constituents, including intellect (buddhi, mahat), ego (ahamkara) and mind (manas). Samkhya theorizes the existence of many living souls (Jeevatmas) who possess consciousness, but denies the existence of Ishvara (God).

Samkhya holds that Purusha, the eternal pure consciousness, due to ignorance, identifies itself with products of Prakriti such as intellect (buddhi) and ego (ahamkara). This results in endless transmigration and suffering. However, once the realization arises that Purusha is distinct from Prakriti, the Self is no longer subject to transmigration and absolute freedom (kaivalya) arises.

Western dualism deals with the distinction between the mind and the body, whereas in Samkhya it is between the soul and matter. The concept of the atma (soul) is different from the concept of the mind. Mind is thought to be an evolute of matter, rather than the soul. Soul is absolute reality that is all-pervasive, eternal, indivisible, attribute less, pure consciousness. It is non-matter and is beyond intellect. Originally, Samkhya was not theistic, but in confluence with Yoga it developed a theistic variant.

## **2. YOGA**

In Indian philosophy, Yoga is the name of one of the six orthodox philosophical schools. The Yoga philosophical system is closely allied with the Samkhya school. The Yoga school as expounded by Patanjali accepts the Samkhya psychology and metaphysics, but is more theistic than the Samkhya, as evidenced by the addition of a divine entity to the Samkhya's twenty-five elements of reality. The parallels between Yoga and Samkhya were so close that Max Muller says that "the two philosophies were in popular parlance distinguished from each other as Samkhya with and Samkhya without a Lord...." The intimate relationship between Samkhya and Yoga is explained by Heinrich Zimmer:

"These two are regarded in India as twins, the two aspects of a single discipline. Samkhya provides a basic theoretical exposition of human nature, enumerating and defining its elements, analyzing their manner of co-operation in a state of bondage (bandha), and describing their state of disentanglement or separation in release (moksha), while Yoga treats specifically of the dynamics of the process for the disentanglement, and outlines practical techniques for the gaining of release, or 'isolation-integration' (kaivalya)."

The foundational text of the Yoga school is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, who is regarded as the founder of the formal Yoga philosophy. The Sutras of the Yoga philosophy are ascribed to Patanjali, who may have been, as Max Muller explains, "the author or representative of the Yoga-philosophy without being necessarily the author of the Sutras."

Hindu philosophy distinguishes seven major branches of Yoga:

Raja Yoga (also referred to as Classical Yoga), a system of yoga codified by Patanjali and classified as one of the six astika ("orthodox") schools of Hindu philosophy.

Jnana yoga, (also called buddhi-yoga centred on the faculty of discernment and 'virtually identical with the spiritual path of Vedanta'.

Karma-yoga, in which the world of everyday work becomes the tool by which self is transcended.

Bhakti-Yoga the path of devoted service to God.

Tantra-yoga focused on the techniques and psycho-physical teachings contained within a body of texts called tantras.

Mantra-yoga, one of the most ancient forms of yoga in which the psycho-acoustical properties of the spoken word are used to concentrate the mind.

Hatha yoga, a system of physical purification designed to reintegrate and re-balance the mind and body in preparation for Raja-yoga (first described by Yogi Swatmarama).

### **3. NYAYA**

The Nyaya school is based on the Nyaya Sutras. They were written by Aksapada Gautama, probably in the sixth century BCE. The most important contribution made by this school is its methodology. This methodology is based on a system of logic that has subsequently been adopted by the majority of the Indian schools. This is comparable to the relationship between Western science and philosophy, which was derived largely from Aristotelian logic.

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Nevertheless, Nyaya was seen by its followers as more than logical in its own right. They believed that obtaining valid knowledge was the only way to gain release from suffering, and they took great pains to identify valid sources of knowledge and distinguish these from mere false opinions. According to Nyaya, there are exactly four sources of knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. Knowledge obtained through each of these is either valid or invalid. Nyaya developed several criteria of validity. In this sense, Nyaya is probably the closest Indian equivalent to analytic philosophy. The later Naiyanikas gave logical proofs for the existence and uniqueness of Ishvara in response to Buddhism, which, at that time, was fundamentally non-theistic. An important later development in Nyaya was the system of Navya-Nyaya.

#### **4. VAISHESHICA**

The Vaisheshika school postulates an atomic pluralism in which all objects in the physical universe are reducible to certain types of atoms, and Brahman is regarded as the fundamental force that causes consciousness in these atoms. The school was founded by the sage Kaṇada (or Kana-bhuk, literally, atom-eater) around the 2nd century BC. Major ideas contained in the Vaisheshika Sutra are:



There are nine classes of realities: four classes of atoms (earth, water, light and air), space (akasha), time (kala), direction (dik), infinity of souls (Atman), mind (manas).

Individual souls are eternal and pervade material body for a time.

There are seven categories (padartha) of experience – substance, quality, activity, generality, particularity, inherence and non-existence.

Although the Vaisheshika school developed independently from the Nyaya, the two eventually merged because of their closely related metaphysical theories. In its classical form, however, the Vaisheshika school differed from the Nyaya in one crucial respect: where Nyaya accepted four sources of valid knowledge, the Vaisheshika accepted only two - perception and inference.

## **5. PURVAMIMAMSA**

The main objective of the Purva Mimamsa school was to establish the authority of the Vedas. Consequently, this school's most valuable contribution to Hinduism was its formulation of the rules of Vedic interpretation. Its adherents propounded unquestionable faith in the Vedas and regular performance of the yajnas, or fire-sacrifices. They believed

in the power of the mantras and yajnas to sustain all the activity of the universe. In keeping with this belief, they placed great emphasis on dharma, which consisted of the performance of Vedic rituals.

The Mimamsa philosophers accepted the logical and philosophical teachings of the other schools, but felt they did not sufficiently emphasize attention to right action. They believed that the other schools of thought that aimed for release (moksha) were not allowed for complete freedom from desire and selfishness, because the very striving for liberation stemmed from a simple desire to be free. According to Mimamsa thought, only by acting in accordance with the prescriptions of the Vedas may one attain salvation.

The Mimamsa school later shifted its views and began to teach the doctrines of Brahman and freedom. Its adherents then advocated the release or escape of the soul from its constraints through enlightened activity. Although Mimamsa does not receive much scholarly attention, its influence can be felt in the life of the practising Hindu, because all Hindu ritual, ceremony, and law is influenced by this school.

## 6. VEDANTA

The Vedanta, or later Mimamsa school, concentrates on the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads rather than the ritualistic injunctions of the Brahmanas. Etymologically, Vedanta means, the last segment of knowledge in the Vedas. It is also known as the 'Gnan' (knowledge) 'Kanda' (section). While the earlier segments of the Vedas are called 'Karma Kanda', parts of Vedas that focus on spiritual practices such as worship, devotion and meditation are called 'Upasana Kanda'.

While the traditional Vedic rituals continued to be practised as meditative and propitiatory rites, a more knowledge-centered understanding began to emerge. These were mystical aspects of Vedic religion that focused on meditation, self-discipline, and spiritual connectivity, more than traditional ritualism.

The more abstruse Vedanta is the essence of the Vedas, as encapsulated in the Upanishads. Vedantic thought drew on Vedic cosmology, hymns and philosophy. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is believed to have appeared as far back as 3,000 years ago. While thirteen or so Upanishads are accepted as principal, over a hundred exist. The most significant contribution of Vedantic thought is the idea that self-consciousness is continuous with and indistinguishable from consciousness of Brahman.

The aphorisms of the Vedanta sutras are presented in a cryptic, poetic style, which allows for a variety of interpretations. Consequently, the Vedanta separated into six sub-schools, each interpreting the texts in its own way and producing its own series of sub-commentaries.

*"Abandon all attachment to the results of action and attain supreme peace."*  
- Bhagvad Gita

*"When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering, like the flame of a lamp in a windless place."*  
- Bhagvad Gita

*"The secret of Buddhism is to remove all ideas, all concepts, in order for the truth to have a chance to penetrate, to reveal itself."*  
- Thich Nhất Hạnh

#### **4. MIND**

Mind is the functional aspect of the brain. The brain is thought to have some fourteen billion cells, all interconnected. An electric current produced by energy powers it, along with chemicals known as neurotransmitters. Between the small groups of neurons, there is a very small gap, where chemicals are deposited. So neurons of the brain work through electrical current but in the gap between the neurons there is chemical energy. The brain sends nerves to the whole body including other organs.

Functions of the brain are called mental functions. Due to there being billions of nerves, the mind works very fast. Mind gets messages of the whole body through the nerves, spread all over body. Hence brain analyzes and perceives properly and gives its reactions. Human brain has maximum evolution on this planet at present. Now, there are a few psychiatrists and philosophers, who say that mind is functioning more than the capacity of the brain. Mind has tremendous energy and can function according to your willpower and desires.

But mind is just like a monkey, meaning it jumps from one desire to another. Mind always wants pleasures and multiple desires and multiple demands which grow and are increasing. There is hardly any satisfaction even achieving one goal.

Mind can be used positively or negatively. One can use it positively through positive thinking, positive emotions, positive perceptions, positive attitudes and positive behaviour. With positive mind one can achieve good health as even the immunity of our body improves. Immunity means resistance to diseases, so positive thinking and behaviour are very important for living a healthy and peaceful life. Similarly negative thinking, negative behaviour, negative perceptions and negative emotions can reduce our immunity and one can be a victim of disease.

**Main functions of the mind are as follows:**

- Thought process
- Emotions
- Perceptions
- Behaviour
- Intelligence
- Memory
- Orientation
- Judgement
- Insight

These are the main functions of mind but as said above mind can function more than brain's capacity, because mind is thought to be a driver of the SELF (Soul).

**Thought Process –**

- Thought can be positive or negative
- Thought can be useful or useless
- Thought can be a concentration of the present, of the past, of the future
- Thought can be subjective or objective
- It can be materialistic or spiritualistic
- Thought can be simple or complex (analysing the whole problems and alternatives)
- Slow process or fast process

**Emotions –**

- Emotions may be negative or positive,  
Negative Emotions are :

- Greed
- Jealousy
- Anger or aggression
- Attachment
- Egoism
- Power play

Positive Emotions are :

- Love

- Sympathy
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Help to the deserving people
- Forget and forgive the injury received from others and do not make any enemy; love everybody, because everybody has a soul like us. So we should not revenge against anybody even though one has injured our ego or body, we should forget and forgive him.
- Detachment to the world or materialistic aspects
- Helping others without our self-interest. E.g. Social services etc.

Mind has also capacity of willpower, intuition and our own experiences through meditation which are not reported as functions of the brain; mind is nothing but the instrument of the soul, so unless our soul can control our mind we cannot achieve self-realization as the goal of the human life.

Our guru of psychology, psycho-analysis and psychiatry Dr. Sigmund Freud of Vienna established the above science of psychology one hundred years ago. Before that there was no scientific theory of the above subject and the people were absolutely in the dark about mental illnesses. Mental illness is very common, afflicting



about 20% of human beings all over the world. Sigmund Freud's theory suggests that 80% of thought or behaviour come from the unconscious mind and the ego censors unconscious desires and thoughts and then our behaviour is resulted. Freud's theory of the mind is as follows –

- ID: Means unconscious mind which is full of instincts, prejudices, complexes etc. So all instincts, desires and thoughts come from the unconscious mind.
- Conscious mind: 20% of our mind; it is well developed and we can become more and more conscious about our thoughts, perceptions, behaviour and emotions
- Ego: Our ego develops at age of 6 months very gradually and normally it should be matured by 18 to 21 years of age.
- Superego: Concept of superego means moral, ethical values of life, superego is partly conscious but mainly unconscious.

This is the structure of mind according to Freud. This concept of Freud is well accepted by the world, new theories related to this are published by the neo- Freudians and others in the field.

Instincts:- Instincts are always there in all animals, in all living beings, and also all human beings. There are three basic natural instincts.

- Self-Preservation: All living beings want to survive at any cost by fight or flight reaction against any danger.
- Sex and Reproduction: All of us want to continue our generations.
- Herd instincts: which is common in all living beings, herd means all living being are social animals. E.g. ants have a queen and other ants follow this leader.

Most of the animals live their lives according to these basic instincts.

The Human brain has evolved more intelligence than any other living being on our planet. Humans are now more civilized than at any other time in history. The average IQ of human beings is, by definition, 100; there is a range of IQ with most people falling between 50 to as high as 160. Previously it was believed that that human being whose IQ is above 150 can be considered a genius. However, in 1985 one psychiatrist has written a book on emotional quotient "EQ" and has said that without emotional maturity one cannot become a genius. Now, there is also thought to be a Spiritual Quotient which is equally important to becoming a genius. "SQ" means faith in some natural super power, or God or Gods. Unless one has developed all three IQ, EQ, and SQ, it is difficult to become a genius. Even a modern genius like Albert Einstein believed in some higher power.

We can train, cultivate or control our mind with willpower or consciously by awareness through meditation. Our soul has tremendous energy and capacity to control our mind, hence mind can be cultivated through meditation and gradually by awareness. We can change our self to ensure a better purpose in life. Mind should be always open, free and independent, so that we can receive and accept the new truths, new experiences and new scientific facts at any time. Mind can be trained negatively or positively. Negative thoughts, negative perceptions and negative actions are very harmful to our self. Similarly positive thinking, positive mood, positive perceptions and positive actions can be very helpful to our body, mind and soul, hence we should use our mind always positively.

Positive mind can be constructive, creative, or innovative and can be helpful to us and others. Similarly negative mind can be destructive and can be harmful to us and others.

It means mind is a double-edged weapon or organ, which can be used negatively or positively. Negative mind means negative thoughts, negative behaviour which gives negative results, as we know that every action has reaction, so negative actions will have negative reactions and they are recorded in the limbic system of the brain, which is in the

unconscious mind and close to our divine layer. Negative karma give negative results in this life, the next life or future lives. Similarly, positive thoughts, positive emotions, positive thinking, give positive results in our lives. To use mind positively, we have to tame it, cultivate it, and control it by our willpower. Also we have to similarly grow our consciousness or awareness, through meditation. Deep meditation teaches us to tame and control our mind positively, positive use of mind teaches us we do our duty, responsibility, and work accordingly. Similarly we can use our mind for constructive ability or creative ability. This positive, constructive or creative ability can be very useful to the whole society. Innovative or novel ideas, if positive, can also be very useful to the society and the whole world. E.g. Mahatma Gandhi brought independence to the country of India through non-violence.

Similarly mind can be used positively for spiritual development and after lots of effort and lots of time in meditation, one can achieve self-realization. e.g. Lord Mahavir, who remained in the forest for more than 12 years thinking again and again, contemplating and meditating, ultimately found the whole truth through deep and continuous meditation, and then guided others to do the same. He himself accepted the Jain philosophy, accepted non-violence, and achieved self-realization.

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## Self-Realization

Self-realization is the most important goal of our lives. Everybody has to ask himself - who am I? My body, brain and mind are mine, but still who am I? Through meditation, we have to pursue this goal. We have to work hard and concentrate very well despite lots of passions. There are lots of problems and hurdles during the process of self-realization. It is possible one could develop some other abilities that normal human beings could not develop; we may see some different types of colours during deep meditation, but we have to ignore all extra-human abilities because those who used extra-intuition abilities for self-interest, will fail to achieve self-realization. After lots of hard work, some people may be frustrated or depressed as they do not achieve this goal easily. One can not allow frustration or depression during the process of deep meditation and self-realization.

*“There can be no spirituality, according to the Sufi masters, without psychology, psychological insight and sociological balance.”*  
- Idries Shah

*“True change is within; leave the outside as it is.”*

- Dali Lama XIV

*“Careful preparation is necessary before people can perceive something which is there all the time.”* - Idries Shah

## 5 PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Faith is another very important aspect. Once you accept the true philosophy and goal of life, you have to work faithfully and devotedly to achieve this goal. How to recognize that one is a self-realized soul?

- He is straightforward, honest, truthful and non-violent
- He is transparent – his mood, thought, perception and behaviour are all functioning in harmony. There is no conflict in his mind.
- He is simple and holy. He loves and cares. He has sympathy, empathy and compassion for everybody.
- He is doing his duties and responsibility with full concentration; enjoys his work, without expecting any fruits and results.
- He loves everybody. he is nonviolent in all aspects towards all souls including plants and animals.

Hindus meditate in a different way by chanting God's name and remembering his principles. There are many institutions for learning meditation.

Jains also practise meditation in a different way, they have Navkar Mantra that they chant often. They have gurus who teach them the principles of Jain Philosophy and practice of meditation to purify the soul.

Buddhists also practise meditation in a different way. Shri Goenkaji established many Vipassana centres for meditation.

Muslims have different methods of meditation by doing Namaz regularly.

Christians do Sunday prayers regularly in the church and confess their guilt complexes to the priest. It creates an awareness so that they do not repeat mistakes.

J. Krishnamurti adopted Russian psychologist Pavlov's theory of deconditioning. He says that you get more and more awareness and change accordingly, and he emphasizes practising meditation regularly to get more and more awareness for SELF-REALIZATION.

## **JAINISM**

The fundamental principles of Jainism can be briefly stated as follows:

1. The first fundamental principle of Jainism is that man's personality is dual – material and spiritual. Jain philosophy regards that every soul is bound by subtle particles of matter known as Karma from the very beginning. It considers that just as gold is found in an alloy form in the mines, in the same way souls are found along with the Karma bondage

from time eternal. The impurity of the soul is thus treated as an existing condition.

2. The second principle-- that man is not perfect-- is based on the first principle. The imperfectness in man is attributed to the existence of Karma in his soul. The human soul is in a position to attain perfection and in that true and eternal state it is endowed with four characteristics, viz., Ananta-darsana, Ananta-jnana, Ananta-virya and Ananta-sukha, i.e., infinite perception or faith, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss.

3. Even though man is not perfect, the third principle states that by his spiritual nature man can and must control his material nature. It is only after the entire subjugation of matter that the soul attains perfection, freedom and happiness. It is emphatically maintained that man will be able to sail across the ocean of births and achieve perfection through the control of senses and thought.

4. The last basic principle stresses that only each individual can separate his own soul and the matter combined with it. The separation cannot be effected by any other person. This means that man himself, and he alone, is responsible for all that is good or bad in his life. He cannot absolve himself from the responsibility of experiencing the fruits of his actions. This principle distinguishes Jainism from other religions.



No God, nor His prophet or deputy or beloved can interfere with human life. The soul, and that alone, is directly and necessarily responsible for all that it does. God is regarded as completely unconcerned with creation of the universe or with any happenings in the universe. The universe goes on of its own accord. Because of this definite attitude towards God, Jainism is accused of being atheistic. It is true in the sense that Jainism does not attribute the creation of universe to God. But at the same time Jainism cannot be labelled as atheistic because it believes in Gods who show true path for salvation, in Punya and Papa, i.e., merit and demerit, in religious practices, etc. According to Jainism the emancipated soul is considered as God and it is absolutely not concerned with the task of creation of this world.

Jain philosophy deals with metaphysics, reality, cosmology, ontology, epistemology and divinity. Jainism is a trans theistic religion of ancient India. The distinguishing features of Jain philosophy are its beliefs on independent existence of soul and matter, absence of a supreme divine creator, owner, preserver or destroyer, potency of karma, eternal and uncreated universe, a strong emphasis on non-violence, accent on relativity and multiple facets of truth, and morality and ethics based on liberation of soul. Jain philosophy attempts to explain the rationale of being and

existence, the nature of the Universe and its constituents, the nature of bondage and the means to achieve liberation.

Jainism has often been described as an ascetic movement for its strong emphasis on self-control, austerities and renunciation. It has also been called a model of philosophical liberalism for its insistence that truth is relative and multifaceted and for its willingness to accommodate all possible view-points of the rival philosophies. It strongly upholds the individualistic nature of soul and personal responsibility for one's decisions; and that self-reliance and individual efforts alone are responsible for one's liberation.

Throughout its history, the Jain philosophy remained unified and single, although as a religion, Jainism was divided into various sects and traditions. The contribution of Jain philosophy in developing the Indian philosophy has been significant. Jain philosophical concepts like Ahimsa, Karma, Moksa, Samsara and like have been assimilated into the philosophies of other Indian religions like Hinduism and Buddhism in various forms. While Jainism traces its philosophy from teachings of Tirthankara, various Jain philosophers from Kundakunda and Umaswati in ancient times to Yasovijayji in recent times have contributed greatly in developing and refining the Jain and Indian philosophical concepts.

Jain ontology postulates existence of sentient or consciousness called as Jiva (soul) characterized by knowledge and perception. There are infinite independent souls. These are categorized into two – liberated and non-liberated. Irrespective of which state the soul is in, it has got the same attributes and qualities. The difference between the liberated and non-liberated souls is that the qualities and attributes are exhibited completely in case of Siddhas (Siddha) as they have overcome all the karmic bondages whereas in case of non-liberated souls they are partially exhibited. Infinite knowledge, perception and bliss are the intrinsic qualities of a soul. These qualities are fully enjoyed unhindered by liberated souls, but obscured by karma in the case of non-liberated souls resulting in karmic bondage. This bondage further results in a continuous co-habitation of the soul with the body. Thus, an embodied non-liberated soul is found in four realms of existence—heavens, hells, humans and animals – in a never ending cycle of births and deaths also known as samsara. The soul is in bondage since beginningless time; however, it is possible to achieve liberation through rational perception, rational knowledge and rational conduct. Harry Oldmeadow notes that Jain ontology is both realist and dualist metaphysics. It is realist in the sense that knowledge of ultimate reality does not exclude the reality of the existing world; the enlightened

worldview includes the knowledge of particulars and the world continues to be real even after the liberation. It is dualist in that the two prime categories of substance, soul and matter, are mutually exclusive.

According to Jainism, the soul is the master of its own destiny. One of the qualities of the soul is complete lordship of its own destiny. The soul alone chooses its actions and soul alone reaps its consequences. No God, prophet or angel can interfere in the actions or the destiny of the soul. Furthermore, it is the soul alone who makes the necessary efforts to achieve liberation without the divine grace. Amongst the twelve contemplations (anupreksas) of Jains, one of them is the loneliness of one's soul and nature of the Universe and transmigration. Hence only by cleansing our soul by our own actions can we help ourselves.

In Jainism, karma is the basic principle within an overarching psycho-cosmology. It not only encompasses the causality of transmigration, but is also conceived of as an extremely subtle matter, which infiltrates the soul—obscuring its natural, transparent and pure qualities. Karma is thought of as a kind of pollution, that taints the soul with various colours (lesya). Based on its karma, a soul undergoes transmigration and reincarnates in various states of existence—like heavens or hells, or as humans or animals.

Jains cite inequalities, sufferings, and pain as evidence for the existence of karma. Jain texts have classified the various types of karma according to their effects on the potency of the soul. The Jain theory seeks to explain the karmic process by specifying the various causes of karmic influx (asrava) and bondage (bandha), placing equal emphasis on deeds themselves, and the intentions behind those deeds. The Jain karmic theory attaches great responsibility to individual actions, and eliminates reliance on supposed existence of divine grace or retribution. The Jain doctrine also holds that it is possible for us to both modify our karma, and to obtain release from it, through the austerities and purity of conduct.

### ***Mahavira's Guidance Towards auspicious Karmas***

*by Pradyuma shah singh (The speaking Tree, The Times of India)*

*"The universal teachings of Mahavira, the 24th Jain tirthankara, are recorded in agam literature. These teachings are based on right faith, right knowledge and right conduct, often referred to as the 'three gems. He reminds us that every individual soul has infinite capacity for right knowledge, faith and conduct but that is hidden under different types of inauspicious karmas. Our knowledge, faith, conduct and working capacity all lie hidden but Mahavira*

*showed us how the dirt of karma can be washed off by the water of auspicious karmas.*

*The journey of auspicious karmas starts with the practice of five vows: non-violence, truth, non stealing, celibacy and non-possessiveness. The practice of non-violence is the highest human value. The meaning of non-violence is to act with the goal of common welfare by viewing all beings as equal and respecting all.*

*Truth and non-violence are close companions. if a man steals and lies he becomes a thief. he acts like that being motivated by greed and other negative thoughts and all these factors weaken the soul. The vow of non-stealing plays an important role of strengthening the soul. Truth, non - stealing and celibacy are closely related with non-violence. A terrorist has no religion.*

*Gandhiji made non-violence a tool of the non-cooperation movement. He used that tool during India's struggle for freedom. Violence only gives birth to more violence just as enmity gives birth to more enmity. Right cannot be suppressed by might. Suppression by might gives birth to hate. This world is burning in the fire of hatred and enmity for others. The pacifist message of Mahavira can put out the fire of this hatred. Co-existence, fraternity and brotherhood can grow in an environment of non-violence.*

*Mahavira had motivated wealthy people to go for limited possession (aparigraha) of prosperity. He had related this vow with dharma. Aparigraha was very necessary to establish an egalitarian society. The lust for unlimited possession creates larger gap between poverty and property. Until proper utilisation of wealth for welfare is done, a strong society cannot emerge.*

*These five vows are equally important for all monks. Mahavira taught us the vow of limited use that is also important to protect our environment. Our air, water, earth, fire and sky can be conducive for us only if we utilise them in a limited manner. Once, Gandhiji had stated that earth can fulfil our need but not our greed.*

*Mahavira taught that everyone should be vigilant while living with feelings of love and fraternity. Mahavira's teaching of non-absolutism (anekantvad) has very great relevance in our present time. Different types of people with different types of lifestyle, language, culture and civilisation are living on earth. There is diversity and there is also unity. Most clashes take place because of misunderstanding about this reality.*

*Mahavira emphasised the need for inclusiveness. Truth should be understood from different angles. If a thing is perceived from different angles, it seems to be different.*

*The same thing appears to be different from different angles. We cannot negate different points of views in which truth is inherent. Mahavira had viewed the true nature of things through his experience and gave us the way of non-absolutism to understand them.*

*The teaching of non-absolutism has no contradiction with modern science. The infinite possibility is lying in property of things provided - we have proper understanding of that. What he had taught during his lifetime is relevant even today. (The writer is associate professor in Jainism, Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala)"*



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**BUDDHISM*****The Spiritual Highway of the Buddha***

M. N. Kundu (*The speaking Tree, The Times of India*)

*"Driven by an incredible metaphysical quest, Prince Siddhartha became an ascetic, adopting an austere lifestyle, trying every possible way in order to attain Self-realisation. With sustained effort and willpower, enlightenment did come to him one day with perfect luminosity. Being the Buddha, the enlightened one, he shared the philosophy of his path with those suffering around him, as a means of overcoming suffering. Gautama Buddha's Middle Path relates more to the middle segment of creation in its present moment than to the so-called theoretical discourse on Creator, genesis and end of creation, He is more suggestive than explicit on the questions that relate to the metaphysical ultimate.*

*The present life is full of suffering caused by ageing, disease and death, which we know are part of life but yet, we do not strive to rise above them. Even understanding that suffering caused by these calls for a solution is a noble truth. The root cause of suffering lies in craving or attachment with transitory reality. The remedy lies in extinction of the flame of desire for which we need to follow an eightfold path. These constitute the four noble truths for contemplation and action in an adequate manner.*

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The Buddha's eightfold path starts with right discernment of the reality behind the superficial apparent. This leads to right intention that is translated into action through right speech and right livelihood. The mystery of life is untied with right effort which consists of right mindfulness or observation of the wheel of karma and universal flux of phenomena. Finally, right contemplation on ultimate emptiness emancipates from the bondage of the cycle of unending misery go-round.

Behind this deceptively simple teaching lies a profound philosophy about the characteristic of 'being.' The Buddha found that 'being,' like all created things, is impermanent, made up of suffering arising out of craving. Our craving causes us to imagine impermanent objects as permanent whereas there is no such thing as permanent self. As fire appears to have continued existence although it changes from moment to moment, so does the self. Everything has a cause and everything becomes a cause. The illusion of continuity is caused by endless chain of cause and effect. The aim is to get out of this cosmic misery-go-round.

The Buddhist concept of nirvana is literally extinction of the flame of desire and thereby dissolution of the impermanent self. But what comes next? He never used any

positive means of describing this ultimate, and emptiness is also a dependent concept meaning absence of divisive selves which own their existence to craving.

The Buddha categorically refused to pinpoint what exactly nirvana entailed or what happens to an enlightened soul after death. As it is impossible to conceive the concept of emptiness, the Buddha never attempted to explain it and left it open to interpretation. It has been explained that nirvana is extinguishing all objects and thoughts into one singular undivided consciousness underlying everything. That consciousness is undifferentiated, unqualified and one without a second. It is closer to the vedantic concept of Brahmin.

The greatest contribution of the Buddha lies in giving us a probing path without any fixed belief system associated with religions. Spirituality concerns direct experience of realisation over and above any belief system. Hence the Buddha steered a middle course between absolute denial and positive affirmation. He wanted us to develop absolute awareness of the entire cosmos and empathetic compassion for all sentient beings. The rest being silence, is required to be experienced in silence.

Buddhist philosophy is the elaboration and explanation of the delivered teachings of the Buddha as found in the Tripitaka and Agama. Its main concern is with explicating the dharmas constituting reality. A recurrent theme is the rectification of concepts, and the subsequent return to the Buddhist middle way.

Early Buddhism avoided speculative thought on metaphysics, phenomenology, ethics, and epistemology, but was based instead on empirical evidence gained by the sense organs (ayatana).

Nevertheless, Buddhist scholars have addressed ontological and metaphysical issues subsequently. Particular points of Buddhist philosophy have often been the subject of disputes between different schools of Buddhism. These elaborations and disputes gave rise to various schools in early Buddhism of Abhidhamma, and to the Mahayana traditions and schools of the prajnaparamita, Madhyamaka, buddha-nature and Yogacara.

### **Indian background**

The historical Buddha lived during a time of spiritual and philosophical revival in Northern India when the overly ritualistic practices of the Vedas came under rational scrutiny.

As well as the Buddha's own teachings, new ethical and spiritual philosophies such as those of Mahavira became established during this period when alternatives to the mainstream religion arose in an atmosphere of free thought and renewed vitality in spiritual endeavour. This general cultural movement is today known as the Sramanic tradition and the epoch of new thought as the axial era.

These heterodox groups held widely divergent opinions but were united by a critical attitude towards the established religion whose explanations they found unsatisfactory and whose animal sacrifices increasingly distasteful and irrelevant. In Greece, China and India there was a return to fundamental questions and a new interest in the question of how humans should live

### **Life and teachings of the Buddha**

According to the traditional accounts, Gautama, the future Buddha, born into a Vedic Kshatriya family, was a prince who grew up in an environment of luxury and opulence. He became convinced that sense-pleasures and wealth did not provide the satisfaction that human beings longed for deep within. He abandoned worldly life to live as a mendicant. He studied under a number of teachers, developing his insight into the problem of suffering.

After his awakening he regarded himself as a physician rather than a philosopher. Whereas philosophers

merely had views about things, he taught the Noble Eightfold Path which liberates from suffering.

### **Philosophy**

The Buddha discouraged his followers from indulging in intellectual disputation for its own sake, which is fruitless, and distracting from true awakening. Nevertheless, the delivered sayings of the Buddha contain a philosophical component, in its teachings on the working of the mind, and its criticisms of the philosophies of his contemporaries.

According to the scriptures, during his lifetime the Buddha remained silent when asked several metaphysical questions. These regarded issues such as whether the universe is eternal or non-eternal (or whether it is finite or infinite), the unity or separation of the body and the self, the complete inexistence of a person after Nirvana and death, and others

### **HINDUISM**

In Hinduism, the Sanskrit words most closely corresponding to soul are jiva, atman and purusha, meaning the individual self. The term "soul" is misleading as it implies an object possessed, whereas self signifies the subject which perceives all objects. This self is held to be distinct from the various mental faculties such as desires,

thinking, understanding, reasoning and self-image (ego), all of which are considered to be part of prakriti (nature).

The three major schools of Hindu philosophy agree that the atman (individual self) is related to Brahman or the Paramatman, the Absolute Atman or Supreme Self, but they differ in the nature of this relationship. In Advaita Vedanta the individual self and the Supreme Self are one and the same. Dvaita rejects this concept of identity, instead identifying the self as a separate but similar part of Supreme Self (God), that never loses its individual identity. Visisht advaita takes a middle path and accepts the atman as a "mode" (prakara) or attribute of the Brahman for an alternative atheistic and dualistic view of the atman in ancient Hindu philosophy.

The atman becomes involved in the process of becoming and transmigrating through cycles of birth and death because of ignorance of its own true nature. The spiritual path consists of self-realization – a process in which one acquires the knowledge of the self (brahma-jñanam) and through this knowledge applied through meditation and realization one then returns to the Source which is Brahman.

The qualities which are common to both Brahman and atman are being (sat), consciousness (chit), and bliss/love

(ananda). Liberation or moksha is liberation from all limiting adjuncts (upadhis) and the unification with Brahman.

The Mandukya Upanishad verse 7 describes the atman in the following way:

"Not inwardly cognitive, not outwardly cognitive, not both-wise cognitive, not a cognition-mass, not cognitive, not non-cognitive, unseen, with which there can be no dealing, ungraspable, having no distinctive mark, non-thinkable, that cannot be designated, the essence of the assurance of which is the state of being one with the Self, the cessation of development, tranquil, benign, without a second (a-dvaita)—[such] they think is the fourth. That is the Self. That should be discerned."

In Bhagavad Gita 2.20 Lord Krishna describes the atman in the following way:

“na jayate mriyate va kadacin 'nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah 'ajo nityah sasvato yam purano 'na hanyate hanyamane sarire”

For the atman there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever – existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." [Translation by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Srila Prabhupada)]



Srila Prabhupada, a great Vaishnava saint of the modern time further explains: "The atman does not take birth there, and the atman does not die...And because the atman has no birth, he therefore has no past, present or future. He is eternal, ever-existing and primeval – that is, there is no trace in history of his coming into being."

Since the quality of Aatma is primarily consciousness, all sentient and insentient beings are pervaded by Aatma, including plants, animals, humans and gods. The difference between them is the contracted or expanded state of that consciousness. For example, animals and humans share in common the desire to live, fear of death, desire to procreate and to protect their families and territory and the need for sleep, but animals' consciousness is more contracted and has less possibility to expand than does human consciousness.

When the Aatma becomes embodied it is called birth, when the Aatma leaves a body it is called death. The Aatma transmigrates from one body to another body based on karmic reactions.

In Hinduism, the Sanskrit word most closely corresponding to soul is "Aatma", which can mean soul or even God. It is seen as the portion of Brahman within us. Hinduism contains many variant beliefs on the origin,

purpose, and fate of the *aatma*. For example, *advaita* or non-dualistic conception of the *aatma* accords it union with Brahman, the absolute uncreated (roughly, the Godhead), in eventuality or in pre-existing fact. *Dvaita* or dualistic concepts reject this, instead identifying the *aatma* as a different and incompatible substance.

## **CHRISTIANITY**

Most Christians understand the soul as an ontological reality distinct from, yet integrally connected with, the body. Its characteristics are described in moral, spiritual and philosophical terms. Richard Swinburne, a Christian philosopher of religion at Oxford University, wrote that "it is a frequent criticism of substance dualism that dualists cannot say what souls are...Souls are immaterial subjects of mental properties. They have sensations and thoughts, desires and beliefs, and perform intentional actions. Souls are essential parts of human beings."

According to a common Christian eschatology, when people die, their souls will be judged by God and determined to go to Heaven or Hell. Though all branches of Christianity – Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Evangelical and mainline Protestants – teach that Jesus Christ plays a decisive role in the Christian salvation

process, the specifics of that role and the part played by individual persons or ecclesiastical rituals and relationships, is a matter of wide diversity in official church teaching, theological speculation and popular practice. Some Christians believe that if one has not repented of one's sins and trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, one will go to Hell and suffer eternal damnation or eternal separation from God. Variations also exist on this theme, e.g., some which hold that the unrighteous soul will be destroyed instead of suffering eternally (annihilationism). Believers will inherit eternal life in Heaven and enjoy eternal fellowship with God. There is also a belief that babies (including the unborn) and those with cognitive or mental impairments who have died will be received into Heaven on the basis of God's grace through the sacrifice of Jesus. There are also beliefs in universal salvation.

There have been differing thoughts regarding whether human embryos have souls from conception, or there is a point between conception and birth where the fetus acquires a soul, consciousness, and/or personhood. Stances in this question might more or less influence judgments on the immorality of abortion.

### **Trichotomy of the soul**

Augustine, one of western Christianity's most influential early Christian thinkers, described the soul as "a

special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body". Some Christians espouse a trichotomic view of humans, which characterizes humans as consisting of a body (soma), soul (psyche), and spirit (pneuma). However, the majority of modern Bible scholars point out how spirit and soul are used interchangeably in many biblical passages, and so hold to dichotomy: the view that each of us is body and soul.

## ISLAM

Islam teaches that the soul is immortal and eternal, and that what a person does is recorded and will be judged at the final court of God. They will either go to heaven or hell, depending on whether or not they did well in the test that was given to them by Allah.

The Qur'an mentions the soul:

And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul (Rûh). Say, "The soul (Rûh) is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little." - Qur'an 17:85

It is Allah that takes the souls at death: and those that die not (He takes their souls) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the Decree of death He keeps back (their souls from returning to their bodies); but the rest He

sends (their souls back to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are Signs for those who contemplate. - Qur'an 39:42

## JUDAISM

The fruit of a righteous man is the tree of life, and the wise man acquires souls.

The Hebrew terms *nephesh* (literally "living being"), *ruach* (literally "wind"), *neshama* (literally "breath"), *chaya* (literally "life") and *yechidah* (literally "singularity") are used to describe the soul or spirit. In modern Judaism the soul is believed to be given by God to a person by his/her first breath, as mentioned in Genesis, "And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Genesis 2:7. Judaism relates the quality of one's soul to one's performance of *mitzvot* and reaching higher levels of understanding, and thus closeness to God. Therefore Judaism embraces *nahala* and not Birthdays as a festive of remembrance, for only toward the end of life's struggles, tests and challenges human souls could be judged and credited for righteousness and holiness.

## **SIKHISM**

Sikhism considers Soul (atma) to be part of God (Waheguru). Various hymns are cited from the holy book "Sri Guru Granth Sahib" (SGGS) that suggests this belief. "God is in the Soul and the Soul is in the God." The same concept is repeated at various pages of the SGGS. For example: "The soul is divine; divine is the soul. Worship Him with love." and "The soul is the Lord, and the Lord is the soul; contemplating the Shabad, the Lord is found." The "Atma" or "Soul" according to Sikhism is an entity or "spiritual spark" or "light" in our body because of which the body can sustain life. On the departure of this entity from the body, the body becomes lifeless – No amount of manipulations to the body can make the person live or make any physical actions. The soul is the 'driver' in the body. It is the 'roohu' or spirit or atma, the presence of which makes the physical body alive. Many religious and philosophical traditions, support the view that the soul is the ethereal substance – a spirit; a non material spark – particular to a unique living being. Such traditions often consider the soul both immortal and innately aware of its immortal nature, as well as the true basis for sentience in each living being. The concept of the soul has strong links with notions of an afterlife, but opinions may vary widely. Even within a given religion as to what happens to the soul after death. Many within these religions and

philosophies see the soul as immaterial, while others consider it possibly material.

## **TAOISM**

According to Chinese traditions, every person has two types of soul called hun and po, which are respectively yang and yin. Taoism believes in ten souls, sanhunqipo "three hun and seven po". The pò is linked to the dead body and the grave, where as the hún is linked to the ancestral tablet. A living being that loses any of them is said to have mental illness or unconsciousness, while a dead soul may reincarnate to a disability, lower desire realms or may even be unable to reincarnate.

## **BAHÁÍ**

The Bahai Faith affirms that "the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel". Bahá'u'lláh stated that the soul not only continues to live after the physical death of the human body, but is, in fact, immortal. Heaven can be seen partly as the soul's state of nearness to God; and hell as a state of remoteness from God. Each state follows as a natural consequence of individual efforts, or the lack

thereof, to develop spiritually. Bahá'u'lláh taught that individuals have no existence prior to their lives here on earth and the soul's evolution is always towards God and away from the material world.

## **OTHER RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND VIEWS**

In theological reference to the soul, the terms "life" and "death" are viewed as emphatically more definitive than the common concepts of "biological life" and "biological death". Because the soul is said to be transcendent of the material existence, and is said to have (potentially) eternal life, the death of the soul is likewise said to be an eternal death. Thus, in the concept of divine judgment, God is commonly said to have options with regard to the dispensation of souls, ranging from Heaven (i.e., angels) to hell (i.e., Demons), with various concepts in between. Typically both Heaven and hell are said to be eternal, or at least far beyond a typical human concept of lifespan and time.

## **THEOSOPHY**

In Helena Blavatsky's Theosophy, the soul is the field of our psychological activity (thinking, emotions, memory, desires, will, and so on) as well as of the so-called paranormal or psychic phenomena (extra sensory



perception, out-of-body experiences, etc.). However, the soul is not the highest, but a middle dimension of human beings. Higher than the soul is the spirit, which is considered to be the real self; the source of everything we call “good”—happiness, wisdom, love, compassion, harmony, peace, etc. While the spirit is eternal and incorruptible, the soul is not. The soul acts as a link between the material body and the spiritual self, and therefore shares some characteristics of both. The soul can be attracted either towards the spiritual or towards the material realm, being thus the “battlefield” of good and evil. It is only when the soul is attracted towards the spiritual and merges with the Self that it becomes eternal and divine.

## **PARAPSYCHOLOGY**

Some parapsychologists have attempted to establish by scientific experiment whether a soul is separate from the brain, as more commonly defined in religion rather than as a synonym of psyche or mind, exists. Milbourne Christopher (1979) and Mary Roach (2010) have argued that none of the attempts by parapsychologists have yet succeeded.

*"God has no religion."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

*"When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion."*

*- Abraham Lincoln*

*"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."*

*- Dali Lama XIV*

*"Hinduism is the religion of truth. Truth is God. Denial of God we have known. Denial of truth we have not known."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

*"Yes I am a Hindu. I am also a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, and a Jew."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

*"Attachment leads to suffering."*

*- Gautama Buddha*

*"You only lose what you cling to."*

*- Gautama Buddha*

## 6 CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has been defined as: sentience, awareness, subjectivity, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind. Despite the difficulty in definition, many philosophers believe that there is a broadly shared underlying intuition about what consciousness is. As Max Velmans and Susan Schneider wrote in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*: "Anything that we are aware of at a given moment, forms part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives."

Philosophers since the time of Descartes and Locke have struggled to comprehend the nature of consciousness and pin down its essential properties. Issues of concern in the philosophy of consciousness include whether the concept is fundamentally valid; whether consciousness can ever be explained mechanistically; whether non-human

consciousness exists and if so how it can be recognized; how consciousness relates to language; whether consciousness can be understood in a way that does not require a dualistic distinction between mental and physical states or properties; and whether it may ever be possible for computing machines like computers or robots to be conscious.

At one time consciousness was viewed with skepticism by many scientists, but in recent years it has become a significant topic of research in psychology and neuroscience. The primary focus is on understanding what it means, biologically and psychologically for information to be present in consciousness—that is, on determining the neural and psychological correlates of consciousness. The majority of experimental studies assess consciousness by asking human subjects for a verbal report of their experiences (e.g., "tell me if you notice anything when I do this"). Issues of interest include phenomena such as subliminal perception, blind sight, denial of impairment, and altered produced by psychoactive drugs or spiritual or meditative techniques.

In medicine, consciousness is assessed by observing a patient's arousal and responsiveness, and can be seen as a continuum of states ranging from full alertness and comprehension, through disorientation, delirium, loss of meaningful communication, and finally loss of movement in response to painful stimuli. Issues of practical concern include how the presence of consciousness can be assessed in severely ill, comatose, or anesthetized people, and how to treat conditions in which consciousness is impaired or disrupted.

Consciousness—The having of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; awareness. The term is impossible to define except in terms that are unintelligible without a grasp of what consciousness means. Many fall into the trap of equating consciousness with self-consciousness—to be conscious it is only necessary to be aware of the external world. Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it has evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written on it.

Most writers on the philosophy of consciousness have been concerned to defend a particular point of view, and

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have organized their material accordingly. For surveys, the most common approach is to follow a historical path by associating stances with the philosophers who are most strongly associated with them, for example Descartes, Locke, Kant, etc. An alternative is to organize philosophical stances according to basic issues.

### **Types of consciousness**

Many philosophers have argued that consciousness is a unitary concept that is understood intuitively by the majority of people in spite of the difficulty in defining it. Others, though, have argued that the level of disagreement about the meaning of the word indicates that it either means different things to different people (for instance, the objective versus subjective aspects of consciousness), or else is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of distinct meanings with no simple element in common.

Ned Block proposed a distinction between two types of consciousness that he called phenomenal (P-consciousness) and access (A-consciousness). P-consciousness, according to Block, is simply raw experience: it is moving, colored forms, sounds, sensations, emotions and feelings with our bodies and responses at the

center. These experiences, considered independently of any impact on behavior, are called qualia. A-consciousness, on the other hand, is the phenomenon whereby information in our minds is accessible for verbal report, reasoning, and the control of behavior. So, when we perceive, information about what we perceive is access conscious; when we introspect, information about our thoughts is access conscious; when we remember, information about the past is access conscious, and so on. Although some philosophers, such as Daniel Dennett, have disputed the validity of this distinction, others have broadly accepted it. David Chalmers has argued that A-consciousness can in principle be understood in mechanistic terms, but that understanding P-consciousness is much more challenging: he calls this the hard problem of consciousness.

Some philosophers believe that Block's two types of consciousness are not the end of the story. William Lycan, for example, argued in his book *Consciousness and Experience* that at least eight clearly distinct types of consciousness can be identified (organism consciousness; control consciousness; consciousness of; state/event consciousness; report ability; introspective consciousness;

subjective consciousness; self-consciousness)—and that even this list omits several more obscure forms.

## **Mind–body problem**

The first influential philosopher to discuss this question specifically was Descartes, and the answer he gave is known as Cartesian dualism. Descartes proposed that consciousness resides within an immaterial domain he called *res-cogitans* (the realm of thought), in contrast to the domain of material things, which he called *res-extensa* (the realm of extension). He suggested that the interaction between these two domains occurs inside the brain, perhaps in a small midline structure called the pineal gland.

Although it is widely accepted that Descartes, explained the problem cogently, few later philosophers have been happy with his solution, and his ideas about the pineal gland have especially been ridiculed. Alternative solutions, however, have been very diverse. They can be divided broadly into two categories: dualist solutions that maintain Descartes' rigid distinction between the realm of consciousness and the realm of matter but give different answers for how the two realms relate to each other; and monist solutions that maintain that



there is really only one realm of being, of which consciousness and matter are both aspects. Each of these categories itself contains numerous variants. The two main types of dualism are substance dualism (which holds that the mind is formed of a distinct type of substance not governed by the laws of physics) and property dualism (which holds that the laws of physics are universally valid but cannot be used to explain the mind). The three main types of monism are physicalism (which holds that the mind consists of matter organized in a particular way), idealism (which holds that only thought truly exists, and matter is merely an illusion), and neutral monism (which holds that both mind and matter are aspects of a distinct essence that is itself identical to neither of them). There are also, however, a large number of idiosyncratic theories that cannot cleanly be assigned to any of these camps.

Apart from the general question of the "hard problem" of consciousness, roughly speaking, the question of how mental experience arises from a physical basis, a more specialized question is how to square the subjective notion that we are in control of our decisions (at least in some small measure) with the customary view of causality that

subsequent events are caused by prior events. The topic of free will is the philosophical and scientific examination of this conundrum.

### **Problem of other minds**

Many philosophers consider experience to be the essence of consciousness, and believe that experience can only fully be known from the inside, subjectively. But if consciousness is subjective and not visible from the outside, why do the vast majority of people believe that other people are conscious, but rocks and trees are not? This is called the problem of other minds. It is particularly acute for people who believe in the possibility of philosophical zombies, that is, people who think it is possible in principle to have an entity that is physically indistinguishable from a human being and behaves like a human being in every way but nevertheless lacks consciousness.

### **Animal consciousness**

The topic of animal consciousness is beset by a number of difficulties. It poses the problem of other minds in

an especially severe form, because animals, lacking the ability to express human language, cannot tell us about their experiences. Also, it is difficult to reason objectively about the question, because a denial that an animal is conscious is often taken to imply that it does not feel, its life has no value, and that harming it is not morally wrong. Descartes, for example, has sometimes been blamed for mistreatment of animals due to the fact that he believed only humans have a non-physical mind. Most people have a strong intuition that some animals, such as cats and dogs, are conscious, while others, such as insects, are not; but the sources of this intuition are not obvious, and are often based on personal interactions with pets and other animals they have observed.

### **Scientific study**

For many decades, consciousness as a research topic was avoided by the majority of mainstream scientists, because of a general feeling that a phenomenon defined in subjective terms could not properly be studied using objective experimental methods. In 1975 George Mandler published an influential psychological study which

distinguished between slow, serial, and limited conscious processes and fast, parallel and extensive unconscious ones. Starting in the 1980s, an expanding community of neuroscientists and psychologists have associated themselves with a field called Consciousness Studies, giving rise to a stream of experimental work published in books, journals such as *Consciousness and Cognition*, and methodological work published in journals such as the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, along with regular conferences organized by groups such as the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness.

Modern scientific investigations into consciousness are based on psychological experiments (including, for example, the investigation of priming effects using subliminal stimuli), and on case studies of alterations in consciousness produced by trauma, illness, or drugs. Broadly viewed, scientific approaches are based on two core concepts. The first identifies the content of consciousness with the experiences that are reported by human subjects; the second makes use of the concept of consciousness that has been developed by neurologists and other medical professionals who deal with patients

whose behavior is impaired. In either case, the ultimate goals are to develop techniques for assessing consciousness objectively in humans as well as other animals, and to understand the neural and psychological mechanisms that underlie it.

### **Neural correlates of consciousness**

A major part of the scientific literature on consciousness consists of studies that examine the relationship between the experiences reported by subjects and the activity that simultaneously takes place in their brains—that is, studies of the neural correlates of consciousness. The hope is to find that activity in a particular part of the brain, or a particular pattern of global brain activity, will be strongly predictive of conscious awareness. Several brain imaging techniques, such as EEG and MRI, have been used for physical measures of brain activity in these studies.

### **States of consciousness**

There are some states in which consciousness seems to be abolished, including sleep, coma, and death. There

are also a variety of circumstances that can change the relationship between the mind and the world in less drastic ways, producing what are known as altered states of consciousness. Some altered states occur naturally; others can be produced by drugs or brain damage. Altered states can be accompanied by changes in thinking, disturbances in the sense of time, feelings of loss of control, changes in emotional expression, alternations in body image and changes in meaning or significance.

The two most widely accepted altered states are sleep and dreaming. Although dream sleep and non-dream sleep appear very similar to an outside observer, each is associated with a distinct pattern of brain activity, metabolic activity, and eye movement; each is also associated with a distinct pattern of experience and cognition. During ordinary non-dream sleep, people who are awakened report only vague and sketchy thoughts, and their experiences do not cohere into a continuous narrative. During dream sleep, in contrast, people who are awakened report rich and detailed experiences in which events form a continuous progression, which may however be interrupted by bizarre or fantastic intrusions. Thought processes during the dream

state frequently show a high level of irrationality. Both dream and non-dream states are associated with severe disruption of memory: it usually disappears in seconds, during the non-dream state, and in minutes after awakening from a dream unless actively refreshed.

## **Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a method of inquiry that attempts to examine the structure of consciousness in its own right, putting aside problems regarding the relationship of consciousness to the physical world. This approach was first proposed by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, and later elaborated by other philosophers and scientists. Husserl's original concept gave rise to two distinct lines of inquiry, in philosophy and psychology. In philosophy, phenomenology has largely been devoted to fundamental metaphysical questions, such as the nature of intentionality ("aboutness"). In psychology, phenomenology largely has meant attempting to investigate consciousness using the method of introspection, which means looking into one's own mind and reporting what one observes. This method fell into disrepute in the early twentieth century, because of

grave doubts about its reliability, but has been rehabilitated to some degree, especially when used in combination with techniques for examining brain activity.

### **Medical aspects**

The medical approach to consciousness is practically oriented. It derives from a need to treat people whose brain function has been impaired as a result of disease, brain damage, toxins, or drugs. In medicine, conceptual distinctions are considered useful to the degree that they can help to guide treatments. Whereas the philosophical approach to consciousness focuses on its fundamental nature and its contents, the medical approach focuses on the amount of consciousness a person has: in medicine, consciousness is assessed as a "level" ranging from coma and brain death at the low end, to full alertness and purposeful responsiveness at the high end.

Consciousness is of concern to patients and physicians, especially neurologists and anesthesiologists. Patients may suffer from disorders of consciousness, or may need to be anesthetized for a surgical procedure. Physicians may perform consciousness-related



interventions such as instructing the patient to sleep, administering general anesthesia, or inducing medical coma.

## **Assessment**

In medicine, consciousness is examined using a set of procedures known as neuropsychological assessment. There are two commonly used methods for assessing the level of consciousness of a patient: a simple procedure that requires minimal training, and a more complex procedure that requires substantial expertise. The simple procedure begins by asking whether the patient is able to move and react to physical stimuli. If so, the next question is whether the patient can respond in a meaningful way to questions and commands. If so, the patient is asked for name, current location, and current day and time. A patient who can answer all of these questions is said to be "oriented times three" (sometimes denoted "Ox3" on a medical chart), and is usually considered fully conscious.

The more complex procedure is known as a neurological examination, and is usually carried out by a

neurologist in a hospital setting. A formal neurological examination runs through a precisely delineated series of tests, beginning with tests for basic sensory motor reflexes, and culminating with tests for sophisticated use of language. The outcome may be summarized using the Glasgow Coma Scale, which yields a number in the range 3—15, with a score of 3 indicating brain death (the lowest defined level of consciousness), and 15 indicating full consciousness. The Glasgow Coma Scale has three subscales, measuring the best motor response (ranging from "no motor response" to "obeys commands"), the best eye response (ranging from "no eye opening" to "eyes opening spontaneously") and the best verbal response (ranging from "no verbal response" to "fully oriented"). There is also a simpler pediatric version of the scale, for children too young to be able to use language.

In 2013, an experimental procedure was developed to measure degrees of consciousness, the procedure involving stimulating the brain with a magnetic pulse, measuring resulting waves of electrical activity, and developing a consciousness score based on the complexity of the brain activity.

## **Spiritual approaches**

To most philosophers, the word "consciousness" connotes the relationship between the mind and the world. To writers on spiritual or religious topics, it frequently connotes the relationship between the mind and God, or the relationship between the mind and deeper truths that are thought to be more fundamental than the physical world. Krishna consciousness, for example, is a term used to mean an intimate linkage between the mind of a worshipper and the God Krishna.

The mystical psychiatrist Richard Maurice Bucke distinguished between three types of consciousness: Simple Consciousness, awareness of the body, possessed by many animals; Self Consciousness, awareness of being aware, possessed only by humans; and Cosmic Consciousness, awareness of the life and order of the universe, possessed only by humans who are enlightened.

*“Many people think excitement is happiness.... But when you are excited you are not peaceful. True happiness is based on peace.”*

*— Thích Nhất Hạnh*

## 7 ATMAN

### **What is the Atman (or the soul)?**

Nobody can describe it, as it neither physical nor visible

Soul is not destructible.

Hence it cannot be proven by scientific experiments but it can be only felt, and that too, only after a long time of concentration, meditation and devotion. As a soul can be rarely experienced by any human being but it can be felt by experiencing Soul's qualities indirectly.

As I understand, the soul has tremendous capacities and its qualities can be considered to be :

- 1) Lots of Energy
- 2) Lots of Intelligence
- 3) Lots of Divinity
- 4) Consciousness
- 5) Lots of true Knowledge
- 6) Capacity for Self-Realization

Hence, to realize all these abilities of the soul, we have to go

to the inner depths of the mind, be in deep concentration and in a meditative state. By working hard and passionately, and keeping this goal in mind, after a very long time, we can achieve self-realization and experience, feel the presence of the soul.

**How to recognize that a person is on the threshold of self-realization?**

The person has developed complete harmony of his emotions, intelligence, behaviour, perception and attitude. Whatever he says he does sincerely. There is no difference between his thoughts, emotions and behaviour. He is very simple, very truthful, very peaceful, very pure at heart, very honest and truly divine. He is living a pure and divine life, and he loves and care for everybody. He has lots of sympathy, empathy and compassion for everyone. He speaks nothing but truth and he is absolutely non-violent. His consciousness has expanded, his intelligence and energy has developed more than what it was, his true knowledge of his own Self (Atman) has also expanded and he is enjoying himself a lot. He is a true saint.

Having already covered the concept of the Atman or soul in Vedic religions in Chapter 5, let us review the concept of the soul in Western Philosophy traditions.

Wikipedia states that The soul, in many religious, philosophical and mythological traditions, is the incorporeal and, in many conceptions, immortal essence of a living thing. According to the Abrahamic religions in most of their forms, souls—or at least immortal souls - belong only to human beings. For example, the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas, attributed "soul" (anima) to all organisms but argued that only human souls are immortal. Other religions (most notably Jainism and Hinduism) teach that all biological organisms have souls, and others teach that even non-biological entities (such as rivers and mountains) possess souls. This latter belief is called animism.

Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle understood the psyche to be crowned with the logical faculty, the exercise of which was the most divine of human actions. At his defense trial, Socrates even

summarized his teachings as nothing other than an exhortation for his fellow Athenians to firstly excel in matters of the psyche since all bodily goods are dependent on such excellence.

### **Etymology**

The word is probably an adaptation by early missionaries particularly Ulfilas, apostle to the Goths during the 3rd century of a native Germanic concept, which was a translation of Greek psyche "life, spirit, consciousness."

### **Semantics**

Although the terms soul and spirit are sometimes used interchangeably, soul may denote a more worldly and less transcendent aspect of a person. According to psychologist James Hillman, soul has an affinity for negative thoughts and images, whereas spirit seeks to rise above the entanglements of life and death. The words soul and psyche can also be treated synonymously, although psyche has more psychological connotations, whereas soul is connected more closely to spirituality and religion.

## **Philosophical views**

The Ancient Greeks used the same word for 'alive' as for 'ensouled' indicating that the earliest surviving western philosophical view believed that the soul was that which gave the body life. The soul was considered the incorporeal or spiritual 'breath' which animates (from the Latin, anima, cf. animal) the living organism.

Francis M. Cornford quotes Pindarin saying that the soul sleeps while the limbs are active, but when one is sleeping, the soul is active and reveals in many a dream "an award of joy or sorrow drawing near."

Erwin Rohde writes that the early pre-Pythagorean belief was that the soul had no life when it departed from the body, and retired into Hades with no hope of returning to a body.

It has been argued that a strict line of causality fails to explain certain phenomena within human experience (such as free will) that have at times been attributed to the soul. (See also: Determinism and free will.)

Some metaphysical thinkers believe that the concept of soul can be a solution for the explanatory gap and



the problem of other minds, which suggests that we cannot know if other people really have consciousness.

## **Socrates and Plato**

Drawing on the words of his teacher Socrates, Plato considered the psyche to be the essence of a person, being that which decides how we behave. He considered this essence to be an incorporeal, eternal occupant of our being. Socrates says that even after death, the soul exists and is able to think. He believed that as bodies die, the soul is continually reborn in subsequent bodies and Plato believed this as well, however he thought that only one part of the soul was immortal (logos). The Platonic soul comprises three parts:

1. The logos or logistikon (mind, nous or reason)
2. The thymos, or thumetikon (emotion or spiritedness or masculine)
3. The eros, or epithumetikon (appetitive or desire or feminine)

## **Aristotle**

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) defined the soul or psyche as the first actuality of a naturally organized body, but argued

against its having a separate existence from the physical body. In Aristotle's view, the primary activity of a living thing constitutes its soul; for example, the soul of an eye, if it were an independent organism, would be seeing (its purpose or final cause). For Aristotle, the soul is the form of a living creature.

### ***Get Liberated from the material world***

*by V N Mittal (The speaking Tree, The Times of India)*

*“Atman or Soul is inherently sat-chit-ananda since it is a part of Paramatman or the Divine Self. Yet, we fail to experience it as the state of eternal bliss proves elusive. In Vedanta, Brahman is often described by the term sat-chit-ananda, a composite word consisting of three words sat, chit, and ananda. ‘Sat’ is the ever-existent or absolute Truth; ‘chit’ is awareness or pure consciousness and ‘ananda’ is absolute bliss --infinite and boundless, free of all stress, tension, conflict and disturbances. In fact, these three denote the three characteristics of Atman that complement each other.*

*These three characteristics are intrinsically interwoven with each other. Truth is ‘consciousness and bliss’ and bliss is ‘consciousness and truth’. The moment you experience truth, you also tend to experience a tremendous explosion*

*of consciousness and enormous overflow of bliss from your heart. Thus the three together are aspects of one and the same experience.*

*In the Atharva Veda (12.1.1) there is a corresponding concept of satyam-ritam-brihat. ‘Satyam’ is the essential truth of existence; ‘ritam’ is the dynamic action or dharma and ‘brihat’ is the vast and the boundless. Thus, satyam corresponds to sat, ritam to chit (shakti) and brihat to ananda, infinite bliss. Satchitananda is actually the Divine Self, eternal and infinite, that lives within each one of us.*

*Atman means the Self or the Soul. It is, often, mistakenly identified with temporary body or mind or intellect giving rise to ego – a false notion about ourselves; but actually it is the chit or “consciousness” that makes us aware of the different body forms. Atman is in a constant state of bliss, it is indestructible and changeless. Atman is therefore Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is self-luminous and brilliant and pervades everything including space.*

*Sat-Chit-Ananda is the natural state of every living being; yet we fail to experience it because we are struggling in a wrong direction and squandering our energies on trivial matters and material life, oblivious of the fact that the eternal joy lies in the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda and not in the worldly pleasures linked to material wealth.*

*The Bhagwad Gita teaches us that the real purpose of life is to transcend death by liberating the Atman from the bondage of material life. When we see God in everyone, and attribute our every action and everything to the eternal spirit or Sat-Chit-Ananda, only then can we be said to have been fully liberated from the material life.*

*To reach the bliss state is the most difficult thing. The number of masters who reached there and stayed on that plane is so small that they can be counted on your finger tips. Sat is the first step that can clear the path of obstructions. The truth is that awareness cannot come about without sat. Thus, the state of consciousness, Self-realization or enlightenment, is not possible without practising sat. Meditation reveals all the mysteries of truth and blissfulness and can enable you to experience the peak of consciousness.*

*When sat unites with chit, the result is ananda or Sat-Chit-Ananda. When Shiva unites with Shakti in the crown chakra, the result is bliss of the Self. This bliss leads us to divine consciousness and awareness of God. When you merge your identity in Shiva, the union is the jiva with Paramatman. He who has realized this is a liberated soul; he has nothing more to learn, to do or to gain. He is freed from the cycle of death and rebirth and becomes immortal.”*

***The Final Challenge To Enlightenment***

*by Swami Kriyananda (The speaking Tree, The Times of India)*

*“What will we do, when we stand on the threshold of enlightenment—In that final moment of separation from the Divine, the soul must stand firm in its determination to merge with Divinity. Where there is ego, there is separation. To realize our oneness with the Infinite, we must surrender the ego itself. By our own free choice we must say, “I want the infiniteSelf, not the little self.”*

*It is not easy. That highest and final test is the most challenging of all. At that moment the ego recoils and says, “No, no—wait!”*

*Paramhansa Yogananda’s chief disciple, Rajarsi Janakananda, was just at the point of attaining the highest state, when suddenly his meditations became filled with darkness. For years his meditations had been filled with the light and bliss of God, but suddenly it was gone. He felt tempted to give in to doubts and disbelief, but he nonetheless kept trying and continued to meditate.*

*After days of darkness, Rajarsi saw a little point of light. Gradually that point came closer until it became his line of gurus – first Paramhansa Yogananda, then Sri Yukteswar, then Lahiri Mahasaya, then Babaji. And then finally Rajarsi*

*merged with the Infinite. Paramhansa Yogananda once said to Rajarsi, "Never forget where your power comes from." With a sweet smile, Rajarsi answered, "I won't, Master. It comes from you."*

*Yogananda once said to me, "Remember, you will not be safe until you have attained nirbikalpa samadhi." He told me about various saints who had fallen after they had attained the lower samadhi.*

*The real work on the spiritual path is to prepare the mind for the ultimate transformation. If cosmic consciousness were to come without preparation, the mind would be unable to contain it. It would be comparable to high-voltage electricity burning the wiring of a house.*

*Human consciousness, conditioned as it is by ordinary, worldly experience, is unable to accept what Yogananda called "the liberating shock of omnipresence." It isn't that omnipresence is devastating. The ego, rather, must be conditioned by long and deep meditation to surrender itself to a greater Self-awareness. Too sudden an expansion from its customary perspective might only bewilder it with its sweeping panorama of things as they really are.*

*Finding God is the simplest, most obvious, most supremely natural thing in the world! At the end, one*

*doesn't find himself straining with desperate zeal. Rather, one relaxes, supremely, into perfect Bliss. Strain, tension, ardour, zeal: all these end forever. What is left is Sat-Chit-Ananda: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new bliss.*

*You reach a point where you've gotten rid of all self-definitions. There's nothing to cling to anymore. You're not a woman or a man. You're not Indian or French or American. You're not rich or poor. You're not young or old. You're not beautiful or ugly. You're none of these things.*

*So, in the beginning, the process of finding God is a matter of continuous struggle until, as Yogananda puts it, "efforts end in ease."*

*However, only by mental attunement with the consciousness of an already-liberated guru can we make that leap. The guru works from within, on our thoughts and feelings. Gradually, his ego-less consciousness seeps into our ego-centred consciousness and transforms us with a new understanding of our own reality.*

*The storm of duality is finally stilled, and the self, no longer in rebellion against God, merges completely into the Infinite Self, becoming the Infinite.*

*"That with the help of which we can know the truth, control the restless mind, and purify the soul is called knowledge."*  
- Anonymous

*"My soul will be my only support (in this practice of detachment). (Hence) let me give up everything else."*  
- Anonymous

*"Every soul is in itself absolutely omniscient and blissful. The bliss does not come from outside."*  
- Anonymous

*"There has never been a time when you and I have not existed, nor will there be a time when we will cease to exist. As the same person inhabits the body through childhood, youth, and old age, so too at the time of death he attains another body. The wise are not deluded by these changes."*  
- Bhagvad Gita



## 8 AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

*The Smart Choice is to be a Vegetarian – Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (The Times of India, Dec 4, 2014)*

*“The debate on 'why it is good to be a vegetarian' has long been settled. The internet is full of information on why eating meat is not good for both one's own health or the environment. For example, according to the US Department of Agriculture, 70 per cent of food poisoning is caused by meat, including exposure to arsenic. Another research says that the production of one kilogram of beef is responsible for as much carbon dioxide emission as by driving 250 km in a car.*

*There is plenty of disturbing footage also available on what treatment animals are subjected to in slaughterhouses, like the documentary 'Meet your Meat'. They are injected with hormones so that they grow faster and add more bulk. All these chemicals then end up in the bodies of people who eat this meat. But their system cannot take these chemicals and they eventually turn into cancers and other immune system disorders. The milk from these animals is also toxic and is rejected by the consumers' biology. In fact, large number of cases of lactose intolerance and diseases among meat eaters was what gave birth to the vegan movement.*

*The human body is designed for a vegetarian diet. Our teeth are not pointed and our intestines are much longer than our bodies, very much like herbivores. Carnivores have short intestines through which meat passes easily. It passes through our intestines much more slowly and is very heavy to digest, sometimes taking up to 72 hours. In this time, it rots and ferments in our bodies. Vegetarian food, on the other hand, is digested within a few hours.*

*So, ethically, environmentally and health-wise, it is a wise choice to be a vegetarian. It is even better to eat organic fruits and vegetables, which have no chemicals and fertilizers.*

*The only reason that people still continue to eat meat is that they are driven by cultural habit or craving for taste. The way to overcome this craving is to make small time-bound commitments in the beginning and then gradually increasing it, like deciding not to have meat for a week, then two weeks and so on. People have also found ways to use tofu and other forms of soya to cook 'mock meat' which tastes identical to the real meat. We have also observed that with the practice of meditation and pranayama, one's taste changes on its own and the body begins to ask for food that is conducive to keep it light and moves away from foods that make it otherwise. Many people have become vegetarian on their own after doing our workshops.*

*However, today with a massive global consumer base, producing meat is a highly profitable business. So, there is a big lobby that does not want people to be educated on the harmful effects of meat and become vegetarian. In India, the issue of vegetarianism also assumes religious connotations and therefore, becomes political.*

*Food being an essential part of any lifestyle, people would like to have the right to exercise their freedom in making a choice; arguing or forcing anyone will not work. The right way is to make people aware and then let them choose for themselves. It may take some time but everybody realizes sooner or later that short-term gratification is not worth the long term troubles it brings. Quality of life is enhanced when we make choices that are life supporting. Being vegetarian does not just help one's own life flourish but also that of other beings."*

*He alone sees truly who sees the Lord the same in every creature...seeing the same Lord everywhere, he does not harm himself or others.*

*- Bhagvad Gita*

*"Don't kill any living beings. Don't try to rule them."*

*- Anonymous*

*"Ahimsä (Non-violence) holds the key position in the whole scheme of the ethical discipline of the householder and the monk."*

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*"The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice, Politics without principles."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

*"The universe is not for man alone, but is a theatre of evolution for all living beings. Live and let live is its guiding principle. 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharma' - Non-injury is the highest religion."*

*- Virchand Gandhi*

*"Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture, or kill any creature or living being."*

*- Bhagwan Mahavira*

*"Kill not, cause no pain. Nonviolence is the greatest religion."*

*- Bhagwan Mahavira*

*"In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self."*

*- Bhagwan Mahavira*

*"Just as pain is not acceptable to you, it is so with others."*

*- Anonymous*

*“Compassion is not religious business, it is human business, it is not luxury, it is essential for our own peace and mental stability, it is essential for human survival.”*

— Dali Lama XIV

*“It is impossible to build one's own happiness on the unhappiness of others. This perspective is at the heart of Buddhist teachings.”*

— Daisaku Ikeda

## 9 SUMMARY

- Nature always changes.
- Science also changes with better facts.
- Environment always changes.
- Social, economic and political values of life change with civilization.
- Time also changes, so we have also to change according to natural laws, new change of environment and new scientific changes.
- But basic principles of philosophy should not be changed, yet other values may change according to change in time and other facts. Otherwise old philosophical theories may become antique and fossil.
- We should always think properly and deeply, and decide our goal of life and pursue it with lots of efforts, concentration and meditation to achieve it.
- We should, according to our experience, find the truth through intuition and meditation. No human being can find out the absolute truth because the universe is so vast that we are nothing but a drop in the ocean! Hence everybody finds truth which is only partial - that is why Jain philosophy says that differences of opinion about the truth will always be there

- Lord Buddha had rightly said that kill your own Buddha (Mentally forget your Guru), and be your own Buddha. It means that your Guru is only stepping stone to achieve your goals through meditation. Find out the truth through your intuition and meditation and follow your own self. But do not blindly follow any Guru.
- To find out the Truth, follow your own choice of philosophy maintaining the basic principles of that philosophy and your truth through meditation.
- We should have open, free and independent mind to receive any new facts or truths, we should not have fixed or prejudiced mind because the complete truth of the Universe or Nature or God is not known to anybody. Every philosophy dose have some truth, hence whenever we realize the truth from anywhere, we should accept it with an open mind.
- All philosophers and religious leaders have laid down, some principles of philosophy or religion, according to self-experiences, All religions and philosophies have some truth, but absolute truth is beyond the capacity of human being, so we should read all religions, all philosophies and accept the truth from them with an open mind. Our freedom and independence of mind should not be lost, because everybody has different types of experience and realizes different type of truth.

- All philosophies/religions agree that we should love, have sympathy and have compassion for every human being, but Jain philosophy includes not only human beings, but all living beings.
- Jain philosophy says not to kill any living beings, so to sustain our life, we have to be pure vegetarians.

## **Self-Realization**

Self-realization should be the most important goal of our lives. Everybody should ask himself / herself who am I? My body, brain and mind are mine – but still who am I? Through meditation we can pursue the answer. We have to work hard, concentrate/focus upon it with lots of passion and single minded pursuit. There will be a lot of problems and hurdles during the process of self-realization. During the meditation process it may present different aura, intuition, extraordinary powers, but we have to ignore them all and go deeper in the meditation. Because those who use these extra powers for self-interest, may fail to achieve the self-realization. After a lot of hard work, some people may feel frustrated or depressed because they did not achieve their goals. One should be careful not be frustrated or depressed during the process of self-realization.

We should keep an open mind, so that we can accept the new truths – from science, natural laws, intuition and meditation.





Bhagwan Mahavir



Bhagwan Buddha



Bhagwan Shankar

**Meditation is not an easy practice to learn as mind keeps wandering, but once learned, it is the easiest and most natural practice. Keep patience and remember:**

- You clean your house and body regularly; why not also clean your mind regularly with meditation?
- Do not be down or frustrated under any circumstance – we have to accept the natural reality as it is.
- Under problematic or dangerous situations, we have a third alternative to solve any problem – not to fight or flight or submit or suppress yourself, but to find an alternative that is positive, constructive or creative for the situation. Remember that every problem has a solution.
- Mind is a very restless organ. If you cannot control your mind, it will control you.
- Keep an open mind to accept the truth. No rigidity or obstinacy or closed mind, but open and dynamic mind to accept the truth.
- Mind is an instrument of your soul. One can use it positively or negatively.
- Soul is attached to physical body and brain in every living being. Soul can be defined as consciousness, intellect, energy, divinity, etc.
- Soul is attached to actions, thoughts, emotions and perceptions. All our actions and reactions are registered in the limbic system of our brain. Hence our karma are always registered in the brain and attached to our soul. All our positive and negative actions will have reactions from the brain – positive actions will have positive results and negative actions will have negative results.
- Always listen to intuition, and respect it. It will create awareness.
- The questions that can be answered through meditation are: Who are we? Why are we born? What should be the goals of our lives? What should be our destination? How to achieve it? What should be the Values of our lives?

