What is Philosophy?

Philosophy is the quest of human beings regarding ultimate nature of physical universe including human beings.

Our daily experience shows that it is beset with pleasures and pains. An object of pleasure may not be pleasurable all the time and so also an object of pain may not be painful all the time. This might make a thinking mind to conceive of a state where there is neither pleasure nor pain in the ordinary sense of the terms. Certain experiences like deep sleep might also help in arriving at the conception that one might try to gain a state which is trouble-free. That necessitates the knowledge of the cause of ways of pleasures and pains of the world. For this a system of ways of knowing is formed. In accordance with the theory of knowledge, a theory of the objective world emerges. With a knowledge of these two branches, one proceeds on the path to reach the aim. Again for this purpose a course of practical discipline is chalked out.
These aspects together are called Philosophy. There is epistemology or the theory of knowledge, ontology or the theory about the objective world and ethics or the practical code of conduct.

The aim of philosophy is to arrive at the ultimate reality of human existence. In India philosophy is rightly called 'Darśana'. It is a means of observation, vision, experience. "Drayate anena iti darśanam". It involves the psychic and physical aspects of life. Indian philosophy is not only an academic exercise but also a way of life. This nature of philosophy can be seen in all the systems of Indian Philosophy.

The philosophic mind of India finds that life is beset with all kinds of misery. From the deeper needs of spiritual life, to get relieved and to avoid the inevitable miseries of life, arose philosophic outlook.

The fundamental concepts of Indian Philosophy such as Brahman, Ātman, Māyā, Karman, Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Pramana, etc., can be found in the very early texts. Of these the word, Brahman is as old
as Ṛgveda and often occurs there in the sense of sacred entity. In the evolution of thought the primeval source of the universe, i.e., Brahman was identified with the inner-most essence, ātman. The identification is the final stage of the evolution of thought and is expressed in the well-known sayings of the Upanishads: 'That thou art' 'This self is Brahman'. Philosophy in India is based on Vedic doctrines, particularly, Upanishads.

**VEDIC PERIOD:**

The Vedic literature is classified into two broad sections, Karmakānda and Jñānakānda. The Karmakānda deals with performance of sacrificial rituals, worship, etc. The Jñānakānda confines itself to the expounding perfect knowledge of the ultimate reality and the means of attaining it. The Saṁhitas and the Brāhmaṇas come under Karmakānda and the Upanishads under Jñānakānda.

The Vedic Saṁhitas give evidence for the different phases of religious thought paving the way for philosophical speculations. In the Ṛgveda we find the development of thought in several stages, viz. theism, polytheism, henotheism, monotheism and monism.

Theism (in modern thought) is a view of reality that postulates a supreme personal deity as creator, sustainer and destroyer or the universe. The different powers of nature are personified and adored as Gods in Ṛgveda. The Ṛgvedic Gods are often invoked and worshipped in groups.
Sometimes two, three or many more gods are grouped together and invoked. For example, Mitrā-varuṇā, Agnāviṣṇū, Indrā-vaishnū, Maruts etc. In a few cases all the gods are worshipped together, Viśvedevāḥ, for instance, when the Gods are implicitly believed to be partial aspects of one Supreme God. This phase of religious thought is called organised polytheism.

Henotheism means the belief in individual God alternately regarded as the highest God for the time being, when the God is being worshipped. Here a God is identified with other Gods and treated as superior to them. This type of religious thought is a step from polytheism to monotheism.

The tendency towards extolling one God as the greatest and the highest gradually developed. This approach is called monotheism. A supreme Lord of all beings was conceived of in Prajāpati. The term "Prajāpati" was originally an epithet applicable to several deities. Later it was recognised as a separate deity, the highest and the greatest. It is clearly said in Rgveda:
hiranya-garbhah samavartatagre
bhūtasya jātasya patīr eka āsīt;
sa dadhāra prthivīm dyām utēmam
kasmai devāya ha viśā vidhema. (X.121-1)

The creator is not only described as one
God above all Gods, but also is said to embrace all
the creatures. This idea of pantheism developed
through the later Vedic literature, till it assumed
its final shape in the Upaniṣads. The clearest
expression of the pantheistic point of view is found
in the celebrated hymn to puruṣa (X.90). The
interpretation of the hymn itself is pantheistic.

In Mac Donell's opinion puruṣa-sūkta is
the starting point of the pantheistic philosophy of
India.

Monism is the belief in one reality which
is impersonal. The reduction of many Gods to one is
a higher conception of unity and further reduction to
one entity is still higher. The whole existence is
traced to a single source. The monistic thought was
clear later in the Upanishads in their identification
of Atman with Brahman. The monism adumbrated in the
Ṛgveda developed into the idealistic monism in Upanishads.
The hymns of the Rgveda are simple and are in the form of adoring Gods to provide them with all the benefits of life. These hymns show clearly the development of thought from polytheism to monism. The monistic idea is however well discussed in the Upanisads. The Nāsadīya-Sūkta (X,129) brings out in vivid terms the monism of Rgveda.

nasad āsīn no sad āsīt tadānīm,
nāśīd rajo na vyoma paro yat;
kim āvarīvaḥ kuha kasya śarman
ambhaḥ kimāśīd gahanam gathīram. (X,129,1)

Another well-known mantra is:

Indram mitram agnim āhūḥ,
atho divyaḥ sa suparṇo ārutmān;
ekam sad viprā banudhā vadanti,
agnim yamam mātariśvānam āhūḥ (1,164,45)

Another feature of the Rgvedic philosophy is the conception of Ṛta. The Ṛta, as moral law, is a dominant idea in the Rgveda. It represents an eternal cosmic order. The whole universe is founded on Ṛta and moves in it. The conception of Ṛta paved the way for monotheism which later led to monism.

The period of the Brāhmanas following the Samhitas marks a certain stage in the religious evolution which has permanently affected the religious
history of India. The religion of the Brāhmaṇas was purely formal. The Brāhmaṇas set out the important ceremonies of various sacrifices and explain the application of the Vedic mantras and formulae therein. The mutual relation of the sacred texts and the symbolic meanings of all the ceremonies are also brought forth. The explanations are often supported by legends, exegesis, philological and philosophical speculations, so as to impress the efficacy of the mantras on the performer for a better practical life.

The Brāhmaṇas do not directly deal with any philosophical problem but we do find the philosophical ideas expressed incidentally in its various contexts. In spite of the numerous rituals the effort of the sages as embodied in the samhitas, to achieve their final aim, is found to continue even in the Brāhmaṇas. A universal entity viz., Prajāpati found its way into the speculations through the Brāhmaṇas. The development of the concept of Brahman, the highest goal, however, is not achieved until the Upanishads.
A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE UPAISHADS

Upāishads are the later portions of the Vedas. They are also called Vedānta, 'end of the Veda'. The word Vedānta indicates not only its textual position but also its supreme importance as it crown the vedic knowledge. The Upāishads contain ideas which form the first definite sketches of philosophical thought.

The Rgveda represents the earliest phase, namely, the objective phase in the evolution of religion. On the other hand, Upāishads mark the subjective phase of religion. There are no hymns to any god or goddess in the Upāishads. But there is a scientific search for the substratum underlying the phenomenal forces of Nature. The real philosophical conception of Rgveda passing through the Brāhmaṇa period was to gather force at the beginning of the Upāishads period. From the psychological point of view the Rgveda may be regarded as a great work of emotion and imagination. The Upāishads may be regarded as work of thought and reason. In these texts we have the intellectual search after the ultimate reality. During the period from Vedic to Upāishadic age there is a process of transference of interest from God to self, from prayer to philosophy, from hymnology to reflection, from henotheistic polytheism to mysticism.
The spirit of the Upaniṣads is entirely against the sacrificial doctrine of the Brāhmaṇas. The attitude of the Muṇḍaka in regard to the efficacy of the ritualism is an exception to the Upaniṣadic reaction in favour of philosophic thought against the Brāhmaṇa literature.

The Muṇḍaka tells us that the only way towards securing the goal of human life consists in simply following the routine of sacrificial rituals enjoined by the Veda.

\[
\text{tad etat satyam mantraṁ karmāṇi kavayo} \\
yānya aparāyaṁ tāṁ tretāyaṁ bahuḥśa santatāṁ; \\
tāṁ aśarata niyatam satyakāmā \\
esāvah panyam sukṛtasya loke. (Mund.1.2.1.)
\]

The Upaniṣads which stand for knowledge as against the Brahmānic philosophy of work, very rarely exhibit this kind of favourable attitude towards ritualism to be met with in the Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad.

The Brahmānic idea of sacrifice came to be modulated in the days of the Upaniṣads so as ultimately to be an entire transformation into a new conception of sacrifice altogether, viz., that of a mental sacrifice which is helpful to the process of acquisition of spiritual knowledge. The Upaniṣads sought to square a growing idealistic philosophy with the settled terminology of religion.
The Samhitas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads have been recognised from ancient times as Śrutī or Revelation. The real meaning of Revelation is the divine springing from the result of inspiration through God-intoxication. We may say that under the divine inspiration the Vedic seers composed the hymns and the Upanishadic philosophers set forth the intellectual arguments.

The Brhadāraṇyaka-upanishad (2,4.10) tells us that the Rgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda and the Atharvaveda, all of them were breathed forth by the great premeval being, likewise also all mythology, all sciences.

"etad yad r̥gvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo
'tharvān̥girase itihāsaḥ purāṇam vidyā
upaniṣadaḥ ślokāḥ sūtrāṇi
anuvyākhyaṇāni vyākhyaṇānāḥ,asyaivaitānī
sarvāṇi niṣṇvasitānī.

The Vedas and the Upaniṣads are said to be apauruṣeya in the sense that they were inspired by God. "puruṣa-prayatnam vinā prādurbhūtam". The word 'apauruṣeya' comes quite close to the word, 'revelation',.

The fixation of the date of the Upaniṣads is quite difficult. They come after Āraṇyakas and are anterior to the rise of Buddhism. The principal Upaniṣads, however, are all pre-Buddhistic. The language style, vocabulary and the grammatical peculiarities are
also taken into consideration for the determination of the age of Upanishads. Modern criticism is generally agreed that they belong to the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. According to some scholars a date between 1200 and 600 B.C. is assigned to them.  

Traditionally the number is one hundred and eight. The Muktikā-Upaniṣad states that one can attain salvation by the study of one hundred and eight Upanishads. But there are more than two hundred Upanishads. Only a few of them are considered as of the Vedic period.

Upanishads may be arranged in a chronological order on the basis of their authenticity and of higher criticism. The Upanishads which are closely associated with the parts of the Śāṃhitas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Āranyakas are the oldest, the others being later ones. The determination of the exact chronological sequence is however not possible as the number of treatises is very large. The various reasons are put forth for the chronology of the Upanishads. For example, some scholars opine that the oldest Upanishads are those which are in prose and the others which followed were written in verse. But being in prose or verse is not a sufficient criteria for the chronological difference. The oldest Upanishads are in lucid style while the later ones are composed in almost complex style.
The principal Upanishads are generally said to be ten in number. Śaṅkara, the earliest available commentator of Upanishads, wrote commentaries on these ten Upanishads: Īṣa, Kena, Katha, Praśna, Mūndaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya and Brhadāraṇyaka. The other important Upanishads are Kauṣītakī, Śvetāsvatara, Jābāla, Mahānārāyaṇīya, Maitrāyaṇī and Piṅgala. The other Upanishads are more religious than philosophical.

The early exponents of doctrines are referred to as 'sages' like, Āruṇi, Yājñavalkya, Bālāki, Śvetaketu, Śaṅdilya. The teachings were developed in spiritual retreats where pupils and teachers discussed and defined the different views and thoughts. Some of the early Upanishads are in prose and others are metrical. Sometimes verses are interspersed in prose. They possess a musical quality of their own. The Upanishads are generally in the form of dialogues. The language is often symbolic and elliptical.

Teaching of the Upanishads

The topics dealt with in the Upanishads are the doctrine of creation, metaphysics, ethics,
psychology, eschatology, practice of yoga, theory of liberation and such others.

The Upanishads in the main, teach the ultimate reality of the individual and the cosmic soul. The aim of the Upanishads is to rise from the unreal to real, from darkness to light and from mortality to immortality. The Upanishad teaching is that the ultimate reality is one and without a second. On the whole, they are monistic and absolutistic in their approach. But the doctrines of the Upanishads are not homogeneous. Some thoughts are developed in detail and they are monistic and idealistic views.

Some statements insist on the unity in diversity, eg. "There is no variety here", (neha nānāsti kiñcana); 'All that is Brahma' (Sarvam khalv idam Brahma). Dualistic and other views are also found here and there.

The ethics of the Upanishads is metaphysical and spiritual. The Upanishads affirm that human life can be graded into a period of studentship, house-holdership and retirement from active participation in worldly life as a preparation for the realisation of Brahman. The spiritual experience is open only to those endowed with tranquility of mind, self-control, freedom from compulsive activities, fortitude,
faith in ideal and power of concentration of mind.\textsuperscript{9}

The ultimate aim of human life is the attainment of Mukti or Mokṣa. But this cannot be attained unless the spiritual knowledge is gained. The attainment of the knowledge results in salvation. The spiritual attainment is the root of all knowledge, Brahma-Vidya is the basis of all kinds of knowledge as stated by Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad (1.1.1.).

The Upaniṣadalic terms for ultimate reality are two: Brahman and Ātman. These two are described as the two pillars on which rests the whole edifice of Indian philosophy.\textsuperscript{10}

The word Brahman, first meant prayer. It is derived from the root Brh, to grow. Later it acquired the philosophical significance which it bears in Upaniṣads as primary cause of universe. It is described, for instance, as satyam jñānam anantam (T.U. 1.1.1.). This seems to be the root for the later Vedantic term "Saccidānanda".

The Brahman, the ultimate reality is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient and pure spirit. It is non-dual, non-spatial and non-causal, but it is impersonal and transcendental, attributeless and higher, acosmic i.e., "Parabrahma", also called Nirguna-brahma,
Sometimes Brahman is personal, determinate aparabrahma, also cosmic Saguna i.e., Iśvara who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world.

Thus the Upanishads, speak of two kinds of Brahman, Para and Apara. The former is the higher one. It is beyond the spatio-temporal order governed by causality. It is the goal of higher knowledge, parāvidyā, while Aparabrahman is the goal of lower knowledge. Higher knowledge is intellectual and discursive. The Brahman is the eternal principle realised as the whole world. Ātman is the innermost essence of one's self. The identification of these two constitutes the essential teachings of Upanishads.

The spiritual unitary character of absolute reality is well expressed in Upanishads. The classical phrase "Saccidananda" indicates the state of unity. This phrase has three terms, sat, cit, ānanda. 'Sat' means being 'Cit' means pure consciousness and 'Ānanda' means peace or bliss, which indicates unity. The all-embracing character of Saccidananda is the highest bliss. This shows the significance of the spiritual reality, i.e., Brahman. It is the source of the whole universe and is the first and supreme principle.

The Upanishadic philosophy is an attempt to
achieve the human values by knowing the essential truth of the entire cosmos. The Brahman is an expression for the supreme power of universe.

The Upanishads describe the explicit identification of the unitary principle to the world and to the individual selves. The establishment of the spiritual character of the principle and the removal of uncertainty about the existence are both the accomplishments of this identification with Atman or the self. The whole universe, according to this view, actually emerges from Brahman and therefore necessarily partakes of its character. The richness of its contents indicates that Brahman, its source, is complex. This signifies creation and dissolution. The distinction made here between a latent and manifest stage or universe implies the dynamic character of ultimate reality. The view is described as Brahmaparînâmavâda, the doctrine of self-evolving Brahma.

Brahman is the source from which the universe with all its organic and inorganic aspects come into being. First it gives rise to the five elements, each of which has its own quality. This classification has been accepted by nearly all the later Indian philosophers.
The presupposition of most of the activities of life is that one thing is different from another. The Upanishads express that each object has its own form, etc., but if monism is the truth, no part of this diversity can be ultimate.

4. POST-VEDIC PERIOD:

After Upanisadic age, what is remarkable is the rise and growth of Buddhism. There was no sudden change in the intellectual life of the country. When the social change took place, it deeply disturbed the Brahmanical society.

In later Upanisads we can notice that there was a tendency to revert to sacrificial worship as taught in the Brahmanas. It gave rise to the religious systems like Buddhism and Jainism directly or indirectly. The new systems rejected the Vedic tradition and the rituals of Brahmanas and offered other means for knowing the truth. The means of knowledge came to occupy an important place in all their investigations and discussions. They tended to be empiricists appealing to experience as the primary source of knowledge and to be in touch with scientific thinking.

The 6th century B.C. witnessed a great spiritual unrest and remarkable intellectual ferment. During this age, though there prevailed in society a general unrest, there was spiritual awakening and
consequently reformers raised their voice against the existing religious order and endeavoured to reconstruct it on a new basis. It was an age when people were disgusted with old philosophical and religious dogmas and were striving for simple and easier means of escape from the ills of this mundane existence. New ideas of thought and religion sprang into vigorous, activity and gave a new orientation to life in the late centuries, before Christ. It was an era of revolt, against the old order of things. The ultimate aim of this revolt was not materialistic but spiritual, not the socialisation but the spiritualisation of life. The spirit of times expressed itself in a number of reforming movements. The life was regarded not as an end but as a means and an idea for spiritualisation. The thinkers of the new movements were pure intellectualists, philosophers and conceived life as a philosophy of power and knowledge. The spiritual leadership passed from the hands of priestly theologians and sacrificers to ascetics and wanderers (āramaṇas and parivrājakas) who laid the greatest emphasis on the cessation of craving for things of the world. These ascetics rejected the authority of the Vedas, denounced the sacrifices of the Brahmanic cult and also denied the existence of god. They declared that right conduct was the only
way of getting out of the mesh of karma and saṃsāra. The leading ascetics of the period were the two Kshatriya princes, Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahaveera.

The tendency of Buddhism and Jainism were not anything new. The trend had already appeared in the Upanishads. The anti-ritualistic spirit of the Upanishadic period were developed by the Buddha and Mahaveera.

In the Vedic tradition also there was a re-thinking, new religious ideas arose. We find the worship of personal deity like Siva, Viṣṇu. This is evidenced in the early Bhāgavata Sampradāya and the thought embodied in the Mahābhārata especially in the Bhagavad-Gītā.

5. BUDDHISM:

The Buddha was born in 563 B.C. The sights of major miseries to which the human being is subject in a world of decay and dissolution agonised the young prince. He left home and tried several modes of spiritual realisation. After enlightenment, he was called "Gautama Buddha".

The basic doctrines as preached by the Buddha have their evidence in the pre-existing philosophy of the Sāṅkhya, the Yoga and the later Upanishads. The Buddha made use of all the previous experience and the resulting set of instructions and he taught a spiritual
practical course. viz., the Noble Eight-fold path, the Arya-Aṣṭāṅgamārga.

This eight-fold path is a system of training the mind and the whole human personality for the final achievement of emancipation called Nirvāṇa. The aim of the path was to prepare the individual for transcending the miseries of life. This was done in stages which include unselfish behaviour, impersonal thinking and deep states of meditations in which the individual personality is left behind. The eight-fold path consisted of: Right thinking, Right viewing, Right acting, Right speech, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindedness, and Right absorption.

The Buddha did not altogether concern himself with the conception of self as embodied in the Upanishads. But the belief in the Karma doctrine found in Buddhism serves as the clearest proof of its connection with the Upanishadic thought.

The Buddhists also believe that all souls are existing from the beginning of a cycle: but they hold that their end is Nirvāṇa. Buddha’s teachings were more religion than philosophy. Those were collected in the ‘piṭakas’. ‘Early Buddhism was pessimistic, positivistic and pragmatic’ as Prof. Hiriyanna writes. The later thinkers wrote philosophical treatises, when
Buddhism developed into two major schools of religion: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna.

6. JAINISM:

Jainism is an independent system, and resembles Buddhism in many aspects like the repudiation of the Vedas, pessimistic outlook on life and disbelief in a supreme god. The differences are equally noticeable, such as its recognition of permanent entities like the self and matter. The founder of this system, Vardnamana Mahaveera of the 8th century B.C., like the Buddha, was a member of the ruling class. He also left his home and practised severe penance and attained perfection. He become a Kevalin, a Tīrthaṅkara. The system lays great stress on ascetic discipline and severe moral training as necessary for spiritual realization.

The teachings of early Jainism are compiled in the 'Āgamas'. Mahaveera advocated a very highly ethical and elevating code of life, a severe asceticism and extreme penance for the attainment of the Nirvāṇa or the highest spiritual state.

According to Jainism: "The whole universe of beings consisting of mental and material factors, has existed from all eternity undergoing an infinite
number of revolutions, produced by the power of nature without the intervention of any external deity. The diversities of the world are traced to the five co-operating conditions of time, nature, necessity, activity and desire to be and act. There is an intrinsic equality among all selves whether they are born of earth, water, vegetation, insects, animals or human beings.

The world consists of two uncreated co-existing but independent, categories namely, the conscious, Jīva and the unconscious, Ajīva. The Jīva corresponds to the soul. This system does not believe in a god. The highest endeavour is to get freedom from this cycle of birth and death, to get salvation from the worldly bondage by attaining the highest knowledge, Kevala-jñāna, through a profound meditation. According to Jain philosophy a soul has to pass fourteen stages of spiritual development to attain Kevala-jñāna. The soul has to struggle hard through these stages by controlling passions, subduing desires and then it gets gradually spiritual powers. In this connection, Jainism speaks of three jewels Ratna-Traya: Right knowledge, Right faith and Right Conduct.

The central point in the Jain's view of Reality is that it is multiple in character. There is a
celebrated epistemological doctrine in Jainism which is unique in Indian philosophical thought. It is known as Sapta-Bhāngī, also called Syād-Vāda or Anekāntavāda. The special feature and excellence of Jainism is its advocacy of a stern ethical life and its doctrine of Ahimsa in its two aspects: Negative and Positive.  

Buddhism and Jainism were the great movements which came into existence because of the dominance of blind ritualism of Brahminism. Buddhism proved to be one of the greatest civilising forces which India gave to the world. Buddhism broke the isolation of India and established an intimate contact between India and other countries, particularly, the East. It was India's greatest gift to the world.

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism neither became the dominant religion in India nor spread abroad, but has ever remained quite powerful in the country. Both have stood the test of time. They have carried the spiritual truth and message of love to one and all, and have enriched Indian culture by using the artistic expression of religion.

THE SYSTEMS:

The anti-Vedic stir opened the eyes of the followers of Vedic tradition. They were compelled
to take stock of their beliefs if they only wanted to guard their own heritage. Again the Upanishadic thought came to their rescue in this task. The philosophical server as round in the Upanishads was diligently cultivated. This intellectual activity gave rise to the several systems of thought called 'Daršanas'. There are six systems which accepted the authority of the Veda in some way or the other. We should not forget to take note of one more school, the materialistic, which happens to be the very starting point of philosophical enquiry.

Each of the systems posits that the universe as it appears has a conscious element called 'Jīva' or 'Ātma' and a non-conscious element. Sometimes a third element called 'Īśvara' is added. All systems believe that the jīva as it appears is in bondage, in misery and the aim of all inquiry is to understand the cause of that misery, thereby the true nature of the self, jīva, which is the means of its release from bondage. In other words, jīva has to realise its own nature. This is called 'mokṣa'! Of course, between the intellectual understanding of the true nature and realisation of the same, there is a course of exercises which each Darśana prescribes.
The philosophical ideals of the systems have influenced the themes of all aspects of Indian culture, ethics, dharma, etc.

Though the aim, the methodology of inquiry etc. of the different systems of Indian Philosophy are the same, the difference is the result of varied perspective on the same spiritual experience.

a) Cārvāka:

The Cārvāka School of Philosophy represents the Indian pattern of Atheism and Materialism. It is not a dogmatic statement of opinion but an organised and reasoned system of materialism. It believes in perception as the only means of knowledge and that there is nothing beyond matter. Everything observed is only a form of modification of matter.

Tradition attributes the origin of the system to Brhaspati. There is no systematic writing of the School available. The theories and opinions of Cārvākas, however, can be gathered from the pūrva-pakṣa statements interspersed in all other Dārṣāna texts. The chief spirit of the system is not to accept anything blindly but to view them with a critical sense. The Cārvāka is sceptical of the traditionally
accepted values. The system gives a materialistic interpretation of reality in terms of matter and that in terms of the four elements, i.e., earth, water, fire and air. It does not admit the existence of soul. For the same reason, it does not discuss emancipation, who is to be emancipated at all? Death is the end. There is no difference between mind and matter for the Carvakas. Consciousness is only a by-product.

The Carvaka School is anti-Vedantic and anti-ritualistic. The Carvaka is also anti-religious. Carvaka denies God, morality, order, plan and purpose in the universe. It does not believe in the law of causation. Agnosticism and scepticism are the chief characteristics of Carvaka Philosophy.  

b. Nyāya System:

Among the six systems of Indian Philosophy the two systems, viz., Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika are allied. The Nyāya system examines logic, the criterion of Truth and falsehood, the nature and function of knowledge, its instruments, their limits, defects and problems relating to the validity of knowledge. The Ontology and scheme of categories of Vaiśeṣika are accepted by Nyāya.
This system was founded by Aksapāda Gautama in his Nyāya-Sūtra and was able commented by Vātsyāyana. The Nyāya stand-point ia logical. The system has as many as sixteen categories. Of these fourteen are logical ones, the other two are the objects of knowledge, i.e., prameya and mokṣa. The sixteen categories are: samśaya, prayojana, drṣṭānta, siddhānta, avayava, tarka, niṣaya, vāda, vitanḍā, hetvābhāsa, cchala, jāti, nigrasthāna, pramāṇa, prameya and mokṣa.

The system has liberation as the final goal. As in the other systems, mokṣa results from the true knowledge of reality pursued with proper instruments. Among the philosophical systems of India, Nyāya system is the first to lay stress on the importance of logic and epistemology. The system specialises in giving a clear idea of the ways of knowing. It has given an elaborate theory for understanding the art of controversy and has developed it for centuries into a science. It has given the finest vāda-vidyā. By its powerful logic and powers of argumentation, it successfully attacked the three important doctrines of Buddhism: the doctrine of soullessness (nairātmya), scepticism and refutation of God.
The Nyāya system is described as realistic and pluralistic. This system believes in the existence of a number of independent reals. For the Naiyāyika whatever is experienced is real in its existential aspect. The knowledge is generated in the soul of man. It is not the nature of the soul but is an adventitious product produced in the Ātman. All things are knowable and nameable. It admits that to know a thing three factors are needed; Pramātā, Prameya and Pramāṇa. There are four instruments of knowledge, the Pramāṇas. Among them, perception (pratyakṣa) is the primary one. It gives us immediate knowledge of an object. According to Nyāya, the Ātman, i.e., the soul, establishes its contact with the manas that contacts the sense-organs and they, in their turn, contact objects. Then only knowledge arises. Inference (anumāna) is the most important instrument of knowledge described and elaborated by the Nyāya System. The knowledge derived from perception is limited to the here and now. To extend knowledge we have to make use of inference. Nyāya system names the different constituents of inference. Various types of anumāna are also described. Besides inferences, Nyāya accepts two other instruments of knowledge, viz., śabda and upamāṇa.
Among the systems of Indian Philosophy, Nyāya system alone stands out as an example of natural theology, the exponent of Nyāya Philosophy, makes a mighty and unique attempt to establish the existence of God with an array of reasoning and not on the authority of any text. Mokṣa or apavarga is the immediate realisation of the real nature of self. The scheme of Nyāya theory of knowledge and methodology of argumentation have been adopted by all other systems of philosophy.

3) VAIśEŚIKA SYSTEM:

The Vaiśeṣika system is presented in the Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra by Kaṇāda Aulukya. Praśastapāda-Bhāṣya on the Sūtras forms the basic text along with Sūtra.

The system is realistic and pluralistic. Its specific field is Prameya. It outlines the scheme of the ontological categories and describes their nature, the origination and the schemes of the dissolution of the world. Its logic and theory of knowledge are not very much different from those of Nyāya system.

The scheme of categories comprises of six padārthas: dravya, guṇa, karma, sāmānya, viśeṣa
and samavāya. The four dravyas by which the world of things are made up of, can be reduced to their minutest and indivisible parts called atoms or Paramāṇus. The atoms are the most unitary, indivisible entities and are infinite in number. They have no parts, hence indestructible. The atom of one dravya differs from that of another because of their quality, 'guna'. It is also explained how these atoms act to fashion the physical world. The combination of atoms is described vividly and in great detail in this system. All composite objects are composed of atoms. Two atoms go to make a dvayaṇuка, 'dyad'. The combination of three dyads is a 'tryaṇuка'. The tryaṇuка is alone visible and not its components, atoms or dyads. They are imperceptible to the human eye. All things exist in space, time and ether which are all-pervading, and non-atomic substances. Kaṇāda was the first to speak of the atoms as being the roots of things. The atomic theory is a special contribution of Vaiśeṣika to the world of knowledge.

According to Vaiśeṣika system, one of the prime functions of God is the allocation of appropriate bodies to souls by the proper combination of atoms according to the moral merit or otherwise, of souls.
The souls in this system are many and they are all-pervasive and non-atomic. Mind, 'manas' is atomic and each soul has a mind. The system is a type of proto-science and discloses a daring analytical interest in reducing things to their ultimate limits.

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika syncretised in 10th century. The scheme of sāpta-pādārthas including Abhāva was adopted in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. The great philosophical contribution of the system, however, is its theory of knowledge and not its ontological categories, the system is an example of ultra-realistic and pluralistic system of philosophy upholding the doctrine of radical difference.

m) Mīmāṃśā SYSTEM:

The mīmāṃśā system is based on authority of the Vedas and their inspiration. The word 'Mīmāṃśa' means an enquiry. The effort is to determine the import of all the Vedic statements which seemingly contradict each other. For this purpose, principles of interpretation are formulated.

Jaimini formulated the principles of interpretation in his pūrva-Mīmāṃśā-sūtras. The system of Jaimini came to be called pūrva-Mīmāṃśa in contrast with the Uttara-Mīmāṃśa of Bādarāyaṇa as Jaimini concentrated on the Brāhmaṇa portions earlier to Upanishads dealt with by Bādarāyaṇa.
The Purva-māma-sūtra was commented by the celebrated Śabarasvāmi. This Bhāṣya was explained by Prabhākara and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. These two so differed on some fundamental issues that two schools have emerged in their names. The Sūtras do not discuss any philosophy as such. It was Śabara who developed some views on ontology and epistemology different from other systems. It was further developed by the Guru (Prabhākara) and Bhaṭṭa in the course of their commentaries.

The significant contribution of Purva-māma is in formulating the principles of interpretation and the establishment of the authority of the Vedas with cogent arguments. The contention of this school is that Dharma is in the form of a command which cannot be known through perception or inference. It can only be revealed by the Vedas in the form of categorical orders. They are the ultimate authority on moral and spiritual matters. The Mīmāma system upholds the supremacy of Karma in the form of sacrifices. The duties ordained in the Vedas have to be performed meticulously. This system recognises neither creation nor dissolution of universe as a whole.
This school is realistic and pluralistic in nature. It believes in the plurality of infinite and eternal souls, the law of Karma and re-birth, heaven and hell and the efficacy of the sacrifice. It accepts six instruments of knowledge: pratyakṣa, anumāna, śabda, upamāna, arthāpatti and abhāva. Knowledge for them is an activity of the self and not a quality of the self as in the Nyāya system. The soul is the enjoyer and agent of Karma. It is not atomic. Though it is all pervasive, it is limited by the body.

The Mīmāṃsā system is utilitarian and is hedonistic in its appeal. The system in its early stages did not envisage the concept of Mokṣa as a value. Its ideal of liberation consists in the soul realising its true nature. In the state of mokṣa, the soul is bereft of all adjuncts which are its characteristics. The school has an activistic epistemology and holds the self as producing knowledge.

e) VEDĀNTA SYSTEM:

The Vedānta is the crown of all the systems of Indian philosophy. The different schools of Vedānta have grown from the difference in the interpretation of the prasthān-traya viz., the Upanishads, the
Bhagavadgītā and the Brahma-Sūtra or Vedāntasūtra, particularly the last. The Brahma-Sūtra have been commented upon by many celebrated Ācāryas like Śaṅkara. This has given rise to different schools of Vedānta. Each school of Vedānta strives for superiority by attempting to establish its own interpretation over others.

The Vedānta system is also described as Uttara-Mīmāṃsā. The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas. The Gītā is a part of the great epic, the Mahābhārata. Its authority rests on that it is the direct message of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The Brahma-Sūtra is the composition of Bādarāyaṇa or Vedavyāsa. The Sūtra tries to arrive at the teachings of the Upanishads by interpretation of the statements apparently contradictory.

All the schools of Vedānta system exhibit certain general characteristics. They believe in the infallible authority of the Vedas as the revealed truth and in the existence of the supreme reality, i.e., Brahma and that it is omnipotent, omnipresent, immanent and transcendental. All the schools agree that the soul is uncreated, eternal and infinite.
Each school of Vedānta has its own ontology and theory of knowledge. The Vedāntic schools believe in the moral law of Karmas as accounting for the inequality among human beings in all respects. Śaṅkara commented on the Vedānta-sūtra. His philosophy is called advaita because all things is , world and the existence of the souls are included in a single category Brahman, the real one and secondless (advitīya). Advaita is not merely philosophy, and religion, but it is metaphysics and spiritual discipline as well. It is monistic and all other major schools are dualistic and theistic in their approach.

f) SĀMKHYA SYSTEM:

According to the historians of Indian philosophy, the Sāmkhya thought is the oldest among the philosophical thoughts of India. There are references to Sāmkhya in the Upanishads, the Gītā and the Mahābhārata. The word 'Sāmkhya' means knowledge and number. Kapila is said to be the originator of this darsana in the development of which two clear stages can be marked. The pre-classical Sāmkhya, prior to Īśvara-Krishna which was theistic. The classical Sāmkhya which is realistic, pluralistic and atheistic.
The greatest contribution of the Sāmkhya system to human thought and the world of philosophy, is its conception of prakṛti. The system posits two entirely independent philosophical categories, viz., Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Thus it is dualistic and also admits the plurality of puruṣa as self-existent realities. It is partly idealistic in its outlook.

The Prakṛti is comparable to the energy of the physicist. It is a primeval category, but a composite one constituted of three strands called Guṇas: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These three are the constituents of Prakṛti in all its manifestations. The three however are not present in equal proportion in the manifestations. The proportion of Guṇas determines the nature of object.

The theory of human personality is based on the concept of the three guṇas. The entire system of animate and inanimate nature is woven out of these Guṇas, which differ in their nature. The sattva represents light and illumination of the things in nature. The rajas is ever dynamic, restless and passionate. The tamas is static and gross. The general characteristics of Guṇas are pleasure, pain and indolence, respectively.
Prakṛti is the root cause of all physical and psychical entities in the universe. The three constituents of prakṛti interact and the interaction keeps the equilibrium and that is the original state of prakṛti. Inequilibrium in prakṛti makes it evolve. Sāmkhya system explains creation as the evolution from a single category, prakṛti. It is the potential cause of all manifestations. The effect is contained in a potential form in its cause. The relation between a cause and its effect is only a case of manifestation of what is already contained in the cause. The effect is pre-existent and is prefigured in the cause. Causation is a process. Hence the doctrine is called Satkāryavāda and Pariṇāmavāda. The Sāmkhya theory of causation is the corollary of its metaphysics.

All things are in prakṛti and their manifestation is evolution. Twentyfour evolutes are manifested in the following order – prakṛti, mahat, ahāmkāra, five tanmātras, five sense organs, five motor organs and manas. Out of the five tanmātras, emerge the five elements, earth, fire, water, air and ether. These are the 24 Tattva. Prakṛti is active and dynamic and acts not for her own end but for the sake of puruṣa. The relation between puruṣa and
Prakṛti is explained by a simile of the lame and the blind (Paṅgu-andha-nyāya). Puruṣa is lame i.e., has no volition of his own. Prakṛti is blind i.e., it cannot act by itself.

While prakṛti is jāda, matter, puruṣa is the principle of consciousness. Puruṣa is the 25th Tattva, unitary and infinite in number; is neither an evolute nor an evolvent. The existence of puruṣa is established with the help of reason. The plurality of puruṣa, Sāmkhya shows, is borne out by human experience. Variety in human experience and diversity in human action are adduced as proofs for the existence of a plurality of puruṣa. Classical Sāmkhya does not provide any place for God.

Mokṣa is the realisation that the puruṣa is different from prakṛti and all experience is due to prakṛti only. Mokṣa is termed Kaivalya, aloofness.

Sāmkhya has its own theory of knowledge, like all other systems of Indian philosophy. The three pramāṇas; pratyakṣa, anumāna and śabda, are accepted. Mokṣa is the realisation that the puruṣa is different from prakṛti and all experience is due to prakṛti only. Mokṣa is termed Kaivalya, aloofness.

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**g.) YOGA SYSTEM:**

Among the systems of Indian philosophy, the Yoga-Darśana is the most widely known and popularly.
appreciated system of thought in India and abroad. It is significantly the single source for Indian psychology.

Historically considered, the Yoga has developed as complementary to the Sāṃkhya. If Sāṃkhya is theoretical, yoga is practical. Yoga accepts largely the epistemology and the ontology of Sāṃkhya. The only difference of Yoga from later Sāṃkhya is the acceptance of the existence of God, Īgvara. The Yoga is often called Sesvara-Sāṃkhya—a term which brings forth its identity of the philosophic framework with Sāṃkhya leaving Yoga to be more a regulated way of life. But this term as applied to Yoga is an error resulting from the lack of historical perspective. It is possible to say that there was a distinct school of thought called Sesvara-Sāṃkhya.23

Etymologically, the term 'Yoga' is traced to the root 'Yuj', 'to bind together', 'hold fast', 'yoke' etc. The word yoga serves in general to designate any ascetic technique and any method of meditation.

Yoga is, in short, the control of Citta, the psychic apparatus, from drifting forth as it likes.
Citta gets the knowledge of external world when it assumes any one of the five functions or vṛtti viz. pramāṇa, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidrā and smṛti. As long as the play of Citta is there, the puruṣa, is condemned to experience the distress of life, the klesas. They are: avidyā, asmitā, rāga, dveṣa and abhinivesā.

The practice of yoga involves a sound ethical life in a healthy body. A two-fold method to arrest the modifications of Citta is suggested. The first of them is abhyāsa and vairāgya. Abhyāsa is explained as the untiring and unremitting repeated effort to control the vṛttis of Citta. Vairāgya is renunciation. The other method to achieve the objective of the yoga is the discipline of eight steps, Aṣṭāṅga-yoga. The eight steps are: yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi. The first five of these 'limbs' of yoga are external aids bahiranga-sādhana, while the last three are internal aids.

Samādhi, the final step in yoga, is intense concentration. There are two types of samādhi, samprajñāta and asamprajñāta. The first one is that in which the consciousness of the object meditated upon persists; in the latter such an awareness
too will not be present. The first is differentiated into four stages: vitarka, vicāra, ānanda and asmitā. Asamprajñāta-samādhi is not merely another type of samādhi, but the higher and final stage also. In fact it can be termed as the samādhi proper. The practice of samādhi gives rise to supernatural powers as well.24

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