

PRE-BUDDHISTIC WORLD VIEWS 1

* The Brahmajala Sutta states that there were two main epistemological grounds on which the theories enumerated therein were based.

➔ Speculative and meditative.

* Brahmanical teachings : authority of the Vedic scriptures ➔ Upanishad : the use of reason => meditation

Eternalism (sassatavada)

* Believed that the soul and the world are eternal (sassato atta ca loko ca)

* Held the view that a person consists of a transient and destructible body as well as an immutable and indestructible soul ➔ body and the life principle are absolutely distinct.

* Based on speculative reasoning or meditative experience.

* Some of the Upanishads mention the use of meditative techniques to reach their conclusion about the eternity of the Atman (Atmavada)

* In Brahmajala Sutta DN 1, the Buddha shows that the meditative experiences could be misleading because it is possible for someone to misinterpret such experience.

* Thus the Buddha recommends a critical examination of all our experience without coming to hasty conclusions.

Traditionalist

* Karma magga

* Sacrifice became the central feature of the religion and came to be regarded as the only means of attaining one's desired objects and set the way to heaven. Thus sacrifices were then considered indispensable for victory in war, as a means of communicating with the gods, obtaining sons and wealth, and finally reaching heaven.

* According to the strength and power of the sacrifices performed, they get rebirth in either heaven, pitr world or hell. It is the difference of power of karma. In Brahmin literature, karma means sacrifice.

* Karmamagga ➔ Jnanamagga : throughout the vedic period, the idea that the world of heaven was not the end- and that even in heaven death was inevitable- had been growing. In one of the oldest Upanishads, the Brhadaranyaka, more emphasis was placed on the knowledge of the cosmic connection underlying the ritual.

* In the Upanishad period, the veda and sacrifice have been criticized openly. Without knowledge, the sacrifice is useless. The Mundaka Upanishad says that the vedic knowledge or practice of sacrifice is lower path. Therefore it is aparavidya. The knowledge which was gained through meditation is paravidya or super great knowledge.

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* In the Upanishad, we also find the doctrine of karma “pretty well established but not emphasized”.

* Brhadaranyaka Upanishad: According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action.

Others, however, say that a person consists of desires. As is his desire, so is his will; as is his will, so is the deed he does; whatever deed he does, that he attains.

* The doctrine of karma of the Upanishads is closely related to the doctrine of rebirth or transmigration.

* It can be analyzed into 3 prepositions

1) good karma leads to emancipation or the union with Brahma.

2) good karma leads to the happy world of the fathers (pitryana) and results in a good rebirth on this earth, and

3) bad karma leads to the kingdom of Yama and results in a bad rebirth on earth

* Brhadaranyaka Upanishad: There are three qualities that were being emphasized in the ethical teaching of the Upanishad:

1) Damyata – restraint

2) Datta – generosity

3) Dayadhvam – compassion

* The human being is amalgamation of god and animal. His responsibility is to remove the nature or quality of animal and develops the nature of god. The aim of morality is to realize the soul.

* The three major events of lives of the followers of this path of morality were:

1st they have to study the practice of sacrifice and generosity.

2nd practice of celibacy being a devout religious person and

3rd leading an ascetic life

* The Upanishadic doctrine of transmigration holds that the self (atman) which transmigrate from one birth to another is indestructible and eternal,. It does not perish at death with the body. It transmigrates from one body to another like a man changing from one set of clothes to another set. They clothes may be different, but the person puts them on is the same man.

Jainism

- * Eternalism, believed that body and soul are distinct.
- * Acceptance of a soul entity (jiva) and carried to the extreme, to them everything has a soul, even plants.
- * Soul or atman is intrinsically pure, perfect, omniscient and conscious.
- * Believed in the theories of karma and rebirth
- * Liberation is to be attained through annihilating the old karmas (nirjara) lying heavy on the soul by the practice of austerities (tapas), and to stop the influx of new karmas by the practice of self-restraint, with regard to the body, speech and mind → Attakilamathanuyoga for liberation.
 - Kiriyaavada

- * Believe that in samsaric life karma forms a subtle body round the soul and the body is a hindrance to the purity of the soul

- * Karma is not 'work or deed. It is an aggregate of material, fine particles which are imperceptible and which enter into the soul and produce changes to it. Through the actions of mind, body and speech, karmic matter gets into the soul and it tied to it through Kasayas (passions) namely anger, pride, deceit and greed.

- * Suffering is brought about by one's own action, it is not brought about by any other cause (fate, creator, chance or the like). Man is responsible for his actions or behaviour, but once an action is performed, it becomes something external to him because he is unable, under any circumstances, to avoid the consequences of that action. In a sense, man becomes a victim of his own actions.

- * Karma is the result of actions arising out of four sources
 1. attachment to worldly things such as food, dwelling place etc.
 2. it is produced by uniting one's body, mind and speech to worldly things
 3. it is also engendered by giving the reins to anger, pride, deceit or greed
 4. lastly by false belief which is a powerful source of itKarma accumulates energy and automatically works it off without any outside intervention.

- * 8 types of Karma
 1. Knowledge-obscuring
 2. Intuition-obscuring
 3. Feeling-producing
 4. Delusion-producing
 5. Longevity-determining
 6. Body-making
 7. Status-determining
 8. Obstruction-generating

*Austerities are of two kinds: external and internal.

The external austerities are of 6 kinds:

1. it implies fasting either for a limited period of time or till the separation of the soul from the body.
2. not to take full meals.
3. imposing certain restrictions upon oneself regarding the mode of begging or the nature of the donor, or the quantity of food or the way in which food is offered
4. abstinence from dainty food
5. mortification of the flesh
6. implies the choice of lonely place of stay devoid of women, eunuchs and animals

Internal austerities are of 6 kinds:

1. means repentance for seeking freedom from the sins.
2. humbleness towards the pious personalities
3. rendering of service to saints in various ways
4. ethico-spiritual study which includes learning, questioning, pondering, repeating, religious discourse or preaching
5. bodily detachment
6. Dhyana- concentration of mind on a particular object.

* 5 vows for the ascetics

1. Ahimsa (Non violence). It is the central doctrine of Jainism
2. Satya (No lying).
3. Asteya (No stealing).
4. Brahmachariya (celibacy).
5. Aparigraha (to renounce the possession of worldly things along with passions).

* Quote: The sinners cannot annihilate works by new works; the pious annihilate their works by abstention from works. → akiriyavada

* One should never desire worldly objects but sustain one's body only to annihilate one's karma.

* When the last karma has been exhausted, "the partnership between the body and the soul is dissolved" and the soul shines in its intrinsic nature of infinite faith, knowledge, bliss and power → liberation/Moksa → Omniscience is attained

* The liberation soul transcends Samsara and goes straight to Siddhasila at the apex of the world and dwells there in eternal knowledge and bliss.

* Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the Brahmajala Sutta, DN 1, mentions the Niganthas as holding the opinion that the soul has no colour, and it continues to exist after death and is free from ailments