

Cognitive tools from Vedanta Philosophy

By Praseed Pai K.T.

Sr. Solutions Architect ,UST Global

About the Presenter

- Co-Author of Books, “.NET Design Patterns” and “C++ Reactive Programming” (writing) for Packt Publishing
- Has Written a university level accredited paper on “Ontology”
- Has created a course on “Philosophical Tools for Software Engineering” (Presented @ Rubyconf India – Preconference)
- Presented in more than 200 events
- “Father” of SLANG Compiler Infrastructure
 - Slang4.net, Slang4Jvm, Slang4CPP (LLVM), SlangJs,
 - Slang4Py, Slang4VB.net
- A budding expert on comparative philosophy (Indian/Western)
- A Critique of Digital Solutioning and Technology Fads
- Sr. Solutions Architect @ UST Global

Who is Vedanta?

- In a nutshell, Philosophical school of thought based on the Upanishads
- Upanishad falls under the last section of Vedas
- Chronologically, Upanishad period is the last age of vedic period

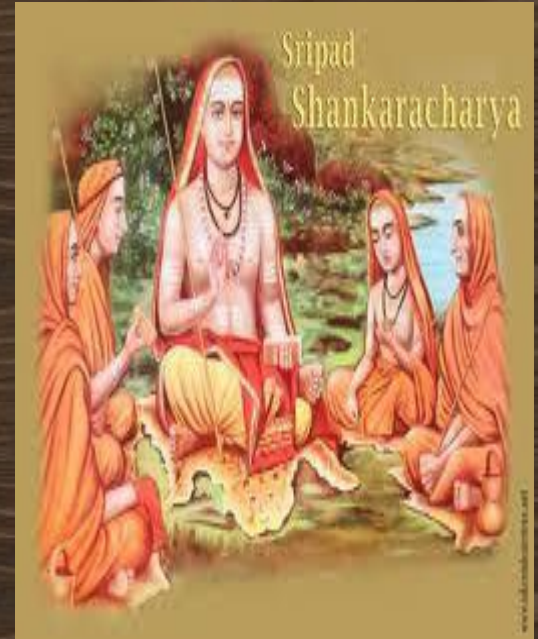
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Atman/Brahman Philosophy

- According to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is the Absolute Reality
- The Universe is called “JAGAT”
- Anything which is in a flux like JAGAT might be having a non dual, unchanging and overarching force seems to be a plausible thing ? Answer from the common sense says Yes
- If such a force exists , it will be stationary or omnipresent ? The omnipresent seems to be the most probable answer.
- if it is omnipresent, you / me and all you see around is part of that one force right?
- If that is the case, whatever is permanent in you or me is that ! (Body, mind, intellect , I conscious goes away) What remains is ATMA, which is part of the Brahman. Thus, Atman is Brahman .
- Four Mah Vakyas
 - Prajnanam Brahma (प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म)
 - Aham Brahma Asmi (अहम् ब्रह्म अस्मि)
 - Tat Tvam Asi (तत् त्वम् असि)
 - Ayam Atma Brahma (अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म)

Advaita Vedanta – Sri Sankara

- Lived between 788 AD – 820 AD
- Travelled across India to fight ritualism, heterodox schools and unified India at a spiritual level
- Wrote Commentaries on Brahma Sutra, Bhagavad Gita and Ten Upanishads
- Wrote “Prakarana Granthas” (Philosophical treatises) like Bhaja Govinda, Atma Bodha , Viveka Chudamani



Essence of Advaita, as per Sankara

**Brahma Satya, Jagan
Mithya. Jivo
Brahmaiva Na Parah**

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Three Levels of Reality/Consciousness

Three Levels of Reality

- Vyvaharika (Transactional Reality)
- Prathibhasika (Phenomenal state)
- Paramarthika (Ultimate Reality)

Three Levels of Consciousness (Avasta Traya)

- Jagrat (Conscious state)
- Swapna (Sub Conscious sate)
- Sushupti (Un-Consciouss state)
- Thuriya (Fourth state , Beyond all these , Super-Consciouss)

Epistemological Sources for Advaita

- Perception (Pratyaksha)
- Inference (Anumana)
- Comparison (Upamana)
- Testimony (Sabd)
- Postulation (Arthapathi) – Contextual Implication
- Non – Availability (Anupalabdi)

ETool #0

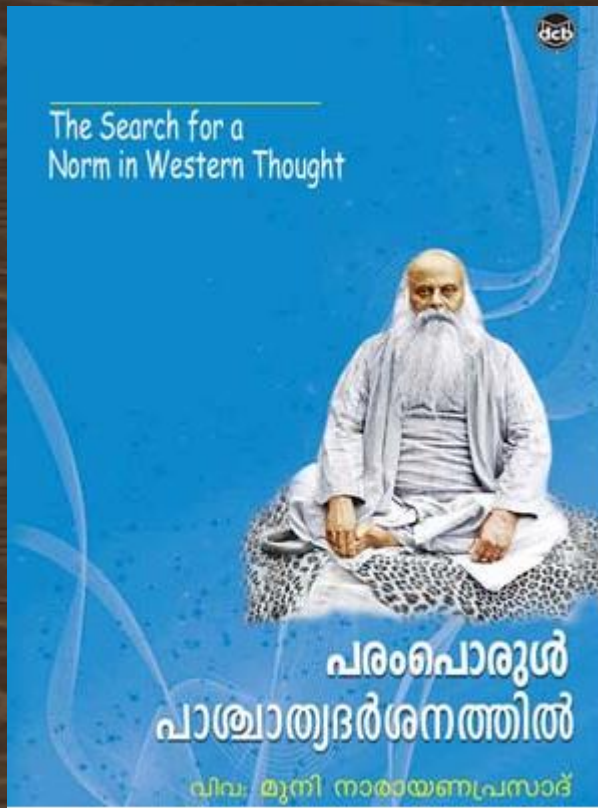
Key notions of Philosophy for discretionary power

Some key notions from Philosophy

- Reductionism vs Holism
- Materialism vs Idealism (Metaphysics)
- Empiricism vs Rationalism (Epistemology)
- Induction, deduction and abduction (Method of Science and Thinking in General)
- Science and Falsificationism
- Philosophy, Theology, Theosophy

ETool #1

IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A NORM OR THE ABSOLUTE



Importance of having Norm or the Absolute

- If there is Norm specified , we will do a relative evaluation of everything
- Abstaining from a “White Paper Contest”
- How to Interview a Candidate?

ETool #2

Purva Paksha Style of Argument

EPurva Paksha style of argument

- Understand the view of the opponent thoroughly and state them in a philosophically correct manner and without logical fallacies
- Understand and specify reason (Cause/Effect) for each of the assertions made by the opponent.
- Specify the epistemological sources for the assertions made by the opponent.
- Suggest an alternate universal premise for the statements you want to refute, along with a concrete example
- After refutation, specify new assertion about the same.

ETool #3

Logic vs Dialectics - Dialectical Approach of Vedanta discourse

Stress on Dialectics in Advaita Philosophy

Laws of Logic

- Law of Identity ($A = A$ or $A \leftrightarrow$ something else)
- Principle of Non Contradiction (A and not $A \Rightarrow$ false)
- Law of Excluded Middle (Things should be True or False, not in between)

Laws of Dialectics

- Process of Change
 - Reality is modelled as a process of change. What is true can become false in the future
- Principle of Contradiction
 - Since change is constant , Contradiction being the dynamic underlying change is also constant
- Principle of Relationship
 - Parts are Meaningful only in the relationship to the whole

ETool #4

Negation as a way to prove something

Proof by Negation in Advaita

- Neti Neti (Via Negativa)
- How to Talk about Limits of something?

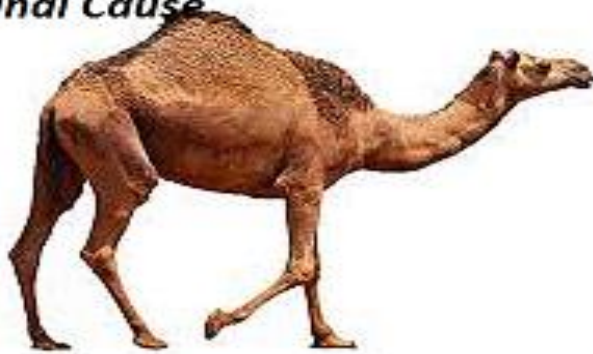


ETool #5

Prroof by Cotnradiction as tool in Vedanta

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Formal Cause



Efficient Cause



Material Cause

Proof by Contradiction in Advaita

- Is there a Creator God for this Universe?
- What is the Material Cause of the Universe?
- The Creator can be Efficient Cause or Instrument, but should not be the Material Cause. If that is the case, we need to agree that Creator is everything. Thus, something which evolves into everything will eventually vanish, as anything which evolves has to die. So creator will die like any created things
- If the creation happened with material cause which existed besides the creator, the existence of material should be equalent to the creator. Thus, if Material can exist without a creator, why cannot Universe emerge itself (will be a lingering doubt). Why creator chose to creator this universe itself has lot of paradoxes! As someone with Goal won't be Perfect. IF there is a second (Material). Then creator is not omniscient. Anything finite will evolve and die. So creator is not a possibility, as the creator will itself search for its own creator

ETool #6

Understand the Impedence mismatch between India and the West

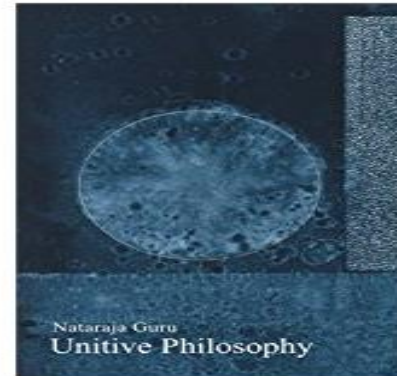
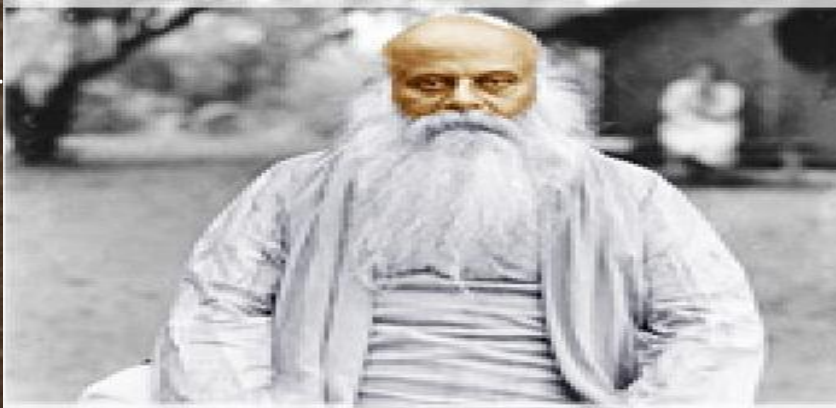
Western Thinking vs Indian Reasoning

1	Western Philosophy	Indian Philosophy
2	Objective Reasoning (Content based)	Subjective Reasoning (Context based)
3	Materialistic	Idealistic
4	Reductionist	Holistic
5	Logic	Dialectics
6	Entity	Relationship
7	Linear	Cyclical

ETool #7

Positive Affirmation of Brahman – A way to look at the world

Positive Affirmation of Brahman



सत् चित् आनन्द

Sat - Chit - Anand

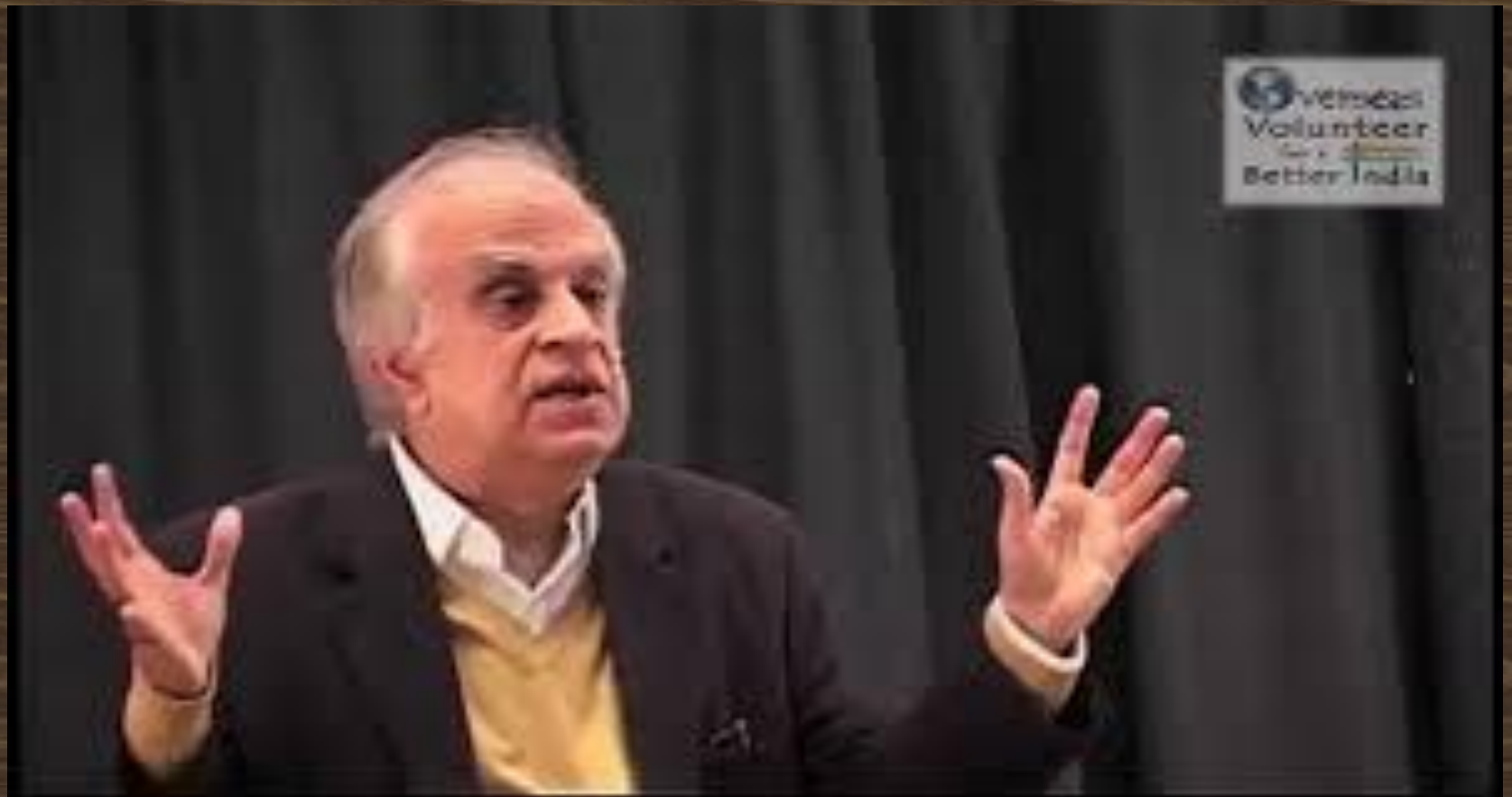
Truth - Consciousness - Bliss

***Existence-Essence-Bliss
Ontology-Epistemology
- Axiology***

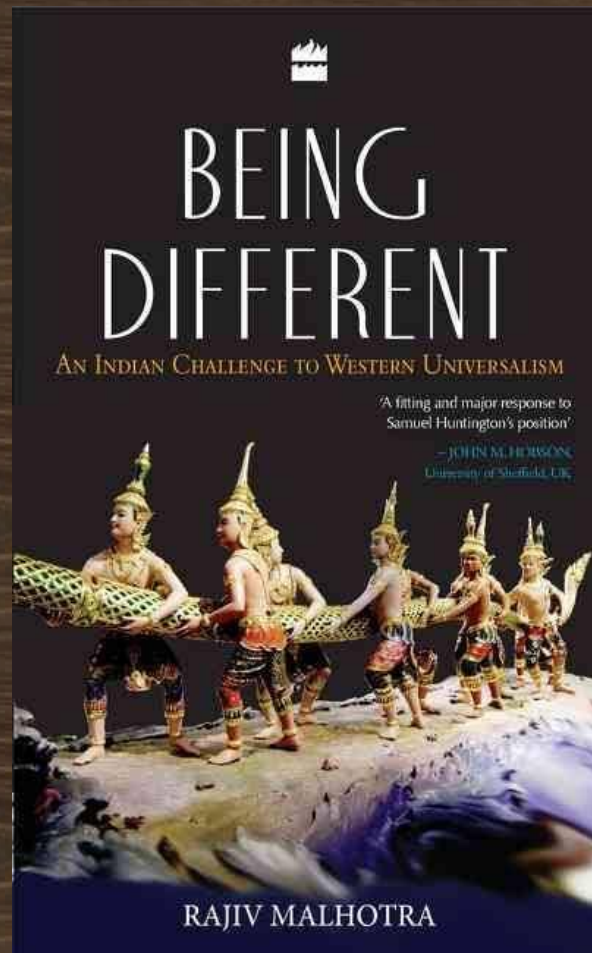
A mapping of “SAT-CHIT-ANAND”

SAT	CHIT	ANANDA
Existence	Essence	Bliss
Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology
Who am I?	What Can I know?	What should I do?
Matter	Mind	Bliss
Structure	Behavior	Function

Tool #8 - Challenging the Western Universalism



A Must read for all of us!



Western Universalism

- Renaissance Project
- A Society based on Logic and Science
- Unusual stress on “Materialism”
- Rajiv Malhotra’s Reason for reversing the Gaze
 - Lack of Historic Centrism
 - Integral Unity of Indian thought
 - Indian comfort with Chaos
 - Untranslatable in Sanskrit

ETool #9

Converse vs Communicate

Better English through Better Vernacular skill

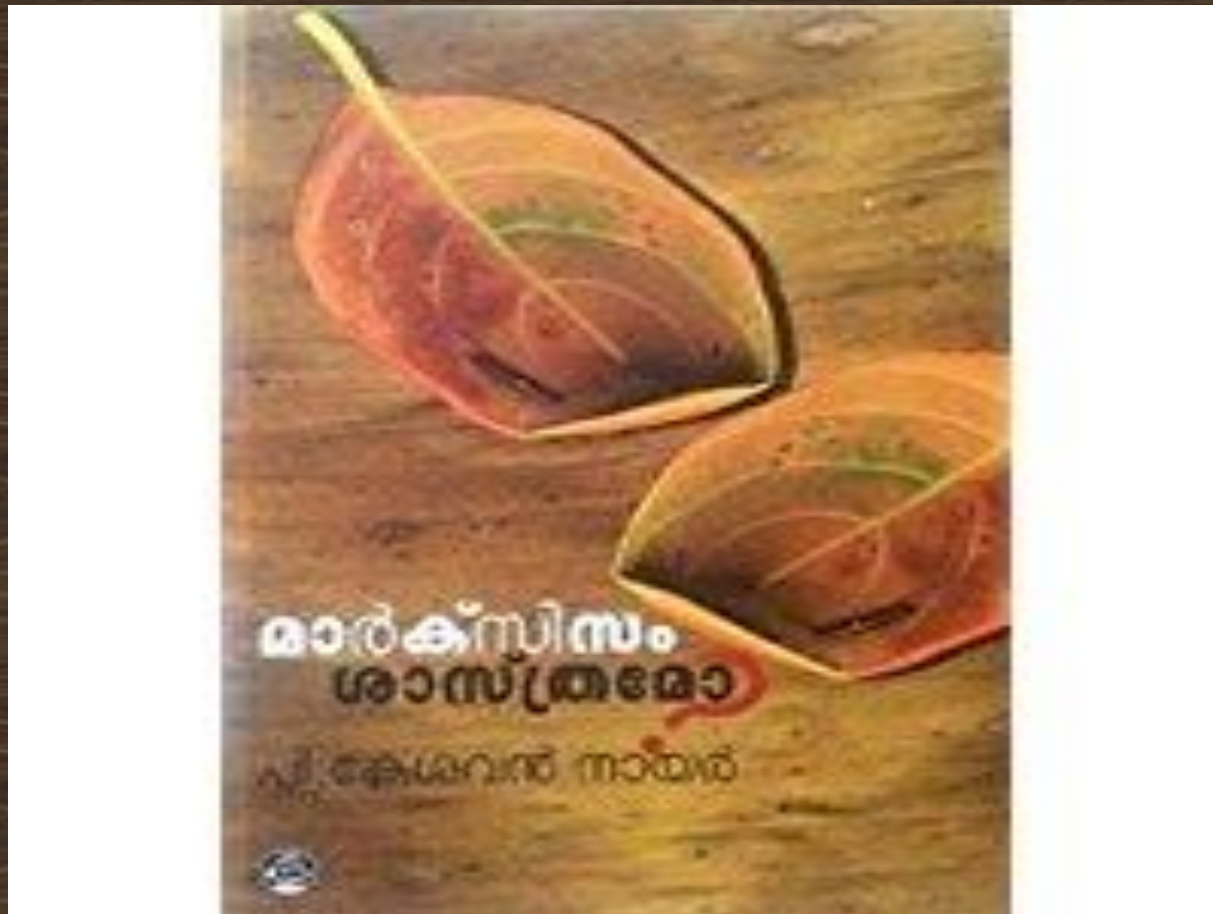
- Language is more than words, sentences and phonetics
- How to communicate Emotions really well?
- Understand the literal and the implied meaning
- ?Necessity of nuanced communication in the local language

ETool #10

Vary of the Dialectical Materialist Template as a Lens to view things



A Remarkable Book!



Marxian Philosophy and its shortcomings

- Based on a school of thought called “Dialectical Materialism”
- Hegel, Marx and DM
- Cultural Marxism (More dangerous)
- From Colonialist masters to Marxian “Intellectual”
- Why it “failed” in India?

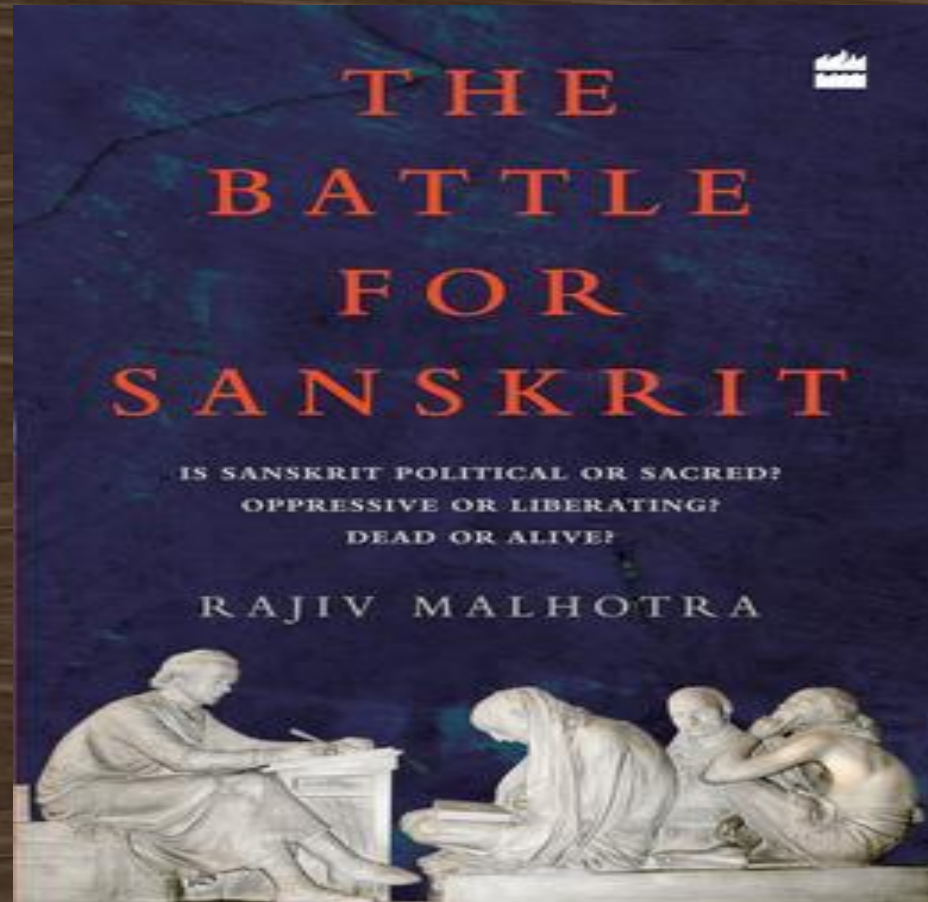
Marx's "Judeo-Xian" lineage

	Xian	Communist
1	Jehovah	Dialectical Materialism
2	Messiah	Marx
3	Chosen People	Working class (Proletariat)
4	Church	Communist Party
5	Second Coming	Revolution
6	Hell	Punishment of Capitalists
7	Heaven	Communist Rule
8	Saints	Polibebaurau
9	Martyrs	Martyrs

ETool #11

Understand Dharmic Tradition and Sanskrit

Understand Dharmic Tradition and Sanskrit



Q&A

- Any Questions ?

Cultural Imperialism and Sanskrit Language

- European Gaze on India and Hegelian “Dialectical” Template
- Buddhism projected as a anti-thesis to Vedic Teachings (as opposed to Dharma Tradition)
- Associating Sanskrit to Varna System (Thus oppressive)
- Western Indologists and how they dabble with Indian Politics

Appendices

Some Uses of Philosophy

- A source to broaden our Intellectual horizon
- Every man has a Philosophy. Studying it, makes us to align our beliefs with some kind of standard. Helps communicate ideas better
- A Grammar for Thought (If we are looking for one)
- A great Emotional Shock Absorber
- Character Transformation through deliberate study of Philosophy
- Ability to articulate complicated and deep topics succinctly
- Study of Philosophy will make you a universal citizen.
- Ability to Study vast amount of topics
- “Unusual effectiveness” of Philosophy in Professional Life

Nyaya Philosophy

- Analysis of Logic and Epistemology
- Detailed work on Anumana (“Inference”)
- Right knowledge for “Liberation” (from suffering)
- perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana), comparison (upamana), and sound/testimony (shabda) are source of valid knowledge
- Invalid knowledge involves memory, doubt, error, and hypothetical argument.
- Aligned with Vaisheshika (Merged with it)
- Cause as an invariable and un-conditional precedence for effect. (an effect does not pre-exist in it’s cause)
- Three kinds of causes
 - Material (Inherent) cause - The substance out of which an effect is produced
 - Non-Inherent cause - helps in the production of a cause,
 - Efficient cause - the power that helps the material cause produce the effect
- God is not the material cause of the universe.

Samkhya System

- A Dualistic Philosophy – Matter (Prakriti) and Eternal Spirit (Purusha)
- Right knowledge comes from separation of Purusha and Prakriti
- Four higher level functions of Purusha are
 - Buddhi (“consciousness”)
 - Ahamkara (“I-consciousness”)
 - Manas (“Mind”)
 - Prana (“Breath”)
- Infinite Purusha and Prakriti is enough (No God). Prakriti springs to action when Purusha gets connected to it.
- distinguish between universal intelligence (mahat) and individual intelligence (buddhi).
- Buddhi is that mode of energy that operates as intelligence and is the basis of all mental processes
- Purusha impinges on Prakriti to form Consciousness (Budhi) and next to evolve is Ahamkara, which deludes Purusha to think, Ego is the center of its Objective Existence.
- Ahmkara can be divided into
 - Five Gross Elements (Water, Air, Space, Earth , Fire) - Tanmatra
 - Five Fine Elements (Touch, Sound , Sight, Taste, Smell) - Mahabuthas
 - Five Organs of Perception (Skin,Ear,Eyes, Tongue, Nose) - Janendriya
 - Five Organs of Activity (Speak, Grasp, Move, Procreate,Evacuate) - Karmendriyas
 - Mind (Controller of Senses)
- Three Primal Qualities of Matter (Gunas) make up prakirti
 - Tamas (Obscurity, Ignorance,Inertia) – Darkness (InAction)
 - Rajas (Activity, Passion, Intensivity) - passion (Action – but, fails often)
 - Satvik (, Purity, Dispassion, Light) – Goodness (Equanimity)

Carvaka System (Materialist)

- Also called Lokayata (Earthly Philosophy)
- Rejects Vedas, Karma, Moksha , Immortality of Self
- Direct Perception as Source of Knowledge (Anubhava or Experience). Rejects Anumana, Upamana and Shabd as source of knowledge
- Everything in this world is some kind of Accident (Akasmika Vada or Accidentalism)
- A Materialist School of Thought
- Make merry in this world. Tomorrow, Does it Exist?
- Some Believe, Kautilya's Arthashastra could be written in a Carvaka context

Limits of Reductionism

- Assumes Sum of Parts is Equivalent to the whole
- Cannot Model Emergent Behavior due to the Inter-dependence of parts
- Limits of Machine Learning – A case study

Holism

- Whole is more than sum of parts
- Models Emergent Behavior
- Successful in Evolutionary Biology, Social Sciences and Systems Modelling
- Software Requirement Analysis
- Design of UX
 - Mental Model of the Users
 - Considering the User Value System (Culture)