

1.GAUTAM MAHARISHI

Gautam Rishi is among of the Saptarshi or Seven great sages. He was one of the Maharishis of Vedic times who discovered Mantras in Sanskrit. The Rig Veda has several 'hymns' that go with his name. Sage Gautam is one of the greatest amongst all Saptarshis (seven sages). He was the son of Rahugana. He married to Ahalya and had two sons Vamadeva and Nodhas both themselves discoverers of Mantras. Ramayan (Treta Yuga) and Mahabharatha (Dwapara Yuga) have references to Sage Gautam as he lived during these two Yugas.

Sage Gautam's sixty-year-long penance is mentioned in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. He is the progenitor of the Gautama gotra.

As per Brahmanda Purana, one of the sub-branches of the Raanaayani branch of Sama Veda was initiated by Gautam. Some famous disciples of Gautam were Shaandilya, Gārgya, and Bharadvaja. According to the Ramayana, sage Gautam once went to take a bath in the river Ganges early morning. Lord Indra, was fascinated with Gautam's wife, Ahalya. Indra went to Ahalya in the disguise of As he was escaping, sage Gautam caught him who had just returned to his Ashrama. Gautam cursed Ahalya and Indra for their act. Ahalya was converted to stone, while Indra was cursed with one thousand of female genitalia (Sahasrayoni). Later, Gautam annulled both the curse. Gautam granted Ahalya a boon that she would be liberated from the curse by the touch of the Lotus feet of Lord Ram. As a result of uttering terrible curses, Sage Gautam lost the extraordinary power he had acquired from long years of penance. To win back his power, he left his ashram and went to the Himalayas.

When the battle of Kurukshetra was going on, Dronacharya took over the commandership of the Kaurava army and got ready to destroy the entire Pandava army. At that point, Gautama entered the battle field, addressed the Drona, "stop the killings and give up arms. You are fighting a battle against your Varn-ashram dharma. Embrace death and go to heaven". Drona, giving respect to the words of these sages, gave up his arms and left the battle field. As advised by sage Gautama, he went to heaven by the Yogadharana way.

Sage Gautam used to travel all over the world with the intention of helping people. Sage Gautam had mastered the great Savitri Mantra. Sage Gautama was the one to whom the great Vyahrthimantra 'Janah' was revealed. He was a great Tapasvi. He was devoted to God and a generous host. The Narada Purana describes the story of the 12-year famine during which sage Gautam fed other sages and saved them. Once the country was reeling under a great famine, but owing to the virtue of Sage Gautam, his ashram dwellers had not experienced the calamity. Thousands of sages took refuge in his ashram. Sage Gautam welcomed everyone with open arms and played host to them. The famine continued for years, but Gautam offered them great hospitality.

2.VALMIKI

Maharishi Valmiki is the author of the holy epic 'Ramayana,' which consists of nearly 24,000 verses. He is also believed to be the author of Yoga Vasistha, a scripture that explains on a range of philosophical issues. The Valmiki Ramayana is said to be dated variously from the period 500 BC to 100 BC. At the same time, Valmiki is also considered to be the contemporary of Lord Ram. Sita took refuge in her Ashram where Lava and Kusa were born. As per an age old belief, before turning into a sage Valmiki was a robber.

Maharishi Valmiki was born in Treta Yug as Ratnakara to sage Prachetasa. At a very young age, he got lost in the forest. A hunter took him under his care. Soon Ratnakara turned out to be an excellent hunter. Ratnakara was married to a beautiful girl. As his family grew, Ratnakara found it next to impossible to feed them. As a result, he took to robbery. One day, sage Narada was passing through the jungle when he was attacked by Ratnakara. Narada played his Veena and praised the Lord. As Ratnakar gazed in Naradji's eyes, his cruel mind melted.

Sage Narada asked Ratnakara whether the family, for whom he took to robbery, will partake in his sins also. Ratnakara went home to ask the same question to his family. On being refused by his family members, he went back to sage Narada who taught him the holy name of 'Ram' and asked him to sit in meditation, chanting the name of Ram, until the time Narada came back.

Ratnakara followed his instructions and kept sitting in a meditative posture for years, during which his body got completely covered by an anthill. When Narada came to see him, he removed the anthills from his body. He told Ratnakara that his penance paid off and the Lord was pleased with him. Ratnakara was blessed with the honour of a Brahmarshi. He was given the name of Valmiki since he was reborn from the ant-hill or Valmika. Sage Valmiki built his ashram on the banks of River Ganga.

Narada visited Maharishi Valmiki in his ashram once and there: he narrated the story of Lord Rama. After that, he received a vision from Lord Brahma in which the Lord instructed him to write Ramayana in shlokas, which the sage readily followed.

Valmiki had the fortuity of receiving Lord Ram along with his wife Goddess Sita and younger brother Lakshman at his ashram. On Valmiki's request, Lord Rama built his hut on Chitrakut hill, near his ashram.

3.BHAGEERATH

Once upon a time, there lived a king called Sagara in the dynasty of Ikswaku. He was a ruler of great vigour and had fought many battles with different surrounding kingdoms. The most of the battles that he had fought, he emerged out as a winner. He married two women and eventually became a father of many children. The sons of this powerful king were equally powerful like their father. They invaded different corners of the earth and fought with everyone whoever tried to stop them.

After ruling over his dynasty for a long time, in order to become the king, he decided to perform the Horse Sacrifice (Aswamedha). Bhajeerath's sons led the horse all over the entire earth. However, while the horse was roaming around, they lost the track of horse. They looked for the horse everywhere but could not trace it anywhere. The princes of Sagara returned to the kingdom and reported the same to their father. Sagara instructed his sons that in order to perform the Aswamedya yajna, he would need the animal without which the yajna was not possible. So, he ordered them to go back and find the horse again.

On their father's instructions, the sons engaged themselves in the task of finding the horse once again. They reached the ocean and found a big hole on the bed of the ocean. The princes dug the hole deep so that it would allow them to enter and look for the horse. On entering, they found the horse near a hermitage. This hermitage belonged to Sage Kapila. When the princes arrived, the sage was found meditating. The sons were very excited to locate it and did not bother about the sage at all and shouted in joy after getting a glimpse of the horse. The sage was disturbed by their arrival and he got extremely furious. He opened his eyes ablaze and burned the princes into ashes.

Narada informed Sagara about the unfortunate news of his sons. The king was devastated to know about his sons however he was not in a condition to do any justice to his sons and his vow did not allow him to move out until the horse returned to his kingdom. The king had a grandson who was called Amsuman. Sagara called out to Amsuman and demanded his help. He instructed him to find out the path his fathers and uncles had followed and also asked him to bring back the horse.

Amsuman did not hesitate at all and set off on his journey immediately. Soon, he reached sage Kapila's hermitage. He found the sage meditating with his eyes closed. Amsuman held his patience and waited for the sage to open his eyes. Sage Kapila appreciated the boy's patience and perseverance. He wanted the boy to ask for a boon. Amsuman was clever enough and did not let the boon go in vain. He requested the sage to release the horse. The sage released the horse immediately and asked Amsuman to ask for another boon. Amsuman wanted the sage to salvage his dead father and uncles. The sage was kind enough

to grant his wish however he did not grant it immediately. He put a condition to the boy. He asked the boy to bring the water of the River Ganga from heaven to the earth.

Amsuman returned to the palace and narrated the entire incident to the king. The king happily conducted the ritual and coronated Amsuman as the king and left his palatial pleasures and started to dwell in the forests.

Amsuman had a son called Dileepa. Dileepa left his house for the Himalayas and meditated there for several years with a hope to please Ganga but could not succeed.

Dileepa's son was known as Bhageeratha. Bhageeratha was aware of the mission of his father, so he went to the Himalayas at a very young age in order to fulfil the wishes of his father.

In order to please River Ganga, he prayed for several years. Ultimately, he could please the river and it came before Bhageeratha as a goddess. Soon, River Ganga agreed to flow down to earth. However, Ganga was very powerful and it would flow very forcibly if nobody would be there to stop it. Hence it needed somebody equally forceful who would hold the river falling from the heaven. River Ganga desired Lord Shiva to be approached for the work.

Hearing about Lord Shiva, now Bhageerath started to meditate on Shiva. The lord was pleased with Bhageerath's prayers and appeared in front of him. He agreed to receive Ganga falling vigorously from heaven in his hair. Next, he prayed to Ganga and request her to flow to the earth.

Soon, Ganga started to flow from the heaven to the hair of Lord Shiva. Ganga's pride was her force and did not know how would Lord Shiva withstand her force. Shiva could understand Ganga's thoughts and hence he applied all his strength and withstood it with great vigour.

Bhageerath had to pray and meditate for years to please Lord Shiva. Finally, Lord Shiva was pleased and agreed to the request of Bhageerath.

The water that flew from the head of Shiva came to be known as the mighty Ganga River. In the end, Bhageerath helped his grandparents in their salvation too.

4.AGASTYA

Agastya is a revered Vedic sage of Hinduism. In the Indian traditions, he is a noted recluse and an influential scholar in diverse languages of the Indian subcontinent. He and his wife Lopamudra are the celebrated authors of hymns 1.165 to 1.191 in the Sanskrit text Rigveda and other Vedic literature. Agastya is considered by many to be the "father of the Tamil language", to whom is attributed the origin of the Tamil grammar text Agastyam (Agattiyam).

Agastya is a character in numerous inconsistent mythologies and regional epics including the major Ramayana and Mahabharata. He is one of the seven or eight most revered rishis in the Vedic texts, as well as a subject of reverence and controversies for being the first Tamil Siddhar in the Shaivism tradition, a non-Brahmin Sanskritist, a Dravidian, an Indo-Aryan, a protector of both the Arya and the Dasa, a maverick rishi, and so on. He is also revered in the Puranic literature of Shaktism and Vaishnavism. He is one of the Indian sages found in ancient sculpture and reliefs in Hindu temples of South Asia, and Southeast Asia such as in the early medieval era Shaiva temples on Java Indonesia. He is the principal figure and Guru in the ancient Javanese language text Agastyaparva, whose 11th century version survives.

Agastya is traditionally attributed to be the author of many Sanskrit texts such as the Agastya Gita found in Varaha Purana, Agastya Samhita found embedded in Skanda Purana, and the Dvaidha-Nirnaya Tantra text. He is also referred to as Mana, Kalasaja, Kumbhaja, Kumbhayoni and Maitravaruni after his mythical origins.

The origins of Agastya are mythical. Unlike most Vedic sages, he has neither a human mother nor a father. According to Hindu mythology, his miraculous birth follows a yajna being done by gods Varuna and Mitra, where the celestial apsara Urvashi appears. They are overwhelmed by her extraordinary sexuality, and ejaculate. Their semen falls into a mud pitcher, which is the womb in which the fetus of Agastya grows. He is born from this jar, along with his twin sage Vashistha in some mythologies. This mythology gives him the name kumbhayoni, which literally means "he whose womb was a mud pot".

Agastya leads an ascetic life, educates himself, becoming a celebrated sage. He is not born to Brahmin parents, but is called a Brahmin in many Indian texts because of his learning. In the Tamil traditions, he is considered a form of the Hindu god Shiva, one well versed in Sanskrit and a symbol of Tamil learning. His unknown origins have led to speculative proposals that the Vedic era Agastya may have been a migrant Aryan whose ideas

influenced the south, and alternatively a native non-Aryan Dravidian whose ideas influenced the north.

According to inconsistent legends in the Puranic and the epics, the ascetic sage Agastya proposed to Lopamudra, a princess born in the kingdom of Vidharbha. Her parents were unwilling to bless the engagement, concerned that she would be unable to live the austere lifestyle of Agastya in the forest. However, the legends state that Lopamudra accepted him as her husband, saying that Agastya has the wealth of ascetic living, her own youth will fade with seasons, and it is his virtue that makes him the right person. Therewith, Lopamudra becomes the wife of Agastya. In other versions, Lopamudra marries Agastya, but after the wedding, she demands that Agastya provide her with basic comforts before she will consummate the marriage, a demand that ends up forcing Agastya to return to society and earn wealth.

Agastya and Lopamudra have a son named Drdhasyu, sometimes called Idhmavaha. He is described in the Mahabharata as a boy who learns the Vedas listening to his parents while he is in the womb, and is born into the world reciting the hymns.

5.BHRIGU

Maharishi Bhrigu (Sanskrit: Bhr̥gu) was one of the seven great sages, the Saptarshis, one of the many Prajapatis (the facilitators of Creation) created by Brahma (The God of Creation), the first compiler of predictive astrology, and also the author of Bhrigu Samhita, the astrological (Jyotish) classic. Bhrigu is considered as a Manasa Putra (mind-born-son) of Lord Brahma.

Saint Bhrigu was compatriot and belonged to the times of Manu. Bhrigu had his Ashram (Hermitage) on Vadhusar river a tributary of Drishadwati river near Dhosi Hill in the Vedic state of Brahmavarta, presently on the border of Haryana and Rajasthan in India. Along with Manu, Bhrigu made important contributions to 'Manusmriti', which was constituted out of a sermon to a congregation of saints in the state of Brahmavarta, after the great floods in this area, nearly 10,000 years ago. As per Skanda Purana, Bhrigu migrated to Bhrugukuch Bharuch on the banks of Narmada river in Gujarat, leaving his senile son Chyavana at Dhosi Hill. The later date archaeological findings at Bhrigu Kutch are dated 8500 years old Temple.

He was married to Khyati, the daughter of Daksha. He had two sons by her, named Dhata and Vidhata. His daughter Sri or Bhargavi, married Lord Vishnu (Narayana).

He has one more son through Kavyamata (Usana), who is better known than Bhrigu himself – Shukra, learned sage and guru of the asuras. The Sage Chyavana is also said to be his son through Puloma.

Maharishi Bhrigu is credited as the father of Hindu astrology and the first astrological treatise Bhrigu Samhita is attributed to his authorship. This treatise is said to contain over 5 million horoscopes, in which he wrote down the fate of every being in the universe. According to popular tradition, only about a hundredth of these horoscopes have survived to this age. The Bhrigu Samhita is an astrological (jyotish) classic attributed to Maharishi Bhrigu during the Vedic period, although the available evidence suggests that it was compiled over a period of time by the various sishtyas (students in the lineage) of Maharishi Bhrigu.

Maharishi Bhrigu was the first compiler of predictive astrology, Jyotisha. He compiled about 500,000 horoscopes and recorded the life details and events of various persons. This formed a database for further research and study. This study culminated in the birth of the science (shastra) of determining the quality of time (Hora) and is the Brihat Parasara Hora Shastra. These Horoscopes were based upon the planetary positions of the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu (North Node of the Moon) and Ketu (South Node of the Moon). After that, Maharishi Bhrigu gave his predictions on different types of horoscopes compiled by him with the help of Lord Ganesha in a brief and concise manner. The total permutations/ possible horoscope charts that can be drawn with this is about 45 million.

Though it is said that these horoscope have been recorded for all mankind who were, have and will be born till eternity.

6.DADHICHI

Dadhichi, also known as Dadhyancha or Dadhyanga, is a central character in Hindu mythology. Dadhichi is primarily known for sacrificing his life so the Devas, or benevolent Gods, could make the weapon called "vajra" from his bones. After being driven out from Svarga, or heaven, by the serpent king Vritra, the Deva needed a powerful weapon to aid their fight. By making use of the vajra, made from the sage Dadhichi's bones, the Devas defeated the Asura and reclaimed heaven.

Dadhyancha or Dadhyanga in Sanskrit is a conjunction of two words Dadhya (curd) + anch (parts), which means "body parts taking strength from Curd." The name Dadhichi is a deteriorated form of Dadhyanga or Dadhyancha, as pointed out by famous ancient Sanskrit scholar Panini in his work Ashtaadhyaii.

By defeating Vritra, the personification of drought, the Deva also released water to the living beings who were innocent victims of the evil Asura. By helping the Deva defeat the Asura through his sacrifice, Dadhichi became revered among the Rishi, or Hindu sages, for his selflessness. Dadhichi symbolizes the notion that no sacrifice is too great in order to help defend the defenseless from evil. This symbolization has inspired the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest military award for gallantry, which is most often posthumously awarded to soldiers who show exceptional courage in battle.

Dadhichi is also known as a devotee of Lord Shiva. After Shiva was separated from Shakti, a goddess personifying the sacred feminine, he went to a forest to live in seclusion as a Rishi. The annual festival of Maha Shivratri marks the first time Lord Shiva appeared as a Rishi to his devotees, including Dadhichi and his disciples, who had been offering prayers to Shiva.

In the Bhagavata Purana, Dadhichi was the son of the sage Atharvan and his wife Chiti. Atharvan is said to be the author of Atharvaveda, which is one of the four Vedas (a collection of texts upon which the Hindu religion is based). Chitti was the daughter of the sage Kardam. The Dadheech Brahmins, a Brahmin clan primarily found in Rajasthan, later migrating to other parts of the world, are his descendants.

The names of Dadhichi's wife and son were Swarcha and Pippalada, respectively. Pippalada was a rishi associated with the Pippalada school of thought in Hinduism, he is known for creating the Praśna Upanishad. Dadhichi had established his ashram in Misrikh, in Naimisharanya near Lucknow, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. Naimisharanya is cited in all of the puranas as the location of his ashram, which is still in existence. The current place of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad is also one of the ancient sites of his ashram. In Ancient India, sages often traveled long distances. It may be that he stayed near Sabarmati River for some time. His name is found in the 1st mandala of the Rigveda (Bhagavata Purana, Srīmad Devi Bhagavatam and in the Puranas). Dadhichi is mentioned also in the various hymns (Richas - Suktas) of Rigveda.

Dadhichi is believed to have written the "Narayana Kavacham", a famous hymn in southern India, sung for power and peace.

7.KANADA (PHILOSOPHER)

Kanada (Sanskrit: कणाद, IAST: Kaṇāda), also known as Kashyapa, Uluka, Kananda and Kanabhuk, was an Indian sage and philosopher who founded the Vaisheshika school of Indian philosophy.

Estimated to have lived sometime between 6th century to 2nd century BCE, little is known about his life. His traditional name "Kanada" means "atom eater", and he is known for developing the foundations of an atomistic naturalism Indian philosophy in the Sanskrit text Vaisheshika Sutra. His text is also known as Kanada Sutras, or Aphorisms of Kanada.

The school founded by Kanada attempted to explain the creation and existence of the universe by proposing an atomistic theory, applying logic and realism, and is among one of the earliest known systematic realist ontology in human history. Kanada suggested that everything can be subdivided, but this subdivision cannot go on forever, and there must be smallest entities (parmanu) that cannot be divided, that are eternal, that aggregate in different ways to yield complex substances and bodies with unique identity, a process that involves heat, and this is the basis for all material existence. He used these ideas with the concept of Atman (soul, Self) to develop a non-theistic means to moksha. Kanada's ideas were influential on other schools of Hinduism, and over its history became closely associated with the Nyaya school of Hindu philosophy.

The name Kaṇāda, states Jeaneane Fowler, is a compound of Sanskrit roots Kaṇa and ad, which respectively mean "atom, particle, grain" and "to eat". Thus his popular traditional name means "atom eater".

Kanada was influential in Indian philosophies, and he appears in various texts by alternate names such as Kashyapa, Uluka, Kananda, Kanabhuk among others. In Jainism literature, he is affectionately referred to as Sad-uluka, which means "the Uluka who propounded the doctrine of six categories". His Vaisheshika philosophy similarly appears with alternate names, such as "Aulukya philosophy" derived from the nickname Uluka (literally owl, or grain eater in the night).

The century in which Kanada lived is unclear and have been a subject of a long debate. In his review of 1961, Riepe states Kanada lived sometime before 300 CE, but convincing evidence to firmly put him in a certain century remains elusive.

The Vaisheshika Sutras mention competing schools of Indian philosophy such as Samkhya and Mimamsa, but make no mention of Buddhism, which has led scholars in more recent publications to posit estimates of 6th to 2nd century BCE. The Vaisheshika Sutras manuscript has survived into the modern era in multiple versions and the discovery of newer manuscripts in different parts of India by Thakur in 1957 and Jambuvijayaji in 1961, followed by critical edition studies, suggest that the text attributed to Kanada was systematized and finalized sometime between 200 BCE and the start of the common era, with the possibility that its key doctrines may be much older. Multiple Hindu texts dated to the 1st and 2nd century CE, such as the Mahavibhāṣa and Jñānaprasthāna from the Kushan Empire, quote and comment on Kanada's doctrines. His ideas are also mentioned in Buddhist texts attributed to Aśvaghoṣa of the same period.

8.KASHYAP

Kashyap (Sanskrit कश्यप kasyap) was an ancient sage (rishis), who is one of the Saptarshis in the present Manvantara; with others being Atri, Vashishtha, Vishvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, Bharadwaja.

He was the father of the Devas, Asuras, Nagas and all of humanity. He married Aditi, with whom he fathered Agni, the Adityas, and most importantly Lord Vishnu took his fifth Avatar as Vamana, the son of Aditi, in the seventh Manvantara. With his second wife, Diti, he begot the Daityas. Diti and Aditi were daughters of King Daksha Prajapati and sisters to Sati, Shiva's consort. Kashyap received the earth, obtained by Parashurama's conquest of King Kartavirya Arjuna and henceforth, earth came to be known as "Kashyapi".

He was also the author of the treatise Kashyap Samhita, or Braddha Jivakiya Tantra, which is considered, a classical reference book on Ayurveda especially in the fields of Ayurvedic pediatrics, gynecology and obstetrics. It can be safely assumed that there were many Kashyaps and the name indicates a status and not just one individual.

The Valley of Kashmir is named after Kashyap Rishi. According to Hindu Mythology, he is the son of Marichi, one of the ten sons (Maanasa-putras) of the Creator Brahma. The Prajapati Daksha gave his thirteen daughters (Aditi, Diti, Kadru, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Tamra, Krodhavaśā, Ida, Khasa and Muni in marriage to Kashyapa. His sons from Aditi or Adityas (Sons of Aditi) were, Aṁśa, Aryaman, Bhaga, Dhūti, Mitra, Pūṣan, Śakra, Savitr, Tvāstr, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, and Vivasvat or Vivasvan, who went on to start the Solar Dynasty (Suryavansha), which later came to be known as Ikshvaku dynasty, after his great grandson, King Ikshvaku, whose subsequent kings were, Kukshi, Vikukshi, Bana, Anaranya, Prithu, Trishanku, and finally King Raghu, who gave it the name, Raghuvansh (Dynasty of Raghu), and then further leading up to Lord Ram, the son of Dashrath.

His sons from Diti were, Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha and a daughter Sinhika, who later became the wife of Vprachitti. Hiranyakashipu had four sons, Anuhlada, Hlada, Prahlada, and Sanhlada, who further extended the Daityas.

Garuda and aruna are the sons of Kashyap from his wife, Vinata

The Nāgas (serpents) are his sons from Kadru.

The Danavas are his sons from Danu.

The Bhagavata Purana states that the Apsaras were born from Kashyap and Muni.

In the family line of Kashyap, along with him there are two more discoverers of Mantras, namely, his sons Avatsara and Asita. Two sons of Avatsara, namely, Nidhrupa and Rebha, are also Mantra-seers. In the Manvantara period named 'Svarochisha', Kashyap was one of the seven Sages for that manvantara known as Saptarishis. The Indian valley of Kashmir in the Himalayas is named after him.

9.KAPILA

Kapila (Hindi: कपिल ऋषि) was a Vedic sage credited as one of the founders of the Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy. He is prominent in the Bhagavata Purana, which features a theistic version of his Samkhya philosophy. He is estimated to have lived in the 6th-century BCE.

Rishi Kapila is credited with authoring the influential Samkhya-sutra, in which aphoristic sutras present the dualistic philosophy of Samkhya. Kapila's influence on Buddha and Buddhism have long been the subject of scholarly studies.

Hindu mythology describes Kapila as a descendant of Manu, or as the grandson of the Hindu god Brahma, or as an avatar of the god Vishnu. The time at which this Kapila lived is dependent on the date of occurrence of the Kurukshetra war and the date of composition of Bhagavad Gita (traditionally 3139 BCE, but according to archaeological evidence closer to 950 BCE; and the text reached its final form in the 4th century CE), because Kapila Muni and Samkhya are mentioned in Bhagavad Gita (3.3 and 10.26). So the first conclusion is that Kapila Muni lived long before 950 BCE.

Secondly Sage Kapila is also mentioned in Svetasvatara Upanisad (5.2). This upanisad is much before Bhagavad Gita and is part of the Black Yajurveda. But Sankaracharya (in introduction) equates Samkhya with knowledge and Kapila with Hiranyagarbha (first born of Vishnu) and not with the atheist Kapila, the author of Samkhya philosophy.

Next Swami Prabhupad mentions two Kapilas in his book. According to him, Kapila in Bhagavad Gita (10.26) is not the atheist Kapila of Samkhya philosophy. Buddhists relate the atheist Kapila with the birthplace of Buddha named Kapilavastu. So we have two Kapilas: (1) Kapila Muni (vedic sage) the incarnation of Vishnu, son of Devhuti (much before 3139 BCE). (2) Atheist Sage Kapila, the founder of Samkhya Philosophy. (later than 3139 BCE but before Buddha).

The name Kapila appears in many texts, and it is likely that these names refer to different people. The most famous reference is to the Vedic sage Kapila with his student Āsuri, who in the Indian tradition, are considered as the first masters of Sāṅkhya school of Hindu philosophy. While he pre-dates Buddha, it is unclear which century he lived in, with some suggesting 6th-century BCE. Others place him in the 7th century BCE.

Kapila is credited with authoring an influential sutra, called Samkhya-sutra (also called Kapila-sutra), which aphoristically presents the dualistic philosophy of Samkhya. These sutras were explained in another well studied text of Hinduism called the Samkhyakarika.

Legends about Kapila's life are mentioned in Book 3 of the Vishnu-focussed book Bhagavata Purana. It states his parents were Kardama Muni and Devahuti. He was also the brother and teacher of Anusuya. Kapila is described, states Daniel Sheridan, by the redactor of the

Purana, as an incarnation of the supreme being Vishnu, in order to reinforce the Purana teaching by linking it to the traditional respect to Kapila's Samkhya in Hinduism. In the Bhagavata Purana, Kapila is the character who presents to his mother Devahuti, the philosophy of yoga and theistic dualism in Book 3. Kapila's Sankhya is also described through Krishna to Uddhava in Book 11 of the Bhagavata Purana, a passage also known as the "Uddhava Gita". The Book 11 of Purana, gives the following words to Kapila:

Of all trees I am the banyan tree, and of the sages among the demigods I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas I am Citraratha, and among perfected beings I am the sage Kapila. (10.26)

Kapila is described within the Puranas as an incarnation of Vishnu, an avatar come to earth to restore the spiritual balance through his teachings. Buddhist sources present Kapila as a well-known philosopher whose students built the city of Kapilavastu.

10.NACHIKETA

Nachiketa (Sanskrit: नचिकेत), also known as Nachiketā (Sanskrit: नचिकेता, Bengali: নচিকৈতা Odia: ନଚିକୈତା), or Nachiketas (Sanskrit: नचिकेतस्) or sometimes even Nachiketan (Sanskrit: नचिकेतन्) was the son of the sage Vājashravas (Sanskrit: वाजश्रवस्, lit. famous for donations) also known as Vājashravā (Sanskrit: वाजश्रवा) is the child protagonist in an ancient Hindu fable about the nature of the soul and Brahman. The story is told in the Katha Upanishad (c. 5th century BCE), though the name has several earlier references. He was taught self-knowledge, the separation of the human soul (the supreme Self) from the body, by the god of Death, Yama. Nachiketa is noted for his rejection of material desires which are ephemeral, and for his single-minded pursuit of the path of realizing Brahman/Moksha i.e. emancipation of the soul from rebirth. Vājashravasa, desiring a gift from the gods, started an offering to donate all his possessions. But Nachiketa noticed that he was donating only the cows that were old, barren, blind, or lame;[5] not such as might buy the worshiper a place in heaven. Nachiketa wanting the best for his father's rite, asked: "I too am yours, to which god will you offer me?". After being pestered thus, Vājashravasa answered in a fit of anger, "I give you to Death (Yama)".

So Nachiketa went to death's home, but the god was out, and he waited three days. When Yama returned, he was sorry to see that a Brahmin guest had been waiting so long. He told Nachiketa, "You have waited in my house for three days without hospitality, therefore ask three boons from me". Nachiketa first asked for peace for his father and himself. Yama agreed. Next, Nachiketa wished to learn the sacred fire sacrifice, which also Yama elaborated. For his third boon, Nachiketa wanted to learn the mystery of what comes after death.

Yama was reluctant on this question. He said that this had been a mystery even to the gods. He asked Nachiketa to ask for some other boon, and offered many material gains.

But Nachiketa replied that material things will last only till tomorrow. He who has encountered Death personally, how can he desire wealth? No other boon would do. Yama was secretly pleased with this disciple, and elaborated on the nature of the true Self, which persists beyond death. The key of the realization is that this Self is inseparable from Brahman, the supreme spirit, the vital force in the universe. Yama's explanation is a succinct explication of Hindu metaphysics, and focuses on the following points:

The sound Om! is the syllabus of the supreme Brahman

The Atman, whose symbol is Om is the same as the omnipresent Brahman. Smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest, the Soul is formless and all-pervading.

The goal of the wise is to know this Atman.

The Atman is like a rider; the horses are the senses, which he guides through the maze of desires.

After death, it is the Atman that remains; the Atman is immortal.

Mere reading of the scriptures or intellectual learning cannot realize Atman.

One must discriminate the Atman from the body, which is the seat of desire.

Inability to realize Brahman results in one being enmeshed in the cycle of rebirths. Understanding the Self leads to moksha

Thus having learned the wisdom of the Brahman from Yama, Nachiketa was freed from the cycle of births.

Nachiketa has been one of the most influential characters in Hinduism. Indian monk Swami Vivekananda said: "If I get ten or twelve boys with the faith of Nachiketa, I can turn the thoughts and pursuits of this country in a new channel."

11.A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, in full Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, (born October 15, 1931, Rameswaram, India—died July 27, 2015, Shillong), Indian scientist and politician who played a leading role in the development of India's missile and nuclear weapons programs. He was president of India from 2002 to 2007.

Kalam earned a degree in aeronautical engineering from the Madras Institute of Technology and in 1958 joined the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). In 1969 he moved to the Indian Space Research Organisation, where he was project director of the SLV-III, the first satellite launch vehicle that was both designed and produced in India. Rejoining DRDO in 1982, Kalam planned the program that produced a number of successful missiles, which helped earn him the nickname "Missile Man." Among those successes was Agni, India's first intermediate-range ballistic missile, which incorporated aspects of the SLV-III and was launched in 1989.

From 1992 to 1997 Kalam was scientific adviser to the defense minister, and he later served as principal scientific adviser (1999–2001) to the government with the rank of cabinet minister. His prominent role in the country's 1998 nuclear weapons tests solidified India as a nuclear power and established Kalam as a national hero, although the tests caused great concern in the international community. In 1998 Kalam put forward a countrywide plan called Technology Vision 2020, which he described as a road map for transforming India from a less-developed to a developed society in 20 years. The plan called for, among other measures, increasing agricultural productivity, emphasizing technology as a vehicle for economic growth, and widening access to health care and education.

In 2002 India's ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) put forward Kalam to succeed outgoing President K. R. Narayanan. Kalam was nominated by the Hindu nationalist (Hindutva) NDA even though he was Muslim, and his stature and popular appeal were such that even the main opposition party, the Indian National Congress, also proposed his candidacy. Kalam easily won the election and was sworn in as India's 11th president, a largely ceremonial post, in July 2002. He left office at the end of his term in 2007 and was succeeded by Pratibha Patil, the country's first woman president.

Upon returning to civilian life, Kalam remained committed to using science and technology to transform India into a developed country and served as a lecturer at several universities. On July 27, 2015, he collapsed while delivering a lecture at the Indian Institute of Management Shillong and was pronounced dead from cardiac arrest soon afterward.

Kalam wrote several books, including an autobiography, *Wings of Fire* (1999). Among his numerous awards were two of the country's highest honours, the Padma Vibhushan (1990) and the Bharat Ratna (1997).

12.DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, (born April 14, 1891, Mhow, India—died December 6, 1956, New Delhi), leader of the Dalits (Scheduled Castes; formerly called untouchables) and law minister of the government of India (1947–51).

Born of a Dalit Mahar family of western India, he was as a boy humiliated by his high-caste schoolfellows. His father was an officer in the Indian army. Awarded a scholarship by the Gaekwar (ruler) of Baroda (now Vadodara), he studied at universities in the United States, Britain, and Germany. He entered the Baroda Public Service at the Gaekwar's request, but, again ill-treated by his high-caste colleagues, he turned to legal practice and to teaching. He soon established his leadership among Dalits, founded several journals on their behalf, and succeeded in obtaining special representation for them in the legislative councils of the government. Contesting Mahatma Gandhi's claim to speak for Dalits (or Harijans, as Gandhi called them), he wrote *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (1945).

In 1947 Ambedkar became the law minister of the government of India. He took a leading part in the framing of the Indian constitution, outlawing discrimination against untouchables, and skillfully helped to steer it through the assembly. He resigned in 1951, disappointed at his lack of influence in the government. In October 1956, in despair because of the perpetuation of untouchability in Hindu doctrine, he renounced Hinduism and became a Buddhist, together with about 200,000 fellow Dalits, at a ceremony in Nagpur. Ambedkar's book *The Buddha and His Dhamma* appeared posthumously in 1957, and it was republished as *The Buddha and His Dhamma: A Critical Edition* in 2011, edited, introduced, and annotated by Aakash Singh Rathore and Ajay Verma.

Poona Pact, (September 24, 1932), agreement between Hindu leaders in India granting new rights to Dalits (low-caste Hindu groups then often labeled "untouchables"). The pact, signed at Poona (now Pune, Maharashtra), resulted from the Communal Award of August 4, 1932, a proposal by the British government which would allot seats in the various legislatures of India to the different communities in an effort to resolve the various tensions between communal interests. Dalit leaders, especially Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, supported the proposal, believing it would allow Dalits to advance their interests. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, objected to the provision of an electorate for the Dalits separate from the Hindu electorate, which in his view would weaken India in its bid for independence. Though in prison, Gandhi announced a fast unto death, which he began on September 18.

Ambedkar refused to abandon his support for separate electorates until Gandhi was near death. He and the Hindu leaders then agreed to the pact, which declined separate electorates but gave increased representation to the Dalits within the Hindu electorate for a 10-year period. Ambedkar complained of blackmail, but the pact marked the start of the movement against "untouchability" within the Indian nationalist movement.

13. MOTHER TERESA

Mother Teresa, in full St. Teresa of Calcutta, also called St. Mother Teresa, original name Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, (baptized August 27, 1910, Skopje, Macedonia, Ottoman Empire [now in Republic of North Macedonia]—died September 5, 1997, Calcutta [now Kolkata], India; canonized September 4, 2016; feast day September 5), founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to the poor, particularly to the destitute of India. She was the recipient of numerous honours, including the 1979 Nobel Prize for Peace.

The daughter of an ethnic Albanian grocer, she went to Ireland in 1928 to join the Sisters of Loreto at the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary and sailed only six weeks later to India as a teacher. She taught for 17 years at the order's school in Calcutta (Kolkata).

In 1946 Sister Teresa experienced her "call within a call," which she considered divine inspiration to devote herself to caring for the sick and poor. She then moved into the slums she had observed while teaching. Municipal authorities, upon her petition, gave her a pilgrim hostel, near the sacred temple of Kali, where she founded her order in 1948. Sympathetic companions soon flocked to her aid. Dispensaries and outdoor schools were organized. Mother Teresa adopted Indian citizenship, and her Indian nuns all donned the sari as their habit. In 1950 her order received canonical sanction from Pope Pius XII, and in 1965 it became a pontifical congregation (subject only to the pope). In 1952 she established Nirmal Hriday ("Place for the Pure of Heart"), a hospice where the terminally ill could die with dignity. Her order also opened numerous centres serving the blind, the aged, and the disabled. Under Mother Teresa's guidance, the Missionaries of Charity built a leper colony, called Shanti Nagar ("Town of Peace"), near Asansol, India.

In 1962 the Indian government awarded Mother Teresa the Padma Shri, one of its highest civilian honours, for her services to the people of India. Pope Paul VI on his trip to India in 1964 gave her his ceremonial limousine, which she immediately raffled to help finance her leper colony. She was summoned to Rome in 1968 to found a home there, staffed primarily with Indian nuns. In recognition of her apostolate, she was honoured on January 6, 1971, by Pope Paul, who awarded her the first Pope John XXIII Peace Prize. In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work, and the following year the Indian government conferred on her the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour.

In her later years Mother Teresa spoke out against divorce, contraception, and abortion. She also suffered ill health and had a heart attack in 1989. In 1990 she resigned as head of the order but was returned to office by a nearly unanimous vote—the lone dissenting voice was her own. A worsening heart condition forced her retirement, and the order chose the Indian-born Sister Nirmala as her successor in 1997. At the time of Mother Teresa's death, her order included hundreds of centres in more than 90 countries with some 4,000 nuns and

hundreds of thousands of lay workers. Within two years of her death, the process to declare her a saint was begun, and Pope John Paul II issued a special dispensation to expedite the process of canonization. She was beatified on October 19, 2003, reaching the ranks of the blessed in what was then the shortest time in the history of the church. She was canonized by Pope Francis I on September 4, 2016.

Although Mother Teresa displayed cheerfulness and a deep commitment to God in her daily work, her letters (which were collected and published in 2007) indicate that she did not feel God's presence in her soul during the last 50 years of her life. The letters reveal the suffering she endured and her feeling that Jesus had abandoned her at the start of her mission. Continuing to experience a spiritual darkness, she came to believe that she was sharing in Christ's Passion, particularly the moment in which Christ asks, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Despite this hardship, Mother Teresa integrated the feeling of absence into her daily religious life and remained committed to her faith and her work for Christ.

14.SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Vallabhbhai Patel, in full Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, byname Sardar Patel (Hindi: "Leader Patel"), (born October 31, 1875, Nadiad, Gujarat, India—died December 15, 1950, Bombay [now Mumbai]), Indian barrister and statesman, one of the leaders of the Indian National Congress during the struggle for Indian independence. During the first three years of Indian independence after 1947, he served as deputy prime minister, minister of home affairs, minister of information, and minister of states.

Patel was born into a self-sufficient landowning family of the Leva Patidar caste. Reared in an atmosphere of traditional Hinduism, he attended primary school at Karamasad and high school at Petlad but was mainly self-taught. Patel married at the age of 16, matriculated at 22, and passed the district pleader's examination, which enabled him to practice law. In 1900 he set up an independent office of district pleader in Godhra, and two years later he moved to Borsad.

As a lawyer, Patel distinguished himself in presenting an unassailable case in a precise manner and in challenging police witnesses and British judges. In 1908 Patel lost his wife, who had borne him a son and daughter, and thereafter remained a widower. Determined to enhance his career in the legal profession, Patel traveled to London in August 1910 to study at the Middle Temple. There he studied diligently and passed the final examinations with high honours.

Returning to India in February 1913, he settled in Ahmadabad, rising rapidly to become the leading barrister in criminal law at the Ahmadabad bar. Reserved and courteous, he was noted for his superior mannerisms, his smart, English-style clothes, and his championship in bridge at Ahmadabad's fashionable Gujarat Club. He was, until 1917, indifferent to Indian political activities.

In 1917 Patel found the course of his life changed after having been influenced by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Patel adhered to Gandhi's satyagraha (policy of nonviolence) insofar as it furthered the Indian struggle against the British. But he did not identify himself with Gandhi's moral convictions and ideals, and he regarded Gandhi's emphasis on their universal application as irrelevant to India's immediate political, economic, and social problems. Nevertheless, having resolved to follow and support Gandhi, Patel changed his style and appearance. He quit the Gujarat Club, dressed in the white cloth of the Indian peasant, and ate in the Indian manner.

From 1917 to 1924 Patel served as the first Indian municipal commissioner of Ahmadabad and was its elected municipal president from 1924 to 1928. Patel first made his mark in 1918, when he planned mass campaigns of peasants, farmers, and landowners of Kaira, Gujarat, against the decision of the Bombay government to collect the full annual revenue taxes despite crop failures caused by heavy rains.

In 1928 Patel successfully led the landowners of Bardoli in their resistance against increased taxes. His efficient leadership of the Bardoli campaign earned him the title sardar ("leader"), and henceforth he was acknowledged as a nationalist leader throughout India. He was considered practical, decisive, and even ruthless, and the British recognized him as a dangerous enemy.

15.J.R.D. TATA

J.R.D. Tata, in full Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata, (born July 29, 1904, Paris, France—died November 29, 1993, Geneva, Switzerland), Indian businessman and aviation pioneer who created India's first airline and oversaw the dramatic expansion of the Tata Group, India's largest industrial empire.

Tata was born into one of India's wealthiest families, but his mother was French, and he spent much of his childhood in France. As a result, French was his first language. It was while on a summer vacation that he first met aviation pioneer Louis Blériot, and the encounter kindled an interest in aircraft that eventually became a lifelong passion. After studying in France, Japan, and England, Tata served in the French army for a year. He had planned to study engineering at the University of Cambridge but was compelled to return to India to assume his role in the Tata family business in 1925. Established in 1868 by Tata's great-grandfather, the Tata Group was one of India's largest business conglomerates.

Within a year his father had died, and Tata took his place as director of Tata Sons, the group's flagship company. Tata surrendered his French citizenship in 1929, and that same year he became one of the first Indians to gain a commercial pilot's license. In 1932 Tata established Tata Air Mail, a courier service connecting Karachi, Ahmadabad, Bombay (now Mumbai), and Madras (now Chennai). In 1938, when Tata took charge as chairman of the Tata Group, he was, at age 34, the youngest member of the Tata Sons board. He rebranded his airmail service as Tata Airlines, making it India's first domestic carrier, and in 1946 he changed the rapidly growing company's name to Air India. Over the next half-century Tata strengthened existing businesses such as steel, power, and hotels and drove the group to diversify its interests to include chemicals, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, financial services, and information technology. When Air India was nationalized in 1953, Tata was retained as chairman, a position that he held until 1978. In 1991 he stepped down from Tata Sons at age 87; the more than 80 companies that constituted the Tata Group empire generated approximately \$4 billion annually.

Under his guidance, several institutions were established to promote scientific, medical, and artistic endeavours in India. These included the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Tata Memorial Hospital, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the National Institute of Advanced Sciences, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts. He was an early advocate of family planning (politically an often unpopular position), and in 1971 he created the Family Planning Foundation. Tata received a number of awards, including the Padma Vibhushan (1957), the Daniel Guggenheim Medal for aviation (1988), and the United Nations Population Award (1992). In 1992 he received India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna.

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Bihari also spelled Behari, (born December 25, 1924, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India—died August 16, 2018, New Delhi, Delhi), leader of the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and twice prime minister of India (1996; 1998–2004).

Vajpayee was first elected to parliament in 1957 as a member of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), a forerunner of the BJP. In 1977 the BJS joined three other parties to form the Janata Party, which led a government that lasted until July 1979. As foreign minister in the Janata government, Vajpayee earned a reputation for improving relations with Pakistan and China. In 1980, following a split in the Janata Party, Vajpayee helped the BJS to reorganize itself as the BJP. In 1992 he was one of the few Hindu leaders to speak out against the destruction of the historic mosque at Ayodhya by anti-Muslim extremists.

Vajpayee was sworn in as prime minister in May 1996 but was in office only 13 days, after failing to attract support from other parties. In early 1998 he again became prime minister, in elections in which the BJP won a record number of seats, but he was forced to make a shaky alliance with regional parties. In 1999 the BJP increased its seats in parliament and consolidated its hold on government.

Although considered a pragmatist, Vajpayee assumed a defiant posture in the face of Western criticism of India's testing of several nuclear weapons in 1998. He had earlier been praised for his conciliatory gestures toward India's Muslim minority. In 2000 his government began an extensive program of divestment of public funds from several key state-run industries. In 2002 Vajpayee's government was criticized for its slowness in reacting to riots in Gujarat in which some 1,000 people (primarily Muslims) died. Nevertheless, in 2003 Vajpayee made a concerted effort to resolve India's long-running feud with Pakistan over the Kashmir region. Under his leadership, India achieved steady economic growth, and the country became a world leader in information technology, though the poorer elements of Indian society often felt left out of the economic prosperity. In 2004 his coalition was defeated in the parliamentary election, and he resigned from office.

Vajpayee announced his retirement from politics at the end of 2005. In late December 2014 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

LATA MANGESHKAR

Lata Mangeshkar, (born September 28, 1929, Indore, British India—died February 6, 2022, Mumbai, India), legendary Indian playback singer noted for her distinctive voice and a vocal range that extended over more than three octaves. Her career spanned eight decades, and she recorded songs for the soundtracks of more than 2,000 Indian films.

Mangeshkar's father, Dinanath Mangeshkar, was a noted Marathi stage personality popularly known as Master Dinanath. Lata, who was the eldest of five siblings, was introduced to music at an early age. She recorded her first song at age 13 for Vasant

Joglekar's Marathi film *Kiti Hasaal*, though her song did not make the final edit. Mangeshkar was trained from age five by her father, a disciple of the Gwalior gharana (a community of performers who share a distinctive musical style), and she was also tutored by maestros such as Aman Ali Khan Sahib and Amanat Khan. As a teenager, she struggled to help support her family and to establish herself as a playback singer in the Hindi film industry of the 1940s, at a time when the profession was dominated by such divas as Shamshad Begum and Noor Jehan.

After Mangeshkar recorded the hit "Uthaye ja unke sitam" in *Andaz* (1949), her destiny was sealed. From that point on she voiced the musical parts for every major leading lady, representing every generation of Hindi cinema from Nargis and Waheeda Rehman to Madhuri Dixit and Preity Zinta. Music directors such as Naushad Ali, Madan Mohan, and S.D. Burman composed tunes specifically to exploit the potential of her wide-ranging soprano. Mangeshkar's singing contributed a great deal to the commercial success of such films as *Mahal* (1949), *Barsaat* (1949), *Satyam shivam sundaram* (1978), and *Maine pyar kiya* (1989). Notable among her concert performances was her wartime rendition of the poet Pradeep's patriotic song "Ae mere watan ke logo," which moved Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to tears.

In 1991 Mangeshkar was credited with having made 30,000 solo, duet, and chorus-backed song recordings in 14 Indian languages between 1948 and 1987. She won four Filmfare awards (*Filmfare* is a noted Indian film magazine) for her song "Aaja re pardesi" from the film *Madhumati* (1958), for "Kahin deep jale kahin dil" from *Bees saal baad* (1962), for "Tumhi mere mandir" from the film *Khandaan* (1965), and for "Aap mujhe acchhe lagne lage" from the film *Jeene ki raah* (1969). She was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, one of India's highest civilian honours, in 1999, and two years later she became the second film celebrity (the first was Satyajit Ray in 1992) to receive the Bharat Ratna (2001), India's highest civilian award for performance of the highest order in any field. Mangeshkar's sister Asha Bhosle was also a noted playback singer.