



A Comparative Study of Indian and Greek Myths with its Philosophical Roots

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ABSTRACT

This comparative study explores the mythological traditions of India and Greece from their philosophical roots. Indian mythology is rooted in its Dharmic traditions, which convey profound metaphysical concepts such as, Rta/Rita (Cosmic Order), dharma (Moral Order), karma (cause and effect), purushartha (goals of human life), moksha (liberation) and so on. On the other hand, Greek mythology is blended with the philosophical inquiries of thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, that deals with the nature of existence, fate, justice, and morality in the stories of gods and heroes. This study focuses on the relationship between the myths and its philosophical authenticity through the key mythological sources from the both traditions. Despite cultural differences, Indian and Greek myths reveal common concerns about the nature of the cosmos, human suffering, and quest for meaning. This study also investigates how these myths reflect and shape the cultural discourse of their times.

Introduction

Myths have been always an important tool to frame narratives for the socio-political outcome. In modern literary and cultural studies, this trend has become more relevant as a result of the battle of



“cultural-supremacy”. Therefore, recently, Myths have more fascinated the creative writers rather than other genres and challenges their creativity. India and Greece have been always incredible nations in terms of their rich mythological heritage. The foundation of the ancient mythological heritage of Indian is deeply rooted in its dharmic traditions. These dharmic traditions share a few common “Core-Philosophies”. These “Core-Philosophies” are unique and shape Indian mythology and culture different across the globe. On the other hand, the foundation of the Greek mythology is in the philosophical ideas from figures like Plato and Aristotle which deals with mythological themes of fate, justice, and the nature of existence.

Philosophy always acts as a benchmark of the authenticity for mythology, but sometimes, the wild interpretations of myths dissociate them from their philosophical authenticity. In this way it loses its essential touch. So this paper investigates on the subject that how philosophical authenticity is essential, without philosophy myths have no sense. This comparative study would explore the rich narratives and mythological traditions of ancient cultures, focusing on their philosophical foundation. Thus, this comparative study will offer new insights into the cultural exchanges between ancient civilizations and their enduring influence on contemporary society.

Research Problem

This research explores how myths function as the vehicle for philosophical inquiries, and how they further shape the cultural-structure of societies. This research also aims to demonstrate that it is philosophical-enquiry that always determines the mythical understanding. Thus, this paper will definitely contribute as a deeper understanding on how myth and philosophy interplay in different cultural contexts.

Review of Literature

Hossain, Amir (2022), on *Rethinking Greek Mythology and Indian Mythology*, this paper aims to look at Greek myth of *Iliad* and Indian myth of *Ramayana* as a comparative study to foster common similarities based on plot construction and art of characterization. The paper aims to motivate emerging scholars and novice researchers by making a comparative study between two great epics.

Sharma, Surbhi (2021), on *Rethinking of the status of Goddesses in Indian and Greek Mythology: A Prefatory Comment*, this paper is a closer scrutiny of goddesses in Greek and Indian mythological traditions which shows that every culture was dominated by male gods although goddesses were elevated to the status of mothers or deities. In both Greek and Indian mythologies gods, who we



worship, have ill-treated goddesses. This paper highlights the sufferings faced by goddesses or their subjugation in Greek and Indian mythologies

Devi, Seema (2021), on *Demystifying Shiva Myth in works of Devdutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi: An indigenous study*, in this paper, researcher's aim is to study demystification of the myths related to Shiva done by Devdutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi in an indigenous mode. Shiva's blue throat, Trident, his Third eye, Aum, Ganas, Halahal, Snow clad mountain that enwrap the persona of Shiva are elucidated.

Bhattacharji, Sukumari (2016), on *The Indian theogony: a comparative study of Indian mythology from the Vedas to the Puranas*, the Indian Theogony by Sukumari Bhattacharji, Published by Motilal Banarsidass is an in-depth analysis of Indian mythology, tracing its development from the Vedic to the Puranic periods. The book delves into the evolution of gods and goddesses within Hindu traditions, examining how these deities and their narratives reflect shifts in religious and philosophical thought. Bhattacharji provides a scholarly comparative framework, highlighting parallels between Indian and other ancient mythologies, while exploring the cultural and historical context of these myths.

Baindur, Meera (2015), on *Nature in Indian philosophy and cultural traditions*, this book offers a nuanced exploration of how nature is perceived and intertwined with philosophical and cultural practices in India. Drawing from classical texts, Baindur delves into diverse perspectives on ecology, ethics, and spirituality, examining nature as both a metaphysical and practical entity. Her interdisciplinary approach bridges ancient traditions with contemporary environmental concerns, making this book insightful for both scholars and environmentalists. It's a valuable read for those interested in the deep ecological wisdom inherent in Indian philosophy.

Research Gap

Despite the extensive scholarship on both Indian and Greek mythologies, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive comparative study that focus on their philosophical foundation. Existing study tends to examine these mythologies in isolation, emphasizing their cultural, religious, or literary significance without exploring their philosophical connections. Thus, this gap leaves a significant opportunity to explore not only the mythological narratives but their philosophical discourse in both traditions as well.

Methodology



Since this research paper is interdisciplinary in nature, so the basic methods of qualitative research: such as, close reading, interpretations, explication, comparison, and contrast will be suitable for this. As a major approach, Indian Philosophy like Vedanta, Samkhya, and others will be used to justify the points. A few important theories that will be used are, cultural-studies, poststructuralism, narratology and so on. The research will revolve round the subject, Indian and Greek myths, their interpretations, its impact, and evaluating them critically from the perspective of their respective philosophy.

Comparative Study of Indian and Greek myths

Sources of Greek Myths

A. Homeric Epics

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are some of the earliest and most significant sources of Greek mythology. The *Iliad* tells the story of the final weeks of the Trojan War, focusing on the hero Achilles, while the *Odyssey* follows the journey of Odysseus as he returns home from the war. These epics offer insights into Greek conceptions of heroism, fate, and the intervention of gods in human affairs.

B. Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*

Hesiod, a near-contemporary of Homer, provides a genealogical account of the gods in his work *Theogony*. It details the creation of the universe and the lineage of the gods, starting from primordial beings like Chaos to the rise of Zeus as the king of the gods. Hesiod's *Works and Days* offers practical advice for living but also includes mythological elements, such as the story of Pandora, which explains the origin of human suffering.

C. Pindar's Odes

Pindar, a lyric poet, composed odes to celebrate victors in the Greek athletic games. His works are significant because they often include mythological narratives related to the achievements of the gods and heroes. Pindar's use of myths serves to connect the victors with divine favor and historical legends, blending reality with the fantastical.

D. Tragic Plays

Greek tragedies by playwrights like Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides dramatize myths and explore their themes through the lens of human suffering and moral dilemmas. Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, for instance, depicts the fall of the House of Atreus and the eventual establishment of justice in Athens.



Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is another iconic tragedy that explores themes of fate, free will, and divine retribution.

E. Apollodorus' *Library*

Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* (Library) is a comprehensive summary of Greek mythology, containing detailed genealogies and narratives about the gods, heroes, and important events. Though it is a later source, it is invaluable for understanding the myths, as it compiles stories from various ancient sources and presents them in a cohesive format.

F. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

While Ovid was a Roman poet, his *Metamorphoses* is one of the most influential works on Greek myths. The poem retells many of the classic myths, focusing on transformations of humans into animals, plants, and constellations as punishment or reward by the gods. Ovid's retelling often adds a psychological and emotional depth to the characters.

G. Pausanias' *Description of Greece*

Pausanias was a Greek traveler and geographer whose work *Description of Greece* provides a detailed account of the myths and local traditions associated with specific places in ancient Greece. His work is significant because it preserves local versions of myths that might have otherwise been lost, offering a window into how myths were interpreted and celebrated in various regions.

H. Homeric Hymns

These hymns, dedicated to different gods like Apollo, Demeter, and Hermes, provide insight into the characteristics, attributes, and narratives associated with these deities. Though their authorship is unknown, the Homeric Hymns are important for understanding how the gods were worshipped and what myths were central to their cults.

Philosophical Roots of Greek Myths

A. Cosmogony and Cosmology in Greek Mythology

Greek myths provided some of the earliest accounts of the universe's origin and structure. Hesiod's *Theogony* offers a genealogical explanation of the cosmos, beginning with primordial entities like Chaos, Gaia (Earth), and Uranus (Sky). These early myths laid the groundwork for later



philosophical speculations about the nature of the cosmos and the gods' roles in it. Pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Thales and Anaximander, were deeply influenced by mythological concepts of the cosmos, though they sought to provide more rational, natural explanations for cosmic phenomena.

Thales, for instance, proposed that water was the fundamental substance of the universe, a notion possibly derived from the mythological association of water with creation in myths such as the birth of Aphrodite from the sea. Similarly, Anaximander's concept of the *apeiron* (the boundless or infinite) can be compared to the primordial chaos of Greek myths, which was an unformed, boundless state that preceded the ordered cosmos (Kahn, 60).

B. The Role of Fate (Moirai) and Necessity

One of the central themes in Greek mythology is the concept of fate (*moira*), which even the gods are subject to. In Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, fate is an unchangeable force that guides the lives of humans and gods alike. Philosophically, the role of fate sparked discussions about free will and determinism. Early philosophers such as Heraclitus accepted a notion similar to fate, referring to it as the *Logos*—a rational principle that governs the cosmos and human affairs (Wheelwright, 95).

Plato also engaged with the idea of fate, particularly in his *Republic*, where he uses the myth of Er to illustrate the cycle of rebirth and the soul's journey, emphasizing the role of choice in shaping one's destiny. While Plato acknowledged the existence of fate or necessity, he also argued for the soul's agency in shaping its own moral destiny.

C. Ethical and Moral Lessons in Myth

Greek myths often conveyed ethical and moral lessons, as seen in stories of hubris and divine retribution. Myths such as the tale of Prometheus, who defied Zeus to bring fire to humanity, are not only stories of rebellion but also commentaries on human progress, the limits of power, and the consequences of challenging divine authority.

Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle used myths as allegories to explore ethical questions. Plato, for example, critiques mythological tales that depict the gods as deceitful or immoral in his dialogue *Republic* (Plato, trans. 199). In Book II of *Republic*, Plato famously proposes that myths should be censored in the ideal state because they portray the gods as behaving in ways unworthy of divine beings, which could have a negative influence on the morality of citizens.



In contrast, Aristotle approached the ethical content of myths differently. In his *Poetics*, he emphasized the value of tragedy, a genre deeply rooted in mythological narratives, in teaching moral lessons. Aristotle argued that tragedy could evoke ‘catharsis’, a purging of emotions, by allowing audiences to experience pity and fear through the misfortunes of mythological heroes like Oedipus or Agamemnon (Aristotle, trans. 19). Through this process, individuals could gain moral insights and emotional clarity.

D. Myth, the Divine, and Philosophical Conceptions of God

Greek mythology offered a polytheistic vision of the divine, with gods embodying different aspects of nature and human experience. This view was in tension with the emerging philosophical monotheism of thinkers like Xenophanes, who criticized the anthropomorphic depiction of the gods in myths. Xenophanes rejected the portrayal of gods with human flaws and argued for a single, unchanging divine being that is unlike mortals in form or thought.

Plato’s conception of divinity, particularly in the *Timaeus*, is a significant departure from mythological polytheism. In this dialogue, Plato presents the Demiurge, a divine craftsman who creates the universe according to the Forms—eternal, perfect ideals that exist beyond the physical world. This vision of a rational, benevolent deity who orders the cosmos contrasts sharply with the capricious and often vengeful gods of Homer and Hesiod (Cornford, 37).

Similarly, Aristotle’s concept of the *Unmoved Mover*—a perfect, self-sufficient being that causes all motion in the universe without itself being affected—represents a rational, philosophical interpretation of divinity, distinct from the anthropomorphic gods of myth. The *Unmoved Mover* is pure actuality and thought, existing as the ultimate cause of all things, a far cry from the emotional and conflicted deities of Greek stories.

E. Philosophical Allegories in Myth

Many Greek myths can be interpreted as allegories, containing deeper philosophical truths. Plato frequently uses myths as allegories in his works to communicate philosophical ideas. For example, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato uses the myth of the charioteer to explain the structure of the soul, comparing it to a charioteer driving two horses—one representing noble passions and the other base desires (Plato, trans. 215).



Similarly, the myth of the cave in Plato's *Republic* serves as a powerful allegory for human ignorance and the philosopher's journey toward knowledge and enlightenment. The prisoners in the cave, who mistake shadows for reality, represent ordinary people, while the philosopher, who escapes the cave and sees the sun (symbolizing the Form of the Good), represents the individual who attains true knowledge.

Sources of Indian Myths

A. Vedas

The Vedas are among the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism, composed in Sanskrit and forming the foundation of Hindu religious thought. The four Vedas—*Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, and *Atharvaveda* are primarily collections of hymns, prayers, and rituals dedicated to various deities. Key mythological figures like Indra, Agni, and Soma are celebrated in these texts. The Vedas offer insight into early Indo-Aryan religion and mythological concepts, including cosmic order (*Rta*) and the role of the gods in maintaining the universe (Doniger, 198).

B. Upanishads

The Upanishads are philosophical texts that explore metaphysical concepts and the nature of the self (Atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman). Though primarily concerned with spiritual wisdom, the Upanishads also contain mythological elements. For instance, the *Chandogya Upanishad* includes the story of Svetaketu's journey to understanding the nature of the self, which serves as a metaphor for spiritual enlightenment (Olivelle, 75).

C. Puranas

The Puranas are a vast genre of ancient Indian texts that provide a more detailed and systematic account of Hindu cosmology, mythology, and religious practices. The most important Puranas include the Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, and Markandeya Purana. These texts contain stories about the creation of the universe, the genealogies of gods and heroes, and the exploits of deities like Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi. The Bhagavata Purana, for instance, is famous for its detailed account of the life of Krishna, one of the most beloved figures in Hindu mythology.

D. Mahabharata



The *Mahabharata* is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, attributed to the sage Vyasa. It tells the story of the Kurukshetra War between two royal families, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The epic contains a wealth of mythological content, including stories of gods, demons, and legendary heroes. It also includes the *Bhagavad Gita*, a philosophical dialogue between Prince Arjuna and the god Krishna, which discusses duty, righteousness, and the nature of divinity (Fitzgerald, 14).

E. Ramayana

The *Ramayana*, attributed to the poet Valmiki, is another major Sanskrit epic. It narrates the story of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and his battle against the demon king Ravana. The *Ramayana* is rich in mythological themes, such as divine intervention, the battle between good and evil, and the hero's journey. The text also portrays deities like Vishnu and Hanuman and explores concepts of dharma (duty) and ideal kingship (Goldman, 84).

F. Buddhist and Jain Mythology

In addition to Hindu myths, India's religious landscape includes the mythologies of Buddhism and Jainism. In Buddhist mythology, stories about the Buddha's previous lives *Jataka tales* are significant, portraying him as a compassionate figure who takes various forms to teach moral lessons. Jain mythology includes tales of the Tirthankaras, spiritual teachers who achieve enlightenment and guide others on the path to liberation (Jaini, 68). These stories, like those of Lord Mahavira in Jainism or the Buddha's sacrifice in Buddhism, are imbued with moral and ethical teachings.

G. Tantric Texts

Tantric traditions, both in Hinduism and Buddhism, have contributed significantly to Indian mythology, particularly in their understanding of the divine feminine and esoteric rituals. Tantric texts often reimagine traditional myths, focusing on the goddess (Shakti) and her various manifestations, such as Kali, Durga, Tara and Parvati. The *Devi Mahatmya* from the Markandeya Purana, for instance, is a key text that depicts the goddess Durga's battle against the buffalo demon Mahishasura, symbolizing the victory of good over evil (Coburn, 91).

H. Regional Myths and Folk Traditions

Indian mythology is not confined to religious texts but also includes regional folklore and oral traditions. In various parts of India, local deities, spirits, and heroes are worshipped and celebrated through folk tales, songs, and festivals. For instance, in South India, the stories of Lord Murugan



(Kartikeya) are central to Tamil mythology, while in Bengal, myths surrounding the goddess Kali and Durga are prominent. Folk epics such as the *Pabuji ki Phad* in Rajasthan or the *Kathakali* dance-dramas of Kerala often depict local versions of mythological stories, blending classical themes with regional beliefs. The foundation of all Indian performance-art is based on Bharat's *Natya Shastra*.

Philosophical Roots of Indian Myths

A. Philosophy of Brahman (the ultimate reality) and Cosmology

Brahman, in Hindu philosophy, represents the ultimate, unchanging reality that transcends all physical and metaphysical phenomena. It is described as the source, sustainer, and end of the universe in many of the Upanishads, which are foundational philosophical texts. Brahman is both immanent, present within all beings, and transcendent, beyond all material forms. The *Chandogya Upanishad* famously declares, "Tat Tvam Asi" (That Thou Art), suggesting the unity of the individual soul (**Atman**) with Brahman (Olivelle, 189). This philosophy underscores the non-dualistic (**Advaita**) view that all beings and the universe are manifestations of Brahman, and that realization of this unity leads to liberation (**moksha**) from the cycle of birth and rebirth (**samsara**).

In terms of cosmology, Brahman is considered the formless essence from which all creation arises. The creation of the universe is cyclical, where Brahman periodically manifests the cosmos through its creative power (Shakti), which is embodied in gods like Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the destroyer). This cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction emphasizes that all forms are transient, while Brahman remains eternal and immutable (Radhakrishnan, 137).

B. Philosophy of Samsara and Moksha (Liberation)

Samsara and Moksha are fundamental concepts in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain philosophy, representing the cycle of existence and the ultimate goal of liberation from it.

Samsara refers to the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that all beings are subject to. This cycle is driven by karma, the moral law of cause and effect, where one's actions in previous lives influence their current and future existences. Samsara is considered a state and desire of being in the mundane which causes suffering (*dukkha*) due to the impermanence and inevitable attachment to worldly desires and experiences (Gethin, 88). In this state, individuals are bound by ignorance and attachment, repeatedly reincarnating without true spiritual progress.



Moksha, on the other hand, is the liberation from samsara. It is the realization of one's true self (Atman) as being identical to the ultimate reality (Brahman), as emphasized in the Upanishads. Achieving moksha involves transcending ego, ignorance, and desires, leading to a state of eternal bliss and unity with the divine. In this state, the individual is freed from the cycle of reincarnation and the suffering associated with it. Different paths, including jnana yoga (knowledge), bhakti yoga (devotion), and karma yoga (selfless action), are offered in Hindu philosophy as means to attain moksha.

C. Philosophy of Niskama Karma

Niskama Karma, a central concept in the Bhagavad Gita, refers to selfless action performed without any attachment to the results. It emphasizes the importance of doing one's duty (karma) for its own sake, without being motivated by personal gain, rewards, or outcomes. This philosophy is integral to the path of karma yoga (the yoga of action), where the focus is on fulfilling one's responsibilities according to dharma (righteous duty) while renouncing the fruits of one's actions (Easwaran, 207).

Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, advises Arjuna to act without attachment, stating that individuals have control over their actions but not over the results. By focusing on the action itself and not the outcome, one can achieve spiritual liberation (moksha). This concept is considered a way to transcend the cycle of birth and death (samsara) by cultivating a sense of detachment and inner peace.

D. Philosophical Allegories in the Ramayana and Mahabharata

The *Ramayana* is often interpreted as an allegory of dharma (righteous duty) and the ideal conduct of individuals in different roles—king, husband, son, and brother. Rama, the protagonist, is seen as the embodiment of perfect dharma, who sacrifices his personal happiness for the greater good. His exile and eventual battle with Ravana symbolize the triumph of good over evil and the adherence to duty even in the face of adversity (Goldman, 54). Sita, on the other hand, symbolizes purity and devotion, and her trials allegorically represent the soul's journey through suffering toward spiritual liberation.

The *Mahabharata* is an allegory of the moral complexities of life, where dharma is not always clear-cut. The Bhagavad Gita, a key philosophical text within the Mahabharata, presents a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna that explores the nature of duty, ethics, and selfless action (nishkama karma). Arjuna's internal conflict about fighting his own kin represents the larger human struggle between personal emotions and the duties imposed by society and morality. Krishna's guidance to Arjuna emphasizes the importance of acting in accordance with one's dharma without attachment to outcomes, reflecting deeper philosophical ideas of karma and moksha (liberation).



E. Philosophical Symbolism in the Puranas

The Puranas are a rich source of philosophical symbolism that convey complex metaphysical ideas through mythological narratives. These texts encapsulate key Hindu philosophical concepts such as samsara, karma, and dharma, using vivid allegories to explain cosmic processes, divine intervention, and the moral order of the universe.

The Puranas frequently describe the cyclical nature of time through the concepts of kalpas (cosmic ages) and yugas (epochs). These cycles represent samsara—the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The periodic destruction and recreation of the universe by deities like Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma symbolize the impermanence of worldly existence and the eternal nature of the cosmos (Rocher, 86). This cyclical process reflects the philosophical view that all existence is transient, but the cosmic order endures.

F. Philosophical Foundation Jainism and Buddhism

In Jain and Buddhist traditions, mythology serves as a means to convey philosophical doctrines, especially concerning non-violence (ahimsa) and the path to enlightenment. Jain mythology, for instance, revolves around the Tirthankaras, spiritual teachers who have achieved liberation from samsara. The stories of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, emphasize the principles of asceticism and renunciation, which are central to Jain philosophy. Mahavira's life exemplifies the philosophical commitment to non-violence, truth, and self-restraint (Jaini, 198).

Similarly, Buddhist mythology, particularly in the *Jataka Tales*, portrays the previous lives of the Buddha in various forms (human and animal) where he perfects virtues like compassion, generosity, and wisdom. These myths illustrate the Buddhist philosophy of ethical conduct, compassion, and the gradual progression toward enlightenment. The life of the Buddha itself is a mythic narrative with deep philosophical implications, emphasizing the impermanence of life, the causes of suffering (dukkha), and the cessation of suffering through the Eightfold Path (Gethin, 298).

G. Philosophy of Shakti and Tantric Mythology

Tantric traditions, particularly those in Hinduism and Buddhism, bring a unique perspective to Indian philosophy by focusing on the power of the divine feminine (Shakti) and the union of opposites. Myths of goddesses like Kali, Durga, Tara and Parvati symbolize the dynamic energy of the universe and the balance between destruction and creation. The *Devi Mahatmya* from the *Markandeya Purana* is a key



text that describes the goddess Durga's battle against demons, symbolizing the triumph of the divine over chaos and ignorance (Coburn, 191).

Comparative Analysis of Indian and Greek Myths

Both Indian and Greek traditions attempt to explain the same stuff from different approaches because philosophical contexts differ.

A. Cosmology and Creation Myths

In Indian mythology, creation is often depicted as cyclical, with the universe going through cycles of creation and destruction. This is evident in texts such as the *Rig Veda*, particularly in the *Nasadiya Sukta* (Hymn of Creation), where the universe is said to arise from a primordial state of chaos or nothingness.

In contrast, Greek mythology tends to present creation in a more linear fashion, starting with chaos, followed by the birth of the gods and the formation of the earth. Hesiod's *Theogony* describes the emergence of Gaia (Earth), Uranus (Sky), and other primordial deities from Chaos, setting in motion a hierarchy of divine beings that eventually leads to the reign of Zeus (West, 1988).

B. Gods and Divine Intervention

In Indian mythology, the gods are often seen as manifestations of a singular divine principle, Brahman. Deities such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva represent different aspects of the cosmic process creation, preservation, and destruction, respectively.

In contrast, Greek gods, while powerful, often behave in more capricious and anthropomorphic ways. The gods of Olympus, such as Zeus, Hera, and Athena, are prone to jealousy, vengeance, and love, reflecting human emotions. They frequently intervene in human affairs, as seen in Homer's *Iliad*.

C. Concept of Fate and Free Will

In Indian mythology, fate is closely tied to the concept of 'karma'—the idea that one's actions in this life and previous lives shape their future circumstances. However, unlike the deterministic view of fate in Greek mythology, Indian philosophy allows for the possibility of altering one's destiny through good actions, spiritual practice, and divine intervention.



In Greek mythology, fate (moira) is an inescapable force that governs both gods and humans. In the *Iliad*, even Zeus is bound by fate, as he cannot alter the predetermined outcomes of events like Hector's death (Fowler, 2010).

Thus, while both traditions acknowledge the role of fate, Indian mythology provides more opportunities for individual agency and spiritual progression, whereas Greek mythology often portrays fate as an inescapable force.

D. Heroism and the Hero's Journey

In Indian mythology, heroes like Rama and Arjuna are also valorised for their strength and bravery, but their heroism is more closely tied to their adherence to 'dharma'. In the *Ramayana*, Ram is not just a warrior but the embodiment of righteous action, even when it requires personal sacrifice.

In Greek mythology, heroes are often defined by their physical prowess, courage, and, importantly, their tragic flaws. The stories of heroes like Achilles, Odysseus, and Hercules centre on their extraordinary deeds, but also on their struggles with pride, rage, or desire.

In essence, Greek heroes are celebrated for their individual achievements and often experience tragic downfalls, while Indian heroes are models of moral and ethical behaviour, emphasizing the importance of duty over personal glory.

E. Moral and Ethical Teachings

In Indian mythology, the concept of 'dharma' is central to ethical living. Myths and epics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* serve as moral guides, illustrating how one should behave in various roles, whether as a king, warrior, or family member.

Greek myths, by contrast, often explore the consequences of moral failures, particularly hubris (excessive pride). In tragedies like *Oedipus Rex*, the downfall of the protagonist is directly related to a failure to recognize limits, whether imposed by the gods or by fate.

Conclusion

The myths of ancient India and Greece reflect the philosophical understanding of their respective societies. Indian mythology emphasis on 'dharma', 'karma', and the cyclical nature of the universe, it integrates philosophical ideas about moral action and spiritual progress. Greek mythology, on the other hand, focus on fate, heroism, and the capricious nature of the gods, presents a more tragic and human-



centred worldview. While both traditions use myths to explore deep philosophical questions, Indian myths tend to emphasize spiritual evolution and ethical duty, whereas Greek myths focus on the tension between human ambition and the limits imposed by fate and the gods. Philosophically, Indian myths are deeply entwined with metaphysical concepts such as the nature of the soul (atman), while Greek myths often wrestle with ethical dilemmas, the pursuit of knowledge, and the limitations of human power. Despite these differences, both traditions reflect an intrinsic human desire to understand the cosmos, human purpose, and the divine.

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