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**(Previous Year)**

**Paper I**

**INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

**(1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Half)**



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- Unit 3: Jaina Anekan Tavada**
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- Unit 3: Vedânta Philosophy of Çânkara**
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### **Paper Introduction:**

The book contains two half of the first paper (Indian Philosophy), M.A. in Philosophy under Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL, Gauhati University). The first half of this book contains five units and the second half contains four units. The first half of this book mainly concern with ancient Indian Philosophy and focused on theoretical and realistic views of Indian Philosophical thought. The second half of this book mainly deals with Vedânta Philosophy which means end of Veda. Here in this half we shall mainly discuss Vedânta Philosophy of Sankara and Ramanuja. An attempt is also made to introduce you with the Sâmkhya and Yoga Philosophy. Thus, this book has the following two half and nine units—

#### **First Half:**

- Unit 1: Vedic Thought**
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- Unit 1: Sâmkhya**
- Unit 2: Yoga**
- Unit 3: Vedânta Philosophy of Çankara**
- Unit 4: Vedânta Philosophy of Râmânuja**

# First Half

# UNIT 1

## VEDIC THOUGHT

### CONTENTS:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Different Phases of Vedic Theism
- 1.4 Theories of Creation
- 1.5 Vedic Concept of God
- 1.6 Summing Up
- 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

### 1.1 Introduction

This unit will be discussing philosophy of the Vedas. The Vedas are the earliest documents of Indian thought.

This unit will help you to know about various phases of the vedas. Various gods who are personified as the powers of nature and what is purusa sukta and Nasadiya Sukta.

As Indians it is necessary to know about vedas. Because the origin of Indian philosophy may be easily traced in the vedas. The vedas are the earliest documents of Indian civilization whatever we may think of them half formed myths or think of obscure groupings or immature compositions, still they are the source of the later practices and philosophies of the Indo-Aryans, and study of them is necessary for a proper understanding of subsequent thought.

We find freshness and simplicity and an inexplicable charm about these first efforts of the human mind to comprehend and express the mystery of the world.

There are four Vedas, Rg. Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The first three are the original and the Atharva Veda is a later addition. Each Veda has three divisions, - the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, and the Aranyakas. The Samhita are mostly verses. Brahamans are commentaries. The Aranyakas are forest treaties. The Aranyakas mark the transition from the ritualistic to philosophic thought. We find here a mystic interpretation of the Vedic sacrifices. The concluding portions of the Aranyakas are called the Upanisads. These are intensely philosophical and spiritual regarded as the cream of the Vedic philosophy.

We find little philosophy in the pre-Upanisadic thought i.e. in the Vedic thought. But the seeds of the important philosophical trend might be easily traced there. There is a gradual development of the philosophical thought from the Mantras and the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas to the Upanisads. We can notice a transition from the naturalistic and anthropomorphic polytheism through transcendent monotheism to immanent monism in the Vedic thought.

In the vedic thought we find that monotheism leads to monism and we have both views in the vedic hymns.

We have an account of the creation of the world by an omnipotent god out of pre-existent matter. Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning from the great water pervaded the universe. He evolved the beautiful world from the shapeless chaos was already existed. But question arises how chaos can produce Hiranyagarbha? Who created primeval water?

## 1.2 Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- *discuss* Vedic Philosophy;
- *explain* different Phases of Vedic Theism;
- *analyse* Purusa Sukta and Nasadiya Sukta; and
- *describe* different Gods in Vedic Thoughts.

## 1.3 Different Phases of Religion of the Vedas

The Vedas represent different phases of religious thought. e.g. polytheism, organised polytheism, henotheism, monotheism and monism.

**Polytheism** : The different powers of nature are sometimes worshipped individually. This phase of religious thought is not naturalism, but anthropomorphic polytheism. The Gods are supernatural and super human powers and endowed with spiritual qualities. They preside over particular phenomena of the nature, but they are not confined to them. They pervade the whole nature. This is the element of polytheism in the Vedas.

**Organized Polytheism** : Sometimes the Gods are invoked and worshipped in groups. Sometimes two Gods, from or more Gods are invoked, sometimes all Gods are worshipped and believed that they are the partial aspects of one supreme God. This phase of religious thought may be called organized polytheism.

**Henotheism** : Among the multitude of Gods any one is treated as the supreme God for the time being when he is worshiped. E.g. Agni may be identified with many Gods, and treated as superior to them. This phase of religious thought is called henotheism.

**Monotheism** : Ṛta harmonizes the Gods with one another and pave the way for monotheism Ṛta is the physical order. It governs the uniformities of nature. Ṛta is the moral, social lay. The Gods follow the laws of Ṛta. It points to the existence of one supreme God. Though it is an impersonal order, it upholds the Gods and the world.

**Monism :** Monotheism leads to monism. Reality is one though it is manifested in diverse ways. There is one reality, sages call it by various names. They call it Agni, Yama. 'That one' (tadekam) is not personal, it is neither male nor female, it is neuter. It is an impersonal principle. There was nothing other than it. The Nasadiya Sukta clearly bring out the monism of the R̥g. Veda. 'That one' (tad ekam) was later identified with the Âtman or Brahman in the Upanisads.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What are the four vedas.
2. What are the different parts of the vedas.
3. Are the Upanisads the main part of vedic philosophy?

#### 1.4 Theory of Creation

When we arrived at monotheistic level the question arises as to whether god created the world out of his own nature without any pre-existent matter or through his power acting on pre-existent matter. We have both views in the Vedic hymns. We have an account of the creation of the world by an omnipotent god out of pre-existent matter. Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning from the great water which pervaded the universe. He evolved the beautiful world from the shapeless chaos which was already existed. But question arises how chaos can produce Hiranyagarbha? Who created primeval water? According to Manu, Hari vanṣa and the purāṇas, God was the author of chaos. He created it by his will and deposited a seed in it. He himself was born as the Brahma or the creator God. 'I am Hiranyagarbha, the Supreme Spirit himself become manifested in the form of Hiranyagarbha'. Thus the two eternally co-existed substances seem to be the evolution of the one ultimate substratum.

**Nasadiya Sukta:** In Nasadiya Sukta, we are introduced to the vedic conception of the impersonal absolute. In this hymn there is a representation of the most advanced theory of creation. According to it there was no existent or non-existent. The existent in its manifested aspect was not then. But for this we can not call it the non-existent. Because it is the positive being from which the whole existence arrives.

**Absolute is beyond time and space :** The absolute reality which in at the back of the whole world can not be characterised by us as either existent or non-existent. First cause of all is older than the whole world, with the sun, moon, sky and stars. It is beyond time, beyond space, beyond age, beyond death and beyond immortality.

**Tapas is the moving force of being into existence :** Within that absolute consciousness there is the fact of affirmation or positing of the primal 'I'. The 'I' will be a bare affirmation, a mere abstraction, unless there is another of

which it is conscious. If there is no other, there is no ego. The ego implies non ego as its condition. This opposition of ego and non-ego is the primary anti thesis, and the development of this implication from the absolute is said to be by tapas. Tapas is the 'rushing forth', the projection of being in to existence. Though this tapas we get being and non-being, the I and the not-I, the active purusa and the passive prakrti, the formative principle and the chaotic matter. The rest of the evolution follows from the interaction of these two opposed principles.

According to this hymn, desire constitutes the secret of the being of the world. Desire or kâma is the sign of self consciousness. It is the germ of the mind. It is the ground of progress. The self-conscious ego has desires developed in it by the presence of the non-ego. Desire is more than thought. It is the bond of binding the existent to the non-existent. The unborn, the one, the eternal breaks in to a self-conscious Brâhma with matter, darkness, non-being, zero, chaos opposed to it. Desire is the essential feature of this self-conscious purusa.

In the last part of this hymn it is said that the gods came later than this creation, who thus knows whence it arose?' The phrase 'who knows'? Bring out the mystery of creation which has led later thinkers to call it mâyâ.

Here in this hymn we have perhaps the first flash of a conception of the Indeterminate absolute, which is the reality undergoing all things, but is in itself.

The Nasadiya hymn, overcomes the dualistic metaphysics like purusa and prakrti in a higher monism. It makes nature and spirit both aspects of the one Absolute. The absolute itself is neither the self nor the other. It is neither self-consciousness of the type of 'I' nor unconsciousness of the type of not 'I'. It is higher than both these. It is a transcending consciousness.

### **Stop to Consider:**

The Vedic thinkers were not unmindful of philosophical problems of the origin and nature of the world. In order to find out the ground of all changing things they like the ancient Greeks, looked upon water, air etc. as the ultimate elements out of which the variety of the world is composed.

Water is said to develop into the world through the force of time, samvastara or year, desire or kama, intelligence or purusa warmth or tapas. sometimes water itself is derived from night chaos, tamas or air. These theories soon related themselves to the non-physical, and physics by alliance with religion and became metaphysics.

In the pluralistic stage the several gods, Varuna, Indra, Agni, Viswakarman, were looked upon as the authors of the universe. The method of creation is differently conceived.

Sometimes the gods are said to create the world as the carpenter builds a house. The question is raised as to how the tree or the wood out of which the world was built was obtained. At a later stage the answer is given that Brâhmna is both tree and wood. Sometimes the gods are said to create the world by the power of sacrifice.

When we get to the monotheistic level the question arises as to whether god created the world out of his own nature without any pre-existent matter or through his power



acting on eternally pre-existent matter. The former view takes us to the higher monistic conception, while the later remains at the lower-monistic level and we have both views in the vedic hymns.

### **Purusa Sukta:**

Indian monotheism retains the belief that God is one. He has various manifestations in the many gods, any one of which may be true. Worshipped as a form of the supreme deity. Even to day we have in India the divergent cults saivism, vaishnavism and the like flourishing side by side and almost every one of them is at bottom based on a philosophy of one supreme god, all-inclusive reality. Indian, monotheism from the vedic age till now, has believed rather in the unity of the gods in god, then the denial of gods for god. Hence Indian monotheism has a peculiarity which distinguishes from the Christian or mahomedan.

Belief in the unity of all gods which we find in the Rg.-veda is only a part of a greater thought which also we find there in a clear form, viz- the unity of all existence. In the famous purusasukta which is even now daily recited by every Brahmin, the vedic seer visualizes for the first time in the human history, the organic unity of the whole universe.

All existence earth, heavens, planets, gods, living and non-living objects- is conceived here as the parts of one great person (purusa) who pervades the world, but also remains beyond it. In them all that is, has been and will be, are united.

The imagination of the Indian brings out the greatness of his god by giving him huge dimensions the man had a thousand heads, a thousand eyes thousand feet, he converted the earth on all sides and stretched ten fingers' length beyond it.

The poetic mind conjures up a vast composition pointing out the oneness of the whole, world and god. This hymn is not however, inconsistent with the theory of creation from the one absolute which we find in the Nasadiya hymn.

We have in this hymn the poetic insight not only into the universe as one organic whole, but also in to be supreme reality which is both immanent and transcendent. God pervades the world, yet he is not existed thereby. He remains beyond it.

### **Stop to Consider:**

According to the hymns of the Rg Veda; the world is not a purposeless phantasm, but is; just the evolution of God. wherever the word maya occurs, it is used only to signify the might or the power. but sometimes maya are employed to signify the will of the demons, this word is also used in the sense of illusion or show. The Rg Veda postulates only one water. It is the primeval matter from which others slowly develop.

In the Nasadiya hymn it is said that there was originally non-being from out of which being grew. The first condition is not absolute non-existence, for the hymn admits the reality of the one breathing breathless by itself. It is their way of describing

the absolute reality, the logical ground of the whole universe. Being and non-being are correlative terms and can not be applied to the one which is beyond all opposition.

Purusa Sukta is not however inconsistent with the theory of creation from the One Absolute as in the Nasadiya hymn. Here also the supreme reality becomes the active purusa for it is said: "From the Purusa Virat was born, and from Virat again Purusa". He is the Absolute as well as the self-conscious I.

**SAQ:**

Explain Purusa Sukta. (Within 100 words)

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### 1.5 Vedic Concept of God

The worship of nature is the earliest form of vedic religion. The earliest seers of the vedic hymns delighted in sights of nature in their own simple unconscious way. To them nature was living presence with which they could hold communion. Some glorious aspects of nature became the windows of heaven, through which the divine looked down upon the godless earth. The moon and the stars, the sea and the sky, the dark and the nightfall were regarded as divine.

In the vedas the creative power is assigned to Agni, Indra of Sama.

**Varuna :** Varuna is the god of the sky. The name is derived from the root 'var', to 'cover' or 'compass'. (According to Max Muller-Varuna is not supreme not even he is the one, without a second He is almost always represented in fellowship with Mitra without any indication that either Varuna is greater than Mitra, Mitra greater than Varuna.

Mitra is his constant companion. Varuna and Mitra, when used together, express night and day, darkness and light. Varuna's figure is steadily transformed and idealised till he becomes the most moral god of the Vedas. He watches over the world, punishes the evildoers and forgives the sins of those who implore his pardon. The sun is his eye, the sky is his garment and the storm is his breath? Rivers flow by his command; the sun shines, the star and the moon are in their courses for fear of him. By his law heaven and earth are held apart. He upholds the physical and the moral order. He is no capricious god, but a 'dhrtavrata', one of fixed resolve. He is omniscient, and as such knows the flight of the birds in the sky, the part of the ships on the ocean and the course of the wind. Not a sparrow can fall without his knowledge. He is the supreme God, the god of gods.

**The sun :** The sun has many names, such as Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Pushan, Aditya, and others. It is interesting to watch how each of these names grows by itself into some kind of active personality; and in a study of the Vedic religion, it is most essential to keep each as much as possible distinct from the others. For our purposes, however, it is more important to see how they all branch off from a common source, and were meant originally to express on and the same object, viewed only from different points.

The ordinary descriptions of the sun, whether under his name of Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Pushan, or Aditya, are such that any one, with a poetic feeling for nature, would easily understand them. Surya, the sun, is called the son of the sky. The dawn is spoken of both as his wife and as his daughter, and as the dawn is likewise a daughter of the sky, she might be represented as his sister also. Indra again is sometimes represented as having given birth both to the sun and to the dawn. From another point of view, however, the same dawns are said to have given birth to the sun.

**Mitra :** Mitra again was originally the sun, only in a new light, and therefore with a new name. He is chiefly the light and cheerful sun of the morning, or the day, sun and day being often used synonymously even in modern languages, such as in yester-sun for yesterday. Sometimes a poet says that Savitri is Mitra, or that he at least performs the same work as Mitra. This Mitra is most frequently invoked in conjunction with Varuna. Both stand together on the same chariot, which is golden-coloured at the rising of the dawn, and has iron poles at sunset.

**Vishnu :** Again, another name for the sun is Vishnu. That he, too, was originally a solar being, is most clearly indicated by his three strides, his position in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. But his physical character soon vanishes behind the splendor of his later divine functions.

**Pushan :** On the contrary, always retains a more humble position. He was originally the sun as viewed by shepherds. His horses if we may say so, in imitation of the Vedic poet, are goats, he carries an ox-goad as his sceptre, and a golden dagger (vasi). His sister, or his beloved is Surya, the sun or dawn, conceived as female deity, and like other solar deities, he too sees everything.

**Aditya :** Aditya in later times a very common name of the sun, is used in the Veda chiefly as a general epithet of a number of solar deities. I call them solar because, though professor Roth looks upon them as purely ethical conceptions, they clearly reveal their solar antecedents, in some of the Vedic hymns. Thus Surya in an Aditya occurs by itself, it may often, particularly simply by the sun.

The Asvins are invoked in about fifty hymns and in parts of many others. They are inseparable twins, the bright lords of brilliance and lustre, strong and agile and fleet as eagles. They are the children of Heaven, and the Dawn is their sister. It is supposed that the phenomenon of twilight is their material basis. That is why we have two Asvins corresponding to the dawn and the dusk. They gradually become the physician of gods and sun.

We have already mentioned Aditi from whom the several gods called Adityas are born. Aditi literally means 'unbound or unlimited.'

**Aditi :** Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the intermediate region, Aditi is father and mother and son, Aditi is all the gods and the five tribes, Aditi is whatever has been born, Aditi is whatever shall be born.' Here we have the anticipation of a universal all-embracing, all-producing nature itself, the immense potentiality or the prakrti of the Samkhya philosophy. It corresponds to Anaximander's Infinite.

**Agni :** Agni is second in importance only to Indra, being addressed in at least 200 hymns. The idea of Agni arose from the scorching sun, which by its heat kindled inflammable stuff. The physical aspects are evident in the descriptions of Agni as possessing a tawny beard, sharp jaws and burning teeth. Wood or ghee is his food. He shines like the sun dispelling the darkness of light. His path is black when he invades the forest and his voice is like the thunder of heaven. He is dhumaketu, having smoke for his manner. Fire is seen to dwell not only on earth in the hearth and the altar but also in the sky and the atmosphere, as the sun and the dawn and as lighting in the clouds. He soon becomes a supreme god, stretching out heaven and earth.

**Soma :** Soma is the god of inspiration, the giver of immortal life. Miserable man requires something of other to drown his sorrows in, When he takes holds of an intoxicating drink for the first time, a thrill of delight possesses him. He is mad, no doubt, but he thinks it is a divine madness. What we call spiritual vision, sudden illumination, deeper insight, larger charity and wider understanding- all these are the accompaniments of an inspired state of the soul.

**Parjanya :** Parjanya was the Aryan sky god. He seems to have become Indra after the Aryans entered India, for Indra is unknown to the others members of Aryan family. Parjanya is the god of cloud and rain. He rules as god over the whole world; all creatures rest in him; he is the life of all that moves and rests.

**Indra :** Indra is the most popular god in the Vedas. When the Aryans entered India, they found that, their prosperity was a mere gamble in rain. The rain god naturally becomes the national god of the indo-Aryans. Indra is the god of the atmospheric phenomena, of the blue sky. His naturalistic is clear. He is born of water and cloud. He brings us light and life, gives us vigour and freshness. Heaven bows before him and the earth trembles at his approach. Gradually Indra's connection is the sky and the thunder-storms is forgotten. He becomes the divine spirit, the ruler of all the world and all the creatures. Who sees and hears everything. He inspires man with their best thought and impulses. The god of the thunder-storm vanquishing the demons of drought, and darkness becomes the victory of god of battles of the Aryans in their struggles with the natives.

**Maruts :** Maruts by the side of Indra there are several minor deities representing other atmospheric phenomena, Vata and Vayu, the wind, the Maruts, the

terrible storm-gods, and the Rudra the howler. The Maruts are the deifications of the great storms so common in India. They are powerful and destructive usually, but sometimes they are also kind and beneficent.

**Rudra :** Rudra has a very subordinate position in the Rg. Veda, being celebrated in three entire hymns. He holds a thunder-bolt in his arms and discharges lighting shafts from the skies. Later he becomes Siva.

We also come across certain goddesses similarly. Ushas and Aditi are goddesses. The river Sindhu is celebrated as goddesses one him, and Sarasvati, the first name of a river, gradually becomes the goddess of learning. Vak is the goddess of speech. Aranyani is the goddess of the forest. The Vedic Aryan prayed to the Sakti or the energy of god.

**Tendency towards Monotheism :** Attempts however, were made by the Vedic Aryans also to establish some kind of supremacy among their gods. We have seen that certain gods, such as Savitri, the sun. Varuna, and others, were conceived not only as having revealed the world by their light, but as having spread out heaven and earth, as having measured, and at last as having made of them. They received the epithets not only of visvakakshas, all seeing, visvavyakas, all embracing, visvavedas, all-knowing, but also of visvakarman, maker of all things, and Pragapati, lord of all men. These two epithets, after a time, were raised apparently in to names of new deities.

**SAQ:**  
How various Gods are personified? Discuss.(within 100 words).  
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**Check Your Progress :**  
1. What is Henotheism?  
2. What are the different phases of the Religion of the Vedas?  
3.. Henotheism is developed into Monotheism. Is it true?

**1.6 Summing Up**

After going through this unit now you are in a position to analyse the Indian vedic philosophy. It is known to you that, Vedas are the earliest documents of Indian culture through which ancient Indian inhabitants got their religious ideas and how they elaborated and changed them. After studying the Vedas we may be allowed to say that possibly other people also may have started from the same beginnings.

It needs mention here that in comparison to anywhere in India we can better study and watch how religious thoughts and religious language arise, how they gain force, how they spread, changing their forms as they pass from mouth to mouth, from mind to mind. The sacred books of India and the Vedas as the earliest documents has offered for a study of religion in general and particularly for the study of the origin and growth of religion. Thus it can be said that Vedas offered the same peculiar and unexpected advantages for the study of origin and growth of human speech in India.

### **1.7 References/Suggested Readings**

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## UNIT 2

### CÂRVÂKA THEORY OF MATERIALISM

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- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Carvaka Metaphysics
- 2.4 Carvaka on Epistemology
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  - 2.4.2 Criticism
  - 2.4.3 Rejection of inference and Testimony
  - 2.4.4 Criticism
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  - 2.5.6 Criticism
- 2.6 Summing Up
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#### 2.1 Introduction

Materialism as a non-Vedic or heterodox system of Indian Philosophy gives place to Carvaka as one of the three schools of materialist thinking. The other two are Jainism and the Buddhists. As Upanisad is said to be the edifice of Indian Philosophy, which accounts for spiritualism, so materialism as such has never been a force in Oriental philosophy. But we can see the germs of materialism in the hymns of the Rg Veda and also within the pre-Buddhistic period. References of the doctrine of materialism are found in Kathopanisad, Chandogya Upanisad, Svetasvatara Upanisad, the Mahabharata and the Bhabavad Gita in different interpretations. Moreover we find a collection of summary on the Carvaka system in Sarvadarsanasamgraha and Saddarsanasamuccaya. But you will be interested to know that Carvaka philosophy is shrouded in mystery because of the absence of original works. Thus Carvaka philosophy has often interpreted by different thinkers in their own way. Hence it is difficult to say that whether Carvaka advocates egoistic hedonism as the standard of life and materialism as the metaphysical interpretation of the reality of the world.

So in this unit we shall discuss the idea of materialism (as a system of philosophy) in Indian thought. Moreover, this unit is going to help you to comprehend the Carvaka view that sense-perception is the only pramana or source of valid



knowledge. On the other hand, other sources of knowledge like inference, sabda or testimony are often erroneous. Perhaps you must also know that Carvaka materialism is based on its epistemology or theory of knowledge and this is a part of our discussion in this unit. We also plan to deal with Carvaka philosophy of egoistic hedonism. In Carvaka view, the material world which is composed of four elements exists because these four elements are perceptible. So Carvaka denies life and consciousness. Life after death, heaven and hell are also questioned and finally rejected. Yes, you can understand here that Carvaka philosophy by advocating materialism strongly opposes spiritualism. Therefore in this unit you will find a broad analysis on Carvaka materialism and different severe criticisms leveled against this system of thought. Lastly in this unit we will try to attempt that whether materialism has to be discarded or it can merge with spiritualism to have an integral development of philosophy as such.

## 2.2 Objectives

This unit introduces you to Carvaka, as a materialistic school of the nastika category, denying the authority of the Vedas. Here you will find that:

- Carvaka Epistemology admits the validity of only one pramana, viz. perception as the source of valid knowledge and rejects inference and verbal testimony.
- Carvaka accepts only four physical elements viz., earth, water, fire and air and rejects ether (space) as it is not given by perception.
- Carvaka metaphysics propounds that matter is the ultimate reality of this world
- Being a materialist school, Carvaka admits that consciousness is a function of the body and is an indispensable condition of the body itself.
- The egoistic hedonism of Carvaka, further stated that ‘eat drink and be merry is the summum bonum of life.
- This crude Carvaka morality rejects therefore all spiritual values of life.
- Finally you will come to a critical conclusion regarding Carvaka philosophy as atheist, positivists and non-believer in immortality of the soul
- Here Carvaka advocates naturalism and rejects the general idea of supernaturalism i.e. behind nature there is no divine or transcendental spiritual law.

Thus after going through this unit you will be able to:

- (a) *analyse* Carvaka Epistemology,
- (b) *discuss* critically Carvaka metaphysic
- (c) *analyse* Carvaka egoistic hedonism
- (d) *describe* Carvaka as a theory of materialism



### 2.3 Carvaka Metaphysics (As a System of Philosophical Thought)

You all have come to know that materialism in India has become almost synonymous with Carvaka philosophy. But the original interpretation of this work is shrouded in mystery due to meager and unwritten documentations. But different interpretations from early critics and writers on Carvaka materialism hold that the word Carvaka is associated with the founder as Brhaspati Laukya or Brahmanaspati. He is the first Indian materialist to have a hypothetical conclusion of the non-being in the beginning as 'asatah sadajayata i.e. matter is the ultimate reality, regarding the origin of the world. Paramesthin followed the view of Brhaspati but dis-agrees the knowledge of ultra-material reality of this world. The difference between these two thinkers on materialism is that the former is a materialist while the latter is a skeptic. Paramesthin therefore refused to propound any metaphysical explanation and stopped with matter only. Again according to many interpretations it is stated that the work on materialism is related with Carvaka because of two reasons:-

Firstly, it may be because Carvaka advocates the crude hedonism of 'eat, drink and be merry' (carv- eat, chew) and

Secondly, it may be because the Carvaka are all sweet tongued people (caru-nice, vak-word). So materialism is also popularly called lokayatamata and thus the view of common people or Lokayatikas. Again in Arthasastra, we find the use of Lokayata, Brhaspati and his followers. According to some other thinkers the word Carvaka, is derived from the root 'carv' which means a demon, Hence Carvaka doctrine means the doctrine of 'demons'. It is sometime said in a story narration that Brhaspati, the preceptor propagated the materialistic view of crude hedonism to the demons so that by following such way of life they can see their own ruin.

But here you will be interested to know that the earliest attempts on materialism were not systematic and philosophical. Traces of wooden posts of philosophical thinking are reflected in the early Sutras. Interestingly enough we see that Brahaspati and his followers tried to refute the orthodox dogmatic traditional speculations of the Vedas and the Brahmanas instead of developing materialism as a constructive system of philosophy. To conclude we can say that materialism as a system of philosophical thinking is the growth of years that encouraged agnosticism and skepticism. All the materialist thinkers finally questioned the Vedic hymns appeared to be very meaningless to the common people.

In the initial development of materialism we find only destructive method of verbal Vedic criticism. But in its later stage of constructive system these thinkers emphatically declares that a man is superior who understands the meaning of Vedic hymns than the mere hymn-chanting priests. As Prof. Max Muller says that 'the celebrated hymn on frogs is a satire, upon Vedic priesthood or better, upon the system of hymn-chanting'. Therefore Carvaka do not accept the view that the Vedas are infallible. Though Buddhism, Jainism and Carvaka are all heterodox or atheistic system of philosophy but Carvaka is rigid in rejecting any religious

code or doctrine. Carvaka de-recognizes in participation of any religious performances like prayer, rites and ceremonies. While Buddhism and Jainism recognizes in attending religious prayers in monasteries and advocate very strictly morality and religious codes in their own way. Again for the Carvaka the priests are mere clever cheats and earn their livelihood by following the Vedic ritualism. On the other hand Buddhism and Jainism consider their preachers as the greatest teachers.

Thus we can say that the Carvaka has given a death blow to the spiritual dogmatism of the Upanisads and propagated the art of free thinking and evaluation regarding virtue and vice and dharma and adharma. As a reaction and challenge to dogmatic spiritualism Carvaka presents the following views:

- The sensuous material world is the only reality
- Perception is the only dependable source of knowledge
- Soul is a mere quality of the material body because both mind and conscious are the product of matter.
- Sensual pleasure is the highest summum bonum of life. Emancipation is nothing but the death of the body.

#### **Stop to Consider:**

According to some scholars the word Darsana in its primary sense means 'perception' and in its secondary sense means the 'Sastra (scripture) which is as important as perception. As perception emphasizes on material reality so the word darsana reminds about the materialist thinkers. Materialism supports the doctrine of svabhava or nature and declares that everything comes into existence without any cause the dictum is thus: 'the existent was born of the non-existent'. Carvaka is therefore regarded as naturalist and accidentalist. Nastika-Shiromani is said to be another name for materialism. The substance of the doctrine of Lokayata can be a quote of Prabodhacandrodaya as, "Lokayata is always the only sastra; in it only perceptual evidence is authority; the elements are earth, water, fire and air; wealth and enjoyment are the objects of human existence. Matter can think. There is no other world. Death is the end of all." In Chandogya Upanisad, Prajapati explains the nature of self to the demon Virocana and the demon was asked to dress oneself in fine cloth and with valuable ornaments and gold jewelry. Further he was instructed to look himself in water. Prajapati then said 'This is the self'. On the contrary Virocana after departing from his teacher taught the other demons the motto of 'eat drink and be merry. So Virocana represents the doctrine of egoistic hedonism of Carvaka. In Manusamhita, we find the reference of materialists who are expert in leading people to ruin and doom. Manu calls therefore that man as materialist who condemns and refutes Vedas and the Smritis with the help of dialectics.

## **2.4 Carvaka on Epistemology**

Lokayata or Carvaka emphasizes the authority of perception as the only source of valid knowledge. That alone exists which is possible by means of direct perception. Perception can yield only particular truths and can never establish universal truths. Perception is necessarily related with the present as there is an

actual contact between the perceiver and the objects. Present is thus confined to here and now. It does not extend to the past or the future. Knowledge of universal relation is not possible in perception. Even inference cannot establish universal relations because in the process of yielding a universal relation, an inference has to depend on universal connection as a necessary pre-condition of its possibility which again depends on another and so on it continues. Hence in order to establish universal conclusion, the process of inference involves infinite regress.

Thus Carvaka rejects inference as a source of knowledge since universal connection is unattainable and inference is not possible without universal connection. Vyapti (universal relation) which is the nerve of inference is therefore rejected by Carvaka. Universal relation is not established by verbal testimony because the validity of verbal testimony depends on inference. Comparison fails to establish universal relation too because it can create a relation between a name and the object that bears the name.

Carvaka therefore criticizes all other source of knowledge like inference, testimony and analogy as the source of valid knowledge.

#### **2.4.1 Perception as the Source of Knowledge (Pratyaksa Pramana in Carvaka)**

In this newly built system of materialism emphatic emphasis is given on sense-perception or pratyaksa pramana as a source of valid knowledge. In this case the principle of causation is rejected by Carvaka because the law of causation is not supported by sense-perception. When two events stand isolated from each other, it is not possible to create causal relation between the two phenomena or two events. For e.g. the universal proposition like “All men are mortal” or “All crows are black” cannot be established by our ordinary and limited pratyaksa or perception. According to Carvaka causality is an imaginary relation between antecedents and consequents. We actually perceive series of occasions in a phenomenon or an event together. Invariable antecedence of one event and invariable consequence of another event are cannot be perceived. So there is no necessary connection between an antecedent and a consequent. When we observe an event repeatedly followed by another event, an expectation occurs in the mind that in the future also we will see that the antecedent will follow from the consequent necessarily. The Carvaka here denies that the effect is never produced from a definite cause and there is no invariable and necessary connection between the cause and the effect of an event.

Ordinarily speaking, there are two kinds of perception. They are: (1) external perception and (2) internal perception. External perception is defined as an immediate knowledge arising from sense-object contact, for e.g., the rose is red, or the grass is green. Here the colour of the rose or the grass is known immediately because there is a sense-object contact between the knower and the known object. On the other hand, internal perception is defined as an immediate perception of the internal state of the mind of an individual, for e.g. Ram is happy,

or Rani is in pleasure. In both the cases of external perception and internal perception, knowledge is valid because it depends on sense-perception and the question of the invalidity of knowledge does not arise here. Thus 'Pratyaksa' is the only 'Pramana' in Carvaka epistemological theory.

As pratyaksa is the only dependable source of knowledge, according to Carvaka, matter or the material world is the only reality. They consequently denied God, heaven, hell, life after death and emancipation. These spiritual things are super-sensuous and imperceptible. Spirituality as such is beyond our sense-perception. So spirituality is baseless and meaningless. God is unreal and meaningless. Immortality of the soul is baseless too. Hence Carvaka epistemology is also called as 'Pratyaksaivapramanavadi'. Again Carvaka recognizes two kinds of perception. They are: (1) Nirvikalpaka and (2) Savikalpaka perception. In the former kind of perception only the existence of an object is known. In the second kind of perception not only the existence of the object is known, but the name and characters of the object is also known. For e.g. 'It is a peacock' — here the object of perception is a peacock is known.

#### **2.4.2 Criticism**

Carvaka theory of 'Pratyaksaivapramanavadi' is vehemently criticized by many scholars. The criticisms are as follows:

- It is true that perception can give us non-erroneous knowledge because of the sense-object contact. All systems of philosophy agree to this conclusion but they reject the view of Carvaka that perception alone is the reliable source of valid knowledge. Carvaka refusal of inference, sabda or testimony and analogy as different sources of knowledge, this view is not accepted by the critics.
- According to Carvaka inference or verbal testimony leads to false security in giving correct knowledge. This view is also misleading. We may point out here that at times perception fails to yield correct knowledge. For e.g. 'the rope- snake illusion. In the case of a rope, we perceive it to be a snake'. So perception fails to be the only certain knowledge.
- In our ordinary way of knowing things, in addition to perception, inference and testimony find sufficient utility as other pramanas. Without the help of sabda and inference, generalization and critical analysis of our thoughts become inefficient and ineffective in many cases.
- Critics hold the opinion that in organized perception we find the involvement of the process of inference, either in an explicit or implicit manner. So it is not justified to reject other valid pramanas to yield certain and indubitable knowledge.

### 2.4.3 Rejection of inference and Testimony

Carvaka refutes inference as an indubitable source of pramana because it involves the inductive leap or the jump from the known to the unknown. Inference, in order to be accepted as a dependable pramana, it must yield knowledge with certainty and which must be true to reality. But inference fails to attain certain and indubitable knowledge. For e.g. when we infer the existence of fire in a mountain while perceiving smoke in the mountain, we take a jump or a leap in the dark, from the known to the unknown, from the perceived smoke to the unperceived fire.

Such a view of the Carvaka is not acceptable by many thinkers. To such a reply, the Nyaya thinkers assert that this leap from the known to the unknown is justified because of our previous knowledge of the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire.

To put in the form of inference we can say:

“All cases of smoke are cases of fire

This (mountain) is a case of smoke

Therefore, this is a case of fire.”

The Carvaka contends that this assertion will be acceptable only when the major premise, holding the invariable relation between the middle term (smoke) and the major (fire), are beyond doubt. But this universal relation (vyapti) can be established only when we can assert that all case of smoke is associated with the presence of fire. However as a matter of fact this is not always true. Perception cannot help us in establishing universal relation between smoke and fire, existed in the past or will exist in the future. Perception is confined to particular instances of the present only. It fails to apprehend events of the past and the future. Therefore Vyapti (universal relation) cannot be justified by perception. Moreover invariable relation between smoke and fire (the antecedent and the consequent) cannot be based on another inference because it will involve ‘a petition principii’. Here the validity of that inference has to be similarly proved and it is next to impossibility. We cannot go on begging the same question for all time as the process will be arguing in circle or the process will lead to infinite regress.

Carvaka does not accept the opinion that the invariable relation between smoke and fire is a casual relation. Carvaka denies any casual relation between the antecedent and the consequent because sense-perception never allows us to perceive any casual relation what so ever. Any invariable or universal relation cannot be possible by sense-perception.

Sabda consists in understanding the meaning of sentences uttered by reliable and trust-worthy person. Trust-worthy person speak their words with all their understanding to guide common people. Their words are non-erroneous and certain and also free from cheating the listeners. But Carvaka, in order to establish their doctrine of ‘Pratyaksaivapramanavadi’ propounds that sabda or testimony cannot be sure for ever as sabda involves inference as well as perception and

both fail ultimately to establish Vyapti (universal relation). Verbal testimony involves the following type of inference:

‘All reliable authority must be accepted,

This authority is reliable:

Therefore this authority must be accepted’

As inference is the underlying system of the process of verbal testimony, so the knowledge from such testimony is as uncertain as inference. Carvaka rejects the authority of the Vedas because the Vedas are the works of some unintelligent and selfish priests who sanction only false security of life for their own benefit. The Vedic promises of emancipation, immortality of the soul etc., etc. are all meaningless. Thus the Vedas are rejected as a source of valid pramana. The Vedas are false, contradictory and tautologous because they profound those statements which are beyond our sensible world, they deal with those statements which are incompatible with one another and repeat same statements without any reason. So the Vedas teach priest-craft and make people foolish. The authors of the Vedas make people foolish by exploiting their minds while rendering false assurance with the concept of heaven and hell. So the Carvaka denounces the authority and sacredness of the Vedas.

Comparison is equally unable to establish a universal relation. Comparison only helps us to justify a relation between a name and the object which holds that name. For e.g. ‘ the application of the already learnt name ‘gavaya’ to an animal that looks like but is not a cow (gau).’ Therefore in Comparison the unconditional and universal relation cannot be explained because the relation between the name and the named object is merely a particular relation. The Carvaka here finally concludes that the universal relation which is indispensable to all inferences is unattainable and therefore rejects inference and other sources of knowledge.

#### **2.4.4 Criticism**

Carvaka rejection of inference has been vehemently criticized by all the systems of Indian Philosophy including other heterodox systems of Philosophy:

- The Carvaka stand on perception as the only dependable source of knowledge has made them to conclude that universal and unconditional relation which is the nerve of all inferences cannot be explained. The Buddhist, which is another heterodox system of Indian Philosophy, rejects this view of Carvaka. Buddhism propounds that it is because of inference we can find the cause of an effect and the effect of a cause. Buddhism puts the question to the Carvaka that Vyapti (universal relation) is a mental understanding and sense-perception is not sufficient and proper to understand such relation. Ordinary understanding helps us to apprehend the ‘cause’ of an event. The Carvaka argues that ordinary understanding



does not admit the validity of inference. But the Buddhist admits that in ordinary understanding inference is established.

- The Buddhists put another question to the Carvaka: how the Carvaka understands that all other opponent school of thoughts accepts the validity of inference? Sense-perception never allows us to see our internal mental order. The Carvaka infers the conclusion from verbal testimony of his opponents. Therefore Buddhism comments that the Carvaka must admit the validity of inference.
- The Carvaka rejection of inference as a valid source of pramana because it can never yield correct or valid knowledge. This conclusion is also rejected by all other systems of philosophy because the thinkers argue that the case is same with perception too. Perception at many times deceives us and any conclusion followed from erroneous perception leads to misleading conclusion. So in such a case, if perception is accepted as a valid pramana then why not inference.
- It is interesting to comment that while rejecting the possibility of inference the Carvaka follows the process of generalization, which is itself a process of inference. So Carvaka accepts inference to reject inference as a valid pramana.
- Perception involves inference, according to many critics. In perception we see the involvement of interpretation and organization of sense-experiences. Thus inference is associated with the process of perception at large extent.
- Carvaka has not accepted testimony as a source of valid pramana. This made the Carvaka to reject the authority of the Vedas and thus been severely criticized. The orthodox systems of oriental (Indian) philosophy have accepted the authority of the Vedas not dogmatically but only after critically analyzing the Vedas and the Upanisads. Vedic and Upanisadic truths are beyond sensuous experiences and mere perception is not sufficient to justify and prove such subtle truths. Verbal testimony plays an important role to justify Vedic truths as Vedas are also accepted as revealed knowledge of the Seers and Rishis. The Vedic Seers have received the knowledge of the Vedas directly so they are also called Mantradrastra'. According to the critics, testimony and comparison can be accepted as a valid source of pramana as both can yield correct knowledge.

**SAQ:**

1. Do you think Carvaka is justified in rejecting inference? Give reasons in support of your answers (In 80 + 40 words)

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2. After reading Carvaka theory of knowledge try to find out why this heterodox system rejected the authority of the Vedic thoughts? (In 80 words)

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.....  
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**Check Your Progress :**

1. Fill in the Blanks.

- a. The word Carvaka has come from ..... and .....
- b. Carvaka Epistemology is called as the doctrine of .....
- c. Pratyaksa is the only ..... according to Carvaka theory of knowledge

2. Give two justifications of rejecting Vyapti (universal relation) by Carvaka?

3. Write three criticisms leveled against Carvaka theory of knowledge?

4. Mention two reasons to call Carvaka a heterodox system of Indian thought?

5. Explain critically Carvaka for rejecting inference as a valid source of knowledge

**2.5 Carvaka on Materialism**

Carvaka Metaphysics propounds the theory of materialism and it is the outcome of its epistemological doctrine of 'Pratyaksaivapramanavadi'. The doctrine of 'Pratyaksa-Pramana' made the Carvaka to conclude that matter is the only reality. Matter is accepted as the only reality from which all things of the sensible world have come into existence. All objects of this physical world are produced by the process of accidental and mechanical combination of perceptible material elements. Accordingly the Lokayatikas deny every thing which is not material. Life is a product of material elements and as such it is a 'physico-chemical' machine. Mind is a product of matter and denies all metaphysical truths like:

- Soul as the embodiment of all spiritual energies
- Consciousness in its spiritual nature



- Law of Karma
- Morality
- Heaven and Hell
- Emancipation

Carvaka finally maintain that we can perceive only four elements. These four elements are earth, water, fire and air, the original principles or stuffs of the world of nature. It has to reject ether since ether is beyond our perception. These elements in their original, atomic state, when mixed in a particular proportion, get transformed into different organism of this world of nature.

Consciousness, as to the Carvaka is a function of the body. Consciousness is inseparable from life and is produced from the body itself. Again body is related with the vital air or life. As consciousness is identified with the body so when the body perishes, it also perishes. Transmigration of the soul is never accepted by Carvaka. There is no life after death and death is the end of everything. The body, sense-organs and consciousness are all transitory. The four elements when combined in a specific form produce consciousness of the body. Our activity of the mind perishes with the dissociation of the material elements of the body. Therefore when the body perishes consciousness remains no more. The body senses and consciousness are all transitory in nature and thus not eternal. According to the Carvaka there is no continuity in the conscious life. The possibility of a continuous stream of consciousness is the result of Vedic priest-craft. Consequently to the Lokayatikas the existence of good or evil has no meaning to an individual's life. Carvaka also propagates that the experience joy and happiness, pleasure and pain, anxiety and suffering happen to an individual only by chance and not as a consequence of any spiritual moral law. Here Carvaka justifies the doctrine of 'Egoistic Hedonism'. On this theory both pleasure and pain are the ultimate realities of life. Gross hedonism stands for sensualism and selfish. Life is the end of life. Virtue is unreal and enjoyment is the only summum bonum of life. Thus 'Materialism signifies the declaration of the spiritual independence of the individual and the rejection of the principle of authority'.

#### **Stop to Consider:**

- Materialism as a theory of philosophy, are also found in the pre-Buddhistic period.
- It is also said that the germs of Materialism is found in the religious songs (hymns) of the Rg-Veda.
- The sutras of Brhaspati, is said to be the classical authority on Materialism.
- In the early Buddhism references of the doctrine of Materialism is found as that, man is composed of four elements and after he dies, the earthly elements returns into their original earthly materials. Both, wise and fool after their death, do not survive anymore.

- Materialism propagates that religion is a mental disorder and it is meaningless for the foolish. So the Vedic prayers and rites are meaningless for the foolish. The philosophy thus advocates that: 'Man is what he eats'.
- The underlying principle of Materialism is that nature never responds to human values. It remains indifferent to both good and bad. Nature has only one quality, i.e. the quality of transcendental immorality.
- The Carvaka accepts 'Chaturbhutas' instead of 'Panchabhutas'.
- Carvaka materialism is atheism in nature. It is often called as mechanism and positivism because for the Carvaka, the world is a combination of four elements and there is no teleological purpose behind the mechanism of this world. So the world is accidental and follows the law of nature by nature. Here the doctrine is thus known as, 'Yadrchavada'.
- To justify the thesis of Materialism, Carvaka mentions that the disorderly Physical Forces of Nature follow the nature of the physical elements and never act against the nature of any physical elements.

### 2.5.1 Carvaka on nature of the world and Consciousness

According to the oriental thinkers of different systems of thought, the material world is composed of five elements. These five elements are viz., earth (ksiti), water (ap) fire(agni), air(vayu) and ether (akasa). This combination of five elements of the material world is called pancabhuta. But we can see different opinion in Carvaka metaphysics which follows from its epistemological doctrine of 'Pratyaksa-Pramana'. According to Carvaka metaphysic, the material world is composed of four elements. These four elements are earth, water, fire and air. Carvaka rejects ether as it is beyond our perception. We have come to know that Carvaka has rejected inference as a valid pramana. The knowledge of the existence of ether is possible because of inference and as it is rejected by Carvaka, so Carvaka has rejected ether as one of the composite elements of this material world. Both the animate and inanimate material objects, i.e. both living and non-living objects are composed of these four gross material objects.

Carvaka admits the knowledge of gross form of earth, water, fir and ether as sense-experience can apprehend only the gross form of these material elements. The atomic forms of these gross elements are imperceptible and hence rejected by Carvaka. We can say here that the perceptible world of nature is the product of these four material elements. Being a naturalist and positivist school of philosophy, Carvaka, does not consider the need of any super-natural or transcendental reality (God). Divine powers are never recognized in Carvaka Materialism. The things of this world are not regulated by any conscious supreme, intelligent, purposive spiritual power. A particular combination of these gross materials in a natural way produces their effects. According to Carvaka metaphysic the causal relation is not only accidental but also mechanical in nature (yadrchavada). The world is the accidental result of the nature (svabhava) of the respective physical elements and their spontaneous combinations. This view is called Naturalism (svabbavavada). According to Carvaka naturalism, the

sequences of different events occur one after another due to the nature of material objects. The nature of gross four elements and laws inherited in the material elements in a natural way combine together to form the world of objects. These Chaturbhutas instead of Panchabhutas are eternal and indestructible. These eternal elements undergo change or transformation. Matter being the ultimate reality of this world of nature, every object, including living and non-living bodies are not only formed by these gross elements but are also reduced to the Chaturbhutas. Thus in Carvaka Philosophy the metaphysical conclusion is that after the death of any living-body, the earth element returns to its original gross form, and the same with water, fire and air. To justify the theory of Chaturbhutas, Carvaka concludes that the entire world including mind and consciousness are the product of the four gross material elements.

You will be interested to find out that Carvaka has stated life and consciousness are mere complex states of material bodies. Apart from matter, life and consciousness have no independent existence. The soul is identified with conscious living-bodies and therefore the soul is not a separate consciousness entity (caitanya-visista deha eva atma). Consciousness is the quality of the body itself. In our day to day life experiences, the soul is identified with the body because we often say that 'I am fair', 'I am strong', 'I am tall', 'I am short' etc, etc. But these qualities are related with the body. Thus the soul is identified with the body having consciousness. This is gross Carvaka Materialism.

It is again another view of refined (susiksita) Carvaka Materialism. According to this view, there is a soul apart from the body. The Soul is considered by this view as the ultimate knower and enjoyer of all human experiences but to justify the philosophy of materialism, refined Carvaka materialists assert that the soul is destroyed along with the body. The soul being material cannot survive the death of the body and fails to transmigrate into another living body. If we talk of a transmigrated soul, it will have the power of recollection of past birth experiences just we can recollect the experiences of our yore days but this not the fact with the soul when identified with the body. So the soul survives so long the body survives.

Following the doctrine of Dehatmavada, the Carvaka materialism denies the law of karma. This school ultimately denies the universal law called fate (adrsta or daiva). It has to deny the merits and demerits acquired in past life. Every question regarding the universal moral law is answered by the Carvaka materialists, by taking the help of naturalism or 'svabhava or spontaneous generation'. To quote here the feelings of Carvaka atheists, 'Religion is a harmful as opium; prayer is the hope of men who are weak and lacking in the will-power to do anything; worship is an insincere practice to save oneself from the tortures of hell; and prophets are the greatest liars among men'.

### 2.5.2 Criticism

- The theory of naturalism of Carvaka metaphysic is severely criticized by Udayana and Vardhamana. These two thinkers reject svabhavavada or naturalism. Svabhava is the peculiar nature of either of the cause or the effect. When it is the peculiar nature of the effect then it never exists before the effect. Here the effect cannot determine its production at a particular time. So before the production of the effect, the svabhava of the effect cannot exist. But when svabhava is the nature of the cause, it is said that the effect has a cause. Without the existence of the cause, the cause cannot have a nature. Suppose the cause exists and has a nature from which the effect comes into existence, then it has a cause. From this explanation naturalism is rejected by these two thinkers.
- Svabhava is the potentiality (sakti) of a cause. According to the Nyaya system of thought there is no reality of potentiality. This system believes that when svabhava is the nature of an effect, then in a natural way the effect is produced. The effect cannot exist before its production. Suppose it is said that the effect has come out of its own nature, then it will always be produced. We see that the effect is produced only at a particular time or place or restricted at a particular time or place. Let us suppose that the effect is unrestricted then the effect will be produced at all time and place. We see that a particular effect depends upon a cause. For e.g. the green color of grass depends upon the process of photosynthesis. Therefore according to the Nyaya system of thought, only the inherent svabhava cannot be the cause for the production of particulars effects by particulars causes and at particular times. Thus the Nyaya thinkers have rejected Svabhavavada.
- Carvaka view of material consciousness has been severely criticized by other schools. Critics are of the opinion that consciousness cannot be the quality of any material body because they have cited two reasons that: (1) during dream-less sleep there is body without any consciousness and (2) when we are in dream there is conscious without any physical activity.
- Soul is believed to be the knower and the enjoyer. If we think to be the quality of the body then it will take the status of an object to be known and enjoyed. The Soul cannot be identified with the body. The knower must remain as a knower and not like an object to be known.
- The Naiyayikas argue that conscious cannot be the quality of a body. Though we find consciousness in the body itself. Consciousness is not a material quality of the body. For e.g. water possess the qualities of liquidity and heat. But we know that these two qualities are not the essential qualities of water, liquidity is the quality of water and heat is the quality of fire. In the same way, consciousness is not the essential quality of the body though consciousness is intimately found associated with the body. If consciousness is an essential quality of the body then we cannot explain memory. Moreover

we find many different changes in the body from birth till old age. In the midst of all bodily changes we remember our experiences and it is because of our memory. This activity of the memory is not because of the unchangeability of the body. Memory is an aspect of our consciousness and therefore not a quality of the body.

- Sankhya system of orthodox philosophy also rejects the Carvaka view of material consciousness. According to former Consciousness cannot be the quality of the body. If it would have been so then consciousness would be seen as present in different material component factors of the body. As this is not seen so consciousness is believed to have developed due to some other reason.
- The most interesting point is that though Buddhism is one of the heterodox systems of philosophy yet it has also criticized the Carvaka view consciousness as the by-product of the body. According to Buddhism consciousness has given rise to the body because consciousness creates the nama-rupa i.e. the bodily form or the embryo of the body.

**SAQ:**

How Carvaka tries to explain the nature of the material world? Can consciousness be the product of material elements? Explain critically.(40+20 words)

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**2.5.3 Carvaka on Egoistic Hedonism**

The success of Carvaka materialism ended in dishonesty and corruption. Too much of freedom made people brute and selfish. Happiness turned into only sensual pleasure. The enjoyment of gross sensual pleasure became the only rule of life. This is the doctrine of 'Egoistic Hedonism'. The dictum for the Lokayata system is therefore, 'Let us enjoy pleasure alone. It is the only thing which is true and good. The only reasonable end of man is enjoyment.' So with this crude moral philosophy the Lokayatikas has preached and practiced an extreme form of gross egoistic hedonism. At this juncture the Carvaka ethics followed the most 'entertaining speech'. It follows as such: 'While you live, drink; for once dead, you can never return'. 'As long as he lives, let a man live happily; even borrowing money, let him drink ghee'. We can thus see here the application of the Hedonistic calculus. The highest good is defined as 'the maximum of sensual pleasure with the minimum of pain'. The Carvaka rejects therefore any supra-mundane happiness

or such highest good. Pleasure is defined as having intrinsic value on the other hand wealth is defined as having an instrumental value. Therefore both pleasure and wealth form the highest human value. The authors of Nitisastra and Kamasastra propound that 'Supreme happiness springs from the gratification of desires'. To satisfy our wishes and also our desires are the highest virtue. Carvaka while denying heaven and hell and other supreme moral values of life, accepts the doctrine advocated by Nitisastra and Kamasastra. When there is sensual pleasure the action produces rightness again when there is bodily pain the action produces wrongness. Hence rightness and wrongness is associated with sensual pleasure and bodily pain respectively. The theory of 'Pratyaksa Pramana' made the Carvaka to conclude that it is the bodily pleasure which is certain. Like the Aristippus of Greece, Carvaka ends the gross egoistic hedonism as 'Eat, Drink and be merry'. 'The past is dead and gone. It never returns'.

This is the turning point of the rapid down-fall of Lokayatikas or the philosophy of Carvaka materialism. Carvaka rejects dharma and moksa as these two principles of life cannot be attained in once life.

#### 2.5.4 Criticism

- The success of Carvaka philosophy ended in corruption and it is because of admitting sensual pleasure. This philosophy of sensual pleasure as the summum bonum or the highest moral principle is criticized by all the systems of Indian thought.
- Carvaka is criticized for rejected the two most important values of moral principles. All the thinkers at least have accepted the three moral principles of life they are as such: virtue, wealth and pleasure. But Carvaka has ignored totally the harmonious cultivation of spiritual discipline.
- Carvaka egoistic hedonism is criticized by the Buddhists and the Jainas. According to these two systems of philosophy, suppression of desires and conquering all passions can lead us to salvation.

#### **Check your progress:**

1. Why Carvaka has identified the soul with the body?
2. What made Carvaka to accept matter as the ultimate reality?
3. Give two reasons why Carvaka has rejected moral principles?

*Fill in the blanks:*

1. Carvaka materialism ended in ..... and .....
2. In denying the law of karma, Carvaka follows the doctrine of .....
3. The world is the result of the theory of .....
4. Write two criticism of Carvaka egoistic hedonism
5. How Udayana has refuted Carvaka metaphysics? Give reasons



### **2.5.5 Carvaka on the Denial of Transcendental Realities**

Carvaka epistemology of 'Pratyaksa-Vada' has resulted in the refusal of the existence of all transcendental realities like God, soul, etc. etc. Perception can give us the knowledge of the empirical world. But the knowledge of the transcendental realities is possible depending on inference. We have come to know the deep rooted reasons for the Lokayatikas to reject inference. Hence for the Lokayatikas as God is beyond our perception, so it is beyond our sense knowledge. The existence of God as spiritual energy does not arise. Moreover the Carvaka theory of epistemology ultimately made them to reject the existence of God. Materialism is bound to reject Spiritualism. Moreover the theory of 'Naturalism' or 'Mechanism' as discussed earlier removes the necessity of the existence of God. The material four elements produce the world because of the inherent nature (svabhava) accidentally so the need God does not arise. There is no necessity of God as such because he simply becomes our enemy by sending sufferings. Therefore it is better to not to have god than to have an un-just and cruel god.

Carvaka also denies pre-existence of the soul because according to the materialistic theory, the body is the cause of consciousness. We cannot confirm the pre-existence of the soul before the birth of the present body of an individual. The soul in the previous body cannot produce the soul in the present body of the individual the soul belongs to two different bodies. The fact is same with the mind or conscious of an individual. The last mental condition residing in the past body cannot produce the first mental condition in the present body as the two mental conditions belong to two different series of physical bodies. As the body is mortal having material consciousness so it vanishes along with the body. There cannot be any casual connection between the previous consciousness and the present consciousness of the body. So there cannot be any pre-existence of the soul and consequently denies future existence of life. Consciousness emerges with the particular combination of the four material elements and vanishes with the body itself. Therefore there is no rebirth. The Carvaka at length deny all the transcendental realities like future life, transmigration of the soul, Law of karma, heaven hell and moksa or salvation.

Heaven is beyond perception and has no requirement for the possibility of sensual pleasures. Transcendental happiness or Bliss acquired from the observances of Vedic rites or ceremonies, dharma (virtue), merit (punya) are just myth or mental imaginations. According to the Carvaka the concept of disinterested action is only verbal assurance as none of our action is altruistic in nature. Vedic sacrifices, charities are performed for personal profit, name and fame. These activities are performed for self-motivated interest.

Hell is non-existent, according to the Carvaka materialism. Physical pain is the only painful situation of life. Hell is identified with the bodily pain. There is no God to judge our actions as right or wrong and accordingly the transcendental concepts like heaven and hell are discarded by the Lokayatikas. As there is no future life so the question of heaven and hell does not arise. After death nothing

remains. Rightness is conducive to sensual pleasure only. Thus 'Nature and not God is the watch word of this school

### 2.5.6 Criticism

- Lokayata has been opposed by thinkers like Nyaya and Vaisesika, Sankhya and Yoga Jaimini and by the Vedantins. These thinkers designed their philosophy in such a way that they once again established the existence of the 'Spiritual Real Existence' i.e. the God.
- The influence of the work of Kapila of Sankhya and Patanjali of Yoga, made the people to question the Lokayata regarding such crude philosophy of life. People once again inclined themselves towards believing in the Supernatural and Spiritual natural of the world
- Under the leadership of Jaimini people again made themselves prepared for the performance of Vedic rites. Jaimini made arguments to convince the people that the Vedas are infallible and performances of Vedic rites are indispensable. Vedas are the words of Rishis who are the 'mantra-drastras,( the direct preceptor of the Spiritual law). Hence the Vedas are the revealed knowledge and therefore the words of gods. Criticizing the Carvaka view, Jaimini propounds that it is for the purification of the mind that the Vedic rites are to be performed with all respect.
- In direct refusal of the Carvaka materialism, Vyasa preaches Idealistic way of life. He out rightly criticizes anti-Vedic doctrines and conceives the soul as spiritual.

#### **Check Your Progress:**

1. Write four reasons of Carvaka's denial of transcendental realities.
2. *Fill in the blanks:*
  - a) Carvaka denies pre-existence of .....
  - b) Vedic rites are just.....
  - c) Rightness is conducive to ..... Pleasure
3. Differentiate between the idea of Carvaka and other orthodox system of philosophy regarding the performance of Vedic rites.
- 4) Why Carvaka had to refute heaven and hell?
- 5) Give two reasons to explain the conclusion of Carvaka metaphysics: 'Nature and not God are the watchword of Carvaka school'



## 2.6 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are in a position to discuss the epistemology and the metaphysics of Carvaka materialism. You are familiar with the fact that though Carvaka Buddhism and Jainism belong to heterodox systems of philosophy, yet Buddhism and Jainism never denied the moral values of life. You have also learnt that materialism has never been a force in Indian philosophy because the Vedas and the Upanisads are regarded as the fountain head of Indian Philosophy. So at a certain point of time the Carvaka materialism has been totally discarded by the prominent thinkers of this soil. But you must remember that we should guard ourselves in understanding this school of Lokayata because of lack of original documentations. This is the most interesting line of conclusion that you can draw while remembering Sri Aurobindo one of the modern Vedanta philosophers. He observes that Carvaka in the Indian context has been totally misinterpreted. To have an integral development we are in need of both materialism and spiritualism. Spiritualism with materialism leads to spiritualism bankruptcy and materialism without spiritualism leads to material bankruptcy. This is the uniqueness of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of the theory of evolution. After reading this unit you can understand, analyse and narrate the Carvaka philosophy and also assess the contribution in developing an independent heterodox system in Indian Soil.

## 2.7 References and Suggested Readings

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### Links

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/indmat/>

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**UNIT: 3**  
**JAINA ANEKANTAVADA**

**Contents:**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Sects of Jainism
- 3.3 Philosophical outlook of Jainism
- 3.4 Anekantavada:
- 3.5 Theory of Syadvada
- 3.6 Triratna or Three jewels of Jainism as means to liberation
- 3.7 Jaina view of God
- 3.8 Summing Up
- 3.9 References/Suggested Readings

**3.1 Introduction**

Jaina philosophy is a notable heterodox school of Indian Philosophy. The Jainas do not believe in the Vedas like the Buddhas. But unlike them, the Jainas believe in the existence of a soul. Like the orthodox tradition they aspire for cessation of suffering and develop systematic techniques of mental control. Jaina philosophy is famous for three aspirations – (1) right knowledge, (2) right perception and (3) right conduct.

Jaina philosophy was first propounded by Rishabha Deva. The last was Vardhaman Mahavir who was born in 599 B.C. In between the two, twenty two other propounders are there. Their names are found in the Vedas. All total twenty four founders are associated with Jainism. They are called Tirthankars i.e., liberated souls. Once they were in bondage, but through their own efforts, they became free, Omniscient, Omnipotent and blissful. The Jainas believe that every jiva can follow the example of Tirthankara or Jina and can attain arhatship or mukti. This is the great optimism that inspires a Jaina with self confidence to realize absolute perfection through personal effort.

**3.2 Sects of Jainism**

In course of time the followers of Jainism were divided into two sects – (1) Svetambaras and (2) Digambaras. Both sects accept the basic Jaina teachings. However the Digambaras are more rigorous and puritanic. While the Svetambaras are accommodative with common men.

### **3.3 Philosophical outlook of Jainism**

Jainism possesses a vast literature, mostly in Prakrita and in Sanskrit as well. The philosophical outlook of Jainism is common-sense realism and pluralism. The objects of this world are real and they are many. The world consists of two kinds of realities – (1) living and (2) non-living. Ahimsa or non-injury to life is an important principle of Jaina philosophy. Respect for the opinions of others is another great principle of this philosophy. This attitude is justified by a metaphysical theory of reality as many faced in Anekantavada and a consequent logical theory which is called Syadvada.

Jaina philosophy may be discussed under three heads – (1) Epistemology (2) Metaphysics and (3) Ethics and Religion.

### **3.4 Anekantavada**

Now let us discuss Anekantavada which is a famous metaphysical doctrine of Jainism. According to the Jainas, reality is neither eternal nor ephemeral. It can not be regarded as both eternal and ephemeral. It is changeable. But it never loses its own self. This theory regarding reality is termed as Anekantavada. It is also known as Parinamavada. The Jainas hold that every object known by us has innumerable characters (ananta-dharmakam vastu) let us try to understand a little more clearly the implication of this view.

Every object possesses both positive and negative characters, e.g. a man's positive characters are his colour, size, weight, heredity family, race, nationality, religion etc. may be uncountable. His negative characters consist of what is not. For example, that he is not a Chinese nor a Negro, not a Hindu, not honest, not foolish etc. Now we come to know that the negative characters are more than positive characters. Again the man may acquire new characters with changes in time. Hence an object has infinite characters (anantadharma).

Jaina thinkers therefore say that if somebody knows an object fully, knows everything, only the Kevali or the arhat who is Omniscient knows an object fully. Ordinary man remains satisfied with the partial knowledge of an object. But we should admit that our knowledge of reality is neither complete nor perfect.

### **3.5 Theory of Syadvada**

Jaina theory of Syadvada is a logical consequence of Anekantavada. Syadvada is the theory that every judgment is relative. Every judgment that we pass in daily life about any object is true only from one standpoint and of one aspect of the object. But we forget this fact and regard our judgment as absolutely true. Therefore we quarrel and disagree very often in our life. This fact is illustrated by the Jainas with the story of an elephant and six blind men. Once six blind men wanted to know an elephant. Touching a part of the body of the elephant each blind man mistook his partial idea to be the whole knowledge and thus quarreled.

Because each blind man thought that his knowledge is true and should be accepted as true unconditionally. The quarrel ended when each blind man had realized the truth that his knowledge was only of a part of the huge animal.

Similarly, the various systems of philosophy which give different accounts of the universe occupy different points of view and discover the different aspects of the many-sided universe. They quarrel because they do not bear in mind that each account is true only from its own standpoint, and is subject to certain conditions. They fail to realize, therefore, that the different views may be true like the different descriptions of the elephant.

In view of these facts, the Jainas insist that every judgment (naya) should be qualified by some word like 'somehow' (syat i.e., in some respect). For example, instead of a judgment like "The elephant is like a pillar", it should be said, "Syat the elephant is like a pillar." Similarly, on perceiving a black earthen jug existing in a room at a particular time, we should not assert unconditionally, "The jug exists", we should rather say, "somehow, the jug exists", it would remind us that the judgment is true only with regard to the many conditions of space, time, quality, etc., under which the jug exists. The qualified judgment "Somehow, the jug exists" would prevent the possibility of the misapprehension that the pot exists at all times or in every place, or that a pot of any other colour, shape, etc., exists. This theory of the Jainas is known as syadvada.

#### **Saptabhanginaya or the Seven Forms of Judgment:**

- (1) The general form of all affirmative judgments can then be symbolically represented as 'somehow S is P' (syat asti).
- (2) Again, negative judgments about an object would be like 'somehow the jar is not outside the room' (meaning that the jar of that particular kind, at that particular time, etc., is not outside); 'somehow, the jar is not black' (i.e., not black at the particular space and time and under those conditions. We find then that the general form of all negative judgments is 'somehow S is not P' (syat nasti).
- (3) We have to describe the complex fact that the jar is sometimes red and sometimes not. We must have a compound judgment like 'somehow the jar is and also is not red.' The general form of this judgment would, therefore, be 'somehow S is and also is not P' (syat asti ca nasti ca). This is the third form of judgment recognized by Jaina logic.
- (4) A jar is black when raw, and red when it is baked. But if we are asked, what is the real colour of the jar always or under all conditions. The only honest reply would be that the jar cannot be described. Our judgments, according to the Jainas, would be of the general form 'somehow S is indescribable' (Syat avaktavyam). This is the fourth kind of judgment recognized by Jaina logic.

- (5) By combining the first and the fourth judgments, we get the fifth form of judgments, 'somehow S is P and is also indescribable' (syat asti ca, avaktavyam ca).
- (6) Similarly, combining again the second and the fourth standpoint successively we have the sixth judgment of the type of 'Somehow S is not P and is also indescribable'.
- (7) Lastly, combining the third with the fourth point of view, we get the seventh form of judgment, 'somehow S is P, also is not P, and is indescribable too' (syat asti ca, nasti, ca, avaktavyam ca).

To sum up, Jaina logic recognizes the following seven kinds of conditional judgment (saptabhanginaya):

1. Somehow, S is P (syat asti).
2. Somehow, S is not P (syat nasti).
3. Somehow, S is P, and is also not P (syat asti ca, nasti ca).
4. Somehow, S is indescribable (syat avaktavyam).
5. Somehow, S is P, and is also indescribable (syat asti ca, avaktavyam ca).
6. Somehow, S is not P, and is also indescribable (syat nasti ca, avaktavyam ca).
7. Somehow, S is P, and is also not P, and also indescribable (syat asti ca, nasti ca, avaktavyam ca).

#### **Check Your Progress:**

1. Is Jainism a Vedic or non-Vedic school of Philosophy?
2. How many founders are associated with Jainism?
3. Give the names of the two sects of Jainism.
4. Briefly mention the philosophical outlook of Jainism.
5. What is the Saptabhanginaya or Seven forms of judgments?
6. What are the Triratnas of Jainism?
7. Give the names of Five great vows of Jainism.
8. Explain Jaina view of Anekantavada.
9. Explain the Syadvada theory of Jainism.

#### **Stop to Consider:**

The Jaina doctrine of syadvada is sometimes compared with the pragmatism of some Western thinkers. It is true that a pragmatic logician, like Schiller, also recognizes the truth that no judgment is true or false without particular reference to its context and purpose. Even a so-called self-evident judgment, like 'A square is not a circle'. This is a striking point of resemblance. But there is a great difference also. The Jainas are realists, but the pragmatists have a distinct idealistic bias. According to the Jainas, the different judgments about an object are not simply different real aspects of the object. The Jainas would accept, therefore, a realistic view of truth which is rejected by all thoroughgoing pragmatists.

Again the Jaina syadvada is sometimes compared with the Western theory of relativity. There are two kinds of relatively, idealistic (as of Protagoras, Berkeley, Schiller), and realistic (as of Whitehead or Boodin). The Jainas are to be called relativist, thus the relational characters of the may-sided accept reality itself.

Another misunderstanding often found is the interpretation of the Jaina word 'syat' as 'may be'. This would impart a skeptical or agnostic form to the Jaina theory. But it should be noted that the Jaina is not a sceptic. It is not the uncertainty of a judgment, but its conditional or relative character, is expressed by the addition of 'syat'.

### **3.6 Triratna or Three jewels of Jainism as means to liberation**

The Jainas suggest certain means to liberation. These are known as Triratnas (1) Right Faith (2) Right knowledge and (3) Right conduct or character. It consists of five great vows (panca Mahabrata) – (1) Ahimsa (2) Satyam (3) Asteya (4) Brahmacharya (5) Aparigraha.

1. Ahimsa or non-injury to life. It must be practised in thought, speech and action.
2. Satyam or truthfulness consists in speaking what is true, pleasant and good.
3. Asteya or non-stealing is based on the idea of sanctity of property.
4. Brahmacharya consists in abstaining from all forms of self-indulgence.
5. Aparigraha consists in abstaining from all attachment to sense objects.

### **3.7 Jaina view of God**

The Jainas are disbelievers of God. They worship the Tirthankaras and pray for their grace, guidance and inspiration. They believe that the liberated souls possess god-like qualities. They believe in the inexorable moral law of karma which no mercy can bend.

Thus Jainism is a strong and brave religion and philosophy. It is a religion of self help. Hence an arhat is called a jina or vira. In this respect it has some other parallels in India like Buddhism and Sankhya philosophy.

### **3.8 Summing Up**

Jainism is a non-Vedic philosophical school of Indian philosophy. It is famous for its metaphysical doctrine of Anekantavada. Jaina philosophy was first propounded by Rishabha Deva. The last was Vardhaman Mahavir who was born in 599 B.C. In between the two, twenty two other propounders are there. Their names are found in the Vedas. All total twenty four founders are associated with Jainism. They are called Tirthankars i.e., liberated souls. Once they were in bondage, but through their own efforts, they became free, Omniscient, Omnipotent and blissful.

The Jainas believe that every jiva can follow in example of Tirthankara or Jina and can attain arhatship or mukti. This is the great optimism that inspires a Jaina with self confidence to realize absolute perfection through personal effort. In course of time the followers of Jainism were divided into two sects – (1) Svetambaras and (2) Digambaras.

According to the Jainas, reality is neither eternal nor ephemeral. It can not be regarded as both eternal and ephemeral. It is changeable. But it never loses its own self. This theory regarding reality is termed as Anekantavada. It is also known as Parinamavada. The Jainas hold that every object known by us has innumerable characters (ananta-dharmakam vastu). Jaina theory of Syadvada is a logical consequence of Anekantavada. Syadvada is the theory that every judgment is relative.

The Jainas suggest certain means to liberation. These are known as Triratnas (1) Right Faith (2) Right knowledge and (3) Right conduct or character. It consists of five great vows (panca Mahabrata) – (1) Ahimsa (2) Satyam (3) Asteya (4) Brahmacharya (5) Aparigraha.

### **3.9 References/Suggested Readings**

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## UNIT: 4

### SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

#### Contents:

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Teachings of Buddha in Brief
- 4.3 School of Buddhism
- 4.4 Difference between Mahayana and Hinayana school
- 4.5 Sarvastivadins
- 4.6 Vaibhasika
- 4.7 Sautrantika
- 4.8 Madhyamika or Sunyavada
- 4.9 Yogachara or Vijnanavada
- 4.10 Summing Up
- 4.11 References/Suggested Readings

#### 4.1 Introduction

Buddhism was propounded by Gautama Buddha (563 B.C.-483 B.C.), the Light of Asia. His life and noble works are fairly well-known almost to every Indian. At the age of twenty nine, Buddha renounced family life, went on deep meditation for twelve years. At the age of 40 He attained Nirvana and came to be known as Buddha. Like all great teachers of ancient times, the teachings of Buddha were taught for a longtime through oral instruction imparted by His disciples to successive generations. Later on the teachings of Buddha were collected by his appropriate disciples in Tripitakas which are known as three baskets of Buddhism. These are (1) Vinayapitaka, (2) Suttapitaka and (3) Abhidhamapitaka. These were composed in Pali Dialect.

Buddha was primarily an ethical and religious teacher. He was not a metaphysician, His teachings showed man the way of getting rid of sufferings of this life. In stead of discussing metaphysical questions which are ethically useless and unanswerable, Buddha tried to enlighten men to solve the real problems of life.

#### 4.2 Teachings of Buddha in Brief

We find the teachings of Buddha:

- (1) The Fourth Noble Truths (catvare arya satyani). These are:
- (i) Life is full of suffering (dukha)
  - (ii) There is a cause of suffering (dukha samudaya)
  - (iii) It is possible to stop suffering (dukha nirodha)
  - (iv) There is a path which leads to cessation of suffering (dukha-nirodha-marga)



### **All other teachings of Buddha centre round these Four Truths:**

- (1) The First Noble Truth analyzes how life is full of suffering. Even apparent pleasures are fraught with pain.
- (2) The Second Noble Truth analyzes the chain of twelve links associated with the causes of suffering. Every effect has a cause, suffering is an effect; therefore it has cause. This cause consists of twelve conditions. These are – (1) Suffering in life is due to (2) birth which is due to (3) will to be born which is due to (4) clinging to objects which is due to (5) thirst for objects. It is again due to (6) Sense experience. It is due to (7) Sense-objects – contact which is due to (8) six organs of cognition. These depend on (9) embryonic organism. It is the result of (10) some initial consciousness which hails from (11) impressions or Samskaras. It is due to (12) ignorance or Avidya

### **Pratitya Samutpada:**

While explaining the causes of life's sufferings, Buddha adopts this theory of Dependent Origination which is known as Pratitya samutpada. According to it, nothing is unconditional. Everything depends on some cause. Life's suffering being an effect must have cause. It is linked with twelve causes which is known as twelve links in the chain of causes and effects.

- (3) The Third Noble Truth about the cessation of suffering: Suffering must cease if its cause is stopped. Cessation of suffering is Nirvana. It can be attained here in this life. Nirvana is not inactivity, Buddha's life proves this fact. After His enlightenment, Buddha lived long forty five years preaching, travelling and founding brotherhood. Nirvana gives double gain-negative and positive. Negatively Nirvana stops rebirth and future misery. Positively Nirvana gives perfect bliss and peace in the mind of the person who attains it. However, the real nature of Nirvana can only be realized; it cannot be described in terms of ordinary experience.
- (4) The Fourth Noble Truth: It is the path of attaining Nirvana. It consists of eight steps:
  - (a) Right views or Samyak dristi
  - (b) Right Resolve or Samyak Sankalpa
  - (c) Right speech or Samyak Vak
  - (d) Right conduct or Samyak Karmanta
  - (e) Right Livelihood or Samyak Ajiva
  - (f) Right Effort or Samyak Vyayama
  - (g) Right Mindfulness or Samyak Smriti
  - (h) Right concentration or Samyak Samadhi

Nirvana – (1) Nirvana literally means extinguished. (2) It is a state of peace. (3) It is indescribable. There are two forms of nirvana – (1) Sopadhi Sesa, (2)

Nirupaddhi sesa. Through nirvana, a person is freed of all the sufferings which the cycle of life and death entails.

***Pratīyasamutpad or Dependent Origination*** – It is the middle path between eternalism and nihilism. It has twelve Nidanas – (a) Due to past life – (1) Avidya or ignorance, (2) Samskara or predisposition, (b) Due to present life – (1) Vijnan or consciousness, (2) Nama rupa or name and form, (3) Sadayatana or six provinces of six senses, (4) Sparsa or contact, (5) Vedana or feeling (6) Tanha or craving, (7) Upadana or clinging, (c) Concerned with the future life – (1) Bhava or coming to be, (2) Jati or rebirth, (3) Jaramarana or old age and death.

***Karma and rebirth*** – According to the Buddha, the fruit of action is inevitable. It depends upon the character of the agent. Karma is not mechanical, Bhava cakra, for the succession of the world is dependent upon Karma. But liberation from Karma is possible.

***Theory of No-soul*** – Buddhist philosophy does not accept the existence of an eternal soul. According to the Buddha, the soul is the stream of consciousness. Despite its rejection of the traditional concept of rebirth, this philosophy accepts it in the sense of one lamp setting another alight. Man is a conglomeration of form, mental states and consciousness. He is the sum total of the five skandhas.

***Doctrine of Momentariness*** – The Buddha believes that everything is changeable, from this belief, his followers deduced the principle of momentariness, the main argument in favour of which is that of Arthakriyakaritva, or the argument from the power of generating effect.

### **4.3 Schools of Buddhism**

After the death of the Buddha, His followers began to interpret his teachings in different ways according to their own conceptions. Of which the most important two were Mahasanghik and Sthavirwadin. Mahasanghiks used to apply reason to the Buddha's teachings. According to this view, any man can achieve the status of Buddha. The Sthavirwadins, on the other hand, were conservative and vehemently against any type of change or novelty. According to them, every one does not possess the capacity to become Buddha; that capacity is acquired only by long penance.

Gradually the differences between the Mahasanghik and Sthavirwadin increased. The former began to call themselves 'Mahayanas' while the latter became known as 'Hinayanas'. Hinayana means the lower path to achieve the stage of liberation. Hinayana also means a 'small vessel' or a 'small sect' and is considered to imply that by its means only a few persons can attain the goal of their lives. Mahayan means a 'bigger vessel' or a bigger sect, suggesting thereby that by its means many persons can reach the goal of their lives.

#### 4.4 Difference between Mahayana and Hinayana School

There are some points of distinction between Hinayana and Mahayana schools. These are as follows:

**1. *The Summum Bonum*** – The followers of the Hinayana sect consider the stage of ‘Arhat’ as the highest stage. After reaching this stage, the aspirant becomes perfectly established in knowledge. The followers of Mahayana sect. On the other hand, aspire to reach the stage of ‘Bodhisatva’. It is after reaching this stage that one gets the capacity to do good to others.

**2. *Concept of Liberation*** – Thus the ideal pursued by the followers of Hinayana is somewhat narrow, as they try only for their own liberation. The ideal of Mahayana, on the other hand, is more liberal and altruistic. They not only seek their own liberation, but aim at cosmic good. Thus Hinayana aims at only individual liberation, while Mahayan aims at the universal liberation.

**3. *Self-dependence versus grace*** – In Hinayana, there is emphasis on self-dependence. According to it, man may attain liberation only by his own efforts. As the Buddha himself has said, “Be ye a lamp unto you”. The aspirants must themselves try for their own uplift. Before attaining Mahaparnirvana, the Buddha said to his followers. “All constructed things or conglomerations are subject to destruction. One should try for liberation by one’s own efforts.”

Mahayana, however, finds a place also for such worldly persons who are so much busy with the struggle in life that they cannot make efforts themselves for their liberation and need the help of others. According to the Mahayana sect, the compassion of the Buddha can also lead to the liberation of man.

**4. *Worship of the Buddha*** – Hinayana is atheistic. In it, the place of God has been given to the essentials of Dhamma. Dhamma (Dharma) moves the whole world. It is due to Dhamma that the fruits of karma are accumulated and every individual gets mind, body and worldly things according to his own karmas. In the Hinayana, there is provision for seeking the shelter of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, but the Buddha was never conceived of as the idol of worship or God.

In Mahayana, the Buddha gradually became the idol of worship and came to be identified with the ultimate existence. Siddhartha Gautama was adored as the incarnation of the Buddha. In the form of Dharma Kaya, the Buddha became God. He is the controller of the world and descends on the earth for the good of living beings. The sufferers in the world pray to get the help, sympathy and compassion of the Buddha by accepting him as God. In this form, the Buddha is also known as Amitabha Buddha.

**5. *Conservatism versus Liberalism*** – The Hinayana sect believes in the tradition of old Buddhist philosophy. As it has been already pointed out, it is conservative and vehemently opposed to all types of changes. Mahayana, on the other hand, is progressive. Hence, in the Mahayana sect there were great scholars like Ashva Ghosh, Nagarjuna, Asanga. Vasu Bandhu and Arya Deva, who seriously discussed the various philosophical problems.

**6. Concepts of Self** – Due to its faith in the ancient tradition, Hinayana does not accept self. According to Mahayana, on the other hand, only the lower self or Hina Atman is illusory, the transcendental self or Mahatma is not false.

**7. Puritan versus utilitarian attitude** – Hinayana was more concerned with the purity and clarity of the idea, while Mahayana aimed at its utility. In Hinayana, the early Buddhist principles remain in their original form while in Mahayana many new thoughts and principles were added to them.

**8. Difference in attitude** – Due to its being conservative, one finds asceticism, narrowness and superstitiousness in Hinayana. Mahayana on the other hand, being progressive, has a healthy and sympathetic attitude and liberal and progressive ideas.

### **Stop to Consider:**

Though the Buddha was himself absolutely rational and tried to prove everything by reasoning, yet he remained silent regarding some philosophical questions and refused to discuss some other problems. It is on these issues and problems, that the later Buddhist philosophers have very much differed from one another and have presented widely different opinions. The seeds of positivism, phenomenalism and empiricism are to be found in the philosophy of the Buddha. His philosophy may be called positivism, because according to it one must try for the progress of this life in this very world. It may be called phenomanism since, according to the Buddha, we may have definite knowledge of only those objects which are subject to empirical experience. Thus some philosophers have also called Buddhist philosophy empirical, because, according to it, experience is the only proof of knowledge. Regarding the ultimate reality, some philosophers have interpreted the Buddha's approach as agnostic while others have explained it as mystic and even transcendentalist. Those who interpreted Buddhist philosophy empirically, called him agnostic, because according to the empirical principle, the knowledge of imperceptible things is impossible.

The Buddha also sometimes referred to such knowledge as being unknowable by rational argumentation, because of its being other-worldly. The Buddha accepted Prajna as the ultimate knowledge. Prajna is beyond the senses. Hence some philosophers have interpreted the Buddha's philosophy as transcendentalism. The Buddha has also referred to knowledge which cannot be proved by experience or logic, which is not subject to worldly thoughts, and which cannot be described in words. On this basis some other philosophers have interpreted the Buddha's philosophy as mysticism.

Philosophically, the Mahayana sect was divided into two classes. Sunyavad or Madhyamik and Vijnanvad or Yogachara. The Hinayana school was also divided into two philosophical schools viz., Vaibhasika and Sautrantika. These two schools differ on the question of the existence of external things, but both Sautrantika and Vaibhasika accepted the reality of the physical and mental objects. Hence they are known as ISarvastivadin or those believing in the existence of everything. These two schools, however, differ on the question of the source of knowledge. According to Sautrantika the external objects are not known through perception. According to Vaibhasika, on the other hand, the knowledge of the external objects can also be gained through perception.

#### **4.5 Sarvastivadin School**

As has already been pointed out, the Sarvastivadins believe in the existence of everything. According to them both citta and external objects have existence and both consist of many elements. These elements are called dharmas. The dharmas are of seventy five types. The substratum of dharmas was known as sanghat. It is because of this that Stacherbatsky has called Sarvastivad as “Sanghatwad”. The material sanghat of citta are of forty six types. Only three dharmas are not subject to sanghat. These are Akasa, Apratisankhyanirodh and Pratisankhyanirodh. Atom is the unit of matter. It is of four types: earth, water, fire and air. The five sense organs are made of five types of special atoms. The atoms are beyond the senses, only their combinations can be perceived.

#### **4.6 Vaibhasika School**

The Vaibhasikas accept both citta and matter. Both these are made up of the dharmas. There is no eternal soul. But Akasa and Nirvana are eternal. There are four elements viz., earth, water, air and fire. The earth is hard, the water is cool, the fire is hot and the air is mobile. The perceptible things are real. They are compounds (sanghat) of atoms. The atoms have no form, sound, taste or colour. Things are the conglomerations of imperceptible atoms. Here, a distinction has been drawn by philosophers between sangat and dravya atom. The sangat atom is the subtlest form of atom. The dravya atom is indivisible and without colour. It is of nine types-earth, water, fire, air, smell, taste, colour, touch and karma dhatu.

#### **4.7 Sautrantika School**

The other school of Buddhism was known as sautrantika school. It was based on Sutta Pitaka. Like the Vaibhasika school, the Sautrantikas were earlier included in the Sthavirvadins, but later on they were separated from them. They have no faith in Abhidhamma Pitaka and Vibhasa. It is due to faith in Vibhasa that this school has been called Vaibhasika. Vaibhasikas believe that the external things are known to perception, while according to Sautrantika school they are subject to inference.

#### **4.8 Madhyamik or Sunyavada**

According to the Sunyavadins, the ultimate reality is Sunya. Hence this view has come to known as Sunyavad. According to Nagarjuna the ultimate reality is neither both existent and non-existent nor different from both. Thus the ultimate reality is entirely different from the four categories. It is attributeless. Nagarjuna has called ‘Sunyata’ by the name of Pratitya-samutpad as well. The element is Swalakshana. Hence whatever is born of material cause depends on something other than itself. Its origination is not in fact, i.e., it is Sunya. These philosophers were called Madhyamikas because they adopted the middle path (Madhyam

Marga) of the Buddha. The Buddha adopted a middle path between activism and renunciation. He neither passed his life as a recluse in the forest nor lived as a worldly being, Living in the world, He aimed at the welfare of all living beings.

- (a) **Samvrtti and Paramartha Satya:** Nagarjuna, the greatest philosopher of Madhyamika school, admitted two forms of reality. According to him, “There are two truths on which the Buddha’s teachings regarding religion are based. One is the empirical truth (Samvrtti Satya). It is for the ordinary person. The other is the transcendental truth (Paramartha satya). Those persons who do not know the distinction between these truths cannot understand the subtle secrets of the Buddha’s teachings.” The empirical truth is only a means for the attainment of transcendental truth. According to Nagarjuna the transcendental truth cannot be known without the help of the empirical and without knowing the transcendental truth, Nirvana cannot be attained. Truth is known by untruth and ultimate reality by Maya. Similarly, the knowledge of the empirical truth is necessary for the attainment of transcendental truth. Empirical truth is also called Avidya (ignorance), Moha (attachment), Viparyaya etc. It is other – dependent and hence perishable. It is also of two types – Loka Samvrtti and Mithya Samvrtti. Loka Samvrtti is that object or phenomenon which is born out of some cause and through which all the activities of the worldly beings go on. Thus Loka Samvrtti is the truth in the world. Mithya Samvrtti is the phenomenon which is also due to some cause, but which is not admitted to do true by all, nor does nit help all in their behaviour.
- (b) **Transcendental Reality:** The Madhyamika philosophers believe in the transcendental reality. Along with the physical world, they also discuss the ultimate existence. All the things of the world are relative. Thus the Sunyavad can also be called relativism. The dharmas of the worldly objects depend upon other objects and their existence requires the existence of other objects. Nothing has its own definite, absolute and independent nature. All these are empirical truths. The transcendental truth is directly opposed to them. Its experience is absolute. It is attained only in Nirvana. It is beyond the empirical objects. It is also called Sunyata, Tathata, Dharma Dhatu etc. In fact, the transcendental truth has no attributes at all. In it there are no names and forms, subjects and objects. It can be known neither through speech nor through the mind. This truth can also not be explained through words. The knower experiences it through immediate experience.
- (c) **Negation of Everything:** Nagarjuna starts his famous book Madhamika Karika, by saluting the great teacher Buddha who preached the doctrine of dependent origination and says that from the transcendental standpoint Pratityasamutpad is itself Nirvana, and all the multiplicity closes into it. From the transcendental standpoint there



is neither negation, nor origination, nor annihilation, nor eternity, nor Sunya. There is neither deduction nor induction.

Nagarjuna condemns the entire creation. Using his logic of fourfold categories, he proves the non-existence of all the objects. Nothing can be born by itself, nor through others; nor both through itself and others, nor in the absence of both. Hence creation is impossible. After it Nagarjuna condemns the four concepts of Hinayana viz., Alamban, Samanantar, Adhipati and Sahakari. Thus he proves that cause and effect are relative and merely empirical truths. Similarly, he also proves notion and perception to be impossible.

The five skandhas are also non-existent. For example, if they are there, they will have no cause and if they are not there even then they will have no cause, because the non-existent thing, like the hare's horn cannot have any cause. Hence rupa is impossible.

Both bondage and liberation are negated and hence are non-existent. There is none bound, none liberated, none both bound and liberated and no one neither bound nor liberated. Hence there can be neither bondage nor liberation. Whatever is in the skandhas and whatever is not in them, can neither be bound nor liberated. Similarly, Nirvana has no existence; because, if it had, like other things in existence, it should also have a beginning and an end, and then it should also have a cause and depend on Skandhas like other Sanskrita dharmas. Similarly, Nirvana cannot be non-existent because then it would not be independent since non-existence depends on existence. Nirvana also cannot be both existent and non-existent, because, this is self contradictory. Again, nirvana, cannot be neither existent nor non-existent, because then it cannot even be thought of. Hence nirvana is neither existent nor non-existent, nor both. It is more illusion.

- (d) **Not Nihilism:** Sine philosophers, including Samkara, have called Sunyavad to be nihilism. According to Samkaracharya, Sunyavad is not even worthy of the honour of being condemned because it is contrary to all proofs. But this only shows Samkara's antipathy towards Sunyavad and not any attempt to understand it. The above-mentioned discussion of the views of Nagarjuna makes it amply clear that according to him non-existence or Sunya is relative. In fact, the word Madhyamika itself proves that the Sunyavadins are on the one hand against positive absolute eternity and on the other hand against positive absolute eternity and on the other hand against absolute nihilism. Their's is the middle path, i.e., according to them, the Reality is neither eternal nor non-eternal. Secondly, when Nagarjuna proves everything to be non-existent, it is only from the transcendental standpoint. As empirical truths, all are real. Samkara has himself declared even God as non-existent from the transcendental standpoint. In fact, the philosophy of Sunyavad is so much similar to the non-dualism of Samkara that



Samkara is again and again found trying to differentiate between the two. This, however, does not mean that Samkara was a crypto-Buddhist. There is no restriction of space and time in the world of ideas and experiences. In spite of their living in different times and places, the two great philosophers could have exactly similar ideas. This only shows the fundamental unity and similarity of human experience and thinking.

- (e) **Empirical and Transcendental Standpoint:** Hence Sunyavad is neither absolute nihilism nor denial of all knowledge. It maintains that from the transcendental standpoint all things of the world are self-contradictory and relative and hence mere empirical truths. It is true that the words used by Sunyavadins e.g., Bhrama (Illusion), Swapna (Dream), Mrg Trsna (Mirage), Akasa Kusum (sky flowers) and Bandhya Putra (son of a barren woman) etc., prove absolute non-existence of things. But the purpose behind all these seems to prove the absolute non-existence of the empirical things from the transcendental standpoint. The Sunyavadins have themselves repeated again and again that absolute negation is impossible. Both negation and affirmation are relative. Many things which are illusory from the transcendental standpoint are perfectly true in the world. But even in the empirical truth, the transcendental truth explains itself. The Reality is absolute, non-dual and beyond the intellect. Though immanent in the world, it is beyond it. According to Nagarjuna, Reality is that which can be known only directly, which is calm and blissful, in which the manyness is dissolved, which is attributeless, non-dual, homogenous and perfect. This Reality is Sunyata. As a matter of fact, Sunyata itself has two aspects. It is dependent origination and relative and means that the worldly objects are not transcendental truths. According to Nagarjuna, this is the middle path which, in the end, is both beyond affirmation and negation. The cycle of dependent origination cannot stop without the destruction of ignorance and that is possible only through real knowledge. Hence from transcendental standpoint, it is neither Sunya nor not-Sunya, nor both nor neither. Relativity is itself relative and this is an empirical truth. Relativism cannot be absolute truth. Nagarjuna has himself said, "We do not say that our particular statement is true while all others are untrue. We say that all statements are Sunya from the transcendental standpoint." He again says, "But from the empirical standpoint, we admit the truth of the statement because the empirical cannot be contradicted by its own logic."

In fact, it is the other-dependent nature of things, their changeability and their own affability which are conveyed through the word Sunya. All the qualities are Sunya because the origination of all of them depends on some thing else. The transcendental existence is beyond the perceptible world and is inevitable. It cannot be known through ordinary worldly concepts. Hence it is said to be Sunya. In the Lankavatar Sutta it has been said that the real nature cannot be known

through the intellect. As has been shown earlier, Nagarjuna has used the criterion of fourfold categories to examine the truth of things. Whatever is beyond these four categories is Sunya. Thus all the things of the intellect whether their real nature is true, untrue, both true and untrue, or neither true and nor untrue. Nagarjuna says, "The Reality is beyond all the concepts of the intellect". Only he who has known the meaning of Sunya may understand the real significance of things and may be able to explain them. On the other hand, he who has not understood the truth Sunya is unable to understand the significance of things or to explain them.

Thus according to Sunyavad, the transcendental truth is known through self-experience. It requires Samadhi in the form of the concentration on citta. The practice of Samadhi leads to the arousal of prajna and the aspirant has a balanced citta. This leads to the experience of the ultimate reality. Samadhi also requires renunciation as well as the knowledge and practice of six Parmitas. These six Parmitas are charity (Dan), good character (Sila), peacefulness (Santi), Virility (Veerya), concentration (Dhyana) and spiritual consciousness (Prajna). The transcendental truth cannot be known without the practice of these. Penance is the most important duty. It leads to annihilation of misery and the attainment of knowledge. Thus the aspirant realizes the Sunya both through knowledge and action.

#### **4.9 Yogachara or Vijnanvad**

Another philosophical school of the Mahayana sect is known as Yogachara or Vijnanvad. It is known as Vijnanvad since according to it all thing are consciousness. It is also called Yogachara because in it the aspirant must go through the practice of Yoga and pass through its ten states before becoming Buddha. The understanding of Alaya Vijnan also requires Yoga. Those who have the experience of Samadhi very well know that in the state of Samadhi the entire physical world seems to disappear in citta and it is only after awakening from Samadhi that the things of the external world are gradually perceived. It is on the basis of this experience that the Yogachara philosophers have concluded that Citta is everything. This Citta is known as Alaya Vijnan, In Mahayana Samparigarh Sutta, Asanga has enumerated the following important characteristics of the Yogachara school:-

1. Alaya Vijnan pervades all living beings.
2. Knowledge is of three types-illusory, relative and absolute.
3. Both the external and internal world are a manifestation of the Alaya.
4. The six parmitas are compulsory.
5. For the attainment of the state of Buddha, one must pass through the ten states of Bodhisatva.
6. Mahayana is far superior to Hinayana which is selfish, individualistic and narrow and which has misinterpreted the teachings of Buddha.

7. The ultimate aim is to be one with the Dharmakaya of Buddha through spiritual experience (Bodhi).
8. Transcending the dualism of subject and object, one must identify oneself with consciousness.
9. From the transcendental standpoint, there is no difference between the world and liberation. With the attainment of equanimity and negation of multiplicity, liberation may be attained here and now.
10. Reality is Dharmakaya i.e., the perfect pure consciousness which is Nirmanakaya from the worldly standpoint.

According to Lankavatar sutta all the Dharmas, except Vijnana, are un-real. Buddha has only preached about Vijnan. Nama, Rupa and Aroop, the three worlds, are mere transformations of this consciousness. No external thing has any existence. Whatever is, is Vijnan. Similarly, according to Vasubandhu as well, Vijnana is the only reality. It is expressed through subject and object. Hence the Buddha has pointed out two bases of knowledge – internal and external. There is no individual soul nor external things because both are the manifestations of Vijnan which cannot be known through the intellect. It is known through direct experience. It can be known through purity of person which is beyond the dualism of subject and object.

Vijnan is of two kinds – Pravrtti Vijnan i.e., personal consciousness and Alaya Vijnan or absolute consciousness. Individual consciousness is again of seven types – Caksu Vijnan, Short Vijnan, Dharma Vijnan, Rasana Vijnan, Kama Vijnan, Mano-Vijnan, and Klista Vijnan. Of these the first six have been admitted by Sarvastivadins. The seventh is the mediating link between the sixth and Alaya Vijnan. The first five types of consciousness lead to the knowledge of the things. Manovijnan leads to thought on them and Klista Vijnan helps in their perception. Alaya Vijnan or Citta is that which unites all these.

All these seven Vijnans of the personal consciousness are born in the absolute consciousness and disappear into it. All these are momentary and changing. Thus, in fact the personal consciousness depends upon absolute consciousness.

Thus Alaya Vijnan is the alaya, the home or store – house, of different types of Vijnanas. Hence in it are stored the passions in the form of seeds of all the Vijnans. In time the seeds manifest in the practical world in the form of behaviour and again merge into alaya. Hence this alaya vijnan is itself the empirical individual self. All types of knowledge remain in it. It is the basis of transmigration. It is also called Citta and Tathagatagarbha.

According to Yogachara, the physical world has no existence apart from consciousness. Even if the existence of any thing outside consciousness is admitted, it cannot be known. However, if there is any external thing, it is either atomic or made of several atoms. If it is atomic it cannot be perceived because atom is very subtle and minute. Again, if it is made of several atoms, even then the whole thing cannot be perceived together. Now, if there is the question of perception of one

part, the difficulty is the same, that either it is made of one atom or more than one atom and, in both the conditions, it cannot be perceived as has been discussed earlier. Thus, there are many difficulties in accepting the existence of things external to the mind. According to Vijnan-vadins, if the thing is not conceived apart from mental knowledge, all these difficulties are removed. Hence Vijnanvadins believe that all things external to mind are mental modifications. According to Dharmakirit, there is no difference in the blue colour and its knowledge; because the two are not independent of one another. Knowledge is necessary to know the things. Hence the thing cannot have any existence apart from knowledge. It is a mere illusion to see things difference from knowledge. Seeing two moons means defect of the eyes and not that there are actually two moons. Just as in dreams things are seen as external and yet they are in mind, similarly, in the ordinary waking state as well, things appear to be external inspite of their being in the mind. The Vijnannvadins prove the non-existence of the external things on the basis of momentarism as well. Things are known only after their creation, but they are destroyed in the very moment of creation. Hence, there should be creation of the things and their knowledge both in the same moment. Now, thing is the cause of knowledge and knowledge is its effect. But cause and effect cannot be in the same time; the effect must be posterior to the cause. On the other hand, the thing is destroyed in the same moment and the question of its knowledge does not arise after its destruction. Thus the knowledge of the external things is impossible. Hence the thing which appears to be external should be taken as a mere mental concept.

It may be questioned here that if the object is mere concept of the mind, why does it not appear, disappear and change is desired. To this the Vijnanvadins reply that the mind is a stream in which the past experiences remain in the form of impressions and whenever there is a favorable condition for a certain impression, the same impression manifests and results into knowledge. This can be proved by the example of memory. There are many impressions in the mind, but at a particular time, only a particular impression is recalled.

The Vijnanvadins do not accept the empirical self as ultimately real. Man is the self born of ignorance. Had there been any real self, there should have been either liberation without effort or no liberation at all. The Vijnanvadins have called the empirical self as Manovijnan. It is based on the Alaya vijnan and along with it are attached four types of miseries – self thought, self-illusion, self-pride and self-love. As soon as the false idea of Monovijnan is destroyed, these miseries also disappear. According to Vasubandhu, when the un-reality of the external things is known, Mano vijnan becomes unreal, because the subject cannot remain without the object, and the aspirant stays in absolute truth.

From the multiple point of view, Vijnanvadins admit two types of knowledge – Grahana and Abhyavasaya. Grahana is indirect and Abhyavasaya direct inference. The Vijnanvadins believe that the proof of things depends on something else (Paratah Pramanyavad). They made two distinctions in the empirical truth, viz..., paratantra and parikalpita. The former is relative while the latter is imaginary.

### **Schools of Buddhism:**

There are basically two schools are found in Buddhism i.e. Mahasanghik or Mahayana and Sthavirwadin or Hinayana. Difference between Hinayana and Mahayan: - (1) The summum bonum is different. (2) Hinayana ideal is narrow, while the Mahayana ideal is liberal. (3) Hinayana emphasizes dependence on self while Mahayana places some faith in the compassion of the Buddha. (4) Contrary to Hinayana, Mahayana does believe the Buddha to be the incarnation of God. (5) Hinayana is dogmatic and Mahayana progressive. (6) Hinayana, contrary to Mahayana, believes in the reality of transcendental self. (7) Hinayana is concerned with purity of ideal while Mahayana is concerned with its utility. (8) Hinayana dry and rigorous, Mahayana is healthy and progressive.

**Philosophical Schools:-** Lack of clarity in the Buddha's philosophical concepts led to the rise of many philosophical schools, the major four of which are:- (1) Sunyavad or Madhyamik, (2) Vijnanvad or Yogachara, (3) Vaibhasika, (4) Sautrantika.

**Sarvastivadin School:** – They believe in the existence of each subject.

**Vaibhasika School:** – Both citta and matter are real. There are four dharmas. Objects are composed of atoms. The dravya paramanu or atom is of eight kinds. Vaibhasika school criticizes the Sautrantika or Bahyanumeyavad. According to them, objects are of two kinds – grahana and adhyavasaya. Pramanas are two – pratyaksha or perceptual, and anumana or inferential. Perception is of four kinds– (1) Indriya jnan, (2) Manovijnan, (3) Atmasamvedana, (4) Yogic jnan. Inference is of two kinds – (1) Swartha or for self, (2) Parartha or for others. Swartha anumana is of two kinds – (1) Sadharmayavat, (2) Vaidharmyavat. In the Vaibhasika school, elements have been studied from two points of view – (1) Visayagat or objective, (2) Visayigat, or subjective.

**Sautrantika School:** – It is based on Sutta Pitaka. This school accepts four causes of knowledge – (i) Alamban, (ii) Samanantar, (iii) Adhipati, (iv) Sakhari pratyay. (2) Bahyanumeyavad.

**Madhyamik or Sunyavad:** – The ultimate reality is sunya. It is attributeless. Everything is sunya. They adopt the middle path between activism and renunciation. According to Nagarjuna, reality is of two forms or kinds – (1) empirical truth or samvrtti satya, (2) Transcendental truth or paramarthik satya. Empirical truth is of two kinds – (1) Loka samvrtti, (2) Mithya or false samvrtti. Sunyavad is relative. Nagarjuna refutes the entire creation. According to him, the five skandhas, dravya, guna and soul are all untrue or unreal. Creation has no beginning, middle or end. Change is impossible. Nirvana is only Sunya. Sunyavad is not destructive. Sunya is the ultimate reality. It has both empirical and transcendental aspects. Both knowledge and action serve to attain the transcendental truth. But of all things that are needed for this attainment, prayer and extreme asceticism are the most important.

Yogachara or Vijnanvad – According to it, all things are Vijnana or consciousness. Citta or alaya vijnan is the only reality. All dharmas besides vijnana are unreal.

There are two distinctions of vijnana – (1) Pravrtti vijnana. (2) Alaya Vijnana. Pravrtti vijnana has seven distinctions. The external objects are alaya vijnana. The practical self is psychological. The pure soul or mahatma is the sole reality. Alaya vijnana is eternal. Knowledge is of two kinds – (1) Grahana, (2) Adhyavasaya. Vijnanavad is not objective.

#### 4.10 Summing Up

Buddha was born in 563 B.C. and died in 483 B.C. His teachings were collected in 247 B.C. on the occasion of the third Buddhist congregation. Later on, his followers were divided in two schools – Mahasanghik and Sthavirvadin or Mahayan and Hinayana which were further subdivided into many sects.

#### **Check Your Progress:**

1. Who was the founder of Buddhism and when He was born?
2. Give the names of Tripitakas.
3. What are the Four Noble Truths?
4. Mention the Eightfold Paths of Liberation.
5. Gives the names of two main schools of Buddhism?
6. Who is the greatest philosopher of Madhyamika School?
7. What are the main characteristics of Yogachara or Vijnanvada?
8. Give the names of two main philosophers of Vijnanavada.
9. Explain and Examinee the Madhyamika school of Buddhism.
10. Critically explain the Yogachara school of Buddhism.

#### 4.11 References/Suggested Readings

1. History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I., – Dr. S.N. Dasgupta
2. Indian Philosophy, Vol. I., – Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
3. A Critical Survey of Indian Philosoph – Dr. C.D. Sarma
4. An Introduction to Indian Philosophy – Dutta & Chatterjee

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## UNIT: 5

### NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

#### CONTENTS:

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Nyaya Theory of Knowledge
  - 5.3.1 Nyaya Theory of Perception (Prataksa)
  - 5.3.2 Types of Perception
- 5.4 Nyaya Theory of Inference (Anumana)
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#### 5.1 Introduction

The Nyaya philosophy is famous for its to systematic logical thinking in traditional Indian philosophy. The great sage Gautama composed the basic text of this philosophy.

This text is known as 'Nyaya Sutra'. Therefore he is regarded as the propounder of this philosophy. Vachaspati interpreted Nyaya Sutra which is known as 'Nyaya Suchi Nibondha'. Later on many elaborate treatises were written on this text. In second century A.D. Vatsayana wrote on this subject. His treatise is famous among other interpretations. In twelve century Gangesa Upadhyaya wrote on Nyaya philosophy which is regarded as Neo-Nyaya philosophy.

Among the six systems of Vedic philosophy Nyaya occupies a special importance for its elaborate and methodical discussion on knowledge. Now let us discuss some important concept of Nyaya Philosophy.

#### 5.2 Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- *discuss* Nyaya theory of knowledge;
- *describe* Nyaya theory of perception; and
- *analyse* Nyaya theory of inference.



### 5.3 Nyaya Theory of Knowledge

Among the systems of Indian philosophy, Nyaya is famous for its logic and epistemology. Knowledge is defined as the manifestation of objects. Knowledge enlightens the object as a lamp illuminates an object. Knowledge is of two types— (1) valid (prama) and (2) invalid (aprama). Valid knowledge is definite or real knowledge and it consists in knowing the object as it is. For example, to know the snake as a snake-and the bowl as a bowl is a valid knowledge. Valid knowledge has four sources viz. (1) Perception (Prataksa) (2) Inference (Anumana) (3) Comparison (Upamana) (4) Testimony (Sabda). Knowledge arising from sources other than these is called invalid or aprama knowledge.

#### **Check Your Progress:**

1. What is the basic text of Nyaya Philosophy?
2. Who had composed the basic text of Nyaya Philosophy?
3. What are the two distinctions of knowledge?
4. What are the sources of valid knowledge according to Nyaya?

#### 5.3.1 Nyaya Theory of Perception (Prataksa)

According to Nyaya philosophy, perception is un-contradicted knowledge which arises out of the proximity of the object with the sense organ. Perception is that form of knowledge which results from the contact or nearness between the object and the sense organ. This is real knowledge. For example, when any object is so near to my eye that I have no doubt of its being real, then it is perceptual knowledge. If a distinct object appears to me to be a human being and I have some doubts about this knowledge, then inspite of the actual contact between the sense organs and the object, the knowledge is not perceptual knowledge. In the same way, knowledge of the rope as the snake is not perceptual knowledge. It is illusion. Hence, illusory knowledge cannot be considered to be perceptual.

This analysis of perception does not take into account the extraordinary and intuitive perceptions because there can be no knowledge of them without actual contact with senses. Knowledge of pleasure and pain, etc., occurs without sensory contact with the object. Perceptual knowledge of an object occurs only when there is cognition of it. In perception, knowledge occurs without any past experience or inference. Thus some Nyaya philosophers have given the name of perception (pratiti) to cognition, implying thereby that perception is that knowledge which is not the result of any other knowledge.

### 5.3.2 Types of Perception

Perception has been classified in various ways. From one angle, perception is of two types – (1) Ordinary (Laukika) (2) Extraordinary (Alaukika). Extraordinary perception provides immediate knowledge even without the sensory contact. Ordinary perception also is of two types – (1) External (bahya) (2) Internal (manas). External perception has five divisions connected with the five senses – visual, tactual, auditory, gustatory and olfactory. In internal perception, the actual contact between the object, and the mind produces knowledge of pleasure, pain, love, hatred, morality, immorality etc. In this way, ordinary perception, admits of three distinctions – (1) Determinate (savikalpa), (2) Indeterminate (nirvikalpa) and (3) Recognition (Pratyabhijna). Similarly extraordinary perception also has three distinctions – (1) Perception of Classes (Samanya Laksana), (2) Perception by Complication (jnana laksana) and (3) Intuitive (yogaja) perception.

Again, ordinary perception has been divided into three types:- Gautama, in his Nyaya Sutra, accepts the three types of Prataksa – determinate, indeterminate and recognition.

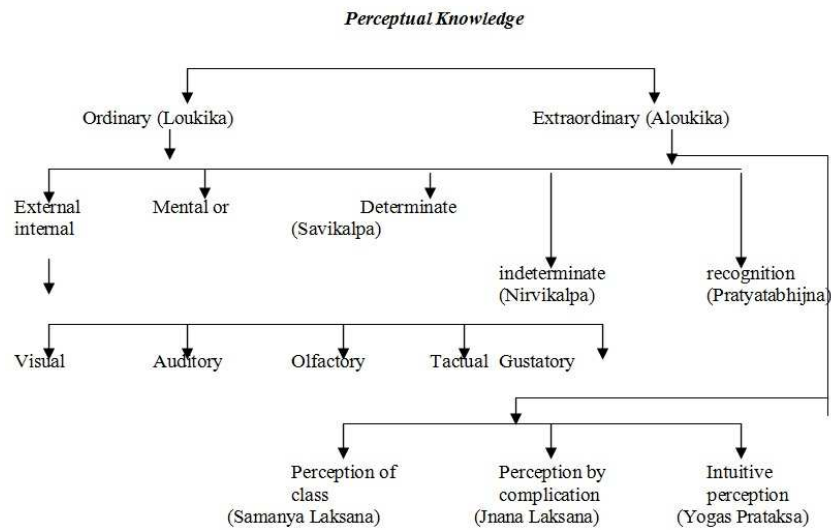
1. **Indeterminate Perception (Nirvikalpa Prataksa)** – When the external sense organ comes into contact with the object, first of all a particular kind of knowledge, known as ‘sanmukh’ or ‘avyakrta’, arises in the mind consisting merely of an awareness of the existence of the object without any knowledge of its name, qualities, etc. It is called indeterminate perception, because it lacks any determining features, such as, quality, class etc. It is the undeveloped form of perception. Its existence is proved not by perception but by inference. According to Nyaya philosophers, indeterminate knowledge should precede determinate knowledge. These two types of perception are only inferred because no relation can be established between the object and the quality without differentiating or distinguishing the two.
2. **Determinate Perception (Savikalpa)** – In determinate perception there is no doubt as to whether the object is an animal or a human being or anything else. According to the Nyaya view, a moment before it arises, the knowledge of an object is devoid of characters, such as, name and class etc.; but in the next moment there is elaborate awareness of the same knowledge, characteristics of the object as name, class, shape, quality, etc, and the once indeterminate knowledge is manifested in practice in the form of sentences presenting determinate knowledge of such characteristics or the object as name, class, shape, quality etc. This is determinate perception. Thus determinate perception gives knowledge of the object that ‘this is a man’, ‘he is still’, etc. It is the developed form of perception and it is on the basis of it that the worldly activities continue to be performed.
3. **Recognition (Pratyabhijna)** – In this type of perception there arises the sense that the object now being perceived has been seen at some earlier juncture. To take an example, if I meet a person to whom I were introduced

a year ago, I feel that he is the same individual. This knowledge will be called recognition. In this knowledge, there is always an element of immediate experience.

The Extraordinary Perception has been classified into three divisions -

1. Perception of Classes (Samanya Laksana)
2. Perception by complication (Jnana Laksana)
3. Perception by intuition (Yogas Prataksa)

1. ***Perception of Classes (Samanya Laksana)*** – The perception which involves the cognition of a common quality or attribute is different from ordinary perception, and it is therefore called the perception of classes. When one says that all men are mortal, the observation is based upon the knowledge of the mortality of some men as representatives of a class and this knowledge is known as the perception of classes. When, upon perceiving someone, one says that he is a man, one perceives manhood in him. In other words, according to the Nyaya philosophers, knowledge of man arises from the perception of his common quality of ‘manhood’ which he shares with all men. It is on the basis of this same perceptual experience that one says that man is mortal because mortality is an attribute of manhood.
2. ***Perception by Complication (Jnana Laksana)*** – This includes perceptions such as, ‘the ice looks cold, ‘the stone appears solid and the grass soft’. In these examples, coldness, solidity and softness are subjects of tactual perception. It may, therefore, be asked, how they can be visually perceived. This has been explained by the Nyaya philosophers thus: We have, on many previous occasions, perceived sandal wood. By smelling it at the same time as perceiving it visually as association between its colour and its smell is established in the mind. It is for this reason that the sight of sandal-wood is the occasion of the perception of its smell as well. In this example, the present experience of smell is based upon a recollection of the previous smell. It is called perception by complication because it is based upon past experience. It is extra-ordinary perception because generally one sense organ does not perceive sensations of a different nature which usually stimulate some other sense organ.
3. ***Intuitive Perception*** – It is the intuitive perception of all objects, and is peculiar to yogis who possess supernatural power. This experience can be had only by those who have achieved supernatural power after meditation and Yogic practices. This power makes it possible for them to have perceptual knowledge of all objects, past and future, complex and minute, near and far. Intuitive perception is also recognized by other Indian philosophers. The distinctions of perception are clearly illustrated in the following chart:-



**Check Your Progress:**

1. Give the classification of Nyaya theory of perception.
2. What are the different types of ordinary or Loukika perception?
3. Give the names of Extraordinary perception.

**5.4 Nyaya Theory of Inference (Anumana)**

The second source of valid knowledge according to Nyaya philosophy, is inference. Inference is the means to ‘anumana’. It is that knowledge preceding which there is some other knowledge. It is indirect (paroksa) knowledge and takes place through the medium of some mark which is called the ‘hetu’, and bears the relation of invariable concomitance with the observed feature. Anumana literally means that knowledge which follows some other knowledge. **The basis of inference is the relation of invariable concomitance. The invariable relation between the ‘hetu’ and the ‘sadhya’ is called concomitance or ‘vyapti’.** The knowledge of the qualities of the ‘paksa’ through the hetu is called ‘paramarsa’ or judgment. Hence, inference or Anumana is said to be the knowledge gained through judgment, or in other words, the knowledge of the presence of the sadhya in the paksa through the linga, which is a quality of paksa and is invariably related by concomitance. For example, there is fire on the hill, because there is smoke on the hill, and where there is smoke there is fire. Here, there is the relation of invariable concomitance between smoke and fire. For this reason the presence of fire on the hill is inferred by the presence of the smoke on the hill because of concomitance, and because it has been observed on previous occasions that fire is invariably present where there is smoke.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. What is the second source of valid knowledge?
2. Define Inference according to Nyaya Philosophy?
3. What is the basis of Inference?
4. What are the constituent three terms of Inference?

**5.4.1 Constituents of Inference**

In an inference there are three terms and at least three sentences. These three constituents of inference are respectively called paksa, sadhya and hetu. They are similar to the three terms of western syllogism – minor, major and middle – of the syllogism of Western logic. Paksa is that part of the inference about which there is inference. Sadhya denotes that which is proved of the paksa. Hetu establishes that there is relation between the sadhya and the paksa. For this reason, hetu is also known as the means. To illustrate by means of an example, in the above inference of fire on the hill, smoke is the means of inference. It is the linga or hetu or sign, the observation which leads to the inference of the fire. This inference is based upon the invariable concomitance between fire and smoke. In this way, the inference of fire from smoke involves three steps – (1) There is smoke on the hill, (2) There is invariable concomitance between smoke and the fire (of which we are already aware), (3) There is fire on the hill. Here the hill is the paksa because it is in relation to it that the inference is being made. Fire is the sadhya because it is fire which is being proved of the paksa (hill), and smoke is the linga. In this way, from the standpoint of thought process, the first step in this inference is knowledge of paksa with the hetu, then the knowledge of the vyapti between paksa and sadhya and finally, the judgment about the relation of the sadhya with the paksa. Then this inference will be stated in the following manner:-

There is fire on the hillside

Because there is smoke on the hillside

Where there is smoke there is fire, as in the kitchen.

**5.4.2 Types of Inference**

Inference has been divided into two types according to the purpose for which it is meant – (1) Svarh or for self, and (2) Pararth or for others. In the former, the inference is intended for oneself while in the latter it is for conveying knowledge to others. In the former, there is no necessity of presenting the judgment in an orderly fashion. But when it is a case of making another person understand, it is necessary that correct order of the judgments be adhered to. According to the Nyaya philosophers, **inference for other consists of five constituents**. An example of the five constituents of the inference is as follows:-

1. **Pratijna** – There is fire on the hill.
2. **Hetu** – Because (on the hill) there is smoke.
3. **Drstanta** – Where there is smoke there is fire, as in the kitchen.
4. **Upanaya** – There is smoke on the hill.
5. **Nigamana** – Hence, there is fire on the hill.

Hetu shows the reason for the pratijna. Drstanta is a universal judgment which, along with an example, shows the invariable relation between sadhya and hetu. Upanaya shows that the drstanta applies this particular instance. Nigamana is that which results from its preceding judgment. In this inference, the linga is observed thrice. The first time smoke is observed in the kitchen, the second time in the hill and the third time it is seen in relation to fire. This inference having five constituents has been called ‘paramanyaya’ by Gautama because it includes four pramanas.

In Gautama’s ancient logic, inference has been divided into three kinds on the basis of the distinctions of vyapti. These three kinds are –

1. Purvavat
2. Sesavat
3. Samanyatodrsta.

Of these types, the first two are based upon causal relationship while the last is not on this basis.

1. **Purvavat** – ‘Purva’ means previous or preceding, while ‘vat’ means like. Hence, purvavat inference is that which is like the previous, or in other words, the consequent or the effect is inferred from the precedent cause. In this manner, in purvavat inference, the future effect is anticipated on the basis of the present cause. It is purvavat inference, when, perceiving the clouds in the sky, it is said that it will rain. In purvavat inference there is a cause-effect relationship between the sadhana and the sadhya.
2. **Sesavat** – ‘Sesa’ means the residual effect. Therefore, inference of the cause from its effect is sesavat inference. Contrary to purvavat inference, here the causal relationship is between sadhya and sadhana in the vyapti. In this, the previous or past cause is inferred from the present effect. To infer that it must have rained somewhere by observing an increase of water in the river, its speed or its muddiness, is to employ the sesavat form of inference. It is also sesavat inference, when, on examining one part of the whole, it is deduced that the remaining must also possess the same qualities. Commentators upon the Nyaya classics have interpreted sesavat inference in a different way also. When the alternatives are nullified and there is no possible material form left, then what remains is called sesa. Any inference through the medium of this sesa is called sesavat inference. For example, being a characteristics quality, sound is not in time, space or mind. It cannot be the special quality of earth,

water, fire, air, or soul because it is heard by the ears. That which is left is the sky. There is no ninth form of matter or 'padartha'. Hence, according to the sesavat inference, it is proved that sound is the quality of the sky.

3. **Samanyatodrsta** – The inference which provides knowledge of any imperceptible or unperceived object is called samanyatodrsta such as, the inference of motion in the sun by observing it in the East in the morning and in the West in the evening. This inference is not based upon the relation of causality, but upon the fact that the means and the end are always found together. The fact that there is motion in the sun is inferred its change of position because, when other objects change their position, there is always motion. Hence samanyatodrsta inference resembles comparison to some extent.

**On the basis of the method of establishing vyapti or the relation of invariable, concomitance, inference has been further divided into three kinds by the Neo Naiyayikas.** These are –

1. Kevalanvayi
2. Kevala vyatireki
3. Anvaya vyatireki.

**1. Kevalanvayi** – This applies to the case where the means and the object are always found going together, meaning thereby, the case in which the vyapti is established by an agreement in presence between the middle and the major term, and in which there is no exception. e.g.

All knowable objects are nameable,

The pot is a knowable object,

∴ Therefore the pot is nameable.

Or, That which can be known must also have a name.

The pot can be known,

∴ Hence it must also have a name.

In the first premise of this inference, there is the relation of vyapti between the subject and object.

**2. Kevala vyatireki** – Where the inference proceeds not from the agreement in presence of the middle and the major term but from the vyapti between the absence of the major term and the absence of the middle term, it is called kevala vyatireki inference. An example of this type of inference is as follow:-

That which is not different from other elements has no smell,

The earth has smell,

∴ Therefore, the earth is different from other elements.

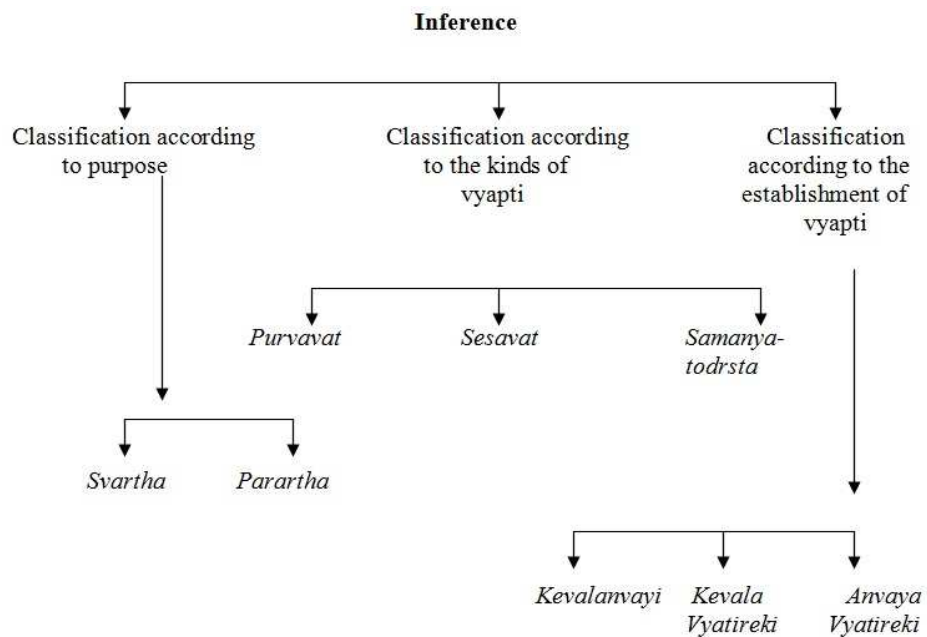


In this inference the first premise establishes a relation between the absence of the major term and middle term and the relation established is one of invariable concomitance. It is not possible to discover the characteristic smell in any place other than earth. For this reason, it is not possible to establish a relation of agreement in presence between the major and the middle term. In this way, here inference has been made on the basis of invariable concomitance.

**3. Anvaya Vyatireki** – Where the relation between the major and the middle term is based on the agreement both in presence and absence, the inference is anvaya vyatireki. The following is an example of it:-

Where there is smoke there is fire,  
 There is smoke on the hill,  
 Hence there is fire on the hill,  
 Where there is no fire there is no smoke,  
 There is smoke on the hill,  
 Hence there is fire on the hill.

The foregoing different types of inferences according to Nyaya philosophy may be illustrated by the following chart:-



**SAQ:**

Explain the Nyaya classification of Inference. (80 words)

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**Comparison (Upaman):**

According to Nyaya philosophy, comparison is the name given to the knowledge of the relation between a name and the thing so named. It supplies knowledge of the relation between a name and the object which is given that name. It is based on the knowledge of some common property or similarity between two major objects. Let us take it for granted that I have never seen a wild cow. A person dwelling in the forest informs me that it is not like an ordinary cow and possesses much the same shape. If, then, I come across some animal which resembles a cow and conclude that this is the animal known as a wild cow, then this knowledge is the result of comparison. Here, there is a relation between the name and the object of that name, or in other words, the animal known as the wild cow is similar to a known animal the cow. In this activity of comparison, when one sees the similarity between the cow and the wild cow, and recollects that the wild cow resembles a cow, only then I know that its name is a wild cow.

**Authority (Sabda):**

According to Nyaya philosophy, sabda is a valid source of knowledge. A sentence is a group of words; and 'word' is an entity which has the power to express some meaning. According to the ancient Naiyayikas system, this power of meaning is due to God, while according to the later Nyaya philosophers, it is endowed by tradition. The quality of being evidence or source of valid knowledge, is possessed, not by all words, but only by the words of seers. If some individual has knowledge of the truth and presents this knowledge for the good of humanity, then his word shall be accepted as true. Knowledge comes about with the comprehension of the meaning and not only of the word. Hence, the knowledge of the meaning of the statements of seers is testimony. Sabda is of two types – (1) Drstartha and (2) Adrstartha.

**5.5 Summing Up**

The sage Gautama is the propounder of Nyaya philosophy. He composed the Nyaya Sutra, the basic text of this philosophy Vachaspati interpreted on this text. Vatsyasa wrote the best commentary on this book.

Nyaya philosophy is famous for its systematic discussion on knowledge. According to this philosophy knowledge is the manifestation of object knowledge is of two types – (1) Valid (2) Invalid. There are four forms of valid knowledge – (1) Perception (2) Inference (3) Comparison and (4) Authority.

The main contribution of Nyaya philosophy consists in the field logic, epistemology and the method of discussion.

## **5.6 References/Suggested Readings**

1. C.D. Sharma – A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy.
2. S.C. Chatterjee – An Introduction to Indian Philosophy.
3. S. Radhakrishnan – Indian Philosophy, Vol. II.
4. S. N. Dasgupta – Indian Philosophy, Vol. II.

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## UNIT: 6

### VAISESIKA PHILOSOPHY: THEORY OF CATEGORIES

#### CONTENTS:

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Theory of Categories
  - 6.3.1 Criticism of the Categories
  - 6.3.2 Samkara's objections to Samavaya
- 6.4 Summing Up
- 6.5 References/Suggested Readings

#### 6.1 Introduction

Of the various Indian schools of thought Vaisesika is a realistic as well as pluralistic philosophy. The basic text of this philosophy was written by the great sage Kanada. Vaisesika philosophy is also called the philosophy of Kanada after his name. He was also known as Ulooka, for this reason it is also called the Aulookya philosophy. The reason for calling this philosophy as Vaisesika is that it accepts Visesa as a category which is not recognized by any other philosophy. After Kanada many treaties were written on his text. Of them the best known was written by Prasasta pada in the sixth century.

#### 6.2 Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- *discuss* the concept of *Vaisesika Philosophy*;
- *examine* critically the theory of categories propounded by Vedic Philosophy.

#### 6.3 Theory of Categories

Vaisesika philosophy devotes itself to metaphysical reflection. According to it all objects of the universe can be divided into seven categories. These seven categories are – (1) Dravya or substance, (2) Guna or quality, (3) Karma or action, (4) Samanya or generally, (5) Visesa or particularly, (6) Samavaya, Inherence and (7) Abhava or non-existence. of these seven categories there are two distinctions – (1) Bhava padartha, and (2) Abhava padartha. The first distinction denotes those categories which have an existence, or those which are present. It relates to being. The second distinction, of non-being, is an addition to

the Vaisesika philosophy by later commentators and is not found to have been discussed originally. The above categories, with the exception of abhava, are all existent and are included in being.

### ***1. Dravya or Substance:***

According to the Vaisesika view, dravya or substance is the substratum of action and qualities, and the material or constitutive cause of composite things produced from it. Even though different from quality and action, substance is their substratum; without it, quality and action can have no existence. Substances are of nine kinds – (1) prthvi or earth, (2) jal or water, (3) tej or fire, (4) vayu or air, (5) akasa or ether, (6) kala or time, (7) dik or space, (8) atma or self, (9) manas or mind.

The five elements – Among the above-mentioned substances, the first five are called ‘panchabhuta’. In each of these, there is one such specific quality. Earth has the quality of smell, water that of taste, fire of colour, air of touch and ether that of sound. These qualities are perceived by the nose, tongue, eyes, skin and ears respectively. These sense organs are also believed to have originated in earth, water, fire, air and ether. With the exception of ether, the other four physical elements are eternal, or nitya in the form of cause, and non-eternal, or anitya, in the form of effect. Accordingly, the atoms of earth, water, fire and air are beginningless and consequently are eternal, because they are not composite. But all the substances formed by the conjunction of these atoms, which, therefore, are effects, are not eternal because their constituent atoms may be separated or even destroyed.

The fifth substance – ether is the basis of sound. The ether is not perceived because it does not satisfy the conditions of external perception, since it is possessed neither of any perception of sound. Being partless, ether is one and eternal. It is cosmic, all-pervading and infinite because its quality-sound-is perceived in all directions.

*Space and Time* – Like ether, space and time are also not perceptible. They are one, eternal and all-pervading. Space is inferred by the knowledge of concepts such as here, there, near, far, etc. Time is inferred on the basis of concepts such as past, future, present, old and ancient. In this way, then, the earth, space and time are actually identical but they appear to be distinct because their qualities differ, and even their parts appear to be different.

*Soul or Atman* – The soul is the basis of the phenomenon of consciousness, and it is eternal and all-pervading. It is perceived by the mind and is thus known. The souls in different bodies are also different. Thus there are many souls. Beside the soul of human beings called the jivatma, the other form of the soul is the paramatma which is one and the creator of the universe.

*Mind or Manas* – The existence of the mind can be inferred from the following two factors – there is an internal sense organ required to perceive the internal categories composed of knowledge, desire, pain, pleasure, etc., and this internal sense is the mind. In spite of there being contact between the object and the external sense organs, knowledge does not occur without a mind. And even

when all the five senses come into contact with their respective qualities in different objects simultaneously, there is knowledge of only one at any one particular moment. This not only proves the existence of the mind but also that the mind is atomic and partless. Had the mind not been an infinitesimal and atomic entity, it would have been possible for its various parts to come into contact with different sense organs simultaneously and thereby, for many perceptions to manifest themselves at the same time. But we find, in practice, that this does not happen. Hence it follows that the mind is a partless or atomic form and is the internal sense of perception. The soul receives its knowledge of the objects through the medium of the mind.

## **2. Quality:**

According to Vaisesika philosophy, quality is that category which subsists in substance but in which no other quality or action can inhere. Qualities cannot exist without substance and hence they are said to be other-dependent, only substance can be the material or constitutive cause of action. It is of secondary importance in the action. In view of the fact that all qualities are dependent upon substance, there cannot be any quality of quality.

*Types of Quality* – There are twenty four qualities – (1) rupa or colour, (2) rasa or taste, (3) gandha or smell, (4) sparsa or touch, (5) sabda or sound, (6) sankhya or number, (7) parimana or magnitude, (8) prthakatva or distinctness, (9) samyog or conjunction, (10) vibhaga or disjunction, (11) paratva or remoteness, (12) aparatva or nearness, (13) buddhi or cognition, (14) sukh or pleasure, (15) dukkh or pain, (16) iccha or desire, (17) dvesa or aversion, (18) prayatna or effort, (19) gurutva or heaviness, (20) dravatva or fluidity, (21) sneha or viscosity, (22) samskara or predisposition, (23) dharma or merit, (24) adharma or demerit. These qualities have been further sub-divided. For example, colours are subdivided into white, black, red, yellow, blue, green; tastes into sweet, sour, saline, bitter, etc.; sound into the articulate and the inarticulate; magnitude into very small medium and very big; number into one to many.

## **3. Karma or Action:**

Karma or action is the commonly used name for the fundamental dynamic qualities of substance. The inactive manifestation of substance is quality and its active manifestation is action or mobility. Substances combine and separate because of action. Action has no quality. Quality is dependent upon substance. Action cannot subsist in all-pervading substances because in them there is no change of position. Hence, the basis of actions can only be material substances like earth, water, air, fire and mind.

### ***Distinctions of Karma:***

There are five distinctions of karma – (1) *Utksepana* or throwing upwards, in which, due to action, the conjunction takes place with the higher plane. (2) *Avaksepana* or throwing downwards in which, action leads to conjunction with the lower plane. (3) *Akunchana* or contraction, which activity is designed to create conjunction in an ever nearer sphere, such as twisting the hand. (4)

*Prasarana* or expansion, (5) *Gamana* or locomotion in which actions other than the first four are comprehended. The activity of substances such as earth, water, and fire is perceptible but the activity of an imperceptible entity like the mind cannot be known by perception.

#### **(4) *Samanya or Generality:***

Generally is that category by virtue of which different individual beings are grouped together and called by a common name, indicating a class, e.g. man, horse, cow etc. The members of such groups have some general or common qualities which are to be found in the entire class and constitute its characteristics. Objects or individual possesses similarity because of this general quality. While considering the general quality, the Indian philosophers have subscribed to one or the other of the following three views:

(i) *Nominalism* – According to this school of thought, generality is not an essential quality but merely a name which lends similarity to the beings belonging to its class and distinguishes it from other classes only by virtue of this name. The general has no individual or separate existence. Among the Indian philosophical systems, it is the Buddhist philosophy which has accepted this view.

(ii) *Conceptualism* – The second view concerning generality is conceptualism. According to this view, the general quality has no existence apart from the individuals nor does it come from outside and enter into the individual. The individual and the general cannot be separated from each other. It is the essential quality or the internal form of the individuals in general which is apprehended by our mind or intellect. This opinion is to be found in the Jaina and the Advaita Vedanta systems of Indian philosophy.

(iii) *Realism* – The third view of generality is realism. According to it, the general is neither a mental thought or concept nor merely a name, but has its own individual existence. The general categories are eternal in nature, and although separate from the individual, still pervade them. In this way, the general is included or mixed in the individuals. It is only because of the general that there is any similarity between different individuals. It subsists in substance, quality and action. It is because of the general that they are called by the same name or said to belong to the same class. This view is propounded by the Nyaya Vaisesika among the systems of Indian philosophy.

#### ***Distinctions of Generality:***

From the point of view of pervasion, generality is of three kinds – *para*, *apara* and *parapara*. ‘*Para*’ is the most comprehensive, such as existence. ‘*Apara*’ is the name given to the least comprehensive, such as potness. The third distinction, ‘*parapara*’ is between *para* and *apara*, one example of it being fluidity. With relation to existence, it is *apara* and with relation to potness it is *para*.

#### **5. *Visesa or Particularity:***

*Visesa* is the very opposite of the general. *Visesa* is the term indicating the unique of specific particularly or individuality of eternal substances which have no parts.



These substances are space, time, ether, mind, soul and the atoms of these elements. It is because of particularity that individuals are distinguished from each other and the atoms of the same substance considered separately. Particulars are those forms of substances by means of which they are known to be distinct from each other. Particulars are needed to distinguish between composite and non-eternal objects, which are effects, such as a chair, and a table etc. The particular is in partless and eternal substances which are innumerable. Hence the particulars are also eternal, partless and innumerable. They are themselves recognizable. There can be no perceptual cognition of them, because, like the atom, they too are invisible.

#### **6. Samavaya or Inherence:**

According to Prasastapada, inherence is that relation which exists in objects which are invariably conjoined, and between which there is the relation of the subsisting and substratum elements. It is the middle term of the concept that this is in them. In this way, objects connected by inherence are so conjoined that they are inseparable. The following are conjunctions of inherence:- quality and substratum, action and the actor, individual and class, temporal and eternal, element and substance, part and whole. On this analogy, there is cloth in cotton fibres, smell in the flower, motion in water, humanity in human beings, and all these are due to *samavaya*.

In order to understand inherence, it is necessary to distinguish it from conjunction. These two differ from each other in the following respects:-

- a) Conjunction is momentary and non-eternal, while inherence is an eternal relationship.
- b) Conjunction is the relationship which results from the connection of two substances. Inherence does not result from the connection of substances but is inherent in them.
- c) Conjunction results from the activity of two elements or two objects. Inherence is always present in substances. The relation of conjoined substances is mutual.
- d) Conjunction is an external relation whereas inherence is an internal relationship. Conjoined substances are capable of existing apart. But substances related by inherence cannot exist separated. The part and the whole cannot remain a part.

#### **7. Abhava or Non-Existence:**

Kanada has accepted only the above six categories, but in the Vaisesika sutra, non-existence is also mentioned in *prameya* form. Being entirely different from the foregoing six categories, non-existence is regarded as the seventh category. This category has been dealt with at length in the authoritative text of the Vaisesika philosophy, - Prasastpada bhasay. Non-existence is the absence of an object. For example, nobody can deny the absence of the moon on dark nights. Hence, it is necessary to include non-existence.

### ***Distinctions of Abhava:***

There are two main distinctions of non-existence –

1. *Sansargabhava* or the absence of one entity in another, such as the absence of heat in the moon.
2. *Anyonyabhava* or one object not being another just as the moon is not the sun.

Sansargabhava also has three distinctions –

1. ***Pragabhava*** – *Pragabhava* or antecedent non-existence, means the absence of the substance which is the effect, before it is created, like the absence of the pot in the clay before the clay is made into a pot. Antecedent non-existence has no beginning but it has an end. There was always the absence of the pot in the clay but with the construction of it, beginningless non-existence comes to an end.
2. ***Dhvansabhava*** – *Dhvansabhava* or non-existence due to the destruction of the substance which is an effect, just as the absence of the pot in its pieces after the pot has been destroyed. *Dhvansabhava* has a beginning but it had no end. When a pot breaks, *dhvansabhava* has a beginning in time but the pot can never come back or be recreated. Thus, this non-existence can have no end.
3. ***Atyantabhava*** – *Atyantabhava* or absolute non-existence means that non-existence between two objects which extends over the entire temporal expanse, past, present, and future, such as the absence of coolness in fire. The absolute non-existence has neither a beginning nor an end. It is always there. The absence of coolness in fire will continue for all time. In this way, absolute non-existence is neither born nor destroyed.

*Sansargabhava* and *anyonyabhava* differ from each other in the following respects:-

1. *Sansargabhava* is the absence of relation between two objects. The later is the absence of something in some other object.
2. *Sansargabhava* is the absence of relation whereas *anyonyabhava* is the absence of identity. A rabbit does not have any horns. In this example, there is absence of relation between the rabbit and the horns and it is an example of *sansargabhava*. The donkey is not a horse. In his relation there is the non-existence of identity, and it is an example of *anyonyabhava*.

### **6.3.1 Criticism of the Categories**

The following objections have been leveled against Vaisesika concept of categories–

1. Vaisesika philosophy has mentioned seven categories but substance appears to be the only category. Quality and action are dependent upon substance. Non-existence is relative to existence, and hence none of the others can be said to be a category. And in the absence of these qualities and relationship, even the nature of the substance cannot be determined.
2. Substances have been stated as being nine in number. Of these, ether is the basis of sound, space and time are based on experience and mind is the internal sense organ. In this way, actually, the only substances are the atoms of the four elements and the souls.
3. Vaisesika's acceptance of the soul as 'unconscious' and 'many' does not appear to be logical.
4. According to the Vaisesika, qualities cannot exist without substance and composite objects cannot exist without parts. If so, how can substance exist without quality and without general and particular traits?
5. The Vaisesika philosophers postulate that there is a particular in every atom and in every soul but they do not describe this particular.
6. The Vaisesika philosophers believe that if there is existence, there must be non-existence, but even they do not synthesize the two. Actually, they are not prepared to adopt the cosmological viewpoint in their consideration of the category although this view is above the ordinary viewpoint. From the point of view of scientific analysis, their concept of the category, which, in effects, is their metaphysics, is very important. But they have failed to adjust among these different categories. In this respect the Samkhya and the Vedanta Systems are far more successful.

### 6.3.2 Samkara's Objections to Samavaya

Vaisesika philosophy looks upon inherence as a category. Against it, Samkara has raised the following fundamental objections:-

1. It is incorrect to speak of conjunctions and inherence as qualities, because even though one is *yutasiddha* and the other *ayutasiddha*, they are interrelated.
2. Inherence is other than the objects to which it relates. Hence it will need another relation of inherence to relate it to the objects, a further relation of inherence to relate this relation of inherence and so on, so that there is no end of this chain.
3. If inherence is separated from both the objects to which it relates, then it is not known where it exists. If it is in the first object, then it cannot relate it to the first, and one inherence cannot remain in both because it is indivisible. Hence inherence is impossible.

#### 6.4 Summing Up

After going through this unit now you are in a position to analyse the *Vaisekha Philosophy*. In this unit you have learnt that in Indian Philosophy *Vaisekha Philosophy* is characterised as a realistic as well as pluralistic philosophy.

You have also learnt that, *Vaisekha Philosophy* categorised the objects of universe into 7 categories. Thus it can be said that the basic theme of *Vaisekha Philosophy* is to analyse the universe on the basis of its 7 categories. However the objects of the universe as depicted in *Vaisekha Philosophy* are not free from criticism. Many objections are found in this regard, but we cannot deny the fact that *Vaisekha Philosophy* provides a realistic way to examine the basic nature of the universe.

#### 6.5 References and Suggested Readings

- |                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| S.N. Dasgupta      | : | <i>History of Indian Philosophy</i>                         |
| J.N. Sinha         | : | <i>History of Indian Philosophy</i>                         |
| D.M. Dutta         | : | <i>Six Ways of Knowing</i>                                  |
| T.R.V. Murti       | : | <i>Central Philosophy of Buddhism</i>                       |
| B.K. Matilal       | : | <i>Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophy</i> |
| C.D. Sharma        | : | <i>Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy</i>                 |
| K.R. Potter        | : | <i>Presupposition of Indian Philosophy</i>                  |
| M. Hiriyanna       | : | <i>Outlines of Indian Philosophy</i>                        |
| Satkori Mookherjee | : | <i>The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux</i>            |
| Rhys Devids        | : | <i>Buddhism: Its History and Literature</i>                 |

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## UNIT: 7

### MIMÂMSÂ EPISTEMOLOGY

#### **Contents:**

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Basic Concept of Mimamsa Epistemology
- 7.4 Impersonality of the Vedas
- 7.5 Mimamsa View of Validity of Knowledge
  - 7.5.1 Prabhakara's View
  - 7.5.2 Kumarila Bhatt's View
  - 7.5.3 Murari Misra's View
- 7.6 Summing Up
- 7.7 References/Suggested Readings

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Mimamsa Philosophy is one of the Astika or Vedic systems of Indian Philosophy. Among the Astika Philosophical systems in India, some are directly based upon the Vedas. Of these some emphasise on the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas, others emphasise on the knowledge aspect. The former is known as Purva Mimamsa or karma Mimamsa, the latter is known as Uttara Mimamsa or Jnana Mimamsa. Its philosophical parts deal with the validity of knowledge.

#### **7.2 Objectives**

After going through this unit you will be able to –

- *discuss* the basic concept of Mimamsa Epistemology;
- *examine* the nature of valid knowledge provided by the Mimamsa Epistemology;
- *examine* critically Mimamsa's conception of Veda.

#### **7.3 Basic Concept of Mimamsa Epistemology**

Mimamsa philosophy had its beginning in the city of Mithila. The aim of this philosophy is the attainment of heaven. Its basic text is the Sutra of Gemini. It is believed that it was written during third century B.C., Shavara swami had elaborated this text. After him three scholars named Kumarila Bhatta, Prabhakara Misra and Murari Misra wrote treatises on the text of

Shavar swami. They had contributed a lot to the development of Mimamsa School. This is the historical background of this Philosophy.

Now our present discussion will be limited to the Mimamsa theory of knowledge.

### **The Nature of Valid Knowledge**

According to Kumarila Bhatta, valid knowledge is that which provides the experience of an unknown object, that which is not contradicted by other knowledge and that which is free from other defects. The root, 'prama, denotes real or actual experience. It constitutes the knowledge of an unknown element. Thus, 'pramana' or valid knowledge is that which gives knowledge of the meaning of an unknown element.

### **Divisions of Valid knowledge:**

There are two divisions of valid knowledge – (1) non-perceptual and perceptual. Non-perceptual valid knowledge has five sources – (1) inference (2) comparison (3) testimony (4) postulation and (5) non-perception. Of these, the last, that is non-perception (anupalabdhi) has been accepted only by Kumarila Bhatta and not by Prabhakara. Regarding inference, there is no difference between the Mimamsa and the Nyaya system.

- 1. Perceptual Knowledge** – According to the view of the Mimamsa philosophers, perception is immediate knowledge. There are two distinctions of perception- (1) savikalpa or determinate and (2) nirvikalpa or indeterminate perception. Indeterminate perception precedes determinate perception. Perceptual knowledge results when there is actual contact between the object and the sense organs. Before such a conjunction takes place, there is only an awareness of the object. In awareness, knowledge is limited to knowing that 'it is'. As to what it is, there is as yet no knowledge. For this reason it is called indeterminate or nirvikalpa perception. In the second stage, the nature of the object perceived is determined on the basis of previous experience. In this, there is knowledge of the name, form, quality, class, etc., of the object and hence it is called determinate perception or savikalpa pratyaksha. Perception provides knowledge of all the qualities. The Mimamsa philosophers hold that in the first moment of contact between the object and sense organs, there is knowledge of many of the qualities of the external object. In the indeterminate state, the object is present only in or microscopic unexpressed form and in the determinate state, it develops like a seed and although we have knowledge of the same object, it is more detailed.
- 2. Upamana or Comparison-** Comparison is attributed to knowledge arising out of similar cognition or perception of similar objects. Mimamsa accepts comparison as an independent source of knowledge. According to the Mimamsa view, when it is realized on

perception that this particular animal is similar to a cow, it is already known from the memory that the animal resembling the cow is a wild cow. Hence, it is inferred that the animal which is presently perceived is a wild cow. In this way, contrary to the view of Nyaya, Mimamsa believes that, in comparison, upon perceiving an object which has been perceived before, it is inferred that object remembered is similar to the object being presently perceived. Mimamsa has accepted similarity as an independent category. It is not a quality, because there cannot be a quality in quality. It does not mean complete unity or identity but similarity in most respects. Hence it cannot be said to be generality of a class, because the generality, such as humanity, remains the same in all the individual cases. Comparison cannot be accepted as subsidiary to perception, inference or testimony. It has been recognized as an independent source of valid knowledge.

3. **Testimony as a Source of Knowledge-** Knowledge of the meaning of a sentence is said to be testimony when it is known in the form of the memory of the object. It is the knowledge which arises out of sentences uttered by reliable individuals. And reliability is attributed to those who see the object in its real form. There are two distinctions of testimony- (1) Personal or (2) Pauruseya, and impersonal or Apauruseya. Utterances of reliable individuals are personal while the Vedic sentences are impersonal.

### **Stop to Consider:**

#### **Kinds of Vedic Sentences:**

There are two kinds of Vedic sentences-

1) Siddhartha (2) Vidhayaka Siddhartha sentences are those which pertain to objective existence. Vidhayaka sentences are those which convey the method of performing some activity or some ritual. Vedic sentences concerned with the mode of performance of religious rituals, being of the vidhayaka form, are themselves valid knowledge. According to the Mimamsakas, the importance of the Vedas lies very much in religious rituals. A sentence telling of objective existence is said to be complementary to the sentences which speak of the methods of religious rituals. In the absence of vidhayaka sentences they have no value or utility. All sentences relating to the objective existence of the Vedas are related to one or the other Vidhayaka sentences inevitably. Apparently, it is the object of these sentences to divert individuals from indulging into undesirable activity and to turn them into more desirable activity. The Vidhayaka sentences are also considered to be of two kinds: 1) Upadesaka and 2) Atidesa. "This is what he should do" is a sentence of the former kind while an example of later type would be-"Achieve heaven through charity for a whole month."

## **7.4 Impersonality of the Vedas**

The Mimamsa philosophers do not accept god as creator or destroyer. According to them, God is not the author of the Vedas. But this does not mean that they are the creation of man. Actually, like the universe, the Vedas are eternal. Many



arguments illustrating the impersonal nature of the Vedas are put forward by the Mimamsa. The major ones are the following:

- 1) From the philosophical viewpoint, the most important argument concerning the Vedas is based upon the eternity of word. The sound that is comprehended by the ear is the symbol of the eternal word. On every pronunciation, the sound produced symbolizes only one word. In this way, sound and the word are separate entities. Sound is not eternal but word is eternal. For example, the sound of 'a', 'b' etc., that we hear, are only the symbols of these letters. If the letter 'a' is pronounced ten times there will be ten sound but only one word. In the same manner, even if the same word is spoken by different individuals the sounds produced will be different but the word will be the same. In this way 'a' is not produced by the sound but only manifested, because it is beginningless and eternal. In this way, the relation of the word and its meaning is not temporal and symbolical but eternal and natural. Being the conglomeration of collection of such eternal and fundamental words, the Vedas are eternal. In eternal form it is impersonal. In the written or spoken form it is merely the reflection of the eternal *Vedas*.
- 2) The saints whose names have been mentioned in the Vedic mantras are not believed to be the authors of those mantras but are recognized only as the observers, lecturers or the promoters of the various Vedic schools. There is no mention of any particular person as the author of the Vedas, which are hence impersonal.
- 3) The Vedas cannot be the creation of a human being because they describe the awarding of prizes according to the past actions of the individuals. Human being can have no knowledge of the relation between past action and their results. The knowledge of qualities rendered by the Vedas can be had by no other source of valid knowledge. The Vedas are, therefore, impersonal.
- 4) Postulation as a source of knowledge can be explained by an example. Suppose we are told or we see that Devadatta does not eat anything in the daytime, but in spite of this he is getting fatter. There is contradiction between not eating in the daytime and getting more rotund. This contradiction can be resolved only when we assume that he must be eating heavily in the night and it becomes acceptable that Devadatta is getting bulkier even without eating anything in the day, by eating in the night. Thus, the assumption of Devadatta eating at night is a postulation. We have never seen Devadatta eating his food at night; hence the knowledge gained by postulation is not perception or perceptual knowledge. It is not knowledge by testimony because we have never heard of Devadatta taking his food at night. It is also not inferential knowledge since there is no relation of concomitance between physical rotundity and eating at night, we cannot say that wherever there is physical rotundity, there is nocturnal eating. In this way, postulation as a source of valid knowledge is not comprehended by any other source such as perception, inference, testimony, etc. Consequently, the knowledge

given by it is a peculiar or unique kind of knowledge and it has to be considered separately. There are two categories of postulation :-

*Drstarthapatti*—Where postulation is used to explain and elaborate any perceived incident, it is said to be drstarthapatti. For example, the fact that Devadatta is getting fatter without eating in the day can be understood only by postulating that he eats at night.

a) *Srtarthapatti* – Where postulation helps to explain and resolve some subject which is heard, it is said to be srtarthapatti. For example, the fact that the village from which Rama hails is on the Jamuna can be understood only when this statement is interpreted as meaning that the village is situated on the banks of the river.

- 5) Non-perception or anupalabdhi is the immediate knowledge of the non-existence of an object. When no knowledge of the object is possible through perception and the other sources of valid knowledge, it is had by non-perception. Non-perception is not perception. For example there is no pot in this room. I do not perceive the non-existence of the pot in this room. Non-existence is no object which can come into contact with any sense organ. There can be contact between the eye and the pot, but there cannot be contact between the eye and the absence of the pot. Actually, the knowledge of absence or non-existence is because of the non-perception of a perceivable object. If the pot is not visible in the room in the daylight, we accept its absence or non-existence. The absence of an object from the situation in which it should be available is said to be its non-existence.

As has been said before, postulation which is propounded as a source of knowledge by the Mimamsa philosophers is only a kind of inference. Thus, the four sources of valid knowledge accepted by Mimamas, namely, perception, comparison, testimony and postulation, are found in other Indian philosophies also. The fifth source of knowledge, non-existence, is only unique feature of Mimamsa epistemology. But it is not a very important source, and even if it is said to be the absence of a source it would not be very improper.

**SAQ:**

Do you think that Mimamsa Epistemology provides valuable information to the study of Indian Philosophy. Give arguments in favour of your answer. (150 words)

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## 7.5 Mimamsa View of Validity of Knowledge

When we receive the knowledge of an object through any source, then the question with which we are confronted is whether that knowledge is in itself valid or whether there is need of any other proof of its validity. Does every source independently provide knowledge? Is that knowledge in itself valid? Pramanyavada is aimed at a consideration of this very question. Nyaya philosophers support the theory of extrinsic validity (*paratahpramanyavada*), while in the Mimamsa, the theory of intrinsic validity (*svatahpramanyavada*) is given greater credence.

Two main principles are involved in the theory of intrinsic validity or *svatahpramanyavada* :-

1. The validity of knowledge is present in material that creates the object.
2. The awareness of the validity of knowledge arises simultaneously with knowledge itself.

In this way, knowledge arises from the determinate source and after it has arisen, we accept it as valid, without waiting to examine it on any criterion. In perceptual knowledge we see the object clearly. Knowledge by testimony is received through meaningful and clear sentences. Inference is based upon an adequate middle term. Hence there is no need of examining knowledge. There is no contradiction between knowledge and action. Knowledge is real, the quality of the truthfulness or validity of knowledge is proved by itself. On the contrary, evidence is needed to prove falsity or untruth. Any knowledge can be known to be false by us only when it is contradicted by some other knowledge. In this way; the falsity of any knowledge can be inferred. But this inferential evidence is needed only when there is some hindrance to belief; otherwise knowledge by itself generates belief. We do not hesitate in moulding our behaviour according to the knowledge received from perceptual sources, because we accept it at its face value without any discussion. Practical life is possible only because of this acceptance and belief. Prabhakara has distinctly stated that it is contradictory to say that there is false knowledge. Kumarila has also accepted this view. The main cause why the Mimamsa philosophers accept the theory of intrinsic validity of knowledge is that they believe in the Vedas. They believe the Vedas to be eternal, impersonal and intrinsically valid. Hence it is only logical for them to look upon knowledge as having intrinsic validity. Validity of the Vedas or by the Vedas in itself implies intrinsic validity. In this way, the Mimamsa followers began to look upon the other sources of knowledge as intrinsically valid also. Otherwise in the Mimamsa, the only source of valid knowledge is the Vedas.

### 7.5.1 Prabhakara's View

On the question of the validity of knowledge there are three opinions among the Mimamsa philosophers all of which accept intrinsic validity of knowledge, but this theory most closely resembles the view of Prabhakara. According to him, knowledge is self-evident and self-enlightening. The intrinsic validity of not need

support from any other source to establish its validity of knowledge by its being self-enlightening. Hence it does not need support from any other source to establish its validity.

### 7.5.2 Kumarila Bhatt's View

Bhatt's view is also amenable to the principle of intrinsic validity, but according to it, validity is not imparted by knowledge but by 'knowability'. In this view, in spite of knowledge being self-enlightening, there is no immediate awareness of it. Knowledge is generated by the senses. Actually, in the knowledge of the pot, a quality called knowability is generated in the pot upon its becoming known and it is this knowability that is perceptually known. Knowability will result only when there is knowledge of the pot, and the pot's becoming known depends upon there being knowledge of the pot. In this way, knowability cannot be created without there being some knowledge. The Mimamsa philosophers accept the existence of knowledge originating in postulation in order to have a basis for the creation of knowability.

### 7.5.3 Murari Misra's View

According to Murari Misra, validity is determined not by knowledge but by 'anuvyavasaya'. In this way, when the sense organs and the object come into contact, there is knowledge that this is a pot. In order to test the accuracy of this knowledge or to determine it, there is the anuvyavasaya that I know this pot. The latter anuvyavasaya determines both the awareness of knowledge of the pot as well as its validity.

#### Check Your Progress:

1. What are the two types of perceptual knowledge according to Mimamsa Philosophy? Explain.
2. Elaborate the Mimamsa theory of validity of knowledge.
3. Write an essay on Mimamsa theory of knowledge.

### 7.6 Summing Up

After going through this unit now it is clear to you that the principle of intrinsic validity of Mimamsa is the commonsense view and it keeps a number of problems unsolved. Actually, this philosophical system does not have a particularly important place in the epistemological field. Its specific field is ritualism. It is more a theory of ritualism than a philosophy. But this does not mean that Mimamsa has no importance whatsoever. It has been rightly said that for a Hindu the Mimamsa literature is of the utmost importance.

## 7.7 References/Suggested Readings

- S.N. Dasgupta : *History of Indian Philosophy*  
J.N. Sinha : *History of Indian Philosophy*  
D.M. Dutta : *Six Ways of Knowing*  
T.R. V. Murti : *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*  
B.K. Matilal : *Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophy*  
C.D. Sharma : *Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*  
K.R. Potter : *Presupposition of Indian Philosophy*  
M. Hiriyanna : *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*  
Satkori Mookherjee : *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*  
Rhys Devids : *Buddhism: Its History and Literature*

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# Second Half

## UNIT: 1

### Sâmkhya

#### Contents:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Nature of Samkhya
- 1.4 Theory of Causation
- 1.5 The Gunas
- 1.6 Purusa
- 1.7 Evaluation of the World
- 1.8 Theory of Knowledge
- 1.9 Liberation
- 1.10 Summing Up
- 1.11 References/Suggested Readings

#### 1.1 Introduction

Sâmkhya is considered to be the most ancient of all philosophical systems in India. It occupies a prominent place in all the shastras. In Mahâbhârata it is held that “There is no knowledge like that of Sâmkhya, no power like that of yoga. You should have no doubt as to Sâmkhya being the highest knowledge”. References may be found to the Sâmkhya doctrine in some of the Upanisads, in the Gitâ, in the Mahâbhârata and in the Purânas. Tradition unanimously regards Kapila as the founder, of this system. In the tradition, he is held to be the first among the wise. Some say he is the son of Brâhma; others say that he is an avatar of Vishnu; still others identify him with an incarnation of Agni and some where he is identified with Siva. In the same way, the name Sâmkhya is explained in different ways. According to some thinkers the word Sâmkhya appears to be derived from the word Sâmkhya which means number, since it enumerates the metaphysical principles of reality or the word Sâmkhya may mean perfect knowledge. The system is called Sâmkhya, science it gives perfect knowledge of the self (purusâ) as quite distinct from prakriti and its evolutes, which annitrilates all kinds of suffering. The sankhya system recognizes dualism of Prakriti and purusa. The dualism of these two is fundamental doctrine of the system. It further maintains the plurality of Purusâs. Again regarding literature, sâmkhya-sutra of kapila is regarded as the earliest work of Sâmkhya. Kapila’s disciple of Asuri and Pancasikha wrote some books on Sâmkhya philosophy. But no information could be found regarding these books. Isvarakrisna’s Sâmkhya Karika is the earliest and authoritative book of Sâmkhya. Gandapdis Sâmkhya karika bhasya, Bacaspati’s Tattva-Kaumudi, Vijnanabhiksu’s Sâmkhya Pravacana bhasya and samkhya-sara, Mahadeva’s samkhya supra vrittisara, Nagasa’s Laghusumkhya



sutra vritti and Aniruddha's sâmkhya-sutra-vritti are some other important works of this system. To name some samkhya teachers are as-Kapila, Asuri, Pancasikha, Vindhyavas, Asitadevala, Jaigisavaya, vodhu, varsa-ganya, Sanaka, Sanardana and so on. Thus, looking into its wide reputation in shastras, the vast number of its preachers and provoking range of literature we can remember the words of Sâmkhya pravalana bhasya that it is u the most significant system of Philosophy that India has produced."

## 1.2 Objectives

Rachard Garbe whohes made a special study of this school in his book "Philosophy of Ancient India" Says : In Kapila's doctrine, for the first time in the history of the world, the complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers, were exhibited". It is, Therefore, essential to have an aquintance with this rich philosophical heritage of India and this unit, likewietry to explore the basic philosophical tenets of samkhya. After going through this unit you will be able to—

- *discuss* the nature of Sâmkhya;
- *analyse* the Sâmkhya theory of causation;
- *examine* the evolution of the universe on the basis of Sâmkhya Philosophy;
- *describe* the theory of Sâmkhya knowledge;
- *discuss* Sâmkhya view of God and human liberation.

## 1.3 Nature of Sâmkhya

Of all the philosophical system, Sâmkhya is considered by all to be the most ancient. It occupies a prominent place in all the Shastras - "There is no knowledge like that of Sâmkhya, no power like that of yoga. You should have no doubt as to Sâmkhya being the highest knowledge. We find references to the Sâmkhya doctrine in some of the Upanisads, in the Gita, in the Mahabharata and in the Puranas. Here in this unit we are going to discuss the theory of causation as propounded by Sâmkhya Philosophy. An attemp is also made to discuss the Sâmkhya theory on the evolution of the world as well as its theory of knowledge. Thus this unit will help you to understand the basic nature of Sâmkhya Philosophy.

Tradition unanimously regards Kapila as the founder of this system. In the tradition, he is held to be the first among the wise. Some say he is the son of Brâhma; others say that he is an avatar of Visnu; still others identify him with an incarnation of Agni and somewhere he is identified with Siva.

The name Sâmkhya is explained in different ways. According to some thinkers the word Sâmkhya appears to be derived from the word 'Sâmkhya' which means number, since it enumerates the metaphysical principles of reality or the word Sâmkhya may mean perfect knowledge. The system is called Samkhya, since it gives perfect knowledge of the Self (purusa) as quite distinct from Prakriti and its

evolutes which annihilates all kinds of suffering. The Sâmkhya system recognizes dualism of Prakriti and Purusâ. The dualism of these two is the fundamental doctrine of the Sâmkhya system. It further maintains the plurality of Purusâs.

### **Stop To Consider:**

#### **Some important works of Sâmkhya :**

The earliest work of Sâmkhya is the Sâmkhya-Sutra of Kapila. Kapila's disciple of Asuri and Pancasikha wrote some books on Sâmkhya-philosophy.

But we have no information about these books. Isvarakrisna's Sâmkhya Karika is the earliest and authoritative book of Sâmkhya. Gaudapada's Sâmkhya Karika hasya, bacaspati's Tattva-Kaumudi, Vijnanbhiksu's Sâmkhya-pavacanabhasya and Sâmkhya-Sara, Mahadeva's Sâmkhya sutravritisara, Nagesa's Laghusamkhya sutra vritti and Aniruddhas' Sâmkhya-sutra-vritti are some other important works of the Sâmkhya-system.

Name of some Sâmkhya teachers are mentioned in the following-

(1) Kapila, (2) Asuri, (3) Pancasikha, (4) Vindhyavas, (5) Asitadevala, (6) Jaigisavya, (7) Vodhu, (8) Varsa-ganya, (9) Sanaka, (10) Sanandana, (11) Sanatana, (12) Sanatkumara, (13) Bhrihu, (14) Sukra, (15) Kasyapa, (16) Parasara, (17) Gargya, (18) Gautama, (19) Narada, (20) Agastya, (21) Pulastya, (22) Uluka, (23) Valmiki, (24) Suka.

## **1.4 Theory of Causation**

Sâmkhya believes in sâtkaryavâda. All material effects are the modification of Prakriti. They pre-exist in the internal bosom of Prakriti and simply come out of it at the time of creation and return to it at the time of dissolution. There is neither creation nor destruction. Creation means manifestation; destruction means dissolution. In Sâmkhya, Prakriti is the Upadanakarana of this universe. Parinama is that process by which the unmanifested Prakriti becomes transformed into this manifested state of the object of experience. According to Sâmkhya, the effect pre-exists in its cause before manifestation. This theory of Parinamavada of Sâmkhya is called Satkaryavada, which establishes that both cause and effect are existent and that is not a non-entity, which has become an entity by the operation of cause. The effect subsists even prior to the operation of the cause and there are five grounds in support of this theory.'

### **(1) Asadakâranat :**

The non-existent cannot be the object of any activity. What is non-existent can never be made existent. Blue cannot be made (turn) into yellow even by a thousand artists. Thus Parinama is the manifestation of something already existing.

### **(2) Upâdânagrahanat :**

There is an invariable relation between a material cause and its effect. A material cause can produce only that effect with which it is causally related. It can produce an effect which is in no way related to it. But it cannot be related to what does not exist. Hence the effect must exist in the material cause before it is actually produced.

### **(3) Sarvasambhavabhavat :**

We see that only certain effects can be produced from certain causes. Everything cannot be produced out of everything. This suggests that the effect before its manifestation is implicit in its material cause.

### **(4) Saktasya - Sakyakaranat :**

Only the efficient cause can produce that effect for which it is potent. This means that the effects, before its manifestation is potentially contained in its material cause.

### **(5) Karanalbhavat :**

The effect is not different from but essentially identical with the material cause. The cause and the effect are the implicit and the explicit stages of the same process. Therefore, the effect pre-exist in its material cause.

The Sâmkhya lays down a fourfold division of categories based on their respective causal and productive efficiency’.

(1) Productive, (2) Productive and produced, (3) Produced, (4) Neither productive nor produced. This classification includes all the twenty five principles - called tattvas, Prakrti or nature being the purely productive; as the Sâmkhyas allow of no other purely productive agency, it is not a product. It is the uncaused cause. It is the seed from which all the creations of this universe spring. This is first principle in the order of creation. (The productive and produced are the other principles, etc). The great principle and five subtle elements are both product and productive. Five sense-organs and five gross elements are only non-productive principles. The Purusa is neither productive nor produced, it is without attributes.

The theory of causation means a real transformation of material cause into the effects It leads to the concept Prakrti as the root cause of this world. Prakrti is described as the first cause of the world and hence it is the primordial matter as the basis of the manifold universe. Prakrti is the equilibrium state of the three gunas viz. sattva, rajas and tamas. They are not the qualities of Prakrti but they are its components. As opposed to Purusa, it has opposite qualities. It is active but non-sentient. As the first principle of this universe it is called Pradhana; as the unmanifested state of all effects it is known as A vyakta. The world is the Parinâma or transformation of Prakrti which is its cause. The entire world of objects is implicit in the bosom of Prakrti. Evolution is the explicit manifestation of this world of objects, while dissolution is the returning of this world to Prakrti.

All objects of the world are limited and dependent things produced by the combination of certain elements. So, the world is a series of effects and it must have cause. It cannot be ‘purusa since the self is neither a cause nor an effect of anything. Moreover, an intelligent principle cannot be the material out of which the inanimate world is formed for the spirit cannot be transformed into matter. So, the unmanifest prakrti or A vyakta is the independent cause of all inner and outer modifications of the world. Prakrti is uncaused, independent, absolute one and eternal being beyond productive. The extreme subtleness of prakrti makes it

unmanifest and imperceptible; we infer its existence through its products. Samkhya offers the following arguments to prove the existence of Prakrti.

- (1) All individual things in this world are limited, dependent, conditional and finite. The finite cannot be cause of the universe. So, we have to proceed from the finite to the infinite. And it is this infinite, unlimited, eternal and all pervading Prakrti which is the source of this universe.
- (2) All things of this world contain certain common characters by which everyone of them is capable of producing of pleasure pain and indifference. Hence, there must be common cause composed of three gunas, from which all worldly things arise.
- (3) All effects produced from the activity of the potent cause. The activity which generates evolution must be inherent in the world cause. And this cause is Prakrti.
- (4) Every effect arises from its own cause and is again resolved into it at the time of destruction. So, the all objects of the world arise from their particular causes and so on, till we come to the first cause of the world.

Again at the time of dissolution, the physical elements must be resolved into atoms, the atoms into energies and so on, till all products are resolved into the unmanifested, eternal Prakrti. Thus we get one unlimited unconditioned and ultimate cause of the whole world.

## **1.5 The Gunas**

Prakrti is constituted by the three gunas, viz. Sattva, rajas and tamas. The theory of guna is an important topic in the Sâmkhya system. These three constituent though distinct in their nature; yet they always co-exist. They make to Prakrti which is nothing apart from them. They are called gunas, because they are intertwined like the three strands to make up the rope of Prakrti, which binds the Purusa to the world.

The gunas are not perceived but are inferred from their effects. They are of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion. The first of them is called Sattva. Etymologically the word Sattva is derived from sat which is real or existent. Sattva is said to be potential consciousness and it is light. Luminosity of light, power of reflection and upward movements pleasure happiness, bliss are all due to it.

The second guna, i.e., Rajas is the source of all activity and is that which produces pain. It is the principle of motion. It is mobile and stimulative. Raja is the cause of all painful experiences. It helps the elements of sattva and tamas, which are inactive and motionless in themselves perform their function.

Tamas is the principle of inertia. Ignorance, confusion and bewilderment and negativity are its result. It is opposed to sattva in being heavy and destructing the manifestation of objects. They never function separately. They support one another and inter mingle with one another. They are closely related as the flame the wick and oil of a lamp.

## 1.6 Purusa

One of the ultimate realities described by the Sâmkhya is Purusâ. The twin principles of Prakrti and Purusâ are entirely opposite in nature. Unlike Prakrti, Purusâ is not composed of any gunas. Purusâ is described as a discriminating but inactive, conscious but motionless ultimate principle of reality. It is non-productive and not subject to any change or modification. It is beyond all mutations.

According to the Sâmkhya, Purusâ is different from the body and the senses the mind and the intellect. It is not an object but subject knowledge. It is pure consciousness. In it there is neither change nor activity. Through ignorance it confuses itself with the products of Prakrti and loses sight of its own nature, Purusâ is eternal and liberated and inactive. It appears as active because of its identification with Buddhi. It is beyond time and space; it is self-luminous and self-proved Sâmkhya presents the following proofs for the existence of Purusâ.

- (1) Objects of the world like tables, chair etc. which are composed of parts are means to the ends of other beings. These beings whose purpose is served by the things of the world must be quite different and distinct from them all. They cannot be said to be unconscious things. They must be conscious selves, to whose ends all physical objects are the means. (Sanghâtaparârthatvat)
- (2) All objects are composed of the three gunas and they presuppose the existence of the Purusa who is the witness of the gunas and is himself beyond them. The three gunas imply the conception of a nistraigunya. (trigunâdiviparyat)
- (3) All objects mental as well as material must be guided by an intelligent agent Prakrti from which they spring is itself unintelligent. A machine or a car does its work when put under the guidance of some person. So, there must be some one who guide the operations of prakrti and all her products. (adhithânat)
- (4) Non-intelligent cannot experience its products. So, there must be an intelligent principle to experience the worldly products of Prakrti. Prakrti is the enjoyed (bhogya) and so there must be an enjoyer (bhokta). All objects of the world have the characteristics of producing pleasure, pain and indifference. But pleasure and pain have meaning only when there is a

conscious principle to experience them. Prakrti cannot enjoy as she is unconscious. Hence Purusa must exist as enjoyer. (bhoktrihavat)

- (5) There are persons who try to attain release from the sufferings of the world. The desire for liberation and emancipation implies the existence of a person who can try for and obtain liberation (Kaivalyartham pravritte) Sâmkhya believes in the plurality of selves.

## 1.7 Evolution of the World

Prakrti evolves the world of objects when it comes in relation with the Purusa. Evolution of world proceeds from the conjunction of Prakrti and Purusa. Purusa in Sâmkhya is inactive; it is changeless, it is merely the witness; so the evolution of the world cannot be due to the Purusa alone. On the other hand Prakrti is non-intelligent; so the evolution is not possible due to the (matter) Prakrti alone. If the activity of unconscious Prakrti is guided by the intelligence of Purusa, there will be any evolution of the world. Here, Sâmkhya attempt to explain the utility of conjunction of Prakrti and Purusa by the simile of the “lame and the blind”. Just as the lame though capable of seeing the way cannot walk, while the blind though capable of walking cannot see the way. But the lame when placed on the shoulder of the blind can direct the latter to proceed. Thus, it is seen that their joint activity can serve a common end which none of them can fulfil without the help of the other. Similarly the mutual co-operation of inactive purusa and unconscious prakrti can bring out an end which one of them cannot achieve independently. This end is two-fold. One belongs to the Prakrti and other to the Purusa. Purusa without Prakrti is lame and Prakrti without Purusa is blind. Prakrti needs Purusa in order to be known, to be seen, and Purusa needs Prakrti in order to enjoy and also in order to obtain liberation. So, inactive Purusa and the non-intelligent Prakrti co-operate to serve their end. This produces a tremendous commotion in the infinite bosom of Prakrti and each of the gunas tries to preponderate over the rest. There is a gradual differentiation and integration of the three gunas and as a result of their combination in different proportions, the various objects of the world originate.

The course of evolution is as follows. Mahat or buddhi is the first product of the evolution of Prakrti. It is the germ of this vast world of objects including intellect, ego and mind. In its psychological aspect i.e. as present in individual beings, it is called buddhi. The special functions of buddhi are ascertainment and decision. Ahamkara or the ego is the second product of Prakrti which arises directly out of mahat. Its function is to generate self-sense (abhimana).

It is an account of ahamkara, the Purusâ wrongly identifies himself to be an agent or a cause of action and answer of properties. Ahamkara is said to be of three kinds : (1) vaikarika, (2) taijasa, (3) bhutadi. It is called vaikarika or Sattvika,



when the element of Sattva predominates in it, taijasa or rajasa when that of rajas predominates and bhutadi or tamasa when tamas predominates. From the first arise the eleven organs, namely, the five organs of perception (jnanendriya), the five organs of action (karmendriya) and the mind (manas). From the third are derived the five subtle elements. The second (rajasa) helps with of men.

Evolution is the play of these twenty-four principles which together with the Purusa who is a mere spectator and outside the play of evolution are the twenty five categories of Samkhya.

## **1.8 Theory of Knowledge**

Sâmkhya accepts only three independent sources of valid knowledge. These are perception, inference and spiritual testimony.

### **Perception:**

Perception is the direct cognition of an object through its contact with some sense. There are two kinds of perception, namely nirvikalpa or the indeterminate and savikalpa or determinate.

The first arises at the first moment of contact between a sense and its object and is antecedent to all mental analysis and synthesis of the sense-data. The second kind of perception is the result of the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of sense data by manas.

### **Inference:**

Inference is the knowledge of one term of a relation, which is not perceived, through the other which is perceived and known to be invariably related to the first. In it what is perceived leads us on to the knowledge of what is unperceived through the relation of a universal relation (vyâpti) between the two; we get the knowledge of vyâpti between two things from the repeated observation of their concomitance.

Inference is of two kinds vita or affirmative and avita or negative. The vita is subdivided into the purvavat and sâmânyato drsta. Apurvavat inference is that which is based on the observed uniformity of concomitance between two things. Sâmânyatodrsta inference is not based on any observation of the concomitance between the middle and the major term but on the similarity of the middle with such facts as are uniformly related to the major. The other kind of inference, namely (Sesavat) consists in proving something to be true by the elimination of all other alternatives to it. The third Pramana sabda is constituted by authoritative statements and gives the knowledge of objects which cannot be known by perception and inference.



## 1.9 Liberation

According to Sâṅkhya philosophy the earthly life is full of three kinds of sufferings. These are adhyâtmika, adhibhautika and adhidaiivika. Liberation is the absolute negation of the three fold of sufferings, the highest end of life. The ordinary worldly experience is quite unable to eradicate the roots of sufferings. The performance of vedic sacrifices may indeed give happiness but they do not remove these sufferings because vedic rites involve impurity and sin of killing animals. Purusa is externally liberated enlightened and pure. It is devoid of association with the gunas. Bondage and liberation do not belong to Purusa. The self is quite distinct from the mind body complex and is beyond all the affections and afflictions of the psychological life. But on account of ignorance it fails to distinguish itself from the mind and the intellect and owns them as parts. The self considers itself to be happy or unhappy due to its conjunction with the Prakrti.

Ignorance or non-discrimination between the self or non-self is the cause of bondage and the right knowledge or discrimination between the self and non-self leads to liberation. In Sâṅkhya philosophy it is said that liberation can be attained by the discrimination between the evolved, unevolved and the knower. Purusa is inactive. Hence all the action of evolution and involution are done by Prakrti. Prakrti brings the experiences of pleasure and pain to Purusa through the course of evolution which is called bhoga. After the purpose of bhoga is accomplished, Prakrti retires from further creation and then the involution takes place. Prakrti functions for the benefit of Purusa without any benefit to herself. There is nothing finer and subtler than Prakrti. She is so shy that she never reappears before that Purusa who has once seen her in her true colour". Just as a dancing girl retires from the stage after entertaining the audience, similarly Prakrti also retires after exhibiting herself to the Purusa. The discriminative knowledge is the realization of the self. There are eight steps to attain this knowledge. In Sâṅkhya, Siddhi is the attainment of discriminative knowledge. According to Sâṅkhya there are eight steps to this attainment from oral instruction to the suppression of the three kinds of pain. They are through study or adhyayana, oral instruction or sabda, proper reasoning or uha, friendly discussion or suhritprapti, purity of discriminative knowledge or dana, the suppression of the three kinds of sufferings or dukkhavighata. The aim of attaining liberation is to get rid of the three kinds of sufferings. The purpose of creation is the liberation of each purusa. The purpose arises in prakrti. The unconscious Prakrti functions for the liberation of Purusa like the non-intelligent milk functions for the nourishment of the calf". The entire evolution of Prakrti is for the purpose of liberating each individual Purusa, though appearing as if it were for the sake of Prakrti herself.

When Prakrti stands without any change or modification Purusa sees her completely isolated from him. For Apavarga Prakrti reveals herself as Jnana to Purusa. According to Sâṅkhya system, the means of attaining apavarga is Tattvabhyasa. Tattvabhyasa means not the mere learning of the Sâṅkhya tattvas but 'the Abhyasa of the eight attainments'.

After attaining tattvajñāna, discriminative knowledge one can attain liberation in life in this world. This kind of liberation is known as Jivanmukti. After the death of its body the liberated self attains what is called Videhamukti.

### **Stop to Consider:**

#### **Sāṃkhya's Concept of God:**

The attitude of the Sāṃkhya towards theism is a matter of controversy among the interpreters. According to some interpreters there is no reason for postulating a hypothesis of God as Prakṛti and Puruṣa are sufficient to explain this universe. But some other writers like Vijnānabhikṣu hold that the existence of God as possessed of creative activity cannot be admitted yet we must believe in God as the eternally perfect spirit who is the witness of the world and whose mere presence moves Prakṛti to act and create.

### **1.10 Summing Up**

After reading this unit you are now in a position to define the basic philosophical conviction of samkhya. Basically samkhya may be called a philosophy of dualistic realism. It traces the whole course of the world to the interplay of two ultimate principles, viz.- spirit and primal matter (Puruṣa and Prakṛti). From the speculative point of view there seem to be certain drawbacks in the samkhya philosophy. Still we should not underestimate its value as a system of human speculative reason for the attainment of liberation; which samkhya establishes on purely practical proportions. On its practicality, samkhya undermines the foundation of supernatural religion by substituting evolution for creation. The world is not the act of a creator God, but is produced by the interaction between the infinite number of spirits and the everactive prakṛti, or the potentiality of nature.

### **1.11 References/Suggested Readings**

1. Mahabharata : 316/2
2. Sk. 9 (Samkhya karika = Sk)
3. Sk. 3
4. S. sutra 1/61
5. Sk.15
6. Sk. 12 & 13
7. Sk. 17
8. Sk. 1.8
9. Sk. 21
10. Sk. 22
11. Sk. 4
12. Sk.1
13. Sk. 2
14. Sk. 56

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## **UNIT 2: YOGA**

### **Contents:**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Origin and Nature of Yoga Philosophy
- 2.4 Citta and its Vṛttis
- 2.5 Yoga Concept of Yogangas
- 2.6 Liberation of the Self
- 2.7 God in Yoga Philosophy
- 2.8 Summing Up
- 2.9 References/Suggested Readings

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the previous unit you have learnt about Sâṅkhya Philosophy which basically deals with theoretical side of the human life. In this unit we are going to discuss Yoga Philosophy which is a practice for life and intimately allied to Sâṅkhya. The Gita calls them one because from general, metaphysical and epistemological standpoints and on conceptions of the ideal of life both the systems hold the similar view. Sâṅkhya is theory; Yoga is practice. For all practical purposes Sâṅkhya and Yoga may be treated as the theoretical and the practical sides of the same system. The Sâṅkhya and Yoga differ very little in their philosophical principles. Both Sâṅkhya and Yoga consider avidya as the root cause of bondage and aim at attaining the knowledge of difference between Purusa and Prakṛti (vivekakhyati). The Sâṅkhya does not mention the ways by which vivekakhyati can be attained while the Yoga clearly states the practical ways of attaining it in order to realize the true nature of man. Yoga accepts the three pramanas namely perception, inference and verbal testimony and the twenty-five metaphysical principles of Sâṅkhya philosophy. Yoga recognizes the reality of God in addition to these twenty five realities of Sâṅkhya. Hence, it is sometimes called Sesvara Sâṅkhya or theistic Sâṅkhya as distinct from classical Sâṅkhya which is Nirisvara or atheistic. In this unit an attempt is made to discuss the basic concept of Yoga Philosophy and its adaptability in human life.

### **2.2 Objectives**

It needs mention that the origin of the yoga is untraceable and lost in antiquity and yoga postures depicted on seals, stones and statues discovered among the relics of the Indus valley civilization indicate that it was prevalent in India even before the advent of the Aryans. After reading this unit you will be able to :

- *discuss* yoga's exposition of citta and its vrittis;
- *define* the eightfold means of yoga;
- *examine* yoga's view on the liberation of the self;
- *evaluaic* yoga concept of God.

### 2.3 Origin and Nature of Yoga Philosophy

Yoga philosophy, one of the most developed systems of Indian philosophy constitutes an integral part of rich heritage of India. Patañjali is the traditional founder of the Yoga system. It is a great system of spiritual discipline.

The word 'Yoga' is used in a variety of senses. The word 'Yoga' literally means union, i.e.; spiritual union of the individual soul with the Universal soul and is used in this sense in the Vedanta. In the Rgveda the term 'Yoga' has been taken in the sense of yoking, harnessing, achieving connection with and so on.

According to Panini the term 'Yoga' means self-concentration and joining or connecting. The Gita defines Yoga as the higher state of mind at which a person is never shaken even by the greatest pain. The state free from all pain and misery is Yoga. The Gitâ also says that even ~s of mind is Yoga. Yoga is also defined in the Gitâ as skill of preserving the equanimity or equality of the mind. In Patañjali's Yoga philosophy, Yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind and through right discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti. The term 'Yoga' according to Patañjali's definition is the final annihilation of all the mental states. Bhoja states that in Patañjali's Yoga philosophy the term 'Yoga' does not mean union but separation.

The origin of the Yoga is untraceable and lost in antiquity. Yoga postures depicted on seals, stones and statues discovered among the relics of the Indus Valley Civilization indicate that it was prevalent in India even before the advent of the Aryans. The Upanisads, the Mahabharata including the Bhagavadgita, Jainism and Buddhism accept Yogic practices.

#### **Stop to Consider:**

##### **Literature :**

The *Yogasutra* of Patañjali is the oldest textbook of the Yoga school. It has four parts of which the first treats of the nature and aim of samadhi or meditative absorption (samadhipada), the second explains the means of attaining this end (sadhanapada), the third gives an account of the supernormal powers that can be attained through the Yoga practices (vibhutipada) and the fourth sets forth the nature of liberation (kaivalyapada). According to *Yajnavalkya Smṛti* Hiranyagarbha is the founder of the Yoga system and Madhava points out that this does not contradict Patañjali's authorship of the *Yogasutra* since Patañjali calls his work 'Anusasana' where the preposition 'anu' implies that his statement follows a primary revelation, and is not itself the first formulation of the system. Vyasa's commentary on the *Yogasutra* gives the standard exposition of the Yoga principle. Vacaspati wrote a glossary on

Vyasa's bhasya called *Tattvavaisaradi*. Bhoja's *Rajamartanda* is a work of considerable value.

Vijnanabhiksu's *yogavartika*, a running commentary on Yogabhasya, and *Yogasarasamgroha* are useful manuals. It is to be noted that besides Patañjali *Yogasutra* there are numerous works on Yoga namely, *Sivasamhita*, *Devi-bhagavata*, *Hathoyogapradipika* *Yogasastra* of Dattatreya, *Yogi-yajnavalkya*, *Avadhutagita*, *Goraksha Siddhanta*, *Gheranda-samhita*; *Satcakranirupana* etc. There are also numerous Upanisads affiliated to Yoga namely-*Na dabindu*. *Brahmavidya*, *Yogatattva*, *Maitri*, *Sandilya*, *Dhysnabindu*, *Hamsa*, *Varaha*, *Hamsa*, *Varaha*, *Yogacudamani*. *Youakundali*, *Saubhagyalakshni*, *Mauktika* etc. Moreover numerous tantra works and works by Goraknatha also deal with the philosophy of Yoga.

## 2.4 Citta and its Vrttis

Patanjala Yoga is also known as Rajayoga Yoga is defined as the cessation of modification of Citta. What the Samkhya calls 'mahat' or 'buddhi', the Yoga calls 'citta'. In the Yoga, however, the term 'citta' is taken in a comprehensive sense, so as to include buddhi, ahankara and the mind. Citta is the first evolute of Prakrti and has the predominance of Sattva. It is itself unconscious but being finest and nearest to Purusa it has the power to reflect the Purusa and therefore appears as if it is conscious. When it gets related to any object it assumes the 'form' of that object. This form is called vrtti or modification. Purusa is essentially pure consciousness and is free from the limitations of Prakrti. But it wrongly identifies itself with its reflection in the citta and appears to be undergoing change and modification. The self or Purusa really undergoes no change or modification. Because of its reflection in the changing states of citta Purusa appears changing and citta appears conscious. Just as the moon appears as moving when seen reflected in the moving waves and waves appear as luminous, similarly Purusa appears as undergoing modifications and citta appears as conscious due to Purusa's reflection in it.

When the Purusa realizes that it is completely isolated and is only a passive spectator, beyond the play of Prakrti, it ceases to identify itself with its reflection in the citta with the result that the light is withdrawn and the modifications of the citta are stopped. This cessation of the modification of the citta through meditation is called Yoga. It is the return of the Purusa to its original perfection.

The modifications of the citta are of five kinds, namely pramana or true cognition, nidra or sleep and smrti or memory. The modifications of citta known as pramana or true cognition is of three kinds, namely, perception (pratyaksa), inference (anumâna) and verbal testimony (âgama). These three are the sources of true knowledge. The modification of citta during any of these true cognition is called pramâna. True knowledge is the knowledge of things as they really are in nature. The means to the attainment of true knowledge are known as pramanas. Viparyaya is an erroneous idea which is not true to the nature of the object. Vikalpa is a mere verbal idea caused by words to which no real things correspond. The idea

of 'hare's horn', 'sky flower', 'Rahu's head' and the like are objectless. These ideas cause excitement in the citta by the corresponding words. Nidra is another kind of the modification of citta.

It is due to preponderance of tam as in the citta and consequent cessation of all waking consciousness. It stands for deep dreamless sleep. In deep dreamless sleep the modification of citta does not cease. On waking from sound sleep we say that we slept well and did not know anything. Smrti or memory is the reproduction of the past experience without any alteration. When citta is modified into any kind of vrtti its own state. The self thus appears to pass through different states of citta. But in reality the self or purusa is beyond all these mental states and processes which really belong to citta. Due to the reflection of the self in the citta, the self wrongly appropriates the states and processes of citta and appears to be subject to five kinds of afflictions or klesas. The five kinds of klesas or afflictions are : avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa and abhinivesa. Avidya or false knowledge consists in mistaking the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure, the unpleasant for the pleasant and the not self for the self. False knowledge is the cause of all other kinds of afflictions. Asmita consists in the erroneous identification of one self with the instruments of body and mind. Raga or attachment is the desire for an object which yielded pleasure in the past and is remembered now. Dvesa or aversion is the anger towards an object which yielded pain in the past and is remembered now. It is not only aversion to painful things but also anger towards them. Abhinivesa is the fear of death. It is instinctive. Abhinivesa is the instinctive love of life and dread of death. So long as there are modifications in the citta the self is reflected in it and due to the absence of discriminative knowledge, identifies itself with the modifications of citta. As a result of this, the self feels pleasure or pain, attachment or hatred. This is the bondage of the self. The bondage of the self is due to its wrong identification with the mental modifications. Liberation, therefore, means the end of this wrong identification through proper discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti and the consequent cessation of the mental modifications. The aim of the Yoga is, therefore the cessation of the mental function or the modifications of citta.

The citta may remain in five different stages or levels. These mental stages are known as cittabhumi. The citta is constituted by the elements of sattva, rajas and tamas. The different levels of citta are determined by the different degree in which the elements are present in it. There are five stages of citta namely kshipta or restless, mudha or blinded, vikshipta or distracted, ekagra or single pointed and niruddha or restrained. In the first stage which is called kshipta or restless, the mind or citta is under the sway of rajas and tamas.

The mind flits from one object to another without resting for a while on any object. The second stage is mudha or blinded. It has an excess of tam as and has a tendency towards vice, ignorance, sleep and the like. The third stage is vikshipta or distracted. In this stage, the mind though free from the dominance of tam as is not completely free from the sway of rajas. In the distracted mind, temporary concentration on a particular object may be possible. But steady concentration



is not possible in this stage. The fourth stage of citta is called ekagra or single pointed or concentrated. The mind here is entirely dominated by sattva while rajas and tamas are subdued. In this stage the mind remains steadily fixed on a particular object. The last level is called niruddha or restrained where the cessation of all mental modifications has been effected. Due to complete arrest of all mental modifications the citta is left in its original unmodified state of calm and tranquility. Yoga is possible only in the ekagra and niruddha stages of citta, since these two stages are characterized by the perfect manifestation of sattva.

## **2.5 Yoga Concept of Yogangas**

Yoga advocates control over the body, the senses and the mind. A sound mind needs a sound body. Sensual attachment and passions distract the body as well as the mind. To overcome them Yoga advocates the eightfold path of discipline (astangayoga) consisting of yama (abstention), niyama (observance), asana (posture), prânâyâma (regulation of breath), pratyâhara (withdraw of senses), dhâranâ (attention), dhyâna (meditation) and samâdhi (concentration).

### **Yama :**

The first discipline yama or abstention consists of non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), nonstealing (asteya), continence (brahmacarya) and non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts (aparigraha). It is abstention from injury through thought, word or deed, from falsehood, from stealing, from passion, lust and from avarice. Of these yamas, non-violence is given such a high place that it is regarded as the root of the other yamas. Yamas like truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual restraint, non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts and also the other niyamas, purity, contentment austerity, study of the scriptures and surrender to God, only serve to make non-violence more perfect. Yoga holds that ahimsa should be the greatest ethical motive for all our conduct. It is by ahimsa alone that we can keep ourselves fit for the higher type of samadhi. Satya or truthfulness consists of word and thought that are in conformity with facts. Speech is for the purpose of transferring knowledge to another. It is always to be employed for the good of others and not for their injury. If it proves to be injurious to living beings, even though uttered as truth, it is not truth. It is sin only. Though outwardly such a truthful course may be considered virtuous, yet, since by his truth he has caused injury to another person, he has in reality violated the true standard of ahimsa. Asteya or non-stealing is the virtue of abstaining from stealing. Theft is making things one's own unlawfully that belong to others. Abstinance from theft consists in the absence of the desire thereof. Brahmacarya or ontinence is the restraint of the generative organ and thorough control of sexual tendencies. Aparigraha or non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts is want of avariciousness, the non-appropriation of things not one's own. This is attained by seeing the defects of attachment and the injury caused by obtaining, preservation and destruction of objects of senses.



**Niyama :**

The second discipline of niyama or observances consists of cleanliness (sauca), contentment (santosa), austerity (tapas), study of the scriptures (svadhyaya) and surrender to God (Isvara pranidhana). Cleanliness is of two kinds: external (bahya) and internal (abhyantara). External cleanliness is the cleanliness of the body by water and other purifying articles. Internal cleanliness is cleanliness of the mind by purging it of all impurities, attachment, pride etc., by cultivating goodwill, compassion and cheerfulness. Santosa or contentment is the absence of desire to possess more than is necessary for the preservation of one's life. Tapas or asceticism means the strength of remaining unchanged in changes like that of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, standing and sitting, absence of speech and absence of all indications by gesture etc.

Svadhyaya or study of the scripture means the study of moksasastras and repetition of the syllable 'aum'. Isvara pranidhana or surrender to God means the bestowal of all our actions upon the God, i.e., to work not for one's own self but for God, so that a man desists from all desires for fruit there from.

These yamas, together with the niyamas are called kriyayoga by the performance of which men become fit to rise gradually to the state of samadhi and attain kaivalya.

**Âsana :-**

It means steady and comfortable posture. There are various kinds of postures which are a physical help to meditation. The mind and the - body are intimately related. So the control of the mind requires the control of the body.

**Prânâyâma :-**

The fourth discipline is prânâyâma or breath control. It consists in controlling natural breathing and subjecting it to a definite law. It consists in slow and deep inspiration (puraka), retention of breath (kumbhaka) and slow expiration (recaks). Breath control is conducive to the concentration of mind. The art of controlling breath can be learnt only under the guidance of experts.

**Pratyâhâra :-**

It is control of the senses and consists in withdrawing the senses from their objects. Our senses have a natural tendency to go to outward objects. They must be checked and directed towards the internal goal. It is the process of introversion.

**Dhârana :-**

It is fixing the mind on the object of meditation like the tip of the nose or the mid point of the eyebrows or the lotus of the heart or the image of the deity. The mind must be steadfast like the un flickering flame of a lamp.

**Dhyâna :-**

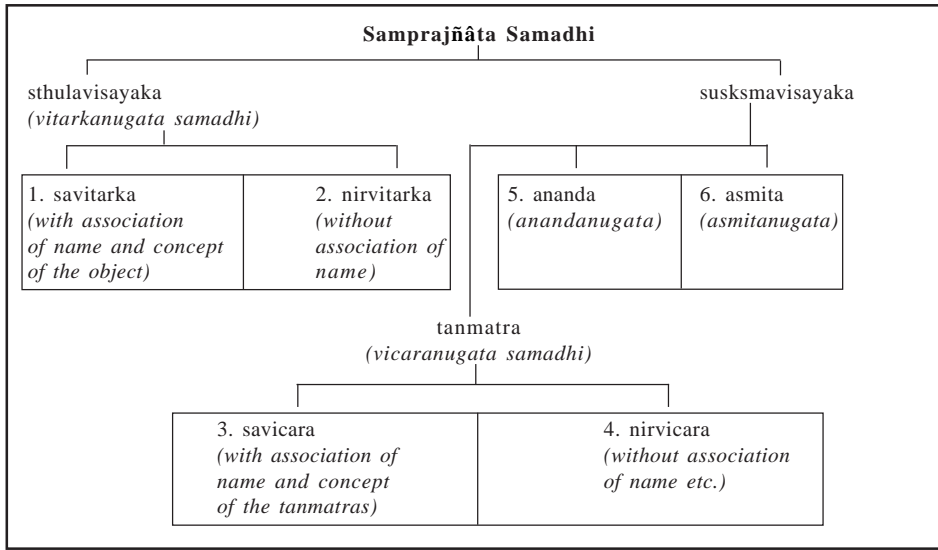
It means meditation and consists in the undisturbed flow of thought round the object of meditation. It is the steadfast contemplation without any break.

### **Samâdhi :-**

It means concentration. This is the final step in Yoga. Here the mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation. In dhyâna the act of meditation and the object of meditation remain separate. But in samadhi they become one. It is the highest means to realize the cessation of mental modification which is the end. It is the ecstatic state in which the connection with the external world is broken and through which one has to pass before obtaining liberation. Samadhi is of two kinds: Conscious or samprajñâta and supra conscious or asamprajñâta.

In the conscious or samprajñâta samadhi the mind remains concentrated on the object of meditation. The meditator and the object of meditation are fused together, yet the consciousness of the object of meditation persists. It is also called sabijâsamâdhi or the state of concentration possessing the seed of future life. This state is said to be of four kinds: vitarkanugata, vicaranugata, anandanugata, asmitanugata. Vitarkanugata samâdhi consists of savitarka and nirvitarka. The state of samâdhi in which the mind seems to become one with the thing together with its name and concept is the lowest stage of samadhi called savitarka. This state does not differ from ordinary conceptual states, in which the particular thing is not only associated with the concepts and their names, but also with other concepts and their various relations. Thus a cow will not only appear before the mind with its concept and name but also along with other relations and thoughts associated with cows. This state is therefore the first stage of samadhi in which the mind has not become steady and is not as yet beyond the range of our ordinary consciousness. The nirvitarka stage arises from this when the mind by its steadiness can become one with its object, divested of all other association of name and concept, so that it is in direct touch with the reality of the thing uncontaminated senses. This is followed by the state of savicara which dawns when the mind by its steadiness can become one with its object, divested of all other association of name and concept, so that it is in direct touch with the reality of the thing uncontaminated by associations. The objects of the state may be the gross material objects and the senses. This state is followed by the state of savicara which dawns when the mind neglecting the grossness of the object sinks deeper and deeper into its finer constituents. The appearance of the thing in its grosser aspects drops off and the mind having sunk deep, centres in and identifies itself with the subtle tanmâtras. It has great similarities with the savitarka stage, while its differences from that stage is that here the object is the tanmâtra and not the gross objects when the mind acquires the complete habit of the savicara state of samâdhi in which it becomes identified with these fine objects i.e., the tanmatras etc. then all conceptual notions of the association of time, space, causality etc. vanish away and it becomes one with the fine objects of communion. This state is called the nirvicara state. When the object of communion is the senses, the samadhi is called anandanugata and when the object of communion is ego or asmita, the samâdhi is known as asmitanugata. There is a difference of opinion regarding the object of the last two varieties of samâdhi, viz., anandanugata and asmitanugata and also about the general scheme of division of the samadhi. Vacaspati thinks that samprajñata samadhi may be divided into three different classes as grahya

(external objects), grahana (the senses) and grahitr (the ego). So he refers vitarka and vicara to the plane of grahya (physical objects and tanmatras), anandanugata to the plane of grahana (the senses) and asmitanugata to the plane of grahir. Vijnanabhikshu, however, disapproves of such an interpretation. He holds that in anandanugata the object of concentration is bliss (ananda) and not the senses. When the Yogin rises to the vicaranugata stage there is a great flow of sattva which produces bliss, and at this the mind becomes one with this ananda or bliss, and this samâdhi is therefore called anandanugata. Bhikshu does not think that in asmitanugata the object of concentration is the ego. He thinks that in this stage the object of concentration is the concept of self which has only the form of ego. Bhikshu's classification is given below in a tabular form :



All these stage of concentration are known as salambana samadhi since they have objects as their basis. Asamprajñāta samadhi is that supra conscious concentration where the meditator and the object of meditation are completely fused together and there is not even consciousness of the object of meditation. Here no new mental modifications arise. They are checked (niruddha). If fire is restricted to a particular fuel, it burns that fuel alone; but when that fuel has been completely burnt the fire also dies. Similarly, in conscious concentration, the mind is fixed on the object of meditation alone and modification arises only in respect of this object of meditation; but in supra conscious concentration even this modification ceases. It is also known as nirbija samâdhi. It is the highest form of Yoga which is divine madness, perfect mystic ecstasy difficult to describe and more difficult to attain. Even those who attain it can not retain it longer.

Immediately or after very short time the body breaks and they obtain complete liberation. Among these eight yogangas, the first five (abstention, observances, posture, breath control and withdrawal of senses) are the external aids (bahiranga sadhana). The last three disciplines (attention, meditation and concentration) are known as internal aids to Yoga. These three disciplines are also known as samyama.

## 2.6 Liberation of the Self

Liberation or freedom from bondage in the Yoga system is kaivalya or absolute independence. Purusa or the self experiences and enjoys, and ultimately attains freedom. But in reality Purusa does neither enjoy nor become liberated. In empirical consciousness, the self wrongly identifies itself with mental modes which assume the forms of objects, and in which the self is reflected. So the bondage and subsequent release refer to the self as reflected in buddhi. The self, which realizes its distinction from its reflection, is said to be free.

Kaivalya or absolute independence of the self does not mean the attainment of any supernormal powers nor does it consist in any upward movement of the self. In Kaivalya the Purusa is in its true form. When the self is completely dissociated from Prakrti and realizes its essential nature as transcendental consciousness the self attains absolute freedom or isolation (kaivalya). The Yoga uses the term 'citta' in a comprehensive sense so as to include buddhi, ahamkara and mind. Buddhi or citta is predominantly sattva.

When buddhi which is of the nature of sattva, is dominated by raj as and tamas, it turns, into ahamkara and the mind. When the specific functions of raj as and tamas are completely eliminated from buddhi or intellect the citta turns into pure sattva. When citta attains its real nature of sattva, there arises in the self the discriminative knowledge that the self is distinct from sattva or citta. When the spiritual aspirant attains the knowledge of the distinction between itself and the citta or sattva by suppressing the egoism, mind and the senses, he is said to have reached the stage of conscious concentration or samprajñāta samādhi. It is a continuous flow of discriminative knowledge. When this discriminative knowledge is destroyed, the self acquires super conscious concentration or asamprajnata samādhi. When all mental modes and their dispositions are completely arrested, the self is disentangled from Prakrti and becomes pure, isolated and shines forth as transcendental consciousness. This is known as the absolute independence (kaivalya) of the self. The Yoga mentions five kinds of afflictions. These afflictions are to be avoided (heya). Kaivalya is the means by which the afflictions can be avoided. So Kaivalya is called hana.

The ways by which kaivalya can be attained has been described in the Yoga. When the three gunas have finished serving the Purusa in its enjoyment and liberation, they along with their disposition merge in the mind, which again merges in egoism. Egoism in its turn, merges in buddhi, which, again merges in the indeterminate Prakrti. This process is known as pratiprasava which is another name of kaivalya. Kaivalya is the eternal life of Purusa when it is freed from the fetters of Prakrti. Purusa then is in its true form of transcendental consciousness free from all afflictions and is omniscient. The state of liberation in the Yoga system is not a blissful state. It is beyond pleasure and pain. When the self becomes isolated (kevala) it shines forth with its light of intrinsic transcendental consciousness.

## 2.7 God in Yoga Philosophy

Yoga accepts the existence of God. Patañjali defines God as a special kind of Purusa untouched by afflictions, actions, effects and dispositions. God is eternally free from afflictions caused by ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and fear of death. He was never bound nor has any possibility of being bound. He is eternally liberated. God is above the law of Karma. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is perfection incarnate. God's knowledge is supreme and purest. The pranava or omkara is His name. But God of Yoga is not the creator, preserver or destroyer of this world. He is only a special Purusa. He does not reward or punish the souls. He can not grant liberation. He can only remove the obstacles in the upward progress of the aspirants. Directly he has nothing to do with the bondage and the liberation of the Purusas. Ignorance binds and discrimination between Prakrti and Purusa liberates. The end of human life is not the union with God, but only the separation of Purusa and Prakrti. The Yoga system offers the following proofs for the existence of God :

- (a) The Vedas tell us that God exists.
- (b) The law of continuity tells us that there must be the highest limit of knowledge and perfection which is God.
- (c) God is responsible for the association and dissociation of Purusa and Prakrti.

The Yoga system of Patañjali should not be confused with magic and self hypnotization. It is founded on the metaphysics of Sârikhya and gives us a practical path of purification and self control in order to realize the true nature of man.

## 2.8 Summing Up

After going through this unit you are now in a position to define the whole philosophical conviction of yoga. The aim of yoga is to explore the region of Gemini super-physical experience and to reveal the reality of man and the world. If one believes in the transcendental spirit, one cannot but admit. A deeper level of consciousness than the empirical one, and wider possibilities and higher potencies than those of the physical and the sensuous. Glimpses of this deeper reality have been sought not only by the seers and saints of different countries, but also by some great philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel. And what is necessary for an appreciation of this philosophy is a sympathetic understanding of it and a sincere endeavor to realize its truths.

## 2.9 References/Suggested Readings

- S.N. Dasgupta : *History of Indian Philosophy*  
J.N. Sinha : *History of Indian Philosophy*

D.M. Dutta	:	<i>Six Ways of Knowing</i>
T.R. V. Murti	:	<i>Central Philosophy of Buddhism</i>
B.K. Matilal	:	<i>Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophy</i>
C.D. Sharma	:	<i>Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy</i>
K.R. Potter	:	<i>Presupposition of Indian Philosophy</i>
M. Hiriyanna	:	<i>Outlines of Indian Philosophy</i>
Satkori Mookherjee	:	<i>The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux</i>
Rhys Devids	:	<i>Buddhism: Its History and Literature</i>

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## UNIT: 3 VEDÂNTA PHILOSOPHY OF SANKARA

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- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Vedanta School of Philosophy
- 3.4 Advaita Vedanta
- 3.5 The Concept of Brahman
- 3.6 The Doctrine of Maya
  - 3.6.1 Maya and Avidya
  - 3.6.2 Adhyasa or Superimposition
- 3.7 The Individual Self
- 3.8 The Falsity of the World
- 3.9 Theory of Knowledge
- 3.10 Bondage and Liberation
- 3.11 Jivanmukti And Videhamukti
- 3.12 Summing Up
- 3.13 References/Suggested Readings

### 3.1 Introduction

The name Sankara associated with the Vedânta Philosophy. In simple word Vedânta means the end of Vedas and stands primarily for Upanishadas. It needs mention that Upanishads are considered as the end of Vedas—both chronologically and philosophically. It is well known to you that on the whole system of Indian Philosophy centre round three main concepts—the absolute, the individual self and the world and the vedânta philosophy is divided into three prasthanas. It is worth mentioning that the term ‘prasthana’ means ‘the place of origin’ or ‘the means of propagation’. Accordingly, the prasthanas of Vedanta mean the different types of works on which the whole of the Vedânta philosophy stands. The three prasthanas of Vedânta are: (1) the Srutiprasthana, (2) the Smrtiprasthana and (3) the Nyayaprasthana. But while explaining the nature and the mutual relations of these three concepts, as contained in those works, commentators differ in their views, as a result of which different theories or systems of thought have come into being. The different theories of Vedanta are : Advaitavada or Non-dualism of Sankara, Visistadvaitavada or Qualified Non-dualism of Ramanuja, Aupadhikabheda-bhedavada or the theory of conditional Difference-cum-non-difference of Bhaskara, Svabhavika- bhedabhedavada or the theory of Natural difference-cum-non-difference of Nimbarka, Acintya-bhedabhedavada or the theory of unthinkable Difference- cum-non-difference of Baladeva Vidyabhusana,



Suddhadvaita-vada or pure non- dualism of Vallabhacarya and Dvaitavada or Dualism of Madhvacharya.

In this unit we are going to discuss Sankaras concept of Avaitavada or Non-dualism, an attempt is also made to introduce you Sankaras concept of Brahman, the Doctrine of Maya. In this unit we shall also discuss Sankaras theory of knowledge which have three sources. Thus, this unit will help you to understand Sankaras Philosophy which reeded as one of the most prominent philosopher of Vedanta Philosophy.

### 3.2 Objectives

This unit will introduced you with the concept of Vedânta school of Philosophy with special reference to Sankara. This school of Indian philosophy concern mainly with the concept of Maya, Brahmana, Theory of Knowledge, Bondage and Liberation. After going through this unit you will be able to :

- *discuss* the fundamental concept of Vedânta Philosophy;
- *analyze* Sankaras views on Brahmana, Maya etc.;
- *examine* different theories of knowledge.

### 3.3 Vedânta School of Philosophy

Vedânta literally means ‘the end of the Vedas’ and stands primarily for Upanisads which are considered as the end of the Vedas-both chronologically and philosophically. Chronologically, the Upanisads are regarded as the ‘end of the Vedas’, because each of the four Vedas comprises four types of literature, namely, the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanisads, coming successively, of which the Upanisads form the last part. Philosophically also, the Upanisads are regarded as the ‘end of the Vedas’ as they mark the culmination of the Vedic speculation and contain the essence of the Vedic teachings. Later on the denotation of the term ‘Vedânta’ has been expanded so as to include the Bhagavadgita, the Brahmasutra etc. all of which have the Upanisads as their foundation. Hence, Vedanta philosophy means the philosophy which is based on the Upanisads.

Traditionally, the literature forming the foundation of Vedânta is divided into three prasthanas. The term ‘prasthanas’ means ‘the place of origin’ or ‘the means of propagation’. Accordingly, the prasthanas of Vedânta mean the different types of works on which the whole of the Vedanta philosophy stands.

The three prasthanas of Vedânta are: (1) the Srutiprasthana, (2) the Smrtiprasthana and (3) the Nyayaprasthana. The Srutiprasthana of Vedânta means the Upanisads, the Smrtiprasthana, the Bhagavadgita and the Nyayaprasthana means the

Brahmasutra of Badarayana. All the exponents of Vedânta have written commentaries on these three fundamental works in order to establish their view.

Now, all the systems of Indian philosophy center round three main concepts: the absolute, the individual self and the world. The three prasthanas of Vedânta also deal with these problems in detail.

### 3.4 Advaita Vedanta

The most widely known system of Vedânta is Advaita Vedânta or Non-dualistic Vedânta according to which Brahman is the only reality, and there is nothing besides Brahman. This system has attained so much celebrity that the term 'Vedânta' is generally used as a synonym of Advaita Vedânta. This system is in existence from very ancient times. Before Sankara we find the names of ancient thinkers like Yajñavalkya, Gaudapada and others as the advocates of non-dualism. But now-a-days, the term Advaita Vedanta is used to denote the philosophy propagated by Sankara. This is because Sankara is the first Vedântin to have propounded the doctrines of Non-dualism in a systematic and exhaustive way and to have endeavoured to establish it by refuting all the rival theories.

Besides the Bhasya on the Vedânta-sutra, Sankara wrote commentaries on the principal Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita. In addition to them we have his Upadesa-sahasri, Vivekacudamani etc. Sankara's doctrine was defended and amplified in matters of detail by various thinkers after him and this has given rise to some diversity of opinion among his follows. Two of the schools resulting from such divergences of view are in particular well known - the Vivarana school which goes back to the Pancapadika, a commentary on Sankara's Sutra-bhasya by his own pupil Padmapada and the Bhamati school represented by Vacaspati Misra (A.D. 841). The *Pancapadika* was commented upon by Prakasatman (A.D. 1000) in his Vivarana, from which the first school takes its name. The Vivarana has a gloss known as Tattva-dipana by Akhandananda and its teaching has also been most lucidly summarized by Vidyaranya (A.D. 1350) in his Vivarana-prameyasamgraha. The Bhamati has been explained by Amalananda (A.D. 1250) in his Kalpataru, which in its turn has been annotated by Appaya Diksita (A.D. 1600) in the *Parimala*. Of the numerous handbooks written to explain the Advaita system, we may mention here the *Naiskarmya-siddhi* of Suresvara, *Sanksepa-sariraka* of Sarvajnatmamuni, *Ista-siddhi* of Vivuktatman, *Nyaya-makaranda* of Anandabodha and *Pancadasi* of Vidyaranya. The *Siddhanta-lesasamgraha* of Appaya Diksita describes the divergences of view among the Advaita Vedantins. The *Vedantaparibhasa* of Dharmarajadhvarindra gives a systematic exposition of the epistemological side of Advaita Vedânta. The *Tattvapradipika* of Citsukha, *Khandana-khanda-khadya* of Sriharsa and *Advaita-siddhi* of Madhusudana Sarasvati are some of the exclusively polemical works of the school.

### 3.5 The Concept of Brahman

The whole philosophy of Advaita Vedânta may be summarized in a sentence thus: Brahman is the only reality; the world is false; and the jiva is nothing but Brahman itself (Brahma satyam, jaganmithaya, jivo brahmaiva naparah). To say that Brahman is the only reality is to say that it is different from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the sensible. Brahman is what is assumed as foundational, though it is in no sense substance. Its nature is inexpressible, for when we say anything of it, we make it into a particular thing. Every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing as associated with a certain genus, or act, or quality or mode of relation. It is devoid 'of anything of a like kind (sajatiya) or of a different kind (vijatiya) and has no internal variety (svagata). A tree, for example, has the internal variety of leaves, flowers and fruits, has the relation of likeness to other trees and of unlikeness to objects of a different kind like stones. Brahman has nothing similar to it, nothing different from it and no internal differentiation, since all these are empirical distinctions. As it is opposed to all empirical existence, it is given to us as the negatives of everything that is positively known. Sankara declines to characterize it even as one except in the sense of second less, but calls it non-dual, advaitam. Brahman is nirguna or quality less. This means that it is trans-empirical, since gunas are products of prakrti and the Absolute is superior to it.

The Advaita Vedântins offer two types of definitions of Brahman : (1) Svarupalaksana or the essential definition and (2) Tatasthalaksana or the accidental definition. The essential definition of a thing consists of the essential nature of that thing. Sat (existence), cit (consciousness), ananta (infinity), ananda (bliss) etc. constitute the essential definition of Brahman. Sat means truth or that the nature of which never changes as distinct from anrta or false which undergoes changes. Brahman is defined as sat in the sense that its nature is never contradicted (abadhya). Brahman is cit meaning that it is not acit (unconsciousness). The term 'cit' also means consciousness itself and not the agent of the act of knowing (jnatr). Brahman is ananta or infinite since it is not limited by time, space and object. Brahman is also ananda (bliss), meaning that it is not of the nature of pain (duhkha). Unlike the worldly bliss, the bliss of Brahman is unsurpassable. All human bliss is a phase of the bliss of Brahman.

It is the highest truth, perfect being and fullest freedom. Brahman is also defined as nitya or eternal because its completeness and perfection are unrelated to time. But even the definition of Brahman as saccidananda is imperfect though it expresses the reality in the best way possible. Any positive definition of Brahman will tend to bring some limitation upon Brahman, since to describe something positively means to limit that thing by our understanding or knowledge. Hence, Sankara maintains that the terms sat, cit etc. do not describe Brahman positively as existence, consciousness etc.; they simply distinguish Brahman from non-existence, non-consciousness etc. This position has been summarized in the Upanisads by the expression 'neti' (not this), 'neti' (not this).

The accidental definition is that which does not co-exist with the thing for all the time and yet distinguishes it from other things. When we define Devadatta's house as that on which a crow is perched, we do not define its essence but state a feature which applies to it accidentally. Even so is the definition of Brahman as the creator and the cause of the universe. Brahman is the cause of the origination, sustenance and destruction of the world.

The Upanisads describe Brahman as both nirguna (quality less) and saguna (qualified). It is described as the receptacle of innumerable good qualities. It is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent etc. and is the cause of the world. But Brahman cannot be both saguna and nirguna at the same time. To reconcile these two positions upheld by the Upanisadic texts Sankara takes the help of the two levels of knowledge - paravidya (higher knowledge) and aparavidya (lower knowledge) - described in the Mundaka Upanisad. Thus, he says that there are two views of the ultimate, the higher and the lower. According to him, nirguna Brahman is the highest reality. The saguna Brahman being concerned with the apparent creative phase of Brahman is not the highest reality.

Brahman appears as saguna and savisesa only when it is endowed with maya, the inexpressible cosmic power. But it is to be noted here that according to Sankara, the saguna Brahman and the nirguna Brahman are not two different entities. The same Brahman and the nirguna Brahman are not two different entities. The same Brahman is saguna and nirguna being viewed from two different standpoints only. From the transcendental point of view, Brahman is nirguna and niskriya (actionless) while from the empirical view-point it is saguna being endowed with numerous good qualities and related with the world process. The saguna Brahman is Isvara or God who occupies a lower status and has a phenomenal character. It is not the highest reality. Sankara has shown the futility of all the proofs forwarded for proving the existence of Isvara, the highest person. It is a fact that if Isvara be regarded as the cause of the world, he must be within the space-time framework, only a vastly magnified man, but not the infinite. The creation of a world full of suffering and evil cannot in any way be ascribed to a benevolent and omnipotent God. A perfect God should not create this type of imperfect world for his enjoyment only. Hence, Sankara says that the problem of creation of the world is only an empirical one; it has no ultimate reality as the world is not ultimately real.

Brahman is said to be the only cause of the world; it is the material as well as efficient cause of the world. But the material cause is generally seen to be transformed into the effect. Hence, if Brahman is said to be the material cause, then transformation or change in some form or other must be admitted in Brahman, while Brahman is changeless. To avoid this impasse the Advaita Vedântins reply that the material cause is of two types-parinamin or that which is really transformed into the effect. For example, milk is really transformed into curd, whereas in the rope-snake. Brahman also is not really transformed into the world. Thus, Brahman can be the cause of the world even without discarding its immutable nature. This

is what is called Vivartavada. It is here argued that Brahman cannot be the material cause of the world as there is a difference of nature between the cause and the effect. Brahman is conscious, pure, eternal etc. whereas the world is of just the opposite nature, i.e., inert, impure, non-eternal etc. But it is generally seen that the effect and its material cause are of similar nature. Hence, Brahman cannot be the material cause of the world. To this objection Sankara replies that the example of inert things coming out of conscious spider, the inert hair, nail etc. arise from living bodies, and the woudeful dream world arises from the conscious self. In the same way it is not impossible for Brahman to be the material cause of the world. Besides, there is some similarity between Brahman and the world, as both are existent. Total similarity between the cause and the effect is inadmissible.

Though Sankara is explicit that Brahman is the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe, in later Advaita differences arise. According to the author of *Vedânta Paribhâsa*, the cause of the evolution of the world is maya and not Brahman. Vacaspati Misra holds that while Brahman is the cause, maya is the auxiliary (sahakari). The followers of the Vivarana school maintain that Brahman qualified by maya, i.e., Saguna Brahman or Isvara is the material cause of the world. The author of *Padârthatattvaanirnaya* holds that Brahman is the substratum of the world which is a product of maya. Sarvajñâtnamuni, the author of *Samksepariraks* maintains that absolute Brahman is the material cause of the world. The followers of Drsti-srsti-vâda regards the jiva or individual self as the cause of the world. In this way the later Advaita Vedântins differ among themselves regarding the material cause of the world.

### **3.6 The Doctrine of Mâyâ**

The theory of Maya is the keynote concept of the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. It is on the basis of this theory that Sankara and his followers establish the differenceless and quality less Brahman as the only reality. The Advaita Vedantins hold that though, the differenceless Brahman is the only reality, it appears as the empirical selves and the world of multiplicity through maya, otherwise called avidya or ajnana. But the problem for the Advaita Vedantins is to explain how can the real, differenceless, unqualified, infinite and pure Brahman of the nature of intelligence and bliss appear as the unreal, manifold, qualified, limited and impure world, quite opposed to consciousness and bliss in nature. The relation between the real and the unreal, the unity and the multiplicity is a mystery which human mind is unable to comprehend. The real is never known to have any relation with the unreal. The idea of causality also does not apply here, since causality necessarily implies a relation between the two entities of cause and effect, which is not possible in the case of non-dual Brahman. Maya means this unbridgeable gap between the infinite and the finite or between reality and appearance. It is something like a magical power which some how produces the appearance of the material world and the empirical selves on Brahman. The magician produces a tree before us from out of nothing. The tree is there, though

we cannot explain it, and so we call it maya. Maya is thus inscrutable or inexplicable in nature. Maya is described as anirvacaniya or mithya or false, since it is neither eternally existent nor totally non-existent. To give it an independent place would be to accept a fundamental dualism. If mâyâ exists, it will constitute a limit to Brahman, if it does not exist, even the appearance of the world cannot be accounted for. Further, maya is not identical with nor different from Brahman. It is not identical with Brahman because maya is changeable and non-eternal, while Brahman is immutable and eternal; it is not something different from Brahman, since Brahman is the only reality. Thus, maya is neither real as Brahman nor unreal as a sky flower. It is thus called anirvacaniya. But whatever we may call it - illusory or real- it is necessary to postulate such an entity to account for the material world and the empirical life.

Mâyâ has two functions -âvarana (concealment) and viksepa (projection). By its concealing power, maya veils the real nature of Brahman and by its projecting power it projects the unreal, i.e., the world of multiplicity on Brahman. Since, maya is thus deceptive in character, it is called avidya or false knowledge. It is not absence of apprehension but positive error.

Mâyâ is the energy of Isvara, his inherent force, by which he transforms the potential into the actual world. When the activity of maya is attributed to Brahman, the later becomes Isvara. His mâyâ which is unthinkable, transforms itself into the two modes of desire (kâma) and determination (samkalpa). It is the creative power of the eternal God. Mâyâ is identified with the names and forms which, in their uninvolved condition, inhere in Isvara, and in their developed state constitute the world. It is said to be constituted of three gunas-sattva, rajas and tamas. In this sense it is synonymous with Prakrit. But unlike Prakriti it is not independent, but depends on Isvara.

### **3.6.1 Mâyâ and Avidya**

The concept of maya is intimately related with that of avidyâ. The appearance of Brahman as the world is due to our avidya, even as the appearance of the rope as the snake is due to defective senses. When we see the rope as it is, the snake becomes unreal. When we see the reality of Brahman the appearance of the world will flee away. Sankara has used the terms maya and avidya more or less synonymously. When we look at the problem from the objective side, we speak of maya, and when from the subjective side, we speak of avidya. Even as Brahman and Atman are one, so are mâyâ and avidya one. But later Advaitins drew a distinction between the two. Vidyaranya, the chief upholder of the theory of difference between maya and avidya states that in maya pure sattva predominates and in avidya impure sattva prevails. Mâyâ is the adjunct of Isvara, whereas avidya is the adjunct of the jiva. The reflection of Brahman in maya is Isvara, while the reflection of Brahman in avidya is the jiva or the individual. The upholders of the view of difference further state that maya is that which does not delude its locus



and depends on the desire of the agent, while avidya deludes its locus and does not conform to the desire of the agent.

There is also difference of view among the latter Advaita Vedantins about the locus and object of maya or avidya. According to Mandana Misra and Vacaspati Misra, the locus of avidya is the jiva and its object is Brahman. Prakasatmayati and Suresvaracarya and their followers, on the other hand, maintain that Brahman is both the locus and object of nescience.

### 3.6.2 Adhyasa or Superimposition

It is already stated that Sankara often uses the terms maya and avidya as synonymous. But an important distinction which he makes deserves notice. In some places Sankara has conceived maya and avidya as cause and effect; avidya is treated as an effect of mithyajnana which is beginningless, positive and is destroyed by knowledge. In these cases he uses the term avidya as synonymous with superimposition or adhyasa. This idea of superimposition is again of paramount importance for the elucidation in Advaita Vedanta. The scope of superimposition is as wide as the world. It covers the total field of experience, subjective and objective.

Adhyasa or superimposition means the apprehension of something on something else, e.g., the apprehension of silver on nacre or that of the not-self on the self. Sankara has dealt with the nature and cause of superimposition at the very beginning of his commentary on the *Brahmasutra*. In our ordinary experience we find cases of superimposition when a nacre appears as silver or a rope appears as a snake. Here, nacre and rope are real on which the false silver and the false snake are superimposed respectively. This adhyasa arises as a result of the admixture between the real and the unreal. Thus, in the experience of silver on the nacre, there is an intermixture of both the nacre, the real, and silver, the unreal. As a result of this intermixture, the erroneous cognitions like 'this is silver', 'this is snake' etc. arise. This adhyasa comes to an end when the true nature of the locus is known. Thus, the false silver and its knowledge are sublated when the nacre is known. Similar is the case with the rope-snake etc.

As in common experiences like nacre-silver etc. so in the case of the self and the not-self (i.e., the body, the mind etc.) there is superimposition. But in the case of superimposition between the self and the not-self the Advaita Vedantins accept a mutual superimposition. That is, just as the self is superimposed on the not-self, so the not-self is superimposed on the self.

Again as a result of the mutual superimposition of the self and the not self, the attributes of the self such as consciousness etc. and those of the not-self such as fatness, thinness, happiness, sadness etc. are also superimposed on the not-self and the self respectively. In consequence of this mutual superimposition between the self and the not-self there arise experiences like 'I am this', 'This is mine' etc.



The definition of adhyasa as given by 'Sankara is as follows: "Adhyasa is the appearance of something - which is previously perceived and which is of the nature of remembrance - on something else". This means that the object of superimposition must be experienced before. This experience is kept in memory in the form of samskara or impression and is reproduced at the moment of superimposition. As a result, an object which is similar to that of earlier experience is superimposed on another object. Being an effect adhyasa also requires a material cause. Ajnana or ignorance is held to be the material cause of superimposition: it is ajnana enveloping the locus that is transformed into the object and the knowledge of superimposition. It is because of this ajnana that the difference between the object superimposed and the locus is not perceived, as a result of which superimposition takes place.

Now, the question is how can there be any superimposition, as is evident in the case of illusory perceptions like the rope-snake etc. And obviously, pure consciousness or the self can never become an object of perception as, in all acts of perception, it remains the subject. One object can appear as another only when "some of its general features are cognized leaving out the specific features due to some defects or other. To be the substratum of superimposition, therefore, an entity has to have parts or be composite. Brahman or the self is not only not a composite object, but also is a self-revealing entity, so that no mistakes can possibly be made with regard to it. To this type of objection Sankara's answer is that pure consciousness is not entirely unknown; it is the object of the knowledge in the form of 'the I'. In fact, the possibility of superimposition on pure consciousness arises from the fact that in its delimited phase as the jiva, distinction between it and its upadhis such as intellect and mind remains uncognised. This lack of discrimination leads to the superimposition of the upadhis on it and the jivahood results. The jiva is a composite product of superimposition. His constituent factors are the subjective consciousness and the objective upadhis.

### **3.7 The Individual Self**

The central import of the Advaitavâda of Sânkara is the identity of the jiva, i.e., the individual self with Brahman, the supreme self. Metaphysically man is non-different from the Absolute. It is only because of the upadhi i.e., the mind-body-complex, which is again the effect of avidya or maya, that the jiva appears as different from Brahman. But in its real nature, the individual is saccidanandarupa.

In the empirical level this real nature of the jiva is not revealed. In this level, the individual self is limited by time, space and the mind-body-complex. His individual self is essentially a agent and the enjoyer of the fruits of action. Agency really avides in the upâdhi or adjunct. Avidya causes the sense of individuality of the empirical self. This jiva is endowed with three different bodies, viz, the gross organic body, made up of the gross elements which the soul casts off at death. The subtle body consists of the seventeen elements, viz., the five organs of

knowledge, five of action, five vital forms, mind and intellect. This subtle body, while material, is also transparent and so is not seen when the jiva migrates. The subtle body persists as permanent factors of the soul until liberation. The third body, i.e., the causal body is identified with the beginningless indefinable avidya. The causal self is the relatively permanent self which persists through successive rebirths determined by the law of karma. It has already been pointed out that the jivahood of the self is not natural to it, in reality, the jiva is nothing but Brahman. The empirical jiva is only a conditioned state of Brahman; it is Brahman conditioned by the psycho-physical organism that appears as the jiva. The upadhis or conditions of the jiva consist of the three bodies of them, the gross body and the subtle body are caused by avidya. Hence, avidya is the real upadhi of the jiva. All the limitations of the jiva are caused by these upadhis. It is because of these upadhis that the real nature of the jiva as infinite existence etc. is not revealed. The empirical self appears as undergoing births and deaths because of the upadhis. Births and deaths are but moments of the self's association and dissociation from the gross upadhis.

The empirical jiva has three states of experience - (1) jagrat (waking), (2) svapna (dream) and susupti (deep sleep). Of these, the experiences of the waking state are the most vivid ones. The waking state of the jiva is that state when knowledge is produced by sense-organs coming in contact with their respective objects of the empirical world. In the state of dream the senses are at rest and only the mind is active; the mind reproduces the objects through the impressions left on the senses by the waking condition. In the state of deep sleep, the mind and the senses are at rest, and the self is, as it were, dissolved in its own self and regains its true nature. Corresponding to these three states, the empirical jiva is said to have three forms, viz., visva, taijasa and prajna.

According to Sankara, the jivas are many; he does not support the view that the jiva, limited by avidya, is one, as avidya is one. For if all souls are one jiva, then when the first case of liberation occurred, mundane existence should have come to an end, which is not the case. Brahman, limited by the different inner organs born of avidya, becomes divided, as it were, into many individual souls. But the difficulties of the relation of mâya and avidya to Brahman led to the formulation of several theories in the later Advaita, of which the two chief are ekajivavada (single soul theory) and anekajivavada (the theory of plurality of souls).

### **3.8 The Falsity of the World**

Both Brahman and the world, both unity and multiplicity, cannot be equally real. According to Sankara, the reality is that which is existent at all times and is never contradicted; it is self-explanatory. But the world of multiplicity is not present at all times and is not self explanatory. It is full of contradiction. When insight into reality is gained, the world of experience is transcended. The world is said to be unreal since it is sublated by true knowledge. According to Sankarâcârya, the

world is mithyâ or false. The Advaita Vedântins are often criticized as regarding the world as totally non-existence, since ‘mithyâ’ in ordinary sense means non-existent. But this criticism has no ground, since according to the Advaita Vedantins, ‘mithya’ does not mean non-existent. In the Advaitic terminology the two terms - non existence (asat) and false (mithyâ) bear quite different meanings. Asat is that which is never experienced, e.g., sky-flower or hare’s horn. But mithyâ is that which is neither sat, i.e., eternally existent not asat, i.e., totally non-existent, but ‘indescribable or anirvacaniya.

The world is not sat or eternally real, since it is contradicted by the knowledge of Brahman. Again the world is not asat or totally non-existent, as it has a pragmatic reality. So long the knowledge of Brahman is not attained the world of experience continues to exist. Thus, the world, is different from both sat and asat and, as such, is mithyâ.

The world-appearance is, however, not so illusory as the perception of silver in the conch-shell, for the latter type of worldly illusions is called pratibhasika. In this context it should be remembered that Sankara accepts three levels of reality, viz., pâmârthika or transcendental, Vyavahârika or empirical and pratibhâsika or illusory. Of these that is called pâmârthika reality which is not contradicted by any knowledge at any time. Brahman is the only pâmârthika reality. Vyavaharika or empirical reality is that which is not contradicted by any knowledge except the knowledge of Brahman. The world-appearance is never contradicted in this worldly stage and is thus called Vyavahârika. So long as the right knowledge of Brahman as the only reality does not dawn, the world-appearance continues to exist uncontradicted by any knowledge. Pratibhâsika reality, on the other hand, is that which is contradicted by any knowledge other than Brahman-knowledge. The rope-snake, or nacre-silver is pratibhâsika as these are contradicted by the knowledge of rope or nacre in this very life. Hence, the world has a pragmatic reality and not totally illusory. It is only because there comes such a stage in which the world-appearance ceases to manifest itself that we have to say from the ultimate and absolute point of view that the world-appearance is false and unreal.

### **3.9 Theory of Knowledge**

Sankara himself has not discussed the mechanism of knowledge. The Vedântaparibhasa of Dharmarajadhvarindra gives a detail account of the theory of knowledge according to Advaita Vedanta. Valid knowledge is the knowledge of an object which is not experienced before and not contradicted later. Sankara refers to three sources of knowledge- perception, inference and scriptural testimony. Later writers add comparison, implication and negation.

**Perception:**

Perception is the direct consciousness of objects obtained generally through the exercise of senses. In sense-perception there is actual contact between the percipient and the object of perception. When the eye is fixed on a jar, the internal organ is supposed to go out towards it, illuminate it by its own light, assume its shape and cognize it. The internal organ functions like light, its vrtti moves outwards in the form of an elongated ray of light. This vrtti, like the ray of light, extends only upto a certain distance. This accounts for the non-perception of remote objects. The vrtti identifies itself with the object. When we perceive something, our perception depends on the nature of the mode (vrtti). If the mode takes the form of the weight of the object, we perceive weight; if of colour, we perceive colour. In the case of the perception of a thing, say a jar, the consciousness determined by the jar is found to be unified with that determined by the vrtti of the internal organ falling on the jar.

The two limiting conditions of ultimate consciousness, the modification and the object, do not produce a difference, since they are in the same spot. Different kinds of perception are admitted. Perception caused by the exercise of the senses (indriyajanyam) are distinguished from those which are not caused by sense-activity (indriyajanyam). Inner perception of desire etc. are of the latter type. The distinction between determinate (savikalpa) and indeterminate (nirvikalpa) perception is admitted. In determinate perception we have the distinction between the thing determined, the jar, and the determining attribute jariness. In indeterminate perception all determining attributes are left out of view. No distinction exists between Sand P as in the propositions "That thou art", "This is Devadatta". Here we grasp the meaning of the proposition without apprehending the relation between its different parts.

**Inference :**

Inference is produced by a knowledge of invariable concomitance (vyâptijñâna) which is its instrumental cause. When there is the knowledge that the minor term possesses the attribute as in the proposition.

'The hill is smoky' and also an awakening of the mental impression due to previous presentative knowledge in the form 'smoke is invariably accompanied by fire', there results the inference 'the hill is on fire'. Here a Vyapti is defined as the co-existence of the probandum with the proban in all the loci where the proban exists.

**Verbal Testimony:**

Âgama or the verbal testimony is accepted by the Advaitins as an independent source of knowledge. A sentence is valid if the relation implied by its meaning is not falsified by any other means of knowledge. Verbal testimony is of two types:

Pauruseya and apauruseya. Pauruseya sabda- pramâna means the words of the trustworthy persons and apauruseya sabda- pramâna means the Veda, which is looked upon as uncreated, beginningless and faultless.

**Analogy:**

The knowledge of similarity is generated by Upamâna. A person who has already seen a cow goes to the forest. There he sees a gavaya and cognizes that the gavaya is like a cow. Then he realizes the similarity of the cow with the gavaya thus: “our cow is like this gavaya”. This knowledge of similarity is the result of Upamâna. Here the instrument of knowledge is the knowledge of similarity of the gavaya with the cow the resultant knowledge is the similarity of the cow with the gavaya.

**Arthapatti :**

Arthapatti is the presumption of something for the explanation of a known fact. Arthapatti is defined as the postulation of the ground of explanation through the knowledge of what is to be explained. When a particular person known to be alive is not found in his house, it is assumed that he must be somewhere outside. Here the knowledge of ‘what is to be explained’, viz., the absence of a living person from the house is the instrument, and the knowledge of the ground of explanation, viz., the existence of the person somewhere outside, is the resultant knowledge.

**Anupalabdhi :**

The non-existence of a thing is known by anupalabdhi-pramâna. The particular cause, i.e., the instrument of the cognition of non-existence, which is not generated by any knowledge is called non-cognition. For example, there is no pot on the floor, as it is not cognized.

### **3.10 Bondage and Liberation**

According to the Advaita Vedantins, the cause of the bondage of the jiva is avidyâ. Avidyâ conceals the real nature of the jiva as identical with Brahman and makes it appear as a distinct reality. Moksa or liberation consists in the realization of the real nature of the self as identical with Brahman. This is possible only by the destruction of the jiva’s false conceit. Now, avidyâ can be destroyed knowledge of Brahman as identical with the self destroys avidyâ as a result of which liberation is attained.

In Advaita Vedânta the realization of the true nature of the individual self as absolutely identical with Brahman is termed as Brahma-prâpti or the attainment of Brahman. This is of the nature of un-surpassable bliss, since the essence of Brahman is absolute bliss. Defined negatively, liberation is the complete cessation

of all pains and sorrows. Avidyâ is the cause of all pains and sorrows. When avidya is destroyed by right knowledge liberation is attained. Hence, liberation is defined by the Advaita Vedântins as the manifestation of the nature of Brahman as eternal, infinite bliss and as the destruction of pain. Like Brahman, liberation is beyond space, time and causality. It is, in reality, beyond the categories of thought; it is the Absolute. Sankara describes the nature of liberation as follows: The disembodied state, which is absolutely real, immutable, eternal, all-pervading like ether, devoid of all change, ever- satisfied, part-less, self-luminous, free from merits and demerits and their effects and lying beyond the three points of time is called liberation. From this it is clear that liberation is beginningless and eternal. The characterization of liberation as immutably eternal underlies the fact that it is not an effect or that it is not the attainment or production of something new. It is only the discovery of the fact existing from eternity. The fact that liberation caused by knowledge does not mean that liberation is non-eternal. Knowledge does not produce anything new. The jiva, being of the nature of Brahman, is eternally free. It is avidya that conceals this nature of the jiva, as a result of which the jiva thinks itself as bound. Liberation consists in the removal of this avidyâ and the revelation of the real nature of the self. Hence, according to the Advaita Vedântins, liberation is the re-affirmation of the truth that exists from beginningless time, it is not anything new. Sravana (hearing), manana (thinking) and nididhyâsana (meditation) are the means for realization of Brahman. The Advaita Vedântins regard sravana manana and nididhyâsana as the antaranga or internal means of liberation, since they directly generate knowledge or help the rise of knowledge by destroying the visible obstacles like doubt etc. Karman or prescribed duties like sacrifice etc. are also to be performed for the destruction of accumulated sins of many births. These duties are said to be the external means of liberation. But according to the Advaita Vedântins, knowledge is the only means of liberation. Knowledge here means the immediate intuition of the non-difference between the jiva and Brahman. Except knowledge there is no other way leading to the highest goal of human existence. Action, though helpful as a preliminary aid has no part to play in the attainment of the ultimate goal. The Advaita Vedântins maintain that liberation is attained only through the destruction of avidyâ and avidyâ and be destroyed by knowledge alone. Sankara is also against the view of the co-ordination of knowledge with action (jñâna-karma-samuccaya-vâda) as the means of liberation. Action cannot co-exist with knowledge, since these two are contradictory to each other. Action is the effect of ajñâna, whereas knowledge destroy ajnâna. Hence, knowledge and action cannot co-exist with each other like the sun and darkness.

### **3.11 Jivanmukti And Videhamukti**

The Advaita Vedântins advocate two types of liberation -jivanmukti or liberation during embodiment and videhamukti or disembodied liberation. Jivanmukti or liberation during embodiment is that in which the spiritual aspirant acquires the



knowledge of Brahman and thereby destroys avidyâ, though his body continues to exist because of the non-exhaustion of the parabdhakarmans.

When a spiritual aspirant attains the immediate intuitive knowledge of the identity between the self and Brahman and thereby destroys avidya and its effects like accumulated karman etc., he is said to be liberated from bondage. But if his parabdha karmans which are destroyed not by knowledge but by enjoyments, remain unexhausted, he has to pass through an embodied state. This is the state of jivanmukti. Though in this state, the spiritual aspirant lives an embodied life, he always remains Brahmanistha, i.e., he always resides in Brahman.

Videhamukti or disembodied liberation can be attained directly with the rise of Brahman-knowledge or through the stage of jivanmukti. If the knowledge of Brahman coincides, by chance, with the exhaustion of the parabdha karmans, the self directly attains videhamukti, without undergoing the stage of jivanmukti. But if the parabdha karmans remain even after the acquisition of Brahman - knowledge, the self will have to pass through the state of jivanmukti till the exhaustion of the parabdha karmans. And when the parabdha karmans are totally exhausted through enjoyment, the self attains videhamukti. This is the complete liberation of the self from the sphere of nescience. In this state even the trace of nescience does not remain in the self, as a result of which the self is freed from all the three types of bodies - gross, subtle and causal. No worldly activity or knowledge is conceivable in videhamukti.

### 3.12 Summing Up

Thus from the above discussion we come to know that Sankara was one of the prominent philosopher of Vedânta School of Philosophy. The concept of Sankara mainly centred round his views on Advaitâ Vedânta. It needs mention that Sankara was one of the propounder of Vedânta Philosophy which implies end of Veda. In this unit you have learnt that, according to Sankara the world has no reality. In other words we can say that the world is false, only Brahmin or *Jiva* is real. You have also learnt that the theory of knowledge is another important concept of Sankara which is based on three sources.

### 3.13 References/Suggested Readings

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
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| T.R. V. Murti | : | <i>Central Philosophy of Buddhism</i>                       |
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K.R. Potter : *Presupposition of Indian Philosophy*  
M. Hiriyanna : *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*  
Satkori Mookherjee : *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*  
Rhys Devids : *Buddhism: Its History and Literature*

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## **UNIT: 4**

### **VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY OF RAMANUJA**

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- 4.2 Objectives
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#### **4.1 Introduction**

In your previous unit you have learnt the Sankaras concept of Vedânta Philosophy. Now in this unit you are going to discuss the philosophy of Ramanuja, who had a specialised training on Vedânta Philosophy. The philosophy of Ramanuja mainly based on knowledge. He had maintained a realistic stand in epistemology and said that knowledge always points to a corresponding object that exist as external to the knower. In this unit we are going to discuss his theory of error and sources of knowledge. An attempt is also made to introduce you with his concept of God, Bondage and Liberation. Thus this unit will help you to understand Ramanuja's views on Vedanta Philosophy.

#### **4.2 Objectives**

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- *examine* Ramanuja's epistemological views (theories of knowledge and error) which provides the basis for his metaphysical constructions;
- *discuss* Ramanuja's Metaphysical view including his concept of God, individual self, matter and creation;

- *evaluate* Ramanuja's basic charges against sankara's advaita Vedânta;
- *explore* Ramanuja's concept of human boundge and liberation together with a brief critical observation of the whole philosophical convictions of Ramanuja.

### 4.3 Basic Concept of Ramanuja Philosophy

Ramanujacharya attempts a harmonious combination absolutism with personal theism. The primary sources of inspiration for this attempt can be traced in the Puranas, the Agames and the devotional songs of the Alvar saints. So far as his indebtedness to other vedantic thinkers is concerned, the names of Bhaskara, yadavaprakasa and yamunacharya are the most important ones. Bhaskara advocated bhedabhedavada and treated both identify and difference as equally real. The causal state of Brahman is of unity, while the state of manifestation is one of diversity. Yadavaprakasa again hold that Brahman is eternally pure and has within itself three distinct states, viz, cit (conscious) acit (unconscious) and Iswara (God). Yamunacharya like wise holds that there are three real categories- the omniscient and omnipotent iswara, the self-conscious souls and the unconscious material world. These thinkers have influenced Ramanuja's thought in the most conspicuous manner and this will be clearly seen when the various aspects of his philosophy will be considered

#### **Stop to Consider:**

##### **Life and works of Ramanuja:**

Ramanuja was born in Sriperumbur in 1017 A.D. He lost his father when he was very young in age. On completion of a general educational course Ramanuja had a specialised training on Vedânta philosophy under Yadavaprakas' a, a well-known Vedânta teacher. As a student he was very intelligent and could grasp the Vedântic concepts and doctrines in no time. Soon he developed an independent way of understanding and interpreting the Vedânta-texts that was at variance with the interpretations of his teacher. While Yadavaprakas' a favoured a monistic approach, Ramanuja adopted the qualified non-dualistic one in interpreting the Vedânta sutras. As a result of such difference Ramanuja had to part with his teacher.

Mahapurna, the maternal uncle of Ramanuja then influenced upon him to meet Yamunacharya, the chief of the mutt of Sri Rangam, who too was very eager to have Ramanuja as his disciple. But by the time Ramanuja arrived, Yamunacharya breathed his last. It is said that Ramanuja found three of the five fingers of Yamuna charya's right hand folded, which, it was believed, signified three unfulfilled wishes of the master and those were (1) writing an easy commentary on the Brahma Sutra (2) converting people to the prapatti doctrine of Vaisnavism and (3) composing works on Sri Vaisnavism. Later Ramanuja studied Vedanta under Mahapurna and mastered the great Vedanta-texts. He also fulfilled all the three wishes of Yamunacharya. He authored Sri Bhasya, the celebrated commentary on the Brahma Sutra of Badarayana. Besides this 'magnum opus', he authored Gita-Bhasya, Vedanta-Sara Vedanta-dipa, Vedanta Samgraha and Godya traya. He established many temples and preached Vaisnavism to make it popular. This great thinker died in 1137 AD. at the age of one hundred and twenty years.

#### **4.4 Epistemological Views**

Ramanuja, like the Nyâya and the Mimâṅsā maintains the realistic stand in epistemology and says that knowledge always points to a corresponding object that exists as external to the knower. Knowledge is a subject-object relation and it reveals both itself and its object. All knowledge according to Ramanuja, sustains on and involves discrimination between the subject and the object. Like Prabhakâra, Ramanuja thinks that knowledge is possible only in relation to its object.

Knowledge forms the very essence of the self. Dissociating himself Prabhakara, Ramanuja rejects the former's view that knowledge is merely an accidental quality of the self on the contrary he says that knowledge is the essence of the self. Self is conceived by Ramanuja as an eternal self-conscious subject; but he never subscribes to the Sankarite view that self is identical with pure consciousness. Pure and undifferentiated consciousness is a non-entity.

Consciousness is always qualified and possesses specific attributes. It is possessed by a subject and it always refers to an object. Explaining further the relation between knowledge and the self Ramanuja presents the analogy of a lamp and the light emanating from it. Self is like the lamp and knowledge is like the light. Knowledge reveals both itself and the object, but can know neither. It is an unique adjunct of the self and is eternally associated with the latter. Knowledge belongs to the self and so is attributive (Udharmabhutajñāna) in this sense. Knowledge is also called substantive because it possesses the qualities of contraction and expansion. Knowledge as substance, is given an intermediate status between matter (gadâ) and spirit (cit) and is called immaterial (ajada). It is not material because it can, on its own, manifest itself as well as its objects. It is not spiritual either, because it is not self-conscious and cannot know itself. Knowledge is self-luminous (svaprakasa) but not self-conscious.

##### **4.4.1 Theory of Error**

The theory of error advocated by Ramanuja is known as Satkhyativada, meaning whatever is cognised (even in erroneous knowledge) is real. All knowledge is intrinsically valid and refers to a real object. From the above view it follows that Ramanuja does not think that there is any logical distinction between truth and error. The distinction between the two is only practical. Error represents partial truth. Error occurs when the object is imperfectly and partially cognised. But this should not, however, be understood that there is any subjective or ideal elements in erroneous knowledge. Ramanuja's view can be understood with reference to the theory of quintuplication (pancikarana) according to which all objects of the world are composed of five elements combined in varying proportions. From this standpoint each object exists in every other object. When one wrongly

perceives silver in shell, one is not cognising some thing entirely non-existent. As both silver and shell are made of the same five elements there is something in common between them.

Ramanuja's contention is that the particles of silver are actually present in shell and so there is partial identity between the two. One errs when this partial identity is mistaken for complete identity. Error can be corrected by acquiring more complete and perfect knowledge of the object.

Not only the objects of erroneous knowledge, but also the dream objects are real according to Ramanuja. Dreams are conceived as creations of God. They are intended to give rise to corresponding percepts in the mind of the dreamer, who either enjoy or suffer them. In the dream-experience one will enjoy the objects or suffer because of them in accordance with the merit or demerit, acquired in the working life, respectively.

### **Stop to Consider:**

#### **Influences on Ramanuja's thought:**

The primary sources of inspiration for the philosophy of Ramanuja can be traced in the Puranas, the Agamas and the devotional poems of the Alvar saints. So far as his indebtedness to other Vedântic thinkers is concerned, the names of Bhaskara (10<sup>th</sup> century), Yadavaprakasa (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Yamunacharya (11<sup>th</sup> century) are the most important ones.

Bhaskara advocated Bhedabhedavada and treated both identity and difference as equally real. The causal state of Brahman is of unity, while the state of manifestation is one of diversity. Brahman, according to Bhaskara really undergoes transformation and modification and manifests itself as the world of multiplicity. Yadavaprakasa, unlike Bhaskara, maintains that Brahman is eternally pure and never suffers real bondage nor enjoys liberation. Brahman has within itself three distinct states, viz, cit (conscious) acit (unconscious) and Iswara (God). These three are simply states of Brahman and not independent substances. Ignorance of this truth and consequent treatment of them as separately and independently real lead to bondage.

Yamunacharya, in his Siddhitraya has provided the philosophical basis for the teaching of the Alvar saints. According to him there are three real categories - the omniscient and omnipotent Iswara, the self-conscious souls and the unconscious material world. These thinkers have influenced Ramanuja's thought in the most conspicuous manner and this will be clearly seen when the various aspects of his philosophy will be considered.

#### **4.4.2 Sources of Knowledge**

Ramanuja accepts perception, inference and verbal testimony as the sources of valid knowledge. He holds an indifferent attitude towards the other pramanas that are generally accepted by the systems of Indian Philosophy.

Perception as a source of knowledge operates by means of sense object contact. The object of perception is distinguished from others by difference and is possessed of a general formal character. The difference makes it a determinate object and the general character makes it a member of a class.

Ramanuja recognises the distinction between indeterminate (nirvikalpa) and determinate (savikalpa) perception but he does not accept the Nyâya view that the object of indeterminate perception is absolutely unqualified and undifferentiated entity. All knowledge is essentially differentiated. It is impossible to apprehend an object devoid of characters. Hence even in indeterminate perception characterisation of the object is necessary. Ramanuja distinguishes between the two types of perception in the following way. When an object is perceived for the first time, the class character is not recognised as an attribute common to a whole class. This is indeterminate perception. On the other hand when an object is apprehended second or a "third time it is recognised as belonging to a particular class. This is determinate perception. In determinate perception is primary presentation and it does not bring to mind any earlier impression of the object. When the child perceives a cow for the first time, he recognises it to be a cow, but does not recognise that 'cowness' is common to all cows. When he sees a cow a second or a third time the earlier impression of the cow is revived and he recognises the perceived cow as one belonging to the class of cows. The first perception of the child is nirvikalpa (indeterminate), while the second is Savikalpa (determinate). Determinate perception, however is to be distinguished from recognition (pratyabhijna) for unlike in the former, the object of perception is the same in earlier and later perceptions in recognition.

Inference as a source of knowledge consists in deriving knowledge from a general principle. Such general principle may be suggested even by a single instance and is established by means of indirect proof (tarka) and also by the use of both positive and negative instances which helps in eliminating the non-essential elements. Ramanuja's explanation of inference is similar to that of the Naiyayikas, Authority of the Vedas as well as that of the Pancaratra Agama is accepted by Ramanuja as valid. Advocating an attitude of reconciliation between Karma Kanda and Jnânakânda of the Vedas he says that Karma (action) and jnana are complementary to each other. Actions enjoined in the Vedas are to be performed to purify the soul and also to secure the grace of God. Karmakânda of the Vedas teaches the modes of worshipping God, while jnânakanda describes the nature of God.

#### **4.5 Metaphysical Views**

Ramanuja's philosophy entertains a peculiar ontological stand - on the one hand it asserts itself as non-dualistic and on the other hand it admits three realities, viz,

cit (spirit), acit (matter) and Iswara (God). Rarnanuja, however, has offered explanation and justification for such philosophical position in his exposition of 'Visistadvaitavada. Absolute Reality, for Ramanuj a, is an organic unity, an identity qualified by diversity. God which identified with the Absolute is the whole of which matter and spirit are the parts. God, matter and soul are all reals and substances; but God alone is independent, while the other two are absolutely dependent on God as attributes depend on their substance. Matter and soul constitute the body where God resides as its soul, as the immanent inner controller. The relation between God and the other two reals (cit and acit) is that of inner inseparability (aprthakasiddhi). It has been conceived as an inseparable, vital and organic relation by Ramanuja, That Absolute is an organic unity of three reals is justified and substantiated by Ramanuja by referig to a passage in the Svetasvatara Upanisad. which states that there are three ultimate realities - the eternal and omniscient and omnipotent God, the eternal but powerless souls and eternal matter. These three realities together constitute the Absolute. The Taittiriya Upanisad also contains such passages where God is described as the soul of Nature and the soul of souls.

The inseparable unity of the three reals, viz, matter, souls and God is Brahman or the Absolute for Ramanuja. Just as in a living organism one element predominates over and controls the rest, in the organic unity called Absolute, God, the soul controls the other two, viz, matter and the individual souls. The controlled or subordinate elements are visesanas (attributes) and the controlling and the predominant one is the visesys (substance). The attributes qualify the substantial unity and make it a complex whole. Thus in Ramanuja's conception the Absolute, though a unity, is qualified by difference, and his view is, therefore, named Visistadvaitavâda.

#### **4.5.1 Ramanuja's Concept of God (Is'wara)**

In Ramanuja's philosophy God (Iswara) is identified with the Absolute (Brahman). Iswara and Brahman signify one and the same reality, which is at once non-dual and qualified. The highest reality cannot be a distinctionless, quality less entity. God is a person and the divine personality is a qualified (savisesa) unity, a unity quaiified by diversity, a unity in - and - through - difference. God has nothing besides, either similar or dissimilar. Therefore God is devoid of both homogeneous (svajatiya) and heterogeneous (vijatiya) distinctions (bheda). But, according to Ramanuja God is possessed of internal distinctions (svagata bheda) as there are within him conscious and unconscious substances that are mutually distinguishable.

God has been conceived by Ramanuja as having both a causal state and an effect-state. In the state of dissolution God exists in a causal state with pure matter and unembodied souls. The whole universe lies in Him in the latent form. When creation starts the subtle mater becomes gross, unembodied souls, other than the nitya (eternally real) and mukta (liberated) ones, assume bodies in accordance with the fruits of their actions. This is the effect-state' of God.



God, according to Ramanuja, is possessed of infinite number of infinitely good qualities (saguna). Rather He is the embodiment of all the perfect qualities the finite creatures can conceive of. The Upanisadic statements denying qualities to Brahman are interpreted by Ramanuja as denying only the imperfections or the bad qualities (Nirguna-Vadasca parasya brahmano heya-gunasambandhad upapadyante-Sribhasya 1.1.1.) The 'qualities, such as, omnipotence, omniscience, love, bliss, mercy are, in the perfect forms, present in the Divine Personality. He has a divine body and lives in Vaikuntha with His divine consort Lakshmi or Shri, who is the symbol of power and mercy. God manifests himself in five forms for the benefit of His devotees. The five forms are Antaryami (the immanent soul of the universe) Narayana or Vasudeva (the Supreme transcendent Lord), the four fold Vyuha (manifested as Vasudeva Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha), Vibhava or Avatâra (incarnated in human or animal form) and Archavatara (holy idols). This theistic characterisation of the Supreme Reality by Ramanuja is obviously influenced by the Pancaratra Agama and Bhagavata view.

For Ramanuja God is both immanent in and transcendent to the world. His creation God being immanent in the cosmic-process sustains and controls it from within and takes it back into His bosom at the time of dissolution.

Though embodied, God does not suffer like other embodied souls. The latter suffer not because of their embodiment, but because of the actions they perform in the embodied state. All actions bear fruits according to the Law of Karma. God himself is the Lord of Karma, it is He who guides and empowers the Law, as the latter, on its own can not give rise to consequences. As the Lord of Karma God cannot be bound by the law of Karma. God is not subject to suffering to which individual souls are subject, nor he can be affected by any mutation that affects matter. God is the unchanging controller of all change, unmoved mover of all worldly processes. God is the ground and cause of the world, but is untouched by the latter's imperfections. His transcendental abode is made of Suddha Sattva or Nitya bibhuti (pure matter). It is said about God that he is knowledge to the ignorant, power to the powerless, merely to the guilty, grace to the afflicted, parental affection to the impure, perennial attachment to those who fear separation, nearness to those who pine to see him, and kindness to all (Tattva traya).

God is the supreme object of worship and the goal of man's religious aspirations. The Highest Reality is the Self-conscious Person who is at once both transcendent to and immanent in the cosmic process. Ramanuja's God undoubtedly represents The Highest Reality in a theistic system; his is a God of Personal Theism.

#### **4.5.2 Cit (The Individual Self)**

Cit or the individual self forms one aspect of The Divine Body and is as real as God Himself. It is a mode (prakâra) or attribute of God and is a spiritual substance which is absolutely real but at the same time absolutely dependent on God. It possesses eternal being. At the time of dissolution it remains as it is in itself, pure

and unattached to a physical body. But at the time of creation it has to take a bodily form in accordance with the merit or demerit acquired as a result of actions performed in its earlier life. It is finite and atomic in size, but is external, uncreated and imperishable. The finite individual is a compound entity with a body and a soul. The soul is different from the body, sense-organs, mind, vital-breaths and even consciousness. In the mundane existence soul wrongly identifies itself with all these due to ignorance and influence of past actions (Karma). Ramanuja accepts plurality of selves. Individual souls are quantitatively numerous though essentially and qualitatively alike. The individual self is the knower, the done and the enjoyer. The self is both self-luminous and self-conscious. Consciousness is the essence of the self. The individual self as embodied is subject to all limitations and imperfections of the body; but such bodily limitations and imperfections cannot touch its essence. Essentially the self is ever blissful (anandarupa). Though it is ever dependent on God and is supported and controlled by God, yet it is a real agent; it performs actions according to its own will and reaps the fruits of its actions. Ramanuja regards the individual selves as free agents inspite of the fact that they are controlled by God from within.

Ramanuja recognises three categories of selves. Under the first category the includes the ever-free (nitya mukta) souls. These souls enjoy eternal freedom and live in Vaikuntha, the Divine Abode alongwith God Himself. The second category is that of the liberated (mukta) souls who have attained liberation from the bondage of the body after exhausting all the fruits of actions by a harmonious combination of action and knowledge culminating in devotion.

The third category of souls is that of the bound (baddha) souls who have been struggling in the world because of ignorance and also as a result of performance of evil works. The bound souls, according to Ramanuja have four types- superhuman, human, animal and immobile.

The relation between individual self and God is conceived by Ramanuja as one of identity-in-and-through difference or identity as qualified by difference. Since the individual selves are parts and God is their whole, there is an organic relation between them. Selves are dependent on God just as parts depend on the whole; but this dependence does not rob the selves of their individual uniqueness. Essentially the selves are similar to God, but they are mere modes. The liberated souls become similar to God, But they do not merge in God nor do they become identical to God. Like God, the souls enjoy infinite consciousness and infinite bliss, because the souls are parts of God and as such they possess the same essential characteristics as God.

**Acit (matter):**

Acit or matter, the unconscious substance forms a part of the Divine Body like cit or the conscious substance. Ramanuja classifies unconscious substance into three types-viz, Prakrti (misrasattva), Nityabibhuti (suddhasattva) and Kala

(sattvasunya). These three substances are “objects of experience, liable to changes and indifferent to the end of man”.

The existence of prakrti is not known through perception and inference. It is believed to exist on the authority of the scripture. It is the material stuff out of which the world is created. Like Samkhya, Ramanuja too maintains that sattva, rajas and rajas are the three qualities of prakrti; but by qualities he means qualities or attributes, to the constitutive elements as meant by Sankhya. Prakrti as a kind of matter (acit) constitutes the Divine Body and so is entirely dependent on God and does not enjoy any freedom at all. The world is the result of evolution of Prakrti. Creation is conceived by Ramanuja as a sport (lila) through which God reveals himself as cosmic power. Since creation takes place with the aid of prakrti, the latter is also called lilabibhuti of God.

Nityabibhuti is constituted of pure matter and so is also called suddhasattva. It is immaterial (ajada). It is the stuff out of which the body of God, those of the eternal and liberated souls are made of. It is said to be ‘matter without its mutability’

Kala or time is the third type of unconscious substance. It is conceived to be an independent state of matter. It does not subsist by itself but it is not a phase of prakrti. All empirical distinctions made within time, such as, moments, days, months etc. represent the modifications or changes of time.

### **Creation:**

The doctrine of creation advocated by Ramanuja is known as Brahmaparinâmavâda, Brahmaparinamavada is a form of Satkaryavada, the theory of causation according to which the effect (Karya) is existent (Sat) in the cause prior to its production. Ramanuja maintains that everything in the universe is the result of the transformation of Brahman, the Absolute Reality.

The world of physical things and spiritual beings is as real as God, even though it is absolutely dependent on the latter. The essence of reality, according to Ramanuja, is not independence. The unconscious matter and conscious souls are neither created nor destroyed. They constitute the body where God resides as the soul.

At the state of dissolution God exists in the causal state. The individual souls exist bodiless and matter exists in the subtle form. Creation means transformation of the body of God into the material world with the finite spirits in it. At the time of creation prakrti, the subtle matter evolves into gross material objects and disembodied souls take on bodies according to the merit or demerit of actions performed by them in their earlier states of embodied existence.

According to Ramanuja, the process of creation starts in order to enable the souls to enjoy or suffer the fruits of past actions. The Law of Karma is controlled by God and through it the Divine Will is expressed. Therefore, even though Ramanuja regards creation and dissolution as sportive acts of God, he finds no

difficulty in accomodating the concept of the Law of Karma as one necessitating creation.

Creation is a real act of God where the latter's body undergoes real transformation (parinâma). Like God, souls and matter too exist in the causal state at the state of dissolution and they manifest themselves in the form of embodied souls and gross objects at the time of creation, which may be called their effect state, Creation and dissolution are only relative and signify different states of the same substance, namely Brahman (God). Therefore, for Ramanuja creation signifies the effect-state of Brahman and is as real as Brahman.

#### **4.6 Refutation of Mayâvâda of Sankara**

The concept of mâyâ may be considered as the most significant element that distinguishes Visistadvaitavâda of Ramanuja from Advaitavada of Sankara. Many of perplexing philosophical problems have been intelligibly solved by Sankara with the help of his doctrine of mâyâ. Ramanuja never accepts Sankara's analysis of the nature and significance of mâyâ; on the contrary he levels number of important charges against Saṅkara's mâyâvâda. Ramanuja regards mâyâ as the real power of God. Avidyâ, another term for mâyâ, is conceived by him as the ignorance because of which the individual self identifies itself with other material objects like the body, the senses, the mind etc. Such wrong identification leads to the bondage of the self, whereas the immediate intuitive knowledge of God is the cause of liberation. The seven charges (anupapatti) levelled by Ramanuja against mayavada are the following —

- (1) Mâyâ should have a locus that supports it. It should have a place to reside. It cannot reside in Brahman, because that will make Brahman qualified which is against Saṅkara's concept of non-dual Reality. Moreover, Brahman being self-luminous and of the nature of pure consciousness cannot be the locus of ignorance. Nor can mâyâ reside in the jiva, because the individuality of the jivas is the creation of mâyâ itself. Thus maya has no locus at all. This charge is termed by Ramanuja as asrayanupapatti.
- (2) It is said in the Sankara-Vedânta that mâyâ conceals the real nature of Brahman. But how can maya which is of the nature of ignorance conceal the self-conscious and self-luminous Brahman is not understandable. This charge of Ramanuja is named tirodhananupapatti.
- (3) There is no determinate knowledge about the nature of mâyâ. If mâyâ is called positive it cannot be a synonym of avidya, since the latter is negative as it means absence of knowledge. Moreover maya taken as positive will be undestroyable. If called negative, it can not give rise to the world appearance. To treat maya as both positive and negative will be self-contradiction and to say that is neither is to abandon all logic. Ramanuja calls this charge Svarupanupapatti.

- (4) Maya is defined as indefinable and described as indescribable. This is sheer contradiction. It is said that maya is indescribable (anirvacaniya) because it does not strictly fall under the categories of reality or unreality. But reality and unreality are exclusive categories. There is no third category besides or intermediate category between, the two. If maya is neither real nor unreal, it is a non-entity, a fiction of imagination of the advaitin. This charge against Sankara's maya is known as anirvacaniyanupapatti.
- (5) We can not have any cognition of mâyâ. None of the three means of valid cognition (pramana) can give any knowledge of mâyâ. Since it is neither an entity nor a non-entity it is not perceptible. Nor can it be inferred because inference proceeds through a mark or middle term which is not there in maya. Scriptural authority speaks of maya as a real power of God which Sankara does not admit. Thus none of the pramanas give us any idea of mâyâ as Sankara wants to present. This charge is known as pramânanupapatti.
- (6) It is said by the advaitins that maya or avidyâ is removed by the knowledge of unqualified indeterminate Brahman. But such knowledge can never be attained. Knowledge is possible only of determinate and qualified things. Undifferentiated attributeless Brahman is unknowable and in absence of such knowledge maya or avidyâ can never be removed by anybody. This is called by Ramanuja nivartakanupapatti.
- (7) Mâyâ is positive (bhavarupa) according to Sankara. But that which exists positively cannot be removed from existence by knowledge. Abstract knowledge cannot remove that which has concrete existence. Therefore removal of maya is not possible. Ramanuja names this charge as nivṛtyanupapatti. Refutation of mayâvâda of Sankara assumes great importance for the theistic philosophy of Ramanuja. Ramanuja takes creation to be as real as God. On the other hand Sankara establishes the unreality of creation by treating it as an illusion having only empirical reality which is transient and ultimately insignificant. Theistic interpretation of the nature of God and his creation necessitates Ramanuja's refutation of mayavada.

#### **4.7 Bondage and Liberation**

Bondage, according to Ramanuja, is the embodied state of the soul where it wrongly identifies itself with the body and its different states and organs. Individual souls remain in their essential nature forming the Divine Body alongwith unconscious matter at the time of dissolution. But at the time of creation these souls become associated with particular bodies in accordance with merit or demerit acquired through action performed during previous embodied existences. Ramanuja avoids the question as to why pure disembodied souls become embodied in the very first occasion and simply states that the relation between soul and its past deeds is beginningless. Bondage is the state here the soul out of ignorance of its essential pure nature thinks that it is identical with body it is in. The embodied

soul reaps the fruits of its past actions and may have to pass through several births to get its entire quota of fruits of actions exhausted.

As ignorance is the cause of bondage, naturally knowledge will be the means to liberation. The immediate intuitive knowledge of God, the Highest reality is the cause of liberation according to Ramanuja. He advocates the necessity of a harmonious combination of both action (Karma) and knowledge (jñâna). The karmakanda and the jnanakanda of the Vedas are to be treated as two inter-related aspects of one method. The vedic actions, if properly performed, help in removing the effects of past actions which stand as obstacles in the path of salvation. Ramanuja points out that the actions should be performed with the sole interest of pleasing God. The self will then realise that mere performance of actions enjoined in the Vedas is not enough for attaining liberation. It has to acquire the right knowledge about the nature of God along with the knowledge that matter and souls form the body of God. Such knowledge one can attain by studying the jñânakanda of Vedânta. Ramanuja admits that knowledge is the immediate cause of liberation; but he also reminds that such knowledge is not ordinary knowledge of Vedânta, for then anyone who studies Vedânta will attain liberation.

Real knowledge which leads to liberation is identical with highest devotion (bhakti). Such devotion is attained through self-surrender (prapatti) and constant remembrance (dhruva smrti) of God as the only object of devotion. Performance of actions enjoined in the Vedas and ordinary knowledge lead to realisation of ordinary devotion, called prapatti which means flinging oneself to the absolute mercy of God. Prapatti (ordinary devotion) and upasana (meditation) is a means to realise devotion of the absolute type which Ramanuja identifies with pure knowledge of God. Such immediate intuitive knowledge is the direct cause of liberation, though it cannot be acquired through devotion alone.

Ramanuja disagrees to the view that on attainment of liberation the individual self becomes merged in God. Souls in their essential nature are identical to the Absolute Substance of which they are simply modes. But they are distinct individuals and their individuality persists even in the liberated state. Liberation means direct intuitive realisation of the self about its own essential and pure nature. Such realisation is possible for the self only after all the fruits of its past deeds are exhausted. According to Ramanuja there is no provision of jivanmukti (liberation in life itself) for the embodied soul. It has to be free from all types of association to the body so that it can attain liberation.

Divine Grace has been conceived as an essential factor for liberation. Without it neither the destruction of fruits of actions is possible, nor the intuitive knowledge of God dawns. The liberated souls become similar to God (Brahmaprakara), though not identical to him. There are only two points in which the released souls differ from God. Firstly, the souls are atomic in size, while God is all-pervading. Secondly, the souls have no power over the creative movements of the world, which belong exclusively to God, the Lord of creation.



The released souls dwell in direct communion with God and enjoy infinite consciousness and infinite bliss.

#### **4.8 Critical Observation**

Ramanuja, one of the great Vedânta teachers, has presented in his philosophical system a synthesis of Upanisadic Absolutism with Personal Theism of Pancaratra scriptures. In fact, the main task he has undertaken to execute, is to justify theistic belief of Vaisnavism by the philosophical doctrines of the upanisads. Visistadvaitavada of Ramanuja represents a philosophic attempt to satisfy both intellectual and religious aspirations. It is undoubtedly the best type of monotheism that explains both transcendence and immanence of God, but as a system of philosophy it is certainly not flawless.

Ramanuja speaks of three realities, viz, matter, soul and God, and maintains a further distinction making matter and soul dependent on God and identifying God with the Absolute. He regards Absolute to be the Triune Unity of matter, soul and God. It is not intelligible how God, one of the three equal-level-realities, can be identical with Absolute. Further, if matter and soul are absolutely dependent on God, they can not be treated as real as God.

Ramanuja says that unconscious matter (acit) and conscious souls (cit) form the Divine Body where in God resides as the soul. God is both material and efficient cause of the universe. At the time of creation the body of God undergoes transformation, and gets manifested as the universe. If it is the body of God that gets transformed then how can it be that God remains untouched and unaffected by the imperfections of the world. It is not logical to say that the soul of God is perfect and changeless while his body is beset with imperfections and mutations.

The relation between God and the universe is described by Ramanuja as identity qualified by difference which he also calls aprthakasidhi or dependent existence. It is like the dependence of attributes or modes on the substance, which is an inner and organic relation. But such a relation cannot be maintained in Ramanuja's philosophy, because he advocates Absolutism on the one hand and sympathises with pluralism on the other. Absolute being conceived as the only reality, it is logically impossible to entertain independent and separate reality of individual souls and matter.

How the soul which is essentially pure and self-conscious comes to be associated with a material body has not been intelligibly explained by Ramanuja. Wherefrom and how the soul accumulates the fruits of actions are the problems that Ramanuja simply explains away saying that it is a beginningless process. Ramanuja is hell bent on refuting Sankara's doctrine of mâyâ. But it is clear that Ramanuja's objections are based on the misunderstanding of the Advaitâ position. All the charges levelled by him can be very well met and adequately replied from Sankara's non-dualistic stand point. Moreover, Ramanuja himself admits of the mystery involved in the relation between pure soul and its actions, and simply



states that the relation between the two is beginningless. Thus he, too, accepts an unintelligible elements like mâyâ or avidya of Sankara.

Ramanuja's philosophy has the credit of bringing religion and philosophy together within one system. Whether his attempted reconciliation between the two is reasonable or not, that should not be the criterion to judge his ingenuity. It is true that as a system of thought it suffers from certain drawbacks, but Ramanuja's Visistadvaitavada serves best the purpose of popularising personal theism of Sri Vaisnavism.

#### 4.9 Summing Up

After reading this unit you are now in a position to define the whole conviction of Ramannuja's epistemology and metaphysics. As a matter of fact, the whole of the teachings of the different schools of Vedanta have their origin in the 'Vedanta sutra' of Bardrayana which itself is the systematization of the different teachings of Upanisads. The Upanisads being discrete and preached in ophorism needed a systematization which bring to harmony the differences underlying them. It was badrayana who did so in his famous Vedanta sutra or brahma sutra. But being very much brief, it again were liable to different interpretations. Various commentaries thus came to be written to elaborate the doctrines of the Vedanta. And one such commentary constitute the whole philosophy of Ramanuja.

#### 4.10 References/Suggested Readings

- |                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| S.N. Dasgupta      | : | <i>History of Indian Philosophy</i>                         |
| J.N. Sinha         | : | <i>History of Indian Philophy</i>                           |
| D.M. Dutta         | : | <i>Six Ways of Knowing</i>                                  |
| T.R. V. Murti      | : | <i>Central Philosophy of Buddhism</i>                       |
| B.K. Matilal       | : | <i>Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophy</i> |
| C.D. Sharma        | : | <i>Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy</i>                 |
| K.R. Potter        | : | <i>Presupposition of Indian Philosophy</i>                  |
| M. Hiriyanna       | : | <i>Outlines of Indian Philosophy</i>                        |
| Satkori Mookherjee | : | <i>The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux</i>            |
| Rhys Devids        | : | <i>Buddhism: Its History and Literature</i>                 |

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