# INTRODUCTION TO
# INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

## Self Learning Material

B21PH02DC

**SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

The State University for Education, Training and
Research in Blended Format, Kerala

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

## Vision

*To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.*

## Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

## Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

# Introduction to Indian Philosophy

Course Code: B21PH02DC

Semester - II

## Bachelor of Arts
## Philosophy
## with Specialisation in
## Sreenarayanaguru Studies
## Self Learning Material

SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

# DOCUMENTATION

## Academic Committee

Swami Muni Narayana Prasasd

| | |
|---|---|
| Swami Rithambharananda | Swami Sookshmananda |
| Dr. Sindhu Pratap | Swami Saradananda |
| Dr. B. Sugeetha | Dr. M.V. Natesan |
| Dr. Sudhanjali P.S. | K.V. Sajai |
| Dr. Radharani | Mr. Dileep Kumar P.I. |
| Dr. Radhika C.S. | Dr. S.K. Radhakrishnan |
| Dr. Smitha S. | Dr. Sarath P. Nath |
| Dr. B. Karunakaran | Dr . M.A. Siddique |
| Dr. Kavitha Raman | Dr. S. Omana |
| Dr. Gasper K.J. | Dr. P.K. Sabu |
| Dr. Lakshmi | Mr. Rajendra Babu G. |
| Mr. Suvarna Kumar S. | |

## Development of the Content

Dr. Vijay Francis, Dr. Nisar A.C., Feleena C.L.

## Review

Content : Dr. Lekshmi Ramakrishna Iyer
Format : Dr. I.G. Shibi
Linguistics : Dr. N. Krishnankutty

## Edit

Dr. Lekshmi Ramakrishna Iyer

## Scrutiny

Dr. Suraj G., Dr. Vijay Francis, Dr. Nisar A. C., Feleena C. L., Dr. Robin Luke Varghese

## Co-ordination

Dr. I.G. Shibi and Team SLM

## Design Control

Azeem Babu T.A.

## Production

October 2023

## Copyright

© Sreenarayanaguru Open University 2023

Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavours.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

The university is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. We are extremely delighted to present this programme to the learners as it stays connected with the teaching of the Sreenarayanaguru. It is a matter of pride as well as satisfaction for this being the maiden attempt to offer a programme in the domain of Sreenarayanaguru's philosophy. The UG programme in Philosophy has derived its framework from the contemporary methodologies in teaching. Topical discussions have been integrated in to the historical progression of the philosophical concepts and practices. Care has been taken to ensure continuity of discussion on Guru's teachings within the basic structure of philosophy as a discipline of knowledge. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

Feel free to write to us about anything that you feel relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.

Regards,
Dr. P.M. Mubarak Pasha                                    01.10.2023

# Contents

# 1

**BLOCK**

# General Introduction

# UNIT 1

# Characteristics of Indian Philosophy

## Learning Outcomes

By studying this unit, the learner will:

♦ get an introduction to Indian philosophy

♦ get fundamental features of Indian philosophy

♦ be exposed to the general differences between Indian and western philosophy

♦ understand key philosophical themes in Indian philosophy in comparison with western philosophy

## Prerequisites

No philosophy or world view originates or develops bereft of some undergirding context. No philosophy fits all the space and time either. To put it in other words, the philosophy of a specific time and space takes its unique shape within a certain cultural, social, political and even geographical setting. Thought is the product of a time and space. It is also the quest of a time and space. The philosophy as a systematic field played the role of natural sciences at the time of its origin and development in the west. The social, cultural and political context of Indian philosophy was different. Indian philosophy, of course, could not originate or emerge without give and take from the mythology, spirituality and religiosity rooted in the Indian culture. In that sense, primarily Indian philosophy goes back to Vedic roots. It consists of Vedic deities, beliefs, hymns, rituals, practices and eschatological concerns. It also consists of existential issues, debates about ethics / values, epistemological, logical and metaphysical discussions. Indian philosophy thus cannot be reduced to the Hindu / Vedic philosophy as much as the Hindu / Vedic philosophy cannot be

reduced to any dominant set or trend of beliefs or practices. It nourished the theistic, atheistic, agnostic, monotheistic and polytheistic streams of thought. It maintained the schools which upheld the authority of the Vedas and those which rejected the same. The intertwined relation between Greek philosophy and Greek mythology is clear to us by now. The intertwined relation between Indian philosophy and Hindu mythology, specifically the Vedic literature, and its comparing and contrasting relations with the western philosophy can be understood in this chapter.

# Key themes

Darsana, Mythology, Spiritual pluralism, Moksha

# Discussion

As we learned, the word 'philosophy' is derived from (the western) Greek words 'philo' and 'sofia' which together means 'love of wisdom.' 'Darśana' and 'tattva' are the two phrases which are predominantly used in Indian tradition to refer to philosophy and philosophical schools.

The difference between the western and Indian etymological routes is significant. 'Darśana' - which is the phrase for philosophy in Indian tradition - means 'view,' 'standpoint,' or 'system' suggesting that philosophical school is something through which we view or see the world. And, to 'see' or 'view' in the Indian philosophical sense means to 'realize.' In a different sense, the meaning and purpose of 'Darśana' in Indian tradition is 'realization' more than anything. We will see in the following chapters how the self-realization or inner-realization – which is mostly seen as the part of the mystical / spiritual life – is important in Indian philosophy.

'Darśana' is a Sanskrit word. It is true that, in ancient days, most of the philosophical works were written in the Sanskrit language. As we know, this is not the case today. In the modern India, philosophical works are written not only in English but also in many indigenous / modern Indian languages.

The other word 'tattva' is derived from tat which means 'it' or 'that' and tva which means 'you.' 'Tat' in Indian thought stands to refer to 'ultimate reality.' To put it simply, tattva means 'that is you.' To put it more elaborately; "that ultimate reality which you are seeking after is you." In the Upanishads (800 BCE–500 BCE), the most important of the ancient scriptures of India and in the Bhagavad Gita, the Divine / God was considered to be identical with the inner self of each human being.

The two etymological cases mentioned above are important especially regarding the overall orientation of Indian philosophy. Fundamentally it must be noted that, taken both the cases of 'Darśana' and tattva, the emphasis is on view / realization and you (the self). This tells us about the overall 'spiritual' orientation of

Indian philosophy – the realization. This also tells us that Indian thought does not actually make a detached approach to the reality and the person who knows / grasps the reality. That means, the epistemological subject / knower cannot be purely detached from the known / reality. This could be said in a different sense; the knowledge in Indian thought is inward more than outward.

Roy. W. Perrett, in his *Introduction to Indian Philosophy* classifies the Indian philosophy into four periods such as the following: Ancient Period (900 BCE –200 CE), Classical Period (200 CE –1300 CE), Medieval Period (1300 CE –1800 CE) and Modern Period (1800 CE –present).

The ancient period of Indian philosophy, according to him, is the period in which the Vedas and the Upanishads were composed. Vedas are considered the earliest Indian religious texts. They are the texts which include hymns, chants and praises to the gods and instructions for the sacrificial rituals. Indian philosophy was founded on these religious texts. While the early Vedic texts mainly consisted of the speculations about the origins of existence and foreshadows the important concepts which developed later in Indian philosophy such as Karma and moral order (Rta), the late Vedic texts - the Upanishads include sets of dialogues on various philosophical themes.

The classical period is the period of the birth and rise of the philosophical systems while the medieval period is the period of great commentaries on the sutras. And the modern period is the period of critiques and reformists, who were inheritors of the previous systems, but were also influenced by western philosophy and education.

The classical period witnessed the rise of philosophical schools or darsanas

including the Brahminical schools that accepted the authority of the Vedas and the non-Brahminical schools that did not accept the authority of the Vedas like Buddhism, Jainism and Cārvāka. The former schools were called as orthodox (āstika) and the latter schools were called as hetevodox (nāstika). The āstika – nāstika distinction is not about faith in existence and non-existence of God. Rather, it is about recognition and non-recognition or acceptance and rejection of the authority of the Vedas.

The orthodox (āstika) Indian philosophical schools are six and they are usually arranged in three pairs: Sāṃkhya – Yoga, Nyāya –Vaiśeṣika, Purva Mīmāṃsā – Uttara Mīmāṃsā (Vedānta). The heterodox and non-Brahminical schools are Buddhism, Jainism and Cārvāka. Each of these schools is again arranged in various categories. For example, there are four major schools of Buddhist philosophy; Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra.

In general, one can broadly classify the Indian schools / traditions as Brahminical and non-Brahminical. Vedic / Brahminical and non-Vedic / non-Brahminical are mostly used interchangeably. Vedas and Upanishads are the foundations of Indian philosophical schools. That means, these texts are the roots of the Vedic philosophy. The Sāṃkhya –Yoga, Nyāya –Vaiśeṣika, Purva Mīmāṃsā – Uttara Mīmāṃsā (Vedānta) systems are also referred to as 'ancient systems.' The Cārvāka, Jaina and Bauddha Darsanas are on the other side. The Buddhist philosophy rose and developed mostly as a critique of or encounter to Vedic darsanas. Both the Buddhist and the Vedanta Darsanas are systems with global impact and interest.

The approach to philosophy from India has been synthetic. To put it in other

words, the Indian philosophical approach to reality has been both secular and spiritual. There are schools and theories which regard the independence of the physical world (physical theories) as much as schools and theories which focus on the independence of some substance other than the physical world (metaphysical theories). The schools which uphold the physical theories of the reality / world need not be always non-theistic, in Indian philosophy. We have schools such as Dvaita and the Vaiśeṣika which propagate the independence of the physical world and external reality and yet take God into account. In other words, the theory of reality in Indian philosophy can accommodate the real existence of this world and God simultaneously.

In the synthetic (secular and spiritual) approach to reality, the classical Dvaita and Advaita distinction is significant. Advaita philosophy propounds that the world is a projection of maya and soul and the God are one and the same. When the personal soul releases itself from ignorance, it merges with the universal consciousness / Brahman. Thus, in actual sense, there is no dual entities / identities / realities. There is only one reality which is God. However, according to Dvaita philosophy, the world is real. We, as human beings are real. The nature and the physical world are real. The God, the creator of this world, nature and ourselves is also real. This complexity is a small aspect of the synthetic approach to reality.

The theories of reality in Indian philosophy also are conceptualized on the basis of the number of realities, the number of substances which are considered real. In this regard, we have monism, dualism and pluralism. Monism affirms that reality is one. The dualistic and pluralistic theories of reality assert that there are 'two' and 'more than two' realities respectively. The Advaita philosophy does not make any claim about the constituent number of reality, but only negates the dualism. The Upanishads uphold the monistic concept of reality while the Vaiśeṣika upholds the pluralistic concept of reality.

The conclusion of the synthetic approach to reality in Indian philosophy is that thinkers in India rejected neither this world nor the 'other' world (if it exists). They neglected neither the theistic (spiritual) nor the non-theistic (secular and worldly) aspects of the reality. This synthetic approach has been a quintessential character of Indian philosophy. This synthetic orientation can be seen even in the thoughts of modern Indian philosophers such as Swami Vivekananda, Sreenarayana guru and others. This approach makes it difficult for anyone to make a simple and easy categorization of Indian philosophical schools.

# 1.1.1 Is there an 'Indian Philosophy'?

Is there something called 'Indian philosophy' at all? The question arises most of the time from the west. It arises from two 'western' concerns; one, philosophy, as a systematic inquiry, is exclusively a Western phenomenon or invention and hence absent within non-Western cultures such as Indian, Chinese, Islamic or Persian. Two, Indian thinkers are driven by religious / spiritual concerns and hence are not really philosophers.

Prima facie, this concern needs to be seen as a concern of the 'secular'/ 'irreligious' west about the 'spiritual'/ 'religious' non-west especially about India. This 'secular' concern of the west is not restricted to the 'Indian' philosophy alone. Rather, it has been the concern of

the west regarding everything which is not western. The Eastern philosophy in general, specifically, the Islamic, Chinese or Indian carries this 'secular' burden.

Now let us take the question "is there anything called Indian philosophy"? Here, philosophy would mean a world-view that provides a coherent explanation of everything including nature, human being, morality, polity, etc. In that sense, of course, there is an Indian philosophy as much as there is an African philosophy or Islamic philosophy or Western philosophy.

In the technical sense, philosophy is when human beings begin to ponder over the universe and critically reflect on the previously and traditionally accepted world-views. As we learned, western philosophy developed upon such contemplation and critical reflection. In that sense as well, we have Indian philosophical traditions which have made tremendous contributions to epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of religion and ethics. We will learn this in the following chapters.

If logic is taken as one of the founding aspects of philosophy, we have a very well-established analytical and logical tradition in Nyāya. If the criticism is that Indian philosophy was driven by many religious / spiritual figures, we can also see the same in the western philosophy. St. Anselm and St. Augustine who elaborated the proofs for the existence of God are still known to us as western 'philosophers.'

Indian philosophical schools of course use a different lens from that of the west while looking at the human being, the world and reality. Islamic and Chinese philosophical schools also use a lens which is different from each other. This is the case with African philosophical schools as well. Moreover, reducing

Indian philosophy to 'Hindu philosophy' or 'Hinduism' is incorrect as there was no monolithic 'Hindu' religion in India.

The difference in the philosophical lens used by each of the above schools is determined by the differences in the Indian / Islamic / western approach to human beings, morality, spirituality and the world. While there can be a common thread in each of these philosophical approaches, there also lies the difference especially regarding the cultural, religious, and moral outlook. In general, Indian philosophy takes a synthetic approach to not only philosophy but also to human being. This is clear even in the stressing of modern Indian philosophy on spiritual / religious and material aspects of the human being.

# 1.1.2 Major Themes in Indian Philosophy: An Overview

Indian, western and for that matter, any philosophy, is different in accordance with their differential treatment of human beings and human life, knowledge, world / reality, nature, spirituality, liberation - salvation, etc. Each philosophical school has an underlying theme on which the epistemology, metaphysics and ethics are built.

The human life rooted in misery or 'universal suffering' ('Dukkha') is one of the most significant themes in Indian philosophy. Orthodox or heterodox, almost all philosophical traditions in India have discussed much on the matter. The aim of life as making a pilgrimage from 'misery to happiness' has been a single thread which runs through all orthodox and heterodox traditions. This itself in one sense makes Indian philosophy about

inner knowledge / self-realization.

## 1.1.2.1 Aim and Meaning of Human Life

According to most of the Indian schools, aim and meaning of life is this journey from misery to happiness. The permanent liberation from misery is understood as identical to the attainment of permanent happiness. Moreover, the concepts such as karma and rebirth / immortality of the soul are discussed in Indian philosophy dwelling on the inherent misery of human life. It is also true that the immortality of the soul has been a common theme to both Western Christianity and Indian philosophy. With this fact, whether religion determines philosophy or philosophy determines religion exclusively is a debatable topic.

Regarding the relation between human beings and nature, the major trend in western philosophy has been to conceptualize the universe and all the resources in it for the sake of human being. The universe is considered to be for the purpose, use and pleasure of human beings. Utilitarianism – a theory that upholds that actions which foster maximum happiness or pleasure to the maximum number of human beings are right– has been produced by western philosophy and is one of the most followed and applied theories of morality across the globe.

In other words, according to the modern western philosophy, success and progress of humanity are considered in accordance with our capacity to possess or take control of nature. Much of what we call the 'scientific progress' is about human beings taking more control of the nature. Contrary to that, or, in a very different sense, ancient Indian philosophy identified human beings with nature. It strictly views some divine element in nature. The doctrine that world is either identical with God or is an expression of His nature has been fundamental in Indian philosophy.

It is even true to say that foundationally Indian philosophy was divided into Dvaita and Advaita based on the conceptualization of the relation between Atman / individual self and Brahman / universal self. Atman is the essence of an individual and Brahman is the unchanging, universal spirit or consciousness (universal self) underlying all things. The dichotomous schools propounding whether the world is illusory or real is founded on the principle of the relationship between Atman and Brahman, the individual self and the universal self / nature / universe.

## 1.1.2.2 Epistemology in Indian Tradition

As we learned already, epistemology is the theory which discusses the nature, method, validity and scope of knowledge. While epistemology is fundamental to both Indian and western philosophy, the approach from both sides to the knowledge has been different. Western philosophy takes an instrumentalist and externalist approach to knowing nature / universe while Indian philosophy takes a spiritualist or divine approach. The divine touch on the universe underlying the Indian philosophical schools can be understood in the background of the above discussion.

The difference between the western, non-divine approach to nature / universe and the Indian divine approach to the same is clear in their views on knowledge.

While knowledge leads to power / conquest in the western tradition, it leads to salvation in the Indian tradition. The Indian tradition stresses on ignorance or avidya, which leads to slavery. Ignorance is a hindrance to the spiritual goal in the Indian tradition while it is not so definitely in the west. This is not to deny that there are reputed philosophers in the west like Socrates who propagated the spiritual significance of knowing: "know thyself" or "I know only one thing that I know nothing."

Indian philosophy discusses two levels of knowledge, unlike the west; Para vidya (higher knowledge) and Apara vidya (lower knowledge). It also prioritizes the former as the only true knowledge. This is a clear indication towards the spiritual dimension of knowledge in India.

That the underbelly of knowledge in Indian tradition is spiritual (that there is an orientation towards the inner self) does not mean that the 'present' world or life is insignificant. Neither does it mean that Indian philosophy is not bothered about the typical ways of knowledge. In contrast, the questions such as "what is knowledge?", "what are its sources?", "how do we fall into error?" all are deeply engaged within Indian philosophy. The competing theories Indian philosophers developed in their attempts to answer the above question, gave rise to pramanavada. Prāmāṇya / pramana (means of knowledge), pratyakṣa (perception), anumana (inference), upamana (comparison), śabda (testimony) and khyātivāda (theory of error) are some important terms in Indian epistemology.

## 1.1.2.3 Logic and Reasoning

Logic is the science of reasoning and argument. The rich heritage of logic especially in Nyāya philosophy tells us about India's glorious past of nurturing difference, dissent and disagreement. Sophisticated and sharpened arguments and counter arguments were advanced and nurtured by defenders and opponents of each thesis. Scholars divide the history of Indian logic roughly into three periods or phases: 1) the ancient period (650 BCE –100 CE). This age was dominated by the Nyāyasūtra and its commentaries; 2) the medieval period (up to 1200 CE) which was dominated by the Buddhist logicians like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti; 3) the modern period (from 900 CE) which was dominated by Gaṅgeśa and the school of Navya-Nyāya ('New Logic').

Although the Upanishads uphold the spiritual view of knowledge, the later systems which are the commentaries to Upanishads consider sensory perception (pratyaksa) and inference (upamana) as means of knowledge (pramana). In addition to that, erroneous knowledge (akhyati) has been also seriously taken up by Indian philosophers. The point is that the spiritual dimension of knowledge here does not lead to the rejection of the worldly dimension of knowledge.

## 1.1.2.4 Ethics

There is no distinct field of value / ethics within Indian philosophy. It is pramāṇavāda that corresponds roughly to and discusses epistemology and logic. Here, we can see an integrated and holistic approach. We can see that debates in classical Indian epistemology and metaphysics include and absorb many significant normative presuppositions on what is right and what is wrong. It is even true to say that Indian philosophy in general is based on a value system.

The classical Hindu ethics upholds Purusharthas or ends of human life. They

are four classes of values in their most common hierarchical ordering; Artha, Kāma, Dharma and Moksha. Artha is wealth and also includes social status and political power. Kāma is sensual / bodily desire or pleasure, particularly as related to sexual and aesthetic experience and dharma is the code or system of obligations and prohibitions preserved in the Hindu legal and religious texts. It is translated as 'righteousness.' Moksha is liberation. Artha is the lowest value / end and dharma is the highest value. Dharma is the ultimate end of Hindu as well Buddhist ethics. A state of complete liberation / salvation from the bondage of birth and inherent sufferings is Moksha.

### 1.1.2.5 Moksha and Happiness

Most of the time, liberation is used in Indian philosophy in terms of the liberation of the individual self from misery and sufferings. Instead of liberation, the western philosophy uses 'emancipation' of the human kind. One can see that the approach from both Indian and western philosophy towards liberation is fundamentally different. Most of the time, Indian tradition used the concept of liberation / salvation of the self (from misery) while the western tradition, especially the modern philosophical tradition, used the concept of emancipation. While the liberation / salvation has orientation to the inner self / spiritual side, the western concept of emancipation has orientation towards the material and worldly aspect.

Indian philosophy has also a differential view on happiness and what constitutes happiness. This is the case with both the orthodox and heterodox schools. Most of the orthodox Indian philosophical schools find happiness in Mukti / Moksha (salvation). However, there are differences

even within the heterodox systems such as Cārvāka and Buddhism. While the Cārvāka upholds that happiness is physical / sensual pleasure, Buddhism affirms that happiness is the elimination of misery / nirvana.

# 1.1.3 Indian Philosophy and Pluralism

Indian philosophy gave birth to different and contrary view points or schools of thought. While the relation between Atman / self and its merger with Brahman / Universal self was the focal point of the Dvaita-Advaita schools, the very concept of self was rejected in Buddhism. Regarding the self, Indian philosophy nourished theories such as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika dualism, Sāṃkhya - Yoga dualism, Dvaita Vedānta's dualism, Advaita Vedānta's non-dualism along with the Buddhist 'no-self' theory. Various theories of reality developed as isms engaged with each other and debated. Jainism, one of the major heterodox schools, advocated a distinctive philosophy of non-absolutism or many-sidedness (anekāntavāda). Anekāntavāda fundamentally promulgated that any entity is at once enduring or lasting and undergoing or experiencing change. Change is constant and inevitable. They are non-absolutists because they hold that what we perceive are some sides or aspects of reality and that all entities have three aspects: substance (dravya), quality (guna), and mode (paryaya).

Schools such as Vedanta believed and propagated that a correct understanding of the nature of the self was a necessary and sufficient condition for human beings to attain liberation. Liberation / Moksha, as we earlier said, existed as a single common thread which runs through all orthodox

and heterodox traditions. However, there also differences were accepted and celebrated. Some schools upheld the concept of an enduring substantial self (ātmavādins) while others denied the existence of such a self and upheld a 'modal' view of reality (anātmavādins). The orthodox Indian philosophers and the Jainas upheld and propagated the former view with disagreement on the nature and number of such selves. At the same time, predominantly, most Indian Buddhist philosophers such as Theravādins, the Vaibhāṣikas, the Sautrāntikas, the Yogācārins and the Svātantrika - Mādhyamikas upheld the latter view.

Indian philosophy nurtured realists and skeptics. Advaita Vedanta affirmed the authority of the Vedas and founded itself on various concepts of deities, hymns, immortality of the soul, Karma, incarnation, Moksha and rituals (all of which developed and followed as Hinduism). At the same time, Cārvākas rejected almost everything which was upheld by the Vedantins. It asserted that Vedic rituals could not deliver Moksha and that the world was not an illusion but real.

# Recap

- 'Darśana' and 'tattva' are the two terms used to refer to philosophy in Indian context

- 'Darśana' means 'view,' 'standpoint,' or 'system'

- A philosophical school is a concept through which we view or see the world

- To 'see' or 'view' in the Indian philosophical sense means to 'realize'

- The ultimate purpose of Indian philosophy is self-realization

- There are mainly two streams of Indian philosophical schools; Orthodox (āstika) and Heterodox (nāstika)

- The āstika – nāstika distinction is based on the acceptance or rejection of the authority of the Vedas

- The Sāṃkhya –Yoga, Nyāya –Vaiśeṣika, Purva Mīmāṃsā – Uttara Mīmāṃsā (Vedānta) systems are also referred to as 'ancient systems'

- The Cārvāka, Jaina and Bauddha Darsanas are the heterodox and non-Brahminical schools

- Advaita philosophy propounds that the world is an illusion / maya and soul and the God are one and the same

# Objective Questions

1. What is the underlying theme in Indian philosophy?

2. On what basis was Indian philosophy divided into Dvaita and Advaita?

3. The aim of life is making a pilgrimage. From which condition to which condition?

4. Indian tradition stresses on ignorance or avidya which is considered slavery. True or false?

5. What are the two levels of knowledge in Indian tradition?

6. What are the three phases / periods of Indian logic?

7. Which is the famous Indian philosophical school for logic?

8. Are Hindu ethics / values pluralist or monolithic?

9. What are the four classes of values in their preferred order?

10. Buddhism affirms that happiness is the elimination of misery. True or false?

11. What is the meaning of Anekāntavāda?

12. What are the two streams / views regarding the self in Indian philosophy?

# Answers

1. Universal suffering ('Dtukha').

2. On the basis of relation between Atman / individual self and Brahman/ universal self.

3. Misery to happiness

4. True

5. Para vidya (higher knowledge) and Apara vidya (lower knowledge)t

6. 1) the ancient period (650 BCE –100 CE), 2) the medieval period (up to 1200 CE), 3) the modern period (from 900 CE)

7. Nyāya

8. Pluralist

9. Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksha

10. True

11. Many sidedness of reality

12. Atmavādins (those who accept an enduring self) and Anātmavādins (those who deny the self)

# Assignments

1. Elaborate on the Dvaita and Advaita schools.

2. Explain the spiritual pluralism in Indian philosophy.

# Suggested Readings

1. Perrett, W. Roy. (2016). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Cambridge Introduction to Philosophy series, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

3. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom*. Routledge.

# 2 UNIT

# The Vedas and the Upanishads: A Brief Account

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ get a general account and classification of the Vedas

♦ get an exposure to the Samhitas, Brahmanas and Aranyakas

♦ get a general introduction to the Upanishads

♦ understand the relation between Indian philosophy and the Vedas

## Prerequisites

There are scriptures in every culture or religion. People believe in and propagate them. Every culture / religion has also certain rituals, customs and practices. The scriptures play a crucial role in the lives of the people. The scriptures in Hinduism are the sources of Indian philosophy. They are the earliest literature and original scriptures of Hindu teachings. Even in the present day, we can see the role of these scriptures in different rituals, ceremonies and duties of the followers of Hinduism. These scriptures are the fundamental source of many other texts and philosophical schools. It is undeniable that what we today call 'Indian' culture was mostly built on the principles discussed in these scriptures. The four significant texts according to Hinduism are the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, which gave the foundation to many philosophical schools in India. The texts contain spirituality, philosophy and mythology. They also justify the caste system which places human beings in a hierarchical order. In particular, the Upanishads play a key role in developing different philosophical theories of self, consciousness, knowledge, ignorance, God, liberation, moral duties and so forth in Indian philosophy.

## Key themes

Vedas, Upanishads, Absolute Reality, Mokṣha

## Discussion

To understand the nature of philosophical enquiry in India, it is essential to understand the main streams in Indian Philosophy. There are two main streams in Indian philosophy, namely, schools that depend on the authority of the Vedas and the schools that depend on the denial of the authority of the Vedas. Indian philosophy has six schools which accept the authority of the Vedas: Samkya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa (Purva Mimamsa), and Vedanta (Uttara Mimamsa). These schools, generally, are called Orthodox schools. Another name for these six philosophical schools is Shad-darshanas. There are three schools which predominantly deny the authority of the Vedas: Cārvāka, Jainism, and Buddhism. These schools are called heterodox schools.

It is important to have a brief knowledge about the Vedas and their core philosophy before dealing with the orthodox and heterodox schools. Veda derives from Sanskrit term "Vid" which means knowledge. The Vedas, generally considered, are the sacred books of Hinduism. The root meaning of the term Veda derives from the Sanskrit term "Vid" which means knowledge. The Vedas are considered the source of knowledge. It is difficult to say when the Vedas were composed. However, there are some historians who assume the timeline of the Vedas. According to Surendranath Dasgupta, Max Muller considered the date to be 1200 BCE. Bal Gangadhar Tilak argued the date to be 4000 BCE.

However, none of the above versions can be proved to be true and absolute. The specific reason, as Dasgupta said, is that ancient Hindus rarely kept the records of their historical achievements in literary, political or religious fields. Another reason is said to be that Hindus believe that the Vedas were not composed by men, rather they are taught by God to the sages or they were themselves revealed to the sages. This is why the Vedas are considered as having no beginning in time. They are apauruṣeyas (impersonal). From a time of unknown antiquity, the Vedas were handed down from mouth to mouth (which is called Śruti) with minute or no additions at all, according to Hindu faith.

In the Vedic period, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Adhiti, Indra, Prajapati and Vishvakarma were generally considered as the gods. We can assume that in the Vedic epoch people at times gave preference to polytheism (a belief that accepts the existence of many Gods) and sometimes gave preference to Monotheism (a belief that accepts the existence of only one supreme God). The Vedas, as the main sources of Indian philosophy, uphold and celebrate contradictory and competing streams of thought regarding the number of Gods.

The Vedas have played a significant role in the form of obligatory duties of the Hindus on different occasions, namely, birth, marriage, death and so on. To put it in other words, Vedic literature discusses not only the world and its order but also the obligatory duties of an individual who believes and follows Hinduism.

# 1.2.1 Classification of the Vedas

The Veda is not name of a particular book but of the literature of a particular era extending over a long period of time. This literature was roughly classified into four different parts:

♦ Samhitas

♦ Brahmanas

♦ Aranyakas

♦ Upanishads

The first two parts are considered as the Karma-Kanda part of the Vedas since these parts deal with rituals and duties which are supposed to be followed by Hindus. The latter two are considered as the Gyan-Kanda as these texts deal with knowledge regarding self and the ultimate reality. In other words, they deal with Hindu theology and philosophy. The following is a brief discussion about them.

### Samhitas

Samhitas are collections of verses (hymns or mantras). These verses are mainly concerned with nature and the gods. They are classified into four:

♦ Rig-Veda

♦ Sama-Veda

♦ Yajur-Veda

♦ Atharva-Veda

Of these, the Rig-Veda is considered the earliest. It has a huge collection of hymns, poems and ślokas. The hymns are mainly composed for praising various deities. Sama-Veda has no independent value as it consists of stanzas which are taken from the Rig-Veda. It deals with fixed melodies; therefore, it is called the book of chants. Yajur-Veda deals with the various religious sacrifices that are conducted in rituals of yajñas. Therefore, it is called the Veda of Yajus (Sacrificial prayers). Finally, the Atharva-Veda is, mainly "a book of spells and incantations appealing to the demon world, and teems with notions about witchcraft current among the lower grades of the population, and derived from an immemorial antiquity." It deals with topics such as mental and physical health of a human individual and discusses matters such as how to vanquish or win over the enemy or ward off illnesses. Based on the nature of Rig-Veda and Atharva-Veda, they are considered the most important of the four Vedas.

### Brahmanas

We may comprehend Brahmanas as the further development of the Samhitas. Brahmanas are theological texts mainly written in prose form. Max Muller says that Brahmanas meant 'originally the sayings of Brahmins.' We can understand the term Brahmins in a general sense of priest or a more specific sense of Brahmin-Priest. It is generally believed that the idea of caste developed in this age. Each Veda has more than a few Brahmanas attached to it.

Brahmanas, generally, explain the importance of the rituals and duties, which are done by priests, to the people who are not familiar with them. It is said that Brahmanas reflect the spirit of the age which is focused on sacrifice, explaining its ceremonies, discussing its values and speculating on its origin and significance. These works are about dogmatic assertions, fanciful speculations and unbounded imagination in the field of sacrificial details. Conducting yajñas and sacrificing animals was part of the rituals.

It is generally believed that the period of Brahmanas is not later than 500 B.C.

### Aranyakas

Aranyakas (forest texts) are the further development of Brahmanas. These are theological texts mainly focused on spiritual development of an individual. These works are probably composed by hermits who lived in the forests or, composed for old people who had retired into the forests. These texts are seen as a shift from doing conventional rituals to spiritual and philosophical interpretations of the rituals. It is belived that since it is not possible to perform the elaborate sacrifices which require a large number of articles and accessories, the Aryanyakas are meant to help as objects of meditation for sages who live in forests and deal with mysticism and symbolism. Put it simply, the Aranyakas make an individual meditate on subtle objects, not on gross objects. An intuitive and exploratory thinking seems to have developed. The Aranyakas paved the way to the development of the Upanishads.

### Upanishads (End of the Vedas)

The Upanishads form the concluding segments of the Vedas. Therefore, the Upanishads are called the "Vedanta'" (Veda + Anta) or the end of the Veda. To put it simply, it contains the essence of Vedic teachings. Etymological meaning of the term Upanishad (Upa + ni-shad) is to sit near the teacher who gives knowledge on various aspects.

Most of the Upanishads are in the form of dialogue between teacher and student. The timeline of composing the Upanishads is not very clear. However, the assumed time frame is between 700 B.C and 400 B.C. Both the Upanishads and the Aranyakas are the concluding segments of the Vedas. Just like the Aranyakas which focused on spiritual enlightenment while meditating on mysticism and symbolism, the Upanishads too, predominantly and in a more advanced way, discuss the various philosophical problems such as true nature of world, Karma (actions), Ātman (self), Gyan (knowledge), Brahman (God) and so on. It may be the reason that both the Aranyakas and the Upanishads are considered as Gyan-Kandas. It is believed that there are more than 200 hundred Upanishads. However, 108 Upanishads are elaborately discussed in the literature. The Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya, Aitareya, Kauṣītaki, Taittirīya, Mundaka, Prasna and Katha Upanishads are some well-known examples. We can also find various commentaries on Upanishads like Adi Sankaracharya's commentary on Brihadaranyaka and Katha.

We have seen that the Upanishads deal with various philosophical problems such as Self, God, Karma and Moksha and so on. In the following sections we shall discuss some of the most important philosophical concepts which have been influencing the scholars till the date.

## 1.2.2 Atman (Soul or Self)

The notion of Ātman is one of the essential topics in many of the Upanishads. The term Ātman is explained in the Upanishads as the 'ultimate essence of the Universe' and 'vital breath in human beings.' It is imperishable, neither born nor mortal. The characteristics of the Ātman are universal, immanent, and transcendent (beyond time and space). The self has the nature of consciousness by which it can be conscious of objects and experiences. It is always the same whereas the individual self (ego) is limited by space and time, birth and death. It is the highest thought and nearest to the absolute thought.

However, it is not by itself absolute. It is a combination of real and unreal. Upanishads argue that it is a product of Ignorance (Avidya). However, its core is the light of the Absolute. The Upanishads (Mandukya Upanishad) classified Ātman into four states. The four states of self-transcendence described in the Upanishad are as follows:

♦ Jagrat – the waking state

♦ Svapna – the dreaming state

♦ Sushupti – the sleeping state

♦ Turiya – the transcendent spiritual state.

The Self in the waking state delights in gross objects. It has the consciousness of the physical world and is called "Visva." In the dreaming state, the self delights in subtle objects. It has consciousness of the internal world and fabricates its own non-existent objects (imaginary objects). It is called Taijasa. In the deep sleeping state, neither gross objects nor subtle objects are experienced. The subject - object duality is transcended. In this state, the self is called Prajña. However, ignorance and unconsciousness still remain in this state. Therefore, there is a necessity of a fourth state where the shadow of the supreme bliss becomes pure bliss. In the Turiya state, an individual realizes the true nature of self which is nothing but pure, conscious, existing being. It shines in its own light. It can be realized by direct and intuitive experience. The bliss in this state is "Amatra" (measureless). However, the realization of this state cannot be fully describable because descriptions are possible only in an empirical state. As we said earlier, the self-realization or spiritual realization is one of the main purposes or end points of the Indian philosophy.

In Katha Upanishad, we see Ātman as Purusha. The hierarchical order was explained in the Katha Upanishad. The order is as follows:

♦ Senses are higher than objects

♦ The Mind (Manas) is higher than Senses

♦ The Intellect (Buddhi) is higher than Mind

♦ The Subtle reason (Mahat) is higher than the Intellect

♦ The Unmanifest (Avyakta) is higher than the Mahat

♦ Purusha (Ātman) is higher than Avyakta

There is no being higher than the Purusha (an ultimate end). However, whether the Ātman is identical with Brahman or it is merely a part of Brahman is a disputed issue. This dispute has given birth to the Dvaita-Advaita philosophical streams. Just like the notion of self, the notion of Brahman is also one of the most significant notions that is discussed adequately in the Upanishads. In the following section, we shall see the Upanishadic explanation of Brahman.

# 1.2.3 Brahman (Absolute Reality)

In the Upanishads, Brahman is considered as the ultimate reality or absolute reality. We cannot see the notion of different gods in the Upanishadic period. Brahman is considered as the supreme reality. The word Brahman is derived from the root Bṛh which means to grow or to evolve. The entire world evolves from it, supported and continued by it, and returns into it. In Chandogya Upanishad, this

process is named as Tajjalan. In Taittirīya Upanishad, the process of evolution of the world is explained in depth. The order of the elements in the evolution process is as follows:

♦ From Brahman Ether arises

♦ From Ether Air arises

♦ From Air Fire arises

♦ From Fire Water arises

♦ From Water Earth Arises

More importantly, the real theory of evolution was given in the doctrine of the five Koshas (sheaths) in the Taittirīya Upanishad. The five Koshas are as follows:

♦ Annamaya kosha (Physical Plane)

♦ Pranamaya kosha (Biological Plane)

♦ Manomaya kosha (Psychological Plane)

♦ Vijnanamaya kosha (Metaphysical Plane)

♦ Anandamaya kosha (Mystic Plane)

The Annamaya kosha is the lowest plane. It is the first state of the evolution process. This is a plane of inorganic matter. Its purpose is fulfilled when it transforms into life. The second state of evolution is the biological plane. Vegetable life evolves first. Its purpose fulfills when it transcends to the plane of animal life. In the psychological plane, mind and perceptual consciousness evolve. The state is shared with lower animals and some human beings. The Vijnanamaya kosha is the plane of self-consciousness where arts, sciences, morals and so forth are possible. Finally, Anandamaya kosha is the highest plane of the evolution process. In this plane, the knower, the known, and knowledge are fused into the transcendental unity (non-dual). Transcendental bliss is possible in this plane.

# 1.2.4 Moksha (Liberation)

Moksha is an important concept in the Upanishads. It is considered as the supreme aim of human life. It is nothing but realizing the true nature of self where one can realize that the self is nothing but Brahman. This is the reconciliation of the individual self with the universal self. The true sense of realization here means that a person has to be free from name and form. However, we should not misunderstand that it is about merely leaving the physical body (death). An example may help us understand better: a flowing river which has a certain name (for example Ganges) disappears in the ocean once it reaches there. The river lost its name and form. Just like that a liberated person sees no differences between him / her and the Brahman. The realized person does not see a difference between his individual self and the universal, transcended self.

# Recap

- The Vedas and the Upanishads are the source of knowledge

- Vedas are classified into four parts: Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads

- Samhitas are further classified into four, namely, Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharva-Veda

- Samhitas and Brahmans are considered as Karma-kanda whereas Aranyakas and Upanishads are considered as Gyan-kanda

- Karma-kanda deals with rituals and sacrifices whereas Gyan-kanda deals with knowledge and the ultimate reality

- Upanishads are the concluding segments of the four Vedas

- Upanishads predominantly deal with philosophical concepts such as self, consciousness, ignorance, knowledge, liberation, and Brahman (ultimate reality)

- Upanishads teach that the Self is neither born nor dead. It is imperishable

- The self has four states, namely, waking state, dreaming state, sleeping state, and the transcendent spiritual state

- Brahman is the ultimate reality and from it evolution happens

- Moksha is nothing but a realization of the true nature of self

# Objective Questions

1. What is the meaning of the term Veda?

2. Who is the author of Vedas?

3. How many parts are the Vedas classified into?

4. Samhitas and Brahmanas are considered as karma kanda. True or false?

5. What are the concluding portions of the Vedas?

6. How many states of self do we have, according to the Upanishads?

7. What is the Turiya state of self?

8. What is the root cause of the evolution process, according to the Upanishads?

9. How is Moksha defined in the Upanishads?

## Answers

1. Knowledge

2. No author (apauruṣeyas)

3. Four parts, namely, Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads

4. True

5. Upanishads

6. Four states, namely, waking state, dreaming state, sleeping state, and transcendent spiritual state

7. Pure conscious state

8. Brahman (the ultimate reality)

9. 9) Realization of the true nature of self which is nothing but the identification with Brahman

## Assignments

1. Explain the importance of the Upanishads in Indian philosophy

2. Comment on the concept of Moksha

## Suggested Readings

1. Dasgupta, Surendranath. (1922). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom*, UK: Routledge.

3. Sitarama Sastri, S. (2020). *Katha Upanishad with Shankara's Commentary*, Wisdom Library.

4. https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/katha-upanishad-shankara-bhashya

# 3
# UNIT

# Polytheism Monotheism Henotheism and Monism

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be:

♦ able to get general idea about relation between religion and philosophy in India

♦ exposed to various types of theological approaches

♦ able to know the significance of gods and goddesses in Indian context

♦ able to understand spiritual pluralism in India

## Prerequisites

There are various streams of views regarding God's existence and belief in God across the globe. There are people who believe in God while there are people who do not believe in God. There are people who believe in a single, Supreme being who is Omniscient and Omni present. There are also people who believe in many Gods and goddesses with equal status. There are also people who are not bothered about God's existence or non-existence. There are people who say that, as human beings, we are not able to grasp the nature of God. Indian tradition is that of spiritual pluralism. There are people who view God in nature and its resources. There are people who worship the nature including sun, moon, water and mountains. Indian tradition has accommodated and tolerated all kinds of contradictory views about Gods. India at any point in time did not hold or preach for a monolithic view of God. This unit will elaborate on the Indian pluralistic accounts of God.

## Key themes

Religion and philosophy, Theism, Gods and goddesses, Spiritual liberalism

## Discussion

Theism, atheism, polytheism and monotheism are concepts related to the belief in God or a divine being and thus all are theories in theology. Theism suggests the belief in God while atheism suggests disbelief in any God. Polytheism means belief in many Gods and monotheism means belief in one supreme God.

Another word which comes in this group is agnosticism - belief that nothing is known or can be known about the existence and nature of God. While a theist affirms his belief that a God exists, an atheist negates or rejects the existence of any God with all surety.

In contrast to both theism and atheism comes agnosticism. An agnostic is a person who neither believes nor disbelieves with surety in God or religious doctrines; rather says that it is impossible to know whether any God exists or not. It is impossible for us to know God's nature or existence. In short, agnosticism is about one's belief in the impossibility of human's knowledge about God, in the impossibility of any access to the existence or non-existence of God.

Basically, one should take all the concepts as 'isms' or doctrines. If monotheism is an 'ism' about 'one God' and polytheism is an 'ism' about 'many Gods;' atheism is an 'ism' about 'no God.' There are schools, streams and scholars in Indian philosophy who propagate and uphold almost all of the above "isms" from polytheism to monotheism to henotheism

to monism.

## 1.3.1 Monotheism

Before discussing polytheism in Indian philosophy, one needs to be familiar with monotheism from a larger perspective. Monotheism has been predominantly the theology of Semitic religions that originated outside the Indian sub-continent. The main Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all of which propagate monotheism. They propagate that there is only one eternal, Supreme God. Judaism propagates that one Supreme God revealed his will in the Torah to the Israelites and Christianity propagates in its holy book, the Bible, the concept of the Holy trinity of the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. According to Christianity, one God exists in three co-equal and co-eternal divine forms. Similarly, Islam, the last Semitic religion, propagates that God is one, Allah, the Omnipresent. Its holy book revealed to the Prophet Muhammed, Qur'an, spreads the monotheistic message to the world. The term Semitic religions is commonly used to refer to the Abrahamic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all of which propagate monotheism.

## 1.3.2 Polytheism

As we said earlier, polytheism suggests the existence of many gods. Polytheism is one of the significant features of Indian religious tradition. There are scholars who

attribute both polytheism and henotheism to the Vedic theology. Some scholars say that Vedic theology is henotheistic while others say that it is polytheistic. Henotheism is the worship of a single, supreme God or divine being but without denying the possible existence of other Gods or deities. Scholars like Max Müller (1823–1900), the German philologist and orientalist, describes the theology of Vedic religion and philosophy by the term Henotheism.

In Hindu religious texts, especially the Vedas, there are many Gods and goddesses (devas and devīs) who represent and personify various cosmic powers like wind, fire, sun, moon, darkness, dawn, earth and so on. Surya namaskar (sun worship) is still a daily ritual in many parts of India. The deities in various names as Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Adhiti, Indra, Prajapati and Vishvakarma were generally considered as gods in different times of the Vedic period.

Vedic deities were worshiped and venerated through hymns, chants and sacrificial rituals (yajña). The Vedas are filled with myths and stories of sacrificial offerings of animals for pleasing the gods and goddesses.

In *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom*, Bina Gupta says that in Greek polytheism, gods are fully personalized entities with precise and defined function, symbolism, powers and ranking. The gods are divided into and placed in watertight compartments. However, according to him, in the Indian polytheism, Gods are not fully personalized entities and do not have an 'organized system of gods with a clear ranking.'

Rama, Krishna, Gauri, Ganapati, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Durga, Lakshmi, Hanuman, Rati, Kali, Saraswati, Indra, Agni, Parvati, Varuna, Vayu, Radha, Sita, Surya, Rudra, Shakti, all are Hindu deities who are associated with various natural powers and are worshipped. Some believe that there is an hierarchical order/rank to the deities while some take all of them in their assigned roles. The wide variety of gods and goddesses is manifested in the elephant faced Gods (Ganesha), monkey faced Gods (Hanuman) and many others. All are considered holy and worshipped in Hinduism.

While Gods and Goddesses were believed and worshipped in Hinduism, there are also opposite views about them. For example, the founder of Arya Samaj and Indian philosopher Swami Danayananda Saraswati revolutionised the Indian religion of Hinduism. He vehemently rejected the idolatry and stated that it was never part of the Vedas. He opposed the worship of idols of gods and goddesses.

In a different line, Swami Vivekananda argued strongly that Hindu religion means nothing but inner / spiritual realization. He said: 'Believe in the doctrine, and you are safe' can never be taught to us, for we do not believe in that; you are what you make yourselves…religion is to be realised, not only heard; it is not in learning some doctrine like a parrot.''

Swami Vivekananda also stated that there was no polytheism in India. According to him, the idol worship prevalent in India's temples should not be taken seriously and literally. All religions from the lowest levels to the highest levels of absolutism are various attempts made by human souls to grasp, absorb and realize the infinite.

According to Max Muller, Rigveda mentions and celebrates many deities,

but praises them all as the 'one ultimate, supreme God' or as 'one supreme Goddess.' This is an assertion of the essence of the deities as unitary (ekam) and that of the celebration of the pluralistic manifestations of the same divine concept / God.

The Hindu believers who are steeped in the texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita believe that Brahman (the Universal soul or ultimate reality underlying all phenomena) encompasses the cosmos and is in unity with atman (the individual soul, or to say, the Universal soul present in individuals) would consider themselves as monotheists. At the same time, the 'common man,' who are away from the above texts make multiple deities and worship them as Gods. All these are equally valid ways of being a Hindu. This is what is called spiritual pluralism in Indian philosophy.

In short, the name of Hinduism was referred to the indigenous religion of India. Originally, scholars say, Hindu simply meant the people beyond the river Sindhu, or Indus. Hinduism is a phrase foreigners used to refer to the faith of those who are beyond the river Sindhu. In other words, it is not a phrase which the believers and followers invented for themselves or identified with. It thus has not been ever monolithic.

Hinduism accepts and embraces a heterogenous range of doctrines, beliefs, practices and rituals, ranging from monotheism to henotheism, from monism to dualism and pluralism, from Dvaita to Advaita, from polytheism to pantheism, from skepticism to agnosticism and from faith in reincarnation of souls to the belief in an hierarchically structured casteism. None of these attributes plays the role of an obligatory doctrine in Hinduism. Rather, all of them are considered to be various socio religious view points within

the Hindu religious thought.

# 1.3.3 Pantheism: Everything is God

Pantheism means everything is God. Its motto is 'God is all' or 'all is God.' Everything including event, mind and mental functions, all are God. It goes beyond the notion that God is present in all existence.

We have already seen that Indian philosophy and Vedic theology / literature have had mutual give and take. The nature and super-nature, the physical and metaphysical are mostly taken as antagonistic concepts in the dominant trends in western philosophy. However, that is not the case in the Indian philosophy. We can see a merger of the nature and super-nature and an integration of the physical and metaphysical aspects of human beings.

As pantheism regards god and world as necessarily co-existing and immanently present in each and everything that makes up the world, one can say that the God in pantheism is immanent. At the same time, it is also transcendent. Pantheistic philosophy can be grasped in the Western philosophy as well, especially in Spinoza's writings.

One of the main differences between the religious and scientific approach to nature is that religions take nature as mysterious and mystifying, because it is a creature of God. Nature always has a religious / divine touch in the religions.

Science, instead, takes nature not as mysterious, but tries to know and explain it. In a scientific reading, human beings sing chants and recite hymns to nature as they take it to be a mysterious, divine entity. Humans express awe and fear about

the cosmic phenomena and events. Out of fear, they pray for blessings from nature and worship it.

While it cannot be generalized, the western approach to nature has been predominantly different. The western philosophy, and specifically modern science, considers nature as an object which needs to be studied, explained and analysed. The urge in the western philosophical and scientific traditions to know, study, explain and analyse nature is more or less different from or opposed to the urge in the Indian philosophical/ spiritual traditions to realize and absorb nature. The latter approach most of the time ended up in worshipping the mysteries of nature.

Nature is referred to and considered as 'mother' or 'holy' in some Indian philosophical texts. Nature and its powers such as the sun, the moon, air, mountains, trees and rivers are all considered holy and worshipped. While the dominant western view is to consider various powers of nature as objects of resources (objects of utility for human beings), everything in nature is considered to represent some super natural/divine power deserving recognition and worship. In the Vedic polytheism, all natural occurrences were attributed to supernatural causes.

## 1.3.4 Monism

Monism is, strictly speaking, a metaphysical theory of reality. It is a position about reality. However, as we know, in Indian philosophy the theories of reality and God are intertwined. That is explicit in Dvaita-Advaita dichotomy.

Monotheism gave away to monism in Vedic texts and literature and Indian philosophy as the seers were dissatisfied with the anthropomorphic or personalistic concepts of the gods. In monotheism, many gods are reduced to one God. And, in monism the whole existence and reality are reduced to one fundamental absolute reality. There are no personalistic terms. It is just called That (tat). The absolutist monism came into existence surpassing the personal theism (monotheism). It is a call to look within oneself. The truth (reality) lies within oneself.

S. Radhakrishnan says that the Vedic hymns tell us about the transition from the naturalistic polytheism through henotheism to a spiritualistic monism. This is a developmental transition for him. There are hymns are praises to one supreme being – ekam sat, the brahman in order to elicit benefits and prevent natural calamities.

## Recap

♦ Polytheism means belief in many Gods and monotheism means belief in one supreme God

♦ India has both theistic and atheistic tradition

♦ An agnostic is a person who neither believes nor disbelieves with surety in God or religious doctrines

- *Agnosticism* is about one's the belief in the impossibility of human's knowledge about God or anything beyond the phenomena of their experiences

- The main Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all of which propagate monotheism

- Max Muller describes the theology of Vedic religion and philosophy as Henotheism

- Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Adhiti, Indra, Prajapati and Vishwakarma are the Gods in different periods of Vedic period

- It is not true to say that monotheism originates from outside India

## Objective Questions

1. How were the Vedic deities worshiped and venerated?

2. What are the Vedas filled with?

3. Did polytheism also exist in the ancient Greek period?

4. Everything including event, mind and mental functions are all God. What is this view called?

5. Indian tradition has accommodated all sorts of contradictory views on Gods. What is this view called?

6. The doctrine that Brahman and Atman are identical is named as?

7. Indian philosophy merges the nature and supernature and makes an integration of the physical and metaphysical aspects of human beings most of the time.  Is this true or false?

8. How does pantheism regard God and the world ?

9. What does monism say about reality?

10. What is agnosticism?

# Answers

1. Through hymns, chants and sacrificial rituals

2. Myths and stories of sacrificial offerings of animals for pleasing the gods and goddesses.

3. Yes

4. Pantheism

5. Spiritual pluralism

6. Advaita (non-dualism)

7. True

8. One

9. There is a single reality

10. One's belief in the impossibility of human's knowledge about the God

# Assignments

1. What is the difference between monism and monotheism?

2. Write an essay about pantheism.

# Suggested Readings

1. Perrett, W. Roy. (2016). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Cambridge Introduction to Philosophy Series, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. Radhakrishnan. S. (1967). *Indian Philosophy*. Vol. I. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

3. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

# 4 UNIT

## The Concepts of Ṛta and Ṛṇa

## Learning Outcomes

In this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ get an introduction to Ṛta, the deities and their duties

♦ know the functions of deities within the realm of Ṛṇa

♦ understand the principal debts / duties of human beings to god, fellow men, animals and other creatures, according to Vedic and Upanishadic tradition

♦ get an exposure to the universal order in the Vedic tradition

## Prerequisites

Our observations of nature generally lead us to think that there is a fixed order behind it. We observe that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. We observe water flowing. We observe day coming after night. We observe moonless days and full moon days. We observe season after a season. We observe births and deaths. We observe many events in nature. These events tend to make us think there is a cycle. That cycle never seems to occur differently. Indian philosophy upholds that the four significant Vedas, namely, Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharava-Veda, give various aspects of knowledge. In particular, the Upanishads, the conclusive segments of the four Vedas, discuss various aspects such as world evolution, the nature of self, and actions that ought to be done by human beings and so on. In the Rig-Veda, there are two concepts, namely, Ṛta and Ṛṇa, that predominantly discuss the order of this world and the different deities and their functions to preserve the social and moral order and different duties of human being towards gods and different creatures. We shall discuss these themes in this unit.

## Key themes

Ṛta, universal order, Deities and their functions, Ṛṇa, Principal duties of human beings

## Discussion

In Hinduism the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads all significantly give us the knowledge of world view and the specific roles of human beings. According to Bina Gupta, there are 1028 hymns in the Rig-Veda which are arranged in ten books. In many places we can see discussions regarding the universe and praising different gods who perform specific duties. A few concepts are very central in the Rig-Veda, namely, Ṛta, Ṛṇa Yajna, Dharma and so on. Among them, the concepts of Ṛta and Ṛṇa occupied a central role in the Rig-Veda. According to Dr. Vijaya Rajiva, the term Ṛta occurs some 390 times in the Rig-Veda in different places. Moreover, he says, the term Ṛta is similar but not identical to the term 'Maat' in Egypt and 'Tao' in China. We shall discuss the concepts of Ṛta and Ṛṇa in the following sections.

## 1.4.1 The Concept of Ṛta

Ṛta is a Sanskrit term. The identical terms for Ṛta are Rit or Rita. The term is derived from the verbal root √r., meaning to 'move'. Ṛta means universal order. It includes cosmic as well as moral order. It is believed to be an order to find natural phenomena. Also, it is a moral order that deities and human beings are supposed to accomplish themselves. The Vedic idea of the universe is not detached from human beings' social and individual experiences. As a result, Ṛta forms a composite idea of cosmic as well as moral order. The harmony that we observe in different cosmic aspects such as the rising and setting of the sun, rotation of the earth, flow of water, alternation of day and night etc. are believed to occur due to the working of Ṛta. All events in the universe are believed to follow the path of Ṛta. Put it simply, according to Hinduism, it is the law that governs the universe. From the point of moral aspect, Ṛta is the ethical order that maintains the harmony in the lives of deities and human beings. It incorporates the ethical standard by which lives of the Vedic people are influenced directly.

## 1.4.2 Deities and their Duties

Rig-Veda identifies different deities such as Varuna, Indra, Mitra, Aditya, Vayu, Agni, Soma, and so on. A noteworthy point is that these deities are not the source/originator of this world. Rather, they are merely connected with the natural world and the principles of human relations and the ritual world, as Bina Gupta says. However, among them, in the Rig-Veda, the deity Varuna who is the guardian of cosmic order becomes the guardian of the moral order. In other words, Varuna maintains the moral harmony while punishing sinners. He is considered an enemy of falsehood. He lives in a "thousand-column golden" house and observes the activities of human beings. To report the actions of human beings, Varuna has spies. The sun who is the eye of Varuna is believed to observe the deeds

of people and report to the deity Varuna. Along with Sun, Varuna has a number of other secret agents like Mitra, a follower of the Varuna. Their function is to report on the unethical doings of human beings.

The natural as well as moral world is believed, according to the Vedic and Upanisadic world view, to be chaotic whenever the harmony is misplaced by anrta, which is the negation of Ṛta. In the Hindu texts, Yajnas (sacrifice) are suggested to please gods and maintain harmony in the universe. In short, Ṛta maintains rhythm in the cosmic and moral aspects. It includes both deities and human beings.

## 1.4.3 The Concept of Ṛṇa

The term Ṛṇa or Ṛin refers to 'being in debt'. In the Vedic and Upanishadic worldview, every individual has some duties and responsibilities that ought to be fulfilled. These duties are not mere bondages but are the mode of social freedom. By birth an individual carries the baggage of Ṛṇa. According to the Vedic and Upanishadic views, Moksha is considered an essential goal in human beings' life. To achieve it, an individual ought to perform some specific duties towards gods, gurus, fellow beings, animals, and other creatures in the universe. The duties are divided into the following sections:

1. Duties to the Gods (Deva Ṛṇa)—it signifies indebtedness to the gods. The debt is repaid by performing yajna (sacrifice) to gods

2. Duties to the seers (Rishi Ṛṇa)—it signifies indebtedness to those people who founded the religious life and gave education. It is believed that the debt is repaid by studying the Vedas in front of Gurus.

3. Duties to the manes (Pitṛ Ṛṇa)—

it signifies indebtedness to one's ancestors who are the cause of our present existence. The debt is repaid by performing duties of a grihastha dharma.

4. Duties to the fellow human beings and other creatures in the universe— it signifies indebtedness to fellow creatures. The debt is repaid by offering / spending part of a person's earnings to his / her fellow creatures.

It is contemplated in the Vedic world view that a person who discharges these duties is a good person. Unselfishness can be accomplished in all our actions. Most importantly, it is delineated in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam, (Brāhmaṇa of one hundred paths) that sacrifice of all things worldly is required.

To repay various sorts of Ṛṇa, it is said that an individual ought to go through four notable stages of his / her life. The following are the four stages of an individual life that are suggested by the Vedic and the Upanishadic texts.

1. Brahmacharya Āśrama/Student Life — expected to study Vedas and learn skills to lead a social, moral, duty-oriented life.

2. Grahasthya Āśrama/ House-hold Life—expected to fulfill the duties mentioned in the scriptures.

3. Vanaprastha Āśrama / Hermit Life— expected to spend an individual his / her time in fasting and penance. Expected to prepare one's own self to the further stage of life.

4. Sanyasa Āśrama / Ascetic Life — expected to detach with all worldly things and long for union with God.

At the first three stages of life, an individual would get an opportunity to repay his / her debts to gurus, pitṛ, God,

and fellow creatures. It is believed that proper fulfillment of these three stages could help an individual to lead / make his / her rest of life in the preparation for union with God.

# Recap

♦ Ṛta refers to the order which includes both cosmic and moral one

♦ World is neither created mechanically nor is it in chaos. There is an order in the creation

♦ The deity Varuna is the custodian of the Ṛta. He is the punisher of sins

♦ Sacrifices (yajna) are done in Hinduism to please the deities and get benefit in the individual as well as social life

♦ Ṛṇa refers to "being in debt" to gurus, pitṛ, Gods, fellow creatures

♦ These debts are repaid through the different stages

♦ There are four stages in an individual's life, namely, brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, and sanyasa

# Objective Questions

1. What does the term Ṛta refer to?

2. How many aspects are included in Ṛta?

3. Who is the custodian of the Ṛta?

4. Which concept in the Vedic and Upanishadic view describes every individual by birth as carrying a baggage of debts?

5. What sort of repaying of debt are learning the Vedas and life skills considered as?

6. What does Pitṛ Ṛṇa mean?

7. What is the way to repay Ṛṇa to God?

8. How many Āśrama dharmas are suggested by the Vedic and the Upanishadic texts?

9. Who is a good person according to the Vedas and the Upanishads?

## Answers

1. Order (harmony)

2. Cosmic and moral order

3. The deity Varuna

4. Ṛṇa

5. The debt repaid to Guru (Teacher)

6. Debt repaid to Ancestors

7. Conducting Yajnas (sacrifices)

8. Four Āśrama Dharmas

9. A person who performs all specified duties.

## Assignments

1. What are the four stages of life suggested by the Vedas?

2. Explain Ṛta and Ṛṇa.

## Suggested Readings

1. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge and Freedom*. UK: Routledge.

2. Singh, Shurya (2019). *The concept of Rit (Ṛta) & Rin (Ṛṇa)*. Ras Exam Preparation.

# BLOCK 2

# Early Schools of Indian Philosophy

# 1 UNIT

# Cārvāka Epistemology

## Learning Outcomes

By studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ get an introduction to the philosophy of Indian materialism

♦ get an exposure to its epistemological and metaphysical views

♦ compare and contrast the materialist philosophy vis-à-vis the Vedantic spiritualism

♦ understand the dominance of Indian materialism and its fame as a global philosophy

## Prerequisites

Some Westerners believe that India is a land of pure spiritualism and religiosity. They consider Indians as people who live most of the time clinging to myths, beliefs, rituals, customs and barbarous practices. Some Indians also propagate India as the spiritual land of the world. However, can we attribute a monolithic world view and life style to a vast country like India? No. We cannot even attribute a monolithic world view, life style and ritualistic practices to even the smallest country of the world. People believe in various ideas and ideologies and uphold and practise them. While a certain section prioritises contemplation and spiritual way of life, others will prioritise the bodily aspects of life. They will not be much concerned about the self, God, priests, life-after death and salvation. Rather, their philosophy might be the philosophy of the celebration of this life. Indian tradition also has such a materialist stream of thought and life; they are Cārvāka, the worldly ones.

# Key themes

Materialism, Worldly life, No-metaphysics, No-self, No-life after death.

# Discussion

Spiritualism and materialism are the two major trends in Indian philosophy / thought. The materialistic school of philosophy is as significant and impactful in the Indian context as its counterpart, the spiritualistic school of philosophy. Radhakrishnan says that in the Indian context "the materialistic school of thought was as vigorous and comprehensive as materialistic philosophy in the modern world." Cārvāka, also known as Lokāyata, which literally means 'philosophy of the common people' is the ancient school of Indian materialism.

Cārvāka's materialism ought to be placed in sheer opposition to the Vedantic spiritualism or the Brahmanical tradition. The former almost rejected all philosophical views of the Vedanta. The Vedantic philosophy came to its fruition in the Vedas and the Upanishads, as we have seen earlier.

According to the dominant narrative, Brhaspati is believed to be the founder of this school. On another view, a sage named Cārvāka, the disciple of Brhaspati founded and propagated materialism. The phrase Cārvāka is derived from the 'charv' meaning 'eat' or 'chew.' The philosophical motto of the Cārvāka school is 'eat, drink and be merry.' It is also believed that the name Cārvāka literally means 'sweet-tongued' (charu – vāka). Cārvāka's another name 'Lokayata' can be translated as 'worldly ones' or 'that which is prevalent in the common world.'

Krsna Misra, in his profound philosophical allegory Prabodhachandrodaya ('The Rise of the Moon of Knowledge'), sums up the teachings of Cārvāka materialism as follows: "Lokayata is the only sastra; perception is the only source of knowledge; earth, water, fire, and air are the only elements; artha and kama are the only two goals of human life; consciousness (in the body) is produced by earth, water, fire and air. Mind is only a product of matter. There is no other world. Only death is moksha."

We get many references to the Cārvāka philosophy in the ancient Hindu texts. However, we get Cārvāka's philosophical positions and views mainly from two sources: Madhavacarya's Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha and Haribhadra's Saddarsanna-samuccaya (Compendium of the Six Systems).In the Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha, Madhavacharya depicts Cārvāka as hedonists. The hedonists are those who take pleasure as one of the main criteria to determine what is right and what is wrong. For him, Cārvākas are hedonists and materialists. He states: "The efforts of the Cārvāka are indeed hard to be eradicated, for the majority of living beings hold by the current refrain

While life is yours, live joyously;

None can escape Death's searching eye;

When once this frame of ours they burn;

How shall it ever again return?"

Cārvāka philosophy emerged, existed and established itself as a counter-philosophical movement to the Vedantic philosophy in the Indian context. They had to establish themselves by negation, rejection and destruction of most of the beliefs, doctrines and practices already established in India through Vedanta philosophy. Thus, they were initially called as 'negativists,' 'abusers of the Vedas,' and 'deniers of the after-world.' However, Cārvāka, which showed a naturalistic tendency, later on developed as a full-fledged philosophical system which made a huge impact on Indian thought, especially on Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, and on the world.

While Cārvāka is the established materialist philosophical school in Indian tradition, scholars say that various versions of the similar ideological positions are present even in the Vedic texts. Scholars say that various forms of skepticism are present in the Rig Veda, the Upanisads and even in the Ramayana.

## 2.1.1 Rejection of Metaphysics

The Cārvāka philosophy can be found as the rejection of the metaphysical theories propounded and upheld by the Vedantic schools. No-authority-to-the-Vedas is the foundational metaphysical theory of the school.

Cārvāka also rejected ideas of God, self, soul, another-world, life after death, morality (right and wrong), reward and punishment, reincarnation, moksha and so on. While the ultimate goal of life for almost all schools of Indian philosophy in general is the realization of oneself (spiritual), for Cārvāka it is to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain and sufferings. In the rejection of spiritualistic ideas, they were very much similar to the western materialists.

In the history of philosophy, the philosophical streams of idealism and materialism have differed on the primacy of the mind / consciousness / idea / thought and body / world. It can be said that the Cārvāka philosophical attack was against all kinds of idealist doctrines or principles. According to them, the self is the body and the world is material. There is primarily only body and the material world. The consciousness arises as an after effect of the body. It arises from the combination of the natural elements which constitute the body. Neither a fetus has any dormant consciousness nor a dead body does carry the consciousness. The consciousness ceases to be when the body ceases to be.

The Cārvāka accepts only four material realities; earth, water, fire and air. That means the whole material world is built by and composed of these four perceptible elements. The material world includes all living organisms, plants, animals and insects.

From a denial of the primacy of the consciousness over the matter, Cārvāka denied the very notion of an eternal self. For them, the self is nothing but the body possessed of consciousness. Consciousness is a by-product or epiphenomenon of matter / body. That means consciousness arises from specific combination of certain bodily elements in the body. It must be noted that their attack was against the notion of the self or 'atman' which has been the bedrock of the Vedantic philosophy. They thought that a rigorous attack and destruction of the notion of the self by default will help them destruct various streams of philosophy.

## 2.1.2 Epistemology: Perception as the Only Source of Knowledge

From their fundamental thesis that matter is the only real and knowable entity, the Cārvāka argued that pratyaksa / anubhava (perception) is the only pramana (source of valid knowledge). One can know the truth only through means of sense perception; whatever is available to and accessible for sense perception is true; whatever is not so, is doubtful.

This stand that perception is the only source of valid knowledge is in sheer contrast to the views upheld by the other schools of Indian philosophy. Most of the other school upheld a number of sources of knowledge including anumana (inference), upamana (analogy) and sabda (verbal testimony). By rejecting all these, the Cārvāka takes a clear epistemological turn away from almost all Indian philosophical schools. By rejecting sabda (verbal testimony), it clearly rejects the Vedantic philosophy and the priestly authority. For Cārvāka, even the consciousness is an object of perception. The consciousness can be perceived to exist in the body. And hence it is a by-product or property of the body.

The Nyāya school, as we know, is reputed for its logic and systems of reasoning and inference. Anumana (inference) is typically understood to have minimum three components in the Nyāya logic: the sadhya (the property to be proven), the hetu (the reason) and the vyapti (the universal concomitance between the sadhya and the hetu). To illustrate an inference along with its three components: 1) there is smoke on the hill 2) wherever there is smoke, there is fire 3) thus, there is fire on the hill. Here, smoke-possessing is called hetu and fire-possessing is called sadhya.

The universal concomitance between hetu / smoke and Sadhya / fire (the universal that wherever there is smoke, there is fire) is called vyapti. The inference especially in Nyāya is a very well-established means of knowledge.

However, Cārvāka's point is that here inference (inferring fire from perception of the smoke) is possible if and only if vyapti is observable and graspable. This is not possible. The pervasive relation between smoke and fire; wherever there is smoke, there is fire is not observable and graspable for anyone. None can observe all instances of smoke-possessing leading to the fire-possessing instances in the past and future. None has 'perceived' all such instances. The notion of invariable concomitance goes beyond the perceived and the perceivable. Thus, it is impossible to infer that wherever smoke is seen, fire is also seen. Hence, it is not a reliable knowledge. That means, anumana is not a pramana.

## 2.1.3 Criticism against Cārvāka

Cārvāka's philosophical position about the self underwent changes historically. Many schools, especially Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, severely criticized the Cārvāka position that consciousness is a by-product of the four bodily / material elements. If there is no consciousness in four material realities, the combination of those realities also does not bring about the phenomenon of consciousness.

Cārvāka also faced criticism from other schools regarding their rejection of the inference. According to them, in order to reject the inference, Charavak makes use of the very method of inference. In other words, 1) wherever smoke is seen, fire cannot be seen. 2) None can infer all the instances of the smoke leading to the

instaces of fire. 3) Hence, all the instances of the smoke leading to the fires is not perceived and is non-perceivable by any. This itself is a form of inference. Thus, Cārvāka is guilty of self-contradiction.

Cārvāka also faced criticism for rejecting the Sabda pramana. If Sabda / testimony is not a valid source of knowledge, how can Cārvāka depends upon the words / testimony of their predecessors and materialist teachers? They themselves use the testimony as a source of knowledge. Thus, they are doing self-contradiction here also.

# Recap

- Lokayata means 'the worldly ones'

- "Eat, drink and be merry"

- Spiritualism and materialism are the two major trends in Indian philosophy

- No God, no soul, no priest, no Vedas, no life after death and no moksha

- "The materialistic school of thought was as vigorous and comprehensive as materialistic philosophy in the modern world"

- Nothing survives death, said Brihaspati

- Perception is the only source of knowledge; earth, water, fire, and air are the only elements; artha and kama are the only two goals of human life; consciousness (in the body) is produced by earth, water, fire, and air

- Consciousness is only a product of matter

- "While life is yours, live joyously; None can escape Death's searching eye"

# Objective Questions

1. What is the word for 'sweet-tongued'?

2. Is Cārvāka an idealist or materialist school?

3. What is the fundamental difference between idealism and materialism?

4. What is consciousness according to the Cārvāka?

5. The Cārvāka accepts only four material realities. What are they?

6. What are the three components in the Nyāya logic?

7. The material world includes all living organisms and plants are made up of four elements. What are they?

8. What is the ultimate aim of life for Cārvāka?

9. Why does Cārvāka reject inference?

10. What is the sole means of knowledge for Cārvāka?

## Answers

1. Cārvāka

2. Mmaterialist school

3. Idealism gave primacy to the mind while materialism gave primacy to the body/world

4. By-product of the body

5. Earth, water, fire, and air

6. The sadhya (the property to be proven), the hetu (the reason) and the vyapti (the universal concomitance between the sadhya and the hetu)

7. Earth, water, fire, and air

8. Maximize pleasure and to minimize the pain

9. Because vyapti – pervasive and universal relation between middle term and major term is not provided by anyone

10. Perception

## Assignments

1. How Cārvāka is a rebuttal of Vedas? Explain.

2. How does Cārvāka reject metaphysics?

3. Explain Cārvāka's epistemology.

## Suggested Readings

1. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

2. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*: *Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom*. Routledge.

3. https://iep.utm.edu/indmat/

4. https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/culture/indian-philosophy-beyond-vedanta-meet-the-Cārvākas-the-realists-and-sceptics

# 2 UNIT

# Jainism

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will:

- ♦ get a brief introduction to Jainism

- ♦ be exposed to the categories in Jainism

- ♦ get an idea about the doctrine of Syadvada – notion that all judgements are conditional

- ♦ get a general awareness about the doctrine of many-ness of reality (anekantavada)

## Prerequisites

Apart from the orthodox schools, India has three heterodox schools of thought. The heterodox schools do not believe in the authority of the Vedas. Among the three heterodox schools, Jainism is a significant philosophical school. Unlike the Upanishadic view of the world which predominantly insists on the importance of absolute reality, and unlike the Buddhist view of the world which insists that reality is impermanent, Jainism stresses the importance of the pluralistic reality. Put it simply, it reconciles the Upanishadic world view and the Buddhist world view.

## Key themes

Categories, Different ways of speaking of a thing, Anekanthavada, Seven truth - vlued - logic

# Discussion

Jainism is an old tradition in India. We can see it both as a religion and a philosophical stream. It follows a strict nonviolence like Buddhism. However, there is an observable difference between Jainism and Buddhism, both in practical as well as theoretical levels. Just like Buddha in Buddhism, there are 24 Tirthankaras in Jainism. They are considered as the founders of the faith. The first Tirthankara was Rishabhanatha and the 23rd Tirthankara was Parshvanatha, and the last Tirthankara was Vardhamana Mahavira who was contemporary to Buddha.

According to Surendranath Dasgupta, there is 240 years of gap between Parshvanatha and Mahavira. By this observation, we can understand the age of this tradition. There are two significant schools in Jainism, namely, Svethambara (who wear white clothes) and Digambara. The Digambara are those people who believe that in order to get liberation one must detach oneself even from clothes. Hence, they do not wear any clothes.

Though Jains have different views and follow different practices, their philosophy on reality is almost same. They believe that reality is pluralistic. This means that there is no single reality. They argue that there are innumerable material atoms and innumerable souls. The innumerable atoms and souls are independently and separately real. In this sense, the reality for Jainism is pluralistic. To put it in the technical term, they believe in the 'pluralistic reality.' By dealing with different concepts such as the classification of categories, concept of syadvada and anekanthavada, we can get the crux of Jainism. We shall discuss these concepts in the following sections.

## 2.2.1 Classification of Categories

Jainism classifies the innumerable realities into two main categories: Jiva and Ajiva. Jiva means the conscious spirit whereas Ajiva means unconscious nonspirit. We can understand the concept of Jiva as the soul which is named in other schools. For Jainism, the whole universe is filled with these two categories. Moreover, these are perpetual, uncreated, and coexisting categories. Since they are coexisting categories, Jainism does not accept the view that being is permanent without becoming (change).

According to Jainism, everything is created, continued and destroyed. Everything which is named as substance (Dravya) has inherent qualities (Guna). The substance with specific qualities must exist in some form which is the mode of existence (paryaya). This mode of existence is subject to change. Thus, for Jainism, substance without qualities and qualities without substances is meaningless. Moreover, each substance exists in a particular shape or form that is subject to change. Jainism divides the two principal categories into subcategories.

### a) Classification of Jiva
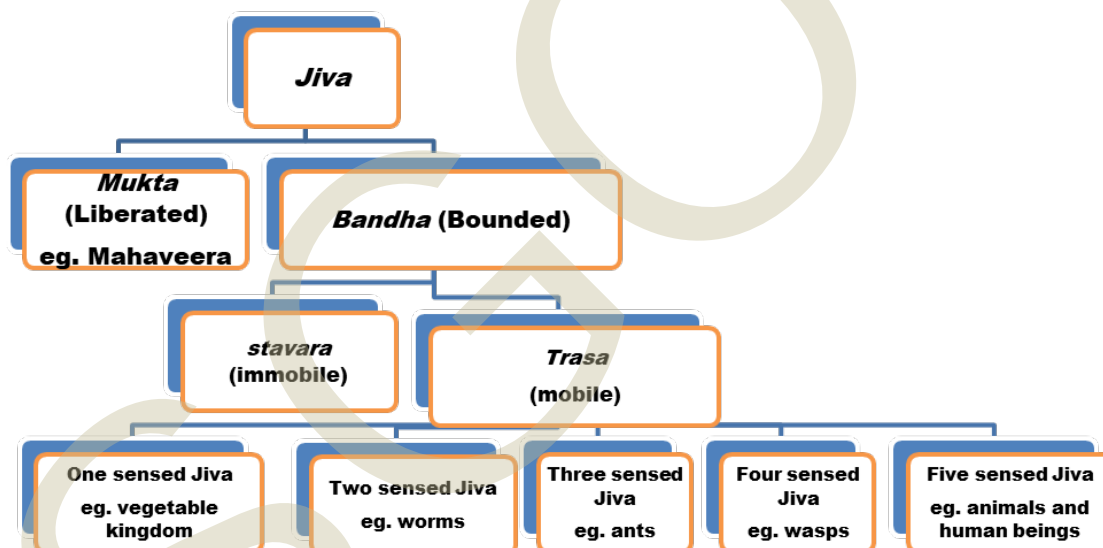
According to Jainism, this universe is filled with innumerable Jivas and Ajivas. The Jiva can be divided into mukta Jivas and bandha Jivas. Mukta Jivas means the liberated souls whereas banda Jivas means the bounded souls; bounded by various karmas. A few examples for the liberated Jivas, in a Jaina's view, are Rishabhanatha, Parshvanatha, and Mahavira, who are considered as Thirthankaras.

Jainism again divides the bandha Jivas into trasa and stavara Jivas. Trasa Jivas are mobile Jivas. They move from one place to another place whereas stavara Jivas are immobile. It believes that immobile Jivas live in the atoms of earth, water, fire, and air and in the vegetable kingdom. They have only one sense; touch.

The Stavara Jivas are further categorized into two sensed, three sensed, four sensed and five sensed Jivas. Higher order animals and human beings are the examples of five-sensed Jivas. According to Jainism, Jiva is a real knower (jnata), a real agent (karta), and a real experient (bhokta). The following hierarchical chart would simplify the sub categorization of Jivas.

world are the combinations of atoms (Sanghata or skandha pudgala).

• Akasha (space)—space is infinite and not perceivable. However, it is real since it is inferred as the condition of extension. Two kinds of space are mentioned. First, Lokakasha (filled space) where motion is possible. Secondly, Alokakasha (empty space), where the space does not contain anything in it.

• Dharma (motion)—Dharma is used in the technical sense of condition of movement. Just like space, it is imperceptible. It cannot generate motion in the substance but only helps as a medium to move just like water is helping the motion of a fish.



### a)  Subcategories of Ajiva

Jainism proclaims that Ajiva is an unconscious non-spirit. It is an inanimate substance. Ajiva is made up of five substances. The following are the five substances:

• Pudgala (matter)—the smallest part of the matter is called an atom (Anu/Pudgala). All atoms are qualitatively alike and indistinguishable. The objects in the

• Adharma (rest)—just like Dharma, rest is also imperceptible and passive. It cannot generate rest. It only helps as a medium of the objects to rest just like the earth is supporting objects which rest on it.

• Kāla (time)—just like space, time is not perceivable but inferred from the characteristics of continuity, modifications, actions, and new or old. Therefore, it is real. However, it does not extend in

space.

From the above mentioned five sub-categories of the Ajiva, Pudgala, Akasha, Dharma and Adharma are considered as Astikaya (anything that occupies space) and the notion of Kāla is considered as Anastikaya. Jiva is also considered as Astikaya.

## 2.2.2 Doctrine of Syadvada

The term syadvada has two components, 'syad' and 'vada.' The term 'syad' means "from a particular standpoint" and the term 'vada' means 'statement.' Bina Gupta says that it is Jainism which spoke about the 'seven-truth-valued logic' for the first time in the history of logic. This 'seven-truth-valued' logic is known as syadvada.

The Syadvada says that our judgement relating to any statement that we make is true from a certain point of view and at the same time is false from another point of view. The noteworthy point is that, according to Gupta's view, we should not take the term syad as meaning 'may be' or 'possibly' because syadvada does not indicate the method of doubt or skepticism or uncertainty. It talks about certainty but about a doctrine of conditional certainty. To put it simply, from some standard point of view, our certain judgement is true while from another standard of view, our judgement is false.

The seven different ways of speaking of a thing's existence (for example, a Jar's existence) is as follows:

a.   Syad asti—there is a perspective from which a thing's existence is true. For example, from the perspective of a particular time and space and colour of a thing, the jar's existence is true.

b.   Syad nasti—there is a perspective from which a thing's existence is false. For example, from the perspective of different space and time and colour, the jar's existence is false.

c.   Syad asti nasti—there is a perspective from which both a thing's existence is true and false. For example, from the perspective of certain conditions, the jar's existence is true, and from the perspective of certain other conditions, the jar's existence is false. Therefore, Jar's existence is both true and false.

d.   Syad avaktavyam—when these two perspectives are combined (no emphasis on either side), our judgment is inexpressible. For example, failing to combine the two truth values (existence and non-existence), the jar's existence becomes inexpressible. Based on the above four truth values, Jaina thinkers developed another three truth values.

e.   Syad asti avaktavyam—from a certain standpoint, our judgment is true but from another standpoint of view, judgment is inexpressible since the object may or may not exist.

f.   Syad nasti avaktavyam—from a certain standpoint, our judgement is false but from another standpoint of view, judgement is inexpressible as the object may or may not exist.

g.   Syad asti nasti avaktavyam—from a certain standpoint, our judgement is true and from another particular point of view, our judgement is false. However, when there is no emphasis on either side, our judgement is inexpressible.

According to Jains' argument, no affirmation or judgement is absolute in its nature. Each is true from a particular point of view. In other words, each statement is true in its limited sense. Jains argue that

all statements relating to any object must belong to any one of the seven alternatives. These seven alternatives are technically called saptabhangi. Therefore, the Jains argue that it is impossible to make any affirmation which is universally and absolutely valid, since a counter affirmation will always be found.

## 2.2.3 Doctrine of Anekantavada

The Jains believe that reality is not absolute but relative. For them, a thing has infinite aspects. Each aspect is true in certain limited conditions. They named this with a technical term as Anekantavada. Anekantavada is a theory which is opposite to ekantavada, which upholds reality as one.

The Upanishads argue that the reality is one, that is Brahman, whereas Buddhists argue that change is the only reality. Contrary to these extreme positions, Jainism argues that reality is pluralistic. Therefore, their metaphysics is called as 'pluralistic realism' or 'relative pluralism.' To put it simple, for Jainism, all affirmatives of an object are true in some limited conditions, but not true in other conditions. We may comprehend the concept of anekantavada with the following simple example.

Take an object, for instance, a gold pot. It has innumerable characteristics. It is called a substance only in one sense of the term, not in another sense. The gold pot is a substance in the sense it has a collocation of atoms, not in the sense of space or time. The object gold pot is thus both a substance and not a substance. Again, the object is an atomic (collocation of atoms) in the sense it is made up of earth atoms and not made of water atoms or any other. As a result, the gold pot is atomic and not atomic. Again, the object is made up

of earth atoms in the sense they are made up of only gold atoms and not made up of silver or any other kind of atoms. Again, it is made up of gold atoms in the sense it is made up of processed gold atoms and not in the sense of gold atoms available in natural conditions. It is again the processed gold that is shaped into a gold pot by a goldsmith X, and not by Y. In this specific way, according to Jainism, any object in the universe possesses an infinite number of characteristics or qualities which are true only in some limited sense, but not true in other senses.

An interesting story from Jain mythology would help to demonstrate the notion of the anekantavada. There are five blind people who have never seen an elephant. One day an elephant is brought to their village. The five people approached the elephant. They touched the elephant and tried to describe the shape of the elephant. One person standing by the trunk of the elephant illustrates it as a thick branch of a tree. The second person who feels the tail disagrees with the first. He describes it as like a rope. The third person who touches the side of an elephant disagrees with the first two and insists that the elephant is actually like a great wall. The fourth person standing around the elephant's leg says it is like a pillar, while the fifth person who feels the ear illustrates the elephant as a huge fan. A passerby (a wise person), who observes the dispute among the five people, tries to mitigate the dispute while claiming that all are right but only partially right. A true explanation of the elephant lies in combining the various partial views.

From the given two examples, the point is clear that for the true comprehension of the nature of any object, one must accept the various viewpoints. Bina Gupta points out that anekantavada or non-absolutism

amalgamates the different philosophical positions. However, the amalgamation is not by putting the various positions together as p and q and r, rather, seeing it as alternatives (as p or q or r). Each alternative is valid from a particular stand-point. Nevertheless, the point of view is to be not subjective but objective.

# Recap

- Jainism promotes relative pluralism or pluralistic realism

- Jainism has 24 Tirthankaras (founders of faith)

- The first Thirthankara was Rishabanatha and the last Thirthankara was Mahavira

- Two principal eternal substances (categories): Jiva and Ajiva

- One sensed, two sensed, three sensed, four sensed and five sensed jivas

- Ajiva is sub-categorised into Pudgala, Akasha, Kāla, Dharma, and Adharma

- Seven different ways of speaking – Syadvada. Seven-truth-valued logic

- Reality is neither absolute nor mere change. It is the combination of both

- Anekantavada and Syadvada are two aspects of the same teaching

# Objective Questions

1. Does Jainism accept the notion of absolute as the only reality?

2. Who is the 23rd Tirthankara?

3. How many categories are there in Jainism?

4. Are Jiva and Soul one and the same?

5. Under which category Pudgala, akasha, kāla, dharma and adharma come in Jainism?

6. What is the meaning of Syadvada?

7. In how many ways can one speak of a thing according to Jainism?

8. When we combine two affirmations, for example, a Jar exists is true and the Jar exists is not true; it is difficult to express the truth value. How is this difficult situation expressed in Jainism?

9. What does the doctrine of anekantavada say?

# Answers

1. No

2. Parshvanatha

3. Six categories (shaddravyas)

4. Yes

5. Ajiva

6. Syad means "from a particular standpoint," vada means statement (an affirmation is true from a particular standpoint of view)

7. Seven ways of speaking of a thing

8. Syad avaktavyam

9. There are infinite ways of explanations of a thing which are true in a limited sense and condition

# Assignments

1. Write an essay on Anekantavada and Syadvada.

2. Jainism promotes pluralistic realism. Elaborate.

# Suggested Readings

1. Dasgupta, S. (1922). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Volume 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. New York: Continuum IInternational Publishing Group.

3. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom*. Routledge.

4. https://jainworld.com/education/jain-education-material/jain-stories/elephant-and-the-blind-men/

5. https://jainworld.jainworld.com/jainbooks/images/22/Shaddravya,_The_Six_Substan.htm

# 3 UNIT

# Buddhism: Important Teachings

## Learning Outcomes

The unit will enable the learner to get:

♦ an introduction to the key themes in Buddhism

♦ the meaning of 'awakening' or 'enlightenment' in Buddhism

♦ an exposition to the significance of the Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Path

♦ the relevance of ethical practices of Buddhism in daily life

## Prerequisites

We witness many human-sufferings around. All of us are going through sufferings at some point in time or most of the time. Have we thought about the very nature and cause of sufferings? About the way to end sufferings? Have we contemplated on all these? A prince named Siddharta who lived around the middle of the sixth century started to ponder over these matters. Like all of us, Siddharta saw people poor, suffering and dying. The truth of 'Dukkha' struck him and he wanted to know more and more about it. He left his palace, all the wealth, wife and child behind and started to wander seeking more wisdom about human-sufferings. He renounced everything. He travelled and interacted with ascetics and philosophers. He meditated. He still remained unsatisfied. After his long travels and meditations, he got enlightenment about the universal human suffering, its cause, its remedy and the path which leads to the remedy. His preaching is called Buddhism.

# Key themes

Rejection of Vedas, Universal suffering, Nirvana, Dependent origination

# Discussion

Around the middle of the sixth century BCE, the Buddhist philosophical school emerged in India (South Asia), and over the next millennia it spread across Asia and the rest of the world. Buddhism revolutionized the philosophical thought of India which was rooted in the Vedantic spiritualism, Brahminism and their sacrificial rituals and priest-hood.

Buddhism and Jainism are the two most important heterodox schools, both arising around the sixth century BCE. Buddhism and Jainism rejected many tenets central to Brahmanism exactly at a time when the Vedantic philosophy was capturing its momentum through the composition of the major Upanisads.

Gautama Buddha is the founder of Buddhism. The name given to him at birth was Sidhartha. However, he was known with his family name Guatama. He is believed to have been born to royal parents in the foothills of Himalayas, in the border of Nepal today, around 560 BCE.

There is a famous story about the beginning Buddha's ascetic and religious life. Historians suggest that Buddha was married to a beautiful princess named Yasodhara when he was sixteen and his wife gave birth to a son named Rahula. However, Buddha was a seeker of truth. One day, leaving his wife and son behind, he left the palace and wandered off. This was the most important point of renunciation in his life. He then led an ascetic and meditative life for a long time. His preaching and teaching in later days turned out to be a foundational philosophy of renunciation.

Sidhartha lived in what is called as an age of 'spiritual restlessness.' Amidst his ascetic wandering with zeal and quest for truth, Sidhartha was reportedly met, talked and interacted with various ascetics, spiritual leaders and philosophers. Buddha at first selected the path of self-mortification for some time. However, he left it after he realized its worthlessness. He lost some important ascetic friends because of this.

He learned and attained wisdom from all of them and followed various paths to the truth in order to attain more wisdom. After leading a life of asceticism and intense meditation under a Bodhi tree, Sidhartha attained enlightenment (nirvana) at Bodh Gaya in India and became 'Buddha' - the awakened one or the enlightened one. He was called 'Buddha' after he attained nirvana.

Buddhist philosophy is founded on the central theme of universal suffering. Buddha observed, pondered over and analysed the sufferings of human beings. Through philosophical and meditative thoughts about human self, human destiny and the universe, he delved into the deep mysteries of human existence.

Buddha also made his mind and body ready to win over all thoughts and dispositions. He conquered the three major instincts in human beings: desire (tṛṣṇā),

attachment (raga) and aversion (arati). Helping the people in their sufferings he took up as his mission. . In order to do that, he preached some important principles, which became famous across the globe. Buddhism through its preaching contributed to global philosophy.

## 2.3.1 Four Noble Truths

One of the important teachings of the Buddha is the Four Nobel Truths. These are universal truths. This is the true knowledge (Arya-Satya) or Vidhya in Buddhism. They are: 1) Dukkha -Truth of Suffering, 2) Samudaya – Truth of origin / cause of suffering, 3) Nirodha – Truth of the end / cessation of suffering, 4) Mārga – Truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering (Nirvana).

Buddhism starts with Dukkha. It starts with detecting the cause of human sufferings and ends in prescribing the remedy for cessation of human sufferings. In that sense, the theoretical philosophy of Buddhism has a practical sense in human life. Buddha says that one's failure to see the four noble truths is what leads him / her to suffering. In other words, only by diagnosing the right cause of sufferings, according to Buddhism, can one arrive at the right cure.

Buddha explains each one of the four noble truths. The First Noble Truth is called 'Dukkha.' Dukkha / suffering is a reality. Suffering is everywhere. In fact, everything related to human being is suffering. The fundamental trait of the entire human existence is suffering; birth, disease, death, separation from the pleasant or the beloved.

The concept of Dukkha in Buddhism is very deep and has wider meaning. And, anyone's comprehensive understanding of Buddhism is determined by his / her com-

prehension of the concept of 'Dukkha.' It has been translated as 'pain,' 'sorrow,' 'suffering,' etc. But in one sense, these translations miss the essence of Buddhist teaching. For Buddha, Dukkha means both pleasure and pain. We all have moments of pleasure / happiness / enjoyment. But what Buddha realized and wants to convey is that all such moments of pleasure / happiness / enjoyment are transitory. They are transitory in the sense that they are followed by experiences of displeasure / unhappiness / sadness.

That Dukkha is everywhere implies a deep metaphysical truth in Buddhism; everything is impermanent. In other words, the truth that the very existence is Dukkha implies a refutation of all metaphysics of permanence. Buddhism promotes the metaphysics of impermanence and transitoriness. Dukkha is the opposite of perfection, harmony, bliss, happiness, well-being and permanence.

The Second Noble Truth is about the origin / cause of suffering. There is a cause for suffering. The truth that there is a cause of suffering follows from another important teaching of the Buddha called Pratītyasamutpāda vada, - The theory of Dependent Origination, or Theory of Dependent Arising. This theory which is shared and upheld by all schools of Buddhism states that all dharmas (phenomena) originate and arise in dependence upon other dharmas (phenomena). Whatever exists must have had a cause. There is nothing without dependence upon the other; "if this exists, that exists and if this ceases to exist, that also ceases to exist." Buddha's aim here is to say that ignorance causes misery and leads to evil.

The third Noble Truth is about the cessation of suffering. It is an assurance that the inherent problem of human existence is curable. It is an assurance that Dukkha

can end. It is a hope that there is destruction of suffering. Buddha says: "Verily, it is the destruction, in which no craving remains over, of this very thirst."

The cessation or extinguishing or extinction of all desires is Nirvana, the ultimate truth in Buddhism. There is sufficient scholarship on the question if Nirvana is a negative state of ceasing to be / exist, or a positive state of bless and bliss. Etymologically, Nirvana means the 'cessation of' or 'ceasing to be.' It also means 'blowing out' of a flame of a candle; the candle being extinguished when there is no air. This for some scholars implies the extinguishment of the existence which is characterized by Dukkha. From Buddha's life, it is clear for us that Nirvana cannot be taken in a negative / pessimistic sense. Buddhism is not a pessimistic view of life. This can be testified with the fact that Buddha led his life for forty-five years after attaining Nirvana. In that sense, Nirvana is the cessation of Dukkha, not the person himself. It is freedom from Dukkha. Given that Dukkha is due to attachment, desires and cravings, Nirvana is the freedom from these attachments. Strictly speaking, as desire, attachment and craving are caused by ignorance (avidya), the ultimate freedom is freedom from ignorance.

## 2.3.2 Eight-fold Path

The Fourth Noble Truths are the path to Nirvana. This path is theorized and is known as the 'Noble Eightfold Path'. The Eightfold Path which leads to the cessation of misery is about controlling the conditions that cause misery. This forms eight steps of ethical practices: right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right views and right resolve.

Of these, the first set of three practices is called Sila, the second set of three practices is called samadhi and the third set of two practices is called prajña,¯ which is about knowledge and wisdom. These eight steps remove ignorance and attachment and turn the mind insightful and enlightened. The eight-fold path is a path of ethical self-control by avoiding the two extremes. This is the middle path between the extremes of sensuality or self-indulgence (which was preached by Cārvāka) and the extreme form of asceticism through self-mortification (which was followed by many in Buddha's era) and is the path to freedom. This tells us to focus on truth through meditation and contemplation. Only this can give us wisdom and freedom from Dukkha.

## 2.3.3 Theory of Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpadavada)

The Theory of Dependent Origination is an ontological theory. It deals with the nature and reality of whatever exists. This is one of the foundational concepts upon which most Buddhist theories are established. It talks about the interdependence of all existing entities. It says that nothing independently exists, rather, each entity has a dependent relation upon another.

According to this doctrine, it is "this arising that arises, this ceasing that ceases to be." The doctrine of universal change and impermanence follows from this fundamental teaching of Buddhism, viz., Pratitya Samutpāda. This is the theory of conditional existence. Which says that thi particular entity has only a conditional existence, depending upon the other entity. Nothing has an un-conditional existence. Change can be understood in terms of conditional existence.

Theory of Dependent Origination is

also called the Law of Causation. The Law of Causation is the basis of continuity. It says every element of the material and the mental world are subjected to laws of physical and moral causation. Buddha rejected the concept of 'Being nor non-Being' and affirmed only the concept of 'Becoming.' Through this, he gives a dynamic explanation of the real. Unlike the other causal theories like svabhāva vāda, which lead to determinism, Buddha's laws of causation make room for human effort.

Two famous examples which are used to illustrate this concept are the stream of water and the self-consuming flame. Just like the stream of water and the flame, every mental and physical realities are subjected to constant change. The aggregate of the flame or the stream of water, or to say, the aggregate of the self or the material object at a point in time, is not the same for two moments. Rather, both the self and the material object are each a flux. Just like the stream of water and the flame, everything in this world is only a series – a succession of similar happenings. There is no fixity. Whatever fixity we attribute to them are purely fictitious. In Buddhism, even the individual self is a succession of similar happenings of consciousness.

In short, Buddhism upholds the dynamic view of reality. Neither a 'being' nor a 'non-being' is the truth. The only truth is that, everything, be it mental or physical phenomena, is 'becoming.' In a different word, as we emphasized in the concept of Dukkha, everything is characterized by birth / origination, growth, decay and death. Everything is necessarily going through and subjected to constant change. Thus, nothing is permanent except the incessant change.

# Recap

- ♦ Buddhism challenged and refuted the authority of the Vedas, priesthood and sacrificial rituals

- ♦ Middle path between self -indulgence and self-mortification

- ♦ Buddha's contemplation on deep mysteries of human existence and enlightenment

- ♦ He delved into the deep mysteries of human existence

- ♦ Conquest of three major instincts in human beings; desire (trsna), attachment (raga) and aversion (arati)

- ♦ Buddhism as an Indian philosophical school with global impact

- ♦ Universal suffering (Dukkha) and the cessation of the suffering (Nirvana)

- ♦ Metaphysics of impermanence and transitoriness

## Objective Questions

1. To what all things Dukkha stands in opposition in Buddhism?

2. What are the Four Noble Truths?

3. What is Pratītyasamutpāda vada or the theory of dependent origination?

4. Buddha believes that individual self and material objects / entities have no fixity. True or false?

5. Theory of dependent origination is also called theory of conditional existence. What does the theory of conditional existence mean?

6. What is the root cause of suffering?

7. "If this exists, that exists and if this ceases to exist, that also ceases to exist." This theory is also called as?

8. What is the etymological meaning of Nirvana?

9. What are the eight steps of ethical practices?

## Answers

1. Dukkha is the opposite of perfection, harmony, bliss, happiness, well-being and permanence.

2. Truth of Dukkha or Suffering, Truth of origin/cause of suffering, Truth of the end/cessation of suffering, Truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering.

3. every entity, mental or physical, is existing depending upon other entity.

4. True

5. Everything has only a conditional existence- existence under certain conditions.

6. Tṛṣṇā

7. Theory of causality. It is another name of theory of dependent origination.

8. 'Cessation of' or 'ceasing to be.' It also means 'blowing out' of a flame of a candle; the candle being extinguished when there is no air.

9. Right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, right views and right resolve.

# Assignments

1. What is the concept of Dukkha in Buddhism? Explain its relation to all other theories.

2. Write an essay on the theory of dependent origination.

# Suggested Readings

1. Perrett.W. Roy. (2016). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy).

2. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

3. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom*. Routledge.

# UNIT 4

# Anatmavada, Ksanikavada and Nirvana in Buddhism

## Learning Outcomes

The unit will enable the learner to:

♦ get an introduction to the theory of No-Self and its connection to other theories in Buddhism

♦ understand the importance of the theory of impermanence/ momentariness in our daily life

♦ get an exposition about the relation between Nirvana and other theories

♦ get an idea about the emancipatory potential of the Buddhist philosophy

## Prerequisites

Literally, Buddha is the one who has attained Bodhi. Bodhi means wisdom which is an ideal state / stage of intellectual and ethical perfection. This wisdom is achieved by human beings through purely human means; contemplation about one's own existence and the existence in general. That there is nothing permanent and ever-lasting is one of the most important lessons life teaches us. An actual contemplative life takes us to some fundamental realities of life: the impermanence of the individual self, the impermanence of the object and the transitoriness of every experience and life as a whole.

## Key themes

Momentariness, no-self, impermanence, Nirvana

# Discussion

The problem of the self has been crucial in Indian philosophy as much as in western philosophy. The problem is about the existence of the referent of the term 'I' in our daily sentences like 'I am conscious,' 'I am driving,' and 'I am studying.' Is there something 'I' in the actual sense?

The disagreement is not about the existence of the self but about this or that particular manner of determining its nature. Is the self simply the body (the sum total of our physical organs) or is it constituted by the cognitive faculties like knowing, thinking, understanding, etc.? Or, is it a bundle of all these mental and physical phenomena? or is it some (substance) other than all these? This is the controversy regarding the specific nature of the self which could not be reasonably raised unless the existence of the self was taken for granted.

Indian theories of the self are divided traditionally into two broad classes: 1) those who explain the self as an entity – a center – which assures a diachronic and synchronic identity. This group refers to an enduring substantial self (Atmavadins). 2) those who deny the existence of such a self, taking instead a 'modal' view of reality (Anatmavadins).

The orthodox Indian philosophers and the Jainas take the former view. Hence, even though they disagree on the nature and number of such selves, they are all non-reductionists of some sort about our identity. The Cārvāka school, as we learned in the previous chapter, argues that the self is identical to the body. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Saṃkhya-Yoga uphold a dualist conception of the self. They believe that the self is something distinct from the passing psychical states. They believe that the self is an eternal, unchanging reality and is an all-pervading like space (ākāsa).

## 2.4.1 Anatmavada (No-Self Theory)

Buddhism upholds Anatmavada, the 'No-Self theory.' It is also called Anatta (substanceless). It is the doctrine that in human beings there is no permanent, underlying substance that can be called the self or soul. Most Indian Buddhist philosophers including the various streams in it such as Theravadins, Vaibhaṣikas, Sautrantikas, Yogacarins and Svatantrika-Madhyamikas take the latter view.

The Buddhist view is a clear denial of reference to any single entity called 'I.' There is no fixed 'I.' Rather, an individual self is a just a bundle of impermanent psycho-physical elements connected over a period of time by causal relations. This is in sheer opposition to the Atman which is 'thickly' conceived and is a permanent entity, a controller and not subject to suffering in the Hindu philosophy. Most of the philosophers defend various forms of mind-body dualism after accepting a permanent self.

According to Buddhism, only the psycho-physical aggregates that compose an individual self over time is called the self. The absence of a permanent self and the impermanence (anicca) of all beings and entities are linked. Moreover, the absence of a permanent self (anatta), impermanence of all beings (anicca) and suffering (Dukkha) are the three characteristics of all existence. One gets the right understanding through recognition of these doctrines.

The fundamental point in Buddhism is

that if all the things in the world are imper-manent, our cravings and efforts to secure and protect them for ourselves or others are meaningless. As there is no self, we cannot crave or desire for anything. As the self is negated, all the narrow minded and selfish attempts we make in life necessarily vanish. The suffering which is caused by the cravings, desires and attachments will also end. Buddha teaches 'sarvam anityam' which means all things are transient.

## 2.4.2 Kshanikavada (Law of Momentariness)

Kshanikavada (Law of momentariness) is another important teaching in Buddhism. This says that both the mental and physical realities are subjected to constant flux. There is nothing enduring or lasting. The endurance we feel is happening only in language.

The theory of momentariness implies that there can be no persisting or persevering relation between any two entities, nor any persisting entities. Instead, they adopt an ontology of momentary events, each of which is causally effective, grouped into various patterns. As it is clear, the Theory of Dependent Origination is inherently connected with the Theory of Momentariness. It also needs to be emphasized that the Theory of Dependent Origination implies that it is not a single cause that brings about an effect; rather an effect is the result of multiple causes coming and working together. The totality of causes and conditions are very much discussed in the Buddhist schools of thought.

All the various streams of Buddhism do not hold a single theory of momentariness. They have differences and disagreements. Sarvastivada school and Sautrantikas hold different theories of momentariness.

Abhidharma Buddhism distinguishes reality into elements (dharmas) and its characteristics (laksana). According to this, an element's enduring essence or 'own nature' (svabhava) is conceptualized as the element's 'own characteristics' (svalaksana). However, this distinction is an approval of a quasi-substantialism. In other words, this distinction is in opposition to the dominant Buddhist notion of non-substantialism.

The Sautrantikas reject this theory as it goes against the Buddhist theory of 'no-self.' If a thing arises / originates from its 'own-nature,' it arises / originates from the self. Thus, the Sautrantikas uphold the dominant Buddhist doctrine of impermanence; existence is nothing but a series of successive and fleeting moments. As Roy Perret says: "A seed is just a series of such point-instants and the seed-series gives rise to the tree-series in the sense that the latter succeeds the former."

## 2.4.3 Nirvana

Nirvana is the stage of enlightenment in Buddhism which is attained when sufferings are ceased. Sufferings are ceased when cravings and desires are extinct. Nirvana is the cessation of sufferings, not the cessation of one's life. It is the cessation of the desires, attachments and cravings which keep us in sufferings. It is an enlightened state.

Nirvanva needs to be understood in relation to various other theories of Buddhism such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-Fold Path, the Theory of Momentariness and the theory of no-self. Suffering is annihilated or extinguished and Nirvana is attained only when one realizes that there is no binding self nor any permanent entity / object for which one craves. Nirvana is attained when one realizes the four noble truths and follows the Eight-Fold

Path.

## 2.4.4 Buddhism and Emancipation

Buddhism is conceived as an emancipatory philosophy / religion by a huge section of the population in India. Buddhism as a philosophy of emancipation was prominently propounded by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He followed the Buddhist teaching. Its rejection of the Vedantic ideas, priestly highhandedness and sacrificial rituals made a big impact on Ambedkar.

Ambedkar affirmed that Buddhism could improve the social status of the Dalits, the untouchables of the country. Ambedkar said: (in the hymns of the Rig Veda) "we see man's thoughts turned outwards, away from himself, to the world of the gods." Buddhism, according to Ambedkar, "directed man's search inwards to the potentiality hidden within himself."

Buddhism as an Indian philosophical school has made an impact on the world. It is practiced and propagated by various sections in the world due to its ethical concepts. It is thought of as a complete religion which ensures peace, love, brotherhood and love. It is considered as a philosophy of harmony which is against all types of violence. It becomes significant because of its intertwined categories, all of which are important in our daily life; sila (ethics), samadhi (meditation) and pragnya (wisdom).

## Recap

♦ Two categories of the theory of the self in Indian philosophy; Atmavadins and Anatmavadins

♦ Orthodox Indians philosophers and the Jainas are Atmavadins

♦ The Cārvāka school argues that the self is identical to the body

♦ Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Saṃkhya-Yoga uphold a dualist conception of the self

♦ The Buddhist view is that there is no fixed 'I'

♦ An individual self is a just a bundle of impermanent psycho-physical elements connected over a period of time by causal relations

♦ The idea that individual self is a bundle of impermanent psycho-physical elements is in sheer opposition to the idea of atman in Advaita philosophy

♦ Absence of a permanent self (Anatta), impermanence of all beings (Anicca) and suffering (Dukkha) are the three characteristics of all existence

# Objective Questions

1. Who are Atmavadins and Anatmavadins?
2. What does Kshanikavada (Law of Momentariness) say?
3. What does the Theory of Momentariness imply?
4. Does the Theory of Dependent Origination uphold that only one cause brings an effect?
5. Buddhism becomes significant because of its intertwined categories which are important in our daily life. What are they?
6. What is the main difference between Rig Veda and Buddhism for Ambedkar?
7. What does "Sarvam anityam" mean?

# Answers

1. Those who explain self as an enduring substantial self are atmavadins and those who deny any such substantial self are anatmavadins
2. It says nothing is enduring or lasting
3. There can be no persisting or persevering relation between any two entities, nor any persisting entities
4. No
5. Sila (ethics), samadhi (meditation) and pragnya (wisdom)
6. In Rig Veda, main thoughts are directed to God. But Buddhism is a search towards oneself
7. "All things are transient"

# Assignments

1. What is No-self theory?
2. What is the law of Momentariness?
3. Explain the theme 'Buddhism and emancipation.'

## Suggested Readings

1. Perrett. W. Roy. (2016). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy).

2. Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group

3. Gupta, Bina. (2012). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom*. Routledge.

# 3

# BLOCK

# Nyāya Vaiśeṣika

# The Nyāya Conception of Knowledge and Perception

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ get a general awareness of the importance of epistemology in Nyāya philosophy

♦ get exposed to the Nyāya conception of knowledge and its relation with Vaiśeṣika system

♦ be familiar with perception (pratyaksa), the first among the four pramānas of Nyāya epistemology

♦ get a glimpse of major classifications of perception

## Prerequisites

Knowledge and means of knowledge are important topics in both the Indian and Western philosophical discussions. How do we know something? What is the boundary of human knowledge? What are the means of acquiring knowledge? How can knowledge be made error-free? What causes errors in our knowledge? These are some of the main concerns philosophers have addressed when discussing epistemological issues. In dealing with the concept of knowledge, Nyāya epistemology also confronts these questions and attempts to provide a clear picture of what valid knowledge means and how that differs from invalid knowledge.

Samānatantra, Realistic, Nirvikalpaka, Savikalpaka, Laukika, Alaukika

## Discussion

Nyāya philosophy is one of the orthodox systems of Indian philosophy that gives importance to valid reasoning and constructing proper arguments. With this characteristic mark, it is associated with different names such as pramānashāstra – the science of logic and epistemology, anviksiki – the science of critical study, tarkashāstra – the science of reasoning, hetuvidyā – the science of causes and vādavidyā – the science of debate.

Like other orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, Nyāya philosophy also has both religious and philosophical ends. Its important concern was the removal of human sufferings that arose from ignorance of reality. To remove the ignorance, Nyaya offered different means of knowledge and believed that attainment of the right knowledge of reality leads to liberation. While philosophising, Nyāya gives prime importance to the theory of knowledge or epistemology rather than metaphysics.

Vaiśeṣika philosophy is closely allied with the teachings of Nyāya, and the exponents of both consider them as Samānatantra or allied philosophy. Even though both systems have a different origin in history, their relation is built upon the agreement they maintain in different subject matters. Both Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, with their epistemological and metaphysical teachings, constituted a pessimistic and realistic philosophy. They are pessimistic in the sense that both consider earthly life, which is full of suffering, as the bondage

of the soul. The suffering and bondage are caused by ignorance of reality, which can only be removed by the right knowledge.

Nyaya formulated a realistic character with a logical ground for their teachings. Realism in philosophy generally refers to the doctrine that the objects or things in the world exist independent of all minds. Nyāya takes this realistic position by considering the objects in the world as independent of all knowledge or experience. They establish a realistic position with utmost clarity offered by logic and critical thinking.

Even though both systems accepted their teachings mutually, there are certain differences which are to be noted. Vaiśeṣika does not accept all the four pramānas of Nyāya; instead, it accepts only perception (pratyaksa) and inference (anumāna). The other two pramānas of Nyāya- comparison (upamāna) and verbal testimony (shabda) are reduced into inference. In the same manner, Nyāya accepts sixteen categories, including the seven categories of Vaiśeṣika, which are reduced into a single category of Nyāya called prameya or the knowable.

Regarding the origin and historical development of the Nyāya School, we cannot pinpoint a definite time and place in history. However, scholars point out that it emerged in the Pre-Buddhist period with the initiative of scholars to formulate canons of arguments in their philosophical debates. Their important purpose was

to train the people in the art of argumentation and teach them with correct rules of debate. Later on, it developed as a school with the works of Gautama, who wrote the foundational text of this system –Nyāya-sūtra.

Gautama, who is also named Akshapada, is considered as the founder of the Nyāya system in the sense that he systematised Nyāya philosophy with his text Nyāya-sūtra, which is divided into five books that contain two sections each. Later, the system developed with Vātsyāyana's Nyāya-bhāsya, a commentary on Nyāya-sūtra on which Uddyotakara wrote his Vārtika. The other important works of Nyāya philosophy are Nyāya-kusumānjali of Udayana and Nyāya-manjari of Jayanta.

## 3.1.1 Nyāya Conception of Knowledge

Nyāya engages with the questions about how we understand things through evidence. They reach a practical standpoint that distinguishes knowledge (jñāna) from the subject and object. In their view, knowledge reveals or shows objects (arthaprakāsho buddhih), like a flashlight highlighting things with its light. However, it is important to note that Nyāya knowledge does not automatically reveal itself, unlike in Vedanta and Mimāṁsā philosophy.

## 3.1.2 Valid and Invalid Knowledge

Nyāya primarily classifies knowledge into valid and invalid. Valid knowledge gives the presentational knowledge or direct knowledge of the object which is original in character. According to this philosophy, knowledge in order to be valid must correspond with reality. Invalid

knowledge is not direct knowledge of something, but rather a representation or reproduction of already gained knowledge. Imagine you see a ripe apple on a table. Your direct perception of the apple's colour, shape, and smell is an example of valid knowledge according to Nyāya. This knowledge corresponds to the real presence of the apple. In contrast, if you later describe the apple's features to a friend, your recounting is an example of invalid knowledge since it is not a direct perception but a representation of what you already perceived.

Nyāya establishes both validity and invalidity of knowledge by extraneous conditions. That is, knowledge, in itself, is neither valid nor invalid: rather it is neutral in character and it attains its validity and invalidity from extraneous conditions. They completely deny the self-evident validity of knowledge. So, in order to establish validity and invalidity Nyāya advocates paratha pramānyavāda (extrinsic validity) and paratah Apramānyavāda (extrinsic invalidity). They view that truth and falsity arise only after knowledge has already arisen. Nyāya establishes all knowledge with four conditions. They are,

a) The subject who knows or the pramātā

b) The object of knowledge or the prameya

c) The means of cognition or pramana

d) The resultant valid knowledge or the prama

Nyāya describes valid knowledge as the right apprehension of an object (yathārthānubhavaḥ). For instance, when we have a visual perception of a bottle on the table is true cognition because it is presented to us directly as it is and we are

certain about the truth of our cognition. Nyaya offers four valid means to attain the right knowledge. They are perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumanā), comparison (upamāna) and verbal testimony (shabda). These pramanas are the operative cause of valid knowledge in normal circumstances.

Nyāya exposes invalid knowledge as the apprehension of what does not exist in a particular object. For instance, when we perceive a snake in a rope, we apprehend the quality of the snakeness in the rope, which is actually not present in the rope. Nyāya classifies invalid knowledge into four:

a) Memory (smṛti) – Nyāya considers memory as invalid because of its representative character. In memory, we have the remembered object which is not directly present at that moment.

b) Doubt (saṁshaya) – In Nyāya philosophy doubt is considered as invalid because it produces uncertainty or lack of conviction in knowledge. In such moments of doubt, we are invested with two or more alternatives of the same object of knowledge.

c) Error (viparyaya) – According to Nyāya, an error is a misapprehension. The error happens due to non-correspondence. It is invalid because in error there is no true cognition of the object. For instance, when you see a rope and mistakenly conceive it as a snake, you have error.

d) Hypothetical reasoning (tarka) – In Nyāya philosophy, hypothetical reasoning is invalid because of its non-productivity. According to it, hypothetical reasoning does not add any new knowledge. It is just like arguing that if there were no fire, there cannot be smoke.

Now let us discuss in detail Perception (pratyakṣa), the first means of valid knowledge in Nyaya philosophy

# 3.1.3 Perception or (Pratyakṣa)

Perception in philosophy has been variously discussed in both Western and Indian traditions. The philosophers addressed the relevant questions related to the foundational role of perception in formulating sensory knowledge and the nature of perceptual content. In the West, the Greek thinkers seriously engaged in discussions related to perception, which was further developed by rationalists and empiricists. In the current debates too, perception and its various possibilities are taken into consideration with special attention.

In Nyāya philosophy, Gautama defined perception as "indriyārtha-sannikarsotpannam Jñānam avyapadeshya avyabhichari vyavasayatmakam pratyakasam". According to this definition, perception involves several factors: the senses (indriyas), the objects (artha), the contact between the senses and objects (sannikarsha), and the resulting knowledge (jñānam). This definition does not cover yogic and divine perception, which occur without requiring any intermediary means of perception. To address this, Vishvanātha provided a more precise definition of perception as "Jñānākaranakam Jñānam Pratyaksam," signifying 'immediate or direct cognition that does not rely on other cognitive processes as tools or means.'

Generally, pratyakṣa is identified with sense perception that uses the five sense organs such as skin, ear, nose, eyes and tongue that identify the five characters of knowledge: tactual, auditory, olfactory, visual and gustatory. However, in Nyāya philosophy, perception also includes immediate or direct apprehension with or without senses. Apart from the senses,

Nyāya identifies a definite place for the mind (Manas) in the act of perception. The mind is the central organ that makes sensation possible; in other words, sense organs cannot operate on their objects without the mind. It is the mediator between the self and the sense-organs. Vātsyāyana includes manas under the category of senses and counts it as the sixth sense organ. For him, it is the inner sense that perceives feelings, cognition and desires.

Nyāya philosophy identifies two stages in perception. The first stage is called indeterminate (Nirvikalpaka) and the second stage is called determinate (Savikalpaka). The indeterminate perception can be conceived as the starting point of all knowledge in which we have a bare awareness of the object of knowledge. In the strict sense, we cannot consider the perception at this level as cognizable, or that produces knowledge. Imagine waking up in a dark room and seeing a vague shape in front of you. At this point, you are aware that there is something, but you cannot quite make out what it is. This is similar to the indeterminate stage in perception, according to Nyāya philosophy – a preliminary awareness without distinct knowledge.

At this stage, we are unable to distinguish perceived objects from other objects or form connections with any other objects. Radhakrishnan describes the indeterminate perception as "undifferentiated non-relational consciousness, free from the work of assimilation and discrimination, analysis and synthesis." It creates the material from which the determinate perception is formed. However, this division can be observed only in thought and not in reality.

On the other hand, the determinate (Savikalpaka) is the perception in the later stage where we have more clarity than the former. It entails the knowledge of the genus to which the perceived objects belong. At this stage, we have a clear and distinct knowledge of the particular object that enables us to distinguish it from the other members of the same class. For instance, think of looking at a flower. In the determinate stage of perception, you not only recognise the flower as a distinct object but also identify it as a type of plant with specific features. You can distinguish it from other plants and understand its place in the broader category of flowers. This is similar to the determinate stage in Nyāya philosophy – a level of perception that provides more comprehensive knowledge about the object and its characteristics. Radhakrishnan characterises the determinate perception as "mediate, differentiated, relational mode of consciousness involving the results of assimilation and discrimination."

Vātsyāyana makes the division with the determinate and indeterminate concerning the name of the object. When the object is perceived with a name it is a determinate perception; otherwise, it is indeterminate. Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya, one of the eminent scholars of Nyāya philosophy, conceived indeterminate perception as the non-relational apprehension of an object devoid of any characteristics such as name, genus, differentia etc. Another important scholar of Nyāya philosophy, Annaṁ Bhaṭṭa describes indeterminate perception as the immediate apprehension of the object and its qualities. However, in this apprehension, no relation is identified between the object and the qualities of the object.

Another way of classifying perception as ordinary (laukika) and extraordinary (alaukika) perception. Nyāya scholars establish this distinction based on how the senses interact with their objects. In ordinary perception, the interaction between the senses and the object occurs in the

usual manner. Conversely, when the interaction takes place in an unusual manner, we experience extraordinary perception. In such cases, perception occurs through an extraordinary medium.

Ordinary perception is further categorised into external(bāhya) and internal(mānasa) perception. External perception occurs when the external sense organs come into contact with objects outside the body. It can be classified into five types: visual, auditory, gustatory, tactual, and olfactory perception. On the other hand, internal perception refers to the perception of the mind. It occurs when the mind comes into contact with mental states such as affection, pleasure, pain, aversion, cognition etc.

Nyāya accepts three kinds of Extraordinary (alaukika) perception – sāmānyalakṣaṇa, jñānalakṣaṇa and yogaja. In sāmānyalakṣaṇa perception, we perceive the universals that which Nyāya considered as separately real. How do we perceive the class character or the universal which cannot be done by any of the senses? In Nyāya's view, when we perceive the particular that belongs to a universal class, we also perceive essential characters that are shared by all the members of that class. For instance, when we perceive a tree, we also perceive the treeness present in all the trees without which we cannot recognise the tree. This perception of treeness is the medium through which I perceive all trees or the class of

trees. In other words, to perceive the class of tree is to perceive all trees separately in which the treeness is inherent.

The second kind of extraordinary perception is called jñānalakṣaṇa in which perception of an object takes place through the previous knowledge of itself. Here the object is not directly presented to any of the senses, but revived in memory because of the past sensations. Scholars consider a few instances such as ice looks cold, tea looks hot, stone looks hard, grass looks soft etc., where jñānalakṣaṇa works. If we take the first instance, the coolness of ice can be perceived only by touching and not by seeing. Here the visual perception of ice revives in memory the idea of coolness by association, which was perceived in the past through touch. So, the sensation of coolness resulting from the vision is a jñānalakṣaṇa perception.

The third kind of extraordinary perception is called yogaja. It is an extra sensory perception that goes beyond the limit of time and space of the senses. Scholars view it as the intuitive and immediate perception of all objects in the past, present and future. They also compare it with the perception of the yogis who have extra sensory talents attained by meditation. C. D. Sharma synonymises yogaja with kevalajñāna of the Jainas, the Bodhi of the Buddhist, the kaivalya of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Aparokṣānubhūti of the Vedāntins.

# Recap

♦ The science of logic and epistemology

♦ Attainment of the right knowledge of reality leads to liberation

♦ Samānatantra or similar philosophy

- ♦ Arthaprakāsho buddhih

- ♦ Paratha pramānyavāda (extrinsic validity)

- ♦ Paratah Apramānyavāda (extrinsic invalidity)

- ♦ Nyāya describes valid knowledge as the right apprehension of an object (yathārthānubhavaḥ)

- ♦ Nyāya exposes invalid knowledge as the apprehension of what does not exist in a particular object

- ♦ "Indriyārtha-sannikarsotpannam Jñānam avyapadeshya avyabhichari vyavasayatmakam pratyakasam"

- ♦ Two stages in perception: indeterminate (nirvikalpaka) and determinate (savikalpaka)

- ♦ perception is classified as ordinary (laukika) and extraordinary (alaukika)

## Objective Questions

1. What are the four pramānas accepted by Nyāya?

2. How many pramānas are accepted by Vaiśeṣika?

3. How many categories are accepted by Nyāya philosophy?

4. Who is considered as the Founder of the Nyāya system?

5. How does Nyāya conceive knowledge?

6. What is the criterion that Nyāya proposes for the validity of knowledge?

7. What are the four conditions proposed by Nyāya?

8. What are the four kinds of invalid knowledge proposed by Nyāya?

9. What are the factors involved in perception, according to the definition given by Gautama?

10. How does Vishvanātha define perception?

11. What are the two stages in Perception according, to Nyāya philosophy?

12. What are the three kinds of extraordinary perception accepted by Nyāya Philosophy?

# Answers

1. Perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumanā), comparison (upamāna) and verbal testimony (shabda)

2. Two

3. Sixteen categories

4. Gautama

5. The revelation or manifestation of objects (arthaprakāsho buddhih)

6. Knowledge must correspond with reality

7. The subject who knows or the pramātā, The object of knowledge or the prameya, The means of cognition or pramana, The resultant valid knowledge or the prama

8. Memory (smṛti), Doubt (saṁshaya), Error (viparyaya), and Hypothetical reasoning (tarka)

9. Senses (indriyas), the objects (artha), the sense-object contact (sannikarsha) and the knowledge produced by this contact (jñānam)

10. Jñānākaranakam Jñānam Pratyaksam

11. Indeterminate perception (nirvikalpaka) and determinate perception(savikalpaka)

12. sāmānyalakṣaṇa, jñānalakṣaṇa and yogaja

# Assignments

1. Explain the epistemology of Nyāya

2. Elucidate the four kinds of invalid knowledge proposed by Nyāya

# Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# 2 UNIT

# Nyāya Theory of Inference

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, the learner will be:

- ♦ exposed to the Nyāya conception of inferential knowledge
- ♦ familiar with the Indian syllogistic formation in Nyāya philosophy
- ♦ acquainted with the major classifications of inference
- ♦ introduced to the fallacies of inference

## Prerequisites

Inference is generally considered as an intellectual process to arrive at a conclusion based solely on already known knowledge. To arrive at inferential knowledge, we mainly depend on our background knowledge and observational abilities. We make inferences based on many sources in daily life, such as pictures, sound, etc. For instance, when we hear the dog barking continuously at night, we infer that somebody has arrived or something unusual is happening on the premises.

Apart from this everyday use of inference, various subjects use inference as a method to derive truths on different subject matters. Scientists use inference to derive new theories by footing on the existing concepts or ideas. Inferences are also used in statistics to arrive at different conclusive facts from the collected data. In philosophy, we consider inference as an important source in conceptual formation. The philosophers, especially the logicians, had developed inference as a sharp tool to derive correct conclusions from already known knowledge.

## Key themes

sādhya, Paksa, Hetu, Vyāpti jñāna, Hetvābhāsa

## Discussion

In our daily lives, we observe certain things or events that are related, from the perception of which we infer the existence of the other. In other words, from the knowledge of the sign, we get the knowledge of the object possessing it. Such kinds of knowledge that arise indirectly or by mediate means come under inference or anumāna. Imagine you are walking in the park, and you see dark clouds gathering in the sky. Based on your past experiences, you infer that rain might be on its way. Here, the gathering of dark clouds serves as a sign, and your inference of impending rain is drawn from your knowledge of this sign. This illustrates how inference allows us to make educated guesses about the world around us, even when we do not have direct evidence of a particular event.

Inference as a source of knowledge plays an important role in the epistemological tradition of Indian philosophy. With the development of Nyāya philosophy, it got more attention in the field of Indian logic. Nyāya considered inferential knowledge as after knowledge - knowledge derived from some other kind of knowledge. Vatsyayana defined inference as something that is preceded by perception. He clearly stated that every inference is followed with the presence of perception; that is, from the perceived, with the help of inferential knowledge, we arrive at the unperceived. For instance, we perceive smoke on the hill and from that perceptual knowledge; we arrive at the knowledge of the presence of the fire on the hill.

## 3.2.1 Constituents of Inference

In any inference, there must not be less than three propositions and not more than three terms. Equivalent to the major, minor, and middle terms of the syllogism in traditional logic, the Nyāya inference contains pakṣa or the minor term, sādhya or the major term and hetu or the middle term. Pakṣa is conceived as the subject where the character is inferred or that which possess the inferable character. What we arrive at through inference or the resultant knowledge or the object of inference is called sādhya and hetu is the mark that indicates the presence of the inferential character.

Scholars explain the relation between sādhya, pakṣa and hetu with the example of smoke and fire. We know that smoke is invariably related to fire. If we see smoke in the hill, we can infer that there is fire. The inferential knowledge of the presence of fire is inferred in the hill with the perceptual knowledge of the smoke. In this example,

The major term sādhya (which is wanted to be proved or established) - Fire

The minor term pakṣa (where the character is inferred) - Hill

The middle term hetu (the reason or the ground for inferring) - Smoke

In Nyāya inference, the relation

between the terms is established through vyāpti jñāna, which is considered as the nerve of inference. In the above-stated example of smoke and fire, the invariable relation between smoke and fire is the vyāpti jñāna. It refers to the knowledge of the invariable association or the universal relation between the sign and the inferred character. In Nyāya's view, vyāpti is established with the experience of the relation between two things that are not contradicted in any occasion. On this ground of vyāpti, the middle term leads to the knowledge of the inferred object. Thus, every inference logically depends on the knowledge of vyāpti.

Nyāya philosophy identifies five major characteristics of the middle term:

1) Pakṣadharmatā – It shows the presence of the middle term in the minor term. In the example of smoke and fire the presence of the smoke in the hill is the pakṣa dharmatā jñāna.

2) Sapakṣasattva – It shows the presence of the middle term in all positive instances in which the major term is present.

3) Vipakṣasattva - It shows the absence of the middle term in all negative instances in which the major term is absent.

4) Abādhita – It refers that the middle term must not be related to contradictory and absurd objects like the coolness of fire.

5) Aviruddha – It shows that the middle term must be qualified by the absence of contradictory reasons

## 3.2.2 Classifications of Inference

Nyāya gives three different classifications of inference in which the first classification give stress on the purpose of inferential knowledge. Every inference is done either to make clarity on certain subject matters related with the self or demonstrating truth to other persons. Based on these two purposes, inference can be divided as

a) Svārthanumana

b) Parārthanumana

Svārthanumana is done for one's own sake. It involves a psychological process that does not necessarily require formal proof to be considered valid. Here, individual beliefs and convictions hold significance, and thus explicit language is not always needed to convey inferential knowledge. On the other hand, parārthanumana is done for the sake of others. It aims to convince others with certain formal proofs. It is demonstrative inference, which has a syllogistic form in Nyāya philosophy. In order to convince others, parārthanumana has to be presented in language with clarity and precision.

Nyāya presents parārthanumana in a syllogistic format that has five members or avayavas. In this five-membered syllogism, Nyāya makes a blend of formal and material logic. They can be explained with the help of the same example of smoke and fire.

1) Pratijñā – The logical statement which is to be proved (this hill has fire)

2) Hetu – The reason for the establishment of the proposition (because there is smoke)

3) Udāharaṇa – The universal concomitance together with example (where ever there is smoke there is fire, eg. A furnace)

4) Upanaya – The application of the

universal concomitance in the present case of experience (this hill has smoke which is invariably associated with fire)

5) Nigamana – The conclusion derived from the preceding premises (therefore this hill has fire)

In the Western tradition, we commonly encounter both mediate and immediate inferences. When formulating theories of inference, Western thought distinctly differentiates between deductive and inductive reasoning, a distinction not typically present in Indian logic. In contrast, Nyāya philosophy acknowledges the integral connection between both deduction and induction. They define inference as a process that does not move from the universal to the particular or vice versa; rather, it moves from the particular to the particular through the universal.

Based on causation and coexistence, Gautama divides inference into pūrvavat, sheṣavat and sāmānyatodṛṣṭa. Among these three, the first two inferences are formed based on causation, and the last is formed based on mere coexistence.

In the pūrvavat inference, we infer the unperceived effect from the perceived cause. Here, the perception of the cause led to the inference of the effect. For instance, the perception of dark clouds will lead to the inference of future rain. On the other hand, in the sheṣavat inference, we infer the unperceived cause from the perceived effect. Here, the perception of the effect leads to the inference of the cause. For instance, from the perception of the swift muddy flooded water in the river, we infer the past rain.

Apart from the causal relation, we can also form inference from the mutual co-existence. Such kind of inference comes under the title sāmānyatodṛṣṭa. It is generally considered as an inference made by some observed points of similarity between different objects of experience. It is similar to an analogy in which we compare things that have similar characteristics based on the relation between the two. For instance, you notice that every time you water the plants in your garden, they flourish. Similarly, when your neighbours water their plants, they also flourish. From these observations of similar outcomes in both scenarios, you can infer that watering plants helps them grow better. This is an example of "sāmānyatodṛṣṭa," where you infer a general principle (watering plants helps them grow) based on the observed similarity between different instances.

Another classification of Nyāya inference is made based on the different methods of establishing vyāpti or universal invariable relation between the major and middle terms. On this basis, the inference is classified as kevalānvayi, kevala-vyatireki and anvaya-vyatireki.

When the middle term is always positively related to the major term, we have kevalānvayi inference. In this type of inference, there are no negative instances. The knowledge of the vyāpti between the middle and the major terms is arrived at only through the method of agreement in presence. The following argument can be considered an example of kevalānvayi:

All knowable objects are nameable

The flower-vase is a knowable object

Therefore, the flower-vase is nameable.

In the above given example of kevalānvayi, the major premise is the universal affirmative proposition in which the predicate 'nameable' is affirmed of all knowable objects. This universal affirmative proposition gives only the accounts of positive instances, which are arrived at by the simple enumeration of the posi-

tive instances of agreement in presence. In the kevala-vyatireki inference, the middle term is only negatively related to the major term and does not include any positive instances. Here the vyāpti is arrived only through the method of agreement in absence. To state this principle Radhakrishnan gives the example of the soul present in animate and inanimate things, which can be stated as follows:

All beings that possess animal functions have souls

Chairs and tables have no animal functions

Therefore, chairs and tables have no souls

In anvaya-vyatireki inference, the middle term is both positively and negatively related to the major term. Here the universal relation (vyāpti) is established in respect of both their presence and absence. That is, the universal proposition is affirmative when it is resulted from positive instances of agreement in presence and negative when the inference is based on negative instances of agreement in absence. It becomes clear from the following examples:

All things which have smoke have fire

This kitchen has smoke

Therefore, this kitchen has fire.

Here the middle-term smoke is positively related to the major term fire.

No non-fiery things have smoke

The hill is smoky

Therefore, the hill is fiery.

Here the middle term smoke is negatively related to the major term fire.

# 3.2.3 Fallacies of inference (Hetvābhāsa)

The fallacies admitted by Nyāya are all material fallacies that arise due to defective reasoning. In Nyāya philosophy, the validity of inference rests upon the strength of the hetu or reason; if the reason is flawed, the entire inference becomes invalid. The defect of the middle term is the real cause of error in Nyāya, that is, the middle term appears to be a reason for inferring something but not a valid reason. Nyāya accepts five kinds of fallacies, they are:

## 1. Asiddha or Sādhyasama

This fallacy is known as the 'fallacy of unproved middle.' It refers to a situation where the middle term, which is crucial for establishing a connection between the major and minor terms, lacks proper validation and remains an unsupported assumption. There are primarily three forms of fallacies within this asiddha category: aśraysiddha, svarūpāsiddha, and vyāpyatvāsiddha.

In the case of aśraysiddha, the middle term lacks a valid locus point. One of the essential conditions for a valid middle term is that it must be present within the minor term. The minor term serves as the grounding point for the middle term's connection. However, if the minor term itself is unreal or lacks proper existence, the middle term cannot establish a meaningful relationship with it. This situation can be elucidated through a well-known example: the sky lotus is fragrant because it fits in the class of lotus. In this example, the minor term 'sky lotus' is unreal, so the middle term 'class of lotus' cannot belong in it.

In svarūpāsiddha, the middle term

cannot be proved to be real in relation to the minor term because of its very nature. For instance, sound is eternal,because it is visible. Here the middle term 'visible' is wrongly associated with the minor term sound. In vyāpyatvāsiddha, the middle term is conditional and not universally related to the major term. There is an absence of the invariable relation (vyāpti), which is the nerve of the inference. Imagine you know that "all students with glasses are intelligent." Now, let us say you also know that "Alex wears glasses." Can you infer that "Alex is intelligent"? In this case, the middle term "wearing glasses" is not universally related to the major term "intelligence." Not all individuals who wear glasses are necessarily intelligent. This absence of a consistent relation between wearing glasses and intelligence means that the inference lacks the necessary invariable connection (vyāpti) and may not be valid.

### 2. Sābhichāra or Anaikāntika

Savyabhichāra is the fallacy caused by the irregular middle, which leads to the opposite conclusions; that is, from the middle term, we can derive both the existence and the non-existence of the major term. Nyāya explains Savyabhichāra in three kinds; they are sādhārana, asādhārana and anupasamhāri. The sādhārana or the ordinary fallacy occurs when the middle term is too wide and make its presence in both positive and negative instances.

In asādhārana or the extraordinary, the middle term is too narrow and makes the presence only in the particular instance, neither in the positive nor in the negative instances. It does not fulfil the condition that the middle term must be present in the sapakṣa or positive instances. The

third kind savyabhichāra is anupasamhāri or the indefinite. Here the middle term is related to a minor term that stands not for any definite individual or class of individuals, but indefinitely for all objects.

### 3. Satpratipaksa

In Satpratipaksa the middle term is contradicted by another middle term or one inference is contradicted by another inference. Here, both have equal force, so, neither of them gets predominance.

### 4. Bādhita

In bādhita, inference is contradicted by a non-inferential source of knowledge. In other words, here the inference is contradicted by some other pramānas other than the inference. In such inferences, the middle term fails to prove the major term, which is disproved by another stronger source of knowledge.

### 5. Viruddha

Viruddha is considered as the fallacy of self-contradiction. When viruddha occurs in an inference, instead of proving the existence of the major term in the minor term ,it proves the contradiction of the same; that is, it disproves the very position which is meant to be proved. It happens when a middle term exists, not in the major term but in those in which the major does not exist. As a result, it contradicts the pratijñā or logical statement, which is to be proved. For example, if one argues that sound is eternal because it is caused, then it commits the fallacy of viruddha. In this example, the middle term 'caused' does not prove the major term 'eternity of the sound;' rather it proves its non-eternity because everything that is caused will perish.

# Recap

- Mediate and indirect knowledge

- In any inference there must not be less than three propositions and not more than three terms

- Paksa or the minor term, sādhya or the major term and hetu or the middle term

- Paksa is conceived as the subject where the character is inferred

- The resultant knowledge or the object of inference is called sādhya

- Hetu is the mark that indicates the presence of the inferential character

- Vyāpti jñāna refers to the knowledge of the invariable association of the middle term with the major term

- Pakṣadharmatā, Sapakṣasattva, Vipakṣasattva, Abādhita, Aviruddha

- Svārthanumana and Parārthanumana

- Five-membered syllogism

- Pūrvavat, sheṣavat and sāmānyatodṛṣṭa

- Kevalānvayi, kevala-vyatireki and anvaya-vyatireki

- Asiddha or Sādhyasama, Savyabhichāra or Anaikāntika, Satpratipaksa, Bādhita, Viruddha

# Objective Questions

1. How does Vatsyayana define inference?

2. What are the three terms identified by Nyāya in inference?

3. How does Nyāya describe vyāpti jñāna in their philosophy?

4. What is meant by Pakṣadharmatā?

5. What is meant by sapakṣasattva?

6. What is meant by Svārthanumana?

7. What are the five members involved in the syllogistic format of parārthanumana?

8. How does Gautama describe pūrvavat inference?

9. How does Gautama describe sheṣavat inference?

10. What is the reason for the inferential fallacy in Nyāya?

11. What are the major fallacies accepted by Nyāya philosophy?

## Answers

1. It is the knowledge preceded by perception

2. Pakṣa or the minor term, sādhya or the major term and hetu or the middle term

3. The universal relation between the sign and the inferred character

4. The presence of the middle term in the minor term

5. The presence of the middle term in all positive instances in which the major term is present

6. Inference done for the one's own sake

7. Pratijñā, Hetu, Udāharaṇa, Upanaya, Nigamana

8. It is an inference done from the perceived cause to the unperceived effect

9. 9. It is an inference done from the perceived effect to the unperceived cause

10. Defective reasoning

11. Asiddha or Sādhyasama, Savyabhichāra or Anaikāntika, Satpratipaksa, Bādhita, Viruddha

## Assignments

1. Write an essay on the constituents of inference in Nyāya philosophy.

2. Write an essay on the fallacies of inference in Nyāya philosophy.

## Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# 3 UNIT

# Upamana, Sabda and Anyathakhyativada of Nyāya

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, the learner will:

♦ get exposed to the Nyāya's conception of upamāna

♦ be familiar with the different factors involved in upamāna

♦ be acquainted with the verbal testimony or sabda as a valid means of knowledge

♦ get a general awareness of the theory of error in Nyāya philosophy

## Prerequisites

In the Western philosophical tradition, knowledge is often categorised into intellectual and sensory knowledge. This division has roots in the philosophy of Plato and has continued onwards. Plato emphasised rational or conceptual knowledge as true knowledge, while he regarded sensory knowledge as less reliable due to its ever-changing nature. On the other hand, Indian philosophical traditions present a diverse range of views on epistemology. Different schools within this tradition vary in terms of the number of accepted pramānas (means of knowledge). For instance, the Cārvāka system acknowledges only perception as a valid means of knowledge, while the Mimāṁsāka School of Kumārila recognises six pramānas. Nyaya philosophy, however, acknowledges four pramānas and this discussion will specifically focus on upamāna and sabda as two of those pramānas.

## Key themes

Upamiti, Vaidika, Laukika, Anyatha

## Discussion

In the preceding units, we have extensively explored Nyāya's understanding of perception (pratyaksa) and inference (anumāna) as reliable means of knowledge. In addition to these two pramānas, Nyāya philosophy also recognizes two more valid sources of knowledge: comparison (upamāna) and verbal testimony (Sabda). This unit will not only engage in these two means but also shed light on Nyāya's theory of error. By engaging in these pramānas and understanding the theory of error, we can gain a better understanding of the epistemological principles upheld by Nyāya philosophy.

### 3.3.1 Upamāna

Upamāna, or comparison, serves as a method to attain valid knowledge about something based on its resemblance or similarity to a previously known object. However, it is important to note that mere comparison or similarity, whether complete, partial, or significant, does not automatically generate valid knowledge (upamiti). In cases of complete resemblance, no new knowledge arises; for example, we would not state that a crow on a banyan tree is similar to a crow on a house roof. Similarly, in instances of partial resemblance, valid knowledge is not obtained, and conclusions drawn based on such similarities might be incorrect. For instance, deducing that both mango and guava trees are alike due to a few shared traits is not a valid inference. Even when the resemblance is considerable, the knowledge acquired might not necessarily be valid.

Nyāya Philosophy considers upamāna as the third kind of independent source of valid knowledge. The knowledge derived from upamāna is called upamiti, which is the knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation. In this kind of knowledge, some authority may have already spoken about an unknown object with certain similarities with a known object. If a person who sees the unknown object, recollects its descriptions expressed by the authority from his memory and recognizes its similarities with the known object and he himself assumes its class, he has reached the conclusion of the class of the unknown object through the knowledge of the relation between the word and the denotation of the authority.

Four factors are necessarily involved in the knowledge derived from upamāna; they are:

1. The authoritative statement from a person

2. The perception of similarity

3. Recollection of descriptive statement given by the authority

4. The resulting knowledge or upamiti

The word upamāna in its etymological roots refers to the resemblance between two things. The word upa means resem-

blance or similarity and mana means knowledge. It is the knowledge derived from comparison. The famous example that scholars used to describe upamāna can be illustrated as following: A man who does not know a gavaya (wild cow) heard that there is a wild animal called gavaya that has certain similarities with the cow. When this man goes to the forest and accidentally come across that animal in the forest and recognises its similarities with the cow from his memory and assumes that it is the gavaya. Here this recognition or knowledge arose due to comparison or upamāna.

However, it is important to note that Buddhists, Sāṅkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and Jaina do not recognise upamāna as an independent pramāna. Buddhists reduced upamāna to perception and testimony. In their view, upamāna recognised by Nyāya does not produce anything new other than what is produced from perception and testimony. Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika reduced upamāna to inference. For them, upamiti is not different from the knowledge produced from inference. Jaina philosophy reduced upamāna to recognition or prathyabhijñā. Apart from these, Mīmāṁsākas recognised it as independent pramānas but differed from Nyāya in various ways.

## 3.3.2 Sabda or Verbal Testimony

In Nyāya philosophy, sabda or verbal testimony is considered the fourth type of valid knowledge. Within Nyāya, the logical complexities associated with generating knowledge through sabda are thoroughly examined. Engaging with the same will give an idea of how sabda or verbal testimony becomes an independent pramāna in Nyāya philosophy. The literal interpretation of sabda refers to knowledge obtained from words or sentences. However, this does not imply that all words or sentences are capable of generating knowledge. According to Nyāya, verbal testimony becomes valid when it stems from a trustworthy source. Nyāya outlines two key characteristics that define trustworthiness. Firstly, the individual considered trustworthy must possess knowledge of the truth, and secondly, they must be able to effectively communicate this knowledge to others.

The above-mentioned part only fulfils half of the requirement needed for attaining knowledge through sabda. A sentence or statement from a trustworthy person is not sufficient in itself to give any knowledge of things. In other words, the mere perception of words or sentences does not produce knowledge. It is only when one perceives the words and understands their meaning without any defect does knowledge become part of it. To make it more precise, we can identify three main steps in the process of attaining knowledge through sabda:

1. The perception of a sentence or proposition from a trustworthy person

2. Understanding of the meaning of the sentence

3. The resultant knowledge of the objects or things

Later Naiyayikas identify two kinds of sabda or verbal testimony, they are:

1. Vaidika or the scriptura

2. Laukika or the secular

Vaidika is identified with the words of God. In the Naiyayikas' view, Vedas have the status of vaidika and are considered as the creation of God, thus remain infallible. In other words, the scriptural testimonies do not require any conditions to prove

their validity. It is true by its very nature. On the other hand, laukika or secular testimony is not valid by its very nature. They are the testimonies of human beings and cannot be trusted as we trust the Vedas unconditionally. They can both be true and false. So, while accepting the laukika one must make sure that it proceeds from a trustworthy person.

# 3.3.3 Theory of Error or Anyathakhyativada

Validity and invalidity of knowledge are significant matters of discussion in Indian Philosophy. Both these subjects are closely aligned with the metaphysical and epistemological positions adopted by each system. Nyāya developed the theory of error known as anyathakhyativada in relation to the realist position developed in metaphysics and epistemology.

Given Nyāya philosophy's realism, they regard every perception as an awareness of something that truly exists. In their view, worldly objects possess distinct and independent existence, and errors arise when an object is mistakenly perceived as something else. The fundamental cause of errors, according to Nyāya, lies in the subject's misplacement or misapprehension.

For Nyāya, error is due to the misapprehension of an object as another object and calls it as anyathakhyativada. The word anyatha means elsewhere or else wise and error arises in the apprehension of something that exists somewhere else. That is,

the presented object is perceived as something else and the represented object exists elsewhere. Jaina logicians and Kumārila take a similar position concerning the notion of error in their philosophy.

The classic example frequently used to illustrate anyathakhyativada is the perception of a shell as silver. In this scenario, one observes a shiny white object and immediately labels it as silver. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the object is actually a shell. This case demonstrates how error arises from a faulty judgment caused by mischaracterisation. The mistaken belief of encountering silver where it does not truly exist is a result of flawed cognition. This example highlights that the root of error does not lie within the object itself but rather in the way it is perceived and interpreted.

Nyāya thinkers ground their theory of error on a solid foundation of objective reality. Their premise is that something that does not exist cannot be perceived, and consequently, a non-existent entity cannot generate any form of cognition. This principle extends to their development of the theory of error within their philosophical framework. Hence, the potential for flawed cognition arises solely in the presence of actual objects. In simpler terms, the mistaken perception of a shell as silver becomes possible only due to the actual presence of the shell, which possesses certain shared qualities with silver.

# Recap

♦ Resemblance or similarity to another thing earlier known

♦ Upamiti is the knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation

- ♦ Authoritative statement from a person

- ♦ Perception of similarity

- ♦ Recollection of descriptive statement given by the authority

- ♦ Buddhists reduced upamāna to perception and testimony

- ♦ Sāṅkhya and Vaiśesika reduced upamāna to inference

- ♦ Jaina philosophy reduced upamāna to recognition or prathyabhijñā

- ♦ Vaidika or the scriptural

- ♦ Laukika or the secular

- ♦ Misplacement or misapprehension from the part of the subject

- ♦ All errors are subjective

- ♦ Anyatha means elsewhere or else wise

## Objective Questions

1. What is meant by upamiti?

2. What are the four factors necessarily involved in the knowledge derived from upamāna?

3. How do the Buddhists treat upamāna in their epistemology?

4. How do Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika treat upamāna in their epistemology?

5. How does Jaina conceive upamāna?

6. What is the literal meaning of sabda?

7. What are the two main characteristic features to qualify someone as trust worthy person?

8. What are the two kinds of sabda accepted by Nyāya?

9. What is meant by Vaidika in Nyāya philosophy?

10. How does Nyāya conceive error?

# Answers

1. The knowledge derived from resemblance or similarity

2. The authoritative statement from a person, the perception of similarity, recollection of descriptive statement given by the authority, the resulting knowledge or upamiti

3. They reduced upamāna to perception and testimony

4. They reduced upamāna to inference

5. They reduced upamāna to recognition or prathyabhijñā

6. The verbal knowledge derived from words or sentences

7. Firstly, the person who is considered as trustworthy must know the truth and secondly must be able to communicate the same effectively to other persons

8. Vaidika or the scriptural and Laukika or the secular

9. The verses from an infallible authority like Vedas

10. Error is due to misapprehension of an object as another object

# Assignments

1. Explain the theory of error in two pages.

2. Comment on upamāna in two pages.

# Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# 4 UNIT

# Vaiśeṣika

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ get a brief introduction to Vaiśeṣika philosophy

♦ get exposed to the theory of reality in Vaiśeṣika

♦ get an idea about the categories in Vaiśeṣika

♦ be familiar with the atomist theory of Vaiśeṣika philosophy

## Prerequisites

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that deals with fundamental questions about the nature of reality, existence, and the underlying structure of the universe. It analyses the concepts that go beyond the physical world and explores the fundamental principles that govern the nature of being, reality, and the relationship between objects, individuals, and the universe. Vaiśeṣika philosophy, as one of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, is closely related to the general sphere of metaphysics. It addresses many of the core metaphysical questions, such as the nature of reality, the composition of the universe, the relationship between objects, and the principles that govern existence. Through its systematic categorisation and analysis, Vaiśeṣika offers an Indian perspective on metaphysics, providing insights into the fundamental nature of the universe according to its unique philosophical framework.

Categories of being, Reality, Padārtha, Substance, Quality, Creation, Causation

## Discussion

The unique identity of Vaiśesika system is that it proposes a naturalist philosophy along with spiritualism which is considered as a common trait of orthodox schools of Indian philosophy. In order to affirm their naturalist philosophy, they propose atomism which states that the physical universe is composed of fundamental indivisible components called atoms. They use this theory to explain the creation and dissolution of the world. Along with this position, they also root themselves in the authority of the Vedas and formulate a perfect blend of spiritualism and naturalism.

Kaṇāda is the founder of the Vaiśeṣika School, one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy. The name of the school is derived from 'viśeṣa', which means 'particular' or 'distinguishing feature.' The main sources of this philosophy include the Vaiśeṣika-sutra of Kaṇāda, Padārtha-Dharma-Saṅgraha of Prasastapāda, Kiranavali of Udayana, and others. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika are allied systems, often referred to as Samāna-tantra. Both systems recognize the reality of God, the individual soul, the mind, physical entities, and the basic elements such as earth, water, fire, air, ether, space, and time. They both advocate realism and pluralism and hold the same deistic conception of God.

However, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika differ on two main points. Nyāya recognizes four means of valid knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. On the other hand, Vaiśeṣika only recognizes two: perception and inference, categorizing comparison and testimony under inference. Additionally, Nyāya acknowledges sixteen categories (padārtha), whereas Vaiśeṣika acknowledges only seven categories. Furthermore, while Nyāya places a significant emphasis on logic and epistemology, Vaiśeṣika places greater importance on ontology or metaphysics.

## 3.4.1 Theories of Categories of Being (Padārthas)

Vaiśeṣika metaphysics represents a form of pluralistic realism. This pluralism encompasses both material and non-material entities, including concepts like time and souls. In Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the various categories are referred to as padārthas, which literally mean "the meaning of a word" or "that which is signified by a word." The term padārtha encompasses all objects of knowledge or real entities that can be known or are capable of being known.

Vaiśeṣika proposes seven types of categories as subdivisions of reality and thus takes the position of a pluralistic philosophy. These seven padārthas fall under two broad classes; bhāva (being) and abhāva (non-being). Bhāva includes six categories they are; dravya (substance), guṇa (quality), karma (action or movement), sāmānya (generality), viseṣa (particularity) samavāya (inherence) and the seventh category is abhava (non-being). Though

Kanada did not give abhāva the status of the category, later Vaiśeṣika accepted it as an independent category.

### 3.4.1.1 Substance (Dravya)

In Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the concept of substance holds a central place. Substance is understood as the underlying foundation or substratum that provides a basis for qualities and actions to exist and manifest. It is the fundamental reality that serves as a support for various attributes and activities. Additionally, substance is considered to be the material or inherent cause from which other composite objects are derived.

Substance can be categorized into two main types: eternal and non-eternal. The eternal substance is ultimate and unchanging. It stands as an independent and absolute reality. This type of substance remains constant and is not subject to production or destruction. It exists beyond the realm of change and impermanence. On the other hand, the non-eternal substance is compound in nature. It is composed of various parts and arises from the interaction of the simple ultimate substances. This type of substance is transient and impermanent because it undergoes processes of production and destruction. It is subject to change and transformation due to its composite nature.

The non-eternal substances are; Pṛithvi (earth), ap (water), tejas (fire), vāyu (air) and the eternal substances are; kāla (time), dik (space), ātman (self), and manas (mind). In addition to all these substances, Vaiśeṣika adds one more, the ether or ākāsha. Thus, Vaiśeṣika perceives nine substances. The four non-eternal substances with ether or ākāsha are called Panchabhūta. Each of these substances has certain qualities that can be perceived by one of our external sense organs. For example, earth has the quality of smell, water has the quality of taste, fire has the quality of colour, air has the quality of touch, and ether has the quality of sound. These qualities are recognized by the nose, tongue, eyes, skin and ears respectively. Further, these sense organs are believed to be derived from the earth, water, fire, air, and ether.

The classification of substances into eternal and non-eternal categories gives rise to the characterization of Vaiśeṣika philosophy as an ontological dualist perspective. This term refers to the philosophical position that acknowledges the existence of two distinct types of fundamental entities or realities: souls and material elements. These two types of entities are considered inseparable in the Vaiśeṣika framework, as they interact and coexist within the very structure of reality.

### 3.4.1.2 Quality (Guṇa)

Kaṇāda defines quality or Guṇa as "that which inheres in a substance, which does not possess quality or action, which does not produce any composite thing, and which is not the cause of conjunction and disjunction like an action." Quality lives in a substance and cannot exist independently. Though a quality cannot exist apart from a substance, still a quality is an independent category because it can be conceived (prameya), thought (jñeya) and named (abhidheya). It holds a distinct status as an objective entity that can be understood and recognized by the human mind.

For example, consider the quality of 'redness'. In this context, 'redness' is a quality that is inherent in an object, such as an apple. The redness of the apple is not a separate entity; it exists within the apple itself. While it cannot be separated from the apple, it is still considered an

independent category because it can be conceptualized, thought of as 'red', and named as such.

A quality, as always inheres in a substance, can never be the material cause of a composite product. It cannot take the role of substance which always remains as the material cause. Quality is the non-material (asamvayi) cause. Threads are the material cause of cloth, while the conjunction of the threads and the colour of the threads are the non-material cause of the texture and colour of the cloth.

Kaṇāda mentions seventeen qualities. Prasastapāda later adds seven more qualities to it. Hence altogether there are twenty-four kinds of qualities. Qualities can be either material or mental and are not necessarily eternal. The twenty-four qualities Vaiśeṣika recognizes are the following: 1) colour, 2) taste, 3) smell, 4) touch, 5) sound, 6) number, 7) magnitude, 8) distinctness, 9) conjunction, 10) disjunction, 11) nearness, 12) remoteness, 13) cognition, 14) pleasure, 15) pain, 16) desire, 17) aversion, 18) effort, 19) heaviness, 20) fluidity, 21) viscidity, 22) tendency, 23) moral merit, and 24) moral demerit.

Furthermore, Vaiśeṣika observes that the qualities are not exactly twenty-four; therefore, these twentyfour are just an estimate. This is the case because if one were to count the subgroups of attributes, the number would rise. For instance, it is possible to identify colours that fall within the category of colours as blue, red, yellow, etc.

### 3.4.1.3 Action (Karma)

Vaiśeṣika philosophy considers 'Action' as an entity that resides solely within a single substance. Unlike qualities, which are inherent attributes, actions are dynamic and immediate causes of conjunction and disjunction between substances. One of the key characteristics of action is its lack of qualities. It is not associated with any inherent attributes or characteristics of its own. Instead, action serves as a direct and immediate cause that leads to the coming together or separation of substances.

It is important to note that an action cannot possess another action or quality. They are independent entities that play a significant role in the dynamics of substances. When an action takes place, it results in the conjoining or separating of substances, altering their states or relationships. Actions serve as unconditional and non-inherent causes for substances. It is also necessary to consider that not all types of actions can be directly perceived. For instance, the action of the mind (manas), which is an imperceptible substance, does not lend itself to ordinary perception. Nevertheless, we can deduce these actions from our internalawareness and perception.

Vaiśeṣika recognizes five kinds of actions as follows:

1. Upward movement

2. Downward movement

3. Contraction

4. Expansion

5. Locomotion

When moving upward, such as when tossing a stone, a body comes into contact with a higher region. A body moving downward makes contact with a lower area, such as when the fruit is falling off a tree branch. Body parts that are contracted are brought closer together, such as the fingers of a hand that are clenched. The expansion keeps body components apart from one another, such as keeping

fingers on a hand apart from one another. Locomotion is the foundation of all other motions. Walking, running, swimming etc. are a few examples for it.

### 3.4.1.4 Generality (Sāmānya)

Sāmānya or generality is a bhāva padārtha (category) in Vaiśeṣika philosophy. It can be understood as a class concept or universal essence that encompasses the common characteristics shared by various entities within the same class. In other words, it serves as the essential, shared trait that unites distinct individuals under a single category or class. For instance, take a class of objects, such as 'birds;' each individual bird within this class possesses unique features, but they all share common traits that define them as 'birds.' In this analogy, the concept of sāmānya represents the universal essence of 'birdness' that is present in each individual bird.

According to Vaiśeṣika, generality can be divided into three types:

• Para - highest: Satta or being is the highest generality. It includes everything and itself is not included in anything.

• Parapara – intermediate: substantiality or thing hood (dravyatva) is parapara or intermediate between the highest and the lowest.

• Apara –lowest: Apara has the most limited or the narrowest extent. For example, 'jarness' as the universal part present in all jars is apara or the lowest.

### 3.4.1.5 Particularity (Visheṣa)

The concept of Visheṣa, also known as particularity, is a significant element within Vaiśeṣika philosophy. This category stands in contrast to sāmānya, or generality. Visheṣa pertains to eternal

substances and serves as the distinguishing factor that sets them apart from one another. While composite substances like jars or cloths can be differentiated by their various parts, eternal entities possess particular characteristics that render them unique. Let us take the example of individual flowers within a garden. While they all belong to the general category of flowers, each flower has specific features that distinguish it from others. This individuality or particularity is inherent in each flower and makes it distinct from its counterparts.

In Vaiśeṣika philosophy, eternal substances such as atoms, space, time, mind, ether, and sound possess particular attributes that differentiate them from one another. These entities are partless and distinct, and their particularity is what defines their uniqueness. It is important to note that these particulars cannot be further divided, as they lack parts that can be broken down. Each particularity is self-contained and does not depend on external factors for its uniqueness. As a result, there are numerous distinct particulars that exist, making the specifics endless and innumerable. The concept of Visheṣa underscores the individuality and distinct nature of eternal entities, enriching the understanding of their diversity within the Vaiśeṣika philosophical framework.

### 3.4.1.6 Inherence (samavāya)

The concept of Samavāya, the sixth category in Vaiśeṣika philosophy, centers on the idea of inseparable inherence or an eternal relationship that exists between entities. It represents a unique bond that binds things together in such a manner that they cannot be separated from each other without losing their essential nature. It is also an unbreakable connection that forms the basis for recognizing the identity of one entity through the presence of another.

Prasastapāda, a philosopher of the Vaiśeṣika School, defines Samavāya as the relationship that persists between inseparable entities. This is comparable to a relationship between a container and the contained. Just as a container holds its contents and the two are interdependent, the entities related by Samavāya are intertwined in such a way that their existence is mutually dependent.

Samavāya is an imperceptible relation which cannot be directly observed through the senses. Instead, it is inferred from the inseparable relationship between two entities. For example, consider the relationship between colour and an object. The colour of an object is inseparably connected to it, but we do not perceive this relationship directly; we infer it from our observations.

Inherence is also considered eternal within Vaiśeṣika philosophy. This is because if inherence were to come into existence at a certain point in time, it would require a cause or previous condition for its emergence. However, this would lead to an infinite regress, as the cause of that cause would need a cause, and so on. To avoid this infinite regress, Vaiśeṣika asserts that inherence is eternal and has always existed.

In the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, Inherence (samavāya) is conceived as different from conjunction (samyoga). Samyoga or conjunction is a temporary or non-eternal relation between two things which are liable to be separated (yutasiddha). On the other hand, samavaya is a permanent or eternalrelation between two entities, of which one inheres in the other (ayutasiddha). Again, samyoga is a quality (guṇa), on the other hand, samavāya is an independent category. The things which are inseparably connected are the part and the whole, the quality and the substance,

the action and the substance, the particular and the universal, the Visheṣa and the eternal substance.

### 3.4.1.7 Non-existence (Abhāva)

In the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, the concept of non-existence (Abhāva) holds significant importance, even though it was not initially included as a distinct category by its founder, Kaṇāda. Instead, later commentators recognized the need to incorporate non-existence as the seventh category in Vaiśeṣika philosophy, identifying its importance in understanding reality. For instance, on a cloudy day when the sun is obscured, we perceive the non-existence of the sun's visible presence. This acknowledgement of non-existence adds a new dimension for understanding reality, allowing for a more comprehensive view of what is present and what is absent.

Broadly, non-existence is of two kinds:

• Anyonyābhāva / mutual negation – it means one thing is not in another thing. It can be expressed as 'S is not P.' It is exclusion and is opposed to identity. It is both beginningless and endless. If it is denied, then all things would become indistinguishable.

• Sansargabhāva - Sansargabhāva declares that one entity cannot exist in another. This might be interpreted figuratively as 'X is not in Y'. Take coolness in a fire, or squareness in a circle, as examples.

Sansargabhāva is of three kinds. These are:

i) Prāgbhāva or antecedent non-existence: Prāgbhāva, also referred to as antecedent non-existence, is a concept within the Vaiśeṣika philosophy that deals with the absence of a thing before its creation or production. It acknowledges that an object or entity does not exist in a par-

ticular state or form prior to its coming into being. In simpler terms, it refers to the non-existence of something before it is brought into existence. Take the example of a chair. Before a carpenter constructs the chair, it does not exist in its current form. This absence of the chair before its creation is what Prāgbhāva signifies. In other words, the chair's antecedent non-existence refers to the fact that it had no existence as a chair before the carpenter fashioned it from raw materials.

ii) Pradhavaṁsābhāva or subsequent non-existence: It is the non-existence of a thing or effect after its destruction. In other words, it is when an effect is destroyed and loses its specific nature. It has a beginning but no end. For example, when a jar is broken into pieces, there is the non-existence of the jar in its pieces. This non-existence of the previously existing jar, due to its destruction is called Pradhavaṁsābhāva. If Pradhavaṁsābhāva is denied, all things would become eternal.

iii) Atyantābhāva or absolute non-existence: Atyantābhāva, also termed as absolute non-existence asserts the complete absence of a particular quality or attribute within an entity across all times – the past, present, and future. It implies that a certain characteristic or property is inherently absent from something else, and this absence remains unchanging and perpetual. Let us consider the example of the moon and heat. The moon is devoid of any heat; this absence of heat within the moon is consistent across all times – it was absent in the past, remains absent in the present, and will continue to be absent in the future. This absence of heat from the moon is an example of absolute non-existence or Atyantābhāva.

## 3.4.2 Atomism

Vaiśeṣika philosophy, an ancient Indian school of thought, proposed a unique perspective on the composition of the world. According to Vaiśeṣika, all the complex objects that we observe in the world are formed from the combination of incredibly tiny, indivisible, and eternal building blocks known as atoms or paramāṇus. These atoms are considered the fundamental constituents of all matter. The concept of paramāṇu arises from the idea that matter cannot be infinitely divisible. Vaiśeṣika philosophers believed that if you were to divide a physical object into smaller and smaller parts, you would eventually reach a point where further division is not possible. This indivisible unit, according to Vaiśeṣika, is the paramāṇu.

The term 'paramāṇu' is derived from the words 'parama', meaning supreme or ultimate, and 'anu', meaning atom. Paramāṇu is the ultimate, the smallest, and the most basic building block of matter in this philosophical framework. It is eternal and partless, lacking any internal structure. These paramāṇus are said to be created by the five fundamental elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, which lend distinct qualities to the resulting composite objects.

Atoms differ from one another both in quality and quantity. They are non-spatial and devoid of inside and outside. Creation is the combination of atoms in different proportions and destruction means the dissolution of such combinations. In the process of creation, atoms are increased not by addition but by multiplication. The motion is given to atoms by an unseen power adṛṣṭa. The basic movements of the atoms formulate dyad - the combination of two atoms and when three dyads are combined, we have triad - the smallest visible substance.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy presents the concept of Nitya-paramāṇu-kārana-

vāda, a theory regarding the material cause of the universe. This viewpoint asserts that the material cause of the universe, represented by the eternal, indivisible atoms or paramāṇus, is neither created nor destroyed. Instead, it posits that the creation and destruction of objects occur through the combination of these atoms.

Imagine you have a collection of individual atoms. According to Nitya-paramāṇu-kārana-vāda, you can combine these atoms to form compound objects, and these objects can subsequently be disassembled, returning the atoms to their original state. The key idea here is that the combination of atoms to create objects is not pre-existing in the atoms themselves. In other words, the arrangement and composition of atoms determine the nature of the created object.

This perspective is closely related to the concept of Ārambhavāda, which emphasizes that the creation of compound objects involves a new beginning. The effect, which is the compound object, is not inherent in the individual atoms. Instead, it emerges as a new creation through their combination. This notion goes along with the Asatkāryavāda theory of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

# 3.4.3 Asatkāryavāda (Theory of causation)

The theory of causation begins with the question: "Does the effect preexist in its material cause?" Asatkāryavādins such as Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Buddhism and some Mimāṁsā school answer this question negatively while Satkāryavādins such as Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mimāmsa and Advaita answer the question positively. Those who uphold Asatkāryavāda says that the effect (new being which is being created) does not already exist in the cause before

it happens. This idea is different from the belief that the effect is already inside the cause (Satkāryavāda). According to Asat-kāryavāda, the cause and the effect are separate and happen one after the other.

Vaiśeṣika believes in Asatkāryavāda; the effect does not pre-exist in the cause. If the cloth already exists in the threads, why should not the threads serve their purpose? It suggests that an effect does not preexist in its material cause, but arises as a new creation. Let us take another example, think about making a clay pot. In this process, the shape of the pot is not already in the clay before the potter makes it. The pot takes its shape when the potter moulds the clay. This example underscores how Vaiśeṣika philosophy elucidates the transformation of entities and their divergence from their causal origins.

Vaiśeṣika philosophy emphasizes the concept that identical causes result in identical effects. This principle excludes the existence of multiple causes for a single effect. For instance, let us consider the process of striking a matchstick to ignite a flame. In this scenario, the cause is the friction generated by striking the match against a rough surface. This cause consistently produces the effect of a flame, and we do not observe a variety of outcomes from the same action under the same conditions.

Vaiśeṣika school also outlines essential attributes of a cause; firstly, a cause must precede its corresponding effect in time, which is known as antecedence. Secondly, the cause must consistently and invariably precede the effect under all circumstances, termed invariability. Lastly, the cause must exist unconditionally alongside the effect, signifying unconditionality. Applying these attributes to the example, the friction created by striking the match must occur before the flame ignites, it must

reliably lead to flame production, and the friction is an indispensable condition for the flame's emergence. This principle aids in understanding the predictability and uniformity observed in the causal relationships of the world.

# Recap

- ♦ Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika are allied systems or Samāna-tantra
- ♦ Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika advocate realism and pluralism
- ♦ There are differences in the number of categories accepted by both Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika
- ♦ Vaiśeṣika metaphysics is a pluralistic realism
- ♦ Vaiśeṣika accepts seven padārthas
- ♦ Substance as a substratum into which qualities and actions inhere
- ♦ Substance can be classified into two categories; eternal and non- eternal
- ♦ Quality resides in a substance and cannot exist independently
- ♦ Quality is the non-material (asamvayi) cause
- ♦ Vaiśesika recognizes twenty-four qualities
- ♦ Action is the direct and immediate cause of conjunction and disjunction
- ♦ Generality is a class concept, class essence or universal
- ♦ Inherence is the inseparable eternal relation
- ♦ Anyonyābhāva / mutual negation
- ♦ Sansargabhāva declares that one entity cannot exist in another
- ♦ Atoms differ from one another both in quality and in quantity
- ♦ Nyaya-Vaiśesika proposes Nitya-paramāṇu-kārana-vāda

# Objective Questions

1. What are the seven categories of Vaiśeṣika philosophy?

2. What is generality (Sāmānya)?

3. What are the three types of generality?

4. According to Vaiśeṣika, Vishesa or particularity inheres in eternal substances and distinguishes them from one another. True or false?

5. What is the antithesis of particularity or individuality?

6. A particular cannot be further divided because it is partless. True or false?

7. What is the sixth category in Vaiśeṣika?

8. Samavāya is an inseparable relationship. True or false?

9. What are two types of non-existence?

10. What is Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's Nitya-paramāṇu-kārana-vāda?

## Answers

1. Substance (Dravya), Quality (Guṇa), Action (karma), Generality (Sāmānya), Particularity (Vishesa), Inherence (samavāya) and Non-existence (abhāva)

2. It is a class concept, class essence or universal

3. Para – highest, Parapara – intermediate, Apara -lowest

4. True

5. Universality

6. true

7. Samavāya or inseparable eternal relation called 'inherence'

8. True

9. Anyonyābhāva/mutual negation and Sansargabhāva

10. Material cause of the universe is neither created nor destroyed

## Assignments

1. Explain the theory of causation.

2. Give a general introduction to the categories of being in Vaiśeṣika.

3. The effect pre-exists in its material cause. Elaborate.

# Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# 4
## BLOCK

# Samkhya
# Yoga

# UNIT 1

# Sāṅkhya – Prakṛti and Puruṣa

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ gain a general idea of sāṅkhya philosophy

♦ broaden awareness of the dualistic viewpoint held by sāṅkhya

♦ be familiar with the concept of prakṛti as well as its guṇās

♦ comprehend purusha and the evidence for the plurality of purusha

## Prerequisites

One of the major philosophical schools, Sāṅkhya, asks the question: "what is accountable for the creation of the world?" To answer this question, Sāṅkhya leans towards dvaitavāda or dualism. The two kinds of fundamental realities that Sāṅkhya holds are prakṛti and puruṣa, which maintain that the soul and matter are two distinct entities. Later, feminist studies attacked the Sāṅkhya system due to its stark dualism. They contend that the properties of prakṛti and puruṣa are associated respectively with women and men, reflecting the roles played by them respectively in early society. Initially, Sāṅkhya is classified as an atheistic Indian philosophical school as the creator God has no place in Sāṅkhya philosophy. The concept of God was included in the Sāṅkhya worldview only after it got intertwined with the theistic Yoga system of philosophy.

## Key themes

Prakṛti, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, Purusha, Consciousness

## Discussion

One of the oldest philosophical systems in India, Sāṅkhya, was founded by the great sage Kapila. The word 'Sāṅkhya' is derived from the word Sankhya, which means number, because the Sāṅkhya system deals with twenty-five categories. According to some scholars, the term 'Sāṅkhya' refers to 'perfect knowledge' (samyag- jñāna), and the philosophy is named as this. The philosophical ideas of the Sāṅkhya system can be found in the Upanishads, Puranas, and Smritis. The disciple of Kapila, Āsuri, and Āsuri's disciple, Pañcāśikha, wrote some books regarding the Sāṅkhya system. But over time, these books were lost, and no information is available regarding this. The 'Sāṅkhya Sūtra' of Kapila is the first as well as the main source of the Sāṅkhya school. The popular text in the Sāṅkhya system is Sāṅkhya Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa.

The Sāṅkhya system is known as 'Atheistic Sāṅkhya' or nirīśvara sāṅkhya because, its founder Kapila did not admit God's existenc. Sāṅkhya is also known as atheistic realism. In order to end all pain and suffering, like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya aims at the knowledge of reality. Separating Purusha from Prakṛti is considered the right knowledge by Sāṅkhya. Hence, this philosophical framework based on the separation is dualistic in nature. While the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika system maintains a plurality of ultimate realities, including innumerable atoms, space, time, mind, and soul, the Sāṅkhya- Yoga system emphasizes only two ultimate realities. As Sāṅkhya provides knowledge about the existence of the self, it is realistic. It also believes in the plurality of Purusha and is known as pluralistic spiritualism.

## 4.1.1 Prakṛti

Metaphysically, Sāṅkhya accepts two fundamental realities: conscious Purusha and material Prakṛti. Sāṅkhya considers Prakṛti to be the ultimate material cause of the world. All objects in the world, including the mind, body, intellect, senses, etc., are dependent on Prakṛti. Sāṅkhya believes in satkāryavāda, which holds that every effect is latent in the cause before its production. As the world exists due to a series of effects, there must be an uncaused cause behind it. Then, what is the cause behind the universe? Purusha or the self has been rejected as the uncaused cause because the self is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. So, the cause must be something else, not the self or consciousness.

Cārvāka, Buddhism, Jainism, Nyāya, and Vaiśeṣika hold material elements or atoms as the ultimate cause of the world. According to them, objects are a combination of these material elements. However, Sāṅkhya rejects this claim by stating that such material atoms are scattered and numerous, and they cannot explain subtle products of nature such as the mind, intellect, and ego. So, Sāṅkhya seeks something that can explain both gross and subtle objects. Therefore, the world's ultimate cause must be an unconscious, unintelligent, independent, absolute, eternal, and uncaused cause. Sāṅkhya identifies this cause as Prakṛti. They conceive Prakṛti as the first, one, ever-active, eternal, finest, all-pervading, and uncaused cause. It is devoid of production and destruction. Prakṛti is subtle, possesses tremendous power, is mysterious, and can evolve and

dissolve the world in a cyclic order. It is viewed as the material and efficient cause of the physical world.

It is impossible to perceive Prakṛti directly, but its presence can be inferred from its effects. As Prakṛti is described as the cause of the world, it is known as parā or mūlā prakṛti. The other names of Prakṛti are pradhana, avyakta, jada, shakti, and anumāna. Prakṛti is called pradhāna because it is the first principle and the uncaused root cause. It is known as avyakta because it is the unmanifested state of all effects. Since Prakṛti is subtle and imperceptible and can only be inferred from its effects or products, it is known as anumāna. Being the unintelligent and unconscious principle, it is known as jada. It is also called shakti because of its ever-active and unlimited power.

For Sāṅkhya, the entire world is latent in the root cause of Prakṛti. Evolution is the explicit manifestation of Prakṛti into the objects of the world, while dissolution is the return of the world towards the latent Prakṛti. Sāṅkhya rejects consciousness as the root cause of the world because consciousness, as the intelligent principle, cannot be the cause of something unintelligent. Prakṛti is a unity of three guṇās and is held in equilibrium (gunānam samyavasthā). The three guṇās are sattva, rajas, and tamas, and these are the constituents of Prakṛti. These guṇās cannot be perceived by us as they are subtle and can only be inferred from their effects. All objects of the world come to possess these three characteristics, and they are capable of producing pleasure, pain, and indifference. The same object may bring pleasure to somebody, pain to others, and may feel neutral to another. These three guṇās constitute Prakṛti as a dynamic whole and not a static entity. Prakṛti is an organic unity of these three guṇās, not a mechanical aggregate.

Guṇās are ever-changing and have the qualities of mobility, lightness, and heaviness. The literal meaning of the element 'sattva' is 'real' or 'existent.' Sattva has the nature of pleasure and is always referred to as good. It is white in colour. Sattva has the qualities of lightness or buoyancy (laghu) and brightness or illumination (prakāśaka). Sattva is responsible for the appearance of objects in consciousness (jnana), the propensity for conscious manifestation in the senses, mind, and intellect, the luminosity of light, and the ability to reflect in a mirror or crystal. It is sattva that causes all different types of lightness in the sense of upward motion in objects, such as the blazing up of fire, the upward rising of vapour, and the winding motion of air etc. The power of sattva brings pleasure in all of its manifestations, such as satisfaction, joy, happiness, bliss, contentment etc.

The literal meaning of 'rajas' is foulness. It is the principle of motion or action. Every time it moves, it also causes others to move. Hence, it is both mobile (Cala) and stimulating (Upaṣṭambhaka). All painful experiences of our lives are because of raja,s because rajas themselves have the nature of pain or duḥkha. The restless activities, feverish efforts, and wild stimulation are all because of rajas. Due to rajas, the fire expands, the wind blows, the senses pursue their objects, and the mind becomes restless. As rajas is restless and ever-active, it helps the inactive and motionless guṇās, such as sattva and tamas, to perform their functions. The colour of the rajas is red.

'Tamas' literally means darkness. Tamas is the principle of inertia or passivity and negativity of things. It resists rajas, which is the principle of activity, and restrains (niyam) the motion of

things. It is heavy (guru) as opposed to sattva. Tamas always obstructs the manifestation of objects or envelops the truth (varnaka). Tamas destroys the power of manifestation in the intellect, mind, and other things, which results in ignorance, darkness, confusion, and bewilderment (moha). As tamas obstructs actions, it leads to temptations towards laziness, indifference (viṣāda), sleep, confusion, and drowsiness. The colour of the tamas is black.

These three guṇās together make up the Prakṛti, a state of perpetual strife and cooperation. They cannot be separated and always go together. Without the assistance and support of the other two, one cannot produce anything, as the ink, nib, body, and shape all cooperate to produce the writing of the pen, even if they are incompatible with one another. Though the guṇās possess different and contrasting characteristics, these three will cooperate to produce the objects of the world. These three guṇās are present in every object of the world, regardless of the size. Each guṇā in the object always tries to suppress and dominate the other guṇās. The nature of the object is determined by the dominant guṇā, while the other two guṇās are suppressed. The difference among objects is because of the difference in the proportion of the guṇās. The usual categorization of items as pure, impure, and neutral, as well as good, bad, and indifferent, refer to sattva, rajas, and tamas, respectively.

When the guṇās are in a state of equilibrium, it is called prakṛti. This state is devoid of evolution. As the guṇās are continually altering, they cannot remain static for a long time. Evolution occurs in two ways: homogeneous change or svarūpapariṇāma and heterogeneous change or virūpapariṇāma. Homogeneous change or uniform change takes place in the state

of dissolution or pralaya of the world. Here, the change occurs within the guṇās without affecting the other guṇa. In this stage, the change is in the form of sattva into sattva, rajas becoming rajas, and tamas into tamas, and evolution cannot take place here. In the stage of homogeneous change, the guṇās are in a state of equilibrium (sāmyāvasthā), and the guṇās here do not predominate over the others. Evolution takes place only in the state of heterogeneous change or virūpapariṇāma. Here, change is not taking place within the guṇās, but one form of guṇa changes into another form, and it breaks the equilibrium of guṇās. In heterogeneous change, one guṇa predominates the other two and results in evolution.

## 4.1.2 Purusha or Self

The purusha or the self is another kind of ultimate reality proposed by Sāṅkhya, based on the idea of pure consciousness. Purusha, according to Sāṅkhya, is the self, spirit, soul, and knower. It is neither the senses nor the body, mind, ego, or intellect. Instead, it is something silent, peaceful, eternal, and the sustaining soul. It is the ultimate knower and the conscious spirit, which is the source of all knowledge. It is not an object of knowledge but is always the subject of knowledge. Purusha is eternal and transcends both time and place. It is a self-luminous, eternal, uncaused, and an all-pervading reality, which is free from all kinds of attachment. Everyone acknowledges the existence of the self, and none can deny it because everyone can feel it. As the Self manifests itself and it is impossible to demonstrate its non-existence, Sāṅkhya believes in the existence of the self.

Although almost all Indian philosophical traditions agree on the existence of the self, there are divergent opinions regard-

ing its nature. Cārvākans, the materialists, viewed the self as the gross material body. The Buddhists believe that the self and the stream of consciousness are one and the same. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Prabhā-kara Mīmāmsa hold the opinion that the self is basically an unconscious substance that gains the quality of consciousness only under specific conditions. The Bhatta school views the self as a conscious entity partially hidden by ignorance. The self, according to Advaita Vedānta, is believed to be pure, eternal consciousness, which also leads to a blissful existence. It is eternally free and is a self-illuminating intelligence that exists in all bodies.

According to Sāṅkhya, the self is distinct from the body, brain, nervous system, senses, manas, and intellect. It also is not the aggregate of conscious states. It is not something that belongs to the world of things. Sāṅkhya views the self as the conscious spirit and the subject of knowledge. This does not mean that the self is a substance endowed with the attribute of consciousness; rather, it is pure consciousness as such. Consciousness is the fundamental essence of the self, not just a quality of it. Consciousness here means not a blissful consciousness (ānandas-varūpa) similar to the Advaitic view of consciousness. Sāṅkhya views the self as the transcendental subject, and its essence is pure consciousness. It is independent of any change and activity. It is something permanent, uncaused, and an all-encompassing truth that is devoid of all attachment and unaffected by all objects. Due to ignorance, the self is sometimes regarded as something akin to the body or the senses. Thus, it is erroneously believed that all alterations, pleasures, and pains that occur in the body and mind belong to the self.

Like Jainism and Mīmāmsa, Sāṅkhya also believes in the plurality of purusha. The Sāṅkhya purusha, similar to Jaina's conception of jīva, Leibnitz's view of monads, and Ramānujā's conception of souls, leans towards qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism. The quality of all selves remains the same, but they differ in number. The very essence of self is consciousness. This contrasts with the Advaita Vedantic conception of self. Advaita believes there is one universal self that exists and pervades all bodies. Sāṅkhya provides many arguments in order to prove the plurality of purusha. They are as following:

1) The soul undertakes separate birth and death, and there are clear distinctions among them, such as possessing different motor and sense organs. The birth or death of one person belongs to that person specifically; similarly, one person's sickness is unique to that person and not shared by all. If everyone shared the same soul, birth as well as death, pain and pleasure, the illness of one particular individual would mean the same for all. Hence, there are many souls or purushas.

2) If there is only one soul that pervades all, then the bondage of one should mean the bondage of all, and the liberation of one should mean the liberation of all. Similarly, if we are all connected by one soul, the actions of one person should inspire others to act as well. However, , we see that some people work hard while others rest, and vice versa, which seems to contradict this idea of oneness.

3) There are several types of humans, animals, and birds. The differences between them cannot be explained if there is only one soul. Hence, the diversity of beings demonstrates the multitude of selves.

# Recap

- ♦ Kapila is the founder of Sāṅkhya philosophy
- ♦ The main source of Sāṅkhya philosophy is the 'Sāṅkhya sūtra'
- ♦ Sāṅkhya is also termed as 'atheistic Sāṅkhya'
- ♦ Two fundamental realities of Sāṅkhya are Purusha and Prakṛti
- ♦ Purusha possesses consciousness
- ♦ Prakṛti is ever-active and unintelligent
- ♦ The three guṇās of Prakṛti are sattva, rajas, and tamas
- ♦ Sattva has the nature of pleasure and is always good. It is white in colour
- ♦ Rajas is the principle of motion or action. Painful experiences in our lives are because of rajas
- ♦ The colour of the rajas is red
- ♦ Tamas is the principle of inertia or passivity
- ♦ The colour of the tamas is black
- ♦ Purusha is eternal and self-luminous
- ♦ Sāṅkhya believes in the plurality of purusha

# Objective Questions

1. What are the fundamental realities of sāṅkhya philosophy?

2. What is the attribute of purusha?

3. Name the main attribute of Prakṛti.

4. Which are the three guṇās of Prakṛti?

5. Which colour is used to represent sattvic guṇa?

6. Which guṇa is represented by red colour?

7. What is the principle of tamas?

8. Which colour is used for tamas?

# Answers

1. Purusha and Prakṛti

2. Consciousness

3. Ever active

4. Sattva, rajas and tamas

5. White

6. Rajas

7. Inertia or passivity

8. Black

# Assignments

1. Briefly discuss prakṛti and its guṇās.

2. Make a note on purusha and establish its plurality.

# Suggested Readings

1. Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

2. Chatterjee, S. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. 8th ed., University of Calcutta.

3. Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1. Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

4. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I and II. Delhi: Oxford.

5. Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# 2 UNIT

# Theory of Evolution in Sāṅkhya System

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦ get familiar with the causation theory of Sāṅkhya

♦ develop a general awareness of how the theory of causation in Sāṅkhya is distinct from that of other systems of Indian Philosophy

♦ get a glimpse of the theory of evolution in Sāṅkhya

♦ identify the roles of prakṛti and purusha in the process of evolution

## Prerequisites

The emergence of the world continues to be a major question in the history of philosophy, which almost all philosophers attempt to answer. What is the principle behind it? One of the major systems of Indian philosophy, Sāṅkhya, also puts forth the theory of evolution in detail. Sāṅkhya philosophy is remarkable for being the first school to provide a comprehensive account of the process of cosmic evolution. According to Sāṅkhya, creation is due to the combination of prakṛti and purusha. The evolution theory of Sāṅkhya follows causality relationships, which claim that nothing can truly be produced or destroyed. All evolution simply takes place because of the transformation of primal nature from one form to another. The significance of Sāṅkhya is that it imparts insights into the elements of the body, mind, and spirit, and encompasses the gross elements of the physical body to the subtle elements of mind and consciousness.

## Key themes

Satkāryavāda, Asatkāryavāda, Parināmavāda, Vivartavāda, Prakṛti parināmavāda

## Discussion

### 4.2.1 Satkāryavāda

The Sāṅkhya theory of causation, on which the metaphysical doctrine of prakṛti is based, is known as satkāryavāda. The theory of causality is addressed by the question of whether the effect pre-exists in its material cause before its production or not. The notion that the effect does not pre-exist in the material cause before its production is known as asatkāryavāda or ārambhavāda. Asatkāryavādins hold that every product is a new creation or a beginning. They hold that otherwise, it is nonsensical to say that the effect is caused or produced. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Hīnayāna Buddhism, some schools of mīmāmsa, and materialists are asatkāryavādins.

For Sāṅkhya, the effect is preoccupied with a potential condition in the material cause before its production. Hence, the theory of causation of Sāṅkhya is Satkāryavāda. They say the effect is only a modification or manifestation of the cause. It is not like a new creation or ārambha as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds. Sāṅkhya holds that all the material effects are implicitly contained in the prakṛti, and everything is a modification or parināma of this prakṛti. The effect already exists in the prakṛti, comes out from it at the time of creation, and returns to it at the time of dissolution. Thus, it is neither a new production nor a complete destruction.

Sāṅkhya defines production or evolution as development or āvirbhava; and destruction or involution as envelopment or tirobhāva. Prakṛti is the material cause, out of which the whole world is produced, except purusha. Now, another concern arises: Is the effect a real transformation of the cause or merely an illusory appearance of its cause? Those who assert that the effect is a real transformation of the cause are called parināmavādins (parināma means real modification), and those who believe that the effect is merely an illusory appearance of the cause are called vivartavādins (vivarta - unreal appearance). Though Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Rāmānuja believe in parināmavāda, there are some differences between them. According to Sāṅkhya, as prakṛti gets transformed into the world, it is particularly known as prakṛti-parināmavāda. Since Rāmānuja had the opinion that the world is the result of the transformation of Brahman, it is known as Brahma parināmavāda. Sankara, shūnyavādās, and vijñānavādās believe in vivartavāda.

Sāṅkhya presents the following arguments to prove the prior existence of the effect in the cause:

a) No effort can make something exist if it does not already exist in the material cause.

b) Cause and effect are inextricably linked. Only one distinct cause can lead to one specific result. Smoke is produced out of fire only. It is impossible to make everything out of everything. Hence, the effect is already there in the material cause concerned.

c)    Only an efficient or potent cause may produce the intended effect. This shows the effect is potentially contained in the material cause in an unmanifested form before the production.

d)    The effect is identical to the material cause. The cloth in its essence is the same as the thread.

## 4.2.2 Theory of Evolution

The theory of evolution put forward by the Sāṅkhya system is known as pariṇāmavāda. For them, the world emerged because of the evolution of Prakṛti. Hence, it is termed as 'prakṛti parināmavāda'. When prakṛti comes into contact with purusha, evolution begins and creates the world of objects. Prakṛti is essentially the most vibrant and active principle. Movement is very much inherent in it and is always changing. Due to the lack of consciousness in Prakṛti, it cannot bring about evolution without the presence of Purusha. It is purusha that alone possesses consciousness. In the same way, purusha alone cannot cause evolution because it is inactive; the movement is absent in it. Evolution occurs only when the active prakṛti comes in contact (saṁyoga) with the conscious purusha. Here, purusha's intelligence serves as a guide for Prakṛti's activity.

To the question of how two contradictory and opposed principles such as prakṛti and purusha cooperate, Sāṅkhya provides an analogy of a blind man and a lame man, both of whom cooperate with each other to get out of a forest. Likewise, the intelligent purusha and the active prakṛti can cooperate. To be known and appreciated by someone, prakṛti needs the presence of purusha (daranrtham), and purusha needs the presence of prakṛti to distinguish itself from prakṛti and achieve liberation (Kaivalyārtham).

Prakṛti is active in every moment. It undergoes both cyclic changes like evolution (sṛsti) and dissolution (pralaya). Every period of evolution is followed by a period of dissolution. Even in the stage of dissolution (pralaya), prakṛti is active and it undergoes homogeneous change (Svarūpaparināmavāda or sajātiyavāda). Here, the change taking place is within the gunās themselves without disturbing the others. Sattva into sattva, rajas into rajas, and tamas into tamas. The three gunās here remain in a state of equilibrium. When prakṛti comes in to contact with purusha, there occurs a disturbance in the equilibrium of the gunās, and evolution begins. Here, one guṇa changes into another, and it is a heterogeneous change or virūpa parināmavāda.

Prakṛti is the basic substance from which the world evolves. Purusha drives prakṛti, like how a magnet attracts iron metal towards itself, through its proximity. Purusha is the unmoved mover of prakṛti. Prakṛti is in an unmanifested condition, and the three gunās in it, such as sattva, rajas, and tamas, are in equilibrium before the proximity with purusha. Equilibrium means a state of tension, and not of inactivity. The vicinity of Purusha causes a disturbance in the equilibrium of the gunās, and evolution begins. As the most naturally active guṇā, rajas get disturbed first among the three gunās. It is rajas that causes the vibration in the other two gunās. Each guṇā here strives to dominate over the other two, and they gradually integrate and separate, and their combination in different proportions leads to the formation of various objects.

Evolution is not a blind or mechanical action, but a vital objective of moral and spiritual life. Evolution helps the spirit to attain liberation and realize its true nature. The evolution of prakṛti into the world of objects allows purusha to enjoy or struggle

with it according to its merits or demerits. When purusha detaches from the empirical world, prakṛti dismantles the world to reveal and accept the evolved product within itself. The first evolute of prakṛti is mahat, which literally means 'the great'. It is regarded as the greatest germ in the realm of objects. Mahat appears as buddhi or intellect in human beings. Buddhi or mahat results from the dominance of the sattvic element in prakṛti. It is of cosmic nature and has the capability for knowledge and decision-making. The subject-object distinction can be grasped due to the presence of buddhi. Buddhi is different from consciousness because purusha alone possesses pure consciousness that transcends all physical things and attributes. While buddhi is material in nature and is made of the finest materials. This finest material allows it to vividly reflect Purusha's consciousness. This reflection of purusha enables it to appear as conscious and intelligent.

The attributes of sattvic buddhi are virtue (dharma), knowledge (jñāna), detachment (vairāgya), and power or excellence (Aishwarya). When tamas dominates over sattva, these attributes are replaced by their opposites like vice (adharma), ignorance (ajñāna), attachment (āsakti or avairāgya), and imperfection (anaiśvarya). As the ground of the intellectual process in all human beings, mahat or buddhi stands nearest to the self and reflects the consciousness of the self. From mahat, ahaṅkāra or individual ego emerges. It is the second evolute of prakṛti. It is the principle of individuation and creates a sense of self (abhimāna). Here, the notions such as 'I' and 'mine' are generated. Ahaṅkāra refers to the sense of the individual being distinct from everything else. The self here is connected to a specific individual body. The function of ahaṅkāra is that the self is seen as a cause or an agent of action, as well as a goal-striver and property owner.

At first, we make use of our senses to observe things. Then the mind reflects on them and categorizes them as belonging to this or that kind. The things are then claimed as being mine and created with my usage in mind. In short, ahaṅkāra is the sense of the self as I (aham) and the things as mine (mama). Purusha mistakenly associates himself with this ego and believes that he is the cause of actions, the desirer, the possessor of thoughts, feelings, and volitions, as well as the enjoyer of material goods. According to Sāṅkhya, there are three different types of ahaṅkāra depending on the prevalence of guṇa.

When the sattva element predominates, it is called Vaikārika or Sāttvika. From the cosmic perspective, eleven organs are aroused from the Sāttvika; they are the five sense organs (jñānendriya), the five motor organs or organs of action (karmendriya), and the mind (manas). From a psychological point of view, Sāttvika produces good actions. When the rajas guṇa prevails, it is referred to as taijasa or rājasa. From the cosmic point of view, rajas is concerned with both the first and third and provide the energy sufficient for the transformation of sattva and tamas into their respective evolutes. It produces evil deeds when viewed from a psychological point of view. When the tamas element predominates, it is known as Bhūtādi or tāmasa. From the cosmic point of view, the five subtle elements or tanmātras evolved from Bhūtādi. It causes indifferent behaviour or lethargy and laziness from a psychological perspective.

From ahaṅkāra, two groups of principles emerge: psychical (pratyayasarga or buddhisarga) and physical (tanmātrasarga or bhautikasarga) evolutes. According to Sāṅkhya- Kārika, the notions of five sense organs, five motor organs, and manas

are psychical evolutes and are thought to have evolved from sāttvika ahaṅkāra, and Vācaspati Miśra accepts this. However, Vijñānabhikṣu asserts that only sāttvika ahaṅkāra resulted in manas, or the mind, while rājasa ahaṅkāra was responsible for the emergence of the five sense organs and the five motor organs, and the five subtle elements, or tanmātras, developed from the tāmasa ahaṅkāra.

For sāṅkhya, manas or mind, which arises from the sāttvika or vaikārika ahaṅkāra, is the primary and the most subtle sense organ. It can contact multiple sensory organs simultaneously. A distinct viewpoint on manas was held by Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika; they claimed that as it is permanent and atomic in nature, it cannot be in contact with numerous sense organs at the same time. However, for Sāṅkhya, manas would be neither eternal nor atomic. As it is composed of parts, it can be in contact with multiple sensory organs at the same time. Sāṅkhya assigns manas the significant function of integrating sense data into concrete perceptions, transmitting these perceptions to the ego, and executing the ego's commands through the motor organs.

The five sense organs (jñānendriya) that evolve from sāttvika ahaṅkāra are the sense of hearing, the sense of touch, the sense of sight, the sense of smell, and the sense of taste. They can perceive physical qualities like sound, touch, colour, smell, and taste respectively. Nyāya- vaiśeṣika has the opinion that the five senses are aroused from the gross physical elements. While sāṅkhya maintains that as the five sense organs are mental functions, they are derived from ahaṅkāra. The five motor organs (karmendriya) are the hand, feet, mouth, sex organ, and anus. They perform functions like prehension or handling, movement or locomotion, speech, reproduction, and excretion respectively.

Mahat / buddhi, Ahaṅkāra or ego, and manas are considered as the three internal organs or antaḥkaraṇa. They are regarded as vital breaths (prāṇās). These three symbolize respectively the psychological factors of knowing, willing, and feeling or cognition, conation, (purpose, desire) and affection. For sāṅkhya, they are material in nature which descended from Prakṛti and reflect Purusha's light. The five sensory organs and five motor organs are together known as external organs or bāhyaka-rana. Both antaḥkarana and bāhyakarana together constitute the thirteen karanās or organs in the sāṅkhya philosophy.

The physical evolutes constitute five subtle physical essences (tanmātras) and the five gross elements (mahābhūtās). Since they are supersensible as well as unenjoyable to ordinary beings, tanmātras are termed aviśeṣa, which means devoid of specific perceptible characteristics. But, the physical elements and their products, as possessed of certain qualities such as pleasurable or painful, are termed viśeṣa or the particular. The five tanmātras (subtle elements) are the essence or potential elements of sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound. Nyāya-Vaisesika held that the five tanmātras evolved from the gross elements. Contrary to this, Sāṅkhya says they are derived from tāmasa ahaṅkāra. The gross elements or mahābhūtās have emerged from the tanmātrās.

From the eternal sound (shabdatan-mātrā), the element of ether or ākāśa emerges. It has the quality of sound and can be perceivable through the ear. From the essence of touch (sparśatanmātra) and sound, the element of air emerges. It possesses the attributes of sound and touch. The element of fire or light originates from the essence of colour or sight (rūpatanmātra) combined with sound and touch and has attributes of sound, touch, and colour. The element of water is cre-

ated when the elements of sound, touch, and colour are combined with the essence of taste (rasatanmātra), and it possesses the attributes of sound, touch, colour, and taste. Lastly, the essence of smell (gandhatanmātra) combined with the other four elements of water, sound, touch, taste, and colour produces the element of earth, which has the qualities of sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell. Ākaśa, air, light, water, and earth possess specific qualities like sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell respectively. The gross elements are characterized by these qualities. The quality of ākāśa is sound, and the qualities of air are sound and touch. Sound, touch, and colour are the qualities of Agni. The qualities of water are sound, touch, colour, and taste. Earth possesses the qualities of sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell.

Thus, evolution in Sāṅkhya is the interplay of twenty-four principles, along with Purusha, that constitutes it. Among them, prakṛti comes first, followed by the gross elements, and the thirteen organs and five tanmātrās belong to intermediate positions. The ultimate aim of the evolution of prakṛti is the freedom (moksha) of the self. The self realizes its true nature through a life of moral training in the evolved universe. Purusha is somewhat similar to Aristotle's concept of God, being the unmoved mover unaffected by evolution. Even though God does not actively participate in evolution, evolution moves towards God as it is the ultimate end. According to Sāṅkhya, creation continues until the purusha becomes liberated. The entire process of prakṛti's evolution is aimed at liberating each individual purusha.

# Recap

♦ Sāṅkhya theory of causation is Satkāryavāda

♦ Satkāryavāda states that; the effect is preoccupied with the material cause

♦ Asatkāryavāda states that; every effect is a new creation (ārambha)

♦ Sāṅkhya theory of evolution is called prakṛti parināmavāda

♦ For Sāṅkhya, prakṛti is transformed into the world

♦ The proximity of intelligent purusha cause active prakṛti to evolve

♦ Prakṛti is active and vibrant

♦ Evolution is a cyclic process. Each state of evolution is followed by a state of dissolution

♦ Prakṛti undergoes homogeneous and heterogeneous changes

♦ In homogeneous change, change is within the guṇās

♦ In heterogeneous change, one guṇa changes into another

- Among the guṇās, rajas get disturbed first

- First evolute of prakṛti is Mahat

- From mahat, ahaṅkāra or individual ego emerges

- From ahaṅkāra emerges psychical and physical evolutes

- Five sense organs, five motor organs and manas are psychical evolutes

- Physical evolutes constitute tanmātrās and mahābhūtās

- The ultimate aim of the evolution of prakṛti is the freedom (moksha) of the self

## Objective Questions

1. What is known as the Sāṅkhya theory of causation?

2. What is known as the philosophical position which holds every effect is a new creation?

3. What does satkāryavāda affirm?

4. What is it called when the effect is the real transformation of the cause?

5. What is it called when the effect is merely an illusory appearance of the cause?

6. What is the sāṅkhya theory of evolution called?

7. What makes prakṛti evolve?

8. Name the first evolute of prakṛti.

9. Which product emerges from mahat?

10. Which are the psychical evolutes of evolution?

11. What are the physical evolutes of evolution?

## Answers

1. Satkāryavāda

2. Asatkāryavāda or Ārambhavāda

3. The effect is preoccupied with the cause

4. Parināmavāda

5. Vivartavāda

6. Prakṛti Parināmavāda

7. The proximity of intelligent purusha

8. Mahat

9. Ahaṅkāra

10. Five sense organs, five motor organs and manas

11. Five tanmātrās and mahābhūtās.

## Assignments

1. Discuss Sāṅkhya theory of causation and make a comparison between satkāryavāda and asatkāryavāda.

2. Briefly explain the theory of evolution according to sāṅkhya.

## Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. (1999). *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I and II). Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2. Hiriyanna, Mysore. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

3. Sharma, Chandradhar. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, Satischandra, and Dhirendra Mohan Datta. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. 8th ed. The University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, Surendranath. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# 3
# UNIT

# Yoga

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner can be able to

♦ get awareness regarding yoga philosophy

♦ know Chitta and the relevance of yoga in order to control Chitta

♦ have a glimpse of Chitta Vṛtti and different kinds of Chitta Vṛtti

♦ be familiar with Chitta bhumis and the different stages

## Prerequisites

In our society, everyone lives in a hectic and tense environment. Having a head full of jumbled thoughts has become a common occurrence. We occasionally lose control over our thoughts and feelings, which can eventually result in various mental health issues. Individual consciousness is highly subjective, and the yoga system employs the term 'Chitta' to denote this. The Chitta is strongly influenced by the individual's thoughts, feelings and emotions. These are the barriers that must be overcome to achieve emancipation. The practice of yoga calms or neutralises Chitta for the purpose of achieving liberation. Chitta, its numerous stages, and the various adaptations or alterations are all covered in this unit. We can practice yoga only after fully comprehending the Chitta and all of its stages and variations.

## Key themes

Chitta, Chitta Vṛtti, Chitta Bhumi, Kshipta, Ekāgra, Niruddha

## Discussion

The great sage Patanjali is regarded as the founder of Yoga philosophy. The literal meaning of the term 'yoga' is 'union' – it signifies the spiritual union of the individual soul with the universal soul. It is a state free from all kinds of pain, misery, and limitations of the body, senses, and mind. According to Patanjali, yoga is not just a union but a spiritual endeavor to achieve perfection through controlling the mind, body, and senses by making proper distinctions between Purusha and Prakṛti. Yoga presents a systematic effort to manage the physical and psychical aspects to achieve emancipation.

Sāṅkhya and Yoga are allied systems of philosophy. Yoga is the spiritual practice of the theoretical teachings of Sāṅkhya. To achieve emancipation, yoga places a strong focus on practice. Like Sāṅkhya, Yoga also accepts perception, inference, and testimony as valid pramāṇās and adheres to the twenty-five metaphysical principles of Sāṅkhya. However, the difference between the systems is that Yoga believes in God. It considers God as the highest self, separate from all other-selves. Hence, it is known as 'Seshvara Sāṅkhya' or 'theistic Sāṅkhya'. But, as we have already discussed, Sāṅkhya is an atheistic philosophy. Yoga is also known as the 'Patanjala system.' Yoga-Sūtra or Patanjala-Sutra is the first work of Yoga philosophy. Yoga-bhāṣya or Vyāsa-bhāṣya is the commentary written by Vyāsa on Yoga-sūtra.

## 4.3.1 Chitta Vṛtti

The self is pure consciousness in its very essence. But, due to ignorance, it becomes confused with Chitta. Chitta is the antaḥkaraṇa, which includes the three internal organs of Sāṅkhya: buddhi or intellect, ahaṅkāra or ego, and manas or mind. Mahat includes ahaṅkāra and manas. Chitta is the first evolute of Prakṛti and is dominated by the sattva guṇa within it. It is not conscious in itself. Due to the proximity of Purusha, the unconscious Chitta appears as conscious.

Chitta takes the 'form' of an object to which it is related. This form is called Vṛtti or modification. Jñāna is the light of consciousness that comes from the Purusha and illuminates the 'form'. Purusha does not undergo any change; it is pure consciousness and is free from all the limitations of Prakṛti. Due to the reflection in Chitta, Purusha is wrongly identified as undergoing change and modifications. Chitta acts as the physical medium in which the manifestation of the spirit occurs. Due to Purusha's reflection, Chitta appears to be conscious, and Purusha appears to be changing, much like how the moon appears to be moving in the flowing stream.

When Purusha knows it is only an observer and is completely free from

the actions of Prakṛti, it ceases to identify itself with its reflection in the Chitta. This results in the withdrawal of light and halts the modifications of the Chitta. Here, Purusha reverts to its original state. The fluctuations or chatter of the mind, with its obstruction of desires, thoughts, and emotions, are referred to as Chitta Vṛtti. It also refers to the thought patterns or preconceived notions that limit us in some way. Yoga is the calming of the mind until it rests in a condition of total and utter peace, allowing one to perceive life as it is; as reality. It is the practice of stopping the modifications of Chitta through meditation.

The mental modification of Chitta or Chitta vṛtti are of five kinds. Some of these are easily identified, while others stay hidden. No matter how painful (Klishta) or how painless (Aklishta) the Vṛtti are, they will always interfere with one's ability to discover the truth.

## 4.3.1.1 Right Cognition (Pramāna)

The validity and invalidity of knowledge are determined by our experiences with it through our five sense organs. Our knowledge regarding water gets validated when we use and perceive it with our senses. Perceptive knowledge can, however, mislead us. Consider the phenomenon of a mirage. We perceived water on the road by sensation, but it does not really exist there. So, according to Patanjali, knowledge is valid not only because it leads to perceptive experience but also because it has a useful application. Knowledge becomes valid when it also becomes valid in our practical experiences too. There are three kinds of it.

a. Pratyakṣa or perception - We become aware of something through sensation. The knowledge is acquired directly using the sense organs. Chitta comes into contact with an external object and acquires its form through the sense organs, or it comes into contact with an internal mental state, and proper cognition then occurs.

b. Anumāna or Inference - Here, we infer the unperceived presence of something in order to deduce things. When Chitta recognizes the generic nature of things, correct cognition is achieved.

c. Shabda or Verbal testimony - It implies the belief in the words of a reliable person. Right cognition can also be attained through verbal testimony or Shabda.

## 4.3.1.2 Wrong Cognition (Viparyaya)

Viparyaya is positive wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge or misconceptions arise due to an object's deceiving appearance. We only see what we want to see in the world. 'Prapancha' is the Sanskrit word used to denote the world. The word 'Pra' indicates, 'Perceiving through' and 'Pancha' indicates 'the five sense organs.' Hence, the world is something that we wish to see through the five sense organs. Our perception of the world always depends upon our interests, likes and dislikes. Hence, thought (Vrittis) can be knowledge that is misconceived. Yoga tries to calm down these Vrittis. When the Vrittis calm down, we can perceive the true object as it is, instead of what we perceive.

## 4.3.1.3 Merely Verbal Cognition (Vikalpa)

Vikalpa is a mental construct similar to daydreaming. It is a mere verbal idea caused by words to which no real thing corresponds, for example, 'hare's horn.' We can create an imaginary world through

thinking, and this imagination may highly influence us. Yoga assists us in stopping such fantasies from taking over the mind and helps us understand reality.

### 4.3.1.4 Absence of Cognition or Sleep (Nidra)

Nidra is another type of mental modification. It is a state of emptiness or deep sleep. All mental thoughts, reasoning, manifestations, and cognition cease to exist in the Nidra state. The belief that mental processes or activities are absent in the state of deep sleep is incorrect. It is only a mental modification. We frequently say, 'I slept well,''I knew nothing,' etc., because in this state also the mind is still there.

### 4.3.1.5 Smṛti

Every conscious experience creates an impression on the individual and is stored as a memory. The recalling of these past experiences through the left-behind impressions is called Smriti. It is the recollection of prior experiences without any modifications or changes.

The five Vrttis cover all mental states. When the Chitta undergoes any kind of Vrtti, the Self is reflected in that particular mode of Chitta and believes it to be its own form. As a result, the self appears to be passing through various stages of Chitta and undergoes birth and death. Only by erasing the error can the self achieve real cognition. The purusha, or self, transcends all mental states and processes that pertain to Chitta. Due to the reflection of the self in Chitta, the Self appears to be subjected to five kinds of kleshas. The five kinds of Kleshas or afflictions are ignorance (Avidya), egoism (Asmitā), attachment (Rāga), aversion (Dvesha) and fear of death (Abhinivesha).

## 4.3.2 Chittabhūmi

There are five different stages or levels of mental life that help to know the real nature of the self. These mental stages are referred to as 'Chitta Bhūmis.' Chitta constitutes the elements of sattva, rajas, and tamas guṇās. The various stages are determined by the supremacy of the guṇās among them. There is some form of suppression of mental changes in each of these. The five stages of Chitta are:

### 4.3.2.1 Kshipta or Restless

This is the most restless stage of the mind and is dominated by rajas guṇa. It is the lowest level. The mind in this state is always fluctuating and not stable. It skips from one thing to another without taking any break at all. It fluctuates with thoughts and feelings. The mind gets bounced around like a shuttlecock here. People in this stage run for materialistic gain. This mental condition is not favourable for yoga because this stage is ineffective for controlling the senses and the mind.

### 4.3.2.2 Mudha or Blinded

This mental stage is dominated by tamas guṇa, which leads to vice, ignorance, sleepiness, lethargy, and other negative aspects. It is the restless mind that leads to the Mudha stage. This state of mind is also not alert to anything and creative activities are impossible here. Hence, it is necessary to come out of this state of mind as soon as possible.

### 4.3.2.3 Vikshipta or Distracted

Vikshipta is another kind of mental state. Sattva predominates in this state, even though rajas occasionally manifests here. Chitta at this stage temporarily focuses on an object, after which it becomes distracted. In short, the chitta in this state is

defined as sometimes focused and sometimes distracted. Steady concentration is impossible here. Thus, it is important to come out from these distractions.

### 4.3.2.4 Ekāgra or Concentrated

The fourth stage of Chitta is Ekāgra or Concentrated. Here, sattva predominates over the other two guṇās. This state is free of all impurities of rajas and tamas. Rajas and tamas are entirely submissive here. This state of mind is entirely focused on one thing, and it is an object of meditation. It is a more advanced stage of the spiritual path, though not the highest. We can attain the condition of Ekāgra when we let go of all worldly concerns through the practice of yoga. This is also referred to as short-term Samadhi or lower Samadhi.

### 4.3.2.5 Niruddha or Restrained

It is the highest state of Chitta. All mental changes are halted here, though latent impressions persist. There is not any object before the Chitta at this stage. As there is no object, Chitta cannot be altered or modified. Hence, Chitta remains in its unaltered original state of calmness and tranquility. Only the perfect yogi can be in this state. This is a state in which the yogi has complete control over his thoughts, and he does not let his thoughts rule him. Here, he can attain complete emancipation.

The yogi in this state no longer has any needs. His ego completely vanishes and this allows him to enter the highest state. The three guṇās here are in a state of equilibrium, and the yogi transcends all such guṇās. It is not possible to attain the Niruddha state of Chitta until we completely purge our minds of all fluctuations. Continuous practice of yoga is necessary to attain this stage. This is the state of Kaivalya or higher samadhi.

Out of the five states of mind, only the last two levels are suitable for yogic life, while the first three are not. The last two—Ekāgra and Niruddha—help one to achieve the ultimate aim of nirvāna. In the Ekāgra level, the mind withdraws from everything and is focused on just one object. However, in the last stage of Niruddha, there is no object presented before the Chitta. Niruddha is also known as asamprajñānata yoga or asamprajñāta samadhi.

## Recap

♦ Yoga literally means 'union'

♦ Yoga is a systematic effort to manage the physical and psychical aspects to achieve emancipation

♦ Sāṅkhya and yoga are allied schools

♦ Yoga is the practice of the theoretical teachings of Sāṅkhya

♦ Yoga believes in God. hence, it is known as 'Seshvara Sāṅkhya' or 'Theistic Sāṅkhya'

- The self is pure consciousness. Due to ignorance, it is confused with Chitta

- Due to the proximity of Purusha, the unconscious Chitta appears as conscious

- The form of an object to which it is related is called Vṛtti

- Pramāna includes perception, inference and verbal testimony

- Viparyaya is the positive wrong knowledge

- Vikalpa is only a mental construct or imagination like daydreaming

- Nidra is a state of emptiness or deep sleep

- Smṛti is the recall of past experiences through left-behind impressions

- Five Vṛttis cover all mental states

- The mental stages are referred to as 'Chitta Bhūmis'

- Various mental stages are determined by the supremacy of the guṇa in it

- The Chitta bhūmis are Kshipta, Mudha, Vikshipta, Ekāgra and Niruddha

- Kshipta is the most restless state of mind and is dominated by rajas guṇa

- Mudha stage is dominated by tamas guṇa, which leads to vice, ignorance, sleep etc

- Sattva guṇa predominates in Vikshipta, even though rajas occasionally manifests

- Chitta in Vikshipta temporarily focuses on an object but suddenly gets distracted

- Ekāgra is known as short- term samādhi or lower samādhi

- Niruddha is the highest state of Chitta

## Objective Questions

1. How does the unconscious Chitta appear to be conscious?

2. What is called the form of an object to which the self is related?

3. What is called the fluctuations or chatter of the mind with its obstructions of desires, thoughts and emotions?

4. How do the modifications of Chitta stop?

5. What are the five kinds of Chitta Vṛttis?

6. What is positive wrong knowledge?

7. What is the mental construct or imagination?

8. What is known as the recall of past experiences through left- behind impressions?

9. What is known as the mental stages?

10. How are the various mental stages determined?

11. What are the five Chitta Bhūmis?

12. What is the most restless stage of mind which is dominated by the rajas guṇa?

13. Which mental stage is dominated by the tamas guṇa?

14. Which is the highest state of Chitta?

15. In which state do all the mental changes halt?

16. Which state is known as short- term samādhi or lower samādhi?

17. What are the other names of the Niruddha state?

# Answers

1. Due to the proximity of Purusha

2. Vṛtti

3. Chitta Vṛtti

4. Through the practice of yoga

5. Pramāna,Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smṛti

6. Viparyaya

7. Vikalpa

8. Smṛti

9. Chitta Bhūmi

10. By the supremacy of guṇās

11. Kshipta, Mudha, Vikshipta, Ekāgra and Niruddha

12. Kshipta

13. Mudha

14. Niruddha

15. Niruddha

16. Ekāgra

17. Asamprajñānata yoga or Asamprajñāta Samadhi

## Assignments

1. Make a note on Chitta and the different kinds of Chitta vṛttis.

2. Discuss elaborately the Chitta Bhūmis.

## Suggested Readings

1. Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

2. Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. 8th ed. The University of Calcutta.

3. Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1. Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

4. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I and II). Delhi: Oxford.

5. Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal.

# 4 UNIT

# Ashtānga Yoga

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦ get the awareness of Ashtānga yoga

♦ become acquainted with the significance of practising yoga

♦ get a glimpse of the different stages or eight limbs of yoga in detail

## Prerequisites

Philosophy is typically thought of as a theoretical discipline, while yoga philosophy has an explicit practical perspective. It puts the theoretical principles of Sāṅkhya into practice. Yoga practice is now highly recommended by many health professionals because it enhances physical strength through muscular training. It makes our bodies more flexible and controlled. It strengthens our bodies by rejuvenating them through frequent practice. Yoga also aids in enhancing one's emotional and mental fortitude. Full harmony between emotions and feelings can be achieved by regular practice of yoga. This unit discusses the eight steps or limbs of yoga in detail.

## Key themes

Yama, Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Aparigraha, Brahmacharya

# Discussion

As previously discussed, it is extremely difficult to perceive spiritual truth since our minds are defiled with impurities and our intellect is tainted by evil thoughts. The supreme truth is directly experienced and revealed to those who have a pure heart and a clear comprehension of it. According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophy, liberation is obtained through spiritual insight (prajñā) into the reality of the self as the eternal supreme spirit. The self is very different from the body and mind. Spiritual insight can only be attained after the mind is completely clear of all pollutants and becomes tranquil.

Yoga helps to control the body, mind, and senses. It promotes the perfection of the body rather than its demise. A sound mind resides only in a sound body. All sensuous inclinations and urges that divert both the body and the mind must be conquered. In order to overcome the obstacles and attain purification and enlightenment of Chitta, Yoga advocates the eightfold path of discipline or Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. The eight-fold path or aids of Yoga are:

1. Yama (restraint)

2. Niyama (culture)

3. Āsana (posture)

4. Prānāyāma (breath control)

5. Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses)

6. Dhāraṇā (attention)

7. Dhyāna (meditation)

8. Samādhi (concentration)

## 4.4.1 Yama

Yama means abstention, the abstention from all kinds of injury to life. The word 'Yama' can be translated as 'restraint,' 'moral discipline', or 'moral vow'. According to Patanjali, these vows are entirely universal regardless of one's identity, origin, circumstance, or future aspirations. Being 'moral' might be difficult at times, that is why Yama is seen as the fundamental practice of yoga. It includes the five vows of Jainism: ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, and aparigraha.

### a. Ahimsa

Ahimsa signifies non-injury. It entails refraining from all acts that endanger life. It advises staying away from thoughts, words, and deeds that are harmful to other people. In short, it is the practice of non-violence. One should never even think about taking one's own life or encouraging others to take their own.

### b. Satyam

Satyam means truth. The Sanskrit word 'sat' literally means 'that which is'. It is the abstention from falsehood and it implies truthfulness in mind, word, and deed. It consists not just of what is true but also of what is good and pleasant.

### c. Asteyam

Asteyam means abstinence from stealing. The fundamental principle of asteya is that one should not take anything that belongs to another person. This applies to both words and thoughts as well as deeds. It is founded on the principle of the sanctity of property.

### d. Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya means abstinence from self-indulgence. It is the control of carnal desires and passions and can also be expressed as fidelity. It is an awareness regarding energy conservation and moderation. Despite overindulging now and feeling awful and depressed later, Brahmacharya teaches how to use energy to achieve internal calm and happiness. It teaches the process of self-regulation and involves refraining from all sorts of self-indulgence, both gross and subtle, ordinary and extraordinary, direct and indirect.

### e. Aparigraha

Aparigraha is the non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts from others. It is a form of self-restraint. It can be translated as non-attachment, non-greed, and non-possessiveness. The literal meaning of the term 'Graha' means 'to take' or 'to grab', 'Pari' means 'on all sides' and the prefix 'a' stands for negation. It negates the act of receiving gifts from others.

Yama instructs us to take only what we require, hold onto only that which meets our immediate needs, and let go when the time is right. Aparigraha is the reverse of Parigraha, which denotes 'the focus on material wealth.' It is a type of self-control that avoids the types of grasping and desire that ruin or harm individuals, other living things or nature in general.

## 4.4.2 Niyama

Niyama, or culture, is the second of the eight limbs of yoga. It consists of the obligations or duties that must be accomplished. It involves the principles of five inner observances. Practising Niyama leads us towards the innermost truth from the grossest parts.

### a. sauca / saucha (Cleanliness)

sauca / saucha refers to cleanliness. It is the purification of the body through washing, bathing, and other means. It does not simply refer to physical cleanliness. By cultivating positive behaviours like love, kindness, and friendliness, among others, one can purify oneself internally and externally. sauca / saucha gives us the ability to recognize undesirable habits we have picked up throughout our lives. It helps in the removal of pollutants and negativity.

### b. Santosa / santhosha

Santosa / santhosha is the practice of satisfaction or contentment. It is an inward sense of fulfilment that is independent of external conditions. santosa / santhosha appears when the desire for what others possess is removed and suggests that one should accept reality as it is. Without santosa / santhosha, one cannot taste peace, and hence, it is crucial.

### c. Tapas or Penance

The word 'tapas' comes from the Sanskrit verb 'tap,' which means 'to burn.' It is the practice of bearing cold and heat while taking austere vows. Hence, it is a challenging endeavour in the transformational process. Through this intentional suffering, one can acquire a sense of self-discipline, passion, and courage, which lead to true greatness by burning away all physical, mental, and emotional impurities.

### d. Svādhyāya

The term 'Svādhyāya' is derived from the Sanskrit roots 'sva' and 'adhyaya'. 'Sva' means 'self' or 'own,' and 'adhyaya' means 'lesson' or 'reading.' It is the process of self-reflection, self-contemplation or self-study. Through this self-study, one can find the greater consciousness that

pervades the entire cosmos and comprehend how the individual self fits into that consciousness.

Mantra recitation or the study of holy texts constitutes the traditional form of svādhyāya. When one recites a mantra or passage from the scriptures, all other ideas leave the person's mind, and the mind becomes fully present with the chanting. It is beneficial to remain fully present so that one can sense their pure consciousness.

### e. Īśvarapraṇidhāna

The term 'Īśvarapraṇidhāna' is made up of two words: 'Isvara' and 'Pranidhana'. The term 'Isvara' refers to the Brahman, the Supreme Being, God, or the Ultimate Reality and 'Pranidhana' means 'fixing.' It is the spiritual practice of completely giving oneself to God or the Supreme Being. In short, it is devotion to God. We obtain the identity of God by surrendering our ego to God.

The Yama and Niyama stages serve as the foundation for the upper stages.

# 4.4.3 Āsana

The body postures practised in yoga are known as āsanas. Through steady and comfortable postures, the discipline of the body is acquired. Physical discipline is very important in order to develop deeper concentration. Regular āsana practice leads to the improvement of physical and mental wellbeing. Āsanas can be learned efficiently only under the supervision of experts.

# 4.4.4 Prānāyāma

The term 'Prāna' means 'energy' or 'life source.' It can also be used to define the energy that permeates the universe around us and the very essence that sustains our existence. The word 'prāna' is also used to describe how respiration works. Prāṇāyāma is the practice of controlling one's breath. It comprises breathing exercises that strengthen the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Prāṇāyāma nourishes our bodies with life force and alters how our central nervous system responds to stress. The three steps involved are:

### a. Inhalation (Pūraka)

It is the process of taking an inward breath. Here, urging prāna to come in during inhalation.

### b. Retention (Kumbaka)

It is the holding of one's breath. In short, retaining the breath for a few seconds.

### c. Exhalation (Reçaka)

Exhalation is the process of outward breath. Here, expelling the prāna from the body.

The first four limbs of Ashtānga yoga are focused on perfecting the physical body and increasing self-awareness. These four stages prepare us for the second half of the journey, which is concerned with the mind, and senses, and achieving a higher state of consciousness.

# 4.4.5 Pratyāhāra

Pratyāhāra is the practice of controlling the senses by detaching them from the external environment. A conscious effort is undertaken at this stage to separate the senses from the outside world and external stimuli, keeping them under the control of the mind. The detachment of the senses from the external world enables us to focus inwardly. Pratyāhāra allows us to look at ourselves. The withdrawal of the senses enables us to logically examine our urges, which may be impeding our inner development and harmful to our health.

A strong will and extensive practice are needed to attain this state.

The first five limbs of ashtānga yoga, such as yama, niyama, āsana, prānāyāma, and pratyahāra, are known as the external aids of yoga or Bahiranga Sādhana. The remaining last three disciplines, Dhāraṇā, Dhyana, and Samadhi, are known as the internal aids of yoga, or Antaranga Sādhana.

## 4.4.6 Dhāranā

Dhāranā, dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi (enlightenment), the final three limbs of ashtānga yoga, are collectively known as Sanyam which means control. The Sanskrit term 'Dhāranā' means 'concentration'. It is the discipline of focusing the mind on a specific internal or external object. Dhāranā aims to fix the mind on a specific thing, place, or concept; here the focus is fixed steadily on a single object. To perform Dhāranā, the individual should choose a quiet space and sit comfortably. The regular practice of Dhāranā can improve a practitioner's capacity for sustained attention. It strengthens the mind and teaches the mind to maintain its tranquility. Dhāranā is crucial for progressing to the next level of yoga, Dhyāna.

## 4.4.7 Dhyāna

The word 'dhyāna' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'dhyai,' which means 'to think of'. It means 'concentrating' or 'meditating' on a particular point of attention with the goal of finding out the reality. It is a refined form of meditation that entails continuous and steady observation of the object. The ability to focus the mind more deeply during meditation is the key to developing self-knowledge, which allows one to distinguish between illusion and truth and finally achieve Samādhi, the ultimate objective of yoga. The yogi no longer recognises this as a meditation practice because they are so engaged in the act of meditation and can no longer distinguish themselves from it.

## 4.4.8 Samādhi

Samādhi is the final limb in ashtānga yoga. It is pure concentration. The difference between the known and the knower endures even in the state of Dhyāna. However, in samādhi, there is no distinction between the known and the knower. Here, individual consciousness and universal consciousness unite. It is the total stilling of the mind to a certain object. The mind is completely engaged in the object of focus at this stage, losing all knowledge of itself and losing itself in the object. It is the ultimate end or liberation.

## Recap

- ♦ Yama means abstention
- ♦ Ahimsa is non- violence or non- injury
- ♦ Satya means truth
- ♦ 'Sat' means 'that which is'

- Asteyam means abstinence from stealing
- Brahmacharya means abstinence from self-indulgence
- Niyama means culture
- sauca / saucha means cleanliness
- santosa / santhosha is the practice of satisfaction or contentment
- The word 'tapas' comes from the Sanskrit verb 'tap,' which means 'to burn'
- Svādhyāya means self- reflection or self- contemplation
- Īsvarapranidhana means devotion to God
- Āsana is the discipline of the body
- Prānāyāma is the regulation of the control of breath
- Inhalation or Pūraka is the process of taking an inward breath
- Retention or Kumbaka means the process of holding breath
- Exhalation or Reçaka is outward breath
- Pratyāhāra is the control of the senses
- Dhāranā is attention or mental discipline
- Dhyāna is the steady contemplation of an object
- Samādhi means pure concentration

# Objective Questions

1. What are the five vows of Yama?

2. What does Yama mean?

3. What is the meaning of the word 'Sat'?

4. What is Brahmacharya?

5. Which stage is the niyama or culture?

6. What are the five principles of Niyama?

7. What does santosa / santhosha refer to?

8. What is Svadhyāya?

9. What is Īśvarapraṇidhāna?

10. What are the three stages of prāṇāyāma?

11. What does Retention or Kumbaka mean?

12. Which stages constitute the external aids of yoga or Bahiraṅga Sādhana?

13. What is pure consciousness?

# Answers

1. Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha

2. Abstention

3. That which is

4. Abstinence from self-indulgence

5. Niyama

6. sauca / saucha , Santosha, Tapas, Svādhyāyā and Īśvarapraṇidhāna

7. Satisfaction or contentment

8. Self-reflection or self-contemplation

9. Devotion to God

10. Inhalation, retention and exhalation

11. Holding the breath

12. Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma and Pratyāhāra

13. Samādhi

# Assignments

1. Discuss the eight limbs of yoga.

2. Do you think yoga helps us to improve our mental health? Establish your views with the aid of ashtānga yoga.

# Suggested Readings

1. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy,* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

2. Chatterjee, S &Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., University of Calcutta.

3. Dasgupta, S.N (2004), *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol.1, Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

4. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I and II). Delhi Oxford.

5. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal

# BLOCK 5

# 5

# Mimamsa School

# UNIT
**1**

# Introduction to Pūrva-Mimāṁsā

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦  get exposed to the Mimāṁsā school

♦  have a glimpse of the various subjects in Mimāṁsā philosophy

♦  et acquainted with the different schools in the Mimāṁsā tradition

## Prerequisites

In India, the Vedas hold great significance as sacred texts that have given rise to diverse philosophical traditions. Each Veda is believed to consist of four distinct parts: the Mantras, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas, and the Upanishads. The initial two sections, Mantras and Brāhmaṇas, predominantly focus on actions, rituals, and sacrificial practices, collectively known as the Karma-Kanda aspect of the Vedas. The Mantras mainly comprise hymns dedicated to various deities, while the Brāhmaṇas provide detailed explanations of the intricate ritualistic practices found in the Vedas.

The latter two parts, the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads, mark a significant shift from the ritualistic approach to a more profound and philosophical tradition. These sections form the Jnana-Kanda (knowledge-oriented) aspect of the Vedas. The Āraṇyakas explore the philosophical aspects emerging from the earlier rituals, while the Upanishads seriously engage in philosophical discussions. Pūrva Mimāṁsā, being one of the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy gives importance to the earlier sections of the Vedas (action and rituals) and formulates necessary philosophical conceptions to reach the ultimate goal of liberation.

## Key themes

Sutra, karma, Vedas, rituals

## Discussion

Mimāṁsā deals with the earlier portions of the Veda and is therefore called Pūrva- Mimāṁsā or Karma-Mimāṁsā, while Vedānta deals with the later portions of the Veda and is therefore called Uttara-Mimāṁsā or Jnana-Mimāṁsā. The former is also named Dharma-Mimāṁsā and the latter Brahma-Mimāṁsā. Pūrva Mimāṁsā is primarily concerned with the authority of the Vedas, - the oldest sacred texts and its interpretation and justification of the Vedic ritual practices. There is a long line of pre-Sankarite teachers, Maṇḍana Mishra believed to be the last, who regards the Mimāṁsā and the Vedānta as a single system and advocates a combination of action and knowledge (Karma Jñāna Samuccaya Vāda).

The word 'Mimāṁsā' literally means 'revered thought' and was initially applied to the interpretation of Vedic rituals that demanded the highest respect. The term is now used in the sense of critical investigation. The Mimāṁsā School justifies these two meanings by giving rules for interpreting the Vedic teachings and philosophically justifying the Vedic rituals. Mimāṁsā makes a close alliance with the Vedānta system of thought, just as Sāṅkhya and Yoga or Vaisheṣika and Nyāya. Both Mimāṁsā and Vedānta formulate their philosophy based on the Vedas and are trying to interpret them, emphasising the different focal points.

Mimāṁsākas assert that the sūtras make up a single compact shāstra, starting with the first sūtra of Jaimini and concluding with the final sūtra of Bādarāyana. The sutras are short, aphoristic statements meant to be studied and interpreted with the help of a teacher or guru. Mimāṁsāka instructors believed that in order to hasten the advent of true knowledge, karma (activity) and upāsanā (meditation) were essential. Even the great Shaṅkarāchārya, who regarded action and knowledge as being diametrically opposed to each other like darkness and light, and who relegated karma to the realm of Avidyā, was forced to concede that although karma and upāsanā do not directly lead to liberation, they do serve to purify the soul.

The Mimāṁsā system is the subject of a great deal of literature. Its primary source is the Sutra of Jaimini, a comprehensive text comprising twelve chapters divided into sixty sections or quarters. These segments include various aspects of ritualistic practices and their justifications, covering around a thousand topics. It is to be noted that the earliest known commentary on this text was written by Sabara Swamin. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara, both prominent exponents of Mimāṁsā, provided distinct interpretations of the Sutra of Jaimini, leading to the development of two schools of thought within the followers of this doctrine. The differences in their explanations gave rise to this division, paving the way for diverse perspectives and approaches to Mimāṁsā philosophy.

Both Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara

wrote their commentary in the seventh century, but the exact date is not known. Kumārila's work is almost entirely available while Prabhākara's work is only partially available, and of that fragment, only one portion has been published. , It is crucial to keep in mind that the great Mimāṁsāka Kumārila Bhaṭṭa is the one who can legitimately be seen as the link between the Pūrva and the Uttara Mimāṁsā.

The Mimāṁsā literature also includes several other texts; one among them is the Bhagavad Gita which is a part of the Mahabharata. It deals with the ethical and moral issues related to the karma-kāṇḍa of the Vedas. Mimāṁsākas, or the followers of the Mimāṁsā system, also wrote commentaries; the most famous among them is Sābara bhāṣya which is a commentary on the Jaimini Sūtras. There are also other Mimāṁsā texts like Mimāṁsā-nyāya-prakāsa by Sabara, the Mimāṁsā-vārttika by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and the Mimāṁsā-muktavali by Prabhākara.

As stated above, in the Pūrva Mimāṁsā philosophy, there are two main sub-schools: the Kumārila Bhaṭṭa School and the Prabhākara School. In addition to Jaimini's sūtras, Kumārila commented on Shabara's bhāṣhya. He emphasised the importance of performing rituals and ceremonies to attain worldly goals and ultimate release from the cycle of reincarnation. He believed that the Vedas are the source of all knowledge and that their injunctions are to be followed and implemented in daily life. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa also emphasised the importance of logic and reasoning in the interpretation of scriptural texts.

Prabhākara differs radically from Kumārila on several essential matters. The commentary Bṛhati (The Large Commen-

tary) on Shabara's bhāṣhya was probably written by Prabhakara, who lived after Kumarila. Shālikanātha comments on Prabhākara's Bṛhati in his Ṛijuvimalā (The Straight and Free from Blemishes), and his Prakaraṇa-pañchikā (Commentary of Five Topics) also gives an excellent explanation of Prabhākara's system. Mādhavā's Jaiminiya-nyāyamālā-vistara, Appaya Dikṣhita's Vidhirasayana, Āpadeva's Mimāṁsā-nyāya-prakāśha, and Laugākṣhi Bhāskara's Artha-saṁgraha are some of the works that belong to this school.

In addition to the distinctions between Kumārila and Prabhākara, Kumārila maintained a strong connection with Jaimini and Shabara. Like Jaimini and Shabara, Kumārila confined the scope of Mimāṁsā to the exploration of Dharma, whereas Prabhākara extended its purview to encompass the broader task of investigating the meanings of Vedic texts. According to Kumārila, the Vedic injunction comprised a statement concerning the outcomes to be attained. Conversely, Prabhākara excluded any consideration of results from the injunction itself and advocated that people should be motivated to act solely by a sense of duty.

The epistemology of Pūrva Mimāṁsā acknowledges the Vedas as the ultimate source of knowledge. Jaimini, a prominent scholar, recognised three pramānas for acquiring knowledge: perception, inference, and testimony. Prabhakara, building upon this foundation, added two more pramānas to the list: upamāna (comparison) and arthāpatti (implication). Kumarila further expanded the scope by accepting these five pramānas and introduced one more: anupalabdhi (non-apprehension) as a valid source of knowledge. Mimāṁsākas excluded aitihya (rumor) and smṛti (recollection) from the category of valid means for acquiring knowledge. They reasoned that aitihya

cannot guarantee the validity of resulting cognition as it lacks information about the credibility of the source of the rumor and smṛti can only reveal what has been previously perceived and cannot provide new knowledge beyond past experiences.

The primary objective of Mimāṁsā philosophy lies in eradicating errors through the cultivation of correct knowledge and understanding, achieved through the rigorous study of scriptural texts and the application of logical reasoning. For them error (viparyaya) is a mistaken perception or inference leading to false knowledge. According to the Mimāṁsā School, error arises when the mind confuses one thing with another or incorrectly attributes qualities to an object that it does not possess. The root cause of such errors is deemed to be the lack of proper attention and discrimination on the part of the mind. Prabhakara School subscribes to the theory of error known as Akhyathivada, while Kumarila presents Viparita khyativada.

Pūrva Mimāṁsā's metaphysics upholds a pluralist and realistic stance. It acknowledges the existence of both the external world and the individual soul. Mimāṁsā philosophy also embraces certain beliefs in unseen forces, such as apūrva, the law of karma, heaven, hell, and liberation. However, it does not subscribe to the notion of a higher deity and dismisses the idea of periodic creation and dissolution of the world. According to Mimāṁsā, the world has neither come into being nor will it ever cease to exist, independent of time. The ethical principles of Pūrva Mimāṁsā underscore the significance of proper performance of Vedic rituals, attaining rewards in the afterlife, and striking a harmonious balance between knowledge and action, for liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

To conclude, Pūrva Mimāṁsā, being one of the six schools of Indian Philosophy, is chiefly devoted to the interpretation and validation of Vedic ritual practices. Its primary objective is to offer a rational elucidation of the rituals and beliefs outlined in the Vedas while steadfastly upholding the authority of the Vedas as the paramount source of knowledge and truth. Moreover, Pūrva Mimāṁsā asserts that the ultimate aim of human existence is to achieve the highest good - liberation from the cycle of rebirth - through the diligent performance of Vedic rituals.

## Recap

♦ Karma-Mimāṁsā or Jnana-Mimāṁsā

♦ Justification of Vedic ritual practices

♦ True knowledge is attainable with karma (activity) and upāsanā (meditation)

♦ The Sutra of Jaimini is the comprehensive philosophical text of Pūrva Mimāṁsā

♦ Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara, the two major exponents of Mimāṁsā philosophy

- Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's philosophy - the link between the Pūrva and the Uttara Mimāṁsā

- Vedas as the ultimate source of knowledge

- Mimāṁsākas excluded aitihya (rumor) and smṛti (recollection)

- Akhyathivada is the theory of error accepted by Prabhakara

- Kumarila puts forth Viparita khyativada

- Pūrva Mimāṁsā's metaphysics upholds the pluralist and realist position

## Objective Questions

1. What is the primary concern of Mimāṁsā philosophy?

2. What is the literal meaning of Mimāṁsā?

3. What is meant by sutra?

4. What are the ways Mimāṁsā gave importance to for attaining true knowledge?

5. What is the primary source of Mimāṁsā philosophy?

6. What is the ultimate source of knowledge according to Mimāṁsā?

7. Why did the Mimāṁsākas exclude aitihya from the category of pramāna?

8. Why did the Mimāṁsākas exclude smṛti from the category of pramāna?

9. What is the name of the theory of error accepted by Prabhākara?

10. What is the name of the theory of error accepted by Kumārila?

## Answers

1. Justification of Vedic ritual practices

2. Revered thought

3. Sutra is the short aphoristic statements which are to be studied and interpreted with the help of a teacher or guru

4.  Karma (activity) and upāsanā (meditation)

5.  Jaimini sutra

6.  Vedas

7.  It cannot guarantee that the resulting cognition is valid without knowing the source of the rumor

8.  It can only reveal what has previously been perceived

9.  Akhyathivada 1

10. Viparita khyativada

## Assignments

1.  Explain the major differences between the schools of Kumārila and Prabhākara.

2.  Pūrva Mimāṁsā's metaphysics upholds the pluralist and realist position. Elucidate

3.  What is Pūrva Mimāṁsā's metaphysics and epistemology?

## Suggested Readings

1.  Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2.  Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motial Banarsidass Publishers.

3.  Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy,* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4.  Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5.  Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# Theory of Knowledge in Mimāṁsā Philosophy

## Learning Outcomes

In completion of this unit, the learner will be able to

♦ get exposed to the intrinsic validity of knowledge

♦ get familiar with various conditions required for valid knowledge

♦ get acquainted with the means of valid knowledge in Mimāṁsā philosophy

♦ get a general awareness about how Mimāṁsā epistemology different from Nyāya epistemology

## Prerequisites

In Western philosophy, we come across mainly two kinds of knowledge; a priori and a posteriori. Some thinkers, especially rationalists, upheld that the human mind is endowed with innate ideas (knowledge prior to experience) or a priori forms of knowledge. They used the same to construct the knowledge system and firmly believed that we can only arrive at universal and necessary knowledge through the innate or a priori forms of knowledge. Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz were the major rationalist thinkers who upheld this position.

In contrast to it, there was another stream of thinkers who gave importance to a posteriori forms of knowledge. They were the empiricists who upheld that all knowledge arises only after experience. At the time of birth, the mind is a clean sheet of paper (tabula rasa) on which impressions are imprinted from experience. The major proponents of this stream of thought were Locke, Berkeley and Hume. There were also thinkers like Immanuel Kant who combined both these traditions. When we come to the Indian scenario, the approach is totally different towards knowledge. The thinkers mainly used the spiritual texts of this tradition to develop epistemological doctrines of their philosophy. Its effects are visible even in the number of pramānas accepted in each system of Indian philosophical tradition.

## Key themes

Svatahpramanyavada, Pratyakṣa, Anumana, Sabda, Upamāna, Artapatti, Anupalabdhi

## Discussion

The Mimāṁsā system of philosophy elaborately discusses the means, nature and criterion of knowledge. While exposing Mimāṁsā epistemology, we must take into account the epistemological contributions of two major thinkers, Kumārila and Prabhākara, to this school. Both of them made relevant contributions to the Mimāṁsā system, and with their contribution, the system became familiar to the intellectual community. Some of the major questions that they try to address are: how does knowledge originate?. What are the conditions that knowledge must fulfil in order to be valid? What are the means through which we can gain valid knowledge? Answering these questions will give a clear picture of the basic epistemological expositions of the Mimāṁsā philosophy.

Scholars engage with Mimāṁsā epistemology in comparison with the epistemological endeavours of the Nyāya philosophy. They focus on the differences and similarities between both systems. Why do they differ in accepting the number of pramānas? Which pramāna is more important than other valid means of knowledge and why? These are some of the major concerns addressed by them.

Svatahprāmāṇyavāda, or intrinsic validity of knowledge, is central to Mimāṁsā philosophy. For them, knowledge reveals the self directly. All knowledge is immediate and self-valid; therefore, there is no need for any subsequent knowledge to validate further. In Indian philosophy, all knowledge involves triputi, the knower,

the object of knowledge and the knowledge. In Mimāṁsā philosophy, they occur in the simultaneous moment. Hence the knowledge derived from each pramāna can reveal the self directly.

## 5.2.1 Conditions for Valid Knowledge

Mimāṁsā philosophy extensively examines the criteria for determining the validity and falsity of knowledge. For knowledge to be deemed valid, it must satisfy four conditions. The first condition emphasises the cause from which knowledge arises. The validity of knowledge is entirely contingent upon its causes; hence, all valid knowledge should be free from defective causes (kāraṇdoṣrahita). Defective causes taint the knowledge and render it invalid.

The second condition, bādhakajñānarahita, dictates that valid knowledge should be devoid of contradictions. Logically, 'A' and 'not A' cannot both be true simultaneously. Therefore, to be valid, knowledge must eradicate contradictions. The third condition, novelty or agṛhitagrāhi, demands that knowledge production must involve something new. Based on this premise, Mimāṁsā philosophy does not consider memory as a valid means of knowledge since it merely involves recollecting what is already known. The last condition for the validity of knowledge is yathārtha which demands the correct representation of the objects

through knowledge. In short, freedom from defective causes, non-contradictions and true representation of the objects are the necessary conditions for the validity of knowledge.

## 5.2.2 Pramānas or Means of Knowledge

Jaimini, the founder of the Mimāṁsā School, acknowledges three pramānas: Perception or Pratyakṣa, Inference or Anumāna, and Verbal Testimony or Sabda. However, two significant commentators of the Mimāṁsā School, Kumarila and Prabhakara, differ from Jaimini regarding the number of pramānas they accept. They hold differing views on various philosophical matters, particularly concerning the nature of knowledge. Kumarila advocates six pramānas. He embraces the four pramānas of the Nyaya School without deviation and includes two additional valid sources of knowledge, Arthāpatti, and Anupalabdhi. According to him, the four pramānas propagated by Nyāya were insufficient to comprehend the true essence of an unknown object.

On the other hand, Prabhakara accepts only five pramānas and includes Arthāpatti in the list of Nyāya's pramānas. He refutes anupalabdhi as an independent source of knowledge, asserting that whatever can be attained through non-perception or anupalabdhi is achievable through perception. The differences in the number and acceptance of pramānas between Jaimini, Kumarila, and Prabhakara showcase the diversity of opinions within the Mimāṁsā School on the nature of knowledge and the means through which it can be acquired.

### 5.2.2.1 Perception or Pratyakṣa

Mimāṁsā thinkers conceive perception

as the direct apprehension which proceeds from sense contact. Kumarila explains this sense of contact as the capacity of the subject to reveal the object. He limits this capacity with the apprehension of sensible objects. In his opinion, sense-contact cannot know supersensible objects. In Prabhākara's view, senses can apprehend not mere objects but substances, classes or qualities as well.

Regarding the division of perception as determinate and indeterminate, Mimāṁsā thinkers slightly differ from the Nyaya theory. According to Nyaya, determinate and indeterminate perceptions are the two stages in perception. They view determinate perception as the actual or accurate perception and indeterminate perception as an earlier stage in the complex process of perception. However, Mimāṁsā philosophy gives importance to the indeterminate perception and gives it more space than Nyāya.

Both Kumārila and Prabhākara acknowledge the validity of both determinate and indeterminate perception. According to Kumārila, indeterminate perception apprehends the object without ascribing any universal or particular quality to it. It solely concerns the object itself. This does not imply that such qualities are absent in the object; instead, their presence is not recognized at this stage of perception. Prabhākara, to some extent, deviates from this standpoint and asserts that indeterminate perception apprehends both the universal and particular qualities of the object but lacks a definite understanding of the object's class character. In determinate perception, the subject recalls other objects belonging to the same class and considers their resemblances and differences.

## 5.2.2.2 Inference or Anumāna

The conception of inference in Mimāṁsā philosophy goes along with that of the Nyāya view of inference. However, both Prabhākara and Kumārila only accept three components in a syllogism. These include pratijñā, which is the statement to be proved, the major premise that establishes the general rule alongside the instance, and the minor premise. Like Nyāya, Mimāṁsākas also recognises the distinction between Svārthanumana (inference for oneself) and Parārthanumana (inference for others).

Another significant matter addressed by both Prabhākara and Kumārila is the novelty of inferential knowledge. Prabhākara does not concede novelty in inferential knowledge. According to him, it necessitates prior knowledge of the universal relation and pertains to things already known. On the contrary, Kumārila considers novelty an essential quality of inference. In his perspective, despite having prior knowledge of the universal relation, knowledge derived from inference through any other medium possesses the freshness of new knowledge.

## 5.2.2.3 Comparison or Upamāna

In contrast to the Nyāya conception of upamāna, Mimāṁsā takes a minor deviation. According to Nyāya philosophy, comparison establishes a relationship between a word and the object it denotes. The knowledge derived from the comparison is based solely on the recognition of resemblance or similarity. On the other hand, in Mimāṁsā philosophy, comparison leads to knowledge of a remembered object in relation to the perceived object. In this scenario, when we see a certain object, we recollect another object based on similarity. For instance, if someone sees a wild cow, they may recall a remembered cow that bears a resemblance to the perceived wild cow. Any individual who has observed a wild cow can conclude their resemblance through recollection.

## 5.2.2.4 Verbal Testimony or Sabda

Verbal testimony or Sabda pramāna holds great significance in Mimāṁsā philosophy. Kumārila distinguishes between two types of testimony: pauruṣeya and apauruṣeya. Pauruṣeya testimony pertains to statements made by trustworthy individuals, while apauruṣeya refers to the testimony of the Vedas. Apauruṣeya testimony, also known as Vedavākya - self-evident truths, does not require proof or validation through other pramānas. They stand on their own as inherently valid and eternal In contrast, pauruṣeya testimony or āptavākya lacks intrinsic validity. Its validity is inferred and can lead to doubts and contradictions, unlike Vedavākya, which is always considered valid and eternal.

Mimāṁsā regards the Vedas as authorless and not composed even by God. The Vedas exclusively expound on dharma, and no other valid means of knowledge can apprehend it. Vedic injunctions are inherently valid and not contradicted by subsequent knowledge. Prabhākara views Vedic testimony as the most genuine and reduces āptavākya to inference. For him, the validity of āptavākya is inferred from the trustworthiness of the person conveying it. Kumārila Bhāṭṭa confines the scope of the Vedas to Vedic injunctions. According to him, the Vedas primarily deal with commands and prohibitions. Following these commands leads to merit, and if we do not obey them that will lead to demerit.

### 5.2.2.5 Implication or Arthāpatti

Kumarila and Prabhakara both acknowledge arthāpatti as a valid source of knowledge. According to them, arthāpatti serves as a valid means of knowledge to resolve inconsistencies in perceived facts. It applies in cases where the perception of one thing cannot be explained without assuming the existence of another thing. For Prabhākara, this pramāna serves to eliminate doubt from knowledge. On the other hand, Kumārila regards it as a valid means to reconcile inconsistencies between two known facts. However, Nyayayikas do not consider arthāpatti as an independent pramāna and reduce it to inference.

A classic example provided by Mimāṁsā is when we say "Devadatta is fat, but he does not eat during the day." In such a scenario, we would naturally assume that Devadatta eats during the night. Here, the inconsistency between the perceived fact of Devadatta being fat and his habit of not eating during the day is resolved by assuming that he eats during the night.

### 5.2.2.6 Non-apprehension or Anupalabdhi

Anupalabdhi, or non-apprehension, holds a significant place in the philosophy of Kumārila Bhāṭṭa. Kumārila points out that immediate knowledge regarding the non-existence of a thing is attainable through anupalabdhi. For instance, the non-existence of a jar on earth is known through the non-perception of the jar. When an individual asserts that there is no jar in a certain place, it leads to the knowledge of the jar's absence, which cannot be grasped through perception. Kumārila argues that perceiving the vacant space

triggers the recollection of the jar's absence from that space, ultimately leading to the knowledge of the jar's non-existence. He clearly distinguishes non-apprehension from perception, emphasising that perception operates through sense-object contact, and there is nothing with which the senses could come into contact to perceive non-existence.

Both Prabhākara and Nyayayika do not regard anupalabdhi as an independent pramāna. According to Prabhākara, the absence of an object is inferred from the non-perception of something that would have been perceived if it were present. On the other hand, Nyāya reduces anupalabdhi to either perception or inference.

### 5.2.3 Svataḥprāmāṇyavāda

The central idea behind Svataḥprāmāṇyavāda is that certain types of knowledge are intrinsically reliable and trustworthy, independent of any external sources of verification. This concept is particularly applicable to specific means of knowledge, known as pramāṇas that provide valid knowledge directly without relying on other pramāṇas for confirmation. In contrast, other pramāṇas might require external support for validation.

Both Kumārila and Prabhākara adopt the intrinsic validity of knowledge. Validity of the knowledge arises at the exact moment when the knowledge originated. Both their origin and ascertainment occur at the same moment. That is, the condition that constitutes the knowledge's origin also constitutes its validity.

Mimāṁsāka and Nyāya engage in a controversy regarding their respective approaches to the nature of knowledge. Nyāya adopts the Parataḥprāmāṇyavāda, or the theory of extrinsic validity of

knowledge. According to Nyāya, the validity of knowledge arises solely from its correspondence with the object in the external world. They assert that no knowledge is inherently valid, and the nature of knowledge remains neutral. Nyāya determines the validity of knowledge based on its ability to produce fruitful results. Defects in the causes of knowledge lead to the invalidity of knowledge, and extraneous conditions also impact its validity.

On the other hand, Mimāṁsā agrees with Nyāya that the invalidity of knowledge can be attributed to extraneous conditions. However, their criticism of Nyāya's perspective on the validity of knowledge is particularly strong. According to Mimāṁsā, the validity of knowledge is purely intrinsic. They argue that knowledge does not require any external validation because it is inherently valid by itself. By critiquing Nyāya's position, Mimāṁsā contends that the concept of neutral knowledge is a misconception and asserts the impossibility of a thirdalternative. In their view, something can only be considered knowledge if it is either valid or invalid.

The theory of knowledge advocated by Prabhākara is known as triputipratyakṣavāda. According to this theory, knowledge is self-luminous and manifests by itself. In every moment of cognition, the knower, the object of knowledge, and the knowledge are simultaneously revealed. There is no requirement for any subsequent knowledge to manifest them. Prabhākara does not consider knowledge to be eternal; it arises in the act of cognition and then ceases to exist. On the other hand, Kumārila's view on the theory of knowledge is called jñātatāvāda. He does not believe knowledge to be self-luminous. For him, knowledge is not immediately revealed; instead, it can only be inferred. According to Kumārila, knowledge is a mode of the self and cannot be self-revealing.

In Mimāṁsā, all truth is considered intrinsically valid. If truth is inherently valid, the discussion about the scope of error becomes central in Mimāṁsā philosophy. Prabhākara's theory of error is termed akhyāti, while Kumārila's theory of error is known as viparitakhyāti. According to Kumārila, an error occurs when there is a misidentification between what is perceived (given) and what is remembered (non-perceived). In other words, viparitakhyāti is the cognitive act of wrongly synthesising the given with the non-given, leading to a mistaken understanding of the object or situation.

In viparitakhyāti, erroneous cognition is based on the misidentification of one thing as another. Kumārila argues that this misapprehension arises due to the conditioning of our previous experiences and memories. Our minds tend to associate certain features with specific objects, and when we encounter something resembling those features, we tend to erroneously attribute the identity of the associated object to the new situation.

Prabhākara maintains that all apprehension is valid, and there is no error in the strict logical sense. He perceives error as non-apprehension rather than misapprehension. For Prabhākara, error represents imperfect knowledge or partial truth. It arises due to the limitations of our apprehension, but at the same time does not invalidate the overall validity of knowledge. He maintains that all apprehensions, even if they contain some level of imperfection, are fundamentally valid. In his view, we cannot claim all knowledge to be perfect; there are inherent imperfections in knowledge, and error points to these imperfections.

# Recap

- The comparison of Mimāṁsā and Nyāya epistemology
- Valid knowledge should be free from defective causes
- Valid knowledge should be free from contradictions
- Novelty or agṛhitagrāhi
- True representation of the objects
- Jaimini accepts three pramānas
- Perception as the direct apprehension
- Prabhākara and Kumārila accept only three members in a syllogism
- Prabhākara does not admit novelty in inferential knowledge
- Kumārila makes novelty an essential quality of inference
- The knowledge produced by comparison is due to the knowledge of resemblance
- Pauruṣeya and apauruṣeya
- Validity of āptavākya is inferred
- Arthāpatti resolves the inconsistencies of the perceived facts
- Immediate knowledge about the non-existence of a thing is possible through anupalabdhi
- Tripuṭipratyakṣavāda and jñātatāvāda

# Objective Questions

1. What are the four conditions of knowledge, according to Mimāṁsā philosophy?

2. What are the pramānas accepted by Jaimini?

3. How does perception take place in indeterminate perception according to Kumārila?

4. How does perception take place in indeterminate perception according to Prabhākara?

5. How many members are present in Mimāṁsā syllogism?

6. What is meant by pauruṣeya testimony according to Kumārila?

7. What is meant by apauruṣeya testimony according to Kumārila?

8. How does Nyaya treat arthāpatti in their philosophy?

9. Who considers Anupalabdhi or non-apprehension as an independent means of knowledge?

10. What is the theory proposed by Mimāṁsā to state the validity of knowledge?

# Answers

1. Kāraṇḍoṣrahita, bādhakajñānarahita, agṛhitagrāhi and yathārtha
2. Pratyakṣa, Anumāna and Sabda
3. It apprehends the object without attributing any universal and particular qualities
4. It apprehends both the universal and particular qualities of the object but lacks definite apprehension of the class character of the object
5. Three
6. The testimony of the trustworthy persons
7. The testimony of Vedas
8. They reduce it into inference
9. Kumārila
10. Svataḥprāmāṇyavāda

# Assignments

1. Explain Pramānas or the means of Knowledge in Mimāṁsā Philosophy.

2. Svataḥprāmāṇyavāda means the intrinsic validity of knowledge. Explain.

## Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motial Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

# Self, Salvation and God

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦  get exposed to the notion of self in Mimāṁsā philosophy

♦  get familiar with the pluralistic nature of Mimāṁsā philosophy

♦  get a glimpse of Mimāṁsā's conception of salvation

♦  get acquainted with the concept of God in Mimāṁsā philosophy and how it is closely aligned with the ritualistic tradition of Mimāṁsā

## Prerequisites

In the world of Indian metaphysical and ethical thoughts, three crucial ideas emerge: 'Self,' 'Salvation,' and 'God.' These concepts function like essential puzzle pieces, aiding us in comprehending ourselves, seeking inner tranquility, and engaging with the notion of a higher power. Exploring the essence of the 'Self' unveils our genuine identity, 'Salvation' leads us to uncover happiness and liberation, and contemplating 'God' encourages us to ponder a superior force beyond our understanding. In the forthcoming discussion, we are going to see how the Mimāṁsā tradition provides a unique viewpoint on these concepts, including God, the self, and salvation.

## Key themes

Dharma, Adharma, Moksa, Mantra, Rituals

## Discussion

Pūrva and Uttara Mimāṁsā strive to demonstrate the compatibility of the philosophical theories and the Vedic revelations in their shared philosophy. The Uttara Mimāṁsā or Vedanta, depicts knowledge of reality, whereas the Pūrva Mimāṁsā, being the older of the two (at least in a logical sense), is ritualistic in theme. According to them, the entire Veda, excluding the Upaniṣads, is believed to be concerned with dharma or moral obligations of which sacrifices are the most important. Keeping this as central, Pūrva Mimāṁsā deals with performing sacred ceremonies, which are typically seen as the precondition for pursuing insight that leads to Moksa.

The evolution of Mimāṁsā philosophy is deeply intertwined with the ritualistic heritage of India. Scholars attribute its origins to a rational exploration of the complex aspects of ritual practices that held prominence during that era. The central focus of the development of the Mimāṁsā system was deciphering how rituals and sacrificial acts could be imbued with significance. Jaimini, the founder of this philosophical school, sought to organise and systematise existing interpretations that were previously characterised by ambiguity and incompleteness. Additionally, they constructed various philosophical principles firmly grounded in this ritualistic tradition. Consequently, topics emerging within this tradition derive their importance solely from their interconnectedness with this core premise. The forthcoming

discussions concerning the self, salvation, and God similarly revolve around the strong ritualistic foundation inherent in the Mimāṁsā system.

### 5.3.1 Self

The Mīmāṁsā tradition acknowledges the existence of the self as a fundamental and enduring reality. It views the self as a distinct entity that transcends the physical body and mind. According to Mīmāṁsā, the self is not merely a product of the physical body, but rather an independent and eternal essence that persists through various lifetimes. They also point out the continuity of the self across different stages of life and even beyond death. They argue that the self is the bearer of the consequences of actions (karmas) performed in previous lives and in the present one. These karmas determine the individual's circumstances, experiences, and outcomes. Therefore, the self is responsible for reaping the results of its actions, whether they are positive or negative.

Mīmāṁsā philosophers clearly draw a distinction between the self and the body, viewing the latter as a vessel for the former. According to their perspective, combining the constituent elements of the body does not lead to the creation of the self, as these elements lack intelligence. This means that the self is discerned from the body, the senses, and the intellect (buddhi). Mīmāṁsā philosophy positions the body as the means to an end, its pur-

pose being to serve the soul that governs it. Both Kumārila and Prabhākara also differentiates between the soul the body, regarding the body as a vehicle that transports the soul. To be more precise, for them, the soul is the experiencer, and the body acts as the instrument of experience. The self endures even after the demise of the body.

Mimāṁsākas accept the plurality of the souls and prove it with the differences of experiences that each individual engages with. Like Advaita, they do not advocate the oneness of Atman. The souls that are present in different bodies are not the multiple expression of the same Atman. Scholars use different analogies to prove the oneness of Atman, like the analogy of the sun. They point out that the same soul is present in different bodies just as the sun reflects in different substances and is endowed with distinct properties. Mīmāṁsākas reject this analogy by asserting that the apparent differences in qualities result from the reflecting medium itself rather than originating from the sun's intrinsic nature.

Mīmāṁsā philosophers also assert that every individual carries out their actions in a distinct manner, setting them apart from others, and subsequently assumes responsibility for those actions. Consequently, they individually receive their corresponding rewards based on their performances. This variation in actions also serves as evidence for the existence of other souls that similarly reap the positive or negative consequences of their own deeds.

Within Mīmāṁsā philosophy, the soul is perceived as eternal, even though subject to change. Unlike certain other orthodox systems that regard consciousness as the core of the self, Mīmāṁsā takes a different stance. Prabhākara considers consciousness as an incidental quality rather than an indispensable attribute of the self. On the other hand, Kumārila posits that consciousness neither holds essential nor accidental status concerning the self. Instead, he views it as a mode or process through which the self perceives the world around it.

Kumārila further elaborates on the existence of the soul by assigning contradictory attributes to it. In his perspective, the self is both identical and distinct, unchanging and subject to change. He attributes the quality of changelessness to the self by conceptualising it as a fundamental essence; however, he also perceives the self as a dynamic aspect that experiences alterations. In comparison with the viewpoints of Prabhākara and Kumārila, the former regards the self as unconscious or passive, while the latter envisions the self as simultaneously conscious and unconscious.

How the self can be cognised represents another pivotal question that both Prabhākara and Kumārila grapple with in their philosophical frameworks. As discussed in the preceding unit, Prabhākara champions the theory of triputipratyakṣavāda, which states that knowledge illuminates both the unconscious self and the object. He conceptualised knowledge as inherently self-luminous, and this self-luminous knowledge unveils the self as the subject (knower) and the object (known), presenting them in unison. In contrast, Kumārila diverges from Prabhākara's perspective and refutes the self-luminosity of cognition. He upholds the theory of jñātatāvāda, asserting that no act of cognition is directly perceived but is instead inferred from the awareness of the object being cognised. Kumārila employs the same theory to elucidate the understanding of the self.

## 5.3.2 God

Pūrva Mimāṁsā philosophy does not believe in the existence of a God in the capacity of a creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. Instead, it presents a range of (Vedic) deities as symbols of Brahman, allowing for the performance of suitable sacrifices to provide for the various needs of the devotees. While these deities are attributed a certain form of existence, emphasis is placed on the devotee or sacrificer concentrating on the mantras and transcending the physical manifestation of the deity. Thus, engaging in offerings to the deities is deemed advantageous, as is directing one's attention to the accompanying mantras, as they can potentially aid in realising the ultimate truth.

In Pūrva Mimāṁsā, the concept of God is different from that of other philosophical systems in Indian thought. It does not posit a personal god who intervenes in the world but sees the gods as personifications of the natural forces that govern the universe. These gods are seen as necessary for the performance of rituals and the fulfilment of one's duties. The gods are believed to have the power to grant blessings and rewards for performing ritual actions, but they do not have the power to grant ultimate liberation or salvation.

Mimāṁsākas take utmost care not to glorify any person (human) in the presence of the divine. They highlighted the ethical side of human life in relation to the notions of Dharma and moksha. They believe that the Veda formulates true spirituality of life with these notions and directs us to do certain acts and abstain from certain acts to attain true happiness of life.

In essence, within Pūrva Mimāṁsā, deities are regarded as functional entities designed to facilitate the execution of rituals. From their perspective, these deities do not possess a role in bestowing ultimate liberation or salvation upon individuals. They are not perceived as personal deities, but rather as embodiments of natural forces governing the cosmos. However, subsequent thinkers in the Mimāṁsā tradition adopt a more tempered stance concerning the role of God in their philosophy. Laugākṣi Bhāskara assumes a theistic standpoint, attributing a distinct significance to God in the realm of duty. He asserts that when duty is performed with dedication to God, it becomes a means for achieving liberation.

## 5.3.3 Salvation

In Pūrva Mimāṁsā philosophy, the notion of salvation is denoted by the term "moksha." This concept revolves around the idea that liberation can be attained through active engagement in one's duties and the conscientious fulfilment of one's dharma, which encompasses the responsibilities and obligations inherent in worldly life. The primary objective of this pursuit is to achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirth, known as reincarnation, and to ultimately merge with Brahman, the ultimate and supreme reality.

According to Pūrva Mimāṁsā philosophy, the path to moksha is paved through the diligent study and accurate execution of the rituals of the Vedas. Furthermore, engaging in sacrificial acts and adhering to various rituals are also regarded as essential in the journey towards salvation. These practices are considered essential because they are believed to align individuals with the cosmic order and establish a connection between the individual soul and the divine.

The concept of moksha was not originally introduced by the founder of the philosophy, Jaimini. While he did refer to the concept of a heavenly existence,

he did not explicitly advocate complete liberation from the cycle of worldly existence, known as saṁsāra. However, subsequent schools within the Mimāṁsā tradition later deemed it a pertinent topic for exploration and discussion. In Prabhākara's perspective, the attainment of liberation is attributed to the complete cessation of both dharma (righteousness) and adharma (unrighteousness). This cessation is described as "the full cessation of the cycle of birth (or the physical body)." Essentially, liberation involves the complete eradication of dharma and adharma, which serve as the underlying causes of the continuous cycle of rebirth.

On the other hand, Kumārila describes moksha as the state of the ātman (self) in its true essence, or the realisation of the self's intrinsic nature. He envisions moksha as a positive state that is devoid of all suffering and pain. In his view, liberation marks a state of ultimate freedom from the constraints of worldly existence. Notably, Radhakrishnan highlights that Kumārila's conception of moksha closely aligns with the viewpoint of Advaita, another prominent philosophical school in Hinduism. This underscores the profound philosophical similarities that Kumārila's perspective shares with the Advaita interpretation of liberation, indicating a convergence of thought between the two distinct philosophical traditions.

Mimāṁsā thinkers do not show a preference for pleasure over pain or happiness over sorrow when it comes to the pursuit of liberation. Once an individual recognises the coexistence of both pleasures and suffering in the world, their attention shifts towards the goal of liberation. At this point, the person strives to abstain from actions that are prohibited as well as those that are recommended. Additionally, the individuals undertake necessary penances to cleanse themselves of accumulated sins / bad effects from the past. Eventually, this process leads to a gradual detachment from their physical life. When these efforts prove successful, they result in the attainment of liberation, known as moksha. In this liberated state, the soul is conceptualised as devoid of attributes and incapable of experiencing even bliss.

From the perspective of Mimāṁsā, true liberation is achievable only through the complete renunciation of action. In this view, every action, regardless of its moral nature, generates outcomes that bind us to the cycles of birth and rebirth. To break free from this continuous cycle of existence, individuals are required to attain a state of pure transcendence, where they are liberated from all actions, moral obligations (dharma), and transgressions (adharma). According to Mimāṁsā philosophy, the ultimate liberation signifies the cessation of both pleasure and pain. It encourages seekers to transcend the dualities of life and embrace a state of timeless freedom, where the soul attains its true nature beyond the realms of action and consequence.

# Recap

♦ The meaningful performance of rituals and sacrifices

♦ Self is an eternal or permanent being

- The necessity of life after death

- Body is the carrier of the soul or self

- Body is the means to an end

- The soul is the enjoyer and the body is the vehicle of enjoyment

- For Prabhākara consciousness is an accidental and not a necessary quality of the self

- Kumārila does not conceive consciousness as neither essential nor an accidental quality of the self

- For Kumārila, the self is identical as well as different and changeless as well as changing

- Prabhākara advocates the theory of triputipratyakṣavāda

- Kumārila advocates the theory of jñātatāvāda

- The gods as personifications of the natural forces that govern the universe

- Gods are the functional entities in Mimāṁsā philosophy

- In Prabhākara's view, the elimination of all dharma and adharma is said to be the cause of liberation

- Kumārila defines moksha as the state of ātman in itself or the realisation of ātman

- Moksha is the natural state of the soul freed from all positive and negative attributes

## Objective Questions

1. How do Mimāṁsākas conceive body in their philosophy?

2. How does Prabhākara conceive consciousness?

3. How does Kumārila conceive consciousness?

4. How does Prabhākara conceive knowledge?

5. What is the theory proposed by Prabhākara to explain the means for

cognising the self?

6.  What is the theory proposed by Kumārila to explain the means for cognising the self?

7.  How do the Mimāṁsākas conceive God?

8.  Who is the later Mimāṁsā thinker who gave special preference to God in his thought?

9.  What is considered as the ultimate goal of Mimāṁsā philosophy?

10. How does Prabhākara conceive Moksha in his philosophy?

11. How does Kumārila conceive Moksha in his philosophy?

# Answers

1.  The Carrier of the Soul

2.  The accidental quality of the self

3.  Mode or process through which the self cognises the things

4.  Self-luminous

5.  Tripuṭipratyakṣavāda

6.  Jñātatāvāda

7.  The gods as personifications of the natural forces that govern the universe

8.  Laugākṣi Bhāskara

9.  To attain release from the cycle of reincarnation and to merge with the ultimate reality of Brahman

10. The full cessation of the body (or cycle of birth)

11. The realisation of ātman

# Assignments

1. Explain Kumārila and Prabhākara's concept of consciousness and knowledge

2. Describe Kumārila's concept of moksha

# Suggested Readings

1. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999) *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), Delhi: Oxford.

2. Hiriyanna, M. (1994) *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motial Banarsidass Publishers.

3. Sharma, C.D. (1960) *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Chatterjee, S & Datta. D.M (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta: University of Calcutta.

5. Dasgupta, S.N (2004) *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (Vol. I), Delhi: MLBD Publishers

# 6 BLOCK

# Vedanta Schools

# Theory of Knowledge in the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦ Be familiari with Advaita Vedānta

♦ comprehend the pramāṇas accepted by Śaṅkara

♦ gain a general awareness of the theory of error in Advaita Vedānta

## Prerequisites

Advaita Vedānta, like all other Indian philosophical traditions, seeks to understand the ultimate reality. There must be a way of knowing in order to achieve reality. These means are referred to as Pramāṇas. Pramāṇas are trustworthy and legitimate ways for people to acquire authentic information. Vedānta, like other schools of Indian philosophy, lists some reliable sources of knowledge (Pramāṇa). We gather a lot of information from our environment, whether it be through the senses, anumāna, śabda, or other means, but we never think about whether the information is accurate or not. What are the criteria for valid knowledge? We encounter a lot of incorrect knowledge as a result of numerous internal and external factors. The question then becomes: How can we eradicate all false knowledge? According to Vedānta, knowledge must not contradict itself in order to be valid. The epistemology of Advaita Vedānta is covered in depth in this unit.

## Key themes

Vedānta, Intrinsic Validity, Pramā, Apauruṣeya, Avidyā

## Discussion

Vedānta is one among the six Āstika Darśanas or Orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy, commonly known as Ṣaḍ Darśanas. This system is closely bound with the religion of India and is more popular than the other systems. The term Vedānta literally means the end of the Vedas. It can be related to the concluding portion of the Veda or to the essence of the Vedic knowledge, and in both ways, it refers to the Upaniṣads. The Vedānta system is also called Uttara Mīmāṃsā as it focuses on the later part or Jñāna Kāṇḍa of the Vedas, compared to the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system, which focuses on the first part or Karma Kāṇḍa.

The work Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, which attempts to systematise the teachings found in the Upaniṣads, is considered the principal text of this system. However, the aphorisms of the text were interpreted and commented upon differently by later philosophers, which led to the formation of various schools within the same system. Śaṅkara's bhāṣya (commentary) on Brahmasūtra marked the spread of Advaita Vedānta. Similarly, the commentaries of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbarka and Vallabha, respectively, led to the formation of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, Dvaita-Advaita and Śuddha-Advaita schools. It is interesting to learn how these schools, having different views on God, the soul, and the world, emerged from the same principal text. Despite the differences, all these schools do have some common points of agreement.

Śaṅkara is regarded as a rational philosopher of the highest grade due to the profundity of his speculations. Apart from the Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya, his commentaries on the Principal Upaniṣads and Bhagavad Gita, along with various independent works like Upadeśasāhasrī, Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, etc. help us understand his Advaitic teachings. Various comparative studies have been conducted between Śaṅkara and Western philosophers like Spinoza, Hegel etc. However, Advaita Vedānta is not limited to Śaṅkara alone. In the Pre-Śaṅkara era, we encounter Gauḍapāda, who emphasised the non-dual nature of reality, and in the post-Śaṅkara era, there are various Advaitins like Vācaspati, Vidyaranya, Sarvajñātma Muni, Śrīharṣa, Citsukha, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, etc., who elaborated on and defended the views of Śaṅkara, against the perspectives of other systems, including the non-Śaṅkarite schools of Vedānta.

# 6.1.1 Theory of knowledge in the Advaita- Vedānta

The ultimate reality according to the Advaita school is the non-dual spirit. It remains hidden in our daily experience where the manifoldness of souls and the material world is projected, and ignorance is the reason behind our sufferings. The mechanism of our knowledge process is also part of the illusory experience, but the inquiry into the conditions behind our cognition can gradually lead us to the real-

ization of truth.

In all determinate knowledge, there is the modification of the ultimate consciousness into (i) the subject who knows, (ii) the process of knowledge, and (iii) the object known. The ultimate consciousness or Ātman, qualified by the internal organ or antaḥkaraṇa, becomes the knower. The antaḥkaraṇa undergoes various modifications known as vṛtti, which reveals objects. The four modes of this antaḥkaraṇa are saṁśaya, niscaya, garva, and smarana. The same antaḥkaraṇa is called manas, buddhi, ahaṅkāra, and Citta, with respect to its four modes. An object is cognized according to the mode of the internal organ.

The object thus revealed is also nothing but the ultimate consciousness manifested as such. The same consciousness assumes various forms through different modifications of the internal organ corresponding to different objects, thus enabling a person to have knowledge in many forms. The knowledge lasts as long as the modification lasts. The views that define knowledge as a product or as an act are rejected. Advaita maintains that the validity of knowledge is intrinsic, and its invalidity is extrinsic. Knowledge is self-revealing and does not need anything else to manifest it. When knowledge originates through any of the valid pramāṇas, which are without deficiencies, its validity also arises therein. But the invalidity of knowledge is ascribed to extraneous conditions.

True knowledge or pramā is valid when the means of knowledge is free from defects and invalid otherwise.

Śaṅkara is said to have referred to only three valid sources of knowledge or pramāṇas: Perception (Pratyakṣa), Inference (Anumāna), and Verbal Testimony (Śabda). Later followers of Advaita recognise three more pramāṇas namely Upamāna (Comparison), Arthāpatti (Postulation), and Anupalabdhi (Non-apprehension), thereby making the number of pramāṇas equal to that of Kumārila school of Mīmāṁsā. Smṛti (Memory) is not considered a valid source of knowledge, as novelty is an essential feature of all knowledge. Immediate knowledge of external objects arises when, through any sense, the antaḥkaraṇa flows out to the object and is modified into the form of the object. All other knowledge is mediate.

### 6.1.1.1 Perception

When the internal organ contacts with an external object through the sense organ, it gets transformed into the vṛtti related to that object. As soon as it has assumed the shape or form of the object of its knowledge, the ignorance with reference to that object is removed, and the luminous pure consciousness reveals the object which was so long hidden by ignorance. The perception of an object is thus the self-shining of the consciousness through a vṛtti of a form resembling the object. Inner perceptions of desire etc., are also admitted. There is the savikalpaka or determinate perception in which the perceived thing (maybe a jar) and the determining attribute (maybe jarness) are apprehended in relation. In the nirvikalpaka or indeterminate perception, there is no such apprehension of relatedness.

Perceptual knowledge is considered as immediate knowledge, because the antaḥkaraṇa flows out to the object through any sense and is modified into the form of the object. Other sources of knowledge provide only mediate knowledge.

### 6.1.1.2 Inference

Inferring that the hill has fire results from the apprehension of smoke as a mark on the hill and the recollection of

the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire. The invariable concomitance between the middle term or hetu or sādhanā (smoke) with the major term or sādhya (fire) is called vyāpti and is the nerve of the inference. According to Advaitins, vyāpti is the coexistence of sādhya or the thing to be inferred with the sādhanā or hetu in all instances where the hetu may be present.

Unlike the Nyāya school, Advaita philosophy accepts only anvaya-vyāpti, which means affirmative, invariable concomitance or agreement in presence, as in "wherever there is smoke, there is fire", and not the negative invariable concomitance or agreement in absence, as in "wherever there is no fire, there cannot be any smoke". So, rejecting the three-fold classification of kevalānvayi, kevala-vyatireki, and anvaya-vyatireki types of anumāna given by Nyāya, Śaṅkara admits only one type of anumāna called anvayi.

Moreover, compared to the five-membered syllogism of Nyāya that comprises pratijñā, hetu, udāharaṇa, upanaya, and nigamana, the Advaita model of syllogism has only three propositions – either the first three or the last three.

### 6.1.1.3 Testimony

Testimony is considered an independent source of knowledge by the Advaitins. The Vedas contain eternal wisdom. They are not of human origin (Apauruṣeyā). They express the idea of God, or they embody the ideal form of the universe, and thus they are eternal. Their validity is self-evident and direct, like the light of the sun.

Smṛti or Tradition, which stands for the works of great men of later ages, does not have absolute validity. It is accepted only when it does not go against the Vedas. Śruti is accepted as the sole authority on dharma and adharma.

### 6.1.1.4 Comparison

It is the means through which the similarity of an object previously perceived to a new object is known from the perception of the new object. For example, the similarity of a previously perceived cow to a wild cow is known through the perception of the wild cow. Advaitins do not allow the reduction of upamāna to perception or inference, as is done respectively by Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika. Their definition of upamāna is also different from that of Nyāya and similar to that of the Mīmāṁsā.

### 6.1.1.5 Postulation

It is the assumption of an unknown fact in order to account for the known fact that seems otherwise inexplicable. For example, from the knowledge that a person is fat but he does not eat in the daytime, it is postulated that he eats at night. Being fat and not eating simultaneously seem inexplicable otherwise. Advaitins refuse to reduce this to inference as done by Nyāya.

### 6.1.1.6 Non-Apprehension

The absence of an object or its attribute from a locus is known neither by perception nor other means of knowledge based on it but through an independent pramāṇa called non-apprehension or anupalabdhi. For example, the absence of a pot on the table is known not through the perception of its non-existence there but through the non-apprehension of its existence.

## 6.1.2 Theory of Error

The various schools of Indian Philosophy have dealt with the problem of error or illusion in different ways and explained their versions of khyāti vāda. The explanation given by each school has a connection with its epistemological and metaphysical views. Advaita Vedānta advocates the view

known as anirvacanīya-khyāti. According to this theory, when the shell is mistaken for silver, the shell-delimited consciousness is the ground on which silver and its cognition are superimposed. This 'silver' is not real because it is contradicted later when the shell is known, and it cannot be unreal because it appears as silver as long as the illusion lasts. It is therefore called anirvacanīya or indescribable, either as real or unreal. Avidyā hides the nature of the shell (āvaraṇa) and makes it look like silver (vikṣepa). Error is an indescribable superimposition that does not affect the ground and is removed by the right knowledge.

## 6.1.3 The Best Means of Knowledge

Non-contradiction is the feature of truth, according to Śaṅkara. Logical means of knowledge works in the empirical realm, where the distinction between the knower, knowledge and the known prevails. Reality is devoid of such divisions, or in other words, real self-consciousness cannot be the object of knowledge. Thus, empirical knowledge containing logical proof has no scope therein, and Śaṅkara compares it to the knowledge of animals, to show its inadequacy. He admits an intuitive level, anubhava, which goes beyond the subject-object distinction and apprehends the non-dual Supreme Self.

The Vedas give us the intuitive experience of great sages through words. They guide us in our search for truth. But the interpretation of intuitive experience given in Vedic statements is fallible and needs continuous testing and revision. So, according to Śaṅkara even though reason cannot apprehend reality, discursive thinking and logical tools can help to critically test the Vedic statements, thus removing the obstructing veil of ignorance.

## Recap

♦ Vedānta literally means 'the end of Vedas'

♦ Ultimate reality is the non-dual spirit

♦ The validity of knowledge is intrinsic and the invalidity is extrinsic

♦ Knowledge is self-revealing and does not need anything else to manifest it

♦ True knowledge is free from defects

♦ Three valid sources of knowledge for Śaṅkara are Perception, Inference and Verbal Testimony

♦ Later Advaitins add Upamāna, Arthāpatti and Anupalabdhi along with pramāṇas

♦ Perceptual knowledge is immediate knowledge derived through sense-organs

♦ Inference is based on Vyāpti

- Vyāpti is the invariable, concomitant relation between the middle and major terms

- Advaitins accept anvaya- vyāpti

- Advaita holds that the Vedas contain eternal wisdom and hence are not of human origin (Apauruṣeya)

- Comparison gives knowledge of the object due to the similarity of the same object previously perceived

- Comparison is a method for assessing the similarity of a previously viewed object to a new object

- Postulation is an assumption of an unknown fact from a known fact

- Non- apprehension is the absence of an object or its attributes

- The theory of error suggested by Advaita Vedāntins is Anirvachanīya-Khyāti

- Error is an indescribable superimposition, that can be removed by the right knowledge

- The main feature of truth, according to Sankara, is non-contradiction

- Anubhava goes beyond the subject-object distinction and appears as the non-dual supreme self

# Objective Questions

1. What are the other names of Vedānta?

2. What is the ultimate reality according to Advaita school?

3. What are the four modes of antaḥkaraṇa?

4. How does Advaita infer the truth of the knowledge?

5. What is the nature of valid knowledge?

6. How many pramāṇas are accepted by Śaṅkara? Which are they?

7. Which pramāṇas are accepted by Advaitins?

8. Why do Advaitins reject memory (smṛti) as a valid source of knowledge?

9. What is the invariable, concomitant relation between the middle term and the major term?

10. What type of Vyāpti does Advaita accept?

11. Why are the Vedas known as Apauruṣeyā?

12. What is the theory of error advocated by Advaitins?

13. What are the characteristics of truth according to Śaṅkara?

## Answers

1. Uttara Mimāmsa & Jñāna Kānda

2. The non-dual spirit

3. Saṁśaya, Niscaya, Garva and Smarana

4. Intrinsic Validity

5. It is free from defects

6. Three. Perception, Inference and Verbal Testimony

7. Perception, Inference, Verbal testimony, Comparison, Postulation and Non- apprehension

8. Memory lost novelty

9. Vyāpti

10. Anvaya- vyāpti

11. It is not of human origin

12. Anirvacanīya- Khyāti

13. Non- Contradiction

## Assignments

1. Make an introductory note on Advaita Vedānta.

2. Discuss the pramāṇas accepted by Śaṅkara.

3. Explain the Advaita Vedānta theory of error.

# Suggested Readings

1. Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed. The University of Calcutta.

2. Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol.1. Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

3. Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4. Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I and II). Delhi: Oxford.

5. Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# Metaphysical Teachings in Śaṅkara Vedānta

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

♦ be familiarwith the Vedānta teachings of Śaṅkara

♦ gain a general awareness of the great saying, 'Brahma Satyam Jagatmithyā Jivo Brahmaiva Nāparah'

♦ distinguish between Saguṇa Brahman and Nirguṇa Brahman

♦ gain a glimpse into the metaphysical concepts of Brahman, Ātman and Jīva

♦ be aware of the Māyā theory of error and the impermanence of life

## Prerequisites

The various metaphysical issues that Advaita Vedānta addresses are the questions like who am I, why and where do we come from, what are the causes of all such creation, what is the reason behind this world, what happens after death, how do our mind and inner self relate to our bodies, why is there so much sadness or happiness in our lives, and how is it possible to get rid of sadness forever etc.

Advaita Vedānta emerges when the dualism of Sāṅkhya becomes well-discussed and accepted by the Indian philosophical tradition. Vedānta is the monistic school of thought that proposes internal oneness or unity behind external diversity. It prioritised jñāna Kānda in spite of Karma and Bhakti. The biggest disadvantage of Vedānta is that it rejects the truth of the world and speaks about the illusoriness and unreality of everything. All of this leads to a sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness in life.

## Key themes

Brahman, Māyā, Ātman, Jīva, Vivarta Vāda

## Discussion

### 6.2.1 Brahma satyam jagatmithyā jivo brahmaiva naparah

Brahman alone is the ultimate reality or Satya. The world is only an appearance with respect to Brahman. The world or Jagat is mithyā, which means it is neither real nor unreal. Jīva is non-different from Brahman. The realization of the individual Self, Ātman, in its purest form, is nothing but realizing the Brahman. "The Absolute Spirit is the reality; the world of appearance is Māyā."

#### 6.2.1.1 Three Levels of Existence

To understand the nature of reality as an empirical distinction within its plurality is explained by using the theory of Sattatrayās. It explains the three levels of existence. They are:

a) Prāthibhāsika Sattā- Those that only appear momentarily in illusions and dreams but are contradicted by normal waking experience. It possesses only ephemeral or illusory existence. It is also called apparent existence.

b) Vyāvahārika Sattā- Those that appear in normal waking experiences are the particular and changing objects, which form the basis of our ordinary life and practice, but which are still not acceptable to reason as entirely real. It is the empirical(practi-

cal) or virtual existence. It is the sort of existence necessary for ordinary life and practice. It is also called practical existence.

c) Pāramārthika Sattā- Pure existence reveals itself through all experiences and is neither contradicted nor non-contradictable. It is also called absolute supreme existence.

The unreality of the effects of the imagined standpoint can be acknowledged only when an empirical standpoint is reached. Similarly, the unreality of the empirical standpoint can only be understood from an absolute perspective.

### 6.2.2 Creation

The source of the world is Brahman, which is Absolute existence and consciousness. Brahman has the capacity to emerge in a variety of outward-seeming forms without actually changing. Despite taking on numerous forms, the universal cause of all things is infinite and formless in essence. It can be found in every finite form. Thus, Śaṅkara arrives at the idea of an infinite, indivisible (Nirviśeṣa) essence or root cause of the universe. He refers to this as Brahman or the Absolute.

A well-known story claims that they initially emerge from Ātman or Brahman. The five subtle elements are ether (akāsa), air (Vāyu), fire (Agni), water (ap), and earth (kṣiti). These five are mixed in sequence in five different ways to create

the five total elements. This process is known as five combinations, Panchikarana. The subtle body of a man is made up of subtle elements, and the gross and coarse objects in nature are made up of gross elements. The coarse element is the result of a mixture of the five fine elements. Śaṅkara accepts this account of creation.However, he understands the whole process in the light of the Vivartha or Adhyāsa theory.

## 6.2.3 Brahman

Brahman is the description of God as conscious, real, and infinite (Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam). The description of Him as the Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer of the world, or by any quality connected with the world, is a mere accidental description. It holds good only from the point of view of the world.

According to Śaṅkara, God can be conceived from two different points of view. If we look at God from the ordinary practical standpoint, from which the world is believed to be real, God may be regarded as the cause, the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Destroyer of the world. Therefore, He is also seen as an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. In this context, God appears as possessing all these qualities (Saguṇa). God, in this aspect, is called Saguṇa Brahman or Īśvara. He is the object of worship. However, the world, as we have seen, is conceived by Śaṅkara as an appearance that rests on our ignorance. The description of God as the creator of the world is true only from the practical point of view, when the world-appearance is regarded as real. The creatorship of the world is not God's essence (Svarūpa lakṣaṇa); it is a description of what is merely accidental (Tāṭastha lakṣaṇa) and does not touch His essence.

According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is the ultimate reality. It is pure consciousness that is jñāna svarūpa or consciousness of the pure self, which is svarūpa jñāna. The pure self is devoid of all attributes and all categories of intellect. Brahman is nirviśeṣa and nirguṇa in nature. When Brahman is associated with Māyā, it appears as qualified Brahman, which is called Saguṇa Brahman. It is also called Saviśeṣa Brahman or Apara Brahman or Īshvara. Para Brahman or Higher Brahman transcends all categories. Brahman is pure existence, pure consciousness, and pure bliss, all contained in one. The lower Brahman is qualified or Saguṇa Brahman, and the higher Brahman transcends all and is Nirguṇa Brahman.

Brahman is 'neti neti', which means 'neither this nor that'. This negates all attributes or characteristics of Brahman because Brahman is beyond such attributes and thus not possible to describe. However, it does not negate Brahman.

## 6.2.4 Ātman

Ātman is the self, which is said to be self-luminous. It transcends the subject-object duality. According to Śaṅkara, Ātman and Brahman are the same. They share the same pure consciousness. In short, Ātman is identical to Brahman. The famous Mahavakya "Tat Tvam Asi," which means "Thou Art That" and can be understood as "You are that," corresponds to the relationship between Ātman and Brahman. Therefore, Ātman and Brahman are one reality. "He who knows the self, knows Brahman" and "he who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman," says Śaṅkara. Brahman and Ātman are one; they may seem different at the empirical or phenomenal level of reality, but this difference is only an illusion.

## 6.2.5 Jīva

The jīva, according to Advaita, is the Brahman consciousness reflected in the mind. The jīva is also said to have no beginning. Jīva has a limited amount of knowledge and power, and it is situated somewhere. The material body is subject to birth and death, and the jīva is made up of three different bodies: gross, subtle, and causal. The three states of experience for each individual soul, or jīva, are wakefulness, dreaming, and deep sleep. The jīva is a doer and a reaper through its different components.

Three different types of karma, namely sanchita, prarabdha, and agami, bind the jīva. Sanchita karma is the outcome of past activities that have not yet been realised. Prarabdha karma is the fructified outcome that is currently being experienced. Agami karma is the outcome of actions that will be realised through future actions.

## 6.2.6 Māyā

Māyā is indescribable and is termed Anirvachanīya. It is neither existent, non-existent nor both. It is not existent, for the existent is only Brahman. It is non-existent because it is responsible for the appearance of Brahman as the world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent, as this conception is self-contradictory. It is called neither real nor unreal; that is, Sadasad-vilakṣaṇa or sadasad- anirvachaniya. Māyā is made up of three Guṇās, namely Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). It is opposed to knowledge. Māyā is Bhāvarūpam, which means that it is not the absence of something but the presence of something else.

Māyā has two properties, namely Āvaraṇa and Vikṣepa. Āvaraṇa is the veil or covering, which hides the real nature of a thing. Vikṣepa is the error in understanding something. This can be understood from the example of the rope-snake illusion. Here, āvaraṇa is the covering on the rope, or one's inability to identify the rope as a rope. If the rope is not present in one's understanding, it has to be something else. Hence, the closest appearance is that of a snake, and there arises the error called Vikṣepa. One cannot precisely define Māyā; it is subjective. It is something that is not negative. Māyā is the power of God. It absolutely depends on Him and cannot exist separately. It is not separate from God, and there is a relation of identity between the two.

Māyā is material and unconscious. It is opposed to the nature of Brahman. As knowledge arises, Māyā disappears. The liberated soul is beyond the influence of Māyā. With the appearance of knowledge, ignorance disappears. As soon as the rope is known, the illusion of the snake disappears. Similarly, as soon as the real nature of the self is known, the world of name and form that is Māyā ceases to have any existence. Māyā is Vyāvahārika or merely pragmatic reality. It is of the nature of reflection. On the transcendental level, only Brahman is true.

Māyā is its reflection in the practical world. Māyā is existent because it is eternal like God. It is the creative power. It is non-existent because apart from God it has no independent existence. It is real since it exists in a state of ignorance. It is unreal since it disappears with the dawn of knowledge and does not limit Brahman. Lastly, it cannot be said to be existent or non-existent (Sat Asat), because these terms are mutually contradictory. Hence, Māyā is called existent, non-existent, and indescribable. Mūla- avidyā, the root ignorance, is responsible for the regular world, while Tūla avidyā, another related ignorance, is responsible for the brief illu-

sion it causes.

## 6.2.7 Adhyāsa

Adhyāsa literally means superimposition. The process of imaginarily attributing something to somewhere it does not exist is called Adhyāsa. In psychology, it is referred to as projection. It is an apparent presentation of the attributes of one object onto another object. Adhyāsa is the illusory attribution or superimposition of the universe into the Ātman, which inherently has no universe in it. This is akin to the misconception of seeing a shell as silver, a snake as the rope, or water in a mirage. This mistaken notion is caused due to Avidyā or ignorance.

According to Śaṅkara, Adhyāsa is the apparent presence, in the form of memory, to consciousness, of something already observed in some other thing. This is deceptive knowledge. The process of imaginary attribution of something to where it does not exist is called Adhyāsa.

## 6.2.8 Vivartavāda

Vivartavāda occurs when a substance projects itself as another substance without changing its entity. A cause never really changes in substance or form when it cre-ates an effect. The only thing that changes is knowledge. Vivarta means the manifestation of unreal or false knowledge.

According to this view, the cause never changes into the effect; instead, the cause is imagined as the effect. The world is only a false representation or vivarta of Brahman. According to Vivartavāda, though Brahman appears to undergo alterations, nothing actually changes. The plurality of creatures are false manifestations because Brahman, the ultimate reality that is unborn, unchanging, and utterly devoid of parts, is the only true being. According to Advaita Vedānta, till there is ignorance of the Self, Vivarta is true. But as soon as ignorance is destroyed, one comes to know: "Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithyā." Brahman is the ultimate reality which cannot be falsified, and the world is Mithyā, that is, illusory. The ignorant never realise Brahman and consider the world to be the ultimate reality.

Through Vivartavāda, one understands that what he sees is not reality or truth. The mirage in the desert can be used as an illustration of Vivartavāda. One does not realise it is not real water until he gets close. Even a sand grain will not get wet in the water from a mirage. It is because of Vivarta that one mistakes it as water.

## Recap

- ♦ Brahman alone is the ultimate reality
- ♦ The world is only appearance or mithyā
- ♦ There are three levels of existence: Prāthibhāsika Sattā, Vyāvahārika Sattā and Pāramārthika Sattā
- ♦ Prāthibhāsika sattā is ephemeral or illusory existence
- ♦ Vyāvahārika sattā is practical existence
- ♦ Pāramārthika sattā is absolute supreme existence

♦ The source of the world is Brahman

♦ Panchikarana is the five different ways of the combination of the five elements

♦ God is conscious, real, and infinite. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world

♦ From the practical standpoint, the world is real and God is the creator of the world and Īshvara

♦ Brahman is Ṣvarūpa Jñāna. It is nirguṇa and nirvisesha

♦ Brahman is associated with māyā, it appears qualified Brahman or saguṇa

♦ Apara Brahman is Īshvara

♦ Para Brahman or Higher Brahman transcends all attributes

♦ Brahman is 'neti neti', which means, 'neither this nor that'

♦ For Śaṅkara, Ātman and Brahman are the same

♦ 'Tat tvam asi' means 'You are that'

♦ Jīva is the Brahman consciousness reflected in the mind

♦ The three states of experience of Jīva are awake, dream and deep sleep

♦ The three types of karma that bind Jīva are, Sanchita, Prarabdha and agami

♦ Māyā is indescribable and Anirvachanīya

♦ Māyā is Sadasad Vilakshana

♦ Māyā has two properties, namely Āvaraṇa and Vikṣepa

♦ Āvaraṇa is covering. It hides the real nature of things

♦ Māyā is only vyāvahārika or pragmatic reality

♦ Adhyāsa literally means superimposition

♦ The process of imaginary attribution of something to where it does not exist is Adhyāsa

♦ Vivarta means the manifestation of unreal or false knowledge

♦ Vivartavāda says, the cause never changes into the effect, the cause is imagined as the effect

## Objective Questions

1. What are the three levels of existence?

2. What is Vyāvahārika Sattā?

3. What is Panchikarana?

4. What is Īshvara?

5. What is neti- neti?

6. What is higher Brahman?

7. What is the meaning of Tat tvam asi?

8. What is Jīva?

9. What are the three states of experience of Jīva?

10. What are the three types of karma that bind Jīva?

11. What is māyā?

12. What are the two properties of Māya?

13. What is Āvaraṇa?

14. What is meant by Adhyāsa?

15. What is Vivarta?

16. What is the ultimate reality according to Vedānta?

17. What is the source of the world?

## Answers

1. Prāthibhāsika Sattā, Vyāvahārika Sattā and Pāramārthika Sattā

2. Level of practical existence

3. Five different ways of the combination of five elements

4. Apara Brahman or Lower Brahman

5. Neither this nor that

6. Para Brahman

7. I am that

8. Brahman consciousness reflected in the mind

9.  Awake, dreaming and deep sleep

10. Sanchita, Prarabdha and agami

11. Sadasad Vilakshana

12. Āvaraṇa and Vikṣepa

13. It is covering, it hides the real nature

14. Superimposition

15. It is the manifestation of unreal or false knowledge

16. Brahman

17. Brahman

## Assignments

1.  Evaluate the great saying 'Brahma Satyam jagatmithyā Jivo brahmaiva naparah' with reference to the Advaitic standpoint.

2.  Critically engage with Śaṅkara's concept of Māyā.

3.  Make a note on Vivartavāda.

## Suggested Readings

1.  Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed. The University of Calcutta.

2.  Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, *Vol.1*. Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

3.  Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4.  Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy (Vol. I and II)*. Delhi: Oxford.

5.  Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# UNIT 3

# Visistādvaita of Rāmānuja

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to:

♦ be familiar with the Rāmānuja school of Visistādvaita

♦ be aware of the notion of Saguṇa Brahman

♦ acquire distinctive knowledge on chit and achit

♦ comprehend the Brahma- Parināmavāda creation of the world

## Prerequisites

Viśiṣṭādvaita is markedly different from other systems of Indian philosophy. Unlike other systems, it is more than just a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of reality. It is a spiritual means of attaining Brahman as the ultimate goal of existence. Thus, it establishes a religious philosophy. Extreme monism tries to associate knowledge with Brahman, and extreme theism completely rejects reason in favour of scriptural faith. However, Viśiṣṭādvaita tries to synthesise these two positions. Rāmānuja's concept of Brahman can be both studied and experienced; hence it made a synthesis of knowledge with bhakti.

As it has become more reliant on religion, Viśiṣṭādvaita has encountered various challenges, with many arguing that philosophy is fundamentally distinct from religion. The primary criticism levelled against Viśiṣṭādvaita is that it rejects the sensationalistic view of reality as insufficient and unsatisfactory, which can potentially lead to a form of nihilism. Religious truths are super-sensuous and permanent; therefore, historical judgments, which solely take into account occurrences in the realm of sense perception, cannot fully comprehend them.

# Key themes

Visistādvaita, Qualified Monism, Mukta, Baddha, Brahmaparināmavāda

# Discussion

Rāmānuja (1077-1157 CE), also known as Rāmānujāchārya, was a significant figure in the Sri Vaishnavism school of Hinduism and a philosopher, theologian, and social reformer. His philosophy of devotionalism had a profound impact on the Bhakti movements. Rāmānuja is considered as the founder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Vedānta. He belonged to the Śrī Śrī Sampradāya within the Vaishnavism tradition. Rāmānuja's philosophy harmoniously combines absolutism with personal theism. Books and commentaries by Rāmānuja include Śrī-bhāṣya, Vedānta-dīpa, Gītā-bhāṣya, Gadya-traya, Vedānta-sāra, and Vādārtha Saṅgraha. Rāmānuja emphasized the theory of combining knowledge and action, known as Jñāna-Karma-Samuchayavāda.

Viśiṣṭādvaita means 'Advaita' = 'oneness'; 'Viśishtasya' = of the God who is 'qualified'. Hence, Viśiṣṭādvaita is known as 'Qualified Monism' or 'Qualified Non-dualism'. Here, God is qualified by a 'body' (śarīra) consisting of the animate (çit), souls, and the inanimate (açit). It is a system of theism. Bhakti holds a higher place than Jñāna. According to Rāmānuja, Jñāna yoga is solely meditation on the nature of the soul, aimed at realizing its difference from its physical sheath. However, Bhakti yoga is a higher state of meditation accompanied by love, focused on the nature of God, for realizing the soul's relation to them. Moksha comes only to those who have practiced Bhakti.

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, God alone is the supreme reality, characterized by multiplicity and different attributes. Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy believes that the supreme reality is Saguṇa Brahman, a personal being with countless auspicious attributes. It is a qualified whole in which Brahman is the soul, and the Jīva and the Jagat (the soul and material nature) constitute the body. This body has an inseparable relationship with the whole. Though it is a non-dual whole, it is characterised by internal differences. This one reality is called 'Viśiṣṭādvaita', meaning 'qualified non-dualism'. This non-dual reality is known by its qualities — the souls and the world, which are of two different natures. These two kinds of entities are distinct yet real parts of the whole.

Rāmānuja recognizes three things as ultimate and real, named tattva-traya. These are matter (açit), souls (çit), and God (Īśvara). They are all equally real. However, the first two are absolutely dependent on God. Though they are substances in themselves, they become His attributes in relation to God. They are the body of God, who is their soul. God is the soul of nature. God is also the soul of souls.

Aprthak-siddhi is the relation between the body and the soul, substance and its attributes, parts and whole, and perhaps between one substance and another. It is an inner, inseparable, vital, and organic connection. For instance, in a blue lotus,

blueness is a quality that cannot be separated from the flower. God is qualified by matter and souls. They form His body and are inseparable from and utterly dependent on Him.

# 6.3.1 The Jiva- Çit

According to Rāmānuja, Jīva or the soul is an eternal, real substance that is entirely dependent on God. The soul is a spiritual substance, and consciousness is the essence of the soul. The Jīva or soul is the enjoyer, knower, as well as the real agent. He believes in the qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism of the soul. According to him, the soul is both self-luminous and self-conscious in nature. During creation, the Jīva is attached to the body due to the karmas of past lives, while in dissolution, it is associated with the karmas that one will reap in the next life.

The self is distinct from the body, life, sense organs, mind, intellect, and psycho-physical features. It is a simple immaterial substance that is under God's dominion, and its freedom is subject to divine will. The self-spreads the world with knowledge. Knowledge, consciousness, atomicity, and purity are the fundamental characteristics of the soul.

## 6.3.1.1 Classification of Souls

Nitya Mukta- Nitya Mukta are eternally free souls or ever liberated. They reside in Vaikuntha, engaging in constant service to the Lord, while being permanently free from karma and prakṛti.

Mukta – Mukta are the freed souls who were once bound, but obtained liberation through their actions, knowledge, and devotion.

Baddha – Baddha are the bound souls that wander due to karma and ignorance. Due to bad karma, they revolve around the world. These are further divided into four classes, namely superhuman, human, animal, and immobile.

The individual soul has attributes of God. God is the whole (amsi), while the soul is the part (amsa). The self, for Rāmānuja, is like God, but not the same as God, because God is infinite in nature, whereas the self is finite.

# 6.3.2 The Matter - Açit

According to Rāmānuja, the concept of matter or açit is the real, uncreated, and eternal substance that is entirely dependent on God. There are three types of açit. They are:

Nitya vibhūti - This is made up of pure sattva. It is immaterial in nature. All the eternal abodes and souls are made up of Nitya vibhūti. It is transcendental matter.

Prakṛti- This primordial cosmic matter is an inert substance, eternal and subject to modification. It consists of the three guṇās, namely sattva, rajas, and tamas. This is what makes the samsāra. It undergoes change, and this change is entirely dependent on God.

Kala- It does not possess consciousness and form. It exists not only in this world but in the supreme abode as well.

# 6.3.3 Saguṇa Brahman

For Rāmānuja, God or Brahman is full of positive attributes. Brahman cannot be an indeterminate, quality-less, and undifferentiated substance. Brahman is determinate and qualified in nature, which is savishesha, because He is qualified by çit and açit, which are His two attributes. Rāmānuja considered God or Brahman as Vasudeva, made up of pure Sattva. He is the creator, preserver, as well as the destroyer.

Rāmānuja holds that Brahman is devoid of two kinds of external distinctions, namely vijātīya and sājātīya, because there is nothing besides God, either similar or dissimilar to Him. But God possesses internal distinctions, as there are different conscious and unconscious substances within Him, which can be mutually distinguished.

Rāmānuja maintains that Brahman is the supreme Person who is free of any imperfection, who is free of any evil, who has created the world, governs and sustains the world, is all-knowing, whose will is perfect, and is the source of all truths. Thus, Brahman is the same as God. For Rāmānuja, Brahman is also the highest Self, which is the inner being of the world and all individual souls. The material world and all individual souls are embodiments of Brahman. All conscious and non-conscious beings constitute the body of the highest Self. Brahman is the highest principle of being and is both the material and operative cause of the universe. According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is infinite and eternal. Brahman is pure Being (sat), pure Consciousness (chit), and pure Bliss (ānanda). Brahman is the essence of Selfhood. Brahman is the inner Self of the world and all individual souls. Brahman has a divine form as the highest Self or supreme Person. Brahman is the highest aim of humankind.

# 6.3.4 Brahmaparināmavāda

For Rāmānuja, creation is real. He accepts the satkāryavāda theory of causation, which holds that the effect is preoccupied with the material cause. Thus, creation denotes the explicit manifestation of an effect that previously existed in the material cause, and destruction denotes the return of the effect to the material cause.

Rāmānuja put forth the theory of Brahma parināmavāda. According to Parināmavāda, the material cause undergoes changes in the form of its effect. Therefore, the effect is the real transformation of its material cause. According to him, Prakṛti or the cause is dependent on Brahman, it is controlled by Him, and it is also inseparable from Him. God is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe. The effect does not exist in the cause. The two are different states of one and the same substance. Brahmaparināmavāda is a modified theory of Satkāryavāda.

Both the material world and the soul are entirely real. God does not carry out either creation or destruction, though these are attributes of God. Creation signifies the evolution of prakṛti, or subtle matter, into the gross elements, whereupon souls are housed in bodies that are appropriate for their karmic histories. Creation enables the souls to enjoy the benefits of their past actions; thus, it necessitates creation. It is God's gracious will, or Līlā, that caused creation.

# 6.3.5 Liberation

According to Rāmānuja, the embodied state of the soul known as bondage is when it mistakenly connects with the body and its various states and organs. When the divine body dissolves, individual souls continue to exist in their fundamental form together with unconscious matter. However, these souls are given specific bodies at the time of creation based on the merit or demerit they have accrued through acts performed in previous embodied existences.

The bondage of souls is due to the association of the soul with the body. It is due to the presence of karma or deeds of previous lives, along with ignorance. For attaining liberation from this samsara,

a harmonious combination of action and knowledge (jñānakarma samuchchaya) is needed. Karma must be executed in a disinterested way in order to please God. Knowledge, for Ramānuja, is not ordinary knowledge, but it is something identical to bhakti or devotion. According to him, ordinary Bhakti leads to higher bhakti and then to liberation with God's grace. The highest bhakti is real knowledge. This is attained by self-surrender or prapatti and with the constant remembrance of God.

Liberation is the realisation of the nature of God, ċit, and aċit, gained by the individual soul. It is not merely freedom from bondage, but it is a positive state of existence in the higher realm without losing individuality. Liberation is nothing but the realisation of the similarity between the liberated soul and God. Liberation is possible only when there is a complete cessation of karma and ignorance, and when Divine grace comes from God. The liberated soul has a direct vision of Brahman and is absorbed in the eternal bliss of union with Him (Sāyujya).

# Recap

- Rāmānuja is the founder of Visistādvaita school

- Visistādvaita is the combination of absolutism with personal theism

- As it is the combination of knowledge and karma, it is termed as jñāna-Karma Samuchchayavāda

- Other names of Visistādvaita are qualified monism or qualified non- dualism.

- God is viewed as the supreme reality

- Rāmānuja recognized three things as real or tattva- traya. They are matter (aċit), soul (ċit) and God (Īśvara)

- Matter and soul are two distinct kinds of entities and are depends on God

- Aprthak- Siddhi is the relation between the body and the soul, substance and its attributes, parts and whole, maybe between one substance and another

- Soul is the spiritual substance; consciousness is its very essence

- He believes in qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism of the soul

- Nitya Mukta, Mukta and Baddha are the three classes of souls

- Three types of aċit are Nitya- Vibhuti, Prakrti and Kāla

- Brahman for Rāmānuja, is qualified in nature or Saguṇa Brahman

- Creation accepted by Rāmānuja is Brahma Parināmavāda

- God's gracious will or līla caused creation

- Knowledge is identical with bhakti

# Objective Questions

1. Name the philosophical thought which is the combination of absolutism with personal theism.

2. Why is Visistādvaita termed jñāna- Karma Samuchchayavāda?

3. What are the tattva- traya?

4. What is called the relation between the body and the soul, substance and its attributes, parts and whole, or one substance and another?

5. Which are the three classes of souls?

6. What are the three types of açit?

7. Which kind of Brahman is accepted by Visistādvaita?

8. What is the creation theory of Visistādvaita?

9. What caused creation?

10. What is similar to knowledge for Visistādvaita?

# Answers

1. Visistādvaita

2. It is the combination of knowledge and karma

3. Matter (çit), Soul (açit) and God (Īśwara)

4. Aprthak- Siddhi

5. Nitya Mukta, Mukta and Baddha

6. Nitya- Vibhuti, Prakrti and Kala

7. Saguṇa Brahman

8. Brahma Parināmavāda

9. God's gracious will or līla

10. Bhakti

# Assignments

1.  Briefly discuss why Visistādvaita is known as jñāna-Karma Samuchchayavāda.

2.  Make a note on the qualified non-dualism of Visistādvaita.

3.  Describe Brahma Parināmavāda of Rāmānuja.

# Suggested Readings

1.  Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed. University of Calcutta.

2.  Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy*, *Vol.1*. Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

3.  Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4.  Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy (Vol. I and II)*, Delhi: Oxford.

5.  Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# Major Schools of the Vedānta Philosophy

## UNIT 4

## Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, the learner will be able to

- ♦ get awareness regarding the other major schools of Vedānta

- ♦ get familiarwith the major concepts in Dvaita, Dvaitādvaita and Shuddhadvaita schools

- ♦ clearly comprehend the metaphysical realities that are addressed by all Vedānta schools

## Prerequisites

As we discussed in the previous unit, Śaṅkara Vedānta proposed a monistic view of reality. It comprehends every object from a monistic outlook. It popularised the statement, 'Tat tvam asi,' which means 'You are that (Brahman).' Against this intellectual backdrop, Madhva, Vallabha, and Nimbārka emerged with dualistic and pluralistic perspectives. Though Śaṅkara Vedānta recommends Jñānamārga for achieving liberation, the Bhakti cult gained popularity during the emergence of other Vedantic schools.

## Key themes

Dvaita, Sad- asat- kārya vada, Panchayibheda, Dvaitādvaita, Suddhadvaita

# Discussion

## 6.4.1 Dvaita of Madhva

Madhvāchārya, who lived in the 12th century AD, is the founder of the Dvaita Vedānta philosophy. Ānandatīrtha and Pūrṇaprajña are other names for Madhva. He was a scholar, philosopher, saint, and mystic. Madhva authored thirty-seven works. Some of his major works include commentaries on the Prasthānatraya (Bhagavad Gita, Upaniṣads, and Brahma-sūtra), commentaries on the Vedas, Epics, and Purāṇas, as well as ten Prakaraṇās. Madhva is recognized as the founder of the Brahma Sampradāya.

The term 'Dvaita' means dualism. Madhva's dualism acknowledges that reality is composed of two mutually exclusive principles. However, God is viewed as the only independent (Svatantra) entity, while everything else is dependent (Paratantra) on Him.

Madhva accepts three sources of knowledge - Pratyakṣa, Anumāna, and Sabda. He regards God as both the writer and the great teacher (mahopādhyāya) of the Vedas. For Madhva, scriptures are the exclusive means to know God, who is referred to as Hari, Vishnu, Narayana, or Vasudeva. Knowledge becomes non-existent if the senses are denied. According to Madhva, the pramāṇas are either the means of knowing (Anu-Pramāṇas) or knowledge itself (Kevala-Pramāṇas). Thus, each pramāṇa is inherently self-validating, truthful, and impartial knowledge. Knowledge possesses intrinsic validity.

### 6.4.1.1 Concept of God

The highest being, known as Isvara, is God. He is completely independent, per-fect, absolute, and of pure consciousness. He is saviseṣa - endowed with innumerable virtues. He assumes various forms and functions as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of this universe. God is the sole supreme, independent reality. He reveals Himself through various incarnations. Among them, Vishnu is the greatest Lord, and Lakshmi is His consort. She is all-pervading and eternal like Him, though her qualities are slightly less than those of her Lord. She is eternally liberated, possessing a divine body, and represents the Power of God. Madhva's concept of the divine can be categorized as Saguṇa Brahman, signifying Brahman with qualities.

The Dvaita theory of causation is referred to as Sad-asat-kārya vāda, which means that the influence is not regarded as merely existing or nonexistent. It does not exist as an effect, only as the cause.

### 6.4.1.2 Soul or Jīva

There are numerous atomic-sized individual souls. Jīva is spiritual consciousness that has no parts at all. This Jīva is knowledgeable and blissful. It is subjected to imperfections and pain due to its connection with the senses, material body, and the mind; this is because of past karmas. Jīva resembles God in this position, but Jīva is reliant on God. Madhva believes that God is the ideal Jīva, and all other Jīvas are merely reflections of God.

Madhva claims that there are three different types of Jīvas. Those who are ready for liberation make up the first category of jīvas, known as muktiyogyas. The second category consists of nithyasamsārins or those who are stuck in a never-ending cycle of rebirth. The third category includes souls who are condemned to hell

forever, known as tamoyogya. Although God controls the soul from within, the soul or Jīva is the actual agent and enjoyer and is accountable for its deeds.

### 6.4.1.3 Panchayibheda

The dualist Madhva claims that there are independent and dependent realities. God or Brahman is the independent reality, while Çit (Soul) and Açit (Matter) are the dependent realities. The soul and the world are dependent on and submissive to God. Thus, Madhva believes in the eternal, absolute realities of matter, soul and God. These three entities are distinct from one another. It is impossible to sublate these differences, and hence the difference is beginningless and eternal. The reality of the five-fold difference is known as Panchayibheda. The differences are:

a)   between God and the soul

b)   between soul and soul

c)   between soul and matter

d)   between God and matter

e)   between matter and matter

### 6.4.1.4 Liberation

Madhva acknowledges the realities of human suffering and servitude. Liberation is the self's enjoyment of its innate Sat, Çit, and Ānanda, participating in the bliss of God. Liberation is attained through devotion to God and His grace. The only means of liberation is total devotion and self-surrender to God. In short, Madhva suggests bhakti-yoga as the means of attaining liberation.

## 6.4.2 Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka

Nimbārka was born in the 13th cen-
tury in South India. He is also known as Nimbāditya and Niyamānanda, belonging to Vaiṣṇavism. He is the founder of the Nimbārkas sect. Nimbārkas are followers of Lord Krishna, believing that the entire cosmos is ruled and controlled by Lord Krishna. He is devoid of defects and embodies virtues. Nimbārka's commentaries include Vedānta Parijat Surabha and Sadachar Prakasha. His other works include Sri Krishna Stavam, Savishesh Nirvishesh, Prapatti Chintamani etc. Nimbārka acknowledges three realities - God (Īshvara), soul (çit), and matter (açit). Çit and açit depend on God.

### 6.4.2.1 Çit and Açit

The individual soul is called çit. It is of an infinite number and is atomic in size. Çit serves as both the knower of knowledge and the knowledge itself. The soul is the Kārta (the Doer), Bhogta (the enjoyer), and Jñāta (the knower). That is, the individual soul is essentially the nature of knowledge (jñānasvarūpa), and it is also the substratum of knowledge.

The lifeless matter or inanimate is known as Açit. It comes in three kinds.

a) Aprākṛta - It is an immutable Super-matter. The divine body is formed of an unchangeable super-matter, like the Suddhadsatva or Nityabhuti of Ramanuja.

b) Prākṛta- It is derived from Prakṛti and is composed of three guṇās such as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

c) Kāla or time.

### 6.4.2.2 Īshvara or Brahman

Krishna is a representation of God, who is the highest Brahman, the source of all goodness and perfection, and the master of this universe. Krishna is the highest manifestation of God and the highest Brahman.

Çit and açit are both a part of Him and His abilities. Nimbārka advocated Saguṇa Brahman.

God is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. He is the effective cause because He creates the universe so that souls can benefit from their karmic deeds. He is the material cause because Īshvara's powers, çit and açit, are transformed or manifested in the universe. Nimbarka thus believes in Brahma Parināmavāda.

### 6.4.2.3 Bheda Abheda

Nimbarka's philosophical position is known as bhedabheda (dvaitādvaita). It is also recognized as dualistic non-dualism. He believes in the concepts of identity and difference. According to him, identity and difference are separate and equally real. The souls and matter do not possess independent existences; hence, they are not distinct from God. However, they do have dependent existences and are constrained, making them different from God, who is a free and unconstrained ruler.

### 6.4.2.4 Liberation

According to Nimbārka, bondage is due to the presence of ignorance or Avidya. This can only be stopped by the grace of God. It is achievable through Pançasadhanās.

a) Karma - performing Vedic rituals, yajnās etc

b) Vidya - acquiring knowledge from scriptures

c) Upāsana- The meditation on the Supreme deity, Lord Krishna

d) Prapatti- devotion towards Lord Krishna

e) Gurupasatti- surrendering oneself

completely to Lord Krishna

# 6.4.3 Shuddhadvaita of Vallabha

Achārya Vallabha is the founder of the Shuddhādvaita school of Vedānta. Vallabha is regarded as an achārya and guru within the Vaishnava traditions. He is known as the author of sixteen stotrās. He has written a commentary on the Brahma-sūtra called Anubhāsya, a commentary on the Bhagavata called Bhagavata-tikasubodhini, and Siddhantarahasya. His system is also known by the names Rudra Sampradaya, Puṣṭimārga, and Pure-non-dualism.

### 6.4.3.1 Jīva or soul

The individual soul or jīva is one with Brahman. It is itself Brahman, with the attribute of bliss hidden or suppressed in the inanimate world. There are three kinds of jīvas:

a) The Pure jīvas - Suddha - the divine qualities are not obscured in these souls by ignorance.

b) The worldly jīvas - Samsārin - these souls are caught in the web of Avidya or ignorance.

c) Mukta jīvas - Liberated souls - these souls are freed from the bonds of Samsāra through Vidya or knowledge.

### 6.4.3.2 Brahman

The independent reality Brahman is identified with Srikrishna. His essence is Sat, Çit, Ānanda. Matter and Souls are parts and manifestations of Brahman. Brahman is the abode of all good qualities. From His nature as Existence arise life, senses, bodies etc. From His nature as Knowledge arise atomic souls that are subjected to bondage. From His nature as Bliss arises Antaryamin. In Antaryamin, the

three Gods are the supreme Antaryamin, the inner rulers of the universe. Vallabha advocated Saguṇa Brahman. Brahman manifests Himself into Soul or Matter through His power of Māyā. This manifestation is not unreal. This is regarded as the real manifestation.

### 6.4.3.3 Avikṛta Pariṇāmavada

According to Vallabha, the universe is a real manifestation and not an unreal appearance. He does not believe in Vivarta or Parināma. The universe is a natural emanation from Brahman that does not cause any change in Him, called Avikṛta Pariṇāmavada. Brahman is the substance, the cause that is non-different from the effects of the universe. The relation between cause and effect is of tadātmya or identity. The material and effective causes of this universe are Brahman. God manifests Himself as this universe in various ways without changing, and through this manifestation, He reveals His true nature as Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss in varying degrees. Dissolution denotes God's internal withdrawal from this manifestation.

Jagat is the real manifestation of God. Samsāra is the cycle of rebirths imagined by the souls due to the fivefold ignorance such as: -

a)    ignorance of its real nature

b)    false identification with the body

c)    false identification with the senses

d) false identification with the vital breaths

e)    false identification with the mind

With the rise of knowledge, samsāra vanishes, but Jagat, being a real manifestation of God, endures

### 6.4.3.4 Liberation

Puṣti or grace is the only means to liberation. Only a person with a pure heart and pure affection towards Brahman can achieve Puṣti. It is neither acquired through knowledge or worship. It is the affection (Sneha) towards God or Brahman. The Bhakti that is generated through special grace is Puṣti Bhakti.

## Recap

- Madhva is the founder of Dvaita Vedānta
- Dvaita means dualism
- Dvaita holds two types of realities- dependent and independent realities
- God is the svatantra or independent reality
- Soul and matter are paratantra or dependent realities
- The three sources of knowledge which Madhva accepts are pratyakṣa, anumāna and sabda
- God is the great teacher or Mahopādhyāya of Vedas
- For Madhva, knowledge has inherent validity

♦ The highest being is God or Īshvara

♦ God is Saviseṣa and possesses Sadaiswaryās

♦ Jīva is spiritual consciousness

♦ God is the ideal Jīva and all other jīvas are merely reflections of God

♦ For Madhva, there are three different types of Jīvas such as Muktiyogyas, Nithyasamsarins and Tamoyogya

♦ Muktiyogyas are ready for liberation

♦ Nithyasamsarins stuck in a never- ending cycle of rebirth

♦ Tamoyogya are souls who are condemned to hell forever

♦ Panchayibheda is the five- fold differences of reality

♦ For Madhva, liberation is attained through bhakti- yoga

♦ Nimbārka is the founder of Dvaitādvaita

♦ The three realities accepted by Nimbārka are God (Īshvara), soul (çit) and matter (açit)

♦ Individual soul is çit

♦ Çit has the nature of knowledge (Jñānasvarūpa)

♦ Inanimate açit is of three kinds. They are Aprākṛta, Prākṛta and Kāla or time

♦ Nimbārka says about Saguṇa Brahman

♦ Nimbārka advocates Brahma Pariṇāmavāda

♦ The philosophical position of Nimbārka is bhedabheda (dvaitādvaita) or dualistic non- dualism

♦ Nimbārka believes in identity- and- difference

♦ Ignorance is stopped through Pañcasadhanās. They are karma, vidya, upāsana, prapatti and gurupasatti

♦ Vallabha is the founder of Shuddhādvaita

♦ Shuddhādvaita is also known as puṣtimārga and pure non- dualism

♦ The essence of Brahman is sat, çit and ānanda

♦ For Vallabha, the universe is a real manifestation and not an unreal appearance

♦ Brahman does not cause any change in him, Avikṛta Pariṇāmavada

♦ The relation between cause and effect is tadātmya or identity

♦ Puṣti or grace is the only means to liberation

♦ Puṣti is the bhakti that is generated through special grace

# Objective Questions

1. How many types of realities does Dvaita hold? What are they?

2. What is independent reality or Svatantra?

3. What are dependent realities or Paratantrās?

4. What are the three sources of knowledge which Madhva accepts?

5. Who is the great teacher or mahopādhyāya of Vedas?

6. Which are the three different types of jīvas for Madhva?

7. What is tamoyogya?

8. What is the way of liberation, according to Madhva?

9. Which are the three realities accepted by Nimbārka?

10. What is the nature of Ҫit?

11. What are the three kinds of inanimate aҫit?

12. What is the theory of creation according to Nimbārka?

13. What is the philosophical position of Nimbārka?

14. What are Paṇcasadhanās?

15. What is the means of liberation according to Vallabha?

# Answers

1. Dependent and independent realities

2. God

3. Soul and Matter

4. Pratyakṣa, anumāna and sabda

5. God

6.  Muktiyogyas, Nithyasamsarins and Tamoyogya

7.  The souls who are condemned to hell forever

8.  Bhakti- yoga

9.  God (Īshvara), Soul (Çit) and Matter (Açit)

10. Possess knowledge (Jñānasvarūpa)

11. Aprākṛta, Prākṛta and Kāla or time

12. Brahma Parināmavāda

13. Bhedabheda (Dvaitādvaita)

14. Karma, Vidya, Upāsana, Prapatti and Gurupasatti

15. Puṣti

## Assignments

1.  Make a comparative study on the Dvaita of Madhva and Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka.

2.  Elaborately discuss Shuddhadvaita of Vallabha.

## Suggested Readings

1.  Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed. University of Calcutta.

2.  Dasgupta, S.N. (2004). *A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.1*, Delhi: MLBD Publishers.

3.  Hiriyanna, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

4.  Radhakrishnan, S. (1999). *Indian Philosophy (Vol. I and II)*, Delhi: Oxford.

5.  Sharma, C.D. (1960). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

# Model Question Paper Sets

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE: ………                    Reg. No   : ....................

Name     : ……...........

## SECOND SEMESTER
## BA PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIALIZATION IN SREENARAYANAGURU STUDIES EXAMINATION
## DISCIPLINE CORE - 2
## B21PH02DC- INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
## (CBCS - UG)
## 2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours                                        Max Marks: 70

---

## SECTION-A

**Objective Type Questions. Answer any ten, each question carries one mark (10X1=10)**

1. What is the meaning of Darśana, the phrase for philosophy in Indian tradition?

2. What is the meaning of Orthodox (āstika) and Heterodox (nāstika)?

3. Which is the famous Indian philosophical school for logic?

4. Is Indian ethics pluralist or monolithic?

5. What does monism say about reality?

6. Charvaka accepts only one source of knowledge. What is it?

7. What is the literal meaning of Syadvada?

8. What is the literal meaning Nyāya?

9. What do we mean by *sabda*?

10. Who is the founder of Vaiśeṣika School?

11. What is the main source of *sāṅkhya* philosophy?

12. What are the two fundamental realities of sāṅkhya?

13. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara are the two major exponents of Mimāṁsā philosophy. Is True or false?

14. Gods are the functional entities in Mimāṁsā philosophy. True or false?

15. The ultimate reality in Vedanta is the non-dual spirit. True or false?

## SECTION-B

**Very short Questions (not more than five sentences). Answer any ten, each question carries two marks (10X2=20)**

16. Distinguish between polytheism, monotheism, henotheism and monism.

17. Monism, dualism and pluralism are fundamental views of reality. Briefly explain.

18. Describe the Buddhist Middle path between self -indulgence and self-mortification.

19. What are the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism?

20. Jainism classifies the innumerable reality into two main categories: Jiva and Ajiva. Explain

21. Explain the four pramānas accepted by Nyaya

22. Describe the comparison/upamana and verbal testimony/sabda according to Nyaya.

23. What is the atomistic concept of reality in Vaishesika?

24. Write on Sankhya's *dvaitavāda* or dualism

25. Explain the five vows of Yama: ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha.

26. Explain the relation between Mimamsa and Vedanta.

27. True knowledge is attainable with *karma* (activity) and *upāsanā* (meditation) in Mimamsa. Explain

28. How does *Advaita* maintain that the validity of knowledge is intrinsic and invalidity is extrinsic?

29. What is the crux of Advaita's philosophy on Brahman and Atman?

30. What are the three valid sources of knowledge for Sankara?

## SECTION-C

**Short Questions (not more than page). Answer any five, each question carries four marks (5X4=20)**

31. Indian philosophy and mythology are intertwined. Demonstrate.

32. Analyze the doctrines of Anatmavada and Ksanikavada in two paragraphs.

33. Analyze the classification of perception according to Nyaya

34. Analyze the theory of Error or Anyathakhyativada

35. Elucidate the theory of reality in Vaishesika.

36. Discuss Prakriti, Purusa and theory of evolution in Sankhya.

37. Satkarayavada is the theory that the effect pre-exists in its material cause and Asatkāryavāda is the theory that the effect does not pre-exist in its material cause. Compare and contrast two theories of causation.

38. What are the eight-fold path or aids of Yoga? Elaborate.

39. What are the four noble truth in Buddhism?

40. Explain the theory of knowledge in Advaita-Vedanta school

## SECTION-D

**Essay Questions (not more than four pages). Answer any two, each question carries ten marks (2X10=20)**

41. Elucidate the fundamental features of the Indian philosophy in comparison with the western philosophy.

42. Jainism promotes relative pluralism or pluralistic realism. Justify this statement in the light of doctrines of Anekantavada and Syadvada.

43. Nyāya presents *parārthanumana* in a syllogistic format. Critically valuate the Nyaya-conception of inference.

44. 'Brahma Satyam Jagatmithyā Jivo Brahmaiva naparah'. Elucidate the Advaita Vedanta's views on Brahman, Atman, Jiva, Maya, Adhyāsa.

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

**QP CODE: ………**          **Reg. No**    : …………..............
                           **Name**      : ………………...

## SECOND SEMESTER
## BA PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIALIZATION IN SREENARAYANAGURU STUDIES
## EXAMINATION
## DISCIPLINE CORE - 2
## B21PH02DC- INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
## (CBCS - UG)
### 2022-23 - Admission Onwards

**Time: 3 Hours**                                    **Max Marks: 70**

---

### SECTION-A

**Objective Type Questionsanswer any ten; each question carries one mark (10X1=10)**

1. Which is the renowned school of Indian Philosophy that primarily focuses on logic?

2. Based on what criteria was the āstika-nāstika distinction made?

3. How many categories are accepted by Vaiśeṣika School?

4. What is the ultimate goal of life according to Cārvāka philosophy?

5. Who is the founder ofDvaitaVedānta?

6. Name the metaphysical theory adopted by Jaina thinkers.

7. What is the etymological meaning of nirvana?

8. Name the theory proposed by Mimāṁsā to state the validity of knowledge.

9. What are the three realities accepted by Nimbārka?

10. Who is the founder of the Nyāya system?

11. What is the means of liberation for Vallabha?

12. Why memory is considered as an invalid knowledge in Nyāya philosophy?

13. What is the literal meaning of the word Yoga?

14. What is the name of the theory of error accepted by Prabhākara?

15. What are the pramānas accepted by Jaimini?

## SECTION-B

**Very short Questions (not more than five sentences). Answer any ten; each question carries two marks (10X2=20)**

16. Write a short note on Saṃhitās.

17. Explain the fundamental principle of the theory of dependent origination (Pratityasamutpāda).

18. What are the four factors involved in the Nyāya theory of knowledge?

19. Explain Prānāyāma in Yoga philosophy.

20. What is Kṣaṇikavāda (Law of momentariness) according to Buddhism?

21. What are the five different stages or levels of mental life according to the yoga system?

22. What are the four necessary factors involved in Upamāna, according to Nyāya?

23. What is meant by Sūtra?

24. What is considered as the ultimate goal of Mimāṁsā philosophy?

25. What is açit according to Nimbārka?

26. What is meant by substance, according to Vaiśeṣika School?

27. What is Brahmaparināmavāda of Ramanuja?

28. Explain *Anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension.

29. *How pauruṣeya* is different from *apauruṣeya in* Mimāṁsā philosophy?

30. *What is Satkāryavāda?*

## SECTION-C

**Short Questions (not more than page); Answer any five, each question carries four marks (5X4=20)**

31. Give a brief account of Upanishads and its importance in Indian philosophy.

32. 'Perception is the only source of knowledge' comment on the epistemological position adopted by Cārvāka philosophy.

33. Is it possible to know a thing completely? Critically evaluate the theory of knowledge in Jainism.

34. Illustrate the difference between*Puruṣa* and*Prakṛti* in Sāṅkhya Philosophy.

35. *Explain the category of Abhāva or Non-existence in* Vaisheṣika School.

36. Give a brief account of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

37. Discuss the theory of error in Advaita Vedanta.

38. Evaluate the conditions of knowledge proposed by MimāṁsāSchool.

39. Analyse the three levels of existence proposed by Advaita Vedanta.

40. Discuss the theory of Evolution in Sāṅkhya philosophy.

## SECTION-D

**Essay Questions(not more than four pages); Answer any two, each question carriesten marks (2X10=20)**

41. Assess the nature and features of philosophical themes mainly discussed in classical Indian philosophy.

42. Critically engage with the question of suffering in human life in view of four noble truths explained by Buddhism.

43. How doesNyāya formulate inference as a source of knowledge different from Cārvāka? Explain.

44. Why Saṅkara describes Brahman as *neti neti*in his philosophy? How that differs from the concept of Brahman proposed by Rāmānuja?

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

--------------------

വിദ്യയാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

കുരീപ്പുഴ ശ്രീകുമാർ

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

## Regional Centres

### Kozhikode
Govt. Arts and Science College
Meenchantha, Kozhikode,
Kerala, Pin: 673002
Ph: 04952920228
email: rckdirector@sgou.ac.in

### Thalassery
Govt. Brennen College
Dharmadam, Thalassery,
Kannur, Pin: 670106
Ph: 04902990494
email: rctdirector@sgou.ac.in

### Tripunithura
Govt. College
Tripunithura, Ernakulam,
Kerala, Pin: 682301
Ph: 04842927436
email: rcedirector@sgou.ac.in

### Pattambi
Sree Neelakanta Govt. Sanskrit College
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala, Pin: 679303
Ph: 04662912009
email: rcpdirector@sgou.ac.in

# Introduction to Indian Philosophy

## COURSE CODE: B21PH02DC

വിദ്യകൊണ്ട് സ്വതന്ത്രരാവുക

**SREENARAYANAGURU**
**OPEN UNIVERSITY**

YouTube