
UNIT 1 CARVAKA

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

One of the important counter-movements in India that challenged the authority of Vedas and questioned its teachings is Caravaka philosophy. It sought to unsettle most of the traditionally held views and beliefs such the existence of God, soul and life after death. That is why it was called heterodox school of philosophy. The aim of this unit is to introduce the students to the teachings, philosophy and arguments of this school which were diametrically opposed to those of orthodox schools of philosophy in India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Carvaka is a non-vedic Indian materialistic school of philosophy named after a sage called Carvaka, the founder of this system, according to a popular view. But some think that Carvaka was a prominent disciple of Brhaspati, the actual founder of the school. Carvaka etymologically means 'sweet-tongued' (*caru+vak*). Carvakas have sweet words. They are votaries of pleasing ideas if only you choose to follow their ways. Some hold that 'carvaka' has its etymology in 'carva' which means to chew or eat. It is an allusion to their doctrine of 'eat, drink and make merry.' According to Gunaratana of eight century C.E., 'carva' stands for chewing, grinding with the teeth, eating and swallowing virtues and vices. Carvakas are those who take no notice of virtues and vices. Carvaka was also called 'Lokayatya' which is the combination of the two words 'loka' (The world) and 'ayata' (basis). It accepts only the reality of the material world. In other words, Carvakas are the people who care only about the earth and not about the heaven.

1.2 ORIGIN OF THE SCHOOL

According to the scholars, the origin of the school can be traced back to post-upanishadic period. The school would have been born between 600-400 B.C.E. The Buddhist texts of this period mentions several heterodox teachers such as Sanjaya, the skeptic, Ajita, the materialist, Purana Kasyapa the indifferentist and Kosala, the fatalist and Katyayana whose ideas in some way or the other come closer to the views of Carvakas. It is probably in this ambience of skepticism, materialism and nihilism that Carvaka philosophy would have originated. It must be noted that it is around the same time that the Atomists and the Sophists became popular in Greece. Though it is a remote possibility that the Atomists, the Sophists and the Carvakas would have influenced one another, it is evident that all these shared certain common views.

But Chattopadhyaya who has written extensively on Lokayata and Carvaka schools holds that already in pre-Buddhist text of Chandogya Upanishad (vii 7-9) of seventh century BCE there is a reference to a view identifying body with the self, the philosophical position of Lokayata/Carvakas. But it must be noted that the text does not mention the word 'Lokayatas' or 'Carvakas' and attributes the view to the Asuras. According to T.M.P. Mahadevan, even in the earliest text of Rg-veda, there are references to heretics, non-conformists, skeptics, agnostics and critics of Vedas.

But Kautilya in the fourth century B.C. speaks of the Lokayatas though only once, but in the context in which he speaks of them seems to indicate that they had an established system already that time like that of the Samkhya and Yoga. In the second century B.C. Patanjali speaks of the Lokayatas and of the Bhaguri as their supporter. The texts of second century C.E., namely, the *Kamasutra* of Vatsyana and the *Nyayasutra* of Gautama—one of earliest texts of Nyaya system contain the views of Lokyata Sutras and have an extensive discussion mainly on two topics, very commonly attributed to Lokayatas/'Carvakas': i) the denial of inference as a source of knowledge and ii) the denial of self distinct from the body. Besides this, the Buddhist sources such as *Payasi Suttanta* and *Samanna-Phala-Sutta* written around 4th-5th Cent CE speak about the views of materialism and the later text speaks of 'heretics' of Buddha's time including Ajita Kesakambali who is a representative of extreme materialism and regarded as a follower of Carvaka school. Hiriyanna considers Carvaka philosophy as a form of accidentalism namely *yadrccha-vada* or *animitta-vada* because, for all of them, world is basically a chaos and whatever order is seen in this world is the outcome of mere chance.

1.3 THE LITERARY SOURCES OF CARVAKAS/LOKAYATAS

The original writings of Carvakas, if any, are no longer extant. Most of what we know about Carvakas and their philosophy is through the *Purvapaksha* (refutations) as provided by the opponents. The chief among them are Madvacharya's *Sarva-darsana-samgraha*, Samkara's *Sarva Siddhanta-samgraha* and Krishn Misra's *Prabodha-chandrodaya* (an eleventh century C.E. allegorical drama intended to popularize the Advaita view by ridiculing specifically the Carvaka view). Only exception to this is Jayasiri Bhatta's *Tattvo-paplava-simgha*, (which literally means 'the lion that throws overboard all categories'), a treatise in defense of Carvaka philosophy. The work edited by Sanghvi and Parikh claim that the actual text of the only original work of Carvakas roughly belong to the eight century CE. Since the text holds that no *pramana*

whatsoever is possible, many scholars think that it represents extreme skepticism, and it defends neither materialism nor perception as the only source of valid knowledge.

Apart from these, one more text needs to be mentioned in connection with Caryakas and it is called Lokayata-sutra or Carvaka-sutra which was only referred to by many writers but never available as a text. It is generally attributed to BrihasPati, who is traditionally regarded as the founder of this school. Yet the existence of another work known as Brhaspati-sutra (a work on political economy) attributed to the same author brings in more ambiguity. But Misra's *Prabodha-chandrodaya* says that the Lokayata Sutras were initially formulated by BrihasPati and later handed over to Carvaka who popularised them through his pupils.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. What is the meaning of the term 'Carvaka'? What is the other name for this school?

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2. Who is believed to be the founder of the school? What is his major work (attributed to him) that forms of the basis of Carvaka philosophy?

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3. What are some of the non-carvaka literary sources that speak about the philosophy of Carvakas?

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1.4 EPISTEMOLOGY

According to Carvakas, perception (*Pratyaksa*) is the only source of valid knowledge and they hold that nothing exists except what is perceived by five senses. Accordingly, they refuted inference (*anumana*) and testimony (*sabdha*), which are accepted by almost all other schools of Indian philosophy as valid and reliable. For them, perception is of two kinds, namely, external and internal, the former kind involving the operation of the five senses while the latter involves

the operation of the mind. Knowledge is the outcome of contact between an external object and one of the five senses, although further knowledge may be acquired through the process of the mind operating with the sense knowledge. Ultimately, then, all knowledge is derived from the senses.

For them inference is not a valid means of knowledge because universal relation which should serve as its ground is impossible. For instance let us take the following example:

“whatever has smoke has fire

The hill has smoke

therefore the hill has fire.”

Here a universal and necessary relation is assumed between the smoke and the fire. Carvakas questions this. They would ask 'How did you get this knowledge? From the kitchen where you have seen fire and smoke? But it cannot give you necessary relation between fire and smoke? Have you observed all kitchens to affirm their (smoke and fire) co-presence. What about the past and the future instances. So no one can be certain about any relation. In inference we proceed from the known to the unknown and there is no certainty in this, though some inferences may turn out to be accidentally true.” Just because certain things are sometimes true in some instances, they need not be true at all times in all instances. Consider a causal relation between A and B in which A causes B. What you observe is A is followed by B. This induces a belief in you that this will be the case in the future too. Therefore causation is a belief, nothing more. From the observed case, we cannot infer anything about the unobserved. Inference is impossible and it is utmost “a merer leap into the dark.” Thus inference is not a valid means of knowledge.

Carvakas brought several other objections against the possibility of a valid inference. They are 1. Impressions created by inferential knowledge are not as vivid (*aspastavat*) as those made by perception. 2. Inference always depends on other things for the determination of its objects. 3. Inference has to depend on perceptual statements. 4. Inferential knowledge is not directly produced by the objects. 5. Inference is not concrete (*avastu-vishayatvat*) 6. Inference is often contradicted (*badhyamanatvat*) and 7. there is no proof which may establish that every case of the presence of the reason (*hetu*) should also be a case of the presence of probandum (*sadhya*) i.e. there is no proof establishing the invariable and unconditional concomitance between the middle and the major terms.

Carvaka's views on inference has been criticised by many thinkers and philosophical schools. According to them, first of all, inference is inescapable for Carvaka himself. To refuse the validity of inference is to refuse to think and discuss. All thoughts, all discussions, all doctrines, all affirmations and denials, all proofs and disproofs are made possible by inference. It is through inference, not through sense-perception that the Carvaka knows what the other doctrines are, and it is through inference that the Carvaka hopes to convince others of the soundness of his argument. Secondly, the rejection of inference itself is self-contradictory. That all inferences are invalid is itself an inference, which the Carvaka must admit. Some historians of philosophy think

that Carvakas did not reject inference altogether. They did not favour the use of inference only for metaphysical categories, i.e as regards things that have never been perceived.

They also do not accept testimony (*sabda*). Madvacharya in his *Sarva-darsana-samgraha* quotes their position as follows: “Nor can testimony be the means thereof, since we may either allege in reply....that this is included in the topic of inference; or else we may hold that this fresh proof of testimony is unable to leap over the old barrier that stopped the progress of inference, since it depends itself on the recognition of a sign in the form of the language used in the child's presence by the old man; and, moreover, there is no more reason for our believing another's word that smoke and fire are invariably connected than for our receiving the ipse dixit of Manu (which, of course, we Carvakas reject).”

Thus it is clear that testimony does not have any value for the Carvakas and accordingly Vedas are not authoritative and they are meaningless and misleading. Those who composed them aimed to confound and confuse the common people in order to achieve their own selfish purpose.

1.5 METAPHYSICS OF CARVAKAS

Carvaka Metaphysics, which is directly and logically derived from their epistemology, is “an unqualified materialistic monism.” They hold a philosophy of the matter which means 'Matter is all.' Since perception is the only reliable source of knowledge, whatever is known through it alone is real and matter becomes the only reality. Sense-perception does not reveal any metaphysical entity. What it can perceive is only matter in its fourfold form; earth, water, fire and air. Carvakas do not accept ether (*akash*), because it is not an object of perception. The four elements are real not as subtle forms but in their gross particle forms. There is no reality other than these four elements and their combinations.

If so, what is consciousness? How do you account for it? How do you explain the capacity of human beings for reasoning, reflecting and imagining? Carvakas do not deny consciousness but deny only that it can be independent of the body. They regard consciousness as a mere product of matter. It does not 'inhere in particles of matter' but when the latter come to be organized in a specific form, they are found to show signs of life. It is always found associated with the body and is destroyed with the body's disintegration. When the four elements of matter come together in a particular mode to form the living organisms, the animal and human consciousness appear in it. It is the result of an “emergent and dialectical evolution, an epiphenomenon, a by-product of matter.” Consciousness is an after-glow of matter. They would say “Matter secretes mind as liver secretes bile”. If none of the elements of physical body possesses consciousness, is it not that consciousness is independent of physical body? Their answer would be no. When physical elements come together to form an organic pattern, consciousness emerges. It does not inhere in any particular part of the body. It is just like certain tastes and intoxicating qualities are got out of certain combinations of ingredients, though none, taken separately, possesses it. Red is got out of the betel leaf and lime, but none of it apparently seems to possess red.

The soul therefore is nothing other than the conscious living body. They say that there is no soul or no consciousness apart from body which is evidenced by the fact that consciousness perishes with the body. Therefore body is the self and the body is the product of material elements. Sankara in his *Sarva Siddhanta-samgraha* describes their understanding of the soul as follows:

“The soul is but the body characterized by the attributes signified in the expressions, “I am stout,” “I am youthful,” “I am grown up,” “I am old” etc. It is not something other than that body. The consciousness that is found in the modifications of non-intelligent elements (ie in organisms formed out of matter) is produced in the manner of the red colour out of the combination of betel, areca-nut and lime. There is no world other than this; there is no heaven and no hell; the realm of Siva and like regions are invented by stupid imposters of other schools of thought.”

The Carvaka thus denies soul or Atman as a surviving or transmitting entity, but it does not mean, according to Hiriyanna, that the Carvaka denies a conscious or spiritual principle but refuses to regard it as ultimate and independent.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. What are the means of knowledge that Carvakas accept? What do they reject explicitly?

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2. Do Carvakas believe in the five elements of the material world? What do they deny? Why?

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3. Do Carvakas accept consciousness? How do they understand it?

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1.6 CARVAKAS VIEWS ON GOD AND RELIGION

Since Carvakas do not believe in any metaphysical reality beyond matter, it logically follows that they out rightly consider that traditional concepts of God, religion and life-after death are “pure fictions, sheer imaginations of fevered brains”. There is nothing existent beyond this material world. Hence there is no survival of anything, no other world, and no God as unmoved mover, the first cause and the creator of the universe. Since all that exists is only matter, God who is

supposed to be a supernatural and transcendental being does not exist as it cannot be the object of perception, the only valid means of knowledge. Thus Carvakas summarily deny the existence of God and dethrone God who is supposed to indwell in the human beings as *antaryamin*. They also de-recognise conscience, the voice of God, which guides man. Subsequently, they rule out the possibility of religion as the realm of faith and belief systems that assume human beings' innate thirst for spirituality and structure their consciousness towards a destiny beyond this world has no basis in the true nature of reality (i.e. materialistic) according to their scheme of things.

1.7 ETHICS OF CARVAKAS

The Carvaka ethics is based on the assumption that the human beings get annihilated at the point of death. She or he begins life with birth and ends it with death. Carvakas do not believe in the theory of *karma* and accordingly they reject the notion of re-birth after death. Since this is the only life for the individual, their exhortation is: "make the best use of it." To get the best out of this only life, one has to enjoy this life and to seek the utmost pleasure. The basic desire of every being/creature is to gain pleasure and avoid pain. Pleasure in this life is the sole end of man. Pleasure goes with pain. But on account of this, you should not run away from pleasure. The fact that there is pain in life should not deter the human beings from pursuing pleasure. Some of the sayings of Carvakas encourage us not to be bogged down by the presence of pain in the process of seeking pleasure: "The wise man does not reject the kernel because of the husk;" "None gives up eating fish because there are bones and scales;" "Roses are not discarded because they have thorns;" "we do not cease to grow crops because the animals destroy them; we do not stop cooking our food, because beggars ask for it;" In all of these sayings the Carvakas call upon the people to enjoy pleasure at all times. Thus pleasure is the natural ethical principle. One should take efforts to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. Whatever action minimizes pain and maximizes pleasure is a good action." A Carvaka lives in the moment for the moment. They exhort the human beings not to ignore a present pleasure in the hope of gaining some greater pleasure later. They invoke the following proverbs in support of their position: "Make hay while the sun shines;" "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;" "A pigeon today is worth more than a peacock of tomorrow." They debunk all religious practices and rituals. One of the reasons for their rejection is that they falsely promise people a good future life but in reality the religious rituals are mechanisms of priests to exploit others and make a living out of it. Vatsayana in his *kamasutra* quotes some of the *Lokyata Sutras*. In this connection let us see one of their aphorisms:

1. Religious rites should not be practiced,
2. because their fruition depends upon the future,
3. And is doubtful.
4. Who, unless he is a fool, gives away to others what belongs to him?
5. A pigeon to-day is better than a peacock tomorrow.
6. A sure *kaudi* is better than a doubtful gold coin.

These Lokyata Sutras thus appeal to people not to ignore the present at the cost of the future. In a spirit of cynicism, one Carvaka asks a priest why he sacrifices a poor animal. The priest replies that the animal sacrificed goes direct to heaven. Then the Carvaka tells the priest “If so, you can jolly well put yourself in that inevitable position.”

The Carvakas do not believe in heaven or hell and for them paradise could only be on this earth. Sankara's *Sarva-siddhanta-samgraha* speaks of what has been repeatedly called the Carvaka philosophy of hedonism:

The enjoyment of heaven lies in eating delicious food, keeping company of young women, using fine clothes, perfumes, garlands, sandal paste, etc.

The pain of hell lies in the troubles that arise from enemies, weapons, diseases; while liberation (moksha) is death which is the cessation of life-breath.

The wise therefore ought not to take pains on account of that (liberation); it is only the fool who wears himself out by penances, fasts, etc.

Chastity and other such ordinances are laid down by clever weaklings. Gifts of gold and land, the pleasure of invitations to dinner are devised by indigent people with stomachs lean with hunger.

The construction of temples, houses for water-supply, tanks, wells, resting places, and the like, is praised only by travelers, not by others.

The Agnihotra ritual, the three Vedas, the triple staff carried by the priests, the ash-smearing, are the ways of gaining a livelihood for those who are lacking in intellect and energy

The wise should enjoy the pleasures of this world through the proper visible means of agriculture, keeping cattle, trade, political administration, etc.

From the above passage it is clear that the Carvaka's emphasis is on the individual, rather than any collective, good; accordingly, the Carvakas accept only two of the four *purusharthas* or traditional human values, namely, attainment of worldly pleasure (*kama*) and the means of securing it (*artha* = wealth), thus rejecting religious merit (*dharma*) and liberation (*moksha*). The Carvakas do not make any qualitative distinction among pleasures, nor do they try to distinguish the pleasures of the body from the pleasures of the mind. Except in the case of activities like trade and agriculture they accept immediately available pleasures rather than any promised ones of the future as they would say “A pigeon today is better than a peacock tomorrow,” and “a certain copper is better than a doubtful gold.”

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. Why do you think that Carvakas do not accept God? Give reasons.

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2. Why should I 'make the best use of life' according to Carvakas? How?

3. Why do Carvakas reject religious rituals?

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Carvaka philosophy or Indian materialism, one of the oldest doctrines in India already quite noted in the earliest text of Rig Veda, an anti-hegemonic counter-movement, has continued to influence Indian academia even into our modern times as we see in the philosophy of modern and contemporary Indian thinkers like Devatman and M.N. Roy. Some view Carvaka philosophy less as a constructive philosophy than as a reaction to the excess of ritualism, spiritualism, world-negating idealism, oppressive clericalism and inhuman casteism. However this is not to state that the Carvaka system is philosophically insignificant and unsound as Dale Riepe observes that Carvaka's epistemological outlook is empirical, their metaphysics materialistic and ethics hedonistic.

Carvaka etymologically means 'sweet-tongued' (*caru+vak*). Carvaka was also called 'Lokayatya' which accepts only the material world as real. Brhaspati is the founder of the school. Some of the texts that refer to the philosophy of Carvakas are Madvacharya's *Sarva-darsana-samgraha*, Sankara's *Sarva Siddanta-samgraha*, Krishn Misra's *Prabodha-chandrodaya*, the *Kamasutra* of Vatsayana, the *Nyayasutra* of Gautama—one of the earliest texts of Nyaya system and the Buddhist sources such as *Payasi Suttanta* and *Samanna-Phala-Sutta*.

The only means of knowledge the Carvakas accept is perception. And they openly question and deny the validity of means of knowledge such as inference and testimony. Carvakas do not believe in all the five elements of the material world. They deny the existence of Ether because it cannot be perceived. Carvakas do not deny consciousness but only its existence independent of the body. It is always found associated with the body and is destroyed with the body's disintegration. For them, consciousness is as a mere product of matter arising out of the combination of the four elements of matter under certain favourable conditions. Carvakas do not

believe in God because they deny the existence of anything which is not material. Hence God who is supposed to be a supernatural and transcendental being is not a reality as God cannot be the object of perception, the only valid means of knowledge. Since this is the only life for me, I must make the best use of it. To get the best out of this only life, I have to enjoy this life and to seek the utmost pleasure. Carvakas reject religious rituals because they falsely promise people a good future life but in reality they are mechanisms of priests to exploit others and make a living out of it.

1.9 KEY WORDS

Carvaka: etymologically it means 'sweet-tongued' (*caru+vak*). Some hold that 'carvaka' has its etymology in 'carva' which means to chew or eat. 'carva' allegorically stands for chewing, grinding with the teeth, eating and swallowing virtues and vices.

Lokayatya: It is the combination of the two words 'loka' (The world) and 'ayata' (basis). This word expressed the belief of the 'Carvakas that accepts only the reality of the material world.

BrihasPati: He is traditionally regarded as the founder of Carvaka school. *Lokayata-sutra* or *Carvaka-sutra* which was only referred to by many writers but never available as a text is generally attributed to him.

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UNIT 2 BUDDHISM - 1

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Four Noble Truths
- 2.3 Philosophical pre-suppositions
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Key Words
- 2.9 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit tries to make the students acquainted with the basic philosophical position of Buddhism in general. It enables them also to make comparative studies and answer the criticism raised by rival systems, as they expose the basic tenets of the system under survey. In this unit we will give the historical setting of Buddha, His teachings, its metaphysical pre-suppositions and its far-reaching implications.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the history of the world, 8th century B.C. to 1st century A.D is known as 'Axial Era', a period of great 'Spiritual Quest' where we get almost all lasting answers to life's perennial questions. India gave her contribution to the genuine thoughts of Axial Era in the form of Upanishadic enquiry, religions of Jainism and Buddhism and all other systems of thought. We generally divide them as orthodox and heterodox contributions. Buddha is one fine product of this era as a new pathfinder. From him comes a religio-philosophical system which is a whole in itself with its diverse developments and spread in course of time.

Every person will be influenced by his age, but what will influence him and how, depends on his sensitivities too. Buddha was a very sensitive man. The story of four sights that made him a wanderer (old man, disease, dead body and recluse) bears witness to this. We also see these sights, but they are like speck of dust fallen on hand. In the case of Buddha they were like speck of dust fallen on eye which is very sensitive and could not rest at ease until a solution was reached. They worked like immediate catalysts that caused an awareness of the basic realities of life. What do these four sights symbolise? The first three; old man, diseased man and dead body speak about the common plight of human beings. This brings Buddha to the first noble truth '*Sarvam Dukkam.*' Recluse or state of being a renouncer was the way of that age for dedicating

oneself for full time enquiry. Thus he leaves his palace and throne and begins his search for the reasons and remedies for the plight of man.

Buddha due to his sensitivity looked into solutions that were available at his time. After taking the life of a wanderer he visited many learned and rigorous practising ascetics. But he was not satisfied fully with any of them. After six years of search he came to his own discipline which he calls middle way and dharma. Middle way for him is rejection of extremes, be it rejection of extreme austerity or extreme indulgence in worldly pleasures (in his practical life) or rejection of 'eternalism' of Upanishads (there is one unchanging, permanent principle) or nihilism of Carvaka (there is no permanent, unchanging principle, life ends with physical death). Thus for his teachings the philosophical foundation becomes a new position that he reached through his enlightenment. This middle way is the theory of dependent origination, that everything is conditional, momentary and without essence. When one forgets this and considers something as unconditional, eternal and with essence, then suffering begins. This was a radical finding which begins with basic position which is opposite to the one that was accepted at that time.

Let us be aware of the complications in understanding what Buddha actually taught. Historically he is so remote and he did not write down anything. He taught orally for 45 years and his teaching fell on the ears of people from various cultures and traditions. So from his part he must have adapted himself to their culture (*paryaya*), and from the hearer's part they got only according to their capacity of reception (*adhikari bheda*). He taught in the language of the ordinary people and there were many, and the philosophical language was Sanskrit. In all these languages the disciples of Buddha later recorded his words. Buddha was a teacher who taught 'be light unto thyself' (*atta dipo bhava*). It means do not take anything true without your rational scrutiny. He also repudiated human authority as the final word in his society of monks (*Sangha*) and taught, "let the dharma be your guide, no human authority". All these caused lot of practical disciplinary problems as so many teachings came up as Buddha's teachings. Thus the need for a canon came up and 30 years after Buddha's *parinirvana* (death), the first council was conducted. Within a century in the next council strong disagreement between traditionalists (*Teravadins*) and progressivists (*Mahasangikas*) came up. Human emotional imbalance in the form of putting down and condemning the other as low and vile (*hina*) happened in the course of time. These all contributed to the growth of sects and sub-sects and many schools and many canons.

Today we have Pali Canon, Chinese Canon, Tibetan Canon and Sanskrit Canon with their own special emphasis. To the question 'which among this is really Buddha's teaching (*buddha vachana*)', nobody dared to negate the other canon, rather emphasised their own among others: "all these are '*buddha vachanas*', but 'this is His, 'the teaching,' is the trend of Buddhist sects. So each one will present Buddha's teaching from his angle. This doesn't mean that they all disagree in everything. In some basic teachings they all agree. They are the practical teachings of Buddha (the four noble truths), No-soul theory, conditioned origination, and the law of impermanence. To these basics each sect adds its own special emphasis as *Buddha vachana*. We don't go into special emphasis of sects in this unit. But we only expose those teachings that normally all agree as real Buddha teaching. In unit 'Buddhism – II' we will discuss some distinguishing marks of some schools.

This unit is divided into two parts. First is the most known teaching of Buddha, (four noble truths) which is very much practical though deep understanding of it exposes metaphysical pre-suppositions. In the second part we will expose metaphysical pre-suppositions. But water tight compartmentalisation is not possible, for they go together always. Thus student will see repetitions in both parts. This is unavoidable as they always go together. This separation is for clarity sake only.

2.2 FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Everyone who accepts Buddha agrees on one thing that his basic teaching is four noble truths (*chatvari arya satyani*). They are '*sarvam dukkam*', '*dukkha samudaya*', '*dukkha nirodha*', '*dukkha nirodha marga*'. This is actually ethico-religious teaching. This is exposed in the first discourse the '*Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*'. All agree that Buddha was against hair splitting metaphysical speculations that are useless from the perspective of life's goal. He has a classical simile to explain it. He says if a man is struck by a poisonous arrow and is in immediate need of medication but says, 'I will not allow you to remove this arrow and put medication until I know who shot, this arrow, what it is made of, how far away he was standing, what type of bow he used etc, then, by the time you collect all answers the man will die. Thus, these answers are useless at the moment. The fact is in front of us and the means for saving his life too. Let us do that.

Buddha was taken up by the plight of humans. He named it '*dukkham*' (suffering), searched the cause of it and presented remedies like a doctor who diagnoses disease and prescribes medicine for cure. The goal is religious as life without 'suffering,' is a stage beyond 'this present life situation'. And the means are purely ethical and meditational. Only difference in this matter between him and the other religious thinkers was rejection of metaphysical speculations, be it on God or soul or the beginning and end of life, etc. Buddha saw it as not only useless but also detrimental to remove suffering. According to Buddha, suffering is caused by ignorance and this ignorance is ignorance about real nature of reality which is *anatma*, *anitya* and *dukkha*. This ignorance causes attachment, craving and all its evil effects. The goal for us is removal of this ignorance by removing attachment and craving. That is termed as '*Nirvana*' and the means for this is *prajna*, *sila* and *samadhi* (awareness, moral precepts and meditation). They are elaborated into 'noble eightfold path'.

Sarvam Dukkham: (everything is suffering)

Indian Philosophy in general begins at a realization of this human predicament; the unfortunate existential situation in which one finds oneself, that his life is 'brutish and short'. It begets frustration, unhappiness and pain. Some scriptures say "life is a vale of tears"; "vanity of vanities, everything is vanity". This is a pessimistic way of looking at life. Buddha also shares in it. According to him, "Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is

suffering, to be united with what is unpleasant is suffering, if one wants something and does not get it, that also is suffering; in brief, the life as we see it is suffering (it is the aggregate of five *skandhas* with thirst for existence and clinging)". If we ask the question why it is suffering we must say it is suffering because it is impermanent. Though this initial pessimism is there in Buddha, it does not make him inactive; rather, it energises him to search for answers. One general answer was already there in the form of law of karma, i.e., the source of this unfortunate situation is of our own making. It is our own deeds that breed the *karmic* residue which is stored up and activated later and makes our life like this. And the future will be conditioned by the present deeds. This situation is called *karmic* circle, *samskara*. Buddha shared in this worldview and within this context arrived at his enlightenment; having been dissatisfied of the already given explanation and he proposes his own.

If we ask the question 'What was Buddha's enlightenment?' we must say it was the realization, '*sarvam dukkham*'. Ordinary man, at one time speaks of life as vale of tears, in the next moment, strives for pleasure and clings to some soul. Even when he fails to attain pleasure he is under the impulse, the thirst for pleasure and appeasing of soul. For the ordinary man things are not consistently impermanent. The distinction of Buddha is that for him even those strivings for pleasure are painful and the attainment of the so-called pleasures too. Clinging to a permanent soul is the root delusion. Thus everything is pain, and this realisation is the first criteria for enlightenment. Thus this is the first noble truth, and this realization is the first criteria for following Buddha way.

One who realizes consistently that everything is suffering, he will strive with the whole heart to end it. In order to end it, first he must know how it originates and how it can be removed. An expert doctor will not only consider the symptoms of disease but also will find out the root cause of it, in order to root it out. Buddha did the same. If every action leads to suffering, can we escape from suffering by desisting from action? Here comes Buddha's moral consciousness, that it is not action that is important, but the attitude behind it. Action before being done externally, happens internally or in the mind. As every action has its cause and brings out its fruits, every mental action too has its cause and effect. This cause-effect examination of all actions within the person through a psychological analysis is his second noble truth.

***Dukkha Samudaya* (cause of suffering)**

Second noble truth says, our suffering has a cause. That which is caused can come to an end if the causal condition is removed. Something that is uncaused cannot be removed. (this is the foundation for Buddha's rejection of Upanishadic uncaused and permanent soul). Thus the second noble truth is the message of hope that comes from Buddha. Since bondage is caused, there is possibility of removing it by controlling causes and eventually eliminating them.

What is it that causes suffering? In the first sermon at Benaras (*Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*) Buddha said, it is the thirst (*trishna*) that leads to rebirth, which is accompanied by delight and passion. Later this thirst is further elaborated as aroused by sense-objects (*kamatrishna*) and it is directed towards one's worldly existence (*bhavatrishna*). When senses come in contact with their objects, sensations arise and these awaken desire. In this way the so-called thirst for objects of desire (*kamatrishna*) arises. The second type of *trishna* arises when one takes worldly personality

(five *skandhas*) as the self (*atma*) and clings to it. This is the ignorance that entangles one in the cycle of existence. When all these joined together in cause effect chain (dependent origination - *pratitya samutpada*), the famous theory of 12 spokes of *bhavachakra* of Buddhism originated. They explain it both in forward order and reverse order.

Let us see the twelve-membered chain of causes and effects:

Ignorance (*avidya*)

Impression (*samskara*)

Initial Consciousness in the embryo (*vijnana*)

Mind-body embryonic organism (*nama rupa*)

The six fields viz., the five senses and the mind together with their objects (*sadayatana*)

Contact between the senses and the objects (*sparsa*)

Sense experience (*vedana*)

Strong Desire (*trishna*)

Clinging to existence (*upadana*)

Will to be born (*bhava*)

Re-birth (*jati*)

Pain, old age and death (*jara-marana*)

In the general presentation of cause of suffering in the twelve-membered chain of causes and effects, the root cause of entanglement in causal chain is ignorance which is the absence of liberating cognition, the four noble truths. In such a person craving for worldly objects and worldly personality come into being (*kama trishna* and *bhavatrishna*). The impressions that are like a subtle body is the bearer of rebirth; it enters into a new womb after death, driven by these impressions. This necessitates formation of body-mind organism and in turn the formation of senses and mind as six organs of cognition. Due to that, contact with objects occurs. And that causes sensations of various kinds leading to the passions (*raga*, *dvesa* and *moha*), foremost being the thirst that clings to sense-pleasure and to the supposed self that grasps them, thereby leading to renewed bondage and new existence. Once again, birth and entanglement in the suffering of existence come about, and so it goes, in the endless chain, till the liberating cognition and annihilation of thirst put an end to the cycle of existence. When one strikes at the root of this endless chain by removing the basic ignorance which is the wrong view of *atma*, permanence and pleasure, one prepares the way for third noble truth.

***Dukka Nirodha* (cessation of suffering)**

It is the third noble truth about cessation of suffering, *nirvana*. Negatively if we speak of *nirvana* it is cessation of all suffering; annihilation of all that binds; complete vanishing of thirst, abandoning of all afflictions (*upadhi*). Positively it is attainment of freedom. The question is freedom from what and freedom to what. *Nirvana* is a freedom from all the three types of acts that bind mental, vocal and physical. This can happen only when one's actions do not create craving (*raga*), aversion (*dvesa*) and delusion (*moha*). Again *Nirvana* is a freedom to a life with full of good will (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic appreciation (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha*). Its outward expressions include politeness, good manners, cleanliness of habits and the like. Buddha himself stands as a beacon with his personality.

Buddha when he started teaching was a man of harmonious, self-contained personality with great magnetism. This comes from self-confidence resulting from his enlightenment, the attainment of the right view. This is liberation. He had a contemplative temperament and kind-heartedness towards all mankind, even towards one who came to kill him. The majesty of his appearance and his courtesy towards people even of lower status and his noble manners converted many even Angulimala and impressed even those who rejected his teaching.

What is the nature of *Nirvana*, if we take it as the permanent state after death? It is a controversial issue. For Buddhism teaches *anatma* and *anitya*. If no permanent agent to experience freedom, then who attains liberation? Or what will be that after right view dawned and aggregate of *skandhas* are no more which we normally call death? Rightly Buddha kept these questions in the inexpressible (*avyakrtas*), for they are beyond our categories of linguistic expression. Later schools explained it in their own way.

***Dukkha Nirodha Marga* (path for cessation of suffering)**

The fourth noble truth is about the path to liberation. This is the path that Buddha followed and attained enlightenment. So anyone who wishes to follow Buddha and attain enlightenment can follow this and attain enlightenment. In fact, it is path to moral perfection, through practice of morality or virtues. Morality in Buddhism has a deeper understanding than popular understanding. Normally we judge rightness or wrongness on the basis of actions externally seen, but in Buddhism emphasis is on what is going on in the mind. Again popularly morality means following moral precepts i.e., emphasis on actions performed. In Buddhism emphasis is on 'being moral' than following precepts. Being moral emphasises total personality. It is not one action that decides morality but the moral culture of the person.

Fourth noble truth is generally described as the noble eightfold path. Some books divide them into three groups. They are wisdom (*prajna*), morality (*sila*) and meditation (*samadhi*). Among the eight first two are classified in the group of wisdom, next three are in the group of morality and last three are in the group of meditation. They are

- i) Right View (*samyak drsti*)
- ii) Right Conception (*samyak samkalpa*)
- iii) Right Speech (*samyak vak*)

- iv) Right Conduct (*samyak karmanta*)
- v) Right Livelihood (*samyak ajiva*)
- vi) Right Effort (*samyak vyayama*)
- vii) Right Mindfulness (*samyak smriti*)
- viii) Right Concentration (*samyak samadhi*)

i) Right View (*samyak drsti*)

‘Right view’ here refers to comprehensive understanding. Its opposite wrong view then refers to one sided or excessively bent to one extreme, be it about self or about world, and that is the root cause of suffering. Thus if we want to be free from suffering we must come out of our one sidedness. Buddha came out of both extremes of ‘it is’ (*sasvatavada*) and ‘it is not’ (*uchedavada*). He gave the truth as middle way, which is the right view, claim his disciples. This truth is exposed in the form of four noble truths and their pre-suppositions, which are dependent origination as becoming (*pratitya samutpada*), no permanent soul (*anatma*) and law of impermanence (*anitya*).

ii) Right Conception (*samyak samkalpa*)

Right conception is the decision in the mind of what is to be practically followed. As far as practice is concerned, the right view remains impractical, for it doesn’t become part of the active mind. It is duty of right conception to make mind active in that way. If that is not there, wrong conception may carry the mind away. Wrong conceptions are associated with lust (*kama-samkalpa*), conception of ill-will (*byapada-samkalpa*) and conception of harm (*vihiimsa-samkalpa*). The right conceptions are conceptions of renunciation (*nishkama-samkalpa*), conceptions of good will (*abyapada-samkalpa*), and conceptions of compassion (*ahimsa-samkalpa*).

iii) Right Speech (*samyak vak*)

When right view and right conception start to regulate life, they bring qualitative change in the way of speaking, behaviour and life style. Right speech is that speech which does not consist of lies, gossip, abuse and idle talk. This rule asks for restraint of speech and practice of virtues with one’s speech.

iv) Right Conduct (*samyak karmanta*)

This noble truth asks the practitioner (*sadhaka*) to abstain from wrong actions. This contains famous “*Pancha-Sila*” – the five vows for desisting from killing, stealing, sensuality, lying and intoxication. Killing refers to destruction of the life of any being. He who takes away life or

instigates another to do so is guilty of this crime. Stealing is taking away of that which is not given. Sensuality or adultery is the holding of carnal intercourse with the female that belongs to another. Lying is one among the four sins of the speech. Others are slander, abuse and unprofitable conversation. Intoxication refers to intentional drinking of any liquor. This is forbidden because it is the root cause of all other sins. For liquor takes away the rationality and morality of the one who is under the grip of liquor, and he commits all types of sins.

v) Right Livelihood (*samyak ajiva*)

Right Livelihood refers to earning one's everyday living by honest means. This rule tells the practitioner (*sadhaka*) that even for the sake of maintaining one's life one should not take to forbidden means, but work in consistency with good determination.

vi) Right Effort (*samyak vyayama*)

Right effort refers to mind control. Mind is the root where all types of tendencies reside, whether they are good or wicked passions. Sometimes undesirable ideas may haunt the mind, and hence mind control is needed. Sins of the mind are covetousness, malice and scepticism. They need to be controlled. One cannot progress steadily unless he maintains a constant effort to root out old evil thoughts and prevent new evil thoughts from arising. Again since mind cannot be kept empty, he should constantly endeavour to fill the mind with good ideas and retain such ideas in the mind. These four are the right efforts.

vii) Right Mindfulness (*samyak smrti*)

This rule further stress constant vigilance, constantly keeping in mind the good things he has already learned. He should constantly remember and contemplate the body as body, sensations as sensations, mind as mind, mental states as mental states and contemplate on the frail, loathsome and perishable nature of things. These help us remain free from attachment and grief.

viii) Right Concentration (*samyak samadhi*)

Buddhism speaks of four stages of concentration. The first stage is dhyana or meditation on four noble truths. Here mind makes its reasoning and investigation about truths. At the second stage of concentration there is no reasoning and investigation, but an unaffected contemplation. Here still the practitioner enjoys an experience of joy, peace and internal tranquillity. At the third stage one detaches himself even from joy of concentration, attitude of indifference increases, still conscious of the ease and equanimity he experiences. At the last stage one puts away even the ease and equanimity and all senses of joy and happiness he earlier had. This is a stage of perfect

equanimity, indifference and self-possession. Here he attains the desired goal of nirvana, the right view in its perfection.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. What are the noble truths of Buddha? Explain.

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2. Elaborate the ways of cessation of suffering.

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2.3 PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BUDDHA'S TEACHING

We know Buddha as an ethical teacher and founder of religion who gave the eightfold path. Can one be a founder of a religion without being a philosopher or without having philosophical ideas as the foundation for these teachings? It is not possible. For religion is moulding of life in the light of reality as one sees it and knowledge of the nature of that reality shapes ideals of life. Thus philosophy is pre-supposition of religion. Sometimes religious teachers will grow from the existing philosophy of the time, without questioning it. But Buddha was not satisfied with the philosophy of the times. He questioned theory and practice of Vedic sacrifice, theory and practice of 'soul-realization' and theory and practice of 'this-life-alone' holders. He comes to a new vision, accepting the spiritual, accepting morality, but rejecting 'permanence' and 'soul' or 'substantiality'. That which is 'not-permanent' breeds suffering. Everything is not-permanent. Hence, '*sarvam dukkam*'. His vision springs from awareness of the causal genesis of things and ideas (*pratitya samutpada*), their impermanence and insubstantiality.

Theory of dependent origination (*pratitya samutpada*)

This is the central conception of the system of Buddha. This is the Buddhist theory of causation. This explains the nature of existence. He said "leave aside the questions of the beginning and end. I will instruct you in the Law (*dharma* of Buddhism). If 'that' is, 'this' comes to be; on the springing up of 'that', 'this' springs up. If 'that' is not, 'this' does not come to be; on the cessation of 'that', 'this' ceases". This is the common description of dependent origination. This

exposes most salient features of Buddha's conception of the principle of dependent origination. There is a temporal relation between the 'that' and 'this'. 'This' is an experiential component. For 'this' refers to the effect that is experienced rather than inferred. And 'that' refers to the cause that has already been experienced. Formulating the principle of dependent origination in this manner, the Buddha attempts to avoid the search for any mysterious entity or substance in the explanation of phenomena. Avoiding mysterious entity or substance does not mean abandoning all enquiry and go to absolute scepticism. Rather it represents the acceptance of a middle standpoint and he calls it right view. In *Kaccayanagotta-sutta*, when question asked about 'right view' Buddha said; "this world, is generally inclined toward two views: existence and non-existence. To him who perceives with right wisdom the uprising of the world as it has come to be, the notion of non-existence in the world does not occur. To him who perceives with right wisdom the ceasing of the world as it has come to be, the notion of existence in the world does not occur.

The world for the most part, is bound by approach, grasping and inclination. And he who does not follow that approach and grasping, that determination of the mind, that inclination and disposition, who does not cling to or adhere to a view, "this is my self", who thinks "suffering that is subject to arising arises; suffering that is subject to ceasing, ceases" such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed there is "right view" (that leads to liberation).

"Everything exists" is one extreme. "Everything does not exist" is the other extreme. Without approaching either extreme, the *Tathagata* teaches you a doctrine of the middle....(then follows exposition of 12 factors of *bhava chakra* as causes of suffering). This we already saw in the second noble truth, where he applied this theory of causation (*pratitya samutpada*) in the origin of suffering. Like that in other fields too his disciples apply it. In the field of Logic it is law of identity. Something is, is; is not, is and is not. When it is applied in metaphysics it becomes theory of momentariness (everything in constant flux, changing from cause to effect). And when applied in ethics it becomes law of karma as every action leaves its effect. This principle of dependent arising is an alternative to the Brahminical notion of eternal self (*atman*) as well as to the Carvaka rejection of spirituality. As an alternative Buddha explains phenomena as a state of being in constant arising and ceasing. What is it that arises and ceases, they say '*dhammas*'. It does justice to the need of both permanence and change to explain our experience and ethics.

Doctrine of Universal change or impermanence (*Sarvam anitya*)

The metaphysical application of law of dependent arising arrived by investigation and analysis of the empirical, is the doctrine of universal change. All things are combination of '*dhammas*' and subject to change and decay. Since they all originate from some condition, it disappears when the condition ceases to be. Whatever has a beginning has an end. Buddha therefore says "know that whatever exists arises from causes and conditions and is in every respect impermanent. That which seems everlasting perishes, that which is high will be laid low; where meeting is, parting will be; where birth is, death will come". This is doctrine of impermanence. When this is brought to its logical conclusion, by asking the question, how one thing can become another if it is not continuously changing. If not changing it will remain as it is, if it remains as it is, it will never change combination of *dhammas* too become impossible. If there is no change, we cannot explain our experience, morality cannot be explained, for morality in order to be meaningful actions

should bear fruit, no fruit without change. If change, change must be at all moments. If at one moment it is permanent, then it will go on like that for ever. For Buddhism does not accept of an external mover.

No-soul theory (*anatma*)

From the beginning of human reflection up to now, one prominent theme is 'soul'. But it is known by different names. To the primitive man inside him or in any animal that lives and moves there is a living principle, a man inside a man or an animal inside an animal that we call 'soul'. This is animism. As religion becomes refined soul concept also becomes refined. But in one form or another we see it in living religions of Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam. They teach a man's personality or self is his soul, known by different names like '*atman*', *pudgala*, *pneuma*, or psyche which enters body at birth and quits at death. The common element is, it is the invisible, immaterial ego, the 'I' that is unchangeable amidst everything that is changing, the 'Lord' of the body and mind. Those who hold that, there is a soul that exists say, without a soul there could be no immortality, without immortality life would not be worth living. The existence of a soul alone could ensure to each individual the fruit of his actions; without soul there could be no reward in heaven or punishment in hell and without it transmigration could not be explained, and so also we cannot explain differences between man and man in character, position, peculiarities and fate.

For Buddha such a permanent soul, a permanent self is the most deceitful of illusions, the basic wrong view that leads man into the pit of sorrow and suffering. In order to be a Buddhist practitioner first thing that is to be rejected is such a belief in permanent self. The reason given is – self naturally produces attachment, and attachment to it leads to egoism, craving for pleasure and aversion to pain on earth and then beyond in heaven. So search for soul is a wrong start, and wrong start will lead in false direction. "Some say that the 'I' endures after death, others say it perishes, both have fallen into a grievous error. For if the 'I' is perishable the fruit people strive for will perish too, and then deliverance will be without merit. If, as the others say, the 'I' does not perish, it must be always identical and unchanging, then moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary". Because of this logical difficulty, Buddha kept that matter in the 'inexplicable'. This silence of Buddha was explained differently by different schools, though all agree 'soul' does not exist. First systematic exposition of that we have in the book "*The Questions of King Menandros*" (*Milindapanha*). Here Nagasena the monk convinces the king with the example of chariot, there is no permanent personality, but only name and form, i.e. the five groups (*skandas*), which continuously cease and arise anew.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. How does Buddhism understand the reality as dependent?

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2. Describe the Buddhist notion of 'self'.

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2.4 LET US SUM UP

Buddhism as we see today is a big forest with such a lot of variety of trees in it. Though the schools and sects keep up their uniqueness, they all claim that they give the Master's teaching. Modern times when study of Buddhism was rejuvenated in Europe, a fresh scientific enquiry into what is later and what is the core was taken up. All unanimously agree on the so-called four noble truths (*catur aryasatyani*) as Buddha's own words and contains a summary of his teaching and gives theoretical framework of philosophy for Buddhists everywhere. Among these truths, the first, the truth of suffering is the basis of Buddhist ontology. The second, the truth of the Origin of Suffering is the basis of Buddhist psychology or the ontology of the mental. The third, the truth of the cessation of suffering is the basis of Buddhism as a religion. The fourth, the truth of the path leading to cessation of suffering, is the basis of Buddhism as a moral and meditational practice. All the later developments in any of these fields have this same fundamental heritage – the vision of Buddha. It is presented as '*sarvam dukkam*', '*sarvam anatmam*' and '*sarvam anityam*'. If we ask the question why everything is suffering? The answer is because it is impermanent. Why is it impermanent? Because it is dependently originated. Why is it dependently originated? The answer is, it is like that. We experience it like that.

2.5 KEY WORDS

Dharmas (*dhmma* in Pali): in Buddhism are the elements of existence. These are grouped into 5 *Skandhas*, 18 *dhatus* and 12 *ayatanas* and their subdivisions. They explain Buddhist ontology.

Reality: It means the sum total of elements (*dharmas*) with which everything is made of, and with in which we comprehend everything.

Religion: In Buddhism refers to spirituality, not to worship of personal God. In a broader sense it refers to a belief that liberation from a frustrating and painful existence or from eternally repeated existence is possible and can be achieved through appropriate mental and moral practices.

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UNIT 3 BUDDHISM – II

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

In the 20th and 21st century so many Eastern and Western scholars wrote volumes and volumes on Buddhism. Still if you ask what is Buddhism it is not easy to give an all agreeing and all comprehensive answer. This is because of its vastness and complexity. To know Buddhism in its varied developments is a Herculean task. For it extends in so many lands and languages. Again it has a history of 2500 years. From the simple practical teachings for liberation by Buddha, his disciples went so far, especially by explaining the inexplicable (*avyakrtas*). Thus we have lot of sects and sub-sects and schools and sub-schools (Division into sects is on the basis of differences in discipline and division into schools is on the basis of metaphysical & epistemological distinctions). To study the distinctions of each sect and school spoken of in different scriptures of Buddhism is not easy; *Katavattu*, one canonical early 2nd century B.C.E text speaks of some 18 sects. Some modern texts on Buddhism enumerate as many as 65 sects and some others speak of more. Here for our study we take up the traditionally accepted four schools in India. They are Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Madhyamika and Yogacara. Each school claims they hold the ‘middle way’ of Buddha. The first two belong to Hinayana tradition (Early Buddhism, *Abhidharma* Buddhism, *Staviravada*, Philosophy of the Elders, Theravada Buddhism, *Sarvastivada* Buddhism, Southern Buddhism, Exoteric Buddhism – all these names emphasise one or the other aspect of this tradition) and the last two belong to Mahayana tradition (Later Buddhism, Developed Buddhism, Northern Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism) within Buddhism. We expose the main metaphysical views of these schools and their distinctions.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Philosophy always fascinated man, for he needs answers to all 'why's and 'how's of all that we are and what we come in contact with. Wise men begin their enquiry by critically examining the answers already given and evaluate their merits and demerits. Some will go that far to ask the question of 'why' about the multiplicity of those answers. Buddha was such a man, and he got enlightenment about their basic 'problem!', that they are all '*dristis*', (ways of looking at reality), which is basically limited because of human predicament of conceptual limitation. He understood not only the limitation of those '*dristis*', but also the harm that it can do, if we cling to it. Thus from practical angle he said, let us put aside these enquires, and be practical. We already referred to his classical simile of man struck by poisonous arrow (Refer previous unit).

A charismatic personality like Buddha could manage like that, but not his disciples after his demise. They were forced to give reasons for their interpretation, not only to outsiders, but also to insiders. Most important reason for this is the potential within his teaching for diverse interpretation. The immediate followers of Buddha even had their difference of opinion about Buddha's teaching. Within a century after the *parinirvana* of Buddha there came a clear cult division in his '*Sangha*'. Orthodox group or traditionalists or conservatives is known as *Staviras* or *Theras* or Elders and Progressives known as *Mahasangikas*. Elders claimed to represent the original teaching of Buddha. Others said Buddha taught something more than what these elders say. Elders called them as '*papabhikkus*' or '*adhamavadins*' (those who practice and teach wrong things). According to elders Buddha was a historical man. He was born, lived and died among them as a human being. But for the other group Buddha was more than a man. He is a God. The moral goal of *Staviras* is attainment of each one's *nirvana*. The other group said this is egoistic. Buddha's goal was not that. *Bodhisattva* should be the ideal; they do not care about one's *nirvana* until all attain nirvana. Again for elders the ideal was attainment of *Arhathood*. But *Mahasangikas* claimed an *arhat* can go wrong and that cannot be the ideal state, rather it must be realization of Buddhahood. About empirical knowledge too there was distinction between the two as *Staviras* (elders) were realists, but *mahasangikas* were more idealistic in their leanings. *Staviras* denied a soul or substance in everything, but they believed in *dharmas* or elements of existence as really existing. But *mahasangikas* denied substantiality for both. Everything is unsubstantial (*sunya*) was their position and this becomes ripe and fully grown into Mahayana.

3.2 MAIN HINAYANA SCHOOLS

The philosophy of *Staviras* or Elders we can call as *Abhidharma*. *Abhidharma* is actually philosophical reflections by realistic and pluralistic philosophers of Buddhism (Theravada or Hinayana) on the basic teachings of Buddha. The literal meaning of the term '*Abhi*' is 'further' or 'about'. Thus *Abhidharma* means the higher, further or special *Dharma*, or 'the discourse on *Dharma*'. *Dharma* here refers to all the elements with which everything is made of. If we analyse everything we can reduce the whole of subject and object (whole reality) into 75 *dharmas*. These realistic philosophers were known as Sarvastivadins. '*Sarvam asti*' means

‘everything is’ (these are realistic pluralistic philosophers) but only as elements not having a *pudgal* or soul. This is in fact the first philosophical development in Buddhism.

3.3 VAIBHASIKA SCHOOL

The word Vaibhasika has come from the main text *Mahavibhasasastra*, which was compiled around 2nd century C.E; its main object was to expose *Abhidharma* philosophy. Another classical text of this school is Vasabandhu’s (420-500 C.E.) *Abhidharma-kosa*. Actually Vaibhasika is the later form of Sarvastivada.

These Sarvastivadin philosophers transformed Buddha’s ‘no soul’ into a consistent philosophy of ‘*pudgal nairatmaya*’ (non-substantiality of everything). Non-substantiality is not only in the case of human beings, but is applied to the whole material world. ‘Things are without essence’. If we say they are unsubstantial, then what are they? This group answers that they are collection of *dharma*s. In the case of material things, there are four material atoms, and in the case of living beings five *skandas*. We see exposition of this in both *Milinda pancho*, a second century C.E. text and *Abhidharmakosa* of Vasabandhu of 4th century C.E.

Another view that is closely connected with this insubstantiality is the idea of momentariness of all entities. Buddha’s ‘*anityam*’ (impermanence) had a limited application, in the case of morality, but they applied it consistently on everything. Unlike Samkhya, who thought of a permanent thing behind all change, exposed by the image of lump of clay that turns into pot still doesn’t lose its ‘clayness’, Vaibhasika clung to Buddhist insubstantiality and impermanence and exposed it with the example of wood being consumed. When wood is consumed by fire, only ashes remain and it is completely different from wood. Still they accepted three moments in this change; past, present and future; that which causes that which is destroyed and that which endures.

They explained the whole of universe with 75 *dharma*s and enumerated them in detail. We see it in *Abhidhammakosa*. First they divide *dharma*s into conditioned (*samskrta*) and unconditioned (*asamskrta*). 72 are conditioned and 3 are unconditioned. The conditioned are again divided into four classes:

I Form (11 *dharma*s) consisting of the five sense organs, five sense-objects, and form with no manifestations. These are also known as *rupa* and they form all that we call matter.

II Consciousness (1 *Dharma*) sometimes divided into five *dharma*s corresponding to the sense-organs. This is also known as *citta*.

III The concomitant mental functions (46 *dharma*s). They are also known as *caitasika*. They are subdivided into four groups.

i) The general mental elements are 10 universals (*sarva-Dharma-sadharana*). They are contact, attention, sensation, ideation, will, desire to do, conviction, recollection, concentration and insight.

ii) The general good functions are 10 moral universals (*kusala-mahabhumika*). They are faith, shame, the root of good, absence of greed, absence of hatred, absence of delusion, diligence, harmoniousness, attentiveness, equanimity and non-violence.

iii) The general foul functions are 6 defilements of mind that hinders one from following the path. They are passion, hate, pride, ignorance, erroneous view and doubt.

iv) Minor foul functions are altogether 20 mental functions that are minor defilements for the practice of eight fold path. They are anger, resentment, hypocrisy, spitefulness, envy, miserliness, deceitfulness, dissimulation, wantonness, malevolence, unrestraint, shamelessness, rigidity, agitation, lack of faith, laziness, negligence, forgetfulness, distractedness and thoughtlessness.

IV 14 *dharmas* that have no connection with form or mind (*citta-viprayukta-sanskara*) They are like acquisition, non-acquisition, communionship, effects of meditation, power of longevity (vital power), the waves of becoming, words and sentences related to speech.

The remaining three are unconditioned elements. They are Space (*akasa*), extinction (*nirvana*) caused by absence of productive cause (*apratisamkhyanirodha*) and extinction caused by knowledge (*pratisamkhyanirodha*). That which provides ground to matter is space. In itself it has no defilement and it is not caused. Again *apratisamkhyanirodha* is that *Dharma*, where no type of defilement is present. In *pratisamkhyanirodha Dharma* there is right view that occasions *nirvana*. If we look into the above list, we see the importance they give to mental activities. In fact they make a psychological analysis of everything. Their naive realism forced them to dogmatically emphasise everything that are exposed above as existing independent of the subject. The next school that we are going to speak of comes up in the context of logical and rational questioning of above enumeration of *dharmas* as independently existing.

3.4. SAUTRANTIKA SCHOOL

The word *sautrantika* comes from '*sutranta*' (scripture). They base themselves on '*Sukta pitaka*' of the canon. This group came up against the naive realism and pluralism of Vaibhasikas. Main teachers of this school are Kumaralat, a contemporary of Nagarjuna. Srilabha or Srilata was his disciple. Then comes Yasomitra and Harivarman who wrote the book *Tattvasiddhi* (Proof of the Truth). Another name notable is Vasubandhu (some say this is the same Vasubandhu who wrote *Abhidharmakosa* and some others say it is another one by the same name). It is a logico-epistemological school. (there is a later logico-epistemological school having characteristics of both Sautrantika and Yogacara. The main personalities are Dignaga and Dharmakirti (5th & 7th century C.E.). The reason for this is universities like Nalanda and Takshashila where issues are followed, not the sectarianism of schools, one becomes acharya, when he is proficient in teachings of all schools, and it was very easy for them to form their own philosophy by taking the logically fitting teachings). They said *Abhidharma* scholasticism is a deviation from the

actual intent of the Master. They rejected independent existence of some of the *dharmas* and reduced their number into 45 (43 Conditioned and 2 unconditioned). If we ask the question what is it that forced them to reduce the number of *dharmas*, we must say it has both metaphysical and epistemological reasons.

The realism of Vaibhasika forced them to treat Nirvana too as some ‘thing’. Sautrantika said this is against the mind of the master. So they clung to ‘Sukta Pitaka’ and based their interpretation on that and reason (for Buddha said ‘*atta dipo bhava*’). Logically, they said, the Vaibhasika clinging to three moments is not possible, for if anything changing, it must happen at all moments and one thing will last only a moment, where birth and death happens; so no past, present and future, only present is existing. Past and future are imagination (*sankalpas*).

Epistemology (Pramanas) and Acceptance of external objects and mind

Sautrantika developed logic and defended itself against both Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic criticisms. This logic was later developed and crystallized by the Yogacara (*vijnanavada*) teachers. Dignaga and Dharmakirti are the two towering personalities. First they were Sautrantika (both mind and external objects exist), later they were lenient to Yogacara (mind only exists). Dignaga in his famous work *Pramana Samuchaya* speak of two valid means of knowledge. They are Perception (*pratyaksa*) and Inference (*anumana*). Perception deals with *svalaksanas*, (that which characterises itself, a unique particular singular and momentary). This is ultimately real (*paramarta sat*) and inexpressible. To experience them means to experience reality as it is. Inference, the other *pramana* consists of conceptualizations, verbalizations, reflections and other products of mental constructions. (*kalpana, vikalpa*) Dignaga calls it *Samanyalaksana* (a general characteristic applicable to many objects or distributed over many instances). They are enduring and not subject to change, thus they are true only in relational level (*asamvrti sat*).

Epistemologically Sautrantika goes a step further from Vaibhasika to answer the question, what we really know. They say it is not objects that come into our consciousness (naive realism) but an after-image of an object. Thus our knowledge is not through perception, but through inference. Therefore there will be always some mental construction. Thus we call them representative realists or critical realists.

Theory of Momentariness

Vaibhasika developed Buddha’s notion of ‘*anitya*’ into universal law of impermanence of everything, but they accepted three moments as “a thing arises, remains constant and ceases to exist”. But being logically minded, Sautrantika raised the question, if changing, how can there be three moments, there can be only one moment. As it arises it must vanish. Thus things never remain constant. What is there is an uninterrupted flow of causally connected momentary entities of the same kind. The cessation takes place without cause. They call it *Santana*. If it were not so,

then the *dharma*s would remain constant and changeless. They define moment (*ksana*) as the smallest indivisible unit of time. This is $1/75^{\text{th}}$ of a second. All aggregates of being are repeatedly produced and destroyed in every moment. Since these elements succeed upon each other so fast, as in cinematography were distinct pictures in a rapid projection, evokes illusion of continuous action on the screen, we see them as continuous. Again earlier and later ones within one *Santana* are almost alike we normally fail to discern the arising and destruction and perceive them like flowing river or flame of a lamp. According to this doctrine, all objects of the world - our bodies, ideas, emotions and all the external objects around us – are destroyed every moment and are replaced by similar things generated at the succeeding moment, which again are replaced by other similar things at the next moment and so on.

One important logical consequence of this theory is the rejection of past and future. Everything is happening at the present time, past has ceased and future hasn't arisen. Past is memory and future is imagination. There is only just origination and cessation. This is the real truth (*paramarta sat*). The other two are relative truths (*samvrti sat*). One question that naturally arises is, how we explain 'the knowing process' then? They explain it with the theory of *svasamvedana* (self-apperception). This theory says consciousness is able to be conscious of itself and of other phenomena, just like a lamp is able to illumine clearly both itself as well as other external objects.

Sautrantika classification of *Dharma*

They have a different classification of *Dharma* from that of Vaibhasika. While Vaibhasika accepts 75 *dharma*s, Sautrantika reduces that number into 45. This includes 43 *samskṛta* and 2 *asamskṛta*. 43 *samskṛta*s they divide into five *skandas*.

- i) Form (*rūpa*): consists of matter in its 4 primary forms (*upādāna*) and 4 derived (*upādāya*) forms. 4 primary forms are earth, water, fire and air. 4 derived forms are solidity, humidity, heat and motion.
- ii) Feeling (*vedāna*): consists of 3 types of emotions- pleasure, pain and neutral.
- iii) Perception (*samjñā*): consists of grasping by 6 senses – five senses and mind. It consists of colours etc by eyes, agreeable, disagreeable, friend, enemy, male female etc.
- iv) Consciousness (*viññāna*): consists of 6 sense consciousness. It is "row grasping of visual, auditory, olfactory, taste, touch and mental consciousness.
- v) Mental formation (*samskāra*): consists of volitional factors that create and determine the five *skandas* of future existence. Sautrantika speaks of 10 virtuous and 10 non-virtuous *dharma*s.
- vi) Unconditioned (*asamskṛta*): consists of 2 uncaused *dharma*s - Nirvana and space.

Sautrantika is a transition thought on the way to full-fledged Mahayana. Later schools of Madhyamaka and Yogacara develop in their own way the '*Sautrantika* germs'. Madhyamaka continues the logical pruning of *dharma*s that was started by Sautrantika and reduces them all

into samvrti satya. Yogacara cling to *Svasamvedana* and give reason for it with their *Vijnaptimatratā*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. What are the noble truths of Buddha? Explain.

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2. Elaborate the ways of cessation of suffering.

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3.5. MAIN SCHOOLS IN MAHAYANA TRADITION

Mahayana literally means 'great vehicle'. This is a term coined by those members of the Buddhism who believed in things that the early school considered as not the real teaching of Buddha. But this group got so many adherents and they formed their own scriptures as taught by Buddha. This group called the other group as old style conservative Buddhists, who were not able to grasp the higher teaching, so Buddha did not reveal it to them. Now time is ripe for that teaching of Buddha to make public.

3.6. MADHYAMAKA SCHOOL

Madhyamaka is the name of the school and one who follows the teaching of that school is known as a Madhyamika. This is also known as *Sunyavada* and it is systematised by Nagarjuna (2nd century A.D), whom they consider as the founder of this school. His famous work is *MulaMadhyamikaKarika*. His disciple was Aryadeva who wrote *Catush Shataka*. The name of this school comes from Buddha's famous 'middle position' (*madhyama pratipad*). Hinayana schools mostly took its ethical implication i.e., not going to the extremes of indulgence or practice. But this school takes it in a metaphysical sense. Middle position is the rejection of the extreme metaphysical positions of 'is' and 'is not' (*Sasvatavada* and *Uchedavada*). Thus it becomes the no-position (transcendental and inexpressible) and they used the word '*Sunyata*' to explain it. In the later development of this school we see division into two: Svatantrika

Madhyamaka and Prasangika Madhyamaka. A famous name connected with *Svatantrika* is Bhavaviveka (6th Century A.D) who proposes independent argument for substantiating their position. Prasangika School claims that Madhyamaka is a 'no-position' school, thus it does not have any independent argument. What it has is its dialectics. It uses '*prasanga*' (*reductio ad absurdum*), in the argument of the opponent only to show the inconsistency within them. Main champions of this trend are Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti (6th and 7th Century C.E.).

Use of '*sunya*' and '*sunyata*':

Sunyata is the most perplexing word in Buddhist philosophy. Non-Buddhists have interpreted it only as nihilism. In Madhyamaka philosophy this term becomes so important that the whole system is known as *Sunyavada*. It has both ontological and soteriological implications.

a) **Ontological implication**

Here '*sunya*' is used to characterize the whole reality. Reality they divide into two - *samvrti sat* (relative reality) and *paramarta sat* (absolute reality). It was a common understanding that everything has a '*svabhava*' (own being, essential property - in orthodox systems, belief in permanent soul). Madhyamaka rejects this as having any independent existence. Thus they speak of both *pudgal nairatmya* and *Dharma nairatmya*. Earlier *Abhidharma* rejected whole (*pudgal*) as construction, a name given without real existence. Now the same reason is applied by Mahayanists to show *dharma*s too are construction (main argument is denial of atomism). They understand *pratityasamutpada* as conditioned existence. They say '*svabhava*' must be that which is not produced by causes, which was not dependent upon anything else. There is nothing like that in our experience, for everything is conditionally originated. Since they are interdependent they are '*sunya*' of '*svabhava*', thus for them all *dharma*s are '*svabhava sunya*'. Secondly they call the absolute reality too '*sunya*' but here *Prapancha-sunya* or devoid of *prapancha* or verbalization, thought-construction and plurality. (The meaning is - Reality that which is not conditionally originated is beyond thought-construction, beyond any expression in words.)

b) **Soteriological implication** (that which is concerned with salvation)

This comes from the practical aim of attaining '*prajna paramita*'. Here we understand *sunyata* as means for attaining an end. (the state of Bodhisattva, the realization of *tathata*, tathagata or *tathagata-garbha*, *Dharma-kaya*, bodhicitta, realization of *sunyata*, *Nirvana* - all these refer to one or other aspect of *prajna paramita* in Madhyamaka which is also the Absolute). This comes through meditation on '*sunyata*'. *Sunyata* tells us that all empirical things are devoid of substantial reality, so they are worthless and because of our *avidya* we cling to insubstantial as substantial and crave for it. Here happens the germination of all passions and desires. Once *sunyata* of *dharma*s are realized, this mad rush after worldly things will go and detachment will come. Meditation on *sunyata* will lead to '*prajna*' (transcendental wisdom) which brings emancipation of the practitioner from spiritual darkness. This is the attainment of status of bodhisattva which consists in bodhicitta with its twofold aspects of *Sunyata* or *pranja* and *Karuna*. *Karuna* here refers to compassion or universal love.

i) ***Samvrti satya* (*vyvaharika*) and *Paramartha satya*** (phenomena and absolute; *samsara* and *nirvana*; appearance and reality). Like every rational, idealistic systems Madhyamaka too accepts two levels of reality. The empirically cognisable, that which is

conditioned, that which can be known through categories of thought, that which is causally connected they call as *samvrti satya* or phenomena or *samsara*. That which is beyond the categories of thought, that which is unconditioned, that which is inexpressible, they call *paramarta satya* or absolute or *nirvana* (*paramarto aryanam thusnibhava* = to the saints, the Absolute is just silence i.e. it is inexpressible says Chandrakirti). Now it is the question of their relationship. Here Madhyamaka brings out its ingenuity. They say actually there are no two. But only one and when you look at it through relativity (thought-forms, categories of reason), then it became empirical reality which is *nissvabhavata*, a covering over reality. But the same when you look through the eye of *sunyata* i.e. by removing the veil of primal ignorance that makes it relative to *samvrti*, then it is *paramarta* or absolute reality. Thus *samvrti* is like means (*upaya*) for reaching Reality that is the goal (*upeya*). Thus there is no *paramarta* without *samvrti* and no *samvrti* without *paramarta*.

ii) Madhyamaka Dialectic

In fact this is the original contribution of Nagarjuna to Buddhism and Indian Philosophy in general. Buddha was silent about many questions. Now Nagarjuna asks the question, why he kept silence at the so called '*avyakrtas*.' Not because he did not know the answer, but because he knew well that such speculations will lead only to dogmatism. All metaphysical positions are one-sided. For reality is transcendent to thought constructions. To prove this he invents the dialectic with four alternatives (*catuskoti* or *tetralemma*). They are i) a positive thesis, ii) a negative counter-thesis; iii) they are conjunctively affirmed to form the third alternative and iv) disjunctively denied to form the fourth. He reduced all metaphysical systems (*drstis*) into one of these categories and applied rigorous logic to it and showed the inner inconsistencies within the system. Yes-or-No answer to fundamental questions could not do justice to the truth and if we do so, it becomes dogmatism is the basic line of thought of Nagarjuna.

Madhyamaka is not a '*drsti*' (metaphysical system) but a critique of all philosophies – a meta-philosophy, which helps one be aware of what he is doing, while philosophizing - checking of pre-suppositions and assumptions unnoticed. In one sense Madhyamaka may seem the most intolerant of systems, as it negates all possible views without exception. In another sense it can accommodate and give significance to all systems and shades of views. For, he realizes *sunyata* and it gives him inner harmony and peace.

3.7. YOGACARA (VIJNANAVADA) SCHOOL

Yogacara is the other Mahayana school that we study in this unit. Yogacara is also known as *Vijnanavada*. It is the only idealistic school in Buddhism and Indian philosophy in the strict sense. It is not only idealism, but also absolutism. As a metaphysical system it comes up against the extreme nihilism of Madhyamika. If you say everything is *sunya* (illusory) having no '*svabhava*', then that is against common-sense. So they said something that projects illusion is real. What is it that projects illusion? It is '*alaya-vijnana*' (the ground, the power that creates material world and projects outside) says Yogacara. Madhyamaka claimed, it has no metaphysical position, it is only dialectics, but we cannot go far without metaphysics (some ground). Yogacara says Pure Consciousness (*Vijnaptimatratā*) provides the ground and this alone is real, and

everything else is its self-bifurcation. Thus Yogacara is an absolutistic system. Epistemologically Yogacara idealism is the logical culmination of Buddhist 'momentariness'. Sautrantika analysis of knowledge exposed the contradiction inherent in perception, when we explain it in the context of momentariness. The only way out is falling back to subjective and idealism of Yogacara solves it. According to Yogacara its idealism is the 'middle way' (*madhyama pratipad*). The two extremes are realism and nihilism. The object is real and exists like the subject is one extreme and it is represented in realistic Sarvastivada. The subject is unreal and non-existent like object is the other extreme represented by Madhyamaka. The middle position between the two is that the object is unreal and is a fiction of the subjective; the subject is the real and the sole reality. The appearances are unreal; but that which appears is real.

Yogacara philosophy has two phases. The first phase is strictly idealistic. This is mainly 4th and 5th century A.D. Important persons and works related with this phase are Maitreya, his famous work is *Abhisamayalankara*. His disciple Asanga, wrote *Madhyanta Vibhaga Sutra* and *Mahayana Sutralankara*. Asanga's younger brother Vasabandhu (who was first Sarvastivadin and later converted into Mahayana by his elder brother) is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Buddhism. He wrote the most complete and definitive text on the Yogacara idealism known as *Vijnaptimatratasiddhi*. Stiramati was his disciple who wrote commentaries on his works. With him the first phase of Yogacara idealism is over.

Most important persons in the second phase are Dignaga and Dharmakirti. They were not interested in the constructive details of the idealistic metaphysics. The interest shifted from metaphysics to logic and epistemology. Idealism was maintained from the standpoint of ultimate reality; but, in order to supply a stable basis for the logic of empirical reality, the Sautrantika conception of a thing-in-itself (*svalaksana*) was revived. This resulted in the formation of the hybrid school of the Sautrantika-Yogacara, for which the name Vijnanavada can be reserved. Famous work of Dignaga is *Alambhanapariksa* and Dharmakirti's work is *Pramanavarttika*.

i) Idealism of Yogacara

Realism and Idealism are the two opposing epistemological positions. Realist will say the content known and the cognition (consciousness of the object) are two independent realities. The duty of consciousness is only to reveal the object not to create it. If it creates, then each time when we perceive, object will be altered but this is not the case. But for Yogacara, consciousness is the only reality. The so-called empirical world is only a system of ideas. The objective content is only apparent, and is really identical with its cognition. These content and cognition are invariably perceived together (*sahopalambhaniyama*) and are therefore identical. If the content were different from cognition it should exist separately and must be perceived apart from the latter but this is not the case. Yogacara concludes that knowledge is not a mere discovery of something that is already there as realist says, but consciousness creates and projects its own content when it knows.

Yogacara proves its conclusion both by disproving the claim of realism and by giving independent arguments. If, as the realist says, consciousness only reveals the object then it must be able to reveal at all times and each time it must be similar. But actually, how and under what

circumstances we look at it, the colour, shape, size etc changes. Then how we decide whether they exist in the object or in the consciousness? Positively they give the example of dreams where consciousness creates and projects as objects. The theory that all our experiential world is like a dream, without real content, and are creation and projection of consciousness, is rejection of all objectivity. It goes against all our subject-object co-operation world experience. So they must show that idealism does not do any violence to our everyday world of experience. They do it with their theory of evolution of consciousness

ii) Theory of evolution of Consciousness

Here we expose Yogacara metaphysics proper. For according to them *Vijnana* only exists (*vinjaptimatrata*). But they have to explain the whole panorama of empirical existence. They explain it with diversification of *vijnana*, which is by nature creative. They speak of different stages of this process. They are mainly three. This is caused by illusory idea of objectivity and once it is eradicated, they revert to the pristine purity of *Vijnaptimatrata*. The main stages of evolution are: a) storehouse consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*) – the place or receptor in which are contained the seeds or impressions (*vasanas*) of all karmas, good, bad or indifferent. All *dharma*s come out of it as effects or evolutes. So it is known as *sarva-bijaka*. *Alaya* serves two functions. 1) Receptor of the impressions of past *vijnanas* 2) gives rise to further *vijnanas* by maturing those impressions. This always goes on in *alaya-vijnana*, till true knowledge dawns. The second stage in evolution of consciousness is known as *Klista-manas* (psyche governed by *klesas*). It is in fact the mediator between first (*alaya*) and third (*pravrti*). In the *alaya* 'bija' is indeterminate and in *pravrti* it is fully determinate, and the transition is done by the *Klista-manas*, in the form categorisation. In Yogacara '*manas*' is referred to as '*klista*' (defiled). For ignorance is without a beginning (*anadi*), but can be removed with practice (Yogacara). *Klistas* in *manas* are four. They are a) the false notion of an ego (*atmadrsti*), b) ignorance about ego (*atmamoha*), c) elation over it (*atmamana*), d) attachment to it (*atmaprema*). In fact what are to be removed are these intellections and all practices are for that. The third stage of evolution of consciousness is determinate awareness of the object. In the empirical discourse these only matter. They are of six forms. The five external senses and one internal sense of mind (this mind is different from *klista-manas*. *Klista-manas* is transcendental but this mind is internal sense organ through which knowledge of the empirical ideas or *dharma*s happens). Thus altogether there are eight *vijnanas*. Here comes up all other *dharma*s that other schools of Buddhism speak of. This school speaks of 100 *dharma*s. These are the last bifurcation of *vijnana*.

iii) Doctrine of Three truths

Yogacara is not only idealism, but also absolutism, for; the logical culmination of idealism is absolutism. Idealism says object does not exist; only subject exists. But the question is – can the subject exist without object? If there is no object what will you call subject? For both of them relatively exist. When object is negated, then the next logical step will be the receding of subject. Thus we reach the *sunyata* of Madhyamaka. But as far as the relative existence of subject and object are concerned, that is real for all practical purposes, as long as our ignorance (*avidya*) does its work of objectification and falsification. Unlike Madhyamaka who makes a twofold division of reality, Yogacara makes threefold. First is *Parikalpita*. That which has no authentic existence is *parikalpita*. It is totally imagined to exist (*kalpanamatra*). It is an object projected by the creative consciousness. Its existence is like barren woman's son. Second is *Paratantra*. This too is appearance, but it is caused by causes and conditions. That which causes it is eight types of

consciousness. When the idea of the other goes, this appearance too will go, till then it will remain. Thus it is a mid-way between *Parikalpita* and *Parinispanna*. When this will go what remains is the third division of reality, known as *Parinispanna*. Thus it is the inner essence of all reality (*dharmanam dharmata*). We can speak of it only in the negative, as what it is not. Positively we can speak of it only as the consciousness freed from subject-object duality.

iv) Yogacara ideal and the way to attain it

The very name 'Yogacara' refers to 'practice of yoga'. Yogacara contains a systematised path of Buddhist practice. Buddhist goal is *nirvana*. This *nirvana* is understood in different ways in different schools. In Yogacara nirvana is freedom of consciousness from duality of the subject and the object which is the false idea or *avidya*. Though duality is *avidya*, the effect it generates is real and we need strict discipline and practice for removing the false idea. They speak of six *paramita* discipline. They are *Dana*, *Sila*, *Ksanti*, *Virya*, *Dhyana* and *Prajna*. Though the first ones are ethical practices, the final one is purely intellectual. It consists in the understanding of the real nature (*Prajna*). This is realization of *Tathata* (the essence of everything), the reality as it is.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What are the noble truths of Buddha? Explain.

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2. Elaborate the ways of cessation of suffering.

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3.10 LET US SUM UP

The main Hinayana Mahayana distinctions:

In Metaphysics: Hinayanists are radical pluralists but Mahayanists are radical absolutists. (non-dualistic *advaya*)

In Epistemology: Hinayanists are rationalists and realists. Mahayanists are mystical, super-rationalists who use dialectical criticism.

In Ethics: Hinayanists are egoistic individualistic aim at Arhathood. Mahayanists are Universal Salvationists aiming at enlightenment for the sake of others (bodhisattva, tathagata)

In religion: Hinayana becomes an order of Monks emphasising human aspect of Buddha. Mahayanists are more devotional, Buddha become object of worship on one side and on the other side the absolute metaphysical reality.

These general trends that we noted here in this general division influence one way or other the peculiarities of each of the school we examined above.

3.11 KEY WORDS

Dharma is a basic general term in Indian philosophy. Even in Buddhism it is used in four senses.

1) *Dharma* in the sense of one ultimate Reality (as it is used in the word *Dharma-kaya*). 2) *Dharma* in the sense of scripture, doctrine, religion (as it is used in the word Buddhist *Dharma*). 3) *Dharma* in the sense of righteousness, virtue (as it is used in general sense). 4) *Dharma* in the sense of “elements of existence”. (in this sense it is generally used in plural)

Scholasticism is generally used in two senses: 1) philosophy in the service of religion (angilla philosophie), 2) excessive subtlety and artificiality in philosophical constructions. Scholasticism in Buddhism is to be taken in the second sense. Vaibhasikas were scholastic in this sense with 75 *dharma*s. The Sautrantikas were in favour of simplification thus they reduced the number of *dharma*s into 45.

Prajna Paramita refers to culmination of six spiritual qualities that help the practitioner for seeing the truth face to face (*vipasyana*). They are *dana* (charity), *sila* (withdrawing from all evil deeds), *ksanti* (forbearance), *virya* (enthusiasm), *dhyana* (concentration) and *prajna* (transcendental insight).

‘**Avyakrtas**’ (inexpressible) are the questions about which Buddha kept silence. They are traditionally enumerated as 14. They are

- i) Whether the world is a) eternal, b) or non-eternal, c) or both eternal and non-eternal, d) or neither eternal nor non-eternal.
- ii) Whether the world is a) finite, b) or infinite, c) or both, d) or neither
- iii) Whether the Tathagata a) exists after death, b) or does not, c) or both d) or neither
- iv) Whether the soul is identical with the body or different from it.

Idealism we understand here in an epistemological sense. Not in a metaphysical sense where we speak of reality as spiritual. According to A.K. Chatterjee, epistemologically this term connotes three things. a) Knowledge is creative, b) there is nothing given in knowledge, and c) the creative knowledge itself is real.

Soteriological means that which is concerned with salvation.

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UNIT 4 JAINISM

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4.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to introduce students to the *Jaina* philosophical system in general. This chapter gives a small historical background of the school of Jainism with its development and different sects. It discusses the general characteristic features of Jainism and also examines its epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. Key notions like *syadvada*, *saptabhanginaya* and *anekantavada* are also analyzed in detail.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The Jainas strongly believe in the teachings of the twenty four *Tirthankaras*. Rishabhadeva was the first *Tirthankara*. The last teacher or the *Tirthankara* was Vardhamana who was given the title Mahavira meaning ‘the great hero’. He is believed to have lived in the sixth century B.C. during the time of Buddha. Vardhamana was preceded by Parsvanatha who lived in the ninth century B.C. The remaining 22 teachers or the *Tirthankaras* are believed to have belonged to a much earlier period. The word *Jaina* came from the root word *Jina* which etymologically means a conqueror. It is the common name given to all the twenty four *Tirthankaras* since they all had conquered passions and thereby attained liberation.

The *Jainas* did not believe in God. They are liberated souls who were once upon a time in bondage but later through their own efforts became free, perfect, omniscient, omnipotent and blissful. In due course of time the followers of Jainism got divided into two well known sects namely *Svetambaras* and the *Digambaras*. Their basic distinction lies in the minor details of faith and practice. While the *Svetambaras* are more accommodative and down to earth the *Digambaras* are more strict and orthodox. The *Digambaras* hold that the followers of their sect should renounce all attachments, possessions and even clothes for that matter. On the other hand the *Svetambaras* insist that their followers should wear only white clothes.

The philosophical outlook of Jainism is based on a common sense type of realism and pluralism. For them the objects in this world are many in number and are also real. The world consists of

two kinds of substances namely *jiva* and *ajiva*. All living beings have a soul (*Jiva*). They give extreme importance to the concept of *Ahimsa*, *Syadvada* and *Anekantavada*.

4.2. EPISTEMOLOGY OF JAINISM

Consciousness is the inseparable essence of every soul. It is like the sun's light – capable of manifesting itself and also every other thing, unless it is obstructive. The reason is that omniscience is a natural property of the soul. In an unobstructed state, the soul is in a position to know things but when it is imprisoned in the body its nature of omniscience is obstructed. In other words it can know things only through the apparatus of the senses. The obstacles are created by the different *karmas* of the soul. These *karmas* obstruct the natural consciousness of the soul in different degrees and that determines the type of knowledge that the soul can get.

The Jainas admit twofold classification of knowledge – namely mediate and immediate knowledge. Under mediate knowledge they categorize inference and other such knowledge which are derived through the medium of some other knowledge. On the other hand immediate knowledge refers to perception. Perceptual knowledge is said to be immediate because we get knowledge of both external and internal objects through the senses and mind. In some cases the soul is also in a position to apprehend. In other words immediate knowledge is direct and mediate knowledge is indirect. Under immediate knowledge we have again two kinds namely ordinary immediate knowledge, extraordinary immediate knowledge; ordinary immediate knowledge, is that type of knowledge which the soul gets when bound by the *karma* obstacles. Under this type of knowledge we can classify *mati jnana* and *sruta jnana*. *Mati Jnana* includes any kind of knowledge obtained through the senses and mind. It even includes memory, recognition etc. On the other hand *sruta jnana* involves knowledge derived from an authoritative person or text. One may argue that listening to a person or reading a text is also a part of perceptual knowledge. Even *sruta jnana* can be brought under *mati jnana* but the Jainas reply that *sruta jnana* is different from *mati jnana* because it involves the text of an authoritative person, that is why it needs special mention.

Immediate knowledge is also classified as absolute or *paramartika* immediate knowledge or extraordinary immediate knowledge. This knowledge is possible after the soul is purged of the impurities namely the *karma* obstacles. In such a state the soul's consciousness becomes immediately related to objects without the medium of the senses. In the case of ordinary immediate knowledge the soul is caged in the body and as a result, it can be related to objects and thereby know them only through the senses. In that stage the soul's knowledge is not only obtained through the sense organs but is also guided by the *karma* obstacles. On the other hand, the soul is said to obtain extraordinary knowledge directly. We can explain this with an example. When a person is standing inside a room he can know the outside world only through the openings in that room such as windows, and doorways. Once the four walls that surround him are removed he can know much more about the world than what he knew earlier. In other words, man is able to see everything around him provided he is free. Similarly soul's consciousness is capable of knowing everything directly but when it is inside the body it is limited, it is not in a position to exercise its full power. When ones *karma* obstacles are removed he is in the path towards extraordinary knowledge which of course is immediate par excellence. The Jainas talk about this in stages because this immediate extraordinary knowledge is not to be got overnight. It needs the gradual destruction of the *karma* obstacles. The Jainas mention three such stages as

- (i) *Avadhi*

- (ii) *Manah Paryaya*
- (iii) *Kevala – Jnana*

After the partial destruction of karmas one acquires the power of knowing objects which are too far away and obscure for the normal sense organs. This stage of extraordinary knowledge is *avadhi*. The second stage is *manah paryaya* wherein one has direct access to others mind. This can happen only after that person overcomes hatred and jealousy. In other words, in the first stage, we are able to know some distant gross objects with a form. In the second stage we are able to know or probe deeper into subtle level. Finally when all karmas are destroyed completely, then absolute knowledge or omniscience arises. That stage is *kevala jnana*. Only the liberated souls possess this kind of extraordinary knowledge.

The Jainas accept three *pramanas* or sources of knowledge namely perception, inference, and testimony. Perceptual knowledge is direct which involves the sense organs and therefore acceptance of perception as an independent source of knowledge need not be elaborated. But definitely we must examine the refutation of Carvaka's position by the Jainas regarding inference and testimony. The Jainas ask whether perception is a valid source of knowledge. Definitely according to Carvaka, perception is a valid source of knowledge because it is uncontradicted and at the same time not misleading. Now the Jainas point out that the reasons for the validity of perception itself shows that the Carvaka resorts to inferential knowledge. Furthermore even perceptual knowledge can at times be contradicted and misleading as in the case of the perception of a mirage. So the Jainas point out that if perception can be contradicted and misleading but still held as a source of knowledge why not inference and testimony be regarded as independent sources of knowledge.

Therefore according to Jainism the only reasonable conclusion that we can draw is that any source of knowledge, be it perception, inference or testimony, should be regarded as valid in so far as it yields knowledge that does not prove misleading. Therefore the criterion of validity should be the harmony of knowledge with the practical consequences to which that knowledge leads.

4.3. THE JAINA THEORY OF JUDGMENT OR SYADVADA

It is the conception of reality as extremely indeterminate which is the basis of *syadvada*. According to this theory every judgment is only partial or relative. The term “*syat*” is derived from the Sanskrit root “*as*” which means “to be”. The present tense form of this verb ‘*as*’ is ‘*asti*’ which can be translated as “is”. The potential mood of this verb form is “*syat*” which means “may be”. The Jainas use this theory to signify that the universe can be looked at from many points of view and that each view yields a different conclusion. In other words they believe that there can be a variety of doctrines depending upon the points of view. This is known as *anekantavada*. This doctrine indicates an extreme caution and signifies an anxiety to avoid absolute affirmation and absolute negation. Here one must see the conditions under which this doctrine was passed in order to understand its significance. There were two important extreme views concerning reality. At one point of time namely the *Upanishadic* view and at another point the Buddhist view. The *Upanishadic* view of reality upholds the concept of “Being”. On the contrary the Buddhists deny such a “Being”. According to Jainism both these theories are only partially true. So the Jainas consider reality to be so complex that every one of these theories is true as far as it goes. But none is absolutely true. So the Jainas make out a series of partially true statements without committing to any of these exclusively. This series is explained in seven steps

or sevenfold formula called *saptabhanginaya*. “*Naya*” means partial knowledge about some object while “*bhangi*” means different and “*sapta*” seven.

Judgment based on any partial knowledge is also called *naya*. When we consider every judgment to be unconditionally true then it leads on to quarrel. In this way the various schools of philosophy have come to quarrel with each other since they believe that their judgment of reality is final; when they realize that their knowledge is partial the conflict is no longer there. In view of this fact the Jainas insist that every judgment should be qualified by some words like “somehow” or “may be” so that the limitation of every judgment as also the possibility of other judgments is recognized. Thus *syadvada* is the theory which holds that every judgment is only partially true. Thus we have the judgment “the elephant is like a pillar” is changed into “may be or somehow the elephant is like a pillar”. On the basis of this theory the Jainas classify seven kinds of judgments though logic recognizes only two namely affirmative and negative. The seven types of judgments are as follows:

- a) *syat asti* – ‘somehow S is P’. A jar is red
- b) *syat nasti* – ‘somehow S may not be P’. A jar may not be red.
- c) *syat avaktavyam* – ‘somehow S may be indescribable’. The redness of jar cannot be described adequately.
- d) *syat asti ca nasti ca* – ‘somehow S may be or may not be P’. This argument does not involve contradiction. Normally logic considers a judgment to be contradictory only when it holds that ‘S’ is both ‘P’ and ‘not P’, because the same ‘S’ is ‘P’ from one angle and ‘not P’ from another angle. That is why this judgment is accepted by the Jainas.
- e) *syat asti ca avaktavyam ca* – somehow ‘S’ is ‘P’ and is indescribable.
- f) *syat nasti ca avaktavyam ca* – somehow ‘S’ is ‘not P’ and is indescribable.
- g) *syat asti ca nasti ca avaktavyam ca* – somehow ‘S’ is ‘P’ ‘not P’ and indescribable. These seven steps form a part of what is known as *saptabhanginaya* or the seven fold judgments. According to this theory every judgment is only partial or relative.

4.4. THE JAINA METAPHYSICS OR THE THEORY OF SUBSTANCE

Every substance has got innumerable characters of which some are positive and others are negative. As in common conversation so also in philosophy a distinction is made between the characters and that which possesses these characters. We call that which possesses characters as substance or *dravya*. The world consists of different substances. Each of these substances have qualities which are essential along with qualities that are accidental. The essential quality is called *guna*. The accidental quality is called *pariyaya*. The essential qualities are those that remain in the substance as long as the substance exists. In other words they are inseparable from the substance. On the other hand the accidental qualities are those which come and go. In so far as the essential characters of the ultimate substance are abiding, the world is permanent. In so far as the accidental qualities undergo modifications, the substance also changes. According to Jainas both change and permanence are real. When we apply *syadvada* the seeming contradiction between change and permanence vanishes. The Jainas reject both *kshanikavada* (theory of momentariness of Buddhists) and reject *nityavada* (theory of permanence of the vedantins).

Substances can be classified as both extended and non-extended. Among substances time alone is devoid of extension. All other substances are considered to be extended. Extended substances are innumerable and are referred to by the general name *astikaya* because every substance exists like a body. *Kaya* means that which possesses extension. The word *astikaya* means anything that

occupies space or has some pervasiveness. Such objects which are extended are classified by the Jainas as animate (*jiva*) and inanimate (*ajiva*). We may call them as the living being or the non-living matter. The Jainas consider soul or *jiva* as an extended substance. This is not without reason. Normally we understand soul as being opposed to body; since body is extended we conclude that its opposite namely the soul is non-extended. But according to Jainism souls also expand and contract according to the dimensions of the body which they occupy. It is only in this sense that the Jainas regard souls to be extended. Even among such souls the Jainas differentiate between the emancipated and fettered souls. Once the souls are emancipated or liberated none of the impurities attach to them. That is the highest state of *jiva*. But the *jiva* has to transcend various levels before reaching this state. So the Jainas attribute such states to the souls in bondage. Fettered souls are either moving or immobile.

Among the non-moving fettered souls the Jainas consider those living in bodies made of earth, water, fire, and air or plants. All such non-moving substances (*sthavara*) have one-sensed, namely that of touch. On the contrary moving substances (*trasa*) are two-sensed namely worms, three-sensed like ants, four-sensed like bees and five sensed like man. This distinction among moving substances is based on the senses that are active. For instance in the case of worms the sense of touch and taste alone are at work. In the case of ants the senses of touch, taste and smell. That is why ants have been classified under three-sensed and similarly bees are four-sensed because they also have sight. The immobile living substances have the most imperfect kind of bodies when compared to the mobile living substances. The Jainas regard even the four elements as being animated by souls, that is the particles of earth etc have soul in the sense that there is consciousness present in them although this consciousness is not as differentiated as in the case of a higher being. We may call such substances as elementary. They just live and die. Their functions are not clearly demarcated, or well defined. These elementary lives are either gross or subtle. Gross objects are distinguished from subtle on the basis of their visibility and knowability. On the contrary the mobile living substances have bodies of different degrees of perfection.

Soul or *jiva* – Generally *jiva* is a conscious substance. It is also extendable in space because souls expand and contract according to the dimensions of the body. According to the Jainas the essence of soul is consciousness or in other words consciousness is present in the soul everywhere. The Jainas arrange the soul theoretically in a continuous series according to the degree of consciousness. At the highest end of the scale would be the perfect soul that has overcome all *karmas* and attained omniscience and at the lowest end would be the most imperfect soul such as the single sensed souls. In this state consciousness is in the dormant form due to the interference of *karma* obstacles.

The soul knows, performs, enjoys, suffers and illumines itself and other objects. Like a light it has no form of itself but it takes the form of the body. It is in this sense that the soul is said to occupy space in its pure states, the soul as infinite bliss and infinite power. Except a few souls all other souls are in bondage because of *karma* or matter which has been accumulated in the past. The Jainas view that consciousness or soul has extension and the soul primarily is a living being which has consciousness in every part of the living body. Consciousness is the essential quality of the soul.

Proofs for the existence of Soul :

1. The existence of the soul is directly perceived by experiences such as “I feel pleasure, pain” etc., when a quality is perceived we say that along with it a substance is also perceived.
2. We can also prove the existence of the soul from inference. If we take a body as an instrument there must be someone to control it and that which controls the body is the soul.
3. The body also performs many actions that are guided; this enables us to infer the existence of soul as the guiding factor.

4.5. INANIMATE SUBSTANCE (OR) AJIVA

Among the extended substances we have seen *jiva* and its various facts. Now let us take a look into another category of extendable substance namely the inanimate substance or *ajiva*. Even these substances occupy space and is referred to as *astikaya*. The Jainas classify this kind of substance into four namely, *Pudgalastikaya*, *Akasastikaya*, *Dharmastikaya*, *Adharmastikaya*

Pudgalastikaya

The word “*pudgala*” means matter and since it occupies space it is *astikaya*. Etymologically it means that which is liable to integration and disintegration. Material substances combine together to form larger wholes and can also break up into smaller and smaller parts. The smallest part of matter which cannot be further divided is called an atom (*Anu*). *Pudgala* is made up of such atoms. The Jainas call atoms and combination of atoms by this single term *pudgala*. All material substances are produced by the combination of atoms. Our bodies and objects of nature are such compounds of material atoms. So even they are called as *pudgala*. Even mind, speech and breath are products of matter. The atoms are eternal and possess qualities like touch, taste smell and colour. Therefore we find these qualities in the compounds of atoms. Here according to Jainas, sound is not an original quality. It is an accidental modification of matter.

Dharmastikaya and Adharmastikaya

The terms *dharma* and *adharma* should not mislead us into thinking about merits and demerits. Instead these two terms are used to denote two kinds of inanimate substances which are known and proved inferentially. They stand for mobility and immobility. The Jainas argue that the movement of a fish in the water, though initiated by the fish, would not be possible without the medium of water. Here water is a necessary condition. Similarly the movement of any soul or material thing needs a necessary condition without which movement would not be possible. Such a condition is *dharma*. Nevertheless, *dharma* cannot cause movement in a non-moving object. It only favours the movement of objects in motion. On the other hand *adharma* is the substance that helps in the immobility of objects or the restful state of objects, just as the shade of a tree helps the traveler to take rest. However *adharma* cannot arrest the movement of any moving object. These two are pervasive in nature. In other words these two are passive conditions for movement and the state of rest respectively. Water cannot compel a fish to move nor can the shade compel a person to take rest. Similarly *dharma* and *adharma* do not compel movement and immobility actively but help objects to move or not to move passively. The necessity for admitting these two categories seems probably to have been felt by the Jainas on account of their notion that the inner activity of *jiva* or the atoms, require for its exterior realization the help of

some other entity. Moreover since the *jivas* were regarded as having inherent activity they would be found to be moving even at the time of liberation which is undesirable.

Akastikaya or Space

The function of *akasa* is to afford room for the existence of all extended substances. It is based on this category that the Jainas classify substances as *astikaya*. Soul, matter, *dharma* and *adharma* exist in space. The existence of space is inferred and not perceived because substances which are extended can have extension only in space, and that space is called *akasa*. Here *akasa* is a necessary condition. Likewise, if we say that substances are those that pervade, then there must be something that is pervaded. That which pervades is called substance while that which is pervaded is space. Jainas distinguish two kinds of space namely *lokakasa* and *alokakasa*. *Lokakasa* stands for space containing the world and *alokakasa* stands for empty space that exists beyond *lokakasa*.

Time or Kala

It is the only non-extendable substance according to the Jainas. Time makes possible continuity modifications etc. Like space time is also inferred. It is inferred as the condition without which we cannot speak about continued existence of things or modification of things. For instance mango became ripe implies that mango was in an unripe state at one point of time which became ripe at a later time. But time according to Jainas is non-extendable(*anastikaya*) because time is an indivisible substance. It cannot be characterized by space. It is irreversible. The Jainas distinguish between real time (i.e) *paramartika kala* and empirical time *vyavaharika kala*. Continuity or duration is the measure of real time. But on the other hand, changes of all kinds characterize empirical time. According to the Jainas empirical time is conventional i.e. divided into hours, minutes and seconds. It is limited by a beginning and an end. Real time on the other hand, is eternal and formless.

Check your Progress-I

1. What is meant by *dravya*, *guna* and *paryaya*?

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2. Write short notes on *jiva*.

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4.6. JAINA ETHICS

This is the most important aspect of the Jaina philosophy. For them metaphysics or epistemology is useful only in so far as it helps man to right conduct. What is meant by right conduct? According to the Jainas right conduct enables man to liberate himself from bondage. Bondage in Indian philosophy means the liability of the individual to birth and all consequent sufferings. But the suffering individual is a conscious substance (*jiva*) who possesses infinite perception, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss. Despite these perceptions the soul suffers in birth because of *karma* obstacles. If the soul has to regain its inherent qualities then these obstacles

must be removed. This situation is like that of the sun's light which becomes brighter and brighter as soon as the clouds are cleared. In order to know how these obstacles can be cleared let us analyze what these obstacles are in reality. The Jainas assert that the obstacles are constituted by matter particles which infect the soul and overpower its natural qualities. In other words we can say that body which is made up of matter particles (*pudgala*) is responsible for limiting the soul. Each body is made up of a particular combination of matter particles which depend on the soul's passion. The *karma* or the sum of past life of the soul generates a craving which attracts particular *pudgala* to the soul. The soul becomes the efficient cause and *pudgala* becomes the material cause. It is our past *karmas* that determine the family in which we are born as well as the nature of our body such as its colour, shape, longevity, the number and nature of sense organs etc. For instance *gotra-karma* determines the family into which the soul is to be born and *ayush - karma* determines the length of life.

Liberation

Bondage, we have seen is the association of soul with matter and liberation therefore should be the complete dissociation of the two. This can be achieved by stopping the influx of new matter into the soul as well as by complete elimination of the old matter with which the soul has become already mingled. Passions of the soul lead to association. What is the cause of this passion? Passions spring from our ignorance about the real nature of our soul. It is knowledge that alone can remove ignorance. Therefore the Jainas stress the need for right knowledge of reality (*samyag – jnana*). Right knowledge is the detailed cognition of the real nature of ego and non-ego, which is free from doubt, error uncertainty etc. It can be obtained only by studying carefully the teachings of the omniscient *Tirthankaras* or teachers who have already obtained liberation and therefore are fit to lead others out of bondage. When do we accept a knowledge? Only when we have a preliminary belief in that. Then that preliminary faith should be supported by right knowledge again for having right faith based on general acquaintance (*samyag- darsana*) in support of right knowledge. Right faith does not imply that one must blindly follow the *Tirthankaras*. But one must have the right attitude of respect towards truth. Further by studying the teachings of the *Tirthankaras* one can strengthen his belief. But these two are rendered useless unless they are followed by rigorous practice. Right conduct is the third indispensable (*samyag-caritra*) condition of liberation. It is this that enables one to stop the influx of new *karmas* and also to eradicate old ones. It consists in the control of passions, senses, thought, speech etc. Right conduct is therefore described as refraining from what is harmful and doing what is good. The Jaina prescription for right conduct: One must follow the five great vows namely the *panca-maha-vrata* for the perfection of right conduct. They are *Ahimsa*, *Sathyam*, *Asteyam*, *Brahamacaryam* and *Aparigraha*.

Ahimsa

It denotes abstinence from all injuries to life – either *trasa* or *sthavara*. That is why a Jaina *muni* breathes through a piece of cloth in order not to inhale or destroy any life in the air. It must be followed in thought, word and deed. That is why they practice extreme caution in speaking, walking or even in answering calls of nature so as to avoid injury to any life whatsoever. *Sathyam*: It is abstinence from falsehood. It is speaking what is true, good and pleasant. Otherwise truthfulness is of no use. To maintain this vow one must conquer greed, fear and anger. *Asteyam*: It refers to abstinence from stealing. Human life requires some form of wealth for their survival. Depriving another man of his wealth is morally wrong. By stealing his belongings it deprives him of an essential condition of life. *Brahamacaryam*: This pertains to

abstinence from sensual and casual pleasures. One must refrain himself from *karma* of any form altogether either in speech, talk or action. *Aparigraha*: This means abstinence from all kinds of attachments. It lies in giving up attachment for the objects of five senses.

Right faith, knowledge and conduct are inseparably bound up with one another and the progress and degeneration of the one affects the other two. A person must harmoniously develop all these three together. Only when the soul overcomes passions and *karmas* (both old and new) it becomes completely free from bondage to all forms of matter and reaches its inherent potentiality. It is finally here that the soul attains the fourfold path of perfection (*Ananta catustaya*) as follows: *Ananta Jnana* (infinite knowledge), *Ananta darsana* (infinite faith), *Ananta virya* (infinite power), *Ananta sukha* (infinite bliss). These three (right knowledge, right faith and right conduct) are known as *Triratnas* – or the three gems of Jainism.

Check Your Progress-II

1. What is the cause of bondage according to Jainism?

2. Discuss the Jaina concept of liberation.

4.7. LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to give a detailed historical account of Jainism and an analysis into the various concepts of the Philosophy of the Jainism. We have discussed at first the Jaina epistemology. We have also analysed key concepts like *Syadvada*, *Anekantavada*, *Saptabhanginaya*, under the different kinds of judgments and finally have evaluated the concept and importance of *Ahimsa* along with the role of *Pancamahavrata*, in attaining liberation.

4.8. KEY WORDS

Tirthankaras :	One who has conquered all passions, <i>raga</i> and <i>dvesa</i> .
Consciousness :	The inseparable essence of every soul.
Syadvada:	The theory that every judgment is relative.
Suptabhanginaya:	Seven different forms of judgment relating to nature of reality.
Substance:	One which possesses of some essential characters (<i>gunas</i>) and also changing modes (<i>paryaya</i>)
Astikaya:	Substances having extension.
Anastikaya:	Substances devoid of any extension.
Ahimsa:	Non-violence or non-injury to any living beings.

Anekantavada:	The metaphysical theory of reality as many-faced.
Jiva :	Soul
Ajiva:	Matter
Triratna:	Right faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct (Three gems of Jainism).

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