
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO JAINISM

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Origin and Development of Jainism
 - 1.3 Mahavira
 - 1.4 Sacred Scriptures of Jainism
 - 1.5 The Concept of God
 - 1.6 The Concept of the Soul
 - 1.7 Jaina Ethics
 - 1.8 Liberation (*Moksa*)
 - 1.9 Jain Sects
 - 1.10 Let Us Sum Up
 - 1.11 Key Words
 - 1.12 Further Reading and References
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1.0 OBJECTIVES

Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. A great generation of *tirthankaras*, *acaryas*, saints, and scholars belonged to this tradition. In today's world, there is an assumption that religion loses its grip on humanity, but Jainism has lot to offer to negate this contention. The main objective of this paper is to achieve a complete understanding of this tradition. Jainism takes the path of self reliance, self discipline, and self purification to realize the inherent potentialities of the human self. It is also a focus on the history, and the sublime and dynamic religiosity of Jainism.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Jainism is one of the religions whose origin can be traced back to the twenty four teachers (*tirthankaras* - ones who establishes a path or ford), through whom their faith is believed to have been handed down. The term '*jaina*' is derived from the term '*jina*', and the term '*jina*' is the common name for the supreme souls who are totally free from all feelings of attachment, aversion, etc. The etymological meaning of the word '*jina*' is conqueror. It is the common name given to the twenty four teachers (*tirthankaras*), because they have conquered all passions (*raga* and *dvesa*) and have attained liberation. Jainism in its essence is the religion of heroic souls who are *jinās* or conquerors of their self. The devotees of *jina* are called '*jaina*', and the religion propounded by *jina* is called the '*Jaina Religion*.'

The first of these teachers was Rsabhadeva and the last was Vardhamana, also known as *Mahavira* (the Great Hero). He is said to have lived in the sixth century B.C. as a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. Mahavira is the successor of Parvanatha, who lived in the ninth century B.C. The contribution of Jainism to Indian culture, spirituality, and philosophy is really immense. It is a religion of praxis than of faith. Jainism is a *sramanic* religion. The word '*Sramana*' means an ascetic or a monk. Thus asceticism and mysticism, meditation and contemplation, silence and solitude, practice of virtues like non-violence, renunciation, celibacy, self-control, etc. are distinguishing characteristics of this tradition. Jainism was also instrumental for a radical change in the social life of Indians. Jainism has the universal message of non-violence.

1.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF JAINISM

The advent of Jainism in the sixth century BC was expected, as many people were beginning to oppose the hierarchical organization and formalized ritualism of the Vedic religion. The failure of the Vedic religion to meet popular needs, the meaningless forms of sacrifices which did not provide release from *samsara*, and the merciless killing of animals in the sacrificial context forced the *Jinas* to provide the people with a new orientation and new interpretation. Their teachings laid primary emphasis on personal training, and taught that salvation is attainable to anyone willing to learn it. They stressed on personal effort and practice, not theoretical speculation, and proof of their validity was found in personal experience, not textual authority or logical argument. Jains hold the view that the *Jaina* religion is eternal and has been revealed again and again in the succeeding periods of the world by innumerable *Tirthanakaras*. It is believed that all the *Tirthankaras* reached *moksha* at the time of their death, as a result of their personal effort; they are regarded as 'Gods' and are worshipped by the Jains. Jains believe that it is on the authority of the teachings of the omniscient liberated saints (*Jinas* or *Tirthankaras*) that we can have real knowledge about certain spiritual matters. The teachings and lives of the saints show the possibility and path to attain liberation. The twenty-third *tirthankara*, the immediate predecessor of Mahavira, was Parvanatha, and he preached the doctrine of love and ahimsa. He enjoined four vows, which are, (i) Not to destroy life (*ahimsa*) (ii) Not to lie (*satya*) (iii) Not to steal (*asteya*) and (iv) Not to own property (*aparigraha*). His great successor Mahavira added the fifth vow of chastity (*brahmacarya*).

1.3 MAHAVIRA

Mahavira was the twenty-fourth *tirthankara*. Jainism is closely associated with Vardhamana Mahavira, who lived from 540 to 468 B.C. and established the central doctrines of Jainism. He was born in Northern India, in the town of Vyshali, into a royal family. His father was Siddhartha Maharaja who ruled Kundapura, and his mother was Priyakarini. Vardhamana lived as a householder for thirty years. At the age of thirty he left his wife, child, and family and started a life of total renunciation and asceticism. Mahavira passed twelve years of his ascetic life with equanimity, performing hard and long penances, and enduring all afflictions and calamities with an undisturbed mind. At the end, the ascetic obtained omniscience; he became *jina*, the victorious and *Mahavira*, the great hero.

He realized his true self and attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities and penances. He understood the nature of physical bondage and ways of achieving total liberation from bondage, and thus, liberation from rebirth and bodily existence. The ideal state of freedom can be achieved only through a radical ascetical life, the essence of which is total renunciation of all bodily comforts and all material objects. He says, "It is owing to attachment that a person commits violence, utters lies, commits theft, indulges in sex, and develops a yearning for unlimited hoarding." (*Bhakta-parijna*). Modern Jains believe that his message is full of pragmatic optimism, self-reliance, self-discipline, and self-purification to develop the inherent and infinite potentialities of the human self. A glimpse into his life shows that he was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. He taught five great vows and initiated many people into this way of life, established the four fold order, (monks, nuns, male lay-votaries and female votaries.) and emerged a teacher of many monks, a renowned preacher, and a founder of a new religion. Lord Mahavira passed the last thirty years of his life as the omniscient

tirthankara. By the time of his death at the age of seventy- two, a large group of people embraced this new faith. Mahavira's close disciples led the movement after his death, and Jainism spread from the north-east of India to the north-west and even to the south, especially to the present day state of Karnataka.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) Who is a *tirthankara*? Why are they called so?

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2) What is the core teaching of the *tirthankaras*?

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3) What is the main contribution of Vardhamana Mahavira to Jainism?

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1.4 SACRED SCRIPTURES OF JAINISM

There are various opinions with regard to the classification of Jaina texts. Each of the main sects of Jainism recognizes its own body of sacred scriptures though many texts are common to all. Most of the ancient Jain texts are written in *Prakṛta* (an early form of Sanskrit). According to their own tradition, the canon (as we know it today) was agreed upon almost a thousand years after the death of Mahavira, in the late fifth or early sixth century of the Christian era, at a Council held at Vallabhi in Gujarat, presided over by the famous monk Devarddhi Ksamasramana, who was called for the specific purpose of collecting and putting the sacred texts into written form.

The general outline of the canon is as follows. It is divided into six sections and contains either forty-five or forty-six books.

- I. The twelve *Angas* or limbs.
- II. The twelve *Upangas*, or secondary limbs
- III. The ten *Painnas*, or 'Scattered pieces'
- IV. The six *Cheya-Suttas*

V. Individual texts (two)

VI. The four *Mula-Suttas*

The *Angas* treat the life of the monks; are mostly made up of sermons on various themes of importance to the Jains. *Ahimsa* is a central feature, and often stressed upon. There is an *Upanga* (sub-section) for each of the *Angas*. They are of varied content, mainly dogmatic and mythological. The term *Anga* means - what comes out (from the mouth of the Lord). It is generally accepted that whatever Lord Mahavira taught after gaining omniscience, was compiled by his *Ganadharas* in twelve parts, the Sanskrit word for part being *Anga*. These twelve compilations are therefore called the twelve *Angas* and are collectively known as *Dwadashangi*. The foremost of these *Angas* is the *Acharang Sutra*. Other well known *Angas* are *Sutrakritang*, *Samavayang*, *Sthanang*, and *Vyakhya Pragnapti* which is more popularly known as *Bhagavati Sutra*. Based on these *Angas*, the seers also compiled twelve auxiliary works that came to be known as *Upangas*. These twenty-four compilations should have been completed by the time of Jambuswami, who was the second successor of the religious order set up by Lord Mahavira, and was also the last omniscient of the current time cycle. The *Painnas*, or Scattered Pieces, deal with almost every topic of interest to the Jains, in both prose and verse. The fourth division of the canon corresponds roughly with the *Vinaya-pitaka* of the *Pali* Buddhist canon, and probably contains a great deal of quite ancient material. The most representative of this section is the *Kalpa-Sutra* which is supposed to have been written by the great Jain Bhadrabahu, the sixth head of the movement after Mahavira.

Of the *Mula-Sutras*, the first which is *Uttaradhyana-Sutra*, is best known in the West, and is one of the most valuable books in the whole canon for an understanding of Jainism. It is partly poetic and partly prose. It contains sermons, proverbs, advice to students, counsel to monks and nuns, parables, dialogues, and ballads. The two individual texts, at times mentioned before and at times after the *Mula-Sutras*, are sometimes listed among the Scattered Pieces. They are not primarily religious in content though they do deal in part with religious subjects. They may be characterized rather as encyclopedias “dealing with everything that should be known by a Jain monk.”

1.5 THE CONCEPT OF GOD

Jainism does not believe in a personal God or a creator God. According to the Jaina philosophical works, the definition of God is as follows: God is that soul who has completely removed all the *Karmas*. The defining characteristic of Godhood is identical with that of liberation itself. To attain liberation is to attain Godhood. The term ‘*Isvara*’ can very well apply to the soul that has become powerful by attaining its perfectly pure nature constituted of four characteristics, which are , infinite knowledge, infinite vision, infinite power, and infinite bliss. By constant practice of spiritual discipline, spiritually right knowledge, and right conduct, the means of liberation gradually develop and ultimately attain perfection. And when they attain perfection, all the coverings get removed and all the bondages are cut off. As a result, the soul’s natural qualities get fully manifested. To attain this state is to attain Godhood. Though the Jains reject God as the creator of the world, they think it is necessary to meditate on and worship the liberated, perfect souls. Prayers are offered to them for guidance and inspiration. According to the Jain religion, worship is not for seeking mercy and pardon. In spite of the absence of a creator-God, the religious spirit of the Jaina lacks neither in internal fervour nor in external

ceremonial expressions. As the lay community increased in Jainism, there evolved also rituals and religious practices.

1.6 THE CONCEPT OF SOUL

The Jaina holds that every living and non-living being is gifted with souls. All souls are not equally conscious, but every soul has the potential to attain infinite consciousness, power, and happiness. The soul is inherently perfect. These qualities are inherent in the very nature of the soul. Each *Jiva* (soul) is eternally associated with *Ajiva* (non-sentient or non-conscious being) because of *Karman*. They are obstructed by *karma*, just as the natural light of the sun is hindered by clouds. By removing the *karmas*, a soul can remove bondage and regain its natural perfections. But what then are these obstacles and how do they come to rob the soul of its native perfections? The obstacles, the Jaina asserts, are constituted by matter-particles which infect the soul and overpower its nature qualities. In other words, the limitations that we find in any individual's soul are due to the material body with which the soul has identified itself. The *Karma* or the sum of the past life of a soul - its past thought, speech, and activity – generates in it certain blind cravings and passions that seek satisfaction. Those cravings in a soul attract to it particular sorts of matter-particles and organize them into the body unconsciously desired. Jaina writers point out that bondage or the fall of the soul begins in thought. They therefore speak of two kinds of bondage: (1) internal or ideal bondage, that is to say, the soul's bondage to bad disposition (*bhava-bandha*), and (2) its effect, which is material bondage, that is to say, the soul's actual association with matter (*dravya-bandha*). But we should keep in mind that the soul, for the Jaina, is not devoid of extension, but co-extensive with the living body. The soul is the *jiva*, the living being; and in every part of the living body we find matter as well.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is the concept of God in Jainism?

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2) What is the concept of Soul in Jainism?

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1.7 JAINA ETHICS

The most important part of Jaina philosophy is its ethics. Metaphysics or epistemology is useful for the Jaina insofar as it guides him to right conduct. The goal of right conduct is salvation (*moksa*), which negatively means the removal of all bondage of the soul, and positively, the attainment of liberation.

Twelve Vows: In the activities dealing with spiritual discipline for the layman, there occurs the exposition of twelve vows. They are: the gross vow of refraining from violence, the gross vow of refraining from telling lies, the gross vow of refraining from taking anything which is not given, the vow of refraining from sexual activities, the gross vow of limiting one's possessions, the vow of limiting the area of acts that are not virtuous, the vow of limiting the quality of things that could be used once as also of things that could be used repeatedly, the vow to abstain from harmful activities that serve no useful purpose, the vow of remaining completely equanimous for a fixed period of time, the vow of reducing the limits of the area set forth in the sixth vow for a limited period of time, the vow of observing fast and living like a monk for certain days, and the vow of sharing things with deserving guests.

Pancha Vratas: Jaina writers are not unanimous about the necessity of all the above steps. Some of them select the first five, namely, the five great vows (*Pancha Vratas*) as sufficient for the perfection of conduct.

Ahimsa: Non-violence: Among the five, *ahimsa* is the most important vow. It is really a positive virtue based upon universal love and mercy towards all beings. *Ahimsa* is abstinence from all injury to life, life that exists not simply in the moving beings (*trasa*), but also in some non-moving ones (*sthavara*), such as plants and beings inhabiting the bodies of the earth. Abstinence from injury to life must be observed in thought, word, and deed – *Mana*, *Vachana*, and *Kaya* respectively. Hence the principle of *Ahimsa* – non-violence, naturally implies purity of thought, word, and deed. Thus, *ahimsa vritha* is binding to all members of the society, whether householder or ascetic. In the case of the householder, it is applicable with a limitation. In the case of ascetics, it is to be observed absolutely without any limitation.

Satya or Truth: This vow is abstinence from falsehood. The vow of *satya* or truthfulness consists in speaking what is true, as well as what is pleasant and good. Truthfulness is not only speaking what is true, but speaking what is true as well as good and pleasant. It is also pointed out that for the perfect maintenance of this vow, one must conquer greed, fear and anger.

Astheya or 'Non-stealing': This vow consists in not taking what is not given. This vow also includes abstinence from evil practices. The vow of *asteya* or 'non-stealing' is based on the idea of the sanctity of property.

Brahmacharaya: The vow of brahmacharaya consists in abstaining from all forms of self-indulgence. This refers to purity of personal conduct in the matter of sex. This vow when applied to the ascetic implies absolute celibacy, since a saint who has renounced all possible connections with the outside world is expected to practise strict celibacy. For the complete maintenance of this vow, one must desist from all forms of self-indulgence – external and internal, subtle and gross, mundane and extra-mundane, direct and indirect.

Aparigraha or Abstinence from all attachment: The vow of *aparigraha* consists in abstaining from all attachment to the senses – pleasant sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell. Attachment to the world's objects means bondage to the world, and the force of this causes rebirth. Liberation is impossible without the withdrawal of attachment. In the case of the ascetic, he must practise non-possession strictly in thought, word, and deed. But in the case of the householder, such a complete renunciation will be meaningless. Since the householder is also expected to keep in

mind the ultimate goal of life, which is the realization of the true self, he must also practise isolating himself, as far as possible, from attachment to external things.

Right knowledge, faith, and conduct jointly bring about liberation consisting in fourfold perfection. When a person, through the harmonious development of these three, succeeds in overcoming the forces of all passions and *karmas*, old and new, the soul is freed from its bondage to matter and attains liberation. Being free from the obstacles of matter, the soul realizes its inherent potentiality. It attains the fourfold perfection, namely, infinite knowledge, infinite faith, infinite power, and infinite bliss.

1.8 LIBERATION (MOKSA)

If the bondage of the soul is its association with matter, liberation must mean the complete dissociation of the soul from matter. Liberation is the expulsion of matter from the soul. On account of the removal of the causes of bondage, as also on account of the dissociation of the bound *karmas*, there takes place the total and absolute dissociation of all *karmas*. This is liberation. In liberation the soul is totally and absolutely free from all *karmas* and consequently established in its pure and pristine state. All the miseries a soul experiences in the world are due to its desire for sensual pleasures. Afflictions due to desire for sensual pleasures are the only afflictions that we find in the world. The cause of passions, the afflictions for sensual pleasures, ultimately spring from our ignorance. Those who are afflicted with desires arising from delusion or nescience find pleasure in activities inspired by it.

Our ignorance about the real nature of our souls and other things leads to anger, vanity, infatuation, and greed. Knowledge alone can remove ignorance. The Jainas, therefore, stress the necessity of right knowledge (*samyag-jnana*) or the knowledge of reality. Right knowledge can be obtained only by carefully studying the teachings of the omniscient *tirthankaras* or teachers who have already attained liberation and are therefore fit to lead others out of bondage. But before we feel inclined to study the teachings, we must have a general acquaintance with the essentials of their teachings and faith in those teachers. This sort of faith (called *samyag-darshana*) paves the way for right knowledge (*samyag-jnana*) and is therefore regarded as indispensable. But mere knowledge is of no use unless it is put to practice. Right conduct (*samyak-caritra*) is therefore regarded by the Jainas as the third indispensable condition of liberation. In right conduct, a man has to control his passions, his senses, his thought, speech, and action, in the light of right knowledge. Thus, in Jainism, liberation is attained only through the human body.

Right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct have therefore come to be known in Jain ethics as the three gems (*triranta*). The path to liberation lies through right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. Liberation is the joint effect of these three. Jain philosophy does not accept the principle that after having attained absolute freedom a soul comes again into this world in the form of incarnation.

Right Faith (*samyag-darshana*): Right faith is an attitude of respect (*sraddha*) towards truth. This faith may be innate and spontaneous in some, but for others it may be acquired by learning or culture. In short, right faith is the respect for truth. It should not be believed that the followers of Jainism have to blindly accept what is taught by the *tirthankaras*. The attitude of the Jainas is rationalistic rather than dogmatic. The initial faith is necessary and so is a reasonable attitude.

This is because it is the minimum will to believe, without which no study can rationally begin. Starting with partial faith and studying further, if the beginner finds that the Jaina teachings are reasonable, he finds his faith increasing.. Perfect faith can result only from perfect knowledge. It is a cyclical process.

Right Knowledge (*samyag-jnana*): Right knowledge consists in the detailed knowledge of all truths. It means the knowledge of the nature of the soul also as the means of spiritual welfare. In order to completely know the nature of the soul, it is necessary to know even the material *karmic* covering that affects it. All our miseries and distresses are due to our ignorance of the soul. In other words, right knowledge is the truth towards understanding about the distinction between *Jiva* and *Ajiva*.

Right Conduct (*samyak-caritra*): Right conduct is refraining from wrong and performing what is right. The fruit of knowledge of reality is the refrainment from the vicious acts, and it alone is right conduct. The true meaning of ‘right conduct’ is to make one’s life pure, keeping it aloof from vices and moral defilements, and to help others strive for the good according to one’s ability. Generally, right conduct is divided into two grades – right conduct for the mendicant and right conduct for the layman. Right conduct for the mendicant is called *sadhu dharma* and right conduct for the layman is called *grahastha dharma*. A man who performs acts beneficial to himself as well as to others is a *sadhu* (a saint, mendicant). He follows five major scale vows: refraining from violence, refraining from telling lies, refraining from taking anything that is not given, refraining from sexual activities and refraining from possessions and attachment for possessions. Those who are not qualified for the monastic discipline can make their lives fruitful by observing the spiritual discipline meant for laymen.

1.9 JAIN SECTS

Shortly after the death of Mahavira, the community split into several sects. There are two important Jain sects, the *Svetambaras* (wearers of white clothes) and the *Digambaras* (the naked). Their division was on the basis of nudity. The literal meaning of the word *digambara* is sky-clad and that of *svetambara* is white clad. These two sects are divided into a number of sects. The *Digambara*’s contend that perfection cannot be reached by anyone who wears clothing. The *Digambara* thinks that a man should abstain from food and possessions, including clothing, to become a saint. They also denied the eligibility of women for salvation. The *Digambaras* strictly maintain that there can be no salvation without nakedness. Since women cannot go without clothes, they are said to be incapable of salvation. The *Digambaras* believe that no original canonical text exists now. The *Svetambaras* still preserve a good number of original scriptures. They believe that having known that the true self consists in the freedom from passions, having realized the strength of the spiritual practice of non-attachment, and having understood the gradual order of undertaking the practice of the means of liberation, one can very well understand a monk’s acceptance of clothing. The only essential point is that when one attains the state of perfect non-attachment, one definitely attains liberation, irrespective of one’s being nude or not. Clothing is not an obstacle to salvation. It is attachment that acts as an obstacle to salvation. The *Svetambaras* also allow women to enter the monastic order under the assumption that they have a possibility of attaining Nirvana.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What are the three jewels in Jainism to attain liberation?

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2) Which are the five important vows in Jainism?

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3) Which are the main sects in Jainism?

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1.10 LET US SUM UP

In today's world, where religion is losing its grip on humanity, Jainism plays an important role. In spite of its small number of followers, it continues to inspire and influence many. In modern times, Jainism is undergoing a process of revival. This is partly due to the Western interest in this old religious tradition of India. Numerous scholarly works have been written on Jainism by Western authors as well as Indian Jains. Jainism holds an integral view of life. Either faith or only knowledge by itself cannot take us to the path of salvation. We should have a combination of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct to tread the path of salvation. These constitute the three jewels of Jainism. Jainism teaches us that it is possible to attain liberation, and thereby one's potentials, through personal efforts. The message of Jainism is full of pragmatic optimism. The core of the Jaina religion is its ethics. Jainism had exerted and still exerts immense influence on humanity. This is especially notable in their propagation and promotion of the ideal of non-violence. The religion of the Jaina is a religion of the strong and the brave. It is a religion of self-help.

1.11 KEY WORDS

Liberation (Moksa): The ultimate aim of any soul in Jainism is liberation from bondage and *karmic* matters. This can be achieved through one's own personal efforts. God has no role to play in liberation. The state of liberation is the state of Godhood; there one achieves the four infinite qualities.

Ahimsa (non-violence): It is the key message of Jainism. The principle of non-violence (non - injury to life) in Jainism embraces not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants,

vegetables, and creatures on the earth, in the air, and water. It is the holy law of compassion extended to body, mind, and the speech of living beings.

1.12 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 PHILOSOPHY OF JAINISM

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Jainism
- 2.3 Jaina Epistemology
- 2.4 Metaphysics
- 2.5 Concept of Substance
- 2.6 Classification of Substance
- 2.7 The Soul or *Jiva*
- 2.8 The Inanimate Substance or *Ajiva*
- 2.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.10 Key Words
- 2.11 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit enumerates the philosophy behind the religion of Jainism. Jain philosophy deals extensively with its own perspective on metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Like any other religion, Jainism also has its foundation in philosophical concepts.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Jainism is the name of one of the religious traditions that has its origin in the Indian subcontinent. According to its own traditions, the teachings of Jainism are eternal, and hence have no founder; however, the Jainism of this age can be traced back to Mahavira, a teacher of the sixth century BCE, a contemporary of the Buddha. Like those of the Buddha, Mahavira's doctrines were formulated as a reaction to and rejection of Brahmanism (a religion based on the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas and Upanishads) which was then taking shape. The Brahmins taught about the division of society into rigidly delineated castes, and a doctrine of reincarnation guided by *karma* or merit, brought about by the moral qualities of actions. Their schools of thought, since they respected the authority of the Vedas and Upanishads, were known as '*orthodox darsanas*' (*darsana* literally means view). Jainism and Buddhism, along with a school of materialists called *Carvaka*, were regarded as the '*unorthodox darsanas*', because they taught that the Vedas and Upanishads, and hence the Brahmin caste, had no authority. Like Buddhism, Jainism belongs to the *sramanic* tradition. Buddhism and Jainism, together with materialism (*Carvaka*), are traditionally designated as unorthodox or heterodox systems because of their refusal to accept Vedic authority.

The main teachings are that there is a sharp distinction between souls and matter; that souls are normally implicated through *karma*, in the painful round of reincarnation; and that through the practice of virtue, meditation, and great austerity the ultimate release of the soul is possible. Jainism is atheistic but does not deny the existence of gods as beings inside the cosmos. The word *Jainism* or *jaina* is derived from *jina*. The etymological meaning of the word *jina* is conqueror. It is the common name given to the twenty four teachers (*tirthankaras*), because they conquered all passions (*raga* and *dvesa*) and attained liberation. Jainism is often classified as a

philosophy, a way of life, rather than a religion. In Jainism, religion is not different from the practice of the realization of our own essential nature. It puts great emphasis on the practice of good life. According to Jainism, the guiding principle of one's life should be: *mitti me sarvabhuesu* (May I have a friendly relation with all beings.)

2.2 JAINISM

Jainism makes a distinction between *Jivas* and *Ajivas*. Therefore, it is dualism. It is also pluralism in that it recognizes an infinite number of animate and inanimate substances. It is also metaphysical realism. They also hold that every atom has a soul but it is not *Jiva*, because they do not have sense organs. The soul is both permanent and changing. Based on extension, Jainism divides substance into two classes, those that are extended in space and those that are not. Although Jainism recognizes souls, it rejects the notion of an ultimate, universal soul.

2.3 JAINA EPISTEMOLOGY

In the Indian system, knowledge has been accounted as a path of liberation. In Jainism, knowledge is considered as one of the means to attain liberation. Jainism has a totally different view of knowledge. Knowledge is not something to be grasped and possessed by the soul, but is a state of the soul itself. Knowledge is the essence of the soul. The liberated soul alone knows all objects in all aspects. Consciousness is the inseparable essence of every soul which is able to manifest itself and other objects. Jainism propagates the theory of 'The Doctrine of Relativity of Knowledge and Judgments.' Jainism divides all knowledge into two classes, the mediate (*paroksa*) and the immediate (*aparoksa*). Mediate knowledge is any knowledge which the soul comes to have by the mediation of sense organs; any knowledge whose acquisition involves something other than the soul itself. On the other hand, immediate knowledge is that which the soul obtains without the intervention of the sense organs. The Jaina classification of knowledge is based on the manner of acquiring knowledge, rather than on the objects of knowledge. The basic difference between these two main types of knowledge rest on the way it is perceived; the former is cognized with the help of senses, while the latter is cognized without any help of the senses.

Knowledge by direct perception, internal or external, which is regarded by many schools as immediate knowledge, is regarded as mediate by Jainism, since the sense and mind (things other than the soul itself) play a role in it. Sometimes Jainism speaks of such perceptual knowledge as relatively immediate and as distinct from absolutely immediate knowledge, which the soul has in virtue of that consciousness attained by freeing itself from all the karmic obstacles. We may call the absolutely immediate knowledge 'supra-sensual, non-conceptual, non-perceptual, intuitive knowledge (*kevala-jnana*)' (see *Puligandha*, 43). So, knowledge is not something external to be grasped and possessed by the soul, but is a state of the soul itself. Immediate knowledge is divided into *Avadhi*, *Manahparyaya*, and *Kevala*; and mediate knowledge into *Mati* and *Shruta*.

Avadhi: Clairvoyance: When a person is partially freed from the influences of the karmas, he acquires the power of knowing objects which have forms, but are too distant, or minute, or obscure to be observed by the senses or mind. Such immediate knowledge is limited, and is therefore called *avadhijnana*.

Manahparyaya: Telepathy: *Manahparyaya* is direct knowledge of the thoughts of others. When a person has overcome hatred, jealousy, etc. (which create obstacles that stand in the way of

knowing other minds), he can have direct access to the present and past thoughts of others. This knowledge is called *manah-paryaya* (entering a mind). In both *Avadhi* and *Manahparyaya*, the soul has direct knowledge unaided by the senses or the mind. Hence they are called immediate, though limited.

Kevala: Omniscience: When all *karmas* that obstruct knowledge are completely removed from the soul, there arises in it the absolute knowledge or omniscience. This is called *Kevalajnana*. It is unlimited and absolute knowledge. These three are extraordinary or extra-sensory perceptions which are immediate. But in addition to these, there are two kinds of ordinary knowledge possessed by an average person. They are called *mati* and *sruta*.

Mati: Sensuous Cognition: *Matijnana* is known as sensory comprehension. Here, sense organs and the mind are the essential aid for cognition. Ordinarily, *mati* means any kind of knowledge which we can obtain through the senses or through *manas*. Jains give an account of the process by which *mati* takes place, in the following way. At first there is only a sensation, and it is not yet known what it means. This primary state of consciousness is called *avagraha* (sensation). Then arises query. This questioning state of the mind is called *iha* (speculation). Then comes a definite judgment. This is called *avaya* (removal of doubt). Then what is ascertained is retained in the mind. This is called *dharana* (retention).

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) Write a short note on Jaina epistemology?

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2) What is *Avadhi*: Clairvoyance and *Manahparyaya*: Telepathy?

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3) What is *Kevala*: Omniscience and *Mati*: Sensuous Cognition?

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Srutajnana: *Sruta* is knowledge obtained from authority. This is usually interpreted as knowledge obtained from what is heard from others. This includes all kinds of knowledge derived from spoken or written authority. As the understanding of any authority is dependent on the perception of sounds or written letters, *sruta* is said to be preceded by *mati*. These two kinds

of ordinary knowledge (namely, *mati* and *sruta*), as well as the lowest kind of immediate extraordinary knowledge (namely, *avadhi*), are not absolutely free from chances of error. But the two higher kinds of immediate extra-sensory knowledge (*manahparyaya* and *kevala*) are never liable to any error.

For ordinary purposes, knowledge may be again divided into two kinds – *Pramana* or knowledge of a thing as it is, and *Naya* or knowledge of a thing in its relation. The Jains accept the general view that there are three *pramanas*, namely, perception, inference, and testimony. *Naya* means a standpoint of thought from which we make a statement about a thing. In all the systems of Indian philosophy, there is a clear cut distinction between ‘valid’ and ‘invalid’ knowledge. Valid knowledge always stands for that form of cognition which reveals reality in its true colour (*yatharthya*) and leads us to successful activity in the light of it. The result of such valid knowledge is technically called *prama*. Invalid knowledge falls short in its grasp of reality and fails to lead us to successful activity, and the result of invalid knowledge is technically called *aprama*. The sources or methodology of valid knowledge has therefore been called *pramana*.

Syadvada: The Jaina Theory of Judgment

Every judgment that we pass in daily life about an object is therefore, true only in reference to the standpoint occupied and the aspect of the object considered. In view of these facts, the Jain insists that every judgment (*naya*) should be qualified by some word like ‘somehow’ (*syat*, that is to say, in some respect), so that the limitation of this judgment and the possibility of other alternative judgments from other points of view may be always clearly borne in mind. The Jaina view that all our ordinary knowledge is necessarily partial, being always relative to some particular point of view and about particular aspects of objects, is known as *syadvada*, the doctrine of relativity of knowledge and judgements (*syad* : relative to some standpoint, *vada* : doctrine, theory, view). In terms of the seven-fold formula, they supported their view that every proposition is only conditional and no proposition can be either absolutely affirmed, or absolutely negated. In each case, Jainas qualify the assertion with (*syat*) ‘somehow’, or ‘in a certain sense’. The sevenfold classification of predications can be schematized as follows:

1. Somehow a thing exists.
2. Somehow a thing does not exist.
3. Somehow a thing both exists and does not exist.
4. Somehow a thing is indescribable.
5. Somehow a thing exists and is indescribable.
6. Somehow a thing does not exist and is indescribable.
7. Somehow a thing both exists and does not exist and is indescribable.

The truth conveyed by each of these predications is not the absolute truth but only a relative one, leaving room for the other alternative truths. In the first predication we choose to make a statement of affirmation about a pot (or some other thing) according to its ‘substance, place, time, and nature’. But since the pot does not exist in the form of another substance, place, time, or nature, the second negating statement can also be made. In the first two forms of predication we have come to the idea that the jar enjoys a somewhat existence and somewhat non-existence. By applying the method of succession to the first two categories we have the third predication. Possibly the jar exists and possibly the jar does not exist. In the fourth predication, inexpressibility (*avaktavyata*) is developed as a new category. The indescribability is due to the equal importance of existence and non-existence, simultaneously conceived in the one and the

same real. This can be enumerated with an example. A jar is black when raw and red when it is baked. But if we are asked what the real color of the jar is always or under all conditions, the only honest reply would be that the jar cannot be described under the condition of the question. The last three predications are the combination of indescribability with the first three. The doctrine of *syadvada* is often criticized as skeptical or agnostic. But it should be noted that a Jaina is not skeptic. It is not the uncertainty of a judgment, but its conditional or relative character that is emphasized in this particular doctrine.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is *Srutajnana*?

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2) Give a short note on *Syadvada* or the Jaina theory of judgment?

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3) What is the sevenfold classification of predications in *Syadvada*?

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2.4 METAPHYSICS

Jaina metaphysics is both realistic and pluralistic. It draws a sharp distinction between animate substances (*jivas* : souls) and inanimate substances (*ajivas* : non-souls). Jainism is basically dualistic. It is also pluralistic (*anekantavada*) in that it recognizes the existence of an infinite number of animate and inanimate substances, each possessing an infinite number of characteristics of its own. Since it teaches that the infinite number of substances exists independently of our perceptions or awareness of them, Jainism may also be described as epistemological and metaphysical realism (see, Puligandla, 37). The universe functions through the interaction of living souls and the five categories of non-living entities: ether (*akasa*), the means or condition of movement (*dharma*), the means or condition of rest (*adharma*), time (*kala*), and matter (*pudgala*). Souls are not only the property of animal and plant life, but also of entities such as stones, rocks, running water, and many other natural objects not looked upon as living by other sects.

2.5 CONCEPT OF SUBSTANCE

Jainas accept the common philosophical view of substance. But they point out that two types of characters are found in every substance, essential and accidental. The essential characters of substance remain as long as it remains the same. Without these the substance will cease to be

what it is. But the accidental characters of substance will come and go; they succeed one another. Desire, pain, etc. are some of the accidental qualities and these accidental characters are possessed by the soul-substance. It is through such characters that a substance undergoes change or modification. The Jainas call an essential unchanging character *guna*, and an accidental one or changing character *paryaya*. So a substance is defined as one that possesses qualities or *guna*, as well as modes or *paryaya*.

According to them the world is composed of different kinds of substances. Insofar as the essential characters of the ultimate substances are abiding, the world is permanent; and insofar as fiction, the world also changes. And they say that the change and permanence are both real. It should not be thought contradictory to say that a particular substance (or the universe as a whole) is both subject to change and free from it. Change is true of the substance in one respect (*syat*), whereas permanence is true in another respect (*syat*). The contradiction vanishes when we remember that each predication is relative and not absolute, as taught by *syadvada*.

Reality consists of three factors: permanence, origination, and decay. In substance there is unchanging essence and therefore it is permanent. There are again the origin and a decay of its changing modes (*paryaya*). Hence all the three elements that characterize are there in a substance. They say that casual efficiency cannot be a mark of reality as the Buddha thinks. And they also denied Buddha's theory of momentariness, and against the one-sided theory of momentariness the Jainas also adduce the following arguments. 1) If everything is momentary, the soul also would be so and then we could not explain memory, recognition, the immediate feeling of personal identity, etc. 2) Liberation would then be meaningless, because there would be no permanent soul to be liberated. 3) No moral life would be possible then, because a momentary person cannot attempt to attain any end. 4) Consequently there would be no moral law; the consequences of one's own action would be lost to him and the consequences of another person's action would befall him. 5) Neither perception nor inference reveals the existence of anything in the world in which there is only change and no element of continuity.

2.6 CLASSIFICATION OF SUBSTANCES

The classification of substances, according to a Jaina, is into the extended and the non-extended. There is only one substance, namely, time or *kala*, which is devoid of extension. All other substances possess extension. They are called by the general name *astikaya*, because every substance of this kind exists (*asti*) like a body (*kaya*), possessing extension. Substances possessing extension are subdivided into two kinds, namely, the living (*jiva*) and the non-living (*ajiva*). For the living, the Jainas accept the common philosophical view of substance. But they point out that two types of characteristics are found in every substance, essential and accidental. The essential characters of a substance remain as long as it remains the same. Without these the substance will cease to be what it is. But the accidental characters of substance will come and go; they succeed one another. Desire, pain, etc. are some of the accidental qualities and these accidental characters are possessed by the soul-substance. It is through such characters that a substance undergoes change or modification. The Jainas call an essential unchanging character, *guna*, and an accidental changing character, *paryaya*. So a substance is defined as one that possesses qualities or *guna*, as well as modes or *paryaya*.

Substances possessing extension are subdivided into two kinds, namely the living (*jiva*) and the non-living (*ajiva*). Substances (*jiva*) are identical with souls or spirits. The souls can again be

classified into those that are emancipated or perfect (*muktha*) and those that are in bondage (*baddha*). The souls in bondage are again two kinds; those that are capable of movement (*trasa*) and those that are immobile (*sthavara*). The immobile living substances have the most imperfect kinds of bodies. They live in the five kinds of bodies made of earth, water, fire, air, or plants, respectively. They have only the sense of touch and so possess tactile consciousness. The mobile living substances have bodies of different degrees of perfection and variously possess two, three, four, or five senses. Non-living substances possessing extension are *dharma*, *adharma*, *akasa*, and *pudgala*.

2.7 THE SOUL OR JIVA

Jiva or soul is a conscious substance. Consciousness is the essence of the soul. It is always present in the soul, though its nature and degree may vary. Souls may be theoretically arranged in a continuous series, according to the degrees of consciousness. At the highest end of the scale would be perfect souls that have overcome all *karmas* and attained omniscience. At the lowest end would stand the most imperfect souls which inhabit bodies of earth, water, fire, air, or vegetable. In them, life and consciousness appear to be absent. But really, even here, consciousness of a tactile kind is present; it is just that the consciousness is in a dormant form owing to the overpowering influence of karma-obstacles. These souls have two to five senses, like worms, ants, bees, and men.

It is the soul that knows things, performs activities, enjoys pleasures, suffers pains, and illumines itself and other objects. The soul is eternal, but it also undergoes a change of states. It is different from the body and its existence is directly proved by its consciousness of itself. Like a light it illuminates or renders conscious the entire body in which it lives. Though it has no form (*murti*) it acquires the size and form of the body wherein it lives. It is in this sense that a *jiva* is said to occupy space or possess extension. The *jiva* is not infinite but co-extensive with the body, as it can immediately know objects only within the body. Consciousness is not present everywhere but only in the body.

The soul is naturally bright, all-knowing, and blissful. There are an infinite number of souls in the universe; all fundamentally equal, but differing owing to the adherence of matter in a fine atomic form. This subtle matter, quite invisible to the human eye, is *karma* - the immaterial clouded over by karmic matter - and thus acquires first a spiritual and then a material body. The obfuscation of the soul is compared to the gradual clouding of a bright oily surface by dust. *Karma* adheres to the soul as result of activity. Any and every activity induces *karma* of some kind, but deeds of a cruel and a selfish nature induce more dangerous *karma* than others. The *karma* already acquired leads to the acquisition of further *karma*, and thus the cycle of transmigration continues indefinitely.

On these premises, transmigration can only be escaped by dispelling the karma already adhering to the soul and by ensuring that no more is acquired. This is a slow and difficult process and it is believed that many souls will never succeed in accomplishing it, but will continue to transmigrate for all eternity. The annihilation (*nirjara*) of *karma* comes about through penance, and the prevention (*samvara*) of the influx (*asrava*) and fixation (*bandha*) of *karma* in the soul is ensured by carefully disciplined conduct, as a result of which it does not enter in dangerous quantities and is dispersed immediately. When the soul has finally set itself free, it raises at once to the top of the universe, above the highest heaven where it remains in inactive omniscient bliss

through all eternity. This, for the Jaina, is *Nirvana*. The soul has two important characteristics. They are: 1) the soul does not fill space like matter and 2) the soul is present in space like light.

2.8 THE INANIMATE SUBSTANCES OR AJIVA

The physical world in which souls live is constituted by the material bodies that the souls occupy and the other material objects that form their environment. But in addition to these material substances, there are space, time, and the conditions of motion and rest, without which the world and its events cannot be fully explained. Following are the different substances:

Matter or Pudgala: Matter, in Jaina philosophy, is called *pudgala*, which means ‘that which is liable to integration and disintegration’. Material substances can combine together to form larger and larger wholes and can also break up into smaller and smaller parts. The smallest parts of matter which cannot be further divided, being part less, are called atoms (*anu*). Two or more such atoms may combine together to form compounds (*sanghata* or *skandha*). Our bodies and the objects of nature are such compounds of material atoms. Mind (*manas*), speech and breath are also the products of matter. A material substance (*pudgala*) possesses the four qualities - touch, taste, smell, and color. These qualities are possessed by atoms and also by their products, the compounds. The Jaina points out that sound is not an original quality like these four, and they say that sound along with light, heat, shadow, darkness, union, disunion, fineness, grossness, and shape is produced later by the accidental modifications of matter.

Space or Akasa: The function of space is to afford room for the existence of all extended substances. Soul, matter, *dharma*, and *adharma*, all exist in space. Space is a formless entity where other categories can exist and function. Space has *loka* and *aloka*. *Loka* is the material universe which has three levels: the underworld or hell (*adholoka*) where the wicked souls live, the terrestrial level in the middle (*urdhvaloka*), and *aloka* or the empty non-world which demarcates the end of the universe. The liberated state is above all these three levels. It is the *siddhaloka*, and is the ultimate goal of our existence. This world is supposed to be in the shape of a bowl.

Time or Kala: Time is eternal and formless. As in Hinduism, Jainism too believes that time is cyclical. Time is first of all conceived as the sequence of events in the past, present, and future. Secondly, it is conceived in a wide context as cosmological, which is like a wheel’s twelve spokes representing twelve ages. Six of them are the ascending part of the cycle or wheel (*utsarpini*), and six are the descending part of the same (*avasarpum*). Time is the necessary condition of duration, change, motion, newness, and oldness. Like space, time is also inferred though not perceived. It is inferred as the condition without which substances could not have the characters just mentioned; though it is true that time alone cannot cause a thing to have the characters. Without time a thing cannot endure or continue to exist; duration implies moments of time in which existence is prolonged. Modification or change of states also cannot be conceived without time. And lastly, the distinction between the old and the new cannot be explained without time. These are, therefore, the grounds on which the existence of time can be inferred.

Time is not extended in space. It is not regarded as an *astikaya*, which means that time is one indivisible substance. One and the same time is present everywhere in the world. Unlike all other substances called *astikayas*, time is devoid of extension in space. The Jaina sometimes distinguishes between real time (*paramarthika*) and empirical or conventional time (*vyavharika*) which is the mark of real time. It is the latter (*samaya*) which is conventionally divided into

moments, hours, etc., and is limited by a beginning and an end. But real time is formless and eternal. By imposing conventional limitations and distinctions on real time, empirical time is produced.

Dharma and Adharma: As *karma* has a specific and unique meaning in Jainism, so too does it propose a unique meaning for *dharma* and *adharma*. *Dharma* is motion and *adharma* is rest; or *dharma* is action and *adharma* is inaction. Mobility and immobility, motion and rest, are the grounds of such inference. The movement of a soul or a material thing requires some auxiliary condition in itself, without which its motion is not possible. Such a condition is the substance called *dharma*. Dharma can only favor or help the motion of moving objects; it cannot make a non-moving object move; just as in contrary, it is the substance that helps the restful states or immobility of objects, just as the shade of a tree helps a traveler to rest, or the earth supports things that rest on it. It cannot, however, arrest the movement of any moving object. *Dharma* and *adharma*, though they are opposed, are also similar insofar as both are eternal, formless, non-moving, and both pervade the entire world-space (*lokakasa*). As conditions of motion and rest, both are here in these technical senses, and not in their ordinary moral senses. Space, time, *dharma*, and *adharma* are remote and passive instrumental conditions. Relative character is emphasized in this particular doctrine.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What do you mean by the concept of substance? Write the classifications of substance?

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2) Provide a short note on the concept of soul or *jiva*?

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3) Write a short note on inanimate substances or *ajiva*?

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2.9 LET US SUM UP

The philosophy of Jainism lays a strong foundation for the beliefs, practices, and generally, the religion of Jainism. The metaphysics of Jain philosophy deals with the fundamental distinction

between the living and non-living beings. The epistemology of Jainism is non-absolutistic and is with the specific logic of *syadvada*. The ethics of Jainism deals with the three famous gems and the five great vows.

2.10 KEY WORDS

kevala-jnana: Intuitive knowledge, *Avadhi*: Clairvoyance, *Manahparyaya* Telepathy, *Kevala* : Omniscience, *Mati* : Sensuous Cognition, *Sruta* : knowledge obtained from authority, *syad* : relative to some standpoint, *vada* : doctrine or theory or view, ether : *akasa*, matter: *pudgala*, possesses qualities : *guna*, modes : *paryaya*, emancipated : perfect : *muktha*, bondage : *baddha*, capable of movement : *trasa*, immobile : *sthavara*, annihilation : *nirjara*,

2.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

Contents

- 3.1 Objectives
 - 3.2 Introduction
 - 3.3 Life of Buddha
 - 3.4 Four Noble Truths
 - 3.5 Doctrine of Non- Soul (*anatta*)
 - 3.6 The concept of God
 - 3.7 Sects of Buddhism
 - 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
 - 3.9 Key Words
 - 3.10 Further Readings and References
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3.1 OBJECTIVES

Buddhism is not what we call a ‘top-down religion’, one in which a deity reveals religious and spiritual truths to humanity. It is a ‘bottom-up religion’ created by humans as an attempt to express spiritual concepts. Buddhism does not deny the existence of gods or of other worlds, and indeed the devotional practices of many Buddhist traditions involve the veneration and invocation of special beings. Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, and unlike other world religions, Buddhism is not a doctrine of revelation. The Buddha did not claim to be the bearer of a message from high. He made it clear that whatever he taught, he had discovered for himself through his own efforts.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Buddhism originated as an alternative tradition to the excessive importance given to rituals and sacrifices in Vedic tradition. It was also a reaction to the gross neglect of the social problems of the time, as well as a revolt against the hegemony of the Brahmins in the society.

The main causes for the emergence of Buddhism are:

Social: A Brahmin centered, caste based, hierarchical set up was prevalent in the society. The authority to interpret the scriptures was vested with the Brahmin. Temples, which were the centres of social life, were controlled by them. Laws of pollution were strictly imposed upon the people of the lower caste. Tribes and Dravidians were out of the caste structure.

Economic: Agriculture and cattle rearing were the main source of wealth and livelihood for the people. Brahmins found out ways and means to exploit the lower sections in the society. Kings were made to perform *yagas*, *yajnas*, and *digvijayas* through which the Brahmins benefited a lot. The ordinary people had to contribute a major portion of their income to the kings, Brahmins, and temples.

Religious: Mode of worship, rituals, and religious ceremonies were interpreted by the Brahmins to suit their interest. The *Vedas*, *Aranyakas*, *Mimamsas* and *Upanishads* were written to perpetuate the hegemony of the Brahmins. Metaphysical speculations were at their zenith, which was the prerogative of the educated class. Exploitation by the higher castes and the suffering of the ordinary people continued unabated.

It was a time of two extremes: the *Vedic*, *Upanisadic* belief in the Absolute supported by sacrifices, rituals (*yajnas*) and the materialistic philosophy of the *Charvaka*. Buddha avoided and negated the extremes, and at the same time integrated the positive elements of these two systems. He negated the existence of the soul and the Absolute, but he accepted the belief in the law of karma and the possibility of attaining liberation. His main concern was the welfare of the ordinary people. Though Buddha himself wrote nothing, the early writings were in the *Pali* and *Sanskrit* languages. Buddhist scripture is known as *Tripitaka* (Sanskrit) or *Tipitaka* (Pali), Three Baskets or Three Traditions. They are *vinaya* (Disciple), *Sutta* (Discourse), and *Abhidhamma* (Doctrinal Elaboration). Buddha was not interested in speculative or theoretical analysis of phenomena, but he was concerned about finding out practical solutions to problems in life. The influence of the early Upanishads is clear in the teachings of Buddha. Compassion and love were the predominant characteristics of Buddha. Charity was the basis of the Buddhist religion. Buddhist spirituality has four stages *ahimsa* (not harming), *maitre* (loving kindness), *dana* (giving), and *karuna* (compassion).

3.2 LIFE OF BUDDHA

Gautama or Siddhartha (566-486 B.C), who later came to be known as the Buddha or 'The Enlightened One', was born into a wealthy *Kshatriya* family, in Lumbini, at the foothills of Nepal. Gautama's father Shudhodana, a Kshatriya of the Sakya clan, was the king of Kapilavastu (present day Nepal), and his mother was *Mahamaya*. She had a dream, while on her way to her parents' home, that a white elephant entered her womb, and later Gautama was born at Lumbini. A white elephant is an important symbol for Buddhists even today. On the fifth day of the child's birth, 108 Brahmins were invited for the naming ceremony, and he was given the name Siddhartha (Siddha- achieved, *artha*- goal; one who achieved his goal). Many predicted that Siddhartha would become either a great king or a great sage. On the seventh day his mother died, and his father married his mother's sister, named Mahaprajapati Gautami. She brought up Siddhartha with love and affection. Gradually, he was called after his step-mother, '*Gautamiputra*' (son of Gautami) or '*Gautama*' (*go*-cow/bull, *tema*-the best; the best cow or bull). The child was delicately nurtured and brought up in palatial luxury. At the age of sixteen, Siddhartha married his cousin, Yasodhara.

At the age of twenty nine, while he was travelling out of the palace, he had four encounters which left a lasting impact on him. He saw an old decrepit man, a sick man, a corpse in a funeral procession, and a peaceful and serene ascetic wandering alone. The first three sights disturbed him, whereas the fourth one gave him hope and peace. After a son, named Rahula (meaning rope or fetter) was born to him, one night he left home and wandered around for many years. He studied yoga and meditation from two hermits - Udraka Ramaputhra and Alara Kalama. For some time he practised severe asceticism, but soon realized that it did not help him. Finally, he sat down at the bottom of the *Bodhi* tree. At the age of 35, during meditation under the *Bodhi* tree (the tree of wisdom), on the bank of the river *Neranjara* at *Bodh-Gaya* (near Gaya in modern Bihar), Gotama (Gautama) attained Enlightenment. In the beginning, he was reluctant to share his experiences with any one for fear of being misunderstood. Gradually, he changed his mind and delivered his first sermon to a group of five ascetics (who were old colleagues) in the Deer Park at *Isipatana*, near Varanasi. After this, he taught all kinds of people till the end of his life, irrespective of their caste, religion, or status in society. After preaching and teaching for many years, Buddha attained *Nirvana* at the age of eighty at Kushinagara in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Buddha was the only religious founder who did not make any super natural claim. He was simple and humane. Whatever he achieved could be attained by any human person. Every person has the inner potency to become an enlightened one, through constant meditation and a disciplined life. He founded the religion of Buddhism after he attained true wisdom under the Bodhi tree at *Bodhgaya*. In his first public address at the Sarnath Deer Park in Benares, Buddha spoke of the four noble truths, which are, (i) the world is full of suffering (ii) suffering is caused by desire (iii) suffering can be removed (iv) in order to remove suffering one has to overcome desire.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What was the main reason for the establishment of Buddhism?

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2. Provide a brief life history of Buddha. What was his main reason for leaving the palace?

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3. How did Gautama became Buddha?

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3.3 FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The Buddha was least interested in metaphysical discourses or dogmas. He was concerned about ethical living, applicable to all sections of people - kings, princes, Brahmans, people of low caste, masters, servants, monks, ordinary people, etc. He taught about the nobility of a religion. The four Noble Truths are the essence of the Buddha's teachings, which he explained in his first sermon to his old colleagues at Isipattana. These noble truths are explained in detail later, in other early Buddhist scriptures.

1. *Dukkha*: there is 'Suffering' in the world.
2. *Samudaya*: the arising or origin of 'Suffering'.
3. *Nirodha*: the cessation of 'Suffering'.
4. *Magga*: there is a path leading to the end of 'Suffering'.

The First Noble Truth: *Dukkha*

The term *Dukkha*, usually translated as 'suffering', does not communicate the full implication of the word as used in the Buddhist scriptures. Because of the misleading and unsatisfactory translation of the term, many people consider Buddhism as pessimistic. But in fact, Buddhism

objectively regards a world of reality (*yathabhutam*), and suggests ways and means to attain peace, happiness, and tranquility. The word *dukkha* has a deeper meaning like 'imperfection', 'impermanence', and 'emptiness', in addition to the ordinary meanings of suffering, pain, sorrow, misery, etc. Though the Buddha presented *dukkha* as one of the four noble truths, he did not negate happiness in life. He accepted both material and spiritual happiness. Three factors are important with regard to life and enjoyment of sense pleasures; they are attraction or attachment, dissatisfaction, and freedom or liberation. Desire is the cause of suffering; desire leads to the means for satisfaction; and satisfaction leads to pleasure or pain, and disappointment. The cycle of birth and death is a necessary outcome of desire. The concept of *dukkha* can be understood from three aspects:

1. *dukkha* as ordinary suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*): birth, sickness, old age, death, separation from the beloved, grief, distress, etc.,
2. *dukkha* as produced by change (*viparinama-dukkha*): vicissitudes in life, a happy or a pleasant feeling that will change sooner or later and then produces pain, suffering or unhappiness.
3. *dukkha* as conditioned states (*samkhara-dukkha*): A being or an individual has five aggregates of attachments.

The five aggregates are the following: a) The aggregates of matter (*rupakkhandha*) are the first aggregate. The four basic elements of the universe, their derivatives, the sense organs and their corresponding objects in the external world are included in the aggregate matter. b) The second one is the aggregate of sensations (*vedanakkhandha*) and is six in number. The sensation we obtain through our senses and mind are included in this category. In Buddhism, unlike in other traditions, the mind is considered as a sense faculty or organ and not as spirit. c) The third one is aggregate of perceptions (*sannakkhandha*) and is six in number in relation to the six internal faculties. d) The fourth one is the aggregate of mental formations (*sankharakkhandha*) which include all volitional activities, both good and bad. e) The fifth is the aggregate of consciousness (*vinnanakkhandha*), based on the six internal faculties and their corresponding objects in the world. Consciousness is not spirit in Buddhist philosophy. These five aggregates together constitute the being; there is no other realist behind these aggregates to experience *dukkha*. Though the first noble truth is *dukkha*, statues of the Buddha always present a serene, calm, compassionate, and smiling face.

The Second Noble Truth, *Samudaya*: The Arising Of *Dukkha*

The oft repeated explanation of the second noble truth is: 'It is 'thirst' which produces re-existence and re-becoming, and which is bound with passionate greed. It finds fresh delight, now here and now there, namely, 1. Thirst for sense-pleasures, 2. Thirst for existence and becoming and 3. Thirst for non-existence. The 'thirst', desire, or craving manifested in different forms in human life give rise to suffering and continuity of life. But desire, though the immediate and all-pervading cause, cannot be considered as the first cause, because everything is relative and inter-dependent. 'Thirst' (*tanha*) depends on sensation, and sensation depends on contact for its origination; hence it is a circle that goes on and on, which is known as 'dependent origination' (*paticca-sammupaada*). Most of the economic, political, social, and ethnic problems are rooted in the interest of a person or a group or a nation.

The Theory of *Karma*

Thirst as a cause for re-existence, and re-becoming is closely connected with the theory of *Karma* and rebirth. Four factors are involved in the existence and continuity of being. They are, i) ordinary material food, ii) contact of the sense organs with the external world, iii) consciousness, and iv) mental volition or will. Mental volition is *karma*; it is the root cause of existence. Mental volition (*centan*) is the desire to love, to re-exist, to continue, to become more and more. This comes under one of the five aggregates which are called mental formations. Both, the case of the arising of *dukkha* as well as the destruction of *dukkha*, are within us. Whatever has the nature of arising within *dukkha* has the nature of cessation within.

There is a basic difference between the *kamma* (Pali) and *karma* (Sanskrit) as generally understood in Buddhist tradition. The theory of *karma* in Buddhist philosophy means ‘volitional action’; it means neither the action nor the result of the action. Volitional acts can be good or bad. Thirst, volition, or *karma* produces either good or bad effects; the result of these actions is to continue in the good or bad direction within the cycle of continuity (*samsara*). The result of the action will continue to manifest in the life after death. But an *Arhant* is free from impurities and defilements, thus he/she has no rebirth.

Volition, thirst, or the desire to exist, to continue, to be reborn is a tremendous force in each living being. A human person is a combination of the five aggregates, which is a combination of physical and mental energies. These energies arise, decay, and die in a person each moment. These energies once produced will continue in a series, even after death. Buddhists do not believe in a permanent substance like a soul, which takes a new life after death. But the volitional actions give rise to energy which will give rise to another act, and so it goes on and on. As long as there is the ‘thirst’ to exist, the cycle of continuity (*samsara*) continues.

The Third Noble Truth: *Nirodha*, ‘The Cessation of *Dukkha*’

There is emancipation or liberation from suffering, which is known as the third noble truth (*dukkhanirodha ariyasacca*.) Liberation is popularly known as *Nirvana* (in Pali- *Nibbana*). *Nirvana* is the total ‘extinction of thirst’. How can we understand *Nirvana*? *Nirvana* is the absolute, supra-mundane experience; hence language is not sufficient to explain it. Like the *neti, neti* approach in *Advaita Vedanta*, *Nirvana* is also explained in negative terms like, *Tanhakkhaya* or extinction of thirst, *Asamkhata* or uncompounded or unconditioned, *Viraga* or absence of desire, *Nirodha* or cessation, *Nibbana* or blowing out or extinction.

The cessation of continuity and becoming is *Nibbana*. Extinction of the ‘thirst’ does not mean self-annihilation, because there is no self in Buddhism. *Nibbana* is the annihilation of the false idea of the self; it is the annihilation of ignorance (*avijja*). *Nibbana* is not a negative experience but is the ‘absolute truth’, which is beyond duality and relativity. Truth is that nothing is permanent; everything is dependent on the other. The realization of this is ‘to see things as they are’ (*yathabhatam*). Once the wisdom dawns, the continuity of *samsara* is broken and the mental formulations are no more capable of producing any more illusions. *Nirvana* can be attained during one’s life time itself, one need not die. *Nirvana* is the highest state of experience one can attain; it is ‘happiness without sensation’.

The Fourth Noble Truth: *Magga* - The Path

This is also known as the 'middle path' because it avoids the extremes - happiness through sense pleasures and happiness through severe asceticism. The entire teaching of Buddha can be summarized into the eight fold noble path. They are the following: a) right understanding, b) right attitude of mind, c) right speech, d) right action, e) right conduct, f) right effort, g) right attention, and h) right meditation. The eight divisions will help a person to grow in ethical conduct (*sila*), mental discipline (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*). Ethical conduct consists of right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Similarly right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration form mental discipline. Compassion (*karuna*) and wisdom are the two essential factors for a person to be perfect. Wisdom is the quality of the mind or intellect, while compassion is the quality of the heart. An integrated development of the two aspects will enable a person to understand things as they are. Understanding, in Buddhism, is of two kinds. They are, grasping a thing based on the given data, which is called 'knowing accordingly' (*anubodha*), and seeing a thing in its true nature, which is called penetration (*patvedha*). Everyone who follows these can be liberated from the bondage of matter and suffering.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Write a short note on the four noble truths.

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2. What is theory of *Karma*?

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3. How one can attain *Nirvana*?

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3.4 THE DOCTRINE OF NO SOUL (ANATTA)

Most of the religions pre-suppose the existence of a soul. Buddhism is unique in denying the existence of a soul or *atman*. The ideal of ego or self is with the aim of self protection and self preservation. These are basically selfish desires. The concept of *anatta* is closely connected with

the doctrine of the five aggregates and dependent origination. The concept of self can be analyzed as a combination of the five aggregates. There is nothing permanent; everything is conditioned, dependant, and relative.

Buddhism originated at a time when there were two predominant trends in the intellectual milieu of India, i.e., the powerful and popular spiritualistic thinking, and materialistic thinking. The former accepted the authority of the Vedas while the latter rejected it. Almost all religious accepted the existence of a soul, whereas materialism strongly rejected the existence of a soul. Buddhism did not follow any of the prevalent trends but followed the middle path. Buddhism was an exception, in denying the existence of a soul, but at the same time it rejected the materialistic philosophy. The idea of an ego or a self in any religion is with the aim of self-protection and self-preservation. Self protection necessitates the existence of God, and self preservation necessitates the existence of self. These two are basically selfish desires. The concept of *Anatta* is closely connected with the doctrine of the five aggregates and dependent origination. The concept of self can be analyzed as a combination of the five aggregates. There is nothing permanent; everything is conditioned in dependence and relativity.

According to the doctrine of the conditioned, and according to the analysis of being as five aggregates, the idea of an abiding, immortal substance in man or outside (whether it is called *atman*, 'I', soul, self, or ego) is considered a mere false belief, a mental projection. This is the Buddhist doctrine of *Anatta*, no-soul or no-self. Nowhere in his teachings, did Buddha mention the existence of a soul. In *Dhammapada* Ch. XX verses 5, 6, and 7 negate the existence of soul in clear terms. "All conditioned things are impermanent. All conditioned things are *dukkha*. All *dhammas* are without self." The basic factors of a human person cannot account for the existence of a soul. The physical material is impermanent, whatever is impermanent is the cause of suffering, and whatever is suffering is non-self. Similarly, sensations, mental formations, and consciousness cannot constitute the self because all these are transient.

3.5 THE CONCEPT OF GOD

The concept of Buddhism refutes the idea of a God who throws the sinners into everlasting torments. In fact, the Buddhists believe in the existence of an enlightened being, who vows to save all sentient beings from their sufferings. The concept of enlightenment is principally concerned with developing a method to escape from the illusions of the materialistic world. Generally, we use the term 'God' to designate a supreme power, who is the creator of the entire universe and the chief law-giver for humans. The God or Almighty is considered to be concerned with the welfare of His creations and the '*moksha*' or salvation for those who follow His dictates. Different religions and sects follow this God differently by different names, but as far as Buddhism is concerned, it has a different perception for Him.

Almost all the sects of Buddhism do not believe in the myth of God. Indeed some of the early Indian Mahayana philosophers denounced God-worship in terms which are even stronger than those expressed in the *Theravada* literature. Some later Mahayana schools, which flourished outside India, ascribed some degree of divinity to a transcendent Buddha, considering living Buddhas to be a manifestation of the *Adi Buddha*. But even then it cannot be said that the Buddha was converted into a Divinity comparable to the God of the monotheistic religions. In the *Brahmajala Sutta* and the *Agga Sutta* texts, the Buddha refutes the claims of *Maha Brahma*

(the main God) and shows Him to be subject to karmic law (i.e. cosmic law). Even long-lived *Maha Brahma* will be eliminated in each cycle of inevitable world dissolution and re-evolution. In the *Khevadda Sutta*, *Maha Brahma* is forced to admit to an inquiring monk that he is unable to answer a question that is posed to him, and advises the monk to consult the Buddha. This clearly shows that *Brahma* acknowledges the superiority of the Buddha. The Buddha is viewed as some kind of a god figure. In the *Theravada* tradition, the Buddha is regarded as a supremely enlightened human teacher who has come to his last birth in the *samsara* (the Buddhist cycle of existence). But, Mahayana traditions, which tend to think in terms of a transcendental Buddha, do not directly make a claim for Buddha as God. Thus the Buddha cannot be considered as playing a God-like role in Buddhism. Rather, Buddha is concerned as an enlightened father of humanity.

3.6 SECTS OF BUDDHISM

Mahayana: *Mahayana* Buddhism developed its own canon of scripture, using much that was included in the *Theravada* canon, but adding other *Mahayana Sutras* which contain the bases of their peculiar beliefs. Among these the best known and most widely used are the famous Lotus Gospel and the *Sukhavati-Vyu-ha* which are the scriptures especially of the pure land sects. The path followed by the Gautama is thus the *Mahayana* - 'the great vehicle' or vehicle of the *Bodhisttva* (*bodhisattva-yana*). The *Mahayana* movement claims to have been founded by the Buddha himself, though at first confined to a select group of hearers. Many of the leading teachers of the new doctrines were born in south India, studied there, and afterwards went to the North; one of the earliest and most important being *Nagarjuna* and other major *sutras* circumstantially connected with the south.

During the life-time of the Blessed One (Buddha), he was already highly venerated and his aid was invoked by his disciples in their spiritual struggles. A simple cult developed about the relics of the Blessed One very early. His body was burned, and the ashes and bones distributed among the disciples. Shrines were built to house those relics, some of them very elaborate and expensive; for example, the very impressive one that has his head. Images of the Buddha representing him in meditation under the *Bodhi* tree became common. At first they were conceived of simply, as subjectively helpful. Veneration of the relic had the effect of calming the heart. Later arose the belief that such a reverential act was good in itself and would result in securing merit. Pilgrimages made to sacred spots associated with him would likewise benefit one and would result in *karma*.

Given the characteristic Hindu background, it was natural that for all practical purposes Gautama should soon become a god, though not theoretically called so. Given likewise the characteristic Hindu speculative philosophical interest, attempts to explain the relation of the Buddha to the ultimate reality of the universe naturally began to be made, almost from the start. According to the *Mahayana*, reality is beyond the rational intellect or beyond the four categories of understanding. And they say that the world is real and relative, and the absolute reality only appears as the manifold universe. Plural is not real. The *Mahayana* concept of liberation is not merely for one, but is meant for all. The ideal *Bodhisattva* defers his own salvation in order to work for the salvation of others. And they also hold that *nirvana* is not a negative state of cessation of misery, but is positive bliss.

Hinayana: The *Hinayana* or lesser vehicle has been more moderate in its doctrine of the person of the Buddha. He is theoretically neither a god nor a supernatural being. His worship or veneration is helpful, but not essential, to the achievement of the salvation goal. This is to be reached by something like the process Gautama taught, namely, meditation on the four noble truths and the keeping of the Dharma; in short, becoming a monk, for one could not carry out all the requirements and live an active life in the day-to-day world. Thus the number to whom salvation lay open was comparatively small. It was this fact which caused the followers of the *Mahayana* school to call the older school the 'little vehicle'. Not many could ride at a time. *Mahayana*, on the other hand, made salvation universally possible for achievement.

The goal of the *Hinayana* was to become an *Arhat*, that is, to arrive at *Nirvana* in the present life; an ideal of salvation of the self, with no reference to the welfare of others, and thus an egoistic ideal. That of *Mahayana* was of a more altruistic sort. It was to become a Buddha; and theoretically, at least, anyone might aspire to reach Buddha-hood. To be sure, he would not reach it in one single lifetime, but there was elaborated a definite series of steps, ten in all, through which one must pass before arriving at the goal. One who had taken the vow of future Buddha – hood was called a *Bodhisattva*, and he need not be a monk. Here was a clear-cut difference from the *Hinayana* School - a layman might aspire for the highest goal. But the most notable difference was the fact that in becoming a *Bodhisttva*, one became (after passing a certain stage) a great 'cosmic helper' or saviour, dedicated to the saving of mankind. Men came to rely on the help of such 'great beings' in their search for freedom.

Along with this idea came a change in the conception of the Buddha. Gautama became but one in a great line of *Buddhas*, behind whom stood the eternal Buddha – the *Dharmakaya* - a conception similar to the old Hindu Brahma manifest in Vishnu or Siva. There were five principal *Buddhas*, of whom Gautama was one. One Buddha, *Maitreya*, was yet to come.

To these *Buddhas* is accorded worship, as also to the *Bodhisattvas*, or great beings who are known to be especially helpful. To them prayer is made; upon them centre love, loyalty, and devotion. One among the (Buddhas), *Amitabha*, came to be in an unusual degree the object of faith and devotion, and to him prayers were made. His powerful name was repeated countless times, for so meritorious was he that there was a strange potency in its mere repetition. According to them, you must be a light unto yourself (*atmadipo bhava*) and they also say that liberation is meant for a person and by oneself. The *Arhat*-hood is attained through a difficult path of self help and *Nirvana* is extinction of all misery.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What you mean by the doctrine of Non-Soul (*Anatta*)?

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2. Elaborate the concept of God in Buddhism?

3. Write a short note on the two sects of Buddhism?

3.8 LET US SUM UP

The unit describes the emergence of Buddhism as a tradition alternative to the existing ritualistic tradition. The sects within Buddhism interpreted various basic tenets of Buddha's teaching and got developed as religious sects.

3.9 THE KEY WORDS

vinaya : disciple, *sutta* : discourse, *ahimsa* : not harming, *maitre* : loving kindness, *dana* : giving, *karuna* : compassion, *dukkha* : suffering, *paticca-sammupaada* : dependent originating, *nirvana* : liberation, *viraga* : absence of desire, *avijja* : ignorance

3.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 4 THE PHILOSOPHY OF BUDDHISM

Contents

- 4.0. Objectives
 - 4.1. Introduction
 - 4.2. Four Noble Truths
 - 4.3. The Eightfold Path in Buddhism
 - 4.4. Doctrine of Dependent Origination (*Pratitya-samutpada*)
 - 4.5. Doctrine of Momentariness (*Kshanika-vada*)
 - 4.6. Doctrine of *Karma*
 - 4.7. Doctrine of Non-soul (*anatta*)
 - 4.8. Philosophical Schools of Buddhism
 - 4.9. Let us Sum up
 - 4.10. Key Words
 - 4.11. Further Readings and References
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4.0. OBJECTIVES

This unit, the philosophy of Buddhism, introduces the main philosophical notions of Buddhism. It gives a brief and comprehensive view about the central teachings of Lord Buddha and the rich philosophical implications applied on it by his followers. This study may help the students to develop a genuine taste for Buddhism and its philosophy, which would enable them to carry out more researches and study on it. Since Buddhist philosophy gives practical suggestions for a virtuous life, this study will help one to improve the quality of his or her life and the attitude towards his or her life.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Buddhist philosophy and doctrines, based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, give meaningful insights about reality and human existence. Buddha was primarily an ethical teacher rather than a philosopher. His central concern was to show man the way out of suffering and not one of constructing a philosophical theory. Therefore, Buddha's teaching lays great emphasis on the practical matters of conduct which lead to liberation. For Buddha, the root cause of suffering is ignorance and in order to eliminate suffering we need to know the nature of existence. Also, Buddha insisted that all those who accept his doctrines must accept it only after rigorous reflections and only after all doubts and perplexities are overcome. Here, the philosophical implications of Buddha's teaching must be taken into serious consideration.

The philosophical system of Buddhism does not assume a systematic form. We cannot make a sharp distinction between the philosophical, religious, and ethical notions of Buddhism. The reason behind it is that the philosophical notions were developed in the background of ethical and religious notions. We may find many overlapping ideas from the previous chapter 'Buddhism as Religion', such as the noble truths, the eightfold path, the doctrines of soul, the doctrine of karma, etc. All these imply profound philosophical insights as they imply great religious insights.

4.2. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The four noble truths are the most important principles of Buddhism. We need to take into serious account these principles, whether we speak about Buddhism as a religion, or Buddhist

philosophy, or any other serious study on Buddhism. Here, only a brief description of the four noble truths is given, to start our study on the 'Philosophy of Buddhism.' The four noble truths are explained in detail in the chapter 'Buddhism as a Religion.' We may have to refer back to the portion there for more details. The four noble truths of Buddhism are as follows:

Life is Full of Suffering (*Dukkha*): According to the first noble truth all forms of existence are subject to suffering. For Buddha it is a universal truth. All known and unknown facts and forms of life are associated with suffering. Birth, sickness, old age, death, anxiety, desire, and despair, all such happenings and feelings are based on suffering. Buddhism recognizes suffering at three levels, such as the suffering we experience in our daily life, like, birth, sickness, old age, death, despair, pain, desire, etc. (*dukkah-dukkhatta*), suffering caused by the internal mental conditions and the activities of the sense organs (*samkara-dukkhatta*), and the suffering caused by the impermanence of objects and our relation to them (*viparinama-dukkhatta*).

Suffering has a Cause (*Dukkha samudaya*): Everything in this cosmos has a cause, and nothing exists and happens without a cause. If this is the case, suffering should also have a cause. Buddhism explains suffering through a chain of twelve causes and effects, commonly known as the Doctrine of Dependent Origination (*pratityasamutpada*). In the final analysis, the root of all miseries is desire (*Tanha*). Desire is all pervasive. Desire for possession, enjoyment, and a separate individual existence are some of the virulent forms of desire.

Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha nirodha*): If suffering has a cause, the seeker has to destroy this cause to stop suffering. So desire has to be extinguished to stop suffering. Nirvana is the state of being without suffering. It is a state of supreme happiness and bliss.

Ways to Destroy Suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha-marga*): The ways to destroy suffering consists of the practice of the eightfold virtue, such as, Right View, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Awareness, and Right Concentration. In the practice of all these virtues one has to avoid extremes and follow the middle path.

4.3. THE EIGHTFOLD PATH IN BUDDHISM

The eightfold path is the practical application of the four noble truths. They are also closely connected to the fourth noble truth as a means to destroy suffering. Following are components of the eightfold path of Buddhism.

Right View (*Samyak-dristi*): It consists of the grasp and acceptance of the four noble truths, rejection of the fault doctrines, and avoidance of immorality resulting from covetousness, lying, violence, etc.

Right Aspirations (*Samyaka-sankalpa*): It implies thought on renunciation, thought on friendship and good will, and thoughts on non-harming.

Right Speech (*Samyak-vac*): It inspires one to speak truth primarily, and to speak gentle and soothing words for the benefit and wellbeing of others. It also promulgates one to avoid falsehood, slander, harsh words and gossip.

Right Conduct (*Samyak-karma*): The Buddha intends by right conduct the practice of five moral vows namely, non-violence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*),

Right Livelihood (*Samyag ajiva*): It consists of the avoidance of a luxurious life and the acceptance of occupations which do not involve cruelty and injury to other living beings. The Buddha exhorts to avoid occupations like sale of alcohol, making and selling weapons, profession of the soldier, butcher, fisherman, etc.

Right Effort (*Samyak vyayama*): It includes the effort to avoid the rise of evil and false ideas in the mind, the effort to overcome evil and evil tendencies, the effort to acquire positive values like attention, energy, tranquility, equanimity, and concentration, and the effort to maintain the right conditions for a meritorious life.

Right Awareness (*Samyak Smrti*): It represents the awareness of the body (breathing positions, movements, impurities of the body, etc.), awareness of sensations (attentive to the feelings of oneself and of the other), awareness of thought and the awareness of the internal functions of the mind.

Right Concentration (*Samyak Samadhi*): The practice of one pointed contemplation leads the seeker to go beyond all sensations of pain and pleasure, and finally to full enlightenment. It happens in four levels. In the first level, through intense meditation the seeker concentrates the mind on truth and thereby enjoys great bliss. In the second level the seeker enters into supreme internal peace and tranquility. In the third level, the seeker becomes detached even from the inner bliss and tranquility. In the fourth level, the seeker is liberated even from this sensation of bliss and tranquility.

The first two of the eight-fold path, namely, right view and right resolve, are together called *Prajna*, because they are related to consciousness and knowledge. The third, fourth, and fifth, namely, right speech, right conduct, and right livelihood, are collectively known as *Sila*, because they deal with the correct and morally right way of living. The last three, namely, right effort, right awareness, and right concentration are collectively known as *Samadhi*, because they deal with meditation and contemplation.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1. What are the three levels in which Buddhism recognizes suffering?

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2. What is the eightfold path Buddhism suggests, for overcoming suffering?

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3. Give a brief sketch of Samyak *Samadhi* (Right Concentration)?

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4.4. THE DOCTRINE OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION (*PRATITYA-SAMUTPADA*)

The doctrine of dependent origination is central to Buddhist philosophy and is connected to the second noble truth - suffering has a cause (*Dukkha Samudaya*). According to Buddhism everything in this world has a cause. There is a cycle of twelve such causes and corresponding effects which governs the entire life of human beings. It is called *Bhavacakra*, the cycle of existence. This universal law works automatically without the help of any conscious guide. This doctrine is the main principle in Buddha's teachings. Other notions, such as the doctrine of *karma*, the theory of momentariness, and the theory of non-soul are based on this doctrine.

Pratitya-samutpada is a middle path between *sasvatvada* (the principle of eternity) and *uchedvada* (the principle of annihilation). According to *sasvatvada*, some things are eternal, uncaused, and independent. According to *uchedvada*, nothing remains after the destruction of things. By maintaining a middle way between both these principles, *pratitya-samutpada* holds that things have existence but they are not eternal and they are not annihilated completely.

The twelve links of *pratitya-samutpada* are as follows:

Ignorance (*Avidya*): Ignorance is caused by desire. It is the substratum of action and the basis of ego (*jivahood*). Ignorance causes the individual to think of himself as separate from the entire world. This leads to attachment to life and thus to suffering.

Predisposition (*Samskara*): *Samskara* is caused by ignorance. Predisposition means a disposition preceding to or preparing to certain activity. Also, it can be understood as the attitude and aptitude of the past *Karma*. *Samskara* is also known as fabrication. There are three types of fabrications namely bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, and mental fabrications.

Consciousness (*Vijnana*): Consciousness is caused by predispositions. There are six types of consciousness, namely, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and intellect-consciousness.

Name and Form (*Namarupa*): It is the psycho-physical body in the womb of the mother caused by consciousness.

Sense Organs (*Sadayatana*): The sense organs are caused by name and form. There are six sense organs such as the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the skin, and the mind.

Contact (*Sparsa*): Contact with the object of enjoyment is caused by sense organs. Sometimes it is said that the eye is due to seeing and not that seeing is due to the eye, and similarly in the case of every organ.

Feeling or Sensation (*Vedana*): Feeling or sensation is caused by contact with the objects of enjoyment. Feeling or sensation is of six forms, such as, vision, hearing, olfactory (sensation), gustatory sensation, tactile sensation, and intellectual sensation (thought).

Craving (*Trsna*): The craving or thirst for enjoyment is caused by the actual experience or sensation of enjoyment. It is due to craving that a person blindly longs for worldly attachments. There are six forms of cravings, such as, cravings with respect to forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and ideas.

Attachment or Clinging (*Upadana*): The clinging to sensory enjoyment is caused by the craving for such enjoyment. There are four types of clinging, namely, sensual clinging, view clinging, practice clinging, and self clinging.

Becoming (*Bhava*): It is the will to be born caused by clinging or attachment. It includes thoughts and actions which are responsible for rebirth. There are three kinds of becoming, such as sensual becoming, form becoming, and formless becoming.

Birth (*Jati*): Birth (also rebirth) is caused by becoming (*bhava*). The *jiva* is caught up in the wheel of the world and remains in it till it attains nirvana. It refers not just to birth at the beginning of a lifetime, but to birth as a new person, which is the acquisition of a new status or position.

Old Age and Death (*Jaramarana*): Old age and death are caused by birth. Rebirth causes the whole chain of the worldly sufferings. After a man is caught in the wheel of the world, diseases, old age, suffering, death, etc. recur.

The twelve links of the doctrine of dependent origination can be divided into three classes, namely, the past, the future, and the present. Ignorance and predisposition are due to the past life. Consciousness, name and form, sense organs, contact, feeling, craving, and clinging are connected to the present life. Finally, becoming, birth, and old age and death are of future life.

4.5. THE DOCTRINE OF MOMENTORINESS (*KSHANIKA-VADA*)

According to *kshanika-vada*, everything is momentary, relative, conditional, and dependent. It is also known as the doctrine of impermanence (*anityavada*). Buddhism teaches that the world and its objects are not permanent, but momentary. The universe is a constant chain of change. The basis of the Doctrine of Momentoriness is the Doctrine of the Dependent Origination. Every object comes into existence from an antecedent condition and gives rise to a consequent object. It is comparable to the flame of a lamp, where the flame is merely the continuity of successive flames. A flame exists only for a moment, but it gives rise to the next flame.

For Buddhists, the material world and its objects are not merely impermanent and transient, but they also exist only for a moment. This doctrine is ultimately to dissuade people from placing confidence in the world and persuade them to renounce it for the permanent status of *Nirvana*. It avoids two extremes: eternalism and nihilism. Thus, it is a middle path where the world is neither a being nor a non-being.

The Buddhist philosophers have given several arguments in support of the doctrine of momentoriness. Of these, the most important argument is known as *Arthakriyakaritra*, the argument from the power of generating action. According to this principle, whatever can produce

an effect has existence, and whatever cannot produce an effect has no existence. It means that as long as a thing has the power to produce an effect it has existence, and when it ceases to produce an effect, its existence also ceases. Again, one thing can produce only one effect. If at one time a thing produces an effect and at the next moment another effect or no effect, then the former thing ceases to exist.

4.6. THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA

The law of *karma* is that every event produces its effects, which in turn become causes for other effects, generating the *karmic* chain. The doctrine of dependent origination links *karmic* impressions from past existence and rebirth. These two links signify the proposition that the present existence of a man is dependent upon his past existence - the effect of his thoughts, words, and actions in the past life. Similarly the future existence is dependent on the present existence. According to the law of *karma*, our present and future are neither capricious nor unconditional, but are conditioned by our past and present.

4.7. THE DOCTRINE OF NON-SOUL (ANATTA)

The doctrine of non-soul (*anatta*) is another important philosophical notion of Buddhism which is a consequence of the doctrine of dependent origination. There is a belief in almost all the cultures and religions that there exists in man an eternal and permanent entity, variously known as the 'soul,' the 'self,' or the 'spirit.' According to Buddhism, one cannot become aware of an unchanging entity called 'soul' and all one can become aware of when one thinks of one's self or soul is a sensation, an impression, a perception, an image, a feeling, or an impulse. The Buddha analyses men into five groups (*skandhas*), namely, form (matter), feeling (pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral), perceptions (sight, smell, etc.), impulses (hate, greed, etc.) and consciousness. Anything a man thinks he is or he has, fall under one of these groups. The self or soul is simply an abbreviation for the aggregate of these *skandhas*, and not some entity over and above the aggregate. Thus there is no distinct substance known as the 'self' or 'soul.' There is a mistaken understanding that through the doctrine of *anatta* the Buddha denies man as a self or a soul. What he denies is the belief that there exists behind and beyond the *skandhas* a self or a soul which is permanent and unchanging. Buddha acknowledges the changing self, but rejects the unchanging substantial self. (For details refer to the title 'The Doctrine of No Soul (*Anatta*)' in the chapter 'Buddhism as a Religion')

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1. *Pratitya-samutpada* is a middle path between *sasvatvada* (the principle of eternity) and *uchedvada* (the principle of annihilation). Explain.

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2. What is the central argument of Buddhism in supporting the doctrine of momentariness?

3. What did Buddha intend to communicate through the doctrine of non-soul (*anatta*)?

4.8. PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

Since Buddha did not give answers to many of the vital philosophical issues, his followers tried to find answers to such questions. These attempts, in turn, gave rise to different philosophical directions and schools. The differences of opinion and doctrines emerged immediately after the death of Buddha. It is believed that there existed thirty such Buddhist philosophical schools. But only four of them survived and are traditionally known. They are as follows:

The Vaibhasika School: The *Vaibhasika* derives its name from its exclusive emphasis on a particular commentary, the *abhidhammamahavaibhasa* of Abhidhamma. In the true spirit of the doctrine of dependent origination, the *Vaibhasika* holds that reality is pure flux and change. This school belongs to Hinayana. The *Vaibhasika* speaks about the existence of the mental and the non-mental realities. It teaches that we can really know the external entities and the world outside. This notion is known as *bahya-pratyeka-vada*. This school holds onto pluralism, realism, and nominalism. According to *Vaibhasika*, the world is in reality as it appears to us. The ultimate constituents (*dharma*) of reality are the same as those which make up the world of our empirical experience. Since they hold that the *dharma* is ultimate and independent of our consciousness, *Vaibhasika* is realism. *Vaibhasika* is pluralism as it asserts *dharma* as distinct and irreducible. For *Vaibhasika*, the reality is particular and is devoid of any universal unchanging entities. Thus *Vaibhasika* can be considered as nominalism too.

The Sautrantika School: The name *Sautrantika*, derived from the fact that it gives greater importance to the authority of the *sutra-pitaka* of the Pali Canon. This school also belongs to Hinayana Buddhism. The *Sautrantika* subscribes both the mental and the non-mental reality. The important difference between both these schools is that while the *Vaibhasika* maintains direct perception of the external objects, the *Sautrantika* holds the inference from the perceptions which are representations of external objects.

The second important difference between the *Sautrantika* and *Vaibhasika* is that unlike the *Vaibhasika*, the *Sautrantika* distinguishes between the world as it appears to us (phenomena) and the world as it is in itself (*nomena*). Here *Sautrantika* denies the absolute, ultimate, and independent ontological status of *dharma*. Another point of disagreement between the *Sautrantika* and the *Vaibhasika* is concerned with the nature of the relation between successive point-instants of existence. For the *Vaibhasika* the past, present, and future are equally real. The reason is that the present, which is admittedly real, cannot be the effect of an unreal past and the cause of an unreal future. Contrary to this, the *Vaibhasika*'s point is that the point-instant which

has no duration cannot causally bring about its succeeding point-instant. For, the cause and effect cannot be simultaneous.

The Yogacara School: This school belongs to Mahayana Buddhism. There are two different accounts of the origin of the name *Yogacara* of this school. According to one account, the followers of this school emphasized *yoga* (critical enquiry) along with *acara* (conduct). According to the other, the adherents of this school practiced *yoga* for the realization of the truth, that reality is of the nature of consciousness. The core of the doctrine of the *Yogacara* is that consciousness (mind) alone is ultimately real. Thus, external objects are regarded as unreal. For *Yogacara*, all internal and external objects are ideas of the mind. Thus, it is impossible to demonstrate the independent existence of external objects. The philosophers of this school are known as the advocates of consciousness (*vijñānavāda*). *Yogacara* offers another argument to deny the independent existence of the external object, which seems to be a criticism to the *Sautrantika* and the *Vaibhasika*. It argues that if there is an object outside, it must be indivisible, partless, and atomic, or divisible and composite. If it is the former, it cannot be perceived since atoms are too minute. If it is composite, we cannot perceive all the parts and the sides of the object simultaneously. Thus, in either case the existence of the external objects is denied. Another important argument against the existence of the external objects is based on the doctrine of momentariness. The *Yogacara* points out that, since objects are not substances but duration-less point instants, it is difficult to understand how a momentary object can be the cause of consciousness. If it is the cause of consciousness, there must be a time lapse between the arising of the object and our consciousness of it.

The Madhaymika School: This school also belongs to Mahayana Buddhism. The literal meaning of the term *Madhaymika* is 'the farer of the Middle Way'. The *Madhaymika* avoids all the extremes, such as, eternalism and annihilationism, self and non-self, matter and spirit, unity and plurality, and identity and difference. The founder of this school is supposed to be Nagarjuna of the second century CE. Aryadeva, Candrakirti, Kumarajiva, and Santideva are the other prominent figures of this school. One of the most important insights of Nagarjuna is the origin and nature of philosophy and philosophical conflicts. For him, knowledge is the means by which man seeks to unite the self and the other. Knowledge is propositional, and propositions are constituted of concepts, and concepts refer names (*nama*) and forms (*rupa*). Hence, the reality which philosophers create in their knowledge is the reality of names and forms, and not reality as it is in itself.

The *Madhaymika* claims that concepts and conceptual systems are relative to each other. They cannot stand by themselves and generate truths. Consequently, no system can claim absolute truth and validity. The truth of each system can be relative and partial. Nagarjuna teaches that it is absurd to speak about reality as true or false. Reality simply is. The emptiness (*Sunyata*) of concepts does not entail the emptiness of the reality. What he means by *Sunyata* is not that reality is nonexistent or illusory, but only that it is devoid of any entities which we think. The *Madhaymika* claim that unlike the other three schools, their philosophy is very close to the teachings of Buddha. The notion of relativity and *sunyata* (emptiness) are none other than the doctrine of dependent origination which Buddha emphasized.

Nagarjuna brings the notion of two types of truths: the lower truth and higher truth. He calls the phenomenal truths as lower truth, since we cannot find any absolute truth in this world. All phenomenal truths are relative, conditioned, and valid within particular domains of our

perceptual-conceptual experience. The higher truth is beyond percepts and concepts, ineffable and defying all descriptions. It is absolute, supramundane, and unconditional. It is grasped through intuitive insights.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1. How does the Sautrantika School differ from the Vaibhasika School, in considering the nature of the relation between successive point-instants of existence?

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2. What are the two reasons for adopting the term 'Yogacara' to Yogacara School?

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3. Why does Nagarjuna say that the reality which philosophers create in their knowledge is the reality of names and forms and not reality as it is in itself?

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4.9. LET US SUM UP

The aim of philosophy is to ultimately lead man to find the meaning of his life and existence. It is true to its core in the case of the philosophy of Buddhism. The four noble truths that Buddha proposes touch the very existence of humans, which leads one to understanding the sufferings and miseries of life, and to go beyond to attain nirvana, a perfect state of happiness and bliss. The eightfold path of Buddhism is moreover a daily guide for everyone to lead a virtuous life. The doctrine of *pratityasamutpada* is a reasonable description about the cycle of human life. The doctrine of momentariness has profound philosophical implications in the present scenario, where people chase the momentary pleasures of the world without realizing its impermanence. The doctrine of non-soul or more precisely the denial of a permanent soul would be a unique notion of Buddhist philosophy. Apart from all these, we find a logical sequence in the entire philosophy, where different ideas are mutually connected and related. The four noble truths are the basis of Buddha's teachings and from this follow all other notions such as the eightfold path, the doctrine of dependent origination, the doctrine of momentariness, the theories of karma, non-soul, rebirth, etc. The various theories of the different philosophical schools are a direct evidence to understand the richness of Buddhist philosophy, and how seriously the study on the teachings of Buddha is carried out. Even today, deeper and wider study is done on the various themes of this philosophy to explore the new horizons of the meaning it contains.

4.10. KEY WORDS

Anatta – The Buddhist doctrine of non-soul.

Dukkha – The Sanskrit term *dukkha* is almost translated as suffering. According to Buddha, life is full of suffering and the goal of human life is to get out of suffering by removing ignorance. The four noble truths of Buddhism are closely linked to the concept of *dukkha*.

Karma - *Karma* is categorized within the groups of causes in the chain of cause and effect, where it comprises the elements of action. Buddhism links *karma* directly to the motives behind an action.

Kshanika-vada – The Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness.

Nirvana – The Buddha describes *nirvana* as the perfect peace of the state of mind that is free from craving, anger, and other afflicting states.

Skandhas - The aggregates or components that come together to make an individual.

Sunyata – Often translated as emptiness or void. According to Nagarjuna “The greatest wisdom is the so-called *Sunyata*.”

Pratitya-samutpada –The Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination

4.11. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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