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UNIT 1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

- to dispel certain misconceptions about Indian philosophy held mainly by western scholars and certain other misconceptions held by some Indian scholars. In order to grasp Indian philosophy in proper perspective it is necessary that these misconceptions are erased;
- to distinguish philosophy from religion in the Indian context. This unit shows that, taken in the strict sense of the term, philosophy is not the same as religion. Some key philosophical issues developed in Indian context on very different lines when compared with western thought;
- to project the essence of Indian thought.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Indian context, philosophy is taken to mean *darshana* or *tattva*. We shall consider how the etymological meaning of 'philosophy' correlates itself with *darshana* or *tattva*. '*Drisyate anena iti darshanam*' - the one through which it is seen. The word seen can be understood either literally or philosophically. Though the difference is irrelevant, let us consider only the latter. To 'see' in philosophic sense means to 'realise'. *Darsana*, therefore, means to realise. Again, the verb 'realise' is a transitive verb. We always realise 'something' whenever we realise. To say that we realise 'nothing' is to admit that there is no realisation at all. If we recollect whatever that was said about 'know', then it becomes clear that to a great extent 'to realise' corresponds to 'to know', and hence realisation corresponds to knowledge. This correspondence is nearly one-to-one; i.e., it is nearly isomorphic. This aspect unfolds itself in due course. Before proceeding in this direction, we should know what '*tattva*' stands for.

The word *tattva* is derived from two words '*tat*' and '*tva*'. *Tat* means it or that and *tva* means 'you'. Therefore *tattva*, etymologically, means 'you are that'.

What is important is to know what *tat* stands for in Indian thought. It means reality or ‘ultimate’ reality. This is also what one division of philosophy, i.e., metaphysics talks about. The word ‘it’, which appears in the meaning of *darshana* stands for *tat*, i.e., ultimate reality. Since *darshana*, is knowing reality, it involves not only an important metaphysical component but also an important epistemological component. Hence, the summation of these two components more or less satisfactorily completes the description of philosophy as *darshana* in Indian context.

There is yet, another component that remains to be understood. Obviously, ‘you’ (*tva*) stands for knower, i.e., the epistemological subject and by identifying the epistemological subject with reality, we arrive at an important corollary. Indian thought did not distinguish between reality and the person or epistemological subject and hence etymologically, knowledge in Indian thought became inward (however, it must be emphasized that it outgrew the etymological meaning in its nascent stage itself). But what is of critical importance is the philosophical significance of the above mentioned corollary. Wherever man is involved, directly or indirectly, value is involved. So axiology surfaces. When man is identified with reality, it and the whole lot of issues related to reality gain value-overtones. Hence, in Indian context, value is not merely a subject matter of philosophy, but philosophy itself comes to be regarded as ‘value’. Consequently, the very approach of Indian thinkers to philosophy gains some distinct features.

1.2 PHILOSOPHER’S LOOK AT REALITY

Indian thought is essentially pluralistic as regards arguments which give an exposition of reality. First, we can begin with types of reality and this can be done from two different angles.

Table 1:

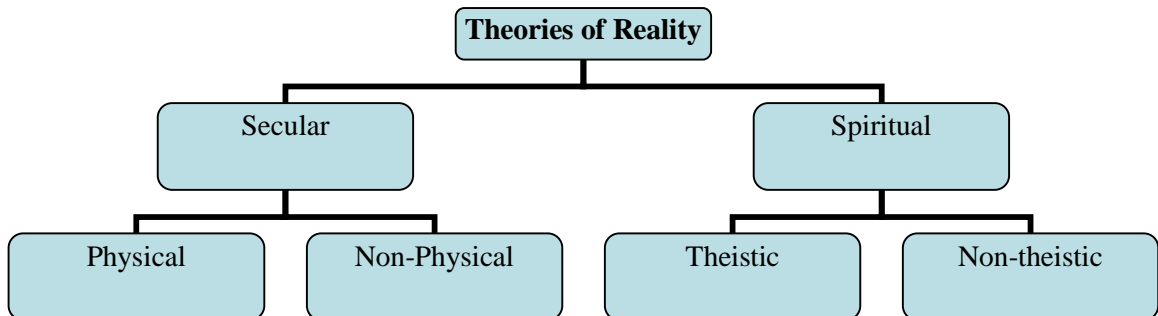
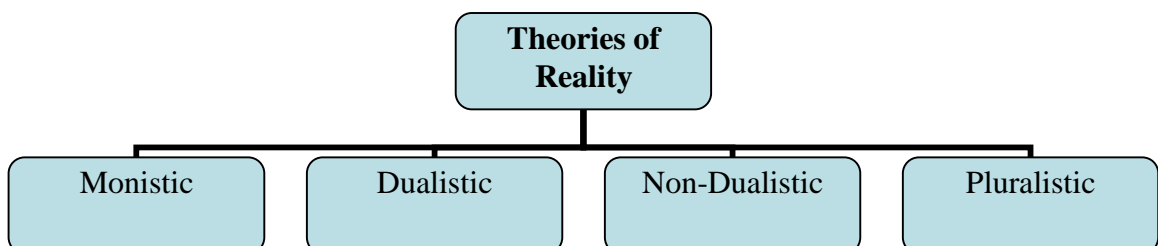


Table 2:



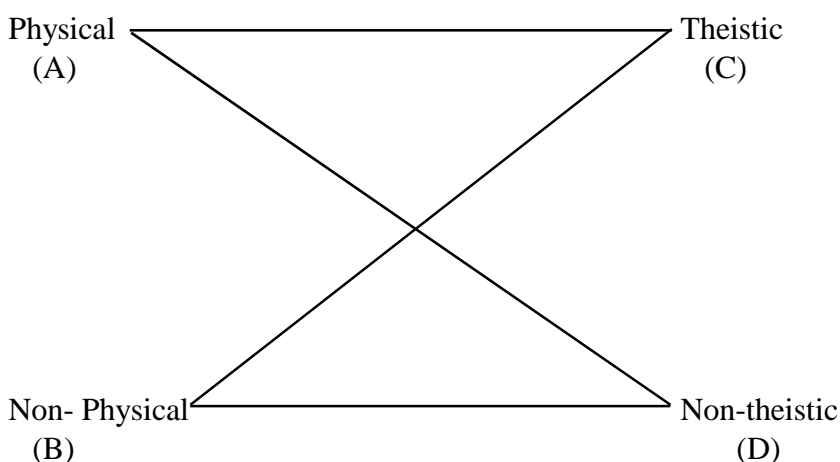
Let us try to understand what Table 1 says. But before doing so, it is better to answer the question; what is reality? Indeed, this is the most difficult question to answer. To start with, ‘reality’ can be defined as the one which is the ultimate source of everything and itself does not have any source. It also can be taken to

mean that which is independent. This definition itself is hotly debated in philosophical circles. If we take this as a working definition of reality, then we find to our surprise that ancient Indians offered various answers resulting in ‘proliferation of an ocean of theories’, to use the phrase used by Feyerabend. Contrary to widespread belief prevailed in the past, all Indian thinkers did not recognize reality as spiritual. Nor did they unanimously regard it as secular. A complex discipline like philosophy does not allow such simple division. Surely, some thinkers accepted only spiritual reality and on the contrary, some other thinkers accepted only ‘secular’ reality. However, in many cases, these two divisions crossed and the result is that in those cases we discover that reality has two faces, secular and spiritual. An upshot of this conclusion is that thinkers in India neglected neither this world nor the ‘other’ (if it exists). This is a significant aspect to be borne in mind.

Curiously, at Level 2, the divisions of secular and spiritual theories are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive, i.e., physical and non-physical, on the one hand and theistic and non-theistic, on the other. Though within secular range (and similarly within spiritual range) the divisions exclude each other any division of secular theory can go with any division of spiritual theory without succumbing to self-contradiction. Accordingly, we arrive at four combinations which are as follows:

- 1) Physical – Theistic
- 2) Physical – Non-Theistic
- 3) Non-Physical – Theistic
- 4) Non-Physical – Non-Theistic

Now let us get to know the meaning of these terms. A theory which regards the independence of physical world is physical. Likewise, a theory which regards the independence of any other substance than physical world is non-physical. The former need not be non-theistic. A theory of reality can accord equal status to this world and god. Surely, it does not involve any self-contradiction. The *Dvaita* and the *Vaisesika* illustrate the former, whereas *charvaka* illustrates the latter. A diagram illustrates the point.



What is to be noted here is that A and B lack connectivity; and so also C and D. In western tradition, the term ‘mind’ replaces the term non-physical. However, in Indian context such usage is inaccurate because, at least, some schools regard mind as sixth organ. The *Sankhya* is one school which regards mind as an evolute

of *prakriti*. Hence, it is as much physical as any other sense organ. The *Vaisheshika* is another school which has to be bracketed with the *Samkhya* in this regard. At this stage, we should get ourselves introduced to two key metaphysical terms, realism and idealism; the former with all its variants regards the external world as ultimately real, whereas the latter with all its variants regards external world as a derivative of mind. Of course, here mind is not to be construed as sixth organ. The *Yogachara*, a later Buddhistic school is one system which subscribes to idealism.

Now it is clear that (A) and (B) are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive. Under (D) there are two sub-divisions; atheistic and agnostic. (C) on the one hand, and atheistic and agnostic on the other hand are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive. Since, atheistic and agnostic doctrines are philosophically different, 2nd and 4th types are further split into two each. So, instead of 4, we will have six theories. Each theory differs from every other theory. The differences are, sometimes gross and some times subtle.

It is, now, more than obvious that Indian philosophy does not lend itself to simple and easy categorization. Complexity and variety must be regarded as salient features of Indian thought. This aspect is further compounded when table 1 and table 2 intersect. Before considering such intersection we should first elucidate table 2.

Table 2 explicates theories of reality and distinguishes theories on the basis of number, i.e., the number of substances, which are regarded as real, becomes the criterion to make any distinction. Monism asserts that reality is one. The assertions of dualistic and pluralistic theories can be ascertained without difficulty, since they stand for 'two' and 'more than two' respectively. Non-dualistic theory, i.e., The *Advaita* is unique. It does not make any assertion about number, but only negates dualism (if dualism is inadmissible, then pluralism is also inadmissible). The *Upanisads* are monistic and The *Vaisesika* is pluralistic.

Now we shall integrate table 1 and table 2. An integration of this sort yields in all twenty four systems. This is not to imply that twenty-four systems dominated the scene. But majority of them did flourish at one time or the other.

Consideration of questions in respect of reality should make it clear that no qualitative difference can be discerned between the Indian and the western traditions. Questions are alike; because problems are alike. But the same set of questions may elicit different answers from different minds at different times and places. Always, *spatio-temporal* factor plays a major role in determining solutions. The last aspect becomes clear after we consider issues in respect of knowledge.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
 b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Show how the key terms Darshana and Tattva can be integrated into the etymological meaning of philosophy.

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2) How do you explain that ultimate reality is knowing reality?

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1.3 KNOWLEDGE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Desire to know is not an extraordinary quality of man. This is an instinct which can be discerned in any animal. However, differences lie elsewhere. The extent of knowledge acquired or capable of being acquired varies from species to species. This is one difference. Second, man's motive to acquire knowledge and his concept of knowledge differ from culture to culture. Previous statement, surely, does not imply ranking of culture. It only shows that the concept of knowledge is relative to culture. The essence of philosophy consists in these two principal factors; motive and idea.

Indian and western concepts, whether ancient or modern, are best understood when they are compared and contrasted. Ancient Greeks believed in the principle 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge', which gave impetus to birth and growth of pure science. In contrast, post-renaissance age heralded the contrary principle 'knowledge is power'. This dictum propagated by Bacon changed for ever the very direction of the evolution of science. However, ancient Indians exhibited a very different mindset. While medicine and surgery developed to meet practical needs, astronomy and mathematics developed for unique reason, neither purely spiritual nor purely mundane, in order to perform *yagas* to meet practical ends and *yajnas* to achieve spiritual gain. At any rate, ancient Indians never believed in Greek dictum. Nor did they, perhaps, think of it. If we regard knowledge as value, then we have to conclude that it was never regarded as intrinsic. On the other hand, it was mainly instrumental. The only exception to this characterization is the *Charvaka* system which can be regarded as the Indian counterpart of epicureanism.

In a restricted sense, the Indian philosophy of knowledge comes very close to the Baconian philosophy of knowledge. Truly, Indians regarded knowledge as power because for them knowledge (and thereby, philosophy) was a way of life and this is the reason why for them knowledge was never intrinsic. But, then, it is absolutely necessary to reverse the connotation of the word 'power'. While the Baconian 'power' was meant to experience control over nature, the Indian 'power' was supposed to be the instrument to subjugate ones own self to nature. This is the prime principle which forms the cornerstone of early *vedic* thought. This radical change in the meaning of the word 'power' also explains the difference in world view which can be easily discerned when the belief-systems and attitudes of Indians and Europeans (for our purpose 'west' means Europe only) are compared and contrasted. Post-Baconian Europe believed that this universe and everything in it is meant to serve the purpose of man because man is the centre of the universe. (The spark of this thought did characterize a certain phase in the development of *vedic* thought, only to be denounced at later stage). On the other hand, ancient Indian believed in identifying himself with nature.

We should carry further our analysis of Baconian ‘power’ *vis-à-vis* the Indian ‘power’. The repetition of what was said earlier is only to reinforce the critical importance of consequences. Knowledge was not only ‘power’ but became a powerful weapon for the westerners to address their economic and political agenda. At no point of time did westerners look upon knowledge as a means to achieve anything even remotely connected to spiritual goal. Just as the *charvaka* is an exception in Indian context, Socrates and Spinoza can be regarded as exceptions in western context. Indians, however, did not regard worldly pleasure as ultimate. For them there was something more important and enduring and therefore the conquest of nature never mattered. Precisely, this attitude has generated lot of needless controversy. This characterization, which, no doubt, is true, was grossly misunderstood and, consequently, it was argued that the Indian thought rejects altogether this world and present life as totally irrelevant and insignificant. This argument, which stems from total misunderstanding, is altogether unwarranted. To say that x is more important than y is not to say that y is insignificant. If something is more important, then it means that something else is ‘less’ important. In other words, Indian tradition, surely, includes the ‘present’ life, but it is not restricted to it; goes beyond it. This point becomes clear in the third chapter.

Evidently, Indian tradition maintains a certain hierarchy of values unlike western tradition. Knowledge, as a way of life, encompasses not only all sorts of values but also it changes one’s own perspective. Accordingly, the so-called spiritual goal in life can be attained only by one who has acquired knowledge. It points to the fact that ignorance or *avidya* is a hindrance to attain spiritual goal in particular and any other goal in general. One who has acquired true knowledge or knows truly, acts and thinks, very differently, different from ignorant, a characteristic Socratic thought in Indian attire. However, this characteristic is conspicuous by its absence in western tradition. It was not necessary that personal life of a philosopher should match his philosophy, in the sense that a philosopher’s life need not be a role model for lesser mortals to emulate. While Socrates and Spinoza are at one end of the thread, Bacon and Heidegger are at the opposite end. The point is that in Indian tradition, philosophy and value are inseparable, whereas in the west it is not so. A philosopher, in the west, can be (not that there are) worse than a hardened criminal. But in Indian context it is inconceivable.

This sort of emphasis upon values led to a hermeneutic blunder. Without batting his eye lid the critic, just like protagonist, argued that in Indian philosophy was never distinct from religion. Hence in India there was no philosophy at all worth the name according to critics. That there was no religion in India (with the exclusion of tribal religion) is a different story. The so-called *Hindu dharma* cannot be mistaken and ought not to be mistaken for religion. This confusion arose because many scholars mistakenly identified religion with spirituality. An analogy may clear the mist surrounding Indian philosophy. Western philosophy is not divided into Christian philosophy and Jewish philosophy, though all western philosophers (excluding Greek philosophers) in loose sense are either Christians or Jews. Likewise, it is highly inappropriate to talk about ‘*Hindu philosophy*’, though majority of Indian philosophers were ‘committed’ *Hindus*. It is true that a few philosophers in India became the heads of religious groups or sects (eg. *Ramanuj or Madhva*). But then we have St. Augustine, St. Aquinas, etc. in the west also. But nobody characterizes their philosophy as Christian philosophy. But surely, we have *Buddhist* or *Jaina* philosophy because neither *Buddhism* nor

Jainism is a religion in the strict sense of the term. At this point, a pertinent question arises, if there is Buddhist philosophy, then why not Hindu philosophy? To believe that there is such philosophy amounts to putting the cart in front of the horse. Philosophy in India did not originate from *Sanatana dharma* – or Hindu *dharma* as it is popularly known as – but it is the other way round.

Therefore, in sharp contrast to western tradition, Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual. When it was said earlier that in India also knowledge is regarded as power, what was meant was that knowledge was regarded as spiritual power; spiritual which is totally non-religious in its nature.

It is an error to assume that spiritual overtones can be discerned only in knowledge. The concept of reality and aesthetic values also are endowed with spirituality. The *Upanisadic* or *Advaitic* notion of *Brahman* is a classic example. It is spiritual because it is neither worldly (physical) nor religious. If knowledge is spiritual, then its *prama* (object) also must be spiritual. ‘*Raso vai sah*’ (that is, indeed, *rasa*) is an example for spiritual status of aesthetic value. In this case ‘that’ according to, at least one interpretation means ‘*Para Brahma*’ or highest reality and *Rasa* may be taken to mean beauty. The metaphysical or spiritual element involved in philosophy must have been hijacked by religions to formulate their notions of gods (and perhaps to counter their rivals).

Let us return to knowledge again. Indian philosophy recognizes knowledge at two levels; *Para Vidya* (higher knowledge) and *Apara vidya* (lower knowledge). Since knowledge is spiritual, only the former is true knowledge, whereas the latter is not knowledge at all in the strict sense of the term. Though the *Upanisads* subscribe to this view, subsequent systems, (with the exception of *Purva Mimamsa*) which are supposed to be commentaries on the *Upanishads*, regarded perception, for example, as a way of knowledge. *Upamana* is another *pramana*. Not only lower knowledge, but also erroneous knowledge was seriously considered as species of knowledge (e.g., *akhyati*) by systems of philosophy. Therefore even *Apara Vidya* retained its place. Does Indian philosophy integrate spiritual life with worldly affairs? If the claim, that upholding of the former is not tantamount to the rejection of the latter, then it does not. The truth is that the former does not entail the latter. Therefore these two had to be fused and it was achieved in a remarkable manner; *purusartha* scheme clarifies that only through *Dharma*, i.e., righteous means, man should acquire *artha* (wealth) and satisfy *kama* (any sensuous desire), the very same means to attain *moksha* (liberation). The law of parsimony is very well adhered to as regards the questions of social philosophy and moral philosophy.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

- 1) Explain briefly that theories of reality can be understood from two different angles, that is, from spiritual and secular angles.

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2) Do you agree with some Indian schools that regard mind as sixth organ?

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1.4 PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

Earlier, it was said that in India philosophy itself was regarded as a value and also that value and human life are inextricably blended. What is the aim of life? Against this backdrop, it is easy to discover solution to this quest in Indian philosophy. It is not so easy to reach the same in western tradition (it is true that existentialism attempted the same, but it remained a sort of island and was obliterated by analytic tradition). The aim of life according to Indian tradition is to make a pilgrimage from 'misery to happiness'. This is a single thread which runs through the whole gamut of Indian philosophy. At one point of time, vertical split occurred in philosophical tradition leading to the birth of orthodox and heterodox schools of thought. However, they concur on one issue, i.e., the aim of life. (It is a commonplace practice to regard them as *vedic* and non-*vedic* schools though it is not very satisfactory to regard so). The dispute between these two poles did not prevent them from embracing a common goal. In what sense is this goal a philosophical issue? This is one question which arises in this context; how can two opposing schools of thought have a common denominator? This is another. Answer to the first question can be construed as follows. Knowledge as value is unique by itself. If the instrument which gives thrust to the quality of lifestyle has any economic value, then from a different perspective, if any, knowledge which reforms lifestyle also must possess value. Therefore knowledge became 'the' value in Indian thought. A *Jnani* in Socratic sense perceives not only routine life, but also the world in which he lives, differently because knowledge changes his world view. This type of change carries with it moral value. It means that the aim of life becomes an ethical issue. In this sense it becomes a philosophical issue. Answer to second question is still simpler. All schools of philosophy unanimously admit that the pursuit of happiness is the sole aim and unanimity stops there. But these two poles differ when they specify what happiness is. An example may make the point clear. All political parties, in their election manifesto, proclaim that their sole aim is uplifting the downtrodden. But the mechanism of doing so differs from one party to the other. Now the position is clear. Orthodox and heterodox schools differ on what happiness is and on what constitutes happiness. Even within heterodox system the idea of happiness differs. The *Charvaka* school maintains that happiness consists in pleasure whereas the Buddhism asserts that happiness consists in *nirvana* if happiness is to be construed as elimination of misery.

Earlier, it was mentioned that spirituality is the essence of Indian philosophy. Against this background, let us analyse what happiness is. Neither this physical

world nor earthly pleasure is permanent. Nor are they ultimate. Hopefully, no one entertains the illusion that this world is eternal. However, not many care to think whether or not everlasting peace or happiness is possible within the bounds of finite world. Indian philosophy is characterized by this thought. The desire to attain eternity is common to the Greek and the Indian traditions. However, in the latter case this desire takes a different form. Hence eternity is tantamount to permanent liberation from misery. A permanent liberation from misery is tantamount to attainment of permanent happiness and this is eternity. It is variously designated as *moksha*, *nirvana*, etc. In its ordinary sense *vairagya* means renouncing happiness. But in real sense what has to be renounced is not happiness, but pleasure. *Vairagya* in conjunction with knowledge leads to eternal happiness. Hence in Indian context *vairagya* is 'renounce worldly pleasure and attain eternal happiness'. It is possible that the very idea of renunciation invites strong objections. But in one definite sense such a renunciation is desirable. *Vairagya* should be construed as elimination of greed and inclusion of contentment in life. This is the hidden meaning of *vairagya*. What happened, in course of time, was that both dimensions were wrongly interpreted leading to the conclusion that *vairagya* is not only negative but also is the sign of pessimism. It did not stop at this stage, but extended to the whole of Indian philosophy.

At this point, it is necessary to digress; In the twentieth century, westerners believed that in India there was nothing like philosophy, but only myth and casuistry in the garb of philosophy. While the western scholars argued that in India, philosophy was totally corrupted by religion, some Indian scholars under the influence of Marxism failed to separate philosophy from custom and tradition afflicting Indian society. The merits and demerits of their arguments and counterarguments are not relevant presently. But the sense, in which the world religion has to be construed, if it has to be regarded as philosophically constructive, is important. If the word religion is taken to mean tribal religion, then its association with philosophy spells doom to the latter. In India, philosophy was not influenced by religion in this sense. On the other hand, various religious sects, which grew later, were influenced by philosophy.

But the criticisms of those scholars, who admit that in ancient India there was philosophic movement, merit our considerations. According to one criticism, Indian thought prompted negative outlook and therefore, is self-destructive only because it negates the reality of physical world. This criticism can be rebutted in two stages. In the first place, Indian philosophy does not deny the physical world in absolute terms. A particular system of philosophy does not become a negative doctrine just because it regards the world as impermanent and that what is impermanent is regarded as not ultimately real. No scientist has ever dared to say that the universe is eternal. If the critic's argument is admitted, then Plato's philosophy also becomes negative in character. Indian philosophers, like Plato, admitted something permanent. Impermanence and permanence are relative terms; relevance of any one of them demands the relevance of another. Secondly, what is relative is always relative to something different. There is nothing like absolute relativity. The last two statements which, actually, explicate the essence of the theory of relativity holds good here also.

Now let us consider the second stage of refutation. Is it legitimate to categorize any doctrine as negative? Refutation is an important step in arguments. But it is

not final. If science can be 'characterized as satisfying a negative requirement such as falsifiability' (Karl Popper, 1959, p.41), then philosophy, whether Indian or western, also is entitled to the same benefit or status. To a great extent Indian philosophy followed the principle of 'Assertion through refutation'. Precisely this principle was upheld by Popper.

Second criticism is as follows; it is pessimistic. Any theory, which negates this world and life in absolute sense, ought to be pessimistic. The very fact that this criticism draws support from two sources of error shows the degree of misunderstanding. First, the desire to escape from misery was misconstrued as the desire to escape from external world. Second, it discourages earthly pleasure. Let us consider the second source first. Negation of earthly pleasure is not tantamount to the negation of happiness because pleasure and happiness are, evidently, different. *Moksha* is simply Sanskrit version of happiness. Pleasure is not only momentary but also is not pure in the sense that pleasure always comes with pain. If we consider Bentham's criteria, then these criteria satisfy not pleasure but happiness. Duration, intensity and purity do not, in reality, characterize pleasure but happiness. Perhaps proximity alone satisfies pleasure. If so, even from practical standpoint any philosophy which regards *moksha* as ideal ceases to be pessimistic.

Now let us turn to the first source. Desire to escape from this world describes the mindset of an escapist. There are references to rebirth. Rebirth may only be a myth and something beyond verification. But when attainment of *moksha* is regarded as a possibility during the lifespan of an individual (this is what is called *jivanmukti*), there is no reason to regard the external world as an evil. It is, however, true that not only critics, but also the votaries of Indian philosophy misunderstood the concept of *moksha* and it led to the cardinal mistake of treating external world as evil.

One more objection can be raised to *moksha*. Is *moksha* a meaningful ideal? In the first place *moksha* must be possible, and secondly, its realisation must be humanly possible. In the absence of either of them does it not cease to be meaningful? Let us assume that it is humanly possible to attain *moksha*. Then it remains an ideal. If we pursue an unattainable ideal, then we progress towards that ideal. What matters is progress. Plato's Utopia is an example which comes very close to the ideal of *moksha* in this respect. Progress in right direction is true progress. Therefore, knowing fully well that it is humanly impossible to achieve a goal like *moksha*, man pursues *moksha*. Thereby man progresses from lower level to higher level. This is a singular advantage of accepting something like *moksha* as an ideal.

In the western tradition only Greeks believed in the immortality of soul. It became totally alien to modern western philosophy, though it found favour with Christianity. The paradox is that immortality of soul is a common theme to Christianity and Indian philosophy, whereas it ought to have been a common to western philosophy and Christianity because west happens to be the mainland of Christianity. It illustrates one crucial factor. Religion does not determine philosophy. On the other hand, philosophy has the required potential at least to influence religion, if not determine the same.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

- 1) What do you understand by the belief that 'knowledge is power' in the Western and Indian context?

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- 2) Do you agree with the view that Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words which mean love of knowledge or wisdom. In Indian tradition philosophy means *Darshana* or *tattva*. Indian outlook is essentially different from western outlook. In terms of problems there is no difference between Indian and western philosophical traditions. Indians perceived knowledge as power in a different perspective. Bacon regarded knowledge as the means to establish authority over external world. On the other hand, Indians regarded knowledge as essential to establish control over ones own self. Indians recognized philosophy itself as a value. Therefore philosophy, in India, was accepted as a way of life. With the sole exception of the *Charvaka*, all other systems of philosophy in India accepted liberation in one or the other sense. *Moksha*, is one such ideal. Philosophy is independent of religion. However, religion may or may not be independent of philosophy.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Yagas and Yajnas : Yagas amd Yajnas are sacared rituals done to appease God, performed during the Vedic period.

Pessimism : Pessimism, from the Latin '*pessimus*' (worst), is a painful state of mind which negatively colours the perception of life, especially with regard to future events. Value judgments may vary dramatically between individuals, even when judgments of fact are undisputed.

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1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) In Indian context philosophy is understood as '*darsana*' -to see or to realize. This realization corresponds to that of knowledge. When we say that we are realizing a thing, it amounts to say that we have some sort of knowledge. This correspondence relationship is one to one and it is nearly isomorphic. *Tattva* stands for two words '*tat*' and '*tva*'. The etymological meaning of this word is 'you are that'. This mainly refers to the Ultimate reality in Indian philosophy. The word *darsana* stands for the ultimate reality and it is a knowing reality thus involving both metaphysical and epistemological component and satisfactorily explaining the description of *darsana* in Indian context.

- 2) The word '*darsana*' comes from the word *tattva* – the ultimate reality. This ultimate reality is the knowing reality. It not only describes about metaphysical component but also epistemological component. However, the summation of both the components is necessary in describing *darsana*. Epistemological component is very important, since it involves in knowing the ultimate reality. In the initial stage there was no distinction between reality and epistemic subject. Epistemologically knowledge became inward. In the course of time human related oneself to value and identified with the reality. So in Indian context, value is not regarded only to the subject matter of philosophy but philosophy itself is regarded as value.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Theories of realities can be understood in two different angles, that is, from spiritual and secular angles. First of all, reality is defined as the ultimate source of everything but that itself does not have any source. Feyerabend comments that this sort of definition failed to recognize reality as neither spiritual nor secular. However complex discipline like philosophy does not allow such divisions. Obviously, we discover that reality has both spiritual and secular face which are mutually exhaustive and totally exclusive, that is, physical and non-physical. We arrive at four combinations. They are 1) physical theistic, 2) physical non-theistic, 3) non-physical theistic, 4) non-physical non-theistic. The theory which regards the independence of the physical world is physical while the theory which regards the independence of any other substance other than the physical world is non-physical.
- 2) In Indian context, some schools regard mind as sixth organ. *Samkhya* is one school which regards mind as evolutes of *prakrti*. Hence, it is as much physical as any other sense or another organ. *Vaisesika* is another school which has to be bracketed with *Samkhya* in this regard. At this stage, we should get ourselves introduced to two key metaphysical terms, realism and idealism; the former with all its variants regards the external world as ultimately real, whereas the latter with all its variants regards external world as a derivative of mind. Of course, here mind is not to be costumed as sixth organ. *Yogacara*, a later Buddhistic school, is one system which subscribes to idealism.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) In post-renaissance age Bacon propagated the famous dictum 'knowledge is power'. This principle changed for ever the very direction of the evolution of science. But the ancient Indians never believed in this dictum. On the contrary, they performed *yagas* to meet practical ends and *yajnas* to achieve spiritual gain.

But in a strict sense, Indians regarded knowledge as power because for them knowledge was a way of life and this is the reason why for them knowledge was never intrinsic. However, it is necessary to look into the connotation of the word power. The Baconian 'power' was necessary to experience control over nature, but the Indian 'power' was supposed to be the instrument to subjugate ones own self to nature. This is the prime principle which forms the cornerstone of early *vedic* thought. This radical change in the meaning of the word 'power' also explains the difference in worldview which can be

easily discerned when the belief-systems and attitudes of Indians and Europeans are compared and contrasted.

- 2) Unlike western tradition, Indian tradition maintains a hierarchy of values. In Indian context, spiritual goal in life can be achieved by the one who has acquired knowledge. However this type of characteristics is absent in western tradition. Many times Indian Philosophy was mistaken to be religion. This confusion made many to identify religion with spirituality. Philosophy in India did not originate from *sanatana dharma* – or Hindu *dharma*. Therefore, in sharp contrast to western tradition, Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual. When it was said earlier that in India also knowledge is regarded as power, what was meant was that knowledge is spiritual power, spiritual which is totally non-religious in its nature. Indian philosophy recognizes knowledge at two levels; *Para Vidya* (higher knowledge) and *apara vidya* (lower knowledge). Since knowledge is spiritual, only the former is true knowledge; whereas the latter is not knowledge at all in the strict sense of the term.

UNIT 2 INDIAN SCRIPTURES

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The subject matter of *Smriti*
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- 2.7 Key Words
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- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you are exposed to the sources of Indian culture. However, the study material excludes prominent texts like the *Vedas* (also called *Sruti*) sources of the *Buddhism* and the *Jainism* since there are other units reserved for these sources. This unit, therefore, includes only the following:

- *smriti*,
- mythology
- *vedangas* and
- epics

Since they only belong to the periphery of philosophy, mere cursory reference will suffice.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The word '*smriti*' means 'that which is in memory.' The texts, which are called '*smriti*', appeared in written form at the initial stage itself because it was not regarded as blasphemy to put it in written form unlike *sruti*. The age of *smriti*, followed the age of *Vedas*. Since the *Vedic* period stretches to several centuries, it is also likely that *smriti* might have appeared during the closing period of the *Vedas*. Consequently, all *smritikaras* (the founders of *smriti*) claimed that their works drew support from the *Vedas* and also that their works are nothing more than clarifications of the *Vedas*. However, we can easily discern in *smritis* lot of variations from *Vedas*. Evidently, such deviations do not get any support from the *Vedas*.

2.2 THE SUBJECT MATTER OF *SMRITI*

Smriti is also known as *Dharma Shasthra*, which means code of conduct. The code of conduct has three divisions; rituals, discharge of social responsibility and atonement for sins which include crimes. It is important to note that there is

no mention of rights – fundamental or any other type. The emphasis is upon ‘prescription and proscription’ only. The code of conduct is identical with the ‘constitution’ and so it is the same as penal code formulated by the present-day governments. Hence, *smriti* emphasizes two aspects of life; ‘*Dharmic*’ and social. The former does not simply exist without the latter. The role of ritual is restricted to individual life; household work to be precise. All these dimensions together constitute ‘*Dharma Shastra*’. Though it is claimed that there were several *Smritis*, history has recorded only a few. Among them only three are well known; sometimes for wrong reasons. *Vidhi* and *Nishedha* were codified by three persons, *Manu*, *Yajnyavalkya* and *Parashara*, and consequently, the *smritis* were named after them. A cursory reference to these *Smritis* is enough.

An important aspect of *smriti* is its rigidity. Fixation of duties and emphasis upon duties resemble, to a great extent, the directive principles enshrined in the constitution. While four-fold division of society is one type, four fold division of individual life is another. *Smriti* is very clear about not only four classes, but also four stages (*brahmacharya*, *garhastya*, *vaanaprastha* and *samnyasa*) in the life of an individual. There is no scope for switching from one position to another in a random manner. The last division, viz., atonement for sins deals precisely with this sort of prohibited switching. The upshot of this discrimination is that liberty took back seat, but stability in society was prioritized. This will help us to infer the kind of political system which *smriti* supported. Surely, *smriti* did not support democratic system, though during *Vedic* age democratic system flourished.

2.3 MYTHOLOGY

Mythology and History in India, it is claimed, are indistinguishable. Mythology in Sanskrit means ‘*purana*’. This word has two slightly differing etymological meanings; *pura* (past), *ateetam* (Lost), *anaagatam* (about to happen) – is one meaning. *pura* (past), *bhavam* (happened) is another. In terms of structure *purana* consists of five components. They are listed as follows:

- 1) Description of nation or nations and their history
- 2) History of creation
- 3) History of re-creation
- 4) Description of dynasties
- 5) Story of each *Manu* (*Manvantara*)

First and fourth components do incorporate elements of history. However, there is a vital difference, history follows a certain method and therefore, at some point to time or the other, it is possible to dispute what a historian claims, because history tries to gather as many evidences (not facts) as possible. *Puranas*, however, are altogether different. The relevance of evidences is totally alien to puranas. It is, therefore, impossible to refute what *puranas* claim. Nor can we defend the same.

Puranas are eighteen in number. Since they are not relevant philosophically, it is not even necessary to list them. In addition to five components mentioned earlier, many *puranas* deal with cosmology. Perhaps this is the only topic common to philosophy and *puranas*. Interestingly, one *purana*, viz., *vayu-purana* attempts at geography, music, etc. Apart from the neglect of evidence, *puranas* suffer

from one more defect. All *puranas* combine legends related to gods and demons, life after death, etc. which disqualify mythology from becoming worthy of serious philosophical study.

In defence of puranas, it can be said that though puranas are related to mainly theological issues, they include almost all activities of life and hence they ought to occupy an important position in the list of disciplines. But this all inclusiveness itself is a serious defect.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Discuss briefly the rigidity of *Smriti*

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2) Explain briefly the meaning of *Puranas*

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2.4 VEDANGAS

Vedangas are also known as *shadangas*, which means six organs. The function of these six organs is to explicate the intricate thoughts of the *Vedas*. Those organs are *shiksha* (phonetics), *vyakarana* (grammar; to be more specific, *Vedic* grammar), *chandasa* (prosody), *nirukta* (etymology and dictionary), *jyautisha* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (rituals).

It was believed that proper understanding of the *Vedic* texts is possible only when all these organs are strictly followed. Two extraordinary characteristics of the *Vedas* form the background of these organs. In the first place, the *Vedas* were held to be *apaurusheya* (independent of man). Therefore, no change in any form for any reason was admissible. Secondly, it was also believed that the *Vedas* should be taught and learnt only orally. Consequently, it took several centuries for Indians to put the *Vedas* in writing. Without going into the merits and demerits of this particular prescription, we should examine the role played by *Vedanga* in protecting the *Vedic* tradition.

SHIKSHA

Sayana, in his *Rig-Veda Bhashya*, has defined *shiksha* as follows; ‘that which teaches pronunciation in accordance with *swara* (vowel) and *Varna* (letter) is called *shiksha*. Clarity in speech and ability to listen correctly are the pre-requisite to learn the *Vedas*. This is the reason why the *Vedas* are also called ‘*anushrava* (that which follows listening). The emphasis upon clear pronunciation is perfectly understandable because due to unique structure of the *Vedic* language, which is the most primitive form of Sanskrit language set by very different grammar, even the slightest variation in pronunciation could lead to total change of meaning.

VYAKARANA, CHANDAS & NIRUKTA

The next three organs are not unique in the sense that the role, which they play with regard to the *Vedic* language, is very much similar to the role of grammar or dictionary in any other language. Since no language is possible without grammar, *Vedic* grammar must be as old as the *Vedas*. If the *Vedas* are *apaurusheya*, then the *Vedic* grammar also ought to have been *apaurusheya*. However, it is not the case. Among the extant works of grammar, *Panini*’s work ‘*ashtaadhyayi*’ is the oldest one. It is said that this is a fourth Century A.D. work. However, earlier *Vedic* dictionaries mention other *vaiyakaranas*. Since the dictionary is more ancient than *Panini*’s work, it is obvious that other *vaiyakaranas*’ works are more ancient. The mention of these aspects shows that grammar is *paurusheya*. Hence language should be *paurusheya*. However, one grammarian by name *Shakatayana* maintains that even grammar is *apaurusheya*. According to him, the oldest work on grammar is *aindra vyakarana*. It is named so since, according to the legend, men received it from *Indra*.

The source of prosody is ‘*chandassutra*’ by one *Pingalacharya*. Nothing is known about this author. This work includes both *Vedic* and non-*Vedic* prosody. Generally, the *Samhitas* are bound by definite prosody. Only *Krishna-Yajurveda* and *Atharva-Veda samhitas* are occasionally prosaic. Hence, prosody occupies a prominent role in the study of the *Vedas*. *Panini* says, ‘*chandah padau tu vedasya*’. Which means prosody is the very foundation of *Vedas*. In course of time, the *Vedic* language itself became prosody. The *Vedic* prosody has one unique feature, which is mentioned by *Katyayana*. He says, ‘*yat akshara parimanam tat chandah*’. It means, ‘the one which determines the number (or quantity) of letters, that is prosody. It should be noted that this is not the case with secular Sanskrit. It is said that the latter evolved from the former.

The *Vedic* prosody consists of what is called *paada* or quartet. Generally, a quartet is supposed to possess four letters. This, perhaps, became a characteristic at the later stage because there are eleven principal prosody, which differ not only in the number of quartets, but also in the number of letters in each quartets, whereas *trishtup chandas* consists of four quartets with eleven letters in each of them. A prosody may differ from another as regards the pattern of quartets. For example, *kakup chandas* has eight letters in the first and third quartets and twelve letters in the second. This difference shows that there is a little freedom here which is conspicuous by its absence elsewhere.

Nirukta provides the meaning of the *Vedic* terms. In the first step, terms were collected which constituted dictionary. Mere synonym or lexical meaning would defeat the very purpose of compiling terms. *Nirukta* does not provide just this

sort of meaning. What it indulges in is hermeneutic exercise. Hence it is more than any ordinary dictionary.

Let us start with the structure of dictionary. A lexicographer, by name *Yaska* collected these terms and provided the most authentic interpretation. The dictionary consists of in all 1770 terms spread over three *kaandas*. First *kaanda* consists of three chapters, which is called ‘*naighantuka*’, second and third consisting of one chapter each are called ‘*naigama* and *daivata*. *Nirukta* is an interpretation of these terms mainly and to some extent he has quoted some *mantras* and interpreted the same. *Nirukta* itself consists of fourteen chapters of which first six chapters deal with *naighantuka kaanda* and *Naigama Kanda* and the next six chapters deal with *Daivata Kanda*. Last two are somewhat like appendices.

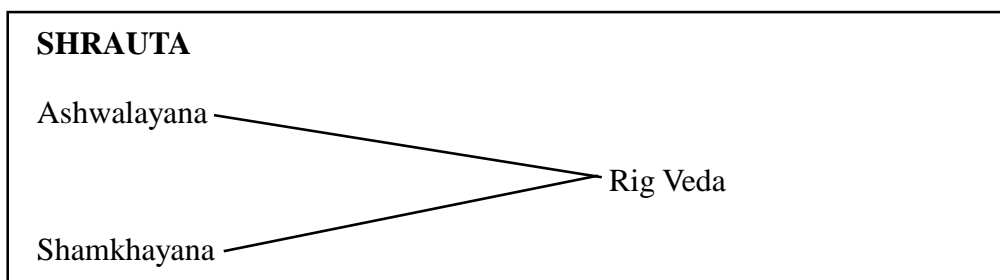
JYAUTISHA

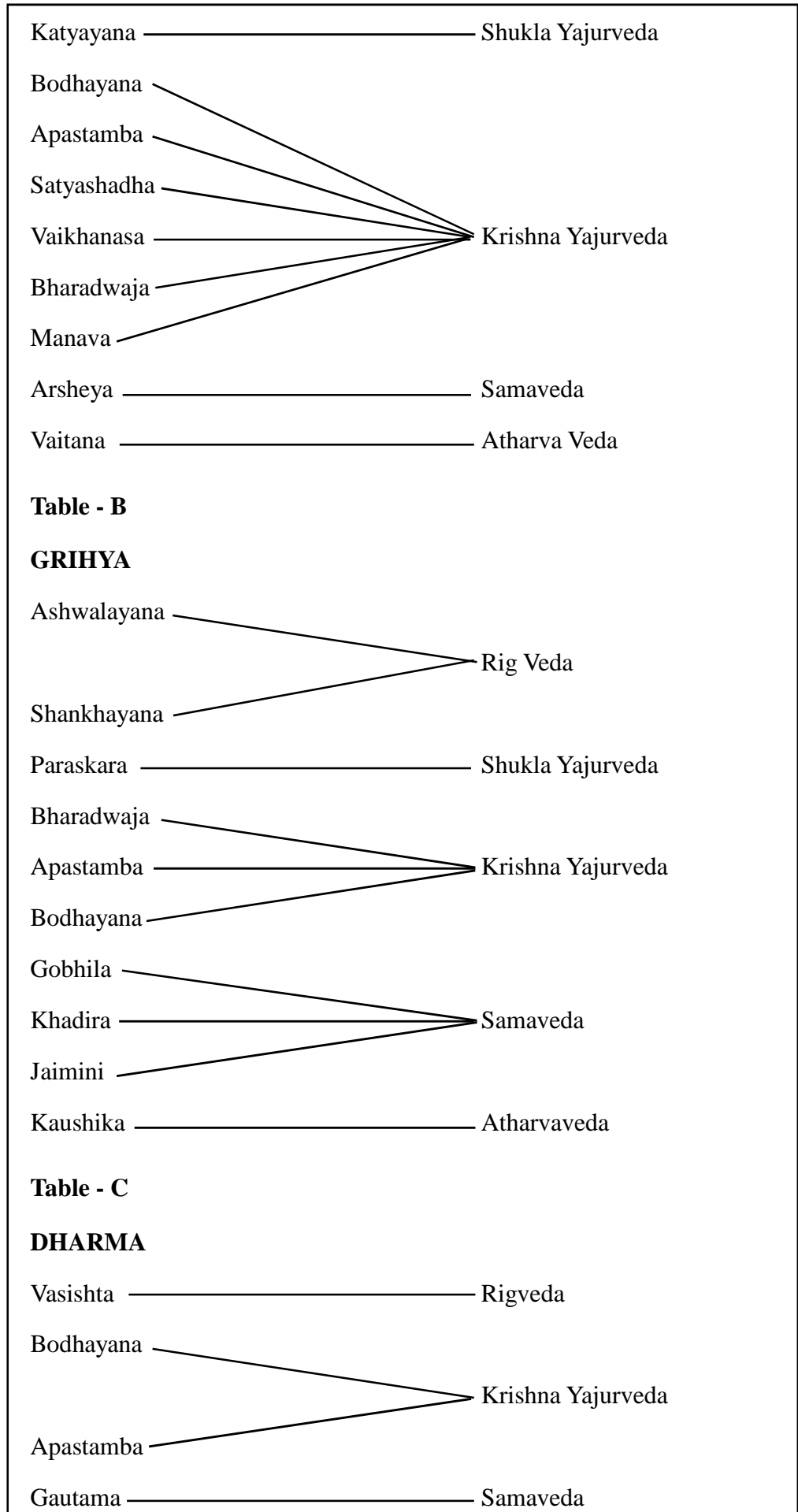
Astronomy evolved in ancient India out of necessity. *Yajnas* and *yagas* could not be performed at the discretion of any one. In the strict sense of the term, it was seasonal. Every *varna* (except *shudra*) had a fixed season to perform *yajnas*. *Taittiriya Brahmana* spoke so, ‘*vasante brahmanaha*, (Brahman during spring), *agnimaadadheeta* (ignite holy fire), *greeshme rajanyaha* (*Kshatriya* during summer), *aadadheeta*, *sharadi vaishyaha* (*Vaishya* during post-monsoon) *aadadheeta*’. Igniting holy fire is very important because only it ought to set any programme in motion. Not only was season important, but also exact time of starting *yajnas* was important for which it was necessary to track the movement of not only the sun but also all celestial bodies. Most important among them are twenty-seven stars. This could be done only with adequate knowledge of astronomy.

KALPA SUTRAS

Kalpa sutras are so called because whatever material is provided by them is all in the form of formulas. The explanation *Kalpa sutras* is the same as that of *Brahma Sutra*; *alpaksharam* (brief), *asandigdham* (unambiguous or incontrovertible), *saaravat* (complete in essence), *vishwato mukham* (all inclusive). *Kalpa sutra* literally means action – indicating formula. Action is of four types, *shrauta*, *grihya*, *dharma* and *shulba*. The last one differs, more or less, in type from the rest. Hence, let us consider it at the end. The first three are common to *Rig*, *Yajur* and *Sama*. But all three *Kalpa Sutras* differ from one *Veda* to another as regards prescriptions and scope. For example, *Ashwalayana* and *Shamkhayana sutras* of *Rig Veda* cover all three *Kalpa sutras*. Since every class of *sutra* has distinct commands, they constitute rituals. Let us consider each *Kalpa* separately and represent membership using tables.

Table – A





Let us examine what these *sutras* are about. *Ashwalayana sutra* was founded by *Ashwalayana*, a student of *Shaunaka*. Likewise, many *sutras* are known after the names of the founders just as many laws and theories in science are named after scientists like Newton's Laws of Motion, etc. All *shrauta sutras* specify the manner in which *yajnas* and *yagas* have to be performed. They are essentially prescriptive which do not allow any room for deviation. The very fact that there are several *shrauta sutras*, which subscribe to different *Vedas*, indicates that there were several ways in which *yajnas* were performed.

Two aspects deserve mention. *Yagas* were performed solely with the motive of reaping worldly benefits. Second, man was ineligible to perform *Yaga* in the absence of wife, which means she enjoyed equal status if not more.

Grihya sutras prescribe household duties. The point to be noted is that all *Grihya sutras* agree on one particular count, i.e., what ought to be done. But they differ on another count, i.e., how it ought to be done. No *Grihya sutra* disagrees, for example, with the relevance of, say, marriage. But they disagree with the manner in which it is to be performed. Secondly, all four *sutras* are complementary to each other. So there is neither choice nor contradiction. To fulfill his obligation one has to perform all rituals in the manner prescribed.

The rituals pertaining to *Grihya sutras* are of two types. One type of rituals has to be performed only once in life (in some cases, there are exceptions). Second type of rituals has to be performed everyday or once in a year. There are sixteen such obligations which are called '*shodasha samskaras*'. There are four classes of such *samskaras*; *samskaras* to be performed before birth, after birth, to begin the learning of the *Vedas* and to prepare man for marriage, etc. It should be noted that there are separate *samskaras* for men and women.

It is not necessary to consider all these *samskaras*. What is important is to know the manner in which they were followed and qualifications which were held as necessary. The characteristic of these *samskaras* is that they were (or are) not regarded as common to all *Varnas*. Two types of discrimination are well known. One discrimination is *Varna* based; i.e., Brahmana, Kshatriya, etc. Second discrimination is gender based. The first category of discrimination must have eventually led to the caste system. It, also, might have resulted in hierarchy. Secondly, gender based discrimination did not affect men. In a way, it was inconsequential as far as man was considered. But it was not so in the case of women. One argument is that women, like *shudras*, were denied of education because they were not entitled to some crucial *samskaras*. It is insignificant that men were not entitled to some *samskaras* to which women were entitled because this limitation did not really affect men. But it was not so in the case of women. One particular *samskara* deserve special mention. *Brahmopadesha*, for example, is not permissible for *shudras* and *women*, even to this day. It is this particular *samskara* which makes *Brahmin* caste, in particular, a distinct caste. It also explains why *brahmin* is called '*DWIJA*' (twice born) after the completion of this *samskara*. It is said that before this *samskara* is performed, *brahmin* is not a *brahmin* at all and so this *samskara* is supposed to give second birth to him.

Surely, even within the framework of *chaturvarnya* (Four-fold *Varnas*) system this particular argument is not endorsed by all. The fact that the argument, being referred to, is at variance with some established or accepted norms set by *smritis* was totally ignored while speaking about *brahmins*. Our purpose, surely, is not go into the merits and demerits or *chaturvarnya* or caste system, but to demonstrate structural changes which took place in belief-systems, perspective in which age old customs came to be understood, and consequently rapid changes which affected the society because this is what precisely happened over centuries in Indian society.

If we consider the literal meaning of the word '*samskara*', then it becomes evident that it is meant to uplift man (or woman) spiritually. It is argued that they also produce other class of positive results; physical well being is one. If so, why was a certain class (or classes) denied of this benefit? It is not possible to discover any answer to this question within the framework of philosophy. A psychologist or sociologist may throw some light on such questions.

In spite of the fact that *samskaras* were spiritual in nature, the ulterior motive behind adherence to them is mundane. It is very easy to discover in the *samskaras* some spiritual support, if not any foundation, for all aspects of earthly life. For different reasons the *samskaras* did not receive support from the *Upanishads* and heterodox systems. The *Upanishads* disapproved the *samskaras* because the goal was this-worldly. The heterodox systems strongly reacted to the *samskaras* because they claimed affinity to the *Vedas*. Despite difference in their philosophy, both the *Upanishads* and the heterodox systems adhered to life in monastery. Their apathy to anything connected with earthly life is behind their antagonism to the *samskaras*. This discussion also brings to the surface an important fact that philosophy and religion do not coincide always if religion is understood as *Dharma*. While *samskaras* stand for *Dharma*, the *Upanishads* stand for philosophy.

Kaushika Sutra of *Atharvaveda* is unique because this *sutra* does not deal with any type of spiritual matter unlike previously mentioned *sutras*. It throws some *light* on herbal plant and thereby it helps in understanding ancient system of Indian medicine.

There is a sharp distinction between *Grihya sutras* and *Dharma sutras*. While *Grihya sutras* regulate man's actions which are restricted to family, *Dharma sutras* have societal leaning. *Gautama's Dharma sutras* appears to be the earliest one. These *sutras* specify not only the obligations within the frame-work of *chaturvarnya*, but also '*Raja Dharma*' – the duties of ruler. In Indian context morality is essentially based upon what the *Dharma sutra* specifies. Hence the limits and defects of *Dharma sutras* have distinct bearing on the acceptability of moral principles.

Last one to be considered in this section is *Shulba sutra*. Though this *Sutra* also is relevant in the context of performing *yagnas*, it is restricted to geometrical aspects only because in the absence of adequate knowledge of geometry it was impossible to construct the *Vedic* atlas. *Shulba sutra* is an example of primitive technology developed by ancient Indians to meet the demands of ecclesiastical dimension of life.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What do you understand by *Shiksha*?

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2) Write a short note on *Grihiya Sutras*

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2.5 EPICS

Though the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are two epics which have influenced literature for several centuries in all parts of India, the *Ramayana* is not significant philosophically, unlike the *Mahabharata* and we are not concerned with the literary value of these two epics. So it is sufficient if we notice that the *Ramayana* accepts the principles of *Sanatana Dharma* and duties of ruler in particular. Since there is nothing philosophically new in this work, we need not consider it. It will serve our purpose if we concentrate on philosophical component of the *Mahabharata*.

Logic and epistemology which constitute any philosophical tradition have nothing to do with us when we study culture literature, etc. The *Mahabharata* is not an exception. We can trace however, two philosophical issues in this work; one is expounded in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, rather in a very unsatisfactory manner, because it is mainly a work in theistic tradition. Second one is morality and polity expounded by two prominent characters; *Vidura* and *Bheeshma*. But these philosophical issues in this work suffer from a serious drawback – draw back from philosophical point of view. Nowhere in this work do we find discussion, or criticism which is the hallmark of philosophy. More than anything else, what we find is only a sermon. Therefore brief reference to these elements is enough.

THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF VIDURA

From the point of view of ethics, it is desirable to regard some characters as personification of virtue. *Vidura* and *Bheeshma* belong to this category. In contrast to these characters in the *Mahabharata*, we have other characters which are regarded as personification of evil. Why should any epic portray evil characters? This is one question. Are they in a broader perspective, really evil forces? This is

another question. The second question is much deeper philosophically and cannot be answered easily. First one is slightly easier to handle. An epic must be vast. Hence it ought to include all facts of world and all aspects of life. So evil characters ought to find place in any epic worth the name.

Vidura's exposition of moral principles begins with a clear distinction between *shreyas* (desirable) and *preyas* (pleasing). He compares *shreyas* with medicine which is not palatable. It is immediately followed by a second analogy to demonstrate the status of pleasure which is invariably accompanied by evil. To make this concomitant relation explicit, *Vidura* compares pleasure with honey, pleasure seeker with one who collects honey and evil with abyss and says that the pleasure hunter is busy only in seeking honey unmindful of impending danger of falling into the abyss.

In the *Mahabharata*, *Vidura* plays his role on three occasions. On second occasion, *Vidura* plays the role of a counselor. His counseling has moral base. He makes an explicit distinction between two states of mind; those of wise man and ignorant. While Plato speaks of four cardinal virtues, *Vidura* speaks of six cardinal vices. Greed is one among them. He makes out a case for wise man by listing the remaining vices - lust, anger, irrational attachment, arrogance and jealousy – which he does not possess. There is no need to describe the personality of one who is free from these vices. It is very interesting to note that *Vidura* concurs with Plato, when he describes ignorant person. He is the one who neglects his duty, but tries to perform what is not his job. Secondly, he cannot distinguish between a true friend and enemy. All qualities attributed to an ignorant person can be found in Thrasymachus who indulges in violent attack on the ideas of Socrates. In the end of this particular session *Vidura* makes a list of Ten Commandments in which one Commandment is identical with Plato's classification of men into three classes; guardians (philosopher kings), soldiers and artisans. Both of them argue that these three classes ought to perform duties assigned to them only. It means that justice, according to Plato and *Dharma* according to *Vidura* consists in everyman doing his own duty and this is the cardinal principle of welfare state. This is the essence of *Vidura's* moral philosophy

In the last session, *Vidura* talks of death and the need to accept the same. Death and fear are nearly inseparable if man does not accept that death is inevitable. In this context *Vidura* accepts reality, i.e., human nature and maintains that man hardly follows wisdom. There is striking correspondence with what the Buddha says: *trishna* (desire) is the cause of misery, and remedy consists in the realisation of truth and that is knowledge of philosophy. In this respect, *Vidura*, the Buddha and Plato held an identical view. It is precisely in this sense that in Indian tradition philosophy always was regarded as a way of life.

BHEESHMA'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

There is a sharp difference between western model of political philosophy as understood and practised today and ancient Indian concept of polity. The difference essentially consists in shift from one end to the other, i.e., from rights to duty, with duty as the focuss of serman. Even democracy, the most liberal form of government prioritizes duties of citizen in spite of the fact that every citizen is entitled to fundamental rights. There is absolutely no gainsaying in holding the view that directive principles form the backbone of any democratic set-up. *Bhisma's* advice to *Dharmaraya* , on the other hand, provides a very

different picture. He specifies only the duties and responsibilities of ruler with no mention of the duties of citizen. Against this backdrop, it becomes obvious that in real sense, citizen is the king and ruler is his guardian. Several centuries before Plato visualized the role of guardians, the *Mahabharata* portrayed king in a similar fashion. *Bheeshma's* lecture not only explicitly mentions king's qualities and duties but also it is first ever treatise on public administration. Let us consider these aspects briefly.

King should be proactive, truthful and straightforward. According to *Bheeshma*, these are the most important qualities of king. He should be compassionate but not too soft. It is interesting to note that Plato starts from the other end, but arrives at the same result. According to him, guardians should be given moderate physical training coupled with music lest they will transform to beasts. The essence of '*rajadharma*' is safe-guarding the interests of citizen. In fact, *Bheeshma* lists thirty-six qualities in an ideal king which are necessary to follow *Rajadharma* without which the citizens do not receive protection from the king.

Foreign policy is another aspect of public administration. Foreign policy involves two forces, enemies and friends. The role of friends is not much highlighted. But he emphasizes that king should know how to deal with enemy. Prudence is always the guiding force. *Bheeshma* makes it very clear that war is not the solution. Nor did he mean that enemy can be spared. Constant vigil, concealing one's own weakness and proper judgment only can ensure safety and security. All these descriptions apply under normal circumstances, whereas in distress even enemy should enjoy compassion because a humanitarian treatment may destroy enmity. Ultimately, humane outlook scores over other considerations.

THE BHAGAVADGITA

The Bhagavad Gita is a sacred Indian scripture. It comprises roughly 700 verses, and is a part of the *Mahabharata*. The teacher of the Bhagavad Gita is Krishna, and is referred to within the text as Bhagavan, the Divine One. The content is the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna taking place on the battlefield before the start of the Kurukshetra war. Responding to Arjuna's confusion and moral dilemma about fighting his own cousins, Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior and prince and elaborates on different Yogic and Vedantic philosophies. Thus, it is often being described as a concise guide to Hindu theology and also as a practical, self-contained guide to life. It is also called *Gitopanishad*, implying its having the status of an Upanishad, i.e. a Vedantic scripture. Since the Gita is drawn from the Mahabharata, it is classified as a *Sm?iti* text. However, those branches of Hinduism that give it the status of an Upanishad also consider it a *śruti* or revealed text. As it is taken to represent a summary of the Upanishadic teachings, it is also called "the Upanishad of the Upanishads."

Three features are prominent in the Gita; knowledge, social obligation and devotion. The confluence of these principal features constitute what is popularly known as *YOGA*. There is no need to consider its role in life which the Gita has explained. What is important is its position in philosophy. But there is no reference to its philosophical foundation anywhere in the Gita. For example, consider 'devotion' (*bhakti*). Devotion is sensible only when '*Bhakta*' is distinct from *Paramatma*; not otherwise. In other words the refutation of the *Advaita* is a prerequisite to accept the relevance of *bhakti*. But nowhere do we find any

reference to *Dvaita* or *Advaita* in the work. On the contrary, the Gita concludes by merging obligation or *karma* and knowledge in *Bhakti*.

One point becomes clear from the Gita; no one can attain *moksha* if he or she renounces this world. Renouncing the world is tantamount to renouncing obligations. Hence in defence of the Gita one assertion can be unhesitatingly made, that the Gita does not prioritize spirituality at the expense of worldly life. However, neither the charge that it does so nor the countercharge that it does not, is philosophically insignificant. But this point is mentioned because attainment of *moksha* in relation to *karma* has primary importance in the Gita.

Let us drop '*bhakti*' and concentrate only on *Karma Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga*. While *Jnana* stands for realization at highest level, *Karma* assumes a very different meaning. During the *Vedic* age, *Karma* meant only performing *Yajna*. But in the Gita it has come to mean social obligation. *Yoga* came to be understood as dedication. Hence, *Karma Yoga* may be understood as discharging duty with a sense of commitment.

The most important element in the Gita is the doctrine of *nishkama karma* which consists in discharging obligations in an impersonal manner. This attitude literally debar *yagas* because one performs it with selfish motive. The Gita however, never advocated that *karma* should be renounced. What it clearly asserts is that '*Karma Phala*' should be renounced. It only sidelines personal interest and upholds societal interest. Thus individual becomes the means and society the end. An impersonal approach to duty does not affect the performer in any manner, i.e., neither success nor failure affects him or her. This attitude is '*SAMATVA MANOBHAVA*' – equanimity of mind.

It is necessary to clarify the relation between the meaning of *karma* and *varna*. At this stage, *chaturvarnya* (four-fold classification) becomes relevant. Translated into ordinary language, it means commitment to profession. '*chaturvarnyam mayasrishtva gunakarma vibhagshcha*'. It means *guna* (quality) and *karma* (profession) determine *Varna*. To this statement we can add another, quality determines profession. Commitment to profession is what *Dharma* is.

The Gita makes a clear distinction between commitment and interest. Commitment is impersonal, whereas interest is personal. Vested interest is well-known. But there is nothing like vested commitment. When vested interest affects an individual, one may resort to prohibited means. But impersonal commitment does not result in this sort of selection. The maxim 'ends do not justify the means' is implicit in the Gita.

One more aspect remains to be mentioned. There is a mistaken notion that there is hierarchy in profession. It is not the case as far as the Gita is concerned. But there is a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' or 'constructive' and 'destructive'. It is good to discharge duty which is in conformity with one's own nature. Otherwise, it is bad. Clearly, there is division of labour, and it is in the interest of society that such division is made mandatory. Therefore qualitative distinction in profession is strongly disapproved.

Check Your Progress III

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer
 b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How do you understand Bheeshma’s foreign policy?

.....

2) What is meant by *Nishkamakarma*?

.....

2.6 LET US SUM UP

Indian Scriptures mainly have determined the life-style of Hindus, who belong to the first three *varnas*. There are four sources which prescribe the way of life. Among these sources, the *smritis*, whether consciously or inadvertently, institutionalized caste system and women were downgraded *Smritis* correspond to modern day constitution. What demarcates history from mythology is blurred. The *vedangas* explicate the intricate thoughts of the *Vedas*. They specify intonation, grammar, structure, etc. According to the *vedangas* chanting *mantras* after knowing the meaning is very important. *Kalpa sutras* are four in number. They mainly deal with what rituals are to be observed, how they are to be observed, etc. The *Mahabharata* possesses not only literary value, but also it is the first ever treatise on polity. The Gita has minor importance as a philosophical work. It gives priority to society at the expense of individual.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Sutra : Sūtra literally means a rope or thread that holds things together, and more metaphorically refers to an aphorism (or line, rule, formula), or a collection of such aphorisms in the form of a manual.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) An important aspect of *smriti* is its rigidity. Fixation of duties and emphasis upon duties resemble, to a great extent, the directive principles enshrined in the constitution. While four-fold division of society is one type, four fold division of individual life is another. *Smriti* is very clear about not only four classes, but also four stages (*brahmacharya*, *garhastya*, *vaanaprastha* and *samnyasa*) in the life of an individual. There is no scope for switching from one position to another in a random manner. The last division, viz., atonement for sins deals precisely with this sort of prohibited switching. The upshot of this discrimination is that liberty took back seat, but stability in society was prioritized. This will help us to infer the kind of political system which *smriti* supported. Surely, *smriti* did not support democratic system, though during *Vedic* age democratic system flourished.
- 2) *Puranas* are eighteen in number. Since they are not relevant philosophically, it is not even necessary to list them. In addition to five components mentioned earlier, many *puranas* deal with cosmology. Perhaps this is the only topic common to philosophy and *puranas*. Interestingly, one *purana*, viz., *vayupurana* attempts at geography, music, etc. Apart from the neglect of evidence, *puranas* suffer from one more defect. All *puranas* combine legends related to gods and demons, life after death, etc. which disqualify mythology from becoming worthy of serious philosophical study.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) *Sayana*, in his *Rig-Veda Bhashya*, has defined *shiksha* as follows; ‘that which teaches pronunciation in accordance with *swara* (vowel) and *Varna* (letter) is called *shiksha*. Clarity in speech and ability to listen correctly are the prerequisite to learn the *Vedas*. This is the reason why the *Vedas* are also called ‘*anushrava* (that which follows listening).
- 2) *Grihya sutras* prescribe household duties. The point to be noted is that all *Grihya sutras* agree on one particular count, i.e., what ought to be done. But they differ on another count, i.e., how it ought to be done. No *Grihya*

sutra disagrees, for example, with the relevance of, say, marriage. But they disagree with the manner in which it is to be performed. Secondly, all four *sutras* are complementary to each other. So there is neither choice nor contradiction. To fulfill his obligation one has to perform all rituals in the manner prescribed.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

- 1) Foreign policy is another aspect of public administration. Foreign policy involves two forces, enemies and friends. The role of friends is not much highlighted. But he emphasizes that king should know how to deal with enemy. Prudence is always the guiding force. *Bheeshma* makes it very clear that war is not the solution. Nor did he mean that enemy can be spared. Constant vigil, concealing one's own weakness and proper judgment only can ensure safety and security. All these descriptions apply under normal circumstances, whereas in distress even enemy should enjoy compassion because a humanitarian treatment may destroy enmity. Ultimately, humane outlook scores over other considerations.
- 2) The most important element in the Gita is the doctrine of *nishkama karma* which consists in discharging obligations in an impersonal manner. This attitude literally debars *yagas* because one performs it with selfish motive. The Gita however, never advocated that *karma* should be renounced. What it clearly asserts is that '*Karma Phala*' should be renounced.

UNIT 3 VEDAS-I

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Meaning and Classification of the *Vedas*
- 3.3 Age of the *Mantras*
- 3.4 Age of the *Brahmanas*
- 3.5 Age of the Aranyakas
- 3.6 The Concept of *Rita*
- 3.7 Theories of Theology
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Key Words
- 3.10 Further Readings and References
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to introduce:

- the essence of pre-philosophical sources of Indian philosophy. Just as history is preceded by pre-history and pre-history provides the background knowledge so also knowledge of pre-philosophy provides an insight into the spirit of philosophy and the direction in which it developed and why it developed in a particular direction;
- various misconceptions that cause misunderstandings and misinterpretations. With the help of this unit, you will be able to dispel all such negative elements so that a beginner like you can approach the discipline without any preconceived notion;
- in order to distinguish Indian philosophy from the western philosophy where it has to be distinguished and highlight similarities where there are;
- in order to distinguish philosophy from religion. This task is of paramount importance given the misplaced belief that philosophy is religion and religion is philosophy. If this is not erased in the beginning itself, a study of philosophy proves to be counterproductive;
- to be in a position to grasp the essence of Indian philosophy.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Historians agree that the Indian civilization (and culture) is the oldest one. It is, therefore, natural that the earliest product of an ancient civilization should be the oldest thought, though found expression in written form much later (in the present case due to strange reasons) A refined civilization, if it is truly refined, does not spring from vacuum. It should emerge from primitive form of civilization and

the latter from more primitive form. In other words, history has its roots in pre-historic age. But, then, we have to initiate our study from somewhere. When this 'somewhere' itself dates back to the earliest age, we begin from the threshold of human civilization. It is sufficient if we are conscious of the roots of what marks the beginning of our study.

The Indian civilization, in its infancy, is characterized by 'nature-worship'. This feature constitutes the base of our future study. The development of the *Vedic* thought carries with it this particular germ. We are more pre-occupied with what germinated from this seed than with history-oriented controversies.

DATE OF THE *VEDIC* AGE

At the outset, it should be borne in mind that the *Vedic* age is not restricted to one particular year as in the case of the birth of any individual or a few decades as in the case of a few philosophical schools. Most surprisingly, the *Vedic* age spans over a very long interval of several centuries. What is shrouded in mystery is the exact century, let alone year, in which the *Vedic* thought took its birth. With great difficulty, scholars have pieced together all known evidences only to arrive at varying results. It is impossible to accept any result with certainty. The beginning of the *Vedic* age stretches incredibly from 1200 B.C..... Second aspect is that the *Vedic* age is characterized by continuous flow of thought. It is, rather, more like a stream of thought than like flashes of insight. Why is it so difficult to fix the beginning? One reason is that ancient Indians never thought of maintaining records what they did or, what they achieved. Secondly, the *Vedic* tradition is characterized by oral tradition for reasons, which will become clear later (3.2). Nor is there any reference to any thinker. Neither date nor authorship can be fixed with certainty in such a tradition.

GENESIS

The most important feature of the *Vedic* tradition is mentioned at the end of the previous section. Indeed, the word authorship is itself a misnomer because this vast literature does not have its beginning in written form. Traditionally, the *Veda* is regarded as '*apaurusheya*'. This word can be construed in two different senses. In the first place, it may be taken to mean that the *Veda* is a message from the god in the sense in which the 'Ten Commandments' of Moses are. In the second place, it may be taken to mean as what is 'revealed'. If we accept the first one, we are likely to be caught in an argument jam. Surely, it will be quite awkward to face this situation at the early stage. Hence, let us consider the second alternative. *Veda* is literally 'seen'; not constructed brick-by-brick. The opinion is that '*rishayah mantra drishtarah na tu kartarah*' (the Rishis, i.e., philosophers, never constructed, but 'saw'). Seeing is not through eyes, but it is through intuition. Perhaps ancient Indians thought that what is intuitively grasped or revealed must be independent of human. What is independent of human may not necessarily mean 'God-given'. In this sense the *Vedas* are *Apaurusheya*, just as the laws of physics are. Philosophy, generally, regards knowledge as objective. Thereby it regards knowledge as independent of human. Hence there does not seem to be any reason to contest the *apaurusheya* character of the *Vedic* literature. *Apaurusheya* can be taken to mean that the said text is objective.

Earlier we mentioned that the *Vedic* literature spreads over a long interval of time, at least a millennium, if S. Radhakrishnan is to be believed. Evidently, the literature is not the handiwork of any one person but it is the outcome of several generations. Hence there is lot of divergence in thought. Further, change of environment also contributes to variation. Not only thought, even language varies from generation to generation. The language of *Vedas* is said to be very ancient, so ancient that even the language of classical Sanskrit literature differs from the *Vedic* language. Consequently, the *Vedic* grammar differs from the grammar of classical Sanskrit. This has resulted in lot of hermeneutic controversies.

While we are not in a position to establish the founders of the *Vedic* tradition, at least we know philosophers who compiled what was preserved till then orally. At this stage, the literature acquired a definite form fit for a systematic study.

3.2 MEANING AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE VEDAS

THE MEANING

The word *Veda* is derived from the word 'Vid' which means 'knowledge.' *Veda* is supposed to be boundless because knowledge is boundless. Earlier (3.1.3), we mentioned that since knowledge is objective and impersonal, *Veda* also is objective and impersonal. Being impersonal is the same as saying *apaurusheya*. It clearly shows that whatever epithet describes knowledge also describes the *Veda*.

At the outset, let us introduce two terms, *sruti* and *smriti*. *Sruti* means to hear and *smriti* means to remember. Of course, *sruti* does include *smriti*, a point, which will become obvious very shortly, though the converse does not hold good. The *Vedic* literature came down from generation to generation in the most unusual manner for extraordinary reasons. The ancient Indians believed that the *Vedas* should be transmitted only orally because they are convinced that to put the literature in the form of writing amounts to sacrilege. It is likely that the technique of preserving any document was invented much later. Whether the ancient Indians knew the art of writing or not is a different question. But it is something different to ask this question; did they know the technique of preserving any written document for posterity? In the absence of any such technique the only way was to communicate orally. What is listened has to be remembered. In this sense, *sruti* includes *smriti*.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE VEDAS

In two different ways, the *Vedic* age can be divided; collection of material and development of thought. It is commonly known that the *Vedas* are four in number; *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva*. This particular division is based on the first system of division. The *Atharvaveda* alone belongs to a different age. It differs from the rest in all respects and only this *Veda* is independent in all respects. In the second system of division, we have *Mantras*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*. These two systems of division are not distinct. At every stage, the first three *Vedas*, according to first division and all four components, according to, second division intersect. The whole scheme can be represented as follows.

1	2	3	4
Rigveda → ↓	Yajurveda → ↓	Samaveda ↓	Atharvaveda ↓
1 Mantras (M1) ↓	Mantras (M2) ↓	Mantras (M3) ↓	Mantras (M4) ↓
2 Brahmanas (B1) ↓	Brahmanas (B2) ↓	Brahmanas (B3) ↓	Brahmanas (B4)
3 Aranyakas (A1) ↓	Aranyakas (A2) ↓	Aranyakas (A3) ↓	
4 Upanishads (U1)	Upanishads (U2)	Upanishads (U3)	Upanishads (U4)

The case of *Atharva Veda* is slightly different. It has only one extant *Brahmana* called *Gopatha Brahman*. The table indicates that the *Aranyakas* are associated with the first three *Vedas* only and in the case of the *Atharva veda*, there is a sort of quantum jump from the age of *Brahmanas* to the age of *Upanishads*. It may be noted that both horizontal and vertical developments are essentially of temporal order. While the *Mantras* of the *Rigveda* (M1 – R1) belong to the earliest age, the *Upanishad of the Atharvaveda*(U4- A4) belongs to the latest age. All other combinations vary within this range. While a discussion of individual *Vedas* become our focuss in the next unit, the other mode of development shall engage us presently.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What do you understand by *Veda*?

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.....

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2) Write a short note on the classification of *Vedas*

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.....

3.3 AGE OF THE *MANTRAS*

Why did the *Aryans* compose *Mantras*? When these *Mantras* number several thousands, it was not for nothing that they did so. No matter what they said or did not say about the other world, unknown and unseen, the external world in which they lived occupied the center stage of their activity. The *Aryans* never thought that they could live independent of nature. Nor did they even believe that the external world had submitted itself to their will. This is an essential characteristic of the age of *Mantras* and the age of *Mantras* alone. They were convinced that they were an integral part of nature. The power of nature came to be regarded as far superior to their ability. One consequence of this attitude is that they came to believe that they are parasites of nature.

This being the case, the *Aryans* ought to have developed only sense of fear. They developed mixed emotions when they had to face gods. Gratitude and fear played a major role in this case. At some point of time gratitude turned into a deep sense of love. This is because their very survival, not just existence, depended upon nature and in turn, nature itself was deified. The *Vedic* literature in its entirety is, therefore, nature-centric and life-centric. Awareness of this simple fact propelled the *Aryans* to take several strides far ahead of others, which shaped the Indian Society (for good or bad) for a very long duration.

The *Aryans* took seriously two major issues: agriculture and protection from enemies. There is no sense in talking of agriculture when life is restricted to the bounds of forest. Depleting animal strength due to continuous hunting must have forced tribal people to graduate from predation to cultivation. Evidently, cultivation, then, was totally at the mercy of nature. By this time, the *Aryans* had changed, or were driven to change, their life style. So they became nature-dependent humans (or animals). Psychology is such that what is supportive of one need is taken as supportive of any other need. If deified nature bestows all its mercy in the form of food, then the very same nature may as well destroy enemies. The *Mantras* were composed in order to pray to the nature-gods. Prayer was the mark of gratitude. This is the birth place of the *Vedas*. Now we stand on the threshold of learning the nuance of the *Vedic* literature.

The *Vedas* are the collection of *Mantras*. Collection in Sanskrit means '*Samhitaa*' (*sam* = together, *hita* = put). Therefore, the *Rigveda* is actually the *RigVeda Samhitaa* and so other *Vedas*. The collection of *Mantras* is not a random one. There is a definite design, which determines every collection. To be precise, *Samhitaa* stands for order (in biological sense), which has been clearly divided, and each division is further divided and this process is very much akin to the kind of classification and division, which take place in biology. Before understanding this process we have to return to the *Vedic* literature.

The *Vedic* pantheon included many gods, because there were too many natural forces, which they worshipped. But all these gods were characterized by one particular quality. In Sanskrit, god means '*deva*'. According to the *Nirukta*, which is *Vedic* dictionary, '*deva*' means, two things: one which gifts and one which shines; i.e., the source of light. Life depends upon light. So, naturally, life depends upon the gods. These *Vedic* gods are classified differently. Hirianna M. classified them as: (i) gods of the sky, (ii) gods of the mid-air and (iii) gods of the earth. Bloomfield classified them as (i) gods of prominent aspects of nature, (ii) gods

of action and (iii) gods of concept. While according to first classification, *Agni* belongs to the third group, according to the second classification it belongs to the first group. The difference between two types of classification is that in the first type only natural forces find the place whereas in the second type, in addition to natural forces, abstract notions also find place. For example, *Savitru* (one who stimulates) and *Brahmanaspati* (the source of prayer), which are gods of action, form a sort of link between men and nature-gods.

The number of gods, it is said in the *Vedic* tradition is indefinite. However, it is desirable to make a list of very important gods, numbering thirty-three, who hold key portfolios. The list includes both types of classification.

Table A

- i) gods of Sky (gods of *Dyuhu*): *Mitra* (the sun), *Varuna*, *Dyuhu*, *Savitru*, *Pushan*, *Ashwin*, *Ushas*, *Aadityaha*, *Vishnu*
- ii) gods of mid-air (gods of *Antariksha*): *Indra*, *Vayu*, *Apaamnapaat*, *Rudra*, *Marut*, *Parjanya*, *Aapaha*.
- iii) gods of the earth (gods of *Prithivi*): *Agni*, *Prithivi*, *Soma*, *Brihaspati* (*Brahmanaspati*)

Table B

- i) gods of nature: *Agni*
- ii) gods of action: *Tvashtru* (the architect), *Savitru* (one who stimulates), etc.
- iii) gods of notions: *Shraddha* (faith), *Manyu* (anger), etc.

All *Mantras* are composed only with the intention propitiating these gods. Now we can understand the principle or motive behind the collection of *Mantras*. All *Mantras* propitiating one particular deity are classified together and this collection is called '*Sukta*'. The collection of all such *suktas* is '*Samhita*'.

Nature of the VEDIC GODS

It is very important to note this difference. In the *Vedic* tradition, we can only find either impersonal gods (like all nature gods) or quasi-personal gods. In many respects, the *Vedic* gods resemble human beings, like gender difference, procreation, etc. However, it is wrong to think that gender difference, procreation, etc. are restricted to human beings. Surely, they characterize life as such. Gods ought to have life. Admittedly, it is impossible to imagine lifeless gods. When every natural force or agency (including day and night) is animated, the whole universe (nature = universe) becomes animated.

What is the philosophical significance of this conclusion? The manner in which the *Aryans* conceived nature gods was such that it demanded that the gods must be live-gods. The striking aspect here is that even impersonal gods are animated.

The *Mantras* had two-fold function to perform at different stages. During the age of *Mantras*, the method and the motive were quite simple. The motive was either to express gratitude or to make a request. At this point of time, there was no place for sacrifice. The element of sacrifice dominated the next stage, i.e., *Brahmanas*. When mere prayer, accompanied by freely available commodities like milk, ghee, etc., was enough to propitiate any number of gods, there was no

need of any expert, i.e., priest. However, there was change in environment and the change was not necessarily for better. This change takes us to the next stage of *Vedic* thought.

Before we pass on to the age of *Brahmanas*, there are two more philosophical aspects which remain to be considered. When the *Aryans* conceived every natural force as something divine, they inadvertently accepted that the external world is not final and that there is some unseen and unknown force, which controls the visible world. This will lead us to the conclusion that if we choose the path set by the *Aryans*, then we have to search for ultimate reality. This is possible if we go beyond the bounds of senses. Hence speculation plays a major role. Just as, all experimental sciences have their origin in philosophy and mythology, so also pure philosophy has its origin in pure speculation. Speculation is an intellectual activity. If our understanding is limited to what can be termed as elementary sense experience, then neither philosophy nor science is possible. To refine there should be something, which is in need of refinement. Initially, that which is crude is refined. The process of refinement is endless. Therefore what was refined at one stage is further refined. This process is common to both science and philosophy.

Second aspect explains the origin of nature worship. Philosophy of religion considers three types of religion; tribal, national and universal. There is no need to study the characteristics of these types. It is sufficient to know that the feeling of identity with nature is a characteristic mark of tribal religion alone. The idea of sacrifice also characterizes only tribal religion. Since these are hallmarks of *Vedic* thought, we ought to conclude that the *Vedic* thought is more tribal in its nature than what it is made out to be. Surely, what is tribal is primitive. If so, is it inferior to other kinds of religion? The question of superiority or inferiority may arise anywhere else, but not in the case of religion. This is so because all religions differ only in kind, but not in degree. Secondly, earlier form of religion does not give rise to later form of religion; one religion may influence another. That is very different. We are only concerned with the origin of religion. We do not indulge in the qualitative comparison of religions.

3.4 AGE OF THE *BRAHMANAS*

The tribal character of *Vedic* thought is explicit in the *Brahmanas*. What distinguishes this particular phase from the earlier one is the prominence that the sacrificial cult received. It is interesting to know how this transition took place. It is also necessary to peep into human psychology. M. Hiriyanna comments in his work 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy', that the idea of sacrifice was not altogether alien to the initial phase. Evidently, it had not yet become a cult at that point of time. If so, why did it become a cult at later stage? During the course of evolution, the 'animal instinct' or to 'expect' – to borrow the phrase from David Hume – might have come down to man. Apparent order in nature is understood as inscrutable law of nature thanks to this particular instinct. Again, the very same instinct prompts man to 'demand'. Obviously, the demands are endless. To ensure that the expectation or demand does not hit dead end, he ingeniously manipulates. His ability to manipulate events creates an impression or firm conviction that he can dictate terms. This mindset worked behind the attitude of *Aryans* at this stage. It also explains why and how the *Aryan* mind

switched from one end to the other. An act of gratitude or request, which marked the age of *Mantras* was explicitly replaced by 'command'. This change reflects the spirit behind *Brahmanas*.

The age of *Brahmanas* is marked by the institutionalisation of rituals, which came to be known as *yaga* and *yagna*. Since the spirit of *Brahmanas* died a premature death thanks to the onslaught of the *Upanishads* and the *Buddhism*, its influence on the development of philosophy came to be restricted to the birth of *Purva Mimamsa* only. This phase has to be considered only because it stands for deviation from the mainstream of philosophy in the very beginning itself.

The institutionalisation of rituals brought into effect two major changes; first the very existence of gods, in addition to their powers, became questionable. Secondly, it gave rise to a new class, i.e., the priestly class. Though the *Brahmanas* did not question the existence of gods per se, their attitude, in a way, downgraded gods and second, new forces or entities were added. They came to believe that the rituals performed as per specifications have innate ability to yield the desired results. Hence, gods became mere puppets. If they yield, then what man puts forth is not request, but demand. Further, due to accurate performance of rituals if gods are forced to yield, then it shows that the power really is vested in rituals. This was enough to sideline gods. Consequently, the *Purva Mimamsa*, much later, denied altogether the very existence of god.

Earlier, a reference was made to new forces or entities. The equipments required to perform rituals gained priority at this stage. They were treated nearly on par with gods. Thus it was not just mechanism that played pivotal role. Thereby a new dimension was added to rituals. Gradually, rituals came to be treated as a sort of magic. The course of transition is now complete; from expression of gratitude to demand or command and from technique to magic. Consequently, an expert who conducts rituals turns out to be a magician in the last phase. Symbolic presentation is another addition, which destroyed the spirit of veneration that was prevalent in the preceding phase.

However, the disastrous addition, which damaged the very structure of ancient Indian society, was that of priest-class. Most probably, this addition gave rise to the caste system later. In other words, if *chaturvarnya* system degenerated into caste system, it may be due to a sort of superiority, which the priest class acquired rightly or wrongly.

3.5 THE AGE OF ARANYAKAS

This phase marks another transition from the spirit of *Brahmanas* to the spirit of the *Upanishads*. While the *Brahmanas* are called *Karma Kanda* (*Karma* is another word for *yajna*) because of total emphasis upon rituals, the *Upanishads* came to be known as *Jñāna kanda* because here knowledge becomes primary. Since the shift involved total change in attitude, it needed a link. This phase is called *Aranyanka* because it became relevant when men retired to forests due to old age. Why should old people retire to forests? Surely, this is a provoking question. Forest was the dwelling place for tribes. If old people retired to forest, then it must be due to strong affinity to the place of origin, which prompted them to choose so.

That apart, we should consider other changes which forest life brought into. Even in those days life in society (it is not clear whether the urban- rural divide, which is now a commonplace phenomenon characterized life then) was more comfortable because all requirements could be met. This was not so in forest where one has to lead secluded life. Non-availability of required material came in the way performing rituals. Hence the need arose to replace rituals. At this point of time, mechanism gave way to creativity. Routine performance of rituals did not require any insight. What was required was merely practice. However, creativity is required when replacement has to be decided. This thought itself was enough to notice the undesirability of rituals. Reflection followed by realisation paved the way for the pursuit of knowledge in the form of the *Upanishads*.

This change is, admittedly, a revolution. The *Aryans*, hitherto, concentrated only on procuring facilities to lead a trouble-free life. To be sure, there was literally no philosophy in their endeavour. Their lifestyle only laid the foundation for future philosophy. Hence, proper study of philosophy begins only from the *Upanishads*.

In this connection, one question remains to be answered. The *Aranyakas* constitute a phase in the life of an individual. There is no doubt about it. In what sense can it be regarded as a phase in the *Vedic* thought? This question is relevant because only older generation belonged to *this phase*, whereas younger generation belonged to the *Brahmanas*. It means that the *Aranyakas* mark a stage in the life of individuals, but not in the development of *Vedic* thought. There is only one way of answering the question. The thoughts of old people might have influenced the younger generation during interaction. If this possibility is not accepted, there is no other reason to accept the *Aranyakas* as a phase in the development of *Vedic* thought.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Why did the *Aryans* compose *Mantras*?

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2) What are two major changes brought into effect by the institutionalisation of rituals?

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3.6 THE CONCEPT OF RITA

Earlier (3.3.1), reference was made to several gods who were propitiated by the *Aryans* but no mention was made about their role in the life of the *Aryans*. Since in the next unit there will be a detailed discussion, only passing reference to this aspect here is enough. *Indra* was regarded as god of *Valour*. He was venerated during war. *Surya* was the source of life. Obviously, he occupied center stage. The twin gods *Dyava-Prithivi* shower rains and through rains food. The role played by *Varuna*, another *Vedic* god, is crucial. *Varuna* is held to be the guardian of *Rita*. This word has two meanings; natural order and moral order. *Varuna* enforces order not only on nature, but also on human beings. He is the guardian of order and also one who practises moral principles (*Ritavari*) Not only *Varuna*, *Surya* also is regarded as the practitioner of morality. Concern for morality, both personal and social, is another aspect of the *Vedic* thought.

3.7 THEORIES OF THEOLOGY

Since the *Vedic* pantheon included many gods (around thirty three), a question naturally arises; who is most important among them? It is difficult to say that all are equally important. If only some gods are very important, there must be some reasonable grounds to say so. In this light, we can discern three streams of thought. In the strict sense of the term, the word theory cannot be used. First two streams have only religious significance, whereas the last one is philosophically significant. A brief consideration of these streams of thought follows.

POLYTHEISM

Ostensibly, the *Vedic* thought admits polytheism simply because several gods are propitiated. This belief is further strengthened when we consider the fact that the same *sukta* includes more than one name. However, in reality, the case is different. Polytheism was never a dominant trend in the *Vedic* literature despite the presence of so many gods. It became a stepping-stone to another trend. It ought to be so because if God (not god) is taken as omnipresent and omnipotent, then the presence of even two gods (not too many) defies common sense, forget logic. Only tenacity and dogma should resist any thought contrary to belief. The very fact that at the initial stage itself the *Aryans* renounced polytheism speaks of their reflective temperament. Willingness to accept defect is the first step in the direction of correcting the mistake. This is what is called progressive thought. Hence, the obvious conclusion is that though the *Vedic* literature has very little philosophy, the *Vedic Aryan* had developed philosophical acumen, which paved the way for the birth of vast philosophical literature.

This is one aspect. The very prevalence of polytheism at any point of time anywhere in *Vedic* literature was seriously questioned by Max Müller. If we follow his argument, then polytheism is a misnomer. At any given point of time, 'one' god was worshiped. Gods differed in accordance with needs. The *Aryan* exercised choice in worshipping one god which is surely peculiar or unique form of democracy within the domain of religion. No pressure was exerted on them to worship 'this' or 'that' god. They enjoyed religious 'voluntarism'. This is what is called freedom of thought. Max Müller used the word 'henotheism' to explain this trend.

MONOTHEISM

M. Hiriyanna makes a subtle distinction between 'henotheism' and monotheism. While, according to him, the former is characterized by belief in one god, the latter is characterized by belief in 'one only' god. Evidently, some sort of process of reduction is involved in bringing down the number of gods from thirty-three to one. This is choice exercised with reason which is similar to some kind of thought experiment. In the *Rigveda*, the *suktas*, which declare oneness, are in plenty. Let us consider one such *sukta*:

indram mitram varunam agnimaahu
ekam sadvipraa bahudha vadanti

Before they arrived at this conclusion, the *Aryans* were troubled by a genuine problem, who should be invited to receive the gift (*havis*)? *kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema*, The *Aryans* went on experimenting speculatively (so it is called thought experiment) to exercise their choice. Several names cropped up' *vishwedeavaaha*, *vishwakarma*, *prajaapati*, *hiranyagarbha*, etc. *Yaska*, in his *Nirukta*, has resolved this issue in a very simple manner. 'one God acquires different names corresponding to different actions.' In other words, the problem of 'many' gods was not solved but simply dissolved by *Yaska*.

MONISM

Monotheism is as much theistic as polytheism. The real leap – a kind of quantum leap – is to monism. This stream of thought is of critical importance for two reasons; one, the *Vedic* thought caught up, finally, with philosophical speculation and two, it freed itself from the clutches of primitive religion. The idea of god as the architect of the universe and guardian of morality was set aside and instead search of primeval substance began. Philosophy begins with doubt. Promptly, monism begins with fundamental question; when and how did the universe come into existence. The search for primeval substance is the search for unitary principle. Cosmology is the subject of *Vedic* monism. Before quoting from the *Rigveda*, we should know what monism means. Monism does not distinguish between creator and created. Otherwise, it amounts to dualism. If 'creator' is the cause and what is created is the effect, then it leads to dichotomy of cause and effect. Monism denies this dichotomy of cause and effect. This is the bottom line of the development of monism.

There is one *sukta* in the *Rigveda* called *Nasadiya sukta*. This *sukta* begins with the assertion that there was neither being nor non-being. Only *tadekam* (that one) was and is. Further, it continues to say that 'no gods had then been born'. It means that the gods are 'younger' than this universe. Then, in any sense, philosophical or mythological, these gods are not gods at all. Only the last line may pose a problem. It begins with these words; 'its Lord in heaven'. How can any *sukta* talk of heaven when it said earlier, '*novyomaa paroyat* (no sky beyond). In this context, 'sky' means celestial, thing in deep space, etc. It may be reasonable to assume that heaven means deep space and Lord means the 'primeval substance'. Irrespective of the correctness or incorrectness of interpretation what can be concluded with certainty is that the *Vedic* monism is germane to philosophical tradition.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What do you understand by *Rta*?

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2) What is the difference between ‘henotheism’ and ‘monotheism’?

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

The earliest civilization in India began with the *Vedic* civilization. The *Vedas* are four in number; Rig, Yajur, Sama, Atharva. Every *Veda*, with the exception of the Atharva, is divided into four phases in its development of thought. The age of Mantras is supposed to be the earliest phase. All Mantras are composed with the intention of offering prayer to gods. The *Vedic* gods are known as nature gods because natural forces were worshiped by the ancient Indians. Gods are 33 in number. The most important among them are Agni, Indra and Surya. The *Vedic* thought, later, developed on philosophical lines giving birth to monotheism and monism. Monism is the beginning of Indian philosophy.

3.9 KEY WORDS

- Intuition** : Intuition is the ability to sense or know immediately without reasoning.
- Hermeneutics** : Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. Traditional hermeneutics – which includes Biblical hermeneutics – refers to the study of the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law.

3.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) The word *Veda* is derived from the word 'Vid' which means 'knowledge.' *Veda* is supposed to be boundless because knowledge is boundless. Earlier (3.1.3), we mentioned that since knowledge is objective and impersonal, *Veda* also is objective and impersonal. Being impersonal is the same as saying *apaurusheya*. It clearly shows that whatever epithet describes knowledge also describes the *Veda*.
- 2) In two different ways, the *Vedic* age can be divided; collection of material and development of thought. It is commonly known that the *Vedas* are four in number; *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva*. This particular division is based on the first system of division. The *Atharvaveda* alone belongs to a different age. It differs from the rest in all respects and only this *Veda* is independent in all respects. In the second system of division, we have *Mantras*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*. These two systems of division are not distinct. At every stage, the first three *Vedas*, according to first division and all four components, according to, second division intersect.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The Aryans never thought that they could live independent of nature. This is an important reason for the composition of *Mantras*. The *Mantras* were composed in order to pray to the nature-gods. Prayer was the mark of gratitude. This is the birth place of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are the collection of *Mantras*. Collection in Sanskrit means 'Samhitaa' (*sam* = together, *hita* = put). Therefore, the *Rigveda* is actually the *RigVeda Samhitaa* and so other *Vedas*.
- 2) The institutionalisation of rituals brought into effect two major changes; first the very existence of gods, in addition to their powers, became questionable. Secondly, it gave rise to a new class, i.e., the priestly class.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

- 1) This word 'rta' has two meanings: natural order and moral order. *Varuna* enforces order not only on nature, but also on human beings. He is the guardian of order and also one who practises moral principles (*Ritavari*). Not only *Varuna*, *Surya* also is regarded as the practitioner of morality. Concern for morality, both personal and social, is another aspect of the *Vedic* thought.
- 2) There is a subtle distinction between 'henotheism' and monotheism. While the former is characterized by belief in one god the latter is characterized by belief in 'one only' god.

UNIT 4 VEDAS-II

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Structure of the *Rigveda*
- 4.3 Structure of the *Yajurveda*
- 4.4 Structure of the *Samaveda*
- 4.5 Structure of the *Atharvaveda*
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Further Readings and References
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

With the help of this unit, you will be in a position:

- to discover the intricacies of the *Vedic* literature
- to understand the path in which the *Vedas* evolved over several centuries
- to understand several changes, which took place not only in the text but also in the attitude of the ancient Indians
- to be exposed to the complexity in the content of the *Vedic* thought
- to compare and evaluate various stages of development against sociological and psychological backgrounds

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is claimed that the *Rigveda* is the foundation of all other *Vedas*. Directly or indirectly the remaining *Vedas*, with the exception of the *Atharvaveda*, borrowed material from this particular *Veda*. Therefore it is desirable to become familiar with the structure of this *Veda*. Earlier (in unit 3), we came to know that the dates of composition and collection are different. It is unlikely that before the *Mantras* were collected there was anything like structure. In other words, within the limits of 'oral tradition' there might not have been any possibility of systematizing the literature. This particular study takes us farther from the age of composition towards the later period. While doing so, care should be taken to separate legend or myth from history. Since no records are available except quotations here and there, we should only restrict ourselves to reasonable conjectures. If it is true that one of the authors of the *Mahabharata* (the *Mahabharata* was not composed by any one individual within limited period of time) systematized the *Vedas*, then except the *Atharvaveda*, other *Vedas* were put in order by him. This is so because the *Atharvaveda* belongs to the post-*Mahabharata* age. There were twenty-one schools of the *Rigveda* according to *Patanjali*. However, only a few schools remain out of which *Ashwalayana* and *Shankhayana* are very significant because they are also sources of *Shrauta* and *Grihya sutras* respectively.

4.2 STRUCTURE OF THE RIGVEDA

The *Rigveda* consists of approximately 10,600 *Mantras* ('*Mantras*' roughly mean the same as stanzas). This *Veda* is systematized in two ways. One method is to divide the entire *Veda* into eight parts, called *ashtakas* and each *ashtaka*, in turn, is divided into eight chapters. Therefore it can be said that this method of division is on 'mode – 8'. Each chapter has several sections and the number of these sections varies from 221 to 331. Finally, each section has *Mantras* ranging from 1147 to 1730. In the second method, the *Veda* is divided into 10 divisions (*Mandalas*). Each division consists of subdivisions (*Anuvaaka*) ranging from 4 to 24. Each subdivision consists of a number of *suktas* ranging from 43 to 191. Finally, each *sukta* is nothing but a collection of *Mantras*. There is an advantage in the latter method of organization. Each *Mandala* is associated with definite *Rishis* (who can be regarded as programmers). For example, the first *Mandala* consists of works of fifteen different authors. Their works do not appear in any other *Mandala*. Hence, the *Mandalas* are author-oriented. It only means that this sort of organization is very close, in purpose, to modern day technique of arranging and classifying books. Further, the arrangement of *suktas* also follows a different order. The first *sukta* addresses *Agni*, followed by *Indra* and so on. On the whole, the method of organization is either author- oriented or god- oriented. This type of organization has distinct advantage even from the point of view of tradition.

Since *Mandala* is *Rishi*-oriented (or author-oriented) and *sukta* is god-oriented, any particular *sukta* is conditioned by these two features. Every *sukta* is attributed to the one who addresses and the god who is addressed and this god is the presiding deity of that *sukta*. Third dimension is meter to which the *sukta* is set. With meter is associated intonation. Intonation is something, which can be picked up surely not by reading, but by listening and practice. In this respect, chanting of the *Vedic* hymns resembles music. (Later we will learn that the *Samaveda* is the source of music and is itself highly musical). Apart from intonation, priority was given to method. There are six methods of chanting. The same *Mantra* is chanted in six different ways. These methods with some sort of formula are mentioned below. Here a, b & c represent words which are required to be chanted.

Formula

1) <i>Samhita Paatha</i> (Method)	A	Bc	D	E
2) <i>Krama Paatha</i>	A	B	Bc	c
3) <i>Jataa Paatha</i>	A	B	Ba	b
	Bc	Cb	bc	
4) <i>Shikhaa Paatha</i>	A	B	Ba	ab
	C	Bc	cb	Bc
5) <i>Pada Paatha</i>	A	B	c	
6) <i>Ghana Paatha</i>	A	B	ba	Ab
	C	C	ba	Abc

In the formula, gap indicates pause in chanting. It is sufficient to note that different methods are meant for different purposes. In the *Rigveda*, these aspects are significant because this *Veda* is composed only in verse. Same judgment applies to the *Samaveda* also.

The *Rigveda* consists of *suktas*, which were specially meant to be chanted only when *yagas* were performed. There are ten such *suktas*, which are called ‘*Apree sukta*’. While performing *yaga*, there was one more specification. It was not the job of any one person to chant all the *Mantras*. It was always a team consisting of four members who had a definite role to play. Members are called *ritwijas*. Their designation and responsibilities are mentioned below.

Order Name Responsibility

- 1) **Hotru** Initiating the programme and invoking respective gods to accept *HAVIS* (which is dedicated to a particular god)
- 2) **Adhvaryu** One who utters *Swaaha* and simultaneously adds sacred material to the sacred fire (*Agni Kunda*)
- 3) **Udgatru** Chants *Mantras* in high pitch
- 4) **Brahma** The presiding officer who ensures smooth running of the programme

SAMHITAS

There is no need to refer to every god. Let us concentrate on a few without omitting any stratum; again, *Prithivi* and *Nadi* (river) from *Prithivi* stratum; *Indra*, *Vayu*, *Parjanya*, *Apaha* and *Apamnapat* from *Antariksha* Stratum and *Varuna*, *Surya* and *Savitru* from *Dyu* stratum. No god enjoyed the same status throughout. The numbers of *suktas* actually determine their ranks at any given time. From this angle, among gods of *Prithivi* stratum, *Agni* is supreme. There are two hundred *suktas* dedicated to this one god. *Agni* is all pervasive in wood, *Jatharagni* in animals, etc. These forms are confirmed to the earth. In mid-air (*Anthariksha*) *Agni* is present in the form of lightning and in *Dyuloka* (deep space) *Agni* is in the form of *Surya*. These descriptions perfectly agree with common sense. The third form of *Agni* is supposed to be superior to the rest. Here first identification is achieved. In his third form *Agni* is the same as *Surya*. If *Agni* is equated with energy, and it is perfect to equate so, then he becomes the Lord of the Universe. This is a poetic usage. In fact, the *Rigveda* is full of such usages. Hence it is very important to extract what appears to be a sound measure according to science and philosophy. Accordingly, Lord of the Universe is to be understood as the prime source, i.e., energy, which is all-pervasive as far as physics is concerned. He is identified not only with *Surya* but also with *Varuna*, *Rudra*, *Maruta*, etc.

There is only one *sukta*, which is dedicated to *Prithivi* alone. But if we consider the spirit with which *Prithivi* is propitiated, then we will understand that its significance is by no means undermined. There are other *suktas* in which *Prithivi* is propitiated in conjunction with another god, viz, *Dyuhu*. Though this association, there is an unconscious attempt to depict the origin of life. There was, and is, no other way to explain the origin of life. It shows that the *Rigveda* attempted to discover not only the origin of the Universe but also life. The

association between *Dyuhu* and *Prithivi* is so strong, according to the *Rigveda*, that they are treated as pair always. This point becomes clear when we learn that these two gods are addressed as *dyavaaprithivi*. *Sayana* puts it in a slightly different manner. He calls it *dviroopaa prithivi*, i.e., two forms of *Prithivi*.

A significant aspect of the *Rigveda* is the importance of rivers recognized by the *Veda*. The rivers which find places in the *Veda* are very few; *Saraswati*, *Sarayu*, *Sindhu*, *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Shutudri*, *Parushri*, *Mardvridhe* and *Arjikiye*. The river *Saraswati* is not only the principal source of life but also of knowledge.

Agni is the most sought after among the gods of *Prithivi* and *Indra* corresponds to *Agni* among the gods of mid-air. There are two hundred and fifty *suktas* in praise of *Indra*. If we put together the *suktas* dedicated to *Agni* and *Indra*, then they will occupy a little less than half of the *Rigveda*. *Indra* is essentially a war-god. The importance given to him indicates that there were frequent battles between *Aryans* and their enemies. They had every reason to protect themselves. It is true that the *Aryans* migrated from some other part of the world (it is conjectured that *Aryans* originated from north pole region), then, surely, they are to be regarded as invaders. If so, did they have any moral right to disturb and dislodge the original inhabitants? It may amount to anachronism to judge their attitude on this basis. Going in search of food and shelter was a common place phenomenon in those days among human beings and even now among animals. In this respect, there is no difference between men and animals. In fact, migration among human beings is still there, but in a different manner. Perhaps ethical aspect involved in such activities was totally unknown in distant past.

In all *suktas* one description of *Indra* dominates. Only valour is distinctly noticeable in these *suktas*. It only speaks of turbulent atmosphere prevalent in those days. Valour cannot be described without legend. An enemy, *Vritra*, was created. What is important here is the way in which *Vritra* is killed. It is a never-ending process. The *Veda* proclaims that the destruction of *Vritra* takes place in future also. There are two ways in which it can be understood. Fight with enemy is never ending. This is one meaning. Another possibility is that the destruction of *Vritra* may be a symbol of eradication of recurring natural phenomena, which are inimical to men's well being. The *suktas* mention resurgence of helpful natural phenomenon, which are the results of *Vritra's* destruction. Again, there is ambiguity here. Another example substantiates this ambiguity. There is one *sukta*, which describes how *Indra* facilitated the Sunrise when he destroyed the chariot of *Ushas*. As long as twilight (here *ushas*) persists there is no sunrise. In saying so, it is true that the *Veda* is putting the cart in front of the horse. But then, let us remember that the *Veda* has resorted to poetic language, which accounts not only for beauty but also ambiguity in expression. Obviously, this is not what is expected in any philosophical enterprise. However, at this stage, the *Veda* had not yet matured to become philosophical.

Let us consider *Vayu* (air), *Parjanya* (cloud) and *Apaha* (water) together because the very possibility of life depends partially on these natural things. In some places instead of *Vayu*, the *Veda* uses another name *vata*. In *Nasadiya sukta*, it is hinted that *Vata* is another name for *Vayu*. There are three *suktas* in *Rigveda*, which exclusively propitiate *Vayu*; elsewhere *Vayu* is propitiated in conjunction with other gods. Two attributes of *Vayu* puzzled the *Aryans*; motion and all pervasiveness. Whenever they experienced puzzle they say divinity. This is (*Vayu*)

one example. One *sukta* addressed to *Parjanya* is interesting. The *suktas* which address *Parjanya* contain references to a cow which gives milk and a cow which does not. *Parjanya* is glorified by comparison with cow which gives milk. Milk indicates rainfall and cow symbolizes *Parjanya*. After all, there could be no rains without clouds. So this takes us to *Apaha* (water). In one sense *Parjanya*, *Apaha* and *Nadi* gods are related. How can clouds shower rainfall? This phenomenon explains partly in straight language and partly in poetic language. Due to the Sun's heat water gets evaporated and the cloud is filled with water vapour, which returns as rains. This explanation is factual. This is followed by poetic description; *Indra* used sword (*vajrauidha*) to dissect the clouds to release water imprisoned inside. Such poetic expressions on many occasions have given rise to difficulties.

Apaamnapat is a unique god. It is an instance of two gods merging into one god. *Apaamnapat* is *Agni* present in water while many gods can be directly related to nature and some indirectly; in some other cases (like the present one) it is not possible to find any correlation.

Among the gods of *Dyuhu* stratum *Varuna*, *Surya* and *Savitru* are important. *Varuna's* function is to maintain *rita* a point mentioned in the previous unit. Twelve *suktas* praise *Varuna*. The distinction in functions which *Indra* and *Varuna* discharge is rather subtle in expression when expressed in *Sanskrit* destruction of '*vritra*' and protection of '*RITA*'. It should be noted that in pronunciation there is very subtle difference. Like any other god, *Varuna* also is omnipresent and substratum of all. Surprisingly, *Varuna* was dislodged from his coveted place during later stage. It was *Indra* who replaced *Varuna*. The sequence of events points to priority. Self-preservation is primary. Morality is meaningless when my own existence is at stake. This simple psychological truth does not defend tendency to sideline morality. An empirical approach neither defends nor criticizes. Any attempt to the contrary is only an over-reaction. A human being is always a human being.

Surya and *Mitra* do not denote separate gods. Not only *Mitra*, but also *Varuna* and *Agni* are regarded as one god by the *Rigveda*. If we regard function as the parameter, then even that difference cannot be traced between *Surya* and *Mitra*. For one reason, *Surya* supersedes all other gods. All other gods need not be propitiated every day. But then *Surya* is propitiated every day. Identity with anything brings with it sentiments or emotions. It is the origin of poetry. This is what happens in *Vedic* literature. *Surya* is regarded as the eye of the gods. *Ushas* symbolizes twilight. Day begins only when *Surya* followed twilight. Hence, the imagination that *Ushas* brings *Surya*. Perhaps, whole of the *Rigveda* is in the poem-style for this reason. When poetry reigns, philosophy takes back seat.

Eleven *suktas* are reserved for propitiating *Savitru*. Again, distinction between *Surya* and *Savitru* is blurred. *Savitru* not only lights the world but also enlightens the inner world of man. *Savitru* is one god, which stimulates intellect. In these respects, *Surya* is treated on par with *Savitru*.

One more aspect with respect to gods has to be mentioned. There are male gods and also female gods. *Ushas*, *Saraswati*, *Prithivi* are a few among them. While male gods are characterized by activity, valour and exercise of authority, female gods are characterized by grace, mercy, sustenance, nursing and so on. It is likely

that even during those days woman was adept at nursing both body and mind. It is perfectly understandable that man imagines god in his own mould because he cannot imagine god in any other mould.

THE LESSER GODS OF THE *RIGVEDA* AND SECULAR *SUKTAS*

All gods propitiated in the *Rigveda* are not necessarily of high reputation. Generally it is believed that references to witch craft are found only in *Atharvaveda*. However, it is not so. The tenth division of the *Rigveda* also includes such *suktas*. They are called '*Abhichaaraka suktas*'. They are very few in number. But it is not a reason to ignore these *suktas*. In fact, among noble gods a few have still less number of *suktas* in their favour than these lesser gods. The aim here is to wish for nullifying what one does not want. Destruction of enemy is one among them. This is one evil, which anybody wants to destroy. Another evil is extramarital relation. In this case the husband is guilty and his wife prays god to harm her rival. In the text, the word '*Sapatni*' is used to refer to her rival. It should be noted that though *Indra* and *Agni* are propitiated here also, their functions remain unaffected.

Secular *suktas* refer to day-to-day life. Three aspects deserve to be mentioned. One *sukta* mentions that a widow can marry her husband's brother. For reasons unknown, it never was in practice, at least, after lapse of the *Vedic* period. Second aspect refers to one *sukta* which says '*pancha jaata vardhayantee !* Considering the fact that in *purusha sukta* there is reference to *Chaturvarnya*, the word '*Panchajaata*' may refer to the birth or lower *Varna* according to one theory. In the said *sukta*, the word *Varna* does not appear. Can we interpret '*Jaata*' as *Varna*? It is very difficult to answer this question. There is no explicit or implicit reference to untouchability either.

Among secular *suktas* '*akshasukta*' describes the fate of gambler. It shows that gambling is as old as human civilization. *suryaasukta*, which has laid down the proceedings of marriage, shows that among *Rishis*, there were women. They are not necessarily wives of *Rishis*. *Surye*, the daughter of *Savitru* is the *Rishi* of *Surya sukta*.

BRAHMANAS

The word '*Brahmana*' is used here in neuter gender. This word refers a class of literature called liturgical literature. These works are essentially prosaic contrary to *Mantras* found in *Samhitas*. The main content of the *Brahmanas* is to specify prescriptions (*Vidhi*) and proscriptions (*Nishedha*) while performing *yagas*. All *Vedas*, in course of time gave rise to *Brahmanas*. This particular class of literature is also very vast. These works required a few centuries to develop. It is surmised that the age of the *Brahmanas* ranges from 200 B.C. to 3000 B.C.

Two *Brahmanas* originated from the *Rigveda*. One *Mahidasa Aitareya* composed '*aitareya brahmana*'. '*kaushitaki brahmana*' is another. The authorship of the latter is not known. Some scholars say that *Kaushitaki Brahmana* is the same as *Shankhayana Brahmana*. According to *Aitareya Brahmana*, one *yaga* called *agnishtoma* is primary and all other *yagas* are its different forms, sometimes distorted also. Therefore, the description of this *yaga* is given in detail. However, *Aitareya Brahmana* is neither spiritual nor philosophical. Indeed, this criticism applies to all *Brahmanas*. From this *Brahmana* another aspect becomes clear.

Chaturvarnya got transformed to caste system at that point of time only. For example, some *Brahmanas* clearly mention that *shudra* can only be a labourer and *vaishya* can only be an agriculturist.

Kaushitaki glorifies another *yaga* called *Soma-yaga*. Another *Vedic* god *Somapavamana* is the presiding deity of this *yaga*. The drink *Soma* is also associated with this deity. It marks deviation from the *Rigveda* of *Mantra* age in replacing *Agni* by *Vishnu*. Another aspect worth mentioning in this regard is resistance to the sacrifice of animals and meat eating.

ARANYAKAS

Two *Aranyakas* are associated with the *Rigveda*; *Aitareya* and *Shankhayana*. Though the names of the *Brahmanas* and the *Aranyakas* are same, content of one differs from that of the other. An important aspect of *Shankhayana Aranyaka* is that one chapter is dedicated to the discussion on some aspects of grammar. Last two chapters of this *Aranyaka* constitute the basis of *Aitareya Upanishad*. *Shankhayana Aranyaka* has fifteen chapters of which 3rd to 6th chapters constitute the basis for *Kaushitaki Upanishad*.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Define *Suktas* in the *Rgveda*

.....

2) Write a short note on *Brahmnas*

.....

4.3 STRUCTURE OF THE YAJURVEDA

The *Yajurveda* is in two forms, *Krishna Yajurveda* and *Shukla Yajurveda*. While *Shukla Yajurveda* is in verse style, the former is prosaic and also poetic. Perhaps *Krishna Yajurveda* is so called because of this admixture. However, the reason is not very significant. Both forms have a common goal. This *Veda* gave utmost prominence to the performance of *yaga*. In this respect, the *Brahmanas* of the *Rigveda* are more in common with the *Yajurveda*. It is said that *Krishna Yajurveda* had eighty-five schools out of which only four are extant. They are called (a). *Taittiriya* (b). *Maitrayaneeya* (c). *Katha* and (d) *Kapisthala*.

SUBJECT MATTER

Since *Yajurveda* gives prominence to *yagas*, there is description of several *yagas*. It is sufficient to just name them; *paurodasha*, *yajamana*, *vajapeya*, *rajasuya*, *somayaga* are some of them. Authoritative commentary on this *Veda* is written by *Sayana*, which helps us to understand the significance of *yaga*. *Taittiriya* School described these *yagas*. In addition to this description, it also consists of *Ghana paatha* just as the *Rigveda* consists; this was designated in order to simplify the *Vedic* language, which was complicated at that point of time. *Maitrayaneeya* School describes *ashwamedha yaga* in addition to the above mentioned *yagas*. But for this addition there is no other difference as far as *yagas* are concerned. This school has borrowed nearly 1700 *Mantras* from the *Rigveda*. *Katha* School describes *agnishtoma*, *agnihotra yagas* in addition to *yagas* already mentioned. In terms of number *katha* is more voluminous with eighteen thousand *Mantras* and *Brahmanas*. Not much is known about the fourth school since the concerned literature is available in patches. One *Rishi* by name *Kapisthala* is the founder of this school. The *Krishna Yajurveda* was founded by *Vaishampayana* while his student *Yajnavalkya* founded *Shukla Yajurveda*. In Indian tradition, we hardly come across a student who finds defects in his teacher and provides a different system. As per records, *Yajnavalkya* belongs to this category. The form of this text resembles the *Rigveda*.

The *Shukla* form also describes all *yagas* mentioned earlier. In addition, it gives a detailed description of the construction of altar; number of bricks required and shape of the altar. From this *Veda*, we can understand that everyone is not eligible to perform any and every *yaga*. There are three chapters, which are devoted to one *yaga* known as *sautramani* can be performed by a dethroned king, or a lover of cattle or a person who does not have access to *Soma* drink. The specification also says that after the *yaga* is completed, he should drink *Somarasa*.

Significance is attached to the description of the killing of *Purusha*. There are conflicting versions about this description. According to one version, the description is only symbolic. By *Purusha* if we understand man, then it does not really mean that man was sacrificed. According to another version, human sacrifice was not something uncommon because there is a reference to human sacrifice in *Aitareya Brahmana*. An interesting and incredible corollary is that in those days human sacrifice was not necessarily a taboo. This conclusion substantiates what was said earlier (Unit 3, 3.2) that the *Vedic* thought is to a large extent an extension of tribal culture. Therefore even if it is possible to prove that *Purushamedha* is only symbolic, it is not sufficient to prove that human sacrifice was not unknown.

BRAHMANAS

The *Brahmanas* which belong to the *Yajurveda* are extant; *Taittiriya* belongs to *Krishna Yajurveda* and *Shatapatha* belongs to *Shukla Yajurveda*. References are made to another *Brahmana* called *Kaathaka* which is extinct. These *Brahmanas* are extensions of respective *samhitas*. Hence the content remains more or less the same but for a few additions. It is sufficient to mention these additions. Among *yagas* '*nakshatreshiti*' is an addition. It includes the description of twenty-eight stars. Among them fourteen are called *deva* and the remaining *Yama*. The second aspect is the specification of *Mantras*, which have to be chanted during ceremonies like coronation, chariot ascending, etc. Two conclusions can

be drawn; one, monarchy was held to be very important and second, performing *yagas* was sacred. This was in tune with the spirit of the *Yajurveda*. In fact, the number of *yagas* mentioned in the *Brahmana* is quite big. The most interesting *yaga*, however, is *Vishwasruja*, which was performed, purportedly, for one thousand years by the gods. As the name itself indicates the universe came into existence thanks to the performance of the *yaga*. We find here an attempt to explain the birth of the universe. This particular aspect needs attention. Religion and mythology assert that the whole universe was created instantly, which is, surely, incredible. The Bible takes one step ahead and says that the god required six days to create the universe. When compared with the former, the latter is several thousand times slower. However, *Vishwasruja yaga* outsmarts Bible in saying that the process of creation of universe took one thousand years. Science discloses that several billions of years were required for the universe to evolve. Therefore the *Taittiriya* is closer to science than any other work in this respect.

Shukla Yajurveda has two schools; *kaanva* and *madhyandina*. *Shatapatha Brahmana* belongs to both these systems. First reference to *Pitru yajna* can be discerned in this *Brahmana*. *Pitru yajna* is regarded as one of the *pancha yajnas*, the other four being *deva*, *atithi*, *brahma yajnas* and *bhootabali*. Study of the *Vedas* is called *Brahma yajna*. *Bhootabali* is offer of food to all creatures. *Shatapatha Brahmana* is so called because it has one hundred chapters. It is said to be the most exhaustive work in this field. Hence it provides more information than any other *Brahmana*. This particular *Brahmana* gives a very different description of *yaga*. According to this interpretation, any *yaga* has two faces; physical or external (*bahiryaga*) and psychological or internal (*antaryaga*). It is difficult to decide whether the latter can also be called spiritual. Accordingly, sacrifice has to be made twice, one for will power or determination and the other for speech because in the absence of any one of them, it is impossible to perform *yaga*. To maintain independence and hence co-operation of 'will' and 'speech' it is necessary to use separate instruments for two acts of sacrifice. *sruva* is the equipment used to offer sacrifice, which represents will power. Likewise, *srak* is meant for speech. There is difference in posture also. Sacrifice, which is associated with will power, should be made while sitting and the second one has to be made while standing. Lastly, this particular *Brahmana* contains words like *arhat*, *shramana*, *pratibuddha*, etc., which were later, used by *Jainism* and *Buddhism*.

ARANYAKAS

Brihadaranyaka and *Taittiriya Aranyakas* are two *Aranyakas*, which belong to this *Veda*. The first one is also an *Upanishad*. Since it will be taken up for discussion later, it can be omitted for the time being. The *Aranyakas* do not constitute distinct texts. Any *Aranyaka*, for that matter, is restricted only to discussions often on matters pertaining to inner significance of *yagas*, and this discussion matured later in the *Upanishads*. *Taittiriya Aranyaka* is important only for one reason. Two *pramanas* (ways of knowing), which become prominent later, viz., '*Pratyaksha*' and '*Anumana*' are used for the first time here. Otherwise, there is nothing new in this *Aranyaka* worthy of any serious study.

4.4 STRUCTURE OF THE SAMAVEDA

This *Veda* has two parts; *purvaarchika* and *uttaraarchika*. *Aarchika* means collection of *Riks* or *Mantras*. Instead of *Samhita*, the word *Aarchika* is used here. First part has six hundred and fifty *Mantras* and second part has one thousand two hundred *Mantras*. However, some *Mantras* of *Purvaarchika* (Prior collection) have been repeated in *Uttaraarchika* (Posterior collection). If repetition is ignored, then we find approximately one thousand six hundred *Mantras*. Out of them, only about one hundred are original. The rest of the *Mantras* have been lifted from the *Rigveda*. Out of supposed thirteen schools of this *Veda*, only three are extant; *ranaayaneeya*, *kauthuma* and *jaimini*. Even though this *Veda*, to a very great extent, is not original with reference to *Mantras*, it enjoys unique position for two reasons; this was organized for the sake of *Udgatru*, who has a definite role to play in the proceedings of *yaga* (see unit 4.1). Secondly, it set definite tone and style to the chanting of *Mantras*. It shows that these three *Vedas* do not compete with each other, but they are mutually complementary. *Mantras* from the *Rigveda*, method of execution from the *Yajurveda* and a definite style of chanting from the *Sama* may complete the process.

SUBJECT MATTER

The subject matter is unique in the sense that the style of chanting itself is its theme. The emphasis upon style is so great that it became the source of classical music in India. The *Sama Gana* is of four types (a). *graamageya* or chanting in society, (b). *Aranyaka Gana* or chanting in forests, (c). *Ooha Gana*, chanting during *Soma yaga* and (d). *Oohya Gana* or secret chanting. Perhaps there was no difference between chanting and singing during this period. In each category there are several types and again, this number differs from one school to another. If we put together all varieties, we arrive at a staggering figure; it adds up to more than six thousand types. Philosophically, it does not have any importance. It is not even necessary for our purpose to correlate the notes of *Sama* with the 'Seven Notes (*Sapta Swara*)' of classical music. So we shall only restrict to mere mention of some aspects. Here the *Mantras* undergo change in six different ways. The changes occur to suit '*Sama music*'.

Samagana itself has five parts: (a). *Prastaava* (initiating) one who initiates is called *Prastotru*, (b), *Udgeetha* sung by *udgathru*, (c). *Pratihaara* sung by *Pratiharta*, (d). *Upadrava* sung by *udgatru* and (e). *Nidhana* sung by the entire team at the end.

BRAHMANAS

There are nine *Brahmanas*, which belong to the *Sama veda*, of which only three have survived. Instead of explaining the method of performing *yagas*, *Sama veda* explains the structure of '*Gana*' with reference to *yaga*. It shows that the *Brahmanas* of the *Samaveda* also are directly related to *yagas*. In addition, this *Veda* describes in detail the function of *Udgatru*, which is not found in other *Brahmanas*. *Tandya Brahmana*, which has explained this aspect, has given to us denotation of large numbers. For example, *niuta* is one million; *nyarbuda* is for one billion and so on. Another *Brahmana* called *shadvimsha* refers to idols and protective measures to be followed at the time of natural calamities. Reference to idols indicates the beginning of idol worship. *Samavidhana* is third one which serves as reference work to *Smritis* and *Kalpa Sutras*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

3) Explain the structure of the *Yajurveda*?

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4) What are the five parts of *Samagana* ?

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4.5 STRUCTURE OF THE ATHARVAVEDA

Even though the *Puranas* claim that this *Veda* was composed by *Veda Vyasa*, there is no reason to accept this theory if the same *Veda Vyasa* wrote the *Mahabharata*. It is a well known fact that this *Veda* belongs to the post-Mahabharata age. *Pippalda*, a *Rishi*, is said to be the founder of this *Veda*. This particular aspect contradicts the belief that the *Vedas* are *Apaurusheya* because this belief does not exclude the *Atharvaveda*. Surely, it is not possible to hold both *Apaurusheya* theory and authorship of any *Veda*, without getting trapped in contradiction. It is said that this *Veda* had nine schools out of which only two schools viz. *Pippalada* and *Shaunaka* have survived.

SUBJECT MATTER AND THE BRAHMANA

This particular *Veda* is wholly independent of liturgy. Hence, nowhere do we find any reference to *yaga* or reference to gods. However, we cannot conclude that this *Veda* is wholly secular. There are nearly ten issues described out of which one refers to atonement and another to ultimate truth. In this respect, it comes close to the *Upanishads*. There are descriptions pertaining to therapy, longevity, routine life, etc. There are references to several diseases like jaundice, tuberculosis, etc. Since therapy included herbal medicines, this *Veda* must be the source from which *Ayurveda* developed.

Gopatha Brahmana is the only *Brahmana*, which has survived. This is an exceptional *Brahmana* because it has nothing to do with *yagas*, even though there are references to *yaga*. This *Brahmana* makes a strange claim that the *Atharvaveda* is a precondition to the study of other *Vedas*.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

All *Vedas* developed from initial stages of *Mantras* to the *Upanishads*. In the case of *Atharvaveda* alone there is quantum jump from ‘*Brahmana*’ to ‘*Upanishad*’. The *Mantras* of the *Rigveda* mainly aimed at propitiating gods, whereas the *Yajurveda* systematized the performance of *yaga*. Thereby such performance became institutionalized. Thanks to qualifications ascribed to such performance, *chaturvarnya* became powerful; but women had far more respectable place. Remarriage of widow was permissible. Performing *yaga* was a way of life. At least one *Brahmana* has the distinction of discussing cosmology. Human Sacrifice is a debatable issue. The *Samaveda* is unique because it is said to be the source of music. The *Atharvaveda* is more secular than any other *Veda*. While the *Samaveda* is the source of music, the *Atharvaveda* is the source of Indian system of medicine, viz., *Ayurveda*. Hence, all these *Vedas* put together complete the requirement of human life.

4.7 KEY WORDS

- Anachronism** : An anachronism (from the Greek “ana” = “against” and “chronos” = “time”) is an error in chronology, especially a chronological misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other.
- Ayurveda** : Ayurveda (the science of life) is a system of traditional medicine native to India, and practiced in other parts of the world as a form of alternative medicine. In Sanskrit, the word Ayurveda comprises the words *ayus*, meaning ‘life’ and *veda*, meaning ‘science.’
- Liturgy** : A liturgy is the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to its particular tradition.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) The *Rigveda* consists of *suktas*, which were specially meant to be chanted only when *yagas* were performed. There are ten such *suktas*, which are called ‘*Apree sukta*’.

- 2) The word 'Brahmana' is used here in neuter gender. This word refers a class of literature called liturgical literature. These works are essentially prosaic contrary to *Mantras* found in *Samhitas*. The main content of the *Brahmanas* is to specify prescriptions (*Vidhi*) and proscriptions (*Nishedha*) while performing *yagas*. All *Vedas*, in course of time gave rise to *Brahmanas*. This particular class of literature is also very vast. These works required a few centuries to develop. It is surmised that the age of the *Brahmanas* ranges from 200 B.C. to 3000 B.C.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The *Yajurveda* is in two forms, *Krishna Yajurveda* and *Shukla Yajurveda*. While *Shukla Yajurveda* is in verse style, the former is prosaic and also poetic. Perhaps *Krishna Yajurveda* is so called because of this admixture. However, the reason is not very significant. Both forms have a common goal. This *Veda* gave utmost prominence to the performance of *yaga*. In this respect, the *Brahmanas* of the *Rigveda* are more in common with the *Yajurveda*. It is said that *Krishna Yajurveda* had eighty-five schools out of which only four are extant. They are called (a). *Taittiriya* (b). *Maitrayaneeya* (c). *Katha* and (d) *Kapisthala*.
- 2) *Samagana* itself has five parts: (a). *Prastaava* (initiating) one who initiates is called *Prastotru*, (b), *Udgeetha* sung by *udgathru*, (c). *Pratihaara* sung by *Pratiharta* , (d). *Upadrava* sung by *udgathru* and (e). *Nidhana* sung by the entire team at the end.

UNIT 1 NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Epistemology
- 1.3 Theory of Causation (*Asatkâryavâda*)
- 1.4 Self and Liberation
- 1.5 The Concept of God
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Key Words
- 1.8 Further Readings and References
- 1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you will learn the Nyâyika's doctrine of valid sources of knowledge and their arguments on self and liberation. Further, you will also learn the Nyâyika's views on God.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain different kinds of perception;
- discuss nature and characteristics of inference;
- elucidate Nyâya concept of self;
- illustrate Nyâyika's views on liberation; and
- examine Nyâyika's arguments on testimony as a valid source of knowledge.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Nyâya School is founded by the sage Gotama, who is not confused as Gautama Buddha. He is familiarized as 'Aksapâda'. Nyâya means correct thinking with proper arguments and valid reasoning. Thus, Nyâya philosophy is known as tarkashâstra (the science of reasoning); pramânashâstra (the science of logic and epistemology); hetuvidyâ (the science of causes); vâdavidyâ (the science of debate); and anviksiki (the science of critical study). The Nyâya philosophy as a practitioner and believer of realism seeks for acquiring knowledge of reality.

1.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The Nyâya school of thought is adhered to atomistic pluralism and logical realism. It is atomistic pluralism on the account that atom is the constituent of matter and there are not one but many entities, both material and spiritual, as ultimate constituents of the universe. By holding pluralism standpoint it refutes materialistic and spiritualistic monism. It is a system of logical realism by dint of its adaptation the doctrine that the world exists independently from our

perceptions and knowledge. Further, the independent existence of the world can be defended not by our faith or intuition but by the logical arguments and critical reflection on the nature of experience.

The Nyâya philosophy recognizes sixteen categories and the first category is known as 'pramâna' which focuses the logical and epistemological character of the Nyâya system. It professes that there are four independent pramânas (sources of valid knowledge). These are; perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony or sabda.

Interpreting the term 'knowledge' Nyâyikas says that it may be treated as cognition, apprehension, consciousness, or manifestation of objects. Knowledge is of subjective and objective. Subjective knowledge differs from objective knowledge. If different people give the different opinion on a particular object or a fact then the knowledge about that object will be treated as subjective knowledge. For example, on a road accident if we ask different people who were present there, we will find different opinions from them. Hence, the view on the accident is treated as subjective knowledge. On the other hand, if most of the people express their views on an object similar to others then the knowledge of that object would be treated as objective knowledge. For example, all people agreed that apple is a fruit and eatable. Thus, any sort of knowledge is a revelation or manifestation of objects. Just as a tube light manifests physical things of a room, likewise, knowledge reveals all objects surrounded it. The Nyâya Philosophy is being the upholder of realism expresses that knowledge is always dealt with object.

Knowledge may be valid or invalid. Valid knowledge is called *pramâ* and invalid knowledge is called *apramâ*. The Nyâya School advocates that valid knowledge is the true and right apprehension of an object. It is the manifestation of an object as it is. The characterization of valid knowledge is a consequence of the correspondence theory of truth which states that truth is the correspondence between a proposition and reality. Thus, valid knowledge is treated as presentative knowledge. Presentative knowledge arises when the object of knowledge is directly present to the knower. For example, Dr. Biplab perceives a pen in his shirt pocket is an instance of presentative knowledge. Valid knowledge is produced by the four valid sources of knowledge- perception, inference comparison, and sabda. Invalid knowledge is defined as the wrong apprehension of object. It includes memory (*smruti*), doubt (*samsaya*), error (*viparyâya*), and hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*). Memory is not presentative but representative knowledge. Memory can also consider as a source of valid knowledge provided what is recalled or remembered were experienced in the past as a presentative cognition. Doubt is lack of certainty on cognition. Error is misapprehension of what is cognized. For example, a snake is mistakenly cognized as rope. Tarka is considered as invalid knowledge because it does not produce any new knowledge. It only confirms what one already knows earlier. Thus, it is representative in nature.

We shall now consider the four valid sources of knowledge (*pramânas*) that is upheld by the Nyâyikas.

Perception

According to Nyâyikas, perception is the direct and immediate cognition produced by the interaction between the object and sense-organs. For a perceptual cognition,

four elements are necessary. These are; the self, mind, sense organs and objects. The self is in contact with the mind (*manas*), the mind is in contact with the sense organs and lastly, the sense organs are in contact with the objects, as a result, we perceive objects.

There are two types of perception; ordinary perception (*laukika*) and extraordinary perception (*alukika*). Ordinary perception is further divided in two sorts; external (*bâhya*) and internal (*mânas*). External Perception has five distinctions because it is connected with five sense organs - auditory, visual, tactual, gustatory, and olfactory. In case of internal perception, the contacts occur between mind and the object. As a result, knowledge produces. Examples of internal perceptions are; feeling, desiring, wishing, etc.

Again, perceptions are divided in three sorts. These are, indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpa*), determinate perception (*savikalpa*), and recognition (*prativijnâna*). These distinctions are made only in thought but not in experience. Now let us discuss indeterminate perception.

Indeterminate Perception

A perception is considered as indeterminate when we can't determine its features like colour, shape, size, etc. In this case, the sense organs contact with the object and a particular knowledge immediately emerges. Nyâyikas named this knowledge is 'avyakta' which means it can't explain through our vocabulary. In other words, we can't express about the object accurately and clearly. This sort of knowledge arises when self has merely an awareness of the object without having any concrete knowledge of its name, form, qualities, etc. It is basically an underdeveloped form of perception. It's existence is only proved through inference, not by perception.

Determinate Perception

Determinate perception unlike indeterminate perception arises when the knowledge of an object consists of characters, such as; name, colour, shape etc. It gives knowledge of the object, as a result, we cognize 'It is a tree', 'He is a man' etc. In this case, an individual can identify and cognize the object as it is.

Recognition

The senses contact with the object and recalled that whether the same object had been encountered earlier or not. If it had encountered in the past and positively recapitulating the situation and the features of the object then it would be considered as recognition. For example, Mr. Ranjeet saw Dr. Biplab after a long time and recognized him. Here, Mr. Ranjeet would able to do so because he encountered Dr. Biplab in an academic conference five years back. In that time they had spent a very lighter and beautiful moment together. All these events are remembered by Mr. Ranjeet. So once he saw Dr. Biplab he said hey! Are you Dr. Biplab? I am Ranjeet my self. Do you remember we met five years back in a conference? By listening from Ranjeet Dr. Biplab said oh! Yes. I remember you, even I remember the moment that we had spent together. This sense of knowledge is called recognition. In this knowledge there is always an element of immediate experience, e.g., Mr. Ranjeet met Dr. Biplab after a long time in a particular place.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief about ordinary perception.

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Extra Ordinary Perception

Now we will focus our discussion on extraordinary perception (alukika). To explain, it is a perception that provides knowledge even without the senses-object contact. In other words, this sort of perception arises whenever the contacts between sense organs and objects occur in an unusual manner.

Nyâya recognizes three kinds of extraordinary perception. These are;

- a) Sârnânyalaksana
- b) Jñânalaksana
- c) Yogaja

Sârnânyalaksana

Sârnânyalaksana is the perception of universals. In other words, it is the perception of classes. According to Nyâya, the universals are a distinct class. They inhere in all the particular belonging to the same class. For example, a hen becomes a hen because it has the universal ‘henness’ inhering in it. Another example, we identify a person as ‘man’ because that person possesses the common quality of ‘manhood’ which we find among other men.

In our day-to-day life we perceive only particulars like a table, a cow, a pen etc. but not universals like tableness, cowness, penness, etc. Thus, it is admitted that whenever we perceive the particulars we first perceive the universal which inheres in it. These sorts of perception Nyâyikas treats as an extraordinary perception.

Jñânalaksana

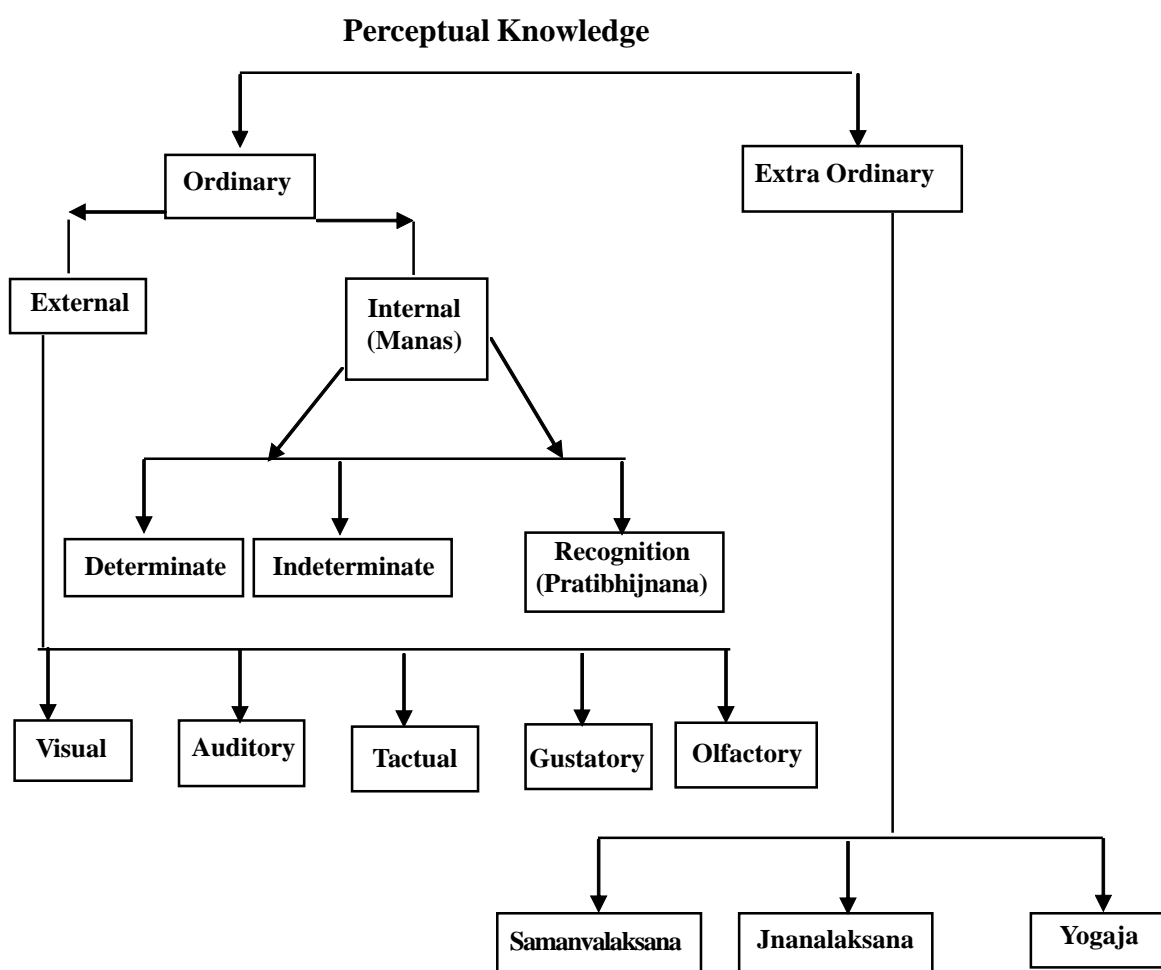
Jñânalaksana perception is a perception through complex association. In this case, an object is not directly presented to the sense organs, but it is retrieved in memory through the past cognition of it and is perceived thorough representation. For example, the ice looks cold, the fire looks hot, etc. Suppose that a person has in the past experienced a piece of ice, its colour and its coldness. Owing to such

invariable association of touch and colour, the person presents in his visual perceptions of ice and its coldness. This results him to say, ice looks cold.

Yogaja

Yogaja perception as an extraordinary perception is found in yogis who possess supernatural power. Yogis through their power of meditation can have intuitive and immediate perception of all objects, past, present, and future.

The following chart represents the Nyâya distinctions on perception.



Inference

According to Nyâya Philosophy, the second source of valid knowledge is ‘inference’. It is also known as ‘anumāna’. The expression ‘anumāna’ is the conjoined of two terms; ‘anu’ and ‘māna’. The word ‘anu’ stands for ‘after’ and ‘māna’ means ‘cognition’. So etymologically speaking, ‘anumāna’ (inference) means ‘after cognition’. Literally speaking, anumāna is such knowledge which follows from other knowledge.

Constituents of Inference

An inference is constituted with at least three sentences and these three sentences are again constituted of three different terms. These three sentences are named as; major premise, minor premise, and conclusion respectively. The major term

is found in the major premise. Similarly minor term is found in the minor premise. And, the term which is found in both major premise and minor premise is called as middle term. In the conclusion only major term and minor term are found. The middle term makes a link between minor term and major term. Major, minor, and middle terms are used interchangeably as 'sadhya', 'paksa' and 'hetu' in Nyâya Philosophy.

An example will clarify the above analysis.

Major Premise : All things which have smoke have fire.

Minor Premise : This hill has smoke

Conclusion : Therefore, this hill has fire

Here 'smoke' is the middle term, 'fire' is the major term and 'hill' is the minor term. In any anumâna (inference) 'vyâpti' relation must subsist between hetu and sâdhya. Vyâpti is defined as an invariable, unconditional and universal relation between middle term and major term of an inferential argument.

In an inference, knowledge of an object is derived due to previous knowledge of some sign or mark. The previous knowledge is due to the universal relation between the major term and the middle term is being present in the minor term.

To explain the above example, it is stated that an individual saw the smoke on a hill from a distant place. By seeing the smoke he/she relates his/her previous knowledge that wherever there is smoke there is fire, e.g.; in kitchen, in a lamp, etc. which is a universal truth. Then, he/she claims that since the hill looks smoky, it implies there is fire.

Now let us discuss the major term, minor term, middle term and their brief analysis in an inferential argument.

Major Term (Sâdhya)

In Aristotelian logic 'major term' and in Nyâya philosophy 'sâdhya' are one and the same. The Sâdhya is the object of inference. It is to be established. The Sâdhya is not perceived but it is inferred by us. On the above example, 'fire' is considered as 'sâdhya'

Minor Term (Paksa)

In Aristotelian logic, paksa is same as 'minor term'. Paksa is to be perceived, but not inferred. The paksa is the subject where we establish something. This something is not considered directly but indirectly. The consideration is depending on inference. 'Hill' is considered as 'paksa' on the above example.

Middle Term (Hetu)

The term 'hetu' corresponds to middle term in Aristotelian logic. It is also known as 'linga', 'mark', and 'sign'. It is found once in relation to sâdhya and then in relation to paksa. Lastly, in the conclusion, it helps in establishing sâdhya in paksa. 'Smoke' is considered as 'hetu' on the above inferential argument.

Types of Inference

Inference is of two types:

- i) Svârtha or for one's self
- ii) Parârtha or for others

In case of the former, the inference is intended for own self whereas, in case of the later, the inference is conveyed knowledge for others. In the former, it is not required to present the judgment in an orderly manner, since it is personal to the member, whereas in case of the later, it is necessary to do so. This is so because the correct order of judgment helps an individual to make understand others.

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, inference for others consists of five constituents.

- 1) This hill has fire (Pratijnâ)
- 2) Because there is smoke (Hetu)
- 3) Wherever there is smoke, there is fire (Udâharana)
- 4) This hill has smoke (Upamâna)
- 5) Therefore, this hill has fire (Nigamâna)

In this inference, the middle term appears three times, Therefore, it is also known as 'tritiyalinga parâmarsa'. In this inference, if we remove either first two premises or last two premises, the inference will not be an invalid and incorrect one. Hence, for an inference we need three and at least three premises possessing three different terms as its basic requirements.

Check Your Progress II

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Explain the role of hetu (middle term) in an inferential argument.

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Upamâna (Comparison)

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, comparison (upamâna) is the third source of valid knowledge. The expression 'upamâna', is derived from two words, 'upa' and 'mâna'. The word 'upa' means similarity or 'sâdrusya' and the word 'mâna' means 'cognition'. Thus, generally speaking, upamâna as a source of knowledge

is derived from the similarity between two things/objects. It is a source of knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation (what the word refers to).

Example of Upamâna:

A person does not know what a ‘squirrel’ is? S(he) is told by a forester that it is a small animal like rat, but it has a long furry tail and strips on its body. After some period of time, when s(he) sees such an animal in the forest, s(he) knows that it is a squirrel.

There are four steps involved in acquiring knowledge of an object in comparison (upamâna).

- First : We have an authoritative statement that a word denotes objects of a certain description.
- Second : When one observes any such objects she/he has the knowledge that it answers to the given description.
- Third : There is a recollection of the descriptive statement received from authority.
- Four/Finally : There is the resulting knowledge that, this kind of objects are denoted by the word is same.

Here, it is important to note that Buddhism (Buddhist philosophy) does not accept comparison as an independent source of valid knowledge. On their account, comparison can be reduced to perception and testimony. The Sâmkhya and the Vaisesika Philosophy believe that comparison can be reduced to inference.

Check Your Progress III

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Give an example of comparison (*upamâna*) on your own.

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Verbal Testimony (Sabda)

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, sabda (verbal testimony) is the fourth and last valid source of knowledge. 'Sabda' literally means verbal knowledge. It is the knowledge of objects derived from words or sentence. But all verbal knowledge is not valid. Thus, Nyâyikas expressed that sabda is a pramâna of valid verbal testimony.

Sabda is the instructive assertion of a reliable person. Now a question probably comes to your mind, i.e. who is a reliable person? A reliable person may be a risi, mlechha, arya who is an expert in certain matter and is willing to communicate his/her experience of it.

Example:

Suppose that a lady came to the side of a river to cross the river and can't ascertain depth of water in the river. In this case, she asked a fisherman who is fishing there that 'can I cross the river?' Since the fisherman is a local person over there and has no enmity with her replied that you can cross the river easily. Here, the word of the fisherman man is to be accepted as a means of right knowledge called verbal testimony.

Types of Sabda

These are two different kinds of Sabda.

- a) i) Drustârtha
- ii) Adrustârtha
- b) i) Laukika
- ii) Alaukika

The former classification is made on the basis of objects of meaning and the later classification is based on the origin of words. Sabda deals with perceptible object is called drstârta, e.g. table is brown, grows is green etc. A sabda deals with imperceptible object is called 'adrsta', e.g. Duty is god, Truth is noble, etc.

Laukika sabda is known as secular whereas alukika sabda is known as divine or vaidika. The Vedas are spoken by god. This vaidika testimony is divine and perfect. According to Nyâyikas, since human beings are not perfect only the words of trust worthy person can be considered as laukika sabda.

1.3 THEORY OF CAUSATION (ASATKARYAVADA)

The theory of causation is an important component of Nyâya Philosophy. Before going in to the discussion of Nyâya theory of causation, let us understand 'what is causation?'

There are two important components found in the theory of causation. One is 'cause' and another is 'effect'. A cause is defined as an unconditional and invariable antecedent of an effect. An effect is defined as an unconditional and invariable consequent of a cause.

Nyâya theory of causation is known as 'astkâryavâda' or 'ârmabhavâda'. They viewed that effect is produced by a cause but the effect and the cause are not one

and the same. The effect is a new product comes to the existence which was not their earlier in the cause. Hence, every effect is a new product which was not found previously in the cause. For example, a pot is made by clay. Here 'clay' is the cause and 'pot' is its effect. According to Nyâyikas, pot is a fresh creation, a new beginning which did not exist before in the clay. In this way they uphold the theory 'asatkâryavâda'.

Check Your Progress IV

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is asatkâryavâda?

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1.4 SELF AND LIBERATION

The Nyâyikas expressed that there are infinite number of individual self exists in the universe. All those have perceivable qualities like pleasure, pain, etc. They are eternal and all pervading.

According to Nyâya, the self can neither be identified with mind (mânas) nor can be identified with pure consciousness, but understood as consciousness belonging to an individual/subject. This is so because mind is atomic and unperceivable and hence devoid from perceivable qualities. On the other hand, consciousness belongs to the individual self but not same as self. Thus, consciousness is not the self but only an attribute of the self. It is an accidental attribute of the self. The self in its original state has no consciousness and hence devoid of cognition and knowledge. But when it comes to contact with sense organs it acquires consciousness.

Self is regarded as 'I' the knower and it is known through internal perception. Since there is self, there is bondage and hence, aspires for liberation or salvation. Liberation is the state refrain from all kinds of sufferings and bondage those arises because of the self's association with body and sense organs. Nyâyikas uphold association and attachment are the sources of pain and suffering. Hence, as long as self is attached with body and sense organs, it goes through the cycles of birth and death. This implies Nyâyikas believe in law of karma.

Liberation, according to Nyâya, can be achieved when there is cessation of karmic chain or karmic influx. It is a state where self is detached from body and sense organs.

Check Your Progress V

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain Nyâyikas view on liberation.

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1.5 THE CONCEPT OF GOD

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He is the efficient, but not the material cause of the universe. The material cause of this universe is the eternal atoms of earth, water, fire, and air. He who desires the universe remains in the state of stability and tranquility. He has the real knowledge of all objects and occurrences. Thus, he is treated as an omnipresent and omniscient being.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

The sage Goutama is the founder of the Nyâya Philosophy. This school unlike other schools of Indian philosophy concerns on the valid reasoning to acquire knowledge of the reality. **Epistemology:** According to the Nyâya Philosophy, knowledge manifests with objects. There are two sorts of knowledge, valid and invalid. Valid knowledge is further divided into four; perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony whereas, invalid knowledge comprises memory, doubt, error, and tarka. **Perception:** It is the knowledge arises due to the association among self, mind, sense organs and objects. Perception is of two sorts: Ordinary and Extra-ordinary. **Inference:** There are three premises and three different terms required for an inferential argument. The premises are respectively named as; major premise, minor premise and conclusion. The three different terms are; major term, minor term, and the middle term. Vyâpti relation subsists in an inferential argument. **Comparison:** Knowledge arises out of the relation between a name and the object it denotes is regarded as comparison. **Sabda:** Sabda is a valid source of knowledge. The Nyâya explains sabda is a reliable statement of anyone. Sabda is divided into two kinds: a) Drustârtha and Adrustârtha b) Laukika and Alaukika. **Theory of Causation:** The Nyâya

Philosophy upholds astkâryavâda which states that effect is not same as the cause. Effect is a new creation or a new bringing of its existence. The effect did not exist in the material cause prior to its production. **Self and Liberation:** There are innumerable self exists in the universe. Since the self possesses consciousness, it is trapped by the law of karma. Hence, suffering and pain are the obvious phenomenon. To get rid from all sorts of sufferings the self seeks liberation. Liberation can be achieved when there will be cessation of law of karma. **God:** God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He regulates the earth, solar systems and the movements of planets and becomes identified as an omnipresent and omniscience being in the cosmos. According to Nyayikas, the world is created out of the four eternal atoms as its material cause. These are; space, time, mind and soul. God is being the efficient cause of universe is responsible for its maintenance, and destruction. Thus God, as the first efficient cause of the universal forces, is the creator of the world. God is one, infinite, eternal, and the universe of space and time, of mind and soul, does not limit him. God is said to possess six perfections: infinite glory, absolute sovereignty, unqualified virtue, supreme beauty, perfect knowledge, and complete detachment. The Nyaya philosophy offers an argument to establish the existence of God known as causal argument. On the line of this argument, it is stated that the entire universe is constituted of enumerable elements both subtle and gross. A human being by possessing limited knowledge cannot be the creator of the vast universe. This implies the creator is one who is beyond space and time, must be eternal and devoid of all limitations. And, all these features are therein Supreme Being or God. Hence, God is the creator or designer of the universe.

1.7 KEY WORDS

- Category** : A category is any of the broadest classes of things – ‘thing’ here meaning anything whatever that can be discussed and cannot be reduced to any other class.
- Knowledge** : Knowledge is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as (i) expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject, (ii) what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information or (iii) awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation. Philosophical debates in general start with Plato’s formulation of knowledge as “justified true belief.”

1.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Barlingay, S.S. *A Modern Introduction to Indian Logic*. Delhi: National Publishing House, 1965.

Chatterjee, S.C. *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1950.

Vidyabhusana, S.C. *A History of Indian Logic*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1971.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

Ordinary perception is of two sorts, external and internal. External is caused by our five sense organs and internal perception is treated as the mental perception.

Check Your Progress II

Hetu is known as 'middle term' in Aristotelian syllogism. It finds in both the major premise and the minor premise and lastly helps major term to establish in the minor term in the conclusion.

Check Your Progress III

Zebra is an animal looks like donkey but it has a long neck and it's body is covered with stripes.

Check Your Progress IV

According to the Nyâya Philosophy, the doctrine that the effect is a new production and it is not same as its cause is known as asatkâryavâda.

Check Your Progress V

Liberation is attained when there will be complete cessation of karmic influx. It is a state where the self is detached from all sorts of worldly sufferings and pains.

UNIT 2 VAISESIKA PHILOSOPHY

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Metaphysics and the Categories (*Abhâva*)
- 2.3 Epistemology
- 2.4 God
- 2.5 Bondage and Liberation
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Further Readings and References
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have explained the various issues and ideas pertaining to Vaisesika Philosophy.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe categories of Vaisesika philosophy;
- explain the Vaisesika's theory of knowledge;
- elucidate the Vaisesika's views on God;
- analyze the issues on bondage and liberation; and
- illustrate the concept 'non-existence'.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

You have learnt in the previous unit Nyâyikas' arguments on valid sources of knowledge (*prâmanas*) and other issues pertaining to Nyâya philosophy. In this unit, you will learn the Vaisesika's arguments on categories (*padârthas*), their views on epistemology, the notion of God, and their concepts on bondage and liberation.

The Vaisesika School is younger to Samkhya and contemporary with Jainism and Bhuddhism. A sage named 'Kanada' is the founder of this school. But according to some, its founder is Ulooka, therefore it is called as the alookya philosophy. The school derives its name from 'vaisesa' which means particularity of eternal substances. There are five eternal substances. These are ether, space, time, soul, and mind (*manas*).

As Nyaya Philosophy is devoted to the study of the criterion of valid knowledge (*pramana*), like wise the Vaisesika philosophy devotes to the study of metaphysical reflections.

2.2 METAPHYSICS AND THE CATEGORIES (ABHAVA)

Vaisesika metaphysics is pluralistic because it claims that variety, diversity, and plurality are the essence of reality. It is also claimed as real for the reason that particulars exist independently of our perceptions. Thus, Vaisesika metaphysics is pluralistic realism. But it is not materialistic pluralism. This is so because its pluralism includes not only material but also non-material entities, for example: time, souls (selves).

The vaisesika used the term “padartha” for categories. Padartha literally means “the meaning of a word” or “the thing or object referred to or signified by a word”. It is an object of knowledge, and capable of being named. Thus, it is knowable (jneya) and nameable (abhidheya).

According to the Vaisesika system, all objects of valid knowledge come under seven categories. These are:

- i) Substance (*Dravya*)
- ii) Quality (*Guna*)
- iii) Action (*Karma*)
- iv) Generality (*Sâmânya*)
- v) Particularly (*Vaiçesa*)
- vi) Inherence (*Samavâya*)
- vii) Non-existence (*abhâva*)

The first six categories are mentioned by Kanada and the last category ‘non-existence’ is added later by his commentators. The above categories, with the exemption of abhava are all existence and are included in being. The nature of the categories is elucidated in details in the following subsections.

Substance (*Dravya*)

According to the Vaisesika, substance as an entity possesses qualities and action. It is the inherent or material cause of an effect. The genus of substance (dravyatva) inheres in it. It is not mere conglomeration of qualities and actions. It has a real and objective existence. It differs from qualities and actions because it is their substrate. They inhere in it. It is their substratum. Thus, it is said that a substance is the substrate of qualities and actions. Qualities and actions can be separated from substance. The reason is, they exist in a substance.

A substance is the material cause of its effect. This features states that a substance can have existence without qualities and actions. Qualities and actions in this sense are considered as the non-inherent cause of substance. For example, green colour of threads, which is a quality, is the non-inherent cause of a cloth. In the similar way, an action is also a non-inherent cause, for example, holding a pen. The conjunction relation between fingers and a pen can be separated from each other without losing any significance or identification of fingers and the pen. But this is not possible in case of a substance. Thus, a substance is the inherent cause of an effect. For example, a cloth is made by threads. Without threads a cloth can’t exist. Hence, threads are the inherent cause of a cloth. They are the material out of which it is produced. Thus, a substance is an inherent cause of an effect, while quality and action are its non-inherent cause.

Orthodox Systems-1

The Vaisesika system expresses that a substance is devoid of qualities at the first moment of its production. It possesses qualities at the next moment. Substances, for them, are of two sorts; eternal and non-eternal. The non-eternal substances are;

- i) Earth or Prithivi
- ii) Water or Jal
- iii) Fire or Tej
- iv) Air or Vayu

The eternal substances are;

- i) Time or Kala
- ii) Space or Dik
- iii) Self or Atma
- iv) Mind or Manas

In addition to all these substances, Vaisesika added one more, i.e. ether or akasa. Therefore vaisesika recognizes nine substances. The four non-eternal substances with ether or akasa are called ‘panchabhuta’. In each of these substances there is one such specific quality that may be perceived by one of the external sense organs. For example, earth has the quality of smell, water that of taste, fire of colour, air of touch, and ether that of sound. These qualities are perceived by the nose, tongue, eyes, skin, and ears respectively. These sense organs are also believed to have originated in earth, water, fire, air and ether.

According to the vaisesika, anything which is composite and hence has parts and is divisible can't be eternal. But the simple, individual, and non-composite is eternal. With these parameters this system has distinguished eternal substances from non-eternal substances. This distinction entails that Vaisesika advocates ontological dualism. This is so because it recognizes the existence of souls and material substances, which are irreducible to each other.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) List the eternal and non-eternal substances and state the reasons for their differences.

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Quality (*Guna*)

According to the Vaisesika philosophy, quality is that category which subsists in substance but in which no other quality or action can inhere. Qualities cannot exist without substance. A quality cannot belong to another quality or action, but only to a substance. Qualities are completely passive and don't produce any objects.

A quality is devoid of quality. For example, colour is a quality of the substance. It is not a quality of its odours, tastes, and other qualities. Hence, qualities have no qualities. A quality is devoid of action. An action is caused by a substance. But the quality of a substance is incapable of doing actions. For example, a bird is flying. Here, fly as a motion is caused by the bird but not by the colours of its feathers. Hence, the colours are devoid of motion. Therefore, a quality has no motion. But it seems to be in motion because its substrate is in motion. In addition to all these defining features vaisesika expresses that a quality is non-inherent cause of a substance. The reason is a substance can exist without qualities at the first moment of its production. Qualities are added to it later.

Qualities can be either material or mental and are not necessarily eternal. The vaisesika recognizes twenty four qualities. These are; 1) colour, 2) taste, 3) smell, 4) touch, 5) sound, 6) number, 7) magnitude, 8) distinctness, 9) conjunction, 10) disjunction, 11) nearness, 12) remoteness, 13) cognition, 14) pleasure, 15) pain, 16) desire, 17) aversion, 18) effort, 19) heaviness, 20) fluidity, 21) viscosity, 22) tendency, 23) moral merit, and 24) moral demerit.

Further, Vaisesika mentions that these 24 qualities are not counted as an exact number of qualities. This is so because the number would be increased if one wishes to count the subdivisions of qualities. For example, blue, red, yellow, etc. can be recognized as colours subsume under the colour category

Action (*Karma*)

Action is physical motion. It resides in a substance like quality. It is dynamic and transient, and not like quality which is static and passive. An action cannot possess another action or quality. Substances are conjoined and separated because of action.

The existence of action is independent of being known. It is expressed by a word because it is known, and therefore nameable. Its existence is independent of its knowledge and expression. It resides in a substance which is its substrate.

Action is unconditional, non-inherent cause of substance. It is non-eternal. Hence, it resides in a non-eternal substance.

There are five kinds of action recognized by Vaisesika.

- i) Upward motion (*Utksepana*)
- ii) Downward motion (*Avaksepana*)
- iii) Contraction (*Akuncana*)
- iv) Expansion (*Prasarana*)
- v) *Gamana* (Locomotion)

Upward motion brings a body into contact with a higher region, e.g. throwing a stone upward. Downward motion brings a body into contact with a lower region, e.g. falling a fruit from the branch of a tree. Contraction brings the parts of a body closer to one another, e.g. clinching fingers of a hand. Expansion makes the part of a body farther from one another, e.g. keeping fingers separate one from the other of a hand. All other kinds of motions are comprised in locomotion. For example, walking, running, swimming, etc.

It is important to remember that there are a few actions cannot be perceived. They can only be inferred through our internal perception. For example, the action of mind.

Check Your Progress II

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write various types of actions justified with examples.

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2.2.4 Generality (Sâmânya)

According to the Vaisesika, generality is that category by virtue of which different individuals are grouped together and called by a common name indicating a class, e.g. bird, table, fruit, etc. The members of such groups have some properties in common. They have some general or common qualities which are to be found in the entire class. For example, the term 'bird' is a general name. It does not refer to this or that bird, but bird in general. Thus, objects or individuals possess similarity because they belong to a general class.

The Vaisesika emphasizes that universal/general subsists in substances, qualities and actions. They are non-spatial and non-temporal. They are similar to the platonic doctrine of the reality of the ideas. Thus, it is impossible for one universal to subsist in another. If it were then one and the something would have contrary natures.

Vaisesika divides generality into three kinds.

- i) Para
- ii) Apara
- iii) Parapara

'Para' is the most comprehensive, such as 'animal'. It is the beinghood which has maximal scope. Apara is the being hood which has minimal scope. It is the name given to the least comprehensive, such as 'men'. 'Parapara' is the generality which is found between para and apara, such as 'beinghood'. Here the general term 'beinghood' is higher than the general term 'men' and lower than the general term 'animal'. This is so because under animality both beinghood and non-beinghood can be constituted, and under beinghood both 'men', 'women' and other category of general term would be constituted.

While considering the generality the Indian Philosophers have subscribed to one or the other of the following three views.

i) Nominalism

This school of thought states that generality is not an essential quality of the similar objects of a particular group but merely a name. Similarity of the beings belonging to a class and distinguishes it from other classes is only by virtue of the name. The general has no individual or separate existence. Buddhist philosophy has suggested this view. The Buddhist nominalism is known as 'apohavada'.

ii) Conceptualism

This school suggests that the general quality has no existence apart from the individuals. The general quality does not come from outside and enter into the individual. Hence, the universal and particular are identical. They cannot be separated from each other. It is the essential quality or the internal form of individuals in general which is apprehended by our mind or intellect. This view is expressed by Jainism and Advaitva Vedantins.

iii) Realism

This school emphasizes that the general/universal is neither a mental thought nor merely a name. But it has its own existence. It is the generality which brings similarity between different individuals of a group. Thus, it is eternal although pervades in each individual or particular object/being. It is because of the general, individuals are called by the same name. This view is subscribed by both Nyaya-Vaisesikas.

Particularity (*Vaiçesa*)

Particularity is referred to 'individuality' and understood as the opposite of generality. It indicates to the unique and specific individuality of eternal substances which have no parts. These substances are space, time, mind, ether, sound and the atoms of these elements. Thus, it is ultimate and eternal. It is because of particularity that individuals are differentiated and distinguished from each other. This also causes the atoms of the same substances considered separately. Hence, each particular is unique in its nature. A particular is partless, and therefore cannot be divided further. Since each particular is unique in its nature and distinguishable from other particulars, there are enumerable particulars found. Thus, the particulars are eternal, part less and enumerable. They are invisible because we cannot have perceptual cognition to them.

Inherence (*Samavâya*)

Inherence is an inseparable and intimate relation between two entities, one of which is incapable of existing separately or independently apart from the other. Inherence relation is eternal. It cannot be separated from its substrate. For example, colour of a flower, motion in water, smell of earth, etc. Inherence should not be understood mistaken as 'conjunction'. In conjunction, the relation between two substances can be separated. It is momentary and non-eternal, while inherence is eternal. Conjunction is the relationship resulted by the connection of at least two substances but inherence is not resulted by the connection of substances. Inherence is inherent in substance. Conjunction is an external relation whereas inherence is an internal relation to the substance. Two substances are joined in conjunction are capable of existing apart. But in case of inherence relation, it is not possible to exist separate from substance. For example, appleness of an apple. Appleness can't exist apart from apple. So appleness and apple are related with inherence relation. This sort of relation is not found in case of 'conjunction'. Here, two substances can exist separate from each other. For example, 'A pen is on the table'. Here the pen is conjoined with table. In this case, the pen can be separated from table and vice versa. Thus, inherence is not conjunction.

Inherence is not perceptible. It is only inferred. This is so because there is no distinct perceptual cognition of it. For example, the relation between a flower and its colour is an inherence relation which is not perceived. What we perceive are that, the colour of the flower and the flower. But we are not able to perceive their inherence relation. Thus, inherence is unperceivable/ imperceptible.

Non-existence (*Abhâva*)

Non-existence as the seventh category of vaishesika substance is not mentioned by Kanada. It is added later by his commentators. The Vaishesika upholds that non-existence, like existence is perceivable. Non-existence is the absence of an object. For example, no one can deny the absence of the sun on the dark cloud of a rainy day. Hence, it is a necessary category in Vaishesika system.

Non-existence is broadly divided in two sorts.

- i) Sansargabhava
- ii) Anyonyabhava

Sansargabhava states the absence of one entity in another. This is symbolically expressed as 'X is not in Y'. For example, coolness in fire, squareness in circle, etc.

Sansargabhava is of three kinds. These are;

- i) Pragbhava or antecedent non-existence
- ii) Dhvansabhava or subsequent non-existence
- iii) Atyantabhava or absolute non-existence

Prâgbhâva

Pragbhava or antecedent non-existence means the absence of the substance prior to its production or creation. For example, the chair does not exist before the carpenter made it, i.e. prior to its making, the non-existence of the chair is in the wood. Similarly, the absence of the pot in the clay before the clay is made into a pot. Thus, antecedent non-existence has no beginning but it has an end.

Dhvansâbvhâva

Dhvansabhava or subsequent non-existence means the absence of the substance after its destruction. For example, the absence of the pot in its pieces after the pot is destroyed. When a pot breaks, we can recreate it from its pieces. Hence, subsequent non-existence has a beginning but it has no end.

Atyantabhâva

Atyantabhava or absolute non-existence means the absence of one thing in another at all times, past, present, and future. For example, the absence of heat in the moon. The absolute non-existence has neither a beginning nor an end. In short, it is eternal. The absence of colour in space will continue for all time. In this way, absolute non-existence is neither born nor destroyed.

Anyonyabhâva

Anyonyabhava is also termed as mutual non-existence. Mutual non-existence means the exclusion of one thing by another. It is the absence of something in some other object. It is symbolically expressed as 'X is not Y'. For example, the table is not a horse. The non-existence of a table in a horse and the non-existence of a horse in a table are mutual non-existence. Anyonyabhava is eternal because two things which are different from each other exclude each other at all times and under all circumstances.

2.3 EPISTEMOLOGY

The Vaisesika philosophy accepts two criterion of valid knowledge, i.e. perception and inference. For them, other two pramanas, comparison and testimony those are accepted by Nyayikas can be subsumed and reduced into perception and inference. In this ground, Vaisesika philosophy differs from Nyaya philosophy. The Nyaya philosophy accepts four pramanas; perception, inference, comparison and testimony whereas, Vaisesika accepts only two pramanas, perception and inference.

According to the Vaisesika, knowledge arises due to our sensations and impressions towards the objects of the world. Sensations and impressions cannot themselves result in knowledge unless the mind is in active position. The mind possesses a serious attention in order to cognize the object as it is. Otherwise, we can only be aware of the presence of something but not able to cognize this or that kind of object. Further, they stated that in order to cognize and identify objects one needs to transform pure sensations and impressions into percepts by categorizing the former by means of concepts. When the mind accomplishes such transformation, 'knowing' as a conscious act arises in the soul. This implies without soul which is the substratum of consciousness there cannot be any knowledge.

The Vaisesika accepts the epistemological realism which states that the perceived qualities and relation of substances are not subjective in nature but belong to the substances and exist in substances independently from our perceptions.

The Vaisesika advocates the doctrine of asatkaryavada which means that the effect does not pre-exist in its cause. The effect is not identical with the cause. The effect is a new beginning. In other words, it is a fresh creation. It does not

contain implicitly in the cause, but certainly it presupposes a cause. For example, the wooden chair as an effect does not pre-exist in the wood and also it is not identical with wood. It emerges from the wood. Hence it is a new object. Therefore, *asatkaryavada* is also known as '*arambhavada*'. This view is opposed by Samkhya and Yoga system of Indian Philosophy. They believe in the doctrine of *satkaryavada* which states that the effect pre-exists in its material cause. For example, the table as effect pre-exist in the wood.

The *vaisesika* expresses that all the material objects of the world are composed of parts and are subject to production and destruction. Each part is divisible into further smaller parts. Again, the smaller parts are also divisible into the smallest parts. This implies there will be a stage where we find the least small part that can't be divisible further. This indivisible part will be eternal particle of the matter. It is termed as '*atom*'. This suggests that all physical things are produced by the combinations of atoms. On the *Vaisesika* views there are four kinds of atoms, earth, water, air, and fire. These four atoms with their different proportions of combination are responsible for creation of the objects of the world. And, destruction means the dissolution of such combinations. It is important to note that one atom is different from other both in quantity as well as quality. Thus the *vaisesika* epistemology is also known as '*paramanukaranavâda*'.

Check Your Progress III

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the doctrine of *asatkaryavada*.

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2.4 GOD

The *Vaisesika* School believes in God as He is the authority of the Veda. It also believes in the principle law of karma. On the account of *Vaisesika*, the Veda is authoritative because it is the word of God. God is the supreme soul, perfect, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal. He is the Lord. He is the guiding principle controlling the motion of atoms. He is guided by the law of karma representing the unseen power of merits and demerits. He creates motion that the living beings may be rewarded and punishable according to their past deeds.

The Vaisesika system holds the view that God creates the universe out of nothing. He is the creator in the sense that he is the designer and architect of the universe. Creation and destruction of the universe takes place in agreement with the wishes of God. In this sense, the Vaisesika atomism is spiritual. This is so because God as the creator imparts motion to atoms which originally lack motion. The creation does not start until God sets the atoms in motion. Thus, God is the efficient cause of the world.

2.5 BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The Vaisesika believes that human beings are in ‘bondage’ because of their ignorance and they can be liberated from bondage by using and applying their knowledge. In short, bondage is due to ignorance and ‘liberation is due to knowledge. Bondage and liberation are caused by our actions. In this regard, Vaisesika expresses that the soul performs actions. Due to ignorance, actions those are performed by soul are judged as good or bad. If actions are in conformity with the Veda’s injunctions, then they are treated as good, and if they are prohibited by the Veda’s injunction, then they are treated as bad.

Good actions and bad actions are resulted by the soul due to our karmic influx. Karmic influx states that every action has its own fruits or results. Hence, good actions resulted good fruits and bad actions resulted bad fruits. These rules are prescribed in the doctrine law of karma.

The principle law of karma is guided by God. He imparts motion to the atoms and leads to creation for the sake of pleasure and pain of the individual soul. As long as the soul performs action, the bondage will remain. Once the soul realizes its true nature as distinct from the mind and body, it can no longer be afflicted by desire and passion. Hence liberation will be achieved and this is possible due to the knowledge of the soul.

Liberation is the cessation of all sufferings, passions, inclinations, desires, together with pain, pleasures, and all qualities. It is the stage, where one can acquire freedom from pain, pleasure, sorrow, suffering, enjoyment and joy. It is pure, quality less, indeterminate, and realizable. In the case of liberation, the liberated soul exists as a substance devoid of all qualities, including consciousness. Thus, the liberated soul is unwarranted.

Check Your Progress IV

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What do you understand by liberated soul?

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

The Vaisesika philosophy is derived from the term ‘visesa’ which means particularly. This system has seven categories (padarthas). Kanada who is the founder of vaisesika philosophy mentioned first to six categories. The last one named as ‘abhâva’ is added later by his commentators. Thus, the seven categories are;

- i) Substances (Padârthas)
- ii) Quality (Guna)
- iii) Action (Karma)
- iv) Generally (Samânya)
- v) Particularity (Visesa)
- vi) Inherence (Samavâya)
- vii) Non-existence (Abhâva)

There are nine substances. These are: i) earth, ii) water, iii) fire, iv) air, v) ether, vi) time, vii) space, viii) self, ix) mind.

There are twenty four qualities. Actions are of five kinds, i) upward movement, ii) downward movement, iii) contraction, iv) expansion, v) mobility

Generality- There are three views concerning this; i) nominalism, ii) conceptualism and iii) realism.

Abhava or non-existence is the last category of Vaisesika philosophy. It is of two kinds; a) Samsargabhava, b) Anyonyabhava (mutual non-existence)

Sansargabhava has three subdivisions.

- i) Pragbhava (antecedent non-existence)
- ii) Dhansabhava (Subsequent non-existence)
- iii) Atyantabhava (absolute non-existence)

The Vaisesika system upholds epistemological realism. It accepts two pramanas, perception and inference. This system subscribes the doctrine asatkaryavada, which means the effect doesn’t exist in its material cause. Regarding the notion God, the Vaisesika mentions that God is the Lord. He is the cause of creation. He is also responsible for atoms movement.

On the issue ‘bondage and liberation’ the vaisesika signifies that bondage is due to ignorance and liberation is due to knowledge. A liberated soul is free from all sufferings and enjoyments. It is pure and hence it is unwarranted.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Materialism : Materialism holds that the only thing that exists is matter; that all things are composed of *material* and all phenomena (including consciousness) are the result of material interactions.

Pluralism : Pluralism is a theory that there is more than one basic substance or principle.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Chattejee, S.G. and Datta, D.M. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1960.

Muller, F.M. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*. London: Longmans Green and Co. Publication, 1928.

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Sinha, J.N. *Indian Realism*. London: Kegan Paul Publication, 1938.

2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Eternal substances are; time, space, self, and mind. The non-eternal substances are; earth, water, fire, ether, and air. Substances are of composite in nature, has parts and divisible treated as non-eternal. On the other hand, substances are of indivisible, and non-composite treated as eternal.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Actions are of five kinds according to the Vaisesika philosophy. These are,
 - a) Upward motion (Throwing a stone up)
 - b) Downward motion (Falling fruits from the branch of a tree)
 - c) Contraction (rolling a cloth in a stick)
 - d) Expansion (stretch a rubber by holding it from two sides)
 - e) Gamana (running in a play ground)

Check Your Progress III

- 1) The doctrine asatkaryavada states that the effect does not exist in its material cause. Hence, the effect is identical with the cause. The effect is a new beginning. This doctrine is also known as 'arambhavada'. For example, a table does not exist in the wood prior to its production.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) A liberated soul is one which is free from sufferings, societal inclinations, desires, aspirations, together with pain, pleasures, and all qualities. It is quality less, pure, indeterminate, indivisible, and eternal. It is only realizable.

UNIT 3 SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Metaphysics
- 3.3 Theory of Causation
- 3.4 Epistemology
- 3.5 Bondage and Liberation
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Further Readings and References
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you will learn the various issues and ideas pertaining to Sâmkhya Philosophy.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the Sâmkhya theory of causation;
- elucidate the distinction between Purusa and Prakrti;
- discuss Sâmkhya views on evolution;
- analyze Sâmkhya account on pramânas (Sources of valid knowledge);
- illustrate Sâmkhya explanations on bondage and liberation; and
- discuss the Sâmkhya views on God.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will find the Sâmkhya's theory of causation, distinction between purusa and prakrti, discussion on the gunas of prakrti; sattva, rajas and tamaj, and a few more issues.

In the previous unit you had studied Vaisesika Philosophy in an elaborate manner. While studying Vaisesika School of thought you must have gone through the discussions on Vaisesika's metaphysics and categories, the concept of bondage and liberation, etc.

In this unit, you will find how Sâmkhya Philosophy argues for the cause of evolution of the world, the role of purusa and prakrti for the creation of the universe, valid sources of knowledge, and on the existence of God.

The Sâmkhya Philosophy is one among the oldest school in India Philosophy. This is so because the basic tenets of Sâmkhya can be seen in Nyâya, Vaiúesika, Yoga, Jainism, and Vedânta. The founder of Sâmkhya Philosophy is 'Kapila' who has written the script 'Sâmkhya Sûtra'. This script is widely known as

Sâmkhya Philosophy. It is commented by many scholars, out of those the significant commentary is known as ‘Sâmkhya Kârîka’ by Iúvarak?na.

There are two views on the origin of this school. Some are believed that the word Sâmkhya is derived from the word ‘Samkhyâ’ which means number as well as right knowledge. Right knowledge is about understanding the reality by specifying the number of ultimate constituents of the universe. Others viewed that Sâmkhya means ‘perfect knowledge’ and that is about the reality. With these introductions now let us know Sâmkhya’s metaphysics.

3.2 METAPHYSICS

The Sâmkhya Philosophy is regarded as dualistic realism. It is dualistic because it holds the doctrine of two ultimate realities; Prakrti and Purusas. Further, it maintains the plurality of Purusas (self) and the existence of matter, hence, treated as pluralistic. It is realism because they viewed that both matter and spirit are equally real. The Sâmkhya school expresses that the self (Purusa) and the non-self (Prakriti) are radically different from each other, as like, subject and object. As subject can never be the object, similarly, an object can never be the subject.

In this regard, a few important questions are addressed here. Those are, ‘what is the ultimate cause of an object?’ and, ‘what are the constituents of the universe?’ In other words, what is the ultimate stuff of which the various objects of the world are made?

The Sâmkhya replies that Prakriti is the ultimate (first) cause of all objects, including our mind, body and sense organs. It is observed that every effect must have a cause. Cause and effect are two inseparable components stand for all sorts of creation in the cosmos. Hence, all objects of the world are bounded in the chain of cause-effect relation. This relation Sâmkhya named as ‘satkâryavâda’ and populated as ‘theory of causation’.

3.3 THEORY OF CAUSATION

The Sâmkhya theory of causation is known as satkâryavâda. It explains the effect exists in its material cause prior to its production. For example, curd was existing in the milk before comes into existence. Hence, the effect is not a real beginning or a new creation. It is also named as ‘parinâmavâda’. By refuting this view Nyâyikas said that effect is a new creation, otherwise why we say this is the effect and that was the cause. The detail analysis of Nyaya theory cause-effect relation (asatkâryavâda/ ârambhavâda) is found in this Block, Unit-1: Nyaya Philosophy.

The following arguments uphold by Sâmkhya to support the theory satkâryavâda.

- i) If the effect does not exist in the cause prior to its operation, none can bring into existence out of the cause. For example, blue cannot be turned into yellow even by a thousand artists. The effect is related to its cause. Effect is nothing but the manifestation of the cause, as oil will be produced from oil seeds only. Thus, effect pre-exists in the material cause in a latent or un-manifest condition.

- ii) A particular effect can be produced out of a particular material cause. A mud jar can be produced out of clay only; cloth can be produced out of threads only. Thus, it proves that the effects are existing in the cause in a latent condition.
- iii) If the effect is not related to its cause, then every effect would arise from every cause. But this does not happen. Every effect does not arise from every cause. For example, butter cannot be produced from sands, waters, or oils. It is produced from milk only.
- iv) The effect pre-exists in the cause since it can be produced by a potent cause only. A potent cause has causal energy to produce a particular effect. The causal energy in this case is inferred from the perception of the effect. If the effect is not existent in the cause, then the causal energy can't be related to it. If the causal energy is unrelated to the effect, then any effect will arise from any cause. Hence, the effect must be pre-existent in its potent cause only.
- v) The effect pre-exists in the cause since it is identical in nature with its cause. The effect is not different from the cause. The cause is existent and therefore, the effect cannot be non-existent. Hence, effect inheres in its cause. This is so because there is no identity between entity and non-entity.

The Sâmkhya disagrees with Nyâyikas and said that if curd as an effect is a new creation and does not exist in its material cause (milk) prior to its production, then can we produce curd from some other liquids like oil, kerosene, diesel etc. Hence, each effect exists in its material cause prior to its production in a hidden form.

Here, a question may come to your mind, i.e. if every effect must have a cause then what would be the cause of a material cause? By responding to this query Sâmkhya philosophy expressed that Prakriti is the first and ultimate cause of all objects of the world both gross and subtle.

Prakrti

Prakrti is the ultimate cause of the universe. It is regarded as the first cause. All effects of the universe are based upon it. Being the first element of the universe, Prakrti itself is uncaused, eternal, and all pervading. Hence, it is called "pradhâna". It can't be perceived but can be inferred from its effect. Thus, it is known as 'anumâ'. In the form of conscious elements, it is called jada, and in the form of the unmanifested objects, it is called 'avayakta'.

Differences between Prakrti and Objects

Objects are the effects of Prakrti. These are dependant, relative, many and non-eternal because they are created and destroyed. But Prakrti, on the other hand, has neither beginning nor end. It is unborn, independent, absolute, one, eternal and beyond creation and destruction. Objects are limited within the space-time continuum but Prakrti is beyond of it. Objects are manifest and composite but Prakrti is unmanifest and without parts. Thus, Vyâsa says that Prakrti is both 'is' and 'is-not'.

Proofs for the existence of Prakrti

There are five arguments offered by Isvarakrishna for the existence of Prakrti. These are as follows;

- i) The world is constituted of manifold of objects. The existence of all the objects must have a cause. This is so because they themselves can't be the cause of their creation. Further, they are limited, dependent, relative and have an end. Hence, the cause which creates them should be unlimited, exists beyond creation and destruction, independent and eternal. Such a cause is the Prakrti.
- ii) The world is an amalgam of all varieties of objects. However, some common qualities are found among all the objects. As a result, pleasure, pain, and indifference subsist among all varieties of objects. This implies that there should be a common cause which possesses these three qualities (pleasure, pain and indifference) and share in all the objects once they created. This cause is Prakrti.
- iii) The activity is generated in the potent cause. All effects arise out of causes in which they were present in an unmanifest form. Evolution means the manifestation of that which is involved. The world of objects which are effect must therefore be implicitly contained in some world cause.
- iv) Every cause has its effect. Thus, cause and effect are distinct from each other although the effect exists in its material cause prior to its production (satkâryavâda). By implication therefore, the universe must have a cause. This cause unmanifests the universe in its totality. This cause in nothing but the Prakrti.
- v) Sâmkhya satkâryavâda accepts the cause-effect relation as an inherence form which implies every effect inheres in its material cause. This holds that if the effect rolls back toward its cause, then it will dissolve in its cause. This helps to maintain the homogeneity in the universe. The balance universe from where everything manifold is regarded as Prakrti.

Gunās of Prakrti

The Sâmkhya Philosophy advocates three gunas of Prakrti. These are; Sattva, rajas and tamas. Prakrti is a state of equilibrium of these three gunas. The word 'guna' is understood here as quality or attribute. Now, let us know about these three gunas.

- i) **Sattva:** Sattva is that element of Prakrti which is of the nature of pleasure, light (laghu) and bright or illuminating (prakâsaka). The tendency towards conscious manifestation in the senses, the mind and the intellect; the luminosity of light and the power of reflection in a mirror or crystal are all due to the operation of the element of Sattva in the constitution of things. For example, blazing up a fire, upward course of vapour etc. Sattva is believed to be white.
- ii) **Rajas:** Rajas is the principle of activity in things. Its colour is red. It is active because of its mobility and stimulation. It is also the nature of pain. For example, on account of rajas, fire spread; wind blows; the mind becomes restless, etc.

iii) **Tamas:** Tamas is the principle of passivity and negativity in things. Its colour is black. It is opposed to the Sattva guna because it is heavy, laziness, drowsiness. It produces ignorance and darkness and leads to confusion and bewilderment.

Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas contradict as well as cooperate among each other to produce an object. These three gunas are present in all the objects of the world. None of them exist alone. Among them each guna tries to dominate the other two. Hence, they can't exist in a tranquility state. As a result, they can't remain pure for a single moment. Since they are changing continuously, distortion is their nature.

There are two types of transformations occur in the gunas. These are, 'svarupa' and 'virupa'.

Svarupa

During pralaya or dissolution of the world, the gunas are changing within themselves without disturbing the others. That is, Sattva changes into Sattva, rajas changes into rajas and tamaj changes into tamaj. Such transformation of the gunas is called 'svarupaparinâma' or change into the homogenous. In this stage, the gunas can neither create nor produce anything.

Virupa

In case of pralaya or dissolution of the world the gunas are in a state of constant flux and each tries to dominate the others. It is this flux of gunas that results in the formation of various objects. This kind of transformation is called virupa transformation or change into the heterogeneous. So, it is the starting point of the world's evolution.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Briefly explain three gunas of prakrti.

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Purusa

According to the Sâmkhya Philosophy, Purusa or self is an eternal reality. Purusa is the self, subject and knower. It never be an object because, the existence of objects can be proved in some ways whereas, non-existence can't be proved in anyways. Purusa is neither the body, nor the mind (mânas), neither ego (aha?kâara) nor intellect (buddhi). It is not the substance which has the quality of consciousness. It is itself pure-consciousness. It is the basis of all knowledge and is the supreme knower. It can't be the object of knowledge. It is the observer, eternally free, the impartial spectator and peaceful. It is beyond the space-time continuum, change, and activity. It is the self enlightened, self-proved and hence, causasui. It is all pervading, formless, and eternal. Its existence can't be doubted because in its absence, all knowledge even doubt is not possible. It has been described as, devoid of three gunas, negative, inactive, solitary witness, observer, knower and of the nature of illumination. According to Sâmkhya Philosophy, the purusa is of the nature of pure consciousness and hence beyond the limits of Prakrti. It is free from distortions. It's objects changes but it itself never changes. It is above self-arrogance, aversion and attachment.

There are five arguments Sâmkhya has given for establishing the existence of purusa. These are as follows;

- a) All the worldly objects are meant for some one. This is so because the conscious Prakrti can't make use of them. Hence, all these substances are for Purusa or self. Prakrti evolves itself in order to serve the Purusa's end. The three gunas, Prakrti, and the subtle body, all are served to the Purusa.
- b) Substances of the universe are composed of three gunas. The purusa is the witness of three gunas and he is beyond from these gunas.
- c) Purusa is a pure consciousness which is beyond our experience and analysis. It is the substratum of all knowledge both positive and negative. There can be no experience without him. This is so because he is the sole authority of all experiential knowledge.
- d) Since Prakrti is unconscious, it can't enjoy her creation. Hence, a conscious element is needed to make use of them. Prakrti is the one to be enjoyed (bhogyâ) and so there must be an enjoyer (bhoktâ). This argument supports the existence of Purusa.
- e) There are persons who try to get relieved from all sorts of sufferings of the world. The desire for liberation and emancipation implies the existence of a person who can try for and obtain liberation. Hence, it is enforced to accept the existence of Purusa.

On the account of Sâmkhya, there are pluralities of self or purusa. All these Purusas are identical in their essences and they are embedded with consciousness. Hence, consciousness is found in all the selves. This view is similar to Jainism, and Mimansa because they believe in the plurality of selves.

Check Your Progress II

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe the characteristics of Purusa.

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Evolution

The world and worldly objects are created because of the contact between Prakrti and Purusa. The Prakrti alone can't create the world because it is material. In the same manner the Purusa can't create the world independently because he is inactive. Hence, the contact between Prakrti and Purusa is necessary for the evolution to start though they are possessing different and opposite natures.

An example can help you to understand the nature of Purusa and Prakrti in a better way and clear manner. The Prakrti is like a blind man and the Purusa is like a lame man cooperate each other to reach their destination. The lame man sits on the shoulders of the blind mind and pointing to him the way where to go and in which direction to move. In much the same manner, the inactive-eternal Purusa and the conscious Prakrti cooperate with each other in order to start the evolution.

Regarding their contact, the Sâmkhya says, there is no real contact took place between Prakrti and Purusa. But their mere closeness or nearness with each other disturbs the stability of the gunas of Prakrti. When these three gunas; sattva, rajas, tamas disturb and disrupt, they are constantly mixing and dissociating. As a consequence, evolution begins.

A sage named Kapila has described the order of creation which is accepted by the Sâmkhya Philosophy.

The order of creation is as follows.

i) Mahat

Mahat is the first product of evolution. It is cosmic in its nature. Besides this fact, it has psychological aspect in which it is called intellect or buddhi. Here, it is important to mention that buddhi should not be understood as the same as consciousness. The reason is buddhi is material whereas

consciousness is eternal. An important function of buddhi is to take decision which is a part of memory act. This helps to distinguish between the known and the knower. Sattva is predominately found as an attribute of buddhi. Buddhi helps to identify the soul or the âtman which differs from all physical objects and their qualities.

ii) Ahamkâra

Ahamkâra is understood as 'ego' in English. It is the second product of evolution. Ego is identified as "I" or "mine" feelings of an individual. Every individual has buddhi, and since ahamkâra is a practical element of buddhi, it is found in all individuals. Because of ego the purusa looks upon himself as an active agent, desire and strive for ends, and possesses characteristics. An individual perceives an object through sense organs. Then mind reflects on these perceptions and determines their nature. Following this, the attitude of 'mine' and 'for me' is attributed to these objects. This is nothing but regarded as 'ego'. In this product (ahamkâra), all these three gunas of prakruti operates.

iii) Mânas

According to the Sâmkhya Philosophy, mânas or mind is neither eternal nor atomic. It is constituted with parts and thus can come into contact with the different sense organs simultaneously. Mind helps to analyze and synthesize the sense-data into determinate perceptions. Being an internal sense organ, it is aware of objects belonging to the past, present, and the future.

iv) Jñânendriyas

Jñânendriyas are known as five sense organs; nose, ears, eyes, skin, and tongue. On Sâmkhya views, sense is an imperceptible energy or force which exists in the perceived organs and apprehends the object. This implies, the sense is not the ears but their power of hearing. Thus, the senses are not perceptible but can infer. They are informed from the functions that they perform. The five sense organs produce knowledge of touch, colour, smell, heard, and taste. All these are born because of the Purusa and they are the result of ego or ahamkâra.

v) Karmendriyas

Karmendriyas is understood as the five organs of action which reside in mouth, ears, feet, anus, and the sex organ. They perform the functions respectively as speech, hearing, movement, excretion, and reproduction. The cause of the creation of these organs is the desire of Purusa for his experience.

vi) Tanmâtrâs

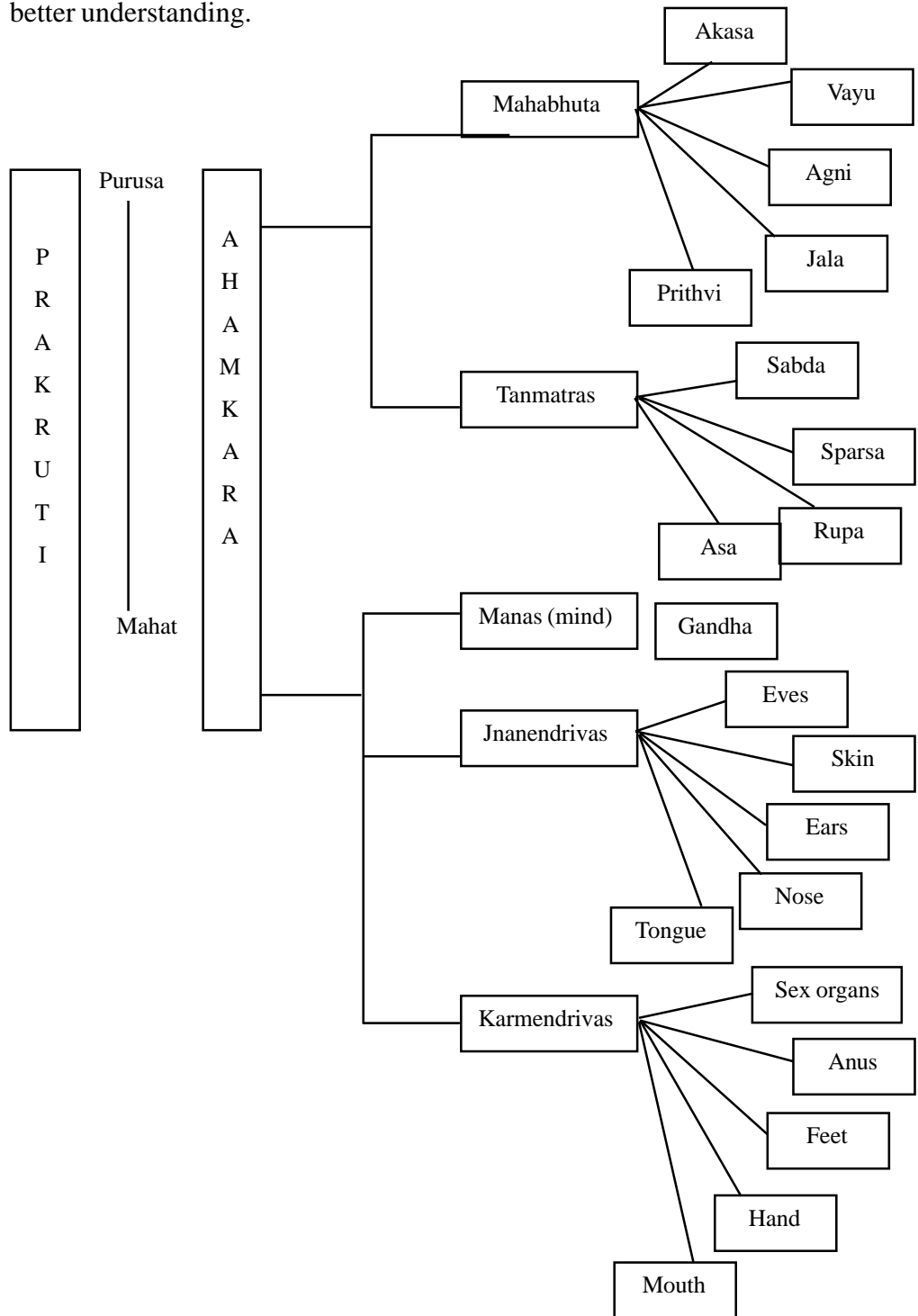
There are five tanmâtrâs; sabda or sound, sparsa or touch, rupa or form, rasa or taste, and gandha or smell. All are very subtle because they are the elements of the objects. Hence, they can't be perceived but inferred. The Sâmkhya School viewed that the five elements; earth, water, air, fire, and ether have their origin in the five tanmâtrâs.

vii) Mahâbhutas

There are five mahâbhutas found in the cosmos namely;

- Air or Vâyû
- Fire or Agni
- Akâsa or Ether
- Water or Jala
- Prathivi or Earth

Their respective qualities are; touch, colour, sound, taste, and smell. The Sâmkhya theory of evolution is illustrated in the following diagram for your clarity and better understanding.



Check Your Progress III

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is mahat?

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3.4 EPISTEMOLOGY

The Sâmkhya philosophy recognizes three independent sources of valid knowledge (Pramâna). These are; perception, inference, and verbal testimony (sabda). According to the Sâmkhya, self possess knowledge. To have knowledge of an object there should be contact between object and sense organs. Again, the connection must found between mind and sense organs. Lastly, mind is related to mahat for cognition. Thus the mahat becomes transformed into the form of particular objects. Mahat being unconscious and physical entity can't generate knowledge alone. Hence, it requires a conscious and eternal entity like Purusa. Since Purusa is pure consciousness helps Prakrti to generate knowledge. The Sâmkhya Philosophy accepts two sorts of perception, savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka as Nyaya advocates. For detail discussion on savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka, please go to the Unit-1: Nyâya Philosophy.

Without deviating from Nyaya Philosophy, the Sâmkhya holds that vyâpti is found in all sorts of inference. For them, inference are of two sorts; i) affirmative (vita), ii) negative (avita). In case of the former, inferences are constituted of universal affirmative propositions. But in case of the later, it consists of universal negative propositions. The analysis of universal affirmative proposition and universal negative preposition are discussed in the Block.

The Sâmkhya accepts the five-membered syllogism of the Nyaya as the most adequate pattern of inference. The Sâmkhya School adores sabda as an independent source of valid knowledge. Sabda or verbal testimony is of two kinds, 'laukika' and 'vaidika'. The analysis of laukika and vaidika are found in Nyaya Philosophy of this Block.

3.5 BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The self, who is eternal, pure conscious, and all pervading, due to its ignorance identifies itself with the mânas, ahmkara, and mahat which are the products of Prakrti. Thus, it experiences the worldly pain and suffering. The universe is

constituted of manifold objects, and since objects are embedded with gunas and selves and even interrelated among them, suffering is unavoidable. This is so because the Sâmkhya claims that wherever there is guna there is suffering. Further, they said that the life in heaven is also controlled by the gunas.

Since there are sufferings and bondage, there are also paths leads to liberation, emancipation or salvation. On Sâmkhya account, there are two sorts of liberation. These are;

- i) Jivanmukti
- ii) Videhamukti

The self attains freedom from worldly suffering and realizes truth in one's life living in the earth is known as jivanmukti. In case of videhamukti, the self attains complete liberation from all sorts of sufferings. This is achieved after death only. Thus, videhamukti is known as kaivalya. This is understood as liberation from the gross body. The Sâmkhya theory of liberation is termed as 'apavarga', the purusartha or the summum bonum of life.

Check Your Progress IV

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the differences between jivanmulti and videhamukti.

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

The Sâmkhya philosophy is the oldest school among all the schools of Indian Philosophy. A sage named kapila was the founder of this school. This system is dualistic because it accepts two ultimate realities, Purusa and Prakrti. It advocates satkâryavâda, which expresses effect exists in its material cause prior to its production.

On the account of Samkhya,

Prakrti - It is eternal, unconscious, and active

Purusa- It is eternal, pure conscious, and inactive

There are three gunas found in Prakrti. These are sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Nearness between Prakrti and Purusa causes evolution. The order of creation is as follows:

- 1) Mahat
- 2) ahamkâra
- 3) Mânas
- 4) Five sense organs (jnânendriyas)
- 5) Five organs of action (karmendriyas)
- 6) Five subtle elements (tanmantrâs)
- 7) Five physical elements. (mahâbhutas)

Epistemology

The sâmkhya philosophy believes there are three independent sources of valid knowledge. These are; perception, inference, and verbal testimony.

Bondage and Liberation

According to the Sâmkhya school of thought, bondage is due to the attachment towards worldly objects and liberation is the dissociation from worldly suffering and pain. On Sâmkhya views, liberation is of two types.

- i) Jivanmukti
- ii) Videhemukti

One can attain jivanmukti while living in the earth and possessing physical body whereas, videhamukti is attained only after death. Thus, videhamukti is known as kaivalya or the summum bonum of life.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Guna : Guna means ‘string’ or ‘a single thread or strand of a cord.’ In more abstract uses, it may mean ‘a subdivision, species, kind, quality,’ or an operational principle or tendency.

Evolution : Evolution, in biology, is change in the genetic material of a population of organisms through successive generations. Although the changes produced in a single generation are normally small, the accumulation of these differences over time can cause substantial changes in a population, a process that can result in the emergence of new species.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Chatterjee, S.G. and Dutta, D.M. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1960.

Hiriyanna, M. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Press, 1932.

Keith, A.B. *The Samkhya System*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918.

3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

Three gunas of prakruti are sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is white, rajas is red and tamas is black in colour. These three gunas help for the production of objects in the world. In some objects they are found in homogeneous manner and in some cases heterogeneous manner.

Check Your Progress II

Purusa is eternal, inactive but embedded with pure consciousness. It is the enjoyer who enjoys all the products of the prakruti. It helps prakruti to produce objects in the world. The nearness between purusa and prakruti causes the evolution to start.

Check Your Progress III

Mahat is the first product of the prakruti. It has psychological aspect in which it is called intellect or buddhi. Buddhi helps to identify the soul or the atman which differs from all physical objects and their qualities.

Check Your Progress IV

Jivanmukti is attainable while living in the earth. It is the stage where one realizes the causes of suffering and detached from worldly objects. Videhamukti on the other hand, is attained after death only. It is the pure liberation where no sign of suffering and attachment is found. In this stage, the soul will be purely liberated.

UNIT 4 YOGA PHILOSOPHY

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Organization of the Yoga-Sutras
- 4.3 Psychology of Yoga
- 4.4 The Eight-Fold Yoga (Astanga Yoga)
- 4.5 God and Liberation
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Further Readings and References
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you will have an exposition to Yoga Philosophy. You will learn different stages, various forms, and modifications of Citta. You will also find the explanation on the eight-fold path of yoga. Further, you will be familiar with the Yogikas' views on God and liberation.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain various forms of Citta;
- elucidate different kinds of Klesas;
- discuss the eight-fold path of yoga; and
- analyze the Yoga views on liberation.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you must have studied Samkhya philosophy in an elaborate manner. Their views on purusa, prakariti, pramanas (sources of valid knowledge), bondage, and liberation.

In this unit you will be explained what are the eight fold path of yoga, how liberation can be attained, how mind gets purified, how to control bodily act, and some more issues allied to Yoga School of thought.

The Yoga philosophy speaks about the theory and practice for the realization of the ultimate truth concerning human being and the world. In Vedanta, yoga is understood as 'union', i.e. spiritual union of the individual soul with the supreme soul. This view is not explained clearly. Patanjali, who is the founder of the Yoga System says, yoga is a spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of sense organs, gross body, subtle mind, intellect and ego. It guides to achieve the highest wisdom through spiritual realization.

Patanjali's 'Yoga-sutras' are the first and foremost systematic and authoritative presentations of yoga in both its theoretical and practical aspects. Followed by

Patanjali, Vasys's "Yoga-bhasya" and Vacavpati Mishra's "Tattva-vaisaradi" are the good additions to Yoga philosophy. These two works are treated as commentaries on Yoga-sutras.

The Yoga Philosophy is closely associated with Samkhya philosophy. The Yoga presents a practical path for the realization of the self whereas the Samkhya emphasizes the attainment of knowledge of self by means of concentration and meditation. Thus, it won't be incorrect to state that yoga is the practice and Samkhya is its theory. The Gita says that Yoga and Samkhya are the practical and theoretical sides of the same system.

Although there are many similarities found between Samkhya and Yoga system yet a few dissimilarities are highlighted. The similarities are; both the schools uphold that liberation can be attained through knowledge. And, to attain this knowledge it requires the power to control body, mind, senses, intellect and ego. Yoga accepts three pramanas which are agreed by the Samkhya. These three Pramanas are; perception, inference and verbal testimony. There are twenty five metaphysical Principles as viewed by the Samkhya and it is agreed by the Yoga. The dissimilarities lie when Yoga states that there is only one and one Purusa is known as 'Supreme self' who is eternal, ubiquitous, beyond time and space. Rejecting this view, Samkhya expresses that there are many Purusas and hence, there are innumerable number of selves.

Now let us know the Patanjali's organization of Yoga-sutras.

4.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE YOGA-SUTRAS

Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras consist of four parts. These are:

- i) Samadhipada
- ii) Sadhanapada
- iii) Vibhutipada
- iv) Kaivalyapada

The first part deals with the introduction to the nature and methods of yoga in its various forms. It describes the various modifications of the organs including citta which is an internal organ of human being. The second part explains the causes of suffering and how to eradicate them. It talks about the law of karma and human bondage. The third part elucidates the concept how to achieve the supra-normal powers and in which ways yoga helps it. The last or the final part describes the nature of liberation and spiritual union with the supreme soul/self.

4.3 PSYCHOLOGY OF YOGA

Psychological foundation is the prerequisite to understand the path of yoga. In other words, a basic understanding of psychology helps to understand the path of yoga in a clear form. Thus, we need to understand in a priority basis 'what is psychology of yoga?'. The most important element in the psychology of yoga is citta. 'Citta' means the three internal organs as described in the Samkhya philosophy- buddhi or intellect, ahamkara or ego, and manas or mind. It is the first-modifications of the Prakriti in which sattva guna dominates rajas and tamas.

It is material by nature, but due to nearness or closeness with the Purusa, it acquires consciousness. But when it relates to an object, it assumes the 'form' of that object. This form is called Vrtti or modification. Due to the modifications of Citta, the self knows the worldly objects. There is no real or actual modification occurred in the self. But due to the reflection of the Purusa in the modifications of Citta, there is an appearance of change found in it. Just as the moon appears as moving in the river and waves of the river appear as luminous, similarly Purusa appears as undergoing modifications and citta appears as conscious due to Purusa's reflection in it. When the knowledge of an object is attained the self ceases to exist from the modifications of Citta. It even detached from the association and aversion of the worldly joys and pain. This attachment and aversion is nothing but 'bondage'. To get rid from these bondage human beings need to control the modifications of citta. One can control the modifications of citta only by practicing yoga in continuous manner. In this regard, Patanjali defines yoga as the cessation of the modification of citta.

On the account of Yoga philosophy, citta has different stages and various forms. Let us discuss these issues one after the other.

4.3.1 Stages of Citta

There are five stages of citta called as 'citta bhumi'.

a) Ksipta (Restless)

This is the first-stage of citta. In this stage citta is very much distributed and attached with worldly objects. For example, Citta of those intoxicated by the possession of power and money.

b) Mudha (Torpid)

In this stage, tamas dominates the other two gunas; sattva and rajas. This stage of citta is known as mudha. For example, citta of the intoxicated persons.

c) Viksipta (Distracted)

This is the third stage of citta where sattva guna dominates the other two gunas. In this stage yoga begins and citta tries to attain god or supreme soul. Due to the sattva dominance, it is found that there is temporary ceasing of the modifications of the citta.

d) Ekagra (concentrated)

This is the fourth stage of Citta. In this stage, citta is fixed to some object due to the sattva preponderance. It is known as ekagra. For example, the flame of a candle light remains always pointing up without flicking hither and thither.

e) Niruddha (Restricted)

The fifth and final stage of citta is niruddha. In this stage the impressions remain in the citta after the cession of modifications. This stage is known as yoga.

Out of these five stages the last two are very helpful and hence useful in yoga. But the remaining stages are harmful for practicing in yoga and thus, these may be removed by practice.

4.3.2 Forms of Citta

Since citta is embedded with three gunas -sattva, rajas and tamas, it constantly changes. This is so because of the dominance nature of one guna on others. Hence, there are three forms of citta noticed. These are;

- i) Prakhya
- ii) Pravrti
- iii) Sthiti

Prakhya

Sattva Guna is dominating in this stage. But, tamas remains as subordinate to sattva. The citta aspires for different powers of yoga in this form. For example, anima, siddhi. etc,

Pravrti

In this form, the citta is predominated by rajas. Tamas, here, becomes weak. Thus, this form appears to be enlightened. Example of this form of citta would be “dhyana” or “dharna”.

Sthiti

The citta is predominated by sattva, and rajas is subordinating to it. In this form citta holds its own form and differentiating from others.

Check Your Progress I

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is citta?

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An important aspect of citta is that it modifies. And, the modified citta is known as vrtti on the view of Yoga Philosophy.

4.3.3 Modifications of Citta

The citta gets modify or change and acquires consciousness due to the reflection of the Purusa or the self. But the real nature of citta is material. The changes in citta are known as modifications of Vrttis.

The modifications of citta are of five types. These are:

- i) Pramana (right cognition)
- ii) Viparyaya (wrong cognition)
- iii) Vikalpa (imagination)
- iv) Nidra (sleep)
- v) Smrti (memory)

Pramana

Yoga school, like Samkhya adheres to three pramanas. These are; perception, inference and sabda (verbal testimony). In the case of perception, the citta through sense organs (both external and internal) comes into contact with external objects of the world and assumes its form. In case of inference, the citta cognizes the generic nature of objects and this is equally applicable to verbal testimony also.

Viparyaya

The expression ‘Viparyaya’ is understood as ‘doubt’. To possess not determinate knowledge of an object is known as doubt. For example, seeing an object and not able to cognize whether it is a shell or a silver is resulted in doubt.

Vikalpa

It is the knowledge in which the object is known but the object does not exist. Thus, it is treated as merely a verbal cognition. For example, barren women’s child, horses’ horn, etc.

Nidra

Nidra is a mental modification where there will be no cognition. It is the knowledge of the absence of objects. In this stage, the citta is predominated by tamas. However, this stage won’t ignore the mild presence of knowledge while some body is in sleep. This is so because after waking up from sleep the person has consciousness that (s)he had slept well and knew nothing. Thus, some sorts of modifications are occurred even in sleep.

Smrti

Memory or smrti is the recapitulation or recollection of past experiences. Recapitulation is possible through our impressions that we left on the objects while cognized. Thus in this stage some sorts of modifications are found in citta.

Check Your Progress II

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.
 b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Smrti (memory) is a modification of the citta. Explain it.

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4.3.4 Kinds of Klesas

There are several causes responsible for the disturbances in the citta. Among those a few are; attachment with objects of the world, cognizing the objects wrongly, inactivity, doubt, carelessness, etc. These causes arise because citta imagines itself as the agent and the enjoyer because of Purusa's reflection on it. Hence, we find the earthly sufferings (klesas).

The Yoga philosophy mentions that there are five kinds of klesas or suffering. These are;

- i) Avidya (ignorance)
- ii) Asmita (egoism)
- iii) Raga (attachment)
- iv) Dwesa (aversion)
- v) Abhinivesa (clinging for long life and fear of death)

Avidya arises when we cognizing the self as non-eternal and material. But the real nature of the self is bliss, eternal, and possesses pure consciousness. Asmita is wrongly identifying Purusa and Prakrti, and further, bringing them in an equal platform. But in reality, purusa and Prakrti are two distinct entities, thus, can't be equated with each other. Raga is the craving to get worldly pleasure like power, money, etc. Dwesa is anger in the means of suffering. The last, abhinivesa is fear of death which finds among all living beings in the earth.

4.4 THE EIGHT-FOLD YOGA (ASTANGA YOGA)

We the human beings have body, sense organs, and mind, hence, it is obvious to have sensual attachment and passion towards worldly objects. As a result, we have drawn in the river of bondage and worldly sufferings. To get rid of earthly suffering and to remove the ignorance that find within us, we have to conquer our sense organs, mind and even our bodily act. To do so the citta needs to be controlled. In this respect, yoga philosophy prescribes eight-fold path which helps to control our passions and craving for worldly pleasures.

These eight fold path are as follows.

- i) Yama
- ii) Niyama
- iii) Asana
- iv) Pranayama
- v) Pratyahara
- vi) Dharana
- vii) Dhyana
- viii) Samadhi

Now let us discuss these points one after another in a sequential manner.

i) Yama

It is the control of mind, body, and speech.

The five yamas are:

- a) **Ahimsa**: it means to accept the principle non-violence. It upholds that not to kill or do any injuries to any living beings.
- b) **Satya**: Satya or truth says that to speak the truth and adhere to truth even in your thinking.
- c) **Asteya**: it upholds the principle non-stealing. This includes both not desiring on others' wealth and not stealing any goods from others.
- d) **Brahmacharya**: it is known as celibacy. Here one needs to control his/her senses towards the attachment of heavenly pleasures. It restrains somebody for not having sexual life.
- e) **Aparigraha**: it says not to accept and aspire for any sorts of unnecessary lavish things for life enjoyment like gold, diamond, etc.

All these yamas are badly required for the concentration of citta.

ii) Niyama

It speaks about the rules for possessing good conduct. There are five niyamas as follows.

- a) **Saucha**: it says about cleanliness which includes both external cleaning (e.g. bath, pure diet, hair cutting and cleaning, nail cutting etc.) and internal cleaning (e.g. friendliness, empathy, happiness, smile, etc).
- b) **Santosh**: it is understood as contentment. It means be satisfy with yourself whatever you attain or posses. In other words, "what you are, you must be happy with that".
- c) **Tapa**: Tapa or penance includes the power of tolerance. To tolerate extreme and maximum cold and heat, one needs to do the hard practices. And, this is possible through tapa.
- d) **Swadhyaya**: it says one needs to study religious scriptures to develop his/her spiritual knowledge. It is considered as one of the good principle to possess good conduct.
- e) **Iswara Pranidhan**: It says always remember God is the supreme authority and all mighty. One should completely surrender himself/herself to him. This is a practice which helps for the development of good conduct upholds by yoga philosophy.

iii) Asana

It is an advanced stage of yoga. It speaks about to do various bodily postures which helps to retain concentration of citta and even helps to control the body as well as mind. There are various types of asana. Among them, a few includes, padma, sirsa, chakra, garuda, maura etc. It is advisable to do regular practice of asana. The reason is, it not only controls the body such as keeps the body flexible, increase the immunity, etc. but also keeps the body free from diseases and make it strong and healthy. By doing regular asana one can control the different external and internal organs of the body.

iv) Pranayama

This is the fourth stage in the practice of yoga. Pranayama is understood as control of breath. It suggests that practicing pranayama helps the agent to control his/her inhaling and exhaling of breath. This helps the citta to remain concentrate and focused. Through pranayama one can control his/her body by doing some postures. This makes agent remains healthy and good.

Pranayama has three steps. These are;

- a) Puraka
- b) Kumbhak
- c) Recaka

The first step puraka conveys to take as much air as possible. It is known as inhaling. The second step Kumbhak expresses after inhaling as much air as possible tries to retain it for half of the time taken in inhaling. The third step 'recaka' states that gradually exhale the air by taking the same time that your had consumed while taking inhalation.

These three steps will gradually accelerate, so that in due course of time the agent may control his/her breath which helps the citta to remain concentrate and not disturbed.

v) Pratyahara

In this stage, the agent should control his/her sense organs for not being attracted by the worldly objects. He/she will try to restrain the sense organs for not clinging desperately for the objects of the world. Hence, craving for an object would be ceased. By practicing this yoga, the agent can keep his/her mind undisturbed from worldly objects even while living in the earth. To do this practice it requires strong determination and repression of the senses.

vi) Dharana

Our mind constantly shifts from one object to another. To keep our mind focused in one particular point and tries to check for its frequency of shifting one object to another is called as dharana. In this stage, the agent keeps his/her mind continuously engage in one object and tries to bring back the mind to that particular object if it is shifted to another object as quick as possible. Example, an agent tries to concentrate to the top of the flame of a candle, concentrating on the cap of a water bottle.

vii) Dhyana

It is one step ahead to dharana. In this stage, the aspirant becomes successful to remain concentrate on an object in a longer time. Here, the aspirant realizes the whole object by concentrating its one part. This step is known as meditation. It helps to realize the true nature of the citta.

viii) Samadhi

The eight and last step of yoga is known as samadhi. This is the apex stage of yoga. In this stage, the aspirant negates the differences between subject and object, realizes the true nature of the citta that how it attains the form of the object. Here, the process of concentration and the object becomes one and identical. This stage is known as cessation of modification of the citta.

Check Your Progress III

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) List the eight fold path of yoga.

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Samadhi is of two kinds. Samprajnat or sabeej (attributed samadhi) and asamprajnat or nirbija (attributeless samadhi).

Samprajnat (Conscious Samadhi)

In this form of samadhi, the aspirant becomes aware of his/her concentration. When the citta is concentrated on one object, the similar kind of object of modifications occurs in the citta. This is known as conscious samadhi or samprajnat. Concentrating on one object leads to controlling the distracted mind which often attaches to different objects of the world. Thus, it is said that focusing on one object implies dissociating from other objects. Since attachment for worldly pleasures cause suffering, the attention towards a particular object removes worldly sufferings (klesas) and passion for worldly pleasures. This helps to receive the real knowledge of an object and becomes free from law of karma or karmic influx.

This conscious samadhi is further divided in four types. These are;

- a) Savitarka samadhi
- b) Savicar samadhi
- c) Sanand samadhi
- d) Sasmit samadhi

Savitarka Samadhi

In this stage, the citta is concentrated on a gross object and clearly identify it through meditation. For example, meditating to see the top of a nose.

Savicar Samadhi

In this stage, the citta is concentrated on subtle object and assumes its form. For example, concentrating on tanmantras (rupa, rasa, gandha, sabda, sparsa).

Sanand Samadhi

In this stage, the citta is concentrated on a sattvika subtler object and produces happiness and joy. It even helps in attaining bliss.

Sasmit Samadhi

In this stage, the citta is concentrated on the ego-substance which is identified with the self. Hence, individuality becomes an existent.

Asamprajnat (Supra-conscious)

This is the highest form of samadhi. In this stage, there will be no distinction found between subject and object. The worldly attachment and sufferings disappear. Thus, it is known as attribute less samadhi or nirbija.

Out of these eight stages of yoga, the first five are to be practiced by external means and the remaining three stages are to be practiced by internal means. This is so because the first five stages are merely preparatory to the latter three stages. The last three stages of yoga are directly connected with yoga.

<p>Check Your Progress IV</p> <p>Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.</p> <p>1) Discuss asamprajnat Samadhi.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

4.5 GOD AND LIBERATION

The Yoga school while accepting the existence of God explains the salient features of God that are found in ‘Yoga sutra’. According to the Yoga Philosophy, God is free from the law of karma, pain, pleasure, joys, and all sorts of worldly attachments. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. In the Yoga Philosophy, God is called as ‘Iswara’. He has eternal knowledge and bliss. His existence is beyond all limitations. He is the supreme authority. What he does, it is not for his own sake but only for the sake of the universe.

Since God is eternal, benevolent, all mighty and all pervasive, he is dissociated from law of karma. Therefore, he does not need any kind of liberation. An individual (Jiva) seeks liberation because he/she has to bear the fruits of his/her karmas. But God is transcendent to everything. Thus, he is detached from liberation. The Yoga school of liberation is named as ‘kevali’.

There are three arguments offered by the Yoga school for the existence of God. These are;

- i) **Scriptural testimony:** scriptures are ancient and old but stands as references for the existence of god. In Vedas and the Upanishads, it is described that God is the ultimate existence, eternal and sumum bonum of life.

- ii) **The efficient cause:** Prakrti and Purusa, since they are different and distinct in their nature, they can't come close to each other without intervention of an efficient cause. This efficient cause is 'God'. He is responsible for bringing prakrti near to the purusa. As a result, the world and living beings in it are created.
- iii) **The ultimate in hierarchy:** we the human beings possess limited knowledge. Hence, we have ego, intellect and buddhi. But God is free from all these properties. He is the 'Supreme Being' and the source of all substratum of the universe and became the creator of all living creatures in the earth. He is the creator and the destroyer of the universe. The whole world is so vast that an ordinary human being can neither create nor control over it. Hence, God's existence is acclaimed.

Check Your Progress V

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- 1) Explain the causes for the existence of God in a brief manner.

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

Yoga sutras are the basic text of yoga philosophy. These are written by Patanjali. The Samkhya philosophy is closely associated with the Yoga philosophy. In this regard, the Gita says, Yoga and Samkhya are the practical and theoretical sides of the same system.

One among the other dissimilarities between these two schools is Yoga accepts only one purusa whereas Samkhya accepts the existence of many purusas or selves.

Organization of the yoga sutra

Patanjali prescribes the following organization of the yoga sutras.

- i) Samadhipada
- ii) Sadhanapada
- iii) Vibhutipada
- iv) Kaivalyapada

Orthodox Systems-1

The citta is an important element of the psychology of yoga. There are five stages of citta. These are;

- i) Ksipta (Restless)
- ii) Mudha (Torpid)
- iii) Viksipta (Distracted)
- iv) Ekagra (Concentrated)
- v) Niruddha (Restricted)

The citta has three forms. These are;

- i) Prakhya
- ii) Pravrti
- iii) Sthiti

The citta modifies due to the reflection of the Purusa on it. It is known as citta-vrtti. There are five types of modifications found in the citta.

- i) Pramana
- ii) Viparyaya
- iii) Vikalpa
- iv) Nidra
- v) Smrti

We the human beings suffer because of the modifications of citta, which is known as klesas in Yoga philosophy. Klesas are of five kinds.

- i) Avidya
- ii) Asmita
- iii) Raga
- iv) Dwesa
- v) Abhinivesa

The eight fold yoga

- i) Yama – non violence, non-hatred
- ii) Niyama- cleanliness, reading religious scriptures
- iii) Asana- to do different postures
- iv) Pranayama – control of breathe
- v) Pratyahara – controlling passions for objects
- vi) Dharana
- vii) Dhyana
- viii) Samadhi

Samadhi is of two types.

- i) Conscious Samadhi (Samprajnat)
- ii) Supra-Conscious Samadhi (Asamprajnat)

Further, samprajnat samadhi is divided into four kinds.

- i) Savitarka Samadhi
- ii) Savicar Samadhi
- iii) Sanand Samadhi
- iv) Sasmit Samadhi

According to the Yoga philosophy, God is known as 'Iswara'. He is the creator of this universe. He is beyond time and space. He is eternal, all pervading, and free from liberation. A jiva or an individual seeks liberation because of his/her karmic influx. But God is beyond the karmic chain. He is almighty, benevolent and sumum bonum of one's life. 'Liberation' in the Yoga philosophy is known as "kaivalya" and the aspirant to attain the liberation is known as 'kevali'.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Citta : Citta (Pali) is one of three overlapping terms used in the to refer to the mind, the others being *manas* and *vijnana*. It primarily represents one's mindset, or state of mind.

Klesas : Klesa is the source of suffering.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Hiriyanna, M. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Publication, 1932.

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

The most important element in the psychology of yoga is citta. 'Citta' means the three internal organs as described in the Samkhya philosophy- buddhi or intellect, ahamkara or ego, and manas or mind. It is the first-modifications of the Prakriti in which sattva guna dominates rajas and tamas.

Check Your Progress II

Memory or smrti is the recapitulation or recollection of past experiences. Recapitulation is possible through our impressions that we left on the objects while cognized. Thus in this stage some sorts of modifications are found in citta.

Check Your Progress III

The eight fold path of yoga are as follows.

- ix) Yama
- x) Niyama

Orthodox Systems-1

- xi) Asana
- xii) Pranayama
- xiii) Pratyahara
- xiv) Dharana
- xv) Dhyana
- xvi) Samadhi

Check Your Progress IV

Asamprajnata samadhi is the highest form of samadhi. In this stage, there will be no distinction found between subject and object. The worldly attachment and sufferings disappear. Thus, it is known as attributeless samadhi or nirbija.

Check Your Progress V

As per the yoga school of thought the existence of God can be proved from the fact that the Holy Scriptures testify it. Also, God's existence is a necessity for the two distinct substances of prakriti and purusha to come forming a union. Also, He is the culminating point in the gradation of the things.

UNIT 5 MIMAMSA PHILOSOPHY

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Epistemology
- 5.3 Sources of Valid Knowledge (Pramâna)
- 5.4 Theories of Error (Khyativâda)
- 5.5 Metaphysics
- 5.6 Nature of Self
- 5.7 God and Liberation
- 5.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.9 Key Words
- 5.10 Further Readings and References
- 5.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After having studied and worked through the unit, you should be able to:

- illustrate the validity of knowledge;
- discuss arthapati (postulation) as a source of valid knowledge;
- analyze khytivada (theory of error);
- explain the nature of self; and
- discuss the Mimamsika's concept of liberation.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, Yoga Philosophy, we gave you an account of different forms and modifications of citta. We had also discussed the 'eight fold path of yoga'. At the end, we had analyzed the concept of God and liberation.

In this unit, you will find the complete discussion on the Mimamsa philosophy, their views on epistemology and the metaphysics. Theory of error and theory of causation are also discussed with reference to their view. Further, their arguments on the sources of valid knowledge (pramanas) are elucidated in an elaborate manner.

The Mimamsa philosophy is one among the other schools of Indian philosophy. The Mimamsa School was founded by Jaimini in 400 B.C. He was the author of 'Mimamsa sutra'. The commentator works on Mimamsa Sutra are primarily of Kumalia Bhatta and Prabhakara Mishra. Like Nayaya-Vaisesika and Samkhya-Yoga, Mimamsa-Vedanta is considered as an allied system of Indian school of thought. The word 'mimamsa' means 'revered thought', which is to be applied originally in the interpretation of the vedic rituals. Mimamsa deals with the initial part of the Veda and is therefore called as Purva-Mimamsa. The initial part of the

Veda concerns on human action, their rituals and the sacrifices. It is thus known as karmakanda.

Two scholars namely Kumarila Bhatta and Prabhakar Mishra wrote treatises on the Mimamsa philosophy. They aimed at giving a theistic learning to the Mimamsa philosophy.

5.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The term epistemology deals with knowledge of an object. When we cognize an object we possess knowledge of that object. To verify whether our knowledge of that object is correct or not, we have to consider the below four conditions. These are;

- i) It must not arise from defective causes.
- ii) It must be free from contradiction. This implies it must be self-consistent and should not be contradicted by subsequent knowledge.
- iii) It provides the experience of an object which has not experienced earlier. In short, it provides experience of an unknown object.
- iv) It must represent the object.

Once these conditions are satisfied, our cognition of an object will be treated as valid. While considering these conditions, it is mentioned that memory can't be regarded as valid knowledge because it arises from the impression of a prior cognition which contradicts the third condition/ criterion of valid knowledge.

Validity of knowledge

Kumarila regards cognition as a means of valid knowledge because of its apprehension (anubhuti), and he regards cognizedness produced by a cognitive act as its result. Prabhakara, on the other hand, vividly expresses that we cognize an object by means of valid knowledge as it is an apprehension, but it is not to the means of 'recollection' as it is found in case of memory. He identifies pramana with prama or valid knowledge and regards cognition as manifesting itself but not inferable form cognizedness of its object. Thus for him, pramana is same as prama. On his views, all cognitions are valid and their invalidity is due to the disagreement with the real nature of objects. So wrongness does not belong to the cognition but to the object cognized.

With these analyses, the Mimamsa philosophy discusses two theories; svatah pramanyavada, and paratah pramanyavada. The former is translated as intrinsic validity and the latter is translated as extrinsic validity of knowledge. To explain svatah pramanyavada, knowledge of an object is valid by itself. Validity of knowledge arises from the essential nature of the causes of knowledge and it is not due to any extraneous conditions. To elucidate paratah pramanyavada, knowledge is not self-evident but it is validated by extraneous conditions.

By doing integration (reshuffling) of these two theories, we are resulted in four theories. These are;

- i) Svatah pramanyavada (intrinsic validity)
- ii) Svatah apramanyavada (intrinsic invalidity)

iii) Paratah pramanyavada (extrinsic validity)

iv) Paratah apramanyavada (extrinsic invalidity)

The Mimamsa (kumarila) upholds svatah pramanyavada and paratah apramanyavada. For him, the validity of knowledge arises from the essential nature of its causes untainted by defects, and is known by the knowledge itself. Intrinsic validity of knowledge consists in its being generated by the complement of causal conditions of the knowledge itself, and not by extraneous conditions besides them. The knowledge of validity is also generated by the aggregation of causal conditions, which make the knowledge known. But the invalidity of knowledge arises from defects in the causal conditions of the knowledge. It is known from the knowledge of the object itself.

Analyzing the four theories, the Samkhya philosophy upholds svatah pramanyavada and svatah apramanyavada. On their view, both valid and invalid knowledge are intrinsic whereas, Buddhists argue in favour of svatah apramanyavada and paratah pramanyavada. They regard that validity of knowledge is extrinsic and invalidity of knowledge is intrinsic. For them knowledge is invalid in itself but it is validated by extraneous conditions. As soon as knowledge of an object is generated, it can't apprehend the real nature of the object. It is uncertain at the time and liable to contradiction, and so should be regarded as invalid. Its validity is subsequently known by the knowledge of the excellence of its causes; or the knowledge of its harmony with the real nature of its object, or the knowledge of a fruitful action and sets aside its intrinsic invalidity.

The Nyaya-Vaisesika regards the validity of knowledge as due to the excellence (gunna) of its causes. These schools regard both validity and invalidity of knowledge as extrinsic.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain svatah pramanyavada.

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5.3 SOURCES OF VALID KNOWLEDGE (Pramānas)

Kumarila Bhatta recognizes six pramanas. These are;

- i) Perception
- ii) Inference
- iii) Comparison
- iv) Verbal testimony
- v) Postulation (Arthapati)
- vi) Non- apprehension (Anupalabdhi)

Prabhakara rejects non-apprehension (anupalabdhi) as a source of valid knowledge. He states that negation can't be an independent pramana. The reason he gives, it is a disagreement with positive facts or phenomena which are found in other pramanas. Thus, he accepts five pramanas. Let us illustrate all the above pramanas in a sequential manner.

Perception

Perception is a form of knowledge which results from the contact between the object and the sense-organs. Generally, we believe whatever is perceived by our senses must be true because in perception, the objects are directly known through our sense-organs. Thus perception is an immediate knowledge. Example; by seeing and touching a table one can acquire the knowledge of that table. Perceptual knowledge is valid only when an object is perceived as it is.

Like Nyayikas, the Mimamsa School has classified perception in various kinds from different perspectives. Firstly, perception is classified in two types; ordinary (laukika) and extra ordinary (alaukika). When sense organs come into the contact with the object in the usual way we have ordinary perception. savikalpaka (determinate) and nirvikalpaka (indeterminate) are two forms of ordinary perception. The detail analysis of these two perceptions are found in the unit-1:Nyaya Philosophy of this block. In the case of extraordinary perception, the objects are not presented to the senses in the usual way but they are conveyed to the sense through unusual medium. On perception, the basic difference between the Nyaya and the Mimamsa philosophy is, the Naiyayikas regard the auditory organ as proceeding from ether (akasa) while the Mimamsikas regard it is proceeding from space(dik).

Inference (Anumana)

The second kind of pramana is called anumana. Inference is a kind of knowledge, which is based on previous cognition. In perception we have direct knowledge of an object because there is a direct presentation of an object before our sense organs. Therefore, perceptual knowledge is immediate or prataksa.

In anumana, there is no such direct presentation of the object and therefore it is called paroksa jnana or mediate knowledge. In anumana, an object is inferred to be present in a particular case because it has been invariably perceived to be present in all such similar cases. Thus in anumana, the cognition of an object is based on our prior knowledge of it. For example, we see smoke in a distant hill. From the presence of smoke, we at-once infer that there must be fire in the distant hill.

Comparison (Upamana)

Upamana is a pramana recognized by the Mimansikas as similar to Nyayikas' views. In upamana, knowledge of an object is determined by comparing it form other similar kinds of objects. Thus roughly it is treated as analogy. For example, assume a situation where a man has not seen a gavaya or a wild cow and doesn't know what it is. A forester told him that a wild cow is an animal like a country cow but she is more furious and has big horn in her forehead. In a later period he comes across a wild cow in a forest and recognizes it as the wild cow by compairing the descriptions made by the forester. This knowledge is possible due to the upamana or comparison. Thus, upamana is the knowledge of the relation between a name and the object it denotes by that name.

Verbal Testimony (sabda)

According to the Mimamsa philosophy, testimony is a reliable statement uttered by a trust worthy person similar to Nyaya Philosophy. It is stated that a sentence consists of a group of words, and a word is considered as an entity which has the power to express some meaning. Testimony is a valid knowledge, which is derived form word or sentence. But all words or sentences can't be treated as testimony because all verbal expressions are not necessarily regarded as valid knowledge. So, on the account of Mimansikas, sabda must be based on the verbal assertion of a trust worthy person who knows the truth and desires to speak the truth for the guidance of others.

Verbal testimony is used as meaningful words or sentences. The mere combination of letters or the words don't provide a valid knowledge. Therefore, words and sentences must be used in a specific sense whose meaning will be clear, as a result, it would be treated as a valid pramana.

Postulation (Arthapati)

This is a unique source of valid knowledge upholds by the Mimansikas. In other words, the Mimansikas expressed arthapati as a valid method of cognition. The expression "arthapati" is a combination of two words namely 'artha' and 'apatti'. The term artha means fact and apatti means 'kalpana' which is understood as 'supposition' in English. Thus, etymologically speaking, arthapati is that knowledge which resolves the conflict between two facts. It entails a presupposition which solves the problem that occurred between two facts.

Arthapati is the assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two apparently inconsistent perceived facts. When a known fact can't be accounted without another fact, we have to postulate the existence of third fact. The valid and justified knowledge of the third fact is known as arthapati.

For example, Devadatta is a fat man by fasting in the day. In this proposition we find two facts. One, Devadatta is a human being alive and he is fat. Second, he is not eating in day time. In order to resolve this conflict, i.e. how a person will be fat and not eating anything in day time, we postulate the existence of third fact, i.e. he must be eating in the night. Another example, "John is living and who is not in home". The problem observed here is how John alive and is not found in his home. To resolve this conflict, we postulate the fact, i.e. he may be staying in a rented house outside his home. Thus, postulation or presumption is a valid source of knowledge.

Check Your Progress II

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss ‘arthapati’ as a valid pramana.

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Non-Apprehension (Anupalabdhi)

This is an independent source of valid knowledge subscribed by the Mimamsa Philosophy. Non-apprehension is the immediate knowledge of the non-existence of an object. An object doesn’t exist in a particular place and a particular time. But it exists elsewhere. To perceive the non-existent of that particular object in a given situation/place is known as anupalabdhi.

For example, ‘there is no book on the table”. Here, an individual does not perceive the book directly through his/her sense organs. But the knowledge of the absence or non existence of the book on the table arises because of the non-perception of the perceivable object. The absence of an object from the situation in which it should be available is said to be its non-existence. And, to possess the knowledge of non existence of objects in an existence form is called as anupalabdhi.

5.4 THEORIES OF ERROR (Khyativāda)

The theory of error is called as ‘khyativada’. It is opposed to the theory ‘pramanyavada’ (validity of knowledge). The term ‘khyativada’ is associated with invalid or erroneous knowledge. Before, entering into the discussion of theories of error which is expressed differently by different schools you should know ‘what is error?’.

Error (viparyaya)

Error or bhrama is reverse of valid knowledge (prama). In the case of valid knowledge the presentation of object is found what it really is, but in case of error, it is found in inverse mode. In case of error, we cognize object what it is not. In error, an object is cognized as having certain characteristics that really fall outside of its being. Thus, it is a wrong apprehension in which the object is taken for what it is not. All error is subjective in their nature. For example; we cognize a snake instead of a rope. This happens because the characteristics of a snake are found in the rope. In the similar way we cognize shell erroneously as silver.

Check Your Progress III

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is error?

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With these backgrounds now let us discuss theories of error which are relevant in your present study out of many. Prabhakara school of Mimamsa and Advaita Vedantins propounded 'akhyativada' and 'anirvacaniya khyativada' respectively. Kumarila Bhatta advocates the theory of error known as 'viparita khyativada'. Let us discuss how they establish their theory in their own ways.

Akhyativada

This theory of error is advocated by Prabhakara school of Mimamsa. It is also called as 'viveka khyati'. According to Prabhakara School of Mimamsa, there is no invalid cognition. A particular cognition may be less than true but it can never be untrue. They recognize two fold classification of cognition. These are;

- i) Valid cognition
- ii) Memory

But they did not acknowledge delusive cognition as a third class. This is so because delusive cognition generates out of the above two cognitions.

For example, 'This is silver'. The 'this' is perceptually cognized and the 'silver' is remembered. The cognition of the 'this' is perceptual because there is sense contact with what is present before us, i.e. shell. However, the cognition of silver is a memory being generated by our sense-impression. In this case, the cognizer fails to demarcate percept from smrti. As a result, our knowledge on the object is treated as erroneous. Hence, we cognize shell as silver.

Anirvacaniya Khyativada

This theory of error is proposed by Advaita Vedantins. It states that something is presented to our senses because of avidya or ignorance. Due to avidya the cognizer cognizes an object something different from what it is.

For example, we cognize shell as silver. In this case our knowledge of silver is imposed on the object 'shell'. So it is erroneous. Further, they said that nothing is found real in this world because knowledge of an object is altered in the next

moment. Due to 'I-ness' we cognize objects in the world. But the fact is that, there is only one reality that is eternal and unchanging is known as Brahman. Hence, whatever we cognize is not real. Therefore, the nature of creation is indescribable. This implies cognition of shell as well as silver is not real. Hence, the theory of error is indescribable.

Viparita Khytivada

In regard to the theory of error, Bhatta School of Mimansa proposed a new theory known as 'viparita khyativada'. On their view, error lies because of the wrong relation between the object and sense organs, but it is not due to the objects which are real. For example, people belong to different parts of the world seeing one and the same moon but wrongly claim that they are seeing different moon. This theory of error is reversal of right behavior towards an object.

5.5 METAPHYSICS

The Mimansa Philosophy believes in the existence of eternal world and the innumerable individual souls within it. They also admit the existence (presence) of other eternal and infinite substances in the earth. They viewed that the world is constituted of three types of elements. These are; body, sense organs and eternal things. The self in the body enjoys the fruit of its actions. Sense organs used as the means to experience pleasure and pain. External things are meant for enjoyment. Apart from all these realities they also believe in many other realities like, the existence of heaven, hell, etc. although these are not perceivable. Thus, Mimansikas are treated as pluralistic realist.

The Mimansikas agreed upon the view that the creation and destruction of the world is based on our karmas. Hence, they ruled out the existence of God behind the creation of the world. For them, God is an unseen power who guides/ instructs us to do certain karmas in certain time/period.

Regarding categories, Prabhakara School of Mimansa recognizes seven categories. These are; substance (Dravya), quality (guna), action (karma), generality (samanya), inherence (paratantrata), force (shakti), and similarity (sadrshya). Differing from prabhakara, kumarila admits only four positive categories out of seven. These are; substance, quality, generality and action. Further, Kumarila adds two more categories in his list- 'sound' and 'darkness'. But these two categories are not accepted by Prabhakara.

Theory of Causation

According to the Mimansa philosophy, theory of causation is explained through 'theory of energy'. They explained that there are potent energies found in the cause. As a result, a particular cause produces a particular effect and that has been observed or known by us (human beings). Thus each phenomenon can be explained only by the theory of potent energy in the cause. If the potent energy is absent, no effect would be observed. An example can clarify this notion. If we fry a seed and sown in the soil, it won't sprout out. The reason is the potent energy of the seed is consumed in the process of burning it.

5.6 NATURE OF SELF

About the self, Mimansikas admit that there are innumerable selves exist in the world. For them, souls are of two sorts. One is liberated soul and other is living soul (individuals of the earth). This implies every living being possesses a distinct self or soul. For Mimansikas, the self is eternal and imperishable substance. When a living animal dies, it won't die with it. It continues to live to reap the fruits of its deeds. According to Mimansikas, 'consciousness' is not the essential attribute of the self. Rather, it is considered as an adventitious quality that emerges in particular situations. For example, while in deep sleep consciousness is not found in the self. This is so because in this stage there will be no contact between sense organs with objects.

Kumarila says that there is no knowledge of self as we have the knowledge of external objects like, tree, grass, bird, etc. Thus, for him, self is the object of self consciousness. Further, he states that when we concentrate on self we realize 'I exist'. Refuting this view Prabhakara Mimansa expresses that the self can't be the subject and object of the same knowledge. This is so because one thing can't be both the 'doer' and the 'deed' at the same time, and in addition to that the function of the doer and the deed are opposite/contrast to each other. Thus, on the account of prabhakara, an objective knowledge constitutes of three constituents; the knower, the known, and the knowledge. All these three constituents are known simultaneously for acquiring the knowledge of an object. For example, "I know this table". Here, the knower is "I", the known is 'table' and the knowledge that acquires is about the object 'table'.

Check Your Progress IV

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the Mimansika's views on 'self'.

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5.7 GOD AND LIBERATION

The Mimamsa Philosophy has given much importance to the Veda than the God. The Vedas prescribe eternal principles to do one's own duties and possess a good and healthy life in the cosmic world. God becomes only the name to offer flower while performing the rituals. They consider 'yajna' is the highest sacrifice

to achieve summum bonum in one's life. Yajna is not for the worship to Gods or propitiation of Gods but purification of one's own soul.

There are two sorts of actions performed by living soul in this earth. One; actions are performed to achieve certain worldly pleasures. Second; actions are to be performed because the Gita prescribes it. In short, the former action is known as duty for duty sake and later is known as duty for deity. Since, there are actions, there are attachment with worldly objects, hence arouses sufferings and pains. To detract from (get rid of) all sorts of sufferings, one needs to get liberation. In this regard, Mimansikas state that the self moves in the cycle of birth and death because of its action and attachment towards worldly pleasures. The state of liberation can be attained only when the self gets emancipation from the bondages of mind, body, sense organs and objects of the world. This helps the self to remain free from the cycle of birth and death. In the state of liberation, the self cannot enjoy the experience of pleasure and pain because it is devoid of consciousness.

Thus, for Mimansikas, liberation is not a state of bliss. It is a state where the self achieves its real nature and dissociated from worldly pleasure and pain.

5.8 LET US SUM UP

The founder of the Mimansa School is Jaimini. He is the author of Mimansa Sutra followed by two chief commentators, Kumarila Bhatta and Prabhakara Mishra out of many.

Epistemology

A valid knowledge is one, that doesn't arise from defective causes, it is devoid of contradictions and dealt with object. The Mimansa philosophy states about svatah pramanyavada (intrinsic validity) and paratah pramanyavada (extrinsic validity). It accepts six pramanas (sources of valid knowledge). These are:

- i) Perception
- ii) Inference
- iii) Comparison
- iv) Verbal Testimony
- v) Arthapati (Postulation)
- vi) Aupalabdi (non apprehension)

The first four pramanas are similar to the Nyaya philosophy but the later additions are made by Mimansa philosophy.

Theories of Error

Error is opposed to valid knowledge. All error is subjective. To explain error, not to cognize an object as it is. In other words, to cognize an object not as it is leads to erroneous cognition. For example, cognizing a rope as a snake instead of rope. There are different opinions given by different schools on theory of error. 'Akhyativada' is advocated by Prabhakara School of Mimansa whereas, Bhatta School of Mimansa is subscribed 'viparita-khyativada'. Advaita vedantins uphold 'anirvacaniya khyativada'.

Metaphysics

The Mimamsa philosophy is pluralistic realist because they suggest there are innumerable objects existing in the world. There are infinite and eternal souls also exist in the world. Souls are of two sorts. One is liberated soul and another is, living soul. This implies as many body those many souls. Further, they said that there are non-perceivable entities exist in the world, like, hell, heaven, etc.

God and Liberation

According to the Mimamsa philosophy, the Vedas prescribe eternal principles for living beings, accordingly, a self does his/her duties in the cosmic world. Since every one does his/her duties, the notion of action and attachment towards worldly objects can't be denied. To free from all sorts of attachment, pain, and pleasure, one needs to attain liberation. In the state of liberation, the self is emancipated from all sorts of worldly bondage and sufferings.

5.9 KEY WORDS

Sutra : Sutra (Sanskrit) literally means a thread or line that holds things together, and more metaphorically refers to an aphorism, or a collection of such aphorisms.

Karmakanda : Karmakanda refers to portions of the Samhitas and Brahmanas with ceremonial rituals used in a system of worship to establish communication with gods.

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5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

Svatah pramanyvada means intrinsic validity of knowledge. In this case, knowledge arises from the essential nature of its causes untainted by defects, and is known by the knowledge itself. Intrinsic validity of knowledge consists in its being generated by the complement of causal conditions of the knowledge itself, and not by extraneous conditions besides them.

Check Your Progress II

Arthapati or postulation is the assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two apparently inconsistent perceived facts. When a known fact can't

be accounted without another fact, we have to postulate the existence of third fact. The valid and justified knowledge of the third fact is known as arthapati.

Check Your Progress III

All error is subjective. In case of error, we cognize an object what it is not. An object is cognized as having certain characteristics that falls outside of its being. Thus, it is a wrong apprehension in which the object is taken for what it is not. For example, cognizing a shell as silver.

Check Your Progress IV

According to Mimansikas, there are innumerable self existing in the world. Self or soul are of two types. One is liberated soul and another is living soul (individuals of the earth). This implies every living being possesses a distinct self. For them, a self is eternal and imperishable. When a living animal dies, it won't die with it. It continues to live to reap the fruits of its deeds.

UNIT 1 VEDANTA: AN INTRODUCTION

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Vedanta Sutras
- 1.4 Major Schools of Vedanta
- 1.5 Sankara and Advaitavada
- 1.6 Ramanuja and Visistadvaita
- 1.7 Madhva (1199-1278 A.D) and Dvaita Vedanta
- 1.8 Vallabha (1473-1531) and Suddhadvaita
- 1.9 Nimbarka and Svabhavika Bhedabheda
- 1.10 Key Words
- 1.11 Further Readings and References
- 1.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.1 OBJECTIVES

Vedanta Philosophy deserves great attention today for many reasons: in the first place for its philosophical value and secondly and more importantly because it is closely bound up with the religion of India and is much more alive in the Indian subcontinent than any other system of thought. Vedanta determines, in one or the other of its forms, the world view of the Hindu thinkers of the present time.

The Unit apparently has two parts:

- The first part intends to make the students familiar with a general study of Vedanta focussing mainly on its meaning, philosophical background and teachings;
- The second part, in turn, will take up the major Vedanta Philosophers who have immensely contributed to the development of the various schools within Vedanta system; and
- Such a study, though brief, will help the students to identify those streams of thought that have continued to have impact on the later thought in India, particularly during the neo-Vedantic times.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The literal meaning of the term Vedanta is “the end of the Vedas, the concluding parts of the Vedas, the culmination of the Vedic teaching and wisdom”. Thus the term is originally referred to the Upanishads, the last literary products of the Vedic period. The views of the Upanishads also constitute the final aim of the Veda, or the essence of the Vedas. However, Vedanta has subsequently come to include the various elaborations and interpretations of the Upanishads. They are the concluding parts of the Vedas and are the culmination of the Vedic knowledge and wisdom. The Upanishads are not philosophical treatises, though their style

is direct, forceful, often didactic and dialogic. The Upanishads are not philosophical systems but are only narratives of experiences of sages and their insights into reality. Consequently, it would be fruitless to look in the Upanishads for a systematic, coherent, logical development of ideas. One should be prepared to encounter apparent inconsistencies, undue emphasis on one idea here and another there, and sometimes even wholly unconnected digressions in the articulation of a given idea or theme. Further, the *Upanishads* are sometimes repetitious. The same idea may be dealt with in several places in more or less the same fashion. How do we account for this peculiar character of the style and texture of the *Upanishads*? One answer is that they are not the work of a single author, but the accumulation of the insights of different men over a long period of time. Another explanation for the non-systematic character of the *Upanishads* is that their authors were concerned not so much with minutiae as with providing a comprehensive picture of their vision and insights. In short, their attention was not upon parts but on the whole. Thus the *Upanishads* abound in terse and aphoristic statements replete with inspiring meanings. Scintillating significance and dynamic intuition are packed into such short and powerful utterances. Precisely for these reasons the *Upanishads* give rise to diverse interpretations. In course of time, there emerged different schools of Vedanta, the prominent ones being Advaita (non-dualism) of Sankara, Visistadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism) of Ramanuja and Dvaita (Dualism) of Madhva.

1.3 VEDANTA SUTRAS

The Vedanta Sutra is perhaps the most available and significant source for the study of Vedanta. It is an exposition of the doctrine of Brahman and therefore it is also called Brahma S^utra. It also deals with the embodiment of the unconditioned self, hence it has also the name Sariraka Sutra. The authorship of this text is attributed to Badarayana who is, according to Indian tradition, identified with Vyasa. Indian scholars are of the opinion that the Sutra was composed in the period from 500 to 200 B.C. The work, however, was not composed in isolation. We find references to Jaimini's Mimamsa, orthodox systems of Samkhya, Yoga, and Vaiseshika, several schools of Buddhism, the Lokayata and Bhagavata doctrines. The author of the Sutra is considerably influenced by the theism of the Bhagavadgita and the Bhagavatas.

The Vedanta Sutra has four chapters. The first chapter deals with the theory of Brahman as the central reality. Its purpose is reconciliation (samanvaya) of the different Vedic statements on this subject. It is an account of the nature of Brahman, its relation to the world and the individual soul. The second chapter meets objections brought against this view and criticizes rival theories. It also gives an account of the nature of the dependence of the world on God and the gradual evolution from and re-absorption into him. It also contains interesting psychological discussions about the nature of the soul, its attributes, its relation to God, body and its own deeds. The third chapter discusses ways and means (sadhana) of attaining brahma-vidya. It also presents an account of rebirth along with other psychological and theological discussions. The final chapter deals with the fruits (phala) of Brahma-vidya. It also describes in some detail the theory of the departure of the soul after death along the two paths of the gods and the fathers and the nature of the release from which there is no return.

Teachings of the Vedanta Sutras

According to Badarayana the Veda is eternal and the sastra is the great authority. No amount of reflection logical argumentation can lead to the discovery of metaphysical truth. Sutra admits two sources of knowledge: pratyaksham (perception) and anumanam (inference). The revealed sruti is self-evident and is called pratyaksham. By Sruti, Badarayana means the Upanishads, and by smriti he means the Bhagavadgita, the Mahabharata and the Code of Manu. In any theory of knowledge, inference is based on perception; so also smriti is based on Sruti. Badarayana makes a distinction between two spheres of existence: the thinkable and the unthinkable. The thinkable consists of the region of prakrti with the elements, the mind, intellect, and egoity, whereas the unthinkable is Brahman. With regard to the knowledge of the latter the only means is the sastras. Any reasoning which is not in conformity with the Veda is useless for Badarayana. Reasoning proceeds from characteristic marks. But of Brahman we cannot say that it is characterized by this or that to the exclusion of other attributes. Reasoning, therefore is subordinate to intuitional knowledge, which can be obtained by devotion and meditation.

It is worth noting here that from a historical standpoint one speaks of the Purva Mimamsa (the earlier schools) and the Uttara Mimamsa (the later schools), subsequently referred to simply as Mimamsa and Vedanta respectively. Mimamsa is generally understood as being concerned with the ritualistic side (*karmakanda*) of the Vedic teachings, and Vedanta with the philosophical, speculative (*janakanda*) aspects. In the light of this distinction, the three schools of Vedanta listed above and other theistic Vedantic schools (such as Suddhadvaita, Svabhavika Bhedabheda, Acintya Bhedabheda) come under Uttara Mimamsa. However, one must proceed with caution in making this distinction. Though the prime concern of Purva Mimamsa is with ritualism, it also contains speculative aspects: the very term 'mimamsa' means "solution of problems by reflection and critical examination. Accordingly, the Mimamsa looked upon its task as twofold: to provide a method by which the complex and seemingly conflicting ritualistic injunctions of the Vedas may be harmoniously interpreted and practiced; and to provide a philosophical justification of Vedic ritualism. The realization of this twofold objective necessarily involved Mimamsa in serious philosophical questions, both methodological and substantive. The philosophical investigations of the Mimamsa schools are considerable, and their results important. Particularly noteworthy is their treatment of knowledge, truth and error. The Vedanta schools are indebted to the Mimamsa schools in that they not only recognize the pramanas (means of valid knowledge) as formulated by the Mimamsa but incorporate and employ them in their own systems.

The background of Vedantic Thought

The Vedas and the Upanishads form the background of the Vedanta. They are called the Sruti. The Hindus implicitly believe in their authority. They are believed to be revelations of truths to the seers (rishis). They embody their intuitions. The Vedic religion traverses the whole gamut of polytheism, organized polytheism, henotheism, monotheism and monism.

The different gods for the Vedic man were the personifications of the different powers of nature. He was not a worshipper of nature. He worshipped supernatural and superhuman deities pervading the whole or considerable part of nature and

beyond and endowed with some qualities of the supreme god-head. Among the multitude of nature-gods any one is treated as the supreme god for the time being when he worshipped. All gods were inspired by the same power. Their great divinity is one. There is unity and order in the phenomena of nature. Thus all the diverse phenomena of nature are the works of gods who are endowed with the same divine power. The order in nature paved the way for monotheism.

The idea permeating the Rg Veda is that nature in all its diversity and multiplicity is not a chaos but is governed by a basic cosmic law (Rita). To this law are subject not only all natural phenomena, such as the movement of the planets and the generation, decay and death of organisms, but also truth and justice. The conception of rita further harmonized the gods with one another, and paved way for monotheism. Rita is the physical order. Everything in the world has its own sphere. The gods follow the laws of rita. They acquired divinity and immortality by serving rita rightly. This rita is an impersonal order which upholds the gods and the world. The conception of rita paved the way for monotheism.

Hiranyagarbha arose in the beginning. He alone was the lord of all that is. He established the earth and the heaven. He gives breath and strength; his commands are followed by other gods. His shadow is death and immortality. He alone is God above all gods. He came to be identified as prajapati, the lord of all creatures, and claimed the rank of Supreme God. Further the Vedic reflection proceeded to posit Visvakarma as the creator of the entire universe. He is the seer of all. His eyes are everywhere, his face is everywhere, and he is of all hands and all feet. He is the world-architect.

Then we have the concept of a Cosmic person (parama purusha), whose body is the whole universe. He, with his thousand hands, thousand feet, thousand eyes, pervades the whole terrestrial space and transcends it. The inner nature of the Parama Purusha is transcendental, though he is immanent in the whole universe. He is the immanent and transcendent. However, this kind of a theistic thinking of God and universe gave way to a new concept of monism, according to which Reality is conceived as one but manifested in diverse ways. That 'One' (tad Ekam) is not personal; it is neither male nor female; it is neuter. It is an impersonal principle which breathed by itself without breath. The celebrated upanishadic hymn known as Puruashukta clearly brings out the pure monism of the Rg Veda. (RV. X. 129. 1-4, 7.)

Thousand-headed was the Purusha (person or man personified) thousand-eyed, thousand-footed. He embraced the earth on all sides, and stood beyond the breadth of ten fingers.

The Purusha is this all, that which was and which shall be. He is Lord of immortality, which he grows beyond through (sacrificial) food.

Such is his greatness, and still greater than that is the Purusha. One fourth of him is all beings. The three fourths of him is the immortal in Heaven.

Three fourths on high rose the Purusha. One fourth of him arose here (on the earth). Thence in all directions he spread abroad, as that which eats and that which eats not." (Rgveda X.90.1-4)

The theme of this hymn is the unity of all existence, inorganic and organic. Such unity is expressed by the Vedic seers, in their grand visual imagery, in the form of what they call 'the purusha'. According to this hymn, the purusha is not to be equated with the universe, for not only does he pervade the universe but he is also beyond it. In philosophical terms, the supreme reality is both immanent and transcendent – immanent because it pervades all existence, thereby rendering it a unity; transcendent, because it is not exhausted by existence but goes beyond it. In theological terms, God, while pervading the universe, is also more than the universe. In other words, the Vedic conception of God is not pantheistic, but panentheistic which may be expressed by saying that the totality of existence is in God but not equal to God.

The Rg Veda refers to the supreme reality underlying and unifying all existence by the term 'the purusha'. However, the Upanishads firmly rule out that this kind of conception is in any way anthropomorphic. The famous Vedic hymn of creation, Nasadiya Sukta, unequivocally declares that ultimate reality (the purusha) is not only impersonal but beyond all names and forms, and hence is inexpressible and indescribable:

*Non-being then existed not nor being:
There was no air, nor sky that is beyond it.
What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection?
And was there deep unfathomable water?*

*Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it?
Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?
The gods were born after this world's creation:
Then who can know from whence it has arisen?*

*None knoweth whence creation has arisen;
And whether he has or has not produced it:
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows, or haply he may know not." (Rg Veda X. 129, 1,6,7.)*

It is clear that according to this hymn all existence is the manifestation of a single ultimate reality, which being beyond thoughts and words, is indescribable, indeterminate, and absolute. To be sure, this grand conception of ultimate reality is not in discursive, philosophical speculation but in the loftiest of poetic, mystical, intuitive insights. This is pure spiritualistic monism. That One (*Tad Ekam*) was later identified with Brahman or Atman. Such a vision is the inspiration of all the Upanishads as well as all the subsequent philosophical speculations of the Vedantic schools.

Spiritualistic Monism of the Upanishads: Brahman

The Rg Veda spoke of One Reality (*ekam sat*) which is spoken of in various ways by the sages. It spoke of That One (*tad ekam*) that created the world. The Upanishads called it Brahman. Brahman is Atman. It is the Reality of the reality. It is the cause of all created things, and it is their ultimate ground and essence. It is one devoid of plurality and is beyond many. This Supreme Principle is called

Brahman because it is the ubiquitous cosmic principle. It is called Atman because it is one eternal homogenous consciousness. All gods and the rita itself subsist in Brahman. Thus the Upanishads explicitly advocated spiritualistic monism or absolute Idealism. This is the bedrock of Hindu religion and philosophy.

Aims and characteristics of Vedanta

The philosophy of Vedanta, like all other systems of thought, is an attempt to clearly understand and offer an explanation of the world as it appears to us in our knowledge. It is an attempt to determine the nature of the Ultimate Reality and to understand how it presents before us a world of manifoldness, in order to make out clearly the place and destiny of man in the world system. Vedanta philosophy considers two very important questions: the theoretical determination of the nature of substance or reality underlying experience and of the origin of knowledge, and the ethical problem of duty and the ultimate ideal of human life. Both these questions are thoroughly discussed and solutions are offered in the system.

Vedanta philosophy is based both upon revelation or Sruti as well as thinking, argument and logical justification. There is in the system a full form of philosophy developed upon a dialectic and logical basis. The first problem which the Vedantin seeks to solve is the ontological problem of Reality, the second, the problem of Cosmology, the third, the problem of Psychology and fourth is the problem of striving after the ideal and its attainment – the final liberation.

Brahman

The Upanishads speak of higher (para) Brahman and lower (apara) Brahman. The former is formless, unmanifest, immortal, abiding and transcendental, while the latter is formed, manifest, mortal, fleeting, and empirical. The para Brahman is devoid of all attributes and determinations; it is unqualified, indeterminate, and unconditioned. It is the Absolute. The apara Brahman is qualified, determinate, conditioned; it is personal God. However, the Upanishads declare that they are not two Brahman. One Brahman viewed from the transcendental standpoint is indeterminate, and viewed from the empirical standpoint is determinate. The indeterminate Brahman is sometimes conceived to be real, and the determinate Brahman is conceived to be unreal.

Brahman conceived as qualified (Saguna) is God (Isvara). The Absolute in relation to the empirical world is God. The cosmic Brahman is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. All creatures spring out of Brahman. They live in Brahman and are re-absorbed in Brahman. He is the support of all and is the refuge of all and can be realized by His grace.

The Atman

While Brahman is the cosmic principle, atman is the psychic principle. It is the inner self in man. Brahman is atman. Therefore, the cosmic principle is the psychic principle. The universal spirit is the self in man. It is the immanent spirit in him. It is the inner guide (antaryamin). Brahman is the soul of all. It is the knower, but is not known. It is the foundational consciousness which is the ground of the universe. It is the ground of our empirical consciousness. The eternal, universal light of consciousness resides in our heart and illumines all objects of our knowledge. There are texts in the Upanishads which identify this atman with the

Brahman. The identity of the individual soul with the universal soul is emphasized by Sankara, whereas Ramanuja recognized the individual soul to a real mode of the universal soul.

Bondage and Liberation

Higher knowledge of Brahman as pure identity devoid of difference is intuition (vidya). Lower intellectual knowledge of the empirical world of plurality of individual objects and selves is ignorance. Intuition brings about release, while intellect ties the individual self to the empirical life of birth and death. Vidya is moksha and avidya is samsara. Vidya is knowledge of pure identity. Duality of subject and object is apparent. Atman is the ontological reality. The individual soul's individuality is due to avidya. Avidya is the cause of individuality. It produces the body, the sense-organs, manas, buddhi and ahamkara which constitute its individuality. However, the embodied life is no bar to its realization. When the unconditioned universal self reveals itself to the individual self, all plurality is overcome, and the mortal becomes immortal. It realizes its Brahmanhood even in its embodied life. When all knots of the heart are broken, the mortal embodied self becomes immortal. It does not transmigrate to any other sphere of life.

Cosmology

Regarding Cosmology, the Vedanta Philosophy seems to have taken the different theories as propounded by the Upanishads. We shall have a look at one of such theories. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad says: "As a spider ejects its thread from its body, and as fire emits sparks, so all lives. All beings, all creatures spring from this Atman."(ii.1.20). This is the doctrine of emanation. The world emanates from the fullness of the imperishable Brahman, again returns to it. It implies that creation is self-expression and self-communication of God to the creatures. Creation is a moral act of willing and self-sacrifice. Further in the same Upanishad we read: "The universe was not unfolded in the beginning; it was unfolded in name and form (namarupa). Atman entered into it up to the finger-tips, as a knife is hidden in a sheath." This text suggests that creation is a passage from an undifferentiated condition to a differentiated condition. If differentiation is real, the process is evolution. If it is not real, creation is a mere appearance. Creation is unfoldment. Dissolution is enfoldment. It is either evolution (parinama) or appearance (vivarta).

Ethics

Vedanta accepts the distinction made by the Kathopanishad between happiness (preyas) and the highest good (sreyas). He who seeks happiness is deprived of the highest Good, whereas he who seeks the highest Good attains his real well-being. The highest Good is the realization of the eternal universal self in man. Vidya or supra-intellectual intuition leads to self-realization. Intuition of the self depends on moral purity and self-renunciation. Atman can be realized by one who does practice self-control, desirelessness, and concentration of mind. Moral purity is the indispensable pre-requisite of knowledge of atman. Karma is not excluded from moral life. Prescribed actions should be performed without any desire or motive. Nishkama karma purifies the mind; however it is only a preliminary step to self-knowledge.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

- 1) What is the source for the study of Vedanta?
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- 2) How does Rig Veda contribute to the growth of the Vedanta system?
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1.4 MAJOR SCHOOLS OF VEDANTA

It is to our advantage that we take a glimpse at the prominent schools of Vedanta, which will be studied in detail in other units. They can be broadly classified into two groups: Absolutistic Vedanta system of Sankara and the Theistic Vedanta systems expounded by Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallbha, and others. We shall begin with Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta.

1.5 SANKARA AND ADVAITAVADA

Sankara (788-820 A.D.) is one of the greatest philosophers among the Indian thinkers in intellectual eminence. Through his works (such as commentaries on the principal Upanishads, the Brhma-Sutras, and the Bhagavadgita) he exposed his own system of Absolute idealism (Advaita-vada). He emphasized the monistic tendency on the Upanishads and developed it into a systematic Advaitavada. He emphasized the reality of the unconditioned and unqualified (nirguna) Brahman and regarded God (Isvara), the individual souls and the world (jagat) as appearances due to and indefinable principle called maya. This maya is neither real nor unreal, nor both, nor neither. Maya conditions Brahman and then it is Isvara. Maya is his power or energy (sakti). It is the source of the names and forms which are modified into the phenomena of the world. The world appears to be born owing to maya. It is an imaginary construction of maya. Maya is not an independent principle; it is dependent on Isvara.

1.6 RAMANUJA AND VISISTADVAITA

In the line of Alvars (the Tamil saints) Ramanuja is the greatest acharya. He was, according to the tradition, born in 1017 at Sriperumbudur, some 30 miles south west of Chennai of today's Tamil Nadu. In his celebrated commentary on the Vedanta-Sutras, which is today known as Srihashya, he has expounded the Visistadvaita philosophy. In propounding a new philosophy his aim was to champion the need for a personal theism, in harmony with Vedic and Upanishadic teaching. He wanted to systematize the vaishnava tenets with a rational basis. Thereby he offered to the people a simple religion based on faith, easy means for God-realization through bhakti.

Ramanuja was the chief propounder of the doctrine of qualified non-dualism (visistadvaita). He criticized Sankara's absolutism or non-dualism (advaita) and established the ontological reality of God, the individual souls and the world. He regarded the souls and world as attributes or modes of God. The germs of theistic Vedanta are found in the theistic Upanishads, the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharata, the Bhagavadgita, and the Pancaratra Agamas.

1.7 MADHVA (1199 – 1278 A.D) AND DVAITA VEDANTA

Madhva has called his system Dvaita because the concept of difference is foundational to it. The basic doctrine of Dvaita is that there is plurality of reals. Difference is of the very nature of things. There is difference between God and soul, between God and matter, between soul and soul, between soul and matter, and between one material thing and another. These five-fold differences permit all kinds of extrinsic relationships between the diverse beings; but leave no room for a really intrinsic continuity in beings (as we affirm between creator and creatures). Therefore God is not the creator of souls and the world: souls are eternal, world arises out of prakrti.

God is Isvara, completely independent being, absolutely perfect. In his deepest essence, He is pure consciousness. Prakrti exists eternally. Therefore does not owe its existence to God, but its nature is to be a mere instrument totally docile to his pleasure. The soul is by essence spiritual consciousness, i.e., partless. In its divisible identity it possesses knowledge, activity and bliss. Therefore it is essentially similar to God, yet dependent on him. The Lord is the perfect model of which the soul is an image (abhasa), a reflection (pratibhasa). The ultimate cause of bondage from the soul strives to escape is Brahman, who causes jiva to be ignorant of its true relation to God. Therefore God alone can give release. That aspect of God that causes release is called prasada (grace). Union with God (sayujya) is the highest form of liberation.

1.8 VALLABHA (1473-1531) AND SUDDHADVAITA

Vallabha thinks that Sankara's advaita is impure, as the latter thought that the world was illusory. But for Vallabha world is real, ultimately world and God are same and real. According to him, it is the same reality of God that assumes the forms of world and the individual souls. To explain this, Vallabha adopts the

avikrta parinama-vada (theory of change without modification). He makes a distinction between essence and power to cause: these are not the same. If they were same, all things would be causing all the time. In God both of them are there: the latter (power to cause) changes while the former (the essence) remains the same. Vallabha recommends three means of liberation: karma-marga, jnana-marga, and bhakti marga – depending on the spiritual disposition and nature of the individual souls.

1.9 NIMBARKA AND SVABHAVIKA BHEDABHEDA

In his Vedanta philosophy, Nimbarka holds that there is natural difference and non-difference between God and souls, between God and the material universe. There is the natural difference between God and the individual souls: God is the cause and is the ruler. The soul is not omnipotent. Soul is the effect and it attains the Brahman. Between God and the material universe, God is spiritual while the material universe is material. Here the difference is more explicit. On the other hand, there is the natural non-difference: Brahman pervades the universe (the effect) like clay in the jar. The souls and universe are dependent on God; they emanate from God (like snake and its coils). Such difference and non-difference are natural (svabhavika) and they are not added. Thus both difference and non-difference are comprehensible.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Describe in brief Sudhaadvaita of Vallabha

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2) Explain briefly Svabhavika Bhedabheda of Nimbarka

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1.10 KEY WORDS

- Brahman** : The Upanishads speak of higher (para) Brahman and lower (apara) Brahman. The former is formless, unmanifest, immortal, abiding and transcendental, while the latter is formed, manifest, mortal, fleeting, and empirical. The para Brahman is devoid of all attributes and determinations; it is unqualified, indeterminate, and unconditioned. It is the Absolute
- Visistadvaita** : the non-duality or oneness of Brahman, which is qualified by the animate and inanimate beings. They are inseparable associated with Brahman.

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1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The Vedanta Sutras is perhaps the most available and significant source for the study of Vedanta. It is an exposition of the doctrine of Brahman and therefore it is also called Brahma S^tra. It also deals with the embodiment of the unconditioned self, hence it has also the name Sariraka Sutra. The authorship of this text is attributed to Badarayana who is, according to Indian tradition, identified with Vyasa.

The Vedanta Sutra has four chapters. The first chapter deals with the theory of Brahman as the central reality. Its purpose is reconciliation (samanvaya) of the different Vedic statements on this subject. It is an account of the nature of Brahman, its relation to the world and the individual soul. The second chapter meets objections brought against this view and criticizes rival theories.

It also gives an account of the nature of the dependence of the world on God and the gradual evolution from and re-absorption into him. It also contains interesting psychological discussions about the nature of the soul, its attributes, its relation to God, body and its own deeds. The third chapter discusses ways and means (*sadhana*) of attaining *brahma-vidya*. It also presents an account of rebirth along with other psychological and theological discussions. The final chapter deals with the fruits (*phala*) of *Brahma-vidya*. It also describes in some detail the theory of the departure of the soul after death along the two paths of the gods and the fathers and the nature of the release from which there is no return.

- 2) The Rg Veda spoke of One Reality (*ekam sat*) which is spoken of in various ways by the sages. It spoke of That One (*tad ekam*) that created the world. The Upanishads called it Brahman. Brahman is Atman. It is the Reality of the reality. It is the cause of all created things, and it is their ultimate ground and essence. It is one devoid of plurality and is beyond many. This Supreme Principle is called Brahman because it is the ubiquitous cosmic principle. It is called Atman because it is one eternal homogenous consciousness. All gods and the *rita* itself subsist in Brahman. Thus the Upanishads explicitly advocated spiritualistic monism or absolute Idealism. This is the bedrock of Hindu religion and philosophy.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Vallabha thinks that Sankara's *advaita* is impure, as the latter thought that the world was illusory. But for Vallabha world is real, ultimately world and God are same and real. According to him, it is the same reality of God that assumes the forms of world and the individual souls. To explain this, Vallabha adopts the *avikrta parinama-vada* (theory of change without modification). He makes a distinction between essence and power to cause: these are not the same. If they were same, all things would be causing all the time. In God both of them are there: the latter (power to cause) changes while the former (the essence) remains the same. Vallabha recommends three means of liberation: *karma-marga*, *jnana-marga*, and *bhakti marga* – depending on the spiritual disposition and nature of the individual souls.
- 2) In his Vedanta philosophy, Nimbarka holds that there is natural difference and non-difference between God and souls, between God and the material universe. There is the natural difference between God and the individual souls: God is the cause and is the ruler. The soul is not omnipotent. Soul is the effect and it attains the Brahman. Between God and the material universe, God is spiritual while the material universe is material. Here the difference is more explicit. On the other hand, there is the natural non-difference: Brahman pervades the universe (the effect) like clay in the jar. The souls and universe are dependent on God; they emanate from God (like snake and its coils). Such difference and non-difference are natural (*svabhavika*) and they are not added. Thus both difference and non-difference are comprehensible.

UNIT 2 SANKARA

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Epistemology
- 2.3 Metaphysical Categories
- 2.4 Means to liberation
- 2.5 Liberation
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Further Readings and References
- 2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit—is to elucidate the teachings of Philosophy of Advaita as propagated by Adi Shankaracharya. The School of Advaita deals with the triad, namely, Epistemology, Axiology and Metaphysics. The philosophical conclusion of the Absolute Truth is derived primarily by relying on the scriptural statements that forms the only valid epistemological base for Advaitic deduction. In this unit, we shall briefly see the fundamentals of Advaita philosophy and its hermeneutical skill resulting in the Absolute.

By the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to understand the fundamental teaching of Advaita;
- to learn the technical terms in Advaita and familiarise with its Sanskrit equivalent;
- to differentiate it from other Schools of Vedanta; and
- to relate its relevance in practical life.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Adi Shankara is considered to be one of the most prominent and outstanding teachers that time could ever produce. He was an exquisite thinker, a great visionary, a brilliant intellect, the most compassionate, who lived for just thirty-two years but created an indelible impact on the generations of minds to come. He is to be remembered not as a founder but as one who propagated the system of Advaita. The historical data states that Shankara was born in 788 A.D. in Kalady, Kerala to the couple Shivaguru and Aryamba, who were great devotees of Lord Shiva. They chose to accept a child brilliant but with short life rather than dull-headed with long life. Shankara was born, who showed extraordinary brilliance at a tender age and is said to have composed *Balabodha sangraha* at the age of six. His versatility spread far and wide. Once as a *brahmachari* in the *gurukula* he visited homes to receive alms. A poor lady, reluctant to send the boy empty-handed, parted with her only food *amla* happily. Shankara impressed by

her humility and compassion outpoured hymns in praise of Goddess Lakshmi and it is said that immediately gold *amlas* showered in the poor woman's house. This composition is popularly known as *Kanakadhara stotra*. By the age of eight, Shankara was prepared to take to a recluse life but could not convince his mother. It is said that while Shankara was taking bath in a river, a crocodile dragged his leg and his mother was helpless. Shankara shouted if only she granted him to renounce then the crocodile will do no harm. Shankara's mother without any alternative consented to his wish. Shankara declared 'I renounce' thrice and the crocodile went away without harming. This incident is perhaps an allegory. Before he left his village in search of a guru, it is said that, Lord Vishnu appeared in his dream and directed him to the great ascetic, Govindapadacharya at Omkarnath. Shankara began his expedition in search of the ascetic and he moved towards the North. He stood at the opening of a cave on the banks of Narmada waiting for the ascetic in deep meditation to arise. The ascetic questioned Shankara 'Who are you?' for which Shankara poured out in ten verses the absolute nature of self. These hymns are popularly known as the *Dashashloki*. The ascetic was none other than Govindapada who accepted Shankara as his disciple. Shankara mastered all the scriptures in three years. At the end of his study, the *Guru* instructed him to write commentaries on the scriptures to cull out the essential teaching. It is said that the *Guru* was confident on Shankara's mastery of the scriptures revealed through his commentary to the *Vishnu Sahasranama* marking the end of his study period. Shankara as instructed by his *Guru* travelled to Kashi to spread the teaching of the scriptures. We can find the teachings of his *Guru* and his grand preceptor Gaudpadacharya re-presented magnificently in his own words. He was barely twelve years and set to comment on the *Prasthanas Traya* (the three basic tenets of *Vedanta*, viz, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Brahmasutra*). By the age of sixteen he established the supremacy of Vedantic knowledge and had huge followers. Shankara is considered to be the gem in the lineage of teachers since he amalgamated the Advaitic teachings prevalent before him, and paved a new path for the generation of teachers yet to come. It is said that, once an old *Brahmin* entered into arguments on the *Brahmasutra* and later Shankara came to know that it was Sage *Vyasa*. The Sage granted him another sixteen years in order to spread this teaching and win over those who were steeped in ritualism. Thus, by the age of thirty-two he bought thousands of people into his fold and established four *mutts* in four directions under the headship of his famous four disciples, Padmapada, Sureshvara, Totaka and Hastamalaka. Shankara not only wrote for the intellects, he gave the essence of the profound teachings in simple and lucid *stotras*. Thus, he catered to different kinds of seekers of Truth. His famous philosophical compositions are *Vivekachoodamani*, *Upadesha Sahasri*, *Vakyavrtti*, *Mohamudgara (Bhaja govindam)* etc. Some of his devotional hymns are *Ganesha pancharatnam*, *Soundaryalahari*, *Sivanandalahari*, etc. It is said that Shankara composed more than hundred works in his short life span. At the end of his mission in 820 A.D, he directed his disciples to carry out his vision for the welfare of humanity. He then, it is said, walked towards the *Himalayas*.

2.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The quintessence of Advaita philosophy is given out by Shankara in his famous line: *Brahma satyam jaganmithya jivobrahmaiva naparah* – Brahman is real, the world is unreal and the individual self is non-different from Brahman. This

teaching is based on the Upanisadic statements and the whole exercise of culling out the Advaitic essence lies in the interpretation of these Upanisadic statements.

Let us begin with the mechanism of knowing; which involves a knower (*pramata*), means of knowing (*pramana*) and object of knowledge (*prameya*) that give rise to valid knowledge (*prama*). The means of knowledge, according to Advaita, are six and they are perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumana*), comparison (*upamana*), postulation (*arthapatti*), non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*) and testimony (*shabda*). A *pramana* is defined as that which gives rise to the knowledge of an entity which is hitherto unknown or concealed by *avidya* and which is not sublated subsequently. In this sense, *shabda* alone is considered to be a *pramana* which gives rise to Brahman-knowledge and all other *pramana* deal with the material world. The other means of knowledge cannot reveal Brahman since Brahman is not an object of knowledge.

Perception

According to Advaita, in the perception of an external object, the mind goes out through the sense organ, say the 'eyes' and reaches the place of the object, say a 'pot' and assumes the shape of the pot which modifies into the thought 'pot'. This modification is known as *vrtti*. The pervasion of *vrtti* removes the veil of ignorance (*vrttivyapti*) and the pervasion of reflected consciousness illumines the object (*phalavyapti*), which is expressed as 'This is a pot'. The capacity of the mind to illumine an object is because of the reflection of Consciousness (Brahman) in the mind. The knowledge of experiences like happiness, sorrow etc that occur in the mind without the aid of sense organs is known by the 'witness consciousness.' There is a mental modification internally that is expressed as 'I am happy' etc. The knowledge of self or Brahman cannot be gained by perceptual cognition since Brahman can never be objectified. When we say, words reveal Brahman, *vrttivyapti* alone functions and not *phalavyapti*, since Brahman is self-evident luminous being, hence the knowledge of Brahman is known as *svarupa-jnana* or knowledge of nature of self as opposed to *vrtti-jnana* or empirical knowledge.

Theory of Erroneous perception

An object perceived differently is said to be invalid cognition in which again the three factors operate namely, the knower, the known and the instrument of knowledge. The famous example oft-quoted by Advaita School is one seeing rope as 'snake'. The reason for this erroneous perception may be due to defect in the perceiver, in the instrument of perception, in the environment (dim light), in the object etc. The analysis of the process of erroneous cognition by Advaita School is known as 'Indescribable Error' (*Anirvachaniya khyati*). It is imperative to understand the mechanism of error, since for Advaita, bondage is an error superimposed on Brahman due to self-ignorance and hence knowledge alone is the means to liberation. Based on the indescribable theory of error, the rope-ignorance creates a 'snake' here ignorance is the material cause of 'snake'. The rope is the substratum on which 'snake' is superimposed and hence rope is the transfigurative material cause of 'snake'. The perceiver of 'snake' superimposes the characteristics of snake is frightened and tries to run away. On rise of rope-knowledge, the 'snake' vanishes and the person 'feels' saved. In this instance, there is no sorrow but still one experiences grief because of lack of knowledge of reality (rope-knowledge). Advaitin states, in the same manner, the world of

plurality is superimposed on non-dual Brahman due to ignorance, plurality is cause of sorrow, on wake of Brahman-knowledge plurality vanishes (just as the 'snake' vanished) and one realises the non-dual nature of self and 'attains' bliss.

Inference

Inference is the means of inferential knowledge. Inferential knowledge is produced by the knowledge of invariable concomitance (*vyapti*). The latent impression of the invariable concomitance is the intermediate operation (*vyapara*). The inferential knowledge that 'the hill has fire' arises when one sees the smoke (*hetu*) in a hill (*paksha*), which arouses the latent impression of the invariable concomitance 'where there is smoke there is fire', and by this application one gains the inferential knowledge that the hill has fire (*sadhya*). Brahman cannot be known by inference because of absence of *hetu* to determine Brahman. According to Advaita, the falsity of the world can be shown through inference by the following syllogism:

Different from Brahman everything is false

Being different

Like shell-silver

Comparison

The instrument of valid knowledge of similarity is comparison. For instance, a person goes to the forest and sees a *gavaya* (bison). He compares the form of cow which he knows with that of the *gavaya* and understands that 'this thing is like a cow' and then gains conviction that 'my cow is like this'. Brahman cannot be known through comparison since there does not exist a similar second thing like Brahman.

Postulation

It is presumption of an explanatory fact (*upapadaka*) from knowledge of the thing to be explained (*upapadya*). The knowledge of the thing to be explained is the instrument, and the knowledge of the explanatory fact is the result. This is explained by the well-known example of 'Devadatta'. Devadatta does not eat during the day time, he is fat, these are known facts. If one does not postulate that 'Devadatta eats at night' the seen fact remains unexplained. Postulation, according to Advaita, also proves falsity of the world. The scriptural statement '*the knower of self transcends sorrow*' reveals falsity of world by application of postulation. Here, the word 'sorrow' indicates bondage which can be removed by self-knowledge, since the statement says 'knower of self'; if the falsity of bondage is not postulated then removal of bondage by knowledge cannot be said. Hence, bondage or world as false is known by postulation. In postulation, we presume something present elsewhere; there cannot be anything else to arrive at Brahman by postulation.

Non-apprehension

The means of valid knowledge known as non-apprehension is the extraordinary cause of that apprehension of non-existence which is not due to knowledge as an instrument. A thing can be known by non-apprehension which has the capacity to be apprehended at a different time. For instance, one can understand the absence of a pot in a place, since pot as an object is apprehended previously or at a later

period. Here, non-existence of a thing is known and Brahman being ever existent (*Sat*) it is never available for non-apprehension.

Testimony

The verbal testimony is defined as that ‘sentence in which the relation among the meaning of words, that is the object of its intention, is not contradicted by any other means of valid knowledge’. According to Advaita, the purport of the scriptures is Attributless Brahman (*Nirguna Brahman*) which is known by scrutinizing the intention of scriptures based on six indicatory marks, they are, Introduction-Conclusion (*upakrama-upasamhara*), Repetition (*abhyasa*), Uniqueness (*apurvata*), Result (*phala*), Eulogy (*arthavada*) and Logical presentation (*upapatti*). A word can reveal its meaning in the primary sense and in cases where primary sense is unfitting, they are known by their secondary sense. Deriving the meaning of a word through its secondary implication is of three kinds, namely, Exclusive (*jahallakshana*), Inclusive (*ajahallakshana*) and Exclusive-Inclusive (*jahalajahallakshana*). The identity statements (*mahavakya*), according to Advaita, reveals the identity meaning by the application of exclusive-inclusive implication.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
 b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give an account of Life and works of Adi Shankaracharya.

2) Examine the mechanism of perception and erroneous perception in Advaita.

2.3 METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES

We have seen so far the Advaitic Epistemology and the role of each means of knowledge. In this section we shall deal with the metaphysical categories of Advaita that is divided into five, namely, *Brahman, Maya, Ishvara, Jiva* and *Jagat*. We shall deal with each of them sequentially:

Brahman

Upanisads define Brahman in two ways, one is revelation of its essential nature (*svarupa laksana*) and the second is revealing Brahman through secondary attributes (*tatastha laksana*). The Upanisadic statements like ‘*Existence Consciousness Limitless Brahma*’ is known as essential or direct definition of Brahman and statements that describe Brahman as the creator of the universe, like, ‘*That from which all beings originate*’, is *tatastha laksana*. Brahman is described as one, only, without duality which implies Brahman is free from homogeneous difference, heterogeneous difference and difference within itself (*sajatiya vijatiya svagata bheda shunya*). The non-dual Brahman free from attributes, modifications, and form, ever-pure, alone exists. It is transcendently real and is the absolute being. According to Advaita, *Nirguna* Brahman alone is real. Brahman, when realised as non-different from the true nature of individual self is known as Atman. Thus, Brahman and Atman are essentially one. Brahman is *anadi* or without a beginning.

Maya

Maya or the primal matter is also without a beginning that has Brahman as its locus and content. The existence and evidence of Brahman is concealed by *maya*. *Maya* is the limiting adjunct that distorts Brahman-consciousness. But, *maya* does not affect Brahman since *maya* is of a lower order of reality. *Maya* is defined as indescribable or that which cannot be categorised as existent, or non-existent or both. It cannot be said to be existent, since on rise of Brahman-knowledge, *maya* and its effects gets sublated. It cannot non-existent, since it is experienced. It cannot be both since opposed features cannot exist in the same locus. Therefore, it is said to be different from existence and non-existence which is known as indescribable. *Maya* cannot be categorised as different from Brahman because it affects the philosophy of non-dualism, neither can it be said to be identical to Brahman since on wake of Brahman-knowledge, *maya* will continue remaining unsublated like Brahman. *Maya* is one without parts. If *maya* is said to have parts then its origin is to be determined, *maya* is beginningless according to Advaita. It cannot be therefore said, *maya* is partless because it is the transformative material cause of the universe. A partless entity cannot transform or modify to become something. Scriptures declare *maya* as a great mystery. It contains three *gunas*, namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is not perceptible but inferred through its products, the world and the material bodies. *Maya* possesses two powers, one to conceal (*avarana shakti*) the nature of consciousness and the other to project (*vikshepa shakti*) a world of plurality. *Maya* does not have an independent existence of its own and it depends on Brahman for its existence. According to Advaita, that which has a dependent existence is unreal (*mithya*).

Ishvara

Brahman, defined in its secondary attributive form, is known as *Saguna* Brahman or *Ishvara*. *Ishvara* is defined as Brahman-Consciousness reflected in *maya*, where *maya* is the power of *Ishvara*. *Ishvara* is the reflected consciousness through *maya*, who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is one from whom the world has originated, in whom it is sustained and unto whom it gets resolved. *Ishvara* is the cause of both subtle and gross universes. *Ishvara* is said to be the bestower of results of actions of the individual souls. *Ishvara* is ever-liberated since he is not affected by the concealing power of *maya* and hence

free from ignorance. However, the projecting power of *maya* is operative and hence plurality of world is seen by *Ishvara*. *Ishvara* is also known as *paramatma*. *Paramatma* is one, formless, all-pervasive. *Ishvara* is unaffected by *karma*, He is neither a doer nor a reaper.

Jiva

According to Advaita, the Brahman-consciousness reflected in the mind is *jiva*. *Jiva* is also said to be without a beginning. By considering six factors as beginningless, Advaita shows the cyclicity of time and does not probe into the 'first' creation that is dismissed as illogical. The six factors that are without a beginning are, Brahman, *Maya*, *Ishvara*, *Jiva*, the difference between *Ishvara* and *Jiva*, the combination of Brahman and *Maya*. Since mind a product of *maya* is of inferior quality, the attributes of *jiva* are inferior. In the sense, *jiva* is limited in knowledge, power and located in a place. *Jiva* is many, constituting three bodies – gross, subtle and causal, the material body is subject to birth and death. While the physical body serves as the abode of experiences, the subtle body serves as the means of experiences. The three bodies based on their functions are classified into five sheaths (*panchakosha*), viz, food-sheath (*annamayakosha*), air-sheath (*pranamayakosha*), mental-sheath (*manomayakosha*), intellect-sheath (*vijnanamayakosa*) and bliss sheath (*anandamayakosha*). The individual soul or *jiva* undergoes three states of experiences, namely, waking, dream and deep sleep states. The *jiva* through its various constituents is a doer and reaper. The *jiva* is bound by three kinds of *karma*, viz, *sanchita*, *prarabdha* and *agami*. *Sanchita karma* is the result of past action yet to fructify, the *prarabdha karma* is the fructified result that is experienced now and the *agami karma* is the result of action to be gained by future actions.

Jagat

Advaitins advocate the theory of transfiguration (*vivartavada*) in order to account for the origination of the phenomenal universe. According to this theory, the cause produces an effect without undergoing any change. Brahman is the substratum on which the world appears. The world does not exist independent of Brahman. The cause of the appearance of the world is *maya* which undergoes change and hence it is the transformative material cause (*parinami upadana karana*). Advaitins hold that the universe exists in an unmanifest form in Brahman. Such a view is known as *Satkaryavada*. Since *maya* does not exist independent of Brahman and Brahman devoid of *maya* cannot be the cause, *Ishvara* is said to be both the material and intelligent cause of the universe. *Ishvara*, the wielder of *maya* spins the universe in an orderly and purposeful manner. The causal state of *maya* is also beginningless, that evolves in two stages, firstly there is the evolution of the subtle universe, from which the gross universe emerges. This process develops at the macrocosmic and microcosmic level. Let us see the evolutionary process:

The causal body in unmanifest condition firstly manifests as the subtle body, like a sprout from a seed. The five elements, space, air, fire, water and earth at the causal state consists of three *gunas* having emerged from *maya*. The subtle body evolves through a process of non-grossification (*apanchikarana*). It is a combination of sixteen organs that are invisible and intangible. They are five sense organs of knowledge (sense of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell), five sense organs of action (speech, sense of grasping etc, sense of locomotion, organ

of excretion and organ of procreation), five vital air (respiration, circulation, digestion, evacuation and reversal process), and internal organ (*antahkarana*) with four-fold functions as mind, intellect, sense of 'I' and memory. The sense organs of knowledge and mind/intellect are the product of *sattva guna* of *maya*, the sense organs of action and vital airs are the product of *rajoguna* of *maya*. The subtle universe possesses the corresponding presiding deities of each of these organs. For example, the god of sun is the presiding deity of eyes and so on. At this stage, there is the evolution of subtle body and subtle universe. The evolutes from *tamoguna* of *maya* undergo the process of grossification (*panchikarana*). The five elements at the gross level are divided into two equal parts. One-half of each element further is divided into four parts. The one-eighth of each element is transferred to other elements retaining one-half of the division. At the end of this grossification process, each element will contain one-half of its own and one-eighth of other elements. For example, the earth element will contain one-half of earth element, one-eighth of space, air, fire and water. At this stage one experiences the gross body and gross universe. The material world and body is known as not-self.

Cause of Bondage

Due to self-ignorance, the nature of self and not-self is mixed up that result in bondage. The nature of self is eternal, immortal, pure, unlimited, blissful etc. The nature of not-self is non-eternal, mortal, impure, limited, sorrowful etc. The nature of not-self is falsely transferred to the self and also the nature of self, that is, Existence and Consciousness is falsely transferred to the not-self. This mixture is the cause of bondage, says Shankara, in his introductory commentary to the *Brahmasutra*.

2.4 MEANS TO LIBERATION

We had earlier mentioned that according to Advaita School, self-knowledge is the liberating solution. On analysis of the metaphysical categories we understand that there are two factors, Consciousness (Brahman) and Matter (*Maya*), of which matter and its products are unreal and consciousness alone is real. One who gains the knowledge that self is non-different from Brahman and the experienced plurality is unreal is free from sorrow. To enter into an enquiry of the nature of self, scriptures prescribe remote means, proximate means and direct means. According to Advaita, the remote means to knowledge is action and meditation which enhances the purity of mind. The proximate means are the four-fold qualifications namely, *viveka* or discrimination between eternal and ephemeral, *vairagya* or dispassion towards worldly benefits, *shamadishatkasampatti* or six-fold mental disciplines and *mumuksutva* or intense desire for liberation. Such a seeker is known as *adhikari* who takes up the direct means, namely listening to the scriptures (*shravana*), engaging in removal of doubts (*manana*) and being established in Brahman by dwelling on the teaching (*nididhyasana*).

The identity of individual self and Brahman is revealed through the *mahavakya* in the Upanisads. There are many *mahavakyas* in the 1180 Upanisads, of which traditionally four *mahavakyas* are enumerated representing the four Vedas. The *Aitareya* belonging to *Rg Veda* contains the *mahavakya* – *Prajnanam brahma*, the *Brihadaranyaka* of *Yajur Veda* has *aham brahmasmi*, the *mahavakya tattvamasi* occurs in *Chandogya* of *Sama Veda* and *Mandukya* of *Atharvana*

veda contains *ayamatma brahma mahavakya*. Here, we shall analyse the *tattvamasi mahavakya* which is of instructive nature.

In *Chandogya, Sadvidya* section, a dialogue is carried out between father Uddalaka and son Shvetaketu. The dialogue opens up to indicate 'that by knowing which everything else is known'. Uddalaka describes *Ishvara* as the cause of the universe manifesting as 'Sat' or Existent. Through the *mahavakya* 'Tat tvam asi'; he refers to his son Shvetaketu and says, 'You are that'. The primary meaning of the words 'tat' (That) and 'tvam' (You) do not convey the meaning of identity. Let us see this process sequentially.

The primary meaning of the word 'tat' refers to *Ishvara*, who is defined as Consciousness reflecting in *maya* and is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. The primary meaning of the word 'tvam' refers to *Jiva*, that is defined as Consciousness reflecting in the mind and is limited in intelligence, power and limited by space. The features revealed through the primary meaning are opposed to each other and are contradictory in nature. The identity of 'tat' *paramatma* and 'tvam' *jivatma* is impossible. Since primary meaning does not fit, we apply the secondary meaning. The secondary implication is developed in three stages:

- 1) The first stage is known as *Samanadhikaranya* or the Appositional usage, in which two words that are in grammatical coordination refers to the same locus. For instance, 'white lotus' are two words that are coordinated grammatically refers to the same flower. Similarly, the words 'tat' and 'tvam' are in apposition and hence refers to the same locus. But the word-meanings are opposed to each other.
- 2) The second stage is known as *Viseshyaviseshana sambandha* or the relation of qualified-qualifier. The word meanings act as qualifier and qualified and delimit each other. In the case of 'white lotus', the word-meaning of 'white' is 'whiteness' and 'lotus' is 'lotusness'. In the first instance, white is qualifier and lotus is qualified and in the second instance, lotus is qualifier and white is qualified. Thus, both word-meaning delimit each other referring to the same locus. But in the case of the words 'tat' and 'tvam', the process of qualified and qualifier does not hold good since the word-meanings with opposed meaning cannot refer to the same locus. Hence, we have to proceed to the third stage of secondary implication.
- 3) The third stage is known as *Lakshyalakshana sambandha*, or the relation of indicator-indicated. As mentioned earlier, the *lakshana* is of three kinds, exclusive, inclusive and exclusive-inclusive. In the exclusive kind, the primary meaning is completely abandoned and a related secondary meaning is taken up to understand the meaning of a sentence. For example, 'well is walking' does not make sense. The primary meaning of the word 'well' is unsuitable since 'well' cannot walk. The meaning related to 'well' is 'water' which is contained in a leather bag. This leather bag is hung on the oxes that are walking which is derived by the exclusive secondary application. This method does not fit in the case of the *mahavakya* since the primary meaning is to be completely abandoned. If it is so, then the primary meaning of 'tat' and 'tvam' that includes consciousness has to be abandoned and identity cannot be arrived at.

In the second kind of inclusive, the primary meaning is retained and a related word is included to arrive at the sentential meaning. For example, ‘browns are running’ does not convey the meaning. ‘Brown horses are running’ is understood based on the context by adding the word ‘horses’. Here, the primary meaning is not given up but a new element is included. This method is inapplicable in case of the *mahavakya* since if the primary meaning is retained then the incompatible features of *paramatma* and *jivatma* has to be retained and identity can never be arrived at.

The third implication process is known as exclusive-inclusive wherein one part of the primary meaning is retained and another part is given up resulting in identity knowledge. For instance, a person meets his friend after many years and recognises him as ‘this is that Devadatta’. The word ‘this’ refers to Devadatta related in present time and current place and the word ‘that’ refers to Devadatta related to past time and a different place. The oneness of Devadatta is arrived at by excluding present time and place and past time and place and retaining only the person Devadatta. In the same manner, the features of ‘*tat*’ is excluded and the features of ‘*tvam*’ is excluded, the consciousness behind ‘*tat*’ and ‘*tvam*’ alone is retained which is essentially the same. Thus, one arrives at the consciousness principle that is non-dual as the true nature of the self.

2.5 LIBERATION

One, who gains the ‘identity-knowledge’ through the *mahavakya*, is a *jivanmukta*. Technically, it is said that, the *jivanmukta* burns down the entire *sanchita karma* and is unaffected by the *agami karma*. Since the *prarabdha karma* has fructified it can be exhausted only by experience. The *jivanmukta* continues as long as the *prarabdha* continue. After the fall of the body, the liberated one does not assume another body and thus attains freedom from re-birth or *videha mukti*. The one who does not gain this knowledge here but has acquired all the qualifications to gain the non-dual knowledge is said to travel to *brahmaloka* after death and attain gradual liberation or *krama mukti*. The Scriptures describe the characteristics of a *jivanmukta* as one who never has the idea of ‘I’ with regard to the body, senses or the mind and is not attached to the sense-objects. The *Bhagavad Gita*, describes such an ‘exalted soul’ as whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, who is free from passion, fear and anger, and encountering good and bad experiences, neither rejoices nor recoils. The scriptures goes to the extent of saying to such a liberated soul there is neither injunctions nor prohibitions prescribed because he conducts himself in the society in keeping with the scriptural teachings spontaneously.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give a brief account of the metaphysical categories of Advaita?

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2) Explain the process of secondary implication to arrive at the nature of Self and describe the features of a *jivanmukta*.

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to give a general understanding of the Philosophy of Advaita based on the commentaries and independent works of Adi Shankara. Though Advaita as a system flourished prior to Shankara and developed further after Shankara, we have restricted to the period of Shankara, since he is considered to be the pioneer and champion in regulating the course of Advaita knowledge. We have briefly described the life of Shankara and his works that forms the historical content of this unit. The purpose of Epistemology is discussed and the Metaphysical categories are defined and examined separately. Knowledge as the means to liberation is an important tenet of Advaita that differentiates itself from other Schools of Vedanta. Finally we conclude the unit with the nature of a liberated person that seems to be a necessitated personality for a harmonious existence of present day society.

2.7 KEY WORDS

- Anadi** : that whose beginning cannot be determined in the concept of time and space.
- Guna** : Quality residing in a substance
- Sattva** : the luminous quality because of which knowledge arises
- Rajas** : the active principle because of which activity takes place
- Tamas** : the quality of inertia because of which there is neither knowledge nor action
- Adhikari** : a seeker who has the four-fold qualifications
- Brahmaloka** : the region said to be the seventh heaven presided by Lord Brahma who imparts knowledge resulting in gradual liberation.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Adi Shankara was born in 788 A.D. in Kalady, Kerala to the couple Shivaguru and Aryamba. Shankara showed extraordinary brilliance at a tender age and is said to have composed *Balabodha sangraha* at the age of six. By the age of eight, Shankara was prepared to take to a recluse life. Shankara began his expedition in search of his preceptor and was embraced by Govindapada who questioned Shankara 'Who are you?' for which Shankara poured out in ten verses the absolute nature of self. These hymns are popularly known as the *Dashashloki*. Shankara mastered all the scriptures in three years. He was barely twelve years and set to comment on the *Prasthanas Traya*. By the age of sixteen he established the supremacy of Vedantic knowledge and had huge followers. By receiving an extension of another sixteen years from Vyasa he engaged in spread Advaita knowledge. Thus, by the age of thirty-two he established four *mutts* in four directions under the headship of his famous four disciples, Padmapada, Sureshvara, Totaka and Hastamalaka. Shankara not only wrote for the intellects, he gave the essence of the profound teachings in simple and lucid *stotras*. Thus, he catered to different kinds of seekers of Truth. Shankara composed more than hundred works in his short life span. At the end of his mission in 820 A.D, he directed his disciples to carry out his vision for the welfare of humanity. He then, it is said, walked towards the *Himalayas*.
- 2) According to Advaita, in the perception of an external object, the mind goes out through the sense organ, say the 'eyes' and reaches the place of the object, say a 'pot' and assumes the shape of the pot which modifies into the thought 'pot'. This modification is *vritti*. The capacity of the mind to illumine an object is because of the reflection of Consciousness (Brahman) in the mind. Theory of Erroneous perception: An object perceived differently is said to be invalid cognition in which again the three factors operate namely, the knower, the known and the instrument of knowledge. The analysis of the process of erroneous cognition by Advaita School is known as 'Indescribable Error' (*Anirvachaniya khyati*).

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The metaphysical categories of Advaita are Brahman, *Maya*, *Ishvara*, *Jiva* and *Jagat* that are said to be *anadi*. Brahman is one, only, without duality. It is transcendently real and is the absolute being. *Maya* or the primal matter

that is indescribable consisting of three *gunas*, namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It possesses two powers, one to conceal (*avarana shakti*) the nature of consciousness and the other to project (*vikshepa shakti*) a world of plurality. *Maya* dependently existing on Brahman is *mithya*. *Ishvara* is defined as Brahman-Consciousness reflected in *maya*, where *maya* is the power of *Ishvara*. *Ishvara* is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. The Brahman-consciousness reflected in the mind is *jiva*. *Jiva* is limited in knowledge, power and located in a place. *Jiva* is many, constituting three bodies or five sheaths that undergoes three states of experiences. The material world is manifested through a process of non-grossification and grossification.

- 2) The secondary implication is developed in three stages: Firstly, *Samanadhikaranya* or the Appositional usage, the words '*tat*' and '*tvam*' are in apposition and hence refers to the same locus. But the word-meanings are opposed to each other. The second stage is *Viseshyavisheshana sambandha* or the relation of qualified-qualifier. The word-meaning of '*tat*' and '*tvam*' cannot delimit each other being of opposed qualities. The third stage is *Lakshyalakshana sambandha*, or the relation of indicator-indicated. The exclusive and inclusive method do not fit since they either exclude the consciousness part or retain the opposed attributes. By the application of exclusive-inclusive identity knowledge is arrived. The features of '*tat*' is excluded and the features of '*tvam*' is excluded, the consciousness behind '*tat*' and '*tvam*' alone is retained which is essentially the same. Thus, one arrives at the consciousness principle that is non-dual as the true nature of the self. One who is established in this knowledge is a *Jivanmukta* who is described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, as an 'exalted soul' whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, who is free from passion, fear and anger etc. He conducts himself in the society in keeping with the scriptural teachings spontaneously.

UNIT 3 RAMANUJA

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Epistemology
- 3.3 Metaphysical Categories
- 3.4 Means to Liberation
- 3.5 Liberation
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Further Readings and References
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit—is to provide a glimpse of another school of Vedanta known as Visistadvaita pioneered by Sri Ramanujacharya who systematised the conception of monotheism based on the *Prasthanas Traya*. *Bhakti* as the sole means to liberation is its contention and hence Ramanuja and other gamut of Visistadvaitins dwell deep into the importance of *bhakti*. We shall examine the Epistemology, Metaphysical categories and Axiology according to Visistadvaita.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of philosophy of Visistadvaita;
- to differentiate it from other Schools of *Vedanta*;
- to learn the technical terms in Visistadvaita and familiarise with Sanskrit equivalents; and
- to appreciate the importance of *Bhakti* and *Prapatti*.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ramanuja was born (1017 A.D.) to Asuri Keshava Somayaji Deekshitar and Kanthimathi in Perumbalur village, Tamilnadu. From a very young age he displayed extraordinary brilliance and was compassionate towards all. Shortly after being married in his teenage years, and after his father died, Ramanuja and his family moved to the neighboring city of Kanchipuram. He took initiation from Yadavaprakasa, a renowned Advaitic scholar. The historical data states that since Ramanuja emphasised on *bhakti* as opposed to *jnana* of Advaitic Thought, Yadavaprakasa considered this as a threat to the philosophical school and he decided to kill the young Ramanuja. However, Ramanuja's cousin Govinda Bhatta discovered the plot and helped him escape. According to another version, one of Yadavaprakasa's students plotted to kill Ramanuja but he escaped in the aforementioned manner. Later, due to further controversial arguments, Yadavaprakasa asked Ramanuja to leave. Ramanuja's childhood mentor, Kanchipurana, suggested

him to meet Kanchipurna's own guru, Yamunacharya. Ramanuja travelled to Srirangam to meet an aging Yamunacharya, a philosopher of the vibrant Vishishtadvaita school of thought. Even before Ramanuja could meet Yamunacharya, he had died. According to the legend of the followers of Ramanuja, three fingers of Yamunacharya's corpse were folded. Ramanuja saw this and understood that Yamunacharya was concerned about three tasks and he vowed to complete them. The three tasks as described by Ramanuja are, firstly to teach the doctrine of surrender to God as the means to liberation, secondly to comment on the *Vedantasutras* in the light of Visistadvaita philosophy that has been transmitted orally to the disciples and thirdly the names of Sage Parashara and Saint Sathakopa be perpetuated. Legend goes that on hearing the vow, the three fingers on the corpse straightened. Ramanuja accepted Yamunacharya as his *Manasika Acharya* and spent six months learning the Philosophy of Visistadvaita as taught by Yamunacharya to his disciple Mahapurna. Ramanuja's wife disparaged Mahapurna's wife as belonging to a lower community. Mahapurna and his wife had to leave Srirangam. Ramanuja realized that his life as a householder was interfering with his philosophical pursuit and that he and his wife had differing views. He sent her to her parent's house and himself took to a mendicant life. Ramanuja started travelling the land, having philosophical debates with the custodians of various Vishnu temples. Many of them, after losing the debates, became his disciples. Ramanuja standardized the practices of these temples and worked for the development for Srivaishnava school of thought. He began his writings at this time. Ramanuja wrote nine works including his famous commentary on *Vedantasutra*, known as *Sri Bhashya*. The *Vedantasara* and *Vedantadipika* are brief commentaries to the *Vedantasutra*. He wrote an elaborate commentary on the *Bhagavadgita*. The other works are independent treatises elucidating the concepts of Visistadvaita. They are, *Vedarthasangraha*, *Nitya grantha* and three prose works expounding the glory of surrender as means to liberation. Ramanuja gained knowledge from five different people whom he considered as his acharyas, they are, Peria Nambigal, Thirukkotiur Nambigal, Thirumalai Nambigal, Tirumalai Aandaan and Thirukachchi Nambigal, from each of whom he learnt various 'secrets' of Vaishnava tradition. It is said that Ramanuja faced threats from some Shaivite Chola rulers and had to move to the Hoysala kingdom of Jain king Bittideva and queen Shantala Devi in Karnataka. The legend states that Ramanuja cured the King's daughter of evil spirits and thereafter the Bittideva converted to Srivaishnavism and took the name Vishnuvardhana meaning "one who grows the sect of Vishnu". However, the queen and many of the ministers remained Jain and the kingdom was known for its religious tolerance. Ramanuja re-established the liturgy in the Cheluvanarayana temple in Melukote and King engaged in building many Vishnu temples. The popularity of Ramanuja spread far and wide and he had huge followers with the desire to attain Narayana. They took to the path of *bhakti* and lead a pious life. At a ripe age of 120, Ramanuja left his mortal coils and attained the abode of the Supreme Being in 1137 A.D. In fact, the followers of Srivaishnava tradition consider Ramanuja as an incarnation of Narayana to re-establish the Vaishnava teaching. Ramanuja's shrine (*sannidhi*) is located inside the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple, Srirangam, Tamil Nadu.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The ultimate is one, according to Visistadvaita, but is not the attributeless absolute since a Being devoid of attributes is imperceptible and logically untenable.

Visistadvaita admits of three fundamental realities, matter (*acit*), individual beings (*cit*) and God (*Ishvara*). The ultimate reality is one with *cit* and *acit* as its parts. Often the word 'Visistadvaita' is referred to as 'pan-en-theism', which means the ultimate God is different from and independent of the relative entities and yet as a whole, it includes the relative entities. The epistemological analysis is a pre-requisite to the metaphysical conclusion of Visistadvaita. Visistadvaitins admit three means of knowledge, viz, perception, inference and testimony.

Perception

As a Realist School, Visistadvaita describes perceptual knowledge as sensory contact with objects. In the process of perception, there is knowledge (*artha praksha*) that reveals an object, knower, object of knowledge and means of knowledge. The knowledge of the *jiva* flows out through the mind to the sense organs that come in contact with the object, there arises a perceptual cognition, like, 'there is a pot'. In this mechanism, Visistadvaitin states, knowledge can reveal only that object which is qualified by attributes. In this regard, perception is divided into two, first is indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*) that cognises the object in the manner 'there is an object' and the second is determinate (*savikalpaka*) that grasps the other features of the object. In either case, the apprehension is because of attributes of the object. Since an object devoid of attributes is imperceptible, Visistadvaitin refuses to accept a transcendental absolute reality.

Theory of Erroneous Perception

Visistadvaitin holds on to the view that all knowledge is of the real. This theory is known as *yathartha khyati* or *satkhyati*. In case of illusory perception like, seeing 'silver' on a 'shell', Visistadvaitin explains based on the theory of evolution, wherein all the effects are combination of five elements. In a 'shell', there is predominantly shell-particles but it contains an infinitesimal part of 'silver', that is, the shell contains the 'brightness' of silver that makes the shell appear as silver. The knowledge has revealed the object as it is, that is silver in this case but knowledge has not fulfilled a second condition, that is, practicality. Since the infinitesimal silver in shell serves no purpose, this cognition of 'silver' in shell is known to be an error. Error relates only to the attributive consciousness of *jiva*. The error is due to the non-apprehension of the determinate characteristics of an object and of its difference from others. Error is a real experience due to a real cause and can be rectified by means of pragmatic verification.

Inference

Inferential cognition is defined as that which is the valid knowledge of the particular pervader (fire) obtained from the observation of the fact of smoke being invariably pervaded by fire. Visistadvaitin accepts the five-membered syllogism of proposition (*pratijna*), reason (*hetu*), instance (*udaharana*), application (*upanaya*) and conclusion (*nigamana*). All mediate knowledge is derived through inference.

Testimony

The scriptural statements or testimony is accepted as an independent means of knowledge by Visistadvaitins. The primary scriptures are the *prasthanaya traya*, but Visistadvaitins include *Puranas* and *Pancharatra Agamas* as equally authoritative and valid source of knowledge. The *Puranas* are classified as

sattvika, *rajasa* and *tamasa* and the *sattvika puranas* eulogise the greatness of Vishnu and hence they are taken to be the most authentic source. For Visistadvaitins, the *Pancharatra Agamas* hold a unique position since they are considered to be revealed by *Ishvara*. The theory of verbal knowledge as admitted by Visistadvaita signifies that the words have power to denote their respective meanings along with qualities or difference. The power of the word to denote an object is not limited to the quality alone but it indicates the substance also. This sense of denotation is known as '*aparyavasana vritti*'. The *cit* and *acit* are inseparable attributes of Brahman and hence every word indicates Brahman immanent in everything. Since all the words denote Brahman primarily, in this sense Brahman is known as '*sarva shabda vachya*' Ramanuja explicates this based on the theory of grammatical coordination.

Visistadvaitins include comparison under memory. Comparison is based on three sources, perception, inference and verbal testimony and hence it is not accepted as a separate means of knowledge. Non-apprehension is categorised under perception and postulation is included in inference. Thus, according to Visistadvaita, the valid means of knowledge are only perception, inference and testimony.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Give an account of Life and works of Ramanujacharya.

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2) Explain the epistemological dimension of Visistadvaita School of Thought.

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3.3 METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES

Visistadvaita is developed based on the concept of substance-attribute and it lays down three fundamental metaphysical concepts, namely, the concept of substance and attribute, the concept of relation and the concept of cause and effect. According to Visistadvaitin's epistemological stand, a substance cannot be conceived devoid of attributes.

- The first concept is explained based on the principle of *aprthaksiddhi*, as an attribute is inseparable from its substance; a substance is also inseparable from its attributes. This implies two things, that attribute and substance cannot exist as two separate things and that attributes and substance cannot be comprehended distinctly. That which is devoid of attributes is a non-entity.
- The second concept of relation is obtained between substance and attribute and substance and substance. Thus, physical body and soul are inseparable substances. Similarly, *cit* and *acit* are inseparable from *Ishvara*.
- The third concept of cause and effect expounds how the 'one' became 'many'. The effect does not exist in the cause nor is it different from the cause. The two are different states of one and the same substance. This is a modified theory of *Satkaryavada*.

Based on the above three concepts, Visistadvaitins proceeds to explicate the metaphysical categories that is broadly divided as substance (*dravya*) and non-substance (*adravya*). The substances are six, divided as inert (*jada*) and non-inert (*ajada*), of which the non-inert entities are further classified as self-revealing (*pratyak*) and revelation for others (*parak*), of which *Jiva* and *Ishvara* are self-revealing non-inert substances and *nityavibhuti* and *jnana* are *parak*. The *prakriti* and *kala* are inert substances. The non-substances are ten, viz, *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*, *samyoga* and *shakti* which are the basic metaphysical attributes.

Dravya

Dravya is that which serves as a substratum of modification and modification is that which an adventitious quality inseparable from the substance. Visistadvaita presents a distinctive doctrine of *jiva*, that is different from Brahman and even in the state of liberation it does not lose its individuality. *Jivas* are infinite in number and they are essentially of the nature of knowledge. *Jiva* is the knower because it serves as the substrate of knowledge. The *jiva* constituting of knowledge is known as substantive-knowledge (*dharmijnana*) which is self-evident but does not reveal the external objects and it knows what is revealed to it. The *jnana* or knowledge by itself is an essential attribute of the *jiva*, which is known as attributive-knowledge (*dharmabhutajnana*). *Jnana* reveals itself and the external objects but does not know them. *Jiva* is a doer and reaper of results. It is of the dimension of an atom (*anu*). *Jiva* is different from *panchakoshas*. The *jivas* are eternal. Ramanuja, while commenting on the *Vedantasutra* establishes that *jiva* is neither different from nor identical with Brahman, but it is a part (*amsha*) of Brahman. The part-whole theory means, *jivas* are the essential attribute of a complex whole.

Visistadvaitin holds a theological philosophy and considers the ultimate reality as the personal God, *Narayana*, etymologically means the ground of *cit* and *acit*. Brahman or the ultimate reality is also referred to as *Vishnu*, etymologically meaning that which pervades everything. Ramanuja derives validity of its theology from the *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. The attributeless Brahman held by Advaitin is rejected as metaphysical abstraction and Brahman is conceived, by Visistadvaitin as God with attributes like possessing a bodily form, with infinite good qualities and glories. The bodily form of Brahman is not subject to *karma* like the *jivas*, but is assumed out of free-will for the benefit of the devotees. The bodily form of Brahman also known as *Ishvara* is eternal with pure quality

(*shuddha sattva*). The nature of Brahman is determined by five distinguishing characteristics, namely, Reality (*satyam*), Knowledge (*jnanam*), Infinite (*anantam*), Bliss (*anandam*) and Pure (*amalam*) based on Upanishadic statements. Visistadvaitin admits six attributes in *Ishvara*, viz, knowledge, strength, lordship, virility, power and splendour. God, for Visistadvaitins, manifest in five forms, the transcendental form (*para*), divine manifestation as *Vasudeva*, *Sankarshana*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* (*Vyuha*), several incarnations (*vibhava*), entering into the substance made by devotees (*archa*) and residing in the hearts of *jivas* (*antaryami*). The purpose of varied manifestations is to destroy evil and re-establish righteousness.

Prakriti or the primordial cosmic matter is an inert substance, eternal and subject to modification. It consists of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is controlled by *Ishvara* and is dependent on Him for its existence. According to the evolutionary process of Visistadvaitin, twenty-three categories evolve from *prakriti*, they are, *mahat*, *ahamkara*, from the *sattvika ahamkara* emerges *manas*, five senses of knowledge and action, from the *tamasa ahamkara* emanates the five *tanmatras* or subtle elements. The *rajasa ahamkara* serves as an aid for both the *sattvika* and *tamasa* in their evolution. The two stages of evolution in the form aggregate and gross is described. The first stage is regarded as the primary evolution of the aggregate universe (*samasthi srishthi*) and the second stage is the formation of the physical universe where the elements undergo the process of *panchikarana*. Visistadvaitin rejects the *vivartavada* of Advaitin and advocates the reality of the universe. The perceived world is not an appearance but an integral part of Brahman. Based on the third metaphysical concept of cause and effect, Brahman with *cit* and *acit* in subtle form is the cause and in manifested form is the effect. Ramanuja rejects the theory of illusion advocated by Advaitin on the grounds of seven untenabilities against the concept of *maya*. The seven untenabilities are elaborately discussed in *Sri bhasya*. According to Ramanuja, firstly the very nature of *maya* is subject to contradictions, secondly the inexplicable nature is illogical, thirdly, there is no means of knowledge in support of this theory of *maya*, the locus of *maya* cannot be ascertained as Brahman or *jiva*, fifthly, the obscuring nature of *maya* is unintelligible, sixthly there is untenability of removal of *maya* by valid knowledge, and finally, the very concept of the cessation of *maya* is illogical.

Nityavibhuti or *Shuddhasattva* is the transcendental matter in contrast to the *prakriti* that is the cosmic matter. It is a spiritual substance characterised by pure *sattva* unlike the physical matter which constitutes three *gunas*. It is non-material and insentient. It is classified under the *parak* and hence it illumines everything but does not know. Visistadvaitins accept *shuddhasatta* category since *Agamas* maintain that idols that are consecrated is permeated with *shuddhasattva* thus making the place of worship a spiritual sanctorum. Moreover, the bodily form of *Ishvara* cannot be made of cosmic matter that is subject to origination and destruction, but it is made of *shuddhasattva*. However, *Ishvara* is the controller of and substratum of both the *prakriti* and *shuddhasattva*.

Kala or the Time Principle is also one of the inert substances that is eternal. It is an independent and real substance but is not a part of *prakriti*. It exists along with *prakriti* without a beginning or an end. It is within the realm of Brahman and undergoes modification in the form of seconds, minutes, hours, days etc.

Adravya

The nature of ten *adravyas* is elaborated here. The *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the three basic qualities of *prakriti*. *Sattva* stands for light and causes happiness. *Rajas* represents activity and causes suffering and *tamas* means inertia giving rise to ignorance. The attributes of the five elements namely sound, touch, sight, taste and smell is cognised by its corresponding sense organ. *Samyoga* or relation is a non-substance that brings together two things. There is *samyoga* between *purusha* and *prakriti* that result in the universe. The body and soul are together due to *samyoga* relation that varies from Brahma to a blade of grass. Knowledge takes place as a result of *samyoga* between intellect and external objects. This relation is possible between two all-pervasive substances like the relation of *Ishvara* and *kala* that is eternal.

Cause of Bondage

The *jivas* have fallen away from the Lord and are ignorant of the relation of themselves as the body of Narayana. This forgetfulness of *sharira-shariri sambandha* or the relation of part-whole unit leads to sorrow and bondage. Freedom is thus, gaining knowledge of the nature of self and attaining the feet of the Lord in his abode, *Vaikuntha*.

3.4 MEANS TO LIBERATION

Visistadvaitin maintains that *jiva* is an eternal individual being that remains in its true nature in the state of liberation with infinite knowledge, relishing the eternal bliss of Brahman. Thus, each *jiva* has to realise its highest goal of reaching *Narayana* and put forth effort to attain liberation. The *jivas* are classified, in Visistadvaita, as *baddha* or bound selves, *mukta* or released selves and *nitya* or eternally free ones. Those *jivas* who develop detachment towards ephemeral pleasures is said to be an aspirant of liberation. If the *jiva* knows the nature of five factors then with the grace of the Lord will attain liberation. The five factors (*arthapanchakam*) are nature of soul as subservient to God, nature of God as the ultimate and only reality, nature of goal as to attain the Lord and serve Him, nature of means being total surrender to win the grace of Lord, and the nature of obstacle as ignorance of the above four factors.

The means or *upaya* according to Visistadvaita is *bhakti* or an unceasing meditation with love on the Supreme Being. *Bhakti* is generated with total observance of religious duties as prescribed in the scriptures adhering to the classification of class and stages of life. *Bhakti* is preceded by *karma* and *jnana* and hence *karma* and *jnana* are subsidiary or subservient to *bhakti* and *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita. *Karma yoga* emphasises the performance of actions accepting any kind of consequence, sacrifice, charity and austerity as divine service to the Lord. *Jnana yoga* signifies control of mind and senses and dwelling incessantly meditating on the Lord. The subservient means enhances purity of mind and removes sins (*papa*) and thereby promotes *bhakti*. The *bhakti yoga* presupposes certain rigorous disciplines known as the seven means (*sadhana saptaka*) that is quoted by Ramanuja in his *Sri bhasya*. The disciplines are discrimination (*viveka*), wherein the seeker must pay careful attention to the kind of food consumed. It must be free from all kinds of impurities. Maintenance of purity of body is directly proportional to the purity of mind. The second discipline is control of passions (*vimoka*) is the attempt to free oneself

from the clutches of desire and anger cycle. The third discipline is practice (*abhyasa*) where a seeker puts forth effort to fix the mind upon the auspicious form of Brahman immanent in everything. This stage is often referred to as *dhyana yoga*. The fourth discipline is performance of five-fold duties (*kriya*). Here, the seeker continues the performance of duties towards God, Elders, Teachers, fellow-beings and the environment of plant and animal kingdom. This is considered as a means of purification of mind. The fifth discipline is development of virtues (*kalyana*). Ramanuja mentions most importantly six virtues to be cultivated by every seeker, they are, truthfulness, integrity, serving others, benevolence, non-violence, non-stealing. The sixth discipline is freedom from weakness (*anvasada*), that is, not allowing oneself overwhelmed with past bitter experiences that weaken the mind. The final discipline mentioned is freedom from excessive goodness (*anuddharsha*). The seeker should not allow oneself involved in too much of goodness or merits which is also an obstacle to *bhakti*. Thus, extreme indulgences should be avoided. Since *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita, it prescribes the process of development of highest devotion or *parabhakti* towards the Lord. Initially, one develops love for the Lord, caused by study of scriptures and by intimate association with other devotees. This is known as general devotion or *samanya bhakti*. Then one should rigorously practice *karma yoga* by accepting any consequence as the offering of the Lord. By gaining God's grace, one reflects upon the true nature of the individual self, is known as *atmanusandhana*. The next stage is the realisation of self as subservient to God, this is known as knowledge of being a part of Lord or *seshatvajnana*. The gradual progress to the next stage is realisation that the highest attainment is oneness with the Lord and *parabhakti* is that wherein one develops the utmost desire and determination to see the Lord. The concept of *prapatti* or total surrender to the Lord is also considered as the direct means to liberation. In fact, according to Visistadvaita, both *bhakti* and *prapatti* are two sides of a same coin and hence they function as the direct means to attain the feet of the Lord. These two means are however, different and distinct with a specific role in the spiritual development. The *bhakti* is considered as *sadhana bhakti* and *prapatti* is known as *sadhya bhakti*, that is, one is the means and the other is the end. In fact, at a later stage, the School emphasised the role of *prapatti* since *bhakti yoga* demands a high level quality that may distance many seekers from attempting to pursue liberation. Ramanuja derives the theistic philosophy from the *prasthanaya trayam* and it remains to interpret the *mahavakya* '*tattvamasi*' since Advaitin had derived the non-dual nature of self from the *mahavakya*. According to Visistadvaita, such an interpretation is untenable. The word '*tat*' in the *mahavakya* refers to God having the entire universe as his body, and the word '*tvam*' refers to God having the individual beings as his body. Thus, *acit* and *cit* as attributes of God is revealed by these two words. Finally the verb '*asi*' in the *mahavakya* reveals the identity of the embodied in both, viz, God.

3.5 LIBERATION

Liberation for Visistadvaita is attaining the abode of *Narayana*. It is not merely freedom from bondage but it is a positive state of existence in the higher realm without losing individuality. The liberated soul attains omniscience and enjoys the unlimited bliss like the Lord. The *jiva* after liberation is not subject to *karma* and therefore knowledge manifests in its fullest. Like Advaita School, Ramanuja does not accept the concept of *jivanmukti* because the abode of Lord can be

attained only after exhaustion of all *karma* and fall of the physical body. The liberated *jiva* gains all the perfections of the Lord except that they remain atomic in size and does not gain the power to create, sustain or dissolve the universe.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Examine the metaphysical categories of Visistadvaita.

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2) What is liberation and the means to liberation according to Visistadvaita?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

Ramanuja’s approach is an attempt to unite the personal theism with the philosophy of the Absolute. The system of Visistadvaita in the 11th century developed basically as a reaction to the Absolutism propagated by Advaita School that seems to leave behind the role of *bhakti* in the gamut of means to liberation. Ramanuja made an emphatic return of *bhakti*, a significant contribution of Visistadvaita by taking to Realism and retaining the theistic approach. There had been significant development prior to Ramanuja and post-Ramanuja which does not find scope in this unit. The two broad views earlier to Ramanuja namely, the non-dual system and school of thought that holds difference-cum-non-difference has been beautifully synthesised by Ramanuja, in his system that is widely known as ‘Qualified Monism’. In keeping with the Realistic approach we have touched upon the epistemological theory of Visistadvaita that presents its theory of error in a unique manner. We had a brief view on the metaphysical concepts and categories that constitutes the crux of Visistadvaita School. The Liberation stressed by Visistadvaita presupposes a disciplined life and total commitment that is in a way need of the hour.

3.7 KEY WORDS

- Artha prakasha* : manifestation of object
- Dharmabhutajnana* : knowledge as an essential attribute of the Self
- Sharira-shariri sambandha*: the organic relation of the body to the soul and of the cosmic universe of *cit* and *acit* to *Ishvara*, according to Ramanuja.
- Satkaryavada* : a view that an effect is a modified state of the causal substance according to Visistadvaita.
- Yatharthakhyati* : the theory that all knowledge is of the real.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Ramanuja was born (1017 A.D.) to Asuri Keshava Somayaji Deekshitar and Kanthimathi in Perumbadur village, Tamilnadu. From a very young age he displayed extraordinary brilliance and was compassionate towards all. Shortly after being married in his teenage years, and after his father died, Ramanuja and his family moved to the neighboring city of Kanchipuram. He took initiation from Yadavaprakasa, a renowned Advaitic scholar. The historical data states that since Ramanuja emphasised on *bhakti* as opposed to *jnana* of Advaitic Thought, Yadavaprakasa considered him as a threat and asked Ramanuja to leave. Ramanuja travelled to Srirangam but before his meeting the teacher died. According to the legend of the followers of Ramanuja, three fingers of Yamunacharya's corpse were folded. The three tasks as described by Ramanuja are, firstly to teach the doctrine of surrender to God as the means to liberation, secondly to comment on the *Vedantasutras* in the light of Visistadvaita philosophy that has been transmitted orally to the disciples and thirdly the names of Sage Parashara and Saint Sathakopa be perpetuated. Legend goes that on hearing the vow, the three fingers on the corpse straightened. He took to a mendicant life and traveled the land, having

philosophical debates with the custodians of various Vishnu temples. He standardized the practices of these temples and worked for the development for Srivaishnava school of thought. Ramanuja wrote nine works including his famous commentary on *Vedantasutra*, known as *Sri Bhashya*. It is said that Ramanuja faced threats from some Shaivite Chola rulers and had to move to the Hoysala kingdom of Jain king Bittideva and queen Shantala Devi in Karnataka. Ramanuja cured the King's daughter of evil spirits and thereafter the Bittideva converted to Srivaishnavism and engaged himself in building Vishnu temples. The popularity of Ramanuja spread far and wide and he had huge followers with the desire to attain Narayana. They took to the path of *bhakti* and lead a pious life. At a ripe age of 120, Ramanuja left his mortal coils and attained the abode of the Supreme Being in 1137 A.D.

- 2) Visistadvaita admits of three fundamental realities, matter (*acit*), individual beings (*cit*) and God (*Ishvara*). The ultimate reality is one with *cit* and *acit* as its parts. As a Realist School, Visistadvaita describes perceptual knowledge as sensory contact with objects. The knowledge of the *jiva* flows out through the mind to the sense organs that come in contact with the object, there arises a perceptual cognition, like, 'there is a pot'. In this mechanism, Visistadvaitin states, knowledge can reveal only that object which is qualified by attributes. In this regard, perception is divided into two, first is indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*) that cognises the object in the manner 'there is an object' and the second is determinate (*savikalpaka*) that grasps the other features of the object. In either case, the apprehension is because of attributes of the object. Since an object devoid of attributes is imperceptible, Visistadvaitin refuses to accept a transcendental absolute reality.

Visistadvaitin holds on to the view that all knowledge is of the real. This theory is known as *yathartha khyati* or *satkhyati*. In case of illusory perception like, seeing 'silver' on a 'shell', Visistadvaitin explains based on the theory of evolution, wherein all the effects are combination of five elements. In a 'shell', there is predominantly shell-particles but it contains an infinitesimal part of 'silver', that is, the shell contains the 'brightness' of silver that makes the shell appear as silver. The knowledge has revealed the object as it is, that is silver in this case but knowledge has not fulfilled a second condition, that is, practicality. Since the infinitesimal silver in shell serves no purpose, this cognition of 'silver' in shell is known to be an error. Error relates only to the attributive consciousness of *jiva*. The error is due to the non-apprehension of the determinate characteristics of an object and of its difference from others. Error is a real experience due to a real cause and can be rectified by means of pragmatic verification.

Inferential cognition is defined as that which is the valid knowledge of the particular pervader (fire) obtained from the observation of the fact of smoke being invariably pervaded by fire. Visistadvaitin accepts the five-membered syllogism of proposition (*pratijna*), reason (*hetu*), instance (*udaharana*), application (*upanaya*) and conclusion (*nigamana*). All mediate knowledge is derived through inference.

The scriptural statements or testimony is accepted as an independent means of knowledge by Visistadvaitins. The primary scriptures are the *prasthanatraya*, but Visistadvaitins include *Puranas* and *Pancharatra Agamas* as

equally authoritative and valid source of knowledge. The *Puranas* are classified as *sattvika*, *rajasa* and *tamasa* and the *sattvika puranas* eulogise the greatness of Vishnu and hence they are taken to be the most authentic source. For Visistadvaitins, the *Pancharatra Agamas* hold a unique position since they are considered to be revealed by *Ishvara*. The theory of verbal knowledge as admitted by Visistadvaita signifies that the words have power to denote their respective meanings along with qualities or difference. The power of the word to denote an object is not limited to the quality alone but it indicates the substance also. This sense of denotation is known as '*aparyavasana vritti*'. The *cit* and *acit* are inseparable attributes of Brahman and hence every word indicates Brahman immanent in everything. Since all the words denote Brahman primarily, in this sense Brahman is known as '*sarva shabda vachya*' Ramanuja explicates this based on the theory of grammatical coordination.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Visistadvaita is developed based on the concept of substance-attribute and it lays down three fundamental metaphysical concepts, namely, the concept of substance and attribute, the concept of relation and the concept of cause and effect. According to Visistadvaitin's epistemological stand, a substance cannot be conceived devoid of attributes. Visistadvaitin's metaphysical categories is broadly divided as substance (*dravya*) and non-substance (*adravya*). *Dravya* is that which serves as a substratum of modification and modification is that which an adventitious quality inseparable from the substance. The infinite *Jivas* are the substances who are essentially of the nature of knowledge. The *jnana* or knowledge by itself is an essential attribute of the *jiva*, which is known as attributive-knowledge (*dharmabhutajnana*). *Jiva* is a doer and reaper of results. It is of the dimension of an atom (*anu*). Ramanuja, while commenting on the *Vedantasutra* establishes that *jiva* is neither different from nor identical with Brahman, but it is a part (*amsha*) of Brahman. Visistadvaitin holds a theological philosophy and considers the ultimate reality as the personal God, *Narayana*. God with attributes like possessing a bodily form, with infinite good qualities and glories is accepted by Visistadvaita. The bodily form of Brahman also known as *Ishvara* is eternal with pure quality (*shuddha sattva*). God, for Visistadvaitins, manifest in five forms, the transcendental form (*para*), divine manifestation as *Vasudeva*, *Sankarshana*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* (*Vyuha*), several incarnations (*vibhava*), entering into the substance made by devotees (*archa*) and residing in the hearts of *jivas* (*antaryami*). The purpose of varied manifestations is to destroy evil and re-establish righteousness. *Prakriti* or the primordial cosmic matter is an inert substance, eternal and subject to modification. It consists of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is controlled by *Ishvara* and is dependent on Him for its existence. According to the evolutionary process of Visistadvaitin, twenty-three categories evolve from *prakriti*, they are, *mahat*, *ahamkara*, from the *sattvika ahamkara* emerges *manas*, five senses of knowledge and action, from the *tamasa ahamkara* emanates the five *tanmatras* or subtle elements. The *rajasa ahamkara* serves as an aid for both the *sattvika* and *tamasa* in their evolution. The two stages of evolution in the form aggregate and gross is described. *Nityavibhuti* or *Shuddhasattva* is the transcendental matter in contrast to the *prakriti* that is the cosmic matter. *Kala* or the Time Principle is also one of the inert substances that is

eternal. The ten *adravyas* are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the five senses, *Samyoga* and *shakti*.

- 2) The means or *upaya* according to Visistadvaita is *bhakti* or an unceasing meditation with love on the Supreme Being. *Bhakti* is preceded by *karma* and *jnana*. *Karma yoga* emphasises the performance of actions accepting any kind of consequence, sacrifice, charity and austerity as divine service to the Lord. *Jnana yoga* signifies control of mind and senses and dwelling incessantly meditating on the Lord. The subservient means enhances purity of mind and removes sins (*papa*) and thereby promotes *bhakti*. The *bhakti yoga* presupposes certain rigorous disciplines known as the seven means (*sadhana saptaka*) that is quoted by Ramanuja in his *Sri bhasya*. Since *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita, it prescribes the process of development of highest devotion or *parabhakti* towards the Lord. Initially, one develops love for the Lord, caused by study of scriptures and by intimate association with other devotees. This is known as general devotion or *samanya bhakti*, gradually leading to *parabhakti* wherein one develops the utmost desire and determination to see the Lord. The concept of *prapatti* or total surrender to the Lord is also considered as the direct means to liberation. Liberation for Visistadvaita is attaining the abode of *Narayana*. The liberated *jiva* gain all the perfections of the Lord except that they remain atomic in size and does not gain the power to create, sustain or dissolve the universe.

UNIT 4 MADHVA

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Epistemology
- 4.3 Metaphysical Categories
- 4.4 Means to Liberation
- 4.5 Liberation
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Further Readings and References
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit— is to give the essence of Dualistic approach as expounded by Sri Madhva. The Dvaita School sprung more as a reaction against the system of Advaita and Visistadvaita. Madhva interpreted the *Upanishadic* statements that convey difference as the primary teaching of the scriptures. The main objection of Dvaita with regard to the Advaitic standpoint is the negligence of common experience and description of an attributeless reality. Madhva though agrees with Ramanuja, is not convinced with the theistic approach of Ramanuja. Thus, Madhva formulated a system of dualism, maintaining difference and enhancing the concept of *bhakti*.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of philosophy of Dvaita;
- to differentiate it from other Schools of *Vedanta*;
- to understand the basic structure of Dualism; and
- to know the importance of its contribution in the field of *bhakti*.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Madhva was born on 1238 A.D. at Pajaka a tiny hamlet near Udupi to Madhyageha Bhatta and Vedavati. The child was named Vasudeva. Even as a child, Vasudeva exhibited special interest in spirituality. He was drawn to the path of renunciation and even as a young boy of eleven years, he chose initiation into the monastic order from Achyuta-Pragna, a reputed ascetic of the time, near Udupi. The preceptor Achyuta-Pragna renamed Vasudeva as 'Purnaprajna' at the time of his initiation into mendicant life. In a few months, he won the debate with expert scholars and he was given the name *Anandatirtha*. Later, he was popularly known as Madhvacharya. At an early age, he set out on a tour of South India. He visited several places of pilgrimage like Anantasayana, Kanyakumari, Ramesvara and Srirangam. He spread the teaching of Dualism and revived the religious faith in the hearts of millions of people. He faced many oppositions and over a period of

time won the hearts of many scholars. He committed himself to write a commentary on the *Prasthanas Traya*. He composed many works that were recorded by his disciple Satyatirtha. Some of his works are *Pramanalakshana*, *Tattvaviveka*, *Vishnutattvanirnaya* etc. He travelled far and wide and returned to *Badri*, where he installed the deity of *Krishna* which he found on the sea-coast of *Udupi*. He initiated social reforms in *Udupi*. He established *mutts* to propagate the study of *Dvaita* philosophy. He took into the monastic fold *Vishnutirtha* and then *Padmanabha Tirtha* who were the torch-bearers of *Madhva's* teachings. He restructured the temple practices based on the *Agama* literature. At the age of 79, he took leave of his disciples and left to *Badri*. The followers of *Madhva* consider him as an incarnation of *Vishnu*.

4.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The tenets of *Dvaita* philosophy is that *Vishnu* is the supreme head and that is the import of the scriptures. Every word in the scripture primarily signifies *Vishnu*, according to *Madhva*, and secondarily indicates the object. *Vishnu* is the cause of bondage as well as liberation. The world of plurality is real and is eternal. The ultimate reality of five-fold difference, namely, the difference between *jiva* and *Ishvara*, *jiva* and *jiva*, *jiva* and *jagat* (matter), *jagat* and *jagat*, *Ishvara* and *jagat*, is accepted. Liberation is gained only by developing *bhakti* towards *Vishnu*. For *Madhva*, devotion is possible only when the seeker possess the knowledge of *Vishnu*, which can be gained only through the instruments of valid knowledge. Therefore, study of *Dvaita* Epistemology is a necessity for liberation.

Dvaita School has a Realistic approach in its Epistemological construction in which it postulates the existence of object as different from knowledge. According to *Dvaita*, the reality of the object remains as it is whether cognised or not and an object has to be necessarily with characteristics to be cognised. *Dvaita* dismisses the possibility of an attributeless object. The attributes of the object determines the form of the knowledge and hence *Dvaita* advocates objectivity and not subjective knowledge.

Madhva focuses on the two meanings of the word '*pramana*', one refers to knowledge as such and the other to the instruments of knowledge. He, therefore, distinguishes the two by introducing the terms, *kevalapramana* and *anupramana*. While *kevalapramana* applies to the meaning of knowledge, *anupramana* is the term used for means of knowledge.

Kevalapramana

Kevalapramana is defined as that knowledge which does not go beyond its object and *anupramana* is that which enables for a valid cognition. *Kevalapramana* is further classified into four kinds, first of which is *Ishvara-jnana*. It is the knowledge possessed by *Ishvara* which is complete, valid and eternal. This knowledge is not different from *Ishvara's* form (*svarupa*) and *Ishvara* has the cognition of both the unmanifested and manifested forms. This is known as *svarupa-jnana*. The second kind of *pramana* is *Lakshmi-jnana*, which is also eternal but it is dependent on the Lord, whereas the knowledge of *Ishvara* is independent. In fact, according to *Madhva*, all the beings also possess *svarupa-jnana*. But the difference is that, while the *svarupa-jnana* of *Ishvara* and *Lakshmi* or not concealed by ignorance, the same is concealed by ignorance in the case of all beings. Thus, the *svarupa-jnana* of all *jiva* is the efficient cause that leads to

modification of mind known as *manovritti-jnana*. Mind is the material cause that is contacted by the *jiva*, the mind contacts the sense organs which in turn contacts the sense objects, giving rise to perceptual cognition. The third *pramana* is *Yogi-jnana*, it is the knowledge obtained through *yogic* powers as a result of meditation on the Lord. It is further classified into three, based on the power gained as a result of meditation. The final *pramana* is *ayogin-jnana* which is the knowledge of all the *jivas*. The *jivas* are those who do not come under the category of *yogis*. Their knowledge is invalid, inadequate and non-eternal.

Anupramana

Madhva maintains three *anupramanas* or instruments of knowledge namely, perception, inference and verbal testimony. The other means accepted by Advaita and other Schools are categorised under these three. For instance, Madhva states, in the case of analogy, both perception and inference are employed and since the comparative knowledge is gained by these two means there is no necessity to accept analogy as a distinct source of knowledge. The means of postulation is also plugged under inference and non-apprehension is said to be known from perception, inference and verbal testimony. Thus, Madhva, confines his means of knowledge to three.

Perception

The mechanism of perception in Dvaita School is the sense-contact with the objects. For Dvaitin, a valid perceptual cognition arises only when both the senses and its objects are devoid of defects. Presence of defects in either will result in invalid apprehension of illusion or doubt. In the perceptual cognition, Dvaita enumerates function of seven senses, they are the five sense organs of knowledge, mind and *Sakshin*. The conception of mind as a sense organ and *Sakshin* are unique to Dvaita School. While the mind functions in coordinating with the five sense organs and acts as means of recollection, the *Sakshin* is the witness consciousness or the faculty of intuitive perception. This *sakshin* is said to be identical with the sentiency possessed in the *jiva*. Since *sakshin* is the purest form of sense organ it never produces invalid knowledge. The external objects are perceived by the *sakshin* with the aid of sense organs and that for which the senses are not the instrument, *sakshin* perceives directly, like perception of the self, mind, the attributes of the mind, ignorance, time, space etc. Dvaita advocates a perceptual knowledge of the self through *sakshin*. For Dvaita, every perception is determinate and it refutes an indeterminate perception. As Realist, Madhva maintains reality of dream and doubt cognitions. Doubt is defined as 'uncertain knowledge' wherein the perceiver fails to cognise the unique attributes of the object cognised. Thus, in a doubtful cognition there is a single object with alternative attributes determining the object. Madhva establishes the reality of dream world on the strength of certain scriptural statements. He regards dream world as real because it satisfies the criterion of validity corresponding to the external reality.

Theory of Erroneous Perception

Like Advaita and Visistadvaita, the Dvaita School also explains the phenomenon of an erroneous cognition. Madhva being a radical realist, presents a completely objective stand with regard to the content of error, synthesising the theories of error as advocated by Buddhism and Nyaya Schools, with certain modifications. Thus, the Madhva theory of error is known as *Abhinava anyatha khyati*. Madhva

borrowes the component of non-existence of object of error from *Asat khyati* of Buddhism and inculcates the component of appearance of error on an existent object from *Anyatha khyati* of Nyaya School. Thus, Madhva explains the process of error in case of ‘shell-silver’. The past experience of a real silver that has created an impression in the mind is triggered on seeing a shell due to certain defects. The ‘silver’ seen on shell is non-existent which is determined by the sublating knowledge that, ‘there is no silver here, the non-existent silver appeared to exist’. Madhva, thus presents the similarity of real silver impression and the shell. Due to the confusion between the mental impressions of silver with the shell it gives rise to the illusion of silver. So, the substratum (shell) and similarity (silver impression) are the two real elements involved in error.

Inference

Madhva accepts, inference as a distinct source of knowledge. Perception is accepted for all immediate knowledge and inference is accepted for all mediate knowledge. Inferential cognition based on the locus (*paksha*), reason (*hetu*) and result (*sadhya*) is established by the knowledge of universal concomitance (*vyapti*). The post-Madhva period classified inference into three kinds, inference of cause from effect (*karyanumana*) like fire from smoke, inference of effect from cause (*karananumana*) like rain from dense clouds, the inference of one thing from another which does not maintain a cause-effect relation (*akaryakarananumana*), like the inference of taste from colour as in the case of inferring sweetness by seeing a yellow-mango.

Testimony

Madhva considers a statement free from defects is known to be a valid verbal testimony. He classifies defects into seven, they are, non-intelligibility (*abodhakatva*), result of use of meaningless word (*nirabhidheyatva*), use of non-syntactically related words (*anvayabhava*), results in erroneous knowledge (*viparita bodhakatva*), revealing an already known thing (*jnata-jnapakatva*), conveying that which is redundant (*aprayojanatva*), giving a result without proper intention (*anabhimata prayojanatva*), stating the impossibility (*ashakhya sadhana pratipadya*), and resorting to a terse method overlooking the easy available method (*laghupaye sati gurupayopadesha*). Madhva explains that a sentence-meaning is non-separate from word-meaning in total. The verbal authority accepted by Madhva are four, apart from the *Prasthan Traya*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Pancharatra Agama* and the various *Puranas* that are non-contradictory. Madhva gives prime importance to the statements of duality in the scriptures. He reconciles the statements of non-duality and part-whole concepts as figurative or eulogy. The Dvaita School reads the *mahavakya tattvamasi*, as ‘*atattvamasi*’ and establishes that this *mahavakya* reveals the dependent nature of the soul on God.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer
- b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit
- 1) Give an account of life and works of Madhvacharya.
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2) Examine Dvaita Epistemology with special reference to its concept of reality.

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4.3 METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES

Madhva upholds that metaphysics is determining the reality and whatever is opposed to real is unreal. The metaphysical task is to distinguish the real from the unreal. The criterion of reality accepted by Madhva is valid knowledge, relation to space and time, and practical efficiency. The application of these criteria results in a pluralistic realistic metaphysics. The metaphysical category for Dvaita is that which can be known, named and asserted.

Padartha

Dvaita recognises ten categories or *padarthas*, they are, substance (*dravya*), Quality (*guna*), Action (*karma*), Universality (*samanya*), Particularity (*visesha*), the specified (*visishita*), the whole (*amshin*), potency (*shakti*), similarity (*sadrshya*) and non-existence (*abhava*).

Dravya

Dravya is a positive category and is the independent substratum on which the eight positive entities depend. Here too, Brahman is the only independent reality (*svatantra tattva*) which is one of the substances. All the other realities are dependent on Brahman (*paratantra tattva*). *Dravya* being the substratum of other categories inheres and constitute the essence of the categories. Dvaita categorises, *dravya* into twenty of which Brahman, *Lakshmi* and *jiva* are sentient beings and others are non-sentient categories. The non-sentient substances are space, time, matter and its eight evolutes, cosmos, ignorance, sound, darkness, mental impressions and reflection. We shall briefly examine the sentient substances of Dvaita system.

Brahman is also referred to as *Ishvara*, *Vishnu*, *Narayana* etc in Dvaita system. God is said to be the supreme reality, endowed with personality, possesses infinite attributes, is the creator and controller of the universe, and is the object of worship. Dvaita denies an attributeless supreme being and hence accepts *Saguna Brahman*. The material cause of the world is other than Brahman, which is *maya*, considered to be real according to Dvaita.

Lakshmi is the second order of substance, who is dependent on Brahman but independent of everything else. She is said to be the consort of Brahman and hence eternally related to Brahman.

Jivas are sentient beings who have existence, consciousness and bliss as essential attributes that are distinguishable through the unique faculty of particularity or *visesha*. They are eternal, without a beginning or end. *Jiva* is said to be of atomic size, it is the knower, doer and reaper. Dvaita defines *jiva* as the substance which is endowed with the powers of agency and enjoyership, with a form but different from the physical body and is expressed through the word 'I' by the *sakshin*. The *jiva* is similar to Brahman in terms of possessing consciousness and bliss apart from existence, but is entirely dependent on Brahman for its existence, knowledge and action. Madhva states that *jiva* is the reflection of Brahman without any medium of reflection (*nirupadhi pratibimba*). Dvaitin establishes the reality of plurality of *jivas* and their eternal nature. The *jivas* are classified based on their nature into three known as *svarupa-traividya*. The *sattva guna* predominant *jivas* intrinsically engage in the good and are fit for release from bondage. They are classified as *mukti-yogya* like the celestials, sages and human with high degree of goodness. Some *jivas* possess predominantly the *rajas guna*, in whom there is a mixture of good and bad. They are not fit for release and are ever subject to pleasure and pain. They are known as *nitya-samsarin* or those who are entangled in the chain of births and deaths eternally. The third group of *jivas* are *tamas* predominant and they are known as *tamoyogya* who are condemned to suffering in hell since they eternally engage in evil activities. Dvaita thus accepts plurality and gradation of *jivas*.

Jagat

The universe is a reality for Dvaita since it fulfils the condition of reality. The physical world is known perceptually which is a valid means of knowledge. Dvaita School gives a special position to perception and is of the view that even scriptural statements are to be interpreted on the strength of perceptual cognition. Brahman is regarded to be the efficient cause of the world and *prakriti* or *maya* is the material cause which is completely different from Brahman. Brahman controls the matter and every change in matter is induced by Brahman, and hence Brahman is said to be both transcendental and immanent. The world of plurality is in unmanifest condition in matter and the transformation takes place by assuming distinct specialities. Thus, *prakriti* evolves from subtle to gross universe.

Cause of bondage

Ignorance of the nature of self is cause of bondage according to Dvaita. The *jiva* is ignorant about its relation to God and it is known as *svabhava-ajnana-vada*, the theory that bondage is because of the ignorance of the true nature of self as being totally dependent on Brahman, the independent reality. Ignorance has two powers, one it conceals the nature of *jiva* as dependent on God (*jiva-acchadika*) and two it conceals the nature of God as the only independent reality (*paramatma-acchadika*). Freedom is only for those *jivas* who realise this difference and puts forth effort to win the grace of God to reach His abode after the fall of the body.

4.4 MEANS TO LIBERATION

The objective of metaphysical enquiry is the attainment of freedom through the divine grace. The Dvaita Philosophy prescribes a series of means or *sadhanas* to attain the Highest end. The School considers the following as important means, one leading to another, they are, detachment (*vairagya*), devotion to God (*bhakti*), study of scriptures (*shravana*), reflection (*manana*), meditation (*nididhyasana*)

and direct realisation (*sakshatkara*). Among these, meditation is considered as the primary means to direct realisation and the others serve as secondary means. Madhva, while commenting on *Vedantasutra*, gives prime importance in gaining the grace of *guru*. The specific features of Madhva’s means to liberation are philosophic inquiry or *vichara*, practice of *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga* and *jnanayoga*, validating the importance of *bhakti* and *upasana*, the direct realisation of God as the ultimate means and the ethical value attached on realisation of the Ultimate. Madhva emphasises the need for performance of *karma* without expectation of result. This is eulogised in the *Gita* as *nishkama karma*. It leads to *bhaktiyoga*, wherein it synthesises religion, philosophy and emotional aspects, according to Madhva. Madhva considers expression of *bhakti* as a necessary element to manifest the natural and intrinsic relationship of the reflected consciousness of the *jiva* to God, which is dormant due to bondage. Madhva does not consider *bhakti* as merely an outpouring of emotions and sentiments, but it presupposes knowledge and a high degree of moral perfection. Here, detachment from worldly objects is emphasised, since for Madhva, without detachment one cannot develop devotion for the High. Madhva also considers, purity of life or *achara*, as one of the key constitutive element of *bhakti*. There are two approaches to *bhakti*, one positive and the other negative. According to Madhva, *bhakti* is negative if the approach to Lord is soaked with love describing the union as a conjugal relation. For Madhva, *bhakti* is not erotic, but a positive factor where there is a combination of the emotion and the intellect. Based on the intensity and commitment, Madhva speaks of three kinds of devotees, *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama*. This gradation is a necessary feature of Madhva’s doctrine of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* itself is divided into three stages, first is the stage prior to the mediate knowledge of God, second is the mediate knowledge and third is after direct realisation where grace of God is gained.

4.5 LIBERATION

The direct perception of God or *aparokshadarshana* alone is the proximate cause of freedom from bondage, according to Dualism. According to Madhva, divine grace plays a pivotal role in attainment of the Highest. As a realist, Madhva holds that survival of the individual *jiva* at the abode of Narayana is to be agreed because if the individuality is lost, there is no one to enjoy the state of liberation. Liberation is self-expression, self-manifestation and self-realisation for Dvaita School. In realisation, the plurality of the world is not dissolved but the false sense of separateness and its independence is removed. The liberated soul sees everything through the eyes of God. The various *jivas* that attain liberation by reaching the abode of Narayana, do not experience a uniform bliss state, Madhva maintains gradation in liberating joy also.

<p>Check Your Progress II</p> <p>Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer</p> <p> b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit</p> <p>1) Examine the metaphysical categories of Dvaita School of Vedanta.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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2) Evaluate the means to liberation according to Dvaita.

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

Madhva can be considered as a contemporary philosopher of his times who synthesised and transcended the earlier interpretations of Vedanta, namely the Advaita and Visistadvaita Schools of Thought. His sole aim was to establish the independent nature of the Lord and dependent individuals. This, according to Madhva, paves way for developing a bond with the Highest Being, namely, Narayana. He toned the flavour of *bhakti* to such an extent that it is considered as the central theme of Dvaita system. We have briefly seen the Realistic approach in the Dvaita Epistemology and a synthetic approach specifically in the theory of error. A complicated classification of metaphysical categories has been developed by Madhva based on the verbal testimony accepted in this School. We dealt with Madhva’s cause of bondage and his prescription of means to be released from bondage. The liberation state described by Madhva maintains difference and duality which is a significant factor that distinguishes it from other schools of *Vedanta*. His emphasis of winning the grace of God by means of following a strict ethical life, is seen as an immediate solution in today’s globalised materialistic world.

4.7 KEY WORDS

- Saguna Brahman* : The Highest Truth with attributes
- Nishkama karma* : an action performed without expectation of results
- Achara* : daily practices of action as prescribed in the scriptures
- Uttama* : superior
- Madhyama* : mediocre
- Adhama* : inferior

4.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Madhva was born on 1238 A.D. at Pajaka a tiny hamlet near Udupi to Madhyageha Bhatta and Vedavati. The child was named Vasudeva. Even as a child, Vasudeva exhibited special interest in spirituality. He was drawn to the path of renunciation and even as a young boy of eleven years, he chose initiation into the monastic order from Achyuta-Pragna, a reputed ascetic of the time, near Udupi. The preceptor Achyuta-Pragna renamed Vasudeva as 'Purnaprajna' at the time of his initiation into mendicant life. In a few months, he won the debate with expert scholars and he was given the *Anandatirtha*. Later, he was popularly known as Madhvacharya. At an early age, he set out on a tour of South India. He visited several places of pilgrimage like Anantasayana, Kanyakumari, Ramesvara and Srirangam. He spread the teaching of Dualism and revived the religious faith in the hearts of millions of people. He faced many oppositions and over a period of time won the hearts of many scholars. He committed himself to write a commentary on the *Prasthan Traya*. He composed many works that were recorded by his disciple Satyatirtha. Some of his works are *Pramanalakshana*, *Tattvaviveka*, *Vishnutattvanirnaya* etc. He travelled far and wide and returned to *Badri*, where he installed the deity of *Krishna* which he found on the sea-coast of Udupi. He initiated social reforms in Udupi. He established *mutts* to propagate the study of Dvaita philosophy. He took into the monastic fold Vishnutirtha and then Padmanabha Tirtha who were the torch-bearers of Madhva's teachings. He restructured the temple practices based on the *Agama* literature. At the age of 79, he took leave of his disciples and left to Badri. The followers of Madhva consider him as an incarnation of Vishnu.

- 2) The tenets of Dvaita philosophy is that Vishnu is the supreme head and that is the import of the scriptures. Every word in the scriptures primarily signifies Vishnu, according to Madhva, and secondarily indicates the object. Vishnu is the cause of bondage as well as the liberator. The world of plurality is real and is eternal. The ultimate reality of five-fold difference, namely, the difference between *jiva* and *Ishvara*, *jiva* and *jiva*, *jiva* and *jagat*, *jagat* and *jagat*, *Ishvara* and *jagat*, is accepted. Liberation is gained only by developing *bhakti* towards Vishnu. For Madhva, devotion is possible only when the seeker possess the knowledge of Vishnu, which can be gained only through instruments of valid knowledge. Therefore, study of Dvaita Epistemology is a necessity for liberation. Madhva focuses on the two meanings of the word '*pramana*', one refers to knowledge as such and the other to instruments of knowledge. He, therefore, distinguishes the two by introducing the terms, *kevalapramana* and *anupramana*. *Kevalapramana* is defined as that knowledge which does not go beyond its object and *anupramana* is that which enables for a valid cognition. *Kevalapramana* is further classified into four kinds, first of which is *Ishvara-jnana*, *Lakshmi-jnana*, *Yogi-jnana* and *ayogin-jnana*. Madhva maintains three *anupramanas* or instruments of knowledge namely, perception, inference and verbal testimony. For Dvaitin, a valid perceptual cognition arises only when both the senses and its objects are devoid of defects. Dvaita enumerates function of seven senses, which include five sense organs of knowledge, mind and *Sakshin*. The conception of mind as a sense organ and *Sakshin* are unique to Dvaita School.

Madhva being a radical realist, presents a completely objective stand with regard to the content of error, synthesising the theories of error as advocated by Buddhism and Nyaya Schools, with certain modifications. Thus, the Madhva theory of error is known as *Abhinava anyatha khyati*. Madhva accepts, inference as a distinct source of knowledge. Verbal testimony is the third means which is accepted if free from seven defects.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Madhva upholds that metaphysics is determining the reality and whatever is opposed to real is unreal. The metaphysical task is to distinguish the real from the unreal. The criterion of reality accepted by Madhva is valid knowledge, relation to space and time, and practical efficiency. The application of these criteria results in a pluralistic realistic metaphysics. The metaphysical category for Dvaita is that which can be known, named and asserted. Dvaita recognises ten categories or *padarthas*, they are, substance (*dravya*), Quality (*guna*), Action (*karma*), Universality (*samanya*), Particularity (*visesha*), the specified (*visishita*), the whole (*amshin*), potency (*shakti*), similarity (*sadrshya*) and non-existence (*abhava*). *Dravya* is a positive category and is the independent substratum on which the eight positive entities depend. Here too, Brahman is the only independent reality (*svatantra tattva*) which is one of the substances. All the other realities are dependent on Brahman (*paratantra tattva*). The material cause of world is other than Brahman that is *maya* which is also real according to Dvaita. *Lakshmi* is the second order of substance, who is dependent on Brahman but independent of everything else. *Jivas* are sentient beings who have existence, consciousness and bliss as essential attributes that are distinguishable through the unique faculty of *visesha*. They are eternal, without a beginning or end. Madhva states that *jiva* is the reflection of Brahman without any medium of reflection (*nirupadhi pratibimba*). Dvaitin establishes the reality of plurality of *jivas* and their eternal nature. The *jivas* are classified based on their nature into three known as *svarupa-traividya*. The *sattva guna* predominant *jivas* intrinsically engage in the good and are fit for release from bondage. They are classified as *mukti-yogya* like the celestials, sages and human with high degree of goodness. Some *jivas* possess predominantly the *rajas guna*, in whom there is a mixture of good and bad. They are not fit for release and are ever subject to pleasure and pain. They are known as *nitya-samsarin* or those who are entangled in the chain of births and deaths eternally. The third group of *jivas* are *tamas* predominant and they are known as *tamoyogya* who are condemned to suffering in hell since they eternally engage in evil activities. Dvaita thus accepts plurality and gradation of *jivas*. The universe is a reality for Dvaita since it fulfils the condition of reality. The physical world is known perceptually which is a valid means of knowledge. Dvaita School gives a special position to perception and is of the view that even scriptural statements are to be interpreted on the strength of perceptual cognition. Brahman is regarded to be the efficient cause of the world and *prakriti* or *maya* is the material cause which is completely different from Brahman. Brahman controls the matter and every change in matter is induced by Brahman, and hence Brahman is said to be both transcendental and immanent. The world of plurality is in unmanifest condition in matter and the transformation takes place by assuming distinct specialities. Thus, *prakriti* evolves from subtle to gross universe.

- 2) The objective of metaphysical enquiry is the attainment of freedom through the divine grace. The Dvaita Philosophy prescribes a series of means or *sadhanas* to attain the Highest end. The School considers the following as important means, one leading to another, they are, detachment (*vairagya*), devotion to God (*bhakti*), study of scriptures (*shravana*), reflection (*manana*), meditation (*nididhyasana*) and direct realisation (*sakshatkara*). Among these, meditation is considered as the primary means to direct realisation and the others serve as secondary means. Madhva, while commenting on *Vedantasutra*, gives prime importance in gaining the grace of *guru*. The specific features of Madhva's means to liberation are philosophic inquiry or *vichara*, practice of *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga* and *jnanayoga*, validating the importance of *bhakti* and *upasana*, the direct realisation of God as the ultimate means and the ethical value attached on realisation of the Ultimate. Madhva emphasises the need for performance of *karma* without expectation of result. This is eulogised in the *Gita* as *nishkama karma*. It leads to *bhaktiyoga*, wherein it synthesises religion, philosophy and emotional aspects, according to Madhva. Madhva considers expression of *bhakti* as a necessary element to manifest the natural and intrinsic relationship of the reflected consciousness of the *jiva* to God, which is dormant due to bondage. Madhva does not consider *bhakti* as merely an outpouring of emotions and sentiments, but it presupposes knowledge and a high degree of moral perfection. Here, detachment from worldly objects is emphasised, since for Madhva, without detachment one cannot develop devotion for the High. Madhva also considers, purity of life or *achara*, as one of the key constitutive elements of *bhakti*. There are two approaches to *bhakti*, one positive and the other negative. According to Madhva, *bhakti* is negative if the approach to Lord is soaked with love describing the union as a conjugal relation. For Madhva, *bhakti* is not erotic, but a positive factor where there is a combination of the emotion and the intellect. Based on the intensity and commitment, Madhva speaks of three kinds of devotees, *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama*. This gradation is a necessary feature of Madhva's doctrine of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* itself is divided into three stages, first is the stage prior to the mediate knowledge of God, second is the mediate knowledge and third is after direct realisation where grace of God is gained.

UNIT 5 SAIVISM AND VAISHNAVISM

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Origin and Development of *Saivism*
- 5.3 Origin and Development of *Vaishnavism*
- 5.4 Philosophical Schools of *Saivism*
- 5.5 Philosophers of *Vaishnavism*
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Further Readings and Reference
- 5.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you are exposed to the medieval religious philosophies of Saivism and Vaishnavism. Slightly different in character from the classical orthodox systems which concentrated much on pure, abstract and speculative philosophical discussions, Saiva and Vaishna religious traditions had a specific flavor of blending practical living with philosophical thinking. As a part of bhakti movements they emerged as much acclaimed popular philosophies. Students would be enjoying reading and learning these philosophical traditions that came to stay very strongly in the life of Indians for many centuries.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Saivism and Vaishnavism are the very popular forms of Hindu faith with large number of followers. Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are worshiped as Supreme Being respectively in these religious traditions. However, in popular Hinduism Siva is one of the Trinity and carries on the function of Annihilation, while Brahma and Vishnu are said to be the Gods of creation and sustenance respectively. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism have diversified religious beliefs and practices. Various sects of them are found all over India. They are considered to be very ancient faiths in India. There are few direct and indirect references to these gods in the Vedas too. Nevertheless Vedic understanding of Siva and Vishnu was not very much developed as to regard them as Supreme Being. As a result of Medieval bhakti movements these religious traditions have witnessed a development both in religious sphere and in philosophical sphere. Let us enumerate various aspects of these developments both in Saivite and Vaishnavite religion and philosophy.

5.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SAIVISM

Saivism is said to be the oldest and pre-historic religion in India, perhaps in the world. Saivism is commendable not because it is the oldest religion, but because it is still a living religion practiced by multitudes. It is a religion which holds Siva as the supreme Lord. Scholars try to trace the origin of Saivism to the pre-vedic period. From the excavations in Mohenjadarо-Harappa sites, Sir John

Marshall says: “Side by side with this Earth or Mother Goddess, there appears at Mohenjadarō a male god, who is recognizable at once as a prototype of the historic Siva.” He further goes on to state that Saivism has a history going back to Chalcolithic Age and the most ancient living faith in the world. There is a difference of opinions among scholars whether Saivism is Vedic or non-Vedic. Scholars like Sir John Marshall, G.U. Pope, G. Slater, Maraimalai Adigal are of the opinion that Saivism is pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic. They try to trace its origin as the indigenous Dravidian tradition, as opposed to Vedic tradition. Scholars like K.A. Nilakanta Sastri have a counter-opinion and they advocate the Vedic origin of Saivism.’

One of the minor deities of the Vedic period, Rudra is said to be associated with Siva. The qualities of Rudra, as in Rg veda, reveal that he was an atmospheric god, quite fierce, destructive and physically attractive. He is the lord of animal sacrifices and is associated with the destructive powers of nature such as the storms, lightning and forest fires. The evolution of Siva is found in Yajurveda where one hundred names are attributed to him. Among these names, *paṇḍarīpati* (God of animals), *Nilagriva* (blue-necked), and *Sitikantha* (white-throated) are notable. The omnipotent and omniscient aspects of Siva are also mentioned here. Further in Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, Siva is referred to as *Hara*, *Mahadeva*, *Īā*, *Īāna*, *Maheśvara* and *Bhagavat*. He is mentioned as ‘dweller in the mountains,’ ‘Lord of the mountains,’ ‘the thousand-eyed’ and ‘one who stands alone, steadfast.’ The Epic Mahabharata refers to one thousand and eight names of Siva and gives the mythical account of marriage of Siva with Uma, the daughter of Himalayan mountain king, Himavan. In Ramayana, Siva is associated with origin of Ganga. The celestial Ganga was made to descend from heaven by Bhagiratha and Siva trapped her in His matted locks to control her turbulence and force, before allowing her to flow on the earth. Later in puranic literatures such as Siva, Linga and Padma Puranas, Siva is described as *Ardhanarisvara*, mixture of male and female principles. Siva is also presented as a teacher of truth and as a silent yogic who meditates in peace. In this position facing south, he is known as Daksinamurti. It has been claimed that the origin of such form could be from Proto-historic period, from Indus valley civilization. Siva is also known by the names of *mahayogin*, *mahatapah*, *yati*, *taponitya* and *yogisivara*.

The epics and puranas contain a multitude of anecdotes pertaining to the annihilation of evil persons like *asuras*. Siva is thus came to be understood as God of destruction or annihilation and is known as *samharamurti*. The puranic literature contains reference to several other epithets of Siva. His description found in the Mahabharata as a God clad in animal skin (deer or tiger), with matted hair and crescent on His head, bearing serpents, carrying a trident (*trisula*) and having a bull for His ensign, becomes a distinguishing feature of Siva. The third eye of Siva on his fore-head symbolizes his wisdom. Siva’s arms hold the fire, the axe and the drum. The crematorium is said to be his dwelling place and his body is smeared with ash. Siva as a Dancing Lord is an another powerful representation. Siva has been referred to and described in great detail in Tamil literature. The reference to Siva in ancient Sangam literature onwards is a witness to his prowess and popularity in Tamil country. Siva performed sixty four divine sports which are well described in Tamil devotional literature. Various epithets, forms, deeds, assets, weapons, ornamentation, episodes, metaphors describing His persona and qualities are very much seen in the devotional literature.

As noted above, Siva was known even in the epoch of the Indus Valley civilization. A fusion came about when the Vedic *Rudra* became identified with the indigenous Siva. By the time of *Svetesvatara upanisad* Siva was absorbed in the Vedic pantheon and was given a lofty position as *mahadeva*. The earliest specific mention of Siva by a foreigner is traceable to Megasthenes. In the age of the Guptas the worship of Siva assumed a considerable importance. But a bhakti movement of saivism is only traceable to south India and reached a great height.

5.3 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF VAISHNAVISM

Sources of origin of Vaishnava religious tradition are varied. Some scholars trace it in the Vedic tradition itself. Diverse concept of Supreme Vishnu as found in various concepts of God in different vaishnava sects are relied upon in speaking of its origin. They are from the concept of *Visnu* (god with three strides) as found in the veda; the concept of *Narayana* (the cosmic and philosophic god); the concept of *Vasudeva* (the historical god); and the concept of *krisna* (the pastoral god). While some view that Vaishnavism had its origin from Visnu as mentioned in Vedas, others consider that it appeared after *bhagavatam* arose. With regard to South Indian Vaishnavism, some consider that Krishna cult in the south started with *Yadavas* in Madurai who were said to be a section of the *Vrsni* people that colonized the *pandya* country. Yet another view holds that Vishnu cult from the ancient Tamil period would have been from the *mullai* region whose god is said to be *perumal*. Vaishnavism is also known by the name *bhâgavata*, meaning the cult of *bhagavat*, the lord. It draws inspiration for its beliefs from *bhâgavata purâna*, *gita* and *nârayaniya* a section of Mahabharata. *Pâncarâtra* and *Vaikânasa âgamas* are certain religious literatures that are regarded as canonical in Vaishnavism. *Pâncarâtra* are texts of ritual worship, which deals with, the knowledge of God, the method of mental concentration, yoga, the construction of temples and the installation of images there in, *kriya*, and the observance of daily rites and the celebration of festivals, *carya*. In *vaikânasa âgamas*, detailed instructions are given for construction of temples and moulding of images.

Vishnu resides in His abode is called *vaikuntha*. There He sits enthroned beside his consort, the goddess *laksmi* or *sri*. She is considered as patroness of good fortune and temporal blessing. Five forms of Visnu are the transcendent (*para*), the grouped (*vuyha*), the incarnated (*vibhava*), the immanent (*antaryâmin*) and the idol (*arcâ*). God as the transcendent posses six attributes, namely knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility, and splendour. The grouped forms of god are four; they are *vâsudeva*, *samkarsana*, *pradyumma*, *aniruddha*. There is a distinctive function assigned to each of those *vyuhas* in cosmic creation as well as in the act of redeeming souls.

The incarnated forms are *avatâras*. Out of His own concern for the world, He descends from time to time in the form of an incarnation, *avatâra*. According to Vaishnavite tradition, there have been only nine such incarnations; there is one yet to come. God descended to earth when the world was in danger of chaos or of perishing by wickedness. The incarnations as fish, tortoise, boar, etc. are popular legends, yet have very little religious value at the present day. In these forms, God appeared in the form of an animal to save the world from floods. *Narasimha* (man-lion), and *Vamana* (the dwarf) are the incarnations in which he saved the

world from destruction by demons. *Parasurama* is His incarnation as a human hero to destroy the aggressive and arrogant warrior class and to establish the supremacy of the *Brâhmanas*. Rama and Krishna incarnations are more important ones as Vishnu is worshipped in these forms chiefly in North India. Two great Epics describe the legends in detail. The ninth form is added only in the middle ages, Buddha, which is a surprising one. Different notions are said about the purpose of this incarnation such as, to put an end to animal sacrifice, but later as to lead wicked men to deny the Vedas and thus to ensure their destruction. The final incarnation known as *kalki*, is yet to come. At the end of this dark age, Visnu is believed to descend once more to destroy the wicked and restore the age of gold, the *krta yuga*.

The idol, *arcâ* is the most concrete of God's forms. Vaishnavism regards the image of Vishnu, *arcâ*, as one of the real forms of the Lord. The belief is that God descends into the idol and makes it divinely alive, so that he may be easily accessible to his devotees. More stress is laid on service to the *arcâ* as the primary duty of the devotee.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Briefly describe origin of Saivism.

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2) Could you explain different forms of Vishnu?

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5.4 PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF SAIVISM

General Concept of God: Siva has a dark and grim side to his nature besides being beneficent. From the concept of Vedic Rudra, the nature of Siva is often described as fierce, lurking in horrible places like cremation grounds, as wearing a garland of skulls and dancing the *rudra thandava* with which he destroys the world at the end of the kalpa. Yet, Siva is also thought of as the great ascetic, wrapped in continual meditation on the slopes of mount *kailasa* in the Himalayas, his head covered with matted hair, in which the crescent moon is fixed and from which the sacred river *ganges* flows. Evidently the characteristics of an agricultural and pastoral fertility god have been merged in the Siva. He is often known as lord of beasts, *paupati*, the patron of procreation in men and animals. He is commonly worshipped in his emblem, the *linga*. Some Siva cults have developed some unpleasant features, such as animal sacrifice, psychopathic self mortification. Most of the sects consider Siva as God of love and grace. The literature of Tamil saivism describes him in very exalted terms and with strong moral emphasis. In this saivism all harsh elements of the Siva have practically disappeared. He is considered to be the compassionate father of all things living, who cares for them in his love and justice and defends them from evil. There are many forms of Saivite religious and philosophical traditions in Saivism. Let us deal about them in brief.

THE PASUPATAS OR KAPALIKAS

The *pasupatas* are the oldest saivaite tradition in the north. In them ascetic tendencies were much in evidence. Although their doctrines express closeness to doctrines of *samkhya* and *yoga* philosophy, they distinguish themselves from these schools and emphasize their Saiva monotheism. For them, Siva is absolutely independent and the instrumental cause of the world. Nature and souls are effects and are rooted in God's will. The liberated souls become eternally associated with Siva. Their yogic practice consists of a constant meditative contact with Siva in solitude. That is the reason they go frequently to burial places. Their ritual practices were often regarded as revolting. More extreme groups, called *kapalikas*, believed in an ostentatious indifference to anything worldly. They hold firmly that it is the best method of freeing oneself from *samsara*. They carried human skulls, *kapala*, and a bowl of liquor. Due to this factor they are worshipped as the skull bearer, *kapalika* or the frightful one, *bhairava*.

KASHMIRI SAIVISM

In the ninth century a monistic form of saivism developed in Kashmir. The sect is known as *trikasastra* or simply *trika Saivism*. The basic texts of the *Trika* are *Siddhatantra*, *Mâlnitantra* and the *Vamakatantra*. These texts are revelatory in character, containing certain theological rather than philosophical thoughts. It was Vasugupta who first explained systematically *trika* philosophy in his *Sivasutra*. Later, it was developed by Saivite thinkers like Somananda, Utpaladeva, Bhaskaracarya, Abhinavagupta and Ksemaraja and so on. Kashmir saivism treats the absolute under the three principles of God, soul and matter. Being influenced by advaita, kashmiri Saivism teaches that Siva is the absolute reality from which all else has emanated. For *Trika* the Absolute is both Siva and Sakti, from a theological, theistic perspective. The absolute is not only God but also Godhead. Although reality is single and one, it is understood from two

perspective. Synthesising the Saiva and Sakta aspects of the *Trika*, Abinavagupta gave a philosophy that is both non-dualistic and theistic as well. Non-dual Absolute is the sole reality, transcendent and beyond mind, intellect and speech. Siiva is the Absolute as pure consciousness in the static aspect. Through dynamic aspect Absolute manifests itself as the universe as Sakti. The manifest universe is not due to *mâyâ* or *avidyâ*, as they are considered to be the result of Divine Energy, *Sakti*. The phenomenal manifestation is not illusion but is true as it is the Absolute that appears as the universe. Hence from Absolute point of view the world is non-different from Absolute. Absolute does not undergo any kind of change, transformation or division, while manifesting itself as the universe. The process of manifestation is by reflection of Absolute's self consciousness within it, like that of reflection in a mirror. God himself appears as a limited and finite universe and individual. Kashmiri saivism attempts to give important status to matter more than advaita school of monism. It rejects outright the negative view of life in the world. Having deep roots in Tantrism, it does not believe in the renunciation of the world, but affirms the world. Bondage is that activity of God whereby He obscures His essential nature. Liberation is nothing by the revelation of essential nature of the Lord. It stresses the importance of knowledge for liberation. Liberation is the intellectual realization that the absolute and individual selves are one and the same. Goal of liberation can be attained through the enjoyment of life in the world. In *Trika* Saivism various ways to salvation are prescribed keeping in view the temperament as well as the intellectual ability of the individual. There is also scope for *bhakti* in this saivism. It rejects the yogic view that one can by effort gain liberation. Self effort plays as much role in liberation as does divine grace, *krpâ*, *Anugraha*, *prasâda*. The school believes that no form of self-effort will succeed unless grace is granted. Grace of Siva is necessary and sufficient for realization of the self as identical with Absolute. Grace is a free gift of God and is not dependent upon or the result of one's good deeds. It is an unasked and motiveless gift flowing froth freely and spontaneously from God. The individual self surrender and Grace go together, one intensifying and fortifying the other.

VIRA SAIIVISM

Vira Saivism or *Lingayatism* as a saivite religious movement gained momentum during the beginning of 12th century in the North-Western parts of Karnataka. The Lingayat cult was also based on the twenty eight Saiva Agamas. Tradition believes that it is very old and was founded by five ascetics namely, *Ekorama*, *Panditaradhya*, *Revana*, *Marula* and *Visvaradhya* who were considered to be springing from the head of Siiva. However, Sri Basavesvara was considered to be the founder. He broke from traditional Hinduism and vehemently protested against meaningless rituals by refusing to undergo the sacred thread ceremony. His followers believe he was an incarnation of *Nandi*. This tradition regards Siiva as superme and people must worship only Him. The term '*Vira-Saiva*' comes from being such stalwart Saivas. The lingayats are distinguished by a small *linga* enclosed in a metal box which they wear around the neck. They theoretically abandon all caste distinctions and grant women equal status with men. They are strict vegetarians, and they are opposed to all forms of magic and sorcery. The *linga* is not necessarily a phallic symbol for the lingayats, rather it is regarded as a concentration of fire and light which purifies the body and mind of the individual. Fire is regarded as so pure that it is not to be used for creation purposes; consequently the lingayats bury rather than burn their dead. The inner

power of Siva is in every person that enables one to view all as the manifestations of the divine.

SAIVA SIDDHANTA

Saiva Siddhanta is a system of philosophy developed in Tamil Saivites, based on the Saiva agamas, upanisads, 12 Tirumurais and 14 Meikanta Sastras. Siddhanta literally means the established conclusion. Saiva Siddhanta is claimed to be a conclusive philosophy of all those who worship Lord Siva. This philosophical system has been very popular in South India. Saiva Siddhanta is called *Agamanta*, the conclusion of the agamas. Though it is the outcome of Agamic tradition, it never rejects the Vedic tradition. The Vedas are held to be the general source. The Agamas form the special source for this system. Saiva Siddhanta is a theistic philosophy, containing both philosophy and religion. As a pluralistic realism it accepts three eternal realities. As any other philosophical system, it sought to determine the relations of God, matter and the soul. It declared that matter and souls were, like God, eternal. The Absolute through its 'grace-form' is forever engaged in the rescue of souls from the bondage of matter and the three stains (*malas*) which defile their purity. God is not identical with soul or the universe. He is not their substance but dwells in them and they in Him. Advaita is not Oneness, but inseparability. Guru or the teacher let the light of enlightenment, although Siva is the source of all enlightenment, sole embodiment of intelligence and grace.

NATURE OF GOD AND SOUL

According to Saiva Siddhanta, God in his essential nature is static, immutable and immeasurable by the limits of time and space. He transcends all empirical knowledge. He has no name and form. The following eight divine qualities are said to be God's essential characters. These are Self-dependence, Immaculate Body, Natural understanding, Omniscience, Eternally free, Infinite grace, Infinite potency, Infinite bliss. God in his essential nature is called as *Parasivam* and His inseparable energy is called *Parasakti*. God transcends description as he is beyond the word and its content. Though God transcends everything, He pervades all of them and is immanent in all beings as their indweller and inner ruler. God assumes various forms and names for the benefit of the souls, out of His boundless compassion. Siva and Sakti are inseparable like sun and its rays. The static state of the Absolute is Siva and its dynamic state is Sakti. There is no Siva without Sakti and no Sakti without Siva. The Lord's grace is personified in theistic terms as His consort Sakti. The Lord discharges the cosmic functions, namely, creation, protection, destruction, obscuration and bestowal of grace. through His Sakti. The purpose of these functions is to bestow on the souls all the earthly and celestial happiness and granting the everlasting bliss. Creation of the world is to enable the souls to engage in activities and to get experiences so that the root evil, *A?nava* would be exhausted. Protection is exercised for making the souls experience the fruits of *karma*. Destruction takes place in order to give the souls rest after experiencing the fruits. Obscuration works through *Anava* to enchant the soul to earthly pursuits and enjoyment till its power is completely emptied. The purpose of obscuration is meant for the maturation of *anava*. God bestows grace on the souls observing the ripening of *A?nava* and the spiritual progress. The Lord appears as a Guru purifying them and imparting wisdom.

God is termed as *Pati*, meaning the Lord. He is called as *Pasiupati*, the lord of the individual selves. The souls are infinite in number and from the beginning they are in contact with *a?nòavamala*. These souls came to existence by the grace of god. According to the intensity of the *malas*, the souls are divided into three groups; the *vijn?anakalas*, *pralayakalas* and *sakalas*. *Vijnanakalas* are the souls which possess only *anòavamala*. The souls with all the three *malas*, the *anòava*, *karma* and *maya* are the *sakalas*. When the soul is in contact with the physical body the organs of knowledge and action, the objective world and objects of enjoyment, it experiences worldly knowledge, pleasure and pain. It also passes through five different conditions; *jagra*, waking, *svapna*, dream, *susupti*, dreamless, *turiya*, deep sleep and *turiyatita*, beyond deep sleep. Through various births and deaths, the soul exhausts its karmas and by god's grace, it attains *moksa*, liberation. Soul is considered to be eminent, glorious and spiritual being, next only to God. Siddhanta believes in the capacity of the soul. It has certain qualities in common with God. It is intelligent being but not omniscient. It has will power and inner intuition. It only grasps the grace of God. Since it has divinity within, it can know God. Matter does not have this. Having the will power to eschew evil and pursue good, it can with the help of God, elevate itself from being *mala*-ridden to becoming a *jivanmukti*. Several schools deny the existence of soul. Some schools locate different things as locus of soul. Siddhantins refute all of them and establish the nature of soul. The value of promoting soul is the purpose of creation. In *Saiva Siddhanta*, the soul is the agent and experiencer of the actions and their fruits.

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

Pasiu means literally as one that is bound. The bond is *pasa*, the defects or impurities. They are *a?nòava*, *karma* and *maya*. *A?nòava* is basic defect in man. The spiritual darkness is the natural dirt attached to man. *Maya* and *karma*, are used only to counteract the bad influence of spiritual darkness. *Anòava* hides the consciousness of the individual self even as the verdigris hides the bright lustre of a copper plate. Nature of *A?nòava* is to prevent the soul from being active. There is a beginningless connection between *A?nòava* and the soul. It is as old as the individual self itself. The second bondage is *maya*. It is the material cause of the elements. *Maya* is the material cause of the universe, substratum of all, primordial cause, real and eternal. Nature of *maya* is subtle, imperceptible, formless and perceived. *Maya* is 'ma' and 'ya', resolution and evolution. *Maya* is in subtle form. *Tattvas* is the result of evolution of *maya* in manifested forms. By God's will they evolve for the purpose of saving the souls. It is by God's intervention. *Karma* is the third bondage. It is in the form of merits and demerits, *dharma* and *adharma*.

Saiva Siddhanta emphasises that service and worship, the paths of *cariyai* and *kriyai*, are means to liberation. Service is stressed to be the powerful means to secure the grace of God. Yoga and *jnana* are the other means. By the constant practice of the means, *sadhanas*, the soul attains a state of balanced outlook, *iruvinaiooppu*, where it is neither annoyed nor elated in adversity or prosperity. The soul in its engagement with the world through various activities exhausts its *A?nòava* and *karma*, when it reaches a state called as *malaparipagam*. In the journey of perfection, the Lord himself appears in the form of a Guru, preceptor and instructs the nature of reality. *Anugraha siakti*, grace of God is bestowed on to the soul. Thus illumined by God, the soul is released from the bondage and attains blissful nature, liberation or *mukti*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How do you understand different sects of Saivism?
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2) Explain the main features of Saiva Siddhanta?
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5.5 PHILOSOPHERS OF VAISHNAVISM

Driven by the bhakti movements of various saints and sages, Vaishnavism flourished both in religious and philosophical spheres. We have a separate unit on these movements in our study. Here we shall enumerate salient features of some prominent Vaishnava philosophers. Among them of course, on Ramanuja and Madva we have separate lessons as well. We shall quickly brief on these two philosophers and go to deal with others.

The greatest among the Vaishna philosophers was Ramanuja, a theistic philosopher. He proclaimed that the way of devotion, *bhakti-marga*, leads to a state of bliss. It is only to be gained by intense devotion to God. The worshipper fully realizes in devotion that one is a fragment of God and wholly dependent on Him. Liberation is to be attained by completely abandoning oneself into the hands of God and humbly waiting for his Grace. Absolute has a personality. Creation is an expression of the personality of God, of His primeval need to love and be loved. The individual soul is made out of God’s own essence. Yet it is never completely identical with Him. Even in the highest state of bliss the soul is permanently joined to God but is ever wholly one with Him. It retains certain degree of individual self-consciousness. If the soul loses its self-consciousness, it would cease to exist as an individual soul. It can never perish as it is a part of the divine essence and shares the eternity of the divine. Hence the liberated soul is one with Him, yet separate. Hence the philosophical system of Ramanuja is known as qualified monism.

Madhva proclaimed the doctrine of dualism. According to him, God, souls and matter are eternally distinct. Liberation is not the union with God but being drawn closer to God and dwelling for ever with God in the contemplation of His

glory. Liberation is granted entirely by God's grace. Deep devotion and strict morality on the part of soul are not that helpful. God's grace is bestowed on the righteous and on deserved.

In the twelfth century, after Ramanuja came Nimbarka. He was likely to have preceded Madhva. Nimbarka was a devotee of Krsna and he spent his time mostly in Mathura the birth place of Krsna. For him, Brahman is Gopala-Krsna accompanied by Radha. He wrote a brief commentary on *Brahmasutra*. The doctrine expounded by him is known as *Dvaitadvaita*, duality in unity. He adapted the *Bhedabheda* doctrine of Bhaskara, difference-in-non-difference. As the Upanisads have many passages which speak of the Supreme Being as one without a second and without any attributes, there is a difficulty in interpreting the number of passages that describe Him as possessed of countless attributes. The Advaitins support the theory of attributeless non-duality by bringing in doctrine of Maya and the theory of two tiers of Reality, the really real and the apparently real. *Bhedabheda* doctrine of Bhaskara presents a Brahman who has innumerable attributes but without any particular form. Brahman transforms Himself into the world of duality and change, without losing His entity as the Absolute. For Nimbarka, the three realities, Brahman, souls (*cit*) and matter (*acit*) are equally eternal. Brahman is the controller (*niyantr*), the soul is the experiencer (*bhoktr*) while the matter is the object experienced (*bhogy*). Brahman is independent being, whereas the soul and matter are dependent realities. The relation between them is as relation of natural difference and non difference (*svabhavika-bhedabheda*). The souls and matter are different from Brahman as they have dependent and distinct existence (*paratantrasattabhava*). They are non-different as they have no independent existence (*svatantrasattabhava*). The relation of identity-in-difference is understood from cause-effect relation and whole-part relation. As the pot is both different and non-different from clay, the souls and matter are related to Brahman. The souls do not lose their individuality in the state of liberation. In this state the soul only realises its essential similarity to God. Liberation is attained through work (*karma*), knowledge (*jnana*), meditation (*upasana*), self-surrender (*prapatti*) and devotion to preceptor (*gurupasatti*). Love of God is the means to liberation. Love of God is not based on just recognition of God's greatness (*aisivarya-pradhana-bhakti*) but on His infinite sweetness (*madhurya-pradhana-bhakti*). According to Nimbarka the souls can attain liberation only at the end of life and not while living in the body. Vallabha (1479-1531), born at Banaras, was another saint and philosopher who made Vaishnava bhakti movement very popular. He popularized the worship of Sri Krishna and preached that salvation could be achieved by *bhakti* towards Krishna. Among his many religious works, two books, namely *subhodini* and *siddanta rahasya* become very popular. Krsna-Gopala is the supreme Brahman in his system. The relation between Brahman and the world is one of pure non-difference (*suddhadvaita*). His system is qualified as pure non-dualism, *suddha-advaita*, different from that of Sankara's *kevaladvaita*. For him, Sankara's system is impure as it has to depend on *maya* as the principle of illusion to explain the world. The highest reality is known as Brahman in the Upanishads and as *paramatman* in the Gita. He is the Supreme Person, *purusottama*. He is *sat-cit-ananda-rasa*. He possesses all qualities. He is eternal and unchanging, yet becomes all things through his *ma?ya?siakti*. Hence, he is not different from the world and the souls as the former is created by him and the latter emanate from him. For Vallabha the Supreme Brahman appears as the *antaryamin* and *aksara Brahman*. He dwells

in the souls as *antaryamin*, limiting its bliss. The *jn?anis* meditate upon the *aksàara* to reach their goal. The soul is an aspect (*am?sia*) of Brahman and is eternal. The souls emanate from the *aksàara Brahman* as sparks from fire. The souls are cognizers, agents and experiencers. In them the *sat* and *cit* are manifest and *ananda* remains latent. There are three types of souls, *pravaha* (those who wallow in the stream of *sam?sara*), *maryada* (those who follow the vedic path), and *pusòtò* (those that worship God out of pure love with His Grace). The world is not unreal or illusory. It is non-different from the Brahman. The world is a transformation of Brahman where the element of *sat* is manifested, while the other elements of *cit* and *ananda* are latent. *Jiva*'s notion of 'I' and 'mine' is unreal which is to be destroyed by knowledge.

The most celebrated and popular vaishnava reformer of Bengal is Chaitanya who was a contemporary of Vallabha. He preached Krishna *bhakti* through *kirtans* or devotional songs. He popularized devotional songs extolling the love of Radha and Krishna. For Caitanya, Brahman as *sat-cit-ananda* is not a bare distinctionless identity. He has an infinite number of powers, *siaktis*. The main powers are *svaru?pasiakti*, *ma?yasiakti* and *ji?va-siakti*. The self-power, *svaru?pasiakti* exists in him eternally and is responsible for all his sports, *lilas*. *Ma?ya?siakti* is the Lord's power which is responsible for the material world. It is God's external power having two aspects, cosmic (*gunà-ma?ya?*) and individual (*jiva-maya*). By the cosmic power he creates the universe out of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. By individual power he makes the *jiva* forget its self-nature and taste the sweets and bitters of life. *Ji?vasiakti* forms the essence of the finite souls and stands between the other two powers. God is *rasa*, (aesthetic sentiment) as well as *rasika* (enjoyer of sentiment). His *siakti* is Radha with whom he is united in love. They are two-in-one, inseparably bound together. The *antaryamin Brahman* is the immanent aspect of God and is pervasive of the universe. The *nirvisièsà Brahman* is the lower aspect of the Supreme which is distinctionless being. For Caitanya, the path of *bhakti* is better than *jn?ana* or *yoga*. The culmination of *bhakti* is a complete self-giving, as unconditional self-surrender to God. *Kevala-bhakti* is not merely a means, it is the final human end as well, the fifth *purusòa?rtha*. It goes beyond even *moksà*. One who realizes it desires nothing but exclusive service of Krsna. The relation between the soul and the world with that of the God is *acintya-bhedabeda* (incomprehensible difference and non-difference). It is the relation between cause and effect, whole and part, possessor of power and the power. This relation is one of simultaneous difference and non-difference and is inexplicable or incomprehensible.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
 b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Illustrate *Nimbarka's* Concept of God.

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2) Write a note on *Vaishnava Philosophy of Caitanya*

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5.6 LET US SUM UP

Saivism and Vaishnavism are popular religious and philosophical traditions that have become very strong in India since the middle ages. They have a blend of practical living with philosophical thinking. Each tradition has their God, Siiva and Vishnu as their Supreme Being. As spread over all regions of India, they have various sects of religious beliefs and practices with varied philosophical concepts of God, Soul and World. Yet in all of them a common thread of philosophy of devotion and love is found. Coming to the question of origin of these two religious traditions, one can say that they are very old and ancient. Saivism is said to be the oldest living tradition, even as pre-Vedic and pre-Aryan. Some argue that the Vedic god Rudra was later developed into a Supreme Being, Siiva. Saivism developed in the course of time, in ritual practices and in philosophical concept of God, Soul and World. Prominent sects of Saivite religion are Pasupatas, Kashmiri Saivism, Vira Saivism and Saiva Siddhanta.

Similarly, Vaishnavite religious tradition too has very ancient, vague and diversified sources for its origin. Vishnu is considered to be the Supreme Being. There are five important forms of Vishnu by which he reveals himself to his devotees. There are various bhakti sects of Vaishnavism. In fact, devotional practices are found with much anthropomorphic elements and emotionalism in Vaishnavism. Philosophy of *bhakti* is well developed in many of Vaishnava sects. There are many prominent Vaishnava Saints and philosophers. Among them Ramanuja, Madva, Vallaba, Nimbarka and Caitanya are worth noting. We have elaborated to some extent the recurring themes of these thinkers. In summing up our deliberation on these two traditions we could say that they are religious philosophies with concreteness for practical human existence.

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5.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) **Origin of Saivism:** Saivism is the oldest pre-historic religion in India. For Vedic origin of Saivism, there are traces of Siva in the Vedic god, Rudra. From the primitive notion of Siva in Vedas, the later development of concept of Siva took place. There are also views that Saivism had entirely depended on non-Vedic tradition. From the proto-Siva of Indus Valley Civilisation the origin of such Saivism is traced. A fusion came about when the Vedic *Rudra* became identified with the indigenous Siva. The earliest specific mention of Siva by a foreigner is traceable to Megasthenes. In the age of the Guptas the worship of Siva assumed a considerable importance. The development and inclusion of Siva into Hindu pantheon as a powerful God is seen from the evidences available in Vedic literature, the Epic and Puranic literature and Tamil Sangam literature and devotional literature. In later development of Hinduism, Siva is considered as one of the Trinity and carries on the function of annihilation alone.

- 2) **Different Forms of Vishnu:** Five forms of Visnu are the transcendent (*para*), the grouped (*vuyha*), the incarnated (*vibhava*), the immanent (*antaryamin*) and the idol (*arca*). God as the transcendent possesses six attributes, namely knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility, and splendour. The grouped forms of God are four; they are *vasudeva*, *sam?karsòanòda*, *pradyumma*, *aniruddha*. There is a distinctive function assigned to each of those *vyuhas* in cosmic creation as well as in the act of redeeming souls. The incarnated forms are *avatarsas*. Out of His own concern for the world, God descends from time to time in the form of an incarnation, *avatara*. According to Vaishnavite tradition, there have been only nine such incarnations; there is one yet to come. As an indweller in the world and in the hearts of people, God is immanent always. The idol, *arca* is the most concrete of God's forms. Vaishnavism regards the image of Vishnu, *arca*, as one of the real forms of the Lord. The belief is that God descends into the idol and makes it divinely alive, so that he may be easily accessible to his devotees. More stress is laid on service to the *arca* as the primary duty of the devotee.

Check Your Progress II

1) Different Sects of Saivism:

The *pasupatas* are the oldest saivaite tradition in the north with rigorous ascetic practices. Siva is absolutely independent. The liberated souls become one with Him. Their yogic practice consists of constant meditation in solitude. Their ritual practices are very much above normal standard of living. They have ostentatious indifference to the world.

Kashmiri Saivism is known as *Trika*, well founded by Vasugupta. It treats the absolute under the three principles of God, soul and matter, and teaches that Siva is the absolute reality from which all else has emanated. *Trika* is both non-dualistic and theistic as well.. It does not believe in the renunciation of the world, but affirms the world. Bondage is that activity of God whereby He obscures His essential nature. It stresses the importance of knowledge for liberation. Liberation is the intellectual realization that the absolute and individual selves are one and the same. Grace of Siva is necessary and sufficient for realization of the self as identical with Absolute.

Vira Saivism or *Lingayatism* is a saivite religious movement based on Saiva Agamas. Sri Basavesvara was considered to be the founder. The term 'Vira-Saiva' comes from being such stalwart Saivas. The *lingayats* are distinguished by a small *linga* enclosed in a metal box which they wear around the neck. The *linga* is not necessarily a phallic symbol for the *lingayats*, rather it is regarded as a concentration of fire and light which purifies the body and mind of the individual. Inner power of Siva is in every person that enables one to view all as the manifestations of the divine.

Saivism of Tamil Nadu is known Saiva Siddhanta. It is built on the spiritual experience of the 63 Saiva saints known as *nayanmars* and on the systematic writing of teachers known as *acaryas*. It accepts the authority of the Vedas and is based on the nucleus of twenty eight Agamas. In addition to Vedic and Agamic literatures each sect adds also its own literature in the language of the region. Saiva Siddhanta is a realistic and pluralistic system. It postulates God, self and the bondage, *pati*, *Pasiu* and *pasam*, are three eternal realities.

- 2) **Features of Siaiva Siddhanta:** It assumes three eternal principles or fundamentals which are realities and have existed from all eternity, viz, god, which is described as independent existence, unqualified intelligence, and absolute bliss, the universe, and the souls. Souls and the world owe their existence to god, siva, who is both immanent and transcendent. The main purpose of its creation is the liberation of the beginningless souls, which are conceived as cattle, Pasu bound by the noose, pasa of impurity, mala or spiritual ignorance, which forces them to produce karman. This karman process, however is a benefit, for as soon as the soul has sufficiently ripened and along an elaborate path of salvation reached a state of purity enabling it to strive after the highest insight, and there are four paths, or means of attaining salvation along which this process can take place, viz. the well known, carya, kriya, yoga and jnana. God is willing graciously to intervene. Then he appears in the shape of a fully qualified and liberated spiritual guide, who is siva's equal, through whose words god permits himself to be realized by the individual soul.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) **Nimbarka's Concept of God:** For Nimbarka, Brahman is Gopala-Krsna accompanied by Radha. Brahman is the controller (*niyantr*), the soul is the experiencer (*bhoktr*) while the matter is the object experienced (*bhogy*). Brahman is independent being, whereas the soul and matter are dependent realities. The relation between them is as relation of natural difference and non difference (*svabhavika-bhedabheda*). The souls and matter are different from Brahman as they have dependent and distinct existence (*paratantrasattabhava*). They are non-different as they have no independent existence (*svatantrasattabhava*). As the pot is both different and non-different from clay, the souls and matter are related to Brahman. The souls do not lose their individuality in the state of liberation. In this state the soul only realises its essential similarity to God. Liberation is attained through work (*karma*), knowledge (*jnana*), meditation (*upasana*), self-surrender (*prapatti*) and devotion to preceptor (*gurupasatti*). Love of God is the means to liberation.
- 2) **Philosophy of Caitanya:** Philosophy of Caitanya is purely a religious and devotional philosophy. For him, God is *sat-cit-ananda*. God is not only *rasa*, aesthetic sentiment, but also *rasika*, enjoyer of sentiment. His *sakti* is *Radha* with whom he is united in love. *Radha* and *Krsna* are two-in-one, inseparably bound together. In his immanent aspect God is *antaryamin* and is pervasive of the universe. Divine Lord sports himself with his playmates, who are all parts of him. Better than *jnana* or yoga is the path of *bhakti*. The culmination of *bhakti* is a complete self giving, as unconditional self surrender to god. Keveala or suddha *bhakti* is not merely a means; it is the final human end as well, the fifth purusartha. It goes beyond even moksa. One who realizes it desires nothing but exclusive service of krsna. Philosophy of Caitanya is technically called *acintya-bhedabheda*, that explains the philosophical debate of finding the relationship between God and the soul. The relation between the souls and the world on the one hand, and god on the other is *acintya bhedabheda*, incomprehensible difference and non difference. Their relation is one of simultaneous difference and non difference. This is of course, inexplicable or incomprehensible.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE UPANISHADS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit:

- you will become familiar with the general tenor of the *Upanishads*
- you are expected to recognize the differences between the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, not only in content but also in spirit
- you should be able to notice various philosophical and primitive scientific issues, which have found place in the *Upanishads*
- you should be in a position to understand that philosophy is not merely an intellectual exercise in India, but also a guiding factor in human life

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Upanishads* mark the concluding parts of the *Vedic* literature. In two different senses the *Upanishads* are called ‘*Vedanta*’. The first statement is one meaning. *Vedanta* also means the culmination of the *Vedic* thought. In our study of Unit, we learnt that the *Vedic* thought began with the age of *Mantras* and in the course of evolution it passed through two more stages; the *Brahmanas* and the *Aranyakas*. While the text and the spirit of the *Brahmanas* did not really make any advance over the age of *Mantras*, the subsequent stage, i.e., the *Aranyakas* applied corrective measure. Introspection and self-correction paved the way for the evolution of the *Upanishads*. It is said that the *Vedic* thought matured and reached its culmination in the *Upanishads*. This is the second sense in which the *Upanishads* are regarded as the ‘end of the *Vedas*’.

1.2 THE *BRAHMANAS* VS. THE *UPANISHADS* – CLASH OF CLASSES?

An interesting aspect of the *Vedic* tradition is that the divergence in thought between these two stages reflects in a very subtle manner some kind of clash, if not clash, at least difference of opinion among Brahmins and *Kshatriyas*. The *Brahmin* class subscribed to the tradition of the *Brahmanas*, whereas the *Kshatriyas* denounced excessive emphasis laid on yagas which the *Brahmanas* specified. The origin of the *Upanishads*, therefore, is traced to the *Kshatriya* class. The opposition of the *Upanishads* to the *Brahmanas* is perceived as contempt, which the *Kshatriyas* had developed for the *Brahminical* tradition, if not *Brahmins*. It is not unlikely that they had contempt for Brahmins also. There are some *suktas* in the *Rigveda*, which refer to the ill-treatment meted out the *Brahmin* class by the ruling class. If this is true, then, the intellectual growth received impetus, not from the so-called intellectual class, but from the ruling class.

1.3 MEANING OF THE *UPANISHADS*

The commentators are not unanimous on this issue. When confronted with the question, what this term means, they came out with answers, mostly unacceptable. There are also instances in which some key statements found in the *Upanishads* were themselves regarded as the *Upanishads*. If this is true, then the rest of the text reduces to mere exposition of a single statement. So the best alternative is to start with etymological meaning. However, it should be remembered that mere etymological meaning will not take us too far. *Upa* (near), *ni* (devotion) and *sat* (sit), have together formed the word the *Upanishad*. When rearranged it only means to sit near (the Guru) with devotion. Here the word ‘near’ has an inner meaning, which is important. It shows that the *Upanishadic* teaching is not open to all. Only those who deserve shall receive the training. At any rate, in any system of education the capability of student is primary which decides what is to be taught. It may be noted that Pythagoras, in ancient Greece, strictly adhered to this restriction.

1.4 THE FORM

The *Upanishads* differ from the *Vedic* literature in terms of form also. A good number of the *Upanishads* are in the form of dialogue – dialogue between teacher and student. Dialogue indicates discussion. Proper study of philosophy is facilitated only by discussion. This particular style is noticeable in ancient philosophical literature. Further, its absence in still older literature indicates the absence of philosophy. It is not wholly incorrect to say that philosophy proper has its beginning in the *Upanishads*. Though the style suits philosophy, language does not. Since philosophy demands clarity of thought and expression, figurative expression and allegory are not generally welcome. But they characterize philosophical writings at early stage not only in India, but also in ancient Greece.

1.5 HETEROGENEITY IN THOUGHT

It is better to clarify this aspect in the beginning itself. When there are thirteen major *Upanishads*, which required a few centuries to acquire the present form, it

is meaningless to expect all of them to present identical thought. Identity in thought may be possible anywhere, but surely not in philosophy. The view that all the *Upanishads* are identical in their teaching was held by those who believed that the *Upanishads* also belong to the class of ‘*Shruti*’. In spite of their conviction, they could not succeed in providing a satisfactory account of what the *Upanishads* teach. Common sense suggests that the world does not need so many works propagating an identical thesis.

1.6 FAREWELL TO THE VEDIC GODS

As long as gods were entertained, there was need to propitiate them. Rituals became imperative. Reflection and introspection changed priorities. Comfort in life became secondary. Acquisition of knowledge became primary. The thinkers, who initiated the *Upanishadic* thought were not happy with ordinary knowledge. They argued that knowledge obtained from the *Vedas* was only lower knowledge (*aparaa vidyaa*), which is impermanent. What they sought was permanent knowledge (*paraa vidyaa*). Prolonged performance of *yagas* must have dented all hopes of seeking knowledge. With gods, rituals also made an unceremonious exit. To make qualitative distinction the *Upanishads* were called *Jnana Kanda* in contrast to the *Brahmanas*, which were termed *Karma Kanda*. This distinction could be achieved because of internal critical attitude.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain briefly the meaning of the Upanishad

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2) What is the difference between *Para* and *Apara Vidya*?

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1.7 UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The *Upanishads* began with the hypothesis that there should be only one fundamental principle. The word ‘hypothesis’ must be noticed. Belief is not the word to be used. The monistic element in the *Nasadiya sukta* must have served as a springboard for the *Upanishads*. Monism was established in two stages.

First they achieved the unity behind diversity in external world and unity in diverse forms of life followed by identification of Brahman and Atman. In the second stage, *Brahman* and *Atman* were equated which resulted in monism.

In this connection, there are two questions, which have to be answered. An insight into the philosophy of *Upanishads* enables us to answer. The questions are as follows; (a). How did *Upanishads* establish the identity of *Brahman* and *Atman*? (b) Where was the need for them to establish such identity? Both questions are relevant. Let us take up the second question first. Philosophers did not seek to establish monism for the sake of monism. Any approach is rational, when there are satisfactory grounds to follow the same, not otherwise. The *Upanishadic* philosophers did have reasons to search for unity.

Indeed, as mentioned above, the pursuit of unity is not unique to philosophy. Any attempt to explain or discover the unifying force is inexplicably common to all intellectual endeavors. We can easily notice that every science has looked for the 'origin' of *explicandum* or *explicanda* as the case may be. For example, we have discussion on the 'origin of universe', 'origin of life', but we have not heard of 'origins.' It is true that there are several theories, which purport to explain. But all of them cannot be true though all of them can be false. Indeed, not even two of them can be true. Against this backdrop, we should try to understand the attempts of the *Upanishadic* philosophers. Further, it should be noted that correctness or wrongness of their answers is not important, but the endeavor is.

The *Upanishads* have synthesized or integrated the problems of two sciences; astrophysics and life sciences. Astrophysics aims at discovering the source of the universe apart from its age. When the *Upanishads* posited the idea of *Brahman*, they were only prelude to what astrophysics is doing today. Similarly, when the *Upanishads* traced the origin of life to the idea of *Atman*, they were, again, prelude to life sciences.

This explanation constitutes a part of the solution to the second question. Let us now consider the second part. It is better to begin the explanation with problem. It is what is known as the problem of self-identity. It is a well-known fact that any living being is born, grows and decays. The process is continuous. So far, there is no riddle. What, if the change is total? If change is just continuous, or total, then it will not give rise to any serious philosophic problem. But if it is total and continuous simultaneously, then we face a very difficult situation. What is it exactly that changes? If we suppose that what changes is 'A', then even before we began to answer the question it would have become something different and it is no longer 'A'. So, we do not know what changes, nor can we convincingly say 'nothing'. In that case, it is tantamount to saying that there is no change at all, which is equally absurd. Then, how do the *Upanishads* wriggle out of this issue?

The *Upanishads* admitted that the change is continuous, but denied that it is total. If we consider the physical framework, viz., body, it changes continuously. If the 'individual' is associated with the body, then it is impossible to account for the identity amidst all changes. Common sense suggests that an individual, say, Einstein, remains Einstein only. He does not become somebody else despite all changes that took place. It shows that there is an element in man which remains unchanged from the moment of fertilization of ovum to the moment of death.

An unchanging element should be, obviously, distinct from the ever-changing component, viz., body. Always an individual is recognized and identified in virtue of this unchanging element. Therefore it alone constitutes the essence of man. This is what the *Upanishads* called 'Atman' or self. If life is common to all living beings, then, the essence of living beings must remain the same. So, there can be only one *Atman*.

One issue remains to be resolved. Between change and permanence, what deserves to be accepted? Instead, if we ask between the two, which is true or real, then the question becomes too complicated. Accepting something is a matter of convention, which cannot be easily challenged. Knowingly or unknowingly, the *Upanishads* chose the latter which became the root cause of all philosophical controversies. The reasons for this choice are psychological. Not only among Aryans, but also among ancient Greeks, the desire to achieve eternity or permanence is more than explicit. Hence not only *Atman* is one, but also it is permanent according to the *Upanishads*.

This is what precisely the *Upanishads* tried to establish. The visible world has a source and it is called *Brahman*. Now diverse objects, both living and non-living are traced two primal sources. *Brahman* and *Atman*. Any scientist, perhaps, would have derived satisfaction with this dichotomy but not the *Upanishadic* philosophers. In this sense, they were several steps ahead of science. They went on to identify *Atman* with *Brahman*. This will take us to the first question raised earlier.

While answering the manner in which the identity was established M. Hiriyanna argues that the analysis of *Atman* and *Brahman* are subjective and objective respectively. His argument is not tenable. Only systems stipulate that method adopted should match content. In other words, same method may not apply to two sciences, if they are well developed and systematized. Obviously, the *Upanishads* are not regarded as systems of philosophy. One more reason can be advanced against Hiriyanna's argument. If the source of man and the universe is the same, it is unlikely that according to the *Upanishads*, we need one method to trace the source of human and another method to trace the origin of the Universe. If human is not distinct from the universe, then why do we need two different methods? There are *mantras* in the *rigveda*, which trace the origin of human to the universe. We can consider two examples 'chakshossuryo ajaayata' (from the sun is born the eye) is one *mantra*, which can be compared with another; 'suryam gacchatu' (let your eyes reside in the sun) a *mantra* from *aurdhva daihika*. Similarly, compare this *mantra* from *purusha sukata*, 'praanaat vayurajaayata' (from *vayu* is born the life or breath) with another *mantra* from *aurdhva daihika sukta*, 'vaatamaatmaadyanacha gacchha' (Let your breath reside in *vayu*). It is interesting to note that both these *sukta* are found in the tenth *Mandala* of the *Rigveda*. Therefore it is difficult to conclude that the *Upanishadic* philosophers, consciously, pursued these two methods. For the same reasons, it is difficult to accept that *Brahman* is objective and uncertain whereas *Atman* is subjective and certain.

Let us start with the result achieved. Monism in the *Upanishads* consists in establishing the identity of *Brahman* and *Atman*. Secondly, it is idealistic. The second characterization is based upon the nature of *Brahman*. The *Taittiriopanishad* characterizes *Brahman* as *satyam*, *jnanam*, *anantam*. Since

Brahman and *Atman* are identical, whatever explanations apply to *Brahman* also applies to *Atman*, *Satyam* stands for certainty, *jnanam* to its spiritual nature and *anantam* to its infinite character. What is infinite is necessarily 'Absolute'.

This particular identity is of critical importance in the *Upanishads*. This is explicated in two ways; one affirmative and another negative. These two types developed into two important theories called *Brahma-Parinama Vāda* and *Braham Vivarta Vāda*, which played critical role in subsequent philosophy. Hiriyanna calls first type cosmic or *saprapancha* and second type acosmic or *misrapancha*. Affirmative interpretation of *Brahman-Atman* identify can be traced to the *Chandogya Upanishad*. This theory developed by *Uddaalaka*, the main speaker, is called *Shandilya Vidya* whereas the second theory is developed by *Yajnyavalkya*, which is found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Let us consider *Uddaalaka's* theory. He begins with the statement, '*sarvam khalvidam brahma tajjalaaniti*' (all is *brahman* because it is *tajjalan*). *Tajjalan* is made up of the following words; *tat* (that), *ja* (generate), *li* (dissolve) *an* (sustain). '*Ja*' also means 'cause & birth'. After defining *Brahman* in this manner, *Uddaalaka* proceeds to establish the concept of "*Brahman-Atman*" as a single principle as against *Brahman & Atman* as different principles. The *Atman*, inside the heart, is much smaller than corn, but externally it includes and transcends even deep space and hence infinite. Theoretically, this is not something impossible, nor is it absurd. This is something analogous to a giant star becoming a dwarf. If we are ready to take one more step forward we can assert in this way. If all laws of nature, which hold good at the level of microphysics also hold good at the level of macrophysics, then, the nature of subatomic particles must be the same as the nature of celestial bodies. It should be noted that *Atman-Brahman* identity corresponds exactly to the equation between subatomic world and celestial world. What separates, then, *Atman* from *Brahman*? The Physical frame, which separates *Atman* from *Brahman*, is only artificial. So separation also is artificial. What is internal is called '*Antaryami*'. So *Atman* is *antaryami*. Another *Mantra* of *Shandilya Vidya* describes *Brahman* as '*Manomaya* and *Akashatma*'. *Manomaya* means that *Brahman* is spiritual; A *akashatma* means that it has the nature of *Ākāśa*. *Ākāśa* is formless. Therefore *Brahman* is formless. 'Immaterial' is understood as that which is spiritual and formless. If we should borrow from the *Vedic* language, then we can as well say that the Lord of this universe is immaterial principle. The same *Mantra* describes this principle as '*sarvakarma*'. This description comes very close to '*vishwakarma*' of monotheism. However, the difference is that monotheism has theistic element, whereas '*sarvakarma*' is free from it.

Philosophically speaking, *Uddaalaka* is in an advantageous position when he regards *Brahman* as spiritual. There is absolutely nothing wrong in admitting that life and spirit are co-extensive and co-terminus. It means that life and *Brahman* are identical because both are spiritual. If we accept this equation, then it is easy to explain the origin of the Universe. On the other hand, if *Brahman* is regarded as material then it becomes very difficult to trace the origin of the universe. How can life originate from non life? So we succeeded in avoiding this problem. Aristotle also faced a similar situation in order to explain the origin of motion he had to admit that there is 'unmoved mover'. Perhaps it is very difficult, if not impossible, to discover a satisfactory solution to the question; how can, what did not exist earlier, come into existence? Instead, if we assume

that all pervasive life is eternal, this problem does not arise. Even if we admit that matter is different from *Brahman*, we do not have to face the question; how can matter come out of life? We should notice some sort of asymmetry between life and matter. Though we can challenge the origin of life from matter, we do not challenge the origin of matter from life. For example, hair and nail do not possess life, though they are parts of living beings. If a nonliving entity like the one mentioned above grows out of a living entity, then according to Hiriyanna, perhaps *Tajjalan* implies cosmic view (all inclusive). *Brahman* is not only 'sarvakarma', but also is 'sarvam idam abhyattaha' (encompasses all). The last statement should be taken in literal sense. If *Brahman* encompasses 'all' then there is nothing exterior to it. If the word 'philosopher' is taken in a highly restricted sense, then *Uddaalaka* can be regarded as the first philosopher.

Before we learn more about *Uddaalaka*'s philosophy, we should consider *Yajnyavalkya*'s argument. His arguments constitute the main theme of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. In the eighth *Brahman* of *Munikanda*, *Gargi* confronts *Yajnyavalkya* with a series of questions. The purpose of the debate is to know the origin of the universe. While answering the first question, *Yajnyavalkya* states that *Ākāśa* is the source of the universe and to the next question he says that *Ākāśa* is covered by *Akshara*. *Yajnyavalkya* takes next step to describe *Akshara* in negative terms. While in Indian philosophy, in general, *Ākāśa* is regarded as one of the five elements, in this particular context; *Akshara* can be regarded as equivalent to space. Here positive description is conspicuous in its absence. Such description is possible only when attributes are admitted. *Akshara* is regarded not only as permanent but also as 'nirguna'. In this respect, *Akshara* comes very close to 'Noumenon', which, in western tradition, means that which is beyond reason and experience. *Akshara* can be said to be the precursor to the *Advaita*'s 'nirguna brahman' concept. When attributes are discovered in anything or when we describe anything with the help of attributes, we impose restrictions on it. Hence what is infinite becomes finite. The ninth *Mantra* in this *Brahmana* asserts that order or 'Rita', a concept of the *Rig Veda* is possible because of the legislation, which is due to *Akshara*. But it does not establish *Atman* – *Brahman* identity. What the ninth *Mantra* further says also is irrelevant. But for us the eleventh *Mantra* is important. In this *Mantra* *Akshara* is regarded as 'SAAKSHI'. *Saakshi* is described by *Yajnyavalkya* in this manner, 'na anyat ataha asti shrotru, ...mantru, ...vijnatru (no other listener, no other spirit, which recollects or meditates and no other extraordinary knower). *Shrotru*, *Mantru* and *Vijnatru* correspond to *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasaua* respectively. *Yajnyavalkya* does not assert that *saakshi* is so. But he only denies that there is nothing else. It only shows that at a higher-level *saakshi* or *Akshara* remains elusive to thought. Let us juxtapose this particular *Mantra* with the seventh *Brahmana*. It asserts that *Atman* is 'antaryami', an extraordinary knower. Except *Atman*, there is none which is 'drishta (one who sees) listener meditates and so on. If we integrate these two *Mantras*, then we will have positive and negative analysis, which completes description. This particular synthesis alone can be regarded as proof of *Brahman* – *Atman* equation. If *Atman* is *antaryami*, then, we can invent a word and claim that *Brahman* is *bahiryami*

However, this *antaryami-bahiryami* distinction itself is unwarranted, if the physical frame, i.e., body is not real or if the body is regarded on par with external world because the roots of external world are traced to *Brahman*. Then, there is no hurdle to equate *Atman* with *Brahman*.

The theories of *Uddaalaka* and *Yajnyavalkya* are of special importance for different reasons. While *Yajnyavalkya*'s theory is the precursor to the *Advaita*, *Uddaalaka*'s theory is a precursor to science. Hence his theory can be regarded as pre-science. In the second place, from these two expositions, two theories of causation developed. They are for all philosophical purposes the earliest theories of causation in Indian philosophy. *Brahma-Vivarta Vāda* and *Brahma – Parinama Vāda* developed respectively from the above-mentioned theories. A brief description of these theories is desirable.

Brahma-Vivarta Vāda regards *Brahman* as the cause, which is real and the world as the effect, which is merely an appearance. It means that *Brahman* does not really change but appears to change. Since apart from *Brahman* nothing else is real and the external world would not exist but for *Brahman*, the *Upanishads* regard *Brahman* as absolute. Such an argument demolishes any distinction between *Brahman* and the rest since 'the rest' is simply dissolved. It is in this sense that the notion of *Maya* enters Indian philosophy, which played key role in the *Advaita*. A theory of this type leads to a strange conclusion that while the cause is real, the effect is not real.

On the contrary, *Brahma-Parinama Vāda* regards the universe as real. Accordingly, cause i.e., *Brahman* and *Atman*, and effect is also real. This is possible because *Brahman* evolves into the physical world, which subsequently, reabsorbed into it. When *Brahman* is evolved into the physical world, it does not really go out of *Brahman*. It means that the evolution, which takes place, is wholly internal. While *Brahma-Vivarta Vāda* signifies that *Brahman* is transcendental, *Brahma-Parinama Vāda* signifies that *Brahman* is immanent in the world. No matter which theory is accepted, the world is not independent of *Brahman*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the two stages in which monism was established?

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2) How did Upanishads synthesize the problems of astrophysics and life-sciences?

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1.8 THE IRRELEVANCE OF BHAKTI

Designating *Brahman* as absolute is of strategic importance. Whatever fragile relation was there between philosophy and religion persisted till the *Upanishads* gained foothold. The advent of the 'Absolute' notion of *Brahman* became fatal to this relation. Any religion, as a matter of fact, remains influential if *bhakti* or devotion is recognized as a principal factor. And *bhakti* has a respectable place when *bhakta* (devotee) is distinct from God. When Absolute takes over the position of God, this distinction between God and devotee vanishes in which case, *bhakti* also collapses. Obviously, such a collapse renders religion wholly irrelevant.

Secondly, there are *Upanishads* like *Chandogya*, which deal with *upaasana* of various non-physical or non-empirical principles like '*Sama*'. The word *upaasana* can be taken to mean roughly, sustained pursuit of a spiritual goal unaffected by any factor. These goals are not merely non-empirical but should be regarded as metaphysical because they go beyond logic also. But the advocates of philosophy-religious nexus sidestep an important component, viz, *bhakti*. Devotion is invariably a bond, which relates the devotee only to personal god. Nowhere in the *Upanishads* is there any reference, whether direct or indirect, to personal god. When personal god has no place, devotion also loses its place. In the *Upanishads*, even *Brahmanic* rituals do not find any respectable place. Therefore even in that particular sense, the gods are not propitiated in the *Upanishads*. Mere reference to *Karma* or liturgy is not a significant ground because the *Upanishads* are called '*Jñāna Kānda*' contrary to the *Brahmanas*, which are called *Karma Kanda*. The relative position of *Karma* and *Jñāna* are important. The *Upanishads* cannot be treated on par with the *Brahmanas* because here *Karma* plays only second fiddle. Moreover, if we consider the spirit of the *Upanishads*, then we can safely conclude that the term '*Upanishad*' applies only to certain prominent, but very few, formula-type statements, like, '*ayamaatma brahma*' while the rest of the text has to be treated as appendices. They were appended by different people at different times for reasons best known to themselves. So the choice is between religion and philosophy or religion and spirituality. Surely, these two pairs are not mutually compatible, but philosophy and spirituality are compatible.

It is not that religion and philosophy are poles apart in Indian tradition. Theism did make inroads into philosophy. We have the *Bhagavadgita*, which glorifies theistic cult. Much later, two other schools, viz., the *Vishishtadvaita* and the *Dvaita* pursued the same trend. The point is that it is impossible to insulate philosophy from any such intrusion. This is a natural process. But it is an inaccurate judgment to generalize the characteristics, which are exceptions. However, this distinction between philosophy and religion offers little consolation. When we are interested in pure philosophy spirituality also takes back seat. Hence, need arises to distinguish in the *Upanishadic* thoughts which are philosophical from thoughts which are spiritual. Against this background, we should try to understand Hiriyanna's remarks, previously mentioned, with reference to the composition of the *Upanishads*.

We should also notice what is common to religion and spirituality. No matter which one is infused into philosophy, it neither gains nor loses by such intrusion.

Gain is possible, though, only marginally. Surely, there can be no loss. What is required is that we should be in a position to demarcate philosophy from what is not philosophy.

1.9 THE ANALYSIS OF MIND

There is a very clear difference between Indian and Western traditions. In the West, mind was regarded as independent of body but identical with soul. But in Indian tradition, mind or *manas* and soul or *Atman* are distinct, but mind and body are not distinct. This difference between *atman* and *manas* is very clear in the *Brihadaranyaka* and the *Taittiriya* '*ayamaatmaa vangmayo manomayaha,...*' means that *manas* is a state of *Atman*. *Prana* is another state of *Atman*. The same *Mantra* says what *manas* is; it is through *manas* that seeing and listening are possible; *manas* is desire, will and so on. Thinking, feeling and willing which are regarded as functions of mind are more or less endorsed by the *Brihadaranyaka*

Manas is one state of *Atma*. A state of *Atma* is called '*Kosha*'. If mind is one state, then body (*anna*) must be another state of *Atma*. The *Taittiriya* says '*purushaha annarasa mayaha*' (*Purusha* is the body-state). In this case, *purusha* is the off-short of *Atman*. If *purusha* is the body-state then, how can *Atman* also be in this state? The word off-short can be understood in this way. *Atman* is 'transformed' into *Purusha* or appears to have been transformed. This transformation is the 'birth' of *purusha*. When this change occurs, *Annamaya kosha* becomes the outer sheath of *Atman*. *Prana*, *manas*, *vijnana* and *Ananda* constitute the integrated sheaths. While the first *kosha* is at rudimentary level, the last one is at the highest level. In empirical sense, *Atman* is in bondage in all these five states. *Atman* should transcend the last state also to attain *moksha*. *Moksha* only means freedom from bondage. This is what is known as '*jivanmukti*' or liberation during this lifespan. This is what is called '*upashantoyam atma*'. Obviously; this is something outside pure philosophy. But then it is only through an intensive training in philosophy that *moksha* can be attained; not otherwise. But the point is that this is the view of Indian philosophers only. It cannot be regarded as a characteristic of philosophy in general.

Now, we shall turn to mind. The states of mind, very interestingly, correlate with the states of matter which physics recognizes today. We shall juxtapose them in the following manner.

Matter	Mind
1) Solid	Jagrut (Waking)
2) Liquid	Swapna (Dream)
3) Gas	Deep sleep (Sushupti)
4) Plasma	Turiya (Transcendental)

It should be noted that in both the cases (mind and matter) as we pass from the first stage to the last one, we realise that we pass from 'concrete' to 'abstract'. The last stages of both matter and mind defy description. With regard to mind it is sufficient to distinguish between first three states. In the first state both senses and motor organs are active. In the second state, sense organs become inactive and in the third both sense and motor organs become inactive. What is at the initial stage can be understood easily, but not what is at the final stage, because

the last stage is abstract. Same explanation holds good for matter also. The last states of both mind and matter fall outside the scope of common man. *Turiya* is inexplicable. It only has to be experienced. And the experience of *Turiya* is possible only for a select few. Consequently, it is something, which cannot be challenged.

1.10 MOKSHA AND KNOWLEDGE OR REALIZATION

Earlier (5.1.6) a reference was made to lower knowledge and higher knowledge. The main theme of the *Upanishads* is that only higher knowledge is the means to attain *moksha*. It is not just *avidya*, which is shunned but even *apara vidya* (knowledge of *Vedas*) is useless. The critically important point to be noted is that even *Vedanta* does not regard the *Vedas* as final authority. To say that the *Vedic* thought culminated in *Vedanta* is to assert that *Vedanta* is purged of the shortcomings of The *Vedas*. Contrary to widespread belief, it was neither *Buddhism* nor *Jainism*, which initially denounced the *Vedic* authority. The *Upanishads* initiated the process. It shows that critical appraisal is internal to philosophy, whether Indian or Western. This is an issue, which has been hardly recognized and admitted. So it has to be highlighted.

Let us return to *moksha*. The *Upanishads* recognize *videha mukti* (*moksha* after death) also. But *Jivan Mukti* deserves preferential treatment. To put *Upanishadic* approach to *moksha* in a nutshell, the *Upanishads* admit that ignorance is the source of evil. In this respect both Socrates and the *Buddha* concur with the *Upanishads*. What is *avidya*? According to the *Upanishads* (in this respect, of course, the *Upanishads* stand alone), seeing difference, where there is none, is *avidya*. It is also the cause for *ahamkara*. When *avidya* is dispelled *ahamkara* also vanishes. There are three stages to eliminate evil. *Shravana* (listen), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyasana* (dhyana). So it is obvious that learning is only through ‘*Guru*’. Not everyone may attain *moksha*. But there is no harm in regarding *moksha* as an ideal.

In addition to *jñâna*, *vairagya* has to be cultivated. *Vairagya* in real sense means detachment or disinterestedness, which is not the same as indifference. It is possible to cultivate *vairagya* when generosity is cultivated. *Brahma jñâna* and unselfishness are equated. Generosity and unselfishness are meaningless if man is not a part of society. It means that *Jivanmukti* does not denounce social life.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Substantiate the statement that ‘critical appraisal is internal to philosophy.’

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2) What is *avidya* according to the Upanishads?

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1.11 LET US SUM UP

The *Upanishads* are called *Vedanta* because they constitute the culmination of the *Vedic* thought. The *Upanishads* developed in opposition to the spirit of the *Brahmanas*. The *Upanishads* provided the required breakthrough by introducing genuine philosophical concepts, viz., *Brahman* and *Atman* and discarding the *Vedic* gods. In addition, the *Upanishads* pursued the search for unitary principle behind the visible universe. The identification process was carried out by *Uddaalaka* in affirmative method whereas *Yajnyavalkya* did it through negation. *Uddaalaka*'s contribution is significant because he introduced to philosophy, for the first time, elements of science. Mind and soul are distinguished whereas mind and body are associated. Knowledge is of two types; higher and lower. Higher knowledge and *vairagya* together are precondition to the attainment of *moksha*.

1.12 KEY WORDS

Monism and Idealism : Monism is one doctrine of reality. According to this doctrine, what is ultimately real is 'one'. By saying so, it denies the reality of 'many'. Idealism is another philosophical doctrine, which is concerned with the nature of reality. This doctrine means that reality, which is one, is not physical or matter, but mind-dependent or mental.

Brahman and Atman : The significance of the *Upanishads* lies in introducing these terms. Etymologically, the term *Brahman* means to 'grow' or 'burst forth'. It is derived from the word '*Brih*'. Another meaning assigned to this term is prayer. *Atman* is another term, which was used as complementary to *Brahman* initially. It meant originally 'breath'. Later it came to mean the 'essence of human.'

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1.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) *Upa* (near), *ni* (devotion) and *sat* (sit), have together formed the word the *Upanishad*. When rearranged it only means to sit near (the Guru) with devotion. Here the word 'near' has an inner meaning, which is important. It shows that the *Upanishadic* teaching is not open to all. Only those who deserve shall receive the training.
- 2) The thinkers, who initiated the *Upanishadic* thought were not happy with ordinary knowledge. They argued that knowledge obtained from the *Vedas* was only lower knowledge (*aparaa vidyaa*), which is impermanent. What they sought was permanent knowledge (*paraa vidyaa*).

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Monism was established in two stages. First they achieved the unity behind diversity in external world and unity in diverse forms of life followed by identification of Brahman and Atman. In the second stage, *Brahman* and *Atman* were equated which resulted in monism.
- 2) The *Upanishads* have synthesized or integrated the problems of two sciences; astrophysics and life sciences. Astrophysics aims at discovering the source of the universe apart from its age. When the *Upanishads* posited the idea of *Brahman*, they were only prelude to what astrophysics is doing today. Similarly, when the *Upanishads* traced the origin of life to the idea of *Atman*, they were, again, prelude to life sciences.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

- 1) To say that the *Vedic* thought culminated in *Vedanta* is to assert that *Vedanta* is purged of the shortcomings of the *Vedas*. Contrary to widespread belief, it was neither *Buddhism* nor *Jainism*, which initially denounced the *Vedic* authority. The *Upanishads* initiated the process. It shows that critical appraisal is internal to philosophy, whether Indian or Western.
- 2) According to the *Upanishads* (in this respect, of course, the *Upanishads* stand alone), seeing difference, where there is none, is *avidya*. It is also the cause for *ahamkara*. When *avidya* is dispelled *ahamkara* also vanishes.

UNIT 2 BRIHADARANYAKA

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 An Overview
- 2.3 Reflection on a Core Issue
- 2.4 Philosophical Response
- 2.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Further Readings and References
- 2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you are expected to know the essential content of the Upanishad such as:

- significance of the Asvamedha sacrifice and the creation of the Universe
- the meaning of ‘prana’ (life)
- the importance of vital force
- the theme of ‘Righteousness’
- the magnanimity of Supreme Brahman
- the direction of seeking the Truth and Supreme Brahman

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Brihadaranyaka is literally translated as ‘Great-forest-teaching’. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is generally recognized to be the most important of the Upanishads. It forms the part of Shatapatha Brahmana. It illustrates an all-embracing, absolute, self-luminous and blissful reality of Brahman recognized as Atman. The Upanishad is widely known for its philosophical statements. The whole composition of the Upanishad is in prose except for a few verses here and there. There are six chapters. They are further divided into forty seven sections called Brahmanas and they are further divided into paragraphs called Kandikas. There are three major sections or Kandas consisting of – Madhu Kanda which explains the teaching of basic identity of the individual and the universal self. Muni Kanda or Yajnyavalkya Kanda has philosophical teachings and Khila Kanda narrates certain modes of worship and meditation. The aim of the Upanishad is to teach about self and thereby to show the identity of Atman and Brahman.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW

The first chapter deals with Asvamedha sacrifice and creation. It is known as Madhu Kanda. The Upanishad starts with the description of a sacrificial horse as

a cosmic form. Each part of the horse is described as a divine thing in nature. And the horse has to be meditated as Prajapati or Hiranyagarbha. The Upanishad says that meditating on the horse is equivalent to the horse sacrifice

There is a fable to illustrate the magnanimity of the vital force. Gods requested different organs to sing hymns for them. Once demons learnt about it they put evil to the organs and it was only Vital force who could chant for the gods, rescued the organs from evil, fought against the death and brought victory to the gods. As an appreciation, gods offered food for vital force and all the organs agreed to be the part of the vital force.

The creator created the Universe and food. There are seven types of food created. One is the basic food for sustenance. Two foods for gods mean of making libation to the gods. One is for animals – milk. The other three he retained for himself.

Second to fourth chapters are Muni Kanda or Yajnyavalkya Kanda. The second chapter starts with a discussion between Ajathasathru and Gange. Ajathasathru preaches about self and explains three state of mind – waking, dream and deep sleep.

Whereas Yajnyavalkya teaches, answers and speaks; about Self with his wife, scholars at the emperor Janaka's court and to the emperor Janaka himself. Yajnyavalkya tells his wife Maitreyi about the knowledge of self. He says that the real self is heard, reflected on and meditated upon and thus realized. Everyone even the gods, being and all reject the man who knows them to be different from the self, because all these are only the self. As various kinds of smoke proceed from the fire kindled with damp fuel, even so the Veda etc. have come out of the Supreme Self.

The Emperor Janaka performed a sacrifice and wished to give a thousand cows to a learned Vedic scholar. Yajnyavalkya instructs his pupil to lead the cows to his place. And when challenged by the other scholars he answered all their questions satisfactorily.

One of the scholars asked him - what is immediate and direct, to the inner self. He replied that it is that which works in the body – 'prana, apana, vyana and udana'. He further explained that it is a sun, hearer, thinker and knower in every body and it cannot be seen directly, heard, thought or known like a sense object. He said more by explaining that it does have physical or psychological emotion. The one who understands this knowledge, he too will be just such. Self knowledge he said once attained will not be lost. When asked if he is aware of 'inner control' and the sutra connect to it. He confirmed that he knows and said that the sutra is 'vayu', and explained about the inner control how it is in all being but not acknowledged. It does not have a separate body but it is his presence that makes the body and the organs. He gave in detail the strength of the inner control,

“adrsto drasta, asrutah srota, amato manta, avijnato vijnataesa ta atmantaryamy amrtah ato'nyad artam,” (3. 8.1)

He said, “The inner self that control is yourself and immortal.”

For the question which is above heaven, below the earth, which is heaven and earth both in between and which was, is and will be. Without hesitation he replies that it is 'unmanifested ether'.

Once he was examined by the scholars, Yajnyavalkya questioned the scholars in return. He asks them: if the tree is pulled out, it springs again, from what root does man sprout after he is cut down by death. None was able to answer his question. He gave an explanation to his question by saying that Brahman, the absolute, intelligence and bliss, is the root from which a dead man is re – born.

Yajnyavalkya guides the emperor Janaka in understanding the Supreme Brahman. He tells him that recognizing the vital force, one has to understand Brahman at - the gross, subtle and causal body respectively in the state of waking, dream and deep sleep called as 'Vaisvanra, Taijasa and Prajna'. He clarifies further.

Fifth and sixth chapters form the third and the last division, Khila Kanda of the Upanishad. Khila means supplement. In the beginning of fifth chapter, invocation is repeated. Adi Sankara's commentary says, "Brahman, which is the theme of all the Upanishads, is describing once more in this Mantra to introduce what follows; for certain aids, to be presently mentioned, viz, 'OM'. Self – restraint, charity and compassion, have to be enjoined as steps to the knowledge of Brahman – aids that, occurring in this supplementary portion, form part of all meditation."

Some explain the Mantra thus "From the infinite causes the infinite effect is manifested. The manifested effect is also infinite or real at the present moment even in its dualistic form.

The fifth chapter introduces some of the auxiliary meditation which do not clash with rites, confer to prosperity and lead one gradually to liberation.

"tad etad evaisa daivi vag anuvadati stanayitnuh – da, da, da, iti damyata, data, dayadhvam iti. Tad etad trayam sikset, daman, danam, dayam iti." (5. 2. 3)

There is a parable about how gods, men and demons understood one sound, 'da'. Prajapati taught gods, men and demons. At the conclusion of the education before leaving the Guru they asked for a final guidance from the Guru. Prajapati said, 'da' and asked them how they understood the sound. Gods said 'da' was 'control,' men said it was, 'charity', and demon said that it was, 'merciful'. At that moment they heard the rumbling of the clouds sounding, da, da, da and repeated – control, give and have compassion.

The third section has, the deeper and significance of the Prajapati - heart, (intellect) – hr da ya. If one meditate on these three syllable, one obtains results corresponding to the meaning of 'hr' receive presents, 'da' receive power, 'ya' have heavenly world. If the meditation on the three syllables is so powerful, how much more must be that on intellect itself?

Whole of fifth chapter deals with meditation and the result of such meditation. There are meditations on – Satya, Solar being, Mind, Lightning, Vedas as cow, and Vaisvanara. The main objective of these meditations is that one must have definite goal. It is meaningless and will not yield result if one meditate on different things at a time. Meditation means concentration on one thing, deeply, regularly and with determination. The main aim of the meditation is to get enlightenment.

There is an elaborate discussion how one should be able to face illness, death and funeral. The Upanishad says that one should look at it as a penance.

The qualities, virtues and importance of the vital force are explained at different sections, with explanations and with fables. Here is a meditation on the vital force in different names. As vital force is the chief of all the organs, it has to be meditated as, “Uktha,” as it raises the universe. The one, who meditate on vital force as ‘Uktha’, will have a son who is a knower of vital force. And the one who meditates will achieve union with and abode in the same world as ‘Uktha’ then the vital force has to be meditated as “yajus,” for all the beings are joined with one another. Next one is to meditate on vital force as, ‘saman’, because it brings in the union, for him who knows it. The last one is to meditate on vital force as, ‘ksattra’, as vital force protects the wounds. The one who knows the significance of the word will not need any other protection and achieve the world of ‘ksattra’.

The meaning and the power of Gayatri chandas, meter is dealt in detail. Gayatri is the chief of the poetic meters. Only Gayatri chandas has the power to protect those who chant Gayatri Mantra. It is a prayer to ‘Savit’, the Sun. Each pada is of eight syllables. The first pada’s eight syllables are equivalent to – ‘bhumi’, the earth, ‘antariksa, the sky, ‘dyaus’, heaven. The second pada’s eight syllables are same as ‘Rcah’, ‘Yajumsi’, and ‘Samani’, the three treasures of knowledge, the three Vedas. The third pada’s eight syllables are similar to ‘prana, apana, and udana’. And the fourth pada is ‘supermundane,’ ‘paro’raja’. It is a visible foot, because the solar being is visualized and he alone shines the entire universe. The results of knowing the whole of Gayatri are incalculable.

The sixth chapter opens with an allegory. The organs had a dispute among themselves and each claimed that it was ancient and very important. Finally they decided to take their dispute to Prajapati. He said that, the organ which makes the body wrenched while leaving would be the superior than the others. So, to test each one’s superiority, organs one by one left the body for a year and came back after that period to find out how the body was in its absence. The explanation given is very practical and beautiful. The answer carries scientific meaning. To give an example, the organs said that that they lived like ‘idiots’ in the absence of mind. But still the body functioned. The last one to leave was vital force. Once it started leaving, all the organs started losing their strength. Immediately, they pleaded that the vital force should not leave the body.

“ma bhagavah utkramih, na vai saksyamas tvad rte jivitum iti, tasyo me balim kurutcti, tatheti.” (6. 1. 13)

They agreed that the vital force is the superior and offered food to the vital force.

There is an interesting, incidence about S’vetaketu, son of Goutama and grandson of Aruna. S’vetakeru after completing his education went to the court of the king Prajanya. The king asked him five questions and S’vetaketu failed to answer all the questions. Even then the king invited him to stay. Bur S’vetaketu left the court in shame and went to his father who was also his Guru and narrated what happened in the court. His father expressed his genuine ignorance about subject talked about in the king’s court. But at the same time, decided that he had to go to the king and learn what he did not know. He invited his son to join him. But S’vetaketu refused. The father went and requested the king to take him as a student and learnt about the doctrine of five fires - of heaven, the rain gods, the world, man and woman. The king further instructed that the householder and the hermit if they meditate on these fires then they would go to Brahma loka.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

3) What does the cosmic horse symbolize?

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4) Explain briefly Yajnavalkya’s difference between one God and many gods

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2.3 REFLECTION ON A CORE ISSUE

The first chapter is ritualistic. At the Vedic time, Ashvamedha sacrifice was considered to be the greatest sacrifice and one who performed it would attain Brahmhaloka, the highest heaven.

In the Upanishad, the description of the sacrificing horse is symbolic. It is looked as a cosmic horse and the description brings out the psychological element that is present in the counterparts of the body of the horse, and the body of the universe out side. Adi Sankara observes that meditating on such horse will derive the result of the horse sacrifice even without performing the sacrifice.

The universe was created as creator was all alone and he wanted a company. He created male and female from his desire. At the same time he did not lose his entity. When the male and female took different species form, all creatures were born. The creator created Gods. Then he himself entered all his creation in a microcosm level as vital force. Vital force guided the different organs in the body. The description of creation is both spiritual in nature and has poetic beauty.

Perhaps, the core-statement of the Upanishad is thefollowing:

“asatoma sadgamaya, tamasoma jyotir gamaya, mrtyorma amrtam gamaya.” (1. 3. 28)

The Upanishad says that repetition of Mantra is being given for one who knows the vital force. The one who understands the meaning of the Mantra, if one chants the Mantra the result is elevation to divinity.

The literal meaning of the Mantra is –

“From unreality lead me to reality,
From darkness lead me to light,
From death lead me to immortality.”

The first two lines have deeper meaning. ‘From unreality (evil) lead me to reality (good),’ evil is death, if our thoughts and actions are evil, they will degrade us. So lead me away from that type of death. Lead me to good, good is immortality, if one follows righteousness, it will lead to divinity and that is immortality. The second line, ‘from darkness lead me to light,’ darkness is death, all ignorance, being of the nature of a veil, is darkness and it is death. And light is immortality opposite of darkness and divine in nature. Knowledge brings luminous, is called light, an imperishable nature. The first Mantra says help me to identify myself with the means of realization, instead of with things that are not such; while the second line says, help me to move away, for it is a form of ignorance – and attain identity with the result. The third Mantra ‘from death lead me to immortality,’ gives combined meaning of the first two and it does not have any inner meaning. If the chanter knows that the vital force is identified with the Mantra, then he will be able to obtain a boon that he desires for.

2.4 PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSE

The Upanishad speaks of a universal Brahman and an individual soul, Atman, and at times asserts the identity of both. Brahman is the ultimate, both transcendent and immanent, the absolute infinite existence, the sum total of all that is, was or shall be. The Upanishad brings out the mystic nature and intense philosophy, Brahman is not described as the God in a monotheistic sense but He is be all and end all, who resides within us.

The Upanishad opens with a description of a symbolic placement of the parts of the individual in the cosmic quarters, with the spiritual purpose of an individual meditation, where the subject mingles with the object. The individual mentioned here is the horse of the Ashvamedha Sacrifice, which is the object of sacred use and while, commonly considered, it is one of the items in the Asvamedha Yajna, and it becomes a part of an external act; in the Upanishad. It becomes a piece of contemplation to transfer every object to universal subject. It transforms the ritual technique into an inward contemplation of the spirit.

Adi Sankara and others have mentioned that the horse mentioned here is Prajapati or a creator of the cosmos. It is not just an animal in the sacrifice. That is how one needs to look at it. So, there is a descent from casual condition to subtle condition and from subtle to gross and from gross to the variegated forms of manifestation in this world. So also the horse to be contemplated in the various aspects of its functions, and the functions are mentioned here in respect of the ritual of the Asvamedha Sacrifice.

The creation of the Universe has symbolic description. How things came, and what is that we see with our eyes. What is the connection between the effect and cause? What is our connection with the Universal Being? What is the relationship between the individual and the Absolute? All these are discussed in detail.

The Upanishad narrates how the ignorance can be removed by understanding the vital force - the self. It is difficult to say when or how the ignorance comes. But the knowledge, determination to know the truth, a seeker can understand self. Once it is realized that the self is the supreme Brahman, knower will become Brahman, there will be no distinction between the two.

“The coordination of the functions of the body, mind and vital force points to the existence of an extra corporeal being for whose sake all those exist. This is what

we know as the individual self. But its nature is transcendent. Stripped of the limiting adjuncts that are superimposed by nescience, the individual self is identical with the Supreme self.

Only material things, which effects and have dimensions, come within the range of the organs, but not the Self. Similarly it is beyond all other characteristics of limited objects such as decay, relationship, bondage, pain and death.”(Ramakrishna Math publication)

Adi Sankara says even though each caste is assigned with specific rituals, meditation guides to enlightenment. In the Upanishad it is repeatedly stressed on the importance of meditation and suggests that it is equivalent to rituals and brings intelligence and understanding of self. And who ignore this and deport this world with ignorance will sustain great lose, lose of enlightenment.

But to understand an Absolute with inner intelligence is challenging to the seeker. He has to understand a Brahman who is neither coarse nor fine, neither short nor long, neither redness nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness. He is neither ether nor air. He is without a physical form. He cannot be measured, and devoid of interior or exterior. But every thing exists because of him. He is the seer, thinker, hearer, knower of all, “*etasmimb nu khalv aksara, gargi, akasa otas ca protas ca.*” Brahman is reflected in the eternal and the infinite power of knowledge, He is unconditional and a pure essence of creation.

The realization of such Brahman as supreme self will lead to ‘Truth’. This truth does not come in slow pace, but like flash of a lightning. The enlightenment is instantaneous. “Not this, not this, suggest that while there is a realm which consists of the duality of subject and object , which is perceived by the intelligence to be coextensive and reciprocally necessary, there is absolute unity from which all dualities proceed, which is itself above duality. Many systems of thought distinguish between the absolutely transcendent Godhead, ‘who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto’ and the creator God. In this famous passage of ‘na iti na iti,’ the Upanishad speaks to us of the absolute transcendent non – empirical Godhead.” (S. Radhakrishnan)

The Upanishad takes the readers to examine the depth of perfection in them and see the purity within to realize Brahman. The means to this end is ‘Knowledge Truth, Righteousness, and understanding the magnanimity of the Heart.’ If one is determined and honest in seeking the enlightenment, one is sure to experience the power of Supreme Brahman within.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
 b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the difference between ritual performance and meditation?

2) Write a brief note on the significance of 'OM.'

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

The Upanishad starts with Asvamedha sacrifice; the horse is compared to the cosmic Being and says that each part of the horse has to be meditated upon in relation to cosmic being. Starting from the horse it takes to the creation of the Universe. There was nothing whatsoever here in the beginning. From nothing every thing started, the creation of a beautiful universe. And the magnanimity of life is 'Prana.' Self, Atman is superior to every thing else.

The Upanishad covers rituals, enthralling description of the creation of universe. It has interesting fables to make the reader to understand the importance of Vital force. The creation of 'Righteousness; is fascinating and beautiful. It brings out how Righteousness is the answer to seek the 'Truth' and Brahman. There are intellectual discourses to emphasize the magnanimity of Supreme Brahman. Literal and inner meaning of the sound 'da' word 'food,' and Mantra, astoma sadgamaya...' are narrated in highly significant way.

The Upanishad successfully narrates that the meditation is as powerful as the ritual. Various meditations are given and the results of such meditations are stressed. There is a lengthy discussion on 'Gayathi' meter.

The Upanishad is successful in helping the reader to work in the direction of seeking the Truth and Supreme Brahman.

2.6 KEY WORDS

Asvamedha : The Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice) was one of the most important royal rituals of Vedic religion, described in detail in the Yajurveda (YV TS 7.1-5, YV VSM 22-25 and the pertaining commentary in the Shatapatha Brahmana ŚBM 13.1-5). The Rigveda does have descriptions of horse sacrifice, notably in hymns RV 1.162-163 (which are themselves known as *asvamedha*), but does not allude to the full ritual according to the Yajurveda.

Hiranyagarbha : *Hiranyagarbha* (literally the golden fetus or golden womb) is the source of the creation of the Universe or the manifested cosmos in Indian philosophy. It finds mention in one hymn of the Rigveda (RV 10.121), known as the *Hiranyagarbha sukta* and presents an

important glimpse of the emerging monism, or even monotheism, in the later Vedic period, along with the Nasadiya sukta suggesting a single creator deity predating all other gods (verse 8: *yó devé?v ádhi devá éka ásit*, Griffith: “He is the God of gods, and none beside him.”), in the hymn identified as Prajapati. The Upanishads calls it the Soul of the Universe or Brahman, and elaborates that Hiranyagarbha floated around in emptiness and the darkness of the non-existence for about a year, and then broke into two halves which formed the Swarga and the Prithvi.

- Macrocosm and Microcosm** : Macrocosm/microcosm is a Greek compound of “Macro” and “Micro”, which are Greek respectively for “large” and “small,” and the word kósmos means “order” as well as “world” or “ordered world”.
- Prajapati** : In Hinduism, Prajapati (Sanskrit *praja-pati* means “Lord of creatures”) is a Hindu deity presiding over procreation, and protector of life. He appears as a creator deity or supreme god above the other Vedic deities in RV 10.121.10 and in Brahmana literature. Vedic commentators also identify him with the creator referred to in the Nasadiya Sukta.

2.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Radhakrishnan, S. *Principal Upanishads*. New York: Harper Collins, 1963.

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Walker, Benjamin. *The Hindu World*. New York: Frederick Praeger, 1978.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) The main tenor of the Upanishad is ritualism and it is characteristic of the Brahmanas in the Vedas. The description of the cosmic horse is entirely symbolic, and highly complicated to understand, as the purpose of the Upanishad is to bring out the psychological element that is present in the comparison that is made between physical counterparts of the body of the horse, and the body of the universe.
- 2) Yajnavalkya’s answers help in immediate and direct understanding of Brahman. There are references to the contraction and expansions of different gods who are ruled by it. Yajnavalkya explains that gods are nothing but manifestations of the one God – Hiranyagarbha, who is the cosmic aspect of Vital force. He expands into countless gods and contracts into one entity.

Answering about the number of gods, Yajnyavalkya says vasus are fire, the earth, air, the sky, the sun, heaven, the moon and stars. Rudras are ten organs in man and the mind. Adithyas are twelve months. Thunder is Indra and sacrifice is Prajapati. Thunder-cloud is the thunderbolt. Sacrifice is animal. The six gods are the fire, the earth, the air, the sky, the sun and heaven. Three gods are three worlds. The two gods are matter and vital force and one and half a god is air that blows.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Meditation is one of the best ways to attain enlightenment. Meditation is effective and important like rituals. The difference between rituals and meditation is the following: for a ritual performance, one has to find a place for performing the ritual, determine auspicious time, get chanters, follow rigid discipline, and prepare offerings to the gods; whereas meditation does not need most of these things. One has only to meditate for a specific duration of time, and the time suitable to one's own convenience. Of course, self-discipline is necessary. One has to meditate every day with determination and dedication. The end result of both is the same, realizing Brahman.
- 2) Usually meditation needs a word. 'OM' is the powerful word for the same. Meditative repetition of the same is the best way of realizing Brahman. Even though Brahman and Atman are the names of the same reality, it is said that OM is its most intimate appellation. Therefore, it is the best means to realize Brahman. It is both a symbol and a name.

UNIT 3 CHANDOGYA

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- 3.8 The Bonds of *Sat*
- 3.9 *Atman* and the Source of the Universe, i.e., *Brahman*
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will get to know in detail:

- the philosophical significance of the *Chandogyopanishad*
- a lot of discussion on liturgical aspects
- the establishing of the identity of *Brahman* and *Atman*
- the *Upanishad* as the earliest work on cosmology and the evolution of life.
- this work as the first ever attempt to introduce quantitative analysis in addition to qualitative analysis
- the nature of *Atman* in several ways as presented by this *Upanishad*.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This *Upanishad* belongs to *Taandya Brahmana* of the *Samaveda*. It consists of eight chapters with each chapter divided into several sections. First five chapters, excluding fourteenth section of the third chapter which includes *Shandilya Vidya* are devoted to the superiority and effects of various forms of '*Upasanas*' and '*Homas*'. *Upasanas* and *Homas* constitute rituals. The prominence enjoyed by these forms of rituals clearly indicate that (sections numbering around one hundred and ten are devoted to the description of these forms) the chapters and sections dealing with this aspect must have been appended to the *Upanishad*. Even though the *Upanishad* denounced all forms of rituals, they did not lose the ground instantaneously. The statement '*ahimsan sarvani bhutani anyatra teerthebhyaha*' means that elsewhere non-violence is a virtue, but during the performance of

Yaga animal sacrifice is mandatory. Even in those sections, which are devoted to glorifying rituals, there is no homogeneity because these sections were appended to the Chandogya at different times. So the *Upanishad* which is available to us in the present form contains extraneous matter in a large quantity. This *Upanishad* not only describes in detail various rituals, it also contains glorification of various aspects of the *Samaveda*. For example, the very beginning of the *Upanishad* is marked by hailing the importance of ‘*Udgeetha*’ (this *Veda* is designed mainly to uphold the importance of *Udgeetha*) which stretches to several sections followed by the descriptions of *Prastava*, *Pratihara*, *Stobha* and so on. Salutations to ‘*Soma*’ occupy nearly the whole of second chapter. While there is diversity in this part of the *Upanishad*, the *Upanishad* proper is restricted to a discussion of *Atman* and *Brahman*. One possible reason for glorifying the non philosophical part is the emphasis upon the concept of *moksha*. In those days people might have thought that ‘*brahma sakshatkara*’ was possible only through rituals in conjunction with knowledge.

Like any other *Upanishad*, the *Chandogya* is also full of anecdotes of several fictitious persons. Even philosophical part of the text is not free from this approach. Hence in our study of the *Upanishad*, we must first segregate philosophy from myth. In order to achieve this, we have to concentrate only on some sections of the last three chapters of the *Upanishad* and as an exception in this case, we shall consider the twelfth section of third chapter of the *Upanishad*.

3.2 THE WAY OF KNOWING BRAHMAN

The particular section with which we are dealing presently is known as *gayatri brahma*. This section regards *vak* or speech as *Gayatri* and it is through *Gayatri* that *Brahman* can be understood. *Brahma* or *Brahman* is what manifests in speech. This may be the reason for regarding speech as the means of knowing *Brahman*. For our purpose, ‘*Gayatri*’ can be taken to mean a form of prayer. According to *Yajnavalkya*’s interpretation, there cannot be any positive description of *Brahman*. Since it is very difficult to understand *Brahman* with only negative interpretation, *Chandogya* chooses an alternative method. There is no need to know what prayer consists of. The *Mantras* numbering seventh, eighth and ninth describe *Brahman* as *Akasha*. In this case *Akasha* can be taken to mean something like ether or space or some eternal substance, and all pervasive. These three mantras first identify *Brahman* with *Akasha* which is external to *purusha* and far superior to prayer. It further says that the very same *Akasha* is also internal to *Purusha*. It points to two possibilities. One is that the very distinction of *Akasha* into external or internal itself is without foundation. The second possibility is that the internal self, which is *Atman*, is the essence of individual whereas the external *Akasha* is the essence of external world. When what is internal is identified with what is external, the individual self is identified with the external world. Hereby the equation of *Brahman* and *Atman* is established. This is the main theme of the *Upanishads*.

In *Akasha*, which is internal to man there are actually two divisions, *Akasha* inside the body and *Akasha* inside the heart. It means that there are three strata of *Akasha*. According to one interpretation, these three strata of *Akasha* correspond to the first three states of mind, *jagrut* (waking state), *swapna* (dream state) and *sushupti* (deep sleep). While the first two states cause misery, the last one does

not. *Akasha* is associated with these states and also the experience. This particular interpretation poses some difficulties. Waking state does not bring only miserable experience. It also brings other experiences. There is no reason why they should be omitted. Secondly, if *Akasha* has three '*prakaras*' or three kinds, then, we have to discern qualitative difference in which case it is difficult to accept that there is one *Akasha* only.

The seventh *Mantra* of the thirteenth section in the same chapter identifies *Brahma* with light. Again, light is both external and internal to *Purusha* just as *Akasha* is. The most unusual aspect of this mantra is that this light has to be experienced to know. It involves three sense organs, eyes, ears and skin. Obviously, the *Upanishad* must have meant that these three organs are not physical but some sort of metaphysical counterparts.

3.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TAJJALANJTI

In the previous unit (5.1.7), a detailed description of *tajjalan*, a part of *Shandilya Vidya*, was given. This section deals with a particular concept of *Brahman* known as *saguna brahma* which forms a part of *Tajjalan*. It means that there are attributes of *Brahman* and only through these attributes is it possible to explain *Brahman*. *Tajjalan* states that the world emerged from and much later it is re-absorbed by *Brahman*. So the physical world has both beginning and end. But *Brahman*, which is the source of the universe, has neither beginning nor end. If, for the time being, we ignore the idealistic theory which pervades the *Upanishads*, the description of *Brahman* correlates to the indestructibility of matter. Matter is not only indestructible, it cannot be created either. Physics speaks about the origin of universe but not matter. Suppose we hypothesize the origin of matter. It results in posing, say, pre-matter. If matter has its origin in pre-matter, then we can further hypothesize the origin of pre-matter in pre-pre-matter. Obviously, it results in infinite regress. So we have to stop at some stage while we are doing science. The position of philosophy is no different from that of science. The selection of point from which we start may or may not be random. While the *Nasadiya Sukta* was skeptical of the origin of the universe, the *Upanishads* were definite. While going back in time, the *Upanishads* stopped at *Brahman*. The termination of search for the primitive source is not a random termination because the *Upanishads* maintain, not just believe that it is the source. The manner in which '*Brahman*' is analyzed testifies to this comment.

The next *Mantra* mentions the attributes of *Brahman*. It is '*manomaya*' (spiritual), *prana sharira* (consciousness), *bhaarupa* (*bhaa* = light), *satyasankalpa* (positive purpose), *aakashatma* (form of *akasha*), *sarvakarma* (maker of all), *sarvakama* (flawless desire), *sarvagandha* (substratum of all pleasant odour), *sarvam idam abhyatta* (enveloping all), *avaakya* (silent), *anaadara* (unenthusiastic). It must be noted that all attributes in one way or another have human touch. *Brahman* is *manomaya* because it is through *Brahman* that *manana* or reflection of what one has listened is possible. By considering *Brahman* as conscious, the *Upanishad* could bring in other attributes. In addition to consciousness, *Brahman* is regarded as light. Hence *Brahman* stands for knowledge and it is *para*, the highest. Since *Brahman* is characterized by positive purpose the results also are positive. Since it is maker of all the positive results are the results of its actions. In spite of so

many attributes with human touch *Brahman* remained *niraakara* (formless) because it is *Aakashatma*. This one attribute is enough to accept the view that *Brahman* is impersonal. To say that *Brahman* is speechless is to admit that silence is supreme. It is not possible to discern the basis for regarding silence as supreme. But one *Upanishad*, which is now extinct says, '*upashantoyam atma*' (for this statement, the available source is *Shankara's* commentary on *Vedanta Sutra*. It is remarkable that there is an equivalent Austrian adage which proclaims 'speech is silver; silence is golden.' Equally, it is paradoxical that *Brahman* should be characterized by silence while one of the supposed root meanings of *Brahman* itself is 'prayer that manifests itself in audible speech.' But, then, paradox is a paradox because there is no solution to it. '*Unenthusiastic*' should be taken to mean, again, calm and composed. What is important is 'enveloping all'. It ought to be, if this particular attribute is quantified. In terms of quality cause and effect should remain the same. Similarly, in the case of quantity, cause should at least equal the effect because from 'less' it is impossible to derive 'more'. Second law of thermodynamics states that heat flows from higher end to lower end but not the other way round. If this law is extended to this particular attribute, then *Brahman* ought to be more than the universe. This attribute derives support from the *Purusha sukta* also. It states, '*sabhoomim vishwatovrittvaa ashtatishtasya dashaangulam*' which means 'after enveloping the universe the *Purusha* outstripped it by ten inches. This *Upanishad* replaced *Purusha* by *Brahman* and the result remains the same.

If we consider the etymological meaning of *Brahman*, which is equivalent to 'burst forth', then *Brahman* can be regarded as energy. The universe is pervaded by two types of energy; stellar energy and nuclear energy. While stellar energy is external, in one sense, in the same sense nuclear energy is internal. But the nature of energy remained the same. Now *Brahman* can be understood as equivalent to nuclear energy when it is regarded as subatomic and equivalent to stellar energy when it is regarded as transcending deep space. In the former state *Brahman* has to be understood as *Atman*. If *Brahman* is regarded as packet of energy, then the universe, before it was evolved, can be said to be latent in *Brahman*; a position very much similar to the Sankhya. It is potential and when it evolves it becomes actual. If the third *Mantra* is understood in this spirit, then it becomes much simpler.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What do you mean by *Akasha*?

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2) Could you mention some of the attributes of Brahman found in this Upanishad?

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3.4 THE POTENTIAL NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE

The nineteenth section of third chapter begins with the *Mantra* according to which, *Aditya is Brahman*. These two are equated because the sun is the principal means of knowing the external world. This *Mantra* says that in the beginning there was *asat* (nonbeing); and then it became *sat*. Later we will come to know that the *Upanishad* refutes this particular possibility. Evidently, the *Upanishad* could not have made a statement earlier only to deny it later. Therefore the first statement of the *Mantra* stands in need of clarification. One possible interpretation is that *Asat* is interpreted as *avyakrit* (not expressed), i.e., potential. When the universe is in unexpressed state, it is in its potential form. At that stage, *naama roopa bheda* (name and form distinction) does not exist. In this restricted sense only it can be regarded as *asat*. Then it became ‘*sat*’, i.e., name and form distinction appeared. The *Upanishad* is very clear about the origin of *Sat*. On this crucial point the *Upanishad* says so; ‘*asat eva idam agra aseet tat sat aseet tat samabhavat tat aandam*’ (this was earlier *asat*; that was *Sat*, it was born, it was egg). Evidently, the interpretation given above is not much helpful. The interpretation assumes that ‘*Asat*’ means the absence of name and form differentiation whereas ‘*Sat*’ means the presence of the same. However, what we can understand from the text is altogether different. Accordingly, the existence of *Sat* preceded differentiation in terms of name and form. The first and second *Mantras* very clearly state that after the *Sat* came into existence it became egg. Its gestation period was one year. Later, it hatched from which *Prithivi* (silver), *Dyu* (gold), etc. originated. The third *Mantra* suggests that *Aditya* originated from the egg. The formation of these bodies designates the differentiation in terms of name and form as far as the interpretation is concerned. Thus, this particular interpretation puts the cart in front of the horse.

Apart from *Asat-Sat* controversy, the origin of *Aditya* also poses a problem. If we suppose that *Aditya is Brahman*, how can it evolve from egg when egg is a successor to *Asat*? If, in accordance with, *Brahma-Parinama Vada*, cause and effect are treated as real, and effect is only a manifestation of cause, then, it means that *Brahman* came out of itself. This is not a comfortable position. Evidently, it has to be treated as *Asat* only because there was no differentiation. But it is doubtful whether any *Upanishad* would ever concede this suggestion.

3.5 RETURN TO THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN

In the seventh chapter, fresh attempts are made to describe *Brahman*. After having said that *Brahman* is *avak* (silent), now the *Upanishad* designates it as *vag brahma* (*vak + brahma = vagbrahma*). Before doing so, *Brahman* was called *naama brahma*. Not only *Brahman* is *Naama*, all *Vedas* are names. However, it is so only at inferior level. In a phased manner, the *Upanishad* provides the supposed perfect description. *Vak* is said to be superior to name. The question is how can *Vak* be a better description of *Brahman* when, earlier, it was said that *Brahman* is silent. It is true that the description ‘*Upashantoyam Atma*’ applies to self. But there is no difference between *Brahman* and *Atman*. So, whatever predicates are applicable to *Atman*, are at the same time applicable to *Brahman* and vice versa. So, it shows that in its attempt to describe *Saguna Brahman*, the *Upanishad* is contradicting itself. Failure of affirmative description, perhaps, is not inherent in the concept. But it may be due to contributions from several thinkers at different times.

Mano Brahma is said to be superior to *Vagbrahma*. But it is not clear why the *Upanishad* has identified *Manas* with *Brahman* twice. Only difference is that earlier the function of *Manas* was restricted to reflection only. But in the seventh chapter there is shift in its function. Desire becomes the function of *Manas*. From *Manas* it passes on to will or determination (*Samkalpa*). In this manner, the *Upanishad* considers in all twelve predicates, the highest being ‘*prana*’. It may be noted that *Akasha* is a repetition. Here, the status is decided based on the supposition of dependence, the principle on most of the occasions is dependence. First let us list various predicates in the order of their position. Determination is followed by *chitta* (to know), *dhyana* (meditation), *vijnana* (higher knowledge), *bala* (force or might), *anna* (food), *ap* (water), *tejas* (heat), *smara* (memory), *asha* (desire) and *prana* (life). However, it is not necessary to consider this chain in detail. It is sufficient to consider the end point of the chain. It is more than obvious that *Prana* is the substratum of whatever was earlier mentioned. Accordingly, *Brahman* is life just as *Atman* is. Life pervades the whole universe and it outstretches the same. This argument is close to the ancient Greek thought which considered the whole world as animated. By considering the world as animated by the Greek thought that they could solve the problem of change. And the *Upanishads* knowingly or unknowingly solved the problem of origin of life.

Finally, by regarding *Brahman* as *Prana*, the *Upanishad* established the identity of *Brahman* and *Atman* more effectively.

3.6 UDDAALAKA’S REFUTATION OF VEDIC SUKTAS: HIS COSMOLOGY

If we understand cosmology in modern sense, then we can claim that *Uddaalaka*’s theory is the first ever attempt to grapple with the problem of the origin and the structure of the Universe. It is interesting to note that all preliminary approaches ended up in monism. In the western tradition also, philosophy began on monistic note only. The only difference is that ancient Greek philosophers, who are called pre-Socratic philosophers are mainly materialists, whereas in India, they are mainly idealists. Opposition to these creeds is only a later development.

If the physical world emerged from *Brahman* only to be reabsorbed later, then can we not conclude that the physical world is real? If so, how can *Uddaalaka* be regarded as an idealist? It is very important to address this objection.

There are two distinct ways of analyzing the origin of external world and life. They are quantitative and qualitative analyses. In any speculative science only the latter is possible. However, in this respect *Uddaalaka* is an exception.

Uddaalaka's arguments begin with his refutation of a *sukta* from the *Rigveda*. The *sukta* says: '*devaanam purve uge asataha sat ajaayata*' (before the (birth of) gods only *Asat*, i.e., nonexistence was from which *Sat*, i.e., existence emerged). In addition to this *Sukta*, the uncertainty of *Nasadiya Sukta* further strengthened *Uddaalaka*'s argument. The *Sukta* says that '*na asat aseeno sat aseeta daneem*' (Neither *Sat* nor *Asat* was). *Uddaalaka* counters both these statements from the *Rig Veda*. He asks '*katham asataha sat jayeta*' (how can '*Sat*' come out of '*Asat*'?). The absence '*Sat*' does not mean (according to the *Rigveda*) the presence of '*Asat*'. To that extent the *Sukta* is correct. When neither of them is present how can '*Tat Ekam*' breathe? To wriggle out of this maze *Uddaalaka* refutes both the *Suktas*. Before the formation of objects only '*Sat*' was and nothing else. This is the meaning of '*ekamevaadvitiya*' (second to none). *Brahman* is this '*Sat*'. How did the formation of objects or the birth of objects become possible? If we can assume that where there is spirit there is activity, then we can conclude that *Brahman* is the seat of activity because *Brahman* is spiritual. This activity manifests in *Brahman* in the form of production of this world. For the manifestation of activity no cause may be required. *Uddaalaka* traces the path of production which is bound by sort of reasonableness, the 'one' became many, i.e., *Brahman* became many. First to be produced is *Tejas*, and from *Tejas*, *Ap* and from *Ap*, *Anna* (food or solid). *Uddaalaka* explains this scheme in this manner. Water (sweat) is generated when there is heat (*Tejas*). So it means that water is born from *Tejas*. *Uddaalaka*'s explanation can be supplemented easily. Rainfall (water) is always preceded by heat (*Tejas*). If *Uddaalaka*'s theory can be regarded as scientific, it is not because of what he said but because why he said so. He provided 'evidences' to justify his theory. Surely, evidences need not be accepted. They can be shown to be inadequate or irrelevant. This possibility is sufficient to classify his theory as a scientific theory.

According to *Uddaalaka* '*Tejas*, *Ap* and *Anna*' are the elements. To this group the *Taittiriya* adds *Vayu* and *Aakasa*. Once these elements are born the classification of name (*nama*) and form (*roopa*) takes place. When 'one' becomes many, each one becomes finite. What is finite has definite form. Name is necessary to distinguish one from the other. In this way, name and form determine this world. In the same part, the fourth *Mantra* states that all these three elements undergo the process of further division. So we have nine divisions together. These divisions apply to matter in gross state. *Tejas* does have other elements. But the proportion of other elements in *Tejas* is much less. The same explanation ought to hold good for other elements. It also means that these elements are not really elements. However, that apart the reference to proportion of elements at any given level, evidently, marks a revolutionary idea. Quantitative aspect which distinguishes one element from another essentially belongs to science. *Uddaalaka* also correlates colour to *Tejas*, white of *Ap* and black that of *Prithivi*. This correlation later gave rise to substance-attribute relation.

The next stage of triple division is very significant. It contains discussion of *manas* or mind. One *Mantra* asserts that mind emerged from the subtle part of *Anna*, i.e., solid. It means that mind is not qualitatively different from solid or matter. Mind is, perhaps, microscopic or subatomic part of matter. There are two ways of interpreting the relation; any aspect of mind can be explained through matter. This method of explanation is accepted by epiphenomenalism; a theory in modern western philosophy. Not only mind even *Prana* has its origin in matter. ‘*Apam... peeya maanaanaam ya animaa sa urdhvaha samudeeshati sa pranobhavati*, (When water is consumed, the subtle part of it rises upwards and becomes *Prana*). So, not only *Manas* even *Prana* has its origin in the so-called matter. If this is the conclusion, then it runs counter to the general spirit of Indian Philosophy. To circumvent this situation, *Uddaalaka*, perhaps, regards not only *Brahman* but also the off-shoot, viz., *Tejas*, *Ap* and *Anna* as gods, and gods in the *Upanishads* do not mean the same as gods in the *Vedas*. Here gods can be taken to mean ‘Spiritual’ as distinct from matter. If so, then whatever exists must be spiritual. *Uddaalaka* chose this path. This is how ‘*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*’ can be understood.

Uddaalaka demonstrates the ‘composition of *Manas* and *Prana* in an extraordinary way. Given the tenor of the *Upanishads* and also the age to which the *Upanishads* belonged what *Uddaalaka* did is, surely, extraordinary. Warder goes to the extent of calling it an experiment. According to the *Brihadaranyaka*, *Prajapati* is made up of sixteen aspects. Of them fifteen aspects constitute *Manas* and the remaining aspect *Prana*. *Manas* has too many aspects because it is too complex. To drive home this point, *Uddaalaka* asks his son to go on fast for fifteen days. As a result he goes into *Amnesia*. It shows that mind (after all, memory is a function of mind) depends upon matter. This is what Warder calls quantitative analysis only because there is obvious reference to ratio and composition, which cannot be understood without numbers.

Is there any difficulty in accepting that whatever exists is spiritual? If *Manas* and *Prana* together have sixteen aspects then ‘spirit’ or *Chaitanya* also must have sixteen aspects. How can what is not physical, possess different aspects? Secondly, if *Manas*, *Prana*, etc. are spiritual, are bone, flesh, etc., which have originated from *Brahman* also spiritual? This may or may not be the case. But *Uddaalaka* is silent on this issue.

Tat tvam asi (that is you) occurs in *Uddaalaka*’s exposition on seven occasions. It means that you are the very same *Atman*, which being the most subtle and true, is also the primal source of the universe. In other words, I should feel my identity with the universe. How is this achieved? *Uddaalaka* gives two analogies; rivers flowing from different directions to merge in sea and production of honey. In this particular case we should discover the essential characteristic of Indian philosophy. This kind of realisation of being one with *Atman-Brahman*, which transcends all reason and experience, is the essence of the *Chandogya*. This is essentially a state of mind.

A passing reference to the evolution of life is sufficient. *Uddaalaka* considers three classes only; *Andaja* (born from the egg), *Jivaja* (born from the animal) and *Udbhijja* (plants). *Aitareya* adds one more; *Swedaja* (born from sweat). It is sufficient to remark that this kind of classification is the primitive form of taxonomy.

In the beginning of the sixth chapter, *Uddaalaka* introduces an important issue. Effect is only name. But cause is fundamental. For example, chain is the effect. But gold, from of which chain is made is its material cause. *Brahman* is the material causes whereas the world is its effect. Goldsmith makes chains. So he is the efficient cause. *Brahman* is not only the material cause, but also he is the efficient cause because he (or it) has made this universe. This theory of causation, which is called *Brahma Parnama vāda*, is the earliest theory of causation. Last element, which deserves to be mentioned is his reference to generalization. If I can show the properties of any one object made from iron, then I can as well know the properties of all objects made from iron. This is an important topic in logic.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How do you interpret the teaching of Chandogya that in the beginning there was *asat* (nonbeing)?

.....

2) What is the meaning of *Tatvamsi* in Uddalaka’s exposition?

.....

3.7 THE MEANING OF SWAPITI AND ITS RELATION TO DREAM STATE

At the outset, two aspects should be made clear; one, the meaning of ‘*Swapiti*’ and the other, meaning of dream state. *Uddaalaka* defines ‘*Swapiti*’ as the association of individual with his true nature, i.e., *Sat*. The association of individual with *Sat* becomes possible when *Sat* comes to be associated with *Manas*. Instead of *Sat*, we can also say self or *Atman*. It means that at empirical level, all activities like, seeing, hearing, etc. owe their possibility to this association. Therefore the true nature of *Sat* is obliterated. This is what can be termed as bondage. Freedom from bondage consists in complete dissociation. In other words, *Swapti* is realised when *Sat* is dissociated from *Manas*. The nature of *Swapiti* is better understood when we understand the nature of ‘*Sushupti*’! The *Upanishad* does not use this particular word. Instead, it uses another word ‘*swapanaantam*’ (end of dream state). The word *Sushupti* is used by

commentators. To understand the process of dissociation, it is necessary to refer to other states of *Manas*. In waking state not only the nervous system is active, but also the individual is conscious of this activity. Hence waking state is characterized by conscious activity. In this state, the association with *Manas* is complete. In dream state, consciousness is absent, but motor organs function. This is one difference between waking and dream states. Secondly, though motor organs function, there is vast difference in degree. It means that nervous system is active, but less active. Therefore even in dream state, *sat* remains at empirical level. While one end of dream state is marked by waking state characterized by full-blooded association with external world, the other end of the spectrum is characterized by the total withdrawal of *sat* from external world. This is possible only in deep sleep. Deep sleep must have been used as an analogy by *Uddaalaka* because deep sleep is only momentary. But when *Sat* is dissociated from external world it is permanent. In this context *sat* is regarded as *Atman* which in at the same time *Brahman*.

A simpler way of understanding *Swapiti* is to regard it as *Swa-Roopa* (one's own or true nature). When *Sat* regains its *Swa-Roopa*, it goes beyond good and evil because good and evil are associated only with external world. It shows that the bond, which connects *Sat* with *Manas* and through *Manas* the external world is not necessary but contingent. According to the *Upanishads*, the goal is to break this bond. Hence, whatever intellectual exercise that can be discerned in the *Upanishad* is propelled by this goal. Thus, the means is intellectual but the end is not. This, exactly, is the essential nature of the *Upanishads*.

3.8 THE BONDS OF SAT

In the previous section a reference was made to bondage and liberation from bondage. Hence it is necessary to know the nature of bondage in detail. *Uddaalaka* recognizes six elements involved in bondage and so calls them '*shadayatana*' (six places). It is easy to trace the link. *Manas* is held captive by *Prana*, *Prana* by *Anna*, *Anna* by *Ap* and *Ap* by *Tejas*. *Sat* is connected through *Manas* in this manner with remaining elements. If *Sat* can break its link with *Manas*, then, naturally, the bondage collapses. *Uddaalaka* clearly states how one element is bound by the other. This is quite illuminating. Food is necessary for life. Hence *Prana* depends upon *Anna*. It is not sufficient if I eat food. It has to be converted to liquid state and then mixes up with juice (*rasa*). Only then it is digested. *Uddaalaka* is merely describing the metabolic process here. Water (*Ap*) is required to convert food into energy. Hence food depends upon water. The process of digestion is known as internal combustion. Directly or indirectly, internal combustion can be equated with *Tejas* or heat.

The bondage can be understood in this way also. *Sat* is the source of *Tejas*; *Tejas* is the source of *Ap* and so on. Everything else depends upon *Sat* but *Sat* itself does not depend upon anything else. This is the nature of bondage. Liberation from bondage does not really mean death. What happens after liberation is different from what happens after death. When *Sat* is liberated from bondage it is not affected by external world because its link with *Manas* has snapped. But this is only in one direction, i.e. *Manas* and *Prana* continue to have relation with *Sat* for their existence. At the time of death one will merge in another; speech in *Manas*, *Manas* in *Prana*, *Prana* in *Tejas* and *Tejas* in *Sat*. And this *Sat* is pure or pure Being.

3.9 ATMAN AND THE SOURCE OF THE UNIVERSE: BRAHMAN

Uddaalaka defines the truth as the equation of atman with subtle essence of the world. To express this equation, Uddaalaka uses what is known as '*mahaa vakya*' (cardinal statement); *tat tvam asi* (that thou art). Put in simple language it only means 'That is you'. He uses analogies, when bees collect juice from different sources (here called trees), they are not preserved separately. The juices collected from different sources lose their identity when they merge in one place. But thereby they do not lose existence. Therefore identity and existence are not one and the same. In case of an individual, this awareness is lost; realisation consists not in maintaining identity but in identifying with *Sat*. Loss in one place is compensated by gain in another place.

Another analogy is 'river-sea' analogy. When rivers enter sea they become parts of sea. It is impossible to differentiate water of one river from water of some other river. Rivers lose their identity only because they become identical with sea. But (assuming that they are conscious), they are not aware of what they have lost and what they have gained.

Uddaalaka uses several analogies in his long discourse. It is not necessary to mention all of them. The essence is that ignorance is the cause of seeing difference when there is none. Acquisition of knowledge is conditioned by three factors, proper guidance, ability and desire to learn. In the absence of any one of them the identity, which is under investigation cannot be realised. Acquisition of knowledge leads to liberation. Truth liberates whereas falsehood curtails freedom. Knowledge is knowing what truth is.

3.10 THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE (*BHOOMA VIDYA*)

Discussion of knowledge and truth takes us to the nature of supreme knowledge. Seventh chapter of the *Upanishad* begins with the assertion 'one who knows, speaks the truth' and 'one who does not know, does not speak the truth'. How does one acquire knowledge? Act of knowing demands reflection and truth, reflection demands dedication and commitment. There are in truth, links to happiness. That which provides happiness is supreme knowledge. The *Mantra* says; "*yo vai bhoomaa tat sukham na alpe sukham asti*". It means happiness consists in achieving the highest or supreme. What is inferior does not bring in happiness. When we reach the peak there is nothing else to see, nor to hear, nor to know, where something else can be seen, etc. then, there is *alpa* (inferior). Obviously, this statement is the basis of reflection on *Advaita*. While what is inferior needs the support of something else, the 'Supreme' does not require any support because that itself is the base for all. This 'Supreme' is *Atman*. Hence the knowledge of *Atman* is the 'Supreme' knowledge.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain briefly the meaning of *Swapiti*

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2) How does Uddaalaka understands truth?

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3.11 LET US SUM UP

The *Chandogya* is one of the earliest *Upanishads*. Hence there is lot of discussion on *Vedic* rituals. This *Upanishad* forms a part of *Samaveda* tradition. Hence, the rituals mentioned here derive support mainly from *Samaveda*. *Upanishads* are against rituals because during transition time people still believed that the ritual is one of the means of knowing or realising *Brahman*. *Gayatri* is one *Mantra* through which *Brahman* can be known. There are three strata of *Akash*; each correlated to three states of mind. *Brahman* also is equated with light. *Tajjalan* has very significant Philosophical implications. Cosmology has its roots in this principle. *Uddaalaka*'s Cosmology is not only scientific but also it is in opposition to the *Vedic* account of the origin of universe. *Brahman* is described in various ways, *Prana* being regarded as the best description. *Atman* is not only the source of universe, but also the essence of man. Knowledge of one's own self is the highest knowledge.

3.12 KEY WORDS

- Adage** : An adage is a short but memorable saying that holds some important fact of experience that is considered true by many people, or that has gained some credibility through its long use.
- Attribute** : An attribute is an abstraction of a characteristic of an entity or substance.
- Substance** : The word **substance** originates from Latin '*substantia*,' literally meaning "standing under." The word is a

translation of the Greek philosophical term 'ousia. It is the basic principle of an object without which the object would not exist, or what exists only by itself (*causa sui*).

Thermodynamics : Thermodynamics (from the Greek, *therme* = “heat” and *dynamis* = “power”) is the study of the conversion of energy into work and heat and its relation to macroscopic variables such as temperature and pressure.

3.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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3.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) In *Akasha*, which is internal to human, there are actually two divisions: *Akasha* inside the body and *Akasha* inside the heart. It means that there are three strata of *Akasha*. According to one interpretation, these three strata of *Akasha* correspond to the first three states of mind, *jagrut* (waking state), *swapna* (dream state) and *sushupti* (deep sleep). While the first two states cause misery, the last one does not. *Akasha* is associated with these states and also the experience.
- 2) It is ‘*manomaya*’ (spiritual), *prana sharira* (consciousness), *bhaarupa* (*bhaa* = light), *satyasankalpa* (positive purpose), *aakashatma* (form of *akasha*), *sarvakarma* (maker of all), *sarvakama* (flawless desire), *sarvagandha* (substratum of all pleasant odour), *sarvam idam abhyatta* (enveloping all), *avaakya* (silent), *anaadara* (unenthusiastic).

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The nineteenth section of third chapter begins with the *Mantra* according to which, *Aditya is Brahman*. This *Mantra* says that in the beginning there was *asat* (nonbeing); and then it became *Sat*. The first statement of the *Mantra* stands in need of clarification. One possible interpretation is that *Asat* is interpreted as *avyakrit* (not expressed), i.e., potential. When the universe is in unexpressed state, it is in its potential form. At that stage, *naama roopa bheda* (name and form distinction) does not exist. In this restricted sense only it can be regarded as *asat*.
- 2) *Tat tvam asi* (that is you) occurs in *Uddaalaka's* exposition on seven occasions. It means that you are the very same *Atman*, which being the most subtle and true, is also the primal source of the universe. In other words, I should feel my identity with the universe, Brahman.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

- 1) *Uddaalaka* defines '*Swapiti*' as the association of individual with his true nature, i.e., *Sat*. The association of individual with *Sat* becomes possible when *Sat* comes to be associated with *Manas*. In other words, *Swapti* is realised when *Sat* is dissociated from *Manas*. The nature of *Swapiti* is better understood when we understand the nature of '*Sushupti*'! The *Upanishad* does not use this particular word. Instead, it uses another word '*swapanaantam*' (end of dream state).
- 2) *Uddaalaka* defines the truth as the equation of *atman* with subtle essence of the world. To express this equation, *Uddaalaka* uses what is known as '*mahaa vakya*' (cardinal statement); *tat tvam asi* (that thou art). Put in simple language it only means 'That is you'. He uses analogies, when bees collect juice from different sources (here called trees), they are not preserved separately. They lose their identity when they merge in one place. But thereby they do not lose existence. Therefore identity and existence are not one and the same. In case of an individual, this awareness is lost; realisation consists not in maintaining identity but in identifying with *Sat*.

UNIT 4a AITAREYA AND ISA

Contents

- 4a.0 Objectives
- 4a.1 Introduction
- 4a.2 A Pre-view
- 4a.3 Discussion
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- 4a.5 Key Words
- 4a.6 Further Readings and References
- 4a.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

4a.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the Unit is:

- to lead your mind away from the outer ceremonies to its inner meaning
- to enable you to know how this Upanishad deals with the creation of the universe
- to enable you to know how it deals with the creation of 'Food,' which is understood not just as physical nourishment but representation of the sustaining and feeding force inherent in nature

4a.1 INTRODUCTION

Aitareya Upanishad is a Mukhya Upanishad that belongs to Rg Veda. It has a short prose text with three parts with 33 verses. This is the part of Aitareya Aryanaka and begins with the 4th chapter of the second Aryanaka covers – 5, 6 and 7th sections. The main *rishi* is Aitareya Mahidasa. The Upanishad has three parts, the 1st part has 3 sections in this Atman is a Divine creator. In the 2nd Part, the three births of man, is dealt with. The 3rd part is about Brahman and Atman. The Upanishad contains most famous expression of the Vedanta, a Mahavakya, "Prajnanam Brahman," meaning Brahman is consciousness.

4a.2 A PRE-VIEW

Aitareyopanishad deals with **Creation**. Human from time immemorial has questioned, wondered and talked about the creation of Universe. There has been many discussion and discourses by religious heads, philosophers, thinkers, great artists and scientists. Each one has come up with most fascinating and beautiful theories. These are only theories and can never be proved as scientifically true.

In Aitareopanishad, creation is a pure poetry, a greatest artistic work, which goes step by step methodically, practically, systematically and ends with creator and the creation merging together to make it a whole.

Who is this creator? Is it Atman or someone else? Who is this Atman? Where has he come from? How did Atman exist in nothingness? These are irrelevant

questions. If we brood on this we miss the beauty of creation. Creation happened intuitively, so we too must read on this intuitively.

Nothing comes from nothing, so there has to be something to start with. Naturally, there is Atman, alone and in solitude. Greatest things happen in silence, solitude and in deep meditation. Atman at such great moment decided to 'Create' the universe. Universe is not created with momentary whim or fancies. Instead, the creation is meditated upon. Like an artist who visualizes his creation on an empty canvas and a sculpture who sees his creation on a rock or a marble piece. Here Atman's creation is presented in a concrete picture of creation from the level of sense – perception. It is a manifestation of the visible and an expression of an inner reality. The inner core of reality, the whole of universe with all its manifold layers expressions appeared as many concentric circles, the common centre, Atman/ Brahman. And to a very great extent, the creation and the physical world are true only as far as human's physical existence is concerned.

The Atman started his brush strokes starting from landscape a solid ground to stand by. He created, the three layers of sky – ambhas' a world of celestial water, under that 'dyuloka', abode for gods, above the earth, where the light passes through, marici'. Each one is called according to the characteristic of its use. This earth, He calls it 'mara', death. And under this solid ground there is water, 'apah'. Why is it that earth called as 'mara'? 'mara' means death. What is born on this earth dies. But at the same time, what is yet to be born comes to life.

Once an artist or a sculpture starts working on his canvas or on the stone, he starts filling details from minute to large one. Each detail has to be considered, each detail is important and significant. So, the artist meditates, visualizes and uses his brush/chisel with caution, knowledge and to perfection. It is so with Atman. Once he has created the space, he wants some one to guard it. So, He took water in his hand and fashioned a 'purusa' from it. Water a fluid which can slip away from between the fingers, became a creation of His inner vision 'purusa'. Like an egg hatching to life, the water in Atman hand took perfect form. The fire is speech, the sun is sight. The moon reflector of the sun is heart a place of mind /emotion/love. Navel region was the place of out breath – death. Even though the earth is 'mara,' a place of death, Atman did not stop at out breath, He goes one step ahead, under the out breath he created, 'generative organ with a seed of life. 'Purusa' a mortal but he has a seed of life with in him. The creator creates his creation to be immortal – "nabir nirabhidvata, nabya apanah, apanam mrtyuh, sisnam nirabhihyata, sisnad retah retasa apah,"

Fire, Sun and other deities want a form to stay to satisfy their hunger and thirst. So, Virats offers them four legged animals, they refuse them, and he gives them, the man. They were happy as he is superior. The human body, in addition to fitness, has elated soul in its higher level of existence; hence man is the master piece of creation. So the deities are happy, 'sukrtam bateti. Puruso va va sukrtam,' and entered the man. They became the part of human's five senses and different organs. The sense exists and functions become of something for whose sake it exists like - the sun gives light to the eyes to see, the sight and so on. Even hunger and thirst enter human.

Creation is not over, it continues, creator decides that he has to create food for his creation. Once more he takes water in his hand and he creates 'food'. If some

food item is given to a child, it takes it directly to his/her mouth and eats it. Eating is as simple as child's play. Then why describe which part of the body takes food. This is a poetic, aesthetic in detail of a creative mind. Food once created started running away to save itself. But the food is for consumption, it gives sustenance, nourishment and energy. There is a lyrical description how different parts of the body tried to grab the food and failed. But it is the out – breath that gasped the food what air is, 'tad apanenajighrksat, tad awayat, saiso'nnyasya graho yad vayur annayur va esa yad vayuh,' Watching his creation, Atman wants to be the part of his creation. He enters human through one's skull.

Aitareyopanishad does not end with creation of the universe by Atman, it goes further with the three stages of birth of man and final ultimate realization of man that he is the part of this great creation and the creator is in him, who guides and protects him. The whole idea behind the Upanishad is to understand the creation and the creator and the place of the creator within us. The creator became a part of his creation. Man has to understand, intuitively that the creator is none other than Brahman, and He is always within him. Human has to understand this - '*prajna – netram prajname pratisthitam, prajna – netro lokah prajna pratistha, prajnanam brahma.*'

4a.3 DISCUSSION

The Aitareopanishad is a creation of three visualizations:

- 1) The creation of the universe,
- 2) The three stages of human's life and
- 3) The third and the last one, the relationship of human and Brahman. In this the whole creation of life completes. There is unity and merging of inner vision with the outer reality.

"atma va idam eka evagra asit namyat kin cana nusat, sa aiksaata llokan nu srja iti," (1. 1. 1)

The self verily was (all) this, one only, in the beginning. Nothing else whatsoever existed. He thought, let me now create this world.

Was the universe created , as Atman was alone? Did the universe come into being at the time of profound silence? Was the universe created by Atman by sheer fancy, boredom or with love?

These are fascinating questions without definite answers. More than why the universe is created, how it is created is interesting. It is created to perfection by a fluid – water.

To assist human different deities were created, each one having a specific function. '*agnir vag bhutva mukham pravisad, vayuh prano bhuyvas nasike pravisad, adityas caksur bhutvaksini pravisad, disah srotram bhutva karnam....*' (1.2.4) It is interesting how the assignment is given to the deities – mouth is the place of fire, it became the organ of speech, nostril is the place of air, it assume the form the sense of smell, the sun enters the eyes to give the sense of sight, different directions enters the ears to give the sense of hearing, skin is the place of touch and feel, herbs and trees entered the skin and they become the hair on the skin,

heart is the place of moon, it forms the mind, death enters the navel in the form of 'apana,' water enters into the limb of generation in the form of semen, organ of procreation. Each deity enters their respective abode. The relationship between the deity and the senses are not one of cause and effect but one of co – existence.

Not being satisfied, the creator goes further and created – hunger and thirst to satisfy them food. In the first place why did Creator create hunger, thirst and food? He gave deities to serve the mortal, He could have made this mortal enjoy life without hunger, thirst and food. But creator knew what he was creating. The creation was the manifestation of the inner reality, vision and a purpose.

It is up to the mortal to understand. Understanding starts with questioning what are these hunger, thirst and food. Are they just physical or do they have higher meaning and intentions? These three can be understood in three level of understanding – 1. Physical, 2. Psychological and 3. Spiritual. 1. At physical level – hunger and thirst cannot be ignored as they make a man weak and in the long run sick. So, food helps the man to sustain, to be healthy and strong. 2. At the psychological level – It is the ambition of the mortal that his death need not be an end but continuity, and the hunger and thirst to know the outer world, for these hunger and thirst the food is the birth of a child and birth of knowledge and learning respectively. 3. At spiritual level - hunger and thirst to know 'what, why, how and where' questions that arises because of learning and knowledge. The food for this is to intuit the intentions of the creator, feel him inside and be conscious of His kindness and love for his creation.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Was food created because of hunger and thirst?

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2) As you read the Upanishad what is your visualization of creation?

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4a.4 LET US SUM UP

Creation is a wonder. If we look around - the high Himalayas, vast sea, river, waterfall, forest- it is amazing how such a beautiful breath taking creation possible. Whether it is God or the natural phenomenon, whatever may be the cause, the effort of it is beyond description. The ancient seers wrote on creation looking at vast magnificent life giving earth. Nature is not only beautiful but also it has energy, force and life.

Aitareyopanishad says Atman created it as he was alone, 'lokan nu srja', he thought and he created. He made the earth for mortals, but at the same time he made it a place of birth. On the earth, continuous life cycle goes on without a break. In this human sees the creation taking place every minute.

New hopes, new expectations, new ideas, new discoveries, new thoughts, new aspirations etc are continuously created. Nothing stays permanent; every second there is a creation. If we look at the thought processes of 'vedanta', we can observe the way it has transformed time and again - rituals, understanding of God, prayers, knowledge, concept of God, recognizing God within - everything is transformed to suit time again and again. This is not only in understanding God but in all fields - science, understanding people (psychology) relationship, values, moral, and economics, name a topic, it has changed from time to time.

But with all these changes and transitions, diversity of knowledge - the concept of God has stood the test of time. Means to the end has changed but the end had stood high and mighty as ever. He is the omnipotent and the Absolute. That is the greatest mystery of all creation and transitions.

Because of this, even Upanishad has stood up the test of time as it deals with 'Truth' of creation and understanding of oneself in relation to God, the God who resides within us. To understand the psycho make up of our being we have the capacity and patience to continue the search till the end. Reality of understanding that there is no separation between the inner and outer world. There is no difference between the way 'purusa' came to being and the child's birth. Both are creation, wonder of nature. The correspondence allows the realization of the identity of force working in nature and in man and drawing greater power, strength, wisdom and vision through the finer infusion of the force into us.

That is why; Upanishad is called as 'upasana' (meditation). Meditation not only elevates the feeling but also widens our being. Knowledge attained enables us to asses the force (within and without) rightly and to pass successfully through different layers of being, the psycho and cosmic character.

Right knowledge frees man from all our world clinging. It is an awakening in transcendental consciousness when the finite together with the infinite vanishes away personality vanishes personal experiences. It is a state of supra - personal, supra - conceptual and supra - temporal experience. And at that stage human realizes that Brahman is consciousness: '*prajnanam brahma.*'

4a.5 KEY WORDS

- Omnipotent** : Omnipotent means all-powerful.
- Time** : Time is a component of the measuring system used to sequence events, to compare the durations of events and the intervals between them, and to quantify the motions of objects. Time has been a major subject of religion, philosophy, and science, but defining it in a non-controversial manner applicable to all fields of study has consistently eluded the greatest scholars.

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4a.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) The Creator gave deities to serve the mortal, He could have made this mortal enjoy life without hunger, thirst and food. But creator knew what he was creating. The creation was the manifestation of the inner reality, vision and a purpose.

It is up to the mortal to understand. Understanding starts with questioning what are these hunger, thirst and food. Are they just physical or do they have higher meaning and intentions? These three can be understood in three level of understanding – 1. Physical, 2. Psychological and 3. Spiritual. The food for this is to intuit the intentions of the creator, feel him inside and be conscious of His kindness and love for his creation.

- 2) Creation is a wonder. If we look around - the high Himalayas, vast sea, river, waterfall, forest– it is amazing how such a beautiful breath taking creation possible. Whether it is God or the natural phenomenon, whatever may be the cause, the effort of it is beyond description. The ancient seers wrote on creation looking at vast magnificent life giving earth. Nature is not only beautiful but also it has energy, force and life.

UNIT 4b ISHA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 4b.0 Objectives
- 4b.1 Introduction
- 4b.2 Central Themes of the Upanishad
- 4b.3 Vision of Life in the Isha Upanishad
- 4b.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 4b.5 Key Words
- 4b.6 Further Readings and References
- 4b.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

4b.0 OBJECTIVES

How to understand life on earth? What must be the goal and aspirations of life? Mundane existence is the necessary condition for the realisation of the freedom and immortality of the self. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, the objectives of the Upanishad can be summarised as understanding:

- The Conscious Lord and the Phenomenal Nature
- Renunciation and Enjoyment
- Action in Nature and Freedom in the Soul
- The One Stable Brahman and the Multiple Manifestations
- Being and Becoming
- The Active Lord and the Indifferent *Akshara* Brahman
- *Vidya* and *Avidya*
- Work and Knowledge

4b.1 INTRODUCTION

Isavasya Upanishad is known also as *Isa Upanishad*. We will be using the shorter form in our writings. *Isha Upanishad* belongs to the earlier or Vedic group of Indian Scriptures. Rshi Yajnavalkya received the instructions from God Surya who appeared in the form of a horse (*vaji*). These instructions together are known as *Sukla-yajurveda-samhita*. This branch is known as the *vajasaneyi* branch as instructed by the “*vaji*”. It has its *karma-kanda* and *jnana-kanda*. Its first 39 chapters deal with various sacrifices and the 40th chapter, consisting of only 18 verses, forms its *jnana-kanda*. This last chapter is known as the *Isavasya Upanishad*.

4b.2 CENTRAL THEMES OF THE UPANISHAD

The main problem discussed in it is the question of reconciling human life and activity with the monistic standpoint of the Vedantic times. It neither supports extreme illusionism nor anti-pragmatism, although *Isha Upanishad* tries to reconcile the uncompromising extremes.

Conscious Lord and the Phenomenal Nature

This world is the manifestations of the Brahman. He is becoming “to create forms of His consciousness in motion in which He as the one soul in many bodies can take up his habitation and enjoy the multiplicity and the movement with all their relations.” For the simple minds, this is explained as *lila* of the Lord. In the experience of the consciousness, man becomes first conscious of something external to him and only then he can become conscious of his own consciousness. It is from the physical nature we move into the spiritual nature of human being. Body is not the real man, it is nothing but the Spirit. “In Rahner’s view, human beings are *spirit* in the world. *Spirit* here “names” the dimension of the human person which is distinct from but not opposed to the material, i.e., the body. The person is properly understood as a unity, a whole, rather than as a hybrid of competing parts of body and soul, flesh and spirit, mind and matter. The spiritual dimension of the person describes the ability that human beings possess which enables them to transcend or break out beyond themselves and the limits of self-isolation, self-preoccupation, and self-absorption. This they do through the pursuit of knowledge, freedom, and love.” (*Understanding Christian Spirituality*, p.33) Self-transcendence is the means to the realisation of human’s truth.

Renunciation and Enjoyment

The multiplicity in the process of becoming can be fully enjoyed only through absolute renunciation of egoistic desires. Egoistic desires are only the “vital deformation of the divine Ananda.” Ananda is “the conscious principle of existence.” The goal of existence itself is the infinite delight, which could be realized only in liberation. Joy is the foundation of human life.

Along the line of growth and achieving maturity, we say ‘one has come of age.’ It simply means the person has grown to know and acknowledge his and other’s role and responsibility in the day to day life. Maturity implies parenting. Parenting can be physical and social. Parenting means nurturing and developing. We have emphasized too much the physical parenting. Social parenting is also important. It consists in developing a civic sense or an attitude of concern for social wellbeing. Every life must become a life that contributes to the welfare of others-humans, sub-humans and nature. *Loka samasto sukhino bhavantu* (Let there be peace and joy in the whole world) is the upanishadic proclamation for the world.

An underdeveloped person cannot contribute duly, promptly and precisely for the welfare of all. Therefore, knowing one’s own talents and real requirements is necessary for giving and receiving mutually to help fulfilling each other. Consumption is a need in our earthly existence. Physical and psychological needs are to be met. Hence social stratification and institutions are needed. Depending on quality (culture, education and commitment), responsibilities and privileges are determined. Respect first one’s own commitment through service for others and then other’s commitment by rewarding or accomplishing their needs. Be satisfied with what you are and have, and have no malice or greed concerning the richness of others.

Action in Nature and Freedom of the Soul

Soul and body are real and they are the two parts of human reality. Actions are not against the nature of the Soul. Ignorance gets the Soul seemingly bound by

the works of the body. By realising the consciousness of unity in the Lord, one experiences the unity with all beings. Life and works thus becomes “the law of our being and the object of our” phenomenal existence. The liberated person reveals himself as ‘passive in state, but active in work.’ This is the state where the dualities of life – birth-death, joy-sorrow, good-bad, love-hatred, pleasure-suffering – do not affect the “I”, but continuously act as self-fulfillment. The Soul is free and acts freely without effecting any karmic residue.

The One stable Brahman and the multiple Manifestations

Movement and multiplicity of the one Brahman “is only a phenomenon of our consciousness.” For practical purposes, we make distinctions and differences (subject-object, far-near, internal-external etc.) in Brahman, the one real existence. It is required in the spatio-temporal realm for the development of consciousness. Consciousness first becomes aware of something other than itself and only then it comes to the awareness of itself.

Multiplicity is to be properly understood. All separative forces are self-destructive too. Multiplicity promotes separatedness. Individual existences compete to sustain and succeed. Accumulation, consumption and manipulation of resources occur in the competition. Class and caste distinctions are promoted for individual gains. In the case of an intellectual flowering of the oppressed, the enlightened will sow the seeds for a revolution. The orthodox ritualistic rigidity of the ruling class will not render sufficient strength to upkeep them straight and steady. History has proved it politically, sociologically and culturally. Yet we find the world of multiplicity continues and it is relevant too. We must find a way to maintain both multiplicity and unity, mutually supporting and sustaining, leading to individual liberation and social harmony.

Being and Becoming

Being and Becoming are objects of our consciousness. “Being is one, Becomings are many; but this simply means that all Becomings are one Being who places Himself variously in the phenomenal movement of His consciousness.” We are busy with counting and consuming the multiplicities. From the stand point of practical truth (*vyaharika satya*), being and acting requires multiplicity. But in the absence of the awareness of the (*paramartika satya*) or the ultimate truth, man’s true nature does not come to light. The fulfillment is understood to be pleasing or achieving one’s goal for oneself or for others or for both. One can be and act in three ways. (1) Be and act as my (blind) mind says or conscience reveals as the best. Ordinarily pleasures of consumption and achievement are the meaning-giving aspects here. This is the life of likes. (2) Be and act as to what other’s say. Imitating the structured majority is the model here. Find one’s fullness in adjusting and accommodating with the institutionalized traditions. This is the life of the commandments and customs. (3) Be and act according to the illumined consciousness. The ultimate truth of unity shines forth. The individual finds the Self. Multiplicity becomes conscious of its oneness and oneness embraces its multiplicity. What is required is seeing the indwelling One in all. This realisation will remove the delusion of separate existence and the limiting factors of egoism and desires. Find the deeper self in this sham show of incessant becomings of the phenomenal world. Human beings have never ending desires and many resort to coveting. According to Sri Ramakrishna “the worldly life rotates on the two wheels of sex and gold.” To realise the Supreme Soul, one

must overcome the worldly realm. Self-discipline and renouncing desires are the means recommended. This is the life of sincere love.

The Active Lord and the Indifferent Akshara Brahman

Brahman has the active and the inactive sides in Him. The inactive state implies that He is free from all modifications. He acts without becoming. “These are the positive and negative poles of one indivisible consciousness.” *Isa Vasya Upanishad* presents two types of life. They are the life of works and the life of contemplation. Life of contemplation demands renunciation of all worldly ties. This leads to the realisation of the indifferent Akshara Brahman. *Sthithapranja* or the perfectly balanced person lives in this world an active life for the good of all. He leads an active life without being bound by anything.

Vidya and Avidya

There is the knowledge of the One and the knowledge of the Many. “If the mind (*manisi*) absorbs itself in God as the formal becoming (*paribhu*) and separates itself from God in the true Idea (*kavi*), then it loses Vidya, the knowledge of the One, and has only the knowledge of the Many which becomes no longer knowledge at all but ignorance, Avidya” which causes the sense of separate ego-sense. Avidya is required to develop individual relations, which when illuminated will reveal the One in all. “This is our proper course and not either to devote ourselves exclusively to the life of Avidya or to reject it entirely for motionless absorption in the One.” “The ego created by Avidya is a necessary mechanism for affirming individuality in the universal as a starting-point for this supreme achievement.”

Works and Knowledge

Works and Knowledge can be understood as the expressions of the egoistic mental character. “Mental knowledge is not true knowledge; true knowledge is that which is based on the true insight, the sight of the Seer.” Mind covers the face of the Truth, Truth consciousness. When the covering is removed, “the all embracing truth-ideation, *mahas, veda, drsti*, replaces the fragmentary mental activity.” True Buddhi (*vijnana*) “leads to pure knowledge (*jnana*), pure consciousness (*cit*). There we realise our entire identity with the Lord in all at the very roots of our being.” The Upanishad makes a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. “Knowledge is of things, acts and relations. But wisdom is of Brahman alone; and beyond all things, acts, and relations, he abides forever. To become one with him is the only wisdom.”

At the level of consciousness of multiplicity, willing and seeing is different. The Truth may be falsified without being aware of its falsification. At the level of the illumined consciousness, Will and Seeing are one. “Therefore when we have the sight and live in the Truth-Consciousness, our will becomes the spontaneous law of the truth in us and, knowing all its acts and their sense and objective, leads straight to the human goal, which was always the enjoyment of the Ananda, the Lord’s delight in self-being, the state of Immortality.” The Individual is transformed to be egoless; matter no more binds him. He lives with “the glory of the divine life and the divine Being.”

4b.3 VISION OF LIFE IN ISHA UPANISHAD

Isha Upanishad is teaching to lead a full life, active and actualizing. Life is to be formed by performing and enjoying. This presupposes the knowledge of the nature and the purpose of life of the embodied Self. The experienced fact is that before knowing and forming, people begin to perform and enjoy. There is cupidity in the mind of man. “This twin source of human bondage, viz, wealth and sex - *Kaamini-kanchan* is what constitutes worldliness, and worldly bondage. Said Sri Ramakrishna: *Kaama-kanchanhi samsaar*-the wheel of worldly life rotates on the two wheels of sex and gold.” People who are seeking the highest perfection in life must get over this bondage of ignorance. Different schools of thought and teachers of Indian philosophical traditions agree that ignorance must be wiped out for liberation. S. Radhakrishnan agrees with Buddha concerning the path to be followed. “For the removal of ignorance a strict morality is essential. *Sila* and *prajna*, good conduct and intuitive insight are inseparably united. The Buddha does not speak of codes and conventions, laws and rites. The way to be happy is to have a good heart and mind which will show itself in good deeds.” Mere intellectual realisation of truth does not give life. Each individual is different but endowed with special gifts and talents by birth itself. They are to be found and awakened both for self-realisation and social realisation. This process may call for renunciation, a renunciation of the egoistic pleasures and malices. The first verse of *Isha Upanishad* brings this to our notice.

Analysing texts

“*savasyam idam sarvam, yat kimca jagatyam jagat*

Tena tyaktena bhunjitha, ma grdhah kasya svid dhana.”

Word Meaning:

Isavasyam – God’s residence; *idam sarvam* – this whole universe; *yat kimca* – and whatever (is); *jagat* – moving(emotional); *jagatyam* – in this moving world; *tena tyaktena* – what is granted by God(*tyaktena* means also to be renounced); *bhunjithas* – eat or enjoy; *ma grdha* – don’t covet; *kasyasvid* – anybody’s; *dhanam* – wealth.

This universe is the House of Lord; whatever is there in this moving world, is His residence; whatever is granted by Him, enjoy and covet nobody’s wealth.

Different Interpretations

There are difference of opinions regarding the translation and interpretation of the texts. To sight an example:

“By the Lord (Isa) enveloped must this all be – Hume.

All this is enveloped by God – S. Radhakrishnan.

All this is to be hidden in the Lord (the Self) – Max Muller.

All that must be enveloped by the Lord – Swami Sarvananda.

All things of the world must be covered by the Lord – Swami Mrdananda.

All things should be pervaded by the Lord – V. Balakrishnan”

The omnipresent Lord is present in every being in this universe. Things of this world are in motion or change. Assembling and disassembling are in the nature of material things. In other words, birth and death are only the two sides of all material realities. Yet there is something that is transcending assimilation and dissimulation. Our true self is neither born nor dies. It only acquires the body it deserves. This acquisition is for a particular purpose. The Self is to be known and liberated. This liberation consists of the awareness of unity, the oneness of all beings in Brahman, the indwelling Spirit.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the use of mundane life according to the Isa Upanishad?

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2) What is the understanding of multiplicity in the Upanishad?

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4b. 4 LET US SUM UP

“Life provides one with chances and fancies
If one is lured by fancies, life is doomed
If one is pruned by the chances, life is tuned
And there will be music and dance in one’s heart”.

Earthly existence is the chance given to us for realising our authentic and true nature. We are all individuals, but we are more than individuals too. At the deepest core, we are all one. Appearances are deceiving. Transcending the individuation, we must realise ourselves. It is possible through self-discipline and an active life of commitment. Life is meaningful when we delve deep into the appearances and become aware of the hidden Self. Life and works are very well enjoined in this Upanishad. “Works are the essence of Life. Life is a manifestation of the Brahman.” Life should be love expressed joyfully but unconditionally.

4b. 5 KEY WORDS

- Sila** : *Sila* (Sanskrit) or *sila* (Pali) is usually rendered into English as “virtue,” other translations include “good conduct,” “morality” “moral discipline,” and “precept.” It is an action that is an intentional effort. It refers to moral purity of thought, word, and deed. The four conditions of *sila* are chastity, calmness, quiet, and extinguishment, that is, no longer being susceptible to perturbation by passionate emotions and desires.
- Prajna** : *Prajna* has been translated as “wisdom,” “understanding,” “discernment,” “cognitive acuity,” or “know-how.” In some sects of Buddhism, it especially refers to the wisdom that is based on the direct realization of the Four Noble Truths, impermanence, interdependent origination, non-self, emptiness, etc. Prajna is the wisdom that is able to extinguish afflictions and bring about enlightenment.

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4b.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Mundane existence is the necessary condition for the realisation of the freedom and immortality of the self. “Life in the world and life in the spirit are not incompatible.” Acting in the world for the good of every one is only a flowering of the realisation of the Self. What we should be renouncing is not the world but the ego, the selfishness of life. Freedom from egocentrism reveals the Self within and the Brahman without, and their identity.
- 2) Movement and multiplicity of the one Brahman “is only a phenomenon of our consciousness.” For practical purposes, we make distinctions and differences (subject-object, far-near, internal-external etc.) in Brahman, the one real existence. It is required in the spatio-temporal realm for the development of consciousness. Consciousness first becomes aware of something other than itself and only then it comes to the awareness of itself. Multiplicity is to be properly understood. All separative forces are self-destructive too. Multiplicity promotes separatedness. Individual existences compete to sustain and succeed. Accumulation, consumption and manipulation of resources occur in the competition. Class and caste distinctions are promoted for individual gains.

UNIT 5 TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Siksha Valli (Chapter 1)
- 5.3 Brahmananda Valli (Chapter 2)
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.5 Key Words
- 5.6 Further Readings and References
- 5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

The chief objectives (*prayojanam*) of the Unit are:

- guiding a student to read the original text of the Upanishad
- imparting the mystic wisdom of the Upanisad
- helping a seeker towards Brahman-oriented life
- enabling a seeker to experience (*anubhava*) Brahman
- liberation (*moksa, mukti*) from shackles of mundane existence

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Taittiriya Upanishad forms the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of the Taittiriya Aranyaka of the Krishna Yajur Veda. These chapters are known as Siksha Valli, Ananda Valli and Bhrigu Valli (not explained in the Unit) respectively. The Siksha Valli, which is the first chapter of the Upanishad, consists of twelve lessons or Anuvakas concerning various types of meditations and ethical rules to be practised by the seeker to make his mind pure and fit to receive the teachings above the Supreme God contained in the next two chapters. Meditations of various types are suggested to help the mind to gain steadiness. The thought of the seeker entangled in the intricate domestic and religious rituals are lifted to the level of cosmic contemplation. Material rewards are also promised as aids to spiritual evolution. There is prayer for prosperity, good health, mental efficiency, good memory, sweet speech and general fitness to receive the bliss of immortality. The ethical principles and practices necessary for the aspirant are clearly stated.

The tenth lesson describes how the accomplished sage Trisanku narrates his experience of God-realisation. The last lesson of the chapter repeats the opening peace chant in a slightly altered form expressing gratitude to the deities who have helped the student in realising the truths taught in the chapter.

The second chapter, Ananda Valli, declares that the knowledge of the Absolute God alone can destroy ignorance and thus remove the misery of transmigratory existence. He who knows Brahman attains the Supreme. The all-pervading

Brahman is also human's innermost self or subtlest essence within the cavity of the heart. But human is not conscious of it because the Self is covered or obscured, as it were, by many layers of ignorance in the form of sheaths or Kosas of varying degrees of subtlety and grossness. These sheaths constitute the gross, subtle and causal bodies of man.

The same Brahman dwells in the hearts of all as consciousness and manifests itself in all acts of cognition. Brahman is also described as self-made, which means: It is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. It is cause of everything but in Itself without a cause. It is also defined as Existence, Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. He who realises his identity with God enjoys Supreme Bliss compared to which the happiness enjoyed on earth and heaven are nothing.

The third chapter, Bhrgu Valli, teaches knowledge of Brahman through a dialogue between teacher and disciple. The teacher tells his disciple to concentrate all his energies and inquire into the nature of the different sheaths to find out if any of them can be Brahman or God. The disciple is guided stage by stage through the different Kosas and finding everyone of them falling short of the ideal, he transcends all the Kosas and reaches the Atman at the innermost core.

In the later sections of this chapter are given meditations on food as Brahman. Food or matter is said to be the basis of all organic creation, and on the body, resulting from food, rests the final spiritual realisation. The contemplation of food as Brahman is eulogised in several lessons.

In order to be faithful to the word-limit of the Unit, we have left out texts of a few sections of the first two chapters as well as the entire third chapter (*Bhrgu Valli*).

5.2 SIKSHA VALLI (CHAPTER 1)

Section I

INVOCATION

- 1) *Aum, May Mitra (the sun) be propitious to us; may Varuna (be) propitious (to us). May Aryaman (a form of the sun) be propitious to us; May Indra and Brhaspati be propitious to us; May Visnu, of wide strides, be propitious to us.*

Salutation to Brahma. Salutation to thee, O Vayu. Thou, indeed, art the visible (perceptible) Brahman. Of thee, indeed, the perceptible Brahman, will I speak. I will speak of the right. I will speak of the true; may that protect me; may that protect the speaker. Let that protect me; let that protect the speaker. Aum, peace, peace, peace.

Note: This is the first section. It is an invocation to God to remove the obstacles in the way of attaining spiritual wisdom.

Section 2

LESSON ON PRONUNCIATION

- 2) *We will expound pronunciation, letters or sounds, pitch, quantity, force or stress, articulation, combination. Thus has been declared the lesson on pronunciation.*

Note: One must learn to recite the text of the Upanisads carefully and so a lesson in pronunciation is given. We must learn the text before we can ascertain its meaning.

Section 3

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMBINATIONS

- 1) *May glory be with us both, may the splendour of Brahma knowledge be with us both.*

Now next we will expound the sacred teaching of combination under five heads, with regard to the world, with regard to the luminaries, with regard to knowledge, with regard to progeny, with regard to oneself. These are great combinations, they say.

Now with regard to the world: the earth is the prior form, the heaven the latter form, the ether is their junction, the air is the connection. This is with regard to the world.

Note: Master and disciple pray that the light of sacred knowledge may illumine them both, that they both may attain the glory of wisdom.

- 2) *Now as to the luminaries; fire is the prior form, sun the latter form. Water is their junction, lightning is the connection. This is with regard to the luminaries.*
- 3) *Now as to knowledge: the teacher is the prior form; the pupil is the latter form, knowledge is their junction; instruction is the connection. This is with regard to knowledge.*

Note: Patanjali in his Mahabhasya says there are four steps or stages through which knowledge becomes fruitful. The first is when we acquire it from the teacher, the second when we study it, the third when we teach it to others and the fourth when we apply it. Real knowledge arises only when these four stages are fulfilled.

Section – 4

A TEACHER'S PRAYER

May that Indra who is the greatest in the Vedic hymns, who is of all forms, who has sprung into being from immortal hymns, may he cheer me with intelligence, O God, may I be the possessor of immortality.

May my body be very vigorous; may my tongue be exceedingly sweet; may I hear abundantly with my ears. Thou art the sheath of Brahman, veiled by intelligence. Guard for me what I have heard.

Note: This is a prayer for acquiring retentiveness and for physical and moral health. The syllable *aum* is pre-eminent among the Vedic hymns. It is 'of all forms,' as the whole universe is its manifestation. 'Of Brahman, of the Paramatman or the Highest Self, Thou art the sheath, as of a sword, being the seat of His manifestation.'

- 2) *Bringing to me and increasing always clothes and cattle, food and drink, doing this long, do thou, then, bring to me prosperity in wool along with cattle. May students of sacred knowledge come to me from every side. Hail. May students of sacred knowledge come to me variously. Hail. May students of sacred knowledge come to me well equipped. Hail. May students of sacred knowledge come to me self-controlled. Hail. May students of sacred knowledge come to me peaceful. Hail.*

Note: To the undisciplined, wealth is a source of evil. Not so to the disciplined. What matters is not the possession or non-possession of wealth but the attitude to it. We may possess wealth and be indifferent to it; we may possess no wealth and yet be concerned with securing it by any means. There is no worship of poverty.

Section – 6

CONTEMPLATION OF BRAHMA

- 1) *This space that is within the heart – therein is the Person consisting of mind, immortal and resplendent. That which hangs down between the palates like a nipple, that is the birth-place of Indra; where is the edge of the hair splitting up the skull of the head. In fire, as Bhuh, he rests, in air as Bhuvah.*

Note: *Brahman* who is said to be remote is here envisaged as close to us. Though the Supreme is present everywhere, here we are taught to look upon Him as residing in one's own heart. Sankara says that the Supreme is said to be in the heart as a help to meditation, even as an image is used for deity.

1-6; III.14. Here we find a transition from the view that the heart is the seat of the soul to the other view that the brain is the seat of the soul. While the soul is an unextended entity which cannot have a spatial locus, psychologists discuss the nature of the part or parts of the body with which the soul is closely associated. For Aristotle, the seat of the soul was in the heart

The reference here is to the *susumanadi* of the Yoga system which is said to pass upward from the heart, through the mid region of the throat up to the skull where the roots of the hair lie apart. When it reaches this spot, the *nadi* passes up, breaking up the two regions of the head.

- 2) *In the sun as Suvah, in Brahman as Mahah. He attains self-rule. He attains to the lord of manas, the lord of speech, the lord of sight, the lord of hearing, the lord of intelligence this and more he becomes, even Brahman whose body is space, whose self is the real, whose delight is life, whose mind is bliss, who abounds in tranquility, who is immortal. Thus do thou contemplate, O Pracinayogya.*

Note: He who contemplates in this matter becomes the Lord of all organs, the soul of all things and filled with peace and perfection. This passage brings out that the end is greater existence, not death; we should not sterilize our roots and dry up the wells of life. We have to seize and transmute the gifts we possess.

Section 8

CONTEMPLATION OF AUM

- 1) *Aum is Brahman. Aum is this all. Aum, this, verily, is compliance. On uttering, 'recite,' they recite. With aum, they sing the saman chants. With aum, som, they recite the prayers. With aum the Advaryu priest utters the response. With aum does the Brahma (priest) utter the introductory eulogy. With aum, a Brahmana begins to recite, may I obtain Brahman; thus wishing, Brahman, verily, does he obtain.*

Note: 'The *pranava* which is a mere sound is, no doubt, insentient in itself and cannot therefore be conscious of the worship offered to it; still, as in the case of the worship offered to an image, it is the Supreme (Isvara) who, in all cases, takes note of the act and dispenses the fruits thereof'. *Aum* is the symbol of both Brahman or *Isvara*, the Supreme.

Section 10

A MEDITATION ON VEDA KNOWLEDGE

- 1) *I am the mover of the tree; my fame is like a mountain's peak. The exalted one making (me) pure, as the sun, I am the immortal one. I am a shining treasure, wise, immortal, indestructible. Such is Trisanku's recitation on the Veda-knowledge.*

Note: This statement is an expression of self-realization when the self, feeling its identity with the Supreme, says that he is the mover, the impeller of this world-tree of samsara. Trisanku, who realized Brahman, said this, in the same spirit in which the sage Vamadeva said.

Section 11

EXHORTATION TO THE DEPARTING STUDENTS

- 1) *Having taught the Veda, the teacher instructs the pupil. Speak the truth. Practise virtue. Let there be no neglect of your (daily) reading. Having brought to the teacher the wealth that is pleasing (to him), do not cut off the thread of the offspring. Let there be no neglect of truth. Let there be no neglect of virtue. Let there be no neglect of welfare. Let there be no neglect of prosperity. Let there be no neglect of study and teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the gods and the fathers.*

Note: Even with regard to the life of the teacher, we should be discriminating. We must not do the things which are open to blame, even if they are done by the wise.

- 3) *Whatever Brahmanas there are (who are) superior to us, they should be comforted by you with a seat. (What is to be given) is to be given with faith, should not be given without faith, should be given in plenty, should be given with modesty, should be given with fear, should be given with sympathy.*
- 4) *Then, if there is in you any doubt regarding any deeds, any doubt regarding conduct, you should behave yourself in such matters, as the Brahmanas there (who are) competent to judge, devoted (to good deeds), not led by others, not harsh, lovers of virtue would behave in such cases.*

Note: The Brahmanas have a spontaneity of consciousness which expresses itself in love for all beings. Their tenderness of sentiment and enlightened conscience should be our standards.

5) *Then, as to the persons who are spoken against, you should behave yourself in such a way, as the Brahmanas there, (who are) competent to judge, devoted (to good deeds) not led by others, not harsh, lovers of virtue, would behave in regard to such persons. This is the command. This is the teaching. This is the secret doctrine of the Veda. This is the instruction. Thus should one worship. Thus indeed should one worship.*

Note: In the Banaras Hindu University this passage is read by the Vice-Chancellor on the Convocation day as an exhortation to the students who are leaving the University. They are advised, not to give up the world but to lead virtuous lives as householders and promote the welfare of the community.

Section 12

CONCLUSIONS

Aum, may Mitra (the sun) be propitious to us; may Varuna (be) propitious to us); may Aryaman (a form of the sun) be propitious to us. May Indra and Brhaspati be propitious to us. May Visnu of wide strides be propitious to us. Salutation to Brahman. Salutation to Vayu; Thou indeed art the perceptible Brahman. Of thee, indeed, perceptible Brahman have I spoken. I have spoken of the right. I have spoken of the true. That hast protected me; That has protected the speaker. Aye, that has protected me. That has protected the speaker. Aum, peace, peace, peace.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) According to Patanjali, what are the four stages through which knowledge becomes fruitful?

.....

2) What do you understand by *Susumnanadi*?

.....

5.3 BRAHMANADA VALLI (CHAPTER 2)

Section I

INVOCATION

May He protect us both. May He be pleased with us both. May we work together with vigour; may our study make us illumined. May there be no dislike between us. Aum, peace, peace, peace.

Note: May our study make us illumined. There is no necessary connection between learning and wisdom. To be unlettered is not necessarily to be uncultured. Our modern world is maintaining the cleavage between learning and wisdom. Perhaps at no other time have humans been so knowing and yet so unaware, so burdened with purposes and yet so purposeless, so disillusioned and so completely the victims of illusion. This strange contradiction pervades our entire modern culture, our science and our philosophy, our literature and our art.

BRAHMAN AND THE COURSE OF EVOLUTION

Aum. The knower of Brahman reaches the Supreme. As to this the following has been said: He who knows Brahman as the real, as knowledge and as the infinite, placed in the secret place of the heart and in the highest heaven realizes all desires along with Brahman, the intelligent. From this Self, verily, ether arose; from ether air; from air fire; from fire water; from water the earth; from the earth herbs; from herbs food; from food the person. This, verily, is the person that consists of the essence of food. This, indeed, is his head; this the right side, this the left side; this the body; this the lower part, the foundation.

As to that, there is also this verse.

Note: the real, knowledge and infinite: the opposite of unreal, mithyatva, of the unconscious, jadatva and of the limited, paricchinnatva. akasa: ether is the ether or the common substratum from which other forces proceed. Sambhutat: arose, emanated, not created. The five different elements are clearly defined and described as having proceeded one after the other from the Self. Sometimes from food, semen, and from semen the person.

Creation starts from the principle of the universal consciousness. From it first arises space and the primary matter or ether whose quality is sound. From this etheric state successively arise grosser elements of air, fire, water and earth.

Param: the supreme. That beyond which there is nothing else, i.e. Brahman.

Guna: the secret place, the unmanifested principle in human nature. It is normally a symbol for an inward retreat.

There are five *kosas* or sheaths in which the Self is manifested as the ego or the *jivatman*. The first of them consists of food (*anna*). Other sheaths consist of *prana* or life *manas* or instinctive and perceptual consciousness, *vijnana* or intelligence and *ananda* or bliss. These five principles of matter, life, consciousness, thought and bliss are found in the world of non-ego. Anna or food is the radiant, the *viraj*, that which is perceptible by the senses, the physical. According to Suresvara, life, consciousness and intelligence constitute the subtle

self, the sutratman and bliss is the causal sheath, the *karana kosa*. B.U. I. 1. 2 mentions five sheaths under the names, *anna* or matter, *prana* or life, *manas* or consciousness, *vac* or speech (corresponding to *vijnana* or intelligence) and *avyakrta*, the undifferentiated. The last is the *karana* or the ultimate cause of all. Atman becomes the knower or the subject when associated with *antahkarana*.

The bodily sheath is conceived in the form of a bird. Suresvara says: ‘The sacrificial fire arranged in the form of a hawk or a heron or some other bird, has a head, two wings, a trunk and a tail. So also here every sheath is represented as having five parts’.

It is an axiom of mystic religion that there is a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Man is an image of the created universe. The individual soul as the microcosm has affinities with every rungs of the ladder which reaches from earth to heaven.

Section 4

MIND AND UNDERSTANDING

II) *Whence words return along with the mind, not attaining it, he who knows that bliss of Brahman fears not at any time. This is, indeed, the embodied soul of the former (life). Verily, different from and within that which consists of mind is the self consisting of understanding. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person. According to that one’s personal form is this one with the form of a person. Faith is its head; the right the right side; the true the left side; contemplation the body; the great one the lower part, the foundation.*

As to that there is also this verse.

Note: *Manas* is the faculty of perception. At the stage of *manas* we accept authority which is external; at the stage of *vijnana* internal growth is effected. The Vedas are our guide at the former level; at the intellectual we must develop faith, order, truthfulness and union with the Supreme. At the level of intellectuality or *vijnana*, we ask for proofs. When we rise higher, the truths are not inferred but become self-evident and cannot be invalidated by reason. Cp.

Section 5

UNDERSTANDING AND BLISS

1) *Understanding directs the sacrifice and it directs the deeds also. All the gods worship as the eldest the Brahman which is understanding.*

If one knows Brahman as understanding and one does not swerve from it, he leaves his sins in the body and attains all desires. This (life) is, indeed, the embodied soul of the former (the mental). Verily, different from and within that which consists of understanding is the self consisting of bliss. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person. According to that one’s personal form is this one with the form of a person. Pleasure is its head; delight the right side; great delight the left side; bliss the body, Brahman the lower part, the foundation. As to that, there is also this verse.

Note: These verses indicate the five bodies or sheaths (*panca-kosas*) material, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual. *Manas* deals with the objects perceived and *vijnana* with concepts. In later Vedanta, the distinction between the two diminishes. *Pancadasi* ascribes deliberation to *manas* and decision to *buddhi* which is the *vijnana* of this Upanishad. In every order of things the lower is strengthened by its union with the higher. When our knowledge is submissive to things, we get the hierarchical levels of being, matter, life, animal mind, human intelligence and divine bliss. They represent different degrees of abstraction and the sciences which deal with them, employ different principles and methods. In *ananda*, the attempt to connaturalise man with the supreme object succeeds. Intelligence is successful in controlling the tangible world. As a rational instrument in the sphere of positive sciences, its validity is justified. This attempt of the intellect to unify is not due to intellect alone. It is derived from its higher, from the breath of the divine. In *ananda*, earth touches heaven and is sanctified.

The author of the *Brahma Sutra* in I. 1. 12-19 identifies *anandamaya* with the absolute Brahman and not a relative manifestation. The objection that the suffix *mayat* is generally used for modification is set aside on the ground that it is also used for abundance.

In this beatific consciousness human participates in the life of the gods. Aristotle places the idea of a higher contemplation above metaphysical knowledge.

Section 6

BRAHMAN, THE ONE BEING AND THE SOURCE OF ALL

- 1) *Non-existent, verily does one become, if he knows Brahman as non-being. If one knows that Brahman is, such a one people know as existent. This is, indeed, the embodied soul of the former.*

Now then the following questions. Does anyone who knows not, when departing from this life, go to the yonder world? Or is it that any one who knows, on departing from this life, attains that world?

He (the supreme soul) desired. Let me become many, let me be born. He performed austerity. Having performed austerity he created all this, whatever is here. Having created it, into it, indeed, he entered. Having entered it, he became both the actual and the beyond, the defined and the undefined, both the founded and the non-founded, the intelligent and the non-intelligent, the true and the untrue. As the real, he became whatever there is here. That is what they call the real. As to that, there is also this verse.

Note: Sankara comments: He willed, he thought and he created. Tapas is the creative moulding power, concentrated thinking, which assumes that consciousness is at the source of manifestation. As we bend nature to our will by thought or *tapas*, *tapas* becomes mixed with magical control.

Section 7

BRAHMAN IS BLISS

- 1) *Non-existent, verily, was this (world) in the beginning. Therefore, verily, was existence produced. That made itself a soul. Therefore is it called the well-made.*

Verily, what that well-made is – that, verily, is the essence of existence. For, truly, on getting the essence, one becomes blissful. For who, indeed, could live, who breathe, if there were not this bliss in space? This, verily, is it that bestows bliss. For truly, when one finds fearlessness as support in Him who is invisible, bodiless, undefined, without support, then has he reached fearlessness. When, however, this (soul) makes in this One the smallest interval, then, for him, there is fear. That, verily, is the fear of the knower, who does not reflect. As to that, there is also this verse.

Note: The passage affirms that no one can live or breathe if there were not this bliss of existence as the very ether in which we dwell. We have a feeble analogue of spiritual bliss in aesthetic satisfaction. It is said to be akin to the bliss of the realization of *Brahman. Brahmananda-sahodarah*. It lifts out of the ordinary ruts of conventional life and cleanses our minds and hearts. By the imaginative realization of feelings, *tanmayatvam rasesu (Kalidasa)* it melts one's heart, *dravibhutam (Bhavabhuti).bhaya*: fear. We have fear when we have a feeling of otherness. See B.U. I. 4.2. where the primeval self became fearless when he found that there was no other person whom he should fear. *Amanvanasya*: who does not reflect. He is not a true sage but thinks himself to be so.

Section 8

INQUIRY INTO FORMS OF BLISS

1-5: From fear of Him does the wind blow; from fear of Him does the Sun rise; from fear of Him do Agni and Indra (act) and death, the fifth doth run.

This is the inquiry concerning bliss.

Let there be a youth, a good youth, well read, prompt in action, steady in mind and strong in body. Let this whole earth be full of wealth for him. That is one human bliss.

What is a hundred times the human bliss, that is one bliss of human fairies – also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of the human fairies, that is one bliss of divine fairies – also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire. What is a hundred times the bliss of the divine fairies, that is one bliss of the Fathers in their long enduring world also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of the fathers in their long enduring world, that is one bliss of the gods who are born so by birth, also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of the gods who are born so by birth, that is one bliss of the gods by work, who go to the gods by work, also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of the gods by work, that is one bliss of the gods, also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of the gods, that is one bliss of Indra – also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of Indra, that is the one bliss of Brhaspati – also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of Brhaspati, that is one bliss of Praja-pati, also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

What is a hundred times the bliss of Praja-pati, that is one bliss of Brahma—also of a man who is well versed in the Vedas and who is not smitten with desire.

He who is here in the person and he who is yonder in the Sun—he is one. He who knows this, on departing from this world, reaches to the self which consists of food, reaches the self which consists of life, reaches the self which consists of mind, reaches the self which consists of understanding, reaches the self which consists of bliss. As to that, there is also this verse.

Note: *For fear of Him does the wind blow:* the writer sees the proof of God in the laws of the universe. The regularity expresses an intelligence and presupposes a guide. Those who attain to the status of gods by their own work are called *Karma-devas*. The bliss of delight which knowledge of *Brahman* occasions baffles all description. It is something completely incomprehensible. *Brahman* thus is blissful being and so is of the highest value. In reaching the richness of being of *Brahman* we reach our highest fulfillment. In describing the various degrees of happiness, the author of the *Upanisad* gives us an idea of the classes of human and divine beings recognized in that period, men, fathers, fairies, gods by merit and gods by birth, *Praja-pati* and Brahma or *Hiranya-garbha*.

Section 9

THE KNOWER OF THE BLISS OF BRAHMAN IS SAVED FROM ALL FEAR

1) *Whence words return along with the mind, not attaining. It, he who knows that bliss of Brahman fears not from anything at all.*

Such a one, verily, the thought does not torment, Why have I not done the right? Why have I done the sinful? He who knows this, saves himself from these (thoughts). For, truly, from both of these he saves himself – he who knows this. Such is the secret doctrine.

Note: The enlightened one is not afflicted by anxiety about right and wrong. The truth makes us free from all restrictions. We are delivered from the law.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain briefly the five *Kosas*.

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.....
.....
.....

2) What is *Tapas* for Taittiriya Upanishad?.

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5.4 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, it may be said that the Taittiriya Upanishad contains many outstanding teachings on philosophy and religious discipline, which deserve to be studied earnestly and meditated upon by all seekers of God. Even today many persons learn the text of this Upanishad in the oral tradition in order to recite with the correct accent, meter, emphasis, sequence and rhythm.

5.5 KEY WORDS

Transmigration : Transmigration is similar and foreign in some ways to the philosophy of reincarnation. In transmigration after death, the soul moves into another body and is reborn. It was thought the soul had been, and always would be, eternal, having no beginning or end.

Nadi : Nadis are the channels through which, in traditional Indian medicine and spiritual science, the energies of the subtle body are said to flow.

5.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) Patanjali in his Mahabhasya says there are four steps or stages through which knowledge becomes fruitful. The first is when we acquire it from the teacher, the second when we study it, the third when we teach it to others and the fourth when we apply it. Real knowledge arises only when these four stages are fulfilled.
- 2) The reference here is to the susumnanadi of the Yoga system which is said to pass upward from the heart, through the mid region of the throat up to the skull where the roots of the hair lie apart. When it reaches this spot, the *nadi* passes up, breaking up the two regions of the head.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) There are five *kosas* or sheaths in which the Self is manifested as the ego or the *jivatman*. The first of them consists of food (*anna*). Other sheaths consist of *prana* or life *manas* or instinctive and perceptual consciousness, *vijnana* or intelligence and *ananda* or bliss. These five principles of matter, life, consciousness, thought and bliss are found in the world of non-ego.
- 2) Tapas is the creative moulding power, concentrated thinking, which assumes that consciousness is at the source of manifestation. As we bend nature to our will by thought or *tapas*, *tapas* becomes mixed with magical control.

UNIT 1 BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 History of Bhakti Movement
- 1.3 Torch Bearers of Bhakti Movement in Medieval Period
- 1.4 Ethical Implications and Philosophical Basis of Bhakti Movement
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Key Words
- 1.7 Further Reading and References
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Bhakti Movement brought about revolutionary changes in moral, social, political perspectives of people of India. It is important to realize that Bhakti Movement unfolded the uniformities existing among the various religions. Once again, it is important to note that it played a significant role against the divisive and destructive forces in society. Bhakti Movement through Bhakti Yoga asserted itself as a method / pathway, to God on par with Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga.

The objectives of this unit are:

- To make the pupil acquire knowledge about Bhakti Movement in ancient and medieval India.
- To enable the pupil understand the aims and services of the leaders of the movement.
- To motivate the pupil appreciate the work of the leaders of the Bhakti Movement.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root “**Bhaj**” means to serve. Dharma means the natural internal characteristics of a thing. The meaning of “movement” is the practice that influences a large section of a society.

In the early beginning, the word Bhakti is first mentioned in Rig-Veda as worship to Indra and Surya Devata. It is also noted in the famous discourse on Bhakti by Narad in Narad Bhakti Sutra. Similarly it also appears in Vishnu-sookta.

Later, Upanishads emphasized Para Bhakti. Bhakti and Upasana of Vishnu, Shiv, Roodra, Narayan, Surya is also indicated in Upanishad. The great epic Ramayana emphasized Pitra Bhakti and Guru Bhakti.

Principles of Bhakti Movement

The main principles of Bhakti movement are:

- 1) God is one,
- 2) To worship God man should serve humanity,
- 3) All men are equal,
- 4) Worshipping God with devotion is better than performing religious ceremonies and going on pilgrimages,
- 5) Caste distinctions and superstitious practices are to be given up. The Hindu saints of the Bhakti Movement and the Muslim saints of the Sufi movement became more liberal in their outlook. They wanted to get rid of the evils which had crept into their religions. There were a number of such saints from the 8th to 16th century A.D.

1.2 HISTORY OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The term bhakti is defined as “devotion” or passionate love for the Divine. Moksha or liberation from rebirth was not in the following of rules, regulations or societal ordering, but it was through simple devotion to the Divine. Within the movement at large, useful distinctions have been made by contemporary scholars between those poet saints who composed verses extolling God with attributes or form, namely, “saguna” bhaktas, and,

Those extolling God without and beyond all attributes or form, “nirguna.”

As mentioned above, the feeling of Bhakti or devotion can be traced back to the Rig Veda. It is the very first hymn of Rig Veda, which gives expression to a feeling of intimacy with the highest God. In the Katha Upanishad it is said that the divine help, which is the reward to Bhakti, is necessary before one can be saved. The Sveta – Svataara Upanishad speaks of the highest devotion to God. Panini refers to the object of devotion in the Astadhyayi. The earliest God connected with Bhakti is Vishnu – Krishna. In the Bhagwad Gita there is emphasis on Love and devotion to God. The attitude of love to the supreme God continued to be recommended in the Bhagwat Purana.

Causes for the birth of Bhakti Movement

Prior to the coming of Islam to India, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism were the dominant religions. Hinduism lost its simplicity. Many philosophical schools appeared. Two different sects, i.e., **Vaishnavism** and **Saivism** also appeared within Hinduism. In course of time **Sakti** worship also came into existence. Common people were confused on the way of worshipping God. When **Islam** came to India, the Hindus observed many ceremonies and worshipped many Gods and Goddesses. There were all sorts of superstitious beliefs among them. Their religion had become complex in nature. Added to these, the caste system, untouchability, blind worshipping and inequality in society caused dissensions among different sections of the people. On the other hand Islam preached unity of God and brotherhood of man. It emphasized monotheism. It attacked idol worship. It preached equality of man before God.

The oppressed common people and the people branded as low castes were naturally attracted towards Islam. It only increased the rivalry among religions.

Fanaticism, bigotry, and religious intolerance began to raise their heads. It was to remove such evils religious leaders appeared in different parts of India. They preached **pure devotion called Bhakti** to attain God.

Origin of the Bhakti Movement

Bhakti means personal devotion to God. It stresses the Union of the individual with God. Bhakti movement originated in South India between the 7th and the 12th centuries A.D. The **Nayanmars**, who worshipped Siva, and the **Alwars**, who worshipped Vishnu, preached the idea of Bhakti. They carried their message of love and devotion to various parts of South India through the medium of the local language. They preached among common people. It made some of the followers of the Vedic faith to revive the old Vedic religion. Saints like **Sankara**, **Ramanuja** and **Madhwa** gave their concepts of God and the individual soul.

Bhakti Movement in the North

The Bhakti movement in North India gained momentum due to the Muslim conquest. The saints of the Bhakti Movement were men and women of humble origin. They came from all castes and classes. They had visited from place to place singing devotional songs. They had also preached the Unity of God and brotherhood of man. They had stressed tolerance among various religious groups. Their preaching was simple.

The Hindu tradition has generally been divided into a number of important historical and religious periods through its long development. The formative time frame from 2500—400 B.C.E. is highlighted by what are known as the sacred texts, the Vedas, and a nomadic people known as the Indo-Aryans; this period is classified as the Vedic Period. Central to the Vedas was the visionary figure of the rishi, or seer, one who was able to communicate with and about the various gods of the Vedic pantheon through a complex system of rituals that could only be conducted by an increasingly powerful priesthood. Liberation, or moksha, was to be found through the precise performance of ritual.

The Epic and Classical Periods, from 400 B.C.E.—600 C.E. are so named because of their focus on important texts, namely, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These epics are concerned with heroes and heroic battles, kings, queens and ideal roles of individuals. Also of central importance to this time frame were Law Books concerned with the ideal nature of society. Social order and stability were to be found in a hierarchical ordering of people as well as specific roles assigned to each individual's life stage (ashrama) and position in society (varna) or caste.

On the upper rung of this system was the Brahmin priesthood, followed by Kshatriyas (warriors) and Vaishyas (merchants), also known as twice-born classes. Only these groups were enabled to take part in an initiation ceremony known as the "sacred thread," study the Vedas and take part in Vedic rituals. Beneath these three groups were the Shudras, those who were servants to the upper three varnas. Underneath this rung came another subsection, the Untouchables, those whose occupations were so polluting that they did not even qualify to fit within an ordered society. The way to liberation from rebirth or moksha was in a true understanding of dharma, recognition and maintenance of the good of the social order, as exemplified and regulated by the Epics and Law Books.

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Nature of Bhakti Movement

Generally speaking the religious movement of this period lies between 1300 – 1550 A.D. It was non ritualistic and mainly based on Bhakti. It emphasized a religion or faith, which was essentially Hindu but reflected the vigorous monotheism of Islam. All Bhakti cults are essentially monotheistic. It is immaterial whether he is called Shiva, Krishna or Devi. They all symbolize the One and the Eternal. It is the religion, philosophy and social thinking that were created during this revival, which enabled Hinduism to reassert itself in the following period. In the religious life of India the glory of period is most resplendent. Ramanand, Kabir, Mira, and Vallabhacharya in the north, Chaitanya in Bengal, Madhava, Vedanta Desika and numerous others in the south give to the religious life of the period a vitality that Hinduism never seems to have enjoyed before.

Characteristics of Bhakti Movement

One chief characteristic of the Bhakti Movement can be mentioned as belief in One God. Devotee could worship God by love and devotion. The second characteristic of Bhakti Movement was that there was no need to worship Idols or to perform elaborate rituals for seeking his grace. The third feature on which the Bhakti Saints laid stress was the equality of all castes. There was no distinction of high or low as far as devotion to God was concerned. The fourth feature was the emphasis, which these saints laid on the Hindu – Muslim Unity. According to these saints all men, irrespective of their religion are equal in the eyes of the God.

The saints preached in the language of the common people. They did not use Sanskrit, which was the language of the cultured few. These saints laid stress on purity of heart and practice of virtues like Truth, Honesty, Kindness and Charity. According to these saints, only virtuous man could realize God. These saints considered God as Omnipresent and Omnipotent. Even a householder could realize God by love and devotion. Some regarded God as formless or Nirguna while others considered him as having different forms or Saguna.

The basic principles of Bhakti Movement namely love and devotion to one personal God and the Unity of God were mainly Hindu. But as a result of contact with Islam, more emphasis was laid on these principles than performance of outward rituals such as **Yjnas**, fasts, going to sacred places, bathing in the Ganges or worship of images.

The movement had two main objects in view. One was to reform Hindu religion to enable it withstand the onslaught of Islamic propaganda. And the second was to bring about a compromise between Hinduism and Islam.

FACTORS THAT HELPED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

There were a number of factors which contributed to the rise and growth of the Bhakti Movement during the Medieval Period. The first important factor can be presumed as the persecution of Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert

them to Islam and imposed Jaziya if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam. This led to the very strong reactions of Hindus leading to preservation of their religion through Bhakti Movement. Secondly, the ill-treatment of the lower classes in Hindu society by the persons of upper castes, the people of the lower caste had to suffer injustice and cruelties. So the teachings of the Bhakti saints who preached equality of castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned appealed to the people of lower castes. Thirdly, the elaborate rituals and rigor in religion was not liked by common man. The Bhakti saints preached the path of devotion and discarded all rituals hence it appealed to the common man.

Next, was the enthusiasm and the inspiration of the Bhakti saints. They tried to remove the evils of Hindu society and gave it a new vigor and vitality. Last, factor was the inner vitality of the Hindu religion that resulted in an intellectual and a moral revival of Hinduism. This Hinduism affected every aspect of thought and generated new moral forces, which helped to revitalize Hindu life and gave it the dynamism. In the sphere of religion and normal thinking in law, in literature and even in political ideals, a new life came into being in India by the middle of the 16th century.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
 b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by Bhakti Movement?

2) Explain the factors contributing towards development of Bhakti Movement.

1.3 TORCH BEARERS OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Torch Bearers of Bhakti Movement

Ramanuja

Ramanuja was one of the earliest reformers. Born in the South, he made a pilgrimage to some of the holy places in Northern India. He considered God as an Ocean of Love and beauty. His teachings were based on the **Upanishads** and **Bhagwad Gita**. Whatever he taught, he had taught in the language of the common man. Soon a large number of people became his followers. **Ramanand** was his disciple. He took his message to Northern parts of India.

Ramananda

Ramananda was the first reformer to preach in Hindi, the main language spoken by the people of the North. He was educated at Benaras. He preached that there is nothing high or low. All men are equal in the eyes of God. He was an ardent worshipper of Rama. He

welcomed people of all castes and status to follow his teachings. He had twelve chief disciples. One of them was a barber, another was a weaver, the third one was a cobbler and the other was the famous saint **Kabir** and the fifth one was a woman named **Padmavathi**. He considered God as a loving father. He lived in the 14th century A.D.

Kabir

Kabir was an ardent disciple of Ramananda. It is said that he was the son of a Brahmin widow who had left him near a tank at Varanasi. A **Muslim** couple **Niru** and his wife who were weavers brought up the child. Later he became a weaver but he was attracted by the teachings of Swami Ramananda. He wanted unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. He preached that both the Hindus and the Muslims are the children of a single God. He had no faith in idol worship, religious rituals and ceremonies. He taught that **Allah** and **Eswar**, **Ram** and **Rahim** are one and the same. They are present everywhere. The devotees of Kabir were known as **Kabir Panthis**. Thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims became Kabir's followers. He probably lived in the fifteenth century A.D.

Namdeva

Namdeva was a waterman by birth. He hailed from Maharashtra. He composed beautiful hymns in Marathi. They are full of intense devotion to God. He worshipped Vishnu in the form of Lord Vithoba. Some of his verses are included in the **Guru Granth Sahib**, the holy book of the Sikhs. A large number of people from different Castes became his followers.

Guru Nanak. (A.D.1469 -A.D.1538)

Guru Nanak was the founder of the Sikh religion. From his childhood, he did not show any interest in worldly affairs. At the age of 29, he left his home and became a **Sadhu**. He went to **Mecca** and **Medina**. He had travelled far and wide to spread his teachings. Guru Nanak had finally settled at Karthpur. He laid emphasis on pure and simple living. He preached the Unity of God and condemned idolatry. He was against the caste system. Guru Nanak's followers are called the Sikhs. He started the **Langer** or the common kitchen, where people belonging to all castes or religions could have their meals together.

Nanak's teachings were in the form of verses. They were collected in a book called the **Adi Granth**. Later Adi Grantham was written in a script called **Gurmukhi**. The holy book of the Sikhs is popularly known as '**Grantha Sahib**'. It contains verses from Kabir, Namdeva and other Bhakti and Sufi saints.

Chaitanya (A.D.1485 - A.D.1533)

Chaitanya, a great devotee of **Lord Krishna**, was a saint from Bengal. From his very childhood, he had showed great interest in education and studied Sanskrit. He married the daughter of a Saintly person. Later at the age of 24, he renounced

the worldly life and became a sanyasin. He travelled all over the Deccan, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. His followers regarded him as an incarnation of **Lord Vishnu**. He helped the old and the needy. He was opposed to the inequalities of the caste system. He emphasized the need for tolerance, humanity and love. He spread the message of Bhakti in Bengal. He popularised '**Sankritan**' or public singing of God's name. His songs are still very popular in Bengal. He was addressed '**Mahaprabhu**' by his followers.

Tulsi Das

Goswamy Tulsidas was a devotee of Rama. His work gives the story of Rama in Hindi. He was the foremost in popularizing Rama cult. His other works in Hindi are **Janaki Mangal** and **Parvathi Mangal**. In his writings he insists the duty of a son to his parent, duty of a student to his teacher and duty of a king to his people.

Guru Ramdas

He was a famous teacher. He was born in A.D. 1608. Chatrapati Shivaji, the great Maratha ruler, was a follower of Ramdas. He stressed upon the equality of all men before God. He said that anyone could attain God's favour by means of Bhakti. Guru Ramdas was not merely a religious preacher but also a Nation Builder.

Tukaram: was a saint who lived in Maharashtra. He composed a large number of verses called **Abhangas** or devotional songs in praise of Panduranga or Krishna. He believed in one God who was kind, merciful and protective. He wrote all his **abhangas** in Marathi.

Jnaneshwar: He is one of the greatest saints of Maharashtra. He worshipped Vishnu in the form of Vithoba or Krishna. At the age of fourteen, he translated the **Bhagawad Gita** into the Marathi language. This book is called **Jnaneshwari**.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA

Nayanmars

In South India, the **Nayanmars** and **Alwars** were the noted saints of the Bhakti movement. The Nayanmars, the devotees of Siva, were **sixty three** in number. The most famous among them were **Appar, Sundarar, Thirugnana Sambandar** and **Manickavachakar**. These saints composed many verses in praise of Lord Siva. A saint named **Nambiandar Nambi** collected the devotional songs of Nayanmars. Appar, Sundarar and Thirugnana Sambandar composed the **Thevaram** hymns. Manickvachakar's songs are known as **Tiruvachakam**. **Periyapuranam**, written by **Sekhizhar**, tells us the life stories of the Nayanmars.

Alwars

The **Alwars** were the worshippers of **Lord Vishnu** who were twelve in number. Among them **Nammalwar, Tirumangai Alwar, Andal** and **Perialwar** were famous. The songs of the Alwars were compiled in a book called **Nalayira Divya Prabandham** by **Nadamuni**. The devotional songs of **Andal** is called **Thiruppavai**.

Basava

Basava lived in Karnataka. He founded the **Virasaiva** or **Lingayat** sect. According to Basava, Siva was the supreme God. Basava opposed child marriage and idol worship.

Women Torch Bearers

Many of the bhakti poet-saints rejected asceticism as the crucial means toward liberation; some bhaktas were instead householders. As well, themes of universalism, a general rejection of institutionalized religion, and a central focus on inner devotion laid the groundwork for more egalitarian attitudes toward women and lower caste devotees.

Women and shudras, both at the bottom of the traditional hierarchy ordering society, became the examples of true humility and devotion. Female poet-saints also played a significant role in the bhakti movement at large. Nonetheless, many of these women had to struggle for acceptance within the largely male dominated movement. Only through demonstrations of their utter devotion to the Divine, their outstanding poetry and stubborn insistence of their spiritual equality with their contemporaries were these women reluctantly acknowledged and accepted within their ranks. Their struggle attests to the strength of patriarchal values within both society and within religious and social movements attempting to pave the way for more egalitarian access to the Divine.

The imagery of bhakti poetry is grounded in the everyday, familiar language of ordinary people. Women bhaktas wrote of the obstacles of home, family tensions, the absent husband, meaningless household chores, and restrictions of married life, including their status as married women. In many cases, they rejected traditional women's roles and societal norms by leaving husbands and homes altogether, choosing to become wandering bhaktas; in some instances they formed communities with other poet-saints. Their new focus was utter devotion and worship of their Divine Husbands.

Caste status and even masculinity were understood as barriers to liberation, in essence a rejection of the hierarchy laid out by the Law Books of the Classical Period. Male bhaktas often took on the female voice calling to her Beloved, utterly submissive to His desires. However, while male bhaktas could engage in this role playing on a temporary basis, returning at will to their privileged social status as males, women bhaktas faced overwhelming challenges through their rejection of societal norms and values, without having the ability to revert back to their normative roles as wives, mothers and in some cases, the privileges of their original high caste status.

While it is tempting to see women's participation within the bhakti movement as a revolt against the patriarchal norms of the time, there is little evidence to support this perspective. Injustices and the patriarchal order itself were not a major focus of these poet-saints. Women bhaktas were simply individuals attempting to lead lives of devotion. Staying largely within the patriarchal ideology that upheld the chaste and dutiful wife as ideal, these women transferred the object of their devotion and their duties as the "lovers" or "wives" to their Divine Lover or Husband. Nonetheless, that their poetry became an integral aspect of the bhakti movement at large is highly significant and inspirational for many

who look to these extraordinary women as ideal examples of lives intoxicated by love for the Divine. Further, it would appear that with the movement's northward advancement (15th through 17th centuries), its radical edge as it pertained to women's inclusion, was tempered. Greater numbers of women took part in the movement's earlier development (6th to 13th centuries); it is largely male bhaktas and saints that are today perceived as the spokespersons for the movement in its later manifestations. The poetry of women bhaktas from this latter time period is generally not indicative of a rejection of societal norms in terms of leaving family and homes in pursuit of divine love. Instead, some of the later poet-saints stayed within the confines of the household while expounding on their souls' journeys, their eternal love for the Divine, as well as their never-ending search for truth.

Female Bhaktas

The poets outlined below represent a panorama of female poet-saints within the Bhakti movement. Some were extraordinarily radical in their rejection of social norms and values, leaving husbands, families, and society behind in order to extol their love for God. Others attempted to fit into more traditional roles in society by maintaining their responsibilities as wives and mothers. All wrote exquisite poetry that has been passed on through bards and singers throughout India.

Akkamahadevi, also known as **Akka** or **Mahadevi** was a bhakta from the southern region of Karnataka and devotee of Shiva in the 12th century C.E. Legends tell of her wandering naked in search of her Divine Lover; her poetry, or *vacanas* tells of her frustration with societal norms and roles that restricted her. They also bear witness to her intense, all-encompassing love for Shiva, whom she addresses as *Chennamallikarjuna*. Through Shiva and Shiva alone is her love fulfilled; through separation from her "lord White as jasmine" is her heart broken.

Janabai was born around the 13th century in Maharashtra in a low caste sudra family. As a young girl she was sent to work in the upper-caste family of Namdev, one of the most revered of the bhakti poet saints. While within this household, she continued to serve Namdev, both as a servant and as his devotee. Janabai wrote over three hundred poems focusing on domestic chores and the restrictions facing her as a low caste woman.

Mirabai, or **Mira** is said to have been born into a ruling Rajput family. Mirabai's poetry tells of her vision of Lord Krishna when she was a child; from that point on Mira vowed that she would forever be his bride. Despite her wishes she was married into another princely family at a young age. Yet the numerous legends surrounding Mira tell of an undying devotion toward Krishna, her true husband. Central to these accounts are Mirabai's struggles within the family she had been married into, including unsuccessful attempts made by her jealous husband to kill her. Others focus on her sisters-in-law's efforts to obstruct Mirabai in her desires to join the company of wandering saints, actions deemed utterly improper for a woman of her high-caste status. Eventually, Mirabai left her husband and family in pilgrimage to various places associated with "her Dark Lord," including Brindavan, Krishna's holy city. There she was initially rejected because she was a woman. Yet Mirabai's reputation of devotion, piety, and intellectual astuteness eventually led to her inclusion within the community of the saints of Brindavan.

Mirabai’s poetry portrays a unique relationship with Krishna; in it she is not only the devoted bride of Krishna, but Krishna is ardent in his pursuit of Mira. Because of Mirabai’s singular focus and intense devotion of her Husband, the “lifter of the mountain,” she can be perceived as simply upholding the “wifely” duties of women and patriarchal norms in general. On the other hand, she remains for many a symbol of resistance of social order of the day.

Bahinabai or **Bahina** was a poet-saint from 17th century Maharashtra, writing in the form of abangas, women’s songs that accompanied their labours, especially in the fields. Her writings are particularly autobiographical, recounting her childhood, puberty and married life. Despite having obvious conflicts with her husband due to her overarching and ecstatic love for her Divine Lover in the form of Lord Vithoba, another name for Krishna, she took her role as wife and responsibilities to her earthly husband seriously. Her husband was also critical of her allegiance to the Bhakti poet-saint Tukaram. Nonetheless, her poetry reflects an attitude of duty and respectful empathy toward both her marriage and her spouse. This becomes clear through her writings on the responsibilities of women toward their husbands. Though highly unusual, it is believed that Bahinabai received some classical training from her father, a Brahmin scribe. Her poetry recounts visions she experiences of the low-caste poet-saint Tukaram; despite her high caste status, she became his devotee, thus choosing the path of devotion over brahmanical norms of ritual purity.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Bring out the contribution of Saint Kabir and Saint Tukaram to Bhakti Movement.

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2) Explain the role played by women saints in Bhakti Movement.

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1.4 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

With reference to the early beginning of Bhakti Movement in southern India, on the philosophical side the most important fact is the new interpretation of the ancient philosophical texts given by Ramanuja, who in the eleventh century provided an intellectual foundation for bhakti, which the monistic philosophy had done so much to undermine. It was this influence which was most powerful in what has been called the Hindu Reformation, and in the ' Four Churches of the Reformation we have evidence of the new strength and vitality which had been imparted to the spirit of bhakti. These Churches are known respectively as (1) the Sri-sampradaya of Ramanuja, (2) the Brahma-sampradaya of Madhva, (3) the Rudra-sampradaya of Vishnuswamin, and (4) the Sanakadi-sampradaya of Nimbarka. These Churches are based on different theological foundations. The first held a qualified monism—visishtadvaita, the second a dualism on the lines of the Samkhya-Yoga, the third a pure monism—suddhadvaita, and the fourth a philosophy which is a curious blend of monism and pluralism. Yet all agree on certain points. They hold to the belief in God as in some way personal. They also agree in holding that the soul is essentially personal and possessed of inalienable individuality. It is also immortal, finding its true being not in absorption in the Supreme, but in a relation with him of inextinguishable love. All agree accordingly in rejecting the doctrine of Maya.

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar has well summarized what is to be said regarding the relations of the various Vaishnava systems to each other in the following paragraph:

The points of contact between these various Vaishnava systems are that their spiritual elements are essentially derived from the Bhagavadgita, that Vasudeva as the name of the Supreme Being, stands in the background of all, and that spiritual monism and world-illusion are denounced by them equally. The differences arise from the varied importance that they attach to the different spiritual doctrines; the prominence that they give to one or other of the three elements that were mingled with Vasudevism ; the metaphysical theory that they set up; and the ceremonial that they impose upon their followers. The Bhagavadgita was supplemented in later times by the Pancaratra Samhitas and the Puranas such as the Vishnu and the Bhagavata, and other later works of that description. These occasionally elucidated some of the essential doctrines, laid down the ceremonial, and brought together a vast mass of legendary matter to magnify the importance of their special teachings and render them attractive.

The Bhaktiratnavali, a work, dating from about A. D. 1400, which consists of extracts from the Bha-gavata Purana, shows how this influence wrought in one of its lines. It commends the bhakti-marga as the only way of deliverance. Neither charity, nor asceticism, nor sacrifices, nor purificatory rites, nor penances and religious vows please him. He is pleased with pure devotion. Everything else is futile, mere mockery.

Effects of Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti movement had brought the Hindus and the Muslims closer to each other. The equality concept preached by the leaders reduced the rigidity of the

caste system to a certain extent. The suppressed people gained a feeling of self-respect. The reformers preached in local languages. It led to the development of Vernacular literature. They composed hymns and songs in the languages spoken by the people. Therefore there was a remarkable growth of literature in all the languages. A new language Urdu, a mixture of Persian and Hindi, was developed. The Bhakti movement freed the common people from the tyranny of the priests. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It encouraged the spirit of toleration. The gap between the Hindus and the Muslims was reduced. They began to live amicably together. It emphasized the value of a pure life of charity and devotion. Finally, it improved the moral and spiritual ways of life of the medieval society. It provided an example for the future generation to live with the spirit of toleration.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Mention some ethical implications of Bhakti Movement.

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2) Explain the effects of Bhakti Movement

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

The social significance of Bhakti Movement was remarkable. It also attempted to do away with all the distinctions of caste and creed. It is well known fact that in Maharashtra saints like Jnanesvara, Eknath, Tukaram and others tried to overcome the evils which were meted out to women and lower caste people.

Bhakti Movement brought about a kind of “reformation” in India with reference to the attitude of people belonging to variety of religions. It also led to respecting other religions.

Following a religion and achieving salvation was made more simple for all down trodden people. The divisive and destructive forces from various religions were

also checked. This led to the change in the mind sets of Indian people. To certain extent it contributed towards strengthening of spirituality of people belonging to various religions.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- Bhakti** : The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root “**Bhaj**” means to serve. The term bhakti is defined as “devotion” or passionate love for the Divine.
- Alvars** : The **Alvars** were the worshippers of **Lord Vishnu** who were twelve in number

1.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root “**Bhaj**” means to serve. Dharma means the natural internal characteristics of a thing. The meaning of “movement” is the practice that influences a large section of a society. In the early beginning, the word Bhakti is first mentioned in Rig-Veda as worship to Indra and Surya Devata. It is also noted in the famous discourse on Bhakti by Narad in Narad Bhakti Sutra. Similarly it also appears in Vishnu-sookta.
- 2) There were a number of factors which contributed to the rise and growth of the Bhakti Movement during the Medieval Period. The first important factor can be presumed as the persecution of Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert them to Islam and imposed Jaziya if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam. This led to the very strong reactions of Hindus leading to preservation of their religion through Bhakti Movement. Secondly, the ill-treatment of the lower classes in Hindu society by the persons of upper castes, the people of the lower caste had to suffer injustice and cruelties. so the teachings of the Bhakti saints who preached equality of castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned appealed to the people of lower castes. Thirdly, the elaborate rituals and rigor in religion was not liked by common man. The Bhakti saints preached the path of devotion and discarded all rituals hence it appealed to the common man.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Kabir was an ardent disciple of Ramananda. It is said that he was the son of a Brahmin widow who had left him near a tank at Varanasi. A **Muslim** couple **Niru** and his wife who were weavers brought up the child. Later he became a weaver but he was attracted by the teachings of Swami Ramananda. He wanted unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. He preached that both the Hindus and the Muslims are the children of a single God. He had no faith in idol worship, religious rituals and ceremonies. He taught that **Allah** and **Eswar, Ram** and **Rahim** are one and the same. They are present everywhere. The devotees of Kabir were known as **Kabir Panthis**. Thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims became Kabir's followers. He probably lived in the fifteenth century A.D. **Tukaram** was a saint who lived in Maharashtra. He composed a large number of verses called **Abhangas** or devotional songs in praise of Panduranga or Krishna. He believed in one God who was kind, merciful and protective. He wrote all his **abhangas** in Marathi.
- 2) Many of the bhakti poet-saints rejected asceticism as the crucial means toward liberation; some bhaktas were instead householders. As well, themes of universalism, a general rejection of institutionalized religion, and a central focus on inner devotion laid the groundwork for more egalitarian attitudes toward women and lower caste devotees.

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Check Your Progress III

- 1) With reference to the early beginning of Bhakti Movement in southern India, on the philosophical side the most important fact is the new interpretation of the ancient philosophical texts given by Ramanuja, who in the eleventh century provided an intellectual foundation for bhakti, which the monistic philosophy had done so much to undermine. It was this influence which was most powerful in what has been called the Hindu Reformation, and in the 'Four Churches of the Reformation we have evidence of the new strength and vitality which had been imparted to the spirit of bhakti. These Churches are known respectively as (1) the Sri-sampradaya of Ramanuja, (2) the Brahma-sampradaya of Madhva, (3) the Rudra-sampradaya of Vishnuswamin, and (4) the Sanakadi-sampradaya of Nimbarka. These Churches are based on different theological foundations. The first held a qualified monism—visishtadvaita, the second a dualism on the lines of the Samkhya-Yoga, the third a pure monism—suddhadvaita, and the fourth a philosophy which is a curious blend of monism and pluralism. Yet all agree

on certain points. They hold to the belief in God as in some way personal. They also agree in holding that the soul is essentially personal and possessed of inalienable individuality. It is also immortal, finding its true being not in absorption in the Supreme, but in a relation with him of inextinguishable love. All agree accordingly in rejecting the doctrine of Maya.

- 2) The Bhakti movement had brought the Hindus and the Muslims closer to each other. The equality concept preached by the leaders reduced the rigidity of the caste system to a certain extent. The suppressed people gained a feeling of self-respect. The reformers preached in local languages. It led to the development of Vernacular literature. They composed hymns and songs in the languages spoken by the people. Therefore there was a remarkable growth of literature in all the languages. A new language Urdu, a mixture of Persian and Hindi, was developed. The Bhakti movement freed the common people from the tyranny of the priests. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It encouraged the spirit of toleration. The gap between the Hindus and the Muslims was reduced. They began to live amicably together. It emphasised the value of a pure life of charity and devotion. Finally, it improved the moral and spiritual ways of life of the medieval society. It provided an example for the future generation to live with the spirit of toleration.

UNIT 2 SUFI MOVEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO INDIA

Contents

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit deals with the roots of Sufism, its origin and development, different orders and the interaction between saints of the two communities in India. The unit has the following objectives: - It aims at presenting the basic idea with a brief history of Sufism in and outside India.

It emphasizes the interaction with a view to making the students cognizant of the appreciable results enhancing the social unity, cultural synthesis and communal harmony. It has also attempted to apprise the pupils of the schools which have jeopardized the above mentioned outcomes.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

All religions, belonging to the Semitic or non-Semitic family, have spiritual aspect enshrined in their very nature. It is evident for the reason that every religion has some fascination for all classes of people. It must satisfy both the intellect and the spirit. Besides, it also provides some relief and contentment to the inner crave of beauty. Man instinctively desires to cherish the most significant concept of supreme beauty with profound devotion and utmost sincerity. It is evident then that the religion either revealed or otherwise is not meant for some particular group or society bound up in the particular geographical precincts. It has, as claimed, a universal appeal to satisfy spiritual, moral and aesthetic urges of different people without a discrimination of person or place. Religion thus attracts the people of all classes living in different geographical regions. It is for this reason that we notice different shades of all practicing religions imbibing local cultural milieu. The impact can overtly be studied in the spiritual disciplines of the persisting religions. In order to substantiate our contention, we may pickup

myriad examples from Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam of course, is no exception. Even cursory study of Sufism in different lands is enough to uphold our contention. We clearly observe the impact of shibboleths in the Sufism of the countries where Islam is preached and practiced.

2.2 ROOTS OF SUFISM

The term sufi is an Arabic word generally alluding to a man having drawn to seclusion taking recourse in the path of devotion and dedication to god. The scholars are divided on the root of the term. Some orientalist, being amply influenced by the West are of the view that the term sufi has been derived from a Greek word sophia which means wisdom. Accordingly the divinely wise people were called sufis. Their view is not acceptable for, there exists no term like sufi in the Greek language. The term sufi has several Arabic roots. Some scholars believe that the term is derived from the Arabic words saf which means rank. The people engaged in worship and devotion who enjoyed the first rank in the hierarchy of Islamic Arab society, were called sufis. It is also not correct because the sufis never cared for social status; in fact they always refused such glamour. Some scholars believe that the term sufi comes out of the Arabic word safa which means purity. It is acceptable to some extent. Purity is one of the basic virtues to be inculcated by a novice. Some orientalists believe that the term sufi owes its origin to another Arabic word sof, meaning wool. The aristocrats before and after the advent of Islam wore woolen cloths as a mark of destination. The devotees also imitated them. They were therefore called Sufi's. The derivation is not correct, for the Sufis generally wore torn up cloaks. Most of the scholars have agreed that term sufi has been derived from the Arabic word suffah meaning the terrace. It has a reference to the devoted companions of the prophet who dwelt on the terrace of the prophet's mosque in Madina. They led a life of prayer and penitence in the days of peace and participated in the battles against Islam in the days of war. They had no social and political responsibilities. They were addressed as the dwellers of the terrace (ahl-al suffah). It is believed to be the most reasonable derivation.

2.3 ORIGIN OF SUFISM

Sufi movement is characteristically Islamic in nature. It originated and developed in the Arab peninsula and spread thereafter in the vast Muslim empire which was established by the rulers after conquering many alien lands in Europe, Asia and Africa. Retaining the Islamic Character the movement readily admitted the local influence and adapted to the social conditions, cultural features and spiritual needs of the native peoples. It may be explicitly understood in the case of India where spiritual interactions between the Sufi's and the Yogis resulted into the inception and growth of Bhakti movement. Many Yoga and Muslim saints led and carried forward the healthy tradition of bhakti movement. In other lands also Sufism pursued the same course ensuing similar consequences. Persia, due to its rich cultural heritage and proximity of ideas, influenced the movement most widely and profoundly. Sufism admitted several conceptual elements from the Persian culture and religion, and practiced them in the course of prayer and penitence. Reason being, that it become an Islamic state following the Arab political legacy.

Although we could notice the mystic trends just after the advent of Islam in the life time of the prophet, yet Sufism in the fullest sense came into existence particularly in the days of Umayyad due to at least for some endurable political distress. As the people have different aptitudes, all of them could not live freely in the vitiated political atmosphere. They therefore preferred to draw themselves to isolation and chose to lead a life of devotion. Abul Hamshin Kofi is believed to be the first Muslim mystic. His way of life fascinated many people who joined him in this path and became his disciples. Sufism thus came into origin.

Since then it attracted scores of people in every age. Some of them remained on the edges; others were lost in the path. But some claimed to have transcended the obstacles of the path.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are different derivations of the term sufi?

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2) Which is the most agreed upon root of the term sufi?

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3) Who were called Ahl-al-Suffah?

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2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF SUFISM

The whole panorama of Islamic mysticism can be divided into two phases (a) Early phase (b) later phase.

Simplicity, modesty, sheer devotion and complete obedience to God are some of the basic characteristics of the early phase. Much emphasis was laid on the doctrines and the authenticity of the mystic experience in the later phase.

a) Early phase

The Early phase of Sufism is believed to have begun from the very inception of Islam. Mohammad, even before the declaration of his prophet-hood, led a life of an asceticism, purity and devotion which is the core of mysticism. After being declared prophet, he was the perfect man to comprehend the esoteric aspect of Islam which again is the basic spirit of Sufism. After his death the pious caliphs and Ali and his descendents continued the traditions and lived a life of devotion and obedience to God with an emphasis on the esoteric aspect of Islam. They however managed social and political affairs of the state efficiently.

Oways-Qarni, Hasan Basari, Abu Hashin Kufi are some of the important names in the early phase of sufism. Besides, Rabia Basari was the first woman Sufi who enjoyed great respect and veneration in her fellow sufis. Thus early Sufism created a spiritual milieu conducive to highlighting the essence of religion and the significance of mystic experience.

The origin and growth of every moment is possible only in the society. Similar is the case of sufism. It came into existence and grew in to some social and political developments. After the death of Prophet Mohammad Muslim society plunged into some serious controversies. The first was regarding the caliphate which resulted into factional fight. This political development gave way to many political upheavals. Many of the companions of the prophet made attempts to dissolve the political crisis. Abu-Zar-Ghaffari Ali, and his descendents tried hard to win over the sociopolitical chaos but it was in vain. Particularly in the days of Umayyad due to their tyrannical rule, the intellectual class took refuge either in the study of Greek philosophy and other sciences or in the path of devotion wherein they could find complete solace and mental satisfaction. Sufism thus is an outcome of sheer despondency and disapproval of the socio political environment. Early sufism therefore reflects a sense of condemnation towards the sociopolitical eventualities and stressed upon leading a life of asceticism, purity, obedience and love of God.

b) Later Phase

The later phase particularly begins with Ghazali who, after analysing the indescribable experiences of the early sufis and after having plunged himself into the realm of mysticism, founded some doctrines of Sufism. They are as follows- (1) Tauba (Repentance) (2) Beem-vrija (hope and fear) (3) Sabr-v-Tavakkul (Patience) and dependence. (4) Marfat (Gnosis) (5) Fana (annihilation) (6) Ishq (Love of God). Later on other sufis like Junaid Bhaghdadi, Shahab-ud-din Suharwardi and Bayazeed Bistami and others discovered their own doctrines like

- 1) Suhv- (Sobriety)
- 2) Noor-doctrine of light
- 3) Sukr- Intoxication.

Indian Philosophical Movements

Having analysed these doctrines carefully we may deduce the following fundamental doctrines.

- 1) Worship of God
- 2) Love of God
- 3) Knowledge of God
- 4) Obedience to God
- 5) Purification
- 6) Annihilation

They involve a variety of mystic experiences resulting into different stages ensuing several mental states. The stages are given below:

- 1) Salik (Novice)
- 2) Sabir – (Patient)
- 3) Arif – (Gnostic)
- 4) Majzoob – Charlatan
- 5) Wali – Saint
- 6) Qutub- The leader or the star etc.

There are many others but we need not go into the details.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Name the phases of Sufism.
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2) What are the characteristics of early sufism?
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3) What are the basic doctrines of later sufism?
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2.5 SUFISM IN INDIA

With the expansion of the Muslim empire and the emergence of sectarian controversies, sufi movement spread all over the Muslim world. The Sufi movement commenced with a missionary zeal. Having conquered many lands the Muslims started preaching Islam. As a consequence people of different lands embraced Islam but did not abdicate their ancestral beliefs altogether. The stupendous task of preaching the religion was willingly taken up by the sufis in different parts of the Muslim kingdom. Similar was the case of India Although Indo-Arab Trade could be dated long before the advent of Islam, yet the Muslims, particularly the merchants, started pouring in Indian coastal areas and settled there in pockets with the purpose of the advancement of their trade. The population of the Muslims being two meagre did not attract the sufis to begin their mission. With the invasion of Mohammad bin Qasim throngs of Muslims chose India as their abode. Many of them were left behind in the Indus valley and the adjoining areas. Even after Mohammad bin Qasim was called back, some sufis and scholars came with the army and stayed here with a two- fold purpose in mind that is to guide the Muslims to the write path and to preach Islam to the natives. Although the sufis never in encouraged forceful conversion yet the rulers supported them in their mission. The sufis also did not check or discourage the local cultural elements the converts brought with them by way of inheritance. In India also we notice an amalgam of two cultures. The theologians (Ulama) considered it as an evil of proselytism and attempted to remove all impurities entering into Islam by way of ancestral beliefs. They resolved to preserve Islam in its pristine form. The sufis, however, in the pursuit of their mission interacted with the people in their dialects and persuaded them to accept Islam in their own way.

Shaikh ali Hujwari of Data Gunj was the first reputed sufi in India. Earlier some other sufies like shaikh Mohammad also visited India but their preceptors did not permit them to stay here. Shaikh Ali Hujwari on the exhortation of his guide lived here to preach Islam to the native people. He succesfully performed his task of proselytism in and around Sindh. Hujweri belonged to the early phase of sufism and emphasized the basic doctrines of sufism like worship of God ,love of God, knowledge of God, purification and annihilation. He paved the path for the future sufis in India by writing a monumental book *Kashful-ul-Mehjoob*.

2.6 ORDERS OF SUFISM

Many sufis of different orders migrated into India from various parts of Muslim empire on the gesture of their preceptors to propagate Islamic values before the Indian natives. They presented themselves as the best example by practicing the moral values of Islam. The local people drew inspiration from their simple life and emulated their cherished higher values. The leading sufis of different orders created a social atmosphere conducive to the growth of a religions personality engaged in the pursuit of the path of devotion. Even the common man having received education from the renowned sufis readily approved the higher values and led a full moral life. The sufis wanted to create a society in which virtues were held high and the evil was completely eschewed. The sufis of different orders established their seminaries to carry out their appointed mission. A great number of people belonging to different communities gathered there to listen to their sermons. They were so greatly impressed that they decided to follow their

path. Many of them, as desired, were initiated into the orders (silsila) and were allowed to practicing mystic doctrines. Many of the Indian converts became practicing Sufis. Some of them enjoyed a leading position in the Sufi hierarchy of one or the other order (silsila).

There are many major and minor orders. Some of them were founded in India itself. The major orders are as follows.

- 1) Chishtiya order
- 2) Qadriya order
- 3) Suharwardiya order
- 4) Naqsh bandiya order.

The minor orders emerged as the off shoot of one or the other major orders.

a) Major Orders

- 1) Chishtiya Order was founded in India by Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti. Like many of his predecessors he also migrated into India from central Asia at the behest of his guide (Peer), Khawaja Usman. He came here with a firm resolution of serving Islam and the Muslims living in India. History records that many Muslim rulers since the invasion of Mohammad bin Qasim attacked India with out having a serious concern to establish Muslim empire in this country. After every attack a great number of Muslims were left behind. Thus the Muslim population went on increasing in India slowly and gradually. This meagre minority had to be looked after. Some of the native rulers were not friendly to the Muslim immigrants. They behaved with them cruelly. Sufi is like Khwaja Moin-uddin were quite sensitive to the cause of the distressed minority. It is believed, albeit, there is no clear historical evidence, that Khwaja Moin-uddin Chisti invited Mohammad Ghauri to invade India once again and emancipate the Muslims from the cruelty of the Ajmer King Prithivi Raj who had defeated him many a time earlier. On accounts of the political antagonism of the Indian Kings Prithivi Raj was finally overcome and Mohammad Ghauri established Muslim rule by appointing his slave as the governor of India. Qutbuddin Aibak, the slave, declared himself as an independent ruler after his master's death.

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti vociferously pursued the task of proselytism in the country. He travelled to Bangal and other states and converted a great number of natives to Islam. The religion Islam was greatly welcomed in the caste- ridden Indian society because of the fact that Islam in its original form admitted no barriers. The Indian sociopolitical scene was quite conducive to the fulfillment of the mission in mind. No, renowned sufi unlike the Hindu yogis or Buddhist mystics ever led a life of complete detachment. They only shunned worldly luxuries; Khwaja Moinuddin followed the legacy of the earliest sufis like Abu-zar Ghaffari. The Khwaja participated in the battles against the natives in the days of wars and offered them spiritual remedies in the days of peace. He, however, pleaded always for the communal harmony, spiritual satisfaction to all, and religious tolerance with all humility and integrity.

The Chishti teachings were carried forward and popularized by his very famous and eminent disciples like Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, Nizam uddin Auliya and Naseeruddin Charagh.

All these saints served the people in the best manner. They lived a life of isolation but never deprived their fellow beings of their blessings. Amongst the chishtis Shaikh Nizamudin Aulia was the most outstanding sufi of his time. He enjoyed a great reverence in the people and the nobility. He guided the common masses and the aristocrats. The kings also paid him great respect and often sought his exhortations particularly at the time of invasion. They implored him to pray for them for their victory in the ensuing battles. His hospice always remained crowded. He offered food and shelter to all those who visited him. He never showed any discrimination on the basis of cast, creed and colour. People of all walks of life belonging to different religions came to listen to his exhortations. In brief he was the most popular and the most venerated man of his time. People offered precious gifts in the form of kinds and cash by which he managed the expenses of his hospice.

Nizamuddin as a sufi, in addition to carrying out the provisions of shariya, emphasized the love of God. He, for this reason, was commonly known even in his life the beloved of God. He also practiced the other Chishti teaching in letter and spirit. All the cryptos of his time describe him as the most eminent sufi of his age.

The next important major order of Sufism in India is the Qadriya. It was founded in the name of its precursor Abdul Qadir Jilani. The sufis of this order also migrated into India from the Persio-Arab land. Muhibullah Shah, Miyan Meer and Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shahjahan, were the representative sufis of this order.

The Qadriyas were not much different from the chistis except that they owed allegiance to their elder.

Abdul Qadir Jilani considered him to be the most perfect sufi of all times. It was an unsubstantiated claim. His spiritual stage, however, was commanded and widely acknowledged.

Qadriya order in India was introduced quite late in the medieval ages. Abdul Qadir of Badayun founded it here in the last decades of 14th century. The order became more popular in the Muslim world including India due to the initiation of Ibnul Arabi into the fold. Most of its followers, therefore, were the staunch supporters of the very controversial theory of the unity of existence Wahdat-ul Wujood. The Qadriya order however remained less significant in India as compared to other three major orders.

The suharwardi order was founded in the name of sheikh shahabuddin Suharwardi Maqtul. Like Mansoor Hallaj he was also executed on account of his heresies. He was an emanationist believing in the incarnation (Hulul) of God in man. He deemed himself to be an incarnation of God. On the basis of his mystic experience he introduced the doctrine of light (Nur) into Sufism. The theologians, who always showed resistance to all such theories considering them against Islam, vehemently opposed his spiritual convictions and persuaded the ruler to execute him declaring him as infidel. Like his predecessor Hallaj, Shahabudin also became a victim of the court politics. He died quite young but initiated many disciples into his fold. Like Ibnul-Arabi he also believed in one existence emanating all through the world to make it organic and vibrant.

The Suharwardi order was also introduced later than Chishtiya. Bahauddin Zakarya was the first and the most important sufi of Suharwardi order in India. He spread and made it popular particularly in the Northern India. The parents of Bahauddin Zakarya migrated into India in the search of better livelihood. Bahauddin, however, had very little to do with the worldly riches. He had spiritual inclination from the very beginning. Bahauddin heard the inner voice and went to the sheikh to get mystic training. His preceptor was amused to see that Bahauddin could grasp the intensity of the mystic experience and transcend many stages in a very short period of seventeen days.

Bahauddin Zakarya was the contemporary of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. The former is believed to have visited the latter at least once. Unlike the chishti saints the Suharwardis considered the accumulation of wealth as indispensable to offer better services to humanity. After Beheading Zakarya some of his descendents like Sheikh Rukn-ul-din and Sheikh Sadr-ul-uddin carried forward the legacy of their preceptor. The order remained popular only for a short time.

After chishtis Naqsh bandya order became quite popular in India. Like other orders it also came into origin in the Perso Arab world. It owes its existence to the silsila of Khwajgan. The order was founded by Khwaja Baha-ul-din Naqsh band. It was preached and popularized by one of his very renowned disciples, Khawja Naseer-ul-din Ubaidullah Ahrar. He lived in the Turkish Empire in the city of Samarqand. He encouraged the Timurid princes to invade the states like Tashqand and merge them into their kingdom. His advice was carried out. He left behind a considerably big chain of disciples.

Naqsh Bandya order was introduced in India with the invasion of Babar. The King Babar and many of his soldiers owed allegiance to Ubaid-ul-Ahrar. Many of other disciples also accompanied Babar in his journey to India. They settled here after the establishment of Mughal empire. The mission of the Naqsh bandi saints was similar but they emphasized the eradication of alien elements crept in Islam from the native religions. Khwaja Kalan and his other compatriots propagated the teachings of their predecessors Ubaid ulah Ahrar and Baha ul- din.

Naqsh bandya order was less tolerant as compared to the Chishties, Qadries and Suhawardies. There was another important distinction. The three above mentioned orders claimed themselves to be the descendents of Ali whereas the Naqshbandies traced their origin from the first caliph, Abu bakr. Their puritanical approach made them austere and obstinately hard liners. They wanted to convert India into a Islamic state and recommended to the Mughal kings to impose jaziya (kind of tax) on the Hindu subjects. The Mughal kings however never acted upon their advice. Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi, a noted Naqsh bandi Saint, vehemently criticized Akbar for his policy of "Sulah-e-Kul" (compromise with all and his religion "Deen-e-Ilahi" the religion of God which he founded for the fulfillment of his mission.

The early Nakshbandies were inclined towards wahadata-ul-wadjoood the unity of existence, the theory of Ibnul-Arabi. Later on Shaikh Ahmad Sir Hindi propounded another theory known as the unity of appearance, wahadul-ul-shahood. All his disciples and some other noted Nakshbandis were

impressed with his theory and followed it rather strictly. Since then, there arose a serious controversy between the follower of the two schools. It gave way to a severe conflict inviting harsh and bitter criticism against each other. Instead of a healthy debate it generated a controversy leading to acrimonious consequences.

Nakshbanya order received better cognizance in India. It produced many notable saints like Khwaja Khurd, Ahmad Sir Hindi, Khawaja Masoom, Shah wali-ullah his son Shah Abdul Azeez. Shiakh Abu Ahmad Sir Hindi, although an exalted saint, was quite controversial because of his alleged heresies and mystic experiences. Jahangir imprisoned him for his political interventions when he criticized his father Akbar for his policies. Shah Wali-ullah was another outstanding sufi of this order. Besides being a noted sufi he was an eminent scholar of all theological sciences. Although he was trained and initiated in the other three orders as well, yet he chose to practice Nakshbandi teachings. As sufi Shah wali-ullah tried to resolve the age old controversy between the two school, namely the unity of existence and the unity of appearance. He offered reconciliation between the two and argued that the thought content of the two schools is similar and that they express the same ideas in different words. He also asserted that the wahdut-ul-wujood and wahdut-ul-Shahood are simply two stages in the mystic journey. Ibn-ul-Arabi reached one stage and Ahmad Sir Hindi soared higher to the next stage. This argument shows his inclination to the later school.

His son Shah Abdul Azeez carried forward the movement of his father in the field of politics and Sufism. The two father and the son assume importance due to changing political scene in India. The Mughal dynasty was dying out. The British were gaining control. There was an all round decay and decline. Shah Abdul-Azeez tried to inspire the Muslims for the restoration of their political power. He thus like other Nakshbandi saints attempted at reestablishing the supremacy of Islam in the realm of politics and religion. He also inherited the puritanical attitude which however proved to be detrimental for the Muslims in India.

b) Minor orders

In addition to these major orders there are a number of minor orders. Some of them were founded outside India but many of them were initiated by the sufi saints in India. Irrespective of the place of their creation, they were basically the off shoots of one or the other major orders. The Firdausiya and Kubraviya orders owed their origin to suharwardiya order. Shattariya order came of Qadriya order. The chisties, however, remained loyal to their teachers and hence began no order in their name. Out of many, Firdausiya and Shaltariya became some what significant. The Firdausiya was founded by Sharf-uldin yahya Manyari; Phulwari near Patna in Bihar was its centre. The order was popular in Bihar and Bangal. The Shattariyah order was founded in the name of Abdullah Shattari. It was popular in the east of Uttar Pradesh. Abdullah Shattari believed in simplicity and emphasized personal way of worship, "Tariqah". The minor orders however could not leave lasting influence on the society. Some of them existed only for a short time and died out with the death of their founders. The sufis belonging to these orders could not command much respect. They were considered only as charlatans or heretics.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) Who is believed to be the first sufi in India?
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- 2) What was the basic mission of the Sufis in India and how did they carry it out?
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- 3) How is the Naqshbandi order distinguished from other three major orders?
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2.7 INTERACTION BETWEEN HINDU AND MUSLIM SAINTS

We are aware that the political expansion, sectarian controversies and the growth of knowledge gave way to the origin of Sufism and dialectical and scholastic science in the Muslim world. We also know that the sufis traveled through the Muslim empire with a mission in mind that they would preach Islam to the native peoples of the conquered lands and remove the defeatist feelings from their minds without using any force or coercive measures. They were welcomed in all the countries including India. In order to fulfill their mission they interacted with the inhabitants of that country. They had to learn the local language for this purpose.

Besides, the sufis also came in contact with the mystics of other religions. In Persia for example they studied Manichean and Zoroastrian scriptures and discussed them with the mystics of the creeds and were influenced by their contents. We notice, for this reason, a profound influence of early Persian mysticism on Islamic Sufism. The devotees of the ancient civilizations left a tremendous impact in shaping the personality of the Muslim mystics. Some of

the Sanskrit texts like sidhanta were translated into Arabic long before the arrival of Muslims in India in the omavvi period. Like the other scholars the sufis were also immensely influenced by the Greek philosophers particularly Plato and Plutinous whose philosophy has great mystic potential.

The sufis continued the same trends and mission when they arrived here in India. Many of them were sent by their preceptors to pursue the mission of proselytism and to preach Islam even to the Muslims particularly its moral and spiritual aspect. A number of sufis came to India with the armies of Muslim invaders. They found the Indian soil fertile for the persuasion of their mission. After their arrival, they developed contacts with the local people. They learnt their language to have meaningful dialoge with the people of the area for their work. Not only this but they also studied the literature of different languages particularly of Sanskrit which deeply affected their thought. Moreover, the Muslim travelers like Al-Baruni showed keen interest in the Indian languages and their literature. He studied the yoga of Patanjali with care and interest and referred to it at many places in his travelogue Kitab-ul-Hind. Many sufis through his translation learnt and practiced the eight fold path of yoga. The yoga theory was quite in proximity with the sufi experience of contemplation, meditation and self mortification. The other yoga schools also fascinated the Muslim sufis. Abdul Qudoos Gangohi his son Rukn-Al-din and his other disciples were deeply moved by the Nath yogis. They practiced the theory and had the desired experience. Abdul Quadoos Gangohi wrote his Alkhnama in Hinduvi, the language developed with the interaction between the Muslim and the Indian natives.

2.8 BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The Bhakti movement was the fruitful outcome of the interaction between the mystics of the two religions. The sufis from the very outset encouraged communal harmony and tried to understand the universal elements in the two religions. The emergence of the movement resulted into a better understanding of each other's point of view. It produced many great saints in the two communities like Nam-Dev, Kabir, Malik Mohammad Jaisi, Dadu and Guru Namak etc. They chose the local languages to express their ideas through the vehicle of poetry. Guru Nanak in his apophthegms quoted many verses from Baba Farid-Shakar ganj. It speaks of the profound influence of Baba Farid and Islamic mysticism on Guru Nanak. The sufis and the pioneers of Bhakti movement laid emphasis on the points of agreement between the two religions. They believed that the fundamental truth, aimed at by the two religions was one and the same. Ram and Raheem are not different entities. They signify the similar truth. The founders of Bhakti movement, under the influence of Islam and Hinduism both arrive at the following conclusion. (1) God is one pure and simple He may be remembered with different names. He must be loved and worshiped. Their concept of worship is however different. They do not subscribe to the ritualistic worship. There has been a long and meaningful debate about the priority of sharia and *Tariqat*. The earlier sufis along with highipities of different orders held sharia as prior to *Tariqat*. It should be clarified here that sharia means the Islamic law which explains the obligations actions and assertions that is Farz-Sunnat and Hadith. Tareeqa on the other hand is the personal ways of worship.

Many sufies consider *Tariqat* as prior to sharia and worship God in their own way refraining from the obligatory or ritualistic prayers. The heretic (Majzoob) and the medicants (Qalander) generally followed the path of *Tariqat*. The

precursors of Bhakti movement in both communities cherished this path and considered God as an immanent being, present in every thing and every where. Every object is His manifestation. They thought that there is no difference between the worshiper and the worshiped.

- 2) The Bhakti saints emphasized communal harmony social integration and unification of culture. Not only the sufies but also the Muslims in general preferred to live in peace with their native brothers. They adhered to virtue of fraternity.

The indispensable interaction gave way to the social integration and unification of culture. The synthesis, if we look at the history, is reflected in the attitude of the people towards each other. Bhakti movement thus brought people close to each other.

- 3) The founders of the movement tried to search universal elements in both the religions. Gura Nank, for instance, was in search of a universal religion and founded Sikhism which embodied the fundamentals of the two religions. Thus Bhakti movement in short was an attempt to remove the barriers of religion and to convince people that the spirit of the two creeds was identical.

2.9 INTERACTION IN THE MUGHAL PERIOD

The mystics of two communities continued influencing each other even after the decline of the Bhakti movement. The sufis kept on studying the religious scriptures of Hindu religion either through translations into Persian or original Sanskrit texts. The *Yoga Vashishta*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* fascinated not only the sufis but also the scholars. They were rendered into translation in Persian even in the medieval ages. Some scholars studied Vedas and quoted their hymns in their works. They also appealed to many sufis who experienced their truth. In the later medieval ages after the establishment of the Mughal rule the Hindu scriptures became still more fascinating. The Mughal kings directed the scholars having the knowledge of the two languages Sanskrit and Persian to translate them into Persian. The bulk of Translation was done in the days of Akbar. The Muslim sufies, who were cognizant earlier with the spiritual legacy of Hinduism had then a better knowledge of Vedic and Buddhist mysticism.

Among the Mughal Princes Dara Shikoh was the most outstanding scholar of Hinduism and Islam. He went through the earlier translation of the Hindu scriptures. He learnt Sanskrit in the company of Pandits. He translated himself some of the important Upanishads in the name of Sir-e-Akbar "The great secret". In his preface he acknowledged that the Upanishads are the hidden Quran (Quran-e-Maknoon). They have also predicted the arrival of Prophet Mohammad. In the same book he has equated the three principal angels Gabriel, the Mikail and Israil with Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

He wrote another book in Sanskrit and Persian both under the title *MAJ-UL-BAHRAIN* the mingling of the two oceans in which he has described 22 points of agreements in the mysticism of the two religions. In short Dara Shikoh very closely studied the two religions and always held dear to his breast the Hindu Muslim Unity. He was of the view that mysticism alone could bring the people closer.

With the accession of Aurangzeb the policy of tolerance and fraternity was badly affected. The theologians (Ulama) gained ground and became politically more powerful. The puritanic elements desired to eradicate alien elements from Islam. This gave way to a perilous orthodoxy. The sufis baring the Nakshbandis were severely condemned. The Nakshbandi mystics were rigid in attitude and orthodox in their approach. A sufi of shah wali Ulah's stature wrote letters to the king Mohammad Shah advising him to deal with the Hindus rather sternly. Although neither Aurangzeb nor other later Mughal Kings listened to their exhortation yet they continued their efforts. Sufis like Sarmad were beheaded. Notwithstanding the growing orthodoxy the Hindu -Muslim unity was not affected until the British established their complete rule in India.

In brief the Sufis in India played a constructive role in shaping the synthetic culture of the country.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the eight-fold Path of yoga and how has it influenced Sufis in India?

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2) What are the chief characteristics of Bhakti Movement?

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3) Give a brief account of Dara Shikuh's contribution to Sufism and communal harmony

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

In the introduction we have classified that the mysticism is not characteristically Islamic in nature. We have very briefly discussed the roots of Sufism, its origin, the sociopolitical conditions which led to the consequential growth and development of the mystic discipline in Islam. It is present in other religions as well. We have also mentioned the major and some minor orders which became rampant in India. We have deliberately emphasized the tremendous influence that the saints of the two communities in India exerted upon each other. Besides, the valuable contribution of the saints of Bhakti movement has also been acknowledged and exalted. In the end we have discussed Dara Shikuh who always stood for the synthesis of the two great religions in India, Islam and Hinduism. We have also mentioned the puritan efforts of the *Naqsh Bandi* saints to mar the social unity and the communal harmony.

2.11 KEYWORDS

Novice	:	One who begins the spiritual journey (traveller).
Purification	:	It refers to the cleanliness of body, heart, mind and soul.
Puritan	:	an orthodox person.

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2.13 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The following are the derivations of the term sufe :- (1) Sophia (2) Saf (3) Safa (4) Sof (5) Suffah
- 2) Suffah is the most agreed upon derivation of the term Sufi.

- 3) The companions, who lived on the terrace of the prophet's Mosque, were called Ahl-al-Suffa.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) There are two phases of Sufism (1) early phase (2) Later phase.
- 2) Simplicity, modesty, devotion to god and obedience to god were the basic characteristics of the early Sufism.
- 3) The basic doctrines of the later Sufism were as follows- (1) worship of God. (2) Knowledge of God (3) love of God (4) Purity (5) annihilation.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Shaikh Ali Hujwari is believed to be the first-Sufi in India.
- 2) The basic mission of Sufis was two fold (1) they aimed at keeping the muslims in India on the right path, (2) They intended to preach Islam. They carried it out by learning the local languages and by persuading the natives to embrace Islam, but under no compulsion.
- 3) The Naqshbandies were puritans and so emphasized to preserve the prestant character of Islam where as the sufis of other three orders never discouraged the inclusion of alien elements in Islam.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) The eight fold path of yoga is as follows-(1) *Yama*, (2) *Niyama* (3) *Asana* (4) *Pranayama* (5) *Pratyahara* (6) *Dharana* (7) *Dhayana* (8) *Smadhi*. The Sufis have practiced these means.
- 2) The love of God, social integration unification of culture and the universal religion are the chief characteristics of the Bhakti movement.
- 3) Dara Shikuh wrote many books and treatises on Sufism particularly *Sil-e-Akbar* (a commentary of Upanisads and *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (The Mingling of the two Oceans on communal harmony, Besides he also got the *Ramaina* and *Mahabharta* translated in Persian.

UNIT 3 REFORM MOVEMENT

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Modern Reform Movements: The Historical Context
- 3.3 Brahma Samaj: The Universalistic Reform Movement
- 3.4 Arya Samaj: The Nationalistic Reform Movement
- 3.5 Hindu Universalism of 19th Century
- 3.6 Guru Movements: The New Syncretism
- 3.7 Iskon Movement
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Key Words
- 3.10 Further Readings and References
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

It is an exciting job to explore the many faceted dimensions of the Indian religious and cultural history. The present study has the following objectives:

- To discover India's credentials, problem and position so as to make a new assessment from the Religio-cultural perspective.
- To enable the student to reinterpret the Indian socio-religious scenario
- To amend the mistakes of the past
- To envisage a modern India with a new ethos to cope up with the "signs of time" (Zeit-Geist)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Several contemporary groups, collectively termed Hindu reform movements, strive to introduce regeneration and reform in Hinduism. Although these movements vary individually in their specific philosophies they generally stress the spiritual, secular, logical and scientific aspects of the Vedic traditions, creating a form that is egalitarian that does not discriminate *Jâti* (caste or sub caste), gender, or race. Thus, most modern Hindu reform movements advocate a return to the ancient, egalitarian forms of Hinduism, and view the aspects of modern Hinduism, such as social discrimination and the caste system, as being corrupt results from colonialism and foreign influence. Modern Hindu reform movements emerged in the 19th century India with the impact of the West on the East and the interaction between Christianity and Hinduism, and as a challenge and response to this impact and the inter-religious encounter.

Scope of the Study

"Reform movements" in India grew out of the exigencies of modern social challenges resulting out of the East-West encounter and compels us to look at

religion critically and scientifically. Among the reformers and reforms there rests a confusion leaving not a conclusion. That prompts to further research, reflection and studies. It has real scope as long as it is oriented to the incessant search for the truth in consonance with the India's perennial quest for *satya* since time immemorial.

The present study explores the three major religious reform movements that have influenced the contemporary Indian people whatever caste, creed or religion they adhere to. A gleaning on the gurus and god-men who influence today's India on the religious, social and political scenario offers wide scope for research and reflection and is highly relevant amidst secularism.

3.2 MODERN REFORM MOVEMENTS : THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

India and the West: Cultural Interaction

As far as historically traceable, the Nordic Aryans initiated the first major foreign invasion in India. Presumably they must have come in through the northwest frontier in about 1500 B.C. According to the archaeological discoveries, in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, India had at that time already developed a high standard of living with urban style of life and amenities. The religious features of the Indus civilization are considered to be "the ancestor of modern Hinduism".

Already in 326 B.C., Alexander the Great entered India and subjugated Punjab and the kingdoms of Indus valley. From 622 A.D. the Arabs controlled the trade. They were masters of the sea on the west coast, and had control over the maritime route from the Persian Gulf to India and also to China. "Up to the end of the fifteenth century A.D. the Indian contact with the West was confined only to coasting trade on the western side of India". Today modern India represents all the major races of the world – Negrito, Austroloid, Mongoloid, Caucasoid, the dominant ones being Dravidian and Aryan. All these people and races who entered India never conquered it wholly. They either merged with the dominant culture or disappeared, thereby making India a synthetic admixture of races and cultures.

Impact of the West

In 1498, Vasco da Gama sailed to India in his Cape de Bonne Esperance and landed at Calicut in south India. With his arrival, India's contact with the West took new dimensions. Many travelers and Christian missionaries followed him, whose narratives about India provide valuable documents which provide us with details about the 15th century India. In 1602 the Dutch founded the Dutch East Indian Company and established bases on the East coast of India and undertook 16 sails between 1595 to 1601 to the East.

As a result of the intermingling with various races, people and cultures, India represents today a heterogeneous social complex. Though the British came primarily to trade with India and make it a colonial empire, their involvement contributed to improve the moral and intellectual condition of Indians. Above all their system of education in India paved the way for an intensive encounter of India with the West. William Bentick, the Governor General of India (1828-1835) introduced into schools and colleges the western model of education and offered scope for the intellectual and social uplift of India. The Western system of education and the rationalistic thought of the 19th century Europe provoked

Indian intellectuals to be critical of their beliefs, traditions and social situations. Thus the renaissance in the 19th century India sprang from two sources. Firstly, western education and philosophy which were now introduced in the Indian colleges with its rationalistic and democratic ideals gave the Indians a broader and more liberal outlook. Secondly the discovery of the indigenous treasure of wisdom and Indian spirituality gave the Indian youth an impetus to make serious studies of their own scriptures. They studied Sanskrit literature and found out the great discrepancy between the spirit and practice of the time. These gave the Indians a new impulse to assert themselves and to bring religion and society back to their pristine purity.

Oriental Renaissance

The works of the Orientalists contributed to the renaissance of Hinduism in the 19th century. The most notable among them were Anquetil du Peron, Jones William, Charles Wilkins and Henry Colebrooke. They studied Sanskrit scriptures and began to translate them into English. Here lies the beginning of the so-called 'Oriental Renaissance'. Sir William Jones, renowned for his linguistic talents (he knew about 28 languages) attempted a serious exploration of Indian scriptures and translated Hitopadesha, a collection of fables and stories of an ideal society. He translated Kalidas's drama "Sakuntala" which became so popular in England that many compared it with Shakespeare's works.

Another remarkable achievement of Jones was laying the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. It fostered studies on Indian culture and religion. Jones was followed by Colebrooke who later became known as the "greatest of the Orientalists". He discovered the wealth of the Asiatic civilization and promoted the study of its culture. He discovered the wide gap between the caste system in practice and its theories found in the scriptures. He was the first to analyze the contents of the Vedas and to present them systematically. Above all he discovered the fact that the Vedas teach the unity of God. In 1840, he edited the "Essays". H.H. Wilson wrote his "Religious Sects" in 1828 and on Vishnu Purana in 1840. Max Müller spent as long as thirty years on translating the Vedic hymns, especially the Rigveda. "The History of Sanskrit literature" and "The Sacred Books of the East" are the valuable contributions which he made to the Oriental Studies.

Christianity and Hinduism: Religious Interaction

The early Christianity in India found itself integrated in the society and developed as "indigenous religion". However there was no significant encounter in depth between Hinduism and Christianity, but they lived in peaceful co-existence. On May 17th 1964, a new Secretariat was created with the purpose to do "all that would dissipate prejudice and ignorance among Christians and would establish fruitful contact with the members of all other religions". A decree was promulgated with the exhortation to live "prudently and lovingly through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions and in witness of Christian faith and life acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their societies and cultures".

Inter-religious Impact

Missionary Encounter in the 19th century

The Church in India acquired new dimensions with the arrival of the Missionaries from the West. It was Vasco da Gama who sailed to India and opened the way for

European Missionaries. Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656) initiated a new approach to evangelization of India and adapted the so-called “accommodation principle”. His theology took the dimension of the concept of Christ as guru. His apologetic method was aimed at refuting, but never condemning the values of Hinduism.

Christian missionary activities also contributed to the intellectual awakening of India in the 19th century. William Carey, who arrived on 11th November 1793 in Calcutta initiated a meritorious work. Along with Ward and Joshua Marshmann known as the “Serampore Trio” he opened a centre at Serampore, in Bengal, for Christian and Western cultural exchange. This provided a further opportunity for an East-West encounter. Aware of the valuable services of the Missionaries, the Government made the best of the Missions “as a civilizing ally” which contributed positively for the Indian renaissance.

A ‘western impact’ and an ‘Indian response’ could be traced in the renascent India. Hindu religion and society introduced a number of reforms and adaptations. Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission were the notable religious reform movements of the Modern India.

3.3 BRAHMA SAMAJ: THE UNIVERSALISTIC REFORM MOVEMENT

Rammohun Roy, the Father of Modern India

Raja Rammohun Roy (1774 - 1833) was born in an orthodox Brahmin family in Bengal. He married in his early childhood and that too thrice before he reached the age of nine. His polygamous life must have made him later a strong opponent of child marriage and polygamy. His studies in Patna, the then centre of Islamic scholarship led him to the democratic ideals of Islam and the logical element of Arabic thought especially the rationalistic schools of Mutasilas. His studies on Islam made him strongly denounce idolatry and superstitions. In 1804 he published his “Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin” (a gift to the Monotheists) which is a treatise on the theology of nature. He observed that the belief in the One God is not only natural but also common to people of all creeds.

Brahma Samaj and its Impact on India’s Awakening

The Brahma Samaj (One-God society) founded by Raja Rammohun Roy in 1828 was to be a place of common worship. According to the Trust Deed “no minister or reciter should retain any mark of caste or sectarian distinction” in the Samaj, it should rather foster unity and brotherliness. It was the first modern religious reform movement which interpreted the Hindu scriptures and traditions to establish the universality of Hinduism and Brahma Samaj as the convergence of religions.

Social and Religious Reforms

Rammohun discovered that social reforms in Hinduism are possible only through reforming religion. He said: “..it is, I think necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort”. He saw in idolatry the root of many social evils which destroyed the “texture of the society” and led to heinous practices like self-immolation, killing of friends and relatives under the pretext of performing religious rites.

Rammohun condemned also polytheism. In order to vindicate that the true spirit of Hinduism is monotheism, he published the “Translation of the Abridgement of the Vedanta, “A Defense of Hindu Theism” and “A Second Defense of the Monotheistic System of the Vedas”. He was convinced that the worship of God must be in spirit consistent with the true dictates of Hindu Sastras and according to the purest principles of morality.

One of Remount’s great contributions in the field of social reforms was the abolition of *sati*- the custom of burning of widows alive. He argued that no *sastras* have ever sanctioned *sati*. He criticized it as “deliberate female murder” and a perversion of Hinduism. Consequently he collected funds for a society for the relief of the destitute widows to liberate them. Rammohun defended also the right of women and condemned the polygamy of the Brahmins. He knew that a proper education is essential to bring self-awareness in the people and restore justice and equality. With the support of David hare, he opened a Hindu college in Calcutta in 1817. He fostered English education as profitable for intellectual re-awakening of the people and stressed the importance of a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy with other useful sciences.

Further developments of the Movement

With the foundation of Brahma Samaj, for the first time in India a place for public cult was established to spread the faith in One God which caused a breech with the traditional Hinduism, but reformed it and gave it a new and universal trait.

Brahma Samaj was an Indian theistic Church open to all irrespective of caste, creed and culture. As “One - God Society” it propagated the belief in One God, denounced all forms of idolatry and polytheism. It introduced religious and social reforms that promoted unity and tolerance among various religious denominations.

After the death Rammohun Roy Debendranath Tagore and then Keshub Chunder Sen took up the leadership of the Samaj. Keshub Chunder was an inspiring lecturer, writer and leader who discovered and promoted the harmony of religions. Today the Samaj is known as ‘Sadharan Brahama Samaj’.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What was the impact of the West on the Modern reform movement in India?

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2) Mention the contributions made by Raja Rammohun Roy in the social sphere

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3.4 ARYA SAMAJ: THE NATIONALISTIC REFORM MOVEMENT

Arya Samaj, “Society of Arians”, literally “society of the Noble”, was a typical Hindu reform movement founded by Dayanada Saraswati in 1875. Dayananda Saraswati (1825-1888) was one of the most radical religious reformers of modern India who initiated a number of reform movements with the slogan “Back to the Vedas”. His original name was Moola Sankar Tiwari, born in 1824 in Gujarath. Born and brought up in an orthodox Brahmin family he was disgusted with the idolatry, caste and child marriage and abandoned his home in 1845. In 1860 found a guru Swami Virjanand Saraswati who was very strict and well versed in the Vedas. Moola Sankar underwent rigorous training under him, who gave him the name Dayanand. At the end of the training as Dayananda wanted to give him the *gurudakshina*, (tuition fee, a gift)Virajananda refused it and extracted a promise from him that he would devote his whole life for the revival of Vedic Hinduism.

Dayananda’s “Back to the Vedas”

Dayananda was a sannyasi who believed in the infallibility of the Vedas and cherished a very peculiar interpretation of the Vedas. He not only upheld the absolutism of the Vedas but also propound the philosophy of dynamic realism. The Vedas contain according to him the seeds of all sciences and knowledge. His book “Satyarth Prakash” (Light of Truth) contains his major ideas, interpretation of the Vedas and other religions.

His Vedic exposition mostly derived from the Rig-Veda reflects the vision and mission of Dayananda’s religious and social reform programme. He was averse to *Gurukulas* and the traditional idol worship (*murthipuja*) and asked the students to do *sandhya* (a meditative prayer chanting mantras from the vedas). They had also to participate in the *agnihotra* (fire sacrifice) practice twice a day. He allowed also the non Brahmins to study the Sanskrit texts. The authority of the Vedas remained supreme which should pave way for the social regeneration of Hindu society.

Dayananda undertook a tour across the country, condemned the caste system, idolatry, and child marriages. His theology welcomed the advances of sciences and technology. To him, the Vedas as the source book contained the seeds of science and technology. He initiated a number of reform programmes starting with a Vedic school in contradistinction to other public schools at that time in order to propagate and impart the Vedic values and religion to youth. He emphasized the theory of karma and *samsara* and extolled the ideals of *brahmacharya* and *sanyasa*.

Unlike the universalistic outlook of Raja Rammohun Roy he was critical of other religions especially Islam and Christianity as his major work Satyarth Prakash indicates. The whole world must accept Vedism! The Hinduttwa movement, inspired by him, accepts as Dharma whatever is in full conformity with the Vedic infallibility and his ideology. Some of his major works are *Bhratnivarana*, *Sanskarvidhi*, *Ratnamala*, *Vedabhasya*. The Paropakarini Sabha located in the Indian city of Ajmer was founded by the Swami himself to publish his works and Vedic texts.

Founding of Arya Samaj

Together with the slogan “Back to the Vedas” he advocated the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation, and emphasized the ideals of *brahmacharya* (chastity) and *sanyasa* (renunciation). His voluminous work Satyarth Prakash laid the basic rules in the establishment and later growth of the organization of the Arya Samaj in 1875. It was a revolutionary social movement showing the falsehood of other religions and the purity and scientific background of the Vedas. Arya Samaj condemned idol-worship, animal sacrifices, pilgrimages, caste system, child marriage etc. and claimed to be a universalistic church.

The five principles of daily practice are:

- *Brahmayajna* (studies of Veda and meditation)
- *Devayajna* (fire sacrifice in which ghee and other incense are burned)
- Social Service (offering food to the wandering monks and the needy)
- *Gayatri mantra* recitation, purificatory rites before meditation
- Sacrifice according to the Vedic rituals

Arya Samaj set up schools and missionary organizations, in and outside India. The Samaj began to spread fast, and has today branches all over the world.

Faith and Principles of the Arya Samaj

The doctrines of the Samaj are summed up in Ten Principles:

- God is the primary cause of all true science and of all that can be known through it.
- ***God is Existent, Intelligent and Blissful. He is Formless, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unborn, Infinite, Unchallengeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, the Support and Lord of all, Omniscient, Imperishable, Immortal, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and the Maker of the universe. To Him alone worship is due.***
- The Vedas are scriptures of true knowledge. It is the duty of all Aryas to read them, hear them being read and recite them to others.
- ***All persons should be ready to accept the truth and give up untruth.***
- All action should be performed in conformity with Dharma, that is, after due consideration of the right and wrong.
- ***The primary aim of the Arya Samaj is to do good for all, that is, promote physical, spiritual and social well-being.***
- ***All people should be treated with love, fairness and due regard for their merit.***

- *One should aim at dispelling ignorance and promoting knowledge.*
- *One should not only be content with one's own welfare, but should look for it in the welfare for others also.*
- *One should regard oneself under restriction to follow altruistic rulings of society, while all should be free in following the rules of individual welfare.*

Dayananda denounced the Puranas, even the Brahmans and Upanishads as being of minor importance. His aim was to establish a Hindu missionary movement to bring all the Hindus back to the one fold under the banner of Veda. However he upheld the theories of *kama* and *samsara*, popularized the *swaraj* (autonomy) for Bharat. Though it was successful among the orthodox Hindus, it lacked the tolerance towards alien religions and cultures and a universal vision and is criticized as a militant movement.

3.5 HINDU UNIVERSALISM OF 19TH CENTURY

When Raja Rammohun Roy initiated a movement based on the basic creed of humankind, faith in one God and gave it a universalistic trait taking ideas from the world religions. Arya Samaj propounded a universalistic religion based on the Veda alone. Ramakrishna Missions' motto was all inclusiveness, a syncretistic approach based on the teachings of Ramakrishna and Neo-Vedanta, interpreted and propounded by Swami Vivekananda.

Râmakrishna Paramahansa

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), the modern sage of India, hailed as the incarnation of Râma and Krishna, possessed great wisdom and knowledge. The most important source about his life and teachings, the Gospel of Sri Râmakrishna, is written by his disciples. His cardinal religious tenet was *anubhava* (experience) and not *anumâna* (speculation), the hallmark of any religious person.

Râmakrishna considered God as personal and impersonal and sought to experience him existentially. He advocated the theory that the life of a householder doing good works and the life of a *sannyasi* by renunciation are equally good. He taught the harmony of religions and considered the many religions as the branches of the same tree. He advocated that social activities have value only if they help to the spiritual awakening of the self. He used to spend hours and sometimes whole night in prayer and meditation. Crying for God-experience he used to spend hours and days in front of the statue of Kali whom he called the divine mother; thus he highlighted the once ancient Indian credo of the feminine aspect of God. His experience of Kâli, Sita, and the variety of experience of God according to the Veda, Vçdânta, Purânas and Tantras and the world religions convinced him of the unity and harmony of religions. His teaching can be summarised as realization of God as the core of religion and the ultimate goal of human existence. People with religious experience live in harmony, the absence of which generates fight, tension and dissension. Ramakrishna synthesized the ways of *jñâna*, *bhakti* and *karma* as conducive to the same God-realization.

**Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902): Founder of Ramakrishna Mission
Movement**

See the Unit on **Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo**

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Briefly describe the Dayananda’s call “Back to the Vedas”

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**3.6 GURU MOVEMENTS : THE NEW
SYNCRETISM**

The basic riddle of human existence in Hinduism is not a moral but a metaphysical one. Why do I exist? Why do I suffer? According to Hinduism, it is not because I have broken a moral law, but am ignorant of my own true nature. My original consciousness is pure, the awareness of which leads me to moksha, salvation.

Throughout the history of Hinduism, emerged gurus and god-men who interpreted human existence in a monistic or dualistic sense. In the former sense the truth-realization is not an intellectual act, but transcends it. Sankara would endorse this view. The Gurus and several god-men and women of today have a variety of interpretation of human existence and adopt a syncretistic way to tackle the problems of every day life.

Sathya Sai Baba (1926)

Satya Sai Baba is an Indian guru and religious leader well known as a god- man and miracle worker. In October 1940, at the age of 14, he left the family to bring “regeneration” to humanity. The five values advocated by him are : *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (right conduct), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *prema* (love) and *shantih* (peace).

There are today an estimated 1,200 Sathya Sai Baba Samitis (centers) in 114 countries world-wide. With around 6 million adherents he is considered to be an *avatar* and the reincarnation of the Sai Baba of Shirdi.

Social Activities

Sai Baba has established a model education system, which includes schools, colleges and an accredited university with three campuses, offering undergraduate, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees. In addition to emphasizing the pursuit of academic excellence, Sathya Sai Baba’s system of “integral education” is designed to foster self-discipline and pro-social conduct. Sathya Sai Baba says that “the end of education is character”. Medical services in well equipped hospitals is an another

aspect of his social service. According to his motto all people should have access to the basic requirements for the maintenance of human life.

Sai Baba's Guiding Principles

*If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.*

Critics like Sanal Edamaruku, the leader of the Indian Rationalist Association, said that the Indian media is scared of Sai Baba's political influence. Basava Premanand, concluded after his research on the life of the gurus of past in his research that Sai Baba is deceptive and sexually abusive. Basava Premanand was attacked several times and was under threat of murder. Another person is Conny Larsson, devotee of 21 years openly exclaimed that he has been sexually abused by Sai Baba. He later broke away from the movement, was under constant threat.

Bhagavan Rajneesh and the Neo-Sannyasa Movement

Rajneesh Chandra Mohan Jain (1931-1990) was professor of philosophy and founder of the Neo-Sannyas-movement in Pune. He was called first Acharya Rajneesh then Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (till 1988) and from 1989 till his death Osho. He claimed to be the guru, the spiritual teacher of modern India. Rajneesh raised his voice against socialism, Mahatma Gandhi, and institutionalized religions. In 1974, he established an ashram that attracted many foreigners. The ashram offered yoga classes and allied therapies derived from the Human Potential Movement and offered a permissive atmosphere. He was known as the "sex guru" in India and "Rolls-Royce guru" in the United States.

Neo-Sannyasa

Rajneesh wanted to create a "new man" combining the spirituality of Buddha and the zest for life exemplified by Zorba, the Greek, with a full integration of matter and spirit. In contrast to the Indian traditional value of material renunciation (sannyasa) he called himself "the rich man's guru". His approach was syncretistic and highlighted meditation, awareness, love, creativity and humor which found unquestioned acceptance among his followers.

Osho's "Ten Commandments"

- Never obey anyone's command unless it is coming from within you also.
- There is no God other than life itself.
- Truth is within you, do not search for it elsewhere.
- Love is prayer.
- To become a nothingness is the door to truth. Nothingness itself is the means, the goal and attainment.
- Life is now and here.
- Live wakefully.
- Do not swim – float.
- Die each moment so that you can be new each moment.
- Do not search. That which is, is. Stop and see.

Osho was a “freethinking agnostic” and enjoys wide recognition as thinker, writer and orator. Khushwant Singh, the former editor of the Hindustan Times, described him as “the most original thinker that India has produced: the most erudite, the most clearheaded and the most innovative”. Critics diverge in their appraisal as some hail him as the 20th century’s greatest spiritual teacher as well as the one of the most maligned figures in history. His ideas on sex, family and human relationships roused opposition and severe critics in India and abroad.

3.7 ISKCON MOVEMENT

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), also known as ,the Hare Krishna‘ movement, was founded in 1966 in New York by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Its core philosophy is based on traditional Hindu scriptures such as the *Úrîmad Bhâgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gîtâ*, and upholds the Vaishnava tradition. ISKCON highlights the practice of *bhakti* yoga (devotion to God) pleasing the Supreme Lord, Krishna.

ISKCON’s highest mantra is:

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare

Hare Rama, Hare Rama

Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

The Seven goals of ISKCON as presented by Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada are-

- To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world
- To propagate a consciousness of Krishna, as it is revealed in the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad-Bhagavatam
- To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, thus to develop the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).
- To teach and encourage the sankirtana movement, congregational chanting of the holy names of God as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
- To erect for the members, and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the personality of Krishna
- To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life
- With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books and other writings

The Four regulative principles for spiritual growth propounded by Bhakti Vedanta Prabhupada are:

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3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) In 1498, Vasco da Gama sailed to India in his Cape de Bonne Esperance and landed at Calicut in south India. With is arrival, India's contact with the West took new dimensions. Many travelers and Christian missionaries followed him, whose narratives about India provide valuable documents which provide us with details about the 15th century India. In 1602 the Dutch founded the Dutch East Indian Company and established bases on the East coast of India and undertook 16 sails between 1595 to 1601 to the East.

As a result of the intermingling with various races, people and cultures, India represents today a heterogeneous social complex. Though the British came primarily to trade with India and make it a colonial empire, their

involvement contributed to improve the moral and intellectual condition of Indians. Above all their system of education in India paved the way for an intensive encounter of India with the West. William Bentick, the Governor General of India (1828-1835) introduced into schools and colleges the western model of education and offered scope for the intellectual and social uplift of India. The Western system of education and the rationalistic thought of the 19th century Europe provoked Indian intellectuals to be critical of their beliefs, traditions and social situations. Thus the renaissance in the 19th century India sprang from two sources. Firstly, western education and philosophy which were now introduced in the Indian colleges with its rationalistic and democratic ideals gave the Indians a broader and more liberal outlook. Secondly the discovery of the indigenous treasure of wisdom and Indian spirituality gave the Indian youth an impetus to make serious studies of their own scriptures. They studied Sanskrit literature and found out the great discrepancy between the spirit and practice of the time. These gave the Indians a new impulse to assert themselves and to bring religion and society back to their pristine purity.

- 2) Rammohun discovered that social reforms in Hinduism are possible only through reforming religion. He said: “..it is, I think necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort”. He saw in idolatry the root of many social evils which destroyed the “texture of the society” and led to heinous practices like self-immolation, killing of friends and relatives under the pretext of performing religious rites. Rammohun condemned also polytheism. In order to vindicate that the true spirit of Hinduism is monotheism, he published the “Translation of the Abridgement of the Vedanta, “A Defense of Hindu Theism” and “A Second Defense of the Monotheistic System of the Vedas”. He was convinced that the worship of God must be in spirit consistent with the true dictates of Hindu Sastras and according to the purest principles of morality.

One of Ram Mohan’s great contributions in the field of social reforms was the abolition of *sati*- the custom of burning of widows alive. He argued that no *sastras* have ever sanctioned *sati*. He criticized it as “deliberate female murder” and a perversion of Hinduism. Consequently he collected funds for a society for the relief of the destitute widows to liberate them. Rammohun defended also the right of women and condemned the polygamy of the Brahmins. He knew that a proper education is essential to bring self-awareness in the people and restore justice and equality. With the support of David hare, he opened a Hindu college in Calcutta in 1817. He fostered English education as profitable for intellectual re-awakening of the people and stressed the importance of a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction embracing mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy with other useful sciences.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Dayananda was a sannyasi who believed in the infallibility of the Vedas and cherished a very peculiar interpretation of the Vedas. He not only upheld the absolutism of the Vedas but also propound the philosophy of dynamic realism. The Vedas contain according to him the seeds of all sciences and knowledge. His book “Satyarth Prakash” (Light of Truth) contains his major ideas, interpretation of the Vedas and other religions.

His vedic exposition mostly derived from the Rig-Veda reflects the vision and mission of Dayananda's religious and social reform programme. He was averse to *Gurukulas* and the traditional idol worship (*murthipuja*) and asked the students to do *sandhya* (a meditative prayer chanting mantras from the vedas). They had also to participate in the *agnihotra* (fire sacrifice) practice twice a day. He allowed also the non Brahmins to study the Sanskrit texts. The authority of the Vedas remained supreme which should pave way for the social regeneration of Hindu society.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Sai Baba has established a model education system, which includes schools, colleges and an accredited university with three campuses, offering undergraduate, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees. In addition to emphasizing the pursuit of academic excellence, Sathya Sai Baba's system of "integral education" is designed to foster self-discipline and pro-social conduct.. Sathya Sai Baba says that "the end of education is character". Medical services in well equipped hospitals is an another aspect of his social service. According to his motto all people should have access to the basic requirements for the maintenance of human life.
- 2) Osho's "Ten Commandments":
 - Never obey anyone's command unless it is coming from within you also.
 - There is no God other than life itself.
 - Truth is within you, do not search for it elsewhere.
 - Love is prayer.
 - To become a nothingness is the door to truth. Nothingness itself is the means, the goal and attainment.
 - Life is now and here.
 - Live wakefully.
 - Do not swim – float.
 - Die each moment so that you can be new each moment.
 - Do not search. That which is, is. Stop and see.

UNIT 4 ASHRAM MOVEMENT

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- 4.2 Hindu Ashrams
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- 4.4 Ashrams and Catholic Women Religious
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- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up
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- 4.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The origin of âshrams in India is traced back to the pre-Christian period. Christian Âshrams are of recent origin. Sometimes the motivations behind the establishment of Christian Âshrams were not understood and as a consequence misinterpreted. Our aim in this unit will be to:

- have a clear idea of what âshrams mean
- to understand the convergences and divergences between âshrams of different religious traditions and Christian Âshrams.

Therefore to proceed in this regard it is necessary to discuss very briefly the origin of âshrams in India and the origin and development of Christian Âshrams.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The word *âsrama* is derived from the root *æram*, to exert oneself. It means a place where austerities are performed, a heritage. It may mean also the action of performing such austerities.

There were two currents of thought and life-styles, the *brâhmaðic* and *úramaðic* in ancient India long before they came to the surface and became remarkable to the eyes of outsiders like Megasthenes from Greece in the Fourth Century BCE. The *brâhmaðic* tendency was Aryan, orthodox ritualistic and materialistic while the *úramaðic* was unorthodox, non-ritualistic and spiritual.

It is probable that the *úramaðic* tendency had its origin in the Indus valley civilization. The archaeological remains of the cities Harappa – Mohenjodaro show that they were cities, which flourished between 3000 and 2000 BCE and they were more advanced in culture than the Aryans. The people who lived in

these cities were a settled down peaceful population. There are at least three seals depicting a God in yogic posture, *padmâsana*. They may be an indication of *úrâmaðic* tendency prevalent in the Indus valley civilization. It is possible that when *brâhmaðic* ritualism began to dominate, the Aryans with a deep spiritual bent adopted or absorbed the *úrâmaðic* tendency prevalent in Indus valley civilization.

It seems that âshrams originated in more than one way.

- 1) Deeply spiritual minded Aryans fed up with the ritualism and sacrifices of the *brâhmaðic* period went into the forests to meditate on the symbolism of the sacrifices. Soon disciples gathered around them. It was at the origin of the *Âranyakas* and contributed to the origin of âshrams.
- 2) In the course of time, education had become the monopoly of Brahmins. In the beginning education was not obligatory for Brahmins. Later by the early upanisadic period, it was becoming obligatory. A Brahmin student had to spend at least 12 years with a *Guru* and study the *Vedas*. This period was one of strict discipline and the student had to practice chastity. Thus the time spent in education came to be called *brahmacarya*. When Vedic education was completed, the *brahmacârins* students had several options. They could go home, get married and thus enter *g^ohasthâsrma*. Many opted for this. Or they could remain with the *Guru* for their whole life as *nai^opikas* leading a life of austerity. This also contributed to the origin of âshrams.
- 3) There were other students who retired to the forests to lead a life of austerities as *vânâprasthas*. Still others roamed about as *parivrajakas*, as those who left everything, *sannyasins* or *bhiksus*, beggars. Soon disciples gathered around them and âshrams began to be formed. The following factors alarmed the leaders of the society. There was an exodus of intelligent and excellent youth from the society rejecting marriage and family life either to stay with the *Guru* or to retire to the forest and so forth as seen above to seek experience of *brahman*. So the leaders of the civil society divided the whole Aryan life into *brahmacarya*, *g^ohastha*, *vânâprastha* and *sannyâsa*, integrating various forms of life already in existence into one whole way of life. When Manu codified the laws, these stages became obligatory (Manu 6:37)

According to this system, every Arya had to be a *brahmacârin* in the house of a teacher, a *g^ohastha*, found a family beget children especially a male child to continue the family line and get them settled in life. When these family obligations were fulfilled, he had to become a *vânâprastha*. Retire into the forest to lead a life of austerities. Finally, he became a *sannyâsin*, *parivrâjaka* or *bhiksu* living without home, without anything, living on alms, free from all earthly ties, waiting for his release. All these various stages of life was integrated into an Aryans system of life style.

To understand what is expected of a *Guru* in an âshram, we must know also the prescriptions, which the code of Manu imposes on a *sannyasin* as a *Guru* is considered to be a *sannyasin*:

Departing from his house, taking with him pure implements, *his water-pot and staff*, keeping silence, unallured by desire of objects near him, let him enter into the fourth order [*sannyâsa*] (Manu 6:41)

The *sannyasin* has to be completely self-controlled and equanimous (Manu 6:48)
His attention is turned to God alone:

Delighted with meditating on the Supreme Spirit, sitting fixed in such meditation, without needing anything earthly, without one sensual desire, without any companions but his own soul let him live in this world seeking the bliss of the next (Manu 6.49)

So total renunciation and deep experience of God is expected from a *sannyasin* and a *Guru*:

There are numerous Hindu Âshrams all over India.

4.2 HINDU ASHRAMS

Âshrams existed in India from Vedic times. They lost their prominence to some extent due to Muslim domination, followed by the British. With English education, scholarly studies on Hinduism by European and Indian scholars brought about an Indian renaissance in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. This renaissance influenced also âshram movements.

Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), a Hindu mystic entered into a variety of mystical experiences and taught the equality and complimentary nature of various religions. Soon disciples flocked around him and thus an âshram came into existence. But the one who founded a monastic community and gave a solid organization to it was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), a disciple of Rama Krishna.

Rama Krishna Math

Vivekananda established an âshram at Belur near Calcutta in 1899. There the friends and followers of Ramakrishna came together to lead a celibate, monastic life as a community. The conditions for admission to the math was that the candidate should be between the age of eighteen and twenty five, should have good health, good character, monastic temperament, ready to do any service and faith in Rama Krishna. They could be of any caste, creed or sect. After three years of probation, they are sent to study Hindu religion and philosophy for two years. Those who are found suitable are accepted as *brahmacârins* after taking 12 vows. After a training of nine years, those who are found fit are initiated into *sannyâsa*. They are given the ochre-coloured habit and a new name.

The *âshramites* follow the non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy of Sankara. Following Rama Krishna's experience worship of a personal God is allowed.

Gandhian Âshram

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, later Mahatma Gandhi gave a new orientation to âshram integrating both old and new elements. He took the vow of celibacy with the permission of his wife Kasturbai in 1906. He founded the Satyagraha Âshram on May 25, 1915 at Kochrab Ahmedabad. Sat means truth and Agra means firmness. The members are to make constant effort towards the service of the country, not inconsistent with universal good. There were prayers in the morning and evening and spinning yarn during the day.

The âshramites observed 11 vows. They are: 1. Truth, 2. Non-Violence or love, 3. Chastity, 4. Control of the Palate, 5. Non-stealing, 6. Non-possession or poverty, 7. Physical labour, 8. Swadeshi, 9. Fearlessness, 10. Removal of untouchability, 11. Equality of religions.

There were three categories of members in the âshram. They were: 1. Managers, who took the vows, 2. Candidates, who are to follow âshram observances 3. Students, boys and girls above four years. On reaching maturity after 10 years of education, they have the option to take the vows or leave.

Ramana Âshram, Tiruvannamalai

Ramana Maharsi (1879-1950) was born at Tirucculi near Madurai in Tamil Nadu. At the age of seventeen, he had a deep religious experience and began a life of contemplation and lived in a cave in Tiruvannamalai or Arunachala a sacred hill. Soon it became a place of pilgrimage and people of all sorts followed him.

He followed the *advaitic* tradition. To teach *advaitic* experience he proposed a simple method: who am I? and self enquiry. Irrespective of caste, creed or religion, all can follow this self-enquiry and reach *advaitic* experience. His approach was universal. God, the self and the world are indivisible. A person has to lead a life of tranquillity, non-violence and meditation to reach this experience.

Community life in the âshram is unrestricted. Each one is free to lead his or her life. Members were not obliged to attend the daily recitation of the *Vedas*. They met at meals if they wished so.

There are numerous Hindu Âshrams with lot of differences, yet following basically Indian tradition. Hindu Âshrams inspired Christian missionaries to think of founding âshrams.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
 b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Trace the ways how the Ashrams in India originated.

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2) Bring out some the characteristics of Gandhian Ashram.

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4.3 CHRISTIAN ÂSHRAMS

There have been lot of misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Christian Âshram movement. There were also violent denunciations of the movement by authors like Sita Ram Goel, however a minority. Even Christians were not able to understand the movement. It is not possible to enter into this controversy as it could require more than a volume to answer the objections and clear misunderstandings. Here an effort is made to present the Christian Âshram Movement in the proper light, at least for well meaning Christians and people of various faiths.

Movements

A number of Christian beliefs and experiences contributed to the origin of Christian Âshram movement. In the first three centuries of Christianity, it was the experience of the Risen Christ, the witness of martyrs and the command of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to all the nations, which motivated Christian missionary activity. Later, salvation motive, that of saving souls inspired missionary enthusiasm. As the Church and theologians came to a better understanding and contact with other religions, salvation motive gave way to inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. In the meanwhile, hunger and poverty of the millions of people in developing countries, the oppression of the poor by the rich drew the attention of theologians. So liberation of the human person from all forms of slavery and oppression became an important motive for evangelization. The contact with the deep religious experience of Indian religious traditions, their spirit of renunciation attracted many of those who were interested in contemplation and mysticism. So sharing religious experience and inter-religious dialogue became part of evangelization. Âshrams were found most suitable for these purposes.

All these have been misunderstood and misinterpreted as a hidden agenda for making conversions. Some clarity as regards conversions is also necessary. There is a false assumption that Hinduism is not a missionary religion and so it is not engaged in making conversions. Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India* has described the conquest, colonization and inculturation of South-East Asia by Hinduism. In modern times, there were and there are a succession of Hindu missionaries from Vivekananda to Radhakrishnan and to modern *Gurus*, God-men and God women making millions of converts to Hinduism all over the world. So religious traditions have to abandon prejudices and “holier than thou” attitudes, come together and agree on some basic principles.

One of such principle is that conversion is a fundamental right of the individual and no one has a right to prevent it. Forced conversion should never be made. As Keshub Chunder Sen said, none of these gigantic religions would cease to exist. They will not be able to swallow one another. Instead of engaging themselves in a game of blaming each other under various pretexts, let them be open and agree on some minimum principles and work together for the betterment of humanity. To achieve it âshrams can do significant service.

First Attempt

Robert De Nobili (1577-1656) was the first Christian missionary to make an attempt to establish a Christian Âshram in India. He was born in a noble family

in Rome, became a Jesuit came to India to preach the Gospel. He found that missionaries were held in contempt due to their association with colonialists and practicing what appeared abominable to the Hindus like drinking, eating meat etc. Moreover, there was an unhealthy identification of Christianity with Portuguese culture, which was totally wrong. Christianity by its very nature is inter-cultural and transcultural. So De Nobili decided to adopt the life style of an Indian *Sannyasin*. He was sincere. So he did not present himself as a *brahmin*, but *Ksatria* which was correct as he belonged to the Italian nobility.

Did De Nobili plan to start an âshram as such? It does not seem so. De Nobili's âshram was a natural evolution. He became a *sannyasin* and adopted fully the life style of an Indian *sannyasin* like silence, vegetarian food, bath, etc. So the youth was attracted. Several became his disciples and thus an âshram way of life came into existence. With the suppression of the Society of Jesus, these types of âshram life cease to exist. Years later, a more systematic effort was made.

The Second Attempt

Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907) whose original name was Bhawani Charan Banerji was born in Khanyan a village about 30 miles north of Calcutta. He joined the *Brahma Samaj*. In February 1891, he was baptized into the Anglican Church and in September of the same year he entered the Catholic Church and took the name Brahmabandhab. He wanted to start a Catholic Âshram.

In May 1898, Brahmabandhab wrote in his Journal Sophia:

“Monastic life is exceedingly congenial to the soil of India. In this age of materialism when contemplative life is despised India is still dotted with monasteries... considered from all points it is extremely desirable that steps be soon taken for the founding of a *Maḥa* (monastery) in India where Hindu Catholics may be trained to monastic life.”

Brahmabandhab envisaged two types of *sannyasins*; those who lead a life of contemplation in the monastery and itinerant ones who will preach the Gospel everywhere. They are to lead a very austere life. There should not be the least trace of Europeanism in their mode of life.

Mgr. Zalesrki, the Apostolic Delegate to India from 1892-1916 was opposed to this project. Mgr. Dalhoff sj, Archbishop of Bombay, who had consulted Zaleski was also opposed to it. Through Mgr. Charles Pelvat msfs, Bishop of Nagpur knew about this opposition, he allowed Brahmabandhab to open a Catholic Âshram close to Marble Rocks on the Narmada not far from Jabalpur. The âshram was opened in the beginning of 1899 with Brahmabandhab, Animananda from Sind, two Brahmin youth from Calcutta and another youth Shankerji from Tinneveli, Tamil Nadu following Indian âshramic tradition, they lived a very austere life, begged their food, cooked it by themselves and spent time in fasting and prayer. The caste distinctions were kept up.

Though begun well, the Apostolic Delegate Zaleski forced Bishop Pelvat to withdraw permission. The Bishop advised Upadhyaya to submit the proposals to Rome for approval. Brahmabanadhab decided to do so in person began his journey but he fell ill on reaching Bombay. On recovering he did not pursue the matter. Thus ended the second attempt to establish a Catholic Âshram.

The ecclesiastical opposition, the impulsiveness and unsteadiness of Upadhyaya caused its failure. On the positive side, the âshram had assimilated the simplicity and austerity of life with meditation and sacramental life. The maintaining of caste distinctions was certainly negative. It was contrary to Indian religious spirit as *sannyasa* transcends *dharmas*. It was against Christian spirit because Christianity promotes the equality of all human beings. All the same, this experiment was not in vain. For it inspired two European missionaries 50 years later to take up the challenge again to found an âshram which will integrate Indian âshramic spirituality.

The Third Attempt

The third attempt to establish a regular Catholic Âshram was undertaken by Abbe Monchanin (1895-1957) a French missionary, a man of vast culture who had a predilection for India and Fr. Henri Le Saux (1910-1973) a French Benedictine monk with a passionate interest in *advaitic* experience. They founded the *Saccidananda Âshram* in Shantivanam in Kulitalai, a village on the bank of the river Caveri not far from Tiruchirapalli. Monchanin took the name, Swami Parama arubi anandam and Le Saux, Abhishiktananda. Both felt that contemplation and its structured form monasticism were the best means of entering into dialogue with Hinduism and of manifesting the spiritual nature of the Catholic Church.

This effort also did not succeed due to the following reasons. The local clergy were not sympathetic to inculturation. There were no vocations. Monchanin passed away in Paris in 1957. Abhishiktananda was much concerned about integrating *advaitic* experience into Christian life. So he left the âshram and became a hermit in Rishikesh. Thus ended the third attempt.

But their attempt was not fruitless. These failures paved the way for future successes. They had clearly laid down the basic principles, which govern a Christian Âshram. Abhishiktananda continued to encourage the founding of Christian Âshrams even coming out of his solitude occasionally for the same purpose.

Kurisumala Âshram

The idea of founding an âshram in Kurisumala was conceived at Shantivanam in 1955 by a Cistercian monk Fr. Francis Mathew (1912-) as Belgian monk, later known as Francis Acharya and Fr. Bede Griffiths (1906-) a Benedictine monk from England. The âshram takes its name from the place where it is established. After spending some time in Shantivanam, they established the Âshram in Kurisumala in 1958 under the Syro-Malankara diocese of Thiruvalla. Three currents of monastic thought and spirituality merge in Kurisumala. They are the Cistercian pattern of life, the Syrian liturgy and the monastic tradition of India. The dress, food and way of life are those of âshrams in India.

Saccidananda Âshram

We have seen that Saccidananda Âshram ceased to exist with the death of Monechanin and Abhishiktananda becoming a hermit. In 1968, Abhishiktananda handed over Saccidananda Âshram to Bede Griffiths who left Kurisumala and came down to Kulilalai to start the Âshram again. Under his guidance, Saccidananda Âshram became one of the leading Catholic Âshrams in India.

The Âshram became a center of inter religious dialogue and a place where many came to seek guidance. These initiatives came from European missionaries. Soon Indians themselves came forward.

Anjali Âshram

Fr. D.S. Amalorpavadass (1932-1990) opened Anjali Âshram on August 15, 1979. It is a very systematically planned Âshram almost in every aspect from its layout to religious ideals and spirituality. The founder had an integral vision of an âshram. Anjali Âshram is to promote Indian Spirituality, contemplation, inter-religious dialogue, social service, liberation of the poor, ecumenism and multi- religious community.

4.4 ÂSHRAMS AND CATHOLIC WOMEN RELIGIOUS

The Catholic Women Religious of India have made a significant contribution to Âshram movement in India. Sister Sara Grant and Sister Vandana called Vandana Maraji both belonging to the congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and disciples of Abhishiktananda have contributed much to Âshram Movement. Both co-operated in the re-establishment of the Christa Prema Seva Âshram in Pune. Later Vandana Mataji started on her own Jeevan Dhara Âshram in Garkwal Hills, U.P. She wrote *Gurus, Âshrams and Christians* and edited *Christian Âshrams, A Movement with a Future?* Both Sisters were involved in promoting ecumenism; inter religious dialogue and Indian spirituality.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the movements that gave rise to Christian Ashrams?

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2) Examine the relationship between Christian Ashrams and women.

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4.5 PROTESTANT ÂSHRAMS

Although Catholics were the first to start âshrams, as seen earlier, the movement was stopped for more than 40 years after Brahmabandhab. In the meanwhile Protestants started a number of âshrams.

Christukula Âshram: Dr. S. Jesudasan and Dr. Ferrester Paton founded the christukula âshram in Tirupattur in Tamil Nadu in March 1921. The chief aim of the âshram was growth in spiritual life. After the death of Jesudasan, prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God became general to the training of members. The full-fledged members were called sevaks. To be a sevak, one had to make a novitiate of three years and to take temporary vows for three years, which could be renewed. The daily programme consisted of prayer, meditation, work, study, recreation and village visit. Taking inspiration from this âshram, a number of protestant âshrams came into existence. By 1950, there were about 30 âshrams.

Christa Prema Seva Âshram (CPSA): Fr. Jack Winslow belonging to the Anglican Church founded CPSA in Shivajinagar, Pune in 1927. The âshram community consisted of three orders, first order of celibate men, Second order of celibate women and Third Order of married people. The âshramites sought to follow Christ as their Lord and Master in renunciation and sacrifice, in selfless service to people. Due to various reasons, this âshram was closed in 1962.

In 1972, the âshram was reopened again with an ecumenical community of women composed of Anglican Sisters of St. Mary the Virgin from Panch Howd and the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from Sophia College, Bombay. The CPSA belongs to the Church of North India (CNI). Sisters Sara Grant and Vandana of Sacred Heart Sisters did significant service in the re-establishment of this âshram as an ecumenical community.

So far, the origin and development of âshrams have been dealt with now we shall suggest some basic principles and characteristics that should animate âshrams in general and Indian Christian Âshrams.

4.6 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ÂSHRAM

- 1) Every âshram adheres to its faith and religious tradition whether Hindu, Buddhist, Jain or Christian. They bear witness to their faith and religious traditions without fanaticism, without any forms of violence or intolerance.
- 2) Âshrams share their own experience of the Ultimate Reality, their spiritual experience in a spirit of peace and tranquility.
- 3) Âshrams are open to the teachings of various religious traditions; show respect to them even if they are contrary to their own belief systems.
- 4) Âshrams are places of prayer, meditation and worship as demanded by their own religious traditions.
- 5) Contemplation of Divine Realities and Mysteries holds the highest place in Âshrams

- 6) A spirit of complete silence is fostered in the âshram except in times of recreation. Silence is a symbol of the transcendence and immanence of the Absolute whose spirit pervades the âshram.
- 7) Âshrams remain open to the variety of religious experiences of various religious traditions and respect them.
- 8) Âshrams are to be places of inter-religious dialogue, peace and harmony. They foster inter-religious understanding and friendship.
- 9) Âshrams follow a life of simplicity and poverty. They bear witness to the spirit of renunciation, which animated the ancient sages of India.
- 10) They welcome all seekers of truth and offer them support and guidance in their search for truth.
- 11) In âshrams, there is no caste distinction. The equality of all humans are accepted. Theistic âshrams foster the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood and sisterhood of men and women.
- 12) Âshrams are centers of moral rectitude and integrity. They avoid entering into any form of politics as politics corrupt religious traditions.
- 13) Âshrams take an active interest in the social concerns of the people.

4.7 SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC ÂSHRAMS

It is understood that the general principles enunciated for all âshrams apply equally to Catholic Âshrams.

- 1) A Catholic Âshram bears witness to the faith of the Catholic Church, promote respect and obedience to the hierarchy of the Church.
- 2) A Catholic Âshram confesses Christ as Lord and Saviour, God incarnate, and shares the experience of the Risen Christ.
- 3) While giving great importance to prayer, meditation and contemplation, they also follow the sacramental life of the Church.
- 4) The Holy Eucharist and Eucharistic worship and contemplation occupy a principal place in the âshram.
- 5) The âshram fosters Indian Spirituality and ways of worship. It assumes whatever may be directly assumed from Indian tradition like simplicity of life, poverty, and renunciation.
- 6) A Catholic Âshram remains open to all religious traditions, transcends all forms of caste and discrimination. Every one is welcomed as a brother or sister.
- 7) A Catholic Âshram is a place of inter-religious dialogue and harmony. Every religious tradition is respected.

- 8) Each âshram has a *Guru* whose authority is respected.
- 9) Members of the âshram form a single community of one heart and one mind, community that loves and cares for everyone, thus bearing witness to the love of Christ.
- 10) A catholic âshram is concerned about the poverty of the poor. They practice solidarity with the poor and support them in their struggle for liberation.
- 11) A Catholic Âshram fosters human rights and offers support to human rights movements and organizations.
- 12) The Âshram remains open to all cultures and cultural differences.
- 13) A Catholic Âshram is to be a witness to the moral conscience of humanity, promoting life in all forms, opposing whatever degrades humanity and concerned about the well being of the whole creation.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
 b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Mention some of the characteristics of Ashrams in General.

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4.8 LET US SUM UP

Traditionally, an ashram is a religious hermitage. Today the term *ashram* (Hindu or Christian) often denotes a locus of Indian cultural activity such as yoga, music study or religious instruction and meditation. The ashrams would usually be located in secluded natural surroundings conducive to spiritual instruction and meditation. The residents of an ashram regularly perform spiritual and physical exercises, such as the various forms of Yoga.

These ashrams have always been a powerful symbol of unity, liberty, equality and fraternity throughout Indian history, and thus ashram movement transcends the barriers of caste, creed and religion.

4.9 KEY WORDS

- Asrama** : The word *âsrama* is derived from the root *œram*, to exert oneself. It means a place where austerities are performed, a heritage. It may mean also the action of performing such austerities.
- Padmasana** : God in yogic posture.

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4.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

It seems that âshrams originated in more than one way.

- 1) Deeply spiritual minded Aryans fed up with the ritualism and sacrifices of the *brâhmaðic* period went into the forests to meditate on the symbolism of the sacrifices. Soon disciples gathered around them. It was at the origin of the *Âranyakas* and contributed to the origin of âshrams.

In the course of time, education had become the monopoly of Brahmins. In the beginning education was not obligatory for Brahmins. Later by the

early upanisadic period, it was becoming obligatory. A Brahmin student had to spend at least 12 years with a *Guru* and study the *Vedas*. This period was one of strict discipline and the student had to practice chastity. Thus the time spent in education came to be called *brahmacarya*. When Vedic education was completed, the *brahmacârins* students had several options. They could go home, get married and thus enter *g^ohasthâsrma*. Many opted for this. Or they could remain with the *Guru* for their whole life as *nai^opikas* leading a life of austerity. This also contributed to the origin of âshrams.

There were other students who retired to the forests to lead a life of austerities as *vânaprasthas*. Still others roamed about as *parivrajakas*, as those who left everything, *sannyasins* or *bhiksus*, beggars. Soon disciples gathered around them and âshrams began to be formed. The following factors alarmed the leaders of the society. There was an exodus of intelligent and excellent youth from the society rejecting marriage and family life either to stay with the *Guru* or to retire to the forest and so forth as seen above to seek experience of *brahman*. So the leaders of the civil society divided the whole Aryan life into *brahmacarya*, *g^ohastha*, *vânaprastha* and *sannyâsa*, integrating various forms of life already in existence into one whole way of life. When Manu codified the laws, these stages became obligatory (Manu 6:37)

- 2) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, later Mahatma Gandhi gave a new orientation to âshram integrating both old and new elements. He took the vow of celibacy with the permission of his wife Kasturbai in 1906. He founded the Satyagraha Âshram on May 25, 1915 at Kochrab Ahmedabad. Sat means truth and Agraha means firmness. The members are to make constant effort towards the service of the country, not inconsistent with universal good. There were prayers in the morning and evening and spinning yarn during the day.

The âshramites observed 11 vows. They are: 1. Truth, 2. Non-Violence or love, 3. Chastity, 4. Control of the Palate, 5. Non-stealing, 6. Non-possession or poverty, 7. Physical labour, 8. Swadeshi, 9. Fearlessness, 10. Removal of untouchability, 11. Equality of religions.

There were three categories of members in the âshram. They were: 1. Managers, who took the vows, 2. Candidates, who are to follow âshram observances 3. Students, boys and girls above four years. On reaching maturity after 10 years of education, they have the option to take the vows or leave.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) A number of Christian beliefs and experiences contributed to the origin of Christian Âshram movement. In the first three centuries of Christianity, it was the experience of the Risen Christ, the witness of martyrs and the command of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to all the nations, which motivated Christian missionary activity. Later, salvation motive, that of saving souls inspired missionary enthusiasm. As the Church and theologians came to a better understanding and contact with other religions, salvation motive gave way to inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. In the meanwhile, hunger and poverty of the millions of people in developing countries, the oppression of the poor by the rich drew the attention of

theologians. So liberation of the human person from all forms of slavery and oppression became an important motive for evangelization. The contact with the deep religious experience of Indian religious traditions, their spirit of renunciation attracted many of those who were interested in contemplation and mysticism. So sharing religious experience and inter-religious dialogue became part of evangelization. Âshrams were found most suitable for these purposes.

- 2) The Catholic Women Religious of India have made a significant contribution to Âshram movement in India. Sister Sara Grant and Sister Vandana called Vandana Maraji both belonging to the congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and disciples of Abhishiktananda have contributed much to Âshram Movement. Both co-operated in the re-establishment of the Christa Prema Seva Âshram in Pune. Later Vandana Mataji started on her own Jeevan Dhara Âshram in Garkwal Hills, U.P. She wrote *Gurus, Âshrams and Christians* and edited *Christian Âshrams, A Movement with a Future?* Both Sisters were involved in promoting ecumenism; inter religious dialogue and Indian spirituality.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) Every âshram adheres to its faith and religious tradition whether Hindu, Buddhist, Jain or Christian. They bear witness to their faith and religious traditions without fanaticism, without any forms of violence or intolerance.

Âshrams share their own experience of the Ultimate Reality, their spiritual experience in a spirit of peace and tranquility.

Âshrams are open to the teachings of various religious traditions; show respect to them even if they are contrary to their own belief systems.

Âshrams are places of prayer, meditation and worship as demanded by their own religious traditions.

Contemplation of Divine Realities and Mysteries holds the highest place in Âshrams

A spirit of complete silence is fostered in the âshram except in times of recreation. Silence is a symbol of the transcendence and immanence of the Absolute whose spirit pervades the âshram.

Âshrams remain open to the variety of religious experiences of various religious traditions and respect them.

UNIT 1 KATHA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Story of Nachiketas
- 1.3 Nature of the Self
- 1.4 Realization of the Self
- 1.5 Means of Realisation
- 1.6 Individual Self and Cosmic Self
- 1.7 Results of Realisation
- 1.8 Jivan-Mukti: Realization while Living
- 1.9 Videha-Mukti
- 1.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.11 Key Words
- 1.12 Further Readings and References
- 1.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Katha Upanishad is the very popular Upanishad. It is the most beautiful Upanishad that answers the basic questions of end of human life. By the end of this unit, you are expected to know:

- the question of the meaning of life and death
- the question of immortality
- the question of the meaning of *dharma* and *adharma*,
- the question of knowledge and ignorance
- the question of the ultimate cause of the world

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Katha Upanishad belongs to Krishna Yajurveda. Scholars are of the view that in the elevation of profound thoughts, depth of expressions and the beauty of imagery, no Upanishad is equal to Katha Upanishad. It is acclaimed as the clearest and the most popular one for its brevity and perfect enunciation for the mystical truths about life. Basic questions of life and death, meaning of various things in life are dealt in the Katha Upanishad. Katha holds a special fascination for all students of the Upanishads for its happy blend of charming poetry, deep mysticism, and profound philosophy. It contains a more unified exposition of Vedanta than any other single Upanishad. Its charm is heightened by the two characters of its dialogue, namely, old Yama, the teacher, and young Nachiketas, the student. The Upanishad is structured as dialogue between Lord Yama, the teacher and Nachiketas, a serious, honest and motivated student. The student is portrayed as one who has an understanding of the eternal and ephemeral in full measure. He

is presented as a young son of Vajasrava and of 12 years old. This boy is very devoted to his father and society. He has a strong desire and quest for Self-knowledge. When he meets Lord Yama he is granted three boons. The little boy asked for firstly, pacification of his father, secondly a fire ritual to gain *swarga*, heaven, thirdly, knowledge of the Self. Katha Upanishad contains one hundred and twenty verses divided into two chapters. Each of the chapters has three sections, called *vallis*.

1.2 STORY OF NACHIKETAS

Vajashrava, father of Nachiketas performs a sacrifice to merit certain rewards. At the end of the performance of *visvajit* sacrifice, he distributes gifts of old and feeble cows to the pious people as *dakshina*. In such a one-day sacrifice the performer is expected to give all his possessions as gift to the priests who participate in the sacrifice. Young boy Nachiketas is greatly disturbed by the act of his father and comes forward to offer himself as a gift to the priest. The father gets irritated by his sons' offer and lashes out in anger that he would give his son to Yama, the god of Death. At the utterance of these words, father is filled with great sorrow. But to keep up his father's words, Nachiketas bows to him and walks away into the abode of Yama. There he waits for Yama for three days and nights without a morsel of food to eat or a drop of water to drink. On his return Yama is greatly distressed at the plight of the young boy and is pleased with the stern attitude of the boy. He offers the boy three boons. Even though young in age, Nachiketas is full of wisdom. The first boon that he asked is regarding his father that he be free from anxiety, anger and be granted calmness in mind. As for the second boon, he asked to enlighten him about the sacrifices that lead one to heaven and free people from hunger, thirst, fear and sorrow. Yama readily grants this boon with further instructions. He explains how the sacrificial fire becomes the source of the worlds. To which Nachiketas gives all the details and procedures of this sacrifice without any fault. Pleased with the shrewdness, power of memory and performance of the boy, Yama grants, "henceforth, this sacrificial fire would be known by your name." And it is granted that whoever kindles that fire thrice, would become united with the three lords and attains liberation.

The third boon Nachiketas asks for is to enlighten him as to what happens to a person after his death. He asks, "There is a doubt about a person after death. Some say he exists and others say he does not." Yama asserts that even great ones have this doubt and the answer to this question being highly complicated and very subtle is very difficult to comprehend. By saying this Yama tried to dissuade the boy from entertaining such query and asked him to ask for any other material boon like wealth, gold, horses, elephants, land and so on. Nachiketas remains unmoved and uncompromising on getting answer to the question. He did not want any other material gifts from the Lord except the mysterious knowledge about after life. Knowing the temporary nature of worldly gains he insists on receiving the eternal knowledge. Greatly impressed by Nachiketas as beyond all pleasures and aspirations of material world, Lord Yama starts the instruction on knowledge of the eternal. Ignorance and Knowledge are wide apart as they lead to different goals. To know the truth one follows the path of knowledge which is explained well by the teachings of Katha Upanishad.

1.3 NATURE OF THE SELF

The nature of the Self is that it is unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient and not destroyed. There is no birth and death for the intelligent Self. It is all pervading, far, near and everywhere. It is joyful as well as joyless. It is bodiless and all pervading. It is smaller than the smallest; at the same time it is greater than the greatest. The *purusa* is the subtlest. It is subtler than sensory objects, senses, mind, intellect and even *mahat*, the manifested *Hiranyagarbha* and the unmanifested *avyakta*. Self is hidden in all things. The Self is soundless, formless, imperishable, tasteless, odourless, eternal, constant, all pervading, subtlest, omniscient and omnipotent. Its light is greater than that of the Sun, Moon, Stars, lightning and fire. It is not seen but by its light everything shines. No mortal beings ever live by just life breath alone. One lives by the self over which the whole existence is dependent on. It is the Brahman that sustains everything and becomes the source of all. He is compared to the Peepul tree whose roots are above in the sky and the branches below. Every possible thing in all the worlds rest in it. Over which none can transcend. “Under his command, even the creator comes out vibrating within as the life-force. He is the one dispenser of the universal law of nature, and a great terror like a raised thunderbolt.” The power of the Self controls the fire, sun, air and even death. All the forces and gods discharge their respective duties by the order of the Self. The Purusa, the self is greater than everything else. He is the truth which everyone wants to know. He alone is the Sun, the air in the sky and fire on the sacrificial altar and the soma-juice at sacrifices. Yet His form is not within the field of vision. None is able to perceive with naked eye.

The self is consciousness. It is not the property of the body as matter is intrinsically insentient in nature. The self is also not a product of body as unconscious matter can never produce something conscious. It is not a part of the body too as it pervades all over the body. The self is a separate and independent entity different from the body in which it resides. It is the entity that pervades the entire body and makes it alive and vibrant. Every part of the body is dependent on it for their existence. While they are dependent on the Self, it is not dependent on them for its reality. It is not limited by the boundaries of the body. It alone survives even after the decay of the body.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the three boons asked by Nachiketas.

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2) Describe the Nature of the Self.

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1.4 REALIZATION OF THE SELF

Only a person who has realized the Self can impart the knowledge of Self. Yama calls, “O man! Arise, awake and realize that truth.” The path to know the self is very difficult like a sharp edge of a razor. Hard indeed is such a path to tread. The difficulty lies in the discrimination of what is self and the non-self. What is in the manifest world is there in the unmanifest Brahman. An ordinary man fails to realize this truth and sees the world as different from Brahman. The sense organs by nature are external in nature. Eventually one who identifies with the body and the sense organs try only to understand and know the sense objects and the externals alone. They rejoice in the sense-objects and never get the vision of the self. These persons are like immature children in their thought and their pursuit. Only few wise men that are desirous of immortality turn their attention internally and have the quest of self-knowledge and self-realization.

1.5 MEANS OF REALIZATION

Knowledge of the Self cannot be obtained only through logical arguments. Knowledge is more than logical reasoning. It cannot be known by the scriptural knowledge or by mere human intelligence. It is possible only by internal realization and experience. Anyone with unrestrained mind becomes only impure and gets immersed in material pleasures. The senses are to be controlled by the mind and the mind is controlled by the self. Only that person who lives without any worldly desires becomes immortal. Realization is through concentration of mind and locating the Self in the inner most being of oneself. This self is the subtlest and is seated in the heart of all. The realization is very hard for everyone but the wise achieve it. One who is free from desires is able to see the Self and becomes free from any grief. As all longings disappear, the Self is attained. When all five senses are at rest together with the mind and the intellect becomes inactive, then one attains the highest state. One abandons joy and grief of the transient world. After knowing and grasping the Truth, one attains the subtle Self and rejoices. Knowledge of the self liberates everyone. The unintelligent goes after material objects and outward pleasures, falls prey to the cycle of death and life. The wise attain immortality by knowing the Self. Nachiketas questions Yama on the truth about the status of the Self after death. Yama says that some souls re-enter the womb to have a body. Those who are not liberated would get another birth. Some other unenlightened souls would get plants as their body. Determining factor for such rebirth is the karma.

Syllable AUM is the goal of all teachings of the Vedas and the austere activities. This is the ultimate one which becomes the final objective of all penance. AUM

is both empirical and absolute Brahman. Whoever knows the identity of the syllable AUM and the Self, Brahman, attains all that one desires. He would get beyond the realms of ignorance and knowledge, the cause and the effect and the rest.

This knowledge is obtained not by reasoning, thought, intuition or intellect, but only by entering into one's own heart. Looking within oneself and understanding the subtlest subject make liberation possible. Distinguishing what is not self from what is self, especially the body is very necessary for self realization. As one separates the stalk from a reed, one should do for separating self from the body. Yoga can be acquired as well as lost owing to the one's own effort and skill. The art of yoga is a firm control of senses by the mind. A yogi becomes free from wandering of the mind.

As the self reveals itself not to all, it is not attainable by all. It cannot be attained by a mere study of the scriptures and intellect. It is seen and experienced by the seekers of truth with their concentrated and pure mind. Those who have not refrained from bad conduct and those with unrestrained mind and those of unmeditative persons cannot get the glimpse of Self.

1.6 INDIVIDUAL SELF AND COSMIC SELF

In the world of spiritual realm, being is understood in two ways, individual self and the cosmic self. The cosmic self enters the intelligence and consciousness of the created beings and reside in the cavity of the heart. It enlivens the lives of all living beings. As Individual self it enjoys at the same time the results of the good and the bad actions of the human being. The self is omniscient which is never born or dead. It is not also created one. In decaying of the body, the self does not suffer. Self is the one that neither kills nor is it killed. Like air which pervades the whole world and assumes different forms according to the container it is filled in, the self abides in the hearts of all beings that appear to be different. The self is both transcendental and immanent. In its absolute state it is transcendental and it is immanent as it prevalent. There is no place where he is not. He is here within, without and everywhere.

The eternal Brahman resides in the city of eleven gates. The gates are described as follows: seven in the head, one in the navel, the two lower ones and one at the top of the head. Self presides over the physical body. An interesting analogy is made. The body is compared to a chariot which endlessly travels on the path of life. The soul is the master of the chariot in which the intellect acts as the charioteer, the mind as the bridle, sense organs as horses and the external objects as roads. The Self remains the enjoyer. If someone has an unrestrained mind and ignorance his sense organs become uncontrollable like unbridled horses. Controlled mind takes the chariot in a right path. With impure mind one finds difficult to attain the goal.

1.7 RESULTS OF REALIZATION

At the realization one does not grieve as ignorance is got rid off by meditation upon the self. The realized self does not grieve because he experiences the Self as the self-same and all pervading. It dwells in the hearts of all without any

physical attachment and is without any name or form. The wise realizes then truth that the self is distinct from the sense organs. They are only the product of the five basic elements of nature. Their existence and fields of activities are limited and changing. The self is entirely different from them as unlimited and unchanging. By beholding the self as “this is that” one fears not. Having been liberated, one becomes absolutely free from the web of births and deaths. At the purification of the mind when the self is realized, there is an end to the dualistic and pluralistic outer external world experiences that are limited, finite and binding. The people of awakening worship the omniscient fire in the fire stick. The fire is the very self all-pervading. Like a fetus well preserved inside, the fire is well lodged unseen in the stick. It is perceived only by the realized persons. One who knows this truth realizes the Atman as the sustainer of life and the lord of the past and the future. Thus what looks as unknown and unknowable for some becomes knowable by the intellect. The intellect which is able to cognize light taste, smell, sound, touch etc drives its knowing capability only the Self. There is nothing unknowable to this omniscient Supreme Being itself. The self of the realized remains pure like pure water poured on to pure water remains pure forever. The one who is able to understand and knows the Self becomes immortal. The person who perceives this truth and realizes that experience attains the state of Brahman even while living. He becomes a *jivan mukta*.

1.8 JIVAN-MUKTI: REALIZATION WHILE LIVING

Benefit of knowledge of the Self is presented in two forms in Upanishads. One is the benefit that can be obtained in this life itself while the other is the benefit after death. Katha Upanishad speaks of both the benefits namely, *Jivan mukti* and *videha mukti*. More than the benefits after death, like freedom from cycle of birth and death and immortality, benefits obtained while living in the body itself draw one’s attention for authentic meaningful living as human beings here on earth. *Jivan mukti* is the benefit of knowledge enjoyed mostly at the mental level in different ways. A sense of fulfillment in life is the first fruit of realization. The realized person is free from limitation and belongs to all. There is no sense of isolation or rejection as there is a realization of all-pervading Self within oneself. Secondly, one becomes independent mentally and emotionally. Nothing affects him emotionally in case of accumulation or deprivation of things, of relation or departure of people. The realized one is not dependent on external factors like wealth, status, persons, power, authority, glory, respect etc. Thirdly, the benefit of realization is the emotional balance or stability as a capacity to face anything in life. Whenever there is an emotional fluctuation nothing affects the Self.

1.9 VIDEHA-MUKTI

While *Jivan mukti* is liberation while living, *videha mukti* is freedom after death. Katha Upanishad clearly states about what happens to a person who is still in ignorance. After death these unrealized persons would drop only the body. Death becomes only a separation of the self with the physical body which is made out of five elements. To these five elements the body returns back. The other two bodies namely the subtle and causal bodies continue to exist for an *ajnani*, ignorant person. The subtle body seeks for another physical body to continue the journey.

Rebirth occurs in another body. Law of karma is operative in the rebirth process. As in every body the self experiences good and bad and acquires merits and demerits. These merits and demerits determine the rebirth to enjoy both bad and good fruits of previous birth. In ignorant persons, there remains lots of unfructified *punya-papas* which compels the subtle and causal bodies to look for another physical body for their fulfillment. On contrary to this process, in the life of a realized person, there is no fresh *punya-papa* that is kept in store for the next birth. At death of a liberated person, three bodies merge into the total universe. There is nothing surviving as an individual for *ajnani*. Since there is no *jiva* as a principle of individual, freedom from cycle of birth and death becomes possible. At death, a realized person attains videha mukti as a freedom from *punarjanma*.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the necessity of Self-realization?

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2) Discuss the means to self realization.

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3) Illustrate the benefits of Knowledge of the Self.

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1.10 LET US SUM UP

Each Upanishad generally takes up the responsibility of caring for the spiritual welfare of the individual. In turn they are expected to render their service to groups that for the society and the nation. Katha Upanishad has been acclaimed as the most popular one as per the structure in the form of a dialogue between Nachiketas and Yama. The Upanishad tells the story of Nachiketas, the son of

Vajashrava, who learns the teachings imparted by Yama. Starting with the story, the Upanishad unfolds the profound philosophical truths. It reveals the truths of this world and the other world that is beyond human comprehension. The distinction of Self from mind and body is clearly made in the Upanishad. Desire, anger, hatred, fear all belong to the mind. Similarly hunger and thirst pertain to the body. None of these belong to the Self. Objective view on the things without identifying them with the Self, makes one realize the imperishable Self. The self is not just mind and body. Even while living, one cannot treat them as oneself. The self alone will shine when there is complete eradication of the desires and consciousness of the body.

For such persons there is no death. Death is only for the body and not for the self. The goal of life is set in the words of God of Death. Liberation is the final goal of one's life. When one achieves liberation he is freed of death, rebirth and all the sorrows of existence. Those who practice austerity, control of mind and sense, spiritual discipline reach the realm of Brahman. Right step on the path of mediation and self realization is to merge the power of speech in the mind and the mind in the intellect and the intellect in the great self. Liberation means freedom from rebirth. Knowledge of Self makes such a release possible. This knowledge comes from realizing the true nature of Self. He is a smokeless flame. It is ever consciousness. The metaphor of uprooted tree with the roots towards the sky is given to explain that heaven is the root of all life. The self is source of all. It sustains everything and gives life to all that is dependent on it. It is independent eventhough it resides in the cavity of the hearts of all. All things and beings receive their support and strength from the Self. When prana goes out, Self alone remains. Even after the decay of the physical body, the unchanging Self survives.

Realization of the nature of the Self comes not from mere learning or scriptural scholarship. It is not dependent on the intellect or intuition. The realization is the *anubhava*, experiential. Realization is not something of new discovery. It is just becoming aware of what is already present. Due to ignorance self is not recognized or known. The hidden self beneath everything is to be realized. The unrealized would face the condition of cycle of birth and death continuously. Anyone who thinks that he is an intelligent and enlightened person would surely goes through the cycle of birth and death again and again. Meditating upon the self one gets rid of ignorance. Anyone who lives in the world without the awareness of the body is called as *jivan mukta*. When all desires that dwell in the heart are destroyed and ignorance is dispelled, and then you become immortal. The Upanishad declares that anyone who is aware of the Self is a liberated person in whom there is no death. He becomes Immortal.

1.11 KEY WORDS

- Metaphor** : Metaphor (from Latin *metaphoria*) is language that directly connects seemingly unrelated subjects. It is a figure of speech that connects two or more things. More generally, a metaphor describes a first subject as *being* or *equal to* a second object in some way.
- Rebirth** : Rebirth refers to reincarnation, belief that some essential part of a living being survives death to be reborn in a new body.

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1.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) When Nachiketas meets Lord Yama he is granted three boons. The little boy asked for firstly, pacification of his father, secondly a fire ritual to gain *swarga*, heaven, thirdly, knowledge of the Self.
- 2) The nature of the Self is that it is unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient and not destroyed. There is no birth and death for the intelligent Self. It is all pervading, far, near and everywhere. It is joyful as well as joyless. It is bodiless and all pervading. It is smaller than the smallest; at the same time it is greater than the greatest. The *purusa* is the subtlest. It is subtler than sensory objects, senses, mind, intellect and even *mahat*, the manifested *Hiranyagarbha* and the unmanifested *avyakta*. Self is hidden in all things. The Self is soundless, formless, imperishable, tasteless, odourless, eternal, constant, all pervading, subtlest, omniscient and omnipotent. Its light is greater than that of the Sun, Moon, Stars, lightning and fire.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Only a person who has realized the Self can impart the knowledge of Self. The difficulty lies in the discrimination of what is self and the non-self. What is in the manifest world is there in the unmanifest Brahman. An ordinary man fails to realize this truth and sees the world as different from

Brahman. Only few wise men that are desirous of immortality turn their attention internally and have the quest of self-knowledge and self-realization.

- 2) Knowledge of the Self cannot be obtained only through logical arguments. Knowledge is more than logical reasoning. It cannot be known by the scriptural knowledge or by mere human intelligence. It is possible only by internal realization and experience. One who restrains from bad conduct. Anyone with unrestrained mind becomes only impure and gets immersed in material pleasures. The senses are to be controlled by the mind and the mind is controlled by the self. Only that person who lives without any worldly desires becomes immortal. Realization is through concentration of mind and locating the Self in the inner most being of oneself.
- 3) At the realization one does not grieve as ignorance is got rid off by meditation upon the self. The realized self does not grieve because he experiences the Self as the self-same and all pervading. It dwells in the hearts of all without any physical attachment and is without any name or form. The wise realizes then truth that the self is distinct from the sense organs. They are only the product of the five basic elements of nature. Their existence and fields of activities are limited and changing. The self is entirely different from them as unlimited and unchanging. By beholding the self as “this is that” one fears not. Having been liberated, one becomes absolutely free from the web of births and deaths.

UNIT 2 MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

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- 2.0 Objectives
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- 2.7 Brahman – Source of All
- 2.8 Nature of Brahman
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- 2.10 Identity of Jiva and Brahman
- 2.11 Realization of Brahman
- 2.12 Means of Realization
- 2.13 Let Us Sum up
- 2.14 Key Words
- 2.15 Further Readings and References
- 2.16 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The highest teachings of the Upanishads are treasury of wisdom. For a long period of time it has been transmitted from competent guru to deserving disciples. In other words it was given as a teaching only in a *gurukula* system where the students heard from the teacher and retained the treasure of knowledge. This unit:

- Will bring the students to the sublime teachings of the Mundaka Upanishad.
- The aspirant seeking wisdom will be benefited to deepen one's understanding of the reality.
- The *brahma vidya*, or the science of the Absolute is the aim of the teaching of Mundaka Upanishad.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mundaka Upanishad has evolved from the Atharva Veda. It is a highly mystical Upanishad. The term Mundaka means shaven head. The teaching of the Upanishad shaves (liberates) the student from ignorance. The Upanishad has three chapters each being divided into two sections. Mundaka Upanishad contains about sixty verses. The first chapter deals with the greatness of the teaching and the tradition of the teaching in the first section. And the second section elaborates on the

apara vidya, lower knowledge of the ritual, mundane and secular activities. The second chapter is concerned about establishing Brahman as the cause of the universe and cause and effect principle regarding *jiva* and *jagat*. The third chapter speaks of ways and means of attaining the self knowledge and the benefit of such knowledge for liberation.

2.2 PHILOSOPHY OF MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

In the Mundaka Upanishad Guru Angiras instructs the ascetic Shaunaka on “that knowledge on knowing which nothing remains to be known.” In Mundaka Upanishad there is a systematic approach to the topic of knowledge of the Self through discrimination and dispassion. In Mundaka Upanishad the knowledge of the Self is discussed elaborately and given a clear exposition. There is a clear distinction explained between higher knowledge of the Absolute and the lower knowledge of the empirical world. One can reach the Absolute only the higher knowledge, not by the lower knowledge of the world and rituals. The enquiry on the Self-Knowledge starts with the division of knowledge into *para* and *apara vidya*. The details of *apara vidya* are treated elaborately well in the beginning.

The great lineage of *guruparampara*, master-disciple tradition down the ages, transmitted wisdom of self-enquiry. Brahman expounded the knowledge of the self. This was first taught to Atharva, his eldest son, a *manasa putra*. From him the tradition of the guru-disciple starts. Atharva taught Angiras. He in turn taught Bharadwaja rishi who was known as *satyavaha*. Angiras Rishi, the present teacher of the Mundaka Upanishad, learned from Satyavaha. He was approached by Shaunaka, who performed sacrifices and fed many people. He humbly places himself at the feet of the guru and asked, “O Master, please teach me about that one, by knowing which everything else is known.” The master explains that knowledge has two folds, *Para vidya* and *apara vidya*.

2.3 APARA VIDYA – LOWER KNOWLEDGE

Apara vidya is the first part of the four Vedas, namely, Rg, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas along with their six limbs. Knowledge of them is meant to acquire material gains. All the knowledge of the world comes under *apara vidya*, the science of the materials. The *karma khanda* of the Vedas gives mainly science of various physical and material disciplines. The *upasana section* of the Vedas deals with mental oriented activities, like meditation. Both these physical and mental activities and the knowledge attained by them and for them are dealt as *apara vidya*. The knowledge of them leads any individual into the material ephemeral world. Each ritual blesses the individual with the benefit it gives. According to the Upanishadic seers the sacrificial works and their fruits mentioned in the Vedic mantras are true, if they are performed with faith.

Agnihotra Ritual

A ritual called *agnihotra* is very popular and practiced daily. It is said to be very efficacious time-tested ritual. It is certain that a person who performs is sure to be blessed by desired results. The Upanishad provides the description of this ritual, along with the deviations and carelessness that are to be avoided. The purpose of this description is to explain the intricacies of the dos and don'ts of the ritual. Even the location and the direction of the sacrifice are given. The

homa kunda, the fire place, is to be prepared in between the northern and southern direction. The performer is to be seated facing the east. The rituals are to be carried out on the first moon day (*amavasya*), full-moon day, and the month beginning with *chaturmasya* rituals. The desired results are based on the meticulous performance. The non-performance of these rituals would not lead to the desired results. Oblations can be offered only into properly lit flames. This ritual is of two types, depending on the type of results desired. First type of rituals is performed with the desired results to be fulfilled during the life of the person. The rituals aiming at the attainment of higher worlds, like *swarga* that would be fulfilled only after death belong to the second type. The *agnihotra* ritual represents all other rituals, social services, charitable works and prayer and pilgrims. If they are performed with desires they would surely benefit the persons.

Result of Ritual Performance

By presenting details of ritual performances and their merits, the Upanishad shows people to realize the fleeting nature of the worldly and heavenly pleasures. The limited and short lived results are not infinite. Only the ignorant would consider them to be infinite. Those who think of the men of rituals as wise and torchbearers are regarded as unwise. Men of rituals who consider themselves as wise are like blind men leading blind people. The same rituals can be performed without much desired results by those who desire not any worldly pleasures. They would be led to the brighter path, *shuklagathi*, attainment of *Brahmaloka*, and eventually the Self knowledge and liberation. Without this focus in ritual activity, the performer stays only in the transient and ephemeral world. The explanation of the ritual knowledge and action which is termed as *apara vidya*, limited knowledge leads us to knowledge of higher realms, namely *para vidya*.

2.4 PARA VIDYA - KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

Para vidya, as the knowledge of the Self through which the immortal is known. The self is the source of all beings. It is eternal, all pervading yet subtle, imperishable, unseen and unknown. *Paravidya* takes one towards Absolute by ensuring purity of mind. The experience of gaining and parting with material things is painful. The enjoyment obtained through them is very short and unreal. The fleeting pain and pleasure makes one aware of the drawbacks of *aparavidya*. A sincere seeker looks for something that is free from all limitations.

2.5 BRAHMAN: CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE

The second chapter in the first section speaks of Brahman as the cause of the universe. Relation of Brahman with the world is regarded as the relationship of cause and effect. Brahman is regarded as both material and intelligent cause of the world, *nimitta karanam* or *upadana karanam*. The example of spider and the web is given to establish Brahman as the material cause of the world. Other examples are gold and ornaments, clay and the pot, the ocean and the wave. The Upanishad brings in also an example of fire and the sparks to illustrate the one cause and many effects. The nature of the fire such as heat and the light are also found in the sparks. The non essential qualities like name and shape, color are different in fire and the sparks. Similarly, Brahman is the one cause for the many effects such as the world. The essential nature of the Brahman and the world are

the same but the non essentials may differ. As the spark goes back to the fire itself and it cannot manifest itself without fire, so also the world cannot manifest itself without the Brahman and it finally goes back to the Brahman.

Again in explaining the cause-effect relationship, the Upanishad says that the effect is always dependent upon the cause and the cause is independent. For its substance, emergence, existence and the resolution, the effect is ever dependent on the cause. Whereas the cause is independent substance for itself and self subsistent, the effects have no substance but only form, name, function and modification. Explaining further, the causal relation of conscious Brahman and the inert world, the example of the human body and its inert hair and the nails is given. In the previous illustration of fire and spark it is established that the relation is like that of material to material. Here the relation is between the conscious principle and the inert principle.

Brahman is the one cause and the effects are many. For the effect there is no independent existence, it is *mithya*. Brahman exists independently and is the substance. Brahman is present all the time, during origin, existence and destruction. Brahman is the material cause of the world and the world is inert, matter. Brahman is consciousness and lends its 'is'-ness to all the effects of the world. World cannot be separated from Brahman as no ornament is separate from its substance gold.

2.6 THEORY OF CAUSALITY

In explaining the relation between universe and Brahman, it is stated that the cause is always present in the effect. *Satkaryavada*, is the theory of causality that believed in the preexistence of the effect in the cause. Before the manifestation of the universe the need of and knowledge of it has been visualized by the Brahman. The name and the form of the universe already existed in the potential form in the Brahman. In vedantic terminology there is no actual evolution or creation of the world, but only the manifestation of the Brahman as the world. The world is not a creation of new things. The world comes into being only as a projection of the potential form. Thus, the world comes into existence in four stages; first the five elements, space, air, fire water and earth are projected. In the second stage, ego and mind are brought forth. Thirdly, the five gross elements are made by unification of subtle elements in certain proportions. Finally, the gross bodies are manifest.

2.7 BRAHMAN – SOURCE OF ALL

The ritual performance of sacrifices prescribed in all Vedas is also originated from Brahman. The Upanishad says that everything that is connected to the yajna, the ritual has come from Brahman alone, the *diksha*, a type of grass, worn by the performer for rituals, his wife, the sacrificial fire, the post to tie the sacrificial animal, sacrificial materials, the fees, *dakshina*, the cow, etc. Even the merits of the performance, namely various worlds, and the enjoyment of the benefits are also from the Brahman alone. The Upanishad further gives an account of other virtues and various forms of beings, like heavenly beings, gods of various orders, the injunctions for performance, faith in the scriptures and teachers, grains used in sacrifice, life force, cattle, birds, penance and devotion, instruments used in

sacrifices and the code of conduct, all are said to have come from the same Brahman. The objects and the sensual experiences of two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, a mouth and a tongue are the effect of the Brahman. The oceans, all the mountains, rivers of every kind and herbs, all proceed from Him.

To explain further that the Ultimate is the source of all beings, the Upanishad gives three analogies, namely the spider and the web; Earth and its produces; human body and the parts of it. As the material and the intelligent cause of the web is the spider, for the universe to be caused, the Immortal becomes both intelligent and material cause, *nimitta* and *upadana karanam*. The earth is the one cause which produces variety of plants and trees. Human body which is considered to be living and conscious produces inert hair and nail. There is no pain experienced when these are cut. Inert, unconscious things can be caused by Conscious principle. As there are varieties of effects from the single cause, Brahman, the consciousness projects the inert material world. As in the case of the Spider Brahman is both the material and intelligent cause of the Universe.

The universe before its manifestation as variety of things, have been existing in the potential form in the Brahman himself. It was like a seed form potentially before its being tree. The Brahman visualized the world as a tapas, the knowledge of what and how to create the world. The creation is manifested as a swelling of the seed. Before sprouting the seed swells meaning that it is going to manifest its potential. The manifestation of the subtle world takes place first. The subtle world is compared to the tiny sprout. The gross world is the visible universe with the five elements known as space, fire, air, water and earth along with all planets.

2.8 NATURE OF BRAHMAN

Brahman is defined as the Omniscient Principle from both *para* and *apara vidya*. Attribute of the Brahman is said to be self effulgent and distinctively different from all other things. Brahman is formless, unborn, all pervading, residing in the heart of the body, existing within and without, unborn, undying and immortal. The name and form and function of the things are the forms of Brahman and they are substance less. They are found in the seed form, just as the lump of the clay or gold having all the names and forms of different pots or ornaments, but in an unmanifested potential form. The whole universe is considered to be the body of Brahman. Both the universe and human body function as one unit at the level of existence. The Jivas, animals, birds, and other living beings are born out of *iswara* by different processes of evolution. It is great and the supporter of all. All creatures that move and breathe are grounded in Brahman. The gross and the subtle, form and formless, are only Brahman. Brahman is *sat*, existence and *cit*, knowledge. *Sat-cit* is the supporter of all beings. Brahman is said to be the rays of light. All the worlds are founded on this immortal Brahman as His attributes. The *prana* of the external speech and the mind are only the expressions of Brahman. The entire creation with heavens, earth, the intermediary worlds are all based upon Brahman. The internal worlds, the mind, the *pranas* and the senses are founded on Brahman.

The nature of the self is that it is free from all limitations and it is eternal. One who controls the mind and sense and has discriminative knowledge of what is real and unreal, would be able to have the knowledge of the Self. Anyone whose

minds are impure and whose visions are of an objective nature cannot realize Brahman.

Consciousness is understood neither as part or product of the body nor as limited by the body. It is the one that survives even after the death of the body. But without the body consciousness is not seen. Every body consists of the original and reflected consciousness and they are inseparable. The original consciousness is one pervading all things. The reflected consciousness is known as *ahamkara* or body consciousness. It is as many as the number of bodies. It is also subject to modification from body to body and even in the same body. The two manifestations of the consciousness is compared to two birds of the same species sitting on a tree. A bird sitting on the lower branch eats fruits that are sweet and bitter. The other bird seated on the upper branch is watching. The body consciousness, the *jivatma* is enjoying the fruits where as the witness consciousness, the *paramatma* is watching. The tree is mind body complex; the fruits are results of various actions, giving pleasure and pain. (III.1.1-2).

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided to write your answers

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Distinguish two types of Knowledge

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2) Give the description of Nature of Brahman.

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2.9 NATURE OF ATMAN

Atma is understood as the witness principle. The atma is only one, though the thoughts are many. The consciousness that is Awareness handles the thoughts single-handed. The thoughts are not awareness, though it is perceived in the presence of Awareness. Like the heart as the hub from where all nerves emerge and spread out over the whole body, the mind rests in the heart and in the mind thoughts arise as well awareness, which is witness to the atma. Atma is a silent witness of the three states of consciousness. The heart is the vital centre. Many faculties and attributes are centered in the heart.

Through the eye of knowledge it is recognized as witness, consciousness, by the competent and a pure one. Just as the sense organs are able to recognize the objects in the constant presence of light, the mind depends on the light of another source, Awareness. Consciousness is the light of all lights that illumines all other lights. This light of consciousness is located in the mind. Brahman is that witness-consciousness. “The sun does not shine there, neither the moon nor the stars, nor the lightning and much less the fire. When It shines, everything shines after it. By it alone all the lights are illumined.”(II.2.10) Similarly, the Atma illumines all, but not illumined by anything. The sense organs and mind cannot illumine the Atma, but the Atma illumines them all. The sense organs illumine external objects from borrowed light of Awareness-Consciousness, the Atma. “I, the Atma, am the conscious being and every other thing is not’ is the idea of the verse II.2.11. Brahman is all pervading.

2.10 IDENTITY OF JIVA AND BRAHMAN

The *jivatma* is defined as the one and the same with *paramatma*. The example of an arrow and bow is given to show the identity. The arrow is *Jivatma* and the target being the Brahman. The scriptures are compared to the bow. The teacher is the unity of the arrow with the bow and the target. The practice of *sadhana* is sharpening of the arrow, keeping it straight and pulling back the string to hit the target. Keeping the arrow straight on the bow is known as *arjavam*, that is consistency in thoughts, speech and action. Pulling back of the string is like withdrawing inwardly. Sharpening of the arrow is to keep the intellect sharp through meditation. The focused attention on the target till the arrow is released is to become one with the target and keeping aside the erroneous notion of separation from Brahman. When the arrow becomes one with the mark, the person who aims at it has success. Similarly the aspirant who meditates on Brahman attains success or attains the fruits of meditation. Atma is said to be composed of both consciousness. When *jiva* wakes up to the higher consciousness there is freedom. The Brahman is both *swarupa lakshanan* and *tatastha lakshanam*, original consciousness and witness consciousness. At the individual level it is a *sakshi*, witness and at the world level it is Brahman.

2.11 REALIZATION OF BRAHMAN

The Upanishad invites its hearers to know Brahman to be the Self of all. There is no word other than Brahman. The teacher says, “This is Self-knowledge – the Atma and other words are to be discarded in the attempt to attain immortality, to cross the ocean of *samsara*.” Goal of life is to know this Brahman. The Brahman is near and moving in the cave of the heart. Hearing, *sravanam*, reflection, *mananam*, and contemplation, *nidhidhyasanam* have been taught to realize the Brahman.

Creation is the glory of Brahman and it alone appears in creation, *vibhuti*. Brahman is discernible in the temple of the body, in the heart, as consciousness which is pure bliss and immortal. In this way the immortal *Atma* is seen and worshipped. The body is compared to a temple and the heart is the holy of holies, *garbhagriha*, where *Atma* resides, which is the *jivatma*. The *atma* is like the leader giving its power to the mind and becomes the life of the body and guides the vital air and the body. Finally at the fall of this body, it enters into another gross

body. The *atma* is all pervading. The body is the reflecting medium where the *atma* shines forth more clearly. (II.2.8)

2.12 MEANS OF REALIZATION

The disciplines are truthfulness, avoidance of speaking untruth, penance, *tapas*, sexual chastity, *brahmacarya*, proper enquiry through *sastra* and guru, *samyak jnanam*. The enquiry of the self is fruitful only when the mind is free from impurities. The virtue of speaking the truth is given much importance. The famous phrase of *Satyameva jayate* is that truth alone triumphs. (III.1.2-6). Speaking the truth is absolutely necessary for liberation and attainment of *brahmaloka*, through the bright path, *shukla gathi*. It is the basic tenet for meditation. The essence of this teaching is that without relative truth, the Absolute Truth, Brahman cannot be realized. Sharp intellect to cognize subtle elements is necessary. Nature of Atma is that it is infinite, limitless, self evident, inconceivable, most subtle farther, nearer and sat and cit. To know this subtle element of Atma, sharp intellect is needed.

What can reveal the Brahman and what cannot reveal it are narrated in the Upanishad. The eyes, words cannot reveal. Sense organs are not able to recognize the subtle element of Atman. Tapas, rituals and other actions too cannot help in knowing Brahman. They may be useful in preparing the mind and sense organs towards purity and subtlety. Atma can be revealed only by the *sruti*. To assimilate what is taught by scriptures the mind must be suitable and well prepared. The mind cleansed of desires and aversion and is well refined and tuned to subtlety alone can know the indivisible, pure and subtle Brahman. The subtle mind recognizes the subtle Brahman.

The Knower of the Self is glorified as he has recognized the Infinite Brahman as the substratum of the entire creation and knows that I am that Infinite Brahman. The *jnani* worships Him without any desire for materialistic pleasures. And he attains immortality. The *jnani* imparts spiritual knowledge to the aspirant systematically that leads to liberation. The self knowledge destroys rebirth and lead to liberation. Desire leads to action and the result of actions goes to character and that makes one obsessed with during the time of death that decides the next birth. A *jnani* has no desire to be fulfilled and such desirelessness leads to liberation from rebirth.

The requirements to know and realize the Atma are the intense desire along with study of scriptures, intelligence and retention power. The thirst for final emancipation, the intense yearning and a burning desire for the object and prepared for any sacrifice to attain it. *paramatma* reveals the knowledge only to the sincere seeker. Actually liberation is not a thing to be achieved as it is already there. The ignorance has to be dispelled to realize the very nature of one is the Atma. The will power, alertness, austerity and determination and detachment are the fourfold qualification for realization.

The benefits of this knowledge of the Self is destruction of ignorance and clarity of the meaning of *Jiva* and *jagat* and *iswara* and finally the freedom from the clutches of *karma*, *papam* and *punyam*, that result in the cycle of birth and death. The benefits of this knowledge are the freedom in two stages, *jivan mukti* and *videha mukti*. The freedom while living in the body and freedom obtained at or

after death. The process is in various stages. It starts with recognition of the fact that the spiritual goal is the ultimate, and getting detached and being tranquil, acquiring knowledge, understanding the identity and attaining *jivan mukti*, continuing in the knowledge without slipping down. And finally merging with all pervading Brahman, The *jivan mukta* has essentially the following nature, *gyana triptah*, satisfied with the knowledge, *kriyatmanah* who has realized the *atma*, *vitarah*, devoid of attachment, *sarvaga*, all pervading, *dhira*, the wise.

To become a *jnani*, purifying the mind with balance of mind and becoming a committed pursuer of knowledge. The merging of the individual soul into the total is compared to the fifteen parts of the moon. The causal and subtle body gets merged into one. The three types of karma, *sancita*, *agami* and *prarabdha* are merged into *ishwara*. The example of rivers merging into the ocean is given to explain this. Though different in names, forms and sizes, the rivers get merged and become only water in the ocean. So also the *jivas*, though different in name and form are essentially one and the same when they merge into the One.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided to write your answers

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the identity of Brahman and Atman

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2) Give the realization of the Brahman.

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2.13 LET US SUM UP

The teaching of the Upanishad focuses on the fulfilling the human quest for knowledge of everything that is knowable. Anything that is can be namable and knowable. Whatever is reality can be knowable. The *Mundaka Upanishad* quenches the perennial search for knowledge. It says all the search for wisdom culminates and reaches its summit in attaining of *Brahmavidya*. Among innumerable objectives of life, human beings are given an ultimate choice of knowing the reality, knowing which everything that can be known would be known.

The Mundaka Upanishad classifies all knowledge into *para* and *apara*, higher and lower. The *apara* knowledge is described well as positive knowledge about the changeful many. All science, art, literature, politics, and economics all belong to this category. The knowledge of vedic rituals and all related to it belongs to *apara*. It proclaims that the one knowledge as *para*. The knowledge by which the imperishable changeless reality of the one behind all is realized is *para*. The Upanishad upholds the given merits of ritual practices and then turns the other side of them. Having explained the limitedness of *apara vidya*, the Upanishad goes to describe the nature of *para vidya*. A transition is said to be a transition from knowledge of the material to the spiritual and from the unreal to real.

Brahman is both material and intelligent cause of the world, *nimitta karanam* or *upadana karanam*. Brahman is one and the world is many. As the essence of them is same, the non-essentials like form and name are different. Also the world cannot manifest itself without the Brahman and it finally goes back to the Brahman. In the last chapter the identity between the *jivatma* and *paramatma* are explained and the preparatory disciplines to realize the identity. And the benefits of such realization are spelt out as being *jivan mukti* and *videha mukti*. Consciousness the witness is talked of with the *ahamkara* as the body consciousness. The Upanishad enumerates the identity of Jiva and Brahman as a single entity. The identity of Brahman and Atman is well defined in Mundaka Upanishad. *Paramatma*, the Brahman is without any impurity and it is without part and division. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. When the ignorance is removed, one realizes it. It is not one becoming another, but realizing what one is. It is like one is already Brahman but ignorant about it. The knowledge removes the ignorance and realization is possible.

The Upanishad concludes saying that this teaching was given thousands of years ago by the teacher Angiras to Shaunaka Maharishi. Though ancient, it is relevant and beneficial for all who seek the truth.

2.14 KEY WORDS

- Mithya** : Mithya's root is 'Mith.' As given by Apte Sanskrit Online dictionary, *Mith* means to associate with; to unite; to hurt; to understand; to wrangle; to grasp.
- Sastra** : *Sastra* in Sanskrit means that which gives teaching, instruction or command. For instance, *tarka sastra* is a science of dialectics, logic and reasoning, and art of debate that analyzes the nature and source of knowledge and its validity.

2.15 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) *Apara vidya* is the first part of the four Vedas, namely, Rg, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas along with their six limbs. Knowledge of them is meant to acquire material gains. All the knowledge of the world comes under *apara vidya*, the science of the materials. The *karma khanda* of the Vedas gives mainly science of various physical and material disciplines. The *upasana section* of the Vedas deals with mental oriented activities, like meditation. Both these physical and mental activities and the knowledge attained by them and for them are dealt as *apara vidya*. The knowledge of them leads any individual into the material ephemeral world. Each ritual blesses the individual with the benefit it gives. According to the Upanishadic seers the sacrificial works and their fruits mentioned in the Vedic mantras are true, if they are performed with faith.
- 2) Brahman is defined as the Omniscient Principle from both *para* and *apara vidya*. Attribute of the Brahman is said to be self effulgent and distinctively different from all other things. Brahman is formless, unborn, all pervading, residing in the heart of the body, existing within and without, unborn, undying and immortal. The name and form and function of the things are the forms of Brahman and they are substance less. They are found in the seed form, just as the lump of the clay or gold having all the names and forms of different pots or ornaments, but in an unmanifested potential form. The whole universe is considered to be the body of Brahman. Both the universe and human body function as one unit at the level of existence. The Jivas, animals, birds, and other living beings are born out of *iswara* by different processes of evolution. It is great and the supporter of all. All creatures that move and breathe are grounded in Brahman. The gross and the subtle, form and formless, are only Brahman. Brahman is *sat*, existence and *cit*, knowledge. *Sat-cit* is the supporter of all beings. Brahman is said to be the rays of light. All the worlds are founded on this immortal Brahman as His attributes. The *prana* of the external speech and the mind are only the expressions of Brahman. The entire creation with heavens, earth, the intermediary worlds are all based upon Brahman. The internal worlds, the mind, the *pranas* and the senses are founded on Brahman.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The *jivatma* is defined as the one and the same with *paramatma*. The example of an arrow and bow is given to show the identity. The arrow is *Jivatma* and the target being the Brahman. The scriptures are compared to the bow. The teacher is the unity of the arrow with the bow and the target. The practice of *sadhana* is sharpening of the arrow, keeping it straight and pulling back the string to hit the target. Keeping the arrow straight on the bow is known as *arjavam*, that is consistency in thoughts, speech and action. Pulling back of the string is like withdrawing inwardly. Sharpening of the arrow is to keep the intellect sharp through meditation and to keep the intellect sharp through mediation. The focused attention on the target till the arrow is released is to become one with the target and keeping aside the erroneous notion of separation from Brahman. When the arrow becomes one with the mark, the

person who aims at it has success. Similarly the aspirant who meditates on Brahman attains success or attains the fruits of meditation. Atma is said to be composed of both consciousness. When *jiva* wakes up to the higher consciousness there is freedom. The Brahman is both *swarupa lakshanan* and *tatastha lakshanam*, original consciousness and witness consciousness. At the individual level it is a *sakshi*, witness and at the world level it is Brahman.

- 2) The disciplines are truthfulness, avoidance of speaking untruth, penance, *tapas*, sexual chastity, *brahmacarya*, proper enquiry through *sastra* and guru, *samyak jnanam*. The enquiry of the self is fruitful only when the mind is free from impurities. The virtue of speaking the truth is given much importance. The famous phrase of *Satyameva jayate* is that truth alone triumphs. (III.1.2-6). Speaking the truth is absolutely necessary for liberation and attainment of *brahmaloka*, through the bright path, *shukla gathi*. It is the basic tenet for meditation. The essence of this teaching is that without relative truth, the Absolute Truth, Brahman cannot be realized. Sharp intellect to cognize subtle elements is necessary. Nature of Atma is that it is infinite, limitless, self evident, inconceivable, most subtle farther, nearer and sat and cit. To know this subtle element of Atma, sharp intellect is needed.

What can reveal the Brahman and what cannot reveal it are narrated in the Upanishad. The eyes, words cannot reveal. Sense organs are not able to recognize the subtle element of Atman. Tapas, rituals and other actions too cannot help in knowing Brahman. They may be useful in preparing the mind and sense organs towards purity and subtlety. Atma can be revealed only by the *sruti*. To assimilate what is taught by scriptures the mind must be suitable and well prepared. The mind cleansed of desires and aversion and is well refined and tuned to subtlety alone can know the indivisible, pure and subtle Brahman. The subtle mind recognizes the subtle Brahman.

UNIT 3 MANDUKYA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 General Content
- 3.3 Exposition of AUM
- 3.4 Names and States of Consciousness
- 3.5 Waking State
- 3.6 Dream State
- 3.7 Deep Sleep State
- 3.8 *Turiya* – Fourth State
- 3.9 Realisation of Self
- 3.10 Characteristics of the Self
- 3.11 AUM and Self
- 3.12 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.13 Key Words
- 3.14 Further Readings and References
- 3.15 Answers to Check Your Progress.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Consciousness present in the human beings is one and the same in all circumstances. The differences in the state of consciousness are experienced in various contexts. The self is the experiencer in all states. By the end of this unit, you are expected to understand:

- the insights of Māndūkya Upanishad that gives the analysis of four modes of consciousness, namely, waking, dream, deep sleep and transcendental.
- the reflective analysis of the mystical syllable ‘AUM,’ which stands as a symbol of religious and philosophical tradition of India

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Māndūkya Upanishad belongs to Atharva Veda. Māndūkya Upanishad derives its name after the seer Māndūkya. Māndūkya literally means a frog. The story goes the following way; God Varuna assumes the form of a frog to reveal the importance of *pranava* or *Om* which is presented as the only name and symbol of the Absolute Brahman. Māndūkya Upanishad is the shortest of the principal Upanishads. It has only twelve verses. It contains the quintessence of the entire *vedantic* teaching. The language of this Upanishad is compact and concise, but rich in meaning. Gaudapada wrote his famous *Karika*, commentary on this Upanishad. This is considered to be the first systematic exposition of Advaita Vedanta. Sankara had also written a commentary both on the Upanishad and the commentary of Gaudapada.

3.2 GENERAL CONTENT

Its analysis has the entire treatment on human consciousness in the three states of waking (*jagrat*), dream (*svapna*) and deep sleep (*susupti*). By adopting a unique method of investigating these three states of human consciousness, the Upanishad asserts that nature of Reality. The self is named as the experiencer of gross things, (*vaiśvānara*), the experiencer of subtle objects (*taijasa*) and the experiencer of unmanifested objectivity (*prajna*). Māndūkya Upanishad provides a symbol of AUM for meditation on the Reality that leads to the realization of the Supreme Reality. AUM is that mono-syllable word of all words. It comprises of three sounds, A, U, M, having much more philosophical implications that are elaborated in the Upanishad. It proclaims the one of the famous great sayings, *mahavakya*, namely *ayamatma brahma* (This self is Brahman).

3.3 EXPOSITION OF AUM

The Māndūkya Upanishad details the subtle meaning of AUM as a syllable standing for all sounds, words and names. The *akshara* AUM is given a meaning as “that which is imperishable or immortal.” The Māndūkya Upanishad tries to strike an identical cord for the concepts of AUM, Brahman and Atman, establishing that they are one and the same. The nature of AUM and the nature of *nirguna Brahman* and *saguna Brahman* are said to be the same. AUM is represented as the symbol of Brahman. It also stands for the manifested world of the past, the present and the future. AUM is the syllable considered to be all. *Aksòaram idam sarvam*.

3.4 NAMES AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The self is presented in the Māndūkya Upanishad as having four names as *visiva*, *taijasa*, *prajna* and *turiya* according to the states of consciousness it has for each moment. The names indicate the respective state of consciousness. The states are waking state, dream state, the state of deep sleep and the fourth, spiritual or transcendental consciousness. The *visiva* is the name given to the Self in the waking state where the Self has waking state as its sphere of activity and cognizes the external objects. The second state of consciousness is the dream state. The self is to act in the sphere of dream. It cognizes internal, mental objects and enjoys the subtle objects. The name given to the self is *taijasa*. The *taijasa* is conscious of the internal and mental states. The third state of consciousness is the deep sleep and the experiencer is named as *prajna*. Here the experiencer does not desire anything. It does not perceive anything of external objects or dream objects. It is said to be mass of cognition, for the self is really witness of its own state. Yet this state of consciousness is considered to be transitory in nature and so it is not the ultimate state. The fourth one is the transcendental consciousness state where the self is really itself and it is said to be *turiya*.

3.5 WAKING STATE

The physical universe is bound by uniform laws. It presents itself to all people. The waking state is the normal condition of the natural man. Here anyone perceives the world as it is and there is no much reflection about it. Bound by the

fetters of sense-perception and desire, the self acts in the waking state. The *visiva* is the name given to the subject of the waking state. It cognizes the material, physical and external objects in this state of consciousness. The waking state is the first quarter of the self and this *vaiśvānara*, the subject of the state, has waking state as the sphere of action. In this state, consciousness relates to things external and is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths. The seven limbs are presented from the imagery of *Agnihotra* sacrifice where it is said, ‘Heaven is verily of that *vaiśvānara*-self who is such; the sun is the eye, air is the vital force, space is the middle part, water is the bladder, and the earth indeed is the two feet. The *ahavaniya* fire has been imagined as his mouth. He that is possessed of these seven limbs is *saptangah.*’ The self is said to be possessed of nineteen mouths. They are five senses of perception and five organs of action, the five vital forces and mind, intellect, ego and mind-stuff. They are mouths in the sense of gates of experiences. Since through these aforesaid entrances *vaiśvānara*, enjoys gross objects he is called as enjoyer of the gross. The enjoyment of gross things is in the waking state. The *vaiśvānara* directs its attention towards superficial objects of the physical and material world. The awareness is an outside-focused concentration towards the things other than oneself. The idea presented in the Māndūkya Upanishad regarding this is that consciousness appears as though related to outer objects, owing to ignorance. The darkness of ignorance leads us to sometimes identify the external objects as its very self.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
- b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) Explain the different states of Consciousness.
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- 2) Give the description of waking state
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3.6 DREAM STATE

The dream state is the condition of the self when the external senses and objects are not presented to it with their physical characters, but are available as mental images. The self is given a name, *taijasa*, the luminous one. The name is given as one who becomes the witness of the modes of cognition and appears only as

a luminous thing. It experiences mental states dependent on the predisposition and impressions left by the waking experience. The consciousness of the waking state is associated with many external means. And it is associated with these means and engrossed in external objects. As a result, it leaves in the mind lots of impressions. It is like the impressions on the piece of painted canvas. It appears in the dream state just as in the waking state, but without any external means. The mind is internal in relation to the senses. The consciousness in dream takes the forms of the impression in the internal mind that which is aware of internal objects. In this state the self fashions its own world of dreams. The dream objects that are experienced are internal, subtle and mental items. The duality of the knower and the known remains in the second state of consciousness too. In the dream state *taijasa* possesses a greater freedom as the self imagines a world of its own from the perceptions of external objects in the previous state of waking experience. The dream objects give delight to the self for sometimes. In this sense, the self is liberated from the empirical world. *Taijasa* is the second aspect where the sphere of activity is the dream state. The consciousness is internal that possesses seven limbs and nineteen mouths. The person enjoys subtle objects. The external *viśva* is dependent on material objects. He experiences the modes of gross cognition. In the second state of consciousness, namely the dream state, the awareness is experienced consisting of mere impressions that are subtle. Hence the enjoyment of them too becomes subtle. While the first state is the waking life of outward moving, external consciousness, the second state is the dream life of inward looking consciousness.

3.7 DEEP SLEEP STATE

The next state of consciousness is deep sleep. The self is called *prajna* whose sphere of activity is in deep sleep. The sleeper does not desire any enjoyable thing and does not see any dream. Deep sleep is the state of knowledge though the external and internal objects are cognized in abeyance. As in the darkness where there is no perception possible, in the deep sleep state there is no perception of both external and internal. In this state there is no desire, no thought is gained. All the impressions have become one and there remains only knowledge and bliss. This is the conceptual self in the deep sleep state. The self in the other two states are imaginative and perceptual ones. The deep sleep state is the doorway to the cognition of the two other states of consciousness, namely waking and dream. Deep sleep consists of the unawareness of Reality. Even in other two states too there is unawareness of reality. There are the presence and absence of perceptible gross objects. Self in deep sleep state which has unawareness of Reality is equally present in all the three states. It is distinguished from the earlier two states. In sleep there is no false perception of reality but only absence of desire. By this the other two states are differentiated from deep sleep. He is said to be *cetomukhah*, since he is the doorway to the consciousness of the experiences in the dream and waking states. The deep sleeper is called as *prajna*, conscious par excellence. In him alone, is there the knowledge of the past and the future and of all things. Even though lying in deep sleep he is called *prajna* conscious. It is because of having been conscious earlier in the other two states. And he alone is possessed of the peculiar characteristics of mere, undiversified consciousness. The other two states have diversified knowledge.

The Self in deep sleep also is called as a mass of consciousness as it is characterized by the absence of discrimination. In this state everything becomes

undifferentiated as everything appearing as a mass by becoming indistinguishable under darkness. The *prajna* is full of joy. The abundance of joy is caused by the absence of the misery involved in the effort of the mind vibrating as the objects and their experience. Anyone who remains free from any effort, is considered to be happy and an experiencer of joy. This deep sleeper too has the joy that is enjoyed in this state. It consists in extreme freedom from effort. He abounds in bliss, who is surely an enjoyer of bliss and who is the doorway to the experience of the dream and waking states. He is not Bliss itself, but the enjoyer of bliss since the joy is not absolute.

In deep sleep the Self does not change or disappear. For after the deep sleep one is able to say that one slept soundly and was not aware of anything. The memory of deep sleep would not be possible if the Self has disappeared in deep sleep. The memory of sound sleep is recollected only because of the witnessing consciousness that remains unchanging in Deep Sleep. At the termination of deep sleep state, the self returns back to dream and waking states. In fact the Self remains unchanged in all states. Only the attributes are superimposed on to the self in these three states of consciousness. It is the same Self that subsists in the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and in the fourth. The deep sleep state is the one in which the consciousness enjoys peace and perceives neither external nor internal. Yet the deep sleep state is not the ultimate state, for it is transitory in character.

3.8 *TURIYA* – FOURTH STATE

The fourth state is termed as *turiya*, as pure consciousness, transcendental, eternal and non dual. The Mândûkya Upanishad does not describe this state in a direct way with its positive qualities. The description of this state follows the negative method, known as *via negativa*. By explaining what is not the fourth, the knowledge of the fourth is known. *Turiya* is indicated not merely through positive description but by negation of attributes. Through negative method something is positively established. *Turiya* is devoid of every characteristic that can be explained by use of words possible. It is not describable through words. The fourth is to be that which is not conscious of the internal world, of external world, of both the worlds. It is not a mass of consciousness. It is not conscious, not unconscious. It is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp of the organs of action, uninferable, unthinkable, and indescribable. The valid proof consists in the single belief in the Self in which all phenomena cease. It is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual. That is the Self and that is to be known.

In *Turiya*, the reality is known beyond the distinction of subject and object. The self is not to be understood in theistic sense of all-knowing and all-powerful and so on. Brahman is not treated as God having knowledge and power. It is a pure being beyond all word and thought. When it becomes *Isvara* as a personal God with the quality of *prajna*, pure wisdom, it is all knowing. Though objective consciousness is absent in both third and fourth state, the seed of its consciousness is found in deep sleep and it is absent in the transcendent consciousness. The empirical consciousness is present in the unmanifested condition in deep sleep. In *turiya* is the state of non empirical beyond the three states.

3.9 REALIZATION OF SELF

The knowledge of the fourth is attained by merging the other three states of consciousness. The self is the one who is known in all the three states. It is free from all phenomenal relationship and remains in its absolute real aspect. The fourth one is different from those three that are conscious of the external and internal world. As the true nature of the rope is realized through the negation of the illusions of a snake, the very self, and subsisting in the three other states is established as *Turiya*. Like the rope taken as snake, the Self in the other states is imagined to be possessed of attributes like conscious of the internal and external world. When the self is known with the valid knowledge arising from the negation of such attributes, there occurs the cession of the phenomenal world of misery. So there is no need to search for any other means of knowledge or any other science or discipline to arrive at the knowledge of the true Self. For the realization of the *Turiya*, the negation of false attributes of the Self in the other three states is needed. Elimination of the knowledge of the snake is the simultaneous occurrence of the knowledge of the rope. The discriminative knowledge of the rope and the snake is made possible merely by this elimination of the false knowledge. In case of *Turiya*, the instrument of knowledge is nothing but a valid knowing arising from negation of false knowledge. The false knowledge of the nature of the Self is only superimposed on the Self in the other three states. The unwanted attributes are eliminated simultaneously with the removal of the distinctions as the knower, the known and the knowledge.

3.10 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SELF

The three states of consciousness are nothing but different states of experience of the self, known as *avastha-trayam*. In the waking state the experiencer functions through the physical body and the sense organs and experiences the external world. In the contact with the external world there are two things happening for the self. One is the experience of the external world which is the gross universe, *sthula prapanca*. Secondly the mind records and stores all the experiences in the form of impressions, *vasanas*. The experiencer has not only experiences the world but his mind also records the events like any audio or video cassette. The cassette can record only sound or images and their capacity is limited. Unlike the cassettes the mind records all the five. In the *svapna avastha*, when all functioning of the physical body and sense organs with their external world disappears, the experiencer leaves one's identification with the physical body. Without any transaction with the world outside, the self is transacting with the internal world. In this new world is encountered with its own sound, touch, sight, smell and so on. This dream world is a projected world born out of the activation of the past impression of the external world in the waking state. The world of dreamer is very much similar with that of the external world in the waking state. Only difference is that they are internal recreated with all its characters. The inner world is exactly real as that of external world. The projection is made out of previous impressions. Sometimes the activation is not total and complete. Only few impressions get projected sometimes. The memory of the mind may be vague. In the deep sleep state, there is no external world due to the absence of the physical activities. Equally too there is no internal world due to nonfunctioning of the mind. Only involuntary actions like blood circulation, breathing and so on, take place. In the absence of any conscious willful functioning of the physical,

there is total blankness without any experience of the external and internal world. The self relaxes without any strain and it gives lots of refreshing to the self. All these three states play an important role in functioning of the self. The waking state is predominant among others for the self is characterized mostly by the physical appearances and the external functioning. The dream world is determined by the impressions of the waking state.

Through elaborate discussion on states of consciousness the Upanishad explains the true nature and characteristic features of the self. Following are the attributes given to self. The self is unseen (*adrstam*), unperceived (*avyavaharyam*), beyond empirical dealings (*agrahyam*), beyond the grasp of the organs of action (*alaksanam*), without any logical ground of inference, uninferable (*acintyam*), unthinkable, indescribable (*avyapadesyam*). The self is the one in whom all phenomena have ceased, (*prapancopasamam*). It is unchanging (*santam*), auspicious (*sivam*), and non-dual (*advaitam*). This conscious being is termed as the Lord of all, Omniscient. This one is the inner Director of all, source of all; this one is verily the place of origin and dissolution of all beings. As the Lord of all, of all diversity is inclusive of the heavenly world. This one again, in his state of immanence in all diversity, is the knower of all. This one is Omniscient, the inner controller. This becomes also Director of all beings by entering inside. He gives birth to the universe together with its diversities and this one is established to be the Source of all. This is certainly the place of origin and dissolution of all beings.

3.11 AUM AND SELF

The first verse of the Mandukya Upanishad says that the letter *AUM* is all that is past, present and future and is beyond all three periods of time. All the objects are indicated by names and forms. The names of objects are non-different from the objects and from *AUM*. Brahman as the supreme is known through the relationship existing between name and its objects. The letter *AUM* is the same as the supreme as well as the inferior Brahman. A clear exposition is given, showing its proximity to Brahman by virtue of its being a means for attainment of Brahman. The past, present and the future is understood as that which is circumscribed by the three periods of time. All this is but *AUM*, in accordance with the reasons already advanced. Even whatever is there beyond the three periods of time is also the *AUM*. That which is inferable from its effects but not confined by time is the unmanifested and verily *AUM*. The word and the object signified are the same. This is given greater importance in the Upanishad. All through the Upanishad this idea is presented with an emphasis on the unity of the name and the thing nameable. All this is surely Brahman. This self is Brahman. The self is said to be possessing four quarters. That which is *AUM* is Brahman. The self, innermost self is divided into four parts.

The self is considered from the standpoint of the syllable. It is indeed *AUM*. *AUM* has three letters or quarters. They are *a*, *u* and *m*. The Self is equated with *AUM*. That syllable *AUM* while being divided into quarters, exists on letters as its basis. The quarters are *a*, *u*, and *m*. Vaisvanara in the waking state is like the first letter, *a*. He who knows does verily attain all desirable things, and becomes foremost. With regard to these, specific relations are being established. Vaisvanara with his sphere of activity as the waking state is identical with the self in the

gross cosmic context. It is because of the pervasiveness both are said to be identical. The sound 'a' is pervaded all speech and sound. "The sound a is indeed all speech." (A. A. II. iii. 7:13). Similarly, by *vaisvanara* is pervaded the whole universe. And we said that the word and thing denoted by the word are the same. That which has precedence is said to be first. Just as the letter called *a*, is the first, so also is *Vaisiva?nara*. Because of this very similarity the self is identified with *a*, *akarah*.

Taijasa in the state of dream is like the second sound *u* of AUM. The similarity of excellence and intermediateness is found in both. He who knows is, increases the current of knowledge and becomes equal to all. None is born in his line who is not a knower of Brahman. The self in the state of dream as his sphere of activity is the second letter, *ukarah*. The excellence is said to be in the self and the second letter. As the letter *u* is better than *a*, *Taijasa* is better than *visva*. And again because of the intermediate position enjoyed by *u*, between *a* and *m*. *Taijasa* is intermediate between *Visva* and *Prajna*. The self heightens, increases, the current of knowledge and becomes equal. *Taijasa* is inwardly conscious.

Prajna with his sphere of activity in the sleep state is said to be *m*. The measuring or absorption is said to be the equal aspect in both. Anyone who knows thus measures all this and he becomes the place of absorption. The analogy is brought in to give meaning to measuring. Barley is measured by the vessel called *prastha*, so are *Visva* and *Taijasa* measured, because of their entry into and coming out of *prajna* during dissolution and origination. Similarly too, at the end of the pronunciation of the syllable AUM and at the time of its fresh pronunciation, the letters *a* and *u* seem to enter into the last letter *m*, to come out again from it. Absorption is getting merged or united in. At the pronunciation of AUM, *a* and *u*, verily seem to get merged into last letter *m*. Similarly *visva* and *taijasa* merge into *prajna* at the time of sleep. The result attained by the man of knowledge is stated. He measures all this, that is to say, he knows the reality of the Universe. He becomes the place of absorption. The self in its state is the cause of the world. The mention of subsidiary result here is by way of praising the primary means.

The partless AUM is *Turiya*, beyond all conventional dealings, the limit of the negation of the phenomenal world, the auspicious, and the non-dual. Om is thus the self to be sure. He who knows thus enters the Self through his self. As a partless AUM, the fourth *Turiya* is merely the Absolute Self. It is beyond empirical relations because of the disappearance of names and nameables, that are but forms of speech and mind. It is the culmination of phenomenal existence which is the limit of the negation of the world. One, who knows the self to be equated with letter OM, and to be auspicious, and non-dual, finally enters into his own Supreme Self through his own empirical self. The knower of Brahman is the one has realized the highest truth. He has entered into the Self by burning away the third state of latency. And hence he is not born again, since *Turiya* does not have latency of creation. For when a snake superimposed on a rope has merged in the rope on the discrimination of the rope and the snake, it does not appear again to those discriminating people, just as before, from the impressions of the past persisting in the intellect. To those men of renunciation however, who are possessed of dull or average intellect, who still consider themselves aspirants, who tread the virtuous path, and who know the common feature of the letters and the quarters of AUM and the Self as presented before to them the syllable

AUM, when mediated on in the proper way, becomes helpful for the realization of Brahman.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Describe the cognition pattern of deep sleep state.

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2) Explain the fourth state of consciousness.

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3) How does the Upanishad identify the *aksharam* 'AUM' and states of consciousness of Self?

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3.12 LET US SUM UP

The Mandukya Upanishad briefly explains in its twelve verses the condensed thought. It describes the entire human experience of three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. The Mandukya Upanishad gives a deeper analysis of these states of consciousness. The self has three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleeping. In the wakeful state, the self is conscious of the common world of external gross objects. It enjoys the gross objects. The self is dependent on the body for the cognition of external objects. The second state of consciousness is that of dreaming. Here the self enjoys subtle things. The world fashioned for the dreamer is of the materials cognized in the waking experience. The self roams freely without the fetters of physical senses and body. The third state is the condition of deep sleep. In this state there are no dreams of objects and no desire for the objects. In deep sleep, all waking and dream experiences disappear. The self is

temporarily identifies with Brahman and enjoys bliss momentarily. In deep sleep the self is lifted above all desires and freed from external and internal objects. It is lost in objectless-knowing subject condition. The analysis of fourth state of consciousness as transcendental is described in the Mândūkya Upanishad through *via negativa*. The fourth state is presented as the basis of all other three states.

An exposition of the principle of *AUM* as consisting of three elements, a, u, m is presented here. These are correspondingly referred to the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The supreme Self as manifested in the world in its gross, subtle and causal forms is presented through the analysis of the term *AUM* and the three states of consciousness. The fourth state of consciousness is termed as transcendental conscious state which is presented as the all-inclusive and ultimately real Absolute. Meditation on the word, *AUM* is suggested, for in recitation of *AUM*, there are four stages. There is a silence before 'A'kara, 'U'kara and 'M'kara. There is an emphasis on the grasping of that silence which is Awareness. The witness is *Atma*, the Self. The Upanishad reveals the true nature of man, as Atman. It proclaims that the infinite dimension of man as *ayam aṁ tmaṁ brahma* – this atman, self of man is Brahman. The absolute of the fourth state of consciousness is the object of mystical union. The knowledge of it, as presented in Mandukya Upanishad leads one to liberation.

3.13 KEY WORDS

- Self** : The self is the individual person, from his or her own perspective. To you, self is you. To someone else, self is that person.
- Dream** : Dreams are a series of images, sounds and feelings in narrative form that occur during sleep. Dreams typically last in the range of 5 to 45 minutes. The content and purpose of dreams are not fully understood, though they have been a topic of speculation and interest throughout recorded history.

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3.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) The self is presented in the Mandukya Upanishad as having four names as *visva*, *taijasa*, *prajna* and *turiya* according to the states of consciousness it has for each moment. The physical universe is bound by uniform laws. It presents itself to all people. The waking state is the normal condition of the natural man. Here anyone perceives the world as it is and there is no much reflection about it. The dream state is the condition of the self when the external senses and objects are not presented to it with their physical characters, but are available as mental images. The self is given a name, *taijasa*, the luminous one. The next state of consciousness is deep sleep. The self is called *prajna* whose sphere of activity is in deep sleep. The sleeper does not desire any enjoyable thing and does not see any dream. Deep sleep is the state of knowledge though the external and internal objects are cognized in abeyance. The fourth state is termed as *turiya*, as pure consciousness, transcendental, eternal and non dual.
- 2) The waking state is the normal condition of the natural man. Here anyone perceives the world as it is and there is no much reflection about it. Bound by the fetters of sense-perception and desire, the self acts in the waking state. The *visva* is the name given to the subject of the waking state. It cognizes the material, physical and external objects in this state of consciousness. The waking state is the first quarter of the self and this *vaiœvânara*, the subject of the state, has waking state as the sphere of action. In this state, consciousness relates to things external and is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths. The seven limbs are presented from the imagery of *Agnihotra* sacrifice where it is said, 'Heaven is verily of that *vaisivana?ra*-self who is such; the sun is the eye, air is the vital force, space is the middle part, water is the bladder, and the earth indeed is the two feet. The *ahavaniya* fire has been imagined as his mouth. He that is possessed of these seven limbs is *saptangah*.' The self is said to be possessed of nineteen mouths. They are five senses of perception and five organs of action, the five vital forces and mind, intellect, ego and mind-stuff. They are mouths in the sense of gates of experiences. Since through these aforesaid entrances *vaisivana?ra*, enjoys gross objects he is called as enjoyer of the gross. The enjoyment of gross things is in the waking state.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Deep sleep is the state of knowledge though the external and internal objects are cognized in abeyance. As in the darkness where there is no perception possible, in the deep sleep state there is no perception of both external and internal. In this state there is no desire, no thought is gained. All the impressions have become one and there remains only knowledge and bliss. This is the conceptual self in the deep sleep state. The self in the other two states are imaginative and perceptual ones. The deep sleep state is the doorway to the cognition of the two other states of consciousness, namely waking and dream. Deep sleep consists of the unawareness of Reality.

- 2) The fourth state is termed as *turīya*, as pure consciousness, transcendental, eternal and non dual. The Mândûkya Upanishad does not describe this state in a direct way with its positive qualities. The description of this state follows the negative method, known as *via negativa*. By explaining what is not the fourth, the knowledge of the fourth is known. *Turīya* is indicated not merely through positive description but by negation of attributes. Through negative method something is positively established. *Turīya* is devoid of every characteristic that can be explained by use of words possible. It is not describable through words. The fourth is to be that which is not conscious of the internal world, of external world, of both the worlds. It is not a mass of consciousness. It is not conscious, not unconscious. It is unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp of the organs of action, uninferable, unthinkable, and indescribable. The valid proof consists in the single belief in the Self in which all phenomena cease. It is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual. That is the Self and that is to be known.
- 3) The first verse of the Mândûkya Upanishad says that the letter *AUM* is all that is past, present and future and is beyond all three periods of time. All the objects are indicated by names and forms. The names of objects are non-different from the objects and from *AUM*. Brahman as the supreme is known through the relationship existing between name and its objects. The letter *AUM* is the same as the supreme as well as the inferior Brahman. A clear exposition is given, showing its proximity to Brahman by virtue of its being a means for attainment of Brahman. The past, present and the future is understood as that which is circumscribed by the three periods of time. All this is but *AUM*, in accordance with the reasons already advanced. Even whatever is there beyond the three periods of time is also the *AUM*. That which is inferable from its effects but not confined by time is the unmanifested and verily *AUM*. The word and the object signified are the same. This is given greater importance in the Upanishad. All through the Upanishad this idea is presented with an emphasis on the unity of the name and the thing nameable. All this is surely Brahman. This self is Brahman. The self is said to be possessing four quarters. That which is *AUM* is Brahman. The self, innermost self is divided into four parts.

UNIT 4a PRASNA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 4a.0 Objectives
- 4a.1 Introduction
- 4a.2 Source of All Being
- 4a.3 *Prana*: Sustainer of Beings
- 4a.4 *Prana* and Human body
- 4a.5 *Prana* and States of consciousness
- 4a.6 Meditation on *AUM*
- 4a.7 Existence of *Purusa*
- 4a.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 4a.9 Key Words
- 4a.10 Further Readings and References
- 4a.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

4a.0 OBJECTIVES

This Upanishad is in the form of questions. It is considered to be the Upanishad of the later period around the time of Buddha. This simple Upanishad deals with practical inquisitive questions of the disciples. The Upanishad clearly portrays

- How from the empirical observations and the natural enquiry on them, human beings are led to higher notions and meaning of life.
- The right preceptor allows the disciples to raise their doubts and rightly instructs them regarding the essential source and Ultimate cause of the world. This unit presents the insights of Prasna Upanishad very briefly.

4a.1 INTRODUCTION

Prasna Upanishad has evolved from the *atharva* veda. It is also a mystical Upanishad. This Upanishad is said to be a commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad. The mantras of Mundaka Upanishad have been elaborately dealt in *Prasna Upanishad*. *Prasna* etymologically means question. As the name *Prasna* implies, this Upanishad is an Upanishad of questions. It contains six chapters. Each *prasna*, chapter is logically connected to the next. The first section contains sixteen verses and the second with thirteen. The third has twelve verses. Fourth deals with eleven verses. Fifth *Prasna* has seven while the Sixth *Prasna* contains eight verses.

Each of the chapter comprises of question asked by a group of six inquiring students on various aspects of reality. Six seekers of the Supreme, namely Sukesha, Satyakama, Kausalya, Kabandi, Son of Bhrigu and grandson of Surya approach the master Pippalada. They raise six questions pertaining to Cosmology, the *devas*, the nature and origin of *prana*, sleep and dream, *Pranava* or mystical *AUM* and *purusha* of sixteen *kalas* or parts. The teacher, Pippalada, answers them. The

request made by the disciples with keen interest for knowing the supreme reality is accepted by the teacher. Pippalada starts his teaching by first asking them to live for a year with complete control of their senses, with *brahmacarya* and *sraddha*, faith. Thereafter they are asked to approach the guru for higher knowledge. The disciples, taking the instruction of the teacher live a life of penance and abstinence for a year strictly and once again approach the guru, the preceptor for further knowledge on the Supreme. As these disciples are keen on knowing the nature of ultimate cause and so on, these questions and answers are formulated as chapters. The six questions put forth are as follows.

- 1) From where are these creatures born?
- 2) Who are the deities that sustain them?
- 3) How does life imbibe the body?
- 4) What is the truth about wakefulness, dream and dreamless sleep?
- 5) What purpose is served by being devoted to *AUM*?
- 6) What is the relationship between the Supreme God-head and the individual Self?

The statements made in the Upanishad are precise and the words used are definite. Through them the essential truths are very well brought out. They take the readers from the experience of the gross material world through the subtle to the beyond marvelously.

4a.2 SOURCE OF ALL BEING

The sage Kabandhi, son of Ka[̄]tya, asks the teacher about the source of all the beings. The question is about the source from which all creatures are born. The Creator performed austerity in the form of meditation first created a couple. Then matter (*rayi*, food) and energy (*pra[?]nà*, the consumer of food) emerged for producing beings. The sun is *pra[?]nà* and the moon is food. Anyone who takes up path of action reaches the world of the moon. Once again the person returns to this material and mortal world to be born again. The Sun is the sum total of all creation as it absorbs all living beings into its rays. The sun holds the vital-force of every created being. It is the source of all energy and is immortal and free from free. It becomes the supreme destiny from where there is no return to the world or rebirth. By searching for the self through the control of sense, abstinence, faith and meditation, one conquers the Sun. The sun is understood as the father with five feet i.e. five seasons and twelve forms i.e. twelve months of the year. It is a common understanding that sun causes the rains. The rays of the sun is symbolically presented as the seven wheels of a chariot with six spokes. The lord of creatures is *Praja[̄]pati*. Day and night are *Praja[̄]pati*. Day is energy and night is matter. Every month is divided into two parts, first dark fortnight is said to be of matter (*rayi*) and the bright fortnight is energy (*pra[?]nà*). The matter (*rayi*, food) is the food which is *Praja[̄]pati* from whom all creatures are born.

4a.3 PRANA: SUSTAINER OF BEINGS

A sage Bhargava of the Vidarbha country, approaches the teacher and asked a question about the number of powers that sustain a being and who among the these powers or factors is the Supreme. Pippalada answered that the powers that

support and illumine the beings are ether, air, fire, water, earth, speech, mind, sight and hearing. All of them sustain and support the material world and the physical body. Life breath or *prana* is Supreme. The queen bee goes upward or downward or goes out or comes in, all the bees do the same. Similarly all other vital energies journey travel with *pra?nà*. It is *pra?nà* that sustains beings. They all accept and praise life energy. The sensory organs and other elements obey the *prana*. It is praised as the prajapati who entered the womb as the foetus to play the game of life. The *prana* is subtle as well as gross. It is held to be the one who pours as rain for all the creatures to be happy hoping for a good harvest and plenty of food. As a giver of food it is said to be the father. *Prana* is the enjoyer of the offering and the universal lord of existence. In fact, it is everything. All creatures who are under the control of life pray thus, “Protect us as a mother and grant to us prosperity and wisdom”.

4a.4 PRANA AND HUMAN BODY

The sage, Kausalya, son of Asivala, asked the teacher about the *prana*. From where the *prana* was born, how it entered this body, how it resided there, how it departed from the body and how it supported the external things. What is its relation with Self? The teacher, Pippalada answers these questions in the third chapter. *Prana* born from the Self enters the body, due to the actions of the mind. A person’s life in the body is appropriated by the activities in the previous existence. *Prana* engages the other energies as king who employs all the others and orders them, “reside here and govern such and such places.” So *Prana* commands others to reside in their respective places.

The residence of *Prana* is said to be in the eyes, ears, mouth and nose. *Apana*, out-breath is in the two lower parts of the body, namely organs of excretion and procreation. In the middle, *samana*, equalizing energy distributes the food all over the body. The self, the subtle body is in the heart. There are 101 chief nerves in the body. Each of these nerves has 100 divisions. Each division is further divided into 72000 sub branches, known as *nadis*. Among these *nadis*, *Vyana*, all pervading air, moves and spreads out in the body and moves in all the nerves. *Udana*, up-breath moves upward due to virtues, moves downwards due to sins and to the human world due to virtues and sins. The external *prana* is Sun. The air that is within is *samana*. The air outside is *Vyana*. *Udana* is luminous. One enters into *Prana* in rebirth as per whatever he thought at the time of death. *Prana* with *Udana* and soul leads to the world of his desire. One who knows all about *prana* achieves immortality.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided to write your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How does Prasna Upanishad explains the ultimate cause of the world?

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4a.5 PRANA AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The grandson of Surya, Gargya asks the teacher about the organs that go to sleep, organs that function during sleep, the experiencer of the dream, happiness and so on. Pippalada replies with the simile of sunrise and sunset where the rays of the sun get diversified and dissolved respectively. Likewise, everything gets unified in mind during sleep. In the state of sleep a person hears not, sees not, smells not and tastes not. The vital force, *Prana* alone is said to be keeping awake in the body. *Samana* carries the two oblations of inspiration and expiration equally into the system. Life conceived as a sacrifice and life breath is compared to the sacred home fire of a householder called *garhapatya*. The mind is said to be the sacrifice. The fruit of the sacrifice is *udana*, up-breath. Deep sleep leads the sacrifice nearer to Brahman everyday. In the dream state, mind experiences. In deep sleep, everything gets merged into the Self. All – earth, water, light, air, ether and their respective element; the eyes, the senses of smell, taste, touch, speech, and hands, organs of generation, the feet, the mind, the intellect, the ego and all activities – rest in the self in deep sleep. A comparison is made with that of the nest on the tree to which birds return back after a long flying. The self is the doer, the intelligent and the supreme immutable higher self. The one who realizes that the complete all-pervasiveness is in that imperishable being, attains the Self and becomes omniscient.

4a.6 MEDITATION ON AUM

The sage Satyakama, son of Sibi, asked Pippalada about the result of meditation on *AUM*. Brahman is equaled with *AUM*. The supreme ever remains attracting all towards Him and is ever the highest reality. Everyone who meditates upon one element, *A*, becomes an enlightened person, but comes quickly to the earth after death. As a human being born on earth one becomes great with self-control, countenance and faith. The one who meditates on two elements, '*AU*' identifies himself with the mind. He is exalted to the intermediate space, the world of moon. Yet, having enjoyed its grandeur and greatness of life, one would come back to this world again. Anyone meditating on the identity on *purusa* with *AUM*, is said to be unified with the light, the sun. He is freed from sin and lifted to the *Brahmaloka*, world of Brahma. He sees the person that dwells in the body as higher than the highest life. This person is an enlightened and undisturbed one and he reaches supreme reality that is beyond old age and death through *AUM*. The supreme bliss which is eternal is attained by means of meditation upon *AUM*.

4a.7 EXISTENCE OF PURUSA

The sage Sukesha of the clan of Bharadvāja asks the teacher regarding the existence of the *purusa* of sixteen parts. The teacher replies saying that *purusa* exists inside the body. The sixteen limbs of the *purusa*, namely life, faith, space, air, light, water, earth, senses, mind, food, virility, discipline, mantra, action, world and individuality, all originate from him. These parts are said to be like spokes of a wheel with the spirit at its hub. He created the *prana*. From *prana* came faith, space, air and food. From food came vigor and self control. Just as the rivers get merged into the sea ultimately, similarly the sixteen parts disappear

on reaching the Ultimate and become *Purusa*. The one who realizes this becomes immortal. The Upanishad ends up with a call, “Know the Self, the worthy one to be known. Beyond this *purusa*, the supreme, there is no other thing.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided to write your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain the Meditation on AUM with its significance.

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4a.8 LET US SUM UP

The Prasna Upanishad in six sections deals with six questions raised by the disciples who have keen interest to know of the nature of the ultimate cause, the power of AUM, the relation of the Supreme to the world and so on. First enquiry is about the origin of creatures in the world. The Lord of creatures, the prajapathi is established from the discussion on creation of various things. The ultimate source of all beings is said to be the vital energy. The second question mainly relates to the different aspects of the vital breath, *pra?nàa*. How this vital life energy is the sustainer of all beings and all other energies gain support from *pra?nàa* for their existence, are well dealt. As a queen bee the *pra?nàa* leads every other energy. The third *prasna* enumerates the relation of *pra?nàa* with the human body. The fourth question is about the presence of *pra?nàa* in various states of consciousness, such as waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. It is the witness that always keeps awake during all the stages. It is infact, present in all and it is called the self which is all pervading in nature. The fifth section beautifully explains the meditation on the syllable *aum* and its significance. The results of meditation on each part of the syllable are well elaborated. The final question is about the nature of the *purusa*. It is present in the body throughout and is the source of all. The teacher concludes that there is nothing higher than the Supreme which is worthy to be known.

4a.9 KEY WORDS

Mantra : Mantra is a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that are considered capable of “creating transformation.” Mantras originated in the Vedic tradition of India, later becoming an essential part of the Hindu tradition and a customary practice within Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.

Sraddha : Sraddha (Pali: saddha, Sanskrit: sraddha = faith) is an important constituent element of the teachings of the Buddha for all traditions of Buddhism, though the kind and nature of faith changes in the different schools.

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4a.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) The sage Kabandhi, son of Katya, asks the teacher about the source of all the beings. The question is about the source from which all creatures are born. The Creator performed austerity in the form of meditation first created a couple. Then matter (*rayi*, food) and energy (*prana*, the consumer of food) emerged for producing beings. The sun is *prana* and the moon is food. Anyone who takes up path of action reaches the world of the moon. Once again the person returns to this material and mortal world to be born again. The Sun is the sum total of all creation as it absorbs all living beings into its rays. The sun holds the vital-force of every created being. It is the source of all energy and is immortal and free from free. It becomes the supreme destiny from where there is no return to the world or rebirth. By searching for the self through the control of sense, abstinence, faith and meditation, one conquers the Sun. The sun is understood as the father with five feet i.e. five seasons and twelve forms i.e. twelve months of the year. It is a common understanding that sun causes the rains. The rays of the sun are symbolically presented as the seven wheels of a chariot with six spokes. The lord of creatures is *Prajapati*. Day and night are *Prajapati*. Day is energy and night is matter. Every month is divided into two parts, first dark fortnight is said to be of matter (*rayi*) and the bright fortnight is energy (*prana*). The matter (*rayi*, food) is the food which is *Prajapati* from whom all creatures are born.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) The sage Satyakama, son of Sibi, asked Pippalada about the result of meditation on *AUM*. Brahman is equaled with *AUM*. The supreme ever remains attracting all towards Him and is ever the highest reality. Everyone who meditates upon one element, *A*, becomes an enlightened person, but comes quickly to the earth after death. As a human being born on earth one becomes great with self-control, countenance and faith. The one who

meditates on two elements, 'AU' identifies himself with the mind. He is exalted to the intermediate space, the world of moon. Yet, having enjoyed its grandeur and greatness of life, one would come back to this world again. Anyone meditating on the identity on *purusa* with *AUM*, is said to be unified with the light, the sun. He is freed from sin and lifted to the *Brahmaloka*, world of Brahma. He sees the person that dwells in the body as higher than the highest life. This person is an enlightened and undisturbed one and he reaches supreme reality that is beyond old age and death through *AUM*. The supreme bliss which is eternal is attained by means of meditation upon *AUM*.

UNIT 4b KENOPANISHAD

Contents

- 4b.0 Objectives
- 4b.1 Introduction
- 4b.2 Preview
- 4b.3 Discussion
- 4b.4 Philosophical Response
- 4b.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4b.6 Key Words
- 4b.7 Further Readings and References
- 4b.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

4b.0 OBJECTIVES

The Upanishad opens with multiple questions. The Interesting part of the Upanishad is that it contains the psychological analysis which is very suggestive. By the end of this unit, you are expected to:

- understand and practice the knowledge that will help you to one attain transcendent illumination;
- to attain knowledge of the Absolute which delivers immediate liberation to you. This is possible if you are able to withdraw the mind from worldly object and mediate on the ultimate 'Truth' of the Universe, which is Brahman himself.

4b.1 INTRODUCTION

Kenopanishad is the second Upanishad of Sama Veda. It derives its name by the first word used in the opening verse, 'Kena'. It is also called Talvaropnisad as it is the ninth chapter of Talvakara or Jaimini Brahmana. It is a short Upanishad with four chapters containing 34 Mantras (13 verses and 21 prose sentences.) Adi Sankara has written two commentaries for this one for pada – bhasya and another for Vakya – bhasya.

The Upanishad is divided into four chapters – the first two are in the form of dialogue, a dialogue between the Guru and a Disciple. It explains how one can realize Atman through the analysis of perception. Third and fourth chapters have an allegory to understand and recognize Brahman. The Upanishad concludes with the Guru's advice to his Disciple, the golden rule that he had to follow to understand Brahman.

4b.2 PREVIEW

Invocation – Let my limbs strengthen. My speech, eyes, ear have vigorous strength and all my senses. All stay in Brahman of the Upanishads. May I never discard Brahman nor Brahman discard me. Let there be no discarding of me. Let the Truth of the Upanishad live in me dedicated to the self.

Peace, peace, peace.

The Disciple suspects that there must be an unknown and unseen force that guides each one's physical and psychological behaviour. He wants to clarify his doubts, so he seeks guidance from his Guru and asks him, "By whom?" questions. Knowledge is gained by observing, questioning and seeking guidance and understanding what has been taught.

The Guru, who lights up the ambition in the Disciple to know more, confirms that there is a force behind each and every action of the mortal. So, next inquisition is what or who this force is. It is an unknown and unseen force. It is difficult to comprehend as it is not a physical or external object. It is within one self. Only a wise and a steadfast seeker, who meditates deeply is able to recognize it. The ancient seers have understood the force to be the Atman, Brahman who resides within in us.

Brahman is not an intellectual matter and nor is it incapacitating but at the same time it is not beyond unknowable for a seeker. Understanding that Brahman is not beyond unknowable is the strong belief of the ancient seers, the present seers and stay true even for the future seers.

Who or what is Brahman? The relationship of Him is within one's own inner self which cannot manifest as an external object. It is difficult to comprehend an unknown and unseen Brahman. He is not a 'figure head' but a life itself. If one realizes this truth then one is released from all bondages, moves away from sin. "Of all forms and manner of knowledge the soul must strip and void itself so that there may be left in it no kind of impression of knowledge, nor trace of aught so ever, but rather the soul must remain barren and bare, as if these forms had never passed through it, and in total oblivion and suspension." (Ibid, Bk. 3, Ch. 2)

Next clarification is, will this awareness lead to 'know' Brahman? The Guru had to lead his Disciple further in understanding, 'Knowing' or 'not knowing' Him. "pratibodha – viditam matam amrtatvam hi vidate

Atmana vindate viryam vidyaya vidate' mrtam" (2.4)

Brahman is cognized by "pratibodha – viditam" by intuition. The knowledge of self by self, by pure spiritual awareness is attained by internally connecting one self with God. The moment this realization comes the Atman and Brahman will become one and the same; the one who attains this stage, experiences "vidyaya vidate mrtam," an imperishable knowledge, which in turn becomes an immortal learning. The one who is enlightened by the knowledge of Brahman sees Brahman in all creatures. "Who has already gained 'jnana', this distinction between objective knowledge and subjective experience of Brahman vanishes. For he who realizes Brahman as the all and both subjective and objective are for him the polarities of the unitary Being. Only a perfect knower of Brahman is vouchsafed this experience of all objects – man, animals, Nature, God etc – as Brahman." Swami Sarvananda, Kenopanishad, page 17. He becomes the part of this immortal Nature.

The next step is to acknowledge His part in all physical and psychological actions. The Guru who understands the psychology of a learning Disciple; uses an allegory to guide him to understand the importance of accepting Brahman in one's action.

Guru uses Indra, Agni and Vayu as chief characters in his fable. A war was fought between the gods, 'the Good' and the demons, 'the Bad'. The 'Good' was victorious against the 'Bad'. And the war was won by the divine's grace. But the gods were happy and were intoxicated about the victory. Brahman thought that they being the 'Good' must realize their error, and should not forget Him. And He was successful in making them realize the Supreme power behind their victory. This knowledge was made known to them by Uma, 'Sakthi'. Once they realized the 'Truth', they were elated.

This is an interesting thought provoking parable. The intention is to illustrate the superiority of Brahman at all manifestation including the divine ones. We make much of our intellectual and physical powers and remain satisfied by the successes we achieve. We glorify our actions boast our accomplishments. We ignore to recognize His hand that led us to success in our 'Positive' actions.

Brahman is present in everything. For example "*vidyto uyadyutada iti mantamisusada ityadhidaivam*," (4.4), in lightning, one of the striking phenomena of external Nature and in the winking of an eye which is the most minute and insignificant function of a mortal. The power of Brahman is in cosmic form or in human's physical action, whether it is great or small. Use of lightning and winking of the eye can be interpreted in different levels –

- 1) Brahman is behind the each action. Without His power nothing happens.
- 2) The illustration indicates the instantaneous enlightenment produced by the union of the individual soul with the transcendental principal of universal mind, light enlightens the intellect which brings joy and happiness.
- 3) If one understands the inner power of the Brahman, then each task, from a difficult to a easy, one can achieve success with a lightning speed and as easily as winking of an eye.

Understanding His presence in each action gives confidence to seek the 'Right Path'. The mental process by which one remembers, think and will presupposes Brahman. One who understands this is elated and his wisdom shows itself in his actions. He, "bahusobhamanam", shines forth with wondrous beauty. To attain this stage one has to work in the right direction, one needs determination and be wise. One must be determined not to waver from his quest to know the 'Truth'. One has to meditate on Brahman as 'Tad – vanam', dearest of all. He has to follow Austerity, self – control and steadfast work. Once he realizes, the 'Truth', his intellect enlightens. The path of enlightenment gives him imperishable learning.

4b.3 DISCUSSION

"Kenasitam patati presitam manh, Kena pranah prathamah prati yuktah.

Kenasitam vacam imam vadanti. Caksuh srotram ka u devo yunakti." (1.1)

"By whom willed and directed does the mind light on its objects? By whom commanded does the life move first? At whose instance do (people) utter this speech? And what god is it that prompts the eye and the ear?"

The Upanishad opens with questions – "By whom.....?" rising doubt if one's physical activity is independent of its actions or has relation with an unknown

force. The whole Upanishad is a search to find an answer to this uncertainty. The very process of one's growth to higher knowledge starts when one starts questioning what happens around one's life. To understand the cause and effect, one has to travel beyond the thoughts to experience the pure enlightenment.

Enlightenment comes when one understands that there is a vital force within us which is responsible for all our physical actions. Probing mind has a difficulty in recognizing this vital power, as Brahman does not have an external physical form. Knowledge of a thing arises through sense or mind, but Brahman cannot be reached by either of these. That is why the ancient seers have said that the knowledge of the Brahman is known and at the same time unknown. There is a duality of understanding the inner supreme power. Brahman is an absolute who resides deep in the self Atman; one has to consciously take an inward journey to understand the inner power one live in.

For a seeker (Disciple) it is challenging to be definite if he 'knows' or 'do not know' Brahman. No positive reply can be given to the question whether one knows Brahman, when asked from an objective point of view. One cannot describe him. But at the same time if one says that he does not know Brahman in this manner, so have the knowledge of Him.

“Itha ced avedid atha asti n aced ahavedin mahati vinastih

Bhutesu bhutesu vici ntya dhirah pretyasmal lokad amrta bhavanti” (2.5)

“If here (a person) knows it, then there is truth, and if here he knows it not., there is great loss. Hence, seeing or (seeking) (the Real) in all being, wise men become immortal on departing from this world.”

The teacher uses the word '**dhira**' twice in the second chapter. According to the Dictionary meaning, 'dhira' means – wise, intelligent or a scholar and also steadfast, determined and holding fast. It is not enough if one is a scholar but must be determined in seeking Him.

The allegory, illustrates, how even the gods failed to recognize Brahman. But understands when Uma, daughter of Himavath reveals His identity. Once they recognize they are elated in their status. This is a powerful metaphor to highlight - life (Indra), Agni (eyes), Vayu (breath) were able to understand the supreme power that lay within deep self. The teacher further says that Brahman is behind the lightning and the wing of the eye, once more it symbolizes that each and every action from winning a war to the winking of an eye, His power is vested. And it can also be interpreted as one can see Him like a flashing of a lightning or a winking of an eye so quick and fast. It is in the presence of mind to behold it and to understand Him.

When the seeker (Disciple) wants the secret of recognizing Brahman, the Guru says the golden rule of life to seek Him - Austerities, self – control and dedication in work as the means to the end.

Tasyaitapo – dama – karmeti pratistha, vedah sarvangani, satyam dyatanam.

Yo va etam evam vedapahatya papmanam ante svarge loke jyete pratitisthati, pratitisthati (4. 8, 9,)

“Austerities, self – control and work are its support; the Vedas are all its units; truth is its abode. Whoever knows this, indeed, overcoming sin in the end, is firmly established in the Supreme world of heaven; yes, he is firmly established.”

The whole Upanishad revolves around understanding of the quoted text. They contain the essence of the Upanishad.

4b.4 PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSE

Understanding of life and values revolve around, “By whom ?” questions. Understanding the difference between the illusion and reality is like understanding the two sides of the issue. Is it an illusion to glorify the physical activity as the actor and forget that there might be reality that controls and guides all physical actions? Is it an illusion to consider that we are not responsible for our actions as all our actions are guided by an unknown power? Does our realization of Supreme Being make us passive in our actions? Does the realization of the Supreme Being make us more realistic and conscious in our actions? The question “By whom ?” opens up a possibility to understand the ‘Truth’ of life; only inquiring mind can thrive for an answer.

It is a difficult and a challenging journey to understand the meaning of life and force behind it. The one who is interested in this pursuit must be not only wise but also a steadfast seeker. He must journey inward to see deep inside the self to understand the unseen. Once the self sees the God within, then it is like as Eckhart has said “When the soul beholds God purely, it takes all its being and its life and whatever it is from the depth of God; yet it knows no knowing, no loving or anything else whatever. It rest utterly and completely within the being of God, and knows nothing but only to be with God. So, soon as it becomes conscious that it sees and loves and knows God that is in itself a departure.” (Rudolf Otto: East and west)

Once one understands the powerful force behind one’s actions, each simple action carry more meaning and significance. The awareness that one’s action is guided by inner force does not make one passive instead it makes one to be successful and positive person. One can surge forward with complete consciousness that one’s actions achieve glory and victory with the guidance of the Supreme Being. One moves away from the wrong doing and become humble and become part of the nature.

The man with wisdom sees Brahman in every creature. It is the ultimate Truth. The insight is the most beautiful thing. Once one attains inner purity it is shown as an out world beauty. The presence of Uma in the Upanishad is the personification of enlightened inner self. The significance of mentioning ‘lightning’ in the Upanishad illustrates the instant understanding of the individual soul with that of the universal wisdom. This brings sudden brief moment of silence within and things around. “In this flash when thou art as if struck by lightning, when thou hearest inwardly the affirmation ‘Truth’ there remains if thou canst.” Eckhart, Rudolf Otto: Mysticism; East and west.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How the disciple’s questions, ‘kena’, are relevant to the present time?

.....

2) Our awareness that there is a power with in us, which guide us in our action, will it make us active or passive?

.....

4b.5 LET US SUM UP

The Upanishad attracts one’s mind by its sublime simplicity and rich suggestiveness. It reveals profound flashes of thoughts and insight which is relevant to all time and situation. The essence of the Upanishad is not restricted to one thought, time or space; it is true at all times. Dr. S Radhakrishna’s remark on Upanishad holds good, “When we pass from the Vedic hymns to the Upanishads, we find that the interest shifts from the objective to the subjective, from the brooding on the wonder of the outside world to the meditation on the significance of self. The human self contains the clue to the interpretation of nature. The Real at the heart of the universe is reflected in the infinite depths of the soul,” (S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishad*, Introduction, page 49.).....

4b.6 KEY WORDS

Guru : A guru is a person who is regarded as having great knowledge, wisdom and authority in a certain area, and who uses these abilities to guide others. It also means “teacher” or “guide” in the religious sense, and is commonly used in Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism as well as in some new religious movements.

Allegory : Allegory (from Greek: *allos*, “other”) is a figurative mode of representation conveying a meaning other than the literal. Fictions with several possible interpretations are not allegories in the true sense. Not every fiction with general application is an allegory. Allegory communicates its message by means of symbolic figures.

4b.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4b.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) The Upanishad opens with questions –“By whom.?” rising doubt if one’s physical activity is independent of its actions or has relation with an unknown force. The whole Upanishad is a search to find an answer to this uncertainty. The very process of one’s growth to higher knowledge starts when one starts questioning what happens around one’s life. To understand the cause and effect, one has to travel beyond the thoughts to experience the pure enlightenment.
- 2) Once one understands the powerful force behind one’s actions, each simple action carry more meaning and significance. The awareness that one’s action is guided by inner force does not make one passive instead it makes one to be successful and positive person. One can surge forward with complete consciousness that one’s actions achieve glory and victory with the guidance of the Supreme Being. One moves away from the wrong doing and become humble and become part of the nature.

UNIT 5 THE SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The Title and the Author
- 5.3 Period of Composition
- 5.4 Commentaries
- 5.5 Unique Features of *Svetasvatara Upanishad*
- 5.6 Philosophical Perspectives in *Svetasvatara Upanishad*
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Key Words
- 5.9 Further Readings and References
- 5.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will have obtained the following philosophical knowledge and academic skills:

- To situate the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* in its proper setting
- To obtain the preliminary knowledge about *Svetasvatara Upanishad* including the meaning of the title of the *Upanishad*, its author, period of composition, commentaries on *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, etc.
- The features that distinguishes the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* from other *Upanishads*.
- To familiarize yourself with the prominent philosophical perspectives of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, such as, the Nature of the Ultimate Reality, The role of Grace in obtaining *Moksha*, the concept of *Moksha*, the Identification of *Siva* as the Ultimate, etc.
- To explore the meaning of some important original verses with select textual exegesis.
- To get a taste of the differing scholarly opinions on the interpretation of the philosophy of this *Svetasvatara Upanishad*.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Svetâsvatara-upanishad* is held in a very high rank among the *Upanishads*. It belongs to the Krishna (Black) *Yajur Veda*. It expounds the philosophy of *Advaita* (Monism) with emphasis on *Advaita Bhakti*. It is one of the twelve *Upanishads* chosen by Vidyâranya in his *Sarvopanishad-arthânabhûtiprakâsa*. Sankara found it worthy to single it out for a special commentary. In his commentary on *Brahma sutras*, Sankara calls it the “*Mantra Upanishad*” of the Vedic *Shvetashvatara* school. This *Upanishad* contains 113 verses in six chapters. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is regarded as an important source of the Vedanta Philosophy.

5.2 THE TITLE AND THE AUTHOR

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* derives its name from the sage *Svetasvatara* who taught it. It belongs to the *Taittiriya* school of the *Yajur Veda*. It is also called sometimes *Svetâsvatarânâm Mantropanishad*. There is a clue to the author of this *Upanishad* in its last chapter: “*The Sage Shvetashvatara got this knowledge of Brahman, which is very sacred and revered by many great sages, through his penance and through God’s grace, and he taught it very well to his disciples*” (6: 19).¹

This verse suggests that this *Upanishad* was attributed to a sage called *Shvetashvatara*. *Shvetashvatara* could also refer to a class or line of spiritual teachers. *Svetâsvatara* is said to have told it to the best among the hermits. He wanted it to be kept secret, and not be taught to anyone except to a son or a regular pupil.

Etymologically, *Svetâsvatara* means a white mule. Mules were known and prized in India from the earliest times. *Svetâsvatara*, as the name of a person means someone who owns a white horse. The author reconciles in an original way those *upanishadic* teachings which he considers as highly valuable, whether they had been proclaimed at length or merely suggested or alluded to.

5.3 PERIOD OF COMPOSITION

Like most other ancient religious literature of India, there is no scholarly consensus on the exact date of this *Upanishad*. However, it is admitted that *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is one of the *Upanishads* of the latest period, perhaps of the 5th century B.C.E. Scholars Keith and Silburn are of the opinion that its final redaction took place around 200 B.C.E.

5.4 COMMENATARIES

There is a major commentary on *Svetasvatara Upanishad* attributed to Sankara. However, on comparison with the other commentaries written by Sankara, some scholars doubt the authorship of this commentary by Sankara. There are three more other commentators on *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, namely by *Vijnanatma*, *Shankarananda* and *Narayana Tirtha*.

5.5 UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

Although the fundamental teachings *Svetasvatara Upanishad* are identical with those of the other *Upanishads*, it differs with them in some significant manners. There are many unique properties to this particular *Upanishad*. Although the unique features of this *Upanishad* could be identified in the central tenets of its philosophical perspectives, it is worth listing them at the outset.

- 1) Emphasis on *Bhakti* (devotion), which is not usually found in *Upanishadic* literature, is one of its special features. There are beautiful imageries regarding the Ultimate Reality or Godhead, which form very appropriate themes for meditation. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* contains several

directives and instructions for practicing the presence of God. *Bhakti* is only indirectly voiced in the form of *Upasana* in other *Upanishads*, but here, leaving no room for doubt, it is explicitly mentioned. There is a clear mention of the word *para-bhakti* at the end of the sixth chapter. Use of words such as *Sharanam*, *Prapadye*, etc., clearly voice submission to God or Brahman.

- 2) Along the same line, being an *Upanishad* of the latest period, there is a vigorous endeavour of synthesis, centred on definite monotheism. Belgian scholar, Richard Desmet, observes that “It is a sort of prefiguration of the *Bhagavad-Gita* but the *Bhagavan* it exalts is not *Krishna*, but the *Siva* or *Rudra* and it still ignores the conception of *avatara* (descent of the Godhead and its apparent embodiment in a finite form.”² *Svetasvatara Upanishad* tries to reconcile the different philosophical and religious views of its time and advocates the unity of the souls and world in the one Supreme Reality.
- 3) Unlike the emphasis on the Supreme Absolute or *Brahman* in other *Upanishads*, this *Upanishad* identifies *Rudra* or Lord *Siva* as the creator of the world, its protector and guide.
- 4) There is the emphasis on a personal ‘*Isvara*’ who is the omniscient and omnipotent, the manifested *Brahman*, than *Brahman* the Absolute, advocated other *Upanishads* whose complete perfection does not admit of any change. While major *Upanishads* like *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* deals with the unqualified and unchanging nature of the *Brahman*, this *Upanishad* deals with the manifest, creative, nurturing, the omniscient, and omnipotent *Isvara* or *Rudra* who causes the energy of the world to flow and bear life. Where *Brahman* is often described as *formless* in other important *Upanishads*, this *Upanishad* gives the form (fullness or *murtitva*) of God. The reason for attributing form to God may be the anthropological difficulty in concentrating the mind on or showing devotion to a formless *Brahman*, especially since devotion emphasized in it. While describing various powers of God, it uses similes such as God having thousands of heads *Sahasra-sheersha* - to denote God’s endless knowledge, thousands of eyes - to denote God as the universal witness for everything going on in the universe and God’s having thousands of feet - to indicate his omnipresence. This *Upanishad* mentions that God or *Parama Purusha* is shining in its glory beyond the darkness of ignorance or *Tamas*.
- 5) It is a devotional and a kind of theistic work distinct from the other leading *Upanishads* which are more abstract and philosophical.
- 6) While other *Upanishads* are concerned with presenting their own philosophical perspectives, this *Upanishad* was written in an attempt to unite the disparate religious and philosophical viewpoints of its time. Its focus on the unity of souls and nature and God are to be appropriated in this setting.
- 7) The style of composition of this *Upanishad* deserves special mention here. Normally, *Upanishads* contain serious philosophical thought, but this *Upanishad* explains the same principles in a simple, lucid and poetic way. The original and independent hymns of the sage *Shvetasvatara* are presented in a beautiful poetic style. *Svetasvatara* is both a seer and a poet. For example, while trying to describe the omnipresence of *Brahman*, hymn 4.2 says, “*You*

are woman; you are man; you are boy and you are girl; you are the shivering old man helped by a stick; you are born in the form of this world.” Hymn 4.4 reads, “You are the blue butterfly, the green-eyed parrot and the lightning cloud. You are the seasons and the seas. You are the one without any beginning; you are omnipresent; all the worlds are born out of you.”

5.6 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD

THE NATURE OF THE ULTIMATE REALITY

As mentioned above, rather than conducting a philosophical inquiry on its own, the thrust of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* on systematisation and harmonisation of diverse ideas. Originating in the setting of various schools of thought that were prevalent at the time of its composition, it tries to harmonise the ideas scattered among them. However, the central vision of the entire Upanishads concerning the God as the One in-dwelling presence has been kept intact by *Svetasvatara Upanishad* too. God has become more personal in *Svetasvatara Upanishad*. The term *Deva* is used frequently in reference to the Ultimate. Other terms like *Rudra* and *Hara* which became prominent only later on in the Hindu thought were used in this *Upanishad* and are not found in the other *Upanishads*.

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* declares the unity and oneness of the Ultimate Reality behind the universe with great emphasis. In 3.2 we read,

For there is one Rudra only, they do not allow a second, who rules all the worlds by his powers. He stands behind all persons, and after having created all worlds he, the protector, rolls it up at the end of time.”

This one Ultimate Reality is the in-dwelling spirit pervading the entire universe.

The god who is in the fire, the god who is in the water, the god who has entered into the whole world, the god who is in plants, the god who is in trees, adoration be to that god, adoration! (2.17).

Chapter 1, verse 3 states forth the overall teaching of this *Upanishad*:

The sages, devoted to meditation and concentration, have seen the power belonging to God himself hidden in its own qualities (guna).

He, being one, superintends all those causes, time, self, and the rest.

It states that there is one God, who will soon be identified as *Rudra*, and the cosmic power (*sakti*), whose diversity of qualities (*guna*) should not hide the singleness, which is His. He rules over all other causes. In *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, creation is the casting of a net by the creator. The net of creation could be called as the *maya*. However, *maya* here is the *Sakti*, power, by which the ultimate creates the universe and upholds it.

As in later Saivism, the ontological distinction between the individual *atman* and his inciter or Mover is clearly professed in 1.6.

In that vast Brahma-wheel, in which all things live and rest, the bird flutters about, so long as he thinks that the self (in him) is different from the mover (the god, the lord). When he has been blessed by him, then he gains immortality.

In verse 1.7, the author integrates the unpanishadic teaching on *Brahman*, as the world basis, on *Akshara*, on *Samsara*, the world of rebirth and *moksha*, deliverance through a merging in *Brahman* by exclusive intervention upon it.

But what is praised (in the Upanishads) is the Highest Brahman, and in it there is the triad. The Highest Brahman is the safe support, it is imperishable. The Brahma-students, when they have known what is within this (world), are devoted and merged in the Brahman. free from birth.

It is agreed by many that what is really peculiar in the *Svetâsvatara Upanishad* is the strong stress which it lays on the personality of the Lord, the *Îsvara*, *Deva*. The *Isvara* here is God as creator and ruler of the world, and not as *Paramâtman*, or the Highest Self. In *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, *Îsvara* is the creator. The concept of *Isvara*, unique to *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is identical with Brahman and at the same time it differs from the popular conceptions of Brahman. "This God," says Pramâda Dâsa Mitra, "is the spirit conscious of the universe. Whilst an extremely limited portion, and that only of the material universe, enters into my consciousness, the whole of the conscious universe, together, of course, with the material one that hangs upon it, enters into the consciousness of God. . . . And again, "Whilst we (the *jîvâtman*s) are subject to *Mâyâ*, *Mâyâ* is subject to *Îsvara*. If we truly know *Îsvara*, we know him as *Brahman*; if we truly know ourselves, we know ourselves as *Brahman*. This being so, we must not be surprised if sometimes we find *Îsvara* sharply distinguished from Brahman, whilst at other times *Îsvara*, and *Brahman* are interchanged."³

God's transcendence and spirituality are again inculcated in chapter 4, verses 19 and 20. No one can see Him with the eye for He is not situated in space and nothing is fully like Him. He can be known only through heart and mind.

No one has grasped him above, or across, or in the middle. There is no image of him whose name is Great Glory. His form cannot be seen, no one perceives him with the eye. Those who through heart and mind know him thus abiding in the heart, become immortal" (4, 19-20).

THE EMPHASIS ON GRACE

While other *Upanishads* are concerned with presenting their own philosophical perspectives, this *Upanishad* was written in an attempt to unite the disparate religious and philosophical viewpoints of its time. In 1.6, "When he has been blessed by him," is said to be an allusion to the saving grace which is a specific feature of this *Upanishad*. Chapter 6 is expanding the idea that God is the One Cause and Mover of all things and that through love inspired by His grace humans can find *moksha* in his knowledge. The concept of devotion later found profound expression in the *Bhakti Sutras* and other treatises on *Bhakti*.

Let us love the old Brahman by the grace of Savitri; if thou make thy dwelling there, the path will not hurt thee. (2.7)

The Self, smaller than small, greater than great, is hidden in the heart of the creature. A man who has left all grief behind, sees the majesty, the Lord, the passionless, by the grace of the creator (the Lord) (3.20)

Interestingly, Even the composition of the very *Upanishad* is said to be realized through the grace of the Lord.

Through the power of his penance and through the grace of God has the wise Svetasvatara truly, proclaimed Brahman, the highest and holiest, to the best of ascetics, as approved by the company of Rishis (6.19)

Indirect allusions to grace and devotion could be found in the following verses:

Some wise men, deluded, speak of Nature, and others of Time (as the cause of everything); but it is the greatness of God by which this Brahma-wheel is made to turn.

It is at the command of him who always covers this world, the knower, the time of time, who assumes qualities and all knowledge, it is at his command that this work (creation) unfolds itself, which is called earth, water, fire, air, and ether;

He is the eternal among eternal, the thinker among thinkers, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many. He who has known that cause which is to be apprehended by Sankhya (philosophy) and Yoga (religious discipline), he is freed from all fetters.

Seeking for freedom I go for refuge to that God who is the light of his own thoughts, he who first creates Brahman (m.) and delivers the Vedas to him;

If these truths have been told to a high-minded man, who feels the highest devotion for God, and for his Guru as for God, then they will shine forth, - then they will shine forth indeed. (6.1, 2,13, 18, 23).

While Chapter 2 verse 15 stresses God’s transcendence, 16 emphasizes His immanence though not forgetting His transcendence. He indeed is the God who pervades all regions: he is the first-born (as *Hiranyagarbha*), and he is in the womb. He has been born, and he will be born. He stands behind all persons, looking everywhere. Belgian scholar Richard Desmet observes that the formulation of the verse 16 favours the later theory of *avatara*.

He indeed is the god who pervades all regions: he is the first-born (as *Hiranyagarbha*), and he is in the womb. He has been born, and he will be born. He stands behind all persons, looking everywhere (2.16).

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How does *Svetasvatara Upanishad* differ from other major Upanishads?

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2) Why *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is called the Upanishad of grace and love?

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THE CONCEPT OF SOUL AND MOKSHA

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is said to be the only *Upanishad* among major *Upanishads* to discuss concept of soul exclusively. The soul here is not the Spirit or the *Atman* which the *Upanishads* have declared as *Brahman*. "... this *Upanishad* describes *Ataman* as *anisha* or powerless, subject to the influence of pleasure and pain. It is quite evident that the *Atman* of this *Upanishad* is not the same *Atman* about which all *Upanishads* have declared in such glorious terms. With the introduction of this new term, we have to postulate three entities: *Brahman*, the *Atman* or the Self and the Soul. The Soul—that Entity which is *anisha* or powerless because of being affected by pleasure and pain—is obviously the Ego."⁴ The ego is the greatest impediment to *moksha* or salvation. This *Upanishad* says that *Brahman* is to be realized in His immanent nature. When a human person discovers the undistorted self in the world, he can be said to have realized the *Brahman*.

The author of this is careful to avoid a monistic interpretation of *moksha*. *Moksha* is obtained by the knowledge of God (*jnana*). Following upon meditation one attains *moksha* which has three aspects: breaking of fetters; freedom from birth and death; universal lordship. The latter implies fulfillment of all desires and isolation:

When that god is known, all fetters fall off, sufferings are destroyed, and birth and death cease. From meditating on him there arises, on the dissolution of the body, the third state, that of universal lordship; but he only who is alone, is satisfied" (1:11).

In chapter one, the author integrates the ascetic practice and brahmanic meditation as a means to *moksha*, although grace is not mentioned here as a condition for success. The beholding in one's finite *atman* of the very *Brahman-Atman* is proposed here as possible through austerity (*tapas*) and the meditation on *Aum*.

By making his body the under-wood, and the syllable Om the upper-wood, man, after repeating the drill of meditation, will perceive the bright god, like the spark hidden in the wood.

As oil in seeds, as butter in cream, as water in (dry) river-beds, as fire in wood, so is the Self seized within the self, if man looks for him by truthfulness and penance;

(If he looks) for the Self that pervades everything, as butter is contained in milk, and the roots whereof are self-knowledge and penance. That is the Brahman taught by the Upanishad. (1:14-16.)

The main thrust of the chapter two is the glorification of the practice of *yoga* which is also presented as the means of attaining God:

If a wise man hold his body with its three erect parts (chest, neck, and head) even, and turn his senses with the mind towards the heart, he will then in the boat of Brahman cross all the torrents which cause fear.

Compressing his breathings let him, who has subdued all motions, breathe forth through the nose with gentle breath. Let the wise man without fail restrain his mind, that chariot yoked with vicious horses.

Let him perform his exercises in a place level, pure, free from pebbles, fire, and dust, delightful by its sounds, its water, and bowers, not painful to the eye, and full of shelters and caves. (2.8-10).

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* contains several ideas in germinal form out of which the later speculations in the systems of *Sankhya* and *Yoga* would emerge. The word *Yoga* and its derivatives are frequently used in the *Upanishad*. However, the description of *Svetasvatara Upanishad* by some commentators as closer to the dualist *Sankhya* system as opposed to the monistic *advaita* may not hold true. For, *Svetasvatara Upanishad* stands undisputedly for the advaitic approach which is central to the other major *Upanishads*. “The followers of *Sankhya*, *yoga* and *saivism*... feel that their respective schools originated here (in *Svetasvatara Upanishad* verse 2). But the spirit of the *Upanishad* does not seem to go in their favour. The *Upanishad* overcomes all types of duality and preaches non-dualistic *Vedanta*.”⁵

Verse 2.15 implies that the freedom from the finite self consists in the real vision of the pure nature of Brahman.

And when by means of the real nature of his self he sees, as by a lamp, the real nature of Brahman, then having known the unborn, eternal God, who is beyond all natures, he is freed from all fetters.

Moksha from the world of sorrow can be had only by reaching Him who is beyond the reach of forms and sorrow “which is beyond this world is without form and without suffering. They who know it, become immortal, but others suffer pain indeed” (3.10).

In chapter 5, verse 9, this *Upanishad* uses the term *Jiva* for the first time to signify the individual *atman*. In an effort to express the spiritual nature of the *jiva*, it is said to be the most minute and yet conformed to Infinity. This *Jiva* could be saved only the knowledge of God. Knowledge frees the human from all fetters: *avidya*, the various *gunas* and *karman*, which bind him to rebirth.

That living soul (jiva) is to be known as part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair, divided a hundred times, and yet it is to be infinite.... He who knows him who has no beginning and no end, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, is freed from all fetters. (5.9,13).

SIVA AS THE ULTIMATE

Some commentators of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* have suggested a sectarian element in *Svetasvatara Upanishad* as advocating the germinal forms of Saivist thinking. For instance, when speaking of the Highest Self or the Highest *Brahman*, it applies such names to him as *Hara* (1.10), *Rudra* (2.17; 3. 2, 4; 4. 12, 21, 22), *Siva* (3.14; 4.10). “It is interesting to note that while other *Upanishads* have described *Brahman* by the pronoun IT, this *Upanishad* speaks of *Brahman* as He. This is because of the name given to *Brahman* as *Siva*.”⁶ The *Shvetasvatara Upanishad* is said to be the earliest textual exposition of a systematic philosophy of Shaivism.⁷ As explained by Gavin Flood, the text proposes: “... a theology which elevates Rudra to the status of supreme being, the Lord (*Īśa*) who is transcendent yet also has cosmological functions, as does *Śiva* in later traditions.”⁸ Chapter three exalts the one God as *Rudra*, integrating many earlier teachings. Rudra, who in *Rigveda* personified the destructive powers of nature, is now given the triple divine function of creation, protection and dissolution.

The snarer who rules alone by his powers, who rules all the worlds by his powers, who is one and the same, while things arise and exists, - they who know this are immortal.

For there is one Rudra only, they do not allow a second, who rules all the worlds by his powers. He stands behind all persons, and after having created all worlds he, the protector, rolls it up at the end of time.

That one god, having his eyes, his face, his arms, and his feet in every place, when producing heaven and earth, forges them together with his arms and his Wings.(3:1-3).

Here the verse 3 is borrowed from the hymn to *Visva-karman* in *Rigveda*, 10.81,3.

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* describes Rudra, a term originally used for *Siva*, as the very *Brahman*. According to this *Upanishad* the Highest Reality is verily *Rudra* who is without a second. According to the *Upanishad*, *Siva* rules (*isata*) these worlds with His enormous powers (*isanibhi*). He is independent from all creatures (*pratyan janan*) and He is the protector of all the worlds (*visvabhuvana gopa*). At the end of creation He withdraws these worlds into Himself. He is the source and origin of all gods. As the ruler of all gods and as *Iswara* he gives birth to *Hiranyagarbha*, the golden germ (3.4). He alone can liberate us beyond the cycle of birth and death. No other path could save us (3.8). There is nothing higher or smaller than Him. He alone pervades the whole universe. (3.9). “He is the Lord and He, *Siva*, is therefore found everywhere” (3.11).

The identification of *Siva* as the ultimate is said to be one of the most significant contributions of *Svetasvatara Upanishad*. “It is most significant that the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* describes *Siva* as the symbol of the Ultimate. In other *Upanishads* the Sacred word, *OM* has been stated as the symbol of *Brahman*. Here *Siva* is equated with *Brahman*. Now *Siva* is indeed the expression of *Ananda*. In this *Upanishad* we see almost a devotional outburst to *Siva* in his aspect as *Ananda*.”⁹

It is possible that the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* reflected the sentiments and the spirit of the age in which it was composed. Saivism might have already been a

popular cult and the author of *Svetasvatara Upanishad* in his synthesizing mission must have been influenced by it. However there are differing scholarly opinions which argue that the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* contains no clear evidence for any sectarian thinking like that of Saivism or the *bhakti* tradition. They hold that that the idea of the Highest Self was developed first, and, after it had reached its highest purity, was lowered again by an identification with mythological and personal deities. Some commentators do not think that the attribution of Supremacy to *Siva* does not make this *Upanishad* a theistic work. They say that the distinguishing feature of this *Upanishad* is that it calls the absolute by a name and that naming alone does not make it anything theistic.¹⁰

5.7 LET US SUM UP

The Upanishadic teachers were earnest in their search for truth and ever ready to advance from inadequate to more adequate considerations. Their main conclusion is that in both the universe at large and in the individual human being there is a Ground which is pure Being, unyielding to change. To realize this Being in oneself means salvation. Once this is done, re-birth and redeath are done away, and humans realize themselves as at least participating in eternal being. This conclusion takes on a more religious shape in the later *Upanishads*, especially, in the *Svetasvatara*, where that Being is seen to be the One Benign God, extending His merciful grace to humans whom He fills with devotion (*bhakti*) towards Him and leads to the beatific vision. As Rohit Meta comments: “The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is indeed the culminating point of the whole process of knowledge which the other *Upanishads* have indicated. The Upanishadic teachers were not engaged in dry, metaphysical speculations—they were sages who spoke the language of experience. . . . It is to this experience of devotion that the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* leads the students to the Divine Wisdom.”¹¹

Check Your Progress II

1) What is the nature of the Ultimate reality according to *Svetasvatara Upanishad*?

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2) What are the means towards *moksha* outlined in *Svetasvatara Upanishad* ?

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- 3) Critically evaluate the association of *Svetasvatara Upanishad* with Saivism and Sankhya system.

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5.8 KEY WORDS

- Godhead** : The term “Godhead” is sometimes used to refer to the unknowable aspect of God which lies beyond His actions or emanations (as it were).
- Beatific Vision** : Beatific vision is the eternal and direct perception of God enjoyed by those who are in Heaven.

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5. 10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) *Upanishads* like *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* deals with the unqualified and unchanging nature of the *Brahman*, this *Upanishad* deals with the manifest, creative, nurturing, the omniscient, and omnipotent *Isvara* or *Rudra* who causes the energy of the world to flow and bear life. Where *Brahman* is often described as *formless* in other important *Upanishads*, this *Upanishad* gives the form (fullness or *murtitva*) of God. While other *Upanishads* are concerned with presenting their own philosophical perspectives, this *Upanishad* was written in an attempt to unite the disparate religious and philosophical viewpoints of its time.]
- 2) While other *Upanishads* are concerned with presenting their own philosophical perspectives, this *Upanishad* was written in an attempt to unite the disparate religious and philosophical viewpoints of its time.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) The central vision of the entire *Upanishads* concerning the God as the One in-dwelling presence has been kept intact by *Svetasvatara Upanishad* too. God has become more personal in *Svetasvatara Upanishad*. The term *Deva* is used frequently in reference to the Ultimate. Other terms like *Rudra* and *Hara* which became prominent only later on in the Hindu thought were used in this *Upanishad* and are not found in the other *Upanishads*.
- 2) *Moksha* is obtained by the knowledge of God (*jnana*). Following upon meditation one attains *moksha* which has three aspects: breaking of fetters; freedom from birth and death; universal lordship. In chapter one, the author integrates the ascetic practice and brahmanic meditation as a means to *moksha*.
- 3) Some commentators of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* have suggested a sectarian element in *Svetasvatara Upanishad* as advocating the germinal forms of Saivist thinking. For instance, when speaking of the Highest Self or the Highest *Brahman*, it applies such names to him as *Hara*, *Rudra* and *Siva*. The *Shvetasvatara Upanishad* is said to be the earliest textual exposition of a systematic philosophy of Shaivism. It is possible that the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* reflected the sentiments and the spirit of the age in which it was composed. Saivism might have already been a popular cult and the author of *Svetasvatara Upanishad* in his synthesizing mission must have been influenced by it.

UNIT 1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND AUROBINDO

Contents

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda
- 1.3 Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo
- 1.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.5 Key Words
- 1.6 Further Readings and References
- 1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVE

Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo revolutionized and awakened the Indian philosophical mind. They brought with them a new and higher consciousness. They can be viewed as great masters of philosophy of “unity in diversity.” Surprisingly enough, they were also linked to each other. Sri Aurobindo was accosted by Swami Vivekananda through his dreams and was the one who prompted him to start his Sadhana. By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- understand the larger vision of unity in diversity implied in the teachings of these philosophers;
- know the central ideas of their philosophy; and
- assimilate their passion for the whole of humanity as one religion.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda was born in a well-to-do family of Calcutta. His early life was not very eventful. In 1881, he happened to meet Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa whom the former accepted as his philosopher and guide. After the death of Ramakrishna in 1886, he undertook an extensive travel of almost the whole of India. In 1893 he addressed the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. After his return, he founded the Ramakrishna Ashram at Belur, near Calcutta. He breathed his last on the 4th of July 1902.

Aurobindo Ghosh was born on the 15th of August 1872 at Konanagar, West Bengal. He had his early education in the Loretto Convent School of Darjeeling, and was taken to England at an early age of eight. In 1885 he was sent to St. Paul’s school, London, where he developed a special fascination for some classical languages like Greek and Latin. On completing his studies he appeared for the I.C.S examination, was successful in the written test, but could not qualify in the riding test. In 1893 he came back to India and joined the Baroda State Service, where he found enough leisure to read ancient Indian Philosophy. He remained in Baroda for about ten years, after which he devoted himself to political work till he was arrested in 1908. During

his imprisonment he underwent a spiritual transformation, which took him to the ways of a Yogi. In April 1910, he shifted to Pondicherry, where he stayed till he breathed his last in 1950. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, began to publish the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo in a uniform library edition and it continues to do so. These works contain all the writings published earlier in the 30-volume Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL), as well as around 4000 pages of new texts.

1.2 PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Vivekananda is an idealist as he believes the ultimate reality to be spiritual. Reality is one absolute *Brahman*. Real is a 'whole' implies that there must be parts. But absolute is perfect unity, and therefore the distinction between parts and whole completely vanishes. The absolute *Brahman* is also beyond space, time and causation, and thus changeless. The changeless absolute is indeterminate without any attribute. However, the absolute can be described as *sat-chit-ananda*. Love is the essential core of *ananda* (bliss). Metaphysically speaking, reality is absolute *Brahman*, and the same reality viewed from religious point of view is God who is all-pervasive, present everywhere and in everything.

God

God is personal. We find two currents flowing in the philosophy of Vivekananda: one that resembles the Advaita Vedanta and the other one that reminds of the theism of the Bhakti-cult. He who is supremely real is also the object of our devotion and worship. An outright rejection of God is impossible as God is presupposed as the necessary support and ground of both the world and the soul. One may gather the following arguments for the existence of God from the teachings of Vivekananda: (1) Argument from Design: The vastness, harmony and the grandeur of the world lead us to suppose that there must be an architect, an intelligent designer of the universe. (2) Argument from Causality: Everything in the universe is by turn a cause and an effect. This causal series leads to an ultimate cause, which is the Uncaused Cause, the Absolute Being, God. (3) Argument from Unity: The universe expresses an essential unity of all things. The things that look very different from each other are really and basically one and the same. This fact of unity reveals the most underlying and unifying principle of all things, namely, God. (4) Argument from Love: Love consists in discovering oneself in the object of love. In the act of love, the distinction between 'me' and 'thou' would vanish. The conclusion is that the reality behind everything is just one, supreme principle of love: God. (5) Argument from Authority of Scriptures: So long as we have not been able to know and realize God, we can base ourselves on the authority of the scriptures. From the point of view of existence and reality, God alone is there, but from the point of view of our finite knowledge, scriptures appear to be prior, and we can rely on their authority in teaching about God. (6) Argument from Analogy: He takes up the analogy of a beautiful picture. That person enjoys a picture who looks at it without the intention of buying and selling. Similarly, the whole universe is the picture of God, which would be enjoyed by humans when all their desires have vanished. (7) Argument from Necessity of Notion: The notion of God is a necessity on various grounds. It is necessary because God is the Truth and Truth is necessary. In the same way, God is necessary because God is freedom. The fact of human freedom presupposes the ideal of absolute freedom which is Divine Freedom. Again God is necessary, because the very condition of existence involves God. (8) Argument from Intuition: Every human has the capacity to experience God directly through intuition if one is prepared to follow the path of rigorous religious discipline and meditation. The rational 'proofs' are needed only so long as the capacity to have a direct vision (intuition) is not developed.

World

World (cosmos) is God's creation, which is the expression of the Creator in finite forms. The Absolute has become the universe by passing through time, space and causation. Of course, this description implies that in Absolute there was neither time, nor space, nor causation since the Absolute is beyond all change. Space, time, and causation are not metaphysical realities, but mere forms through which God makes creation possible. Although a form is not a metaphysical reality, it is neither real nor false. The forms are like waves in an ocean. The waves are the same as the ocean, yet different. Similarly, the world is as real as the waves. *Jagat mithya* of Sankara, according to Vivekananda, does not mean mere illusion, but that which has no reality of its own, without any permanent value. It means that which is constantly changing. Creation is timeless. God is eternally creating. Creation and evolution go together.

Maya

Maya is the power of the Creator. It is the principle of change, which makes creation possible. But in Advaita Vedanta, *maya* is the power that creates illusion; it is that Divine *sakti* which has the capacity of deluding human into believing that the world is real. Vivekananda disagrees with this position. For him, *maya* reflects the fact of contradiction that the universe so clearly exhibits. For instance, wherever there is good, there is evil; wherever there is life, there is death, and so forth. Finally, all contradictions are to be resolved, and therefore, *maya* has to be superseded. But the superseding act does not completely cancel or negate that which is superseded. Even when *maya* gives way, it gives way only to find that all the time it was lying within the bosom of Brahman itself. Its being superseded does not take away from it its distinctive role that it had been playing so long. *Maya* is neither existence nor non-existence, but something in between Absolute Being and non-being.

Human

The picture of human that emerges in the philosophy of Vivekananda is an organized unity of the physical and the spiritual. Human is physically superior to all other animals because human's physical nature is better organized and exhibits a greater unity. This uniqueness of human's physical nature is also due to the presence of spirituality in the person. The true nature of *atman* is identical with *Brahman*. The two are basically identical and their difference is only apparent. Normally we do not have an awareness of this identity, but certain experiences and realizations can be taken as pointers towards this. The most usual example is the feeling that one is capable of such an identity.

Freedom and Karma

The real nature of human is freedom. It constitutes the very essence of the soul. It is not correct to say that freedom belongs to the soul since soul itself is freedom. Freedom does not mean absence of all kinds of determining factors. It does not mean 'no-determination' at all, but it means self-determination in which the free agent is not determined by anything else but by himself. In this way, freedom and karma no longer remain incompatible with each other. Karma determines human's nature, but it is human's karma. One's own actions create tendencies that bear fruit for the future. Secondly, karma does not contradict human's freedom. It is because final escape rests ultimately with one's own actions. By one's own good deeds, one can win over one's ignorance and suffering. That shows that human is basically free.

Immortality

Vivekananda admits that it is not possible to give an exact and scientific demonstration of the soul's immortality. However, this notion cannot be brushed aside as a delusion since a notion cannot keep on deluding generations after generations. The soul, in fact, survives death. This survival assumes the form of rebirth and finally the realization of immortality. True immortality can be attained only when the 'cycle' of birth and rebirth is stopped. The following are some of the evidences for immortality: (1) Simplicity of Soul: The soul is immortal because it is simple. Simplicity is the absence of complexity. What is liable to destruction is invariably something complex. (2) Infinite Potentialities: Human has infinite potentialities. Human has the capacity to go beyond every task that one is faced with. (3) Yearning for Liberation: Our yearning for liberation from death is a sign of immortality. For, our genuine desires do have a real object. It shows that our desire for immortality itself is an evidence of immortality.

Liberation and the Means

One of the most important concepts of Hinduism is that of *mukti* (liberation). The liberation can be attained through the practice of *yoga*. Of the numerous *yogas*, Vivekananda proposes the following four: *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, *jnana-yoga*, and *raja-yoga*. (1) In *Karma-Yoga*, work is not done due to compulsion, but out of a sense of duty. The *karma-yogi* works as a free being, unattached to all self-interest. Such work leads to knowledge, which in turn brings liberation. (2) *Bhakti-yoga* is a genuine search for the Lord in love. Love of God grows and assumes *parā-bhakti* or supreme devotion in which all forms and rituals vanish. In *bhakti-yoga*, one trains to control one's feelings and emotions and gives the soul higher and higher direction towards God. (3) *Jnana-Yoga* explains the meaning of 'Thou art that' and tells human that one is essentially divine. In *jnana-yoga* the entire energy of the body can be concentrated in the direction of knowledge. In course of time this concentration will become more intense, and the individual may attain the stage of complete concentration or *samadhi*. At this stage, even the distinction between the Self and Brahman will vanish. It is a stage of perfect unity. (4) *Raja-yoga* is the method of realization through the mystic union of the lower Self with the higher Self. It restrains the activities of the mind, and with the cessation of the activities of the mind, attachment and bondage disappears. It produces certain super-normal powers, which the aspirant should ignore so as to attain liberation. When a person goes into *samadhi* or superconscious stage, one comes out as a sage and attains metaphysical and transcendental knowledge.

Religion

Religion is a necessity of life. For, first, there is a longing of a higher kind which shows that religion is a necessary aspect of life. Second, religion is inevitable, and it cannot be given up. Trying to give up religion will itself become a religion. Third, the historical fact of the survival of religion itself – unlike politico-social institutions – is an evidence of its necessary character. *Origin of religion*: Religion originates in human's attempt to go beyond the senses. Human experiences uneasiness within when certain phenomena appear as beyond one's ordinary perception and understanding. *Nature of religion*: Religion is inherent in the very constitution of human. The nature of religion can be known by analyzing the religious sense, which is universally present with all the three elements in it: the cognitive elements, the feeling elements and the conative elements. These elements are never present in equal proportion or degree, but the nature of religion is determined by the preponderance of this element or that. For example, where there is a preponderance of feeling, religion tends to be mystical;

where there is emphasis on knowledge, religion is intellectual and abstract; and where there is predominance of volitional elements, religion becomes practical and ritual. But true religious consciousness harmonizes all these aspects into a unity. *Characteristics of religion:* (1) Supernatural Content: The supernatural content provides a religion with its uniqueness and distinguishes it from all other forms of disciplines. (2) Transcendence: Religion transcends not only the limitations of the senses, but also the power of reasoning or of pure intellectual deliberation. (3) Abstractions: Religious facts are more or less abstractions which are super-sensuous, like 'the ideal unity,' 'the ideal of humanity,' and so on. (4) Awakening of spirituality: To say that religion is a spiritual awakening is to emphasize that it begins in an awareness of the inadequacy of sense and reason. (5) Social and moral content: A distinction is usually made between morality and religion by saying that morality serves social purpose and religion has a value that transcends even the social. However, religion provides a secure foundation and an ultimate sanction to morality. Ethics will ever remain blind and chaotic without this sanction. (6) Mental exercise: Religion is the greatest and the healthiest exercise that the human mind can do. (7) Triple aspects of religion: Every religion has three aspects or contents such as philosophy, mythology and ritual. Philosophy underlies the whole scope of a religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal and the means for reaching it. Mythology consists of legends and stories, which concretize philosophy. Ritual is made up of forms and ceremonies that keep men engaged religiously and provide them with structural and organizational unity. *Universal Religion:* A universal religion has the following features: (1) It must open its door to every individual who is free to decide one's religion. (2) It must be inclusive of all sects superseding conflicts and tensions that often occur among the various sects. (3) The spirit of universal religion implies acceptance. Acceptance is not just tolerance, which is negative in its import, but positive acceptance in which respect is shown to everyone. God is the essence and ideal of universal religion. (4) Universal religion has to be acceptable to all minds satisfying the largest possible proportion of humankind. Universal religion must harmoniously balance all the aspects of religion namely, *philosophy, emotion, work, and mysticism.*

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain Swami Vivekananda's view on Freedom and Karma.

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2) What are the means to liberation according to Swami Vivekananda?

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1.3 PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO (1872 – 1950)

Aurobindo is a non-dualist (advaitic), but different from that of $\mu\alpha\theta\kappa\alpha\alpha$. $M\delta y\delta$ is the real power of *Brahman*, part and parcel of consciousness. It is the creative power of *Brahman* who descends through it to the world of matter. There is nothing that is not permeated by *Brahman* and thus everything is real. The conscious is permeated by the unconscious and vice versa. Both the conscious and the unconscious are powers of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is pure existence and it is the very nature of the power of *Brahman* to manifest itself as the world of finite objects and selves. Universe is the power of *Brahman* manifesting itself. In the process of evolution, all beings constantly return to *Brahman*. This return to the primordial power of Being results in the evolution of the spirit into higher forms of consciousness. For Aurobindo, unlike Darwin, all beings are the evolutes of the spirit. Every being has something in common with every other being. The ordinary distinction between the lower (plant) and the higher (animal) is not an essential distinction but only one of degree. The lower is constantly struggling to evolve into the higher, and the higher is always reflected in the lower. The universe is a constant evolutionary play between the lower and the higher, and the summit of evolution is the attainment of *saccidananda*.

The movement from spirit to matter and matter to spirit belongs to the very nature of the Absolute. It is *maya*, the power of the Absolute. If spirit is conscious and *maya* is unconscious, then both conscious and unconscious are not separate from each other, but belong to each other. The movements of descent (involution) and ascent (evolution) constitute a circular movement. Absolute Reality (*Brahman*) is *Saccidananda*: *Sat* (Being), *Cit* (consciousness), and *Ananda* (bliss). There are, in fact, nine stages of the descent and ascent of the Supreme Spirit into matter and from matter: Being (*Sat*), consciousness (*Cit*), bliss (*Ananda*), supermind, overmind, mind, psyche, life and matter.

Sat is pure existence, infinite, eternal, and indefinable. Being and becoming are both fundamental aspects of *Sat*. *Cit* is consciousness-force. All existence ultimately comes down to a movement of energy, a Force, and this Force is a conscious Force. *Ananda* is absolute delight or eternal and unlimited bliss. Hence, the Absolute, *Brahman*, is a conscious existence whose consciousness is limitless bliss. Of course, at the top is the Supreme Unmanifest *Saccidananda* since Reality, in the final analysis, is beyond its manifestations. Next comes *Saccidananda* made manifest, which is being, consciousness, and bliss. *Supermind* is direct-truth consciousness. It is the possession of truth, and not the construction of that truth. It is the consciousness by which the Divine knows its own essence and manifestations. It is consciousness that yields automatic action in harmony with the Divine essence. It is oblivious to the dichotomy of thing in the manifest universe even while it acts within that universe. An example could be someone's acting in the light of pure unselfish love where the distinctions between self, action, and the beloved are not made. *Overmind* is a kind of bridge between supermind and the lower levels of the human mind. Overmind-consciousness knows the unity of things. But its action is deliberate, not automatic as in supermind-consciousness. *Mind* (intuitive mind) is a direct encounter with truth. It encounters truth only in moments of illumination rather than the consciousness of Supermind, which is definitive and immutable. Illumined Mind and Higher Mind are similar to one another. Whereas the Higher Mind is a tentative awareness of Unity in that it is still grounded in conceptual thought, Illumined Mind is more integrated, more visionary.

Normal waking consciousness is the level of mind which operates from the perspective of the single individual and assumes the multiplicity of things to be elemental. The multiplicity of things is real, but the level of mind is unable to see the essential connectedness of things. In fact, Mind does not know the Whole but mistakes its own individuality as being its defining characteristic in relation to everything else. *Psyche* is that which represents the presence of the Divine in all life-forms. It also creates desires in and for the individual, thus separating one from the Whole. Because *Psyche* is the Divine Spark, it facilitates the spiritual evolution of that individual. *Life* is the energy that animates every living thing, animal or plant. *Matter* is the material stuff of the universe.

The purpose of human life is to evolve spiritually upward toward Supramental consciousness, and human beings have the capacity to help or to hinder this process for the rest of the human community. In essence, when an individual attains to Overmental consciousness, then Overmind itself descends to the level of human consciousness in a way that goes well beyond the spiritual accomplishment of the individual. The way in which a person participates in this process of Divine self-manifestation is through the practice of *Integral Yoga* which is the integration of spiritual practice with regular activity in the world.

The stages from mind to matter belong to the empirical world. The stages from supermind are supernals and divine. The overmind is the mediator between mind and supermind through the veil of *maya* that separates the two. The overmind corresponds to the witness-consciousness of *Vedanta*. The first three levels beginning with existence constitute *Brahman* which is *sacchidananda*. *Maya* stays between the mind and the supermind, and *maya* and the overmind belong to each other.

The aim of human life is to follow the path of the ascent to the levels of the supernals one after another, from Overmind to the Supermind and so on. At the higher levels there is no possibility of falsity at all as ignorance and consciousness are inseparable there. The overmind now and then passes onto mind some great truth which cannot be accounted for by mind. When human rises to the levels of the overmind and becomes one with it, one becomes a superman. The superman of Aurobindo is a yogi who has surrendered oneself to God becoming one with him. It has nothing in common with the Superman of Nietzsche. There is no conflict or strife for those who have risen to higher levels. There is complete unity without difference. Such an experience is integral knowledge.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Differentiate between 'Supermind' and 'Overmind.'

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2) Explain Sri Aurobindo’s concept of ‘Superman.’

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1.4 LET US SUM UP

Swami Vivekananda was known for his Practical Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda declared that he had come to prove the great Vedanta ideal in practical life and to herald it before the workaday world and society. He believed in the basic oneness of existence seen through different constitutions such as earth, heavens, gods, hell, ghosts, men, etc. and advocated strongly the eternal sameness or homogeneity beyond all differentiation, the unity of all personalities. Vedanta meant that all power, glory, divinity, and purity of the divine were already within the soul, within each creature in the universe.

The essential teaching of Sri Aurobindo is that humans are in a transition toward the final evolution. They would surpass their present conditions and rise to a newer life with abundant knowledge and consciousness. It would transform not only the personal self but also this cosmos. It would cause the dawn of a New Heaven and a New Earth, the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth.

1.5 KEY WORDS

- Space** : Space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction. Physical space is often conceived in three linear dimensions, although modern physicists usually consider it, with time, to be part of the boundless four-dimensional continuum known as space-time.
- Mind** : Mind is the subjective, comprehensive structure of a rational being. It is the aspect of intellect and consciousness experienced as combinations of thought, perception, memory, emotion, will and imagination, including all unconscious cognitive processes. Mind manifests itself subjectively as a stream of consciousness.

1.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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<<http://www.sriurobindosociety.org>> is the Official Website of Sri Aurobindo Society that provides the reader everything linked to Sri Aurobindo's life, teachings, and writings, including the details about Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville at Pondicherry.

<<http://www.sriurobindosociety.org.in/saspub/saspub.htm>> gives the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo and of the Mother in Book, Video, Photograph, and in other formats.

<<http://www.miraura.org>>, the Integral Yoga Website provides the reader the compilation of writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The real nature of human is freedom. It constitutes the very essence of the soul. It is not correct to say that freedom belongs to the soul since soul itself is freedom. Freedom does not mean absence of all kinds of determining factors. It does not mean 'no-determination' at all, but it means self-determination in which the free agent is not determined by anything else but by himself. In this way, freedom and karma no longer remain incompatible with each other. Karma determines human's nature, but it is human's karma. One's own actions create tendencies that bear fruit for the future. Secondly, karma does not contradict human's freedom. It is because final escape rests ultimately with one's own actions. By one's own good deeds, one can win over one's ignorance and suffering. That shows that human is basically free.
- 2) One of the most important concepts of Hinduism is that of *mukti* (liberation). The liberation can be attained through the practice of *yoga*. Of the numerous *yogas*, Vivekananda proposes the following four: *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, and *rāja-yoga*. (1) In *Karma-Yoga*, work is not done due to compulsion, but out of a sense of duty. The *karma-yogi* works as a free being, unattached to all self-interest. Such work leads to knowledge, which in turn brings liberation. (2) *Bhakti-yoga* is a genuine search for the Lord in love. Love of God grows and assumes *parā-bhakti* or supreme devotion in which all forms and rituals vanish. In *bhakti-yoga*, one trains to control one's feelings and emotions and gives the soul higher and higher direction towards God. (3) *Jñāna-Yoga* explains the meaning of 'Thou art that' and tells human that one is essentially divine. In *jñāna-yoga* the entire energy of the body can be concentrated in the direction of knowledge. In course of time this concentration will become more intense, and the individual may attain the stage of complete concentration or *samādhi*. At this stage, even the distinction between the Self and Brahman will vanish. It is a stage of perfect unity. (4) *Rāja-yoga* is the method of realization through the mystic union of the lower Self with the higher Self. It restrains the activities of the mind, and with the cessation of the activities of the mind, attachment and bondage disappears. It produces certain super-normal powers, which the aspirant should ignore so as to attain liberation. When a person goes into *samādhi*

or superconscious stage, one comes out as a sage and attains metaphysical and transcendental knowledge.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) *Supermind* is direct-truth consciousness. It is the possession of truth, and not the construction of that truth. It is the consciousness by which the Divine knows its own essence and manifestations. It is consciousness that yields automatic action in harmony with the Divine essence. It is oblivious to the dichotomy of thing in the manifest universe even while it acts within that universe. An example could be someone's acting in the light of pure unselfish love where the distinctions between self, action, and the beloved are not made. *Overmind* is a kind of bridge between supermind and the lower levels of the human mind. Overmind-consciousness knows the unity of things. But its action is deliberate, not automatic as in supermind-consciousness.
- 2) The aim of human life is to follow the path of the ascent to the levels of the supernals one after another, from Overmind to the Supermind and so on. At the higher levels there is no possibility of falsity at all as ignorance and consciousness are inseparable there. The overmind now and then passes onto mind some great truth which cannot be accounted for by mind. When human rises to the levels of the overmind and becomes one with it, one becomes a superman. The superman of Aurobindo is a yogi who has surrendered oneself to God becoming one with him. It has nothing in common with the Superman of Nietzsche. There is no conflict or strife for those who have risen to higher levels. There is complete unity without difference. Such an experience is integral knowledge.

UNIT 2 MAHATMA GANDHI AND RABINDHRANATH TAGORE

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Philosophy of Gandhi
- 2.3 Philosophy of Tagore
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.5 Key Words
- 2.6 Further Readings and References
- 2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you are going to study the philosophy of two eminent personalities of our motherland in the contemporary times:

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi whom the whole world acknowledged as the Mahatma
- Rabindranath Tagore who won world recognition (Nobel Prize) for his contributions to literature.

Neither of them is a philosopher in the usual sense of the term. Neither of them constructed any philosophical system. However, they were so deeply involved in a synthetic perspective of viewing things within a synoptic vision that whatever they said, did and wrote was profoundly philosophical. The new perspective that they offered have led us to a fresh and fruitful way of understanding self-realization, interrelationship of humans with one another and with the environment. What is still more important is that the whole world recognizes the relevance of their thought.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi (1869- 1948) was born at Porbandar on the 2nd of October 1869. His early education was at Porbandar itself. In 1888, he was sent to England for legal studies. He returned to India in 1891 after qualifying as a barrister-at-law. After staying in India for a very brief period he went to South Africa in April 1893 to instruct the counsel for Dada Abdulla & Co. With his unique experiences of South African social and political adventures, he came to India to make efforts for its Independence by applying the method of *Satyagraha*. The life of Gandhi from 1920 to 1948 has almost become a household story which does not require a repetition here.

Rabindranath Tagore was born in Calcutta as the fourteenth child of his family. He wrote his first verse in his eighth year. He lost his mother in 1873. After two years he gave up going to school altogether. In 1878, he sailed for England to study Law, but in 1880 he returned home without any academic degree. His marriage took place in

1883. In 1901, he settled down at Santiniketan and began his educational experiment with 5 pupils. In 1913, the Calcutta University conferred on him a D.Litt. Degree; in 1914, he received the Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*. In 1915, the Government made him a Knight. He visited the United States in 1912, delivered lectures at the Harvard University and returned in September 1913. He sailed for Japan in May 1915. On his return to India he visited Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram. On 22nd December 1918, Santiniketan became an International University, and Visva-bharati, a centre of Indian Culture, was formally inaugurated on 23rd December 1921. He undertook lecture-tours in Europe, the United States, Russia, China, Iran, and Iraq. The Oxford University conferred a Doctorate on Tagore in 1940 at Santiniketan.

2.2 PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHI

A voluminous literature has gone into studying the man and his thought. Besides, his own writings have run into 100 large volumes of published materials. They were all written on various occasions, in different contexts with diverse aims. Gandhi never attempted to present his thought in any single treatise. That makes it difficult for many people to know his philosophy clearly. However, he had such an integrated vision which, he used not mechanically (as in the case of the theories of natural sciences), but creatively, i.e. first viewing the context and understanding it as widely as possible and shedding light on it with the help of the eternal principles he had learnt from religious scriptures. This process is not to be thought of as applying a theory to data. Rather the theory illuminates the data and the data get focused in the light of the theory in an intuitive dialectical relationship. The life transformation or state of peace that results from such an application further illuminates the deeper grasp of the philosophical principles and reinforces their value and strengthens the philosophical vision. We begin with Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha.

Satyagraha

For Gandhi, *satyagraha* includes three basic values: truth, nonviolence, and self-suffering. The purpose of *satyagraha* is to bring an end to injustice by changing the heart of the wrong-doer by awakening, through love and self-suffering, one's sense of justice. Traditionally there were two ways to deal with injustice: one either continued being a victim or one fought back with violence. Gandhi's ethical pacifistic nature would not allow him to be passive, and he was convinced that injustice corrupts the soul, both of the victim and the perpetrator. Hence it would be wrong not to do anything. Fighting back with violence is no solution either since violence begets violence. In mutual violence, the original perpetrator of injustice would now feel victimized and thus justified in responding with violence. *Satyagraha* was his alternative to both. He experimented with *satyagraha* both in South Africa and India. Looking at his various *satyagraha* movements, one can discern a specific pattern. It starts with a careful marshalling of all the facts, leading to negotiation and possibly arbitration. One remains open to communication since each side in a conflict has only a partial view. Each side needs the critical perspective of the other to sort out truth from untruth. In case the arbitration fails, the *satyagrahi* prepares the group for direct action without resorting to violence. One has to offer love in response to emotional and physical violence. Now the *satyagrahi*, after announcing his direct planned action, persists in action, accepting all adversity, until the issue is resolved to mutual satisfaction. One can claim to have won only if one's opponent can also say the same thing. In this way *satyagraha* is a new form of conflict resolution which can be applied to conflict between nations, between oppressed minorities and their governments, between social groups, and

even between individuals. Thanks to Gandhi's Gospel of *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, Great Britain and India had the friendliest transfer of power from the ruler to the ruled in human history.

Truth

Gandhi was committed to truth in the sense of being truthful, seeing that truth covers all ethical action. Unethical action is as much a violation of Truth as making a false statement. Since epistemologically Truth seemed more certain than God, Gandhi converted his position from *God is truth* to *Truth is God*. Since human beings are fallible creatures, they cannot be sure of knowing Truth as such. He accepted the Jain theory of the multidimensionality of truth (*anekantvada*), and emphasized the necessity for open-mindedness and soul-searching. In critical situations, he relied on his 'inner voice,' which was tuned to the call of Truth through long practice.

Love

For Gandhi love is the cardinal virtue, which serves truth. If a person's actions are motivated by love for all, those actions will be conducive to the highest good. According to Gandhi, *ahimsa* is not just refraining from injuring others, but positively enhancing their well-being, or rather, loving them. Genuine love is rooted in egolessness, which is the highest personal virtue. It is *nishkamakarma*, acting without attachment to the fruits of action, which expresses love and self-surrender. Gandhi was extremely modest, unassuming, and owned no property.

Social Reform

Gandhi's social action was aimed at the transformation of society based on two basic convictions: (1) All human beings are brothers because they possess the same *atman*. Hence, to injure another is to do violence to oneself. (2) All human beings are fundamentally good. Given these convictions, one can understand why Gandhi was committed to justice and equality. He fought for equality of women and *harijans* within Hindu society. He aimed at *Sarvodaya*: everyone's self-development. He founded several *ashrams* where he gathered men and women of different castes and religions and encouraged them to lead a life of simplicity.

Religion

Gandhi believed in the equality of all religions since all principal religions are equal and true. The essence of all religions is not dogmas and doctrines, but ethical action based on self-surrender.

Economics

Gandhi's economic views were unorthodox, but he was against unbridled economic liberalization and material prosperity at the cost of human values. Economic policy should ensure that no one in this world goes hungry or homeless. He worked to create cottage industries and cooperatives in villages. The spinning wheel was a symbol of simplicity and self-reliance. He was also against welfarism. No able-bodied person should live on charity. Everyone must work hard to earn one's own bread. But he did not believe in expropriation of the wealth of the rich since that would result in violence. So he evolved the theory of Trusteeship in which the rich should act as trustees of their wealth, which they should use for social uplift.

Politics

He believed in the decentralization of power in which the base of political power should be small community groups patterned after the village *panchayats*. The state must have minimum power consistent with the aim of *sarvodaya*, universal self-realization. *Ahimsa* should be the guiding principle of all political relationships.

God

Gandhi was in the beginning an ardent believer in God, "I have made the world's faith in God my own." And he regarded "that faith as amounting to such experience as to say: "I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room". He even testified to that faith as to confess: "I may live without air and water but not without Him. You may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God, and I am dead". Gandhi lamented at the fact many of us "shut our ears to the still small voice. We shut our eyes to the 'pillar of fire' in front of us". On his part he "realized His omnipresence. Even in darkest despair, where there seems to be no helper and no comfort in the wide, wide world, His Name inspires us with strength and puts all doubts and despairs to flight".

Gandhi confessed that he had no argument to convince the existence of God through reason because faith in God transcends reason. In the very nature of things it must be so, he said, because we must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because He is beyond them. We can feel Him if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses. Also externally we could feel that there is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

To sum up: (1) God is truth and truth is God. This is not a logical abstract truth, but the spiritual and metaphysical. Truth is the law that supports human and the universe; God is both the law and the law-giver. (2) God is love itself. For God is affectional and affective by nature. (3) Truth prevails one's falsity and falsehood in every conflict between two sides. (4) One should hold fast to truth. Then one will be supported by truth. Falsity leads to non-existence. (5) As truth, God, and love are the same, one should stick to love. (6) One should follow the path of non-violence. The opposite of love is violence (7) Human is finite, not God; one's power, knowledge and will are limited. One may be mistaken in one's own conviction. (8) In sticking to truth, one should not destroy another. (9) When truth wins, falsity will be destroyed. If two parties love each other, the destruction will be the destruction of false convictions. (10) God alone has the right to destroy. God knows what is true and what is false in his infinite wisdom. When God destroys, he destroys in love, not in hatred. As finite beings, we not only cannot be certain of truth, but also cannot destroy in love. Hate is easy, but love is difficult. Our duty is to follow the path of love. When we follow the path of love we shall be like God, the law, ground, support of our being.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain Gandhi's view on Truth.

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2) What is Gandhi's concept of Love?

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2.3 PHILOSOPHY OF TAGORE

Tagore authored about one hundred books of poems, about fifty plays and about forty works of fiction, about fifteen books of philosophical lectures and essays. His best-known poems appear in *Gitanjali* (Song offerings), originally written in Bengali and translated by himself into English. His writings of philosophical interest are *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* (London: Macmillan 1913), *Personality* (London: Macmillan 1917), *Creative Unity* (London: Macmillan 1922), *The Religion of Man* (London: Unwin Books 1931). Obviously, Tagore did not give any systematic exposition of his philosophy. However his writings are charged with a particular vision of reality and a lot of suggestions of a system of philosophy. Attempts have been made to interpret Tagore's philosophy in the light of its own fundamental principles, supplying the premises, drawing out the conclusions, and giving the setting where necessary. The most famous of such attempts is a big volume *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (London: Macmillan 1918). Tagore himself is reported to have appreciated it. The philosophical teachings of Tagore became popular all over the world not only because of literary beauty but also on account of the lofty ideas they contain. Here you are given a synthetic presentation of the essential elements of his thought.

God

Tagore is a non-dualist, but not like Sankara. The absolute in its perfection, living away from all that happens in the world, is of no interest to human. It is the picture with all the richness of its colours, shades, and forms that interests us, but not the canvas on which it is painted. The author of the picture is a person, a spiritual reality. Hence, the absolute is a person, a creative person which acts and creates, whom we can love and be loved. Limitation of the Unlimited is personality. God is everything, but not everything is equally God. To realize God as the Supreme person is our destiny,

our *dharma*. We fulfill it when we know our true nature, which is oneness with God. We do not really know our oneness with God because of our ignorance (*avidya*). We can overcome *maya* and *avidya* only through a genuine love of God. The vision of God is a direct and immediate intuition. We feel God as we feel light. The joy we feel in our vision of the Supreme is the evidence that the Supreme exists.

Love

Love is more important than knowledge. In knowledge, the distinctions are either kept separate or completely dissolved in a rare unity. But in love, the lover and the beloved are distinguished, yet united. Love retains both unity and difference. Love is the consummation of knowledge. The Supreme Person creates human beings in order to realize the bliss of love, which is possible only if lover and beloved are separate beings.

Nature and Human Being

Nature is created both as human's home and also as an instrument which, through its beauty, awakens the human heart and directs it towards the Beloved (the Supreme). Just as an artist creates a work of art both to express and evoke a certain mood (*rasa*), God creates the world of nature to evoke love in the human being. The fundamental fact about human is one's dual nature. Human is both earth's child and heaven's heir. Like the lotus, which has its roots in mud but its flower in clear sunlight, human has a finite pole in the world of necessity and an infinite pole in aspirations towards divinity. Human is the "angel of surplus" since the spirit of human has an enormous surplus far in excess of the requirements of the biological animal in human. Civilization and culture – through the development of art, religion, philosophy, and science – is the product of surplus in human, which enables human to surpass one's biological inheritance. Applying this concept of surplus to the Supreme, Tagore says that the Supreme is boundless in his superfluity, which expresses itself in world process. At his least developed level, the human is a desiring animal, desiring things and people for self-aggrandizement.

Knowledge

Human has three sources of knowledge: senses, intellect and feeling. Senses: Human knows the world through the senses. Intellect: Human discovers science and logic-centred philosophy by intellect. Feeling: Human discovers the Supreme Person by feeling. True knowledge is a knowledge of things in their relation to the universe, a knowledge that retains the distinctions and yet grasps them in their unity.

Sadhna

Sadhna, the true realization of life, leads from love of self to love of others. To love God is to love the entire creation moving from duality to unity. The ideal human being fulfills the demands of life and meets all his social obligations. The path of renunciation is not an ideal. For those entirely engrossed in the world and those who renounce the world are equally doomed.

Religion

Tagore advocated the religion of humanity. A person must live by one's *dharma*. One must respond to the love-call of God with love. Love for God includes love for humanity and all of nature. True religion is love, harmony, simplicity. "While God waits for his

temple to be built of love, men bring stones.” He also wrote against idolatry, superstition, and religious fanaticism. “We must go beyond all narrow bounds and look towards the day when Budha, Christ and Mohammad will become one.”

Social Philosophy

The human must engage both externally in coping with nature and internally in developing spiritually. Tagore did fight against the evils of his society such as poverty, superstition, untouchability and oppression of women. He did not find the West to be the source of all evil. He welcomed Western science and Western beliefs in individual worth, freedom, and democracy. He believed that nationalism deteriorated from patriotism to chauvinism. Nationalism is individual selfishness raised to a higher level. Just as a human must rise above self-centredness to love for all, the nations of the world too must grow to love other nations.

Education

Tagore’s own childhood experiences encouraged his lifelong commitment to education. In his view, the traditional schools imprison children who are born with a power to be happy and to make others happy. But in traditional schools they are like flowers pressed between book leaves. Hence, he started a model-school after the ancient hermitage schools of India: *santiniketan* (the abode of peace). A garden and a handicraft shop were attached to the school. His ecological concerns were manifested in his tree planting programmes. He also widened his educational commitment by founding a university – *Visva Bharati* – where he promoted an international culture of unity in diversity.

<p>Check Your Progress II</p> <p>Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer. b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.</p> <p>1) Sum up Tagore’s teachings on God.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>2) How does Tagore understand education?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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2.4 LET US SUM UP

You have learnt about the philosophical outlooks of two great personality of our times. Though they are so different from each other yet they both are critical of modernity which promotes materialistic approach to life. They both lay stress on the spiritual dimension of life as the distinguishing mark of human kind. At the same time they both emphasize the need of living in tune with the nature and thus they clamour for environmental protection. They both had enormous influence from other cultures and religions. In fact they both have been criticized that they had borrowed many concepts from other religions. The actual truth is that whatever the influences they were exposed to others, they could assimilate them into their own ancient roots and were able to re-discover from their past. Both are indeed expression of the Indian ideal of philosophy and religion, restated to meet the needs of modern times.

For, it is clear that they both are influenced by the Upanishadic vision of reality. The one aim of the Upanishadic seers was to understand the nature of the ultimate reality that they believed stands behind the mundane world of ordinary experience. What our intellect discovers is the existence of a supreme power which pervades the entire universe. This was named as the impersonal, immanent in the universes, sustaining and regulating it—Brahman or the world soul. But they were not satisfied with it. They knew that ultimate power have their own inner immortal self, present in all the living beings and yet is different from them, who controls them from within without even being known by them. Thus they arrived at central metaphysical truth about ourselves. Each of us is an expression of that universal soul, each of us is the same soul or Atman. If the same Infinite is equally present in all of us, then we ourselves are at bottom identical with each other. This recognition paves the way to our openness to others and generates in us love, concern for our fellow beings, establishes bonds promotes care for others, sacrifice our interests for one's fellow men, and even with the whole cosmos.

2.5 KEY WORDS

Self-aggrandizement : Self- agrandizment is the the act of making oneself more powerful, wealthy, etc., in a ruthless way.

Intuition : Intuition is the act by which the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas

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2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Gandhi was committed to truth in the sense of being truthful, seeing that truth covers all ethical action. Unethical action is as much a violation of Truth as making a false statement. Since epistemologically Truth seemed more certain than God, Gandhi converted his position from *God is truth* to *Truth is God*. Since human beings are fallible creatures, they cannot be sure of knowing Truth as such. He accepted the Jain theory of the multidimensionality of truth (*anekantvada*), and emphasized the necessity for open-mindedness and soul-searching. In critical situations, he relied on his 'inner voice,' which was tuned to the call of Truth through long practice.
- 2) For Gandhi love is the cardinal virtue, which serves truth. If a person's actions are motivated by love for all, those actions will be conducive to the highest good. According to Gandhi, *ahimsa* is not just refraining from injuring others, but positively enhancing their well-being, or rather, loving them. Genuine love is rooted in egolessness, which is the highest personal virtue. It is *nishkamakarma*, acting without attachment to the fruits of action, which expresses love and self-surrender. Gandhi was extremely modest, unassuming, and owned no property.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Tagore is a non-dualist, but not like Sankara. The absolute in its perfection, living away from all that happens in the world, is of no interest to human. It is the picture with all the richness of its colours, shades, and forms that interests us, but not the canvas on which it is painted. The author of the picture is a person, a spiritual reality. Hence, the absolute is a person, a creative person, who acts and creates, and whom we can love and be loved. Limitation of the Unlimited is personality. God is everything, but not everything is equally God. To realize God as the Supreme person is our destiny, our *dharma*. We fulfill it when we know our true nature, which is oneness with God. We do not really know our oneness with God because of our ignorance (*avidya*). We can overcome *maya* and *avidya* only through a genuine love of God. The vision of God is a direct and immediate intuition. We feel God as we feel light. The joy we feel in our vision of the Supreme is the evidence that the Supreme exists.

Contemporary Indian Thinkers

- 2) Tagore's own childhood experiences encouraged his lifelong commitment to education. In his view, the traditional schools imprison children who are born with a power to be happy and to make others happy. But in traditional schools they are like flowers pressed between book leaves. Hence, he started a model-school after the ancient hermitage schools of India: *santiniketan* (the abode of peace). A garden and a handicraft shop were attached to the school. His ecological concerns were manifested in his tree planting programmes. He also widened his educational commitment by founding a university – *Visva Bharati* – where he promoted an international culture of unity in diversity.

UNIT 3 PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND B. R. AMBEDKAR

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Philosophy of Nehru
- 3.3 Philosophy of Ambedkar
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.5 Key Words
- 3.6 Further Readings and References
- 3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R.Ambedkar are two architects of Independent India. To Nehru was given the singular honour of raising the flag of independent India in New Delhi on 15 August 1947, when India gained Independence, while Ambedkar was entrusted with the task of framing the Constitution of the new Republic. In this Unit you are expected to understand:

- Nehru’s appreciation of the virtues of parliamentary democracy, secularism and liberalism coupled with concerns for the poor and underprivileged that guided him in formulating policies which influence India to this day.
- Ambedkar’s theory that there cannot be authentic political democracy without social democracy. Social reforms should precede political reforms. Mere democratic form of government is not the remedy for all social and economic evils. The democratic form of government requires a democratic form of society which safeguards the interest of the weaker sections of the society.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was born on November 14, 1889 at Allahabad and educated in England, at Harrow and Cambridge. In 1912, Nehru returned home to play a central role in India’s struggle for freedom from British colonial rule, and then, as Prime Minister of independent India for seventeen years, went on to shape the nation’s future as a modern, secular and democratic state. He died in office on May 27, 1964. Visionary and idealist, scholar and statesman of international stature, Nehru was also an outstanding writer. His three most renowned books – *An Autobiography*, *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India* – have already acquired the status of classics.

Bhimrao (later called B. R. Ambedkar) hailed from a poor family belonging to one of the Hindu untouchable communities in India, born on April 14 to Ramji and Bhimabai. His mother died when he was only six. A teacher named Ambedkar in the Satara High School in Dapoli, Maharashtra, loved Bhimrao very much and often fed him. As a

mark of love and respect to this teacher, he began to call himself Ambedkar. In 1907, Ambedkar passed his matriculation examination from Elphinstone High School, Bombay, obtaining just 282 out of 750 marks. This may appear a modest achievement to us, but for an untouchable on those days, it was certainly extraordinary. Though he subsequently made his mark as a scholar, he was average in his studies during student life. In June 1913, he left India for the United States of America and joined the Columbia University where he studied Economics, Sociology, History, Philosophy, Anthropology and Political Science. He obtained his M.A in 1915 and Ph.D in 1917. After completing his education in America, he joined the London School of Economics and Political Science. He had to leave the studies unfinished as his scholarship was terminated and was called back to India by the Dewan of Baroda. He was not treated well by the staff of Baroda State because of his low birth. One morning Ambedkar found himself threatened by a crowd with stick in their hands to beat him unless he left. Peons refused to serve even drinking water to him in the office. His high academic honours could not wash the stigma of untouchability from him. Subsequently, Ambedkar devoted his entire energies to the mission of uplifting the crores of untouchables. In 1918, Ambedkar joined Sydenham College as a Professor of Political Economics. His profundity of knowledge and convincing lectures earned him popularity among the students, but the social treatment remained unchanged. Some Gujarati professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the professional staff. Ambedkar again joined the London School of Economics and was awarded the Master of Science in June 1921. In 1922, he obtained the D. Sc degree. Ambedkar was now a Barrister reinforced by a London Doctorate in Science, an American Doctorate in Philosophy, and studies at Bonn University. He was thus well equipped to become, later, an eminent constitutionalist, distinguished parliamentarian, scholar and jurist, and above all the leader of the depressed classes. He attended three round Table Conferences in London (1930-1933) as the only representative of the depressed classes. He served as a member of the Governor General's Executive Council (1942-46), and after Independence as Law Minister in the first Nehru Cabinet. As Law Minister, he piloted the Constituent Assembly of India.

3.2 PHILOSOPHY OF NEHRU

Nehru is a thinker of immense national and international importance. Through his writings, speeches, statements in Parliament, public platforms, international gatherings and elsewhere, he unleashed seminal and impregnated thoughts for the reordering of a developing democratic society. Philosophy, according to Nehru, has avoided many of the pitfalls of religion and encouraged thought and inquiry. But it has usually lived in its ivory tower concentrating on ultimate purposes and failed to link philosophical speculations with the life and practical problems of human. Philosophy is guided by logic and reason, which are too much the product of mind and unconcerned with facts of life.

Science

Science has steadily advanced its frontiers by rational demonstration and verification. It has definitely increased the corpus of human knowledge that is empirically verifiable. It has come to stay and has largely replaced the superstitions connected with religion. The scientists are the "miracle-workers of today." However, science cannot reveal the whole truth and its method of observation cannot always be applicable to all varieties of experiences. But limitations of science should not deter a person from holding on to them because it is better to understand a part of truth and apply it to our lives than to understand nothing at all.

Religion

Nehru was always quite indifferent, unsympathetic, and even hostile in his comments on religion. Some describe him as an atheist, while others call him agnostic. The following is a critical reflection of Nehru on religion: “Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. But with all the good they have done, they have also tried to imprison truth in set forms and dogmas, and encouraged ceremonials and practices which soon lose all their original meaning and become mere routine. While impressing upon man the awe and mystery of the unknown that surrounds him on all sides, they have discouraged him from trying to understand not only the unknown but what might come in the way of social effort. Instead of encouraging curiosity and thought, they have preached a philosophy of submission to nature, to established churches, to the prevailing social order, and to everything that is. The belief in a supernatural agency which ordains everything has led to a certain irresponsibility on the social plane, and emotion and sentimentality have taken the place of reasoned thought and inquiry. Religion, though it has undoubtedly brought comfort to innumerable human beings and stabilized society by its values, has checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society.”

Communalism and Secularism

Communalism is the enemy of the unity and integrity of India. It is another name for groupism dividing humankind on some primitive notions and faiths. The alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance. Secularism is the only answer to this problem. In fact, secularism can save religion by preventing religious ideas from getting mixed up with the details of ordinary life and government. For tolerance and mutual respect are very essential not only for the safe governance of the country, but for the growth of these religions themselves. No religion can grow in an atmosphere of tension and conflict.

History

Nehru’s concept of history has often been categorized as “historical sociology” by several scholars. Although Nehru did not develop a coherent theory of evolution and change in history, he fully recognized the importance of objective forces, the economic factors, and the situational context of society in his concept of historical sociology. Historical sociology is unique because of its practical orientation rooted in his early education of science at Cambridge.

Democratic Socialism

Nehru stood for socialism leading to the creation of a classless society with equal opportunities for all. However, he was not an uncritical admirer of the type of socialism which prevailed in the West and wanted to modify its principles to suit the Indian conditions. He was against that type of socialism which regulated the lives of the individuals to the extent of losing their rightful autonomy and freedom. His democratic socialism aimed at adopting the means consistent with the principles of democracy.

Humanism

Corliss Lamont defines humanism as ‘a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science and democracy.’ Of the two varieties of humanism, liberal and Marxist, Nehru

was much closer to the liberal humanism. For despite being influenced by Marxian ideas, such as the polarity of opposing forces, the Gandhian influence was so deep and pervasive that Nehru could not subscribe to the violence implicit in the Marxist view of conflict resolution. Especially valuable for him was Gandhi’s ethics of ends and means, with its emphasis on right means as the only way to secure right ends.

The Constitution of India

Nehru was of the firm opinion that nothing was permanent in the Constitution of India. For he believed that the coming generation could change the basic features of the Constitution or could write a new Constitution. During one of the debates in the Constituent Assembly of India, Nehru said: “When the spirit of a nation breaks its bonds, it functions in peculiar ways. . . . It may be that the Constitution this House may frame, may not satisfy free India; this House cannot bind down the next generation or the people who will succeed us in this task.”

Foreign Policy

Nehru’s foreign policy was based on the considerations of long-term interests of India. He was a crusader of peace and believed that the security of South-East Asia depended on a policy of non-alignment. The main objectives of the foreign policy of India are all contained in the speech of Nehru broadcast on September 7, 1946. Its salient objectives may be enumerated as follows: 1. To develop contact with other nations and co-operate with them in furtherance of world peace and freedom. 2. As far as possible to keep away from power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which led to two World Wars in the past and may again lead to a disaster on a vaster scale. 3. To work for the emancipation of the colonial people and the welfare and progress of dependent people towards self-government. 4. To utterly repudiate the Nazi doctrine of racialism. 5. To work for one world based on co-operation of free people in which various groups shall not exploit each other. 6. To have friendly and co-operative relations with England and other countries of the British Common Wealth.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How did Nehru understand communalism and secularism?

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2) What do you understand by Nehru’s concept of democratic socialism?

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3.3 PHILOSOPHY OF AMBEDKAR

Ambedkar was very much affected by Indian social system and ideologies and was influenced by the Western modernism. He used the methodology and strategy derived from the West to analyse Indian society. Though he admired the ideals of western liberalism and Marxism, he perceived their perfection in Buddhism. He suggested moderate ways to improve our political and economic system and radical methods for the social and religious reformation.

Social Philosophy

Social criticism is the foundation of Ambedkar's philosophy and action. It revolves around the humiliation he and other members of the depressed class underwent every where in India as untouchables. His philosophy and struggle can be considered as workable social practices for the liberation of all people who are systematically separated and segregated from the mainstream.

Social conscience was regarded as the reliable safeguard of all rights. Social system, sometimes prevent people to realise the moral demand and follow blind cultural conditioning. Caste system made the people blind and immoral. Thus fundamental human rights and social justice have been violated in India for centuries. Indian social system is based on caste system. Caste system remains in society as culturally deep rooted, socially approved, religiously sanctioned and economically oppressive practice. Caste system is a hierarchically arranged social division of labour which is determined by the birth of a person. At present our Constitution has made many provisions to protect the members of lower castes from the possible atrocities by the upper castes. Yet segregation and atrocities against the lower castes take place. Then how much persecution and humiliation might have taken place at the time of Ambedkar when no such safeguards were available.

Ambedkar systematically evolved a thorough criticism against Chaturvarnyam. It is the determination and division of four castes on the basis of varna or colour. His attack upon caste system was not an out burst but principle based. "To me this Chaturvarnya with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it. But I do not wish to rest my objection to Chaturvarnya on mere grounds of sentiments. There are more solid grounds on which I rely for my opposition to it." He found caste system as out dated, impracticable, irrational and superstitious social practice. He narrated the damages done by it on the society, "Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. Virtue has become caste ridden and morality has become caste bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious." For the decay of a society are not these evils enough? He fought consistently for human dignity and social equality. Ambedkar's prime concern was the establishment of an egalitarian society. He set annihilation of caste as his goal. He believed that the real independence of India was possible only by it. He claimed that social progress and stability were possible in an equitable society.

Political Ideals and Socio-political Criticism

Ambedkar worked out an action plan for the establishment of social equality and made use of every opportunity to fulfill his dream. He was inspired by French Enlightenment. "If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on *Liberty, Equality*

and *Fraternity*.” An ideal society should permit vertical and horizontal mobility of every member of the society. In an ideal society, there should be avenue for divergent groups, different principles and many interests to be consciously communicated and shared. It works in a true democracy. “Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.” How can a society that restricts the interaction among its people enjoy liberty? In such a society how can we establish democracy? Equality was an unthinkable desire in India, because, status, position and therefore merit were inherited. Upward movement was strictly prohibited.

In the Census of 1940, the dominant communities allured or forced the members of the depressed communities to register themselves as the members of the dominant communities for their political gain. In the power sharing it was number which gave political advantage to one community over another. The result was that the Census in India was deliberately cooked. “The Untouchables fell a victim to this stratagem and decided not to declare themselves as Untouchables in the Census return but to call themselves merely as Hindus. . . . It reduced the number of Untouchables and swelled the ranks of the Hindus.” The upper caste Hindus integrated the Untouchables for their political gain and segregated them for exploitation. The Untouchables remained untouchable. Ambedkar and other leaders of the Untouchables were condemned as anti-Nationals. He was worried that “The politicians never realised that democracy was not a form of government; it was essentially a form of society. It may not be necessary for a democratic society to be marked by unity, by community of purpose, by loyalty to public ends and by mutuality of sympathy. But it does unmistakably involve two things. The first is an attitude of mind, an attitude of respect and equality towards their fellows. The second is a social organisation free from rigid social barriers.” But Indian politicians were working only to maintain status quo, never challenged caste system. Ambedkar accused Gandhi of putting down all the aspirations of the depressed classes for social recognition.

In the Second Round Table Conference Ambedkar succeeded in convincing the British authorities on the need for a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes and got it. A separate electorate would mean that the Untouchables would vote for their own candidates and be allotted their votes separate from the Hindu majority. Gandhi felt that separate electorate would separate the Harijans from the Hindus. The thought that the Hindus would be divided pained him grievously. He started a fast unto death. Due to public pressure and the persuasion by national leaders, Ambedkar finally agreed to be satisfied with greater representation through reservation instead of separate electorate. The agreement in 1932 is known as Poona Pact.

When India became independent in August 1947, Babasaheb Ambedkar became First Law Minister of Independent India. The Constituent Assembly made him the chairman of the committee appointed to draft the constitution. His study of law, economics and politics, international level exposures and experiences within the nation made him the right person for this task. He studied the Constitutions of many countries and reflected on them from the Indian context, coordinated the thoughts of other members of the draft committee, explained each and every line of the draft in the Constituent Assembly to the satisfaction all members and brought out the best for India. Thus he is called the Architect of the Constitution.

Ambedkar, a liberal by bringing up, stressed parliamentary democracy along with state socialism for the welfare of all. He asserted the rule of law, equality of citizens,

people's participation in law making and policy decisions made him to accept parliamentary democracy. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee could bring out the proper paths for the liberation of the depressed classes by introducing laws and acts for the promotion of social justice. He imprinted in the Constitution all his dreams through Directive Principles of the State Policy. His social thoughts are reflected in the Fundamental Rights

Economic Ideals and Social development

The underlying principle of Ambedkar's economic philosophy was the principles of Utilitarianism: greatest good of the largest number of people. An economic system was acceptable only if it had looked after the welfare of the majority who had been in the base of society. Ambedkar expressed the grievances of the rural poor, arranged mass movements and promoted workable programmes and laws for the upliftment of the weakest sections of society. The Independent Labour Party which he had founded in 1936 struggled for attaining human status for the workers belonging to the depressed classes.

Ambedkar's attack on the caste system was not merely aimed at challenging the hegemony of the so-called upper castes, but had a broader connotation of economic development. The vertical and horizontal mobility of the work force is essential for economic development. Caste system reduced the mobility of labour as well as capital. He said, "Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and to make his own career." Selection under caste system was not on the basis of capacities, but on the ground of social status.

In his memorandum submitted to the British Government titled "States and Minorities" in 1947, Dr. Ambedkar laid down a strategy for India's economic development. The strategy placed "an obligation on the State to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth". The task of democracy would be fulfilled by achieving the social and economic dimensions of democracy. Its spirit was reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution.

As the Law Minister, Dr. Ambedkar fought vigorously for the passage of the Hindu Code Bill – most significant reform for women's rights in respect of marriage and inheritance. He resigned in September 1951 when the Bill did not pass in the Parliament.

Religious Criticism and Social Transformation

Ambedkar was consistent in his attack upon Hinduism, because it had inbuilt mechanism of oppression and exploitation. He believed that the Untouchables could never overcome their misery if they were attached to Hinduism. He worked hard to unite the depressed classes, separate them from Hindu fold and keep them as different entity in Indian society against the wish of national leaders like Gandhi and others. In the Yeola Conference of Dalits in 1935 Ambedkar told, "We have not been able to secure the barest of human rights... I am born a Hindu. I couldn't help it, but I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." Ambedkar wrote in the article **Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables**, "Slavery, serfdom, villeinage have all vanished. But Untouchability still exists and bids fair to last as long as Hinduism will last... The

sufferings of the Untouchables . . . are the result of a cold calculating Hinduism... The Untouchable is not merely despised but is denied all opportunities to rise.”

Ambedkar retorted to the argument of the protagonists of Chaturvarnya who claimed that it was based not on birth but on *guna* (worth) by questioning why they have been insisting upon labelling men as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. A learned man would be honoured without his being labelled a Brahmin. A soldier would be respected without his being designated a Kshatriya. “So long as these names continue, Hindus will continue to think of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra as hierarchical divisions of high and low, based on birth, and act accordingly. The Hindu must be made to unlearn all this. But how can this happen if the old labels remain and continue to recall to his mind old notions.” He despised Chaturvarnya as an impracticable and harmful system of social organization.

In the similar manner he suspected the Indian National Congress. “. . . whatever may be its title it is beyond question that the Congress is a body of middle class Hindus supplied by the Hindu Capitalists whose object is not to make Indians free but to be independent of British control and to occupy places of power now occupied by the British. If the kind of Freedom which the Congress wants was achieved there is no doubt that the Hindus would do to the Untouchables exactly what they have been doing in the past.” According to him India was not mature enough to undergo a political revolution. After sufficient level of social transformation, political independency would make an egalitarian society. Thus he wanted to have social revolution first and then political revolution or separate electorate for empowering the depressed classes and achieve political independency of the nation. Otherwise he feared that the upper caste Hindus might make use of the power to oppress the depressed classes. But India attained freedom without preparing her people to treat everybody as fraternal and equal. Therefore oppression and humiliation of the depressed classes continued and he was forced to educate and organize the members of the depressed classes to agitate for their liberation.

From history Ambedkar learned that religious revolutions strengthened oppressed communities to fight for freedom. “It was Puritanism, which won the war of American Independence, and Puritanism was a religious movement. The same was true of the Muslim Empire. Before the Arabs became a political power, they had undergone a thorough religious revolution started by Prophet Mohammed. Even Indian History supports the same conclusion. The political revolution led by Chandragupta was preceded by the religious and social revolution of Buddha. The political revolution led by Shivaji was preceded by the religious and social reform brought about by the saints of Maharashtra. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak.” He borrowed Buddha’s path after considering its theoretical and practical strengths such as a humanitarian and dominance free attitude and denial of doctrinal control. Ambedkar consulted many, threatened the National leaders and reformers with the idea of conversion, waited so long and finally on 15 October 1956, he and 8,00,000 followers converted themselves to Buddhism at *Deeksha Bhoomi, Nagpur*. At that time he prescribed 22 vows with the intention of complete severance of bond with Hinduism. The converts took oaths that they should not have any faith in the Hindu beliefs and practices. These vows asserted the faith in the Buddhists teachings, prescribed to follow moral life and demanded to deny superstitions, wasteful and meaningless rituals. He answered his critics, “My religious conversion is not inspired by any material motive. . . . There is no other feeling than that of a spiritual feeling underlying my religious conversion. Hinduism does not appeal to

my conscience. My self-respect cannot assimilate Hinduism. ...Do not care for the opinion of those who foolishly ridicule the idea of conversion for material ends. Why should you live under the fold of that religion which has deprived you of honour, money, food and shelter?" Two months after the conversion ceremony, Ambedkar passed away. However, the religious movement that he set in motion has thrived, and it now includes around four million Buddhists.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Why did Ambedkar want to separate the depressed classes from Hinduism?

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2) Why did Ambedkar suspect Gandhiji and the Congress?

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3.4 LET US SUM UP

As India's first Prime minister and external affairs minister, Jawaharlal Nehru played a major role in shaping modern India's government and political culture along with a solid philosophical vision of unity in diversity to which the Indian Christian philosophizing too is committed. He is praised for creating an inclusive secular democratic system of affirmative action to provide equal opportunities and rights for all citizens – members of all religions, diverse ethnic groups, various languages and dialects, minorities, women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Nevertheless, his stance as an unfailing nationalist led him also to implement policies which stressed unity among citizens while still appreciating their diversities. In this unit we have also tried to describe Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social, political and economic thoughts, religious convictions and political strategies for the liberation of the weakest in the society. His social criticism was a demand for social justice. He felt the religious reformation and political movements of his time sidelined the social and economic exploitation in the name caste. Thus he started with independent movement and action programme for the liberation of the depressed classes. Organising the depressed classes and separate them from Hindu fold would be a workable strategy to liberate them. Otherwise they would be assimilated into Hinduism without getting liberation from caste oppression. He was attracted to Buddhist humanism, compassion, love and selfless collective living. He made use of political position and space available to him for providing provisions for liberation of

depressed classes and women.

3.5 KEY WORDS

- Caste system** : It is a hierarchically arranged social division of labour which is determined by the birth of a person.
- Chaturvarnya** : Hindu society was divided into four major hierarchic castes on the basis of varna or colour. Varna is understood as guna or merit. But caste was determined not on the merit of the person but by birth. Thus caste is inherited.
- Untouchables** : In Hindu society those who were not belonging to four caste groups were called outcastes and were treated as menial and manual workers and kept them at a distance from upper castes and their society. They were called Untouchables and the practice was known as untouchability.

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3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Communalism is the enemy of the unity and integrity of India. It is another name for groupism dividing humankind on some primitive notions and faiths. The alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance. Secularism is the only answer to this problem. In fact, secularism can save religion by preventing religious ideas from getting mixed up with the details of ordinary life and government. For tolerance and mutual respect are very essential not only for the safe governance of the country, but for the growth of these religions themselves. No religion can grow in an atmosphere of tension and conflict.
- 2) Nehru stood for socialism leading to the creation of a classless society with equal opportunities for all. However, he was not an uncritical admirer of the type of socialism which prevailed in the West and wanted to modify its principles to suit the Indian conditions. He was against that type of socialism which regulated the lives of the individuals to the extent of losing their rightful autonomy and freedom. His democratic socialism aimed at adopting the means consistent with the principles of democracy.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Caste system and Hinduism are intertwined. Though it was an out dated and impracticable concept, many leaders and organisations tried justify the system. They did not make any serious effort to remove it.
- 3) Gandhiji openly justified caste system as a traditional social division of labour. He did not accept separate electorate which would have been an opportunity for emancipation of the depressed classes. In the Congress and in the national affair upper castes' voice was prominent. Hindu reformers did not attack caste system.

UNIT 4 S. RADHAKRISHNAN AND AMARTYA SEN

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Philosophy of Radhakrishnan
- 4.3 Philosophy of Amartya Sen
- 4.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.5 Key Words
- 4.6 Further Readings and References
- 4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to give you a short introduction to the philosophies of two eminent thinkers of India: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Amartya Sen.

- Radhakrishnan was India's President, whose birthday is celebrated every year as teacher's day. He is a philosopher who spoke extensively on larger issues of philosophy.
- Amartya Sen is a living Nobel Prize winner in economics. Economics is a science of production, distribution and consumption, and any question on what, how and why, raised in economics, imply philosophical presuppositions.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) was born into a middle class Telugu family at Tirutani in Tamil Nadu state, a town in Madras Presidency, British India, 64 km to the northwest of present Chennai. His early years were spent in Tirutani and Tirupati. His father was a subordinate revenue official in the service of a local landlord. His primary education was at Primary Board High School at Tirutani. In 1896 he was shifted to the Hermansburg Evangelical Lutheran Mission School at Tirupati. He joined the Voorhee's College in Vellore but switched to the Madras Christian College at the age of 17. He graduated with a Master's degree in Philosophy from the Madras Christian College in 1906. Radhakrishnan wrote his thesis for the M.A. degree on "The Ethics of the Vedanta and its Metaphysical Presuppositions". This got published as a book when he was only 20. **Amartya Kumar Sen** (born 3rd November 1933) was born in Santiniketan, West Bengal, the University town established by the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Sen hails from a well-known liberal academic family from East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh). His maternal grandfather Kshitimohan Sen was a renowned scholar of medieval Indian literature, an authority on the philosophy of Hinduism. He was a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan. Sen's father was Ashutosh Sen and his mother was Amita Sen. Sen began his high-school education at St Gregory's School in Dhaka in 1941, in modern-day Bangladesh. His family migrated to India following partition in 1947. Sen studied in India at the Visva-

Bharati University school and Presidency College, Kolkata before moving to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he earned a First Class BA (Honours) in 1956 and then a Ph.D. in 1959.

S. Radhakrishnan and
Amartya Sen

4.2 PHILOSOPHY OF RADHAKRISHNAN

Radhakrishnan was not a follower any one system of thought, but open to various viewpoints presented by different philosophers. Among all the viewpoints, of course, he was more at home with the metaphysics, epistemology and ethics of Advaita Vedanta which became his line of thinking.

Metaphysics

Following Sankara, Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that reality is Brahman that is one, spiritual, transcendent and absolute. He called it spiritual because it is not material. He called it transcendental because world cannot exhaust it and it is absolute because it is one, pure consciousness, pure freedom with infinite possibility. Brahman is indescribable and manifests itself as God who is the creator of the world.

According to him, there are two worlds: the material world that science studies and the spiritual world that the spiritually inclined perceive. He calls it transcendence or infinite aspect of soul. Upanishads speak of it as “*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*” – everything permeated by Brahman or the spirit which cannot be perceived in any other way. This spirit comes to its fullest expression in human who has a unique position. According to him human is a peculiar combination of egoism and self-transcendence, of selfishness and universal love. This is due to finite and infinite aspects in human. Thus human has a special role in creation. Human is a being capable of self-transcendence, self-reflection and planning.

Since human is embodied spirit (finite-infinite, with body and soul), one cannot attain one’s ultimate destiny directly. Therefore the first aspect of one’s destiny would be freedom from embodied existence. But although that may make one free, that will not put an end to creation; and so long as the cosmic process does not come to an end, complete unity will not be established. Therefore, the final aspect of one’s destiny must be the realization of unity at the end of the cosmic process. One cannot be free from cosmic process till all others are saved. The world process will reach its final goal when every individual will realize Divinity. Radhakrishnan calls it “Sarvamukti”. Once this is realized, the purpose of creation is fulfilled and everything will go back to Brahman.

Epistemology

Radhakrishnan accepts three sources of knowledge - sense experience, intellectual cognition (discursive reasoning) and intuitive apprehension. Sense experience acquaints us with the outer characteristics of the external world. We come to know the sensible qualities of the objects. The data yielded by sense experience constitute the subject matter of natural science. Discursive reason or what Radhakrishnan calls logical knowledge depends on analysis and synthesis of the data of perception. He calls logical knowledge indirect and symbolic. We are able to handle and control the objects of nature with such knowledge. Logical knowledge and sense-experience are the means by which we are capable of practical purposes and control over our environment.

Though he accepts the two means of knowledge, they fail to reveal the “original integrity of the perceived object” (IVL, p.106). Intellectual symbols cannot represent perceived realities, as what they are. Moreover, the entire life of feeling and emotion, ‘the delights and pains of the flesh, the agonies and raptures of the soul’ remain out off from thought. He thinks of a higher mode of apprehension where thought, feeling and volition are blended into a whole, where there is no duality, the distinction between the knowledge of a thing and its being. It is a type of knowing by becoming. Radhakrishnan calls it Intuitive Apprehension. In the intuitive apprehension the knower establishes an identity with the known. This can be made clear by taking the example of anger. No intellectual deliberation can give us any idea of the emotion of anger. We can know it only by being angry. Thus we say intuition establishes a unity – almost an identity between the knower and the known. The object known is seen not as an ‘object outside the self, but as a part of the self’.

When he speaks of intuition he uses the word “integral insight.” This doesn’t mean that he makes a compartmentalization in the knowing faculty of human. Rather he says “human’s awareness is broadly speaking of three kinds: the perceptual, the logical and the intuitive; manas or the sense-mind, vijnana or logical and ananda which for our present purposes may be defined as spiritual intuition. All three belong to the human consciousness”. When Radhakrishnan uses the term “integral experience” to refer to intuition, he emphasizes three things. First, intuition is integral in the sense that it coordinates and synthesizes all other experiences. It integrates all other experiences into a more unified whole. Second, intuition is integral as it forms the basis of all other experiences. In other words, Radhakrishnan holds that all experiences are at bottom intuitional. Third, intuition is integral in the sense that the results of the experience are integrated into the life of the individual. For Radhakrishnan, intuition finds expression in the world of action and social relations.

Intuition is the ultimate form of experience for Radhakrishnan. It is ultimate in the sense that intuition constitutes the fullest and therefore the most authentic realization of the Real (Brahman). The ultimacy of intuition is also accounted for by Radhakrishnan in that it is the ground of all other forms of experience.

Finally, intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is ineffable. It escapes the limits of language and logic, and there is “no conception by which we can define it” (IVL 96). In such experiences, thought and reality come together and a creative merging of subject and object results” (IVL 92). While the experience itself transcends expression, it also provokes it (IVL 95). The provocation of expression is, for Radhakrishnan, testimony to the creative impulse of intuition. All creativity and indeed all progress in the various spheres of life is the inevitable result of intuition.

Religion and Ethics

Radhakrishnan’s ethical teachings must be understood from the background of his religious faith and metaphysics. Every philosophy and religion begins with an intuition. When the need of explaining intuition to others, need of language comes up. When we are born in a tradition the basic content of intuition comes to us as a ‘condition of sensibility,’ in which we are born, brought up and have our being. In this sense, Radhakrishnan ‘never lost faith in a spiritual power beyond the experiential flux of phenomena’ From his study of Indian culture he got two more basic principles namely; universality of outlook and democracy in view of life. (This universality of outlook refers to his faith in the basic oneness of humanity, as all are identical with Brahman or sharing the same qualities of God from whom all came or received the common quest.

Democracy in view of life refers to the tolerance of different points of views, different ways of looking at and different ways of living etc.

When we speak of Religion, as Radhakrishnan understands it, we must make a distinction between Religion and religions. Religion for him is personal intuitive experience. It is an insight into the nature of reality (darsana) and experience of reality (anubhava) (HVL p.15). It is an inward and personal experience which unifies all values and organizes all experiences. It is the reaction to the whole of reality by the whole human. In his book, *Idealistic view of Life*, he calls it spiritual life, the culmination of intellectual, moral and aesthetic activity or a combination of them. (IVL p. 88-89). Different religions according to him are different explanations of this experience. In the course of time, in its effort to explain the intuitive experience there came up external structures in the form of rites, ceremonies, institutions, programmes etc. According to him when the central fact touches a devotee, an experience within, of abounding vitality or inner life which transcends consciousness is the result. When overwhelmed by this, a new humility is born in the soul, cleanses it of pride, prejudice, privilege thoughts and creates a feeling of tenderness and compassion for one's fellow humans. According to him when such humans abound in society, a difference in the life of the society is the result (S. Radhakrishnan, *A Centenary Tribute*, p. 376). According to him, the need of the time is to go from religions to religion, and for that two things are to be emphasized: inner experience and ethics.

Religion also means spirituality which is impossible without ethics, which is the sum total of values and virtues that makes social life smooth and good. Thus he says: "After all, what counts is not creed but conduct. By their fruits ye shall know them and not by their beliefs. Religion is not correct belief but righteous living. 'Religion is universal to the human race. Wherever justice and charity have force of law and ordinance there is God's kingdom', there is Religion. The truly religious never worry about other people's beliefs. Look at the great sayings of Jesus; 'other sheep I have which are not of this fold' (HVL p.37). Jesus' ethics is universal. He says "do unto others what you like them to do to you". When we have such an ethical stand, we are creators of God's kingdom or Religion.

While speaking about Hindu ethics Radhakrishnan explains the purushartas (the four supreme ends of human craving). He writes 'ancient Rishis of India were not only spiritual masters, they were also psychologists, who looked at the motives behind our actions, and they realized that desires or cravings are the very center of our life. Each of these cravings tries for satisfaction. Basically they are four: parental instincts and sexual instincts (kama), desire for power and wealth (artha), desire for social harmony and common good (dharma), and union with the unseen (moksa). These desires are not distinct and independent, but always try to win upper hand and win over the other. The greatness of the person consists in making a co-operation of the four and bringing an overarching unity in life. For each one is a whole in oneself' (HVL p. 56).

The meaning of the word Dharma is really complex. The whole of Ethics could be reduced to this concept. Etymologically it comes from 'dhr' means to hold. *Dharma* is that which holds. It is classified differently. First, as vyaktidharma (or individual duty) and sadharana dharma or ordinary duty. When dharma is applied to social life it becomes vyaktidharma and on the basis of it again we have varnadharma and ashramadharma. There are four varnas: Brahmana, kshatriya, vaisya and sudra, and that is based on nature and capability and each one has to perfect one's nature. Then ashramadharma based on four ashramas: brahmacharya for student, garhastya for family people, and then when one grows in age Vanaprasta and sannyasa. Then

Sadharanadharma is obligatory on every one irrespective of caste, creed and status. This consists of practicing charity, peace, benevolence, fortitude etc.

According to Radhakrishnan freedom is one of the foundations of ethics. Freedom can be understood in three levels. Psychologically it is freedom to act this way or that way. Moral freedom is freedom to choose between alternatives with knowledge and volition. But here knowledge may not be perfect, so error, evil or ignorance may occur. This is what we see around us. Human made enormous progress in knowledge and scientific inventions. But along with that corresponding moral and spiritual progress has not happened, rather declined in standard. Our natures are becoming mechanized, void within, we are reduced to atoms in a community, members of a mob. Science and experiments of communism and capitalism brought possibilities of material well-being that has ability to wipe out poverty and illiteracy but actually they are not going away due to lack of fellowship and co-operation, due to mutual conflict, lack of confidence and exploitation. All these come up from baser passions of human nature, its selfishness and hatred, its insolence and fanaticism. Thus we must go beyond psychological and moral freedom into spiritual freedom that leads to integral liberation, liberation of the ‘whole human’, not like economic or political liberation. For the cultivation of a complete human being, we require the cultivation of inward peace, the grace and joy of souls overflowing in love. For this all-round growth needs physical efficiency, intellectual alertness and spiritual awakening.

Education

The universities are the means to a new world and higher education is an instrument in solving problems. The object of education is to bring forth the ethical human, the human in whom all the capacities are fully developed. Being truly educated means having the light to see the truth and the strength to make it prevail.

Social and Political Philosophy

The cornerstone of Radhakrishnan’s social philosophy is the axiom that all human beings are of equal worth, entitled to the same fundamental rights. The human individual is the most concrete embodiment of the Spirit on earth and anything that damages one’s dignity is morally wrong. “The state that governs least is the best.” Democratic government is the most satisfactory since it rests on the consent of the governed.

Economics

Social justice is possible with economic justice. In capitalism, there is unequal concentration of economic power. He also opposed communism and fascism. Radhakrishnan advocated an international state in which the differences need not be fused, but they need not conflict.

<p>Check Your Progress I</p> <p>Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer. b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.</p> <p>1) What was Radhakrishnan’s view of Brahman? </p>

2) Explain briefly Radhakrishnan's social and political philosophy.

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4.3 PHILOSOPHY OF AMARTYA SEN

At the age of 23 Sen became Professor and Head of Department of Economics at Jadavpur University, Calcutta. During his tenure at Jadavpur University, he had the good fortune of having the great economic methodologist, A. K. Dasgupta, who was then teaching in Benares Hindu University, as his supervisor. Subsequently, Sen won a Prize Fellowship at Trinity College, which gave him four years of freedom to do anything he liked, during which he took the radical decision of studying philosophy. That proved to be of immense help to his later research. Sen related the importance of studying philosophy thus: "The broadening of my studies into philosophy was important for me not just because some of my main areas of interest in economics relate quite closely to philosophical disciplines (for example, social choice theory makes intense use of mathematical logic and also draws on moral philosophy, and so does the study of inequality and deprivation), but also because I found philosophical studies very rewarding on their own."(<http://econdse.org>).

Metaphysics

When we ask the question what is there, Amartya sen will answer, that which we see through our senses and understand through our intellect. Thus we have human beings who have the ability to treat themselves as subject (subject here is one who has ability to study anything else as other) and everything else as object. The subject finds himself as a relational being, a person belong to different groups. The same person can be Indian citizen, a British or American resident, a poet, a government employee, a man or a woman, a student of philosophy etc. All these belongings put some force over his choices and decisions that he takes and answers he gives for the problems he faces today and on his priorities. This complexity is complexity of metaphysics for him. This is very much linked with epistemology. Let us explain it.

Epistemology

Once we understand individual as member of a group and nature of group as multi-dimensional with sub-classifications we enter into a complex web. Here comes up clash of interests, role of ambiguity and for him the central issue in epistemology is clarification of this ambiguity. Let us explain it with an example. Suppose I like Malayalam poetry. Poetry as a group includes all the poetries of past and present all over the world. Again poetry itself can be classified into classical, historic, epic, patriotic, nature, philosophic etc. When I say I like Malayalam poetry which type I mean? And how I get over the ambiguity? Here he brings in the use of reason and experience.

Ethics

Amartya Sen's ethics has the foundations of liberalism and welfare in it. He got this from his family background and childhood experience. His liberalism is one that accepts freedom, tolerance and democracy. He appreciates very much the intellectual plurality of Indian heritage and says question and dissent is there in Indian blood. He proves it in his book 'the Argumentative Indian' by quoting from ancient texts. According to him "Sanskrit has a larger volume of agnostic or atheistic writings than in any other classical language". The tolerance of minority views and criticism we can see even in scriptures like Bhagavad Gita, especially in the talk between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. His childhood experience which is another strong influence in his ethical ideals, he explains in 'the story of Kader Mia.' It is story of a mindless violence. Kader Mia, a Muslim daily labourer, who came to Hindu predominant area for work was stabbed in the back by communal thugs. He was taken to the hospital by Sen's father. On the way he was going on saying, his wife told him not to go there for work, they may harm you, but he could not bear the cry of his children for bread. Sen says the penalty for that economic un-freedom turned out to be death, which occurred later on in the hospital.

He was inspired by Gandhian ideals of economic and social welfare based on ethics. According to Royal Swedish academy that conferred the Nobel Prize to Sen in 1988, "he restored ethical dimension to economics". His sensitivity to the marginalised is visible in his works and attitude to economic theories of capitalism and communism. According to him the slogans like "you have to break some eggs to make an omelette" is dreadfully misleading and mistaken in terms of understanding the nature of human. Thus he stands for participatory economics. According to him economics without human welfare is fruitless. Thus economist must look into grass root situations. Poverty must be defined not as deprivation of food, but in terms of illiteracy, poor health care system, inadequate land reforms, gender differences, deprivation of women and positive neglect of children. He says "with uncomfortable areas of our socio-economic life such as inequality, deprivation, sex bias, malnutrition, illness and starvation ever present, the economist has a duty to suggest measures to remove them. He has to examine the legal system and the wage structure. Our policy makers are not to be obsessed with total consumption but with the provision of basic needs for the people's needs. (Cf. "Amartya Sen's economics and Gandhian Ideal" by Dr. N. Mahalingam in 'Mahatma Gandhi, Sun of the Millennium' ed. Sheshrao Chavan). It is his concept of justice that forced him to go into the root causes of deprivations in society. All types of disadvantages class division, caste division, backward region, inequalities within family in terms of schooling, food, allocation of resources etc he treats. In this context he criticises some traditional cultural values like self-sacrificing, which disproportionately praised, idealized and idolized, that deprived group, be it girls at home consider deprivation as a virtue. It is from this background he writes against women's deprivation, poverty, illiteracy, failures in child welfare, child bearing and child rearing, lack of basic health etc.

Social Philosophy

Sen's papers in the late 1960s and early 1970s helped develop the philosophy of social choice, which first came to prominence in the work by the American economist Kenneth Arrow, who, famously proved that all voting rules, be they majority rule or two thirds-majority or status quo, must inevitably conflict with some basic democratic norm. Sen's contribution was to show under what conditions Arrow's impossibility theorem would indeed come to pass as well as to extend and enrich the theory of social choice, informed by his interests in history of economic thought and philosophy.

In 1981, Sen published *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (1981), a book in which he demonstrated that famine occurs not only from a lack of food, but from inequalities built into mechanisms for distributing food. Sen's interest in famine stemmed from personal experience. As a nine-year-old boy, he witnessed the Bengal famine of 1943, in which three million people perished. This staggering loss of life was unnecessary, Sen later concluded. He presents data that there was an adequate food supply in Bengal at the time, but particular groups of people including rural landless labourers and urban service providers like haircutters did not have the monetary means to acquire food as its price rose rapidly due to factors that include British military acquisition, panic buying, hoarding, and price gouging, all connected to the war in the region. In *Poverty and Famines*, Sen revealed that in many cases of famine, food supplies were not significantly reduced. In Bengal, for example, food production, while down on the previous year, was higher than in previous non-famine years. Thus, Sen points to a number of social and economic factors, such as declining wages, unemployment, rising food prices and poor food-distribution systems. These issues led to starvation among certain groups in society. His capabilities approach focused on positive freedom, a person's actual ability to be or do something, rather than on negative freedom approaches, which are common in economics and simply focuses on non-interference. In the Bengal famine, rural laborers' negative freedom to buy food was not affected. However, they still starved because they were not positively free to do anything; they did not have the functioning of nourishment, nor the capability to escape morbidity.

Sen's revolutionary contribution to the philosophy of development economics and social indicators is the concept of 'capability' developed in his article "Equality of What." He argues that governments should be measured against the concrete capabilities of their citizens. This is because top-down development will always trump human rights as long as the definition of terms remains in doubt (Is a 'right' something that must be provided or something that simply cannot be taken away?). For instance, in the United States citizens have a hypothetical "right" to vote. To Sen, this concept is fairly empty. In order for citizens to have a capacity to vote, they first must have "functionings." These "functionings" can range from the very broad, such as the availability of education, to the very specific, such as transportation to the polls. Only when such barriers are removed can the citizen truly be said to act out of personal choice. It is up to the individual society to make the list of minimum capabilities guaranteed by that society.

Sen was seen as a ground-breaker among late twentieth-century economists for his insistence on discussing issues seen as marginal by most economists. He mounted one of the few major challenges to the economic model that posited self-interest as the prime motivating factor of human activity. His work helped to re-prioritize a significant sector of economists and development workers, even the policies of the United Nations.

Welfare economics seeks to evaluate economic policies in terms of their effects on the well-being of the community. Sen, who devoted his career to such issues, was called the "conscience of his profession." His influential work *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* (1970), which addressed problems related to individual rights (including formulation of the liberal paradox), justice and equity, majority rule, and the availability of information about individual conditions, inspired researchers to turn their attention to issues of basic welfare. Sen devised methods of measuring poverty that yielded useful information for improving economic conditions for the poor. For instance, his theoretical work on inequality provided an explanation for why there are fewer women

than men in India and China despite the fact that in the West and in poor but medically unbiased countries, women have lower mortality rates at all ages, live longer, and make a slight majority of the population. Sen claimed that this skewed ratio results from the better health treatment and childhood opportunities afforded to boys in those countries, as well as sex-specific abortion.

Governments and international organizations handling food crises were influenced by Sen’s work. His views encouraged policy makers to pay attention not only to alleviating immediate suffering but also to finding ways to replace the lost income of the poor, as, for example, through public-works projects, and to maintain stable prices for food. A vigorous defender of political freedom, Sen believed that famines do not occur in functioning democracies because their leaders must be more responsive to the demands of the citizens. In order for economic growth to be achieved, he argued, social reforms, such as improvements in education and public health, must precede economic reform.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain briefly that Amartya Sen’s Ethics is one that accepts freedom, tolerance and democracy.

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2) How do you understand Sen’s concept of ‘capability’?

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4.4 LET US SUM UP

Both Radhakrishnan and Amartya Sen have clarity in their thought and expression. Both are very good teachers, well known all over the world. Radhakrishnan went abroad after being mature in his world vision, just to teach his understanding of philosophy of religions, but Amartya Sen had long research experience outside India and his basic discipline is not philosophy immediately but economics. Radhakrishnan was basically a spiritual and religious man respecting the intuitive thinking in Indian culture. Amartya Sen though respects Indian mind of tolerance and reasonableness, critical of its religious bend. He is a self-proclaimed atheist. For him religion is to be the ‘handmaid’ of ethics and values.

4.5 KEY WORDS

- Fanaticism** : Fanaticism is a belief or behavior involving uncritical zeal, particularly for an extreme religious or political cause, or with an obsessive enthusiasm for a pastime or hobby. The fanatic displays very strict standards and little tolerance for contrary ideas or opinions.
- Liberalism** : Liberalism is the belief in the importance of individual freedom. This belief is widely accepted today throughout the world, and was recognized as an important value by many philosophers throughout history.

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) Following Sankara, Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that reality is Brahman that is one, spiritual, transcendent and absolute. He called it spiritual because it is not material. He called it transcendental because world cannot exhaust it and it is absolute because it is one, pure consciousness, pure freedom with infinite possibility. Brahman is indescribable and manifests itself as God who is the creator of the world.
- 2) The cornerstone of Radhakrishnan's social philosophy is the axiom that all human beings are of equal worth, entitled to the same fundamental rights. The human individual is the most concrete embodiment of the Spirit on earth and anything that damages one's dignity is morally wrong. "The state that governs least is the best." Democratic government is the most satisfactory since it rests on the consent of the governed.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Amartya Sen's ethics has the foundations of liberalism and welfare in it. He got this from his family background and childhood experience. His liberalism is one that accepts freedom, tolerance and democracy. He appreciates very much the intellectual plurality of Indian heritage and says question and dissent is there in Indian blood. He proves it in his book 'the Argumentative Indian' by quoting from ancient texts. According to him "Sanskrit has a larger volume of agnostic or atheistic writings than in any other classical language". The tolerance of minority views and criticism we can see even in scriptures like Bhagavad Gita, especially in the talk between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. His childhood experience which is another strong influence in his ethical ideals, he explains in 'the story of Kader Mia.' It is story of a mindless violence. Kader Mia, a muslim daily labourer, who came to Hindu predominant area for work was stabbed in the back by communal thugs. He was taken to the hospital by Sen's father. On the way he was going on saying, his wife told him not to go there for work, they may harm you, but he could not bear the cry of his children for bread. Sen says the penalty for that economic un-freedom turned out to be death, which occurred later on in the hospital.
- 2) Sen's revolutionary contribution to the philosophy of development economics and social indicators is the concept of 'capability' developed in his article "Equality of What." He argues that governments should be measured against the concrete capabilities of their citizens. This is because top-down development will always trump human rights as long as the definition of terms remains in doubt (Is a 'right' something that must be provided or something that simply cannot be taken away?). For instance, in the United States citizens have a hypothetical "right" to vote. To Sen, this concept is fairly empty. In order for citizens to have a capacity to vote, they first must have "functionings." These "functionings" can range from the very broad, such as the availability of education, to the very specific, such as transportation to the polls. Only when such barriers are removed can the citizen truly be said to act out of personal choice. It is up to the individual society to make the list of minimum capabilities guaranteed by that society.

UNIT 5 PHILOSOPHY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Fundamental Rights
- 5.3 Fundamental Orientation of the Fundamental Rights
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.5 Key Words
- 5.6 Further Readings and References
- 5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

The significance of the philosophy of the Constitution of India for us today is much more than in the early decades of independence when there was a widely shared agreement on the essentials of public life and the laws and institutions required to sustain them. In the wake of the conflicts regarding the essentials of public life, many take recourse to the Constitution, which underscores the philosophical principle of “unity – in – diversity,” as a guide to conflict resolution. In this Unit you are expected to:

- Analyse the preamble of the Constitution;
- Reflect on the salient features of the Constitution; and
- Understand its fundamental orientation rooted in philosophical principles.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Every Constitution has a philosophy of its own. For the philosophy underlying *our* Constitution we must reflect on the following Preamble to the Constitution:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all;

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity *and integrity* of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

For a proper understanding and appreciation of the philosophy embodied in the Constitution, we must turn to the various expressions contained in this Preamble:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA means the ultimate sovereignty and authority of the people of India. The Preamble declares in unequivocal terms that the source of all authority under the Constitution is the people of India and that there is no subordination to any external authority. It is SOVEREIGN as it has the independent power to legislate on any subject without being controlled by any other State or external power. As a REPUBLIC, it has a government by the people and for the people headed by an elected President. Hence it is a DEMOCRATIC republic. It is democratic not only from the political but also from the social standpoint. In other words, it envisages not only a democratic form of government but also a democratic society which is SOCIALISTIC and SECULAR. The Constitution envisages a socialistic pattern of society where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control and there is equitable distribution of wealth. However, it is not that type of State socialism which involves 'nationalisation' of *all* means of production, and abolition of private property. Instead of a total nationalisation of all property, it envisages a 'mixed economy,' but aims at offering 'equal opportunity' to all, and the abolition of 'vested interests.' The socialistic society should also be secular. The secular objective of the State has been specifically expressed by inserting the word 'secular' in the Preamble by 42nd Amendment of the Constitution in 1976. It means that the State protects all religions equally and does not itself uphold any religion as the State religion. In this way, the State promotes JUSTICE.

which is the absence of any arbitrary distinction of human and human in social, economic and political sphere. Justice guarantees LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. Liberty nourishes EQUALITY of status and of opportunity. Equality furthers FRATERNITY among all sections of people composed of so many races, religions, languages and cultures. A fraternity cannot be maintained unless the dignity of each of its citizens is upheld. The Constitution seeks to achieve this objective by guaranteeing equal fundamental rights to each individual. The philosophy contained in the Preamble has been further highlighted by emphasising that each individual shall not only have the fundamental rights, but also a corresponding fundamental duty, such as to uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of the nation by maintaining secularism and fellowship among all the people of India.

The fittest tribute to the Indian Constitution – adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949 and coming into force on January 26, 1950 – is its enduring and encompassing nature in vivid contrast to several other Constitutions of the world. The Constitution has always preserved, articulated and inculcated a sense of national identity shared by a billion people despite their ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional, social, political, economic, philosophical, ideological, and other cultural diversities and disparities. Thanks to the remarkable philosophical vision of *unity-in-diversity*, or *one-in-many*, of its founding fathers who – in conformity with the rich cultural traditions of our motherland – wanted this document to be large hearted enough to accommodate within its ambit the entire spectrum of pluralities without compromising its inherent universality and underlying unity, and thus defining nationhood as a celebration of unimpeachable plurality in unison with its citizens. The steady stream of inspiration flowed from this philosophical vision implicit in the Constitution ensured the integration of our society by warding off formidable challenge to its authority while retaining its own legitimacy and credibility very much manifest in its adoption of parliamentary form of democracy, in the incorporation of the fundamental human rights,

in the envisioning of a federal structure of governance with power to be shared between the Union and the States, in the categorical assertion that the State would be resolutely secular and equidistant from the religious affiliations of its citizens, in the insistence on the necessity of safeguarding minority rights, and in the ensuring of Reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. This philosophical vision of the founding fathers of the Constitution is very much visible in their explicit inclusion of the Fundamental Rights into it.

5.2 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

We shall dwell briefly with various types of fundamental rights assured in the Indian Constitution:

Right to Equality (Art. 14-18): This right states the equality of all citizens before law. The principle of equality does not mean that every law must have universal application for all who are not by nature, attainment or circumstances, in the same position, as the varying needs of different classes of persons often require separate treatment. Also this principle does not take away from the State the power of classifying persons for legitimate purposes. But such classification should be reasonable and must be based upon some real and substantial distinction bearing a real and just relation to the object sought to be attained, and the classification cannot be made arbitrarily and without any substantial basis. For a permissible classification two conditions must be fulfilled: (1) that the classification must be founded on an intelligible *differentia* which distinguishes persons or things that are grouped together from others left out of the group, and (2) that, that *differentia* must have a rational relation to the object sought to be achieved by the statute in question. What is necessary is that there must a *nexus* between the basis of classification and the object of the Act under consideration. To the question what are the conditions for a reasonable classification, it is not easy to give all the circumstances under which a classification may be considered reasonable. The basis of classification may be geographical, historical, difference in time, or based on the difference in the nature of persons, trade, calling or occupation, etc. The guarantee of equality extends to rights as well as privileges.

While the State has reasonable right for classification of person, Art. 15 of the Constitution forbids such any discrimination on certain grounds like religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, etc. Access to public places also is not to be denied. But the article expressly states that the State is authorised to make reservations for backward classes and castes, for women and children, or the socially underprivileged. Also equality of opportunity should be provided (Art. 16) for all citizens, regardless of caste, religion, race, sex, descent, place of birth, etc., for employment or appointment to any office under the State. Here too reservation is permissible. Abolition of *untouchability* is made an important issue here (Art. 17); it is a crime punishable under the law. Abolition of titles is also mentioned under this right.

Right to Freedom (Art. 19). Under this right comes various expressions of the aspect of freedom. All citizens have the right to (a) freedom of speech and expression, (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms, (c) to form associations or unions, (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India, (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, and (f) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

Right Against Conviction (Art. 20): The Constitution says: “No person shall be convicted of any offence except for violation of a law at the time of the commission of the act charged as an offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence. No person shall be prosecuted and punished for the same offence more than once. No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.” The article guarantees that a person must not be convicted of any offence except for the violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act. This means the criminal law has no retrospective effect. In awarding penalty the law in force at the time of commission has to be taken into account; and a person should not be prosecuted and punished for the same offence for than once, this is immunity from double punishment. This article also grants the privilege of self-incrimination.

Right to Protection of Life and Personal Liberty (Art. 21): “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.” The objective of this article is to prevent encroachment upon personal liberty by the Executive save in accordance with law, and in conformity with the provisions thereof. It is for this reason that the confinement of an under-trial prisoner or the arrest and detention of a person by the police under the Code of Criminal Procedure is considered legal. The reason for which a person is deprived of one’s life or personal liberty should be fair and just, and not arbitrary. It is for the Court to decide by the exercise of its power of judicial review, whether the deprivation of life or personal liberty in a given case is by procedure which is reasonable, fair and just or otherwise. When the law has been often misused by the Executive especially in the case of the poor and other deprived persons the Court has often entered in to set matters right. But at the same time many who could not have access to the court have suffered due to the ‘unreasonable’ use of the law. This article can be suspended during Emergency prevailing in the country. Prior to 1976, the Supreme Court had held that notwithstanding the suspension of Art. 21, it was still open to a person imprisoned or detained to challenge such order on any ground outside Art. 21, e.g., that the order was *ultravires* or *mala fide* or based on extraneous considerations.

Protection Against Arrest and Detention in Certain Cases (Art. 22): When a person is arrested, under the ordinary law of the land he must be informed soon after the arrest of the grounds of his/her arrest, and an arrested person must be given the opportunity to consult a lawyer of his choice and to be defended by him. An arrested person must be produced before a Magistrate within 24 hours of his arrest (excluding the time required for bringing him/her to the Magistrate). No person can be detained in custody beyond 24 hours without the authority of the Magistrate. Art. 22 does not form a complete code of constitutional safeguards relating to preventive detention. Since it deprives the person of his liberty, restrictions placed on a person preventively detained must be minimal in so far as that is consistent with the effectiveness of detention. The right to be informed of the grounds of arrest is a safeguard so that on learning the reasons the person arrested will be in a position to make an application to the appropriate Court for bail, or move the High Court for habeas corpus. The intimation will also enable the arrested person to prepare his/her defence in time for the purposes of trial. The arrested person has also the right to consult a legal adviser of his/her choice, ever since the moment of his/her arrest and also to have effective interview with the lawyer out of the hearing of the police, though it may be in their presence. The right extend to any person who is arrested, whether under the general law or under a special statute. The government is also bound to give free legal aid to an indigent person, provided it can be proved that he is a *pauper* and the State needs to come to

his/her assistance. The object of the framers of the Constitution in giving a constitutional status to preventive detention was that though they recognized the necessity of law for preventive detention, they wanted to provide certain safeguards to prevent an abuse of power.

Right Against Exploitation (Art. 23-24): This right forbids trafficking in human beings and *begar* and other similar forms of forced labour. When a person is employed against his/her will, even if it is for remuneration or other consideration, it is forced labour. It is immaterial whether there is a contract or whether the compulsion is due to economic reasons or legal provisions. This right also forbids employing of children below the age of fourteen.

Freedom of Religion (Art. 25-28): Subject to the restrictions the Constitution imposes every person has a fundamental right not merely to entertain such religious belief as may be approved of by his/her judgment of conscience but to exhibit his/her belief and ideas in such overt acts as are enjoined or sanctioned by his/her religion and further to propagate his/her religious views for the edification of others. Such a freedom is subject to public order, morality or health. Propagation of faith does not mean 'conversion' for the other person is also entitled to 'freedom of conscience'; but of course the other person has the freedom to adopt another religion through the free exercise of his/her conscience. Since India is a secular State equal rights are given to all citizens in respect of freedom of conscience and religion. The religions have the right to own and administer institutions, own and acquire movable and immovable properties, and to administer the property in accordance with the law. This right also excludes the power for the State to levy any religious tax from any citizen, and to promote any particular religion in government owned institutions. Religious instruction is forbidden in educational institutions wholly maintained by the State funds.

Cultural and Educational Rights (Art. 29 – 30): These rights as envisioned in the Constitution seems mainly applicable to minorities – linguistic, religious, etc. The linguistic minority has the right to retain its language and teach it through their educational institutions. The right to conserve the language includes the right to agitate for the protection of that language, including political agitation. All linguistic and religious minorities have also the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The right is to establish institutions which will effectively serve the needs of the community and the scholars who resort to such institutions. Hence establishment of institutions of high grade is also included in this right. The right would be nugatory if the scholars of such institutions are debarred from such opportunities for higher education or for a useful career in life. But this right is not an absolute right in the sense that the State shall have no right to regulate the administration of the institutions established by the minority communities. If they are mismanaged, or the purpose for which they have been established is not served the State has the right to intervene. In granting aid the State is not supposed to discriminate any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language. As the notion of minority has not been defined by the Constitution, the general understanding is that the members of the community should be less than 50%. Whether a community is a 'minority' is to be determined with reference to the particular legislation which is impugned.

Earlier right to property was considered as a fundamental right, but with the 44th amendment of the Constitution it has been reduced to a legal right the violation of which can be questioned in the court. The main argument in favour of abolition of private property was that it stood in the way of progressive or socialistic legislation.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain briefly the right to equality.

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2) What do you understand by freedom of religion?

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5.3 FUNDAMENTAL ORIENTATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Freedom

The Preamble of the Constitution sets the tone of the Constitution. It shows the general purpose behind the several provisions of the Constitution, and thus it is not to be regarded as a source of any substantive power, prohibition or limitation. As the Preamble sets forth the goal of Indian political society, it can be invoked to determine the ambit of the Fundamental Rights and the Directives, since the ideals of *democracy*, *socialism* and *secularism* are highlighted in it.

The freedom envisaged in the Constitution is given a general setting in the Preamble: a setting that *emphasizes* the equality of the citizens, *guarantees* justice to them, and *promotes* the dignity of the individuals and the integrity of the Nation. Hence the freedom set in this setting not only cannot jeopardize any of these fundamental values, but it has to contribute towards a realization of them. It is not just one of the values set forth in the Constitution; freedom rather is the queen of all values, as it serves as the steps and means to attain them.

The section on the ‘*Right to Freedom*’ (Art., 19) speaks of six areas of public life, with regard to which freedom is specifically guaranteed by the Constitution. While guaranteeing the right to freedom to the individuals, the state reserves its right to place ‘reasonable restrictions’ on the individuals’ freedom. The ‘right to freedom’ (Art., 19) is intended to protect the freedom of the individuals against *State Action* other than in the legitimate exercise of its power to regulate private rights in the public interest. The Constitution, by giving a list of individual liberties and the possible legal restraints or

‘reasonable restrictions’ on them, tries to strike a balance between individual liberty and social control.

The freedom that is promised in the Constitution is to be taken as the *freedom of the citizens of India*. But it is ordinarily taken, and justifiably so, as a freedom of choice: as an Indian I am not curtailed, but free to decide for myself. But when we look at it from a philosophical point of view, we can see freedom in its ontological sense. Freedom is always linked to Being; when one is able to choose to be oneself, to be one’s Being, one is said to be ontologically free. It is a freedom for one’s Being. What one *is* or one’s Being is not anything that is statically given; but rather one *can* be, what one *is* (Being). If one *can* be what one *is*, then one *ought* to be so. Thus we find the trilogy, *is-can-ought*, as closely linked. This needs to be further clarified in relation to the freedom promised in the Indian Constitution.

Being, in the contemporary philosophical understanding, is not a static notion or a dead label, but is to be taken in the dynamic sense. Thus *my being Indian* speaks at the same time of the twofold dimension of the *already* and the *not yet*. I am *already* an Indian, but at the same time *not yet*. This dialectics challenges me to move from the *already* to the *not yet*. What I am already is not merely to be preserved or maintained, but is to be developed by the constant process of becoming more and better of myself. Thus my being Indian calls me to try to be more of an Indian. This is what is implied in what is said above, ‘what one *is*, one *can* be’. Every Indian, by his/her freedom, has the ability to improve upon his/her being an Indian. Thus freedom implies ‘self-creativity’: my *freedom as Indian* implies that I keep on creating my *Being as Indian*.

Freedom implies not only one’s *self-creativity* but also one’s *ought-character* or *ethicality*. If I am given, by my freedom, the capacity to create myself or my Being, then I *ought* to strive towards it. It is an ethical demand that is ingrained in my Being. As an Indian I am ethically challenged to keep on growing in my being an Indian. Only in the light of the ethical or ought-character of freedom can we understand what is traditionally referred to as *freedom for* and *freedom from*. Indians as ‘ought to be’ are free *for* being Indians, and free *from* not being Indians. Thus as far as the freedom of the Indians is concerned, the greatest ethical ought or value is ‘to be Indian’ and the greatest ethical evil is ‘not to be Indian’. The section on ‘fundamental duties’ given in the Constitution reminds every Indian citizen of his/her ethical responsibility *to be Indian*.

The Freedom of the Indians, promised in the Constitution and enabled by the timely State legislation, has to be appropriated by every citizen of India. To use the language of Gabriel Marcel, freedom is to be taken as a *grace*, as an invocation to be free. Thus I become free by my creative response to the appeal of my Being—my being Indian. Standing rooted in the cultural-historical heritage of my Being, I respond to its appeal and invocation. If *Dharma*, *Satya*, *Ahimsa*, justice, peace and integrity are the constitutive values of my Being Indian, my freedom demands that these be appropriated, and thus I grow in my ontological freedom. But in order to grow in and to move towards freedom, I need to have freedom as the ‘springboard’ of movement. Freedom is thus the *whence* and the *whither*, the *basis* that enables me to grow, and the *goal* towards which I grow. If all the Indians were to be convinced of their freedom, not as a privilege, but as a collective responsibility to the freedom of everyone and to the common good, there would have been an *India*, different from what it is today.

Equal and Fraternal Social Order

In spite of Ivor Jennings' contemporaneous critique of the Constitution as ridden with contradictions and as the paradise of lawyers, the Indian Constitution came to terms with the profound complexity of India and with the normative questions of how to enable people caught in this complexity to strive after a good life. For the purpose it did not merely foreground certain ideals but a definitive order of rights and enabling provisions, and thus envisioning an equal and fraternal social order. It made place not merely for individual rights but group claims as well. It did not hold aloft a single conception of any good life in a decisive sense and generally took it for a fact that there are pluralities of such conceptions which not merely be permitted sufferance but enabled to be pursued as well. At the same time, the Constitution admitted certain reasonable limits for the pursuit of these conceptions and persuaded them to keep a broad conception of public good in view. But across the board it built up preferential provisions for disadvantaged groups. It underscored many expressions of disadvantage and held up enabling provisions to offset specific forms of disadvantage. It tried to avoid the pitfalls of both liberalism and Marxism and their corresponding economic expression either in terms of a market based or centralized economy. It embodied a democratic conception of governance which was not merely representative but which was demonstrably accountable at all levels from the locality to the nation as a whole.

Secularism as Guarantor of Freedom and Social order

Secularism in India does not mean animosity towards religion. It implies equal respect for all religion. It has nothing against private religious feeling or the individual pursuit of religion but it definitely demands the exclusion of religion from public life or from affairs of the state. It is a technique of building a national political community in a situation of religious pluralism. Pluralism and secularism are twins. As against monistic conception of society, pluralism denotes that in a social structure there are distinct cultural units revealing themselves as a multi-layered society, having plurality of religions, castes, sects, cults etc. While secularism seeks out the fundamental unity in the core ideas of different religions and is, therefore, a cohesive force, communalism lays maximum emphasis on the exclusive features and is, thus, a divisive force. It is secularism, not communalism, which is thus the true guarantor of freedom and social order.

5.4 LET US SUM UP

The Constitution has always maintained a sense of national identity shared by a billion people, despite all their diversities and disparities, thanks to the remarkable philosophical vision of *unity-in-diversity*, or *one-in-many*, of its founding fathers. The significance of this philosophical vision for us today is much more than in the early decades of independence when there was a widely shared agreement on the essentials of public life and the laws and institutions required to sustain them. This, for example, is evident with regard to the freedom promised in the Constitution. That promised freedom is the *basis* that enables one to grow, and the *goal* towards which one grows. That promised freedom, nevertheless, obliges one to be convinced of it as a collective responsibility to the freedom of everyone and to the common good of all through a strict adherence to human and fundamental rights. What is being questioned in many circles today is the entire process of nation-building and economic development without respecting these rights, which has already marginalized the dalits, tribals, the religious and linguistic minorities and the regional identities on the periphery. The need of the

hour is a sustained combat against prejudices of these particular identities through a process of dialogue aimed at the establishment of a more egalitarian society.

Swami Vivekananda and
Aurobindo

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How does the Constitution envision an equal and fraternal social order?

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2) How do you understand secularism in the Constitution?

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5.5 KEY WORDS

- Rights** : Rights are legal, social, or moral freedoms to act or refrain from acting, or entitlements to be acted upon or not acted upon. While the concept is fundamental to civilized societies, there is considerable disagreement about what is meant precisely by the term *rights*.
- Ultra vires** : Ultra vires is a Latin phrase that literally means “beyond the powers.” Its inverse is called *intra vires*, meaning “within the powers.”
- Mala fides** : Mala fides or Bad faith (Latin: *mala fides*) is a legal concept in which a malicious motive on the part of a party in a lawsuit undermines their case. It has an effect on the ability to maintain causes of action and obtain legal remedies.

5.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) **Right to Equality** (Art. 14-18): This right states the equality of all citizens before law. The principle of equality does not mean that every law must have universal application for all who are not by nature, attainment or circumstances, in the same position, as the varying needs of different classes of persons often require separate treatment. Also this principle does not take away from the State the power of classifying persons for legitimate purposes.
- 2) **Freedom of Religion** (Art. 25-28): Subject to the restrictions the Constitution imposes every person has a fundamental right not merely to entertain such religious belief as may be approved of by his/her judgment of conscience but to exhibit his/her belief and ideas in such overt acts as are enjoined or sanctioned by his/her religion and further to propagate his/her religious views for the edification of others. Such a freedom is subject to public order, morality or health. Propagation of faith does not mean 'conversion' for the other person is also entitled to 'freedom of conscience'; but of course the other person has the freedom to adopt another religion through the free exercise of his/her conscience.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) Indian Constitution came to terms with the profound complexity of India and with the normative questions of how to enable people caught in this complexity to strive after a good life. For the purpose it did not merely foreground certain

ideals but a definitive order of rights and enabling provisions, and thus envisioning an equal and fraternal social order. It made place not merely for individual rights but group claims as well. It did not hold aloft a single conception of any good life in a decisive sense and generally took it for a fact that there are pluralities of such conceptions which not merely be permitted but enabled to be pursued as well. Across the board, it built up preferential provisions for disadvantaged groups. It underscored many expressions of disadvantage and held up enabling provisions to offset specific forms of disadvantage. It tried to avoid the pitfalls of both liberalism and Marxism and their corresponding economic expression either in terms of a market based or centralized economy. It embodied a democratic conception of governance which was not merely representative but demonstrably accountable at all levels from the locality to the nation as a whole.

- 2) Secularism in India does not mean animosity towards religion. It implies equal respect for all religion. It has nothing against private religious feeling or the individual pursuit of religion but it definitely demands the exclusion of religion from public life or from affairs of the state. It is a technique of building a national political community in a situation of religious pluralism. Pluralism and secularism are twins. As against monistic conception of society, pluralism denotes that in a social structure there are distinct cultural units revealing themselves as a multi-layered society, having plurality of religions, castes, sects, cults etc. While secularism seeks out the fundamental unity in the core ideas of different religions and is, therefore, a cohesive force, communalism lays maximum emphasis on the exclusive features and is, thus, a divisive force. It is secularism, not communalism, which is thus the true guarantor of freedom and social order.