

HINDU PHILOSOPHY



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Philosophy – Its Origin and Its Limitations

Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion. It is an integral part of religion in India. It is a rational enquiry into the nature of Truth or Reality. It gives clear solutions for the profound, subtle problems of life. It shows the way to get rid of pain and death and attain immortality and eternal bliss.

Philosophy has its roots in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective state. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, the secret of immortality, the nature of the Self, the Creator and the world. Philosophy helps him to know all these things. Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit of man. The philosophers are its voice. Great creative thinkers and philosophers appear in all ages. They elevate and inspire the people.

Certain philosophical questions arise in the mind of man. What is this Samsāra? (Samsāra = life through repeated births and deaths; the process of worldly life). Has it any purpose? Is the world real or mere appearance? Is there any Creator or Governor of this universe? If there is a Creator, what is His nature? What is the relation between man and the Creator? Is there any way to escape from the round of births and deaths? Is there any such thing as the Impersonal Absolute? If so, what is Its essential nature? How did man come into bondage? What is his essential nature? Is he a part of the Supreme Being, or is he identical with It? What is the difference between Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute? What is the source for this world? What is matter? What is mind? What is individual Self? What is the goal of life? The search for a solution of these problems is philosophy. Philosophy solves beautifully all these problems.

Death – The Starting Point of Philosophy

The idea of death has ever been the strongest motive-power of religion and religious life. Man is afraid of death and wants to live for ever. This is the starting point of philosophy. Philosophy enquires and investigates. It boldly proclaims: “O man! Do not be afraid of death. There is an immortal abode. That is Brahman (the Supreme Reality). That is your own Ātman (Self) which dwells in the chamber of your heart. Purify your heart and meditate on this pure, immortal, changeless Self. You will attain immortality”. Death is the ultimate pointer to the transience of all things and the existence of an ultimate reality.

Various Schools of Philosophy

A clear understanding of man’s relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy and to all aspirants. Philosophers, prophets, saints, sages, thinkers, Acharyas and great religious leaders of the world have tried to explain the relation of man to God and the universe. Various schools of philosophy and different kinds of religious beliefs have come into existence, on account of various explanations given by different philosophers.

Philosophy and Intuition

Philosophy will take you to the gates of the realm of eternal bliss, but it cannot allow you to enter that realm. Intuition or realisation is necessary for entering that holy land of everlasting joy and ineffable glory.

Hindu philosophy is not mere speculation or guesswork. It is lofty, sublime, unique, and systematic. It is based on mystic spiritual experience, or *Aparokṣa Anubhuti*. The seers, sages and Rishis who had direct, intuitive perception of the Truth are the founders of the different philosophical systems in India. The different schools of philosophy are all based on the *Srutis* or the *Vedas*, directly or indirectly. Those who have studied carefully the *Upaniṣads* will find that the revelations of the *Sruti* (*Vedas*) are in harmony with the conclusions of philosophy.

The Orthodox and the Heterodox Systems of Indian Philosophy

The six systems of Indian philosophy or the *Shad-Darśanas* are the six orthodox systems of philosophy. They are the six ways of looking at the Truth. These are:

1. The *Nyāya*
2. The *Vaiśeṣika*
3. The *Sāṅkhya*
4. The *Yoga*
5. The *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsa*
6. The *Uttara-Mīmāṃsa* or The *Vedānta*.

The orthodox systems of philosophy believe in the authority of the *Vedas*. The heterodox systems of philosophy do not believe in the epistemic authority of the *Vedas*.

The six heterodox systems of philosophy are:

1. The Materialistic School of *Charvaka*
2. The System of the *Jainas*
3. The School of Presentationists or *Vaibhāṣika* (Buddhist)
4. The School of Representationists or *Sautrāntika* (Buddhist)
5. The school of idealism or *Yogacāra* (Buddhist)
6. The school of Nihilism of the *Madhyāmika* (Buddhist)

The Shad-Darśanas or the Six Orthodox Schools

The *Shad-Darśanas* or the six orthodox systems grew directly out of the *Vedas*. *Darśana* means literally sight or vision. *Darśana* means a system of philosophy. Each *Darśana* is a way of looking into the Truth; is a standpoint in respect of the Truth.

Gautama Rishi systematised the principles of *Nyāya* or the Indian logical system. *Kaṇāḍa* composed the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*. *Kapila Muni* founded the *Sāṅkhya* system. *Patañjali Maharshi* is the first systematiser of the *Yoga* school. He composed his *Yoga Sūtras*. The *Yoga-Darśana* of *Patañjali* is a celebrated text-book on *Rāja-Yoga*. *Jaimini*, a disciple of *Vyasa*, composed the *Sūtras* of the *Mīmāṃsa* school, which is based on the ritual sections of the *Vedas*. *Bādarāyana* composed his

famous Vedānta Sūtras or Brahma Sūtras which expound the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The different schools of the Vedānta have built their philosophy on the foundation of these Sūtras.

Different Ways of Approach to the Same Goal

The six schools of thought are like the six different roads which lead to one city. You may go to Mumbai by train or airplane or bus or any other vehicle. Even so, you can reach the goal of life through Yoga, or Vedānta, or any other path. The methods or ways of approach to the Goal are different to suit people of different temperaments, capacities and mental calibre. But they all have one aim, viz., removal of ignorance and its effects of pain and sufferings and the attainment of freedom, perfection, immortality and eternal bliss by union of the individual (*Jīvātman*) with the Supreme Being (*Paramātman*).

No student of Hinduism ought to be satisfied without acquiring a clear and accurate knowledge of the principal distinguishing characteristics of the six philosophical schools. The more advanced scholar should study the original Sūtras in which the doctrines of each school are enunciated. Study of the six schools of philosophy will sharpen the intellect and give you vast knowledge. You will have clear and comprehensive understanding of the Truth. Each system is a step or rung in the spiritual ladder.

Interrelation Between the Six Systems

The six schools are divided into three groups:

1. The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika
2. The Sāṅkhya and the Yoga
3. The Mīmāṃsa and the Vedānta

The Vaiśeṣika is a supplement of the Nyāya. The Yoga is a supplement of the Sāṅkhya. The Vedānta is an amplification and fulfillment of the Sāṅkhya. The study of *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), Mīmāṃsa, Nyāya and Sāṅkhya is necessary to understand the Vedānta. The Nyāya sharpens the intellect and enables the aspirants to grasp the Vedānta. The Nyāya is considered as a prerequisite for all philosophical enquiry.

The Vaiśeṣika is not very much in honour now. The Nyāya is still popular. The Sāṅkhya is not a living faith. The Yoga is practised by a few in its practical form. The Vedānta is the most popular of all the schools today.

The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika will give you an analysis of the world of experience. They arrange all the things of the world into certain kinds or categories (*padārthas*). They explain how God has made all this material world out of atoms and molecules. They show the way to attain knowledge of God. The Sāṅkhya will provide you with deep knowledge of Hindu psychology. Kapila Muni was the father of psychology. The Yoga deals with the control of *vṛttis* or thought-waves, and with meditation. The Yoga system shows the ways to discipline the mind and the senses. The Yoga will help you to cultivate concentration and one-pointedness of mind and enter into Nirvikalpa Samādhi or the Superconscious State.

The Pūrva-Mīmāṃsa deals with the *Karma-Kāṇḍa* (rituals-ceremonies) of the Vedas, and the Uttara-Mīmāṃsa is also known as the *Vedānta-Darśana*. This is the corner stone of Hinduism. The Vedānta philosophy explains in detail the nature of Brahman or the Eternal Being, and shows that the individual Self is, in essence, identical with the Supreme Self. It gives methods to remove *Avidya* or the veil of ignorance and to merge oneself in the ocean of bliss or Brahman.

The Nyāya calls ignorance *mithya jñāna*, false knowledge. The Sāṅkhya styles it *aviveka*, non-discrimination between the real and the unreal. The Vedānta names it *avidya* = nescience. Each philosophy aims at its eradication by knowledge or *Jñāna*. Then one attains eternal bliss or immortality.

By study of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, one learns to utilise his intellect to find out fallacies and to know the material constitution of the world. By study of Sāṅkhya, one understands the course of evolution. By study and practice of Yoga, one gains self-restraint and obtains mastery over mind and senses. By practice of Vedānta, one reaches the highest rung of the ladder of spirituality or the pinnacle of divine glory, oneness with the Supreme Being, by the destruction of ignorance (*Avidya*).

Vedānta – The Most Satisfactory System of Philosophy

Some of the doctrines of the Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika, the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga are opposed to the teaching of the Vedas. These systems are only superficially based on the Vedas. The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika schools rely too much on human reason, though they accept the Vedas as the supreme authority. Human intellect is frail and finite. It has got its limitations. It functions within time, space and causation. Its findings cannot be infallible. It cannot solve transcendental matters. Vedas only are infallible and authoritative. They contain the revelations or direct intuitional experiences of seers and Rishis. These experiences will tally with the experiences of those who have attained Knowledge of the Self (*brahma-jñāna*).

The Vedānta is the most satisfactory system of philosophy. It has been evolved out of the Upaniṣads. It has superseded all other schools. The Mīmāṃsa school has laid great stress on rituals, or Karma-Kāṇḍa.

According to Mīmāṃsa school, Karma or ritual is all-in-all in the Veda. *Upāsana* (worship/meditation) and *Jñāna* (knowledge) are only accessories to Karma. This view is refuted by the Vedānta school. According to the Vedānta, Self-realisation (*Jñāna*) is the foremost thing, and ritual and worship are accessories. Karma will take one to heaven which is only an impermanent place of refined sensual enjoyment. Karma cannot destroy the cycle of births and deaths, and cannot give eternal bliss and immortality.

During the time of Sankaracharya, all the six schools of philosophy flourished. Therefore, he had to refute the other systems in order to establish his absolute monism (*Kevala Advaita*). But, nowadays, Sāṅkhya, Vaiśeṣika, etc., exist in name only. Even now, some Hindu preachers, Sannyasins and Mandalesvars try to establish Advaita Vedānta by refuting these old systems. This is a mistake. They will have to refute at the present moment materialism, agnosticism, atheism and science, and then establish Advaita Vedānta.

1. THE NYĀYA

Introduction

The Nyāya or Hindu logic was founded by Gautama Rishi, who is also known by the names Akṣapāda and Dirghatapas. The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika are analytic types of philosophy. The word 'Nyāya' signifies 'going into a subject', i.e., investigating it analytically. In this sense of analysis, the word Nyāya is exactly opposed to Sāṅkhya, synthesis. The Nyāya is sometimes called *Tarka-Vidya* or the Science of Debate, *Vāda-Vidya* or the science of Discussion. Tarka is the special feature of the Nyāya.

The Nyāya is not merely formal logic, but a complete epistemology. Ordinary people think that the Nyāya is chiefly concerned with logic. Logic is merely a part or a single topic. The purpose of the Nyāya is a critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of the canons of logical proof. The Nyāya system deals critically with metaphysical problems. It contains discussions on psychology, logic, metaphysics and theology.

The Nyāya – A Method of Philosophical enquiry

The Nyāya is intended to furnish a correct method of philosophical enquiry into all the objects and subjects of human knowledge, including the process of reasoning and laws of thought. The evidence of the senses is submitted to a critical enquiry. The Nyāya gives a description of the mechanism of knowledge in detail. The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika explore the significance of time, space, cause, matter, mind, Self and knowledge for experience, and give the results in the form of a theory of the universe. The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika are regarded as parts of one whole. The Vaiśeṣika is a supplement to the Nyāya. They are allied systems. They both believe in a Personal God, a plurality of jīvas and an atomic universe. Further, they use many arguments in common.

The Nyāya is the basis of all Sanskrit philosophical studies. It is an introduction to all systematic philosophy. It is the preliminary course for a student of philosophy. You cannot understand the Brahma-Sūtras of Sri Vyasa without a knowledge of the Nyāya. A study of the Nyāya develops the power of reasoning or arguing. It renders the intellect sharp and subtle. You cannot make Vedantic enquiry without a sharp and subtle intellect.

The Kathopaniṣad says:

“It (the Ātman or the Self) is beheld by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect” (*ḍṛśyate tvāgryayā buddhyā sukṣmayā sukṣma-darśibhih*).

The Nyāya Sūtra by Gautama is the first work on Nyāya philosophy. This is the most famous book of the school. Numerous commentaries have been written on this book by various authors, viz., Nyāya-Bhāṣya by Vatsyāyana, Nyāyālaṅkāra by Srikantha, Nyāya-Mañjari by Jayanta, Nyāya-Bodhini by Govardhana, Nyāya-Varttika-Tātparya-Ṭika by Vachaspati Misra etc.

Knowledge

All knowledge implies four conditions:

1. The subject or the *pramāta*, the cogniser
2. The object or the *prameya*
3. The resulting state of cognition or the *pramiti*
4. The means of knowledge or the *pramāṇa*

prameya, or the objects of which, right knowledge is to be obtained, are twelve, viz.,

1. Self (*Ātman*)
2. Body (*Śarīra*)
3. Senses (*Indriyas*)
4. Objects of senses (*Artha*)
5. Intellect (*Buddhi*)
6. Mind (*Manas*)
7. Activity (*Pravṛtti*)
8. Fault (*doṣa*)
9. Transmigration (*punarbhava*)
10. Fruit (*Phala*)
11. Pain (*Duḥkha*)
12. Salvation (*Apavarga*)

Perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), and word or verbal testimony (*śabda*) are the Pramāṇas or the means of right knowledge. Śabda or verbal testimony, includes Vedic revelation. Pratyakṣa is perception by the senses.

God, Self and Universe

God

The Nyāya says that human actions produce fruits, called *adriṣṭa*, under the control of God. God supervises the work of *adriṣṭa*. The intelligent principle of *adriṣṭa*, which governs the fate of man, acts under the direction of God. God does not alter the course of *adriṣṭa*, but renders possible its operations. God is the bestower of the fruits of actions of human beings. God is a Special Being endowed with omnipotence and omniscience, by which He guides and regulates the world.

God is a Personal Being. He is free from *mithya-jñāna* (false knowledge). *Adharma* (demerit), and *pramada* (carelessness). He has *jñāna* (knowledge), *ichha* (desire) and *prayatna* (volitional effort). God is One, Creator, who is endowed with *nitya jñāna* (eternal knowledge) and *ichha-kriya* (desire-action) as his *gunas* (attributes). He is *vibhu* (all-pervading).

The Jīva/Self

The jīva is a real being. It is an eternal entity. Desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, intelligence and cognition are its qualities or marks. The object of the notion of 'I' is the jīva. No cognition or recollection is possible without a jīva. The eye cannot see objects and the ear cannot hear sounds without a jīva. There should be an agent to use the instruments (senses). That agent is the Self. After an object is seen, even if the eyes are both destroyed, the knowledge that 'I have seen' remains. This knowledge is not a quality of either the objects or the senses. The mind is not the Self. It is only an instrument of the Self, by means of which it thinks. The Self is the subject. The Self exists even when the body perishes, the senses are cut off and the mind is controlled. There are infinite numbers of Selves.

The Universe

The universe is a composite of eternal, unalterable, causeless atoms which exists independently of our thoughts. The universe is the modification of the atoms (Paramanus) of the physical elements: Earth (*prithvi*), Water (*apas*), Fire (*tejas*), and Air (*vāyu*). The Nyāya admits nine objects (*Dravyas*), viz., Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Space (Quarters), Time, Mind and the Self (*Ātman*).

The Cause of Bondage and the Means to Emancipation

One can remove misapprehension or false knowledge and attain supreme felicity by the true knowledge of the sixteen categories. The sixteen categories are: means of right knowledge (*pramāna*), object of right knowledge (*prameya*), doubt (*saṁśaya*), purpose (*prayojana*), familiar instance (*dr̥ṣṭānta*), established tenet (*siddhānta*), members (*avayava*), argumentation (*tarka*), ascertainment (*nirṇaya*), discussion (*vāda*), wrangling (*jalpa*), cavil (*vitanda*), fallacy (*hetvabhāsa*), quibble (*chala*), futility (*jāti*), and occasion for rebuke or cliunches (*nigraha-sthāna*).

There is, first, the state of *Samśaya* or doubt about the point to be discussed. Next comes the *Prayojana* or motive for discussing it. Next follows a *Dr̥ṣṭānta* or example which leads to the *Siddhānta* or established conclusion. Then comes the objector with his *Avayava* or argument, split up into five members. Next follows the *Tarka* or refutation, and the *Nirṇaya* or ascertainment of the true state of the case.

A further *vāda* or controversy takes place, which leads to *Jalpa* or mere wrangling. This is followed by *Vitanda* or caviling. *Hetvābhāsa* or fallacious reasoning, and *Nigraha-Sthāna*, the putting an end to all discussion by a demonstration of the objector's incapacity for argument.

When one attains the true knowledge, his faults, viz., affection (*rāga*), aversion (*dveśa*) and stupidity (*moha*) vanish. Aversion includes anger, envy, malice and hatred. Attachment includes lust, greed, avidity and covetousness. Stupidity includes suspicion, conceit, carelessness and misapprehension. Stupidity generates dislike and attachment. You must put an end to the chain, which begins with misapprehension or false knowledge and ends with pain, if you wish to attain release. If false knowledge vanishes, faults will disappear. If faults vanish, one is freed from activity and consequent transmigration and pains.

Transmigration which consists in the *jīva*'s leaving one body and taking another, is the cause of its undergoing pleasure and pain. A *jīva* which is no longer subject to transmigration is freed from all pains. The *jīva* attains release as soon as there is end to the body, and consequently to pleasure and pain.

The State of Apavarga or Release

Apavarga, or release, is absolute deliverance from pain. It is freedom from pain. It is cessation of pain. It is not the enjoyment of positive pleasure. It is not annihilation of the self. It is destruction of bondage. Release from the twenty-one kinds of pain or *duḥkha* is liberation (*Mokṣa*). In the state of release, there is no connection of mind with the *Ātman*. The *Ātman* is destitute of desire, effort, merit, demerit, hatred, mental impressions, etc., in the state of liberation, as, then, there is no mind. The liberation (*Mokṣa*) of the Naiyayikas is a word without meaning. It is a state of painless, passionless existence, like that of a stone without sensation and interest.

To Sum Up

This world has begun by a combination of atoms. It has *Samyoga* (conjunction) and *Viyoga* (Disassociation). The cause of the world is the Paramanus (atoms) and the nine Dravyas (materials), including *Īśvara* (God). *Īśvara* has *nitya-jñāna* (eternal knowledge) who has also *ichha-kriya* (desire-action) as *guṇas* (qualities). He is *Vibhu* (all-pervading). *Jīva* (individual Self) is doer and enjoyer. He has several attributes. *jīvas* are endless. The cause for bondage is ignorance (*Ajñāna*). Twenty-one kinds of pain constitute bondage. *Mokṣa* is destruction of all kinds of pain. Knowledge of the *Ātman*, as is distinct from others, is *Mokṣa-sādhana* (practice for emancipation). Gautama advocates *ārambha-vada* and *anyathākhyāti* (theory of the production of a new effect from every cause and of realistic epistemology).

2. THE VAIŚEŚIKA

Introduction

Rishi Kaṇāḍa is also known by the names, Aulukya and Kasyapa.

The Vaiśeṣika system takes its name from *viśeṣa* or particularity which is the characteristic differentia of things. The aphorisms of Kaṇāḍa contain the essence of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy. The principal subject treated therein is *viśeṣa*, one of the six *padārthas* or categories enumerated by the founder.

The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika

The Vaiśeṣika and the Nyāya agree in their essential principles, such as the nature and qualities of the Self and the atomic theory of the universe. The Vaiśeṣika is a supplement to the Nyāya. The Vaiśeṣika has, for its chief objective, the analysis of experience. It begins by arranging its enquiries under categories (*padārthas*), i.e., enumeration of certain general properties or attributes that may be predicted of existing things. It formulates general conceptions, which apply to things known, whether by senses or inference, or by authority.

The Aphorisms of Kaṇāḍa

There are ten chapters in Kaṇāḍa's book. The first chapter deals with entire group of *padārthas* or predicables. In the second chapter, Kaṇāḍa has ascertained substance. In the third chapter, he has given a description of the *jīva* and the inner sense. In the fourth chapter, he has discussed the body and its constituents. In the fifth chapter, he has established Karma and action. In the sixth chapter, he has considered Dharma or virtue according to scriptures. In the seventh chapter, he has established attribute and Samavaya (co-inherence or combination). In the eighth chapter, he has ascertained the manifestation of knowledge, its source, and so on. In the ninth chapter, he has established the particular or concrete understanding. And, in the tenth chapter, he has established the differences in the attributes of the *jīva*.

There is enumeration of *padārthas* (substances) in the beginning. Then there is definition. Then comes examination or demonstration.

This system is chiefly concerned with the determination of the *padārthas* and yet, Kaṇāḍa opens the subject with an enquiry into Dharma, because Dharma is at the root of the knowledge of the essence of the *padārthas*.

The first Sūtra is: *Yatobhyudaya-niḥśreyasa-siddhiḥ sa dharmah* – Dharma is that which exalts and bestows the Supreme Good or Mokṣa (cessation of pain).

[Note; Dharma = Righteous way of living, as enjoined by the sacred scriptures; virtue.]

The Seven Padārtha or Categories

Padārtha means literally the meaning of a word. But here it denotes a substance discussed in philosophy. A *padārtha* is an object which can be thought (*Artha* or meaning) and named (*Pada*). All things which exist, which can be perceived and named, all objects of experience, are *padārthas*. Compound substances are eternal and independent.

The *padārthas* of the Vaiśeṣika are the following:

1. Substance (*dravya*)
2. Quality or property (*guna*)
3. Action (*karma*)
4. Generalities of properties (*samanya*)
5. Particularity (*viśeṣa*)
6. Co-inherence or perpetual intimate relation (*samavaya*)
7. Non-existence or negation of existence (*abhāva*)

The first three categories of substance, quality and action have a real objective existence. The next three, viz., generality, particularity and inherence are logical categories. They are products of intellectual discrimination.

Kaṇāḍa enumerated only six categories, the seventh was added by later writers.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, ātman and mind are the nine Dravyas or substances. The first four of these and the last are held to be atomic. The first four are both eternal and non-eternal, non-eternal in their various compounds and eternal in their ultimate atoms to which they must be traced back.

Mind is an eternal substance. It does not pervade everywhere like the jīva. It is atomic. It can admit only one thought at a time.

There are seventeen qualities inherent in the nine substances, viz., colour (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), touch (*sparsā*), numbers (*saṅkhyā*), measures (*parimānāni*), separateness or individuality (*prithaktvam*), conjunction and disjunction (*samyoga-vibhāgam*), priority and posterity (*paratva-aparatva*), intellection or understanding (*buddhayah*), pleasure and pain (*sukha-duḥkha*), desire and aversion (*ichha-dvesha*), and volition (*prayatnaḥ*). Seven others are said to be implied, viz., gravity, fluidity, viscosity, merit, demerit and sound- making twenty-four in all. Sixteen of these qualities belong to material substances. The other eight, viz., understanding, volition, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, merit and demerit are the properties of the jīva.

The third category, Karma or action, consists of five kinds of acts, viz., elevation or throwing upwards, depression or throwing downwards, contraction, expansion and, motion.

The fourth category, *Sāmānya* or generality of properties, is twofold, viz., (1). Higher and lower generality and (2.) that of genus and species.

The fifth category, *viśeṣa* or particularity, belongs to the nine eternal substances of the first category, all of which have an eternal ultimate difference distinguishing each from the others. Therefore, the system is called Vaiśeṣika.

The sixth category *samavaya* or co-inherence, is of only one kind. It is the co-inherence between a substance and its qualities, between a genus or species and its individuals, between any object and the general idea connected with it and is thought to be a real entity.

There are four kinds of *abhāva*, the seventh category, viz., antecedent non-existence, cessation of existence, mutual non-existence and absolute non-existence.

Knowledge of the Padārtha Secures Supreme Good

Knowledge of the *padārthas* is the means of attaining the Supreme Good. The Supreme Good results from the knowledge produced- by a particular Dharma- of the essence of the *padārthas*, by means of their resemblance and differences.

The Principle of Adṛṣṭa and its inadequacies

Kaṇāḍa does not openly refer to God in his Sūtras. His belief was that the formation of the world was the result of *adṛṣṭa*, the unseen force of Karmas or acts. He traces the primal activities of the atoms and jīvas to the principle of *adṛṣṭa*.

The followers of Kaṇāḍa introduce God as the efficient cause of the world. The atoms are the material cause of the universe.

The unthinking atoms have not the power and the intelligence to run this universe in an orderly manner. Surely, the activities of the atoms are regulated by an omniscient and omnipotent God. Inference and scriptures compel us to admit God. What is that intelligence which makes the *adṛṣṭa* to operate? That intelligence is God. The five elements are effects. They must be preceded by someone who has a knowledge of them. That 'someone' is God. There must be an author for the Vedas. The contents of the Vedas are destitute of errors. The author is free from deceit. He must be an omniscient being.

The jīvas are destitute of intelligence in the state of dissolution. Hence they cannot control the activities of the atoms. There is no source of motion within the atoms. Therefore, there must be a first mover of the atom. That First Mover is the Creator or God.

Atomic Theory of the Universe

In the Vaiśeṣika system, the formation of the world is supposed to be effected by the aggregation of atoms. These atoms are countless and eternal. They are eternally aggregated, disintegrated and re-disintegrated by the power of *adṛṣṭa*. An atom is defined as 'something existing, having no cause, and eternal'. It is less than the least, invisible, indivisible, intangible and imperceptible by the senses. Each atom has a *viśeṣa* or eternal essence of its own. The combination of these atoms is first into an aggregate of two (*Dvyanu, dyad*). Three of them, again combine into a particle, called *Trasarenu* (Triad), which like a moat in a sunbeam has just sufficient magnitude to be perceptible.

There are four classes of *Paramanus* (*Paramanu* is a sub-atomic particle, such as electron), viz., *Paramanus* of earth, water, fire and air. The individual atoms combine with others, and again disintegrate after some time.

The Vaiśeṣika cosmology is dualistic in the sense of assuming the existence of eternal atoms side by side with eternal jīvas. It has not decided positively the exact relation between jīva and matter.

Body and Self

The body is subtle in *pralaya* (dissolution) and gross in creation. The time, place and circumstances of birth, family and the span of life are all determined by the *adṛṣṭa*.

The individual jīvas are eternal, manifold, eternally separate from one another, and distinct from the body, senses and mind; and yet capable of apprehension, volition, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, merit and demerit. They are infinite, ubiquitous or omnipresent and diffused everywhere throughout space. One's Self is as much in New York as in Mumbai, although it can only apprehend and feel and act where the body is. The Self and the mind are not objects of perception.

The Self is absolutely free from all connections with qualities in the state of Mokṣa or release. It regains its independence.

Birth, Death and Salvation

Conjunction of jīva with body, sense and life, produced by *Dharma* (virtue, merit) and *Adharma* (demerit), is called birth, and disjunction of body and mind produced by them is called death.

Mokṣa consists in the non-existence of conjunction with the body, where there is, at the same time, no potential body existing and consequently rebirth cannot take place.

Bondage and Release

Pleasure and pain result from the contact of Self, sense, mind and object.

From pleasure arises desire. From pleasure derived from the enjoyment of garlands, sandal paste, women and other objects, *rāga* or desire is produced successively for pleasure of a similar kind or for the means of attaining it. From pain caused by snakes, scorpions, thorns and the like, aversion arises with regard to such pain or with regard to its source.

A very powerful impression is produced by constant or habitual experience of objects, through the influence of which, a sad lover who does not win his mistress sees his beloved in every object. He who has been bitten by a snake beholds snakes everywhere, on account of a strong impression regarding that.

The Faults That Lead to Bondage

Desire (*rāga*), aversion (*dveśa*) and infatuation (*moha*) are called faults (*doṣas*), as they are incentives to activity which serves to bind the doer to this world. Gautama also says: “Faults have for their characteristic, incitement to activity or worldly occupation” (Nyāya Sūtras, 1-1-18).

The Knowledge That Results in Release

Intuitive knowledge of the Self destroys false knowledge. Consequently, attraction, aversion, stupidity or *moha* and other faults vanish. Then activity also disappears. Then birth due to action does not take place. Consequently, pain connected with birth also disappears.

3. THE SAṆKHYA

Introduction

The word 'Sāṅkhya' means 'number'. The system gives an enumeration of the principles of the universe, twenty-five in number. Hence the name is quite appropriate. The term 'Sāṅkhya' is used in the sense of 'Vicāra' or 'philosophical reflection' also.

In the Sāṅkhya system, there is no analytical enquiry into the universe as actually existing, arranged under topics and categories. There is a synthetical system, starting from an original primordial Tattva or Principle, called Prakṛti, that which evolves or produces or brings forth (*prakaroti*) everything else.

Perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and right affirmation (*āpta-vākya*) are the three *pramānas* or proofs in the Sāṅkhya system. The word *āpta* means fit or right. It is applied to the Vedas or inspired teachers. The Naiyayikas have four kinds of proofs, viz., perception, inference, comparison and verbal authority. The Mīmāṃsakas recognise six kinds of proofs.

Dual Concept of Puruṣa and Prakṛti

The Sāṅkhya system is generally studied next to the Nyāya. It is a beautiful system of philosophy. The Western philosophers also have great admiration for this system. It is more categorically dualistic. It denies that anything can be produced out of nothing. It assumes the reality of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the knowing Self and the objects known.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa are *anādi* (beginningless) and *ananta* (infinite). Non-discrimination between the two is the cause for birth and death. Discrimination between Prakṛti and Puruṣa gives Mukti (Liberation). Both Puruṣa and Prakṛti are *sat* (real). Puruṣa is *asaṅga* (unattached). He is consciousness, all-pervading and eternal. Prakṛti is doer and enjoyer. Jīvas are countless.

Non-acceptance of Īśvara or God

The Sāṅkhya system is called *nir-īśvara* (God-less) Sāṅkhya. It is atheistic. The Sāṅkhyas do not believe in Īśvara. They do not accept Īśvara (God). The creation produced by Prakṛti has an existence of its own, independent of all connection with the particular Puruṣa to which it is united. So the Sāṅkhyas say that there is no need for an intelligent Creator of the world, or even of any superintending power.

This is a mistake; according to the Vedānta, Prakṛti is always under the control of the Lord. It cannot do anything by itself. The Lord gazes at Prakṛti. Then alone it is put in motion, and it begins to create. Prakṛti is non-intelligent. An intelligent Creator alone can have a thought-out plan for the universe. Prakṛti is only a helper (*Sahakāri*). This is the theory of Vedānta.

Theory of Evolution and Involution

The Sāṅkhya adopts the theory of evolution and involution. The cause and effect are the undeveloped and developed states of one and the same substance. There is no such thing as total destruction. In destruction, the effect is involved into its cause. That is all.

There cannot be any production of something out of nothing. That which is not cannot be developed into that which is. The production of what does not already exist potentially is impossible like a horn on a man, because there must, of necessity, be a material out of which a product is developed, and because everything cannot occur everywhere at all times, and also because anything possible must be produced from something competent to produce it.

That which does not exist cannot be brought into existence by an agent. It would be useless to grind groundnut, unless the oil existed in it. The same force applied to sand or orange would not express

groundnut oil. The manifestation of the oil is a proof that it was contained in the groundnut and consequently, a proof of the existence of the source from which it is derived.

The effect truly exists beforehand in its cause. This is one of the central features of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy. Cause is a substance in which the effect subsists in a latent form. Just as the whole tree exists in a latent or dormant state in the seed, so also the whole world exists in a latent state in Prakṛti, the *Avyakta* (unevolved), or the *avyakṛita* (undifferentiated). The effect is of the same nature as the cause. The effect or the product is not different from the material of which it is composed.

Fourfold Classification of the 25 Tattvas (principles)

The Sāṅkhya gives a description of categories based on their respective productive efficiency, viz.,

1. Productive (*prakṛti*)
2. Productive and Produced (*prakṛti-vikṛti*)
3. Produced (*vikṛti*)
4. Neither Productive nor Produced (*anubhayarūpa*)

This fourfold classification includes all the twenty-five principles or Tattvas. Prakṛti or Nature or *Pradhāna* (chief) is purely productive. It is the root of all. It is not a product. It is a creative force, evolver, producer. Seven principles — intellect (*Buddhi*), egoism (*ahāṅkāra*) and the five *tanmātras* (subtle rudimentary elements in an undifferentiated state before quintuplication or *Pañcikaraṇa*)-are productions and productive. *Buddhi* (intellect) is productive as *ahāṅkāra* (egoism) is evolved out of it. It is produced also, as it itself is evolved out of *Prakṛti*. Egoism is a production, as it is derived from intellect. It is productive, as it gives origin to the five subtle rudiments or *tanmātras*. The subtle rudiments are derived from egoism. Hence they are productions. They give origin to the five elements (space, fire, air, water, earth). Hence they are productive. The sixteen principles, the ten organs, the mind and the five elements, are productions only. They are unproductive, because none of them can give birth to a substance essentially different from itself. The Puruṣa or Spirit is neither a production, nor is it productive. It is without attributes.

The Object of the Sāṅkhya Philosophy

The enquiry into this system of philosophy is to find out the means for eradicating the three sorts of suffering, viz., internal or *adhyatmika* (e.g., fever and other diseases), celestial or *adhidaivika* (lightening, cold, heat, floods, earthquakes, storms etc.), and external or *adhibhautika* (pain from animals, snakes, scorpions etc.), and the disease of rebirths. Suffering is an obstacle. It stands in the way of doing *Yoga sādhana* and attaining Mokṣa or release. Kapila Muni imparted a knowledge of the twenty-five principles which annihilated this pain. According to the Sāṅkhya, he who knows the twenty-five principles attains liberation. The ultimate cessation of the three kinds of pain is the final goal of life.

Prakṛti

‘Prakṛti’ means that which is primary, that which precedes what is made. It comes from ‘*Pra*’ (before) and ‘*Kṛ*’ (to make). It resembles the Vedantic *Māyā*. It is the one root of the universe. It is called Pradhana or the chief, because all effects are founded on it and it is the root of the universe and of all objects.

Characteristics of Prakṛti

Pradhana or Prakṛti is eternal, all-pervading, immovable. It is one. It has no cause, but is the cause of all effects. Prakṛti is independent and uncaused, while the products are caused and dependent. Prakṛti depends only on the activity of its own constituent *guṇas* (metaphysical properties).

Prakṛti is destitute of intelligence. It is like a string of three strands. The three *guṇas* form the three strands. Prakṛti is mere dead matter which is equipped with certain potentialities due to the *guṇas*.

The Modifications of Prakṛti

Crude matter is without form. *Mahat* or the Cosmic Intelligence is its first form. Intellect is the matter for egoism. Egoism is a form of intellect. It is the matter of which the senses and the rudimental elements are formed. The senses and the rudimental elements are forms of egoism. The gross elements are forms of the rudimental elements.

Intellect, egoism and the five subtle rudiments or *tanmātras* are the effects of Prakṛti. This creation, from intellect down to the elements, is brought about by the modifications of Prakṛti. Having observed the effects, the cause (Prakṛti) is inferred. It is imperceptible from its subtlety. It must, therefore, be inferred from its effect.

The Function of Prakṛti

Prakṛti is the basis of all objective existence. Prakṛti does not create for itself. All objects are for the enjoyment of the spirit or *jīva*. Prakṛti creates only when it comes into union with *Puruṣa*, like a crystal vase with a flower. This work is done for the emancipation of each *jīva*. As it is the function of milk to nourish the calf, so it is the function of Prakṛti to liberate the *jīva*.

The guṇas

According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, Prakṛti is composed of three *guṇas* or forces, called *Sattva* (purity, light, harmony), *Rājas* (passion, activity, motion), and *Tamas* (inertia, darkness, inertness, inactivity).

Guṇa means a cord. The *guṇas* bind the *jīva* with a triple bond. These *guṇas* are not the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika *guṇas*. They are the actual substances or ingredients, of which Prakṛti is constituted. They make up the whole world evolved out of Prakṛti. They are not conjoined in equal quantities, but in varying proportions, one or the other being in excess. Just as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is the Vedantic trinity, so also the *guṇas* are the Sāṅkhya trinity.

Interaction Between the guṇas leads to Evolution

The three *guṇas* are never separate. They support one another. They intermingle with one another. They are intimately related as the flame, the oil and the wick of a lamp. They form the very substance of Prakṛti. All objects are composed of the three *guṇas*. The *guṇas* act on one another. Then there is evolution or manifestation. Destruction is only non-manifestation.

The *guṇas* are objects. *Puruṣa* is the witness-subject. Prakṛti evolves under the influence of *Puruṣa*. *Mahat* or the great (Intellect), the Cause of the whole world, is the first product of the evolution of Prakṛti. *ahaṅkāra* (egoism) arises after *Buddhi*. Agency belongs to *ahaṅkāra*. It is the principle that creates individuality. Mind is born of *ahaṅkāra*. It carries out the orders of the will through the organs of action (*Karma Indriyas*). It reflects and doubts (*Sankalpa-Vikalpa*). It synthesizes the sense data into precepts. The mind takes part in both perception and action. There is no separate *Prana Tattva* in the Sāṅkhya system. The Vedānta system has a separate *Prana Tattva*. In the

Saṅkhya system, mind, with the organs, produces the five vital airs. Prana is a modification of the senses. It does not subsist in their absence.

Characteristics of the Three guṇas

Sattva is equilibrium. When *Sattva* prevails, there is peace and tranquillity. *Rājas* is activity which is expressed as *rāga-dveśa*, likes or dislikes, love or hatred, attraction or repulsion. *Tamas* is that binding force with a tendency to lethargy, sloth and foolish actions. It causes delusion or non-discrimination.

When *Sattva* is predominant, it overpowers *Rājas* and *Tamas*. When *Rājas* is dominant, it overpowers *Sattva* and *Tamas*. When *Tamas* is predominant, it overpowers *Rājas* and *Sattva*.

How One Is Affected by the Three guṇas

There are three guṇas in every man. Sometimes, *Sattva* prevails in him. Then he is calm and tranquil. He reflects and meditates. At other times, *Rājas* prevails in him and he does various sorts of worldly activities. He is passionate and active. Sometimes, *Tamas* prevails. He becomes lazy, dull, inactive and careless. *Tamas* generates delusion.

Again, one of these guṇas is generally predominant in different men. A *Sattvic* person is virtuous. He leads a pure and pious life. A *Rājasic* person is passionate and active. A *Tamasic* person is dull and inactive.

Sattva makes one divine and noble. *Rājas* makes one thoroughly human and selfish, and *Tamas* makes one bestial and ignorant. There is much *Sattva* in a sage or saint and there is much *Rājas* in a soldier, politician and businessman.

The Puruṣa

Characteristics of the Puruṣa

The Puruṣa or the Self is beyond Prakṛti. It is eternally separate from the latter. Puruṣa is without beginning or end. It is without attributes and without qualities. It is subtle and omnipresent. It is beyond mind, intellect and the senses. It is beyond time, space and causality. It is the eternal seer. It is perfect and immutable. It is pure consciousness (*Chidrupa*).

The Puruṣa is not the doer. It is the witness. The Puruṣa is like a crystal without any colour. It appears to be coloured by the different colours which are placed before it. It is not material. It is not a result of combination. Hence it is immortal. The Puruṣas or jīvas are infinite in number, according to the Saṅkhya. There are many Puruṣas. If the Puruṣas were one, all should become free if any one attained release.

The different jīvas are fundamentally identical in nature. There is no movement for the Puruṣa. It does not go anywhere when it attains freedom or release.

Jīvas exist eternally separate from each other and from Prakṛti. Each jīva retains its individuality. It remains unchanged through all transmigrations. Each jīva is a witness of the act of a separate creation, without taking part in the act. It is a looker-on uniting itself with the unintelligent Prakṛti, like a lame man mounted on a blind man's shoulders, in order to behold the phenomena of a creation, which Prakṛti herself is not able to observe.

The Puruṣa or the Self is the witness (*sākṣi*), a spectator (*draṣṭa*), a by-stander (*madhyastha*), solitary (*kaivalya*), passive and indifferent (*udāsina*).

Inference of the Existence of the Puruṣa

Intelligence cannot belong to the intellect, because the intellect is material and is the effect of Prakṛti which is non-intelligent. If intelligence is absent in the cause, it cannot manifest itself in the

effect. Therefore, there must be a distinct principle of intelligence and this principle is Puruṣa or the Self.

The insentient body seems sentient on account of its union with the Self, and the Self appears as the agent. Just as a pot with cold water appears to be cold, with hot water seems to be hot, so intellect and the rest seem to be sentient on account of union with the Puruṣa. This mutual transfer of properties is like that of fire and iron, or that of the sun and water.

There must be a Supervisor over and above the Pradhana or Prakṛti. The Supervisor is Puruṣa or the Self. Prakṛti and its products are objects of enjoyment. There must exist an enjoyer who must be an intelligent principle. This intelligent enjoyer is Puruṣa or the Self.

Just as chair and bench are for the use of another, so also this body, senses and mind are for the use of the Self which is immaterial, as it is destitute of attributes and as it is beyond the guṇas. The Puruṣa is the witness of the guṇas. The guṇas are the objects. Puruṣa is the witness-subject. Hence, it is not affected by pleasure, pain and delusion which are attributes of the three guṇas, Sattva, Rājas and Tamas, respectively. If pain is natural to the Puruṣa and if the Puruṣa is not naturally free from the action of the guṇas, no salvation from rebirth is possible.

Puruṣa and Prakṛti – A Contrast

The characteristics of Prakṛti and Puruṣa are contrary in nature. Puruṣa is consciousness, while Prakṛti is non-consciousness. Puruṣa is inactive (*akarta*), while Prakṛti is active. Puruṣa is destitute of the guṇas, while Prakṛti is characterised by the three guṇas, Puruṣa is unchanging, while Prakṛti is changing. The knower is Puruṣa. The known is Prakṛti. The knower is the subject or the silent witness. The known is the visible object.

The Universe

The world is evolved with its different elements when the equilibrium in Prakṛti is disturbed. The countless Puruṣas exert on Prakṛti a mechanical force which distracts the equipoise of Prakṛti and produces a movement. Then the evolution of the universe starts.

The Process of Evolution and Involution

Prakṛti is the root of the universe. Prakṛti is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. From this Prakṛti emanates the cosmic Buddhi or Mahat. From *Mahat* proceeds the cosmic *ahankāra* or the principle of egoism. From this egoism emanates the ten senses and the mind on the subjective side, and the five subtle *tanmātras* of sound, smell, taste, vision (or colour) and touch on the objective side. From these *tanmātras* proceed the five gross elements- earth, water, fire, air and space.

Akasha (space) has the property of sound which is the *viśaya* or object for the ear. Vāyu (air) has the property of touch which is the *viśaya* for the skin. *Tejasa* (fire) has the property of form or colour which is the *viśaya* for the eye. Apas (water) has the property of taste which is the *viśaya* for the tongue. Prithvi (earth) has the property of odour which is the *viśaya* for the nose. Each of these elements, after the first, has also the property of preceding besides its own.

During dissolution of the world, the products return by a reverse movement into the preceding stages of development, and ultimately into Prakṛti. Earth merges in its cause, water, water in fire, fire in air, air in space; and space in Antahkarana (egoism), and Antahkarana in Mahat (intellect), and Mahat in Prakṛti. This is the process of involution. There is no end to Samsāra or the play of Prakṛti. This cycle of evolution and involution has neither a beginning nor an end.

The Process of Knowledge

An object excites the senses. The mind arranges the sense impressions into a percept. Egoism refers it to the Self. Intellect forms the concept. It converts the percept into a concept and presents it to the Puruṣa. Then there is knowledge of the object.

Before you engage in any matter, you first observe or consider, then you reflect, and then determine: “This must be done by me”; and then you proceed to act. This ascertainment: “Such act is to be done by Me” , is the determination of the intellect (*adhyavasaya*). The intellect is an instrument which receives the ideas or images conveyed through the organs of sense and the mind, constructs them into a conclusive idea, and presents this idea to the Self. The function of the intellect is determination (*niścaya*).

The mind is both an organ of sensation and of action. The senses receive simple impressions from without. The mind cooperates with the senses, and then the impressions are perceived. The mind ponders, the intellect determines, and egoism becomes conscious.

Agency belongs to egoism- the ahaṅkāra or the “I-maker” which is itself a product of Prakṛti, but not to the Puruṣa or Self who is always a silent witness.

Intellect, egoism, mind and the eye see a form (shape) at once, in one instant, and come immediately to the conclusion, say, “This is a jar”. The same three, with the tongue, at once relish taste; with the nose smell; and so with the ear and the skin. The function is also occasionally gradual. A man going along a road sees an object at a distance. A doubt arises in his mind whether it is a wooden pole (post or a stump) or a man. He then sees a bird sitting on it. Then the doubt is removed by the reflection of the mind. The intellect makes a determination that it is a wooden pole only. Then the egoism says: “I am certain it is a wooden pole only”. In this way, the functions of the mind, intellect, egoism and the eye are gradual, also. There is leisure for the eye to see, for the mind to reflect or consider, for egoism to apply, and for the intellect to conclude. There is another example. The ear hears the twang of a bowstring; the mind reflects that this must be for the shooting of an arrow; egoism says: “It is aimed at me”; and the intellect determines: “I must run at once”.

The intellect, the mind and egoism are the door-keepers. The five senses of perception or Jñāna-Indriyas are the gates. The intellect is the instrument or organ which is the medium between the senses and the Self.

The Intellect and Its Functions

The intellect or the Buddhi is the most important of all the products of Prakṛti. The senses present their objects to the intellect. The intellect exhibits them to the Puruṣa. The intellect discriminates the difference between Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

The intellect is the instrument or organ which is the medium between the other organs and the Self. All ideas derived from sensation, reflection, or consciousness are deposited in the chief or great instrument, intellect, before they can be made known to the Self for whose use and advantage alone they have assembled. They convey impressions or ideas with the properties or effects of pleasure, pain and indifference, accordingly as they are influenced by the qualities of Sattva (purity), Rājas (passion) or Tamas (darkness).

Just as the headman of a village collects the taxes from the villagers and pays them to the collector of the district, just as the local collector pays the amount to the minister, and the minister receives it for the use of the state, so also the mind receives the ideas from the external organs, transfers them to egoism, delivers them to the intellect which is the general superintendent and takes charge of them for the use of the Sovereign Self.

The intellect is the prime minister of Puruṣa. It brings for Puruṣa the fruition of all that is to be experienced. It appears to be intelligent on account of the reflection of Puruṣa which is very near to it, though, by itself, it is really non-intelligent.

The jīva (embodied Self)

The jīva is the Self in union with the senses. It is limited by the body. It is endowed with egoism. The reflection of Puruṣa in the Buddhi or intellect appears as the ego or the empirical jīva. It is associated with ignorance and Karma. It is subject to pleasure and pain, action and its fruits, and rotates in the cycle of births and deaths.

The jīva must realise the perfection of the Puruṣa. It must attain to the status of the Puruṣa. Every jīva has in it the higher Puruṣa hidden within. It must become conscious of the real nature of the higher Puruṣa. Freedom or perfection is a return into one's true Self. It is the removal of an illusion which conceals one's true nature.

Release

Bondage belongs to Prakṛti, but is attributed to Puruṣa. Puruṣa is eternally free. Union of Puruṣa with Prakṛti due to non-discrimination is bondage; the failure to discriminate between Puruṣa and Prakṛti is the cause of Saṁsāra or bondage; and disunion of Puruṣa and Prakṛti due to discrimination is emancipation. Release is not merging in the Absolute, but isolation from Prakṛti.

The object of the Sāṅkhya system is to bring about the liberation of the Puruṣa or Self from the fetters which bind it on account of its union with Prakṛti. This is done by conveying the correct knowledge of the twenty-four constituent principles of creation, and tightly discriminating the Self from them.

In the Sāṅkhya system, the *pramānas* or means of obtaining the correct measure of existing things, are three, viz., *Pratyakṣa* or perception by the senses, *Anumāna* (inference) and *āpta-vacana* (trustworthy testimony).

How Release Is Effected

When the separation of the jīva from the body takes place by destruction of the effects of virtue, vice and the rest, and Prakṛti ceases to act in respect to it, then there is the final and absolute emancipation or the final beatitude.

When the fruits of acts cease, and body — both gross and subtle — dissolves, Nature does not exist with respect to the individual Self which attains the state called Kaivalya. It is freed from the three kinds of pain.

The *Linga-Deha* or subtle body which migrates from one gross body to another in successive births, is composed of intellect, egoism, mind, the five organs of knowledge, the five organs of action and the five *tanmātras*. The impressions of actions done in various births are imbedded in the subtle body. The conjunction of the *linga-deha* with the gross physical body constitutes birth and separation of the *linga-deha* from the gross physical body is death.

This *linga-deha* is destroyed by the knowledge of the *puruṣa*.

When one attains perfect knowledge, virtue and vice become destitute of causal energy, but the body continues for some time on account of the previous impulse, just as after the action of the potter has stopped, the wheel continues to revolve owing to the momentum given to it.

Release Is Nothing but Termination of the Play of Prakṛti

The union of the Self with Nature or Prakṛti is like the association of a lame man with a blind man. A lame man and a blind man were deserted by their fellow-travellers in a forest. They agreed to divide between them the duties of walking and of seeing. The lame man mounted himself on the shoulders of the blind man and directed the blind man. The blind man was able to pursue his route by the directions of his friend. Even so, the Self is like the lame man. The faculty of seeing is in the Self, not that of moving. The faculty of moving, but not of seeing, is in Prakṛti. Prakṛti is like the blind man. The lame man and the blind man separated when they reached their destination. Even so, Prakṛti, having effected the liberation of the Self, ceases to act. The Self obtains Kaivalya or the final beatitude. Consequently, their respective purposes being effected, the connection between them terminates. The Self attains liberation by knowledge of Prakṛti.

Prakṛti's performances are solely for the benefit and enjoyment of the Self. Prakṛti takes hold of the hand of the Self and shows it the whole show of the universe, and makes it enjoy everything which this world can give, and lastly helps it in its liberation.

In truth, the Self is neither bound nor released, nor does it migrate, but Nature alone in relation to various beings is bound, is released, and migrates.

As a dancing girl, having exhibited herself to the spectators, stops dancing, so also Nature ceases to function when she has made herself manifest to the Puruṣa or the Self. Nothing is more modest than Prakṛti, when she becomes conscious that she has been seen by the Puruṣa. She does not again expose herself to the gaze of the Puruṣa.

4. THE YOGA

Introduction

The word Yoga comes from the root YUJ which means to join. Yoga is restraint of the activities of the mind, and is the union of the individual Self with the Supreme Self.

Hiranyagarbha is the founder of the Yoga system. The Yoga founded by Patañjali Maharshi is a branch or supplement of the Sañkhya. It has its own charm for students of a mystic temperament and of a contemplative type. It claims greater orthodoxy than the Sañkhya proper by directly acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Being (Ishvara).

The God of Patañjali is a Special Puruṣa or Particular Being unaffected by afflictions, works, fruition and vehicles. In Him is the highest limit of the seed of omniscience. He, being unconditioned by time, is the teacher of even the ancients. He is ever free.

The sacred syllable OM is the symbol of God. Repetition of Om and meditation on Om, should be practised. This will remove all obstacles and will lead to the attainment of God-realisation.

The Yoga Sūtras

The 'Yoga Sūtras' of Patañjali form the oldest text-book of the Yoga school. It has four chapters. The first chapter, Samādhi Pāda, deals with the nature and aim of Samādhi (the state of super-consciousness where Absoluteness is experienced attended with all-knowledge and joy; Oneness). The second chapter, sādhana Pāda, explains the means of attaining this end. The third chapter, Vibhuti Pāda, gives a description of the supernatural powers or Siddhis that can be achieved through the Yoga practices. The fourth chapter, Kaivalya Pāda, describes the nature of salvation.

Rāja Yoga and Hatha Yoga

Patañjali's Yoga is Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga or Yoga with eight limbs. This Yoga deals with the discipline of the mind and its psychic powers. Hatha Yoga treats of the methods of bodily control and regulations of breath. The culmination of Hatha Yoga is Rāja Yoga. A progressive sādhana (self effort; spiritual practice) in Hatha Yoga leads to the accomplishment of Rāja Yoga. Hatha Yoga is a ladder to ascend to the stage or summit of Rāja Yoga.

When the movement of breath is stopped by means of *Kumbhaka* (retention of breath) the mind becomes supportless. Purification of the body and control of breath is the direct aim of Hatha Yoga. The Shat-Karmas or six acts of purification of the body are *Dhauti* (cleansing of the stomach), *Basti* (natural form of enema), *Neti* (Cleansing of the nostrils), *Trāṭaka* (unwinkingly gazing at some object), *Nauli* (churning of the belly) and *Kapalabhati* (removal of the phlegm through a certain kind of *Prāṇāyāma*). [*Prāṇāyāma* = regulation and restraint of breath]. The body is rendered healthy, light, strong and steady by the practice of Asanas, Bandhas and Mudras.

Yoga – A Methodical Effort to Control the Mind

Yoga is a method of strict discipline. It imposes restrictions on diet, sleep, company, behaviour, speech and thought. It should be practised under the careful supervision of an expert and illumined Yogi.

Yoga is a methodical effort to control the mind and attain perfection. Yoga heightens the power of concentration, arrests the wanderings and vagaries of the mind, and helps to attain the super-conscious state or Nirvikalpa Samādhi. The practice of Yoga removes restlessness of body and mind. It removes the impurities of the mind also and steadies it. The aim of Yoga is to teach the means by which the individual may attain complete union with the Supreme. This fusion or blending of the individual with the Supreme Puruṣa is effected by controlling the *vṛttis* of the mind.

This is a state which is as clear as crystal, since the mind is not coloured by contact with worldly objects.

The Yoga And The Saṅkhya

Kapila's system is Nirīśvara Saṅkhya, as in it there is no Īśvara or God. The system of Patañjali is Sa-Īśvara Saṅkhya, because there is Īśvara or Special Puruṣa in it, who is untouched by afflictions, works, desires, etc. Patañjali built his system on the background of the metaphysics of the Saṅkhya. Patañjali accepts the twenty-five principles of the Saṅkhya. He accepts the metaphysical view of the Saṅkhya system, but lays great emphasis upon the practical side of self-discipline for the realisation of the absolute unity of the Puruṣa or true Self.

Saṅkhya is a system of metaphysics. Yoga is a system of practical discipline. The former lays emphasis upon investigation and reasoning, and the latter upon concentration of the will-power.

The individual jīva in the Yoga has greater freedom. It can attain salvation with the help of God. The Saṅkhya maintains that knowledge is the means to salvation. The Yoga holds that concentration, meditation and Samādhi will lead to Kaivalya or Independence. The Yoga system holds that the Yogic process consists in the suppression of the diversities of mental functions and the concentration of the mental energy on the self-luminous Puruṣa.

The Eight Limbs of Rāja Yoga

Rāja Yoga is known by the name Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga or the Yoga with Eight Limbs. The eight limbs are:—

1. Yama (restraint)
2. Niyama (observances)
3. Asana (posture)
4. Prāṇāyāma (control of breath)
5. Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses)
6. Dhāraṇa (concentration)
7. Dhyāna (meditation)
8. Samādhi (super-conscious state)

The first five of these form the external limbs (Bahir-aṅga) of Yoga. The last three form the internal limbs (Antar-aṅga) of Yoga.

Yama and Niyama

The practice of Yama and Niyama constitute ethical discipline. It prepares the Yogic student for the real practice of Yoga. The Yogic student should practise non-violence, truthfulness, continence, non-stealing, and non-acceptance of gifts which are conducive to luxurious living; and practise purity, contentment, austerity, sacred study and surrender to God. The chief of them is non-violence (Ahimsa). All other virtues are rooted in Ahimsa. Non-violence is abstinence from malice towards all living beings- in every way and at all times. It is not merely non-violence, but non-hatred.

The Yamas or restraints are the great universal vows (Mahāvratā), not limited by caste, place or country, time or circumstances. They must be practised by all. There are no exceptions to these principles. Not even self-defence can justify murder for one who is practising the vow of non-violence. He should not kill even his enemy if he is to practise Yoga rigorously.

Asana, Prāṇāyāma and Pratyāhāra

Asana is steady, comfortable posture. Asana or posture is a physical help to concentration. When one obtains mastery over the Asana, he is free from the disturbance of the pairs of opposites.

Prāṇāyāma or regulation of breath leads to tranquillity and steadiness of mind, and good health. *Pratyāhāra* is introversion. It is withdrawal of the senses from their objects. Yama, Niyama, Asana, *Prāṇāyāma* and *Pratyāhāra* are accessories to Yoga.

Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi

Dhāraṇa, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* are the three consecutive stages of the same process of mental concentration and are thus parts of an organic whole. *Dhāraṇa* is the effort to fix the mind steadily upon an object. *Dhyāna* is continuous and unbroken fixity of the mind upon the object. *Samādhi* is fixity of the mind upon the object with such intensity of concentration as to become the object itself. The mind is wholly merged in and identified with the object upon which it is fixed.

Samyama or concentration, meditation and *Samādhi* are one and the same, that gives a knowledge of super-sensual objects. *Siddhis* are by-products of concentration. [*Siddhi* = perfection; psychic power]. The super-natural powers are really obstacles to *Samādhi* or freedom.

Yoga Samādhi And Its Characteristics

Dhyāna or meditation culminates in *Samādhi*. The object of meditation is *Samādhi*. *Samādhi* is the goal of Yoga discipline. Body and mind become dead, as it were, to all external impressions. The connection with the outer world is broken. In *Samādhi*, the Yogi enters into Supreme Silence which is untouched by the ceaseless noises of the outer world. The mind ceases its functioning. The senses are absorbed in the mind. When all the modifications of the mind are controlled, the Seer, the Puruṣa, rests in his own Self. Patañjali speaks of this in his Yoga Sūtras as Svarupa-Avasthanam (establishment in one's true Self).

There are kinds or degrees of concentration or *Samādhi*, viz., *Samprajñata* or conscious and *Asamprajñata* or super-conscious. In *Samprajñata* *Samādhi*, there are definite objects of concentration for resting. The mind remains conscious of the object. *Savitarka* (with deliberation), *Nirvikalpa* (without deliberation), *Savicāra* (with reflection), *Nirvicāra* (without reflection), *Sānanda* (with joy), and *Sasmita* (with the sense of personality) are forms of *Samprajñata Samādhi*. In *Samprajñata Samādhi*, there is a clear consciousness of the object meditated upon, as distinct from the subject. In *Asamprajñata Samādhi*, this distinction vanishes, it being transcended.

Conditions For Success In Rāja Yoga

The Importance of Yama and Niyama

Aspirants who desire to attain God-realisation should practise all the eight limbs of Yoga. On the destruction of the impurities through the practice of the eight limbs- or accessories- of Yoga, arises the light of wisdom leading to the discriminative knowledge.

For the attainment of *Samādhi* or union with the Divine, the practice of Yama and Niyama is an indispensable necessity. The Yogic student should practise Yama and observe Niyama side by side. It is not possible to attain perfection in meditation and *Samādhi* without the observance of the practice of Yama and Niyama. You cannot have concentration of mind without removing from within falsehood, deceit, cruelty, lust etc. Without concentration of mind, meditation and *Samādhi* cannot be attained.

The Five Mental Planes According To Patañjali

Kṣipta, Mudha, Vikṣipta, Ekagra and Niruddha are the five mental planes according to the Rāja Yoga school of Patañjali. The Kṣipta plane is that wherein the mind wanders amongst various

sensual objects. The mind is filled with Rājas. The Mudha plane is that wherein the mind is in a state of sleep and impotence on account of Tamas. The Vikṣipta plane is that wherein Sattva preponderates, and the mind oscillates between meditation and objectivity. The rays of the mind are slowly collected and gathered. When Sattva increases, you will have cheerfulness of mind, one-pointedness of mind, conquest of the senses, and fitness for the realisation of the Ātman (Self). The Ekagra plane is that wherein the mind is one-pointed. There is deep meditation. Sattva is free from Rājas and Tamas. The Niruddha plane is that wherein the mind is under perfect control. All the vṛttis of the mind are annihilated.

A Vṛtti is a whirlpool or thought-wave in the mind-lake. Each Vṛtti or mental modification leaves behind a Samskara or impression or latent tendency. This Samskara may manifest itself as a conscious state when the occasion arises. Similar vṛttis strengthen similar dispositions. When all the vṛttis are arrested, the mind is in a balanced state (Samapatti).

Disease, langour, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldliness, erroneous perception, failure to attain concentration and instability in it when attained, are the main obstacles to concentration.

The Five Klesas And Their Removal

According to Patañjali, Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), rāga-dveṣa (desire and aversion, or likes and dislikes), and Abhinivesa (clinging to mundane life) are the five great Klesas or afflictions that assail the mind. These are alleviated by means of continued Yogic practice, but not uprooted totally. They remain hidden in the form of seed. They sprout out again the moment they find an opportunity and favourable surroundings. But Asamprajñata Samādhi (Absolute-Experience) destroys even the seeds of these evils.

Avidya is the main cause of all our troubles. Egoism is the immediate result of Avidya. It fills us with desires and aversions, and veils the spiritual vision. The practice of Yoga-Samādhi uproots Avidya (ignorance).

Practice of Kriya Yoga

Kriya-Yoga purifies the mind, attenuates or thins out the five afflictions, and leads to Samādhi. Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (studying and understanding of scriptures) and Īśvarapranidhana (worship of God and surrendering the fruit to God) constitute Kriya-Yoga.

Cultivation of friendliness (Maitri) towards equals, compassion (Karuna) towards inferiors, Cheerfulness (Mudita) towards superiors and indifference (Upekṣa) towards wicked people (or with regard to things pleasant and painful, good and bad) produce tranquillity of mind (Chitta-Prasada).

One can attain Samādhi through devotion to God. Devotion to God gives freedom. By Īśvara pranidhana, the Yogic student obtains the grace of God.

Abhyasa and Vairagya

Abhyasa (practice) and Vairagya (dispassion, non-attachment) help in steadying and controlling the mind. The mind should be withdrawn again and again and brought back to the centre, whenever it goes out towards sensual objects. This is Abhyasa Yoga. Practice becomes fixed and steady, when pursued for a long time without any break and with perfect devotion.

The mind is a bundle of Trishnas (cravings). Practice of Vairagya will destroy all Trishnas. Vairagya turns the mind away from the objects. It does not allow the mind to go outwards (Bahirmukha action of the mind), but promotes its Antarmukha (inward going) action.

The State Of Kaivalya Or Absolute Independence

“The goal of life is the absolute separation of Puruṣa from Prakṛti. Freedom in Yoga, is Kaivalya or absolute independence. The jīva is freed from the fetters of Prakṛti. The Puruṣa is in its true form or

Svarupa. When the jīva realises that it is absolutely independent, and that it does not depend on anything else in this world, Kaivalya or Isolation comes in. The jīva has removed the Avidya through discriminative knowledge (Viveka-khyati). The five Klesas or afflictions are burnt by the fire of Knowledge. The Self is not touched by the conditions of the Chitta. The guṇas retire to rest and the Self abides in its own divine essence. Even if one becomes a Mukta (liberated Jīva), Prakṛti and its modifications exist for others. This, the Yoga system holds, in agreement with the Saṅkhya.

5. THE PŪRVA MĪMĀMSA

Introduction

Pūrva Mīmāṃsā or Karma-Mīmāṃsā is an enquiry into the earlier portion of the Vedas, an enquiry into the ritual of the Vedas or that portion of the Vedas which is concerned with the Mantras and the Brahmanas only. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā is so called, because it is earlier (*Pūrva*) than the *Uttara* Mīmāṃsā, not so much in the chronological sense as in the logical sense.

Mīmāṃsā- A System of Vedic Interpretation

Mīmāṃsā is not a branch of any philosophical system. It is rather a system of Vedic interpretation. Its philosophical discussions amount to a kind of critical commentary on the Brahmana or ritual portion of the Veda. It interprets the Vedas in the literal sense. The central problem of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā is ritual. Jaimini has systematized the rules of Mīmāṃsā and established their validity in his work. The rules of Mīmāṃsā are very important for the interpretation of the Hindu Law.

The Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini give a detailed description of the different sacrifices and their purposes, the doctrine of *apūrva*, and also some philosophical propositions. There are twelve chapters.

Sabara is the author of the chief commentary (Bhāṣya) on the work of Jaimini. Kumarila, the Guru of Bhāvabhūti, commented on the Sūtra and the Bhāṣya. He proved the eternal character of the Vedas and the efficiency of Vedic ceremonials. Prabhakara was a pupil of Kumarila. He wrote a commentary on the Bhāṣya of Sabara.

Jaimini accepts the three pramānas of perception (Pratyakṣa), inference (Anumāna) and authoritative testimony (śabda or Veda). Jaimini holds that there is a perpetual connection between a word and its sense and that sound is eternal.

The Eternal, Self-Existent Veda

Jaimini was an opponent of rationalism and theism. The Veda was practically the only God for him. The eternal Veda needs no other basis to rest on. There is no divine revealer. The Veda itself is authoritative. It is the only source of our knowledge of Dharma. God was not necessary for him and his system. He said that Veda was itself the authority. His first aphorism '*athāto dharma-jijñāsa*' states the whole aim and object of his system, viz., a desire to know Dharma or duty, which consists in the performance of the rites and sacrifices prescribed by the Veda. Dharma itself bestows the rewards. The aim of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā is to investigate into the nature of Dharma.

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā has a number of deities. The offerings may be made to them. The practice of Vedic Dharma is not in need of any Supreme Being or God. Vedic religion does not require the assistance of God. The eternal self-existent Veda serves all the purposes of Jaimini and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas. Jaimini does not so much deny God as ignore Him.

Practice Of Vedic Dharma- The Key To Happiness

Dharma is enjoined by the Vedas. The Vedas are also called the Sruti.

[Note: Sruti means the revealed scriptures. The literal meaning of Sruti is 'that which has been heard.']

Its practice leads to happiness. If the Smṛiti does not agree with the Sruti, the former is to be ignored.

[Note: Smṛiti = Auxiliary scripture that explains and elaborates the Sruti. Examples of Smṛitis are The Manu Smṛiti or the Laws of Manu, the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas etc. The Smṛitis constitute the body of traditional law, secular as well as religious, which guides the daily life of the

Hindus. They were delivered originally by Manu, Yajñavalkya, and other inspired legislators, to their respective pupils, and committed later from memory to writing].

The practice by virtuous men or custom comes next to the Smṛiti. A Hindu should lead his life in accordance with the rules of the Vedas. A Hindu must perform Nitya Karmas like Sandhya etc., and Naimittika Karmas during proper occasions, to get salvation.

[Note: Nitya Karma = daily obligatory rites. Naimittika Karma = obligatory rites on special occasions, such as death anniversaries, eclipses etc.]

These are unconditional duties. If he fails to do these, he incurs the sin of omission to attain special ends. If he avoids prohibited actions (Nishiddha Karmas), he will avoid hell. If he performs the unconditional duties, he will attain salvation.

Some later Mīmāṃsakas maintain that all works ought to be performed as an offering to God or the Supreme Being. Then they become the cause or means of emancipation.

If works or sacrifices are done in a mechanical way without feeling, Sraddha (faith) and devotion, they cannot help one to attain salvation. One may perform any number of sacrifices; and yet, there may not be any change in the heart, if they are performed without the right spirit or right mental attitude and right will. What is really wanted is not the ceremonial sacrifice, but the sacrifice of selfishness, egoism and rāga-dveṣa (likes and dislikes).

The Doctrine Of Apūrva

The fruits or rewards of sacrifice are not dispensed by any beneficent God. *Apūrva* bestows the reward on the sacrificer. *Apūrva* is the link or necessary connection between work and its fruit or result. *Apūrva* is *Adriṣṭa*. It is a positive, unseen force created by an act, that leads to the attainment of the fruit of the action. This is the view of Jaimini.

Other thinkers severely criticized that. The critics maintained that the unconscious or non-intelligent *Apūrva* could not bestow the rewards. The Mīmāṃsa system could not satisfy the intelligent, thoughtful men. Hence, the later Mīmāṃsakas slowly introduced God. They declared that if sacrifices were performed in honour of the Supreme Being, it would lead to the achievement of the Supreme Good. *Apūrva* cannot act, unless it is moved by God or the Supreme Being. He who makes the *Apūrva* function is God.

The Self And Its Characteristics

The self is distinct from the body, the senses and the intellect. The self is the experiencer or enjoyer. The body is the abode of experiences. The senses are the instruments of experience. The self perceives when it is in union with the mind. It experiences internally pleasure and pain; and externally, objects such as trees, rivers, plants, etc.

The self is not the senses, because it persists even when the senses are injured or destroyed. The body is made up of matter. The perceiver is distinct from the body. The self directs the body. The body is a servant of the self. There is some being which synthesizes the various sense-data. That being or entity is the self. The self is all-pervading and imperishable. Selves are countless.

The real self survives the annihilation of the body. The performer of a sacrifice goes to heaven. Jaimini does not believe in Mokṣa (liberation). He believes in the existence of Svarga (heaven) attainable through Karma or sacrifice. The Veda promises rewards to the sacrificer to be enjoyed in another world.

The Later Mīmāṃsakas

Prabhākara and Kumarila

Jaimini showed the way to attain happiness in Svarga or heaven, but he did not tell anything about the problem of the final emancipation. The later writers like Prabhākara and Kumarila, however, could not avoid this problem of final emancipation as it engaged the attention of the thinkers of other schools. Prabhākara says that the absolute cessation of the body caused by the total disappearance of Dharma and Adharma, whose operation is the cause of rebirth, is ultimate release or liberation. One abandons prohibited acts, and the deeds which lead to happiness in heaven.

One does the necessary expiations for exhausting the previously accumulated Karmas. One practises self-restraint and disciplines himself. One develops virtuous qualities. One frees himself from rebirths by a true knowledge of the self. One cannot attain release by mere knowledge. Exhaustion of Karmas only can bring about release. Knowledge prevents further accumulation of virtue and vice. Karma by itself cannot lead to the attainment of the final emancipation. *rāga-dveṣa* (attraction and aversion), which lead to the performance of actions, must be destroyed if one wants to attain *Mokṣa* (liberation). *Mokṣa* is the cessation of pleasure and pain. It is not a state of bliss, as the attributeless Self cannot have even bliss. It is simply the natural form of the Jīva.

The view of Kumarila comes very near to the view of Advaita Vedantins. Kumarila maintains that the Veda is composed by God and is Brahman in the form of sounds. *Mokṣa* is a positive state for Kumarila. It is the realisation of the Ātman (ātma-bodha). He is of the opinion that knowledge is not sufficient for *Mokṣa*. He thinks that *Mokṣa* can be attained through Karma (action) with Jñāna (knowledge).

Jaimini's Philosophy In A Nutshell

According to Jaimini, performance of the actions that are enjoined in the Vedas is the *sādhana* or means for attaining heaven. Karma-Kāṇḍa is the chief section of the Vedas.

[Note: *Karma Kāṇḍa* = The section of the Vedas dwelling only on the rituals or mainly on the rituals. *Karma Kāṇḍa* is also known as the Samhitas and the Brahmanas of the Vedas.]

The cause of bondage is the performance of *Niṣiddha Karmas* or prohibited actions. The self is *jaḍa-cetana*, a combination of insentience and intelligence. Jīvas are countless. The jīva is doer and enjoyer and is all pervading. Jaimini does not believe in the creation of the world. He believes in grades of happiness in heaven and in *sadācāra* or right conduct, viz., *Satyam-vada* (Speak the truth), *Dharmam-cara* (Perform duty).

Criticism of Jaimini's Philosophy

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā system of philosophy is said to be unsatisfactory and incomplete, in as much as it does not deal with the problem of the Ultimate reality and its relation to Self and matter. There is no philosophical view of the world. The central feature is the performance of the sacrifices. This is the most essential or fundamental thing. '*Perform sacrifices and enjoy in Heaven*'- this is the sum and substance of Jaimini's teaching. This is his *Mokṣa* or the final goal. This cannot give satisfaction to the thinkers who know that the enjoyment in heaven is transitory, imperfect, sensual and worldly.

6. THE VEDĀNTA PHILOSOPHY

ALSO KNOWN AS THE UTTARA MĪMĀMSĀ

Introduction

Uttara Mīmāṃsā or the Vedānta philosophy of Vyasa or Bādarāyana is placed as the last of the six orthodox systems, but, really, it ought to stand first.

The Uttara Mīmāṃsā conforms closely to the doctrines propounded in the Upaniṣads. The term Vedānta means literally the end or the essence of the Veda. It contains the doctrines set forth in the closing chapters of the Vedas. The closing chapters of the Vedas are the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads really form the essence of the Vedas.

The Brahma Sūtras of Bhagavan Vyasa

Sri Vyasa wrote the Brahma Sūtras or the Vedānta Sūtras which explain the doctrine of Brahman. Brahma Sūtras are also known by the name Śārīraka Sūtras, because they deal with the embodiment of the Supreme Nirguṇa Brahman. 'Brahma Sūtras' is one of the three books of the Prasthana Traya, the three authoritative books on Hinduism, the other two being the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad-Gīta. Sri Vyasa has systematized the principles of Vedānta and removed the apparent contradictions in the doctrines. The Brahma Sūtras are 555 in number. Sri Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka, Vallabha, Bhaskara, Yadavaprakasa, Kesava, Nilakantha, Baladeva and Vijñāna Bhikṣu are the chief commentators on the Brahma Sūtras. Each has commented in his own way and built his own philosophy. The most reputed teacher of this school of philosophy is Sri Sankaracharya.

Sri Vyasa has criticised the doctrines of the Vaiśeṣika system and the Sāṅkhya system.

There are four chapters, viz., *samanvaya*, *avirodha*, *sādhana* and *phala*. In the first chapter, an account of the nature of Brahman and of Its relation to the world and the individual jīva, is given. In the second chapter, the rival theories, viz., Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika, etc., are criticised. Suitable answers are given to the objections leveled against this view. In the third chapter, the means of attaining *Brahma-vidya* are treated. In the fourth chapter, there is a description of the fruits of *Brahma-vidya*. There is also a description how the individual ātman reaches Brahman through the Devayāna or the path of the Devas, whence there is no return. The characteristics of the *jīvanmukta* or liberated one are also discussed in this chapter. Each chapter has four parts (Pādas). The Sūtras in each part form Adhikaraṇas or topics.

The five Sūtras of the first chapter are very important.

The first Sūtra is: “*athato brahma-jijñāsa*” (Now, therefore, the enquiry into Brahman). This first aphorism states the object of the whole system in one word, viz., *brahma-jijñāsa*, the desire of knowing Brahman (the Supreme Reality).

The second Sūtra is: “*janmadyasya yatah*” (Brahman is the Supreme Being from Whom proceed origin, sustenance and dissolution of the world).

The third Sūtra is: “*sāstra-Yonitvāt*” (The scriptures alone are the means of right knowledge. The omniscience of Brahman follows from Its being the source of the scriptures).

The fourth Sūtra is: “*tat tu samanvayāt*” (That Brahman is to be known only from the scriptures and not independently by any other means is established, because it is the main purport of all Vedānta texts).

The fifth Sūtra is: “*ikṣater na aśabdam*” (On account of 'thinking', Prakṛti or *Pradhāna* not being first cause). *Pradhāna* is not based on the scriptures.

The last Sūtra of the fourth chapter is: “*anāvṛttih śabdāt, anāvṛttih śabdāt*” (There is no return for the released jīvas, on account of scriptural declaration to that effect).

Brahman, Māyā and jīva

Brahman

Brahman, the Absolute, after emanating the elements, enters them. It is the Golden Person in the sun. It is the Light of the Ātman. It is ever pure. It is *Sat-Chid-Ananda*, one without a second. It is *Bhūma* (infinite, unconditioned). It dwells in the heart. It is the source of everything.

Brahman is the material cause, as well as the instrumental cause of the universe. Brahman and the universe are not different, just as the jar is not different from clay. Brahman projects Itself into the universe for Its own Lila or sporting, without undergoing the least change, and without ceasing to be Itself.

Brahman is without parts, without qualities, without action and emotion, beginningless, endless and immutable. It has no consciousness, such as is denoted by ‘I’ and ‘You’. It is the only Reality. Brahman is to the external world what yarn is to cloth, what clay is to jar and what gold is to a gold ring.

Brahman is *Paramārthika Satta* (Absolute Reality). The world is *Vyavahārika Satta* (relative reality). The dream object is *Pratibhāṣika Satta* (apparent reality).

Māyā

Māyā is the Śakti (power) of God. It is the *Kāraṇa Śarīra* (causal body) of God. It hides the real and makes the unreal appear as real. It (*Māyā*) is neither *Sat* nor *Asat* nor *Sat-Asat*.

[Note: *Sat* = existence; being; reality; truth. *Asat* = opposite of *Sat*]

Māyā is Anirvachaniya (indescribable).

Māyā has two powers, viz.,

1. The power of veiling or *āvaraṇa Śakti*
2. The power of projecting or *Vikṣepa Śakti*.

We have forgotten our essential divine nature on account of the veiling power of Māyā.

This universe is projected owing to the *Vikṣepa Śakti* of Māyā.

Jīva — The Five Sheaths (Kośas)

The jīva or the individual Self is enclosed within five sheaths (*Kośas*), which are like the sheaths of an onion. The five sheaths are:—

1. The Food-sheath (*Annamaya Kośa*)
2. The Vital sheath (*Prāṇamaya Kośa*)
3. The Mental sheath (*Manomaya Kośa*)
4. The Intellectual sheath (*Vijñānamaya Kośa*)
5. The Bliss sheath (*Ānandamaya Kośa*).

The food sheath constitutes the physical body. The next three sheaths (vital, mental and intellectual) form the subtle body. The last sheath (bliss) forms the causal body. The individual Self should

transcend all its sheaths through meditation and become one with the Supreme Self which is beyond the five Kośas. Then only it will attain liberation or freedom.

Jīva — The Three States of Consciousness

There are three states of consciousness for the individual Self, viz.,

1. The waking state (*jāgrata*)
2. The dreaming state (*svapna*)
3. The deep sleep state. (*suṣupti*)

Turiya or the fourth state is the super-conscious state. *Turiya* is Brahman. *Turiya* is the silent witness of the three states. The individual should transcend the first three states and identify himself with the *Turiya* or the fourth state. Then only he can attain oneness with the Supreme Being.

Avidya is the causal body of jīva. The jīva identifies itself with the body, mind and the senses on account of *Avidya*. It has the erroneous notion that the body is the Self, just as one has the wrong notion that the rope is the snake, in the twilight. The moment the individual Self is freed from the self-imposed ignorance by a proper understanding of the Truth through the Vedānta philosophy, *Vicāra* (enquiry), reflection and meditation on the Supreme Brahman, all the illusion disappears.

The identity of the *Jīvātman* and of the entire phenomenal world with the *Paramātma* or Brahman is re-established. The jīva attains immortality and eternal bliss. It merges itself in Brahman or the Ocean of Bliss.

Bādarāyana believes in jīvanmukti or Liberation While Living.

Celebrated Vedantic Formulae

The following are the celebrated formulae of Vedānta:

- *ekam eva advitīyam* – The Reality is One alone without a second.
- *brahma satyam jagan mithya, jivo brahmaiva na aparah* - Brahman only exists truly, the world is false, the individual Ātman is Brahman only and no other.
- *sarvam khalvidam brahma* – All this is, indeed, Brahman.
- *satyam jñānam anantam brahma* – Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity.
- *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati* – The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.
- *śāntam, śivam, advaitam* – Brahman is Peace, Auspiciousness and Non-duality.
- *ayam ātma śāntaḥ* – This Ātman is Silence.
- *asaṅgo ayam puruṣa* – This Puruṣa is unattached.
- *śāntam, ajaram, abhayam, param* – This Brahman is Peace, without aging, Immortal, fearless and Supreme.

May you all understand the truths of Vedānta philosophy.

May you all realise the bliss of oneness.

May you all become jīvanmuktas while living.