

BPY-001 INDIAN PHILOSOPHY Part I (4 credits)

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The Indian philosophy is expressed through a rich variety of thoughts and practices that have developed over more than three thousand years. There is no single Indian philosophy, but rather a plurality of ways of understanding and relating to Reality from a stock of widely held ideas reflected in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and particularly in the classical systems of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Philosophy becomes thematic at various levels and in different contexts, in debates concerning the status of certain concepts as the soul, God, substances, universals, time, change, permanence/impermanence, one and many, etc. This Course (Part I in the first year BA and Part II in the second year BA) helps a student to understand the different aspects and systems of Indian Philosophy in its long formation.

In this course of the first year BA we have presented 4 blocks comprising 18 units.

Block 1 is an introduction to Indian philosophy. In this block we try to explain the general characteristics of Indian philosophy and Indian scriptures, especially the Vedas.

Block 2 deals with the Upanishads. The Block begins with an introduction to the Upanishads and then proceeds to study in detail 5 major Upanishads: Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Aitareya, Isa, and Taittiriya.

Block 3 studies the remaining principal Upanishads: Katha, Mudaka, Mandukya, Prasna, Kena, and Svetasvatara.

Block 4 probes into the teachings of “Hetrodox Systems” of Indian Philosophy: Carvaka, Jainism, and Buddhism. There are two units on Buddhism: Buddhism I and Buddhism II.

Taken together these Blocks will provide you with introductory knowledge about Indian Philosophy.

BLOCK-1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'Indian philosophy' may refer to any of the several traditions of philosophical thought that originated in the Indian subcontinent: Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Jain philosophy, and Tribal and Dalit Philosophy. Having the same or rather intertwined origins, all of these philosophies have a common underlying theme of world vision, and similarly attempt to explain the attainment of truth and liberation. The characteristic of these philosophies is that they may belong to one "school" and disagree with each other, or be in agreement while professing allegiance to different banners. An example of the latter is the non-Vedic Jain and the Vedic Samkhya schools, both of which have similar ideas on pluralism; an example of the former would be the Dvaita and the Advaita schools, both of whom are Vedic. The Vedic thinkers /seers centered philosophy on an assumption that there is a unitary underlying order, which is all pervasive and omniscient. The efforts by various schools were concentrated on explaining this order. All major phenomena like those observed in nature, fate, occurrences, etc., were results of this order. The earliest mention of this appears in the Indian Scriptures, especially in the Rig Veda, which speaks of the Brahman, or the universally transcendent building block of the whole world. It is described as dimensionless, timeless and beyond reach of the known frontiers of happiness and knowledge. The present block, consisting of 4 units, introduces Indian philosophy beginning with the Indian Scriptures.

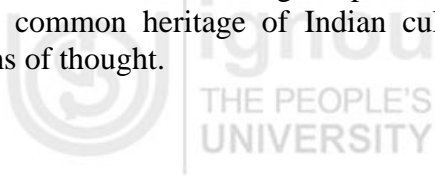
Unit 1 is on "General Characteristics of Indian Philosophy." This unit helps you to understand distinct aspects of Indian Philosophy. It is an outline of the differences between Western and Indian philosophical traditions, and the aims of philosophy differently perceived by the Western and Indian thinkers. This unit forms a sort of background study which should enable you to form a proper perspective of Indian thought.

Unit 2 highlights the significance of the "Indian Scriptures" in the formation of Indian philosophy. In this unit, you are exposed to the sources of Indian culture. However, the study material excludes prominent texts like *Vedas* (also called *Sruti*) and scriptures of *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. Since, there are other units reserved for these sources. This unit, therefore, includes only the following; *smriti*, mythology, *vedangas* and epics.

Unit 3, "Vedas I," introduces the salient features of *Vedic* literature. This is supposed to be the earliest work in the world. Probable date and circumstances responsible for the development of *Vedic* thought are given elementary discussion. You will become familiar with the contents of three *Vedas* (fourth one will be taken up in the next unit). Though the *Upanishads* constitute the concluding stage of the *Vedas*, they receive full-fledged treatment in unit 4. Also, you will be in a position to trace the development of *Vedic* thought from primitive form to more refined form.

Unit 4, "Vedas II," discusses chiefly the content of the *Atherva Veda*. In the previous unit, you learnt about the significance of *Vedic* gods and transition from nature worship to philosophical speculation. You could only access to an outline, which is more or less common to all the three *Vedas*. In this unit, you will be familiarized with the development, which took place in all the three *Vedas* over a period of time, in addition to the teachings of the *Atherva Veda*.

The above given 4 units will give you basic understanding of Indian philosophy required to grasp the profound reflections of great philosophers / sages. In addition, this block will introduce you to the common heritage of Indian culture that has further influenced later movements and streams of thought.



UNIT 2**INDIAN SCRIPTURES**

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The subject matter of *Smriti*
- 2.3 Mythology
- 2.4 Vedangas
- 2.5 Epics
- 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, 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 Shashtra*, 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



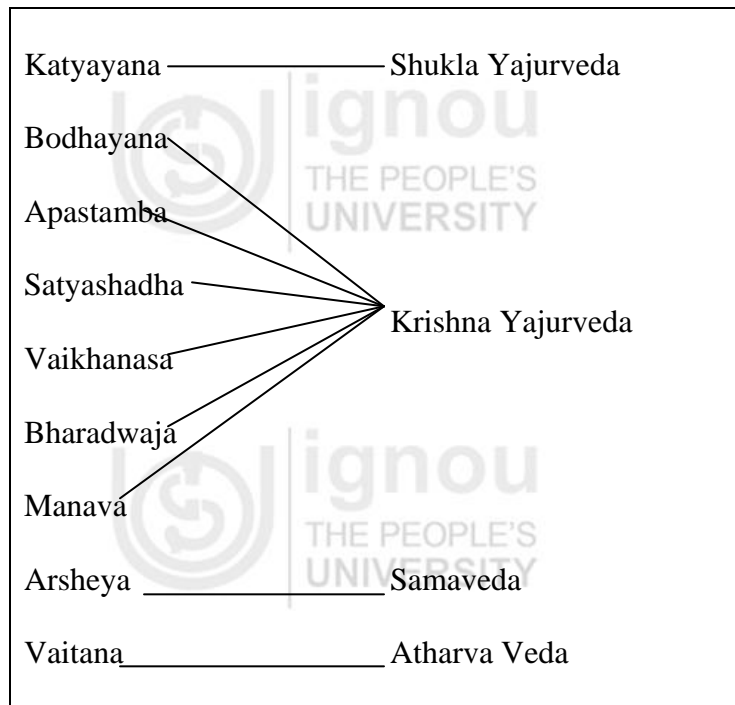
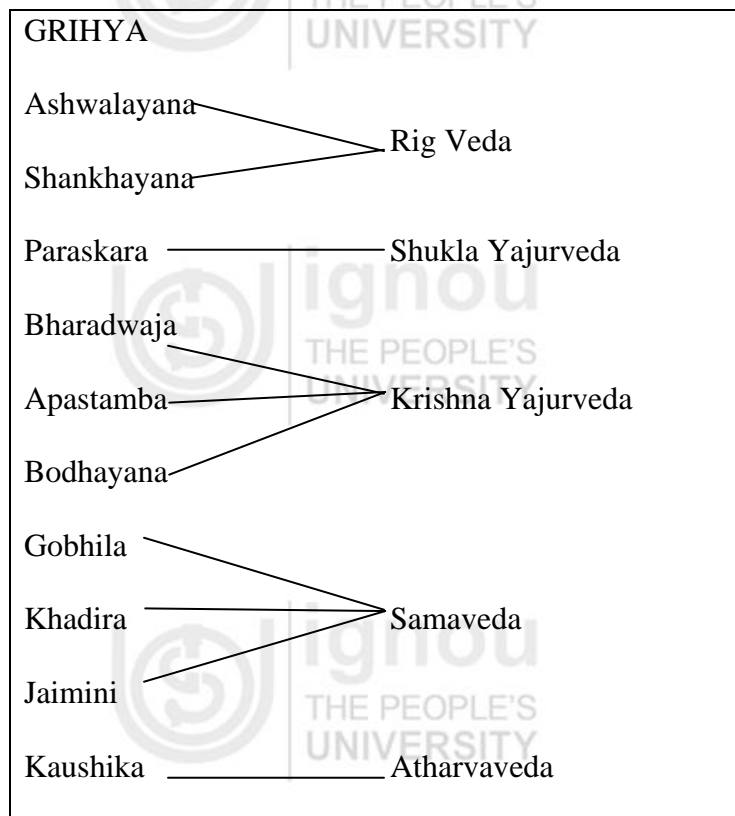


Table - B



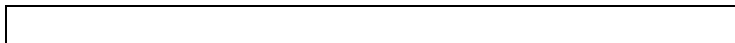
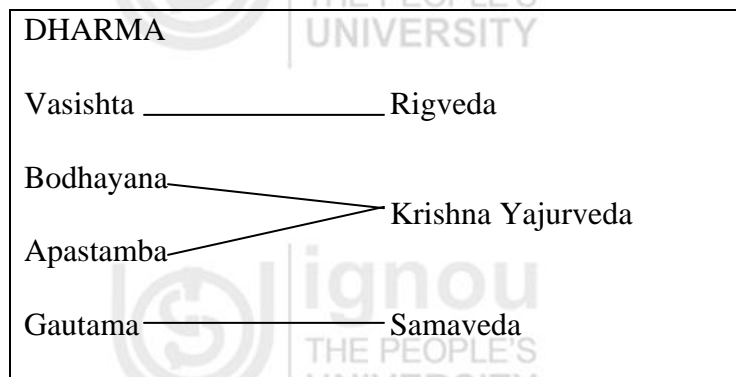


Table - C



Dharma sutras pertaining to *Shukla Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* are not extant.

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 *shrouta 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 *shrouta 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 *Smṛiti* 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 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. 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?

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2) What is meant by *Nishkamakarma*?

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.....

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.

Gangrene: Gangrene is a complication of necrosis (i.e., cell death) characterized by the decay of body tissues, which become black (and/or green).

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., *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.

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 pre-requisite 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.



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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 amount 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 prosperity? 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.



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 focus 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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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. Hiriyanna 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 where as 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*'.

3.3.1 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 *Aranyaka* 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.

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- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Structure of the *Rigveda*
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- 4.7 Key Words
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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 *Ghana Paatha* A B ba A b
 C C ba A bc

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 <i>HAVIS</i> (which is dedicated to a particular god)
2	Adhvar yu	One who utters <i>Swaaha</i> and simultaneously adds sacred material to the sacred fire (<i>Agni Kunda</i>)
3	Udgatr u	Chants <i>Mantras</i> in high pitch
4	Brahm a	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 confined 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*

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.....
.....

2) Write a short note on *Brahmanas*

.....
.....
.....

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 *Yajur veda*. 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* 'nakshatreshthi' 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 use 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 *Smrutis* 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. *Pippalada*, 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 *āyus*, 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 *udgatru* and (e). *Nidhana* sung by the entire team at the end.



BLOCK-2 INTRODUCTION

The Upanishads are Hindu scriptures that constitute the core teachings of Vedanta. They do not belong to any particular period of Sanskrit literature: the oldest, such as the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads, date to the late Brahmana period (around the middle of the first millennium BCE), while the latest were composed in the medieval and early modern period. The Upanishads have exerted an important influence on the rest of Indian Philosophy, and were collectively considered one of the 100 most influential books ever written by the British poet Martin Seymour-Smith. The philosopher and commentator Shankara is thought to have composed commentaries on eleven mukhya or principal Upanishads, those that are generally regarded as the oldest, spanning the late Vedic and Mauryan periods. The Muktika Upanishad (predates 1656) contains a list of 108 canonical Upanishads and lists itself as the final one. Although there are a wide variety of philosophical positions propounded in the Upanishads, commentators since Shankara have usually followed him in seeing *Advaita* as the dominant one.

Unit 1 is on “Introduction to the Upanishads.” 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. Secondly, you should be able to notice various philosophical and primitive scientific issues which have found place in the *Upanishads*. In the end, you should be in a position to understand that philosophy is not merely an intellectual exercise in India, but it is also the guiding factor of human life.

Unit 2 highlights the teachings of “The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.” The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is generally recognized as the most important of the Upanishads. It forms the part of Shatapatha Brahmana. It illustrates all-embracing, absolute, self-luminous and blissful reality of Brahman recognized as Atman. According to Adi Sankara the Upanishad is the greatest; for it contains all the three ways of learning – Upadesa, Upapatti and Upasana. Upadesa, as it teaches the true nature of the mystic experience of the Brahman-Atman; Upapatti with logical explanation, and Upasana on how to understand the Supreme Being by meditation and self realization. The Upanishad is widely known for its philosophical statements.

Unit 3, “*Chandogya*,” explains the philosophical significance of the *Chandogya Upanishad*. Since this is one of the earliest *Upanishads*, a lot of discussion on liturgical aspects can be found. Of course, these may be irrelevant to philosophy. You will also understand how this *Upanishad* established the identity of *Brahman* and *Atman*, and how it teaches on cosmology and evolution of life. The work is the first ever attempt to indulge in quantitative analysis in addition to qualitative analysis.

Unit 4, “*Aitareya & Isa*,” discusses the teachings of these two Upanishads. *Aitareya Upanishad* is a *Mukhya Upanishad*, belongs to Rg Veda. It has a short prose text with three parts with 33 verses. The main theme of the Upanishad is to lead the mind of the sacrificer away from the outer ceremonies to its inner meaning. Like Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, this Upanishad deals with the creation of the universe. It also 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. *Isavasya Upanishad* is also known as *Isa Upanishad*. *Isha Upanishad* belongs to the earlier or

Vedic group of Indian Scriptures. 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, but tries to reconcile the uncompromising extremes.

Unit 5, "Taittiriya," belongs to the Taittiriya school of the *Yajur Veda*. It is divided into three sections called *Vallis*. The first is the *Siksa Valli*. *Siksa* is the first of the six *Vedangas* (limbs or auxiliaries of the Veda); it is the science of phonetics. The second is the *Brahmananda Valli* and the third is the *Bhrigu Valli*. The latter two deal with the knowledge of the Supreme Self, *paramatma-jnana*. The chief objective (*prayojanam*) of the Upanisad is liberation (*moksa, mukti*) from shackles of mundane existence. To achieve this objective or goal, a Brahman-oriented life is prescribed for the aspirants and students. Brahman, the Supreme Being, is Existence-Intelligence-Bliss (*satyam-jnanam-anandam*).

The above given 5 units will give you basic understanding of the Upanishads, which clearly set forth the prime Vedic doctrines like self-realization, *yoga* and meditation, *karma* and reincarnation, which were hidden or kept veiled under the symbols of the older mystery religion. The older Upanishads are usually affixed to a particular Veda, through a Brahmana or Aranyaka.



UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE UPANISHADS

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The *Brahmanas* Vs. the *Upanishads* – clash of classes?
- 1.3 Meaning of the *Upanishads*.
- 1.4 The form
- 1.5 Heterogeneity in thought.
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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*, '*vaatamaatmaadyancha 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 *Brahm 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-shoot of *Atman*. If *purusha* is the body-state then, how can *Atman* also be in this state? The word off-shoot 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.

1. In addition to *jñāna*, *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 jñāna* 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.



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- 2.7 Further Readings and References
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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 'Vaisvanara, 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.

1) What does the cosmic horse symbolize?

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2) 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 Brahmaloaka, 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 the following:

“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 depart 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, “*etasminb 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?

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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 *aśvamedha*), 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 devésv ádhi devá éka ásīt*, 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.

Macrocism and Microcism: Macrocism/microcism 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 *prajā-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.

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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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3.0 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 'Homās'. *Upasanas* and *Homās* 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*?

.....

2) Could you mention some of the attributes of *Brahman* found in this *Upanishad*?

.....

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 *Udbhija* (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*

.....
.....

2) How does Uddaalaka understands truth?

.....
.....
.....

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.

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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, *jaग्रत*

(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, *Swapiti* 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 4**AITAREYA AND ISA**

UNIT 4a**AITAREYA**

Contents

- 4a.0 Objectives
- 4a.1 Introduction
- 4a.2 A Preview
- 4a.3 Discussion
- 4a.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 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 avayat, 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 prajnanam 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 aiksata 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?

.....

2. As you read the Upanishad what is your visualization of creation?

.....

.....

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.

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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 UPANISAD

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 Bhrgu 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, Bhrigu 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 (*Bhrigu 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 Brahmans 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. Sambhutah: 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-sahodaraha*. 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*.

2) What is *Tapas* for Taittiriya Upanishad?.

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.

BLOCK-3 INTRODUCTION

The word *Upanishad* literally means “sitting down near” and implies studying with a spiritual teacher. The six *Upanishads* presented are drawn from the principal *Upanishads*. These *Upanishads* are not to be seen as uniform books – each text is connected to the Veda in which it occurs. The *Upanishadic* teaching is often presented in the context of a particular Vedic hymn or ritual. In the *Vedanta* traditions, the *Upanishads* are referred to as the *sruti prasthanas*, i.e., revealed scripture, from which knowledge of Brahman is obtained. The triad in *Mundaka* 1 refers to the first three *Vedas*, while the triad in *Shvetashvatara* 1 seems to refer to three aspects of God. The present block consists of five units.

Unit 1 is on “*Katha Upanishad*,” which is one of the most beautiful *Upanishads* that answers the basic questions of end of human life. “What happens when one dies? Is everything gone with death? Is there anything left over to survive after one dies? What remains after all living? What is the meaning of *dharma* and *adharma*, knowledge and ignorance, life and death?” The answer ultimately remains in the understanding of the Supreme. All these questions are elaborated along with possible answers and many other related topics are dealt with in a very simple, practical and easy way in the *Katha Upanishad*. This unit introduces to the students the ancient teachings on mystery of life and the ultimate cause of the world.

Unit 2 highlights the teachings of “The *Mundaka Upanishad*,” which has evolved from the *Atharva Veda*. The term ‘*Mundaka*’ means ‘shaven head.’ The teaching of the *Upanishad* shaves (liberates) a 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. The third chapter speaks of ways and means of attaining the self knowledge and the benefit of such knowledge for liberation.

Unit 3, “*Mandukya*,” explains the philosophical significance of the *Mandukya Upanishad*. 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. This unit introduces the students to the analysis of four modes of consciousness: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and illumined consciousness. The reflective analysis of the mystical syllable ‘AUM,’ which stands as a symbol of religious and philosophical tradition of India, is very remarkable in this *Upanishad*.

Unit 4, “*Prasna & Kena*,” discusses the teachings of these two *Upanishads*. *Prasna Upanishad* has evolved from the *atharva veda*. It is also a mystical *Upanishad*. The mantras of *Mundaka Upanishad* have been elaborately dealt in *Prasna Upanishad*. As the name *Prasna* implies, this *Upanishad* is an *Upanishad* of questions. Each chapter is logically connected to the next. Each of the six chapters comprises question asked by a group of six inquiring students on various aspects of reality. *Kenopanishad* is the second *Upanishad* of *Sama Veda*. The *Upanishad* opens with multiple questions. By understanding and practice one can attain transcendent state in which the

knowledge of the Absolute results in immediate liberation. This is possible if one is able to withdraw the mind from worldly object and mediate on the ultimate ‘Truth’ of the universe. The knowledge of Brahman leads to the pathway of liberation by which a soul acquires higher wisdom resulting in identifying oneself with the Supreme.

Unit 5, “Shvetashvatara 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* with emphasis on *Advaita Bhakti*. It is one of the twelve *Upanishads* chosen by Vidyanaraya in his *Sarvopanishad-arthanabhuitiprakasa*. 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 has 113 verses in six chapters.

The above given 5 units on the “Upanishads -2” further speak of *Brahman* and *Atman*, and at times assert the identity of both. Brahman is the ultimate, both transcendent and immanent, the absolute infinite existence, the sum total of all that ever is, was, or shall be. The mystical nature and intense philosophical bent of the Upanishads has led to their explication in numerous manners, giving birth to three main schools of Vedanta and several other philosophical speculations.



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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.

2. Describe the Nature of the Self.

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 JĪVAN-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 *ajñāni*, 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-pāpas* 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-pāpa* 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 a *jñāni*. 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?

.....
.....

2. Discuss the means to self realization.

.....
.....

3. Illustrate the benefits of Knowledge of the Self.

.....
.....

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.

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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 Muṇḍaka 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 Muṇḍaka Upanishad.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Muṇḍaka Upanishad has evolved from the Atharva Veda. It is a highly mystical Upanishad. The term Muṇḍaka 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. Muṇḍaka 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 MUṆḌAKA UPANISHAD

In the Mundaka Upanishad Guru Angiras instructs the ascetic Shaunaka on “that knowledge on knowing which nothing remains to be known .” In Muṇḍaka Upanishad there is a systematic approach to the topic of knowledge of the Self through discrimination and dispassion . In Muṇḍaka 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 Muṇḍaka 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

.....

2. Give the description of Nature of Brahman.

.....

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 illuminates 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, *garbha griaha*, 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 *ishwara* 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*, *vitragah*, 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 too 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

2. Give the realization of the Brahman.

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 *Muṇḍaka 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 Muṇḍaka 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 Muṇḍaka 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, *brahmacharya*, 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.



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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 Māṇḍūkya 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

Māṇḍūkya Upanishad belongs to Atharva Veda . Māṇḍūkya Upanishad derives its name after the seer Māṇḍūkya . Māṇḍūkya 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 *Omkara* which is presented as the only name and symbol of the Absolute Brahman . Māṇḍūkya 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 *Kārika*, commentary on this Upanishad. This is considered to be the first systematic exposition of Advaita Vedānta. Śankara 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 (*jāgrat*), 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 (*prājña*). Māṇḍūkya 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, *mahāvākya*, namely *ayamātmā brahma* (This self is Brahman).

3.3 EXPOSITION OF AUM

The Māṇḍūkya 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 Māṇḍūkya 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. *Akṣaram idam sarvam*.

3.4 NAMES AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The self is presented in the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad as having four names as *viśva*, *taijasa*, *prājña* and *turīya* 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 *viśva* 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 *prājña*. 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 *turīya*.

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 *viśva* 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 *vaiśvanāra*-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 *vaiśvanāra*, enjoys gross objects he is called as enjoyer of the gross. The enjoyment of gross things is in the waking state. The *vaiśvanāra* 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 *Māṇḍūkya 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 *prājña* 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 *prājña*, 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 *prājña* 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 *prājña* 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 *TURĪYA* – FOURTH STATE

The fourth state is termed as *turīya*, as pure consciousness, transcendental, eternal and non dual. The Māṇḍūkya 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.

In *Turīya*, 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 *Īśvara* as a personal God with the quality of *prajñā*, 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 *turīya* 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 *Turīya*. 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 *Turīya*, 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 *Turīya*, 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 *avasthā-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, *sthūla prapañca*. Secondly the mind records and stores all the experiences in the form of impressions, *vāsanās*. 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 avasthā*, 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 (*adr̥ṣtam*), unperceived (*avyavahāryam*), beyond empirical dealings (*agrāhyam*), beyond the grasp of the organs of action (*alaksanam*), without any logical ground of inference, uninferable (*acintyam*), unthinkable, indescribable (*avyapadeśyam*). The self is the one in whom all phenomena have ceased, (*prapañcopaśamam*). It is unchanging (*śāntam*), auspicious (*śivam*), 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 Māṇḍūkya 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*. Vaiśvānara 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. Vaiśvānara 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 .” (Ai. Ā. II. iii. 7:13). Similarly, by *vaiśvānara* 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 *Vaiśvānara*. Because of this very similarity the self is identified with *a*, *ākaraḥ*.

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, *ukāraḥ*. 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 *Viśva* and *Prājñā*. The self heightens, increases, the current of knowledge and becomes equal. *Taijasa* is inwardly conscious.

Prājñā 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 *Viśva* and *Taijasa* measured, because of their entry into and coming out of *prājñā* 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 *prājñā* 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 *Turīya*, 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 *Turīya* 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 who 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 *Turīya* 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 dream state.

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2. Explain the fourth state of consciousness.

3. How does the Upanishad identify the *aksharam* 'AUM' and states of consciousness of Self?

3.12 LET US SUM UP

The Māṇḍūkya 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 Māṇḍūkya 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 Māṇḍūkya 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 ātmā 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 Māṇḍūkya 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 Māṇḍūkya Upanishad as having four names as *viśva*, *taijasa*, *prājña* and *turīya* 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 *prājña* 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 *turīya*, 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 *viśva* 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 *vaiśvanāra*-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 *vaiśvanāra*, 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

- a. 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 Māṇḍūkya 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 Māṇḍūkya 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 4

PRASNA AND KENA

UNIT 4a

PRASNA UPANISHAD

Contents

- 4a.0 Objectives
- 4a.1 Introduction
- 4a.2 Source of All Being
- 4a.3 *Prāṇa*: 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 *Praśna* Upanishad very briefly.

4a.1 INTRODUCTION

Praśna Upanishad has evolved from the *atharva* veda. It is also a mystical Upanishads. This Upanishad is said to be a commentary on the *Muṇḍaka* Upanishad. The mantras of *Muṇḍaka* Upanishad have been elaborately dealt in *Praśna Upanishad*. *Praśna* etymologically means question. As the name *Praśna* implies, this Upanishad is an Upanishad of questions. It contains six chapters. Each *praśna*, 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 *Praśna* has seven while the Sixth *Praśna* 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, Pippalāda, 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 life 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 Kātya , 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 (*prāṇa*, the consumer of food) emerged for producing beings. The sun is *prāṇa* 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 *Prajāpati*. Day and night are *Prajāpati*. 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 (*prāṇa*). The matter (*rayi*, food) is the food which is *Prajāpati* from whom all creatures are born.

4a.3 PRĀṆA: SUSTAINER OF BEINGS

A sage Bhārgava 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 *prāṇa*. It is *prāṇa* 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 Aśvala, 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 Praśna Upanishad explains the ultimate cause of the world?

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4a.5 PRANA AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The grandson of Surya , Gārgya 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 . Samāna 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 *gārhapatya*. The mind is said to be the sacrifice. The fruit of the sacrifice is *udāna*, 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 Satyakāma , 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.

4a.8 LET US SUM UP

The Praśna 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, *prāṇa*. How this vital life energy is the sustainer of all beings and all other energies gain support from *prāṇa* for their existence, are well dealt. As a queen bee the *prāṇa* leads every other energy. The third *praśna* enumerates the relation of *prāṇa* with the human body. The fourth question is about the presence of *prāṇa* 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.

4a.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4a.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. The sage Kabandhi, son of Kātya, 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 (*prāṇa*, the consumer of food) emerged for producing beings. The sun is *prāṇa* 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 *Prajāpati*. Day and night are *Prajāpati*. 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 (*prāṇa*). The matter (*rayi*, food) is the food which is *Prajāpati* from whom all creatures are born.

Check your progress II

1. The sage Satyakāma, 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*.

- 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 ones’ 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 with in 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 with 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 once 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 become 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 understand 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 mantamisuusada 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 yukta.

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.

“Iha 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.

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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

5.0 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 *Sarvopaniṣad-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 COMMENTARIES

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?

.....

2) Why *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is called the Upanishad of grace and love?

.....

.....

.....

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 (*pratyjananan*) and He is the protector of all the worlds (*visvabhavana 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 in *Svetasvatara Upanishad*?

2. What are the means towards *moksha* outlined in *Svetasvatara Upanishad* ?

3. Critically evaluate the association of *Svetasvatara Upanishad* with Saivism and Sankhya system.

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.



BLOCK -4 INTRODUCTION

It is a common misperception that Naastikaas are those who denied the existence of God - this cannot be, as even various Aastika schools like the Saamkhya and the Mimaamsaa disputed the existence/utility of a creator God. The Naastikaas or the heterodox thinkers are those who questioned the authority of the Veda. They were particularly concerned about three issues: 1. the authority of the Veda concerning matters of the spirit, 2. the efficacy of Vedic sacrifices and 3. the supremacy of the Brahmin. It should also be noted that schools like the Saamkhya or Yoga, though labelled orthodox weren't absolutely faithful to the Vedas or its teaching. They merely paid lip service to the Vedas and where their views agreed they were most eager to claim orthodox support. History records many movements opposed to orthodox religion. For our purpose, in this block with 4 units, we've chosen only three, which we consider the most prominent as they find constant mention in the polemical treatises of orthodox schools: Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism.

Unit 1 is on "Carvaka," which is the school of Indian materialism or cārvāka darśana. This is one of the oldest non-Vedic schools. The significance of the name 'Cārvāka' applied to this is not very clear but some scholars opine that Cārvāka was the name of the disciple to whom the doctrine was first communicated by its founder. However, the word Cārvāka literally means 'sweet-tongued' (cāru – vāka). This name is significant in so far as it stands for a doctrine which is superficially very attractive as it advocates the acquisition of pleasure (kāma) and wealth (artha).

Unit 2 highlights the philosophical teachings of "Jainism," which is a very old form of heterodox system which repudiates the teachings of the Vedas. The word 'Jainism' is derived from 'jina' which means conqueror, i.e., one who has conquered one's passions and desires. In all probability Jainism arose in the later Vedic period, and it was revived by Vardhamāna, also called Mahāvīra or the great spiritual hero, in the 6th century B.C.

Unit 3, "Buddhism - 1," explains the early Buddhism known as Pali Buddhism or canonical Buddhism. Early Buddhism must be differentiated from the later schools, which grew up long after when Buddha had taught. This great creed called Buddhism was founded by Siddharta who belonged to the family of Gautama or Gotama. He was called 'Buddha', which means the 'awakened one' after he got enlightenment.

Unit 4, "Buddhism-2," discusses the teachings of the schools of Buddhism. The practical teachings of the Buddha (early Buddhism) was carried forward almost faithfully by all the followers of Buddhism. But the divergence of Mahāyāna from Hīnayāna is in their conception of the ideal of life. Both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna believe in aspiring for one's own salvation, but in Mahāyānism the salvation is not recommended for its own sake but it is regarded as a qualification to strive for the salvation of others. This is the ideal of Bodhisattva as distinguished from that of the Arhant of the Hīnayāna schools.

The above given 4 units of "Heterodox Systems" understand and define itself as those which do not accept the validity of Veda or nāstikas; those which accept the validity of Veda are called the orthodox systems or āstikas, which will be studied in the second part. Cārvāka, Jainism and Buddhism are nāstika or heterodox systems.

UNIT 1 CĀRVĀKA

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Cārvāka metaphysics
- 1.3 Self or soul in the cārvāka view
- 1.4 Denial of God or any transcendental being
- 1.5 Cārvāka epistemology
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- 1.7 Illusion in the cārvāka view
- 1.8 The way of life
- 1.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.10 Key Words
- 1.11 Further Readings and References
- 1.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The systems of Indian philosophy are mainly divided into two groups – the heterodox (nāstika) and orthodox (āstika). Those systems of philosophy which do not accept the validity of Veda are called the heterodox systems or nāstikas and those which accept the validity of Veda are called the orthodox systems or āstikas. Cārvāka, Jainism and Buddhism are nāstika or heterodox systems. In this unit you are expected to understand the teachings of Carvaka on:

- metaphysics
- self or soul
- denial of God or any transcendental being
- epistemology
- way of life

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The first school of thought to be considered is Indian materialism or Cārvāka darśana. This is one of the oldest non-Vedic schools. Cārvāka accepts Bṛhaspati as their teacher. The significance of the name 'Cārvāka' applied to this is not very clear but some scholars opine that Cārvāka was the name of the disciple to whom the doctrine was first communicated by its founder. However, the word Cārvāka literally means 'sweet-tongued' (cāru – vāka). This name is significant in so far as it stands for a doctrine which is superficially very attractive as it advocates the acquisition of pleasure (kāma) and wealth (artha).

The original works of the Cārvāka school are lost. The knowledge about this system is gathered from works by the Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. The views of Cārvāka makes it clear that in India, only spiritualism was not advocated but materialism was equally vigorous. Matter as ultimate reality was first envisaged by Bṛhaspati Laukya of the Rg Veda. However in its primary stage Indian materialism was mingled with scepticism and agnosticism. Bṛhaspati gave it a distinct form.

In its earlier stage, Cārvāka believed in 'svabhāva vāda'. It traced the general characteristic of an object to itself and not to any other extraneous agent. It rejected the idea that nature reveals any divine or transcendental power working behind it. Fire is hot; water is cold and air is temperate to the touch. Who could have brought such distinctions into being? The answer given by Cārvāka is that these are the very essence of each object. In other words, things are what they are and their nature by itself explains all the variety of the universe and the order that is noticeable in it. The Cārvākas do not believe in the existence of any invariable cause of an event. According to them, observing two things together does not mean that one is the cause of the other. Because we observe fire and smoke, can we come to the conclusion fire is the cause of smoke? Is it possible to say that if there is smoke fire is inevitable and it was so in the past when I was not born and will be so when I am dead? However, the information gathered about this school is extremely meager. Mostly we get to know about this system through refutations from its opponents. Sarva darśana samgraha does contain a chapter on this system but even here it is very brief and the information that we can gather is nothing more than what we can gather from other sources. Cārvāka is also known as Lokāyāta meaning that the system is restricted to the world of commonsense. Since most of the schools of Indian philosophy refer to Cārvāka only while criticizing its materialistic tenets we cannot help thinking that these schools may be exaggerating the weak points of the doctrine and/or misinterpreting the tenets.

1.2 CĀRVĀKA METAPHYSICS

Being positivistic Cārvāka claims that perception or pratyaksa is the only means of valid knowledge. Therefore, only what is perceivable is the object of knowledge for Cārvāka. Whatever is not perceivable is rejected as a figment of our imagination. On this ground, matter is the only reality and the world is constituted of only four basic categories, namely, earth, water, fire and air, which are all physical and given in perception. Ether or space is not accepted as the fifth element because it is not perceivable. Matter is both the material and efficient cause of the universe and matter they say has always existed and will always exist. All beings, animate or inanimate are the products of these elementary principles of matter. That matter is the ultimate reality is implied from Bṛhaspati's dictum 'out of matter come forth life.'

1.3 SELF OR SOUL IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

The most important doctrine in the Cārvāka system is that perception (pratyaksha) is the only means of valid knowledge. Since there is no entity called 'soul' as distinct from the body, as given in perception, there is no place for such an entity in this system. According to Cārvāka, when the four forms of matter, namely, earth, water, fire and air combine in a peculiar way, there results what we call a body. Life breath (prāna) and consciousness are present only in such a body. This body is the soul and there is nothing permanent or eternal apart from the body. There

is no life-breath or consciousness in the minute particles (kana) of matter, which are the basic constituents of matter, when they are in a disjointed state. At that time, they remain in a lifeless and insentient state. However, due to that very peculiar and mutual combination or mixture of these elements, there appears life-breath and consciousness. Thus what we call soul is nothing but the conscious body. In other words, consciousness or mind is an epi-phenomenon, a by-product of matter. Such a by-product is possible because qualities not possessed by the elements individually, may arise in the aggregate constituted of them. For example, an intoxicating quality arises from the mingling of yeast and other ingredients, though this quality is not possessed by the ingredients when they exist by themselves. To quote: 'sarvasiddhāntasārasamgraha.' "That intelligence which is found to be embodied in modified forms of the non-intelligent elements is produced in the same way in which the red colour is produced from the combination of betel, areca-nut and lime" Thought is a function of matter. Since consciousness is a property of the body, with the dissolution of the body consciousness disappears and each of its constituent elements is mingled with its kind leaving behind only ashes and dust. Transmigration, retribution etc. are meaningless words.

Cārvāka reinforces the above idea with the following analysis. They say that both in common usage and in the scriptures the self is revealed in as awareness involving the 'I' as the doer (kartr), experiencer (bhoktr) or seer (drasht). In an awareness involving the 'I' generally the body itself is revealed as the doer, experiencer and seer. The Cārvāka says that body is the atman which is characterized by such attributes as implied in expressions like 'I am stout' 'I am young'. 'I am an adult', etc. We have no experience of the separate existence of body and soul. When we say 'I am writing', the self is revealed as the doer. If one is writing while sitting in one's house, then the self is revealed as being in the house. This 'self in the house' is nothing but the body. In a statement like, 'I see the moon while sitting inside my room', 'I' is revealed as the seer and also that 'I' is in the room. This 'I' is nothing but the body who is revealed as the seer. And also as one who is in the room. This 'I' is nothing but the body. In another instance like 'I fell in the pit and suffered much pain', 'I' is revealed as the experiencer, and the 'I' that fell is nothing but the body. Therefore only the body is the self. Thus, analyzing the different cases of awareness involving the 'I', the Cārvākas consider only the body as the self.

The later followers of the system propounded three more views to account for the cause of consciousness. According to some thinkers consciousness is possible only because of the senses. According to another view, the agency was ascribed to the vital power or prana i.e. life, and in the third, mind (manas), was considered to be the agent of knowledge. Though life and mind were considered to be distinct from the body, their distinct existence was not admitted.

The Cārvāka view that there is no self distinct from the body has naturally provoked the keenest controversy. Ātman occupies an important place in other systems of philosophy and hence all the systems here argued against the Cārvāka view. Some of the important arguments against the Cārvāka are given below. Firstly, the opponent of Cārvāka says that if consciousness is a property of the body, it should be either an essential property or an accidental property of the body. If it were an essential property, then it would be inseparable from the body. Then, consciousness should last as long as the body lasts. But that is not the case as we find in the case of fainting and dreamless sleep. If consciousness is only an accidental property of the body then there is a need of an agency (upādhi) to produce consciousness. If so, then we cannot ascribe

consciousness wholly to the body. Again, when one wakes up after a dream, he is able to own the dream experience but if he saw himself as a tiger in the dream he will disown the dream body. Many scholars say that even if we accept that consciousness is always associated with a physical body, it is not possible to say that consciousness ceases to be when the organism breaks up. They say that it may continue in some other manner. Even though this contention cannot be proved, it is said that a doubt is sufficient to reject the Cārvāka stand. Again, even though consciousness is always associated with the body, it is not possible to say that one is the property of the other. To take an example, the eye cannot see in absolute darkness, but for that reason can we say that visual perception is a property of light? Similarly we can say that body is a condition for consciousness to manifest itself. The most important point against the Cārvāka view is, can we see other's dreams, feelings, thoughts, pain, pleasure, etc. as we can see their body? A person's dreams, feelings, etc. are immediately known to that person himself but the others can only see his body without knowing his feelings. The form or complexion of the body can be seen by all those who meet him. Taking another example, the feeling of a toothache as experienced by a patient is not the same as what is known by his dentist. The opponents of Cārvāka say that these facts prove that consciousness is not a property of the physical body but of something else or it is an independent principle which finds its expression in the body.

1.4 DENIAL OF GOD OR ANY TRANSCENDENTAL BEING

As pointed out earlier, the system believes in only what is validated by perception or pratyaksha, and hence there is no place for anything transcendental. It recognizes neither a God who controls the universe nor a conscience which guides man. All the other systems of Indian philosophy insist on ethics and a way of life with a belief in life-after-death. But Cārvāka rejects any such life-after-death which entails that good conduct gets rewarded while wrong doing meets with punishment. Cārvāka rejecting any higher life advocates that man is here to enjoy sensual pleasure. They claim that nature is indifferent to good and bad. The sun shines equally on the good and the evil. Cārvāka says that majority of men believe in deities because of their weakness. There is no heaven or hell, what is there is only this world where we live.

The Cārvāka does not believe in any God as a creator. If there is a God who is omniscient, omnipotent and compassionate, why does he not remove all doubts about his existence in all beings? God cannot be said to be the judge of our merits and demerits. If we believe him to be the judge, he would be guilty of partiality and cruelty. Therefore Cārvāka says that it is better not to have a god than to have a cruel one. There is no such god as the supreme author and governor of this world, but the only god is the earthly king, the ruler of a state, the arbiter of right and wrong in the society.

1.5 CĀRVĀKA EPISTEMOLOGY

According to Cārvāka knowledge is located in the body. They prove this by the rule of 'presence in presence and absence in absence.' The colour of flower is present only when the flower is present, not otherwise. In other words, it is a fact that the colour of the flower is located in the flower, when there is no flower. This is the fact of conforming to presence and absence. Similarly, we find between body and knowledge, there is conformity to agreements in presence and absence. No one can deny that when the body i.e., sense organ is present, knowledge is also present and when the sense organ is absent, knowledge is also absent. When the visual sense

organ is in tact there will be the ability to see while when one is blind, there is no ability to see. Thus by this agreement in presence and absence between sense organ and knowledge it is proved that all knowledge is located only in the sense organ. It is necessary here to clarify that Cārvāka is not accepting 'presence in presence and absence in absence' as an argument. Since they do not admit the validity of inference, but Cārvāka establishes this only through perception.

The doctrine of 'consciousness of matter' (bhūta – caitanya vāda) is another name for "consciousnesses of sense organs" (indria-caitanya-vāda) because for Cārvāka sense organs are admitted to be made of forms of matter like earth, fire, water and air. The objection that is raised against the doctrine of consciousness of matter is as follows. The opponents of this view say that we often recollect in old age what happened in boyhood. This fact cannot be explained if the doctrine of consciousness of matter is accepted. Recollection is the effect caused by the earlier impressions, which are stored in consciousness. But on a bhūta-caitanya-vāda the impressions can be located only in the sense-organs and due to the dissolution of the atoms of matter; the sense-organs of boyhood no longer exist in the old age. Therefore the impressions which were located in the sense organs must have been destroyed. However, following the Cārvāka view, this objection can be answered. Firstly, Cārvāka does not believe in the relation of causality. Therefore their answer to such an objection would be to say that nothing which was not experienced through perception can be admitted. Therefore, according to the Cārvāka view, an impression is not the cause of recollection. Recollection has as its object a thing previously perceived. Therefore no unknown thing is presented. Because of the peculiarity of nature, different things with different forms and in different places and at different times are produced. For this there is no need to admit any cause.

1.6 KNOWLEDGE IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

According to Cārvāka knowledge is generally divided into two classes, viz, apprehension (anubhava) and recollection (smaraṇa). Apprehension is again divided into two classes, namely, perception and assumption (kalpanā). Perception is knowledge acquired by the five sense organs – visual, gustatory, olfactory, cutaneous and auditory which get the knowledge of colour, taste, smell, touch and sound respectively. Valid knowledge or pramāna is the knowledge of objects which are not contradicted by a subsequent knowledge. Sense organs are the instruments of valid knowledge. Thus, according to Cārvāka, all other forms of knowledge like inferential knowledge and verbal testimony are invalid. Since all forms of knowledge except perception are invalid, they are of the nature of assumption. Cārvāka advances some arguments to prove that both inference and verbal knowledge are invalid.

Inference is the process by which we claim one proposition to be true or false on the basis of other propositions. Inference may be either deductive or inductive, but Cārvāka rejects inference itself and hence does not recognize this distinction. As far as the problem of knowledge is concerned, the Cārvāka regard, the deductive, inductive patterns of inference as inextricably bound up with each other. The Cārvāka says that the deductive pattern like –

All men are mortal
Socrates is a man.
Therefore Socrates is mortal

cannot be accepted because unless we know that the propositions, 'All men are mortal' and 'Socrates is a man' are true, we cannot say that Socrates is mortal. At this point let us examine the inductive pattern of inference to see if the universal proposition 'All men are mortal' is valid. In induction, a universal proposition is justified on the basis of particular propositions. That is, by noticing that particular men, x, y, z, are mortal we conclude that all men are mortal. However, according to Cārvāka, this is a leap in the dark. This universal proposition is unwarranted because all we are entitled to know is that, so far, all men have been mortal. Drawing a universal conclusion is to presume that the future will be like the past. But there is nothing in our experience which can justify such a conclusion. Thus, the inferred proposition 'All men are mortal' cannot be reliable knowledge. If this proposition is itself not reliable, there is no scope for any deductive inference. The next criticism of Cārvāka against deductive inference is that it is a case of 'petitio principii' or arguing in a circle or begging the question. Thus, to assert that all men are mortal is at the same time to assert that Socrates is mortal since Socrates is classified as a man. So 'Socrates is mortal' gives us no knowledge or information not already contained in the original proposition.

The general objection to the above criticism of the Cārvāka is that 'All men are mortal' is ascertainable because there is an invariable concomitance that is perceived between man and mortality. To take another example, we can say, "where ever there is smoke, there is fire" because there is an invariable concomitance or connection (vyāpti) between smoke and fire. But the Cārvāka does not accept any claim about invariable concomitance because it goes beyond what is perceived and is perceivable. Universal truths, they say, cannot be asserted because they have no foundation in our perceptual experience. We have no grounds in our experience for going from statements of limited perceived instances to unlimited, unrestricted universal generalizations. Considering the above views of the Cārvāka against inference, it is necessary for us to examine if the Cārvāka can successfully avoid drawing inferences at all. It is easy to see that it is not possible to avoid the use of reason or inference. To take an example, in order to teach his doctrine, the materialist must use language. Language is to utter certain noise (by way of words) and the hearer infers from the noise the meaning and content of what the materialist is saying. This is possible only when the hearer relies on his memory for the meaning of words. Thus, although he Cārvāka denies inference at the theoretical level, he himself cannot help employing inference in his every day living in the midst of men.

Again, we can say that Cārvāka generalizes that perception is reliable because he observes that most cases of perception are reliable. Now, let us grant that perception is a reliable source of knowledge, yet, on what ground can we say that perception alone is a reliable source of knowledge. The most important criticism on this view of the Cārvāka comes from the Sāmkhya thinkers. They ask the question as to how anyone who rejects inference can come to know that a man is ignorant or in doubt or in error. Ignorance, doubt and error in other men cannot possibly be discovered by perception. This must be inferred from conduct or speech. Now we must turn to the Cārvāka critique on testimony. The Cārvāka says that testimony is a reliable source of knowledge only when we presume that those who give this knowledge are honest and trustworthy. On what grounds do we know that some one is always honest and trust worthy? Someone who has been honest so far may be otherwise in future. Hence, according to Cārvāka, verbal testimony is not reliable. It is not a source of valid knowledge. Thus, for Cārvāka verbal

knowledge is also a form of assumption because we can rely on it only after it is known perceptually.

So far as testimony is concerned, most importantly, Cārvāka was eager to refute the validity of Vedic statements. They denounced the authority of the Vedas in very bitter terms. Cārvāka says that the Vedic statements are tainted by the three faults of untruth, self-contradiction and tautology. Cārvāka says that many sacrifices were advocated because it was a source of livelihood for the Brahmins, and they do not have any validity or truth in them. For example, the Vedas say that any one desirous of heaven should perform the asvamedha sacrifice. But no one knows whether there is any world to which one goes after death. Since heaven is not attained while one is living, there is no way to ascertain whether any man has ever attained heaven. The other example taken by the Cārvāka is the statement that performance of a yagna or sacrifice by name putreshti will give a son to a childless couple. This again, the Cārvāka says, can never be verified as true. In some cases, after the performance of this sacrifice a son may be born but that would be due to reasons other than the performance of the yagna. Surely, everyone who performs the yagna will not beget a son. These statements so far as they convey their meaning, are to be taken as traditional heresy, (aitihya,) and not as a source of valid knowledge. The validity of a statement depends on the perception of the objects referred to by it. The things spoken of by the Vedas are totally unfit to be perceived. The validity of the Vedas which speak of extra-ordinary things is not possible at all. Cārvāka makes it clear that there is no statement that can be called valid by itself or svatahprāmānya.

Having given their views on the invalidity of inference and verbal testimony, Cārvāka thinkers proceed to show that other sources of knowledge as accepted by Mimamsa are also invalid. They say that the knowledge gained by postulation is of the nature of assumption. One takes to postulation only on being aware that a certain accepted meaning is unjustifiable in any other way. In such cases even the knower himself is aware that his knowledge is a kind of assumption. It is of the form 'I presume such a meaning'

According to the Mimāmsaka, when sacrifices like Asvamedha etc are performed, a kind of adrsta or merit is procured by the person who performs it. This adrsta or merit is proved by postulation. In other words though the sacrifice which is an act (kriya) will be short lived the merit produced by it will last till one attains heaven. This type of knowledge is arrived by postulation. But can this be called valid asks Cārvāka., This they say can be nothing more than traditional heresy which is nothing but an assumption.

Now coming to non-existence or abhava, it is known by the pramana called non-apprehension or anupalabdhi. In the Cārvāka view non-existences are absolutely unreal. Therefore, in this view, the knowledge of non-existence would be nothing but assumption. Thus in this view, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, postulation and non-apprehension have not been accepted as sources of valid knowledge. Therefore according to Cārvāka perceptual knowledge which is not contradicted is the only source of valid knowledge.

Carvaks consider the mind as one of the five sense organs. Unlike Nyaya-Vaisesika who considers the mind as a separate sense organ to experience pleasure and pain, Cārvāka says that there is no separate sense organ called 'mind'. So strictly speaking there is no mental perception. They explain the experience of feelings as follows. The sense organ called skin (tvac) is

uniformly present everywhere, both outside and inside the body. According to this view that part of the sense organ called 'skin' which is situated inside the body would be the mind or the internal sense organ. The Cārvākas think that with the help of such a sense organ, people experience pleasure and pain. In many cases, pleasure or pain is produced due to the experience of a particular type of touch and its substratum is the inside skin. In other words pleasure is a kind of tactual experience. So also pain too is a kind of tactual experience resulting in some kind of knowledge. Similarly desire and aversion would also be of the nature of knowledge. When we realise that something is the means to get our desires, we get our desires fulfilled, i.e., the ishtasadhana takes us to getting the desired effect. When something we know is harmful we have the feeling of aversion. The substratum of all these is also the sense organ. On this view the knowledge of recollection is also produced with help of the sense organ. Recollection never has for its object an unknown thing. Due to different kinds of physical stimulation people recollect things previously experienced. However, there is no general rule that one type of stimulation results in the recollection of one particular object. There is no cause-effect relation. Each individual will be inspired by a particular modification to recollect some experience depending on certain factors. Therefore uniformly, by framing a general rule, no cause-effect relation can be established between the modification of the sense organ and the recollection.

1. 7 ILLUSION IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

Cārvāka explains the nature of illusory knowledge by subscribing to the theory of asatkhyāti – i.e., awareness of the non-existent. When shell is mistaken for silver, there is illusion. Due to bad light or distance the non-existent silver is perceived and hence what is revealed is actually non-existent and unreal. But in some other cases of illusion, what is revealed is not unreal. For example, a man travelling in a fast moving train sees the lamp post and the trees standing on the sides also moving at the same speed. Here the relation alone is illusory not the objects. That is to say, the speed is related to the train but not to the post or the trees. The man in illusion associates the speed with the objects which are real but are stationary. Hence, in this case it is only the relation which is wrongly perceived.

1.8 THE WAY OF LIFE

Cārvāka does not believe in any spiritual values. Of the four purusārthas or human values, Cārvāka rejects the two values of 'Dharma' and 'Moksha'. Therefore, the human effort is only for the attainment of sensual pleasure (kāma) and wealth (artha), which is the means to get pleasure. Briefly said, it is crude Hedonism. Cārvāka is aware that pleasure is often accompanied by pain. They say that no one throws the grain because it has the husk. Does one stop plucking a lotus because there is thorn; does one stop eating fish because there is bone and scales? A wife or child who creates heaven on earth, when they depart there is bound to be pain. But the life of one with no love in his heart is also miserable and barren. Cārvāka admits that there is sorrow everywhere – in king's palaces and beggar's huts. Still this world of ours is not full of misery. The amount of pleasure is greater than pain. If it were not so, why would people desire to live and get frightened to die? It is important to enjoy the pleasure and to avoid pain, which is invariably associated with it. We should not forego pleasure for the fear of pain. According to Cārvāka, one's aim in life should be to get maximum amount of pleasure. The advice is to make

the best of a bad bargain, and to enjoy. Sometime we wonder if really there could have been any system, which asked man to be just selfish without even being useful to the society in which he lives. It is easy to think of a system without the ideal of 'Moksha' but to think of any system without 'Dharma' is really difficult.

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 Metaphysical position of the Cārvāka?

.....

2. Why do they reject any discussion on God?

.....

3. Explain the theory of illusion according to the Cārvāka.

.....

1.9 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, it can be said that Cārvāka materialism was surely an attempt to break away from the asceticism and dogmatism that was being encouraged during their time. It also points to the freedom of thought that was possible. While we appreciate the atmosphere of free thinking that was prevalent in Indian philosophical thinking, we cannot help wondering if Cārvāka really gave no place to reasoning and ethics. It is quite possible that they rejected only such reasoning which others thought was sufficient to establish the existence of God, transmigration of the soul and so on. Coming to ethics, is it believable that a teacher of the calibre of Brahaspati did not even insist on certain basic human values and instead advocated that man could live like a beast? Since most of our knowledge about Cārvāka is based exclusively on the works of other schools, which are more interested in discrediting and debasing the system than in presenting an objective account of its tenets, may be, what we know about Cārvāka is only a caricature. So one wonders if the Cārvāka really advocated crude Hedonism of the form – eat, drink and be merry.

1.10 KEY WORDS

Hedonism: Hedonism is a school of philosophy which argues that pleasure has an ultimate importance and is the most important pursuit of humanity.

Caricature: A caricature refers to a portrait that exaggerates or distorts the essence of a person or thing to create an easily identifiable visual likeness.

1.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1. Being positivistic Cārvāka claims that perception or pratyakṣa is the only means of valid knowledge. Therefore, only what is perceivable is the object of knowledge for Cārvāka. Whatever is not perceivable is rejected as a figment of our imagination. On this ground, matter is the only reality and the world is constituted of only four basic categories, namely, earth, water, fire and air, which are all physical and given in perception. Ether or space is not accepted as the fifth element because it is not perceivable. Matter is both the material and efficient cause of the universe and matter they say has always existed and will always exist.

2. As pointed out earlier, the system believes in only what is validated by perception or pratyakṣa, and hence there is no place for anything transcendental. It recognizes neither a God who controls the universe nor a conscience which guides man. All the other systems of Indian philosophy insist on ethics and a way of life with a belief in life-after-death. But Cārvāka rejects any such life-after-death which entails that good conduct gets rewarded while wrong doing meets with punishment. Cārvāka rejecting any higher life advocates that man is here to enjoy sensual pleasure. They claim that nature is indifferent to good and bad. The sun shines equally on the good and the evil. Cārvāka says that majority of men believe in deities because of their weakness. There is no heaven or hell, what is there is only this world where we live.

3. Cārvāka explains the nature of illusory knowledge by subscribing to the theory of asatkhyāti – i.e., awareness of the non-existent. When shell is mistaken for silver, there is illusion. Due to bad light or distance the non-existent silver is perceived and hence what is revealed is actually non-existent and unreal. But in some other cases of illusion, what is revealed is not unreal. For example, a man travelling in a fast moving train sees the lamp post and the trees standing on the sides also moving at the same speed. Here the relation alone is illusory not the objects. That is to say, the speed is related to the train but not to the post or the trees. The man in illusion associates

the speed with the objects which are real but are stationary. Hence, in this case it is only the relation which is wrongly perceived.



UNIT 2

JAINISM

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Metaphysics
- 2.3 Jaina Epistemology
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- 2.5 Empirical Perception
- 2.6 Syllogistic Inference
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- 2.10 Key Words
- 2.11 Further Readings and References
- 2.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Jainism is a way old form of heterodox system and was founded by Vardhamāna. This system speaks about independent existence and its position is unique. It teaches to us a new way of life and the ways and methods to conquer life

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Distinguish the system on its metaphysical and epistemological positions.
- The different sources of knowledge.
- Speak about Syllogistic Inference and Authority
- And mainly its practical teaching

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Jainism is a way old form of heterodox system which repudiates the teachings of the Vedas. The word 'Jainism' is derived from 'jina' which means conqueror, i.e., one who has conquered his passions and desires. In all probability Jainism arose in the later Vedic period, and it was revived by Vardhamāna, also called Mahāvīra or the great Spiritual hero, in the 6th century B.C. Vardhamāna was the last in a series of prophets. According to tradition, twenty three prophets preceded him. Vardhamāna was the twenty-fourth prophet or Tirthaikara. Jaina tradition ascribes the origin of the system to Ṛṣabha.

Vardhamāna was born in a princely family in north Bihar about 540 B.C. On attaining his 30th year, he renounced all empirical comforts and led a life of severe abstinence and meditation. After thirteen years of such penance he attained illumination securing freedom from all ills. He then became a 'jina' or a spiritual leader, a word from which the term 'Jainism' is derived.

Jainism, like Buddhism and Cārvāka does not believe in the authority of the Vedas. All these three heterodox systems also are alike in so far as they do not believe in a supreme God. But unlike Cārvāka and Buddhism, Jainism believes in permanent entities like the self and matter, because of which Jainism is described as a theological mean between Brahminism and Buddhism.

2.2 METAPHYSICS

The distinguishing feature of Jainism is its belief in the eternal and independent existence of spirit and matter or in the animate and inanimate respectively called jiva and ajiva. But by spirit we have to understand only the individual self and not the supreme soul as in the Upanishads. According to Jainism, the jivas are many in number and even material entities possess a soul. One of the curious features of Jainism is the belief in the variable size of the jiva in its empirical condition. It is capable of expansion and contraction according to the dimension of the physical body with being. In their empirical form they are classified as having one sense, two senses and so forth. Jains believe that the jiva is both an experient (bhokta) and an agent (karta). The intrinsic nature of the jiva is perfection and is characterized by infinite intelligence, infinite peace, infinite nature of the jiva is obscured though not destroyed. Again, the difference in bound jivan is due to the degrees of their connection with matter. Karma is conceived as subtle particles of matter, and the presence of karmic, matter in the soul is the cause of soul's bondage.

Consciousness, according to Jainism, is the very essence of jiva. They say that in an inorganic body, the soul's consciousness is dormant while it is active in the organic body. Knowledge is a quality of the soul and a conscious self experiences perception, intention, etc. Jains prove the existence of the soul by pointing out that the soul is directly experienced owing to the 'I – consciousness' (ahampratyaaya) in "I did, I do, and I shall do". Jains point out that doubt presupposes a doubter as its ground. That ground is a soul or conscious self. Further, jains point out that consciousness cannot be the quality of a material body because body has form and knowledge, feeling, etc. Again, the material body cannot be the substratum of consciousness because perception, memory, etc are absent in deep sleep or death even though the body is present.

Jiva's relation to matter explains the Jaina view of knowledge. Knowledge is not something that characterizes the jiva but it constitutes jiva's very essence. The jiva therefore can know everything unaided directly and exactly as it is if there is no impediment in its way. In other words, all knowledge is in the soul though it manifests itself only when the impeding media are removed. The knowledge which a jiva has is fragmentary because of the obstruction caused by karma which interferes with its power of perception. The impediments are passions and emotions. The Jaina, therefore, recognizes differences in the extent of enlightenment that a self may possess depending upon the extent to which obstacles (karma) have been removed. But there can be no self without knowledge or knowledge without a self. The culmination of enlightenment is reached when the obstacles are completely broken down. This is kevala jñāna when one becomes omniscient. This knowledge is pure because it is immediate and is obtained without any aid like sense, mind, etc. Thus, from the Jaina point of view, senses and mind are aids to knowledge only from the empirical point of view. They are also impediments being part of matter.

Jaina epistemology points out that the process of knowledge does not modify the object of knowledge. The consciousness of the jīva is ever active and this activity reveals its own nature as well as that of the object. As light reveals itself and other objects, so also knowledge reveals itself and other objects. Again in knowing anything, the self knows itself simultaneously. If it did not know itself, nothing else could impart this knowledge to it.

Consciousness which is the essence of jīva has two manifestations – (i) darśana or intuition (ii) jñāna or knowledge. In the case of intuition, the details are not perceived while in knowledge the details are also known. Darśana is simple apprehension while jñāna is conceptual knowledge. In its perfect condition referred to as Kevala Jñāna, darśana and jñāna are together. Such knowledge is perfect, free from any doubt or uncertainty.

Apart from jīva, the other everlasting category of the universe is ajīva. According to Jainism, the whole universe can be brought under one or other of the two everlasting, uncreated, co-existing but independent categories described as jīva and ajīva. That which has consciousness is jīva and that which has no consciousness but can be touched, tasted, seen and smelt is ajīva. Jīva and ajīva do not correspond to 'I' and 'not I', but it is an objective classification of things in the universe. This classification clearly shows the realistic and relative stand point of Jainism. The ajīva is the object and Jainism says that as sweaty as there is a subject that knows so sweaty there is an object that is known.

The term 'ajīva' is used to denote the five categories of pudgala (matter), kāla (time), dharma (motion), adharma (rest) and ākāśa (space). Of these, dharma, adharma, ākāśa and kāla are without form (arūpa) and matter is with form (rūpa). Their essential distinction from the jīva is that they as such lack life and concessions.

Pudgala denotes matter or material object in general. Matter possesses colour, flavour, odour and touch. Sound is considered not as a quality but as a mode of it. Matter is not created but indistinguishable and real. It is real and independent of the perceiving mind. The basic definition of pudgala, which stand for matter in Jainism, is "that which can be experienced by the five sense organs." The second definition is derived from the etymology of the compound word 'pudgala'. The term 'pud' refers to the process of combination and 'gala' stand for disassociation. The significance of the definition lies in the atomic theory of the Jains. The ultimate constituent of matter is aṇu or paramānu (atom)¹. The atoms are all of the same kind, yet they can give rise to an infinite variety of things. Even the elements of earth, water, fire and air are divisible and have a structure. By developing the respective characteristics of odour, flavour, etc. the atoms become differentiated and thus the material world is divided though the atoms are not different from one another qualitatively. Therefore matter has two forms, one atomic or simple and the other compound called skanda. The process of combination of atoms gives rise to the molecules or skanda. All perceivable objects are skandas. It is the combination of molecules that is responsible for the different types of objects with varying qualities. Six forms of skanda are recognized

¹ The term 'anu' which means atom is found in the *Upanishads* but there is no systematic atomic theory in the *Upanishads*. We can say that the *Jaina* atomic theory is the earliest.

Bhadra – Bhadra: This type of skanda when split cannot regain the original undivided form. For example, solids.

Bhadra: When split, this type of skanda has the capacity to join together, for example, liquids

Bhadra – Suksma: This type of skanda appears gross but is really subtle. It can neither be split, nor pierced through or taken up in hand, for example, Sun, heat, shadow, light, etc. Minute particles of these are evident to senses.

Suksma – Bhadra: This type of skanda appears subtle but is really gross, for example, sensation of touch, colour and sound.

& 6.Suksma: Skandas of this type are extremely subtle and they are beyond sense perception. It is matter in this subtle form that constitute karma, which by its influx into the jīva brings on samsāra or bondage.

From the atomic theory, it is clear that the Jain view of reality is identity and change. The Jain view states that to suffer change and yet endure is the privilege of existence. The change or modes are known as paryāyas, which comes into being, persist for at least for one instant and then disappear. The change is due to the different modes of combination of atoms. Underlying all the changing modes is the fact there is the identity of the ultimate constituents, the atoms. Thus in the atoms, we find the identity element, in their combining to form molecules and in the division of and addition of atoms, we find the element of change. According to Jainism, the nature of reality is such that there is a constant factor while there is change, which is also real. Thus Jainism defines reality as one-in-many.

A thing seems to assume various shapes and to undergo diverse changes. For example, clay can assume various shapes and can undergo diverse changes. Upanishads held that since in all changes the clay matter remained permanent, that alone was true where as the change of form and state were but appearances, the nature of which cannot be rationally explained. According to Upanishads, the unchanging substance alone is true and the changing forms are mere illusions of the senses. On the other hand, according to Buddhism, the changing qualities alone can be perceived and that there is no unchanging substance behind them. What we perceive as clay, says the Buddhist, is some specific quality and what we perceive as jug is also some quality. For the Buddhist qualities do not imply that there are substances to which they adhere. We can neither perceive nor infer such pure substances. As against these two views of the Upanishads and Buddhism, Jainism holds that the nature of reality is both permanent and changing. Jainism claims that they are able to speak of two contradictory characteristics in the same reality because experience warrants it. Thus, they say that, both Upanishads and Buddhism contain only an element of truth but not the whole truth as given in experience. Jains point out that in all experience, there are three elements: - (i). Some qualities appear to remain unchanged. (ii). Some new qualities are generated. (iii). Some old qualities are destroyed. It is true that qualities of things are changing but all qualities are not changing. Thus, when a jug is made, it means that clay lump is destroyed and a jug is generated and the clay itself is permanent. Thus clay has become lost in some form, has generated itself in another and remained permanent in another form. It is by virtue of three unchanged qualities that a thing is said to be permanent though undergoing change, which we call the substance. Hence the nature of being (sat) is neither the absolutely unchangeable nor the momentary changing qualities of existence, but reality is that which involves a permanent unit. While every moment it loses some qualities and gains some.

After taking a view of the nature of Pudgala, it is necessary to understand the nature of the other categories of ajīva like, kāla (time), ākāśa (space), dharma and adharma. Of these time or kāla is infinite but it has cycles in it, each cycle having two eras of equal duration described as 'Avasarpini' and 'Utsarpini'. Avasarpini is the descending era in which virtue gradually decreases. Utsarpini is the ascending era where virtue gradually increases. According to Jainism, the present era is the descending era, where virtue is gradually decreasing. Ākāśa or space is also infinite and is conceived as being of two parts, namely, Lokākāśa and Alokākāśa. In Lokākāśa movement is possible and in Alokākāśa movement is not possible. Whatever exists exists only in Lokākāśa (like matter). This universe is cosmos, not a chaos which means that there must be certain laws of motion and rest. Dharma is the principle of motion and adharma is the principle of rest. The two principles are non-active, non-physical, non-atomic and non-discrete in structure. Dharma and adharma are neutral conditions of movement and rest. They are the forces cause movement and rest. Space gives room to subsist; dharma makes it possible for things to move and be moved and adharma to rest. Dharma as a principle of motion does not create motion but only helps those things, which have the capacity to move. Similarly, adharma does not interfere with moving objects but like the earth it is the condition of rest for objects on it. Both dharma and adharma do not have same qualities. Empirically they were considered to possess a number of space-points (pradeśas) but transcendently they are considered as each possessing one pradeśa only. They are considered to be responsible for the systematic character of the universe.

2.3 JAINA EPISTEMOLOGY

According to Jainism, knowledge is of two forms – Pramāna or knowledge of a thing as it is in itself and naya or knowledge of a thing in its relation. The doctrine of nayas or standpoints is a peculiar feature of Jaina logic. A naya is a standpoint from which we make a statement about a thing. What is true from one standpoint may not be true from another. This is a reference to the relativity of knowledge. The particle views are due to the purposes that we pursue. But to profess one particular standpoint is not to deny the others. The general character of reality is given in general practical views. There are several ways in which nayas are divided. There are artha (meaning) nayas where in the division is based on whether the emphasis is on the particulars or on the general views. So also there are dravyārtika nayas based on the point of view of substance, and paryāyārtika nayas based on the point of view of modification or condition.

The most important use of these standpoints is of course the Syād-Vāda or the saptabhangi. It is the conception of reality as extremely indeterminate in its nature. It signifies that the universe may be looked at from many points of view and each point of view yields a different conclusion (anekānta). The nature of reality is not expressed by any one of them. In its concrete richness, reality admits all predicates. Therefore, strictly speaking, every proposition is only conditional. Absolute affirmation and absolute negation are both erroneous. The Jains illustrate this point by narrating the story of six blind men examining an elephant and arriving at different conclusions regarding its form. While, in fact each observer has only a part of the truth. The seven steps of syādvāda are:

May be, is (syāt asti)

May be, is not (syāt nāsti)

May be, is and is not (syāt astu bāsti)

May be, is inexpressible (syāt avaktavyah)

May be, is and is inexpressible (syāt asti ca avaktavyah)

May be, is not and is inexpressible (syāt nāsti ca avaktavyah)

May be, is, is not and is inexpressible (syāt asti ca nāsti ca avaktavyah)

Each naya or point of view represents one of the many ways in which a thing can be looked at. When any one point of view is mistaken for the whole, we have a nayābhāsa or a fallacy. As pointed out earlier, Jains believe that both the Upanisadic thinkers who believe in permanence and the Buddhist thinkers who believe in change are one-sided, and that both are against experience. Since the Jains believe in both permanence and change, they have difficulty in expressing the nature of reality in one step. But we have to mention here that the Jaina criticism against the Upanisadic view is not warranted because the Jaina is only speaking of the empirical reality while the Upanisads are speaking of the transcendent. But the Jains while rightly drawing our attention to the relativity of all judgments and knowledge fail to understand that all talk of relativity makes sense only in the light of some absolute. But Jainism never leaves the plane of the relative. Further, the seven-fold scheme is only a mechanical assemblage of the various possible judgments but not a synthesis of them. Jains forget that the conjunction of several partial truths is not equivalent to the whole truth. It is a theory of identity and difference but not identity in difference. If the Jaina logic is built on the law of contradiction, then they forget that the law of contradiction is only the negative aspect of the law of identity. But the Jains believe in kevala jñāna, which is the right intuitive experience. It is perfect knowledge, which is in fact a case of absolute-izing the relativity of knowledge. If, in this experience, there is the unity of the subject, object and knowledge, then their claim to relativistic pluralism breaks down.

The Jains admit of five kinds of knowledge – mati, śruti, avadhi, manah-paryāya and kevala.

Mati jñāna: is the knowledge by means of senses or indriyas and mind. Mind is called animdriya. This is knowledge by acquaintance.

Śruti: refers to testimony. It is knowledge derived from signs, symbols or words. This is knowledge by description.

Avadhi: is clairvoyance or it is knowledge of things even when it is at a distance in space and time. However, since it is not beyond the spatio-temporal existence it is limited.

manah-paryāya: is telepathy. It is the direct knowledge of the thought of others. It is knowing other minds.

Kevala: is perfect knowledge, which comprehends all substances and their modifications. It is omniscience, and is unlimited by space, time or objects. This is independent knowledge not dependent on the senses and can only be felt but not described. This is the knowledge that is acquired by the liberated souls.

These five types of knowledge are brought under two broad divisions – pratyaksa (immediate) and paroksa (mediate). The details of this classification shall be discussed in the next section under the heading Pramānas.

Of the five kinds of knowledge mentioned above, the first three kinds of knowledge, namely, mati, śruti and avadhi are liable to error but manah-paryāya and kevala cannot be ever wrong. Validity of knowledge consists in its practical efficiency enabling us to get what is good and avoid what is evil. Valid knowledge is a faithful representation of objects and therefore practically useful. It is said, “... the validity is either determined intrinsically or extrinsically.” (Pramāna Mīmāmsa 1-1-8 Hemachandra). Jains believe in both intrinsic and extrinsic validity. The determination of validity in some cases is achieved by a cognition by itself. Under this we can cite the example of all those cognitions, which are habitual. Like we know water quenches thirst and we do not require another confirmatory cognition to establish the validity of this proposition. On some occasions the experience of validity is secured by means of an external datum. Its validity is determined by (i) a consequent confirmatory cognition of the same object. (ii) a cognition of its pragmatic consequences (iii) the cognition of an object invariably or universally concomitant with it. This is extrinsic validity because here the validity is determined by other means.

According to Jains wrong knowledge means disharmony with the real nature of the object. Invalid knowledge represents things in relation in which they do not exist. When we mistake a rope for a snake, our error consists in seeing a snake where it is not. Erroneous knowledge is of three kinds. They are, (i). Samśaya or doubt (ii). Viparyaya or mistake (iii). Anadhyavaśaya or wrong knowledge, which is caused by carelessness or indifference. According to Jains, invalid knowledge leads to contradiction.

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 essence of Jiva? What are its manifestations? Explain

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The Jains believe in three sources of valid knowledge, viz., perception, inference and testimony. These sources of knowledge are discussed under two broad divisions, direct and indirect – pratyaksa and paroksa.

Jaina thinkers divide perceptual knowledge into categories. The first division is that where perceptual cognition is directly related to the soul. This perception is called direct perception, immediate perception, transcendental perception, extra-sensory perception or real perception. Direct perception is defined as follows: “The perfect manifestation of the innate nature of a soul emerging on a total annihilation of all obstructive veils is called direct perception.” (Pramāna Mīmāmsa of Hemachandra I, 1.15). Consciousness is the very essence of the self and the self is self-luminous. So this form of perception is where self is manifested as it is. It is pāmārthika pratyaksa. It is pure, perfect and is independent of the senses and the mind. This occurs when all the obscuring veils on the self disappear or when karma is totally annihilated. Then, the soul manifests itself in a pure form and perceives the whole of reality in a direct and immediate manner. Hence it is called kevala jñāna or omniscience. The other forms of transcendental knowledge accepted by Jains are, clairvoyance and telepathy. Clairvoyance is confined to the objects having form. Only those things having shape, colour, etc. can be perceived through this faculty. Thus Avadhi or clairvoyance is ‘limited’ in so far as it is limited by space and time. Telepathy or manah-paryāya is the direct apprehension of the modes of minds. This is confined to the abode of human beings. A person possessing the faculty of telepathy can directly cognize the thought of people. This is possessed by an ascetic with strict mental and physical discipline. This is higher, purer and more lucid than clairvoyance. As pointed out earlier, the culmination of knowledge is kevala jñāna.

2.5 EMPIRICAL PERCEPTION

This form of perception is conditioned by the senses and the mind and it is limited. It is samvyāvahārika pratyakasa. The senses are five in number that of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing and each have a specific capacity to know. Each of these is of two kinds, physical and psychical. Mind is the organ of apprehension of all the senses. It is designated as anindriya (non a sense), suksma-indria or inner self (antahkarana). Mind is also of two kinds, physical and psychical. The physical refers to the material entity and psychical to the conscious activity. Empirical perception is of four kinds, viz.,

Sensation (avagraha),
Speculation (īha),
Determinate perception (avaya)
Retention (dharana).

Sensation is the indeterminate awareness of an object when the senses come in contact with the object. Speculation is to speculate and understand the specific details of what is sensed. Determinate perception is the determination of specific characteristics of the objects of speculation and it is here that one makes a definite proposition about what has been sensed. Finally, retention is the condition of memory, enabling recollection of a past event. It is the latest mental trace left over by the previous experience.

The other sources of knowledge are discussed under non-perceptual cognition, or paroksa. The most important sources of this kind of knowledge are inference and testimony. The Jains add that recollection; recognition and induction are also paroksa jñāna. This form of knowledge is less vivid than pratyaḥsa.

Inference is the knowledge of the probandum (sādhyā) on the strength of the probans (sādhana). The knowledge of the probandum, which is of the nature of a real fact and which arises from a probans either observed or expressly stated, is called inference or anumāna. Probandum stands for the object of inference. It is that which is not perceived but need to be inferred and this is indicated by a sign or probans. In an example like, “The hill is on fire because there is smoke”, the probans, i.e., smoke is what we perceive. From this sign (smoke), we infer the unperceived fire or we get the knowledge of fire on the hill. This is possible because there is an invariable relation or concomitance between the probes and the probandum. Going back to our example, the inference of fire from the perception of smoke is possible because there is an invariable concomitance or relation between smoke and fire. Inference can be of two types, one is to get rid of doubts in one’s own mind, which is called svārthānumāna and the other is to provide knowledge for others which is known as parārthānamāna or syllogistic inference. The invariable relation is called vyāpti. Which are of different kinds, like essential identity, cause and effect or co-inherent in the same substratum. These relationships can be illustrated by examples. When a word is heard, the meaning of the word is inferred because there is a relation of identity between the word and what it stands for. Cause and effect relation can be illustrated by examples like, from dark clouds we can infer that there will be rain or from smoke we can infer that there must be fire. The illustration of the co-inherent in the same substratum is the taste and colour belonging to one and the same fruit.

2.6 SYLLOGISTIC INFERENCE

Pramāna Mīmāṃsa II 1.1. Syllogistic inference is definite cognition resulting from a statement of a probans having the characteristic of necessary concomitance with the probandum. In other words, the minimum condition for any inference is some kind of vyāpti between the middle and the major terms. The probans is the sign or middle term which is perceived (smoke) and the probandum is the major term (fire) or what is inferred though it is not perceived because there is such an invariable relation between the two (i.e., smoke and fire). Therefore by perceiving ‘smoke on the hill’ we can conclude that the ‘hill has got fire’

2.7 AUTHORITY

The knowledge acquired by the words of reliable persons is called ‘authority.’ it is also known as ‘verbal testimony’. He who possesses right knowledge and then makes the right judgment is said to be reliable or āpta. The words of a reliable person are always true. The authority is of two kinds: ordinary or laukika and extra-ordinary or alaukika. Laukika sabda is from one who is reliable while alaukika sabda is from one who is omniscient.

2.8 PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF JAINISM

Practical teachings are the special feature of Jainism. As the word 'jina' suggests, the aim of Jaina Philosophy is to enable man to conquer his passions and desires. The chief feature of the discipline that is prescribed is to extreme severity. It prescribes a rigorous discipline both for the ascetic and the householder. Jainism, like so many other doctrines, insists on both enlightenment and conduct. Morality is essential to reform man and to prevent the formation of new karma. The path is through the three jewels or triratna or the three precious principles of life. They are:
Right faith (samyagdarśana)
Right knowledge (samyajjñāna)
Right conduct (samyak cāritra)

Of these three, the first place is given to right faith. They say that even right activity accompanied by false convictions loses much of its value. Right faith is the unshaken belief in Jaina scriptures and the teachings intended to dispel skepticism or doubt, which comes in the way of spiritual growth. Right knowledge is the knowledge of Jaina religion and Philosophy. Right conduct is translating into action what has been learnt and believed to be true. It is a very important part of the discipline for it is through right action one can get rid of karma and reach the goal of life. To get rid of karma, Jains prescribe five ethical vows. These are to be followed rigidly by the Jain ascetics and they are slightly modified for the lay disciplines. The five great vows of Jainism for the monks are called 'Mahāvratas' and those to be followed by the laymen are called 'anuvratas'. The five vows are:

Ahimsā – The principle of ahimsā or non-injury is the most significant of the five vows. It refers to the positive virtue of not harming any living being. One should practice the vow of non-violence in thought, word and deed. It is not simply avoiding giving pain to others; it is also helping the suffering, which is of at most importance. It is only by overcoming passions like pride, prejudice, attachment and hatred that one can successfully tread the path of ahimsa.

Satya – The second vow is that of truthfulness. Adherence to truth in all circumstances is the satya mahāvratā. Speech without deliberation, speech in anger, and speech motivated by avarice or by fear is to be shunned.

Asteya – The principle of asteya is the vow of non-stealing. Stealing is unlawful possession of the belongings of others and should be abhorred. Accepting bribes, smuggling, black marketing and the like are all instances of the violation of the principle of asteya.

Brahma-carya – This vow refers to the principle of celibacy. The ascetics must practice the vow of chastity in thought, word and deed and not violate the virtue of continence. Such a code of conduct leads to self-control over the senses and the attainment of perfect self-discipline.

Aparigraha – This vow emphasizes the spirit of renunciation. The ascetic should not desire material things. An attitude of complete detachment is advised.

In the case of a layman, he is asked to follow the anu-vratas, in which the last two are replaced by chastity and contentment, or strict limitation of one's wants.

The aim of life is to get oneself disentangled from karma. In most systems of Indian philosophy, karma stands for action but in Jainism, karma is conceived as subtle particles of matter and the cause of soul's bondage is the presence of karmic matter in it. Again, the difference in jīvas is due to degrees of their connections with matter. According to Jainism, karma being material permeates the jīva through and through weighting it down to the mundane level. It is said that

karma unites with the soul like heat unites with iron and water with milk and the soul so united with karma is the soul in bondage. Karma particles bind men for varying lengths of time depending on the intensity of passions and actions. Jainism also makes it clear that karma can be completely broken down by self-discipline. While giving details of the course of practical discipline, Jaina explains the scheme of nava-tattva, or nine categories. These categories are jīva, ajīva, punya, papa, asrava, bandha, samvara, nirjara and moksa.

Jīva and ajīva stand for the conscious principle and matter respectively. Punya and papa stands for the virtuous deeds and the vicious deeds respectively. Asrava and bandha are the categories through which the jīva gets bound. Certain psychical conditions like ignorance of the ultimate truth and passion lead to the movement of karmic particles towards the soul. That is asrava. Then, there is the actual influx of karma and that is bandha. The falling away of karma is also through two stages. First through right knowledge and self restraint influx of fresh karma is stopped and that is samvara, then shedding of karma already these takes place. That is nirjara, which will take place by itself after samvara but the process may be hastened by self-training. After this one gets to moksa when the partnership between jīva and ajīva (karmic matter) is dissolved and the ideal character is restored in jīva, which then transcended samsara and flies up to its permanent abode at the summit of lokākāsa being omniscient and with everlasting peace. During the period intervening between enlightenment and actual attainment of godhead (all liberated souls are gods) the enlightened jīva dwell apart from fresh karmic influence. During the interval the devotee is termed 'arhant' and he becomes a 'siddha' or perfected soul at actual liberation, he is disembodied and reaches lokākāsa. The stage of siddha represents a trans-empirical stage. The acquisition of siddhā Lord is synonymous with attaining 'Nrvāna' while the arhants are the omniscient, perfect souls who await nirvāna after release from the physical body.

2.9 LET US SUM UP

Jainism does not believe in the existence of any supreme God. According to Jains, karma operates by itself and not under the guidance of any supreme God. arhant is the embodied ideal saint who is designated as a God, but he does not confer any favours or boons. He is worshiped only as a 'model', an inspiration for those who seek perfection. Every liberated soul is divine. They are enlightened beings having attained kevala jñāna or omniscience. Some arhants are said to be tirthankara type. The tirthankara type of arhant is the one who is engaged in preaching and propagating Jainism.



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 are the four kinds of empirical perception?

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2) Which should be the three precious principles of life according to Jainism?

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2.10 KEY WORDS

Epistemological Realism: Epistemological realism is a philosophical position, a subcategory of objectivism, holding that what you know about an object exists independently of your mind. It opposes epistemological idealism.

Relativism: Relativism is the idea that some elements or aspects of experience or culture are relative to, i.e., dependent on other elements or aspect

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2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1) Consciousness is the very essence of jiva.

Consciousness which is the essence of jīva has two manifestations –
(i) darśana or intuition (ii) jñāna or know

(i) Darśana is simple apprehension while (ii) jñāna is conceptual knowledge.

For Jains wrong knowledge means disharmony with the real nature of the object. Invalid knowledge represents things in relation in which they do not exist. When we mistake a rope for a snake, our error consists in seeing a snake where it is not. Erroneous knowledge is of three kinds. They are, (i). Samśaya or doubt (ii). Viparyaya or mistake (iii). Anadhyavaśaya or wrong knowledge, which is caused by carelessness or indifference. According to Jains, invalid knowledge leads to contradiction.

Answers to Check your progress II

1) Empirical perception is of four kinds, viz,

- (i) Sensation (avagraha),
- (ii) Speculation (īha),
- (iii) Determinate perception (avaya)
- (iv) Retention (dharana).

(i) Sensation is the indeterminate awareness of an object when the senses come in contact with the object.

(ii) Speculation is to speculate and understand the specific details of what is sensed.

(iii) Determinate perception is the determination of specific characteristics of the objects of speculation and it is here that one makes a definite proposition about what has been sensed. And,

(iv) Retention is the condition of memory, enabling recollection of a past event. It is the latest mental trace left over by the previous experience.

2) The main aim of Jaina Philosophy is to enable man to conquer his passions and desires.

The three precious principles of life are:

- (i) Right faith (samyagdarśana)
- (ii) Right knowledge (samyajjñāna)
- (iii) Right conduct (samyak cāritra)

Of these three, the first place is given to right faith. They say that even right activity accompanied by false convictions loses much of its value.

Right faith is the unshaken belief in Jaina scriptures and the teachings intended to dispel skepticism or doubt, which comes in the way of spiritual growth.

Right knowledge is the knowledge of Jaina religion and Philosophy.

Right conduct is translating into action what has been learnt and believed to be true.

It is a very important part of the discipline for it is through right action one can get rid of karma and reach the goal of life.

UNIT 3

BUDDHISM -I

Contents

3.0 Objectives

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

Early Buddhism is also known as Pali Buddhism or canonical Buddhism. Early Buddhism must be differentiated from the later schools, which grew up long after when Buddha had taught. This great creed called Buddhism was founded by Siddharta who belonged to the family of Gautama or Gotama. He was called 'Buddha', which means the 'awakened one' after he got enlightenment. In this Unit you will come to know:

- metaphysical views of Buddhism
- doctrine of dependent origination
- practical teachings of Buddhism
- nirvana
- karma

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Buddha was born in the sixth century B.C. It was an age of spiritual restlessness. Society was going away from real Philosophy. The whole sacrificial cult became very complicated. The Vedic sacrifices meant conformity to the letters of the law instead of the spirit of worship. The princely patron's encouragement made way for priestly greed. Thus, there was a need for the re-orientation of faith. The Buddha came on the philosophic scene at such a time in history and gave to the world an extremely pragmatic and scientific Philosophy.

When Siddharta woke up to the fact that the world is full of suffering, his mind got restless to find a solution for the ills of life. In fact, for him the individual instances of suffering were illustrations of a universal problem. Finding that the things of sense are empty, Siddharta decided to renounce the comfort of the palace and became a wanderer, for in those days the seekers of light began their search by repudiating the comforts of life and wandering in search of

truth. He made this great renunciation at the age of twenty-nine and first tried to find spiritual rest by philosophic thought under the tutelage of great teachers of that time. But soon he found that subtle dialectics are no cure for mental unrest. The other means of escape was through bodily austerities. He wandered with five ascetics who underwent bodily mortifications of the most severe type. However, the fervour of asceticism did not give him any solace and hence decided to have a fresh course of self-discipline characterized by less vigour. He won over all evil thoughts and dispositions, conquered desire (tṛṣṇā), attachment (rāga) and aversion (arati). He gained a deep insight into the mysteries of existence – first of self and then of human destiny in general and lastly of the universe as a whole. Thus seated under the bodhi tree, a new light dawned on Siddharta and he became the enlightened one or the Buddha. Legend says that when he sat under the tree in meditation, Māra tried to distract him. But the Buddha conquered every temptation (Māra) and hence he is called hero (Vira), the Victor (Jina) and Tathāgata, the one who knows things as they are. He is Arhant, the worthy. Buddha's mission now was to help the great multitude of people who were living in sin and infamy. He preached the Gospel of the four Noble Truths and the eight-fold path to the troubled world. The peace and serenity on Buddha's face just made him very dear to any one who came under his influence. His first pupils were his five ascetic friends who had gone away from him when as Siddharta, he decided to give up severe asceticism.

Buddha never wrote any books and hence there is a certain amount of vagueness about his teachings as they were gathered from works that were compiled a long time after his death. However, the total literature of Buddhism is so large that it is quite impossible to master all of them. There are many versions of the sacred scriptures written either in Prakṛt or a form of Sanskrit with its own syntax and vocabulary. It is not possible to say that all that has come down to us is absolutely authentic and are master's own words. Certain old works are identified as those which serve as the basis of our knowledge of early Buddhism. These works are written in Pāli, which is a dialect of Sanskrit.

The canon is generally known as Tripiṭaka (The Three Baskets) after the three sections into which it is divided. They are: –

Suttas or utterances of Buddha himself
Vinaya or rules of conduct
Abhidhamma or philosophic discussions.

These piṭakas are often in the form of dialogues and there is no methodical discussion in them of any topic in the modern sense of the term. They contain many metaphors and allegories, which is also the cause of some indefiniteness about the doctrine of the Buddha. Of the three piṭakas the suttas are very important because they contain discourses by Buddha. It is divided into five sections:

Digha Nikāya (long discourses)
Majjima Nikāya (discourses of shorter length)
Saṅyutta Nikāya (collection of short pronouncements)
Anjguttara Nikāya (short passages arranged in sections)

Khuddaka Nikāya (a matter of works of varying types containing Dhammapada, Jataka tales, etc.)

The Vinaya Pitaka contains the rules of conduct of the Buddhist order of monks and nuns. The Abhidhamma piṭaka is a collection of seven works on Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics.

There are numerous other works in Pāli, which are not generally considered canonical. The most important are the commentaries on the books of the canon. It is believed that most of these were compiled in Ceylon by the great doctor Buddhaghosa of the fifth century A.D. from earlier commentaries. At a later date, Jataka verses were made into prose and that is one of the most beautiful narrative literatures. Buddhaghosa is also the author of 'Visudhimagga', which means 'The way of purification'. Another very important Pāli work of early date is 'Milindapañha' i.e., the questions of king Menander. The inscriptions of emperor Ashoka (273-232 B.C.) are also of great value because they are inspired by Buddhism inculcating the moral philosophy of Buddhism.

Though Buddhism is a non-Vedic school and essentially different from the Upanishads in one sense we can say that certain Upanishadic tendencies are carried to their logical conclusions by the Buddha. For example, the Upanishads are against the belief in a personal God and the Buddha dismisses that conception altogether. So also, the self is explained negatively in the Upanishads and the Buddha eliminates the conception of a self, altogether. Buddha's belief in Karma doctrine is a clear proof of the connection of Buddhism with the Upanishads.

When anyone thinks of the general tendencies of Buddhism, the first thought that comes up is its pessimistic flavor. However, by any yardstick, Buddhism cannot be called pessimistic. If the Sarnath sermon is to be taken as our guide we may take one point of the Buddha's instruction as basic, namely, just as there are ills (heya), and their causes (heya-hetu), so also a cure (hāna) and a path (hānapāya) exist. This is just like the science of medicine. If there is an ailment (roga), there will be a cause for it (roga-hetu). Once the cause of the ailment is diagnosed, the cure is not far away. This shows that though the Buddha said that all is suffering – Sarvam Dukham, he did not stop at that. Buddha's doctrine is not a creed of despair. Even though he points out that misery is a fact, he does not say that man is doomed. Man can get peace here and now, says Buddha. Therefore Buddhism is not pessimistic but a doctrine of hope. Secondly, as pointed out earlier, its fundamental ideas and essential spirit is scientific. During the time of the Buddha excessive discussions were leading to anarchy of thought. The emphasis was on the performance of sacrifices. People were becoming more dogmatic and less positivistic. Buddha revolted against their trend and rejected all that was not positively known. Hence, he was against the Vedic rituals and Vedic tradition. He did not believe in any supernatural power. To put it briefly, Buddha did not believe in anything beyond the sphere of perception and reason. One of the most important features of Buddhism is that it is pragmatic. Buddha taught only what was necessary for overcoming evil. Deliverance from pain and evil was his one concern and he neither found time nor need to unravel metaphysical subtleties. He was evidently practical in his teachings. He said, "Philosophy purifies none, peace alone does." From what has been said so far it is clear that we should not look for any metaphysics as such in the teachings of the Buddha. We can truly say that, though there is no metaphysical aim in the teachings of the Buddha, there is a metaphysical view underlying it.

3.2 METAPHYSICAL VIEWS OF BUDDHISM

Early Buddhism recognizes the distinction between consciousness and matter but does not accept either a permanent self or a permanent unchanging material or physical world. Buddha established that there is nothing permanent and declared that everything is anatta or not self. Buddhist writings declare thus – “At any moment of experience, we stumble upon some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure.” As given in experience, the Buddha believed in these transient sensations and said that it is not necessary to believe that these sensations belong to a permanent self. That is, he believed in only the states of consciousness. To him the sensations and the thought together with the physical frame with which they are associated are themselves the self. He described the self as an aggregate or Samghāta. It is a psycho-physical entity known as nāma-rūpa (name and form). Nāma or name refers to the psychical factors and rūpa or form refers to the physical frame. A close analysis of the ‘self’ shows that it is made up of five factors or skandas. They are:

Sensation or feeling (vedanā) of pleasure, pain and indifference;
Perception or idea (samjñā) conceptual knowledge;
Conative disposition (samskāra);
Discriminative intelligence or reason (vijñāna);
Physical form.

This brings out clearly the analytical character of Buddhism highlighting the psychological basis of its analysis. The explanation given about material things is similar. To the Buddha the attributes themselves are the objects and he denied any self-sustaining substance, apart from them. Thus, the material things, like the self, are also aggregates. This is Buddha’s nairatmya vāda or soul denial.

The other important view of Buddhism is kṣanika vāda or the Law of Moment-ness, according to which both the mental and physical reality are subjected to constant flux. When we look around us we notice that everything is subjected to constant change and nothing is permanent. To some extent, it is language, which leads to the mistaken notion of something enduring. We use one word to refer to one thing and one name to refer to one particular person and that makes us believe that a thing or a person is enduring even though it is constantly changing. Buddhism says that when we say “It thinks” or “It is white”, we mean by the ‘It’, nothing more than when we say, “It rains”. There are several parables in Buddhist literature to bring home to us the full import of the doctrine. The most famous parable is that of the chariot. In the work, “Questions of king Milinda”, a conversation between the Greek King Menander and a Buddhist sage, Nāgasena is recorded. The sage described the doctrine of no self but the king was not convinced. In order to make the king understand the theory, the sage asked him if the king came on foot or in a chariot. To this the king replied that he always traveled in a chariot. On learning this, the sage asked the king to define the chariot. Counting on the various parts of the chariot, the sage asked if we could call the pole, or the wheels or the axle as the chariot. This example made the king realize that ‘chariot’ is just a symbol for the various parts assembled together in a particular way. According to Buddhism, both soul and matter exist only as complexes and neither is a

single self-contained entity. The fundamental teaching of Buddhism is the doctrine of dependent origination.

3.3 DOCTRINE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

According to this doctrine, “this arising that arises, this ceasing that ceases to be.” The doctrine of universal change and impermanence follows from this fundamental teaching of Buddhism, viz., Pratitya Samutpāda. Change can be understood in terms of conditional existence. This law of causation is the basis of continuity. Both the elements of the material world and of the mental world are subjected to laws of physical and moral causation. This law insists on the necessity of sufficient conditions. Buddha neither believed in ‘Being nor non-Being’; but only in ‘Becoming’. Thus he gave a dynamic explanation of the real. The symbols generally used to illustrate this conception are the stream of water and the self-consuming flame. Just as the flame and the stream of water, both the material and the physical reality are subjected to constant flux. When we view the aggregate, be it the self or the material object in time, we notice that they are not the same even for two moments. So the self and the material world are each a flux (saṃtāna). Just as the flame and the stream of water, everything is only a series (vithi) – a succession of similar things or happenings. The notion of fixity we have of them is wholly fictitious. There were two views current during the time when Buddha philosophized – one believing in Being and the other in non-Being. Buddha opposed both these views when he propounded his view of reality as dynamic. . Thus, according to Buddhism, neither Being nor non-Being is the truth; the truth is that everything is ‘Becoming’. We know through experience that everything is characterized by birth, growth, decay and death, which means that everything is subjected to constant change and that nothing is permanent. What is important to note is that for Buddha, there is incessant change but at the same time there is nothing that changes. There is action but no agent. Since everything is a series, it is relevant to ask as to what is the relation between any two successive members of the series. One explanation given during the time of the Buddha was that it is accidental, and the other explanation did recognize a causal relation as underlying the succession but introduced a supernatural power like God in addition to the known factors. Buddha rejected both these views and postulated necessity as the sole governing factor. In denying chance he took his stand on the uniformity of nature and in denying supernatural intervention; he disassociated himself from all dogmatic religion. According to Buddhism, the causal law governing all change in the phenomenal world is not a mere unfolding of a cause but the result of certain external factors co-operating with it. Change can be understood in terms of conditional existence. In other words, a causal series will not begin unless certain conditions are fulfilled and the series will continue so long as all the factors are there. The series will end only when one or more co-operating factors are withdrawn. For example, the flame series will not start until the wick, the oil, etc. are there and will continue till one or more of the factors are withdrawn. The law itself is universal and does not admit of exceptions but yet the operation of the law is dependent on conditions. This is the precise reason why it is called “dependent origination” or “pratītya samutpāda” - that being present, this becomes; from the arising of that, this arises”. The literal meaning of the phrase ‘pratītya samutpāda’ is “arising in correlation with”. Conversely, the law indicates that when the conditions cease to be, the series will cease, or “from the cessation of that, this ceases.”

The Buddhist psychology, which explains their views on epistemology, is also based on the theory of causation, or law of dependent origination. As pointed out earlier, the *nāma rūpa* (aggregate of name and form) refer to five conditions and they arise depending upon one another. In *Samyutta-Nikāya* III 1.0.1, it is said, “The four *mahābhūtas* (the elements of fire, air, water and earth) were the *hetu* and *paccaya* (reason and cause) for the communication of the *rupakkhandha* (form). Contact is the cause of the communication of the feelings (*vedanā*); sense contact is also the *hetu* and *paccaya* for the communication of the *sannakkandha* (specific knowing), sense-contact is also the *hetu* and *paccaya* for the communication of the *sankhārakkandha* (mental states and synthetic activity). But *nāma rūpa* is the *hetu* and *paccaya* for the communication of the *vinnanakkanda* (reason).”

Prañīya Samutpāda or the theory of dependent origination is the most significant in early Buddhism. It is central to all the views of the Buddha. Unlike the other causal theories like *svabhāva vāda*, which lead to determinism, Buddha’s views make room for human effort. After the great renunciation, under the bodhi tree, it is the law of contingent causation, which, at last, flashed across Siddharta’s mind and made him the ‘Buddha’. The theory states, “that becoming, this becomes or that being absent, this does not become” which means that every effect has a series of causes and hence the Buddha went on to find the cause of suffering and the method by which with one’s own effort, freedom from suffering is possible. Before going on to Buddha’s practical teachings it is necessary to examine some of the criticism leveled against Buddhism.

One of the commonly alluded criticisms against *Kṣanika vāda* or the doctrine of momentariness is as to how such a theory can account for memory. If every thing is continually renewed, it is important to know how recognition of objects, the apprehension of objects as the same that we already know is explained. Buddhism answers that things in the two moments of cognition are only similar and we mistake them to be the same. In other words, all recognition is erroneous since similarity is mistaken for identity. As regards memory, the Buddhist explanation is that each phase of experience as it appears and disappears is wrought up into the next, so that every successive phase has within it all the potentialities of its predecessors which, manifest when the conditions are favorable. Hence, though a man is not the same in two successive moments, he is not quite different. The self is not only a collection entity but also a recollect-ive entity. It is on this basis Buddhism establishes moral responsibility. This is clear from the suttas of Buddhism and their *Jataka* Stories, where a sinner is pointed at and told that he alone reaps the fruits of his actions. Buddhism denies unity in the sense of identity of material, but recognizes continuity in its place. If we represent two self-series as A1, A2, A3...and B1, B2, B3, ... though the two series are not identical, there is a kinship among the members of each series. That is, there is a kinship between A1, A2, A3...etc., but A1 will not have a kinship with B1 or A2 with B2 and so on. Thus, Buddhism recognizes a ‘fluid self’, which cannot be regarded as altogether a dissimilar or distinct series. Several thinkers commenting on this aspect of Buddhism have opined that by giving the above theory, the Buddhist has tacitly admitted a self, transcending the experience of the moment because a series can never become aware of itself. Some others are of the opinion that Buddha did not disbelieve in the concept of self but the later followers of the Buddha innovated the negation of the self. This point is debatable but it goes without saying that the principles of impermanence and no self are fundamental to the teachings of the Buddha.

Early Buddhism recognized only four elements or bhūtas viz., earth, fire and air. They did not believe in the concept of ākāśa. However, we must remember that these names are only conventional and they do not stand for anything more than the sense data associated with them viz., hardness, fluidity, heat and pressure respectively. The material world, our senses and our bodies are all aggregates derived from these elements and they are called bhautika to indicate their secondary character. The psychical aspects are called caitta or mental “Dharma dhātu” is the term used in Buddhism to refer to the causal elements that are responsible for the manifestation of phenomena. Dharma dhātu has two aspects:

The world of phenomenal manifestation
The state of ‘thusness’ or noumena

The causal theory of Buddhism usually applies to the phenomenal world but in speaking of the ideal world as realized the latter sense is also applied. Taking the first sense of the term ‘dharma dhātu’ it refers to the actual world, the realm of all elements of phenomenal existence. Causal origination is thus the theory, which sets out the fact that all beings are correlative, interdependent and mutually originating. Matter and mind arise simultaneously due to interdependence. It refers to the totality of all existence- Dharma dhātu, in its reference to the world, speaks of the sphere of samsāra (life flux), the cycle of birth and death, which is one of dynamic becoming. Thus, all created beings dependent on the principle of cause and effect are within its realm. Taken in this sense, only the Buddha or enlightened being is outside the dharma dhātu. In the second sense, i.e., in the sense of thusness or noumena, it signifies the state of liberation or ‘Nirvāna.’ It is the stage of cessation of all becoming, it is the true state of all things in the universe, freedom from bondage and the final release from suffering.

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 made Buddha think that the world is full of suffering?

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2. Does Buddhism have Upanishadic tendencies?

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3.4 PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM

Practical teachings of Buddhism are in conformity with their theoretical philosophy. If all the things in the world are impermanent, then our effort to secure them either for ourselves or for others is meaningless. The very desire for them is a delusion. We must get over desire. More than desiring things, we are overcome with a desire to preserve ourselves. Since there is no self (anatta), we should get over the craving. With the negation of self, all the narrow selfish

impulses necessarily disappear, along with the whole range of narrow love and hatred. Since the belief in self-identity is false, ignorance or avidya becomes the true source of all evil. Thus, here in Buddhism, as in the Upanishads, evil is traced to ignorance and the way to escape from samsāra is through right knowledge. But the meaning of 'avidya' in the two teachings is different. Avidya in the Upanishads represents the ignorance of the essential unity of all existence but in Buddhism, it means the failure to realize the hollowness of the self. The true knowledge or vidya in Buddhism is called the Arya-Satya or the Four Noble Truths. They are:

Duhkha – Suffering

Samudaya – The origin of suffering – cause of sufferings

Nirodha – Removal of suffering

Mārga – The way to remove suffering

According to the Buddha, the failure to see the four noble truths is what leads to suffering and rebirth. Buddha looks upon suffering as a great disease and while seeking a remedy, he follows the scientific method of a physician. After arriving at the right cause of misery, he proposes the remedy. Without a proper diagnosis, no disease will get cured. Similarly, the Buddha gives the remedy after analyzing the causes of suffering. That is the reason why the Buddha is called the Great Healer. The first three noble truths speak of the theoretical aspect of the Buddhist teaching and the last its practical aspect.

The First Noble Truth is about the fact that there is suffering. The Buddhist texts say that birth is painful, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful, union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is the separation from the pleasant, any craving that is not satisfied is painful; in short, the five aggregates (body, feeling, perception, will and reason) which spring from attachment are painful.

The Second Noble Truth is about the origin of suffering. That there is a cause of suffering, follows from the belief that whatever is, must have had a cause. Pratitya samut pāda clearly states that "from the arising of that, this arises. Now, suffering is a fact and it must have had a cause. Buddha found this cause to be ignorance in the last resort. The aim of the Buddha was to find out the process by which ignorance leads to evil. The way in which ignorance causes misery is explained with the help of twelve links. They are:

Ignorance (avidya)

Action (Samskāra)

Consciousness (vijñāna)

Name and form (nāma rūpa)

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

Contact between the senses and the objects (sparśa)

Sensation (vedanā)

Desire (tṛṣṇā)

Clinging to existence (upādāna)

Being (bhava)

Re-birth (jāti)

Pain old age and death (jarā-maraṇa)

This chain of causation is not restricted only to the present life but it includes reference to the past and the future. Putting it briefly we can say that ignorance is the root cause of suffering. From ignorance proceeds, desire, desire leads to activity and it brings in its turn rebirth with its fresh desires. This is the vicious cycle of samsāra – the bhava-cakra or the wheel of existence.

The Third Noble Truth is the removal of suffering. Breaking the chain of existence is bhava-nirodha. Buddha states that for each condition in the chain, there is a cause, a source or origination. If the condition ceases, the effect does not occur. When the attachments to desires are absent, the fetters of lust, hate and delusion are rooted out. Thus, one succeeds in breaking the links of the chain of causation. The goal of liberation is attained which is the end of all suffering and cessation of the cycle of birth and death. The Buddhist causal theory clearly states though the process which gives rise to suffering involves a necessity, the necessity is not absolute. A series though began, admits of being put an end to.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the way to remove suffering. This gives the path that one has to follow in order to overcome suffering. The path of self-discipline, which leads man to the desired goal of emancipation from samsāra is eight-fold. They are –

Right faith
Right resolve
Right speech
Right action
Right living
Right effort
Right thought
Right concentration

To put it briefly, prajña or right knowledge of the four-fold truth is the basis of the whole discipline. But prajña does not mean mere intellectual conviction, but it means an intuitive experience. Buddha said that salvation is possible only through self-reliance. For knowledge to become an internal certainty, sīla and samādhi are necessary. Sīla means right conduct which includes virtues like veracity, contentment and non-injury (ahimsā). Samādhi is meditation, which aids in securing tranquility of mind and gaining a clear insight into the truth.

Right living prescribed for the laymen is different from what is described for the monks. But in both cases, the discipline is not very severe. Buddha strikes a mean between self-indulgence and self-mortification. Buddha says that self-indulgence is a life of pleasure and devoted to desire and enjoyment, which is base, ignoble, unspiritual, unworthy and unreal. Again, self-mortification is gloomy, unworthy and unreal. Buddha says that the perfect path lies between the two extremes. It is the middle way (Madhyama Pratipath) which enlightens the eyes, enlightens the mind which leads to rest, to knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvāna.

3.5 NIRVANA

The goal of discipline is Nirvāna. Nirvāna is the Summum Bonacm of Buddhism and the person who has attained the ultimate goal is called Arhant. What is Mokṣa to the Hindu, the Tao is to the Chinese mystic, Fana to the Sufi, Eternal Life to the followers of Jesus, that is Nirvāna to the Buddhist. The word Nirvāna literally means, ‘blowing out’ or ‘becoming cool’. It is the

blowing out of the fire of lust (rāga), of resentment (dosa), of glamour (moha). It is thus becoming cool, reaching perfect calm, to be reached within the four corners of the present life. An Arhant, after the dissolution of his body and mind, reaches the state of Pari-Nirvāna. Thus, “blowing-out” and “cooling” is not complete annihilation but the extinction or dying out of hot passion. It is the destruction of the fires of lust, hatred and ignorance. These two implications of Nirvāna, namely, ‘blowing-out’ and ‘cooling’ are to be understood as the negative and positive sides of one ultimate state of being which cannot be adequately described in terms of thought but it is given to one’s own experience. Buddha asked his followers to be a light on to themselves.

3.6 KARMA

Finally, the knowledge on Buddhism will not be complete without a discussion on Buddha’s views on Karma. Karma is one of the most important doctrines of Buddhism. Buddhism resolves the human being into a number of elements called dhammas, which possess no permanent existence. Thus to Buddhist belief in transmigration seems inconsistent with their denial of an enduring self. Deussen criticizes Buddhism by saying that Karma needs an individual bearer like the Upanishadic self and Buddhists, therefore, are contradicting themselves by believing in Karma and denying an enduring self. However, the belief in the Karma doctrine really presents no difficulty to Buddhism. If there can be action without an agent, there can be transmigration without a transmigrating self.

The word Karma means ‘deeds’ or in singular ‘action’. So there is really nothing wrong in saying that a deed is not immortal and what transmigrates is not any soul but only one’s character. But the question still remains – How can character that is no entity in itself be reborn? When a person dies, his character lives after him and by its force brings into existence a being, who, through possessing a different form is entirely influenced by it. Though the dead person does not revive, another may be born with the same disposition. When a lamp is burning, there is transmission of light and heat. They are transmitted every moment and when one lamp is lit from another (just before the former is extinguished), a new series of flames is started. Similarly, according to Buddha, there is rebirth not only at the end of this life but also at every instant. What is of importance is to note that the word Karma covers two distinct ideas, namely, the deed itself and the effects of that deed in modifying the subsequent character and fortunes of the doer. The Buddhists say that their subjective effect continues after death into the next life. Karma expresses not that which a man inherits from his ancestors but that which he inherits from himself in some previous state of existence.

In samyutta-Nikāya (III 1.4), it is said, “Let any one who holds self dear, that self keep from wickedness, for happiness can never be found by anyone of evil deeds.” So, Buddha preached that merit gained in this life will yield a blessing in the next. In Milindapañha it is said that Karma is the cause of inequality in the world.

Buddhism makes a distinction between fruitful and barren Karma. When a man’s deeds are performed from the three conditions of covetousness, hatred and infatuation, he reaps the fruition of those deeds be it in the present life or in some subsequent one. Those deeds done without such base conditions are barren Karma and they are abandoned uprooted and pulled out, not liable to spring again.

Buddha makes it clear that the law of Karma operates in such a way that the character of the individual and his disposition is of great importance in giving reward and punishments even when the deed performed by two persons is the same. In Anuttara Nikāya (iii.99), it is explained that one person who has done a slight deed of wickedness may expiate it in the present life. That man who is not proficient in the management of his body, percepts, concentration and wisdom, who is bound by wickedness would go to hell where as another man may not go to hell for the same mistake because he is proficient in the management of his body, .percepts concentration and wisdom and is greatly involved in good deeds. The word ‘hell’ here means only the severity of the punishment one gets if they do not correct themselves. This concept Buddha explains by saying that when a lump of salt is put into a glass of water, it tastes very salty but the same amount of salt added to Ganga River will not make any difference to the river.

To be born and to die here and be born elsewhere is called the round of existence. This process will go on until the person overcomes his thirst for being. This is bhava-cakra, which gets annulled only by knowing the Four Noble Truths – It is then that one reaches ‘Nirvāna’

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 are the four noble truths enumerated by Buddha?

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2. What is liberation according to Buddhism?

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

We see from the above description that for the Buddha, the self is a continuity and hence there is no inconsistency in upholding the Karma doctrine. It admits that nothing that we do disappears without leaving its results behind and the good or evil so resulting recoils upon the doer. Buddha rationalized the whole doctrine and he disassociated it from all supernatural and materialistic appanage. Thus the law of Karma in Buddhism is a law in the sphere of morality working according to its nature and by itself.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Appanage: An appanage is the grant of an estate, titles, offices, or other things of value to the younger male children of a sovereign, who under the system of primogeniture would otherwise have no inheritance.

The Jataka Tales: The Jataka Tales refer to a voluminous body of folklore-like literature native to India concerning the previous births (jati) of the Buddha. The word most specifically refers to a text division of the Pali Canon of Theravada Buddhism, included in the Khuddaka Nikaya of the Sutta Pitaka. Jataka also refers to the traditional commentary on this book.

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3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1. When Siddharta woke up to the fact that the world is full of suffering, his mind got restless to find a solution for the ills of life. In fact, for him the individual instances of suffering were illustrations of a universal problem. Finding that the things of sense are empty, Siddharta decided to renounce the comfort of the palace and became a wanderer, for in those days the seekers of light began their search by repudiating the comforts of life and wandering in search of truth.

2. Though Buddhism is a non-Vedic school and essentially different from the Upanishads in one sense we can say that certain Upanishadic tendencies are carried to their logical conclusions by the Buddha. For example, the Upanishads are against the belief in a personal God and the Buddha dismisses that conception altogether. So also, the self is explained negatively in the Upanishads and the Buddha eliminates the conception of a self, altogether. Buddha's belief in Karma doctrine is a clear proof of the connection of Buddhism with the Upanishads.

Answers to Check your progress II

1. The true knowledge or vidya in Buddhism is called the Arya-Satya or the Four Noble Truths. They are:
Duhkha – Suffering
Samudaya – The origin of suffering – cause of sufferings
Nirodha – Removal of suffering
Mārga – The way to remove suffering

2. The word Nirvāna literally means, 'blowing out' or 'becoming cool'. It is the blowing out of the fire of lust (rāga), of resentment (dosa), of glamour (moha). It is thus becoming cool, reaching perfect calm, to be reached within the four corners of the present life. An Arhant, after the dissolution of his body and mind, reaches the state of Pari-Nirvāna. Thus, "blowing-out" and "cooling" is not complete annihilation but the extinction or dying out of hot passion, if it is the destruction of the fires of lust, hatred and ignorance. These two implications of Nirvāna, namely, 'blowing-out' and 'cooling' are to be understood as the negative and positive sides of one ultimate state of being which cannot be adequately described in terms of thought but it is given to one's own experience. Buddha asked his followers to be a light on to themselves.



UNIT 4

BUDDHISM – II

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

Buddhism as propounded by Gautama Buddha is pragmatic and practical. The chief aim of Buddha's philosophy was to find a way out of suffering. Hence he did not indulge in abstract, metaphysical arguments. However, he left many things unsaid which led to some vagueness leading to many interpretations on the teachings of the Buddha. This resulted in the birth of many schools of Buddhism. Scholars point out that there were as many as eighteen in India itself. But for convenience the schools have been broadly classified under two heads – Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. In this unit you are expected to study:

- Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika Schools
- Yogācāra School of Buddhism
- Mādhyamikā School
- Metaphysical views of the Schools of Buddhism
- Practical teachings of the Schools of Buddhism

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After the enlightenment, the Buddha gave his first sermon to his five friends, which is termed as “Dharma Cakrapravartana” or “Setting in motion the wheel of the Law”. Gradually, the number of disciples increased and they became the missionaries to spread the new Dharma. Buddha's teachings spread widely in course of time and eventually grew into a world religion. When Buddha visited his father's court, even his family members became his disciples. Having given his councils and directions to Ananda, his favorite disciple, the Buddha died at the age of eighty.

Quite early in the history of Buddhism, sectarian differences appeared. The tradition tells us that two great councils of the Buddhist order took place. The first one was soon after the death of the Buddha and the second a hundred years later. At the second council, a Schism occurred and the sect of Mahāyāna broke away on account of differences on point of monastic order and also on certain doctrinal differences. At this point, the main body claimed that they were faithful to the teachings of the Buddha and called themselves 'Theravāda' or 'the teaching of the elders'.

Mahāyāna literally means the 'great vessel' and Hīnayāna means the 'small vessel'. Obviously, the name Hīnayāna must have been devised by the Mahāyāna thinkers because Hīnayāna means 'low' and they called the other sect of Buddhism as being lower than their own.

The fundamental truths on which Buddhism is founded are not metaphysical or theological, but rather psychological. However, after Buddha's death his followers got more interested in subtle metaphysical arguments. The enlightenment of the Buddha was the knowledge of 'Dependent Origination' or Pratītya Samutpāda', on which was built the Four Noble Truths. The Theravāda or the Hīnayāna Buddhists claimed that they were the true followers of the Buddha and it is only their doctrines which represented Buddhism faithfully. But the Mahāyāna thinkers pointed out that their doctrines alone could unravel the truths latent in Buddha's teachings. The exponents of Mahāyāna further claimed that the variations in Hīnayāna was due to either the Master saying those things for some of the followers who were less qualified or because some of these men were not capable of grasping the real significance of Buddhism. Whatever the truth may be, both forms of Buddhism exhibit several important changes from early Buddhism. Undoubtedly, early Buddhism contained germs capable of development along different lines, and the advocates of these schools took different abstract positions. According to scholars, there are four chief schools, of which two belong to the Hīnayāna and two to the Mahāyāna. The Hīnayāna schools are Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas and the Mahāyāna schools are the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikās. Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas are realists or Sarvāstivādins. They believe in a self-existent universe actual in space and time while the Yogācāras are idealists and the Mādhyamikās believe in Sūnyavāda.

The literature concerning these later schools of Buddhism appeared as early as first or second century A.D. But some of the Sanskrit works are lost. The chief exponents of the Vaibhāṣikas views were Dinānāga and Dharmakīrti. Dinānāga the scholars believe belonged to 500 A.D. Dharmakīrti is often referred to as the chief interpreter of Dinānāga. The important work of Dinānāga is Pramāna-Samuccaya, and Dharmakīrti's important work is Nyāya – Bindu. Kumāralabha is considered to be the founder of the Sautrāntika School. The chief teachers of the Yogācāra school are Asanga and Vasubandhu. They were brothers and probably they belonged to the third century A.D. It is believed that Vasubandhu started as a realist, a Sautrāntika and later become an idealist under the influence of his brother. Vasubandhu's Abhidharma Kośa is a very authoritative work on this school of thought. He has also written a commentary on it. It covers the whole field of ontology, psychology, cosmology, the doctrine of salvation and

the discipline for the saints and the vast proportion of its matter is common to all Buddhist belief. The other important work on Yogācāra is Lankāvatāra. The significance of the name Lankavatara is the belief that it represents the teaching of Buddha as given to Rāvana, the king of Lanka. The chief exponent of the Mādhyamikā school is Nāgārjuna. He was a renowned scholar. Some scholars believe that he was the pupil of Aśvaghosa (A.D. 100). Aśvaghosa was a renowned Buddhist philosopher, poet and dramatist. His chief works are Buddhacarita and Saudarānanda and the drama Sāriputraprakarana -all on the life and teachings of the Buddha. Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyama-Kārika is a very valuable work. The commentary on this work is written by Candrakīrti. The Sata-Śāstra or Catuh-Sataka of Aryadeva is another important work belonging to the Mādhyamikā School. Arya deva was the pupil of Nāgārjuna.

4.2 VAIBHĀṢIKA AND SAUTRĀNTIKA SCHOOLS

Epistemologically, the Hīnayāna are called Sarvāstivādins. They believe that the mind is conscious of objects. Our knowledge of things not mental is no creation, but only a discovery. Things are given to us. The Hīnayāna thinkers or Sarvāstivādins believe in the existence of objects outside and independently of knowledge though the objects according to the general postulate of Buddhism are conceived as momentary. However, the Vaibhāṣika views differ from that of Sautrāntika views with respect to their stand on realism. Vaibhāṣikas hold that objects are directly perceived and the Sautrāntikas hold that they are known indirectly since according to the doctrine of Momentaniness, objects cannot be present at the time they are perceived, for otherwise objects will have to last for at least two moments, one when they served as a stimulus and the other when they are actually perceived. Therefore, it is only a successor in the object series that is perceived. However, the previous member before it disappears leaves its impression on the percipient mind and it is from this impression or idea (ākāra) that we infer the existence of the corresponding object. Thus the so-called perception really refers to the past and is in the nature of an inference. They hold that the external objects are not perceived by us directly but are inferred from the perceptions, which are representations or copies of external objects. Therefore the Sautrāntika view is called copy-theory, or representationism or representative theory of perception. But they are realists in so far as they do not deny the independent existence of external objects. Where the objects are not really existent, we will have illusions.

The Vaibhāṣikas who hold that objects are known directly are able to dismiss the intervening psychic medium. In fact, the Vaibhāṣika criticizes the Sautrāntika view saying that it goes against experience and also that perception itself cannot be made a matter of inference. Since without perception there cannot be inference. However, the criticism is not correct because according to the Sautrāntikas the existence of the object is not a matter of inference but only implies that the object is known indirectly. They are only giving an explanation on the process of knowing. Though there is this little difference between Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas with regard to the nature of knowing, both these schools believe that the particular or Svalakṣaṇa alone is real but not the general or the sāmānyalakṣaṇa. In other words, so far as the nature of universal is concerned, the Sarvāstivādins are nominalists. They deny any ontological status to the

universals. The status of perception in Buddhism will be discussed further under the heading ‘Pramānas’.

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. Why was Buddha not interested in Metaphysical Arguments?

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2. Name the different schools of Buddhism.

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4.3 YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL OF BUDDHISM

The other name for this school of Buddhism is Vijñāna Vāda, as this name suggests, this is school of subjective idealism. We can say that Vijñāna Vāda is a direct outcome of the representative theory advocated by the Sautrantikas. Of the triple factors of experience, viz., knower, known and knowledge, for the Vijñāna Vādin, knowledge alone is real. There is neither subject nor object but only a succession of ideas. The specific form which cognition at any particular instance assumes is determined on this view not by an object presented to it but by past experience. That is, the stimulus always comes from within, never from outside. No object can be experienced apart from consciousness, therefore, according to Vijñāna Vāda, consciousness and its object are one and the same. The Yogācāra points out that objects are not substances but duration less point-instants on the basis of the theory of momentariness. The object as a point- instant cannot be causally efficacious. Therefore, it is not possible, says the Vijñāna Vādin, to accept any external object. Thus for these thinkers, the external world is not only epistemologically but also ontologically dependent upon the perceiving mind or consciousness. The argument from dream is considered by Yogācāra to prove their view. They point out in dream, experience arises even though no object is perceived. Secondly, cognition becomes aware of itself. In self-cognizing cognition what is known is identical with what knows. Also, they say that the so-called objects seem to impress different people in different ways, and sometimes the same person differently at different times. The Yogācāra argues that this is so because really there is no object out there. The above arguments do not assume the dimension of a proof for subjective idealism because these thinkers forget that the contact apprehended may have a subjective side and may at the same time, point to a real object outside.

The view of Vijñāna Vāda can be summarized as follows:

What appears in knowledge has no counterpart outside and what is supposedly outside does not appear in knowledge.

There are difficulties in accounting for cognition on a dualistic basis viz., knowledge here and object there with a similarity or *sārūpya* between them. The inconceivability of an unknown object throws doubt on the realistic hypothesis.

The occurrence of illusion, dream objects, mirage, reflection, etc., proves that *Vijñāna* can have a content without there being a corresponding object outside.

We can explain all facts of experience on the view that *Vijñāna* manifests the object content from time to time owing to its own internal modification, which are the results of its latest forces or *Vāsanās* i.e., karmic impressions from the past, latent in the stream of consciousness.

Just as out of the countless things in our memory, we only recall certain things at certain times, of the myriads of impressions that lie deep in our consciousness, only some rise to the surface at some time and under certain circumstances and appear as objects both internal and external.

It is from this point of view that *Yogācāra* calls consciousness *Ālaya Vijñāna*, the repository or storehouse of all past consciousness. In conclusion, we have to emphasize that for *Yogācāra* consciousness is not an unchanging substance but an unbroken stream of states and impressions. As long as one is in bondage ignorance, impressions, thoughts, ideas and desires arise in accordance with the law of karma. One who overcomes attachment and illusion realizes the sole reality of consciousness.

4.4 MĀDHYAMIKĀ SCHOOL

The *Mādhyamikā* is the most important outcome of Buddha's teaching. The literal meaning of the term *Mādhyamikā* is 'the farer of the middle way'. *Mādhyamikā* avoids all extremes such as eternalism and annihilation of spirit and body, unity and plurality and treads the middle path. This standpoint of the *Mādhyamikā* with regard to knowledge is altogether novel. The other schools of Buddhism held at least the subject series as real but *Mādhyamikā* is quite revolutionary and questions the validity of knowledge as a whole. They hold that if criticism of knowledge is necessary, it should be for all knowledge without presuming that some part of it is self-evident. We commonly believe that we get in touch with reality through knowledge. However, when we inquire into the nature of this so-called reality, we discover that our enquiry is full of discrepancies. Man in his thirst for knowledge, thinks of the world as the other. But all knowledge is a matter of relation. Knowledge, in so far as it can express anything at all, is prepositional. Propositions are made up of percepts and concepts, which are called *nāma rūpa* (name and form) in *Mādhyamikā* language. Accordingly, the reality created by philosophers in their knowledge is nothing but names and forms. This is ignorance leading to suffering. *Nāgārjuna* tries to free men by calling attention to the relativity of all thought constructions thereby eliminating the very basis for all clinging.

Vijñāna Vāda does not believe in the duality of subject and object and it is a form of *nis-svabhāva vāda*, so also *Mādhyamikā* is a form of *nis-svabhāva vāda* for it believes in only mutual dependence and the subject and the object are nothing in themselves. The

difference between the two is that the Mādhyamikā considers the logical constitution of a thing and finds it lacking in essence. The Vijñāna Vāda views it psychologically and says that the object cannot stand by itself. It is nothing without the consciousness on which it is super-imposed (parikalpita), it is Vijñāna that can undergo modification and it can purify itself by getting rid of the super-imposed duality. Mādhyamikās point out that neither the external objects nor Vijñāna has any self-essence. It is sūnya. Thus they conclude that though knowledge serves the purposes of empirical life, and may be valid or not as the case may be, it is impossible to attach any metaphysical significance to it. This view accounts for the Buddhist criterion of truth viz., that knowledge is true which confirms the expectation it raises. Truth consists in its fitness to secure for us the object in question. Right cognition is successful cognition. Cognition, which leads us astray or which deceives us is wrong cognition or error. Thus, there is a connection between the logic of our knowledge and its practical efficiency. Right knowledge is efficacious knowledge. The other characteristic of right knowledge is the cognition of the object not yet cognized. It is the first moment of cognition, enduring cognition is recognition. Dinnāga says that only the first flash of awareness can be a source of knowledge. According to the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, Sva-lakṣana is given but knowledge only directs us to the series of which Sva-lakṣana cognized was a member. Knowledge merely lights up the path of action and so long as it successfully does so, it is regarded as true. So also in inference, inference is based on invariable concomitance, invariable concomitance is a relation and according to Buddhism all relations are by hypothesis unreal. Yet, when it leads to the requirements of practical life it is valid. Since there can be errors in both perception and inference, knowledge can be accepted only after verification. However, it is necessary to distinguish between the content of error and ideal constructions or kalpanā. Kalpanā is false but yet it is necessary for all perceptions. They are the forms of the mind. As against this, errors are occasional and they affect only individual percipients.

All schools of Buddhism accept that knowledge serves the purpose of empirical life and hence it is necessary to discuss the meaning and significance of the word 'pramāna' and the source of empirical knowledge. The Buddhist philosophers differ among themselves with regard to the meaning of the word 'pramāna'. For the realists among Buddhists, viz., the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, the formal similarity obtaining between cognition and its object is to be regarded as pramāna. According to Vijñāna Vādins, self-cognition and the capacity to acquire such cognition is pramāna. Nāgārjuna, the propounder of Mādhyamikā School of Buddhism does not attach any special significance to the meaning of pramāna. For the Buddhists conceptual knowledge of language and all nameable things and of all names is dialectical.

The Buddhist epistemology divides knowledge into direct and indirect. The direct source of knowledge is sensibility and the indirect one is intellect or understanding. Dinnāga calls these sources of knowledge conventionally as perception and inference respectively. These are the only two sources of knowledge accepted by the Buddhists. The Buddhists do not give verbal testimony the status of pramāna.

Dinnāga says that perception is a source of knowledge which is non-constructive which means that it is direct. According to the view, pratyaksa or perception is different from imagination and has no connection with names, genus, etc. This definition, we can notice, makes no mention of sense-object contact. So it signifies that as direct cognition, pratyaksa includes mental cognition, self-consciousness and mystic cognition. This definition also makes no mention of pratyaksa being non-illusionary. As against this Dharmakirti defines perception as a presentation which is generated by the objects alone, unassociated by names and relations (kalpanā) and which is not erroneous. Perception thus means the correct presentation of an object through the senses in its own uniqueness as containing only those features which are its own or Svalakṣaṇa. What is presented is only the bare particular or Svalakṣaṇa and all the general qualities or sāmānya lakṣaṇas, like the name, genus, etc. are constructed by the mind. These are the imaginative constructs or Kalpanās. These are five:

- Jāti Kalpanā, having universal as its content
- Guna Kalpanā, having an attribute as its content.
- Nāma Kalpanā, having a name as its content
- Karma Kalpanā, having an action as its content.
- Dravya Kalpanā, having a substance as its content.

Pratyaksa is knowledge free from constructions when it is not affected by illusion caused by colorblindness, rapid motion, traveling on board a ship, sickness and other causes. One factor that is significant from the Buddhist view of perception is that a real sense of cognition or perception exists through the senses only in the first moment of perception. The first instant can be called sensation when only the bare unrelated particular is given. This stage is generally described as indeterminate or nirvikalpaka. Here the mind is passive but in the next stage of determinate perception or savikalpaka the mind becomes active giving it a subjective elaboration because of which the reality becomes greatly transformed. However, a conceptual judgment is not the same as an erroneous judgment, erroneous perceptions are of different kinds.

Illusions proper is when intellect mistakes a ray of light for water in the desert. Here the intellect mistakes what is imagined for what is presented. This illusion disappears as soon as a man realizes that it is a mirage and not water. But if a man sees double moon due to some defect in the eye, their image persists even when he is aware that actually there is only one moon. Apart from these illusions, hallucinations and dreams are also illusory. As against these illusions, the empirically true judgments are efficacious or they have the quality of arthakriyākaritva.

Inference

The cognition of a non perceived object through a perceived object is called inference. It is an indirect cognition, cognition of an object through its “mark”. The inferential judgment is possible only because the ‘mark’ that you see is related to the object yonder

by a necessary relation or vyāpti. According to the Buddhists only two types of vyāpti are legitimate. They are:

Sphere of causation – we can infer fire from smoke because smoke is caused by fire. To doubt the law of causation is to take away the meaning from life's activities.

Sphere of identity – when we know that a certain thing is Śimsūpa, we know that it is a tree. This relation between genus and species can be the basis of a valid inference, so long as what is inferred is not narrower than from which it is inferred. For example, we can say that all Śimsūpa are trees but all trees are not Śimsūpa.

Every inference has three terms, the logical subject, the logical predicate and the mark which unites them. Inferential reasoning that is used for the knowledge of others, is called a syllogism (pararthanumana) when it is for oneself, it is called svarthanumana (Inference for oneself), which can be worded as 'there is a fire on the hill because there is smoke just as in the kitchen. The syllogism reads as:

wherever there is smoke, there must be fire as in the kitchen.

There is such a smoke on the hill.

Therefore there must be fire on the hill.

Dinnāga says that these three propositions are enough in a syllogism and he criticizes Nyāya for their five membered syllogism.

Dinnāga gives three rules that should be followed.

The presence of the reason in the subject

Its presence necessarily in all similar instances.

Its necessary absence in all dissimilar instances

A fallacy will occur when any one of these rules are violated.

4.5 METAPHYSICAL VIEWS OF THE SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

The important features of early Buddhism are emphasized to a great extent by all the schools of Buddhism. The view that everything is flux and everything is an aggregate or samghata are two important theories which have influenced the views of the schools of Buddhism. Undoubtedly, the doctrine of dependent origination or pratiya sanutpada is the very foundation of Buddhism and therefore it continues to be very important for the development of the schools of Buddhism as well.

According to Buddhism, when there is a change, the change is total and there is nothing that remains, which endures the change. For example, according to common sense, when XA changes, it becomes XB; such that X endures and it is the characteristic A, which becomes B. Buddhism does not accept this view. For them change is total. It is a revolution not an evolution. Going back to our example, XA will become YB, because reality is becoming, change is not only total but perpetual. This follows from their conception of reality according to which, that which is real is capable of causal efficiency. For example; when a seed becomes a shoot it becomes wholly different

without anything called seed surviving-niranvayanasa. This causal efficiency is described in Sanskrit as artha-Kriya Karitva. To go back to the example taken, causal efficiency means that when a seed gives rise to shoot the seed series will give rise to the shoot series and the activity is continuous. Also, no extraneous causes are required for the destruction of the thing. Non existence cannot be brought about. If a thing does not annihilate itself, nothing can do it. Also, if the thing does not end itself in the instant following its appearance, there is no reason why it should disappear at all. Hence if things are not momentary, they have to be eternal which is not acceptable.

This conception of reality is criticized by the other systems of Indian philosophy. The critic says that if everything is a flux, how is it that there is recognition? The Buddhist answers this criticism by saying that everything is continuously changing but we mistake similarity for identity. Recognition is a compound of memory and perception. What we perceive and what we remember are two members of the same series and hence they are similar and we mistake the similarity for identity. The example of a flame is taken to prove this point. When a flame is burning it is not the same flame in any two instants and that is clear from the consumption of oil. Similarly all things are changing from moment to moment.

The next criticism is regarding the causal efficiency as being the criterion of the real. According to Buddhism, a series never ends but may be transformed into another like the seed series making way for the shoot series. But when they speak of the ego series, it is said that it ends when an arhant attains nirvana. If so, the final member of the ego series has no causal efficiency and so is it real? If so, then the whole ego series must be unreal or they have to give up the ideal of nirvana. However, the Buddhist claims that Nirvana or freedom from samsara is the truth because there is scope for any one to get to that state of experience.

Of the four schools of Buddhism, the Vaibhāṣika may be described as pluralistic realism. They believe only in the bare particular or the Svalakṣaṇa as what is independent of the perceiver. Time and space are also mental devises and no Svalakṣaṇa by itself has either duration or extension. But these Svalakṣaṇa are not ultimate. They are secondary. The ultimate elements of reality are the atoms.

The critics of Vaibhāṣika point out that the Svalakṣaṇa is not able to explain the world view and it can as well be dispensed with. Since it is always accompanied by the subjective categories or sāmānyalakṣaṇas, the critics says that it is not much of a realism. However the Hīnayānists were not idealists and in attempting to be most loyal to Buddha's teachings, they committed some subtle errors and the dimensionless Svalakṣaṇa is a weakness. To improve on this, the Sautrantikas advocated the representative theory of perception.

Vijñāna Vāda represents the idealist view-point. They are called Yogācāra because they say that Buddhahood is attainable through the practice of yoga. In this school, all reality is reduced to thought-relations. The truth is one homogenous Vijñāna which is not an abstract but concrete reality. The whole system of facts is placed within the individual

consciousness. It is Ālaya Vijñāna. The Ālaya with its internal duality of subject and object becomes itself a small world. It is confined to its own circle of modifications. The Ālaya which is a continually changing stream of consciousness is contrasted with the Ātman which is immutable. Every individual has in him this vast whole of consciousness, the great tank, and we are not aware of the entire contents. Our personal consciousness knows but a small fraction of the sum total of our conscious states, the Ālaya Vijñāna. Particular phenomena are manifestations of the Ālaya, according to the number and nature of the conditions. Ālaya Vijñāna is the absolute totality, originality and creativity, unconditioned by space and time. Space and time are the modes of existence of the concrete and empirical individuality. Ālaya Vijñāna is the whole containing within itself the knower and the known.

Sankara criticizes this theory on several grounds.

Sankara says that Yogācāra fails to account for perception satisfactorily. He says, because things and ideas are presented together it does not mean that they are the same. Inseparable connection is different from identity.

Sankara says that Vijñāna Vāda is wrong in so far as it compares waking experience with dream experience. What is true of dream experience cannot be taken as an example to explain the nature of waking experience. Dream experience is subjective and private and lasts so long as the dream lasts, while waking experience endures. Sankara further says, that waking experience can be said to be false only if we have an access to some experience to contradict it. The dream experience is contradicted by waking experience because of which we say that the dream experience is false. Similarly, waking experience can be falsified only when there is another higher experience.

Unfortunately, the Vijñāna Vādins are not very clear about the exact significance of Ālaya. The unsatisfactoriness of the Vijñāna Vāda is due to their obligation to the theory of momentariness of the Buddha.

4.6 SŪNYA VĀDA OF THE MĀDHYAMIKĀS

The term Mādhyamikā refers to the middle path of the Buddha. It is said to be the middle path between Being and Non-Being, attribute and Substance, cause and effect. Thus the Mādhyamikā philosophy tries to adopt the mean between extreme affirmation and extreme negation.

The phenomenal nature of the world follows from the doctrine of pratīyasamutpāda or depended origination. Nothing is by itself. Everything depends on something else. The Mādhyamikā do not dismiss all dharmas as well as their collections as unreal, though they look upon them as phenomenal and momentary (the word 'dharma' here in Buddhism stands for the causal elements). According to the Mādhyamikas, if incapacity to explain is sufficient reason to deny the reality of a thing, then, neither external objects nor inner souls are real. The Yogācāra argues that external objects are unreal since we cannot say whether they arise from existence or not, from atoms or complex bodies. Nāgārjuna goes one step further and says even consciousness or Vijñāna is unreal, because we cannot say anything consistent about it. Mādhyamikā calls the objective

world sūnya. Empirical reality is designated as sūnayata, it is non-existence of individuality or pudgala sūnyata or dharma sūnyata. This word sūnya had been used in early Buddhism but not in the Mādhyamikā sense. When this word was used by Hīnayānists, it was used as the fourth term, along with the usual three terms, namely, dukha, anitya, anatma. So for the Hīnayānists, sūnya was used as anatama, and sūnya connoted no other sense. For the Mādhyamikas sūnyata is the middle way, it is the logical consequence of pratityasamutpada. The sūnya vādain is neither a thorough going sceptic nor a cheap nihilist, who doubts and denies the existence of everything for its own sake, or who relishes in shouting that he does not exist. His object is only to show that world-objects when taken to be ultimately real, will be found self-contradictory and relative and hence mere appearances. However, Nāgārjuna maintains the empirical reality of all phenomena. Mādhyamika is aware that absolute negation is impossible because it necessarily presupposes affirmation. Nāgārjuna denies the ultimate reality of both affirmations and negation. Sūnya is understood as what is indescribable. It is beyond the four categories of understanding. It is neither affirmation nor negation, nor both affirmation and negation and neither affirmation nor negation. Empirically sūnya is relativity and transcendently it is indescribable. Therefore everything is sūnya. Appearances are svabhava sūnya, that is devoid of ultimate reality.

Reality is prapanca sūnya or devoid of plurality. Dialectic is the soul of Mādhyamikā philosophy. The primary alternatives are the affirmative (sat –is) and the negative (asat – is not). These are conjunctively affirmed and denied, yielding two derivative alternatives of the form both ‘is’ and ‘is not’ (sadasat) and neither ‘is’ nor ‘is not’ (na sat naiva sat). this is the celebrated ‘catus-koti’ of the Mādhyamika. According to sūnya vadins he who knows that all empirical dharmas are sūnya or devoid of self reality, knows the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. He who knows that all worldly objects are like illusion, dream, echoes of reality reaches blissful Nirvana.

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 is the Metaphysical position of The Yogācāra school of Buddhism?

.....

2. Name the sources of knowledge accepted by Buddhism.

.....

4.7 LET US SUM UP

The practical teachings of the Buddha (early Buddhism) was carried forward almost faithfully by all the followers of Buddhism. That all is suffering and pleasure itself is 'attenuated suffering' continues to characterize later doctrines as also that knowledge is the means to overcome it. The course of discipline laid down for Nirvana is also the same as before, partly moral and partly intellectual. But the divergence of Mahāyāna from Hīnayāna is in their conception of the ideal of life. Both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna do believe in aspiring for one's own salvation, but in Mahāyānism the salvation is not recommended for its own sake but it is regarded as a qualification to strive for the salvation of others. This is the ideal of Bodhisattva as distinguished from that of the Arhant of the Hīnayāna schools. The bodhisattva, having perfected himself, renounces his own salvation to work for the good of others. It is even believed that the Bodhisattva can even transfer his good deeds to others thereby helping them in their struggle for freedom from suffering. This new feature has a special appeal to the lay aspirant and that is shown by the large following that is there for Mahāyāna Buddhism. The other significant change that one notices in the Mahāyāna faith is the deification of Buddha. Buddha is revered as a God. The iconic worship of Buddha became popular by 1st century A.D. the formula of the "Three Jewels"..... "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the doctrine, I take refuge in the order"... became the Buddhist profession of faith and is used by monk and layman alike.

Buddham sharanam gaccāmi;
Dhammam sharanam gaccāmi;
Sangam sharanam gaccāmi.

4.8 KEY WORDS

Monastery: Monastery, a term derived from the Greek word monasterion (from monazein, "to live alone") denotes the building, or complex of buildings, that houses a room reserved for prayer as well as the domestic quarters and workplace(s) of monastics, whether monks or nuns, and whether living in community or alone (hermits).

Stimulus: In physiology, a stimulus (plural stimuli) is a detectable change in the internal or external environment. The ability of an organism or organ to respond to external stimuli is called sensitivity. When a sensory nerve and a motor nerve communicate with each other, it is called a nerve stimulus.

4.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1. Buddhism as propounded by Gautama Buddha is pragmatic and practical. The chief aim of Buddha's philosophy was to find a way out of suffering. Hence he did not indulge in abstract, metaphysical arguments. A story in one of the Suttas makes this point very clear. Sitting under the Śimśupa tree, the Buddha gathered some leaves and asked his disciples if these were the only leaves on the tree. The disciples said that surely there were many more. Then, the Buddha said, similarly, he knew much more than what he had told the disciples and it was not necessary to say everything, since, it has no practical utility.

2. According to scholars, there are four chief schools, of which two belong to the Hīnayāna and two to the Mahāyāna. The Hīnayāna schools are Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas and the Mahāyāna schools are the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikās. Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas are realists or Sarvāstivādins. They believe in a self-existent universe actual in space and time while the Yogācāras are idealists and the Mādhyamikās believe in Sūnyavāda.

Answers to Check your progress II

1. Of the triple factors of experience, viz., knower, known and knowledge, for the Vijñāna Vādin, knowledge alone is real. There is neither subject nor object but only a succession of ideas. The specific form which cognition at any particular instance assumes is determined on this view not by an object presented to it but by past experience. That is, the stimulus always comes from within, never from outside. No object can be experienced apart from consciousness, therefore, according to Vijñāna Vāda, consciousness and its object are one and the same. The Yogācāra points out that objects are not substances but duration less point-instants on the basis of the theory of Momentariness. The object as a point- instant cannot be causally efficacious. Therefore, it is not possible, says the Vijñāna Vādin, to accept any external object. Thus for these thinkers, the external world is not only epistemologically but also ontologically dependent upon the perceiving mind or consciousness. The argument from dream is considered by Yogācāra to prove their view. They point out in dream experience arises even though no object is perceived. Secondly, cognition becomes aware of itself. In self-cognizing cognition what is known is identical with what knows. Also, they say that the so-called objects seem to impress different people in different ways, and sometimes the same person differently at different times. The Yogācāra argues that this is so because

really there is no object out there. The above arguments do not assume the dimension of a proof for subjective idealism because these thinkers forget that the contact apprehended may have a subjective side and may at the same time, point to a real object outside.

2. The Buddhist epistemology divides knowledge into direct and indirect. The direct source of knowledge is sensibility and the indirect one is intellect or understanding. Dinnāga calls these sources of knowledge conventionally as perception and inference respectively. These are the only two sources of knowledge accepted by the Buddhists. The Buddhists do not give verbal testimony the status of pramāna.

