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Core Course

BA PHILOSOPHY

V Semester

THE SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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UNIT . I.

INTRODUCTION.

VEDIC AND NON-VEDIC SYSTEMS

The etymological meaning of the word philosophy is ‘love of learning’. The Sanskrit terms for philosophy are ‘darsanas’ and ‘tattva’, which means ‘vision of truth and reality’. ‘Know the self’ (Atmanam Viddhi) is the key note of all Schools of Indian Philosophy. And this is the reason why most of the Schools of Indian Philosophy are also religious sects. Annihilation of the three kinds of pain – adhyatmika, adhibhavtika and adhidvaivika – and realisation of supreme happiness is the end and Sravana Manama and nididhyasana are the means – in almost all Schools of Indian Philosophy.

According to the Hindu tradition the various philosophical ideas that were developed in the philosophical systems originated in the Vedas. The Vedas are the earliest document of the Aryan mind. The name Veda (knowledge) stands for the Mantras and Brahmanas. Mantra means a hymn addressed to some god or goddess. The collection of the mantras are called ‘Samhita’. There are four Samhitas – Rk, Sama, Yajur and Atharva. These are said to be compiled for the smooth performance of the Vedic sacrifices. The Brahmanas unlike the mantras, are written in prose. They are the elaboration of the complicated ritualism of the Vedas. They deal with the rules and regulations laid down for the performance of the rites and the sacrifices. Their name, ‘Brahmana’ is derived from the word ‘Brahma’ which originally means a prayer. There is little philosophy in these, though some philosophical ideas flash here and there in the course of some speculative digressions. The appendages to these Brahmans are called Aranyakas mainly because they were composed in the calmness of the forests. The Aranyakas mark the transition from the ritualistic to the philosophic thought. We find here a mystic interpretation of the Vedic sacrifices. The concluding portions of the Aranyakas are called the Upanishads. These are intensely philosophical and spiritual and may be rightly regarded as the cream of the Vedic Philosophy. The hymns are the creation of the poets, the Brahmas are the work of the priests, and the Upanishads the meditations of the philosophers. The religion nature of the hymns, the religion of law of the Brahmans and the religion of spirit of the Upanishads, correspond in a very close way to the three great divisions in the Hegelian conception of the development of religion.
The mantras and the Brahmanas are called the Karma-Kanda or the portion dealing with the sacrificial actions, and the Aranyakas and the Upanishads are called the Jnana-Kanda or the portion dealing with knowledge. Since people include the Aranyakas in the Karma-Kanda. Really speaking, they represent a transition from the Karma-Kanda to the Jnana-Kanda. The Upanishads are also known as ‘Vedanta’ or ‘the end of the Veda’. Firstly because they are literally the concluding portion, the end of the Vedas, and secondly because they are the essential, the cream, the height, of the Vedic Philosophy.

In the vedic hymns, we find religion and Philosophy more or less intermixed. But along with it the seeds of the important philosophical trends might be easily traced. Moreover, there has been a gradual development of the philosophical thought from the mantras and the Brahmanas through the Aranyakas to the Upanishads. It is said that we can notice a transition from the naturalistic and anthropomorphic polytheism through transcendent monotheism to immanent monism in the pre-upanishadic philosophy. Polytheism, henotheism and monotheism are the three different stages in the evolutionary history of the Vedic gods. The personified forces of nature first changed into real gods and these later on, became mere forms of one personal and transcendental God, ‘the custodian of the cosmic and moral order. They maintain the physical order of the cosmos known as Rta.

The law of which Varuna is the custodian is called the Rta. Rta literally means “the course of thing”. It stands for law in general and the immanence of justice. This conception must have been originally suggested by the regularity of the movement of Sun, Moon, and Stars, the alternations of day and of night, and of the season, Rta denotes the order of the world. Everything that is ordered in the universe has Rta for its principle. The tendency towards the mystic conception of an unchanging reality shows its first signs here.

When the early Vedic Aryans who were primitive, if not semi-civilised and semi-barbarious, settled down and began to wonder at the charming and the tempting and to fear the terrible and the destructive aspects of nature, they personified them in an anthropomorphic fashion and called them gods and goddess and began to worship them. This was the stage of naturalistic and anthropomorphic polytheism. In vedic polytheism natural occurrences are attributed to supernatural causes. Polytheism yielded place to monotheism and the latter to monism. Max Muller introduces henotheism as a transitional stage from polytheism to monotheism. Henotheism means ‘belief in one only God’. The Vedic Aryans regarded any god they were
praising as the most supreme and the only god. According to MacDonnell henotheism is an appearance rather than a reality, an appearance produced by the indefiniteness due to undeveloped anthropomorphism. But whether we call it henotheism or mere exaggeration of the powers of the deity in question, it is obvious that this stage can neither be properly called polytheistic nor monotheistic but one which had a tendency towards both of them.

Now let us see the stages of development of thought from polytheism to monotheism in the early parts of the Vedas. When polytheism leads to monotheism, the most powerful god among the hierarchy of gods is enthroned as the ruler of this universe. In monotheism, Varuna at one time and Indra at another were treated as the supreme. The supreme can only be one. We can not have two supreme and unlimited beings. Everywhere the question was asked whether a god was himself the creation of another. A creator god is no god at all. With the growing insight into the workings of the world and nature of godhead the many gods tended to melt into one. The perception of unity realised in the idea of Rta waked in support of monotheism. Trust in natural law means faith in one God. RgVeda declares that reality is one and that sages call it by many such as Agni, Yama, etc.

Experiments on the concept of God continued and now monotheism gives way to monism because the seers were not satisfied with an anthropomorphic or personalistic conception of the Godhead. This tendency towards the one culminates in monism. In monotheism many Gods were reduced to one God, but in monism the whole of existence is reduced to one fundamental reality, which the wise regard him as many. There are mantras in the Vedas which allude to monism eg: sat is one. To Israel the same revelation came: “The Lord, thy God, is one”. Plutarch says: “There is one sun and one sky over all nations and one Deity under many names.”

Thus the highest spiritual truth is thus expressed in two forms in Vedic hymns—personal theism (monotheism) and absolutism (monism). Theism here means the belief in a personal deity where as absolutism is the view that recognises an absolute impersonal reality as the ground for all existence.

**DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

Indian philosophy has had a long and complicated development. A chronological history is, however, difficult to present because of the lack of concern of the ancient Indian to chronology and historical perspective. From the time of the birth of Buddha, Indian chronology is on a better foundation.
The following are the broad divisions of Indian Philosophy.

The first period of Indian philosophy is called the Vedic period (1500 BC – 600 BC) covers the age of the settlement of the Aryans and the gradual expansion and spread of the Aryan culture and civilisation. This is the age of the assimilation of the great Vedas, culminating in the Aranyakas and Upanishads. The Indian thought process has been profoundly influenced by the Upanishads and has remained so ever since. They are the foundations on which most of the later philosophers and religions of India rest “there is no important from of Hindu thought heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upanishads”. The views put forward in this age are not philosophical in the technical sense of the term. It is the age of groping, where superstition and thought are yet in conflict. Yet to give order and continuity to the subject, it is necessary for us to begin with an account of the outlook of the hymns of the Rgveda and discuss the views of the Upanishads.

The second period of Indian philosophy is called the Epic period (600 BC to AD 200) extends over the development between the early Upanishads and the darsanas or the systems of philosophy. This was a fertile period in the philosophical development of the world in general. The great works in China, Greece and Persia coincides with this period of Indian philosophical development. Not only the great epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana were written during this period but also the early development of Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism took place simultaneously. Bhagavad-Gita, which is a part of Mahabharata ranks as one of the three most authoritative texts of Indian philosophical literature (The Upanishads, the Brahma sutra and the Gita) belong to this age. The philosophies of scepticism, naturalism and materialism arose and the orthodox systems of Hinduism took shape. Systematic treatises were written that brought into focus the unorthodox systems of Buddhism, Jainism and Carvaka during the Epic period. In addition the codes of conduct, social and ethical philosophy were compiled in the Dharmashastras.

The third period is called the sutra period (from AD 200). Most of the sutras in short enigmatic aphorisms were written as treatises to the earlier School of Philosophical thoughts. This helped in organising the various doctrines in a systematic, orderly form and the systems took a basic form in which they were to be preserved. The six Hindu systems, collectively called the Darshana literature developed during this period. Among the systems themselves, we cannot say definitely what are earlier and which later. There are cross-references throughout. The Yoga accepts the Samkhya the
Vaisesika recognises both the Nyaya and the Samkhya. Nyaya refers to the Vedanta and the Samkhya. Mimamsa directly or indirectly recognises the pre-existence of all others. So does the Vedanta. The sutra period cannot be sharply distinguished from the scholastic period of the commentators. The two between them extend up till the present day.

The fourth period of Indian philosophy is called the scholastic period (from AD 200). It is not possible for us to draw a hard and fast line between this and the previous one. Yet it is to this that the great names of Kumarila, Sankara, Sridhara Ramaniya, Madhva, Vacaspati, Udayana, Bhaskara, Jayanta, Vijjanabhiksu and Raghunatha belong. During this period commentaries were written on the sutras and commentaries were written on original commentaries. Literature from this period, which lasts from the sutra period to the 17th century, is mainly explanatory. It is also controversial and often argumentative and noisy. Some of them, however, are invaluable. Sankara’s commentary on the Vedanta sutra is thought of more highly than the original sutra written by Badarayana. Various scholars wrote commentaries on Brahma sutra according to their own interpretation. Chief among them were Sankaracharya, Ramanucharya and Madhvacharya. Incidentally, three schools of Vedanta were developed. Sankaracharya’s Advaita Vedanta, Ramanucharya’s Vishistadvaita Vedanta and Madhvacharya’s Dvaita Vedanta.

Classical Indian philosophy can be roughly categorised into ‘orthodox’ (Asthika) Schools of Hindu Philosophy and ‘heterodox’ (Nastika) schools. Those schools are regarded as orthodox not because they believe in God, but because they accept the authority of the Vedas. The heterodox schools arose mainly by opposition to the vedic culture, and therefore they reject the authority of the Vedas. Many Hindu intellectual traditions were codified during the medieval period of Brahmanic-Sanskritic scholasticism into a standard list of six orthodox (astika) schools (darsana), the six philosophies (Saddarshhanas) all of which cite Vedic authority as their source.

Nyaya – the school of logic

Vaisesaka – the atomist school

Samkhya – the enumeration school

Yoga – the school of Patanjali (which assumes metaphysics of samkhya)

Purva-Mimamsa – the tradition of Vedic exegesis, with emphasis on Vedic ritual and Vedanta (also called Uttara Mimamsa)
These are often coupled into three groups for both historical and conceptual reasons. Nyaya-Vaisesika, Samkhya-Yoga and Mimamsa-Vedanta.

Schools that do not accept the authority of the Vedas are defined by Brahmins to be unorthodox (nastika) systems. They are Jainism, Buddhism and Carvaka.

The Vedas, are directly or indirectly responsible for most of the philosophical speculation. In the orthodox schools, next to the Vedas and the Upanisads, Sutra literature marking the definite beginning of systematic philosophical thinking. The Brahma-Sutra of Badarayana is the first systematic treatise on Vedanta. Similarly we have for mimamsa, the Sutras of Jaimini, for Nyaya the sutras of Gotama, for Vaisesika, the sutras of kanada, for yoga, the sutras of Patanjali. According to tradition, on Sankhya also there were the sutras of Kapila. But the earliest systematic work available now is the Sankhya-karika of Isvara Krsna. Though the different schools were opposed to one another in their teachings, a sort of harmony among them was also conceived by the Indian thinkers. The many systems of philosophy beginning from the materialism of the Carvaka school and ending with the Vedanta of Sankara after the different paths for philosophical thinking and living that suit persons of differing qualifications and temperaments.

Each Veda is composed of Mantras, Brahmanas, Aryankas and the Upanisads. The Mantras are poetic expressions of sacred truths. The Brahmanas are guide books for the performance of sacrificial rites. The Aranyakas give philosophical interpretations of the rituals. The Upanisads contain teachings about the ultimate reality and the means of realizing it.


Unit II.

Non-Vedic Systems

1. CARVAKA

The school of materialism in India seems to be very old. References are found to it in the epics and in the early Buddhist literature. It must have arisen as a protest against the excessive monkdom of Brahmana priests. Brhaspati, a heretical teacher, is regarded as the traditional founder of this school. His sutra, which we have no reason to doubt, has unfortunately perished. Sometimes this Brhaspati is equated with the teacher of the gods who propagated materialism among the Asuras so that they might Brhaspati. According to another view, charvaka is the name of the founder of this school. According to still another view, the word ‘Carvaka’ is not a proper name, but a common name given to a materialist, and it signifies a person who believes in ‘eat, drink, and be merry, or a person who eats up his own words, or who eats up all moral and ethical consideration, or a person who is ‘sweet-tongued’ and therefore whose doctrine in superficially attractive. Another synonym of carvaka is Lokayata which means a commoner and therefore by implication, a man of love and unrefined taste. No original work of this school is extant with the single exception of a much later work, tattvopaplavasimha of Jayarashi Bhatta, published by the Oriental Institute of Baroda in 1940. It is therefore very difficult to have a correct idea of it. Our chief source of information are given in the works of the other schools. The arva-darshana-sangraha gives a summary of this school.

In the second act of the allegorical play called Prabatha chandrodaya, Krsnapati Mishra sums up the teachings of materialism thus Lokayata is the only sastra, perception is the only authority, earth, water, fire and air are the only elements enjoyment is the only end of human existence, mind is only a product of matter. There is no other world, death means liberation. Some of the important sutras of Brhaspati which are quoted in the various philosophical writings maybe gleaned as follows.

(1) Earth, water fire and air are the elements

(2) Bodies, Senses and objects are the results of the different combinations of elements
(3) Consciousness arises from matter like the intoxicating quality of wins arising from fermented yeast.

(4) The soul is nothing but the conscious body

(5) Enjoyment is the only end of human life

(6) Death alone is liberation

The epistemological doctrines of the carvaka school is that perception (Pratyaksa) is the only means of valid knowledge. The validity even of inference is rejected. Inference is said to be a mere leap in the dark. We proceed here from the known to the unknown and there is no certainty in this, though some inferences may turn out to be accidentally true. A general proposition may be true in percerved cases. But there is no guarantee that it will hold true even in imperceved cases.

In ethics the carvaka regards sensual pleasure as the sumum bonum life. Eat, drink, and be merry, for once the body is induced to ashes, there is no hope of coming back here again. Therre is no other world. There is no soul surviving death. The ethics of the carvaka is a crude individual hedomism pleasure of the senses in this life and that too of the individual is the sole end out of the four human values Dharma, Artha kama and moksa karma or pleasure is regarded as the end and artha or wealth is regarded with means to realize that end, while Dharma and moksa are altogether rejected pleasure is regarded as mixed up with pain, but that is no reason why it should not be acquired.

2. Jainism

The word Jainism is derived from ‘jina’ which means ‘conqueror’ – one who has conquered his passions and desires. Jains belive in 24 Tirthankaras or ‘founders of the faith’ of these the first was Rsabhadeva and the last, Mahavira. Mahavira, the last of the prophets, cannot be regarded as the founder of Jainism because even before him, Jaina teachings were existent.

1. Anekanthevada

The Jains metaphysics is a realistic and realistic pluralism. It is called Anekanthavada or manyness of reality. Matter and spirit are regarded as separate and independent realities. There are innumerable material atoms and innumerable individual souls which are all separately and independently real. And each atom and each soul possesses innumerable aspects of its own. A thing has got an infinite number of characteristics of its own. Every object possesses innumerable positive and negative characters. It is not possible for us, to know all the qualities of a thing. Is to become omnisent. Human knowledge is
necessarily relative and limited and so are all our judgments. This epistemological and logical theory of the Jainas is called ‘syadvada’. Both Anekantavada and Syadvada are the two aspects of the same teaching realistic and relativistic pluralism. The metaphysical side that reality has innumerable characters is called Anekantavada, while the epistemological and logical side that we can know only some aspects of reality and the therefore all our judgments are necessarily relative, is called syadvada.

2. Syadvada

Syadvada which is also called saptabhangi-nyaya is the theory of relativity of knowledge. Supta-bhargi-nyaya means ‘dialectic of the seven steps. The jaina logic distinguishes seven forms of judgment. Each judgment, being relative, is preceded by the word ‘syat’. This is syadvada. The seven steps are as follows.

(1) Syadasti, maybe, is
(2) Syadnasti, maybe is not
(3) Syadasti, nasty, maybe is and is not
(4) Syadavaktavyam may be, is unpredictable
(5) Syadastica avaktavyam, may be is and is unpredictable
(6) Syadastica avaktavyam may be, is not unpredictable
(7) Syadastica, nastica avaktavyam, may be, is not and unpredictable

3. Categories

The whole universe is brought under the two everlasting, uncreated eternal and co-existing categories which are called jiva and ajiva. Jiva means the conscious spirit and ajiva means the unconscious non spirit. Ajiva includes not only matter which is called ‘Pudgala’. but also space, motion, rest and time. Spirit, matter, motion, rest and space are described as asti-kaya dravyas or substance which possess constituent parts extending in space, while time(kala) is the only anastikaya dravya which has no extension in space.

Time is anastikaya because it does not extend in space. It is infinite like time, space is also infinite, eternal and imperceptible. Dharma and Adharma are used here not in their popular sense of merit and demerit, but in the technical sense of the conditions of movement and rest. Like space and time, they also are eternal and imperceptible. Matter is called pudgala which means that which is liable to integration and disintegration.
4. **Triratna**

According to Jainism right knowledge is the cause of liberation. This right knowledge is produced by faith in the teachings of the omniscient Tirthamkaras. Hence faith is necessary and it is right conduct which perfects knowledge. Right knowledge dawns when all the karmas are destroyed by right conduct. Hence right faith, right conduct and right knowledge all the three together form the path of liberation which is the joint effect of these three. Right faith. Knowledge and conduct are the three jewels of Jainism, they are inseparably bound up and perfection of one goes with the perfection of the other two.

3. **Buddhism**

Buddhism was founded by Gautama, the Buddha. After attaining the Enlightenment Buddha left the Bodhi tree and went to Kashi. At saranath in Kashi, he delivered his first sermons before his five disciples. These sermons are known as “Dharama Chakra praverton sutra”. And Lord Budhha sent his disciples to different parts of the world in order to propagate his teachings. R. Puligandla observes; “From then until his death in 483 BC, at the ripe old age of eighty, Gautama travelled untiringly, teaching his message to men and women, irrespective of caste, colour and station in life. in course of time, The Buddha’s message gave rise to Buddhism as religion and philosophy which spread far and wide, to Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, China and Mongolia in the north.”

**THE FOUR NOBILE TRUTHS**

Although Buddha was a man of penetrating intellect, the overall emphasis of his teaching is on the practical matters of morality and conduct leading to the conquest of sufferings, rather than on abstract philosophical inquiries. Buddha was primarily an ethical teacher and not a metaphysician. For Buddha, the most urgent task is to lead man out of suffering and illness. So in Indian tradition Buddha is often described as a “great physician”, According to Buddha the duty of a philosopher is not a discussion about the pain of human beings but an attempt to heal the pain. If a man is struck by a poisoned arrow and writing in pain the first thing for us to do is to alleviate his pain by pulling the arrow out of his body, not to insist on eliciting information as to the origin and nature of the arrow, the man who shot the arrow, or the man struck by the arrow before we can pull the arrow out and nurse the injury. Similarly if the poisoned arrow of suffering is embedded in humanity it would be no sense for men to preoccupy them selves with such meta physical questions as ; is the world eternal ? is it infinite or finite? Is there a God? etc.,. Inquiry in to these questions, says Buddha, is not in the least conducive to solving the immediate
and pressing problem of suffering. For Buddha, anyone who indulges in metaphysical inquiry is either blind to the fact of suffering or wasting his time by hoping to cure men of suffering by making them swallow metaphysical medicines. We shall now present the Buddha’s analysis of the problem of suffering and his solution to it.

The teachings of Lord Buddha make a mention of four of great truths. They are:

1. (Dukkha) There is suffering
2. (Dukkha-samudhya) There is a cause of suffering.
3. (Dukkha-nirodha) There is a cessation of suffering.
4. (Dukkha-nireodha-gamini pratipat) There is a way leading to this cessation of suffering

All the teachings of Buddha centre round these four great truths. We can start our discussion about the four great truths, taking the first great truth.

**The first Noble truth about suffering**

According to Buddha life is full of misery and pain. Birth is attended with pain, decay of painful, desire is also painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. Even the so-called pleasures are really fraught with pain. That there is suffering in this world is a fact of common experience. Poverty, disease, old age, death, anger, hatred, quarrels are rampant in this world. That life is full of misery no one can deny. R. Puligandla explain the concept of Dukkha or suffering showing its philosophical sense. He says:

“The term Dukkha is often rendered as suffering in the sense of physical and psychological pain. But more correctly dukkha is to be understood in its fundamental meaning, namely, impermanence (anitya). Impermanence is the basic characteristic of all existence, animate and inanimate. Of we look around we find all things changing. There seems to be nothing permanent within man or without. According to Buddha it is this impermanence that is the foundation of all suffering “ 4

For Buddha, Impermanence is the basic trait of reality as we experience it with our senses and mind. And wherever there is impermanence there is bound to be suffering. The first Noble truth is that existence is Dukkha (impermanence) out of which arises all suffering
The second Noble truth about the cause of suffering

Though the fact of suffering is recognized by all Indian philosophers, the diagnosis of this malady is not always unanimous. The origin of life’s evil is explained by Buddha in the light of his special conception of natural causation. According to Buddha everything has a cause. Nothing comes out of nothing “Ex nihilo nihil fit”. The existence of every event depends up on its causes and conditions. Everything in this world is conditional, relative and related. Suffering being a fact, it must have a cause. So it must depends on some conditions. Suffering is not due to chance but brought about by certain conditions which constitute the warp and woof of existence itself. If suffering is uncaused, then there can be no way of eliminating it. The whole of existence, as we experience it, is a vast caused nexus. This fact is expressed by the formula “This arising that arises; this ceasing to be that ceases to be” or this phenomenon is depend upon that phenomenon. Noting exists unconditionally and absolutely; everything is depends up on something other than itself. The doctrine that everything depends upon other things is known as the Doctrine of Dependent origination or “Pratīyasamutpādavada”. In the light of the Doctrine of dependent origination, the second noble truth may be stated thus; suffering has a cause. The various conditions which produce suffering are expressed by Buddha in the form of chain of cause and effect made up of twelve links. The twelvefold chain of causation is another name for the doctrine of dependent origination.

The third noble truth about the cessation of suffering

Having understood the cause of suffering, the next thing to do is to eliminate it. This brings us to the third noble truth. The third noble truth may be stated thus; Since suffering is caused, it can be eliminated by eliminating its causes, what is it, then, has to be removed in order for pain, misery, sorrow and suffering to cease? It is clear from the twelvefold chain that ignorance is the fundamental condition of suffering. That’s why ignorance is to be removed in order to gain freedom from suffering. But how is ignorance to be conquered? According to Buddha man can conquer the ignorance by clearly comprehending the truth of the nature of existence and acquiring perfect insight and wisdom leading to non—attachment, tranquility, freedom— in short by attaining Nirvana. Then what is the path to Nirvana. The answer to this question is the fourth noble truth.

The fourth Noble truth about the path to Liberation

The path to Nirvana is the Eight fold path or Astangika marga. The perfect blending of Knowledge and conduct. Followers of this Eight fold path will attain
Nirvana. The Path recommended by Buddha consist of eight steps or rules and is therefore called the eight fold noble path. The eight fold noble path this gives in a nutshell the essentials of Buddhist Ethics. This path is open to all, monks as well as laymen.

**PRATITYA SAMUTPADA**

The Doctrine of Pratitya Samutpada or the theory of Dependent origination is the foundation of all the teachings of Buddha. It is contained in the second noble truth which gives us the cause of suffering and in the third noble truth which shows the cessation of suffering. Suffering is samsara; cessation of suffering is Nirvana. Both are only aspects of the same reality. Pratityasamutpada, viewed from the point of view of relativity is samsara; while viewed from the point of view of reality, it is Nirvana.

Why do we suffer from old age and death? Because we are born. Why we are born? Because there is a will to be born, why should there be this will? Because we cling to the objects of this world. why do we have this clinging? Because we crave to enjoy the objects of this world. Why do we have this craving? because our contact with sense objects. Why do we have this contact? Because of the sense organs. Why do we have sense organs? Because of the psycho-physical organism. Why do we have this organism? Because of the initial conscious of the embryo. Why do we have this consciousness? Because of Karma. why do we have this Karma? Because of ignorance. Hence ignorance is the root cause of all suffering. Thus we have the 12 links of the causal wheel of dependent origination.

1. Ignorance
2. Karma
3. Consciousness
4. Psycho-physical organism
5. Sense –organs
6. Sense –object contact
7. Sense experience
8. Thirst for enjoyment
9. Clinging to enjoyment
10. Will to be born
11. Birth
12. Old age and death
Of these twelve links, the first two are related to past life. The last two to future life and the rest to the present life. This is the cycle of birth and death. Death is only a beginning of a new life. This cycle can be destroyed only by Right knowledge. So knowledge is the sole means of liberation

**ASTNAGA MARGA**

**OR**

**THE EIGHT FOLD PATH**

The Eight fold path contained in the fourth Noble truth of Buddha. The Buddha said, “there are two extremes, o monks from which he who leads a religious life must abstain. One is a life of pleasure, devoted to desire and enjoyment; that is base unworthy, unreal, and unspiritual. The perfect one, O monks, is removed from both these extremes and has discovered the way which lies between them, the middle way enlightens the eye, enlighten the mind, which leads to rest, to knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvana”. These words of Buddha is the base of eightfold path. The eight fold path consists of the following disciplines.

**Right view**: As ignorance with its consequences, namely wrong views about the self and the world, is the root cause of our sufferings. It is natural that the first step to moral reformation should be the acquisition of right views or the knowledge truth. So this is the discipline which enable one to see the true nature of the world of experience as being sorrowful, impermanent etc. rights view reveals the four noble truths.

**Right mindedness**: This refers to the right motivation. Removing all prejudices and evil intentions from ones thoughts, one must cultivate a friendly attitude towards all sentient beings. One should cultivate benevolent thoughts, thoughts of compassion thoughts of sympathy etc.

**Rights speech**: Right speech is Kind and truthful, speech, that is less speech. Buddhism preached, “Better than a thousand utterances composed of meaningless words in one sensible word hearing which one becomes peaceful

**Right action**: Evil deeds should be avoided. Right deeds do not result in sorrow. One should practice restraint and virtue and one should commit no wrong

**Right Livelihood** The means of living that one adopts should be in agreement with the laws of morality. One should avoid such cruel means of living as that of being a butcher or a huntsman
Right effort: According to Buddha, self effort is the utmost necessity. Through right efforts, passions should be controlled without right effort one cannot gain enlightenment.

Right Thought: This literally means good memory, not merely the faculty of remembering the past, but also being alert in minds being watchful and in complete self–possession. It is through right mindfulness that one can control one’s acts, feelings and thoughts.

Right Concentration: This is the practice of meditation resulting in the final wisdom. Sense culture should enable one to become discerning and sharp so that one may not be carried away in the storm of sensual pleasure. This should lead one to the development of the power of concentration. Mediation is the way to Nirvana.

Ksanikavada and Nairatmyavada

The theory of momentariness(Ksanikavada) is a corollary of dependent origination. Because things depend on their causes and conditions because things are relative, dependent, conditional and finite, they must be momentary. .... Say that a thing arises depending as its cause is to admit that it is momentary, for when the cause is removed the thing will cease to be. The theory of No-ego(Nairatmyavada), the theory that the individual ego is ultimately false is also based on this doctrine. When every thing is momentary and therefore relative and false.
UNIT. II.

VEDIC SYSTEMS

1. Nyaya-Vaisesika

The sage Gotama is the founder of Nyaya school. Nyaya means argumentation. Nyaya is a system of atomic pluralism and logical realism. It is allied to the Vaisesika system. Which is regarded as Samanatantra or similar philosophy.

Pramanas

Perception, inference, comparison or analogy and verbal testimony are the four kinds of valid knowledge.

1. Perception

Gotama defines perception as ‘non-erroneous cognition which is produced by the intercourse of the sense-organs with the objects, which is not associated with a name and which is well-defined. This definition of perception excludes divine and yogic perception which is not generated by the intercourse of the sense-organs with the objects. Perception is a kind of knowledge and its the attribute of the self. Ordinary perception presupposes the sense-organs, the objects, the manas and the self and their mutual contacts. The self comes into contact with the manas, the manas with the sense organs and the sense organs with the objects. The Naiyayika maintains two stages in perception. The first is called indeterminate or nirvikalpa the second, determinate or savikalpa. They are not two different kinds of perception, but only the earlier and the later stages in the same complex process of perception quoted above. Perception is ‘unassociated with a name’ which means ‘determinate’ and it is “well-defined” which means determinate. Perception, again, may be ordinary(laukika) and extra ordinary (alaukika) when the sense- organs come into contact with the objects present to them in the usual way, we have laukika perception. And if the contact of the sense-organs with the objects is in an unusual way, i.e, if the objects are not ordinarily present to the senses but are conveyed to them through an extra ordinary medium, we have Alaukika perception. Ordinary perception is of two kinds-internal and external. In internal perception, the mind which is the internal organ comes into contact with the psychical states and process like cognition, affection, conation, desire, pain, pleasure, aversion etc. external
perception takes place when the five external organs of sense came into contact with the external objects. It is of five kinds- Visual, auditory, tactual, quotatiory and of factory, brought about by the sense-organs sight, sound, touch, taste and smell respectively when they come into contact with the external objects. Extra ordinary perception is of three kinds-samanya laksana, jnana laksana and yogaja. Samanyalaksana perception is the perception of the Universals. An individual belongs to a particular class because the universal of that class in hires in it. Thus a cow becomes a cow because it has the universal cowness inheriring in it. We perceives particular cows but we do not perceive a universal cow. Hence the Nyaya maintains that the universals are perceived extraordinarily. Jnanalaksana perception is the ‘complicated’ perception through association. Here an object is not directly presented to a sense-organ, but is revived in memory through the past cognition of it and is perceived through representation for example, I look at a blooming rose from a distance and say. I see a fragrant rose. Here the visual perception of the rose revives in memory the idea of fragrance by association which was perceived in the past through the nose. Yogaya perception is the intuitive and immediate perception of all objects, past, present & future, possessed by the yogina through the power of meditation.

2. Inference

It is defined as that cognition which presupposes some other cognition. It is knowledge (mana) which arises after (anu) other knowledge. Invariable concomitance (Vyapti) is the nerve of inference. The presence of the middle term in the minor term is called paksadharmata. The invariable association of the middle term with the major term is called vyapti. The knowledge of paksadharmata an qualified by vyapti is called paramarsha. And inference is defined as knowledge arising through paramarsha ie. The knowledge of the presence of the major in the minor through the middle which resides in the minor and is invariably associated with the major. We know that smoke is invariably associated with fire and if we see smoke in a hill we conclude that there must be fire in that hill. Hill in the minor term, fire in the major term, smoke is the middle term. Inference is generally regarded as of two kinds svartha(for oneself) and parartha(for others). Gotama speaks of three kinds of inference purvavat, sesavat and samanyatodrsta. When we infer the unperceived effect from a perceived cause we have purvavat inference eg. When we infer future rain from dark clouds in the sky. When we infer the unperceived cause from a perceived effect we have Sesavat inference eg when we infer past rain from the swift muddy flooded water of a river. When inference is based not on causation but on uniformity of co-existence, it is called samanyatodrsta eg when we infer clovenhoofs of an animal by its horns.
3. Comparison

It has been defined as the knowledge of the relation between a word and its denotation. It is produced by the knowledge of resemblance or similarity for example, a man who has never seen a gavaya or a wild cow and does not know what it is, it told by a person that a wild cow is an animal like a cow, subsequently comes across a wild cow in a forest and recognizes it as the wild cow, then his knowledge is due to upamana.

4. Verbal testimony

It is defined as the statement of a trustworthy person and consists in understanding its meaning. Testimony is of two kinds- vaidika and secular. The vaidika testimony is perfect and infallible because the Vedas are spoken by God. secular testimony, being the words of human beings who are liable to error, is not infallible. Only the words of trustworthy persons who always speak the truth are valid, others are not.

Vaisesika

The founder of this system is Kanada. The word is derived from ‘Vishesa’ which means particularity or distinguishing feature or distinction.

Padartha

A category is called padartha and the entire universe is reduced to six or seven padarthas. Pardartha literally means ‘the meaning of a word’ or the ‘the object signified by a word’. All objects of knowledge or all reals come under padartha. Originally the vaisesika believed in the six categories and the seventh, that of abhava or negation, was added lateron. The seven padarthas are

1. Substance(dravya)
2. Quality(guna)
3. Action (Karma)
4. Generality(Samanya)
5. Paricularity(Vises)
6. Inherence(Samavaya) and
7. Non –being(abhava)
Substance or dravya

Substance or dravya is defined as the substratum where actions and qualities in here and which is the co existent material cause of the composite things produced from it without substance, we cannot have qualities and actions for they cannot hand loose in the air, but must be contained some where. Substance is the basis of qualities and actions. The nine substance are (1) earth, (2) water(3)fire(4)air (5)ether (6)time(7)space(spirit) and (9) mind or the internal organ.

Guna

Unlike substance, it cannot exist independently by itself and possess no quality or action. It inheres in a substance and depends for its existence on the substance and is nota constitutive cause of anything. It is called an independent reality because it can be conceived, thought and named independently of a substance where it in hires. They are a static and permanent feature of a substance. Kananda mentions seventeen qualities to which seven more are added by prashastapada. These twenty four qualities are recognized by the Nyaya-Vaisesika school.

Karma

Like quality, it belongs to and in hires in a substance and cannot exist separately from it. But while a quality is a static and permanent feature of a substance an action is a dynamic and transient feature of it. Action is said to be of five kinds (1) Upward movement (2) downward movement (3) Contraction (4) Expansion (5) Locomotion.

Samanya

It is class-concept, class-essence or universal. It is the common character of the things which fall under the same class. It is the universal by the possession of which different individuals are referred to as belonging to one class. It is called eternal, one and residing in many. There is the class- essence of the universal, of man, called ‘man-ness’ or ‘humanity’ which in hires in all individual men.

Vishesa

It enables us to perceive things as different from one another. Every individual is a particular, a single and a unique thing different from all others. It has got a uniqueness of its own which institutes its particularity. Generality forms the basis of assimilation, particularity forms the basis of discrimination.
Samavaya

Inseparable eternal relation is called ‘inherence’. It is different from conjunction or Samyoga which is a separable and transient relation and is a quality. Samavaya is an independent category (Padartha). Kanada calls it the relation between cause and effect. The things which are inseparably connected are these. The part and the whole, the quality and the substance, the action and the substance.

Abhava

Kanada does not mention it as a separate category. It is added afterwards. Abhava means non-existence. Non-existence is of four kinds. (1) antecedent non-existence (Pragabhava) (2) Subsequent non-existence (Pradhvaim Sabhava) (3) mutual non-existence (anyonyabhava) (4) absolute non-existence (atyantabhava). The first is the non-existence of a thing before its production. The second is the non-existence of a thing after its destruction. The third is the non-existence of a thing as another thing which is different from it. The fourth is a pseudo-idea.

2. Samkhya-Yoga

Tradition regards Kapila as the founder of this system. The system is predominantly intellectual and theoretical. Right knowledge is the knowledge of the separation of the purusa from the prakrti. Samkhya is dualistic realism. It is dualistic because of its doctrine of two ultimate realities, Prakrti and Purusa. Prakrti is regarded as the root-cause of the world of objects. All worldly effects are latent in this uncaused cause; it is the potentiality of nature, ‘the receptacle and nurse of all generation’. As the uncaused root-cause, it is called prakrti, as the first principle of the universe, it is called Pradhana, as the unmanifested state of all the effects, it is known as Avyakta, as the extremely subtle and imperceptible thing which is only inferred from its products, it is called Aumana, as the un-intelligent and unconscious principle, it is called jada, and as the ever, active unlimited power, it is called Shakti.

Prakrti

Prakrti is said to be the unity of three gunas held in equilibrium. The three gunas are sattva, Rajas and Tamas. They are the constituents of Prakrti and through it of the world objects. Being subtle and imperceptible their existence is inferred from their effects – pleasure, pain and indifference respectively. Although they are called gunas, yet they are not ordinary qualities or attributes like the Nyaya-Vaisesika Gunas. They themselves possess qualities like lightness, activity, heaviness etc. they are extremely fine and ever changing elements.
They makeup Prakrti which is nothing apart from them. They are not the qualities which Prakrti, the substance, possesses; on the other hand they themselves contribute prakrit. Sattva literally means real or existent and is responsible for the manifestation of objects in consciousness. It is called goodness and produces pleasure. It is light and bright, buoyant and illuminating. Its colour is white. RAjas, which literally means foulness, is the principle of motion. It produces pain restless activity; feverish effort and wild stimulations are its results. It is mobile and stimulating. Its colour in red. Tamas, which literally means darkness, is the principle of inertia. It produces apathy and indifference. Its colour is dark. These three gunas which constitute prakrti are never separate. They are imperceptible and are inferred from their effects. All things are composed of these three gunas and their difference are due to the different combinations of these gunas.

**Purusa**

The other of the two co-present co-eternal realities of Sankhya is the purusa, the principle of consciousness. Purusa is the soul, the self, the spirit, the subject, the knower. It is neither body nor senses nor brain nor mind nor ego nor intellect. It is not a substance which posses the quality of consciousness. Consciousness is its essence. It is itself pure and transcendental consciousness. It is the ultimate knower which is the foundations of all knowledge.

The Samkhya puts forward several arguments to establish the existence of puresa. (1) The agregate of things must exist for the sake of another. This world, which is an assemblage of the five elements, is for another’s use, there is a self for when enjoyment this enjoyable body, consisting of intellected and the rest, has been produced. (2) All knowable objects have the three gunas, and they presuppose a self who is their seen divide of the gunas. (3) there must be a presiding power, a pure consciousness which co-ordinates all experiences. (4) since prakrti is non-intelligent, there must be some one to experence the products of prakrti (5) there in the striving for liberation (kaivalya) which implies the existence of a purusa with qualities opposed to those of prakrti.

**YOGA**

Patanjali is the traditional founder of the yoga system. The word ‘Yoga’ literally means ‘union’. According to Patanjali, yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind and through right discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti. The Yoga system is closely related to the Samkya system. Yoga system accepts the epistemology and the metaphysics of the Samkya with its twenty five principles,
but unlike Samkya system it admits the existence of God. Yoga system gives special interest in the practice of Yoga as a means to the attainment of vivekajnana or discriminative knowledge. Samkya system also considers vivekajnana to be the essential condition of liberation. The definition given for yoga is cessation of the modification of chitta.

The Yoga system points out that, to get rid of suffering, control over the body and the senses are necessary. For this it does not want to kill the body but it recommends its perfection. For the purification of the citta or the mind or for attaining perfection the Yoga gives us the eightfold means. It is what is known as the eight limbs of yoga or Astanga yoga. They are yama (abstentions), niyama (observances), asana (posture), pranayama (control of breath), pratyahara (withdrawl of the senses from their objects), dharana (fixed attention), dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (concentration). Among these eight steps the first five are said to be external aids and the last three are internal aids to yoga. The first two steps of yoga namely yama and niyama are the ethical basis of yoga and they points to certain negative and positive virtues.

**Astanga yoga**

1. **Yama:** - Yama consists of five negative rules they are (a) ahimsa or abstention from all kinds of injury to any life (b) satya or truthfulness in thought, speech and action (c) asteya or non-stealing (d) brahmacharya or control of the carnal desires and passions and (e) aparigraha or non acceptance of unnecessary gifts from other people or disowning of possessions. A Yegin must strictly follow all these negative rules. The body and mind of a man can be sound only if he controls his passions and sexual impulses. A man cannot concentrate his attention on any object when his mind disturbed by the evil thoughts. So the Yigin who is eager to realize the self should be away from all evil thoughts and actions.

2. **Niyama or observances:**-The second step of Yoga namely Niyama includes five positive rules or it consists in the cultivation of good habits, they are (a) saucha or purification of the body by washing and taking pure food - which is bahya or external purification and purification of mind by cultivating good emotions and sentiments such as friendliness, kindness, cheerfulness for the virtues and indifference to the vices of others- which is known as abhyantara or internal purification. (b) Santosa or contentment- it is the habit of being content with what comes of its without undue extention. (c) Tapas or austerity- it consist in the habit of enduring cold and heat etc and observing austere vows. (d) Svadhyaya or study it consists in the regular habit of study of religious books and (e) Isvara pranidhana or devotion meditation of God.
3. Asana: - The third limb of Yoga namely asana stands for steady and comfortable posture. This is the discipline of the body and consists in the practice of steady and comfortable postures. Various kinds of asanas are prescribed, such as padmasana, virasana, bhadrasana, sarasana etc. The point that one should always keep in mind is that, these asanas can be properly learnt only under the guidance of a guru. For the attainment of concentration the discipline of both body and mind is necessary. If the body of a man is not healthy, it is very difficult to attain concentration. So the Yoga prescribes certain rules for keeping a healthy body and making it a good medium for concentrated thought. It is believed that the asanas or postures prescribed in it are effective means by which the body can be keep to an extent free from diseases.

4. Pranayama: - pranayama means control or the regulation of breath and consists of regulation of inhalation (puraka), retension (kumbhaka) and exhalation (recaka) of breath. The respiratory exercises are useful for strengthening and improving the functions of heart. This fact is recognized by medical people. When breathe is suspended, the mind is in a state of undisturbed concentration, so by practicing the control of breath, the Yogin can suspend breathing for a long time and in that way prolong the state of concentration.

5. Pratyahara: - Pratyahara is control of the senses and consists in withdrawing the senses from their external objects and keeping them under the strict control of the mind. Our senses have a natural tendency to go to outward objects. They must be checked and directed towards the internal goal or object of meditation. When the senses are controlled by the mind instead of following their natural objects they follow the commands of the mind itself. The mind of a man who has attained this state is not disturbed by sights, sounds, smell etc. Coming through the eyes, ear and other senses. This stage is similar to the mind of a stithaprajna or stable minded person, prescribed in Bhagavadgita. It is very difficult to attain this stage but it is possible of attainment. It requires long practice to gain control over one’s senses.

As mentioned earlier, yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara are regarded as the external aids to yoga – bahiranga – sadhana. The last three disciplines are said to be internal aids to yoga –antaranga-sadhana because they are directly related to some kind of Samadhi or yoga. They are dharana, dhyana and Samadhi.
6. Dharana or attention: - It is a mental discipline which consists in holding or fixing the mind or citta on a desired object or it is the concentration of the mind in some object, internal or external. Then object concentrated may be a part of one’s body like one’s navel, the middle point of the eyebrows etc (internal) or it may be object like, moon, the idols of Gods etc. The ability to keep one’s attention steadily fixed on some object is necessary for entering on the next higher stage of yoga.

7. Dhyana or meditation: - It is the next step. It consists in the undisturbed flow of thought about or round about the objects of meditation or the object of attention. One can say it is the steadfast contemplation of the object without any disturbance. At this stage the yogin at first have a clear and distinct representation of the object by parts. Later by prolonged meditation the mind can develop the partial representation of the object into a full presentation of object. So this stage reveals the reality of the contemplated object to the yogi’s mind.

8. Samadhi: - It means concentration and it is the final step in the practice of yoga. Here at this stage the yogi’s mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation, it loses itself in the object and has no awareness of itself. In dhyana the act of meditation and the object of meditation remain separate, but here at this state they become one. So at this stage only the object of thought exists in the mind and the yogi does not even know that there is a process of thought in the mind.

Samadhi is of two kinds – conscious or samprajnata and super conscious or asamprajnata. In the former consciousness of the object of meditation exist, in the later it is transcended. In the samprajnata Samadhi the mind continues to function, though it is completely absorbed in the contemplation of a particular object. In asamprajnata Samadhi objective consciousness also disappears and the mind ceases to function. Patanjali expressed the view that the last three stages namely- dharana, dhyan and Samadhi are more direct aides to spiritual experience.

It is believed that a yogin is able to acquire certain extraordinary powers by the practice of yoga in its different stages. For example it is believed that they can have knowledge of past, present and future. But the yoga system asked people not to practice yoga with an intension of acquiring those powers. One should practice Yoga for the attainment of liberation. A true yogin will always aim at Kaivalya or liberation.
3. **Purva-Mimamsa**

The word ‘Mimamsa” literally means ‘revered thought’ and was originally applied to the interpretation of the vedic rituals which commended highest reverence. The word is now used in the sense of any critical investigation. The schooling Mimamsa justifies both these meanings by giving up rules according to which the commandments of the veda are to be interpreted and by giving a philosophical justification for the vedic ritualism. Purva-Mimamsa regards the veda as eternal and atherless and of infallible authority. It is essentially a book of ritual dealing with the commandments prescribing injunctions or prohibitions. The aim of the Mimamsa is to supply the principles according to which the vedic texts are to be interpreted and to provide philosophical justification for the views contained therein.

The earliest work of this system is the Mimamsa. Sutra of Jaimini which begins with an inquiry into the nature of Dharma. Shabarasvamin has written his great commentary on this work and his commentary has been explained by Prabhakara and Kumarila Bhatta.

1. **Arthapatti**

It is presumption or postulation or implication. It is the assumption of an unperceived fact inorder to reconcile two apparently inconsistent perceived facts. If Devadatta is alive and he is not in his house, we presume that he is elsewhere. ‘Being alive’ and ‘not being in the house’ are two perceived facts which appear to be inconsistent. Their apparent inconsistency is removed when we presume the fact of ‘being elsewhere’.

2. **Anupalabdhi**

Anupalabdhi or Non-apprehension is a means of knowledge with reference to the object negated. When we say “there is no far in this place” we cognize the absence of the jar. Absence cannot be apprehended by perception, which stands in need of sense-contact with a present object, which is not possible in the case, nor can non-existence be apprehended by the other pramanas. We perceive the vacant space, remember the far that is absent, and than we have the knowledge of the absence of the far, which has no reference to the act of perception. Apprehension of non-existence is through anupalabdhi.

**Sabda or Verbal testimony**

The aim of the Mimamsa is to ascertain the nature of dharma. Dharma is not a physical existent, and so it cannot be apprehended through the senses. So
Sabdha-pramana has got the greatest importance in Mimamsa. Testimony is verbal authority. Mimamsa divides testimony into personal and impersonal. The former is the testimony of the trust worthy persons. The latter is the testimony of the Veda. It is valid in itself. It has intrinsic validity. But the former is not valid in itself. Its validity is inferred from the trustworthy character of the person. The veda is eternal and authorless. Veda deals with dharma and the objects denoted by it cannot be known by perception, inference, companion or any other means of valid knowledge. Hence the vedic injunctions can never be contradicted by any subsequent knowledge. Hence the vedic testimony is valid in itself.

### 4. Vedanta

#### General Introduction

The Vedas are the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. They are believed to be eternal and generally considered as emanating from god himself. Each of the Vedas has four sections. The first is known as the samhitas. The second known as Brahmanas, comprises prose passages explaining the significance of sacrificial rites and ceremonies. The third is the aranyakas, the forest-test. These sometimes overlap the Brahmanas. The fourth section of the veda is known as the Upanisads and properly constitutes the essentials of the Vedanta philosophy.

The term Vedanta literally means ‘the end of the Vedas (veda + anta)’. The word ‘anta’, as the English word end, means both termination and aim. Both these meanings are applicable to Vedanta for they are actually the Upanisads, which are the concluding or end portions of the Veda. And also the ideals of the Vedas in its finest form are found in them; it is the flowering of the Vedas. Thus we may say in the Upanisads the a aim of the Vedas are achieved. In the popular sense of the term by Vedanta we mean the later interpretations and explanations on the ideas of the Upanisads and the consequent various philosophical schools based on the difference in the interpretation of Upanisadic ideas.

The Upanisads are not systematic treatises. The task of systematizing their teachings are undertaken by Badarayana in his Vedanta-sutra (c.400 B.C). Badarayana by no means is the first one to weave a system out of the Upanisadic texts. He himself mentions the names of several teachers who preceded him. But his is the earliest work on Vedanta that has come down to us. This work is known as other names also: Vedanta-sutra, since it is the aphoristic text on Vedanta, Sariraka-sutra, since it is concerned with the nature and the destiny of the embodied soul; Bhiksu sutra, since those who are most competent to study it are the bhiksus or monks or sanyasins. Since the Vedants-sutra are different
interpretations and different schools of Vedanta. Each school of Vedanta has interpreted it in its own way and each commentary has a series of sub-commentaries. Each school maintains that is faithful to the text.

Prasthana-traya(The Basic Texts of Vedanta)

Besides the Vedanta-sutra the Upanisads and the Bhagavad-Gita are considered as the basic authorities by all the Vedantic schools. These three constitute the ‘triple foundation(prasthana-traya)’ of Vedanta; and it is sometimes also known as ‘the triple canon of Vedanta’. The Upanisads constitute the sruthi-prasthana: sruthi means literally the ‘heard’, and the Vedas is sruthi. Since the Upanisads are the summits of the Veda and parts of it, they are described as the surthi-prasthana(prasthana means foudation). The Bhagavad-gita comes next only to the Upanisads. It is assigned a status which is almost equal to that of the Upanisads. As this next forms part of the Mahabharatha which is a smriti(the remembered, i.e. a secondary text based on the Vedas), it is called smriti-prasthana. The third of the canonical text is the Brahma-sutra which is regarded as the nyaya-prasthana, because it sets forth the teachings of Vedanta in a logical order. All the classical commentators seek to show that these three basic text teach a constant philosophy.

Different Schools of Vedanta

In the Upanishads we find statements about the identity and distinction between world, soul and Brahman. The first problem to solve for anyone who is attempting to systematize the teaching of the Upanisads is accordingly to harmonize these two sets of statements. But as Badarayana in his Brahma-sutra, tried to harmaonize the Upanisads one would have thought that the Vedanta schools would teach one and the same doctrine. But such is not the case. There are five main schools of Vedanta: KevalAdvaita vada(popularly called Advaita) or strict monism of Sankara, Visistadvaita-vada or qualified monism of Ramanuja. Dvaitadvaita-vada or dualism-monism of Nimbarka,Dvaitha vada or dualism of Madva, and the Suddha-Advaita-vada or pure monism of Vallabhadacarya. The chief point where they are divided is the relation between unity and plurality between God and the world. According to Sankaracarya there is absolute non-difference; Nimbarka admits difference and non-difference and gives equal stress on both; according to Madva, the world is absolutely different from Brahman; and according to Vallabhadacarya, the world is real and non-different from Brahman.
Advaita Vedanta

1. Introduction

Sankara is the founder of Advaita School. He was born in the 8th century (788-820 A.D) at Kalady in Kerala. He wrote several works on Vedanta, established monasteries in different centers and spread the doctrine of Advaita.

Among his major works are the great commentaries on Upanisads, Bhagavad-Gita and Brahma-sutra and such independent manuals as the Upadesasahasri, the Vivekacudamani and the Atmabodha.

He was instructed in the Vedic and Upanisadic philosophy by Govinda one of the pupils of the famous Vedantic philosopher Gaudapada. Although Sankara was the first great consolidator of Advaita he was not the first to teach Advaita. The great work 'Mandukya-karika' by Gaudapada may be regarded as the first available systematic manual of Advaita.

Central Teaching of Advaita:- According to (the current and common interpretation of) Advaita nothing is real apart from the absolute spirit which is referred to by such terms as Brahman and Atman. The fundamental teaching of Advaita is therefore, the non-dualism of spirit. Sankara puts the entire philosophy of Advaita in half a verse where he says: 'Brahman is real; the world is an illusory appearance; the individual soul (jīva) is Brahman alone, not other (Brahma satyam jagan mithya jivo-Brahmaiva napara). The non-duality of Brahman, the non-reality of the world, and the non-difference of the soul from Brahman- these constitute the teaching of Advaita.

The Name “Advaita”:- Sankara recognizes, in the Upanisads, there are two streams of thoughts: one which affirms the identity of Brahman, self and world and the other which denies their identity. But he thinks that one of them, that which affirms the reality of diversity, is only a concession to empirical modes of thought. All diversity being thus only conditionally true, the only teaching of the Upanisads, according to him is that of unity. Since, however, there can be no unity apart from variety, he does not describe his teaching as monism but only as “non-dualism”(Advaita; a-dvaita= not two). Strictly speaking it is therefore wrong to say, as it is now too common to do, that Sankara teaches bare unity. But he only denies the many but does not affirm the one. The reason for this is that no positive attributes can be predicated of reality. If we affirm it as monistic we are predicated attribute to the ultimate reality and that will be a limitation to the absolute; only negatively we can describe the ultimate reality.
Satta-traya or Criterion of Truth

The Satta-traya(three reals) is the hierarchical differentiation of the reals or existence that Sankara makes. He recognizes three grades of reality:

1. Pratibhasika-satta(Illusory reality),
2. Vyavaharika-satta(Empirical reality),
3. Paramarthika-satta(Ontological reality).

Illusions, dreams and the like are illusory existences. The world in space and time, which is subject to causality, is the empirical reality. Brahman is the ontological reality.

**The Pratibhasikasatta (The Illusory or Phenomenal Reality)**

Senory illusions such as mistaking a rope for a snake, a conch for silver, a stump of a tree for a their, etc., are to be taken not as totally unreal or non-existent like a hare’s horn or a barren woman’s son because:

a) The illusions give to the ignorant man the impression(prathibhasa) of reality until they are corrected by proper sense experience. This knowledge can be sublated to its higher realm of knowledge when we recognize the reality.

b) The above mentioned visual deceptions have their substratum in such things as rope, shell, tree,etc. that is to say, in this kind of illusions there is a reality(which is not illusion but real) which causes the illusion, for eg. Rope in rope snake illusion.

Thus, we must note that Sankara ascribes reality, even to illusory objects (of course relative and lower degree of existence); because they are not absolute non-existent being such as hare’s horn.(For example, snake in the ripe snake illusion is not absolutely unreal)

**The Vyavaharikasatta (Empirical or Practical or Pragmatic Reality)**

All the objects experienced in our normal waking consciousness are accorded the vyavaharikasatta. While sensory illusions and dream objects are peculiar to particular individuals and last only for a few seconds, our common experience of waking have an abiding reality, they certainly belong to a higher order of reality. The world which is the scene of all or activity cannot, therefore, be dismissed as a momentary illusion. The world is real for all practical illusory experience(with the help of the rope-snake example).
The Paramarthikasatta (The Ultimate or Final or Transcendental Reality)

Brahman alone is paramarthikasatta. This unique reality is unsublatable through all times. This is the ultimate reality of everything.

Sattatrays as the Criterion of Truth

When the theory of ‘three grades of reality’ or ‘satta-traya’ that we have mentioned above is seen from the epistemological point of view we may consider them as the ‘criterion of truth’. True or valid knowledge is defined as that knowledge which has for its content what is unsublated and unestablished by any other means. Unsublatibility or non-contradiction and novelty are the characteristics of truth. Judged by these characteristics, nothing other than Brahman-knowledge can be true. Brahman-knowledge arises by sublating all other Brahman, and the absolutely true knowledge is the knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman. To the facts of the empirical world belong only relative reality; and empirical knowledge is but relatively true. In other worlds empirical knowledge is taken as true only till Brahma-knowledge is the knowledge that pertains to such fanciful objects as those of dream and delusion. Thus reality or truth is said to be threefold: absolute (paramarthika), empirical (vyavaharika) and apparent (pratibhasika).

Maya, Avidya and Aadyasa

These three terms are interchangeably used in Vedanta. That is to say all the three has somewhat same meaning. But there is slight difference in their emphasis. These are the principle by which the existence of anything other than Brahman is explained; for advaithins Brahman alone is absolutely real and it is the absolute. World is only appearance. If so, how the appearance takes place? This question is answered with the help of Maya, avidya and adhyasa.

The term Maya is often translated as “illusion”. This is the principle that makes for the world. It is significant only from the relative(vyavaharika) standpoint and not from the standpoint of the absolute(paramarthika). The word ‘Maya’ literally means ‘that which (ya) is not(ma).

The concept of Maya is best clarified by setting forth its epistemological and ontological meanings.

From an epistemological point of view, maya is our ignorance (avidya) of the difference between appearance and reality. It is a lack of knowledge. It is not knowing the real and also thinking that appearances are real. Due to avidya we mistake what is sublatable as unsublatable and vice versa. The point to be noted here is that maya is not only lack of knowledge but positive wrong knowledge.
Human mind wrongly ascribe qualities to the sublatable appearances which belongs to unsublatable reality and vice versa.

From an ontological point of view, maya is the creative power of reality (Brahman) by virtue of which the world of variety and multiplicity comes into existence. It is the potency of Brahman by which it becomes the manifold world. It is considered as the ability of Brahman to be conditioned and to appear in the form of the universe.

**Maya and Avidya**

The same reality considered under epistemological point of view is termed as ignorance (avidya) and its ontological point of view is maya. Thus maya is the term for the cosmic dimension and avidya is of the individual dimension of the same fact. From a logical point of view maya and ignorance are coeval, in that there be the one without the other. However, from an epistemological point of view, ignorance may be regarded as prior to maya, in that the latter presupposes the former, that is ignorance is the necessary condition for maya. This also means that maya vanishes as soon as ignorance is overcome by knowledge of the real.

These two terms—maya and avidya concealment and projection. The real nature is concealed in maya and it is the negative aspect of projection which is something positive. It is a kind of unveiling or appearance and it is called viksepana. It is by this power Brahman appears or projects itself as the world. Some of the Advaitins consider the veiling function (avarana) as ignorance or avidya and the other unveiling function (viksepana) as maya. Whether maya is called the cosmic and positive power of projection and avidya the individual and negative ignorance both the terms are used synonymously.

Now let us consider adhyasa. The term also is used in the same sense of maya and avidya by advaitins. The literal meaning of adhyasa is “superimposition,” which Sankara define as “the apparent presentation in the form of remembrance to consciousness of something previously observed in some other thing.” As an act, superimposition is our thinking mistakenly that an object has certain attributes which in fact it does not have.

As we hav seen already the human mind in its ignorance (avidya) has the tendency to mistake what is real for unreal and vice versa. But in this process it happens that certain qualities which are present in the real are wrongly ascribe to the unreal; thus we consider what is real as unreal and vice versa. This specific aspect of ascribing wrong qualities could be vaguely considered as the
specific application of the term adhyasa. But we must know this is not a process apart from maya and avidya but all the three signifies a single process.

The classic illustration of maya, avidya and adhyasa is the rope snake example. A man steps on a rope in the dark and thinks it is a snake. Here the rope is what is immediately present to consciousness, the snake is an object of past experience, and superimposition is the person’s mistakenly attributing the remembered qualities of the snake to the rope. The snake-like experience cannot be had in the absence of the rope. The capacity of rope to appear as snake may be understood as maya; anyway rope has a capacity (potency) to appear as snake, for we do not perceive, for example, a jack fruit as snake. The lack of knowledge in the person who has misperceived the real nature of what is presented is avidya. When one brings a lamp and discovers that what one has stepped on is only a rope, one’s snake like experience is recognized as being illusory. In a similar manner, the empirical world arises as a result of maya. Which involves avidya and adhyasa. Just as under superimposition the rope is experienced as a snake, so also under the superimposition of name and forms reality, which is beyond names and forms, is experienced as the world of appearances. On attaining knowledge of reality, ignorance, maya, and the world of appearance vanish away simultaneously.

The magician’s trick bests illustrates this point. Suppose a magician makes one thing appear as another or apparently produces something out of nothing. Sankara’s point here is that it is we, being ignorant of the magician’s trick, who mistake appearance for reality. Here is the case of ignorance. For the magician himself, as the master of the trick, there can be no illusion. But once we discover the trick by which the magician make things appear, disappear and reappear, we no longer fall victim to illusion but recognize the magician’s performance for what it is. Magician’s ability to do magic by making one thing appear as another or producing something out of nothing may be understood as maya. The ignorant viewer out of his ignorance and due to magician’s capacity wrongly ascribes certain qualities of reality to what is being produced out of magic. Just as the magician’s by his power of manipulation creates in us illusions, so also reality (Brahman) by its creative power, namely, maya produces in us illusions of the phenomenal world of variety, multiplicity, and diversity. One ignorance is overcome by knowledge of real, one is no longer held captive by maya. One might now ask. How is ignorance produced? To answer this question, we turn to a consideration of Sankara’s concept of adhyasa.

From what is being said it is clear that Maya is not pure illusion. It is not only absence of knowledge. It is also positive wrong knowledge. It is a cross of the real and the unreal. In fact it is indescribable. It is neither existent nor non-
existent nor both. It is not existent(real) for the existent is only the Brahman. It is not non-Existent nor both. It is not existent (real) for the existent is only the Brahman. It is not-existent (unreal) for it is responsible for the appearance of the Brahman as world. It cannot be both existent and non-existent for this conception is self-contradictory. It is called neither real nor unreal. That is it is anirvacaniya. It is false or mithya. But it is not non-entity like hare’s horn. It is potency in the positive sense.

It is to be emphasized that when Sankara talks about the phenomenal world as maya in the sense of illusion, he is not saying that the phenomenal world is unreality, but that it is an appearance which has its foundation in reality. Appearance, unlike unreality is sublatable. For this reason, there can be no such thing as pure illusion. Every illusion is grounded in reality. It is clear then that when Sankara says that the phenomenal world is an illusion, he is not saying that it is nonexistent and unreal. Quite the contrary, he is affirming that the phenomenal world, like illusions, is not an independent reality but grounded through in the sole reality of Pure Being.

The Ultimate Reality: Brahman

The two terms frequently employed in the Upanishad to indicate the ultimate reality are Brahman and Atman. The usage of these two terms as synonymous implies that the supreme spirit is the same as the self. The ultimate reality of the objective cosmos and the ultimate reality of the subjective self are one and the same. Brahman is that which is great (brahat) than which there is nothing greater. This does not mean that there are other reals which are less great. What it reality, thus it is the absolute, all powerful, all knowing and all encompassing. The Brahman which is ultimate reality must be spiritual in nature. Because if it has to be the ultimate source of every other reality it has to be spiritual for there are non-material realities also of which Brahman should be the source.

Brahman: The Absolute

If Brahman is the absolute fullness of everything we can attribute no qualities to him for any attribution becomes limitation to him, for we are limiting Brahman to human categories of knowledge, but Brahman is beyond all these. Thus Brahman cannot be defined in terms of any category. Its nature in indicated by ‘via negative’(negative way) as neti,neti, (not this, not this). This Brahman is beyond any cosmic frame work of space, time and causality. Thus it is acosmic or nisprapanca. This does not mean however, that Brahman is nothingness or a countless void. It is the plenary being, the sole reality. In some text of the Upanisad positive expressions are also employed with reference to Brahman-
terms like satya, jnana, and ananda(sat,cit,ananda): existence, consciousness and bliss. But these too are designed for making us understand the real by telling us what it is not; i.e. that it is not non-being, not what is inert, and not that which is related to sorrow. To define a thing is to limit it, to finitize it. The infinite and the ultimate cannot be characterized in terms of finite categories. Brahman is nirguna, without characteristics. Even to say that it is one is not strictly true, for the category of number is inapplicable to the absolute; and therefore the term Advaita, no-dual instead of monism.

It is true that there are in the Upanisads passages which characterize Brahman as the cause of the world and as the home of all auspicious qualities. But how are we to reconcile the two view – the view of Brahman as the absolute without characteristics, and the view which characterizes it as the world ground? For solving this problem, Sankara postulates two standpoints: the absolute(paramarthika) and the relative(vyavaharika). The supreme truth is that Bahaman is non-dual and relationless. It alone is there and there is nothing beside it. But from our stand point, which is the empirical, relative standpoint, Brahman appears as god, the cause of the world. There is no real causation; the world is an illusory appearance in Brahman even as the snake in the rope. This doctrine is known as vivartha-vada(the theory of phenomenal appearance) which is to be distinguished from parinama-vada (the theory of transformation). To say that the Brahman is the cause of the world is as to say that the rope is the cause of the illusory snake.

**Brahman: God or Isvara**

Brahman the ultimate reality, as we have seen, is unconditioned, without attributes and without qualifications. But it is the same reality that is called God or Isvara when viewed in relation to the empirical world and the empirical souls. Brahman the same, as nirguna(attributeless) and as saguna(with attributes). There are not two Brahmans as wrongly alleged by some of the critics. Even when God is referred to as the lower (apara)Brahman, what is meant is not what Brahman become lower in the status as God, but that God is Brahman: Brahman as-it-is-in-itself and Brahman as-it-is-in-relation-to-the-world. The former is the unconditioned Brahman the latter is Brahman as conditioned and is subject to configuration and change.

Thus Brahman reflected in or conditioned by maya is called Isvara or God. Isvara is the personal aspect of the impersonal Brahman.

**Is Isvara in Advaita Real or Not:** Isvara becomes unreal only for him who has realized his oneness with Brahman by rising above speech and mind. For ordinary person Isvara is all in all. Finite thought can never grasp Brahman.
And therefore all talks about Brahman are really talks about Isvara. Even the words ‘unconditioned Brahman’ refer really to ‘conditioned Brahman’ for the moment we speak of Brahman he ceases to be Brahman and becomes Isvara.

Isvara is sat, cit and ananda, the existence, consciousness and bliss which is being positively realized. He is immanent in the whole universe which he controls from within. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. He is source(cause) of everything.

**World**

Sankara’s conception of the real(sat) is that of eternal being and Brahman is the sole reality of the type. Similarly his conception of the unreal(a-sat) is that of absolute nothing. The world, in all its variety, is neither of the one type nor of the other. It is not real in this sense, for it is not eternal. Nor is it unreal in the sense defined, for it clearly appears to us as no non-entity can. No one has ever seen or is ever going to see a hare’s horn or a barren woman’s son which are totally non-existent. Further the world possesses, unlike non-entity, practical efficiency or has value, being serviceable in life. This is the reason why the world is described in advaita as other than the real and the unreal or as an illusory appearance. Its reality is vyavahariaka satta. The serpent that appears where there is only a rope is neither existent nor non-existent. It is psychologically given, but cannot be logically established. On other words, the things of the world, though not ultimately real, are yet of a certain order of reality. They are appearances, in the sense that they depend for their being upon some higher reality. The “serpent”, for example, points to the existence of the rope; and the dependence is one-sided, for while the disappearance of the rope necessarily means the disappearance of the serpent. In the same way the world is an appearance of Brahman. It has a reality but not same as the reality of the ultimate reality. Therefore the world is neither real nor unreal.

Sankara emphasizes that from the phenomenal point of view the world is quiet real. It is not an illusion. It is a practical reality (vyavaharika satta). He distinguishes the dream state from the waking state. Things seen in a dream are quite true a long as the dream lasts; they are sublated only when we are awake. Similarly the world is quite real so long as true knowledge does not dawn. But dreams are private. They are creations of the jiva. The world is public. It is the creation of Isvara.

**6. Individual Self (Jiva)**

World is an illusion, but jiva or individual self is not an illusion but it is nothing other than Brahman.
World is an illusion, but jiva or individual self is not an illusion but it is nothing other than Brahman. Before explaining this difference, it is necessary to draw attention to an important distinction between two types of illusion in common experience.

Considering the example of rope-snake illusion; a person may fancy that he sees a serpent at a distance, while closer scrutiny reveals to him that it is only a rope. The corrected knowledge affirms the existence of something; but it shows that the new knowledge denies the object that he had in his earlier knowledge. He says to himself or feels when he discovers his error. “it is a rope, not a serpent.”

Let us take another case of a person looking at a white conch through a sheet of yellow glass takes it to be yellow. But a suitable change in his standpoint will disclose to him that the yellowness belongs to the glass and not to the conch. Here also, as in the previous case, the later knowledge affirms the existence of some reality; unlike it, however, it does not deny the object as which it appeared, viz, the conch, but only an aspect of it-its yellowness. He still sees it as conch, but only adds that it is white and not yellow.

The illusion in the first case consists in mistaking a given object for another which is not given; in the second, it consists merely in attributing to an object which is given, a feature that does not really belong to it, though it also is presented at the time. But for the interposition of the sheet of glass to which the yellow actually belongs, there would be no illusion at all in latter case.

Now these types of illusion serve to illustrate the difference in the manner in which, according to Sankara, one and the same Brahman comes to appear as the world and has become the individual self (jiva). It gives rise to the illusion of the world, as the rope does to that of a serpent in our first example. The ultimate truth, as realized by a jivanmukta, denies the world while affirming the underlying reality of Brahman which is given in all presentations as individual self on the other hand, is not illusory in this sense. It is Brahman itself appearing through media or limiting adjuncts like the internal organ(antha-karana ) which, are all elements pertaining to the physical world and, as such, are illusory. Or to state the same otherwise, the individual self when seen in its real nature, is Brahman itself. When this fact is realized in one's own experience, what is denied is not the jiva as a spiritual entity, but only certain aspects of it, such as its finitude and its separateness from other selves. We cannot therefore say that the individual self is false(mithya), as we may that the world is false.
Jiva or the individual self is a subject-object complex. Its subject element is pure consciousness and is called saksin. Its object element is the internal organ called the anthakarana(mind) which is bhautika as it is composed of five elements, Earth (Prithivi), Water (Ap), Fire (Tejas), Air (Vayu), Ether (Akasa), with predominance of tejas which makes it always active except in deep sleep or states like swoon or trance. The source of the internal organ is avidya which causes individuality. In perception, the internal organ, when a sense-organ coes into contact with an object, assumes the ‘form’ of that object. It is the vrtti or the mode of the internal organ. This vrtti inspired by the saksin takes the form of empirical knowledge. In waking state, the internal organ is aided by the senses; in dream state it functions by itself; and in deep sleep it is lost in its cause avidya. In this state too, the individuality persist because the saksin is associated with avidya. In liberation avidya is destroyed by jnana and the saksin is realized as the Brahman which it always is.

With regard to the individual soul it is neither the real transformation of the Brahman nor an illusory appearance of Brahman, so that no principle of causation is at all involved there. If we yet speak of the individual soul as born we only mean that its adjuncts like the physical body come into being and not spiritual element in it. Hence the jiva is described as beingless. It is as already indicated Brahman appearing in an empirical dress.

Qualified Brahman is Isvara. In the same vein we may say qualified or conditioned atman is jiva. Here ‘Brahman atman’ is the ultimate reality. Thus conditioned form of the ultimate reality in the realm of objective world (termed as Brahman) is Isvara and the ultimate reality in the realm of subjective self (atman) is jiva. But phenomenally there is a difference between jiva and Isvara. The former is the agent and the enjoyer, acquires merit and demerit, experiences pleasure and pain while the latter is not at all touched by all this. But ultimately there is no difference between jiva and Brahman. Only so long as jiva does not discard nescience leading to duality and does not realize its own true nature, he remains the individual self. Slumbering in ignorance, when he is awakened by the sruthi, he realizes that he is not the body senses or mind, but is the non-dual universal self-tat tvam asis (that thou art). Even the view that the jiva becomes Brahman is only a verbal statement, for he is always Brahman. Just as the pure transparent white crystal is wrongly imagined to be red on account of a red flower placed near it, the non-dual atman or Brahman is wrongly imagined to be the empirical self.
7. Liberation

The goal of human life, according to Advaita, can be directly deduced from its explanation of the character of the individual self. The individual self is Brahman itself, and its supposed distinction from it is entirely due to the illusory adjuncts with which it identifies itself. Man’s ultimate aim in life should accordingly be to know and realize this truth of identity. Since the various accompaniments of the self are all false and the identification of the self with them is erroneous, the means of getting rid of them is right knowledge.

That is to say, man has to alter totally his standpoint towards himself and the world in order to become free. Final freedom does not therefore mean any actual change in the nature of the self. To give a familiar illustration: in a lunar eclipse, the moon is actually obscured by the shadow of the earth; and it remains eclipsed until this obscuration is removed by a change in the relative position of the heavenly bodies concerned, and it remains eclipsed until this obscuration is removed by a change in the relative position of the heavenly bodies concerned, and the sun’s light again fully falls on it. Here the change is real. In a solar eclipse on the other hand, nothing at all happens to the luminary; and it continues to be, during the eclipse, as it was before. It is only the position of the observer with reference to the sun and the moon that gives rise to the wrong notion of the eclipse. When there is an appropriate shifting of that position the eclipse perforce ceases to appear. Similarly in the present cases also, the identity of the self with Brahman is not to be newly attained; it is already there and has only to be realized in one’s own experience. This does not mean that there is no need, according to Advaita for undergoing and practical discipline to realize it.

VISISTADVAITA VEDANTA

Introduction

We can divide the whole Vedanta broadly into two: absolutistic and theistic. Advaita is absolutistic for the ultimate reality according to it is ‘the absolute’ the attributeless Brahman. Visistadvaita and dvaita are theistic because for them the ultimate reality is God to whom qualities can be attributed and is the subject of devotion.

The attempt to combine personal theism with absolutism took three main lines- Vaisnavism, Saivism and Saktism, according as the personal divinity was identified with Visnu or Siva or Sakthi. The vaisnavas, the saivas and the saktas all have their different sacred literature called the Agamas. The agamas of
vaisnavism, saivism and saktism are respectively called the Pancaratra Samhita, the Saiva Aagama and the Tantra. The Sakthas practically allied themselves with the saivas. But there was a long struggle between the vaisnavas and the saivas. Both Ramanujua and Madhva belong to vaisnava tradition.

As opposed to the absolute and unqualified non-dualism of Sankara’s Vedanta, Visistadvaita Vedanta is qualified non-dualism. According to tradition, Ramanuju was the founder of Visistadvaita Vedanta. Born in A.D. 1017 of Brahmin parentage, at Sriperumbudur in South India, Ramanuja studied under such great acaryas(teachers) and alvars(poet-saints) as Yadava Prakasa, Yamuna, Periamambi, and Gosthipurna, all of whom held a theistic personality interpretation of Vedanta. Ramanuja considered Sankara’s Absolute as an arid and bloodless abstraction not only unwarranted by scriptures but also incapable of fulfilling man’s genuine religious aspiration. Therefore Ramanjua set himself the task of providing an interpretation of Vedanta that would at one preserve the identity of a difference between Atman and Brahman between man and God. To this end, Ramanuja composed several works, the most important of which are Sribhaysya and Gitabhasya, commentaries on the Brahmansutras and the Bhagavad –Gita, respectively. As a theistic Vedantin, Ramanuja worship God as Vishnu, established many temples of Visnu and converted many to Vaisnavism. He died in 1187.

2. **Tattva-traya: Isvara (god), Cit (soul) and Acit(matter)**

Ramanuja recognizes three things as ultimate and real. They are known as tattva-traya. These are Isvara (god) cit(soul), and acit (matter). Though all are equally real, the two are absolutely dependent on God. Though they are substances in themselves, yet in relation to god, they become his attributes. They are the body of god who is their soul. Whatever is, thus the body of God and he is the soul not only of inorganic nature but also of souls or jivas.

The chief difficult in interpreting the Upanisads, as we know, is in reconciling statements that identify Brahman with the difficulty in interpreting the Upanishads, as we know, is in reconciling statements that identify Brahman with the individual soul and with the physical universe and with those statements that distinguish it from the same. The manner in which Ramanuja harmonizes them is unique. He points out that, as shown by common linguistic usage, we often identify things that are distinct. Thus we say that rose is red. The “rose” which is a substance and “redness” which is a quality cannot be the same; but yet we speak of them as if they were, because usage permits it. Similarly one may say “I am a man,” identifying a surviving soul with the mortal human form in which it appears. Such usage, how ever, is not found in the case
of all distinct things. We cannot, for example speak of a man and his coat or his staff in this manner, but have necessarily to say that he has a coat on him or a staff in his hand, thus indicating clearly their distinction by our mode of speech.

Contrasting these two forms of usage, Ramanuja comes to the conclusion that the relation in the two former cases should be different from and more intimate than that in the latter which obviously mere conjunction. But the relation of the former type is inseparable and it is found only between (1) substance and attribute, and (2) body and soul that is, between two substances of which one is necessarily spiritual. This intimate relation is termed by him aprthaka-siddhi, which literally means “inseparability.” It connotes that one of the two entities related is dependent upon the other in the sense that it cannot exist without the other also existing and that it cannot be rightly known without the other also being known at the same time.

To illustrate this point more clearly let us take another example. A person, namely Davis who was once a child, once a youth and is now old, may be regarded as one and the same person when we mean by it the soul as embodied previously in childhood, a youthful, and now in an aged, bodily frame is one and the same. But at the same time we know there is a difference between child Davis, young Davis and old Davis. That is qualified non-dualism; unity with difference. To put the whole matter briefly, it is the qualified or the embodied that is one, while the factors qualifying or embodying it are quite distinct, though inseparable, from it.

There is no doubt that Ramanuja successfully overcome the difficulty which the Upanishads present. The statements found in the Upanisads where they distinguish the world or the self from Brahman, is true as they give expression to what is a matter of act. Where they indentify them, they only mean that they are inseparable in the sense explained just now, and not that they are identical. The final import of the statement is that though the world and the individual souls are real and distinct, the absolute in which they are included is one.

Thus, for Ramanuja, Brahman is the unity of the different selves and material objects of the phenomenal world. Brahman as the identity of these different constituents is the underlying substratum. It should be pointed out that, correctly speaking; Ramanuja’s concept of unity is not unity but union; for from a logical point of view it is only union and not unity that can be thought of as being constituted of ultimately distinct and separate parts. This is the same as saving that individual selves and object are real qualities and modes of Brahman. Individual selves and material objects are related to Brahman as parts
to a whole. Each part is separate and yet not different in substance from the whole. Just as qualities are real but cannot exist independently of substance, so also the selves and objects are as part of ultimate reality but cannot exist independently of it. It is for reason that Ramanuja’s Absolute, unlike Samkara’s, is not unqualified identity but identity in difference. Hence Ramanju’s Vedanta is known as Visistadaita(qualified nondualism).

Ramanuja’s view is Visistadvaita or non-dualism qualified by difference. The absolute is an organic unity, an identity which is qualified by diversity. It is a complex whole (visista) which consists of the interrelated and interdependent subordinate elements which are called ‘visesana’ and the immanent and controlling spirit which is called visesya. According to Ramanuja God is the central principal of both the individual soul and the physical world. The three entities-soul, world and god- are all real and distinct from one another. Thus the final Upanishadic teaching, according to Ramanuja, is that while Brahman, the soul and the physical world are all different and equally different, although they stand in a peculiarly close relation to one another. What is meant by describing the doctrine as Advaita(non-dualism) is not that the complex of these three elements is a synthesized unity of differences but only that Brahman as embodied in or inspiring the souls and matter is one. The latter, viz. souls and matter are not identical with it or with one another. If we like, we may interpret the term “Visistadvaita” as signifying that there is nothing outside this embodied whole.

**Concept of God**

In Ramanuja’s account of God, we may notice three points of importance.

First, God is identified with the absolute. He is Brahman and Brahman must be a savisesa or a qualified unity. God stands for the whole universe and matter and souls form his body, he being their soul. As the absolute, the ultimate unity-in-and through-trinity, the concrete whole, god may be viewed through two stages-as cause and as effect. During the state of dissolution (pralaya), God remains as the cause with a subtle matter and unembodied souls forming His body. The whole universe lies latent in him. During the state of creation (srsti), the subtle matter becomes gross and the unembodied souls(except the nitya and mukta souls) become embodied according to their karmas. In the effect state the universe becomes manifest. The former state is called the causal state of Brahman and while the latter state is the effect-state of Brahman.

Secondly, god is considered as the immanent inner controller (antharyami), the qualified substance (visesya or prakrti), who is in himself changeless and is
the unmoved mover of this world-process. In his essence he does not suffer change which is said to fall to the lot of his attributes or modes only. Ramanuja makes no distinction between attributes and modes. They are absolutely dependent on god and are inseparable from him. They are his body and he is their soul. Just as in the case of an ordinary individual only the body undergoes change while the soul is changeless, similarly it is only body of god, i.e. the matter and the individual souls that undergo changes and not God himself who is their soul. Hence god is the unchanging controller of all change and limitation of the finite souls do not affect the essence of god.

Thirdly, God is also transcendent. He is the perfect personality. He has a divine body. Embodiment is not the cause of bondage. It is karma which is the cause of bondage. Hence it is theistic conception of God. God as the perfect personality is devoid of all negative qualities and possesses all merits. God is considered as the srststi-sthithi-samhara- creator, preserver and destroyer.

The principle thus enunciated help us to understand what, according to Ramanuja, the meaning of the Upanishadic statement “That thou art” (Tat tvam asi) is. Here the word “That” finally denotes God having the entire universe as his body; and “thou”, God having the individual soul as his body. The import of the proposition, as a whole, is accordingly the identity of the embodied one-God-in both.

Individual Soul

We now consider Ramanujas conception of cit or the individual soul. It is described as a prakara-mode-of God, by which is meant that it is an accessory to him, and not that it is a mode in the sense of being a transformation of him, and not that it is a mode in the senses of being a transformation of him. It is looked upon as God’s “body” in as much as God is immanent in, upon and guides it from the inside. It is a spiritual substance in itself and is absolutely real. It is an eternal point of spiritual light. It is beyond creation and destruction. In the state of creation it is embodied according to its karmas, while in the state of dissolution and in the state of liberation it remains in itself.

Though it is eternal, real, unique, uncrated and imperishable yet it is finite and individual, being only a part or a mode of god. Hence it is regarded as atomic(anu) in size. Though it is really subjected to earthly existence and to the various imperfections, defects and miseries which the worldly life implies yet these do not affect its essence. the soul is different from its body, sense organs mind, and even cognition. In samsara it wrongly identifies itself with these due to ignorance and karma.
The soul is a self-luminous substance as well a self-conscious substance. It manifests itself without the aid of the knowledge and it is also self-conscious. It is the substance of Dharma-bhuta jnana.

The souls are many; and unity is predicated of them anywhere in the Veda, it is because all of them alike are of the nature and therefore forms one and the same class. Thus they are qualitatively homogenous and only quantitatively different.

They are intrinsically happy but transmigrate an are subject to suffering, as a result of their past karma. The jivas are of three types;

(a) Those that were never in bondage, and have therefore always been free (nitya-mukta),

(b) Those that have passed through the ordeals of life and have, through successful self-discipline become free (mukta) and

(c) Those that are still in the process of transmigration(baddha)

Matter (acit)

According to Ramanuja, acit or unconscious substance is of three kinds: prakriti or misra-sattva, nitya vibhuti or suddha-sattava, and kala or sattva-sunya.

Prakrti:- Prakrti is ordinary matter which makes samsara. Prakriti is conceived vry much as in the Samkhya Yoga, the only important difference being (i) that it is not regarded here as independent of spirit, here prakrti is absolutely dependent on god and (ii) that sattva, rajas and tams are taken to be its attributes and not its constituents. That it is not independent of God is shown by our description of it as the body of God.

Nityavibhuti or suddhasattva is made up of pure sattva and is called ajada or immaterial like dharmabhutajnana. The ideal wold and the bodies of God and of eternal and liberated souls are made of this stuff.

Kala or time is another unconscious substance and is give in a separate status.

Epistemological Notions

Nature of knowledge:- According to Ramanuja all that is known necessarily involves some differentiation. Discrimination is essential to all knowledge. Whatever is known is known as characterized in some way, as qualified by some specific attribute.
Classification of knowledge as chetana and Dharma Bhuta Jnana:-
Ramanuja defines substance as a substratum or support of qualities. A thing may be a substance as well as an attribute. The light is the attribute in relation to lamp, but it is a substance in relation to its rays. The whole world as an adjective of God, is an attribute in relation to him though it contains many substances like souls and material objects. Similarly knowledge is both substance as well as an attribute. It is a substance because it possesses the qualities of contraction and expansion and also it is an attribute because it belongs to a self or to God.

Thus there is knowledge (consciousness) which is constitutive of the self(cetana), there is also self’s attributive knowledge. The latter, the attributive dimension of knowledge (consciousness), is called dharma bhuta jnana. If the constitutive or substantive consciousness is like light, the attributive consciousness is like its luminosity.

Ramanuja regards dharma-bhuta-jnana as neither spiritual nor purely material. It is not inert(jada)like the material objects; and is not consciousness (cetana), like the self. He gives a separate intermediate position to it. It is called ajada or immaterial and is distinguished from both matter and spirit.

Dharma bhuta jnana is unlike unconscious material substance, since it can without any other aid manifest itself as well as other objects. It is unlike self conscious souls, since it is not self conscious and cannot know itself. Attributive knowledge can only show itself as well as its object just as a lamp can show itself as well as a pot, but it cannot know(conscious of) either itself or its object.

But unlike dharmabhutajnana, the self- i.e, the knowledge that is constitutive or substantive of the self-is self conscious and also self-luminous. Though it is self luminous it can only reveal itself and cannot reveal the object.

Ramanuja distinguishes self-luminosity from self-consciousness. Attributive knowledge is self-luminous but is not self-conscious. The self is both self-luminous and self-conscious; but it cannot reveal the objects outside. The self is self-luminous but it knows the objects only through its attributive consciousness, i.e dharma-bhuta-jnana. Thus attributive knowledge always belongs to and exists for the self. Hence it is described as dharma-bhuta-literally meaning subsidiary or attributive jnana.

Ramanuja describes the process of knowing as staring from the soul, then reaching the mind and then, passing through the senses and meeting the outside objects. Thus coming into contact with the object, it assumes the ‘form’ (akara) of that object and somehow reveals it to the subject in question. The conception
of dharma corresponds to that of the antha-karana in the Advaita, which also is presented as similarly going out towards and assuming their form before giving rise to knowledge.

**Bondage and Liberation**

**Bondage**

The souls are bound on account of their ignorance and karma. How does the pure soul come to be at all tinged with karma? This question is explained away by Ramanuja by answering that the relation between soul and karmic impressions as beginningless. Due to its karmas, the soul becomes associated with particular body, senses, mind and life. In its ignorance, the self identifies itself with the body or some part thereof and thereby develops desires and attachments to bodily existence. The general tendency of the self to identity itself with non-self is known as ahamkara (egoism). Thus to obtain freedom the soul has to remove its karmic obstacles, it has to purify itself from the dross and dust of karma that has somehow surrounded it.

**Means for Liberation**

How to get the soul from the karmic obstacles? Ramanuja suggests a way in which the way of action (karma-yoga), knowledge (jnana-yoga) and devotion (bhakti-yoga) are involved. According to Ramanuja, the self’s bondage to the body is the due to its karma, which is generated and sustained by the self’s ignorance as to its true being.

Ramanuja suggests as the first stage or a spiritual aspirant in the process of liberation is to do his duties which are enjoyed by the Vedas. Thus for him karma-marga implies doing the duties, rites and rituals prescribed in the Vedas in a disinterested manner simply to please God. Ramanuja regards purva-mimamsa and uttara mimamsa (Vedanta) as one science. The study of purva-mimamsa is necessary for the study of the Vedanta. Thus, as we know purva-mimamsa teaches meaning and necessity of the performance of Vedic rituals observing these are the first stage for a spiritual aspirant.

But this performance alone will not provide salvation. The aspirant should start studying Vedanta. He should acquire the knowledge that the soul in reality is the mode of God himself and it has wrongly identified itself as body, mind, sense and cognition. The soul will now realize that the matter and souls quality God who is their inner ruler, that they form the body of God who is the real soul. Now this is the jnanamaraga advocated by Ramanuja.
Prapatti: the Special Means for Liberation

What we have mentioned above is the normal or regular means to release. But a person, to follow it, must belong to the higher casts of Hindu society; for it is only such that are qualified to receive instruction in the Veda and the Upanisads. The visistadvata therefore recognizes along with it another pathway to god which any one irrespective of caste or creed or rank may follow. That is known as prapatti. The word is derived from pra-pad, meaning ‘to take refuge with’ or ‘to piously resign’, and points to a belief that salvations obtained through free g race. It is the absolute self surrender. It is described as sarnagati or flinging oneself on god’s compassion. It consists of six steps: 1) to think, will and act as those will please god, 2) not to think, will and act as those would displease God, 3) faith that god would protect, 4) appeal to God for protection, 5) absolute self surrender to God, and 6) feeling of absolute dependence on God.

For Ramanuja the ordinary bhakti is constant contemplation on God whereas prapatti is the highest bhakti which is not mere emotional love of god, but is the immediate and intuitive knowledge of god. Bhakti also in its highest form in effect may become prapatti. Thus both bhakti and prapatti maybe considered as two means to attain highest bhakti, providing intuitive knowledge of God.

Dvaita Vedanta

Introduction

Dvaita, Vedanta, as its very name indicates, rejects Sankara’s non-dualism as well as Ramanuja’s qualified non-dualism and upholds though going dualism between the world and Brahman. The school of Dvaita Vedanta was founded by madhva. Born of Brahman parentage in A.D.1199, at Billigram in south western India, Madhva began his philosophic studies under Achyutapreksa. But, dissatisfied with his teacher’s non-dualistic interpretation of Vedanta, Madhva left Achylutapreksa. After several years of independent study and reflection, he produced his own interpretation of Vedanta which developed into the school of Dvaita Vedanta. He was the author of thirty seven works, among which the most important are Madhavabhasya and Gitabhasya, commentaries on the Brahmasutra and the Bhagavad-Gita, respectively. Madhva died in 1278.

The philosophic foundation of Madhva’s dualism in his theory of perception and knowledge. According to Madhava, Genuine knowledge is the articulation of perceived differences between things as well as between things and the perceiving self. Consequently, to deny difference to deny the very possibility of knowledge; those who affirm identity but deny difference, argues Madhva, are in the absurd
position of claiming knowledge by rejecting its very foundation. The gist of the argument is that perception necessarily implies the perceiver and the perceived as distinct existents; and knowledge, too in that it is based on perception, analytically implies the knower and the known as distinct existents.

It should be obvious from the foregoing that Madhva is both an epistemological and an ontological realist: not only do we perceive the world as constituted to different selves and material object, but in reality it is so. In short, the empirical world is real and pluralistic. Further, according to Madhva, Brahman, the creator and Lord of the world, is distinct from the world.

**Pancabheda: The Theory of Difference**

As we have said above, for Madhva, genuine knowledge is the articulation of perceived differences between things as well as between things and the perceiving self. Madhva’s philosophy is thus through and through a philosophy of differences are, distinctionism. He recognized five fundamental and absolute distinctions. These are known as Pancabheda. The difference are: (1) between Brahman and individual selves, (2) between Brahman and matter, (3) between matter and individual selves, (4) between one individual self and another, and (5) between one material object and another. Madhva divides the universe into independent and depended being. Brahman is the sole independent being; selves and material object depend upon Brahman for their existence. Brahman is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. To the question how Brahman as a distinct being can be omnipresent without being limited by the equally real selves and material objects, Madhva replies that the latter, being dependent upon Brahman, lack the power to resist and limit Brahman.

**God**

For Madhva, reality then consist of three eternal, absolutely real, and irreducibly distinct entities, namely, Brahman, selves, and matter, although the last two are absolutely dependent on the first. True to the spirit of distinctionism, Madhva regards Samkara’s Nirguna(unqualified) Brahman not as reality but as an empty and absurd concept, and takes Samkara's saguna(qualified) Brahman as the ultimate reality. Madhva teaches that Brahman is God, the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the world(selves and material objects) and is the Lord of karma, God creates the world only in the sense that by his will he brigs into existence the world of variety and multiplicity. At the time of dissolution of the world, God transforms all material objects into homogeneous primordial matter, and selves into disembodied intelligences. It is important, however to not that even in the state of dissolution, there remain the
distinction between selves, matter, and God, according to Madhva, is a person, whose essence is reality, consciousness, and bliss (sat-cit-ananda). He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe (srsti-sthithi-samhara). He possesses all positive qualities in infinite perfection. He is both transcendent and immanent.

Soul, Bondage and Salvation

Selves are eternal, plural and atomic; consciousness and bliss are intrinsic to them. But owing to their past karma, selves become entangled with bodies and suffer pain and misery. God endows selves with free will; consequently, each self is wholly responsible for its state of existence. Evil in the world is thus not traceable to God, who possesses all and only positive perfections. Madhva divides souls into three kinds; eternally free (nityamukta), freed (mukta), and bound (baddha). Though god controls the soul from within, yet it is real agent and a real enjoyer and is responsible for its acts. Like Ramanuja, Madhva recognize total devotion and self-surrender to God as the only means of salvation. It is defined as the eternal love for God with a full sense of his greatness. Accordingly bhakti yoga is the sole path to liberation. We may not here that in the entire Indian philosophical religious tradition Madhva is alone in teaching the doctrine of eternal damnation.

Model Questions

Short Answer Questions Carrying 1 weightage

1. Define Nastika

Nastikas are those who do not accept the authority of Vedas. They are Jainism, Buddhism and carvaka.

2. Bring out the philosophy of monism.

In monism the whole of existence is reduced to one fundamental reality. This reality is called ‘that’ (Tat).

3. Examine the epistemological doctrine of the Carvaka School.

The epistemological doctrine of the Carvaka school is that perception is the only means of valid knowledge. The validity even of inference is rejected.
4. **Comment on the Jaina categories**

The whole universe is brought under the two ever lasting co-existing categories which are called jiva and ajiva. Jiva means the conscious spirit. The ajiva means the unconscious non spirit. Ajiva includes matter, space, motion, rest and time.

5. **Name the four Noble truths**

The four Noble truths are (1) There is suffering (dukha) (2) There is a cause of suffering (dukha samudaya) (3) There is a cessation of suffering (dukha-nirodha) (4) There is a way leading to this cessation of suffering (dukha-nirodha gamini-pratipat).

6. **Definition of perception according to Gotama.**

Gotama defines perception as the non-erroneous cognition which is produced by the intercourse of the sense-organs with the objects, which is not associated with a name and which is well-defined.

7. **Sankhya system is dualistic. Elucidate.**

Samkhya maintains a clear out dualism between purusa and prakrti. Prakrit is the root cause of the world of objects. Purusa is pure consciousness.

8. **What is Arthapatti**

It is presumption or postulation or implication. It is the assumption of an unperceived fact inorder to reconcile two apparently in constant perceived facts.

9. **What is satta-traya**

The satta-traya is the herearchichical differentiation of the reals. There are three grades of reality-pratibhasika vyavaharika and paramarthika.

10. **Explain Maya**

The term maya is often translated as illusion. Maya is the creative power of reality by virtue of which the world of variety and multiplicity comes into existence.

11. **Discuss jiva**

Jiva is a subject-object complex. It subject element is pure consciousness and is called saksin. Its object element is the internal organ called antrakarana. In liberation the saksin is realized as the Brahman.
12. **What is Tattva-traya**

God, soul and matter are the tattva traya. Though all are equally real, the first two are absolutely dependent on God.

13. **What is prapatti**

Another path way to god which any one irrespective of caste or creed or rank may follow.

14. **Comment on Panchabheda**

Madhva recognized five fundamental and absolute distinctions. These are known as pancabheda (1) between Brahman and soul (2) between Brahman and matter (3) between individual soul and matter (4) between soul and soul (5) between matter and matter.

**Short Answer type questions carrying 2 weightages**

1. Explain Syadvada

2. Write a brief note on the Jaina categories

3. Explain the no-soul theory of Buddhism

4. Describe the Vaisesika notion of abhava

5. Explain the internal preparations of Yoga

6. Describe Sankara’s account of Maya

7. Explain the God-self relation according to Madhava

**Essay questions carrying 4 weightages**

1. Distinguish between vedic and non-vedic systems

2. State the metaphysical features of Carvaka

3. State & explain the Four Noble Truths

4. Explain Nyaya classification of perceptual knowledge

5. Explain the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta

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