

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS-PHILOSOPHY
SEMESTER -III**

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

CORE 301

BLOCK-1

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

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BLOCK-1 INDIAN METAPHYSICS

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK-

Unit-1 In this unit we will introduce you to some knowledge of naya philosophy, its importance, different topics related to naya philosophy, different elements like pramana, prameya, padartha etc. We shall also give you insights detailed knowledge about all the various topics in this philosophy.

Unit-2 In this unit, we have explained the various issues and ideas pertaining to Man, God, categories of metaphysics.

Unit-3 The objective of this Unit is to familiarize the student with the closely related terms *being* and *essence*. The method we will be following is historical, because it is more correct to speak of the history of the meanings rather than of 'the meaning' of being and essence. The limitation of the Unit is that it concentrates mainly on the West.

Unit-4 Insight into, and understanding of the basic structures of ourselves as beings, and of the realities around us, is the main objective of this unit. This unit explains how act and potency are the two ultimate co-principles of all that comes into being. For an initial meaning of the words "act" and "potency" just look up any Standard English dictionary.

Unit-5 WE have introduced this chapter to show that God whose mercy is need for Moksha does not exist. Now what about the nature of Ishwar the nature of Ishwar as mentioned by various schools. Two things which I have marked in this theory the positions is not satisfactory because the god is never mentioned as creator, destroy and rather of the universe

Unit-6 Bhakti Movement brought about revolutionary changes in moral, social, political perspectives of people of India. It is important to realize that Bhakti Movement unfolded the uniformities existing among the various religions. Once again, it is important to note that it played a significant role against the divisive and destructive forces in society.

Unit-7 The main objective of this Unit—is to provide a glimpse of another school of Vedanta known as Visistadvaita pioneered by Sri Ramanujacharya who systematised the conception of monotheism based on the *Prasthan Traya*. *Bhakti* as the sole means to liberation is its contention and hence Ramanuja and other gamut of Visistadvaitins dwell deep into the importance of *bhakti*. We shall examine the Epistemology, Metaphysical categories and Axiology according to Visistadvaita.

UNIT 1 PRAMEYA : PADARTHA

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Prameya
- 1.3 Philosophy of Language- Nyaya
- 1.4 The meaning of words-Sabdartha
- 1.5 The import of word PADARTHA
- 1.6 Meaning of sentences (Vakyurtha)
- 1.7 Let's sum up
- 1.8 Key words
- 1.9 Question for review
- 1.10 Suggested readings and Reference
- 1.11 Answer to check your progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will introduce you to some knowledge of naya philosophy, its importance, different topics related to naya philosophy, different elements like pramana, prameya, padartha etc. We shall also give you insights detailed knowledge about all the various topics in this philosophy.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The whole system of Nyaya philosophy contains within itself the theory of knowledge, the theory of physical world, the theory of individual self and its liberation, and the theory of God. The system elaborately discusses sixteen philosophical topics like, pramana, prameya, samsaya prayojana, drstanta siddhanta, avayava, tarka, nirnaya, vada, jalpa, vitanda, hetvabhasa, chala, jaii and nigrahasthana. Among all these pramana is the matter of central

concern for our present purpose. Pramana is the instrument of valid knowledge (Prama). The word prama is used to mean valid knowledge. It is defined as “yatharthanubhava prama”

1.2 PRAMEYA

Prama is the right apprehension of an object. It is the manifestation of an object as it is. “Tadvati tatprakaradnubhava yathartha saiva prametyucyate” Valid knowledge is the knowledge which states the existence of something as it is. Regarding anubhava the Naiyayikas hold, “Tattvamanaropitam rupam, tasya jnanamanubhava” 3 It means that anubhava is knowledge of given facts as distinguished from those that are imagined or supplied by the mind. It is definite and assured (asandigdha) cognition of an object which is true and presentational. Prama is the definite categorical assertion distinguished from all indefinite categorical assertion distinguished from all indefinite, problematic and hypothetical knowledge. Prama is always sure, true or yathartha knowledge. The truth of knowledge consists in its correspondence for facts. Prama- according Nyaya is representational it represents the facts properly.

The instruments of *prama* or valid cognition are called *pramanas*. They are the means of right knowledge. *Pramana* is that which gives valid knowledge, and this valid knowledge is of objects. “*Pramana* is the cause of valid cognition of objects, in as much as it gives us a knowledge of objects, as they really are and exist in themselves.” 4 *Pramana* has a relation with objects, in the sense that the nature and attributes of objects, as revealed by *pramana*, are obviously true of them, in spite of variations in space, time and other condition.

The concept of *prama*, *pramata*, *prameya* and *pramana* are included in *Nyaya* epistemology. 5 *Prama* is unerring knowledge and the other three (*pramata*, *prameya*, *pramanna*) are the necessary factors of *prama*. 6 *Pramata* is the subject, *prameya* is the object and *pramana* is the method of knowledge. In every

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knowledge situation there involves a subject or knower. The subject is the substantive ground of all cognition. The subject acts according to its own choice. It is the self, conceived as an intelligent agent. The subject is an independent entity which exists for itself and is an end to itself.

The knower knows the objects, i.e., the subject has the object to establish knowledge relationship. The object of knowledge is the *prameya*. *Prameya* is that to which it is directed. The *prameya* may be either existent or non-existent. Both positive and negative facts may become objects of knowledge, knowledge is positive in case of the existent objects and does not depend on anything other than its own. The knowledge of non-existent object is negative and conditional. It depends on the direct apprehension of similar existent objects. The light of a lamp, which reveals the existence of certain perceived objects in a dark room, manifests also the non-existence of those that are not perceived for if the latter had existed there, they would have been perceived like the similar perceived objects". Just as there can be no knowledge without a conscious subject so also there is no knowledge without an object. Both subject (*pramata*) and object (*prameya*) are correlative factors involved in knowledge. *Pramata* and *prameya* are distinguishable but cannot be separated in any act of knowledge.

The instrument of knowledge is *pramana*. In western philosophy it is customary to analyse the knowledge in to a trifactoral relation of the subject, object and valid knowledge. These correspond to *pramata*, *prameya* and *prama* respectively in Indian philosophy. The *pramanas* are considered not as factors but instruments which is distinct from other factors, *Nyaya* does not deny the distinction, but yet considers the subject (*pramata*), object (*prameya*), instruments (*pramanas*) and resulting state (*prama*) as mutually implicated aspects of the whole truth. Each of the four is essential to knowledge. When these four principles are taken together in one whole, there is the realization of the Truth.

Pramana as a factor of valid knowledge is as necessary as *pramata*

and *prameya*. *Pramana* is the unique operative cause (*karana*) of right knowledge. The *pramanas* have invariable relation (*avyabharisambandha*) with *prama*. *Nyaya* philosophers admit four kinds of independent *pramanas* which give rise to four kinds of valid knowledge.

Yatharthanubhavachaturbidham-pratyaksanumityupamitisabdabhedat

Tatkaranamapi chaturbidham pratyaksanumanopamanosabdabhedat?

The four kinds of valid knowledge are perceptual knowledge

(*pratyaksa*), inferential knowledge (*anumiti*), from comparison (*upamiti*) and verbal knowledge (*sabda*). Each of these has its own *karana* or cause. Perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumana*), comparison (*upamana*) and words (*sabda*) are the causes respectively.

The *Naiyayikas* also maintain that the distinction between different kind of knowledge is due to the different *pramanas*. Perception (*Pratyaksha*), inference (*Anumana*), Testimony (*Sabda*) and comparison (*Upamana*). Each of these *pramanas* gives rise to knowledge but of different kinds. The generally accepted standpoint from which knowledge can be classified is the ways of knowing or grounds of knowledge. *Nyaya* accepts this point of view which is also followed by *Vedanta* and some other schools of Indian philosophy. The *pramana* is the operative cause of knowledge, knowledge gives truth in the sense of real correspondence between idea and object and it is the *pramana* which leads to truth. Knowledge for its objective validity depends upon the *pramanas*.

Pratyaksa or perception is defined by Gotama as a definite cognition

which is produced by sense-object contact and is true or unerring.

Indriyarthasannikarsotpannam jhanam avyapadeshyam avyabhicari vydvayasaydtmakam pratyaksam. 8 The perception of a table before the perceiver is due to the contact of the perceiver's eyes with the table and the perceiver is sure that the object is a table. But this definition does not include divine and yogic perceptions. Therefore, *Viswanatha* defines perception as '*Jnanakaranakam Jrianam pratyaksam*', which means direct or immediate cognition not derived through the instrumentality of any other cognition. This definition includes both ordinary and extra ordinary perceptions and excludes inference, comparison and testimony.

Perception has been classified in to various kinds from different points of view. From the standpoint of the object of perception or prameya, ordinary (Laukika) and extra ordinary {Alaukika) are two different kinds perception. In laukika perception there is the actual sense - contact with the object present to the senses (indriyarthasannikarsa). Laukika perception is again classified in to external and internal. The external perception is due to the external senses i.e., five sense organs, and the internal is due to mind's contact with psychical states. Thus Laukika perception is of six types - five external and one internal. Alaukika perception is of there kinds sdmnyalaksana, jnanalaksana and yogaja.

Alaukikastu vyaparastribidhah parikirtitah sdmnyalaksano jnanalaksano yogajastatha. 9 Samanyalaksana is the perception of universal which according to Nyaya, inheres in particulars. The universal are distinct class of reals. The universals inhere in particulars on account of which the particulars belong to different classes. A cow becomes a cow due to the universal cowness inhering in it.

This universals are not perceived ordinarily and therefore, *Nyaya* maintains that they are perceived extra-ordinarily. *Jnanalaksana* is the complicated types of perception where different sensations become

associated and form one integrated perception. Here an object is not directly presented to sense organ, but is revived in memory through the past cognition of it and is perceived through representation. When one makes a judgment like 'fragrant rose' looking at rose from distance, the fragrance is perceived through representation of its past cognition *yogaja* perception is the intuitive and immediate perception of all objects, past present and future possessed by the *yogins* through the power of meditation.

The *Naiyayikas* maintain that there are two stages of ordinary perception indeterminate or *nirvikalpa* and determinate or *savikalpa*. Gotama in his definition of perception mentions the terms *avyapadeshya* and *vyavasaydtmaka* which mean indeterminate and determinate perception respectively. Annam Bhatta clearly explains the nature of *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa* perception in the language ***tatra nisprakarakam jndnam nirvikalpakain saprakarakam jndnatn savikalpam.*** 10 When the sensation is not recognized with a name it is indeterminate or *nirvikalpa* and it becomes determinate or *savikalpa* when properly named after analysis. These two are not different kinds of perception, rather the earlier and the later stages of perception and applicable only in case of ordinary perception.

Inference or *Anumana* is the knowledge of an object on the basis of previous knowledge of some sign or mark (*linga*). *Nyaya* defines *anumana* as the knowledge of an object by means of the knowledge of a *linga* (sign) and that of its universal relation or *Vyapti* with the inferred object. ***Anumitikanamanumdnam Pardmarsajanyam jndnamanumitih.*** Inference is the cause of *anumiti* and *anumiti* is the knowledge arising out of *paramarsa*. *Paramarsa* is the knowledge of the relation between *paksa* and *hetu* qualified by *vyapti*. The relation between *paksa* and *hetu* is *paksadharmatcTand* and when it is qualified by *vyapti*, *paramarsa* arises, which corresponds to the minor, major and middle term in Western Logic respectively. *Vyapti* is the invariable concomitant relation between *sddhya* and *paksa* and this *Vyapti* is the basis of inference. It is the universal relation which makes the knower capable of knowledge about unperceived objects. *Nyaya* inference is an inductive -deductive process. It contains five prepositions and three

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terms. The three terms are *paksa*, *sadhya* and *hetu*. Inference consists of five propositions and each of the propositions has its name *pratijnahetudaharano panayanigamananyavayavail*}² They are *Pratijna*, *Hetu*, *Udaharana*, *Upanaya*, *Nigamana*. *Pratijna*, *hetu*, *udaharana* together constitutes an inductive inference, while *udaharana*, *upanaya* and *nigamana* constitute deductive inference. The first proposition is the *pratijna* which asserts a fact. The second *hetu* states the reason for this assertion. The third is the *udaharana* showing the connection between the reason and the asserted fact, as supported by known instances. The fourth *upanaya* is the application of the universal proposition to the present case. *Nigamana* is the last proposition which follows from the preceding propositions.

Comparison or *upamana* is another cause of valid knowledge according to Nyaya. The *Naiyayikas* define *upamana* as, *upamitikaranamupamdnam, Samjna-samjhi samhandhatvajtuinam upamiti*}³ It is the cause of the relation between a name and the things so named or between a word and its denotation. Knowledge through *upamana* is called *upamiti*. We have *upamiti* when some authoritative person tells that a word denotes a class of object of certain description, and then on the basis of the given description, apply the word to some objects which fit in with that description, although we might not have seen them before. The ground of our knowledge in *upamana* are a given description of the objects to be known and a perception of their similarity, etc. to the familiar objects mentioned in the description. A man recognises a *gavaya* as such just when he perceives the description, that the *gavaya* is an animal resembling the cow.

Sabda or verbal testimony is the last *pramana* accepted by Nyaya. It is the knowledge of objects derived from words or sentences. All verbal knowledge is not valid. Nyaya therefore, defines *Sabda* as a valid verbal testimony which consists in the assertion of a trustworthy person.

Aptopadesah sabdah (N.S.)14

Aptavdkyam sabdah aptastu yatKarthavakta (T .S .f5

The reliable or authoritative person or script as called *dpta*. The statement made by such authoritative agency is *aptavakya*. The words or sentences by themselves nor their mere perception give knowledge about objects. It is only when one perceives the words and understands their meanings that one can acquire knowledge from verbal statements (*Vakydrthajnanam sabdajnanam*)X(>. Hence while the validity of verbal knowledge depends on its being based on the statement of trustworthy persons, its possibility depends on the understanding of the meaning of that statement. Thus *Sabda* or testimony, as a source of valid knowledge, consists in understanding the meaning of the statements of trust worthy person and here arises the problem of meaning as a important epistemological one. *Nyaya* philosophy of language thus develops as a part of *sabda pramana* which attempts at determining the meaning of word and sentences.

1.3 PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE-NYAYA

The *Naiyayikas* expressed their belongingness to the Vedas by means of logical reflection. They established the authority of the Vedas not by mere faith, feeling, intuition, scriptural testimony or dogmatic acceptance but by means of logical analysis and reflection. The world of beings and even one's own existence are not products of consciousness, rather they exist without being cognized by consciousness.

The origin of such an attitude can be traced back to the *Upanisadic* texts that

foreshadow the central doctrines of *Nyaya* and *Vaisesika*. It is found in the Upanisads that the self should be heard (*Srotavyah*) reflected (*mantavyah*) and constantly meditated upon (*nididhyasitavyah*,). The implication is that there are some doctrines about logic and language in which reason or critical reflection is exercised.

The *Nyaya* linguists, on this basis hold that it is better to posit a personal God who can satisfy faith, feeling and willing.¹⁷ According

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to *Nyaya* God is pure-existence, consciousness, bliss, preserver, destroyer, sustainer, foster parent, eternal, immutable and moral governor of the world. God exists in the same way as other things like chair etc. exist. Their existence do not depend upon any mind nor do they depend upon whether we know them or not. The difference between God and other existent things is that God is at the top position of degrees of reality in which a chronological order is constituted by the eternal atoms, space, time, ether, self, earth, water, air, fire, objects of the world, language etc.

The words, according to the *Naiyayikas*, are not eternal because they are produced and have a beginning from the personal God. For them God's will (*iccha*) is the cause of world - creation at a time and the same creates language at the same time. The will of God is efficiency of language. Language consists of words and words consist of letters. Therefore, words and letters are endowed with efficiency (*sakti*). The *Nyaya* linguists also do not admit that the relation between words and referents is impersonal and eternal. When God wills in the form of language endowed with efficiency, it takes the shape of *mantras*, *brdhmanas*, *vedangas* etc. The principle of causality has been employed by the *Naiyayikas* in the linguistic plane. If the presence or absence of one word invariably follows the presence or absence of another, the relation between the two words would be considered as that of cause and effect. The important point here is that simply a word cannot be a cause of verbal cognition; it is the knowledge of words that gives rise to verbal cognition. Because the utterance of a mere word may give rise to the cognition of other by means of *samavaya* (inherence) which is not warranted. Hence knowledge of words is instrumental cause, the recollection (*smarana*) by means of denotative function is an operation (*vyapara*); verbal cognition (*sabdabodha*) is the result (*phalam*); and thus the understanding of the knowledge of words and relations by means of recollected word-meanings constitute the cause of linguistic cognition.

The philosophy of language of the *Nyaya* system is supported by the logical theory of the *Naiyayikas*. The categories of *Nyaya* are objects (*arthas*) denoted by words. Because if a *sakti* means power to signify the

existents, and category (*padartha*) means the meaning of words (*Padasya arthah*) ; then the categories like substance, quality, action, class, particularity, inherence, non-existence thus become *arthas* (objects). Moreover, the *Nyaya* categories like *pramdna*, *prameya samsaya*, *prayojana*, *drstanta*, *siddhanta*, *avayava* etc. are also meanings of words since they are signified by means of efficient words. Even perception in determinate form is also linguistic. It depends upon the language units like subject, predicate, this, that, difference, relation etc. such that comprehensive knowledge of objects becomes possible. Inference depends upon the perception of *linga* in one form or other, but it does not deserve supremacy. Even the members of argument like, *Pratiffha*, *hetu*, *udaharana*, *upanaya*, *nigamana* constitute only the formal structured inference. After all logic as a whole is purely oral and linguistic in character. Logical reasoning is used in course of scientific debate in public forum that makes logic oral and linguistic.

Thus the *Naiydyikas* through their metaphysics, epistemology and logic deal with the philosophy of language.

Check Your Progress 1

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

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

1. What do you understand by philosophy of language?

.....

**1.4 THE MEANING OF WORDS
 (<SABDARTHA) :**

It is through the understanding of the meaning of sentences that *sabda*

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gives knowledge. The sentences may be verbal or written by some authoritative persons. The basic question, therefore, is how the sentences become intelligible; and what it is. A sentence or *vdhya* is a group of words (*pada*) arranged in a certain way. The words are group of letters arranged in a fixed order.¹⁸ The essential nature of a word lies in its meaning. The words have fixed relations with some objects, so that it can be recalled whenever a word is heard. Thus words are significant symbols. Words have potency (*sakti*) to mean an object for which they are intelligible.

Nyaya philosopher regarding the nature of words hold that words are non-eternal. A word is a particular kind of sound and sound according to *Nyaya* is a physical phenomenon. Sound is the attribute of *akasa* or ether which is an intangible and all-pervading substance. Air is the medium of its transmission. *Sabda* or sound is a produced phenomenon which has origin and decay. It is produced out of the conjunction of two bodies or of the disjunction of the parts of one composite body. Therefore it is non-eternal.

The words have as their constituents the letters (*varnas*) and the letters are arranged in a fixed order *padam ca varnasamuhah* .¹⁹ The order of the letters in a word cannot be changed; otherwise the meaning of the word would be changed. In other words if the meaning of a word is to be kept as it is, the order of letters cannot be altered. The word 'man' is a grouping of letters in the order 'm - a - n'; this order is the form of the word. If this order is changed like 'n - a - m' or 'a - n - m' etc., the word will be destroyed. The words 'won' and 'own' contain the same letters, but become different as the fixed order of the letters are different in the two words. A letter is a significant sound and a word is a symbolic sound of a higher order. Words stand for things or ideas whereas a letter is only a part of alphabet. Words are symbolic sounds consisting of letters in a definite arrangement. Spoken words are objects of auditory perception while written words are objects of visual perception.

According to *Nyaya* philosophers, a word has three types of meaning *abhidha*, *paribhasa* and *laksana*.²⁰ These three kinds of meaning follows from the relation of a word to the objects signified by that

word. That a word is a group of letters arranged in a fixed order is simply the structural definition of word. 'The essential nature of a word lies in its meaning.'²¹ Logically, a word is a sound that bears certain meaning. A word may have different meanings corresponding to the different ways in which it may be related to objects. *Nyaya* thus admits three kinds of meaning of a word - primary, technical and secondary meaning.

The primary meaning of a word is called *abhidha*. The meaning signified by the inherent potency of a word is called *abhidha* or primary meaning. It is also called *Sakyartha* as the word itself has the potency to mean the particular object directly. The word - meaning relationship may be either *sanketa* or *laksana*. *Sanketa* is the direct relation between a word and its meaning, such that the knowledge of the word immediately leads to its relation to that meaning. This direct relation may also be either eternal or non - eternal. When the *Sanketa* is eternal it is called *sakti*. This sakti or potency of a word, according to the *Naiyyyikas* is due to the will of God. For them it is not a natural relation but conventional. When the relation is established by God, it is called sakti. It is the *mukhyartha* as the word basically means for what it is capable and with this only the word is directly and immediately related.

The direct relation between a word and its meaning may be non - eternal or changeable. *Sanketa* in this non - eternal sense is called *paribhasa*. *Paribhasa* is the relation not due to the authority of God but due to the usage of mankind. It is the will of the authorities in any science which prescribes that such and such word will mean such and such object. *Paribhasa* is the technical meaning called up by the convention and established by authorities. The word bearing such meaning is called *paribhdsika* or technical word. The word 'premise' in logic, 'Law' in court etc. are technical words.

Laksana is the secondary meaning of a word which is indirect or implied meaning. In *laksana* we have to understand the meaning of a word when its primary meaning does not consist with other words or the context. A word indirectly means an object when it is related to it because of its direct relation with something else with which the object

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is somehow associated. In the sentence “The house is on the Ganges”, ‘the Ganges’ has been used not in the primary meaning of ‘the current of water’; but in the secondary meaning of ‘the bank of the Ganges.’ The secondary meaning is here suggested through the association with the primary meaning. There are three kinds of secondary meaning *jahalaksana*, *ajahalaksana* and *jahadajahallaksan*. *Ajahalaksana* is that kind of secondary meaning where no part of primary meaning is retained. *Ajahalaksana* retains the primary in implied meaning and in *jahadajahallaksana* one part of the primary meaning is retained, while another part is discarded. These three kinds of *laksana* depends on whether the primary meaning is retained or discarded wholly or partly. *Laksana* is the implicative meaning of a word. It is a relation to that which is conveyed by the potency of a word due to the non-comprehensibility of the intention of the speaker. This intention (*tatparya*), according to the *Naiyayikas* has great philosophical significance. They point out the significance of intention in the context of enquiring the root of *laksana*. For them the non - realisability of intention is the seed of *laksana*’s implicative meaning. If the sentence ‘the house is on the Ganges’ is to be understood ‘the Ganges’ has to be interpreted as ‘the bank of the Ganges’ and this is possible only by accepting *laksana*. The non- realisability is not of the relation between word and object but of the intention which is the root of *laksana*. The importance of application of *laksana* lies in the fact of removing the non realisability of intention (*tatparyanupapatti*) of the speaker.²³ Implication or *laksana* does not belong to words alone; it belongs to group of words also. In the example, ‘There is a milk - man colony on the deep river,’ the group of two words ‘deep’ and ‘river’ refers to the ‘bank’ through implication.

There are different ways of knowing the meaning of a word. The meaning of word can be known from the dictionaries, from grammar, from comparison or *upamana*, from the uses made by authoritative persons, from the context in which the word is used, from familiarity, explanation and so on. These various ways of knowing meaning show that the relation between word and meaning is not natural but a conventional relation. Had there been any natural relation between

word and meaning, the word always should have coexisted with the object signified by it. In that case, we should have known their relation simply by means of perception. But a word does not co-exist with its denoted object. The word 'fire' does not co-exist with the object 'fire' and produce any burning sensation when the word fire is uttered. The relation between a word and its meaning is not perceived in the same way the relation between fire and burning is perceived. Moreover, the conventional character of the relation between word and its meaning is evidenced by the different meanings in which the same word is used by different people or in different context. For example, the word '*saindhava*C when uttered in warfield, it will mean 'the horse' and when uttered at dinner table, it will mean 'salt'. The hypothesis of natural relation between word and meaning cannot explain such variation in meaning. The convention that such and such word should mean such and such object is established by God where the relation between words and their meanings is a fixed and eternal relation called *sakti*. It is established by human being living in a society where the relation between them is a changeable relation called *paribhasa* or *laksana*.

1.5 THE IMPORT OF WORD (PADARTHA):

Vatsayana in the *Nyayabhasya* explains about the import of word.

Whether a word means an individual (*vyakti*), or a particular form (*akrt'i*) or a universal (*jati*) has been explained differently by the philosophers from various points of view. It is the primary meaning with which such questions are concerned. For the *Naiyayikas* all these three *vyakti* and *ja ti* and *akrti* together constitute the meaning of a word. A word can not mean individual (*vyakti*) only. For if a word means an individual, then any word could mean any and every individual. But an individual is individual only in relation to a class or belonging to a class. Individuals bear the class character to which it belongs. In the sentence 'that cow stands', the individual cow is characterised by the generality of cowness. It is one of

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the important contributions of the *Nyaya* philosophers that for them the universal resides in the individual. They therefore, do not admit that a word denotes individual only. The words may refer to individuals on the basis of individuals' association with the primary meaning. 25 Individual without universal (*jati*) cannot be conceived. The specification of the individual at least requires some specific qualities which are universal. In order to define an individual, the universal, i.e., qualities have to be mentioned. Thus the understanding of the meaning of individual is possible only with reference to universal. Hence individual alone cannot be the import of a word.

Moreover, the form by itself is also not sufficient to constitute the meaning of a word. The clay model of cow has the identical form with that of a cow, but it is not what is meant by cow. Thus only the form apart from its class - essence cannot be taken as the meaning of a word according to the *Naiyayikas*.

The *Naiyayikas* hold that word do not mean only universals also.

Because the universal cannot be understood apart from the individuals and their particular forms. According to them a genus can be recognised only through the individuals that constitute the genus and the configurations of the individuals. A word, therefore, means all these three - the individual, the configuration and the universal.²⁶ It is not that one of them is direct and the rest indirect. The individual, the universal and the configuration together constitute the meaning of a word. In the meaning of a word all the three factors are present in the same way but with different degree of prominence. It is due to the speaker's interest that one of these three factors is seen as dominant in some cases. When the interest is to distinguish one thing from others, emphasis is given on individuality. In the same way according to the purpose emphasis is given on any one and the others remain as subservient factors in the meaning of word. Thus the old *Naiyayikas* hold that meaning of a word has three factors any one being predominant in one case. The three factors give rise to the three aspects of meaning of a word, viz., pictorial denotative and connotative. A word expresses a form, denotes individual and connotes the genus.

Gangesa, the pioneer of *Navya-Nyaya* philosophy holds that the particular as qualified by the universal (*Jdtivisistavyaktifl*) constitutes the meaning of a word. It is natural and logical for the particular to appear as qualified by the universal and this is the way things are understood. Both the particular and universal appear in the same awareness as bound together by a tie in which the particular appears as qualified by the universal. According to him the particular appearing as qualified by the universal constitutes meaning. Gangesa in support of his view quotes Gautama's aphorism where in he has used the word *padartha* (meaning of word) in the singular number though what constitutes this meaning has been mentioned as consisting of the universal, the form and the individual. According to Gangesa the implication of aphorism is that the individual as qualified by the form and by the universal constitutes the meaning (primary meaning) of a word. There are perhaps exceptions, e.g., when referring to an earthen imitation of a cow somebody says "this is a cow", what is referred to by the word 'cow' is not a real cow having the relevant universal. Gangesa maintains that the word 'cow' here refers to the form only through secondary signification, and envisages that there may be occasions when the universal only or the particular only may be referred to. But in such cases the mode of reference is through the process of secondary signification and it can be retained that what constitutes primary meaning is the qualified particular.

1.6 MEANING OF SENTENCES - [VAKYURTHA] :

The concept of *vakya* (sentential syntax) is one of the most important problem of logic and language that follows the rules of grammar. Grammar of a language is based on its own logical background This background of grammar consists of verb (*kriya*), adjective (*visesana*), preposition (*sarvanama*) and sentence (*vakya*). The verb conforms to the tense (*vacana*) and person (*purusa*), the *visesana* conforms to *linga* and *karaka*, preposition is subordinated to name and *vakya* gives rise

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to a synthetic import. On this logical basis diversified philosophical theories develop in Indian tradition regarding sentence meaning.

The *Naiyayikas* put forward a theory of meaning that may be called the name theory of meaning. It expresses an ontological scheme. In this ontological scheme the names of different varieties are made substratum of qualifiers, different properties, action and dynamic aspects. Also the names are made to stand one another in a nexus, in a relation and in a definite pattern. There are many patterns and any name must fall in any of the patterns. Names cannot exist without a definite pattern; nor can they stand by themselves. According to the neo-logicians, these patterns are supplied by various linguistic syntaxes. The various words, phrases and compounds are grades of the pattern. The simplest pattern is the word; the phrases and the compounds are more complex patterns. These patterns are so fundamental that a definite meaning can be indicated by a name only in a definite pattern. In case of complex patterns, the constituent parts contribute two-fold functions; individual and collective. The individual functions are directed towards collectivity. The unity of referred and the unity of meaning lie upon this collectiveness. A sentential syntax (*vakya*) seems to supply a pattern where a series of names are directed towards yielding a total meaning. A name whether complex or compound has a definite meaning which implies its knower; in the same way a series of names whether single or highly compound sentence also has its definite meaning that invariably implies its knower. This comprehension of whole meaning is called *Vakyarthabodha* (Cognitive meaning) by the Nyaya linguists. The Nyaya theory of meaning becomes significant only over this concept of *vakya rthabodha*. According to the *Naiyayikas*, the notion of syntax (*vakya*) is objective. For the logical verb is nothing but self-linking relations (*svarupasambandha*). This relation is found in the subject-object (*visayavisayi*) complex of reality. Word-symbols make a syntax standing or facts. A word becomes symbol if it represents an individual (*vyakti*) of a universal (*Jati*). *Vakya* has been defined by the *Naiyayikas* as any word-cluster by stating that each word is not complete by itself, and that the word meanings must enter in to a relation so as to

produce a sentence meaning. There are various definitions of *vakya* and all of the definitions emphasize upon the unity of sentence (*ekavakyata*) which presents the syntactic import. Regarding the question whether verb is necessary for unity of a sentence, the *Naiyayikas* answer negatively.

They hold that a word to be meaningful does not mean to possess a verb (*kriya*), because then the word verb (*kriya*) to be meaningful must possess another verb which leads to infinite regress.

The *Naiyayikas* distinguish between *pramanavakya* (valid sentence) and *apramanavakya* (invalid sentence). A valid sentence is grammatically and semantically acceptable, while invalid is either ungrammatical or non - semantic or both. They exclude *apramanavakya* from their theory of language. The construction of an intelligible sentence must conform to four conditions which are *akanksa* (expectancy), *Yogyata* (competency) and *sannidhi* (proximity) and *tatparya* (intention)²⁸. *Akanksa* (expectancy) is the quality of words constituting the sentence. It is the quality of the words by which they expect or imply one another. A complete meaning cannot be conveyed by a single word itself. In order to express a full judgment a word must be brought into relation with other words such that *vakyartha* can be understood.

***Padasyapaddntaravyatirekaprayuktdnvaydnubhdvakatvamdkmksd* 29**

When one word is heard, expectancy arises in the mind of the hearer for the next word so that it can be understood. For example, when one hears the word 'bring', the hearer expects for the next word or words denoting some objects such as 'the pot'. Then 'bring the pot' becomes a complete judgment. Annam Bhatta holds that *akanksa* is the incompleteness of a *vakyartha* in respect of something without which it fails to express meaning (*artha*).

Yogyata is the concept corollary to *akanksa*. Because though sentence is formally a valid sentence (*pratnanvdhya*) due to expectancy; if it lacks *yogyata*, it may turn in to *apramanavakya*. *Yogyata* is in fact, a syntactic possibility between one *artha* and another if it belongs to the grammatical connection with words that can denote only those meanings. According to

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Annam Bhatta, *yogyata* is connected more with semanticity of language in which it suggests non-contradiction (*abadha*) of a *vakyarth* (*arthavadho yogyata*)³⁰. The old school of Nydya holds that *yogyata* is only *abhava* of any cognitive instrument that can convert *vakyartha* by means of a particular string of words. *Yogyata* is the mutual fitness which means absence of contradiction between the constituent words. The sentence 'moisten with fire' does not possess mutual fitness as there is contradiction between 'moistening' and 'fire'.

Hence, there must not be any incompatibility between the meaning of different words so as to render the sentence meaningless. Some modern *Naiyayikas* do not consider the knowledge of fitness to be necessary condition of verbal knowledge. For them what prevent the understanding of a sentence is the knowledge of incompatibility between its words. The relationship between words, according to the *Navya-Naiyayikas* maybe called *yogyata*, provided its knowledge gives rise to linguistic cognition. The third condition of a valid sentence or a verbal knowledge is the *Sannidhi* or *asatti*. It consists in the proximity between the different words of a sentence (*padanamabilambenoccharana sannidhi*)³¹. The words which constitute a

sentence must be continuous with one another in time or space. When the words are separated by long intervals in time they can not produce a sentence, even if they are uttered. The written words cannot produce a sentence when they are written with long intervals of space. For example, the words 'bring a cow' will not produce a sentence if the three words are uttered in three days or if the three words are written in three different pages. Here the other feature like *akahksa* and *yogyata* may be present; but due to non-proximity it will not be a sentence.

The intention of the speaker (*Tatparya*) is another condition of verbal knowledge. It stands for the meaning, intended to be conveyed. *Tatparya* is the desire of the speaker (*Vakturiccha tu tatparyam parikirtitam*) .³² In other words it has been stated that when a word or a sentence is uttered with a desire to convey something, It is called *tatparya* (*tatpratitichayauccharitvam*) .³³ When there is the utterance of a particular word with a desire to convey one's own idea

to others this particular desire or intention is *tatparya*. *Tatparya* plays a vital role in determining the meaning of ambiguous sentence having various meaning. The sentence 'Saindhavamanaya' may mean bringing of a horse or salt. The exact meaning is to be determined according to the intention of the speaker uttered under a particular context and this is why the knowledge of *tatparya* is taken to be the cause of verbal cognition. Regarding knowledge of one's own intention is through a contact with the mind, but in case of understanding others' intention the context (*prakarana*), the qualifier (*visesana*), space (*desd*) etc. serve as promoters. If in the context of taking meal the word *saindhava* is uttered, it will mean salt and if the context is like going to battle - field then it will mean the horse. In fact, the hearer infers the intention after hearing the sentence of the speaker. Dinakari has analysed *tatparya* in the context of non-ambiguous sentence. *Tatparya* is the intention of the speaker of conveying the sentences like 'Bring a jar' (*Ghatamanaya*) in which jar has become a *prakara* or qualifier, *karmatva* or the property of being an object attached to it has become a qualificand and superstratumness (*adheyata*) has become a relation. When there is the awareness of the *ghatamanaya*, there is the knowledge of a *jarkarmatva* as denoted by the word *ghatam* and as this, being a property, remains in the substance *ghata*. Here the jar is the substratum and *karmatva* is the superstratum. This is the nature of awareness which is the intention of the speaker.³⁴ When a particular sentence is uttered in order to convey a particular intention, the knowledge of such intention of the speaker is the cause of verbal comprehension. Thus *tatparya* is necessary to understand both ambiguous and non-ambiguous sentences.

Regarding the meaning of a sentence the *Naiyayikas* advocate *abhihitnavayavada*. The meaning of a sentence, according to this view, is merely the synthesis (*anvaya*) of the meanings of the separate words composing the sentence. When a sentence is uttered the hearer first goes through the meanings of the words one after another and putting then by together all the meanings of the words according to their expectancy, fitness, proximity and intention gets the meaning of the whole sentence. According to this view, the expression of the meanings of words precedes

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the construction of a sentence. In other words, there is a construction of the meanings as expressed in the words (*abhihitavaya*). It is by means of memory that the different meanings which are successively expressed by the words are put together. The meanings of the words are understood successively and getting the last word of the sentence, the meanings of all the preceding words are remembered. The meaning of the last word being combined with those of the preceding words by means of memory, the meaning of the sentence as a whole is understood.

The theory of *abhihitavayavada* stands on the following reasons. The words have been classified in to nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. If the words of a

sentence have no separate meanings then such classification of words become meaningless. But the classification of words cannot be called meaningless as all words are not used in the same way or status in a sentence. Hence, the classification of words justifies the theory.

Moreover, in every case in which the meaning of a sentence has to be understood, it is essential to understand the meaning of its component words. A sentence cannot be quite independent of the meaning of words; because in that case any sentence would convey any meaning. Again, in order to understand the meaning of a new verse, generally one has to understand on the basis of the knowledge of constituent words and their separate meanings. This cannot be explained by any

understanding of the sentences, since they are new and unintelligible. So it is concluded that the meaning of a sentence is just the synthesis of the separate meanings of its words.

Check Your Progress II

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

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

1. What do you understand by the concept of vakya?

.....

1.7 LET'S SUM UP

According to the *Naiyayikas* knowledge is either *pratyaksa* (immediate) or *paroksa* (mediate). The mediate knowledge arises through the instrumentality of another knowledge. Knowledge of *vyapti*, similarity and words serves as an instrument of inferential knowledge, knowledge through comparison and verbal comprehension respectively.³⁶ It follows from this that knowledge of a *pada* (*padajana*) becomes the instrumental cause for the comprehension of meaning.³⁷

The recollection of meaning of a term through the knowledge of that term is called

» *j n vyapara*. In such case the medium is the *sakti* or potency of a term. In the sentence 'the jar exists', the meaning of 'jar' is known through the term 'jar' and the meaning of the verb 'exists' is known through the usage of the term. Thus knowledge of meaning of a sentence is mediate knowledge. This concept of verbal comprehension has been introduced by the *Navya-Naiyayikas* as they do not agree with the definition of Gautama as "*aptopadesah sabdah*" .³⁹ When the knowledge of a word or sentence comes from authoritative person it is called *pramaqa*. Here the problem arises regarding determining the authority of the person. In order to determine *aptatva* (authority) there must be some criteria. The definition of *apta* person is given as having real knowledge of an object, having no defect in sense organ etc. In other words the person who has no illusory cognition, no carelessness, no desire for cheating others and no weakness in sense organs is called *apta*. But these cannot make a person reliable or authentic to be taken in to confidence. There may be individual possessing all these characteristics but afterwards proved as non-authentic (*anapta*). Therefore such persons' words cannot be regarded as *pramana* and the *Neo-Naiyayikas* for this reason does not accept the concept of *sabda* as *aptopadesah sabda*. But if the meaning of the term *aptatva* is taken as

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being the locus of real knowledge which is the cause of verbal usage, then it may be admitted. Because those who have the knowledge of the words that are used conventionally become *dpta*. Hence, the knowledge of word becomes the instruments of the knowledge of the meaning of a word or sentence. Thus *padaafhana* is the instrument, recollection of meaning is *vyapara* and the result is the comprehension of meaning. *Sabda* is recognised as an independent *pramana*; but the method of its occurrence is purely inferential in nature. To know the meaning of a particular word through convention is simply an inference from the verbal usage of the old persons (*Vrddhavyavahdra*). A beautiful explanation of child learning meaning is found in *Sabdasaktiprakasika*. A child comes to know the primary relation of a term with its meaning from the verbal usage of the old first. When a man who is aware of the meaning of a term asks another man who also knows the meaning of the same term to bring a cow, the later brings it after hearing the word of the senior and realizing the meaning of it. From the observation of this a child draws the inference like “This bringing of a cow is the result of the inclination, as it has got effortness in it, as in the case of my inclination to suck mother’s breast.”

40 Here it may be raised that as it is a case of inference, there must be *vyapti* as an instrument. It may be said to have *vyapti* that lies between *ichestatva*’ (effortness) and *pravrttijanayatva*’ (being produced by inclination). The form is ‘where there is *chestatva*, there is *pravrttijanayatva*’. The *udaharana* is ‘my inclination to suck mother’s breast. Then he comes to infer the state of being produced by the knowledge of feasibility of which the bringing of a cow has become qualificand in respect of the inclination. This is done with the help of syllogistic argument in the form: “The inclination to bring a cow is produced by the knowledge of feasibility of which the inclination to the same has become qualificand, as it is endowed with the property of being an inclination as in the case of my own (inclination) .41 Any inclination presupposes this type of feasibility. The child then infers that the knowledge of feasibility has an uncommon cause as it is an effect as in the case of a jar. As any type of effect has got its special cause, the effect of bringing a cow need’s some special cause. From this the child comes to know that the knowledge of the verbal usages of the old is the uncommon

cause of knowledge.

On the concept of *vrddhavyavahara* as held by *Navya Naiyayikas*, Dr. R. N. Ghose comments that it is not tenable, 42 because, the primary meaning of a term can be comprehended after being guided by the convention. But the secondary or suggestive meaning of a word may not always be comprehended from the verbal usage of the old, for the implication is always context dependent and the meaning of such type may be ascertained after depending on the comprehensive capacity of a person. Implicative meaning is not always same to all. Hence, the intellectual exercise of an individual is inevitable for proper understanding of the same. If the convention or *vrddhavyavahara* is taken as criterion to comprehend meaning of a word, the initial verbal usage of a word which is present at the time creation of the world cannot be explained, because that particular word has no prior usage. The *Naiyayikas* try to explain the fact by bringing God. This is in fact a proof for the existence of God.

The *Naiyayikas* are of the opinion that a word has got some power of indicating its denotations which is given by God's desire. But there is no necessity of bringing God in determining the meaning of a word or sentence. The initial verbal usage of an object may be introduced by a particular person, which may be followed by later generation. In our day to day life it is found that a new object is initially described by a scientist or by a researcher with the help of some name which is followed by others. Therefore, the knowledge of the meaning of a word is possible without accepting God's desire. The *Navya-Naiyayikas*, therefore, hold that the desire of an individual but not God in the form ; 'This meaning is to be understood from this word' is *samketa*. This power comes from the knowledge of grammar, comparison, dictionary, reliable texts or statement of trustworthy person, from the paraphrase and contiguity of well - known words.43 *Nyaya* admits *akanksa*, *yogyata* and *asatti*

(expectancy, consistency and contiguity) as causes of comprehension of meaning. Among these expectancy and Contiguity are highly essential for primary, implicative and suggestive meaning. Consistency is cause for the comprehension of primary meaning

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(*sakyartha*). In the example, 'He is sprinkling with fire' there is no consistency in the meaning of the statement. But in spite of lack of consistency it means something; at least it points to the fact that it is an impossible phenomenon. The usage of phrase 'the egg of the horse' etc., though not having consistency (*yogyata*) can provide some meaning by implication. Thus for inverting some implicative meaning, the inconsistency in meaning sometimes may act as promoter.

When the primary meaning is consistent, the implicative meaning is searched for.

Therefore, the *Nyaya* position that comprehension of meaning is possible when there is no consistency is not at all true.

The meaning through implication requires *sakanksa* and *asatti*. Without expectancy and contiguity it is not possible to understand that there is inconsistency in meaning. In order to know the consistency in meaning (*arthavadhatva*) of a sentence, the structural order like expectancy etc, must be

correct. Otherwise it will fail to give rise to the *sakyartha* of the sentence leading to the non - apprehension of implicative meaning. The *sakyartha* gives rise to *laksartha* as per definition of *laksana*. This is the uniqueness of language that it always gives some indication. Bhartrhari observes, 'a reality which is not associated with an articulate verbal form cannot be the content of our thought and is regarded as fiction. On the other hand a fiction such as hare's horn etc. when expressed through language appears to have existence and becomes object to logical predication.'⁴⁴ Hence the absence of an object which is absurd conveys some sense and thus inconsistency in meaning sometimes becomes meaningful.

In the comprehension of implicative and suggestive meaning the question arises regarding whether these meanings are properties of the sentence or those of speakers or readers or hearers. These are properties of sentence in the sense that the sentence must in here the power of *laksana* and *vyanjana* in it. The sentence '*Gangayam ghosah*' is capable of providing both implicative and suggestive meaning. But there are cases where a sentence endowed with the power of *laksana* and *vyanjana* may not be understood by the hearer. Particularly the suggestive meaning may not always be easy to understand, it depends

on the intellect of the hearer or speaker also. Moreover, the suggestive meaning of a sentence may vary from person to person. Thus there involves a subjective element in the understanding of suggestive meaning which cannot be ignored. As an example of the role of subjective element in the comprehension of suggestive meaning the story of Lord Buddha may be cited. Lord Buddha advises his disciples in a single sentence 'The sun is set' and three disciples of Buddha having different *samskaras* have apprehended the meaning of the sentence in three different ways. It shows that in comprehending the meaning of a sentence the role of both language and speaker is highly influential.

Together with expectancy, consistency and contiguity, the *Naiyayikas* also admit the intention of the speaker (*tatparya*) as another means of comprehending words and sentences. It is so important in verbal comprehension that both realisability and non-realisation of the speaker's intention gives rise to meaning. The realisability of intention gives primary meaning and non-realisation of the same gives implicative meaning. From this point, the intention of the speaker should be regarded as the sole factor for verbal comprehension. The intention of the speaker is a prime factor for understanding the meaning of the ambiguous and non-ambiguous sentences. The sentence in the form 'there is a jar in the house' is non-ambiguous; for the intention of the speaker here is the relation between the jar and the house and it can generate cognition about the relation. If a sentence does not have expectancy or semantic competency, it is understandable if the intention of the speaker is realised or unrealised. In case of unrealisation the implicative meaning is to be explored. In fact the non-realisation of the intention in a given sentence is the root of implicative meaning through which the intention of the speaker is realised. In other words, the inconceivability of the intention in the primary meaning gives rise to explore the implicative meanings that reveals the true intention of the speaker.

There is much difference of opinion among the Indian thinkers regarding the importance of *tatparya* as a condition of verbal knowledge. Some hold that a definite knowledge of the intended meaning is an essential condition of verbal knowledge. But some others think that knowledge of intended

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meaning is necessary only in case of equivocal terms and ambiguous expressions. Some thinkers also are of the opinion that *tatparya* should not be considered as separate conditions; rather is to be included in *akanksa*. The *Vedantists* hold that *tatparya* in the sense of intended meaning is not a condition of verbal cognition. When the parrot imitates such human expressions as 'who comes', 'who goes' etc. it can not be said that there is any intention behind such imitative cries. Moreover, when someone utters the *Vedic* texts without understanding their meaning, he cannot be said to intend the meaning which the hearers interpret out of them. Therefore, the *Vedantists* hold that *tatparya* as a condition of verbal knowledge is not constituted by the meaning intended to be conveyed by the speaker, but by the fitness of the words of the sentence to give a particular meaning. In case of equivocal words like *saindhava* etc. the *tatparya* lies in their fitness to yield a particular meaning in the absence of some other intended meaning. The word *saindhava* is fit to mean salt in the absence of any intention to mean the horse. Thus the *Vedantists* reduces *tatparya* to the fitness of words themselves. This difference of *Nyaya* and *Vedanta* position is due to their difference in the notion of meaning. For the *Vedantists*, the primary meaning is a power inherent in the words, while for the *Naiyayikas*, it is imported in to the words by the intention of the speaker who uses it. *Tatparya* has been explained in *Tarkasamgrahadipika* as, ***Tatpratiticchaya uccaritatvarupa (dtparyajndnam ca vakyarthajnanahetuh.***

When a particular word is uttered with a desire to convey his own idea to others, this particular desire is *tatparya*. In this definition the use of the term *uccharitatva* is controversial. Because in case of written statement there is no scope of *uccharana*. When a dumb person expresses a statement in writing, the statement has *tatparya* although it is not uttered. Hence the term *uccharitatva* is superfluous and it is better to accept *tatparya* as the intention of the speaker (*vakturiccha*).

A sentence is the medium of expressing determinate knowledge (*Savikalpafnana*). It is because indeterminate knowledge cannot be expressed in language, i.e. in words or sentences, according to the *Naiyayikas*. The object of determinate knowledge is a thing qualified by

an attribute. Thus determinate knowledge is that of qualified objects. Here something is known to be related to something else as substantive to adjective. Therefore, a sentence must contain two terms and express a relation between them. The two terms are subject and predicate. The subject is the locus of quality and thus becomes determinandum or what is presented to be determined and characterised by thought. The predicate is the *visesana*, which is referred to the subject (*uddesyaorvisesya*). The predicate is the determinant of the subject. This type of analysis of a sentence resembles to a

proposition in Western logic. But whereas the proposition of formal logic necessitates a copula, the *Naiyayikas* do not admit the same. According to the *Naiya-yikas* the complete meaning of a sentence can be expressed without copula just as "*parvatobahnimarF*". The modern Western logician like Bradley,⁴⁶ Bosanquet⁴⁷ and Johnson⁴⁸ hold the view that the copula as some form of the verb 'to be' is not an essential part of proposition. The *Naiyayikas* go a step further and denies the necessity of verb in a sentence. There may be verbs implied but not expressed and such verbs stand for subjective mode of assertion, not for any part of the asserted fact or content. S. H. Mellone also holds, "There is no separate existence in thought corresponding to the separate existence of the copula in the typical proposition, 'S is P'. The *Naiyayikas* here makes a mistake of taking sentence as equivalent to proposition in western logic. A sentence is wider than a proposition. There are sentences that do not express and relation between subject and predicate or there may not be any subject or predicate, just as 'come', 'go there' etc. The *Naiyayikas*' concept of sentence is more akin to modern logical concept of proposition in which subject predicate form is only one type of propositions; but different from that of traditional logic. The import of a sentence, according to the *Naiyayikas* is the predication of an attribute with regard to some thing or things. The relation between substantive and adjective is expressed in a proposition; but it does not mean that the sentence relates them; rather they are found related in a sentence. Both the substantive and adjective are real facts and sentence expresses a complex whole. Hence, the *Naiyayikas* cannot agree with Bradley and Bosanquet who

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hold that a proposition is the reference of an ideal content to reality or that proposition characterises some part of reality. According to the *Naiyayikas*, the predicate is not an ideal content, but as real as the subject *Nyaya* differs from the view of Bradley and Bosanquet due to their difference in basic philosophical attitude - while *Nyaya* is realistic the other two, i.e., Bradley and Bosanquet are idealistic. As radical realists the *Naiyayikas* are in favour of the objective view that the proposition expresses a real relation between two facts or reals. Mr. Gotshalk supports this naive view of the *Naiyayikas*. He opposes the idealistic view and holds that 'the subject of an ordinary judgment is not Reality itself but merely and simply that limited situation within reality engaging attention.'⁵⁰

1.8 KEY WORDS

Pramana : ("sources of knowledge," "measure") is an epistemological term in Indian and Buddhist philosophies referring to the means by which a person obtains accurate and valid knowledge (*Prama*, *pramiti*) of the world.

Pratyaksa : Perception or knowledge through sense organs.

1.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

Answer the following questions:

1. what is Naya philosophy?
2. What is prameya?
3. What is parmana?
4. What is padartha?

5. How is prameya different from padartha?
6. Paramana is instrument of valid knowledge. Explain.

1.10 SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

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1.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

1. Refer to topic Philosophy of language.

Check your progress II

1. Refer to topic Vakyurtha.

UNIT 2 MAN, GOD AND WORLD AS THE BASIC GENERAL

STRUCTURE

- 2.0. Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Man
- 2.3 God
- 2.4 Bondage and Liberation
- 2.5 Metaphysics and the Categories (*Abhāva*)
- 2.6 Generality (*Sāmānya*)
- 2.7 Epistemology
- 2.8. Let's sum up
- 2.9 Keywords
- 2.10 Question for review
- 2.11 Suggested Readings and references
- 2.12. Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have explained the various issues and ideas pertaining to Man, God, categories of metaphysics.

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

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

2.1 INTRODUCTION

You have learnt in the previous unit Ny āyikas' arguments on valid sources of knowledge (*prāmanas*) and other issues pertaining to Nyāya

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philosophy. In this unit, you will learn the Vaiśeṣika's arguments on categories (padārthas), their views on epistemology, the notion of God, and their concepts on bondage and liberation.

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

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

2.2 MAN

Nature, working like an artist under the supervision of her Creator, equips her products with the means for acting and functioning in harmony with their respective natures. Individuals, we see, when they begin to be, need to be brought passively into being. They are equipped with potencies to be activated, and changed into active potencies. It is very evident that no one does what he or she cannot do. What people could not do, or make, or understanding at one time, they can at another. Time has an important part to play in the activation and actualization of potencies and their activation. Acts presuppose active potencies. Whoever actually speaks, CAN speak. Whoever actually sees, can see. Whoever actually invents, CAN invent... From the act and the fact, we rightly conclude that there is some potency or potencies which make that act or activity, possible. Acts, therefore, presuppose potencies as well as their activation. This is clear from the behavior of non-living as well as living beings. Living things, like plants, are endowed with potencies for feeding, growing and multiplying. Animals, fish and birds are equipped with potencies for self-movement, sense-knowledge, and other faculties for the preservation of individual and species. While moving themselves, they are also moved by their desires for food, security, reproduction.

Human beings are more richly endowed by Nature than other creatures.

Our five senses and mind are potencies for knowing; our hands, for doing and making; our feet, for walking, running, local movement; our wills, for choosing how and when to use our other endowment. Our will is therefore the queen of our potencies. There is no activity without the potency for that activity. It follows that for each of our activities, personal, social, professional, etc. we need as many potencies.

Human intelligence is full of a great variety of potentialities, talents, abilities, for self-actualization through a great variety of arts, crafts and skills in farming, building, dancing, driving, and hundreds of thousands of activities including flying. It is easy to understand that without eyes, we cannot see; without ears, we cannot hear; without wings, we cannot fly; without intelligence, we could never have invented flying machines.

What is the purpose of these relatively active potencies? Their purpose is their corresponding activity or ACT. What can see (active potency) and what can be seen (passive potency), meet in the ACT of seeing. What can hear (active potency) and what can be heard (passive potency), meet in the ACT of hearing, and so on.

We here call them relatively active because these and other potencies that, at first sight, appear active may sometimes need to be activated. In such cases, they are passive, rather than active. The eyes, for instance, are active, when seeing and looking,

2.3 GOD

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

The Vaisesika system holds the view that God creates the universe out of nothing. He is the creator in the sense that he is the designer and architect of the universe. Creation and destruction of the universe takes place in

agreement with the wishes of God. In this sense, the Vaisesika atomism is spiritual. This is so because God as the creator imparts motion to atoms which originally lack motion. The creation does not start until God sets the atoms in motion. Thus, God is the efficient cause of the world.

2.4 BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

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

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

The principle law of karma is guided by God. He imparts motion to the atoms and leads to creation for the sake of pleasure and pain of the individual soul. As long as the soul performs action, the bondage will remain. Once the soul realizes its true nature as distinct from the mind and body, it can no longer be afflicted by desire and passion. Hence liberation will be achieved and this is possible due to the knowledge of the soul. Liberation is the cessation of all sufferings, passions, inclinations, desires, together with pain, pleasures, and all qualities. It is the stage, where one can acquire freedom from pain, pleasure, sorrow, suffering, enjoyment and joy. It is pure, quality less, indeterminate, and realizable. In the case of liberation, the liberated soul exists as a substance devoid of all qualities, including consciousness. Thus, the liberated soul is unwarranted.

Check Your Progress I

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

- Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
- What do you understand by liberated soul?

2.5 METAPHYSICS AND THE CATEGORIES

Vaisesika metaphysics is pluralistic because it claims that variety, diversity, and plurality are the essence of reality. It is also claimed as real for the reason that particulars exist independently of our perceptions. Thus, Vaisesika metaphysics is pluralistic realism. But it is not materialistic pluralism. This is so because its pluralism includes not only material but also non-material entities, for example: time, souls (selves). The vaisesika used the term “padartha” for categories. Padartha literally means “the meaning of a word” or “the thing or object referred to or signified by a word”. It is an object of knowledge, and capable of being named. Thus, it is knowable (jneya) and nameable (abhidheya).

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

These are:

- i) Substance (*Dravya*)
- i) Quality (*Guṇa*)
- i) Action (*Karma*)
- i) Generality (*Sāmānya*)
- i) Particularly (*Vaiśeṣa*)
- i) Inherence (*Samavāya*)
- i) Non-existence (*abhāva*)

The first six categories are mentioned by Kanada and the last category

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

Substance (*Dravya*)

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

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

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

- i) Earth or Prithivi
- i) Water or Jal
- i) Fire or Tej

- i) Air or Vayu

The eternal substances are;

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

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

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

Check Your Progress II

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

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

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

Quality (*Guṇa*)

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

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

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

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

Action (*Karma*)

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

and separated because of action.

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

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

There are five kinds of action recognized by Vaisesika.

- i) Upward motion (Utksepana)
- i) Downward motion (Avaksepana)
- i) Contraction (Akuncana)
- i) Expansion (Prasarana)
- i) Gamana (Locomotion)

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

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

Check Your Progress III

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

- Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
- Write various types of actions justified with examples.

2.6 GENERALITY (SĀMĀNYA)

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

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

Vaisesika divides generality into three kinds.

i) Para

i) Apara

i) Parapara

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

While considering the generality the Indian Philosophers have

subscribed to one or the other of the following three views.

i) Nominalism

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

ii) Conceptualism

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

iii) Realism

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

Particularity (*Vaiśeṣa*)

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

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particulars, there are enumerable particulars found. Thus, the particulars are eternal, part less and enumerable. They are invisible because we cannot have perceptual cognition to them.

Inherence (*Samavāya*)

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

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

Non-existence (*Abhāva*)

Non-existence as the seventh category of vaishesika substance is not mentioned by Kanada. It is added later by his commentators. The Vaishesika upholds that non-existence, like existence is perceivable.

Non-existence is the absence of an object. For example, no one can deny the absence of the sun on the dark cloud of a rainy day. Hence, it is a necessary category in Vaisesika system.

Non-existence is broadly divided in two sorts.

- i) Sansargabhava
- i) Anyonyabhava

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

Sansargabhava is of three kinds. These are;

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

Prāgbhāva

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

Dhvansābhāva

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

Atyantabhāva

Atyantabhava or absolute non-existence means the absence of one thing in another at all times, past, present, and future. For example, the absence of heat in the moon. The absolute non-existence has neither a beginning nor

an end. In short, it is eternal. The absence of colour in space will continue for all time. In this way, absolute non-existence is neither born nor destroyed.

Anyonyabhāva

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

2.7 EPISTEMOLOGY

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

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

but belong to the substances and exist in substances independently from our perceptions.

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

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

Check Your Progress IV

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

- Explain the doctrine of *asatkaryavada*.
-

2.8 LET US SUM UP

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

i. Substances (Padārthas)

i. Quality (Guna)

i. Action (Karma)

i. Generally (Samānya)

i. Particularity (Visesa)

i. Inherence (Samavāya)

i. Non-existence (Abhāva)

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

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

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

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

non-existence)

Sansargabhava has three subdivisions.

- i. Pragbhava (antecedent non-existence)

- i. Dhansabhava (Subsequent non-existence)

- i. Atyantabhava (absolute non-existence)

The Vaisesika system upholds epistemological realism. It accepts two pramanas, perception and inference. This system subscribes the doctrine *asatkaryavada*, which means the effect doesn't exist in its material cause. Regarding the notion God, the Vaisesika mentions that God is the Lord. He is the cause of creation. He is also responsible for atoms movement. On the issue 'bondage and liberation' the vaisesika signifies that bondage is due to ignorance and liberation is due to knowledge. A liberated soul is free from all sufferings and enjoyments. It is pure and hence it is unwarranted.

2.9 KEY WORDS

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

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

2.10 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Describe categories of metaphysics.

2. Explain the theory of knowledge

3. Elucidate the views on God

4. Analyze the issues on bondage and liberation

5. Illustrate the concept 'non-existence'

2. 11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

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

Check Your Progress II

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

Check Your Progress III

Actions are of five kinds according to the Vaisesika philosophy. These

are,

- a. Upward motion (Throwing a stone up)

- a. Downward motion (Falling fruits from the branch of a tree)

- a. Contraction (rolling a cloth in a stick)

- a. Expansion (stretch a rubber by holding it from two sides)

- a. Gamana (running in a playground)

Check Your Progress IV

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

UNIT 3 BEING AND ESSENCE

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Ancient Philosophy: Being as Essence
- 3.3 The Middle Ages: Being as *Esse*
- 3.4 The Modern Period: Breakdown and Ferment
- 3.5 The Contemporary Period: Beyond Being and Essence
- 3.6 A Finite being as One in many
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Key Words
- 3.9 Question to review
- 3.10 Suggested Readings and References
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Unit is to familiarize the student with the closely related terms *being* and *essence*. The method we will be following is historical, because it is more correct to speak of the history of the meanings rather than of ‘the meaning’ of being and essence. The limitation of the Unit is that it concentrates mainly on the West.

By the end of this Unit you should be able to distinguish and identify at least four great periods in the history of the meanings of being and essence in the West.

- The ancient identification of being and essence;
- The medieval identification of being with *esse*;
- The breakdown of the medieval synthesis in the modern period;
- Contemporary efforts to go beyond both being and essence.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Being is that which exists and it is unlimited in itself. But things are

diferent in nature and limited by their essence. The principle of unlimitation is being and the principle of limitation is essence. In this unit, we speak about the origin and development of the concept of being and essence in the history of philosophy.

3.2 ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY: BEING AS ESSENCE

The earliest Indian reflections on being may be found in hymn X, 129 of the *Rgveda*, which speaks of a mysterious ‘One’ as the originator of the universe, noting that then there was neither Being (*sat*) nor Not-Being (*asat*). *Sat*, derived from the infinitive *as*, to be, here means the manifestly existent, all creatures distinguishable by their form and name (*namarupa*), including gods; *asat* means the not yet differentiated material, the primal matter out of which names and forms emerge.

In the West, reflection on being achieved its first high point in the philosophy of Parmenides, which is characterized by an opposition between being and appearance, and a clear option for being as stability and unity. What is real neither arises nor perishes, and this thinking continues to influence the subsequent Presocratic nature philosophers who, however, unlike Parmenides, do not conclude that the objects of our everyday experience are mere appearances.

Plato is the first in the West to have explicitly raised the question, What is being? The question is answered in *The Sophist* by accepting a Form or Idea of being, but also by distinguishing two forms of being: Ideas, which have their own Being, and particulars, which have Being only through participation. Like Parmenides, then, Forms or Ideas are stable and unchanging; unlike Parmenides, there is a plurality of Forms. Plato refers, in fact, to the Forms as *ousiai*. His *ousia* is the decisive formulation of *einai*, being a substantive derived from the feminine participle of *einai*. *Ousia* is that of which ‘is’ is properly predicated. It is the real and primary being (*ontos on*). It is that which something is as such: its whatness. Thus Plato equates being with Form or Idea. In contrast, the things of experience are merely imitations or images of the Ideas, and so, while they

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are not absolutely nothing, they do not have any immanent *ousia*.

Against Plato, Aristotle upholds the individual existent as the paragon of reality and calls it 'primary substance' (*prote ousia*), in opposition to 'secondary substance' which is merely conceptual. For him, the first substance is *hypostasis* or subject, because it is "that of which everything else is predicated, while it is itself not predicated of anything else." (*Metaphysics* Book 7, ch. 3.) Still, this term is not yet specialized and Aristotle uses it to mean all sorts of subject, substrata, supports, or subject-matter. Perhaps we could say that for Aristotle, *hypostasis* is, in material substances, the essence (*to ti en einai*) composed of matter and form, where form is that which makes matter into a substance. It is primarily the whatness of a thing, the essence, that makes a thing what it is. There is an equation in Aristotle between being (*ousia*) and essence.

Hellenistic philosophy repudiated both Platonic ideas and Aristotelian essences or forms. The Stoics held the view that only corporeal things exist, and that only such things can either affect or be affected by something. Since the soul, for example, can clearly be affected or affect something, they drew the reverse conclusion that the soul itself is corporeal. The denial of beings beyond the perceptible world remains a fundamental position of Stoicism. The Church Fathers, on the other hand, have a concept of being that is quite distinct, deriving it from an interpretation of the "I am who am" of *Exodus* 3, 14. Thus Clement of Alexandria allowed that God can be named 'being,' in the sense of 'the real and only being,' who was, is and will be, and who undergoes no change. According to Gregory of Nazianzen also, 'being' is a name that first and foremost describes the divine essence. Since God as 'being' encompasses being as a whole, Gregory calls him, in a famous metaphor, "as it were an unending and limitless ocean of Being."

The reception of Greek philosophy in the Latin-speaking world encountered significant difficulties with the translation of important words. *To on* was rendered by the non-classical *ens*. Seneca coined the word *essentia* as a translation of *ousia*: just as *ousia* is the substantive of the Greek infinitive *einai*, *essentia* is the substantive of the Latin infinitive *esse*. This usage, however, did not become established: under the influence of Aristotle's *Categories*, *substantia* became the dominant

translation of *ousia*. The terms *ousia*, *substantia* and *essentia* play an important role in the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. At the time of these controversies, their meanings were still floating and ambiguous, together with those of *prosopon* / *persona*, *hypostasis* / *subsistentia* / *subjectum* / *suppositum*, and *physis* / *natura*. In Greek, *prosopon* was retaining its ancient meaning of mask or character, whereas in Latin its cognate *persona* was attaining the sense of *subjectum iuris*. Among the Greeks, it was *hypostasis* that was acquiring this meaning of *persona*, while its Latin cognate *substantia* only meant for the Latins essence (Gk. *ousia*) or substance or nature (Gk. *physis*), for which they also used *natura*. This led to imaginable confusion between Greek and Latin theologians. Finally, during the fourth century AD, it was agreed to say that Christ was, in Latin, one *persona* in two distinct *naturae* or *substantiae*, in Greek one *hypostasis* in two *physeis* or *ousiae*. Similarly, they declared that God is one Essence or Substance (*ousia* / *substantia*) in three persons (*hypostaseis* / *personae*). These developments are significant for the medieval Christian reflection on being and essence.

3.3 THE MIDDLE AGES: BEING AS ESSE

The Muslim philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sina) initiated an important distinction between being and essence. One of his theses was that ‘being’ indicates ‘being-real’, while ‘essence’ indicates the Whatness of a being. Being is to be understood as the act of some particular being; it is not a property of its essence; and it is related to its essence as an accident, even though not a categorical one. On the other hand, the essence has its own value: it is indifferent to determinations such as universality or individuality, and mental or real ways of being, and can be thought of without them. So essence and being are distinct. This teaching about the accidentality of the Being of created beings was accepted by Algazel (Al Ghazali) and Moses Maimonides, but rejected vigorously by Averroes (Ibn Rushd).

Thomas Aquinas takes over Avicenna’s distinction of being and essence, but with Averroes rejects the accidentality of being. In fact, with him the act of being, which he refers to as *esse*, comes to occupy

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explicit primacy over essence understood as the Whatness of a being. Thus if Aristotle may be regarded as the champion of essence, Thomas is the champion of *esse*. Parmenides had established linguistic argument as an independent power that could challenge the evidence of the senses, thus making way for the distinction between sense and intellect. Plato had given pride of place to understanding when he insisted on the reality of a world of eternal Forms. Aristotle had systematized the distinction between sense and understanding by distinguishing between matter and form in the essence of a thing, or the essence that is the thing, the *ousia*. To Thomas, however, goes the credit of making systematic a further distinction between understanding and judgment. Thus where Aristotle was content to say that among sensible things, 'that which is' is either the essence or at least an essential, with Thomas being ceases to be identified with essence; it is now primarily the act of existence, or better, pure *esse*. Aristotle had, of course, a theory of judgment, but judging for him was the composition or division of concepts, not the absolute positing of what is true; thus he reduced judging to experiencing plus understanding. Thomas does tend to use Aristotelian language, but, with his superior grasp of the distinction between understanding and judging, he was able to acknowledge and emphasize the real distinction between essence and *esse*.

Thomas' doctrine can be synthesized in the following manner. Being has two denotations: being pure and simple, and being qualified in some sense. A being pure and simple is that which is. A qualified being does not itself 'be'; instead it refers in some way to an act of existence. Examples of qualified being are accidents, the intrinsic and constitutive principles of being, possible, and beings of reason. Examples of being without qualification are God, angels and material creatures. God is being as pure and unrestricted act. Angels are beings composed of form and act. Material creatures are beings composed of potency (matter), form and act.

Hence essence also has three denotations. In God, essence is pure act itself. In angels, essence is form. In material creatures, essence is composed of potency and form. Form is related to matter as insight to

sensible data. Essences are also divided into essences pure and simple, and essences qualified in some sense. An essence pure and simple is the essence of being pure and simple. An essence in a qualified sense is the essence of anything that pertains to a being pure and simple. *Esse* is the act of a being, the act of being, the act of an essence. In God, *esse* is pure act itself. In angels it is an act limited by form; in material creatures it is an act limited by essence composed of matter and form. There is a real, adequate, minor distinction between finite essence and contingent act of existence. There is a real, inadequate, minor distinction between a finite being and its essence. That which is, in other words, is not a finite essence, but a being composed of essence and act of existence. In God, being, essence and act of existence are the same. But in a creature, being pure and simple is indeed that which is; but it is by essence and act of existence that the creature is a being.

Substance has two denotations; further, it is understood in several ways. Substance is either first or second substance. Second substance is an abstraction, such as man or cow. First substance is a concrete reality such as this man or this cow. But this may be taken in two ways: first, as including accidents; second, as prescinding from accidents. Further, first substance can be conceived without accidents, (1) as composed of potency, form and act, in which case it is, as regards substance, a being pure and simple; (2) as composed of potency and form, in which case it is not a *being* pure and simple but an *essence* pure and simple.

The matter can be made clearer by noting that Plato has an analogy of form, Aristotle an analogy of substance, but Thomas alone an analogy of being. Platonic forms (*ta eide*) are posited on the analogy of universal concepts: they are eternal, immutable, subsistent, immaterial, intelligible, but not intelligent. Aristotelian substances (*ousiai*) do not correspond to concepts; they proceed instead from an analogy of the intelligent and the intelligible. Thus in material things they are the intelligible that is grasped in the sensible. In that which is immaterial, *ousia* or substance is both one who understands and what is understood; there is identity between the one understanding and what is understood. Material substances are known by an investigation of the formal cause. Separate substances cannot be known in this manner because they neither have senses nor are sensible things. So

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Aristotelian analogy proceeds to a conception of separate substances through the intelligent and the intelligible. Human intellect is moved to understand by the mediation of sensible data; separated intellects are immovable, they are not moved by anything, in them intelligible and intelligent and intellect are one and the same. As for Thomist analogy of being, its systematic root is the assertion that the object of intellect is unrestricted being or 'all things.' The intellect is in act or potency depending on its relation to universal being. Only God's intellect is purely and simply in act, because no created intellect is unrestricted being. An angelic intellect is always in act, but only with respect to certain intelligibles. Human intellect is merely potency in the genus of the intelligible; even after it has received a species, without a phantasm it understands nothing in act. Thus the Aristotelian doctrine is included in such a way as to be transformed. In material things, besides matter and form, there is also the act of existence. In separate substances, besides form there is also the act of existence. And beyond these there is God, who is subsistent act of existence itself, pure act. Thus Thomas proceeds by asking, not: What, analogically speaking, is a separate substance? but: What, analogically speaking, is the act of existence, being, that which is? To this the answer is that being not only has a twofold denotation (being pure and simple, and being qualified in some sense), but also is twofold (being by its essence and being by participation) and is known in a twofold way (being quidditatively known, and being analogically known). The Thomist system simply and utterly transcends Aristotelian essentialism, for while it includes the Aristotelian doctrine, it adds to it another doctrine that is simply and utterly new, and it adds it in a systematic fashion.

We must note that such a systematic addition and transformation is possible only to the extent that, within the realm of sensible things, being does not denote the same thing as essence or essential. For if these denote the same thing, one will ask with Aristotle about material and immaterial beings, and answer with him through a science of material things and of separate substances. For if 'being' and 'essence' have the same denotation, the question 'What is being?' is none other than the question of what this, that, or the other essence is. Only if being adds something above and beyond the essential does the

question of what being is make sense; and only then is this question answered by dividing being into being by its essence, and being by participation.

Thomas does not speak explicitly of a real distinction between *esse* and essence, but he does mean a non-mental difference between the two in the concrete existing thing. Opposition to the real distinction came from the Latin Averroists, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The latter two groups, however, based themselves on a general and extrinsic reason: they objected to the use of Islamic and Aristotelian sources. The problem was brought sharply into focus by Giles of Rome, with his insistence not merely on the distinction but on a separation between essence and *esse*: without this, he said, there is no proof of creation, analogy, distinction of substance and accidents. Henry of Ghent countered with a rational distinction between essence and existence, and refused it a major role in philosophy and theology; he was joined in this later by Duns Scotus. But Thomas remains the most important protagonist of the real distinction.

Check Your Progress I

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

- Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.
- How is being understood in the ancient period of the West?

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- How is being understood in the medieval Western period?

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**3.4 THE MODERN PERIOD:
BREAKDOWN AND FERMENT**

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The masterly sublation of Aristotle achieved by Thomas in his philosophy of *esse* soon suffered an eclipse and a breakdown, not only at the hands of his opponents but also at those of his own disciples and interpreters. Modern Western philosophy thus inherits not so much the Thomist synthesis as the breakdown represented by late Scholasticism.

A. MacIntyre has even referred to modern rationalism the first cousin of late Scholasticism. Descartes, in effort to give philosophy a fresh beginning, refuses to engage in a systematic ontology; still, his *Cogito* contains certain assumptions about existence. Being is first one's own existence, discovered with intuitive certainty in the performance of thinking; the existence of things of the outside world is guaranteed ultimately only through the truthfulness of God. Again, Descartes insisted on a strict distinction between essence and existence. Essence, however, is not so much the Whatness of a thing or its definition, but the princip

Further Reading and References

al attribute of a substance. Thus extension is the essence of corporeal substance, and thought the essence of thinking substance. As for existence, Descartes understands it as a perfection; he can thus say that it belongs necessarily to the nature of the most perfect being, God.

Hobbes rejects all metaphysical concepts such as essence and entity as futile and superfluous, and makes a break with Aristotle when he holds that definitions are of names, not of things. An essence is merely that accident by which we give a name to a body. For Locke, only corporeal things are real, and their basic determination is the 'solidity' which is attained through the sense of touch. Everything that exists is either an idea in us or a real being outside us. In contrast to Hobbes, Locke does admit a real essence that is the bearer of qualities, but this real essence is mostly unknown to us. It is the colour, weight, etc. of a thing which gives it a right to a particular name, and that is its nominal essence. Hume admits that all our ideas are associated with the "most perfect idea and assurance of being." Still, the reality outside us corresponding to perception is ultimately only an object of belief. As for 'substance,' he rejects it as an 'unintelligible chimera.' One consequence of such thinking is that real essence becomes unimportant, and philosophy becomes a study of meanings.

In Leibniz we find once again the effort to work out an ontology, but now it is not so much the science of *esse* as of the most universal concepts such as something, nothing, thinkable, being, and thing. The idea of being is innate in all peoples, but we come to it by the Cartesian way of self-experience and distinct ideas. Being is thus what can be clearly grasped, and the existent can be perceived through inner or outer sense. As for essence, it is basically the possibility of what one proposes; it is eternal because it is a pure possibility. This essence as possibility contains the act of existing. For Wolff, essence is that in which is found the ground of all the rest that belongs to a thing: one knows the essence of a thing when one understands how it is determined in its type.

True, essence here appears to be merely a possibility, but since possibility is something necessary, the essence of a thing consists in this, that it is a definite type of possibility; thus essence is necessary, eternal, unchanging. Given Kant's Copernican Revolution, the term Being plays a minor role in his philosophy. The place of traditional ontology is taken by the Transcendental Analytic, which replaces Being and beings with the pure ideas of reason as the spontaneous conditions of possibility of experience. However, in the special context of the ontological proof of The existence of God, the concept of Being does play a central role. In this context, Kant distinguishes two meanings of Being: (1) if something is posited as a characteristic of a thing, Being means the positing of this relationship; (2) if the thing is posited in and for itself, then Being means the absolute positing of the thing, or Dasein. The main point in this distinction is that Being in the sense of Dasein is not a predicate or determination of things. Thus the statement 'God exists' brings to the concept God no new property. The real contains nothing more than the merely possible. The ontological proof of God's existence fails because existence cannot be derived from an analysis of transcendental ideals. Being as posited can never be affirmed *a priori*, because our awareness of existence is derived wholly and completely from the unification of experience. As for essence, Kant distinguishes between the logical essence and the real essence or nature of a thing. Both refer to inner principles of things: logical essence is the principle of all the possibilities of a thing, while real essence or nature is the principle of what belongs to

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the Dasein of a thing. Thus geometrical figures have a logical essence, but no nature. Kant holds that, while we can easily understand the logical essences of a thing, we cannot see the real or natural essence of a thing as a whole. However, he holds that it is necessary neither for the natural sciences nor for metaphysics to know the entire real essence of a thing. The doctrine of Being is the subject of Hegel's Logic. Together with the doctrine of essence, the doctrine of being constitutes the 'objective Logic' that takes the place of traditional ontology. The Logic has its starting point in 'pure knowing.' Pure knowing presents itself as the 'undifferentiated.' In its non-differentiatedness, pure knowing is 'simple unmediatedness,' pure Being. As pure knowing should be called nothing but knowing as such, so pure Being must be called nothing but Being itself. Being is therefore the non-determinate, the unmediated, empty intuition and empty thinking. In this total non-determinateness it is therefore Nothing; it is simply identity with itself. However, insofar as Being is transformed into Nothing, a movement has taken place, and a new moment appears, which is Becoming. The unification of Being and Nothing in Becoming produces Dasein, and there arises 'determination as such.' Thus in its attempt to know what Being is in and for itself, knowing cannot remain with the unmediatedness of Being; it enters into itself, and awaits the emergence of the Truth of Being. This emerges in the first negation of Being, in essence. Being in its truth reveals itself as having become Nothing – it emerges as Appearance. Thus one arrives at the second great step of ontology, to the Logic of Essence. Insofar as Appearance appears not as the manifestation of another, but as itself, there emerges Reflexion, the appearance of essence in itself. In the presentation of essences, Reflexion reaches determination. With the Logic of Essence and the doctrine of concepts derived from it, the Logic of Being is abandoned; yet the movement of knowing leads back to Being. On the highest level of knowing, which is the Idea, there is pure unity. The Idea is simple relation to itself and therefore pure Being, but through the mediation of the concept it is Being brought to fulfilment, Being as the concrete and as totality. Hegel's Logic can therefore be understood as a universal doctrine of Being, as the explicitation of the meaning of

‘is’. Since, however, primordial reality is the Absolute Idea, and since Hegel tends to equate Being with essence, we may say that Hegel returns in a sense to Aristotle.

Kierkegaard reacted against the absence of place for the individual and the particular existent in Hegel’s dialectic, but ‘existence’ has a different meaning for him: it means the manner of being proper to a human being. The ‘ex’ in existence is not the emergence of beings from their causes and from prior nothingness, but the intentionality of consciousness going towards something different from itself. For Dilthey, the concept of essence belongs to the life-categories that, in contrast to the formal categories of thought, express a fact of life contained in the inner experience of the subject. Since however life as a whole is ultimately not to be grounded through concepts, the concept of essence contains a dark and non-groundable core that we cannot discipline through any kind of logic. Instead, there is in each individual a centre of his essence and of the meaning of his existence, which we can understand through the consciousness of our relationship with him. As for Nietzsche, he completely rejects the distinction between essence and appearance. For him, the ‘Outer’ is the ‘Inner’, and ‘appearances’ are not masks of an unknown X but rather Manifestation, Power and Life itself. Yet in the end, manifestation almost always becomes essence and functions as essence.

Husserl’s philosophy is a *sui generis* return to the immutability of essences. For Husserl, essence means above all that which can be found in the ownmost being of an individual as its What, that can be empirically experienced through individual intuition. What is intuited is the pure essence or *eidōs*. To every individual object belongs an ‘essential state,’ and to each essence correspond possible individuals as its factual particularizations.

3.5 THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD: BEYOND BEING AND ESSENCE

The great re-emergence of the question of Being takes place, of course, in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger was one of Husserl’s most

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brilliant pupils. His originality consists in adopting the phenomenology of Husserl and applying it, not to the rarefied world of pure essences, but to the factual world in all its temporality and concreteness. Heidegger's whole philosophy can be understood as concerned with the question of Being. *Being and Time* (1927) tries to explicate the meaning of Being by examining a particular being, *Dasein*. The peculiarity of *Dasein* over other beings consists in the fact that the Being of this being is to be concerned about Being. That *Dasein* comports itself towards Being in this way gives its Being the character of Existence. *Dasein* essences thus, that it is the 'there,' the lighting up of Being. This Being of the Three, and only this, has the basic relation of Ex-sisting, which means ecstatic dwelling in the truth of Being. Heidegger places the word 'essence' in inverted commas and verbalizes it, so that it means the Ek-stasy of *Dasein*. As for essence in the sense of a generic and universal concept, Heidegger calls it the 'trivial' and 'unessential essence,' in contrast to the 'essential essence' that consists in what a being really is. Understood as a verb, essence (*wesen*) means 'to last' (*währen*). The enduring of that which, having come into unconcealment, remains there, is the 'Presence' (*Anwesen*). The structures of Existence are the existentials, and together these existentials form the existentiality of *Dasein*. Further, since *Dasein* is always and primordially being-in-the-world, its meaning is concealed there. As being-in-the-world, *Dasein* begins to understand itself when it grasps itself in its temporality. In the second part of *Being and Time*, Heidegger had planned to show the structures of *Dasein* as modes of temporality. But this part never appeared, and Heidegger left unanswered the question whether temporality is the path to the meaning of Being. His 'Turn' tries to think Being without thinking back to a grounding of Being on beings. According to Heidegger, the history of metaphysics has concentrated on beings and so has missed the 'Truth of *Seins*' that 'essences' as the Hidden. When he uses expressions such as "A being is. Being essences," he is trying to avoid encapsulating Being in categories and in the language of presence-metaphysics. He also tries, with the help of a 'silent teaching' instead of a logic, to indicate that one can never directly speak of Being itself, because it only essences in silence. In later writings he tries, with the help of a ~~strikeout~~ (*Sein*), to indicate the way in which the new thinking

that does not articulate itself in statements dissolves Being. The concept of Being has thus freed itself from all the coordinates of ontology. Interestingly, however, the late writings tend to think of Being as a power possessing the attributes of personality: Being ‘speaks to’, ‘denies,’ ‘withdraws.’ The high point in Heidegger’s mythicization of Being comes when it becomes a cipher of salvation philosophy for ‘the select few of the future,’ for those who await ‘the distancing and nearing of the last god.’

Taking off from Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre addresses the Being question. Against Kant’s separation of the Thing-in-itself and Appearance, Sartre insists on the self-manifestation of appearance; but this is not an abandonment of ‘transphenomenality’. Rather, it means: the Being of appearance is distinct from appearance; it is the condition for the unveiling of being, but is not itself unveiled. The ontological difference presents itself thus as the difference between the phenomenon of Being and the Being of the phenomenon. The question about the Being of the phenomenon turns to consciousness. In so far as it is always consciousness of something, consciousness points away from itself to the thing in itself. Between the being in itself and consciousness, whose way of Being is to be for itself, there is a radical gap: while the in-itself is an undifferentiated affirmation of itself, the Being of the for-itself lies in the annihilation of the for-itself – its Being is never given, it is always deferred, is always in question and longs for Being, always conceives itself and shatters in the process. At the same time the in-itself and the for-itself belong together. This *a priori* unity marks the concrete relationships of human beings in their Being in the world. Sartre’s ontology explicitates the human condition with emphasis on the consideration of existence with others and with special attention to the human body.

The groundswell against being and essence that we have noticed since the inception of modern philosophy builds up into a wave with Nietzsche and Heidegger, and crashes down with the movement known as Postmodernism. Derrida, one of the stellar figures of this movement, describes the Western intellectual tradition as “a search for a transcendental being that serves as the origin or guarantor of

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meaning.” Such an attempt to ground meaning relations in an instance that lies outside all relationality was referred to by Heidegger as logocentrism. Derrida argues that the whole philosophical enterprise is *essentially* logocentric, and that this is a paradigm inherited from Judaism and Hellenism. He further describes logocentrism as phallographic, patriarchal and masculinist. He was vigorous in pointing out and highlighting “certain deeply hidden philosophical presuppositions and prejudices in Western culture,” arguing that the whole philosophical tradition rests on arbitrary dichotomous categories such as sacred/profane, sign/signifier, mind/body, and that any text contains implicit hierarchies, “by which an order is imposed on reality and by which a subtle repression is exercised, as these hierarchies exclude, subordinate, and hide the various potential meanings. Derrida refers to his procedure for uncovering and unsettling these dichotomies as deconstruction.”

Check Your Progress II

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

- Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.
- What is the fate of being and essence in the modern Western period?

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2) How is being understood in the contemporary period?

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3.6 A FINITE BEING AS ONE IN MANY

A finite being is as structured as one’s operation is. “As the operation is, so the being is”. The operation is composed of exercise and determination

– a one in many. Hence a finite being (person) must also be composed – a one in many. The finite being is composed of Being (*esse*) and essence (*essentia*). Essence is composed of substance and accidents. Substance is composed of prime matter and substantial form. The prime matter is in potency; whereas the substantial form is in act.

Being in Essence

The finite being has to be identical with Being; for Being is immanent in this finite being because this being *is*. This identity is not perfect because alongside *this* being, there are also other finite beings. Being, in so far as it is immanent in this being through a certain identity, is not unlimited Being. For unlimited Being transcends *this* particular Being. The immanent Being is a modified, finite or limited Being. It is the *proper* Being of the particular being. The limiting principle (essence) is neither Being nor being. Nevertheless, the limiting principle constitutes *this* being as *this being*, and expresses a modification of the unlimited Being into a limited *being this* and nothing else. Whatever essence has it derives from the relative opposition to Being, to which as a modifying principle it refers by its whole nature and from which it has also its modifying capacity. Hence, Being lets itself be modified or limited, and according to the limitation the finite being participates in unlimited Being. The unlimited Being, which transcends all modes, does not fully coincide with the *proper Being* of each being which is only in a limited way. The finite being is through *participation* in unlimited Being. To explain this participation, we must admit that within the finite being there is a distinction between its *proper Being* and the principle through which Being becomes its own limited Being, i.e., its own modifying and limiting essence.

The relativity of essence and Being cannot be fully reciprocal. Being as being transcends all modes of being and therefore all modifications through essence, while the essence is fully relative to Being. However, in the finite being, Being has let itself be modified.

In a sense, the essence is prior to being in so far as the mode modifies Being into *being this*. But this priority is not absolute; for the mode also arises from Being which includes in itself the

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possibility of being-finite, becoming 'incarnate' in the finite. Hence, Being is prior to essence; for Being makes the mode a mode of Being. Perhaps, the unlimited Being points to a ground which is transcendent not only relatively to finite beings but absolutely.

Being as the Principle of 'Unlimitation' of Beings

Should something possess no Being, but only an essence, then it is a mere possible and not real. The real differs from the possible because of Being. In other words, Being is that in a being which makes it real, distinguishing it from a merely possible being. It is the principle of perfection or unlimitation of all beings. Being is the inner principle or universal ground of that which really is and through which beings are in themselves.

Essence as the Principle of Limitation

When we ask about something what it is, we suppose that we know already that it is a certain *what*. In this way it differs from the whatness of all other beings. If it differs in this way from that which it is not, then beings possess Being not to its fullest extent, but only within determined limits that through which a being is that which it is. Essence is that through which a being is posited in a determined, limited manner of being. Of course, essence implies a negation of Being. It is not a negation which suppresses the Being of a being and reduces it to nothing; but it is a negation which limits its Being and reduces it to a finite being. It is not total or absolute but a partial and relative negation which refers to certain determinations and denies their presence in this Being. Such a relative negation is also a negative relation as it refers one being to all others and distinguishes it from them. A relative negation is a determined negation, determined by that which it refers. Hence the finiteness is always and necessarily determined finiteness.

Substance in Accidents

Finite beings are composed of a relatively permanent principle which remains primarily the same throughout secondary changes and secondary principles which may come and go without producing a change in the primary mode of being. The relatively permanent principle is called 'substance' and secondary principles are called 'accidents'. The notions of 'substance' and 'accident' may be acquired from the analysis of an external experience. For instance, our external senses reveal to us an unripe orange as a concrete whole which is extended in space, green coloured, sour etc. The intellect conceives the qualities which may come and go as determinations which affect something underneath these changes and modified by them. The difference between the determinations and their subject is expressed by the notions 'accidents' and 'substance' which correspond to a reality existing in the extramental world. Thus we may interpret substance as the being-in-itself of a finite essence which is the basic inner principle of permanence or continuity of that being which becomes. A being is originally constituted by its act of existing and essence. It is posited as a limited but a real being which exists in itself autonomously as a substance. It is Being-in-itself and not in another. *Accident*, on the other hand, is that which is not in itself but in another. It is a mode of being, but not autonomous. It does not exist in itself, but in another. It is whatever is added in any way to another determined in its being.

Form in Matter (Hylomorphism)

Hylomorphism is derived from the Greek words 'hyle' (matter) and 'morphe' (form). It is the theory of matter and form. This theory of Aristotle seeks to explain the essential constitution of a corporeal substance in terms of a twofold principle: prime matter and substantial form. Prime matter is material and indeterminate, and substantial form is formal and determining.

Prime Matter

All material beings possess a principle of materiality. It is not a being at all

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but a principle of material beings as such. Hence it cannot be known scientifically (empirically), but metaphysically. This principle of materiality is prime matter. It is the common substantial principle found in all material bodies. It is wholly without determinateness in itself. It cannot exist itself. It is substantial, but an incomplete substantial principle. It requires another substantial principle to exist, or rather to give it existence in a determinate body. The other substantial principle (with the exception of human soul) is also an incomplete substantial principle. The prime matter is the determinable element and the substantial form is the determining element. It is also pure potentiality as it is a pure capacity for existence in a material body. It is a capacity which must be filled up, determined, made into the only existible body by a substantial principle other than itself. Since the result of the union of this determining principle with prime matter is a single bodily substance, the union itself must be a substantial union, the substantial fusing of two substantial principles into an actuality which is a third thing. This third thing is neither prime matter alone nor substantial form alone, but an existing body of a specific kind. It is that which makes anybody a body, not actively but passively receiving the impress and union of the substantial form. For the whole character of prime matter is its passivity, its inertness, its indifference to become this particular kind of body rather than another, in a word, its indeterminateness, its *potentiality*. In this way we can affirm the classical Aristotelian assertion: 'Prime matter is that constitutive principle of corporal substance which of itself is quite indeterminate and hence can be determined to form corporeal substance.'

Substantial Form

To illustrate the various senses in which the term *form* is used we shall consider a few instances of its use: Form is frequently used as a synonym for outline or shape. We speak of the oval form of a race-course, of the symmetrical form of a drawing. It also means a plan or program, a record, or a form-sheet to be filled. It is often used for *good condition*, and a golfer is said to be 'in form' or 'at the top of his form'. The adjective of form (i.e., formal) is often employed to indicate a certain dignity, or a certain decorum invoking precise details of dress or conduct. Thus we speak of

‘formal dress’, ‘formal occasion’, ‘formal introduction’ etc. To a philosopher form may mean that which *determines* a thing, sets it in its being, in its essence, in its substance, in its accidents, in its actuality. Any determining element is a being in form. When it is spoken of corporeal substance the term refers to *substantial form* which makes a bodily substance an existing reality (actuality). It is the substantial form of human which makes the one bodily being a human being. That which sets and determines a substance in its actual being, and makes it a substance of this precise kind or essential nature, is its substantial form.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Where Parmenides used various forms of the word *einai* to speak of Being that is stable, unchanging and one, Plato coined the word *ousia* to characterize his eternal Forms, in contrast to which material things are mere imitations. Aristotle instead upholds the individual existent as the paragon of reality, first *ousia*. These may be either pure immaterial essences, or else mixed essences composed of matter and form.

Where Aristotle had an analogy of substance, Thomas Aquinas worked out an analogy of *esse*: God is the pure *esse*; angels are substances composed of act of existence and essence; material things are composed of act of existence and essence, but the essence is itself composed of form and matter. Thus Being for Thomas is primarily *esse* rather than essence.

This higher synthesis and transformation of Aristotle is broken up in various ways in the modern period. The empiricists regard essences as merely nominal. Kant recognizes that existence is not a predicate, but relegates Being to a minor role. Hegel ignores *esse* to construct a Logic of Being and a Logic of Essence culminating in the Absolute Idea. In reaction to his neglect of the particular and the individual, Kierkegaard works out a new meaning of existence as the manner of being proper to human beings.

Heidegger works out a phenomenology of factual existence, seeks the Being of meaning, and raises anew the question of Being. However, he abandons his early efforts when he opts for a poetic recognition of the

Truth of Being that ‘essences’ in silence. Derrida is representative of postmodernism when he proscribes all philosophy as logocentric, and conceives of his own task as one of deconstruction of the subtle violence of philosophy and of civilization. Postmodernism therefore seeks to get beyond the thinking of Being and essence/*logos* that has characterized the history of the West.

3.8 KEY WORDS

- Einai* : Gk. infinitive ‘to be.’
: Gk. substantive derived from *einai*, variously translated
- Ousia, ousiai* as being
or substance.
Gk. expression coined by Aristotle, usually translated as
- To ti en einai* : essence.
- Esse* : Lat. infinitive ‘to be’; act of existence.

3.9 QUESTION TO REVIEW

1. What is being and essence?
2. Describe being in ancient period?
3. Describe being in medieval period?
4. Difference between modern and contemporary period?
5. Describe substance?

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3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

- 1) In the ancient period of the West, being tends to be identified with essence in the sense of the Whatness of things, and essences are considered stable and unchanging in themselves. Parmenides regarded only the stable and unchanging as being, and further

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regarded being as one. Plato preserved this emphasis on stability when he spoke of a world of eternal, unchanging Forms, but admitted a plurality of such Forms or *ousiai*. Aristotle extended the word *ousia* also to material things, and indeed exalted the individual existent as the prototypical substance or *ousia*. Still, even for him *ousia* or being is largely its essence, though in material things the essence consists not only of form but also of matter.

- 1) In the medieval period of the West a distinction emerges between essence and existence. Especially for Thomas Aquinas, being is primarily not essence but act of existence, or *esse*. He establishes an analogy of *esse*: God who is pure *esse*; angels who are beings composed of form and act of existence; and material things that are composed of essence and existence, and whose essence is further composed of matter and form.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) In the modern period, Hobbes and Locke begin insisting that essences or definitions are of names rather than of things. Kant does recognize that existence is not a predicate, but relegates Being to a minor role as compared to the pure ideas of reason. Hegel swallows up both *esse* and movement into the dialectic of the Absolute Idea. In reaction, Kierkegaard worked out a new meaning of existence as the manner of being proper to the human being, and Nietzsche refused to acknowledge any difference between essence and appearance. Thus the modern period represents a breakdown of the synthesis achieved by Thomas Aquinas.
- 2) The contemporary period may be regarded as an ongoing effort to get beyond both Being and *logos*. Taking inspiration from Husserl, Heidegger creates a phenomenology of factual existence and raises anew the question of Being. This he does by examining Dasein,

which is that being whose Being is to be concerned about Being. Eventually he abandons this attempt and opts for a poetic recognition of the Truth of Being that 'essences' in silence. Derrida goes one step further when he characterises the whole history of philosophy in the West, including that of Heidegger, as logocentric, and proposes to replace it by deconstruction of its violent and repressive dichotomie

UNIT 4 POTENCY (BECOMING)

STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Operative Level
- 4.3 The Level of Essence
- 4.4 The Existential Level
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Questions for review
- 4.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Insight into, and understanding of the basic structures of ourselves as beings, and of the realities around us, is the main objective of this unit. This unit explains how act and potency are the two ultimate co-principles of all that comes into being. For an initial meaning of the words “act” and “potency” just look up any Standard English dictionary.

What they mean in metaphysics will soon be clear. You know that “act” may be just another word for activity or actualization, or action; and “potency” is another word for power, capacity, ability or faculty.

After completing this unit, the student must be able to:

- Understand his/her own potentialities better, as well as their in-built limitations ; select the potentialities it would be better for him/her to actualize
- See oneself and others not only as human beings, but as beings sharing in the universal condition of all finite composite, changing, limited beings, subject to spatial and temporal conditions, and depending on many interrelations
- Realize the truth that whatever comes into being, whatever belongs to the created world, is constituted of act and potency, not

only at the operative, but also at the essential and existential levels

· Explore the nature of causality in its various manifestations, and to distinguish final from efficient causality...and embark on the search for the Absolute, without whom finite being cannot be.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We are dealing here with the metaphysical structure of finite being. After having studied the relation of substance to accidents and matter to form in the previous units, we now come to the ultimate constitutive co-principles of finite being. Finite beings are characterized by their limitations, changeability, composite nature, and interdependence. From these very characteristics, we have to conclude – as we shall show in the following pages – that all finite beings are constituted of act and potency at the operative, essential and existential levels. These three levels are really inseparable, but we consider them separately just for a better understanding of the co-principle of all finite reality.

Act and potency are technical terms. Potency is a term that may refer to: capacity, ability, power, possibility. Act is associated with: action, activity, actualization, actuality, perfection, realization, since they are applicable at different levels of reality, they are susceptible to analogical predication.

The operative level is the level of action and capacity for activity. The essential level is deeper than the operative, and deals with the intrinsic constitution of material beings. The existential or entitative level refers to the relation between essence and existence. The terms act and potency are therefore analogical since their significance is similar at different levels. In general, potencies are called active potencies when they are used for action and activity. Potencies are passive when they are acted upon. Both kinds of potencies belong — as properties, accidents or attributes to material as well as spiritual substances. Substances therefore are in potency with reference to these properties. Substances do not act immediately through themselves, nor do they actualize themselves except through their potencies. Potencies and acts are not substances, but co-principles of finite substances at the operative as well as existential

level. “Dunamis” is the word used by Aristotle, for potency; and “energeia”, for act.

4.2 THE OPERATIVE LEVEL

In order to get at the metaphysical structure of beings like ourselves, let us start with the operative level, which is the sphere of activities that are manifest to the senses, and more or less evident to everyone. At the ports ships are arriving and departing; and at the air-ports, the planes. The metaphysicians see all this as the operative level of reality, and set themselves to understand and explain the basic reasons for it all.

Movement and Change – Act and Potency

Movement and Change are so obvious, so constant, and so inevitable, that it is taken for granted by Eastern as well as Western philosophies. The Vedic elements, earth, air, fire, water, are moving and movable. In Samkya, ‘prakrti’, for instance, is constantly undergoing evolution. The Vaisheshika atoms are also ever on the move. The Buddha, too, saw the passing nature of everything that came to be. The Sarvastivada school of Hinayana Buddhism also maintained that there was neither being nor non-being, but constant becoming.

Many thinkers may not speak explicitly of act and potency, but they do speak of change and evolution, and process as pervading all natural reality, and remind us at least remotely of Heraclitus whose over-all vision of the world was opposite to that of Parmenides. Wherever there is process or change or movement, there is interplay of act and potency. Potency as well as act interplay in the various kinds of change and movement that we see in the world around us:

Local change: One kind of change is local change, which means change of place. Nature has not given plants and trees the potencies for local movement as she has given to animals; nor has Nature given human beings, abilities to fly, as she has given to birds. But, in giving humans intelligence, she has given them the remote active potency: human beings naturally cannot fly, but actualizing the potentialities of the mind, human beings can now fly higher and faster than many birds.

Long before Newton formulated the basic laws of mechanics, Aristotle had attempted to describe motion and change metaphysically in terms of act and potency. “Motion is the act of a being in potency in so far as it is in potency.” The take-off of an airplane from Delhi for Bangalore is an act of a being in potency for Bangalore. It is a being coming-to-be in Bangalore. It continues to be in potency till it alights, and finds itself actually in Bangalore. When actually in Bangalore, a plane, or bus, or passenger, or whatever, may be potentially elsewhere.

Quantitative Change: This kind of change refers particularly to physical growth: increase or decrease in quantity. This kind of change is constantly taking place among the minerals, the metals; among non-living things as well as living things. Living things including ourselves – grow in height, weight, strength, from childhood to maturity. This growth takes place in time. Trees, which don't have the potencies for local movement, have more potentialities for quantitative growth than animals and human beings. Trees also have potentialities for living longer than animals or human beings.

Qualitative change: As in the case with local change and quantitative change, qualitative change is seen and experiences in Nature's works as well as in human affairs. The qualities of fruits and vegetables, for instance, can change, depending on the rainfall, the soil, the season; they can deteriorate with the passage of time. They can improve through the agricultural sciences. Success, progress, advancement — all depends on actualization of potentialities. These are all acts of beings in potency in so far as they are in potency. When that potency is actualized, they will be in act, but in potency to some other act.

Within ourselves and our consciousness,, in our environment, in others, in the areas of health, education, economics, politics, music, technology, etc. there are not only local and quantitative changes, but any number of qualitative changes. The interplay of act and potency is everywhere around us.

At the operative level, change, motion, movement is an act of a being

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in potency in so far as it is in potency. Hence, all these beings and their operations are a mixture of act and potency, activity and passivity, actuality and possibility, activity and passivity.

Check Your Progress I

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

- Mention three words associated with “act”.

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What is change? Mention three kinds of change.

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Potencies: Passive and Active.

Nature, working like an artist under the supervision of her Creator, equips her products with the means for acting and functioning in harmony with their respective natures. Individuals, we see, when they begin to be, need to be brought passively into being. They are equipped with potencies to be activated, and changed into active potencies. It is very evident that no one does what he or she cannot do. What people could not do, or make, or understand at one time, they can at another. Time has an important part to play in the activation and actualization of potencies and their activation. Acts presuppose active potencies. Whoever actually speaks, CAN speak. Whoever actually sees, can see. Whoever actually invents, CAN invent... From the act and the fact, we rightly conclude that there is some potency or potencies which make that act or activity, possible. Acts, therefore, presuppose potencies as well as their activation.

This is clear from the behavior of non-living as well as living beings. Living things, like plants, are endowed with potencies for feeding, growing and multiplying. Animals, fish and birds are equipped with potencies for self-movement, sense-knowledge, and other faculties for the preservation of individual and species. While moving themselves, they are also moved by their desires for food, security, reproduction.

Human beings are more richly endowed by Nature than other creatures. Our five senses and mind are potencies for knowing; our hands, for doing and making; our feet, for walking, running, local movement; our wills, for choosing how and when to use our other endowment. Our will is therefore the queen of our potencies. There is no activity without the potency for that activity. It follows that for each of our activities, personal, social, professional, etc. we need as many potencies.

Human intelligence is full of a great variety of potentialities, talents, abilities, for self-actualization through a great variety of arts, crafts and skills in farming, building, dancing, driving, and hundreds of thousands of activities including flying. It is easy to understand that without eyes, we cannot see; without ears, we cannot hear; without wings, we cannot fly; without intelligence, we could never have invented flying machines.

What is the purpose of these relatively active potencies? Their purpose is their corresponding activity or ACT. What can see (active potency) and what can be seen (passive potency), meet in the ACT of seeing. What can hear (active potency) and what can be heard (passive potency), meet in the ACT of hearing, and so on.

We here call them relatively active because these and other potencies that, at first sight, appear active may sometimes need to be activated. In such cases, they are passive, rather than active. The eyes, for instance, are active, when seeing and looking, but they may need light to activate them. This means that some passive potency can be activated and so become active.

What is in act in one sense at one time may be in potency at the same time in another sense; but nothing can be in act and in potency in the same sense, at the same time.

The Language Connection

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Although language cannot be taken as a sure guide to the understanding of reality, we admit that some features of reality are reflected in language. Verbal constructions and expressions sometimes picture the construction of reality.

In English, adjectives ending in -ble, often affirm or deny potency, possibility, capacity, ability, potency: able, unable, capable, incapable; visible, invisible: legible, illegible: audible, inaudible; curable, incurable, etc.. Verbs often refer to acts, actions, and activities. Moreover, most English verbs have active and passive voice. Their usage very often corresponds either to activities, or to active potencies, on one hand, and passive potencies on the other. For example: active voice: You are reading this. Passive voice: This is being read by you..

There are also verbs that indicate potency. CAN is the principal verb in English that indicates potency or possibility. When someone tells you: You CAN succeed. It means you have the power, the ability to succeed. Possible = can be = possible cannot be = impossible.

Potency, Act and Purpose/Finality

Purpose means aim, goal, and intention. We introduce here the notion and reality of “purpose” because it has an extremely important role to play in the works of Nature, and also of human affairs.

Nature urges her products to actualize their various potentialities in order that they may flourish. Living organisms are instinctively moved to change and move themselves from place to place in search of food, shelter, security, and whatever is good for them. This characteristic of Nature to direct particularly living organisms towards an end or goal is known as teleology.

In view of the intentions she had for each class of her products, Nature inscribed her intentions into class of her products. Grass was given its properties for the good of cows and for their nourishment. Cows were provided with the active potencies of digesting the grass without cooking or boiling it. Nature has written her intentions into the very structure of the human body, in which are planted its active

and passive potencies. As Socrates pointed out, the mouth is placed just below the eyes and the nose, so that whatever enters the mouth can be seen and smelt in advance.

Potencies for sensing and feeling and moving, draw animals, fish and birds to the food and the good that they desire and need for the actualization of their potentialities and maintenance of their lives. In other words, they are moved by their desires towards what is good for them and away from what would injure them.

Humans also are moved towards food and pleasure and towards the fulfilment of their aspirations partly by Nature, partly by culture and have some purpose, aim and goal and intention for all their activities. As potencies are intended for acts, so acts are intended for actualization and fulfilment.

Human purposes are to increase individual and social well-being and happiness, and to progress in every field of human activity: economic, political, commercial, artistic, etc. The invention and manufacture of goods never loses sight of the purpose. The organization of games and sports and entertainments always keeps in mind the purpose. Two-wheelers, three-wheelers, four-wheelers, have their purpose written into their wheels. Spoons and forks and knives have their purposes written into their structures. And so with all that men manufacture: shoes, watches, TVs, generators, etc...

Since everything in Nature and in human affairs is ruled by finality, we can take it as a principle that whatever is moved is moved by another. In other words, final causes and purposes have active potencies to move by attracting and drawing desires, emotions, moving and motivating intentions. From experience we know that beauty, goodness, honour, glory, and many other things – including movies – have the power or potency to move and draw thousands of people to themselves. That precisely is the meaning of the principle: Whatever is moved is moved by another. What is moved has passive potency that which moves, has actuality and promises actualization and fulfilment.

There can be series of final causes, like aiming at getting through pre-university, graduate, post-graduate, attainments with a view to securing a highly lucrative or prestigious position in society. This would

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mean a graded actualization of potentialities each comparable to a movement moved forward by the actualization .of a previous potentiality. Actualization is achieved in grades and stages.

Both in the operations of Nature or of human beings, the goal is some good — whether implanted by Nature into her products, or chosen by human beings, who are the products, not only of Nature, but also of culture and free choice. In the latter case, the good may be real or apparent. That is why act is said to be a perfection and fulfillment of potency.

There is a real difference between efficient causes on one hand, and final causes, on the other. In both cases, whatever is moved is moved by another. Drivers, carpenters, masons, pilots, surgeons can become efficient causes, because of their active potencies.

. But unless they are driven to work by some desirable goal, such as need for bread, or love, or prestige, or money, or pleasure, they may prefer to remain idle. Their potencies are active as far as their work is concerned, but passive with respect to their motivation.

Conclusion 3: Act and potency are co-relative, that is, they match each other and are made for each other and meant for each other.

Potency, Act and Efficiency

As we have just seen, whatever is moved is moved by another.

Explanation: what IS moved has passive potency.

.....by another: having active potency ...

This “—other” may be another part of the same being, or another being. We have shown above how this applies not only in the sphere of final causes. This principle is operative also in the sphere of efficient causes, as will be made clearer from the following.

Inanimate things, like tables and chairs, instruments and books, cannot move themselves. Passive potency can be compared to inertia. Newton would say that they need a force to move them. That force can be compared to active potency.

Things that cannot move themselves or even people who cannot

move themselves fast enough and far enough are sometimes carried about as cargo in trucks or trains. The trucks and trains are equipped with engines and motors. In such cases, whatever is moved is moved by a motor. Engines and motors have the active powers and potencies to be movers.

As in the case of final causes, so too in the case of efficient causes, whatever is moved, is moved by another. "Another" means an agent with active potency such as a motor. A good illustration for this is a railway train consisting of many coaches. What moves the engine driver to be efficient in his job, is some final cause, some motivation, such as sense of duty, or service of commuters. The engine has active potency, while the coaches have passive potency. The engine is the efficient mover (efficient cause), and when it moves the first coach is moved (passivity) and moves the second coach, which, in its turn is moved, and moves (activity) the third coach, and so on.. A running train is a fine example of moved movers, moving movers, in the sense that the coaches immediately after the engine are moved by the engine, while moving the coaches that come after them. In this way, passive potencies of the coaches are turned into active.

Living beings – as we have just seen — are distinguished from non-living, because they have active potencies for self-movement, potencies for self-actualization. In so far as they move themselves, they are active and in act. In so far as they are moved, they are passive, and in potency. Senses and sensations are accompanied by motor neurons in the nervous systems that move my right hand to strike dead, the mosquito sucking the blood from the back of my left palm.

In such a case as this, it may be a bit difficult to distinguish efficiency from finality. But the distinction is clear in the case of an engine driver, who moves

the train at the signal from the guard or station-master, for the purpose of the

good, or even for fear of losing his job. Whereas the railway engine moves the

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coaches because of its efficiency, the station-master moves the engine driver by

a kind of moral force, which can be reduced to final causality, as has been explained above (4.2.3)... Whereas final causes move by appealing in some way

to desire, appetite, hope for something good, efficient causes usually move to

act and work and bring about desirable changes.

Living things can also be efficient causes in generating other living beings. Hens, for instance, have active potencies for laying eggs. Eggs have potentialities to grow from hens in potency into hens in act. From this it might appear that act presupposes potency. That is very true. All our activities presuppose that we have the ability, capacity, or competence for those activities. But it is also true that absolutely speaking, potency presupposes act. In other words, though the egg comes before the full-grown hen, — potency before act – without the actual hen, there would be no egg. Act comes and must come, before potency.

Conclusion 4: Whereas, absolutely speaking, act precedes potency in the sphere of nature, intention and finality, potency precedes act, relatively and temporally, in the sphere of efficient causality.

Check Your Progress II

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

- Do non-living things have active potencies? Give reasons for your answer.

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- Do human beings move themselves, or do they have potencies that are moved by something outside themselves?

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4.3 THE LEVEL OF ESSENCE

Let us now proceed from the operative to the essential level of finite beings. That is like proceeding from the fruits of the tree to the roots of the tree, from the behavior to the nature, from the more evident to the less evident, from the operations and accidents to the essence and substance.

As you already know from a previous unit in this block, material substances are composite beings constituted of two co-principles, matter and form. Act and potency, at this level, acquire new shades of meaning. “Potency “means “the material co-principle”; and “form”, the first act at the essential level. This is not the external, accidental, form, but the internal, substantial form of material being.

It is important to remember that when we deal with matter and form as potency and act at the essential level, we are dealing not with being as being, but being as material. Finite spiritual beings are simple, and therefore not composed, at what has been called the essential level...

As you may remember from what you have already learnt, Parmenides and Zeno had challenged change and plurality, while maintaining the being was unchanging and one. Aristotle countered this double challenge by inventing a two-lever key to unlock the mystery of being — i. act and potency; and ii. Analogy. In fact, it is better to consider these solutions, not as inventions but as discoveries, because as you have seen up till now, that inter-play of act and potency is so manifest and evident, that if Aristotle had not discovered it, one of us would have done so.

It is easy to see that wherever there is change, there is composition, because in change, there is a term away from which, a term to which and something underlying. This means that there is composition of the underlying substratum; wither with the first term, or the second. This is precisely what you will notice, if you peruse once again what you have read above, Local, quantitative, and qualitative changes

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have places, quantities and qualities respectively as their terms away from which and to which. The underlying substratum is the substance. What happens if substantial change takes place? That brings us from the operative to the essential level, and to matter as underlying substantial change.

Matter as Passive Potency

To begin with, let us consider human inventions and man-made articles and items, such as crockery, cutlery, machinery, footwear, etc. Everything made or manufactured by human beings presupposes some raw material out of which new products are made.

Raw material is pre-required for the manufacture of slippers, spoons, motors, airplanes. From where does this raw material come? From Mother Nature. It is she who supplies about 92 elements and billions of compounds and mixtures for the manufacture of millions of products by human beings. The stuff out of which, products are made, came to be known as the material cause. Here the word “cause” is used analogically. The material cause is not the efficient cause.

From where does Nature get her raw material for the manufacture of the 92 or so elements? What is the stuff out of which, Nature makes her products?

That was the question ancient sages in East and West put to themselves. The earliest recorded Greek philosophers, the Milesians, were greatly interested in the material out of which nature made her products. Just as humans manufactured new products from pre-existing raw materials, they suspected that Nature too was using some more elementary material. Was it water, air, something boundless? Empedocles believed that earth, air, fire and water were the four basic elements. That search led to the 92 natural elements of today’s chemistry.

In ancient India, the satkaryavadins maintained that the effect (karya) pre-existed in the cause. ...”the effect, before its manifestation is potentially contained in its material cause. Production is only an actualization of the potential (shaktasya

shakua karanat).”

Texts such as this make it clear that there were Indian thinkers who perceived the difference between act and potency. Kumarila and some Jainas hold that the effect is both real and unreal before its production. Apparently “real and unreal” could be taken to mean “actual and potential”. These references show that the ancient Indian sages had observed the inter-play of act and potency in the realities around them, though they had not systematically analyzed it.

A further question would be: Are the elements the ultimate stuff out of which Nature makes all her products. The answer is: NO. First, because the elements are already formed, with their nama and rupa. Whatever has a clearly and distinct identity, with properties and characteristics of its own, is already formed matter. Each element has its own distinctive features. Some, like uranium, have active potencies such as radioactivity. So the elements are not the ultimate stuff or primary matter.

Secondly, there is possibility of transmuting the elements into one another. In other words, substantial change can take place between the elements. The possibility of substantial change of one element into another is an indication that there is still some underlying substratum that is neither this nor that. It is pure potency. This is what Aristotle called primary or entirely unformed matter.

By pure potency, we mean potency unmixed with act of any kind, and therefore lacking all active potencies. Since existence is an act, primary matter does not exist independently by itself, but only co-exists with the form. Hence, we cannot even focus on primary matter, without speaking of form. Only the atoms and subatomic particles, out of which the elements are made, can be considered the primary matter and pure potency.

Primary matter is that which underlies all the 92 or more elements, and permits their transmutation into one another. As already mentioned earlier, the elements are NOT primary but secondary matter, since they already have nama-rupa, name and form, and are clearly distinct from one another. But the sub-atomic particles, which have NO independent existence, may be considered the primary matter thought of by Aristotle. ¹

This is the view of Heisenberg, an awardee of the Nobel Prize for physics.

Form as Act

From the foregoing, you already know that all material substances are constituted of two co-principles: matter and form. The elements are the building blocks of our material world; and they themselves have matter and form in their very essence and constitution.

To have a better idea of form, let us look again at the manufacturing business: All the vehicles coming out of the same factory are of the same kind or form or model or design. The job of a factory is to assemble materials into the form selected by the firm or company. There are Fords, Boleros, Chevrolets, Volvos, etc. A Volvo bus may be damaged or destroyed or discarded; but the form of the model that is with the company continues to manufacture NEW Volvos, and so can replace the old. Factories, therefore, join matter and form. The raw material they use can be considered relatively primary. This, however, is NOT pure potency.

All this is possible because the form is one and relatively unchanging; while the materials are anifold and changing all the time. The quantity and number of Volvos, Boleros, Boeings, AK rifles, depends on the matter. In this sense, matter is sad to the principle of individuation, which accounts for the plurality of individuals, participating in one form.

Nature, too, seems to work according to plans and models, classifying her products into solids, liquids, gases; plants, mammals, birds, and many species within each genus. Materials are assembled in a great diversity of ways and moulded into different forms. In these forms are rooted the properties and active [potencies referred to in 4.2 above. What Nature manufactures, far surpasses man-made factories and their products. The latter are extrinsically assembled, and cannot multiply themselves or repair themselves, or direct themselves at least till today. But Nature's forms act as final, as well as efficient causes. This is more manifest in living things, whose substantial forms are called souls. Into the very heart of the form of the egg, Nature has written the programme to be followed for the actualization of the potentialities of the respective eggs. That is why the substantial form is called the first act of the essence, making the essence such, and locating it in the hierarchy of being. Here, "act" does not

mean activity in the operative sense; neither is it actuality in the existential sense, but a possible and feasible organization of the material in view of its functions and activities, and its possible actualization in existence. In 1900, Wilbur Wright, one of the inventors of the airplane, wrote to a French aviation pioneer, Chanute, "...flight is possible for man." In 1903, flights became actual.

4.4 THE EXISTENTIAL LEVEL

After considering the inter-play of act and potency on the operative and essential levels of beings, let us now probe their mutual relations and roles at the existential level, which is sometimes called entitative.

It is obvious that the operative and essential levels can without difficulty be merged into the existential. At the operative level, Nature as well as human beings can do many things, and also make many things because of their active potencies. When it comes to making new things – as Nature does through reproduction, and factories do through production – we have the passage from the operative to the essential levels. Both operations as well as new products and inventions take place on the existential level, and are sometimes inseparable from it but distinct from it, as act and potency are always distinct, but sometimes inseparable from each other.

Essence as Potency for the Act of Existence

At the existential level, the preferred meaning of potency is possibility or capacity, while the preferred meaning of act is actuality, reality, fulfillment, realization.

Essences as you already know from a previous unit, is not the same as existence. When you ask: What is this; your question refers to essence, not to the existence, which is presupposed, but to the nature of the thing before you. When you ask: Is there life on Mars? You are referring to existence.

There is a difference and real distinction between essence, on one hand, and existence on the other. There were no cars or flying machines in the time of Aristotle, Aquinas, or Leonardo da Vinci.

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But today they exist. This means that their essences were in potency. Had they not been possible, they would never have been actual today. Apply the same to ourselves. Thirty, forty years ago, today's students were not existing; they were possibilities. Today they are actualities. Every finite possible essence needs an actually existing active potency to bring it from possibility into actuality. Nature has given human as well as other living beings the active potencies to bring new living beings of their own species into existence. Human beings, as we saw, brought cars, planes, etc. from possibility into reality.

Potency Limits Act

Being is like an immense ocean. This ocean cannot be contained in any finite essence. Finite essences can be compared to dams or tanks, or water-containers great and small. All containers have limited capacity. It is true that active potencies give power for action. The greatest active potency in the natural world is the human intelligence. But even human intelligence is rooted in human nature and essence, and is therefore limited. And this essence has a limited as well as limiting capacity for containing the vast ocean of being and existence and actuality.

If at the essential level human nature has a limited capacity, it will inevitably follow that at the operative level, its potencies, however powerful and efficient, will be limited and finite. That is confirmed by experience. All material living forms are mortal. With the privation of the substantial form, substantial change takes place, from living to non-living matter, showing the limits of material life.

As the Buddha and many others have pointed out, whatever is born is doomed to die. And as has been pointed out above, whatever is moved is in potency, and is moved by another. So whatever is brought to birth is brought from possibility into actual existence, by some being(s) in act, otherwise what is possible would never have a chance to be. This fact and its accompanying insight has led Aristotle and others to the general conclusion that there is One, Unchanging Being Who is Pure Act, in the sense that His Essence is the very act of being and existence, unmixed

with unfulfilled potentialities. This is the Supreme Being that cannot not be.

Check Your Progress III

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

- Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.
- Show how essence is not the same as existence.

.....

.....

.....

- What does Pure Act mean?

.....

.....

.....

4.5 LET US SUM UP

The change and movement which we see all around, and also within us is the act of beings in potency, in so far as they are in potency. Whatever is moved is in passive potency. Whatever is moved, can be moved and must be moved either by itself or by another. If it moves itself, that means it has parts, some of which are moved, while others act as movers. Nature has indeed bestowed on living things potencies to move, and to be moved. Nature, however, is not infinite. Hence, the potencies given by Nature are not only limited, but also limiting. So the self-movement is limited, depending

on the energy available to the system, which needs to be re-fuelled.

Hence, the organic system is moved by another, namely by some good outside itself, for instance, food, security, pleasure or whatever, according to the purposes and intentions of Nature.

In accord with these intentions, birds, animals, bees and others can proceed from the operative to the essential levels by joining form to matter, for instance, in building nests, making honey, etc., and even

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reproducing their species. Here, matter with its passive potentialities is acted upon by the form acting as efficient cause. All these products of Nature come into being from possibility into actuality, and continue to be constituted of potency and act as really distinct principle of their beings at the essential as well as the existential levels.

Humans, while sharing some characteristics with other products of Nature, have special potentialities rooted in their intellectual make-up, which empowers them to find new ways and means of self-actualization, brought discoveries, inventions, technologies. Through their probing into the working of Nature, and into the constitution of finite beings, they can reach out to the recognition of the Absolute and Infinite Whom Aristotle calls Pure Act (Energeia), Pure Actuality, the Unmoved Mover.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Potency : a capacity for growth or development or ability to develop.

Essence : the quality or nature of something that identifies it or makes it

what it is.

4.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain the concept of becoming.
2. Explain the level of essence.
3. Describe potency.
4. Explain the level of existence.
5. Do non living things have potency? Explain.

4.8 SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

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Cambridge University Press, 1995.

4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Activity, actuality and activation.
1. Change is the act of a being in potency, in so far as it is in potency. There is local change, quantitative change, and qualitative change.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Yes, non-living things do have active potencies, for instance, the sun.
1. Human beings, while sharing in many respects with the animals, are moved to food, pleasure, and satisfaction of needs. However, because of their rationality, they have greater capacity for self-actualization, through the free choices of their free wills.

Answers to Check your progress III

1. Generation after generation comes into being and passes away, as history shows. This means that being is not their essence. The same is true of the cosmos, as we know it.
1. Pure Act is a metaphysical term indicating the Supreme Being, in Whom Alone is essence identical with existence, and who, therefore, cannot not be. That is the ultimate Unmoved Mover Whose Presence moves the cosmos from generation to generation, and Who has no mixture of unfulfilled potentialities.

UNIT 5 GOD

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The Concept Of God In The Philosophy Of Vedas And Upanishad
- 5.3 The Concept Of God In The Philosophy Of The Geeta.
- 5.4 Concept Of God In Different Schools Of Philosophy
- 5.5 Let Us Sum up
- 5.6 key words
- 5.7 Questions for Review
- 5.8 Suggested readings and references
- 5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVE

WE have introduced this chapter to show that God whose mercy is need for Moksha does not exist. Now what about the nature of Ishwar the nature of Ishwar as mentioned by various schools. Two things which I have marked in this theory the positions is not satisfactory because the god is never mentioned as creator, destroy and rather of the universe. With the laws of karma and the eternity of the soul gods positions is very poor. As c.d. Sharma has mentioned. It is “Karmadhyanksha” which cannot give little more or less. All is brimh. In Upanishad Ishwar is defined as God who knows his power as maya.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of a divine god is not fundamental to the Hindu philosophy. What do we mean by this word ‘God’ ? Traditionally God is considered as a being or an entity, essentially having these qualities -

- a) an existence in the material sense,
 - b) a sort of consciousness, and a desire to control and to take decisions,
-

c) possession of some supernatural overwhelming power to effect decisions.

The Christian religion is very unambiguous on this issue. The first book of the Holy Bible is the Book of Genesis, which starts with the statement that in the beginning it was all dark and the world did not exist. And then Lord said let there be light and there was light and so the creation came into being by a powerful entity called god who pre-existed the creation and who took conscious decisions about working of this system and still does. The Christian religion gives very clear attributes to what is known as god. Is the Hindu god any different? Since Hinduism is not an organized religion, not one founded by a code book, we can only go by what are the traditional practices and beliefs of the people. These beliefs of the common Hindu present a picture of a god not very different from the gods of other religions. But if we go by the fundamental philosophical treatises, the Vedas, the main Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, then a very different picture emerges.

5.2 THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF VEDAS AND UPANISHAD

we here want to give concept of God in Vedas , Upanishads and Geeta with my perspective. we also want to say scholars of the Indian philosophy have accepted the position of God very poor in Indian Philosophy. Holding my own view we hereby giving the concept of god as described in some of the schools of Indian philosophy.

The concept of GOD in the philosophy of the Vedas, The Upanishads & The Geeta:-Riga-Veda is full of panegyric hymns venerating the numerous deities for their superhuman powers. Some scholars call it the prevalent polytheism. Actually none of these characters were in the category of a god. They were historical figures, like warlords who fought for the Aryans, and divine attributes got associated with them in time and legend. They lacked the status of absolute divinity. None of them was a supremo.

The sages of the Vedic age also came up with the concept of Brahman, a concept that should not be confused with god.

I want to quote Sutra 129 of the tenth mandala of Riga-Veda :

“In the beginning in the state of flood there was neither matter nor non-matter, neither being nor non-being. At that time there was neither the sky nor the space nor anything beyond . There was neither life anywhere nor any source of pleasure. What was there ? And where ? What was the power ? At that time even the solemn water did not exist. There was neither death nor immortality, neither night nor any notion of the day. At that time only one, i.e. Brahma, imbued with energy in his nature was there and nothing else existed. Darkness was hidden inside darkness and the existence was unknown. With the exertion of its own tapas, heat-energy, out of nothing emerged Brahma without external cause or action. This caused the conception of creation and the sages realized the cause of matter in non-matter. Who knows the entire truth and who can speak about this creation ? What are the causative factors of this creation? The gods have originated after the creation. Who knows the one from which this world has got created. It is not known how this existence has come up. He only knows the one who has unveiled it. Does he bear it or not ? It is not known whether the lord up above knows it or not”.

The Vedic scholars treated Brahman as the source of creation, not as the conscious creator. Brahma is not a creator in the sense that He was a powerful and conscious being who existed before the existence of the universe. Brahma was something from which the existence came out into being. Brahma was an entity possessed only with heat energy but was without consciousness or desires. Creation occurred out of Brahma, not by Brahma, and it occurred out of non-matter and without any external cause. The concept of Brahman was further elaborated in Atharva-Veda, and in the Vedanta i.e. in Upanishads it was the main subject of thought. The main characteristics of Brahma as described in Vedanta are -

“Brahma is ‘nirguna’, it does not have any qualities.”

“Brahma is neither living nor non-living, or is both. It has no form. It is material as well as non-material”.

“Brahma is not conscious in the way we understand a conscious being. He is not a person. He does not take decisions”.

Notes

It is interesting to note that in Vedanta the stress is not on the worship of Brahma but on understanding of Brahma. In Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna repeatedly says that when the yogi realizes that all this existence is just a variegated manifestation of Brahma, he assumes sambhava, and thus he integrates himself with Brahma, he attains the state of Brahma, a state of infinite peace and bliss. Thus Brahma is not a deity, it is not a god, it is nothing supernatural. Brahma is all that we are, and the abstract cause of all that is, it is a concept which has to be understood, realized and felt, not just to be worshipped. And for this reason Brahma does not interfere or take decisions. Brahma is also not the chief controller of the human action. In Bhagavad Geeta also Krishna says that He does not take decisions into mundane human affairs, he does not interfere. Krishna says that God creates neither the acts nor the cause nor the circumstances of the action. It is the nature that acts these out. God regards neither sin nor piousness. Krishna further says that he is detached to whatever he is doing. He does not control the actions of people nor does he interfere with their affairs. He neither gets affected by human actions nor does he sit upon judgment on their lives. He does not take such decisions. He is not the grand judge. In fact there is no concept of a day of judgment in the Indian philosophy. To quote from Bhagavad Gita.

All works are accomplished by the qualities of nature. The ignorant feel they are the doer because of their ego.

Though creator of this existence you should understand me as one who does not do anything.

When one does not see the doer but sees only the qualities of nature performing their acts truly attains my being.

The five factors which accomplish all actions are - the scene of action i.e. the body, the doer, the instruments or the sensory organs or the faculties, the efforts i.e. the motions or the impulses, and providence i.e. the divine factors.

This is only to show that in Hindu philosophy there is no superman type of god who would actively intercede into human affairs, a concept normally regarded as divine, and linked to god.

Since Brahma does not decide how the individual should act? Does

anyone control? Or are we all absolutely free ? Is all this uncontrolled and chaotic ?

We cannot psychologically accept that it is all chaotic and haphazard. Scientifically also we do find some order in the scheme of things, some principles making things act in the way they do. Existences are not free to do anything they want. Krishna tells Arjuna that his resolve not to fight in the battle is vain and an offshoot of his ego. He tells Arjuna, ‘ You think you are going to take decisions. But no. Your own nature will compel you to fight.’ Elsewhere also, Krishna says that even the sinner is a victim of his own nature, he is not a sinner in the real sense, as he is not the doer. Man is thus bound by his own nature in the context of his actions, but there is no extra-terrestrial control over him. This does put serious limitations on the individual’s freedom but that is also true. It however relieves the individual from the dictates of an alien divine hand.

I am mentioning here the 14th shloka of Chapter VII of Gita, ‘ This three faceted Maya of mine is difficult to fathom. ’ Krishna does not expect man to be able to know fully the unknown facets of action.

We come back to the question, Is there a god controlling things in this universe ? If you accept the phenomenon, then you have to per se also accept the concept of divine interference and divine disposition. I mean you cannot say that god is unfair and irresponsible. But if you go by this theory of karmic burden and commiserate disposition, then the theory of nature acting upon the beings does not hold good. Then you are negating almost everything said in Gita and Upanishads. And if you believe in Brahma and the forces of nature then you cannot sustain the theory of the karmic burden of the previous life, or anything indicating divine dispensation.

Thus I do not find the concept of a divine god either logical , or empirically sustainable, nor supported by ancient Indian philosophy.

That is why I hold that the Hindu philosophy was based on scientific perceptions, on rational and logical thought and there was no room in it for supernatural and divine concept of god. They believed in the concept of Brahma as the underlying universal cause of all existences. But they sages

also realised that it was difficult for the common man to understand and accept such an abstract concept. To quote sh. 5 of ch. XII of Gita- Efforts are tremendous for those who cling to the formless one, because the path of formlessness is attained by mortal beings with great pain.

The concept of god was man's answer to the mysteries of the existence. It was a reassurance in a system which was full of unknown, and full of inevitability of death. Belief in divinity satisfied a very basic need of human curiosity and bewilderment. And ofcourse, of fear. We must remember that the process of human survival was a very ruthless one. There was no democracy, no human rights and no concept of social justice to save the unfit. God was a part of man's quest for survival. The concept of god as a superior being capable of doing a rescue act was indeed a fascinating idea. Indeed god was the most sublime creation of the collective human mind.

5.3 THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE GEETA.:-

The all-pervasive nature of God and the fact that. He is the essence and upholder of all things in the world is again and again in various ways emphasized in the Geeta. Thus Krishna says, "there is nothing greater than I, all things are held in me like pearls in the thread of a pearl garland; I am the liquidity in water, the light of the sun and the moon, manhood (parursa) in man; good smell in earth, the heat of the sun, intelligence in the intelligent, heroism in the heroes, strength in the strong, and I am also the desires which do not transgress the path of virtue. Again, it is said that "in my unmanifested (avyakta) form I pervade the whole world all beings exist completely in me, but I am not exhausted in them yet so do I transcend them that none of the beings exist in me I am the upholder of all beings, I do not exist in them and yet I am their procreator. In both these passages the riddle of God's relation with man, by which he exists in us and yet does not exist in us and is not limited by us is explained by the fact of the threefold nature of God, there is a part of Him which has been manifested as inanimate nature and also as the animate world of living beings. It is with reference to this all pervasive nature of God that is said

that “ as the air in the sky pervades the whole world, so are all being in me (God). At the end of each cycle all beings enter into my nature and again at the beginning of a cycle I create them.

5.4 CONCEPT OF GOD IN DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHARVAAK:-

Charvaaks are atheistic they do not believe in any supreme entity. On the contrary they say Gods are made by Brahmins to run their business by showing their fear. Câr vâka Metaphysics does not believe in the existence of God. It does not accept god as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Because Câr vâkas donot accept the existence of anything which cannot be perceived. As God cannot be perceived, therefore there can be no God. God as an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent being is only an imagination. It is not necessary to believe in God as the creator of the world. The whole universe, animate as well as inanimate, is composed, according to Câr vâka Metaphysics, of the four basic elements –earth, water, fire and air. Living beings are born of them and they merge into them after death. The world is not moving towards any definite goal created by God.

The Câr vâkas say that introducing the name of God, some hypocrates and cunning priests had exploited the ignorant and simple minded common people. To satisfy God, the common people performe worships, yajna, etc. They offer various valuable things in the name of God by the direction of the priests. Worships etc are only for the selfish fulfillment of the wicked, priests according to Câr vâkas. Therefore, it is completely meaningless to worship God, because He is non-existent and non-perceptible.

Moreover, the Câr vâkas regard the king of a country to be the God. Because the qualities attributed to God are almost present in the king, who is also the all in all of the kingdom. The king is the judge, well-wisher of the subjects. Common people try to make the king satisfied by all means. Only the fools try in vain to please God by uttering prayers etc. But the intelligent people earn wealth pleasing the king. ‘Lokosiddho bhabet raja’, the king is real, he is perceived. Hence, the king is the God

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE JAINA.:-

Jain scriptures reject God as the creator of the universe. Ācārya Hemacandra in the 12th century put forth the Jain view of the universe in Yogaśāstra: This universe is not created nor sustained by anyone; It is self-sustaining, without any base or support.

Jainism rejects the idea of a creator deity responsible for the manifestation, creation, or maintenance of this universe. According to Jain doctrine, the universe and its constituents (soul, matter, space, time, and principles of motion) have always existed. All the constituents and actions are governed by universal natural laws and an immaterial entity like God cannot create a material entity like the universe. Jainism offers an elaborate cosmology, including heavenly beings (devas), but these beings are not viewed as creators; they are subject to suffering and change like all other living beings, and must eventually die.

Jainism does not teach the dependency on any supreme being for enlightenment. The Tirthankara is a guide and teacher who points the way to enlightenment, but the struggle for enlightenment is one's own. Moral rewards and sufferings are not the work of a divine being, but a result of an innate moral order in the cosmos; a self-regulating mechanism whereby the individual reaps the fruits of his own actions through the workings of the karmas.

In Jain theism God is there. But then God in Jainism, inspite of all powerful and all blissful like the God of other religions, is a Soul that was once embodied, in a bondage, and has become God by self-effort. We do not find such a situation in the conventional Theism. Moreover, Jain God is not the Creator of the world or the fruit-giver. The world, according to Jainism is since the beginningless of time (anadi). In conventional theism we find God as the world-creator. Thus, though Jainism is Theistic in its colour, it very much differentiates from the conventional Theism. This brings the Jaina theism to a peculiar position where Jainism appears to be having its own type of theism : not Theism in Jainism but Jain Theism in Jainism.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE BUDDHISM:-

Gautama Buddha rejected the existence of a creator deity, refused to endorse many views on creation and stated that questions on the origin of the world are not ultimately useful for ending suffering.

Buddhism refutes the idea of a God, who throws the sinners into everlasting torments. In fact, the Buddhists believe in the existence of an Enlightened being, who vows to save all sentient beings from their sufferings. The concept of enlightenment is principally concerned with developing a method to escape from the illusions of the materialistic world. According to the Buddhist ideology, anyone can enlighten himself by undertaking a method of mental discipline and a code of conduct.

Almost all the sects of Buddhism do not believe in the myth of God. Indeed some of the early Indian Mahayana philosophers denounced God-worship in terms which are even stronger than those expressed in the Theravada literature. Some later Mahayana schools, which flourished outside India, ascribed some degree of divinity to a transcendent Buddha, considering living Buddhas to be a manifestation of the Adi-Buddha. But even then it cannot be said that the Buddha was converted into a Divinity comparable to the God of the monotheistic religions. In the Brahmajâla Sutta and the Aggaa Sutta texts, the Buddha refutes the claims of Maha Brahmâ (the main God) and shows Him to be subject to karmic law (i.e. cosmic law). Even though long-lived Mahâ Brahmâ will be eliminated in each cycle of inevitable world dissolution and re-evolution. In the Khevadda Sutta Mahâ Brahmâ is forced to admit to an inquiring monk that he is unable to answer a question that is posed to him, and advises the monk to consult the Buddha. This clearly shows the Brahmâ acknowledges the superiority of the Buddha. This is view that the Buddha is some kind of God figure. In the Theravada tradition the Buddha is regarded as a supremely enlightened human teacher who has come to his last birth in samsâra (the Buddhist cycle of existence). But, Mahayana traditions, which tend to think in terms of transcendental Buddhas, do not directly make a claim for Buddha as God. Thus the Buddha cannot be considered as playing a God-like role in Buddhism. Rather the Buddha is considered as an enlightened father of humanity.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SANKHYA:-

Kapila, the proponent of the Samkhya School, rules out the existence of God. He asserts that the existence of God cannot be proved and that God does not exist. Samkhya argues that if God exists and if God is eternal and unchanging as is widely claimed, then he can not be the cause of the world. A cause has to be active and changing. However some of the later commentators of Samkhya seem to bend towards theistic interpretation. The existence of God or supreme being is not directly asserted, nor considered relevant by the Samkhya philosophers. Sāmkhya denies the final cause of Ishvara (God). While Samkhya school of Hinduism considers the Vedas as a reliable source of knowledge, it is an atheistic philosophy according to Paul Deussen and other scholars.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE YOGA:-

A key difference between Samkhya and Yoga schools is, state scholars, that Yoga school of Hinduism accepts a "personal, yet essentially inactive, deity" or "personal god".

Ten sutras in the Yoga Sutras refer to 'the lord' (isvara). These are 1.23-29, 2.1, 2.32 and 2.45. In the sutras preceding 1.23 we are told various ways of gaining a state which could be either absorption (samadhi) or dispassion (vairagya).ⁱ Then 1.23 itself says "isvara pranidhanad va", "or by contemplation on the lord." In other words, this state, whatever it may be, can be gained by isvara pranidhana, which is usually translated as 'devotion to the lord', although, as I shall argue, contemplation on the lord' is probably a more accurate rendering. The remaining nine sutras are:

1.24 The lord is a special self (purusa) untouched by defilement (klesa), the results of action (karma-vipaka) and the store of mental deposits (asaya).

1.25 In him the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed.

1.26 He was also the teacher of the former ones because of his non-boundedness

by time.

1.27 His sound is the pranava (the syllable OM).

1.28 The recitation of that produces an understanding of its meaning.

1.29 Then comes the attainment of inwardmindedness (pratyak-cetanii) and also the removal of obstacles.

2.1 Asceticism, self-study and isvara pranidhana are kriya yoga.

2.32 Purity, contentment, asceticism, self-study and isvara-pranidhana are the disciplines (niyama).

2.45 Through isvara pranidhana comes the attainment of samadhi.

2.1 tells us simply that isvara pranidhana is a part of kriya yoga (active discipline) whilst 2.34 and 2.45 just inform us that is it one of the five disciplines which act as a preparation for the attainment of samadhi. The sutras from book one are more explicit about the nature of isvara. Firstly, we are told that he is a special kind of purusa. What makes him special are the facts that he has always been untouched by defilement, action and its consequences and the store of mental deposits. He was also the teacher of former yogins because he, out of all the purusas, has never been bound by time. His symbol is OM and the recitation of this will enable the reciter to understand the nature of isvara. Furthermore, he is said to be omniscient.ⁱⁱ

It is clear that for Patanjali the isvara can help the yogin in some way, for he was the teacher of former yogins. But exactly how does isvara help purusas which are in bondage? Mircea Eliade explains it in the following way:

'This divine aid is not the effect of a 'desire' or a 'feeling' - for god (isvara) can have neither desires nor emotions - but of a 'metaphysical sympathy' between isvara and the purusa, a sympathy explained by their structural correspondence ... what is involved then, is ... a sympathy metaphysical in nature, connecting two kindred entities.'ⁱⁱⁱ

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE VAISHESHIKA:-

There is also some indication that the Vaisheshik are not only believe in the authority of Veda and law of karma and though not openly indicate the existence of god yet believe in god. Vaisheshik further believes God is a

mover that gives rise to different padarth change in to things. “Kanada himself does not openly refer to God. His aphorism .. “The authority of the Veda is due to its being His (or their) Word”, has been interpreted by the commentators in the sense that the Veda is the Word of God. But the expression “Tadvachana” may also mean that the Veda is the Word of the seers. But all great writers of the Vaishesika and the Nyaya systems, including Prashastapda, Shriodhara and Udayana, are openly theistic and some of them, e.g. Udayana, give classical arguments to prove the existence of God. We cannot, therefore, treat the founder of the Vaishesika as an atheist”, says Chandradhar Sharmanin his book A Critical Survey of Indian Pliosophy. He Further adds, “God as the supervisor and the controller. He is the efficient cause of the world of which the eternal atoms are the material cause. Atoms and souls are co-present and co-eternal with God.”

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NYAY:-

Early Naiyayikas wrote very little about Ishvara (literally, the Supreme Soul). Evidence available so far suggests that early Nyaya scholars were non-theistic or atheists. Later, and over time, Nyaya scholars tried to apply some of their epistemological insights and methodology to the question: does God exist? Some offered arguments against and some in favor.

Arguments that God does not exist :- In Nyayasutra's Book 4, Chapter 1, verses 19-21, postulates God exists, states a consequence, then presents contrary evidence, and from contradiction concludes that the postulate must be invalid.

The Lord is the cause, since we see that human action lacks results.

This is not so since, as a matter of fact, no result is accomplished without human action.

Since this is efficacious, the reason lacks force.

—Nyaya Sutra, *IV.1.19 - IV.1.21*

A literal interpretation of the three verses suggests that Nyaya school rejected the need for a God for the efficacy of human activity. Since

human action and results do not require assumption or need of the existence of God, sutra IV.1.21 is seen as a criticism of the "existence of God and theism postulate". The context of the above verses includes various efficient causes. Nyayasutra verses IV.1.22 to IV.1.24, for example, examine the hypothesis that "random chance" explains the world, after these Indian scholars had rejected God as the efficient cause.

Arguments that God exists

U dayana's Nyayakusumanjali gave the following nine arguments to prove the existence of creative God:

Kāryāt (lit. "from effect"): The world is an effect, all effects have efficient cause, hence the world must have an efficient cause. That efficient cause is God.

Āyojanāt (lit., from combination): Atoms are inactive. To form a substance, they must combine. To combine, they must move. Nothing moves without intelligence and source of motion. Since we perceive substance, some intelligent source must have moved the inactive atoms. That intelligent source is God.

Dhṛtyādēḥ (lit., from support): Something sustains this world. Something destroys this world. Unintelligent Adrsta (unseen principles of nature) cannot do this. We must infer that something intelligent is behind. That is God.

Padāt (lit., from word): Each word has meaning and represents an object. This representational power of words has a cause. That cause is God.

Pratyayataḥ (lit, from faith): Vedas are infallible. Human beings are fallible. Infallible Vedas cannot have been authored by fallible human beings. Someone authored the infallible Vedas. That author is God.

Shrutēḥ (lit., from scriptures): The infallible Vedas testify to the existence of God. Thus God exists.

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Vākyāt (lit., from precepts): Vedas deal with moral laws, the rights and the wrongs. These are divine. Divine injunctions and prohibitions can only come from a divine creator of laws. That divine creator is God.

Samkhyāviśeṣāt (lit., from the specialty of numbers): By rules of perception, only number "one" can ever be directly perceived. All other numbers other than one, are inferences and concepts created by consciousness. When man is born, his mind is incapable of inferences and concepts. He develops consciousness as he develops. The consciousness development is self evident and proven because of man's ability with perfect numerical conception. This ability to conceive numerically perfect concepts must depend on something. That something is divine consciousness. So God must exist.

Adṛṣṭāt (lit., from the unforeseen): Everybody reaps the fruits of his own actions. Merits and demerits accrue from his own actions. An Unseen Power keeps a balance sheet of the merit and demerit. But since this Unseen Power is Unintelligent, it needs intelligent guidance to work. That intelligent guide is God.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIMANSA.:-

Poorva Mimansa consist of both atheistic and theistic doctrines and not deeply interested in the existence of god. J.N. Sinha says” it believes in the reality of the external world, the reality of the individual souls (Atman) and the law of karma. It believes in transmigration heaven and hell and liberation. It believes in many god who are worshiped through sacrifices. It rejects the notion of one god, who creates preserves and dissolved the world. It frankly advocates Atticism and emphasizes the importance of ritualism”. J.N. sinha ,Indian philosophy, page 764. Mīmāṃsā theorists decided that the evidence allegedly proving the existence of God was insufficient. They argue that there was no need to postulate a maker for the world, just as there was no need for an author

to compose the Vedas or a God to validate the rituals. Mīmāṃsā argues that the Gods named in the Vedas have no existence apart from the mantras that speak their names. To that regard, the power of the mantras is what is seen as the power of Gods.

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ADVAIT:-

Shankara also believes that God is Brahman, so far as Brahman refers to the world of existence. While Brahman itself is without cause or effect, God (*Ishvara*) is the material cause, as well as the operative cause, of the world of existence.

For Shankara, God is the creator of the world and is the ruler of the universe. The universe is an appearance of Brahman. Thus, God is also the supreme being who causes and directs the unfolding of the universe.

Shankara asserts that God (*Saguna-Brahman*) has attributes, but that Brahman (*Nirguna-Brahman*) is without attributes.

In the ultimate sense, for Sankara, the concept of Brahman is the ultimate and last factor for everything. It is featureless in the true sense and inactive in the sense of activity. In essence Jiva and Brahman are one or more so Jiva is temporary and Brahman is the only eternal reality. Sankara has a similar doctrine to this on Isvara, or qualitative Brahman, as he does for the Jiva

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE VISHISTADVAIT:-

Ramanuja was the first of the Vedanta thinkers who made the identification of a personal God with the brahman, or Absolute Reality, of the Upanishads and the Vedanta-sutras the cornerstone of his system. As a personal God, brahman possesses all the good qualities in a perfect degree, and Ramanuja does not tire of mentioning them. He interprets the

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relationship between the unitary and infinite *brahman* and the plural and finite world in a novel way, which, however, has some support in the Upanishads. For him the relation between the infinite and the finite is like that between the soul and the body. Hence non-duality is maintained, while differences can still be stated. Soul and matter are totally dependent on God for their existence, as is the body on the soul.

God has two modes of being, as cause and as product. As cause, he is in his essence qualified only by his perfections; as product, he has as his body the souls and the phenomenal world. There is a pulsating rhythm in these periods of creation and absorption. For Ramanuja, release is not a negative separation from transmigration, or series of rebirths, but, rather, the joy of the contemplation of God. This joy is attained by a life of exclusive devotion (bhakti) to God, singing his praise, performing adulatory acts in temple and private worship, and constantly dwelling on his perfections. God will return his grace, which will assist the devotee in gaining release.

Check Your Progress V

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

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

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5.5 LETS SUM UP

There are innumerable self exists in the universe. Since the self possesses consciousness, it is trapped by the law of karma. Hence, suffering and pain are the obvious phenomenon. To get rid from all sorts of sufferings the self seeks liberation. Liberation can be achieved when there will be cessation of law of karma. **God:** God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He regulates the earth, solar systems and the movements of planets and becomes identified as an omnipresent and omniscience being in the cosmos. According to Nyayikas, the world is created out of the four

eternal atoms as its material cause. These are; space, time, mind and soul. God is being the efficient cause of universe is responsible for its maintenance, and destruction. Thus God, as the first efficient cause of the universal forces, is the creator of the world. God is one, infinite, eternal, and the universe of space and time, of mind and soul, does not limit him. God is said to possess six perfections: infinite glory, absolute sovereignty, unqualified virtue, supreme beauty, perfect knowledge, and complete detachment. The Nyaya philosophy offers an argument to establish the existence of God known as causal argument. On the line of this argument, it is stated that the entire universe is constituted of enumerable elements both subtle and gross. A human being by possessing limited knowledge cannot be the creator of the vast universe. This implies the creator is one who is beyond space and time, must be eternal and devoid of all limitations. And, all these features are therein Supreme Being or God. Hence, God is the creator or designer of the universe.

5.6 KEY WORDS

Dharma : The term ‘dharma’ (Sanskrit: *dharma*, Pa?i *dhamma*), is an

Indian spiritual and religious term, that means one’s righteous duty or any virtuous path. It literally translates as *that which upholds or supports*. In Indian languages it contextually implies one’s religion. **Dogma:** Dogma is the established belief or doctrine held by a religion, ideology or any kind of organization: it is authoritative and not to be disputed, doubted or diverged from.

Ritualism : Ritualism refers to an overemphasis on the rituals and liturgica ceremonies of a religion.

5.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain concept of God according to mimamsa philosophy?
2. Distinguish between the concept of nyaya philosophy and sankhaya philosophy on God?
3. Describe the concept of yoga philosophy.
4. Give view on vaiseshika school on concept of God.
5. Give breif view of God according to indian philosophy.

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5.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress

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

UNIT 6 : GOD AND BHAKTI MOVEMENT

STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 History of Bhakti Movement
- 6.3 Torch Bearers of Bhakti Movement in Medieval Period
- 6.4 Ethical Implications and Philosophical Basis of Bhakti Movement
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Key Words
- 6.7 Questions for review
- 6.8 Suggested Reading and References
- 6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

Bhakti Movement brought about revolutionary changes in moral, social, political perspectives of people of India. It is important to realize that Bhakti Movement unfolded the uniformities existing among the various religions. Once again, it is important to note that it played a significant role against the divisive and destructive forces in society. Bhakti Movement through Bhakti Yoga asserted itself as a method / pathway, to God on par with Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. The objectives of this unit are:

- To make the pupil acquire knowledge about Bhakti Movement in ancient and medieval India.
- To enable the pupil understand the aims and services of the leaders of the movement.
- To motivate the pupil appreciate the work of the leaders of the Bhakti Movement.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root “**Bhaj**” means to serve. Dharma means the natural internal characteristics of a thing. The meaning of “movement” is the practice that influences a large section of a society.

In the early beginning, the word Bhakti is first mentioned in Rig-Veda as worship to Indra and Surya Devata. It is also noted in the famous discourse on Bhakti by Narad in Narad Bhakti Sutra. Similarly it also appears in Vishnu-sookta.

Later, Upanishads emphasized Para Bhakti. Bhakti and Upasana of Vishnu, Shiv, Roodra, Narayan, Surya is also indicated in Upanishad. The great epic Ramayana emphasized Pitra Bhakti and Guru Bhakti.

Principles of Bhakti Movement

The main principles of Bhakti movement are:

- 1) God is one,
- 1) To worship God man should serve humanity,
- 1) All men are equal,
- 1) Worshipping God with devotion is better than performing religious ceremonies and going on pilgrimages,
- 1) Caste distinctions and superstitious practices are to be given up. The Hindu saints of the Bhakti Movement and the Muslim saints of the Sufi movement became more liberal in their outlook. They wanted to get rid of the evils which had crept into their religions. There were a number of such saints from the 8th to 16th century A.D.

6.2 HISTORY OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT (GOD)

The term bhakti is defined as “devotion” or passionate love for the Divine. Moksha or liberation from rebirth was not in the following of rules, regulations or societal ordering, but it was through simple devotion to the Divine. Within the movement at large, useful distinctions have been made by contemporary scholars between those poet saints who composed verses extolling God with attributes or form, namely, “saguna” bhaktas, and, Those extolling God without and beyond all attributes or form, “nirguna.”

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As mentioned above, the feeling of Bhakti or devotion can be traced back to the Rig Veda. It is the very first hymn of Rig Veda, which gives expression to a feeling of intimacy with the highest God. In the Katha Upanishad it is said that the divine help, which is the reward to Bhakti, is necessary before one can be saved. The Sveta – Svatara Upanishad speaks of the highest devotion to God. Panini refers to the object of devotion in the Astadhyayi. The earliest God connected with Bhakti is Vishnu – Krishna. In the Bhagwad Gita there is emphasis on Love and devotion to God. The attitude of love to the supreme God continued to be recommended in the Bhagwat Purana.

Causes for the birth of Bhakti Movement

Prior to the coming of Islam to India, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism were the dominant religions. Hinduism lost its simplicity. Many philosophical schools appeared. Two different sects, i.e., **Vaishnavism** and **Saivism** also appeared within Hinduism. In course of time **Sakti** worship also came into existence. Common people were confused on the way of worshipping God. When **Islam** came to India, the Hindus observed many ceremonies and worshipped many Gods and Goddesses. There were all sorts of superstitious beliefs among them. Their religion had become complex in nature. Added to these, the caste system, untouchability, blind worshipping and inequality in society caused dissensions among different sections of the people. On the other hand Islam preached unity of God and brotherhood of man. It emphasized monotheism. It attacked idol worship. It preached equality of man before God.

The oppressed common people and the people branded as low castes were naturally attracted towards Islam. It only increased the rivalry among religions.

Fanaticism, bigotry, and religious intolerance began to raise their heads. It was to remove such evils religious leaders appeared in different parts of India. They preached **pure devotion called Bhakti** to attain God.

Origin of the Bhakti Movement

Bhakti means personal devotion to God. It stresses the Union of the

individual with God. Bhakti movement originated in South India between the 7th and the 12th centuries A.D. The **Nayanmars**, who worshipped Siva, and the **Alwars**, who worshipped Vishnu, preached the idea of Bhakti. They carried their message of love and devotion to various parts of South India through the medium of the local language. They preached among common people. It made some of the followers of the Vedic faith to revive the old Vedic religion. Saints like **Sankara**, **Ramanuja** and **Madhwa** gave their concepts of God and the individual soul.

Bhakti Movement in the North

The Bhakti movement in North India gained momentum due to the Muslim conquest. The saints of the Bhakti Movement were men and women of humble origin. They came from all castes and classes. They had visited from place to place singing devotional songs. They had also preached the Unity of God and brotherhood of man. They had stressed tolerance among various religious groups. Their preaching was simple.

The Hindu tradition has generally been divided into a number of important historical and religious periods through its long development. The formative time frame from 2500—400 B.C.E. is highlighted by what are known as the sacred texts, the Vedas, and a nomadic people known as the Indo-Aryans; this period is classified as the Vedic Period. Central to the Vedas was the visionary figure of the rishi, or seer, one who was able to communicate with and about the various gods of the Vedic pantheon through a complex system of rituals that could only be conducted by an increasingly powerful priesthood. Liberation, or moksha, was to be found through the precise performance of ritual.

The Epic and Classical Periods, from 400 B.C.E.—600 C.E. are so named because of their focus on important texts, namely, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These epics are concerned with heroes and heroic battles, kings, queens and ideal roles of individuals. Also of central importance to this time frame were Law Books concerned with the ideal nature of society. Social order and stability

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were to be found in a hierarchical ordering of people as well as specific roles assigned to each individual's life stage (ashrama) and position in society (varna) or caste.

On the upper rung of this system was the Brahmin priesthood, followed by Kshatriyas (warriors) and Vaishyas (merchants), also known as twice-born classes. Only these groups were enabled to take part in an initiation ceremony known as the "sacred thread," study the Vedas and take part in Vedic rituals. Beneath these three groups were the Shudras, those who were servants to the upper three varnas. Underneath this rung came another subsection, the Untouchables, those whose occupations were so polluting that they did not even qualify to fit within an ordered society. The way to liberation from rebirth or moksha was in a true understanding of dharma, recognition and maintenance of the good of the social order, as exemplified and regulated by the Epics and Law Books.

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Nature of Bhakti Movement

Generally speaking the religious movement of this period lies between 1300 – 1550 A.D. It was non ritualistic and mainly based on Bhakti. It emphasized a religion or faith, which was essentially Hindu but reflected the vigorous monotheism of Islam. All Bhakti cults are essentially monotheistic. It is immaterial whether he is called Shiva, Krishna or Devi. They all symbolize the One and the Eternal. It is the religion, philosophy and social thinking that were created during this revival, which enabled Hinduism to reassert itself in the following period. In the religious life of India the glory of period is most resplendent. Ramanand, Kabir, Mira, and Vallabhacharya in the north, Chaitanya in Bengal, Madhava, Vedanta Desika and numerous others in the south give to the religious life of the period a vitality that Hinduism never seems to have enjoyed before.

Characteristics of Bhakti Movement

One chief characteristic of the Bhakti Movement can be mentioned as

belief in One God. Devotee could worship God by love and devotion. The second characteristic of Bhakti Movement was that there was no need to worship Idols or to perform elaborate rituals for seeking his grace. The third feature on which the Bhakti Saints laid stress was the equality of all castes. There was no distinction of high or low as far as devotion to God was concerned. The fourth feature was the emphasis, which these saints laid on the Hindu – Muslim Unity. According, to these saints all men, irrespective of their religion are equal in the eyes of the God.

The saints preached in the language of the common people. They did not use Sanskrit, which was the language of the cultured few. These saints laid stress on purity of heart and practice of virtues like Truth, Honesty, Kindness and Charity. According to these saints, only virtuous man could realize God. These saints considered God as Omnipresent and Omnipotent. Even a householder could realize God by love and devotion. Some regarded God as formless or Nirguna while others considered him as having different forms or Saguna.

The basic principles of Bhakti Movement namely love and devotion to one personal God and the Unity of God were mainly Hindu. But as a result of contact with Islam, more emphasis was laid on these principles than performance of outward rituals such as **Yjnas**, fasts, going to sacred places, bathing in the Ganges or worship of images.

The movement had two main objects in view. One was to reform Hindu religion to enable it withstand the onslaught of Islamic propaganda. And the second was to bring about a compromise between Hinduism and Islam.

FACTORS THAT HELPED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

There were a number of factors which contributed to the rise and growth of the Bhakti Movement during the Medieval Period. The first important factor can be presumed as the persecution of Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert them to Islam and imposed Jaziya if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam. This led to the very strong reactions of Hindus leading to preservation of their religion through Bhakti Movement. Secondly, the ill-treatment of the lower classes in

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Hindu society by the persons of upper castes, the people of the lower caste had to suffer injustice and cruelties. So the teachings of the Bhakti saints who preached equality of castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned appealed to the people of lower castes. Thirdly, the elaborate rituals and rigor in religion was not liked by common man. The Bhakti saints preached the path of devotion and discarded all rituals hence it appealed to the common man.

Next, was the enthusiasm and the inspiration of the Bhakti saints. They tried to remove the evils of Hindu society and gave it a new vigor and vitality. Last, factor was the inner vitality of the Hindu religion that resulted in an intellectual and a moral revival of Hinduism. This Hinduism affected every aspect of thought and generated new moral forces, which helped to revitalize Hindu life and gave it the dynamism. In the sphere of religion and normal thinking in law, in literature and even in political ideals, a new life came into being in India by the middle of the 16th century.

Check Your Progress I

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

- What do you understand by Bhakti Movement?

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- Explain the factors contributing towards development of Bhakti Movement.

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6.3 TORCH BEARERS OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Torch Bearers of Bhakti Movement

Ramanuja

Ramanuja was one of the earliest reformers. Born in the South, he made a pilgrimage to some of the holy places in Northern India. He considered God as an Ocean of Love and beauty. His teachings were based on the **Upanishads** and **Bhagwad Gita**. Whatever he taught, he had taught in the language of the common man. Soon a large number of people became his followers. **Ramanand** was his disciple. He took his message to Northern parts of India.

Ramananda

Ramananda was the first reformer to preach in Hindi, the main language spoken by the people of the North. He was educated at Benaras. He preached that there is nothing high or low. All men are equal in the eyes of God. He was an ardent worshipper of Rama. He welcomed people of all castes and status to follow his teachings. He had twelve chief disciples. One of them was a barber, another was a weaver, the third one was a cobbler and the other was the famous saint **Kabir** and the fifth one was a woman named **Padmavathi**. He considered God as a loving father. He lived in the 14th century A.D.

Kabir

Kabir was an ardent disciple of Ramananda. It is said that he was the son of a Brahmin widow who had left him near a tank at Varanasi. A **Muslim** couple **Niru** and his wife who were weavers brought up the child. Later he became a weaver but he was attracted by the teachings of Swami Ramananda. He wanted unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. He preached that both the Hindus and the Muslims are the children of a single God. He had no faith in idol worship, religious rituals and ceremonies. He taught that **Allah** and **Eswar**, **Ram** and **Rahim** are one and the same. They are present everywhere. The devotees of Kabir were known as

Kabir Panthis. Thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims became Kabir's followers. He probably lived in the fifteenth century A.D.

Namdeva

Namdeva was a waterman by birth. He hailed from Maharashtra. He composed beautiful hymns in Marathi. They are full of intense devotion to God. He worshipped Vishnu in the form of Lord Vithoba. Some of his verses are included in the **Guru Granth Sahib**, the holy book of the Sikhs. A large number of people from different Castes became his followers.

Guru Nanak. (A.D.1469 -A.D.1538)

Guru Nanak was the founder of the Sikh religion. From his childhood, he did not show any interest in worldly affairs. At the age of 29, he left his home and became a **Sadhu**. He went to **Mecca** and **Medina**. He had travelled far and wide to spread his teachings. Guru Nanak had finally settled at Karthpur. He laid emphasis on pure and simple living. He preached the Unity of God and condemned idolatry. He was against the caste system. Guru Nanak's followers are called the Sikhs. He started the **Langer** or the common kitchen, where people belonging to all castes or religions could have their meals together.

Nanak's teachings were in the form of verses. They were collected in a book called the **Adi Granth**. Later Adi Grantham was written in a script called **Gurmukhi**. The holy book of the Sikhs is popularly known as '**Grantha Sahib**'. It contains verses from Kabir, Namdeva and other Bhakti and Sufi saints.

Chaitanya (A.D.1485 - A.D.1533)

Chaitanya, a great devotee of **Lord Krishna**, was a saint from Bengal. From his very childhood, he had showed great interest in education and studied Sanskrit. He married the daughter of a Saintly person. Later at the age of 24, he renounced the worldly life and became a sanyasin. He travelled all over the Deccan, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. His followers regarded him as an incarnation of **Lord Vishnu**. He helped the old and the needy. He was opposed to the inequalities of the caste system. He

emphasized the need for tolerance, humanity and love. He spread the message of Bhakti in Bengal. He popularised 'Sankritan' or public singing of God's name. His songs are still very popular in Bengal. He was addressed 'Mahaprabhu' by his followers.

Tulsi Das

Goswamy Tulsidas was a devotee of Rama. His work gives the story of Rama in Hindi. He was the foremost in popularizing Rama cult. His other works in Hindi are **Janaki Mangal** and **Parvathi Mangal**. In his writings he insists the duty of a son to his parent, duty of a student to his teacher and duty of a king to his people.

Guru Ramdas

He was a famous teacher. He was born in A.D. 1608. Chatrapati Shivaji, the great Maratha ruler, was a follower of Ramdas. He stressed upon the equality of all men before God. He said that anyone could attain God's favour by means of Bhakti. Guru Ramdas was not merely a religious preacher but also a Nation Builder.

Tukaram: was a saint who lived in Maharashtra. He composed a large number of verses called **Abhangas** or devotional songs in praise of Panduranga or Krishna. He believed in one God who was kind, merciful and protective. He wrote all his **abhangas** in Marathi.

Jnaneshwar: He is one of the greatest saints of Maharashtra. He worshipped Vishnu in the form of Vithoba or Krishna. At the age of fourteen, he translated the **Bhagawad Gita** into the Marathi language. This book is called **Jnaneshwari**.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA

Nayanmars

In South India, the **Nayanmars** and **Alwars** were the noted saints of the Bhakti movement. The Nayanmars, the devotees of Siva, were **sixty three** in number. The most famous among them were **Appar**,

Sundarar, Thirugnana Sambandar and Manickavachakar. These saints composed many verses in praise of Lord Siva. A saint named **Nambiandar Nambi** collected the devotional songs of Nayanmars. Appar, Sundarar and Thirugnana Sambandar composed the **Thevaram** hymns. Manickvachakar's songs are known as **Tiruvachakam. Periyapuranam**, written by **Sekhizhar**, tells us the life stories of the Nayanmars.

Alvars

The **Alvars** were the worshippers of **Lord Vishnu** who were twelve in number. Among them **Nammalwar, Tirumangai Alwar, Andal** and **Perialwar** were famous. The songs of the Alvars were compiled in a book called **Nalayira Divya Prabandham** by **Nadamuni**. The devotional songs of **Andal** is called **Thiruppavai**.

Basava

Basava lived in Karnataka. He founded the **Virasaiva** or **Lingayat** sect. According to Basava, Siva was the supreme God. Basava opposed child marriage and idol worship.

Women Torch Bearers

Many of the bhakti poet-saints rejected asceticism as the crucial means toward liberation; some bhaktas were instead householders. As well, themes of universalism, a general rejection of institutionalized religion, and a central focus on inner devotion laid the groundwork for more egalitarian attitudes toward women and lower caste devotees.

Women and shudras, both at the bottom of the traditional hierarchy ordering society, became the examples of true humility and devotion. Female poet-saints also played a significant role in the bhakti movement at large. Nonetheless, many of these women had to struggle for acceptance within the largely male dominated movement. Only through demonstrations of their utter devotion to the Divine, their outstanding poetry and stubborn insistence of their spiritual equality with their contemporaries were these women reluctantly acknowledged and accepted within their ranks. Their struggle attests to the strength of

patriarchal values within both society and within religious and social movements attempting to pave the way for more egalitarian access to the Divine.

The imagery of bhakti poetry is grounded in the everyday, familiar language of ordinary people. Women bhaktas wrote of the obstacles of home, family tensions, the absent husband, meaningless household chores, and restrictions of married life, including their status as married women. In many cases, they rejected traditional women's roles and societal norms by leaving husbands and homes altogether, choosing to become wandering bhaktas; in some instances they formed communities with other poet-saints. Their new focus was utter devotion and worship of their Divine Husbands.

Caste status and even masculinity were understood as barriers to liberation, in essence a rejection of the hierarchy laid out by the Law Books of the Classical Period. Male bhaktas often took on the female voice calling to her Beloved, utterly submissive to His desires. However, while male bhaktas could engage in this role playing on a temporary basis, returning at will to their privileged social status as males, women bhaktas faced overwhelming challenges through their rejection of societal norms and values, without having the ability to revert back to their normative roles as wives, mothers and in some cases, the privileges of their original high caste status.

While it is tempting to see women's participation within the bhakti movement as a revolt against the patriarchal norms of the time, there is little evidence to support this perspective. Injustices and the patriarchal order itself were not a major focus of these poet-saints. Women bhaktas were simply individuals attempting to lead lives of devotion. Staying largely within the patriarchal ideology that upheld the chaste and dutiful wife as ideal, these women transferred the object of their devotion and their duties as the "lovers" or "wives" to their Divine Lover or Husband. Nonetheless, that their poetry became an integral aspect of the bhakti movement at large is highly significant and inspirational for many who look to these extraordinary women as ideal examples of lives intoxicated by love for the Divine. Further, it would appear that with the movement's

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northward advancement (15th through 17th centuries), its radical edge as it pertained to women's inclusion, was tempered. Greater numbers of women took part in the movement's earlier development (6th to 13th centuries); it is largely male bhaktas and saints that are today perceived as the spokespersons for the movement in its later manifestations. The poetry of women bhaktas from this latter time period is generally not indicative of a rejection of societal norms in terms of leaving family and homes in pursuit of divine love. Instead, some of the later poet-saints stayed within the confines of the household while expounding on their souls' journeys, their eternal love for the Divine, as well as their never-ending search for truth.

Female Bhaktas

The poets outlined below represent a panorama of female poet-saints within the Bhakti movement. Some were extraordinarily radical in their rejection of social norms and values, leaving husbands, families, and society behind in order to extol their love for God. Others attempted to fit into more traditional roles in society by maintaining their responsibilities as wives and mothers. All wrote exquisite poetry that has been passed on through bards and singers throughout India.

Akkamahadevi, also known as **Akka** or **Mahadevi** was a bhakta from the southern region of Karnataka and devotee of Shiva in the 12th century C.E. Legends tell of her wandering naked in search of her Divine Lover; her poetry, or *vacanas* tells of her frustration with societal norms and roles that restricted her. They also bear witness to her intense, all-encompassing love for Shiva, whom she addresses as Chennamallikarjuna. Through Shiva and Shiva alone is her love fulfilled; through separation from her "lord White as jasmine" is her heart broken.

Janabai was born around the 13th century in Maharashtra in a low caste sudra family. As a young girl she was sent to work in the upper-caste family of Namdev, one of the most revered of the bhakti poet saints. While within this household, she continued to serve Namdev, both as a servant and as his devotee. Janabai wrote over

three hundred poems focusing on domestic chores and the restrictions facing her as a low caste woman.

Mirabai, or **Mira** is said to have been born into a ruling Rajput family. Mirabai's poetry tells of her vision of Lord Krishna when she was a child; from that point on Mira vowed that she would forever be his bride. Despite her wishes she was married into another princely family at a young age. Yet the numerous legends surrounding Mira tell of an undying devotion toward Krishna, her true husband. Central to these accounts are Mirabai's struggles within the family she had been married into, including unsuccessful attempts made by her jealous husband to kill her. Others focus on her sisters-in-law's efforts to obstruct Mirabai in her desires to join the company of wandering saints, actions deemed utterly improper for a woman of her high-caste status. Eventually, Mirabai left her husband and family in pilgrimage to various places associated with "her Dark Lord," including Brindavan, Krishna's holy city. There she was initially rejected because she was a woman. Yet Mirabai's reputation of devotion, piety, and intellectual astuteness eventually led to her inclusion within the community of the saints of Brindavan.

Mirabai's poetry portrays a unique relationship with Krishna; in it she is not only the devoted bride of Krishna, but Krishna is ardent in his pursuit of Mira. Because of Mirabai's singular focus and intense devotion of her Husband, the "lifter of the mountain," she can be perceived as simply upholding the "wifely" duties of women and patriarchal norms in general. On the other hand, she remains for many a symbol of resistance of social order of the day.

Bahinabai or **Bahina** was a poet-saint from 17th century Maharashtra, writing in the form of abangas, women's songs that accompanied their labours, especially in the fields. Her writings are particularly autobiographical, recounting her childhood, puberty and married life. Despite having obvious conflicts with her husband due to her overarching and ecstatic love for her Divine Lover in the form of Lord Vithoba,

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another name for Krishna, she took her role as wife and responsibilities to her earthly husband seriously. Her husband was also critical of her allegiance to the Bhakti poet-saint Tukaram. Nonetheless, her poetry reflects an attitude of duty and respectful empathy toward both her marriage and her spouse. This becomes clear through her writings on the responsibilities of women toward their husbands. Though highly unusual, it is believed that Bahinabai received some classical training from her father, a Brahmin scribe. Her poetry recounts visions she experiences of the low-caste poet-saint Tukaram; despite her high caste status, she became his devotee, thus choosing the path of devotion over brahmanical norms of ritual purity.

Check Your Progress II

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

- Bring out the contribution of Saint Kabir and Saint Tukaram to Bhakti Movement.

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- Explain the role played by women saints in Bhakti Movement.

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6.4 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

With reference to the early beginning of Bhakti Movement in southern India, on the philosophical side the most important fact is the

new interpretation of the ancient philosophical texts given by Ramanuja, who in the eleventh century provided an intellectual foundation for bhakti, which the monistic philosophy had done so much to undermine. It was this influence which was most powerful in what has been called the Hindu Reformation, and in the ‘ Four Churches of the Reformation we have evidence of the new strength and vitality which had been imparted to the spirit of bhakti. These Churches are known respectively as

(1) the Sri-sampradaya of Ramanuja, (2) the Brahma-sampradaya of Madhva,

(3) the Rudra-sampradaya of Vishnuswamin, and (4) the Sanakadi-sampradaya of Nimbarka. These Churches are based on different theological foundations. The first held a qualified monism—visishtadvaita, the second a dualism on the lines of the Samkhya-Yoga, the third a pure monism—suddhadvaita, and the fourth a philosophy which is a curious blend of monism and pluralism. Yet all agree on certain points. They hold to the belief in God as in some way personal. They also agree in holding that the soul is essentially personal and possessed of inalienable individuality. It is also immortal, finding its true being not in absorption in the Supreme, but in a relation with him of inextinguishable love. All agree accordingly in rejecting the doctrine of Maya.

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar has well summarized what is to be said regarding the relations of the various Vaishnava systems to each other in the following paragraph:

The points of contact between these various Vaishnava systems are that their spiritual elements are essentially derived from the Bhagavadgita, that Vasudeva as the name of the Supreme Being, stands in the background of all, and that spiritual monism and world-illusion are denounced by them equally. The differences arise from the varied importance that they attach to the different spiritual doctrines; the prominence that they give to one or other of the three

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elements that were mingled with Vasudevism ; the metaphysical theory that they set up; and the ceremonial that they impose upon their followers. The Bhagavadgita was supplemented in later times by the Pancaratra Samhitas and the Puranas such as the Vishnu and the Bhagavata, and other later works of that description. These occasionally elucidated some of the essential doctrines, laid down the ceremonial, and brought together a vast mass of legendary matter to magnify the importance of their special teachings and render them attractive.

The Bhaktiratnavali, a work, dating from about A. D. 1400, which consists of extracts from the Bha-gavata Purana, shows how this influence wrought in one of its lines. It commends the bhakti-marga as the only way of deliverance. Neither charity, nor asceticism, nor sacrifices, nor purificatory rites, nor penances and religious vows please him. He is pleased with pure devotion. Everything else is futile, mere mockery.

Effects of Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti movement had brought the Hindus and the Muslims closer to each other. The equality concept preached by the leaders reduced the rigidity of the caste system to a certain extent. The suppressed people gained a feeling of self-respect. The reformers preached in local languages. It led to the development of Vernacular literature. They composed hymns and songs in the languages spoken by the people. Therefore there was a remarkable growth of literature in all the languages. A new language Urdu, a mixture of Persian and Hindi, was developed. The Bhakti movement freed the common people from the tyranny of the priests. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It encouraged the spirit of toleration. The gap between the Hindus and the Muslims was reduced. They began to live amicably together. It emphasized the value of a pure life of charity and devotion. Finally, it improved the moral and spiritual ways of life of the medieval society. It provided an example for the future generation to live with the spirit of toleration.

Check Your Progress III

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

- Mention some ethical implications of Bhakti Movement.

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- Explain the effects of Bhakti Movement

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6.5 LET US SUM UP

The social significance of Bhakti Movement was remarkable. It also attempted to do away with all the distinctions of caste and creed. It is well known fact that in Maharashtra saints like Jnanesvara, Eknath, Tukaram and others tried to overcome the evils which were meted out to women and lower caste people.

Bhakti Movement brought about a kind of “reformation” in India with reference to the attitude of people belonging to variety of religions. It also led to respecting other religions.

Following a religion and achieving salvation was made more simple for all down trodden people. The divisive and destructive forces from various religions were also checked. This led to the change in the mind sets of Indian people. To certain extent it contributed towards strengthening of spirituality of people belonging to various religions.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Bhakti : The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root
“Bhaj”

means to serve. The term bhakti is defined as
“devotion” or passionate love for the Divine.

Alvars : The **Alvars** were the worshippers of **Lord**
Vishnu who

were twelve in number

6.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain bhakti movement.
2. explain Ethical implication of Bhakti movement.
3. Explain Philosophical basis of bhakti movement.
4. explain bhakti movement in south india.
5. Impact of bhakti movement.

6.8 SUGGESED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The term Bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root “**Bhaj**” means to serve. Dharma means the natural internal characteristics of a thing. The meaning of “movement” is the practice that influences a large section of a society. In the early beginning, the word Bhakti is first mentioned in Rig-Veda as worship to Indra and Surya Devata. It is also noted in the famous discourse on Bhakti by Narad in Narad Bhakti Sutra. Similarly it also appears in Vishnu-sookta.

- 1) There were a number of factors which contributed to the rise and growth of the Bhakti Movement during the Medieval Period. The first important factor can be presumed as the persecution of Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert them to Islam and imposed Jaziya if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam. This led to the very strong reactions of Hindus leading to preservation of their religion through Bhakti Movement. Secondly, the ill-treatment of the lower classes in Hindu society by the persons of upper castes, the people of the lower caste had to suffer injustice and cruelties. so the teachings of the Bhakti saints who preached equality of castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned appealed to the people of lower castes. Thirdly, the elaborate rituals and rigor in religion was not liked by common man. The Bhakti saints preached the path of devotion and discarded all rituals hence it appealed to the common man.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Kabir was an ardent disciple of Ramananda. It is said that he was the son of a Brahmin widow who had left him near a tank at Varanasi. A

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Muslim couple **Niru** and his wife who were weavers brought up the child. Later he became a weaver but he was attracted by the teachings of Swami Ramananda. He wanted unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. He preached that both the Hindus and the Muslims are the children of a single God. He had no faith in idol worship, religious rituals and ceremonies. He taught that **Allah** and **Eswar**, **Ram** and **Rahim** are one and the same. They are present everywhere. The devotees of Kabir were known as **Kabir Panthis**. Thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims became Kabir's followers. He probably lived in the fifteenth century A.D. **Tukaram** : was a saint who lived in Maharashtra. He composed a large number of verses called **Abhangas** or devotional songs in praise of Panduranga or Krishna. He believed in one God who was kind, merciful and protective. He wrote all his **abhangas** in Marathi.

- 1) Many of the bhakti poet-saints rejected asceticism as the crucial means toward liberation; some bhaktas were instead householders. As well, themes of universalism, a general rejection of institutionalized religion, and a central focus on inner devotion laid the groundwork for more egalitarian attitudes toward women and lower caste devotees.

Women and shudras, both at the bottom of the traditional hierarchy ordering society, became the examples of true humility and devotion. Female poet-saints also played a significant role in the bhakti movement at large. Nonetheless, many of these women had to struggle for acceptance within the largely male dominated movement. Only through demonstrations of their utter devotion to the Divine, their outstanding poetry and stubborn insistence of their spiritual equality with their contemporaries were these women reluctantly acknowledged and accepted within their ranks. Their struggle attests to the strength of patriarchal values within both society and within religious and social movements attempting to pave the way for more egalitarian access to the Divine.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) With reference to the early beginning of Bhakti Movement in southern India, on the philosophical side the most important fact is the new interpretation of the ancient philosophical texts given by Ramanuja, who in the eleventh century provided an intellectual foundation for bhakti, which the monistic philosophy had done so much to undermine. It was this influence which was most powerful in what has been called the Hindu Reformation, and in the ‘ Four Churches of the Reformation we have evidence of the new strength and vitality which had been imparted to the spirit of bhakti. These Churches are known respectively as (1) the Sri-sampradaya of Ramanuja, (2) the Brahma-sampradaya of Madhva, (3) the Rudra-sampradaya of Vishnuswamin, and (4) the Sanakadi-sampradaya of Nimbarka. These Churches are based on different theological foundations. The first held a qualified monism—visishtadvaita, the second a dualism on the lines of the Samkhya-Yoga, the third a pure monism—suddhadvaita, and the fourth a philosophy which is a curious blend of monism and pluralism. Yet all agree on certain points. They hold to the belief in God as in some way personal. They also agree in holding that the soul is essentially personal and possessed of inalienable individuality. It is also immortal, finding its true being not in absorption in the Supreme, but in a relation with him of inextinguishable love. All agree accordingly in rejecting the doctrine of Maya.

- 2) The Bhakti movement had brought the Hindus and the Muslims closer to each other. The equality concept preached by the leaders reduced the rigidity of the caste system to a certain extent. The suppressed people gained a feeling of self-respect. The reformers preached in local languages. It led to the development of Vernacular literature. They composed hymns and songs in the languages spoken by the people. Therefore there was a remarkable growth of literature in all the languages. A new language Urdu, a mixture of Persian and Hindi, was developed.

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The Bhakti movement freed the common people from the tyranny of the priests. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It encouraged the spirit of toleration. The gap between the Hindus and the Muslims was reduced. They began to live amicably together. It emphasised the value of a pure life of charity and devotion. Finally, it improved the moral and spiritual ways of life of the medieval society. It provided an example for the future generation to live with the spirit of toleration.

UNIT-7 RAMANUJA BHAKTI AND LIBERATION

STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Epistemology
- 7.3 Metaphysical Categories
- 7.4 Means to Liberation
- 7.5 Liberation
- 7.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.7 Key Words
- 7.8 Questions for review
- 7.9 Suggested Readings and References
- 7.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

- to appreciate the importance of *Bhakti* and *Prapatti*.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Ramanuja was born (1017 A.D.) to Asuri Keshava Somayaji Deekshitar and Kanthimathi in Perumbadur village, Tamilnadu. From a very young age he displayed extraordinary brilliance and was compassionate towards all. Shortly after being married in his teenage years, and after his father died, Ramanuja and his family moved to the neighboring city of Kanchipuram. He took initiation from Yadavaprakasa, a renowned Advaitic scholar. The historical data states that since Ramanuja emphasised on *bhakti* as opposed to *jnana* of Advaitic Thought, Yadavaprakasa considered this as a threat to the philosophical school and he decided to kill the young Ramanuja. However, Ramanuja's cousin Govinda Bhatta discovered the plot and helped him escape. According to another version, one of Yadavaprakasa's students plotted to kill Ramanuja but he escaped in the afore-mentioned manner. Later, due to further controversial arguments, Yadavaprakasa asked Ramanuja to leave. Ramanuja's childhood mentor, Kanchipurna, suggested him to meet Kanchipurna's own guru, Yamunacharya. Ramanuja travelled to Srirangam to meet an aging Yamunacharya, a philosopher of the vibrant Vishishtadvaita school of thought. Even before Ramanuja could meet Yamunacharya, he had died. According to the legend of the followers of Ramanuja, three fingers of Yamunacharya's corpse were folded. Ramanuja saw this and understood that Yamunacharya was concerned about three tasks and he vowed to complete them. The three tasks as described by Ramanuja are, firstly to teach the doctrine of surrender to God as the means to liberation, secondly to comment on the *Vedantasutras* in the light of Visistadvaita philosophy that has been transmitted orally to the disciples and thirdly the names of Sage Parashara and Saint Sathakopa be perpetuated. Legend goes that on hearing the vow, the three fingers on the corpse straightened. Ramanuja accepted Yamunacharya as his *Manasika Acharya* and spent six months learning the Philosophy of Visistadvaita as taught by Yamunacharya to his disciple Mahapurna. Ramanuja's wife disparaged Mahapurna's wife as belonging to a lower

community. Mahapurna and his wife had to leave Srirangam. Ramanuja realized that his life as a householder was interfering with his philosophical pursuit and that he and his wife had differing views. He sent her to her parent's house and himself took to a mendicant life. Ramanuja started travelling the land, having philosophical debates with the custodians of various Vishnu temples. Many of them, after losing the debates, became his disciples. Ramanuja standardized the practices of these temples and worked for the development for Srivaishnava school of thought. He began his writings at this time. Ramanuja wrote nine works including his famous commentary on *Vedantasutra*, known as *Sri Bhashya*. The *Vedantasara* and *Vedantadipika* are brief commentaries to the *Vedantasutra*. He wrote an elaborate commentary on the *Bhagavadgita*. The other works are independent treatises elucidating the concepts of Visistadvaita. They are, *Vedarthasangraha*, *Nitya grantha* and three prose works expounding the glory of surrender as means to liberation. Ramanuja gained knowledge from five different people whom he considered as his acharyas, they are, Peria Nambigal, Thirukkotiyyur Nambigal, Thirumalai Nambigal, Tirumalai Aandaan and Thirukachchi Nambigal, from each of whom he learnt various 'secrets' of Vaishnava tradition. It is said that Ramanuja faced threats from some Shaivite Chola rulers and had to move to the Hoysala kingdom of Jain king Bittideva and queen Shantala Devi in Karnataka. The legend states that Ramanuja cured the King's daughter of evil spirits and thereafter the Bittideva converted to Srivaishnavism and took the name Vishnuvardhana meaning "one who grows the sect of Vishnu". However, the queen and many of the ministers remained Jain and the kingdom was known for its religious tolerance. Ramanuja re-established the liturgy in the Cheluvanarayana temple in Melukote and King engaged in building many Vishnu temples. The popularity of Ramanuja spread far and wide and he had huge followers with the desire to attain Narayana. They took to the path of *bhakti* and lead a pious life. At a ripe age of 120, Ramanuja left his mortal coils and attained the abode of the Supreme Being in 1137 A.D. In fact, the followers of Srivaishnava tradition consider Ramanuja as an incarnation of Narayana to re-establish the Vaishnava teaching. Ramanuja's shrine (*sannidhi*) is located inside the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple, Srirangam,

7.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

Perception

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

Theory of Erroneous Perception

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

Inference

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

Testimony

The scriptural statements or testimony is accepted as an independent means of knowledge by Visistadvaitins. The primary scriptures are the *prasthanas traya*, but Visistadvaitins include *Puranas* and *Pancharatra Agamas* as equally authoritative and valid source of knowledge. The *Puranas* are classified as *sattvika*, *rajasa* and *tamasa* and the *sattvika puranas* eulogise the greatness of Vishnu and hence they are taken to be the most authentic source. For Visistadvaitins, the *Pancharatra Agamas* hold a unique position since they are considered to be revealed by *Ishvara*. The theory of verbal knowledge as admitted by Visistadvaita signifies that the words have power to denote their respective meanings along with qualities or difference. The power of the word to denote an object is not

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limited to the quality alone but it indicates the substance also. This sense of denotation is known as ‘*aparyavasana vritti*’. The *cit* and *acit* are inseparable attributes of Brahman and hence every word indicates Brahman immanent in everything. Since all the words denote Brahman primarily, in this sense Brahman is known as ‘*sarva shabda vachya*’ Ramanuja explicates this based on the theory of grammatical coordination.

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

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

- Give an account of Life and works of Ramanujacharya.

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- Explain the epistemological dimension of Visistadvaita School of Thought.

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7.3 METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES

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

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

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

Dravya

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

Visistadvaitin holds a theological philosophy and considers the ultimate reality as the personal God, *Narayana*, etymologically means the ground of *cit* and *acit*. Brahman or the ultimate reality is also referred to as *Vishnu*, etymologically meaning that which pervades everything. Ramanuja derives validity of its theology from the *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. The attributeless Brahman held by Advaitin is rejected as metaphysical abstraction and Brahman is conceived, by Visistadvaitin as God with attributes like possessing a bodily form, with infinite good qualities and glories. The bodily form of Brahman is not subject to *karma* like the *jivas*, but is assumed out of free-will for the benefit of the devotees. The bodily form of Brahman also known as *Ishvara* is eternal with pure quality (*shuddha sattva*). The nature of Brahman is determined by five distinguishing characteristics, namely, Reality (*satyam*), Knowledge (*jnanam*), Infinite (*anantam*), Bliss (*anandam*) and Pure (*amalam*) based on Upanishadic statements. Visistadvaitin admits six attributes in *Ishvara*, viz, knowledge, strength, lordship, virility, power and splendour. God, for Visistadvaitins, manifest in five forms, the

transcendental form (*para*), divine manifestation as *Vasudeva*, *Sankarshana*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* (*Vyuha*), several incarnations (*vibhava*), entering into the substance made by devotees (*archa*) and residing in the hearts of *jivas* (*antaryami*). The purpose of varied manifestations is to destroy evil and re-establish righteousness.

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

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by valid knowledge, and finally, the very concept of the cessation of *maya* is illogical.

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

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

Adravya

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

This relation is possible between two all-pervasive substances like the relation of *Ishvara* and *kala* that is eternal.

Cause of Bondage

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

7.4 MEANS TO LIBERATION

Visistadvaitin maintains that *jiva* is an eternal individual being that remains in its true nature in the state of liberation with infinite knowledge, relishing the eternal bliss of Brahman. Thus, each *jiva* has to realise its highest goal of reaching *Narayana* and put forth effort to attain liberation. The *jivas* are classified, in Visistadvaita, as *baddha* or bound selves, *mukta* or released selves and *nitya* or eternally free ones. Those *jivas* who develop detachment towards ephemeral pleasures is said to be an aspirant of liberation. If the *jiva* knows the nature of five factors then with the grace of the Lord will attain liberation. The five factors (*arthapanchakam*) are nature of soul as subservient to God, nature of God as the ultimate and only reality, nature of goal as to attain the Lord and serve Him, nature of means being total surrender to win the grace of Lord, and the nature of obstacle as ignorance of the above four factors.

The means or *upaya* according to Visistadvaita is *bhakti* or an unceasing meditation with love on the Supreme Being. *Bhakti* is generated with total observance of religious duties as prescribed in the scriptures adhering to the classification of class and stages of life. *Bhakti* is preceded by *karma* and *jnana* and hence *karma* and *jnana* are subsidiary or subservient to *bhakti* and *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita. *Karma yoga* emphasises the performance of actions accepting any kind of consequence, sacrifice, charity and austerity as divine service to the Lord. *Jnana yoga* signifies control of mind and

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senses and dwelling incessantly meditating on the Lord. The subservient means enhances purity of mind and removes sins (*papa*) and thereby promotes *bhakti*. The *bhakti yoga* presupposes certain rigorous disciplines known as the seven means (*sadhana saptaka*) that is quoted by Ramanuja in his *Sri bhasya*. The disciplines are discrimination (*viveka*), wherein the seeker must pay careful attention to the kind of food consumed. It must be free from all kinds of impurities. Maintenance of purity of body is directly proportional to the purity of mind. The second discipline is control of passions (*vimoka*) is the attempt to free oneself from the clutches of desire and anger cycle. The third discipline is practice (*abhyasa*) where a seeker puts forth effort to fix the mind upon the auspicious form of Brahman immanent in everything. This stage is often referred to as *dhyana yoga*. The fourth discipline is performance of five-fold duties (*kriya*). Here, the seeker continues the performance of duties towards God, Elders, Teachers, fellow-beings and the environment of plant and animal kingdom. This is considered as a means of purification of mind. The fifth discipline is development of virtues (*kalyana*). Ramanuja mentions most importantly six virtues to be cultivated by every seeker, they are, truthfulness, integrity, serving others, benevolence, non-violence, non-stealing. The sixth discipline is freedom from weakness (*anvasada*), that is, not allowing oneself overwhelmed with past bitter experiences that weaken the mind. The final discipline mentioned is freedom from excessive goodness (*anuddharsha*). The seeker should not allow oneself involved in too much of goodness or merits which is also an obstacle to *bhakti*. Thus, extreme indulgences should be avoided. Since *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita, it prescribes the process of development of highest devotion or *parabhakti* towards the Lord. Initially, one develops love for the Lord, caused by study of scriptures and by intimate association with other devotees. This is known as general devotion or *samanya bhakti*. Then one should rigorously practice *karma yoga* by accepting any consequence as the offering of the Lord. By gaining God's grace, one reflects upon the true nature of the individual self, is known as *atmanusandhana*. The next stage is the realisation of self as subservient to God, this is known as knowledge of being a part of Lord or *seshatvajnana*. The gradual progress to the next

stage is realisation that the highest attainment is oneness with the Lord and *parabhakti* is that wherein one develops the utmost desire and determination to see the Lord. The concept of *prapatti* or total surrender to the Lord is also considered as the direct means to liberation. In fact, according to Visistadvaita, both *bhakti* and *prapatti* are two sides of a same coin and hence they function as the direct means to attain the feet of the Lord. These two means are however, different and distinct with a specific role in the spiritual development. The *bhakti* is considered as *sadhana bhakti* and *prapatti* is known as *sadhya bhakti*, that is, one is the means and the other is the end. In fact, at a later stage, the School emphasised the role of *prapatti* since *bhakti yoga* demands a high level quality that may distance many seekers from attempting to pursue liberation. Ramanuja derives the theistic philosophy from the *prasthanatraya* and it remains to interpret the *mahavakya* ‘*tattvamasi*’ since Advaitin had derived the non-dual nature of self from the *mahavakya*. According to Visistadvaita, such an interpretation is untenable. The word ‘*tat*’ in the *mahavakya* refers to God having the entire universe as his body, and the word ‘*tvam*’ refers to God having the individual beings as his body. Thus, *acit* and *cit* as attributes of God is revealed by these two words. Finally the verb ‘*asi*’ in the *mahavakya* reveals the identity of the embodied in both, viz, God.

7.5 LIBERATION

Liberation for Visistadvaita is attaining the abode of *Narayana*. It is not merely freedom from bondage but it is a positive state of existence in the higher realm without losing individuality. The liberated soul attains omniscience and enjoys the unlimited bliss like the Lord. The *jiva* after liberation is not subject to *karma* and therefore knowledge manifests in its fullest. Like Advaita School, Ramanuja does not accept the concept of *jivanmukti* because the abode of Lord can be attained only after exhaustion of all *karma* and fall of the physical body. The liberated *jiva* gains all the perfections of the Lord except that they remain atomic in size and does not gain the power to

create, sustain or dissolve the universe.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

Examine the metaphysical categories of Visistadvaita.

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What is liberation and the means to liberation according to Visistadvaita?

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7.6 LET US SUM UP

Ramanuja’s approach is an attempt to unite the personal theism with the philosophy of the Absolute. The system of Visistadvaita in the 11th century developed basically as a reaction to the Absolutism propagated by Advaita School that seems to leave behind the role of *bhakti* in the gamut of means to liberation. Ramanuja made an emphatic return of *bhakti*, a significant contribution of Visistadvaita by taking to Realism and retaining the theistic approach. There had been significant development prior to Ramanuja and post-Ramanuja which does not find scope in this unit. The two broad views earlier to Ramanuja namely, the non-dual system and school of thought that holds difference-cum-non-difference has been beautifully synthesised by Ramanuja, in his system that is widely known as ‘Qualified Monism’. In keeping with the Realistic approach we have touched upon the epistemological theory of Visistadvaita that presents its theory of error in a unique manner. We had a brief view on the metaphysical concepts and categories that constitutes the crux of Visistadvaita School. The Liberation stressed by Visistadvaita

presupposes a disciplined life and total commitment that is in a way need of the hour.

7.7 KEY WORDS

Artha prakasha : manifestation of object

Dharmabhutajnana : knowledge as an essential attribute of the Self

Sharira-shariri sambandha: the organic relation of the body to the soul and of the cosmic universe of *cit* and *acit* to *Ishvara*,

according to Ramanuja.

Satkaryavada : a view that an effect is a modified state of the

causal substance according to Visistadvaita.

Yatharthakhyati : the theory that all knowledge is of the real.

7.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain central role of God in the bhakti school.
2. Explain works of Ramanujacharya.
3. Examine the metaphysical categories of Visistadvaita.
4. what is liberation?
5. explain epistemology of visistadvaita.

7.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Ramanuja was born (1017 A.D.) to Asuri Keshava Somayaji Deekshitar and Kanthimathi in Perumbadur village, Tamilnadu. From a very young age he displayed extraordinary brilliance and was compassionate towards all. Shortly after being married in his teenage years, and after his father died, Ramanuja and his family moved to the neighboring city of Kanchipuram. He took initiation from Yadavaprakasa, a renowned Advaitic scholar. The

historical data states that since Ramanuja emphasised on *bhakti* as opposed to *jnana* of Advaitic Thought, Yadavaprakasa considered him as a threat and asked Ramanuja to leave. Ramanuja travelled to Srirangam but before his meeting the teacher died. According to the legend of the followers of Ramanuja, three fingers of Yamunacharya's corpse were folded. The three tasks as described by Ramanuja are, firstly to teach the doctrine of surrender to God as the means to liberation, secondly to comment on the *Vedantasutras* in the light of Visistadvaita philosophy that has been transmitted orally to the disciples and thirdly the names of Sage Parashara and Saint Sathakopa be perpetuated. Legend goes that on hearing the vow, the three fingers on the corpse straightened. He took to a mendicant life and traveled the land, having philosophical debates with the custodians of various Vishnu temples. He standardized the practices of these temples and worked for the development for Srivaishnava school of thought. Ramanuja wrote nine works including his famous commentary on *Vedantasutra*, known as *Sri Bhashya*. It is said that Ramanuja faced threats from some Shaivite Chola rulers and had to move to the Hoysala kingdom of Jain king Bittideva and queen Shantala Devi in Karnataka. Ramanuja cured the King's daughter of evil spirits and thereafter the Bittideva converted to Srivaishnavism and engaged himself in building Vishnu temples. The popularity of Ramanuja spread far and wide and he had huge followers with the desire to attain Narayana. They took to the path of *bhakti* and lead a pious life. At a ripe age of 120, Ramanuja left his mortal coils and attained the abode of the Supreme Being in 1137 A.D.

- 2) Visistadvaita admits of three fundamental realities, matter (*acit*), individual beings (*cit*) and God (*Ishvara*). The ultimate reality is one with *cit* and *acit* as its parts. As a Realist School, Visistadvaita

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

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

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

The scriptural statements or testimony is accepted as an independent means of knowledge by Visistadvaitins. The primary scriptures are the *prasthanā traya*, but Visistadvaitins include *Puranas* and *Pancharatra Agamas* as equally authoritative and valid source of knowledge. The *Puranas* are classified as *sattvika*, *rajasa* and *tamasa* and the *sattvika puranas* eulogise the greatness of Vishnu and hence they are taken to be the most authentic source. For Visistadvaitins, the *Pancharatra Agamas* hold a unique position since they are considered to be revealed by *Ishvara*. The theory of verbal knowledge as admitted by Visistadvaita signifies that the words have power to denote their respective meanings along with qualities or difference. The power of the word to denote an object is not limited to the quality alone but it indicates the substance also. This sense of denotation is known as

‘ *aparyavasana vritti*’. The *cit* and *acit* are inseparable attributes of Brahman and hence every word indicates Brahman immanent in everything. Since all the words denote Brahman primarily, in this sense Brahman is known as ‘ *sarva shabda vachya*’ Ramanuja explicates this based on the theory of grammatical coordination.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) Visistadvaita is developed based on the concept of substance-attribute and it lays down three fundamental metaphysical concepts, namely, the concept of substance and attribute, the concept of relation and the concept of cause and effect. According to Visistadvaitin’s epistemological stand, a substance cannot be conceived devoid of attributes. Visistadvaitin’s metaphysical categories is broadly divided as substance (*dravya*) and non-substance (*adravya*). *Dravya* is that which serves as a substratum of modification and modification is that which

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the *prakriti* that is the cosmic matter. *Kala* or the Time Principle is also one of the inert substances that is eternal. The ten *adravyas* are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the five senses, *Samyoga* and *shakti*.

- 2) The means or *upaya* according to Visistadvaita is *bhakti* or an unceasing meditation with love on the Supreme Being. *Bhakti* is preceded by *karma* and *jnana*. *Karma yoga* emphasises the performance of actions accepting any kind of consequence, sacrifice, charity and austerity as divine service to the Lord. *Jnana yoga* signifies control of mind and senses and dwelling incessantly meditating on the Lord. The subservient means enhances purity of mind and removes sins (*papa*) and thereby promotes *bhakti*. The *bhakti yoga* presupposes certain rigorous disciplines known as the seven means (*sadhana saptaka*) that is quoted by Ramanuja in his *Sri bhasya*. Since *bhakti* is the direct means to liberation, according to Visistadvaita, it prescribes the process of development of highest devotion or *parabhakti* towards the Lord. Initially, one develops love for the Lord, caused by study of scriptures and by intimate association with other devotees. This is known as general devotion or *samanya bhakti*, gradually leading to *parabhakti* wherein one develops the utmost desire and determination to see the Lord. The concept of *prapatti* or total surrender to the Lord is also considered as the direct means to liberation. Liberation for Visistadvaita is attaining the abode of *Narayana*. The liberated *jiva* gain all the perfections of the Lord except that they remain atomic in size and does not gain the power to create, sustain or dissolve the universe.