

Indira Gandhi National Open University  
School of Inter-disciplinary and  
Trans-disciplinary Studies

Block

# 4

## **HETERODOX SYSTEMS**

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### **UNIT 14**

#### **Cārvāka**

**193**

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### **UNIT 15**

#### **Jainism**

**205**

---

### **UNIT 16**

#### **Buddhism-I**

**219**

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### **UNIT 17**

#### **Buddhism-II**

**233**

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## Block Introduction

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It is a common misconception that *Nāstikas* are those who denied the existence of God; this cannot be as even the *Āstika* schools like the Sāṅkhya and the Mīmāṃsaka disputed the existence or need of/for a creator God. The *Nāstikas* or the heterodox thinkers were those who questioned the authority of the *Vedas*. They were particularly concerned with three issues: 1. The authority of the *Veda* concerning matters of the spirit; 2. The efficacy of Vedic sacrifices and 3. The supremacy of the Brāhmins. It should also be noted that schools like the Sāṅkhya or Yoga, though labeled orthodox were also critical of the *Vedas* and its teachings. In many cases, they merely paid lip service to the *Vedas*, and in matters where their views matched they were most eager to claim orthodox support. History records many movements opposed to the orthodox religion. For our purpose, we've chosen only three which were most prominent as they find constant mention in the polemical treatises of orthodox schools: Cārvāka, Buddhism and Jainism.

**Unit 14** is on Cārvāka which is the school of Indian materialism or cārvāka darśana. This is one of the oldest non-Vedic schools. The significance of the name Cārvāka applied to this is not very clear but some scholars are of the opinion that Cārvāka was the name of the disciple to whom the doctrine was first communicated. However, the term “cārvāka” literally means sweet-tongued (cāru-vāka). This name is significant in so far as it stands for a doctrine which is superficially very attractive as it advocates the acquisition of pleasure (kāma) and wealth (artha).

**Unit 15** highlights the philosophical thesis of Jainism, which is a very old heterodox system that repudiates the teachings of the *Vedas*. The word “Jainism” is derived from ‘jina’ which means conqueror, i.e. one who has conquered one’s passions and desires. Jainism arose in the later Vedic period, and it was revived by Vardhamāna, also called Mahāvīra or the great spiritual hero in the 6th century B.C.

**Unit 16**, Buddhism-I explains the early Buddhism known as Pāli Buddhism or canonical Buddhism. Early Buddhism must be differentiated from the later schools, which grew long after the Buddha’s death. The great school of Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha, who belonged to the family of Gautama or Gotama. He was titled the ‘Buddha’, which means the ‘awakened one’.

**Unit 17**, Buddhism-II discusses the teachings of the schools of Buddhism. The practical teachings of the Buddha (early Buddhism) were carried forward by the followers of Buddhism. But the divergence of Mahāyāna from Hīnayāna is their conception of the ideal of life. Both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna believe in aspiring for one’s own salvation, but Mahāyāna school extends this to striving for salvation not just for oneself but for others. This is the ideal of the Bodhisattva as distinguished from that of the Arhat of the Hīnayāna school. There are many other points of contention between the schools, which shall be looked into detail through the chapter.



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## UNIT 14 CĀRVĀKA\*

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### Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Cārvāka Metaphysics
- 14.3 Self or Soul in the Cārvāka view
- 14.4 Denial of God or any Transcendental being
- 14.5 Cārvāka Epistemology
- 14.6 Knowledge in the Cārvāka view
- 14.7 Illusion in the Cārvāka view
- 14.8 The way of Life
- 14.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.10 Key Words
- 14.11 Further Readings and References
- 14.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 14.0 OBJECTIVES

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

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

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### 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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The first school of thought to be considered is Indian materialism or Cārvāka darśana. This is one of the oldest non-Vedic schools. Cārvāka accepts Bṛhaspati as their teacher. The significance of the name ‘Cārvāka’ applied to this is not very clear but some scholars opine that Cārvāka was the name of the disciple to whom the doctrine was first communicated by its founder. However, the word Cārvāka literally means ‘sweet-tongued’ (cāru – vāka). This name is significant

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**Heterodox Systems** in so far as it stands for a doctrine which is superficially very attractive as it advocates the acquisition of pleasure (kāma) and wealth (artha).

The original works of the Cārvāka school are lost. The knowledge about this system is gathered from works by the Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. The views of Cārvāka makes it clear that in India, only spiritualism was not advocated but materialism was equally vigorous. Matter as ultimate reality was first envisaged by Bṛhaspati Laukya of the Ṛg *Veda*. However in its primary stage Indian materialism was mingled with scepticism and agnosticism. Bṛhaspati gave it a distinct form. In its earlier stage, Cārvāka believed in 'svabhāva vāda'. It traced the general characteristic of an object to itself and not to any other extraneous agent. It rejected the idea that nature reveals a divine or transcendental power working behind it. Fire is hot; water is cold and air is temperate to the touch. Who could have brought such distinctions into being? The answer given by Cārvāka is that these are the very essence of each object. In other words, things are what they are and their nature by itself explains all the variety of the universe and the order that is noticeable in it. The Cārvākas do not believe in the existence of any variable cause of an event. According to them, observing two things together doesn't mean that one is the cause of the other. Because we observe fire and smoke, can we come to the conclusion fire is the cause of smoke? Is it possible to say that if there is smoke fire is inevitable and it was so in the past when I was not born and will be so when I am dead? However, the information gathered about this school is extremely meager. Mostly we get to know about this system through refutations from its opponents. *Sarva darśana saṁgraha* of Mādhavācārya (Vidyāraṇya Swāmi) does contain a chapter on this system but even here it is very brief and the information that we can gather is nothing more than what we can gather from other sources. Cārvāka is also known as Lokāyāta meaning that the system is restricted to the world of commonsense. Since most of the schools of Indian philosophy refer to Cārvāka only while criticizing its materialistic tenets we cannot help thinking that these schools maybe exaggerating the weak points of the doctrine and/or misinterpreting the tenets.

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## 14.2 CĀRVĀKA METAPHYSICS

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Being positivistic Cārvāka claims that perception or pratyakṣa is the only means of valid knowledge. Therefore, only what is perceivable is the object of knowledge for Cārvāka. Whatever is not perceivable is rejected as a figment of our imagination. On this ground, matter is the only reality and the world is constituted of only four basic categories, namely, earth, water, fire and air, which are all physical and given in perception. Ether or space is not accepted as the fifth element because it is not perceivable. Matter is both the material and efficient cause of the universe and matter has always existed and will always exist. All beings, animate or inanimate are the products of these elementary principles of matter. That matter is the ultimate reality implied from Bṛhaspati's dictum 'out of matter comes forth life.' In *Tattvopplavasiṅgh*, Jayarasibhatta (One of the Vaitaṇḍika; some scholar believe he was a philosopher of Cārvāka Tradition) writes that pratyakṣa (perception) is the only means of knowledge and it is sense-object contact. And accepting perception means no establishment of even four elements (Earth, Water, Fire and Air), because elements are subtle in nature that is why they cannot be the object of our senses.

### 14.3 SELF OR SOUL IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

The most important doctrine in the Cārvāka system is that perception (pratyakṣa) is the only means of valid knowledge. Since there is no entity called 'soul' as distinct from the body, as given in perception, there is no place for such an entity in this system. According to Cārvāka, when the four forms of matter, namely, earth, water, fire and air combine in a peculiar way, there results in what we call a body. Life breath (prāṇa) and consciousness are present only in such a body. This body is the soul and there is nothing permanent or eternal apart from the body. There is no life-breath or consciousness in the minute particles (kaṇa) of matter, which are the basic constituents of matter, when they are in a disjoined state. At that time, they remain in a lifeless and insentient state. However, due to that very peculiar and mutual combination or mixture of these elements, there appears life-breath and consciousness. Thus what we call soul is nothing but the conscious body. In other words, consciousness or mind is an epi-phenomenon, a by-product of matter. Such a by-product is possible because qualities not possessed by the elements individually, may arise in the aggregate constituted of them. For example, an intoxicating quality arises from the mingling of yeast and other ingredients, though this quality is not possessed by the ingredients when they exist by themselves. To quote: '*Sarvasiddhāntasārasaṅgraha*' "That Intelligence which is found to be embodied in modified forms of the non-intelligent elements is produced in the same way in which the red colour is produced from the combination of betel, areca-nut and lime" Thought is a function of matter. Since consciousness is a property of the body, with the dissolution of the body consciousness disappears and each of its constituent elements is mingled with its kind leaving behind only ashes and dust. Transmigration, retribution etc. are meaningless words.

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

The later followers of the system propounded three more views to account for the cause of consciousness. According to some thinkers consciousness is possible only because of the senses. According to another view, the agency was ascribed to the vital power or prāṇa i.e. life, and in the third, mind (manas), was



**Heterodox Systems** considered to be the agent of knowledge. Though life and mind were considered to be distinct from the body, their distinct existence was not admitted.

The Cārvāka view that there is no self distinct from the body has naturally provoked the keenest controversy. Ātman occupies an important place in other systems of philosophy and hence all the systems here argued against the Cārvāka view. Some of the important arguments against the Cārvāka are given below. Firstly, the opponent of Cārvāka says that if consciousness is a property of the body, it should be either an essential property or an accidental property of the body. If it were an essential property, then it would be inseparable from the body. Then, consciousness should last as long as the body lasts. But that is not the cases we find in the case of fainting and dreamless sleep. If consciousness is only an accidental property of the body then there is a need of an agency (upādhi) to produce consciousness. If so, then we cannot ascribe consciousness wholly to the body. Again, when one wakes up after a dream, he is able to own the dream experience but if he saw himself as a tiger in the dream he will disown the dream body. Many Scholars say that even if we accept that consciousness is always associated with a physical body, it is not possible to say that consciousness ceases to be when the organism breaks up. They say that it may continue in some other manner. Even though this contention cannot be proved, it is said that a doubt is sufficient to reject the Cārvāka stand. Again, even though consciousness is always associated with the body, it is not possible to say that one is the property of the other. To take an example, the eye cannot see in absolute darkness, but for that reason can we say that visual perception is a property of light? Similarly we can say that the body is a condition for consciousness to manifest itself. The most important point against the Cārvāka view is, can we see other's dreams, feelings, thoughts, pain, pleasure, etc. as we can see their body? A Person's dreams, feelings, etc. are immediately known to that person himself but the others can only see his body without knowing his feelings. The form or complexion of the body can be seen by all those who meet him. Taking another example, the feeling of a toothache as experienced by a patient is not the same as what is known by his dentist. The opponents of Cārvāka say that these facts prove that consciousness is not a property of the physical body but of something else or it is an independent principle which finds its expression in the body.

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#### **14.4 DENIAL OF GOD OR ANY TRANSCENDENTAL BEING**

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



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

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## 14.5 CĀRVĀKA EPISTEMOLOGY

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According to Cārvāka knowledge is located in the body. They prove this by the rule of ‘presence in presence and absence in absence.’ The colour of a flower is present only when the flower is present, not otherwise. In other words, it is a fact that the colour of the flower is located in the flower, when there is no flower. This is the fact of conforming to presence and absence. Similarly, we find between body and knowledge, there is conformity to agreements in presence and absence. No one can deny that when the body ie., sense organ is present, knowledge is also present and when the sense organ is absent, knowledge is also absent. When the visual sense organ is intact there will be the ability to see while when one is blind, there is no ability to see. Thus by this agreement in presence and absence between sense organ and knowledge it is proved that all knowledge is located only in the sense organ. It is necessary here to clarify that Cārvāka is not accepting ‘presence in presence and absence in absence’ as argument. Since they do not admit the validity of inference, but Cārvāka establishes this only through perception.

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

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## 14.6 KNOWLEDGE IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

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According to Cārvāka knowledge is generally divided into two classes, viz,

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

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

All men are mortal.

Socrates is a man.

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

The general objection to the above criticism of the Cārvāka is that ‘All men are mortal’ is ascertainable because there is an invariable concomitance that is perceived between man and mortality. To take another example, we can say, “Wherever there is smoke, there is fire” because there is an invariable concomitance or connection (vyāpti) between smoke and fire. But the Cārvāka does not accept any claim about invariable concomitance because it goes beyond what is perceived and is perceivable. Universal truths, they say, cannot be asserted because they have no foundation in our perceptual experience. We have no grounds in our experience forgoing from statements of limited perceived instances to unlimited, unrestricted universal generalizations. Considering the

above views of the Cārvāka against inference, it is necessary for us to examine if the Cārvāka can successfully avoid drawing inferences at all. It is easy to see that it is not possible to avoid the use of reason or inference. To take an example, in order to teach his doctrine, the materialist must use language. Language is to utter certain noise (by way of words) and the hearer infers from the noise the meaning and content of what the materialist is saying. This is possible only when the hearer relies on his memory for the meaning of words. Thus, although he Cārvāka denies inference at the theoretical level, he himself cannot help employing inference in his everyday living in the midst of men.

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

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

Having given their views on the invalidity of inference and verbal testimony, Cārvāka thinkers proceed to show that other sources of knowledge as accepted

**Heterodox Systems** by Mīmāṃsā are also invalid. They Say that the knowledge gained by postulation is of the nature of assumption. One takes to postulation only on being aware that a certain accepted meaning is unjustifiable in any other way. In such cases even the knower himself is aware that his knowledge is a kind of assumption. It is of the form ‘I presume such a meaning’

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

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

Cārvākas consider the mind as one of the five sense organs. Unlike Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika who considers the mind as a separate sense organ to experience pleasure and pain, Cārvāka says that there is no separate sense organ called ‘mind’. So strictly speaking there is no mental perception. They explain the experience of feelings as follows. The sense organs called skin (*tvac*) is uniformly present everywhere, both outside and inside the body. According to this view, that part of the sense organ called ‘skin’ which is situated inside the body would be the mind or the internal sense organ. The Cārvākas thinks that with the help of such a sense organ, people experience pleasure and pain. In many cases, pleasure or pain is produced due to the experience of a particular type of touch and its substratum is the inside skin .In other words pleasure is a kind of tactual experience. So also pain too is a kind of tactual experience resulting in some kind of knowledge. Similarly Desire and aversion would also be of the nature of knowledge. When we realise that something is the means to get our desires, we get our desires fulfilled, i.e, the *iṣṭa-sādhana* takes us to getting the desired effect. When something we know is harmful we have the feeling of aversion. The substratum of all these is also the sense organ .On this view the knowledge of recollection is also produced with help of the sense organ. Recollection never has for its object an unknown thing. Due to different kinds of physical stimulation people recollect things previously experienced. However, there is no general rule that one type of stimulation results in the recollection of one particular object. There is no cause- effect relation. Each individual will be inspired by a particular modification to recollect some experience depending on certain factors. Therefore uniformly, by framing a general rule, no cause- effect relation can be established between the modification of the sense organ and the recollection.

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## 14.7 ILLUSION IN THE CĀRVĀKA VIEW

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

## 14.8 THE WAY OF LIFE

Cārvāka does not believe in any spiritual values. Of the four *puruṣārthas* or human values, Cārvāka rejects the two values of ‘Dharma’ and ‘Mokṣa’. Therefore, the human effort is only for the attainment of sensual pleasure (*kāma*) and wealth (*artha*), which is the means to get pleasure. Briefly said, it is crude Hedonism. Cārvāka is aware that pleasure is often accompanied by pain. They say that no one throws the grain because it has the husk. Does one stop plucking a lotus because there is thorn; does one stop eating fish because there is bone and scales? A wife or child who creates heaven on earth, when they depart there is bound to be pain. But the life of one with no love in his heart is also miserable and barren. Cārvāka admits that there is sorrow everywhere –in king’s palaces and beggar’s huts. Still this world of ours is not full of misery. The amount of pleasure is greater than pain. If it were not so, why would people desire to live and get frightened to die? It is important to enjoy the pleasure and to avoid pain, which is invariably associated with it. We should not forego pleasure for the fear of pain. According to Cārvāka, one’s aim in life should be to get the maximum amount of pleasure. The advice is to make the best of a bad bargain, and to enjoy. Some Scholar believes that Carvaka’s view is against human’s essence or goal. They say that without Dharma, no system is useful for human beings. May be, they are right. But we can think that Carvaka philosophy wanted to create a new model/new foundation of Moral Philosophy. Cārvāka condemns animal sacrifice, *yajña* (on the ground that they are the means to fulfil one’s selfish deeds.). This condemnation may be helpful to see the ground of moral system of Cārvāka.

### Check Your Progress I

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

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

1. What is the Metaphysical position of the Cārvāka

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2. Why do they reject any discussion on God?

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3. Explain the theory of illusion according to the Cārvāka

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### 14.9 LET US SUM UP

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

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### 14.10 KEY WORDS

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

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

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### 14.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 14.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Being positivistic Cārvāka claims that perception or pratyakṣa is the only means of valid knowledge. Therefore, only what is perceivable is the object of knowledge for Cārvāka. Whatever is not perceivable is rejected as a figment of our imagination. On this ground, matter is the only reality and the world is constituted of only four basic categories, namely, earth, water, fire and air, which are all physical and given in perception. Ether or space is not accepted as the fifth element because it is not perceivable. Matter is both the material and efficient cause of the universe and matter they say has always existed and will always exist.
2. As pointed out earlier, the system believes in only what is validated by perception or pratyakṣa, and hence there is no place for anything transcendental. It recognizes neither a God who controls the universe nor a conscience which guides man. All the other systems of Indian philosophy insist on ethics and a way of life with a belief in life-after-death. But Cārvāka rejects any such life-after-death which entails that good conduct gets reward while wrong doing meets with punishment. Cārvāka rejecting any higher life advocates that man is here to enjoy sensual pleasure. They claim that nature is indifferent to good and bad. The sun shines equally on the good and the evil. Cārvāka says that majority of men believe in deities because of their weakness. There is no heaven or hell, what is there is only this world where we live.
3. Cārvāka explains the nature of illusory knowledge by subscribing to the theory of asatkhyāti – i.e., awareness of the non-existent. When shell is



## Heterodox Systems

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



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## UNIT 15 JAINISM\*

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### Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Metaphysics
- 15.3 Jaina Epistemology
- 15.4 Pramāṇas
- 15.5 Empirical Perception
- 15.6 Syllogistic Inference
- 15.7 Authority
- 15.8 Practical Teachings of Jainism
- 15.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.10 Key Words
- 15.11 Further Readings and References
- 15.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 15.0 OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

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### 15.1 INTRODUCTION

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

Vardhamāna was born in a princely family in north Bihar about 540 B.C. On

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**Heterodox Systems** attaining his 30th year, he renounced all empirical comforts and led a life of severe abstinence and meditation. After thirteen years of such penance he attained illumination securing freedom from all ills. He then became a 'jina' or a spiritual leader, a word from which the term 'Jainism' is derived.

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

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## 15.2 METAPHYSICS

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

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

*Jīva*'s relation to matter explains the Jain view of knowledge. Knowledge is not something that characterizes the *Jīva* but it constitutes *Jīva*'s very essence. The *Jīva* therefore can know everything unaided directly and exactly as it is if there is no impediment in its way. In other words, all knowledge is in the soul though it manifests itself only when the impending media are removed. The knowledge which a *Jīva* has is fragmentary because of the obstruction caused by karma which interferes with its power of perception. The impediments are passions and emotions. The Jain, therefore, recognizes differences in the extent of enlightenment that a self may possess depending upon the extent to which obstacles (karma) have been removed. But there can be no self without knowledge or knowledge without a self. The culmination of enlightenment is

reached when the obstacles are completely broken down. This is kevala jñāna when one becomes omniscient. This knowledge is pure because it is immediate and is obtained without any aid like sense, mind, etc. Thus, from the Jaina point of view, senses and mind are aids to knowledge only from the empirical point of view. They are also impediments being part of matter.

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

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

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

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

Pudgala denotes matter or material object in general. Matter possesses colour, flavour, odour and touch. Sound is considered not as a quality but as a mode of it. Matter is not created but indistinguishable and real. It is real and independent of the perceiving mind. The basic definition of pudgala, which stands for matter in Jainism, is "that which can be experienced by the five sense organs." The second definition is derived from the etymology of the compound word 'pudgala'. The term 'pud' refers to the process of combination and 'gala' stand for disassociation. The significance of the definition lies in the atomic theory of the Jains. The term 'anu' which means atom is found in the *Upaniṣads* but there is no systematic atomic theory in the *Upaniṣads*. We can say that the Jaina atomic theory is the earliest. The ultimate constituent of matter is aṇu or paramāṇu (atom). The atoms are all of the same kind, yet they can give rise to an infinite variety of things. Even the elements of earth, water, fire and air are divisible and have a structure. By developing the respective characteristics of odour, flavour, etc. the atoms become differentiated and thus the material world is divided though the atoms are not different from one another qualitatively.

**Heterodox Systems** Therefore matter has two forms, one atomic or simple and the other compound called skandha. The process of combination of atoms gives rise to the molecules or skandha. All perceivable objects are skandhas. It is the combination of molecules that is responsible for the different types of objects with varying qualities. Six forms of skandha are recognized

**Bhadra (Gross) – Bhadra:** This type of skandha when split cannot regain the original undivided form. For example, solids.

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

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

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

**Sukṣma:** Skandhas of this type are extremely subtle and they are beyond sense perception. It is matter in this subtle form that constitutes karma, which by its influx into the jīva brings on saṃsāra or bondage.

**Sukṣma - Sukṣma:** They are finer than Sukṣma Skandhas.

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

A thing seems to assume various shapes and to undergo diverse changes. For example, clay can assume various shapes and can undergo diverse changes. *Upaniṣads* held that since in all changes the clay matter remained permanent, that alone was true where as the change of form and state were but appearances, the nature of which cannot be rationally explained. According to *Upaniṣads*, the unchanging substance alone is true and the changing forms are mere illusions of the senses. On the other hand, according to Buddhism, the changing qualities alone can be perceived and that there is no unchanging substance behind them. What we perceive as clay, says the Buddhist, is some specific quality and what we perceive as jug is also some quality. For the Buddhist qualities do not imply that there are substances to which they adhere. We can neither perceive nor infer such pure substances. As against these two views of the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhism, Jainism holds that the nature of reality is both permanent and changing. Jainism claims that they are able to speak of two contradictory characteristics in the same reality because experience warrants it. Thus, they



say that, both *Upaniṣads* and Buddhism contain only an element of truth but not the whole truth as given in experience. Jains point out that in all experience, there are three elements: - (i). Some qualities appear to remain unchanged. (ii). Some new qualities are generated. (iii). Some old qualities are destroyed. It is true that qualities of things are changing but all qualities are not changing. Thus, when a jug is made, it means that clay lump is destroyed and a jug is generated and the clay itself is permanent. Thus clay has become lost in some form, has generated itself in another and remained permanent in another form. It is by virtue of three unchanged qualities that a thing is said to be permanent though undergoing change, which we call the substance. Hence the nature of being (sat) is neither absolutely unchangeable nor the momentary changing qualities of existence, but reality is that which involves a permanent unit. While every moment it loses some qualities and gains some.

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

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### 15.3 JAINA EPISTEMOLOGY

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

**Heterodox Systems** also there are dravyārtika nayas based on the point of view of substance, and paryāyārtika nayas based on the point of view of modification or condition.

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

May be, is (syāt asti) May be, is not (syāt nāsti)

May be, is and is not (syāt astu bāsti) Maybe, is inexpressible (syāt avaktavyah)

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

**manaḥ-paryāya:** is telepathy. It is the direct knowledge of the thoughts of others. It is knowing other minds.

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

These five types of knowledge are brought under two broad divisions – pratyakṣa (immediate) and parokṣa (mediate). The Details of this classification shall be discussed in the next section under the heading Pramāṇas.

Of the five kinds of knowledge mentioned above, the first three kinds of knowledge, namely, mati, śruta and avadhi are liable to error but manaḥ-paryāya and kevala cannot be ever wrong. Validity of knowledge consists in its practical efficiency enabling us to get what is good and avoid what is evil. Valid knowledge is a faithful representation of objects and therefore practically useful. It is said, "... the validity is either determined intrinsically or extrinsically." (*Pramāṇa Mīmāṃsā* 1-1-8, Hemachandra). Jains believe in both intrinsic and extrinsic validity. The determination of validity in some cases is achieved by a cognition by itself. Under this we can cite the example of all those cognitions, which are habitual. Like we know water quenches thirst and we do not require another confirmatory cognition to establish the validity of this proposition. On some occasions the experience of validity is secured by means of an external datum. Its validity is determined by

(i) a consequent confirmatory cognition of the same object.

(ii) a recognition of its pragmatic consequences (iii) the cognition of an object invariably or universally concomitant with it. This is extrinsic validity because here the validity is determined by other means.

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

### Check Your Progress I

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

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

1. What is consciousness, according to Jain Philosophy?

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2. Write a short note on the Jain's theory of erroneous knowledge.

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### 15.4 PRAMĀṆAS

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

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

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### 15.5 EMPIRICAL PERCEPTION

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This form of perception is conditioned by the senses and the mind and it is limited. It is *samvyāvahārika pratyakṣa*. The senses are five in number that of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing and each have a specific capacity to know. Each of these is of two kinds, physical and psychical. Mind is the organ of apprehension of all the senses. It is designated as *anindriya* (not a sense-

organ), sukṣma-indriya or inner self (antaḥkaraṇa). Mind is also of two kinds, physical and psychical. The physical refers to the material entity and psychical to the conscious activity. Empirical perception is of four kinds, viz., Sensation (avagraha), Speculation (īhā), Determinate perception (avaya), Retention (dhāraṇa).

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

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

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

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## 15.6 SYLLOGISTIC INFERENCE

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(*Pramāṇa Mīmāṃsā* II 1.1.) Syllogistic inference is definite cognition resulting from a statement of a probans having the characteristic of necessary concomitance with the probandum. In Other words, the minimum condition for any inference is some kind of vyāpti between the middle and the major terms. The probans is the sign or middle term which is perceived (smoke) and the probandum is the major term (fire) or what is inferred though it is not perceived because there is

**Heterodox Systems** such an invariable relation between the two (i.e., smoke and fire). Therefore by perceiving 'smoke on the hill' we can conclude that the 'hill has got fire.'

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## 15.7 AUTHORITY

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

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## 15.8 PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF JAINISM

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

Right faith (*samyagdarśana*)

Right knowledge (*samyagjñāna*)

Right conduct (*samyak cāritra*)

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

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

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

**Asteya** – The principle of asteya is the vow of non-stealing. Stealing is unlawful

possession of the belongings of others and should be abhorred. Accepting bribes, smuggling, black marketing and the like are all instances of the principle of *asteya*.

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

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

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

The aim of life is to get oneself disentangled from karma. In most systems of Indian philosophy, karma stands for action but in Jainism, karma is conceived as subtle particles of matter and the cause of soul's bondage is the presence of karmic matter in it. Again, the difference in *jīvas* is due to degrees of their connections with matter. According to Jainism, karma being material permeates the *jīva* through and through weighing it down to the mundane level. It is said that karma unites with the soul like heat unites with iron and water with milk and the soul so united with karma is the soul in bondage. Karma particles bind men for varying lengths of time depending on the intensity of passions and actions. Jainism also makes it clear that karma can be completely broken down by self-discipline. While giving details of the course of practical discipline, Jaina Explains the scheme of *nava-tattva*, or nine categories. These categories are *jīva*, *ajīva*, *punya*, *papa*, *āśrava*, *bandha*, *saṁvara*, *nirjarā* and *mokṣa*.

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



**Check Your Progress II**

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

1. Write a note on empirical perception in Jain Philosophy.

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2. Write a note on Concept of Triratna.

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**15.9 LET US SUM UP**

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

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**15.10 KEY WORDS**

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

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

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**15.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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Jani J. L. *Outlines of Jainism*. England: Cambridge University Press. 1940

## **15.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

### **Answers to Check Your Progress I**

1. Consciousness is the very essence of Jīva.

Consciousness which is the essence of jīva has two manifestations –

(i) darśana or intuition (ii) jñāna or know

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

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

### **Answers to Check Your Progress II**

1. Empirical perception is of four kinds, viz,

i) Sensation (avagraha),

ii) Speculation (tīhā),

iii) Determinate perception (avaya)

iv) Retention (dhāraṇa).

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

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

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

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

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

The three precious principles of life are:

i) Right faith (samyagdarśana)

ii) Right knowledge (samyajjñāna)

iii) Right conduct (samyak cāritra)



## **Heterodox Systems**

Of these three, the first place is given to the right faith. They Say that even right activity accompanied by false convictions loses much of its value. Right faith is the unshaken belief in Jaina scriptures and the teaching is intended to dispel skepticism or doubt, which comes in the way of spiritual growth. Right knowledge is the knowledge of Jaina religion and Philosophy. Right conduct is translating into action what has been learnt and believed to be true. It is a very important part of the discipline for it is through right action one can get rid of karma and reach the goal of life.



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## UNIT 16 BUDDHISM-I\*

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### Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Metaphysical Views of Buddhism
- 16.3 Doctrine of Dependent Origination
- 16.4 Practical teachings of Buddhism
- 16.5 Nirvāṇa (In Pāli Language, Nibbāna)
- 16.6 Karma
- 16.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.8 Key Words
- 16.9 Further Readings and References
- 16.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 16.0 OBJECTIVES

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Early Buddhism is also known as Pāli Buddhism or canonical Buddhism. Early Buddhism must be differentiated from the later schools, which grew up long after when Buddha Had Taught. This great creed called Buddhism was founded by Siddhārtha who belonged to the family of Gautama or Gotama. He was called 'Buddha', which means the 'awakened one' after he got enlightenment.

In this Unit you will come to know:

- metaphysical views of Buddhism
- doctrine of dependent origination
- practical teachings of Buddhism
- nirvāṇa (in Pāli nibbāna)
- karma

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### 16.1 INTRODUCTION

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

When Siddhārtha woke up to the fact that the world is full of suffering, his mind

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

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

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

*Suttas* or utterances of Buddha himself,

*Vinaya* or rules of conduct,

*Abhidhamma* or philosophical discussions.

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

*Digha Nikāya* (long discourses)

*Majjima Nikāya* (discourses of shorter length)

*Saṅyutta Nikāya* (collection of short pronouncements)

*Anguttara Nikāya* (short passages arranged in sections)

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

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

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

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

When anyone thinks of the general tendencies of Buddhism, the first thought that comes up is its pessimistic flavor. However, by any yardstick, Buddhism cannot be called pessimistic. If the Sarnath sermon is to be taken as our guide we may take one point of the Buddha's instruction as basic, namely, just as there are ills (heya), and their causes (heya-hetu), so also a cure (hāna) and a path (hānapāya) exist. This is just like the science of medicine. If there is an ailment (roga), there will be a cause for it (roga-hetu). Once the cause of the ailment is diagnosed, the cure is not far away. This shows that though the Buddha said that all is suffering – *Sarvam Dukham*, he did not stop at that. Buddha's doctrine is not a creed of despair. Even though he points out that misery is a fact, he does not say that man is doomed. Man can get peace here and now, says Buddha. Therefore Buddhism is not pessimistic but a doctrine of hope. Secondly, as pointed out earlier, its fundamental ideas and essential spirit is scientific. During the time of the Buddha excessive discussions were leading to anarchy of thought. The emphasis was on the performance of sacrifices. People were becoming more dogmatic and less positivistic. Buddha revolted against their trend and rejected all that was not positively known. Hence, he was against the Vedic rituals and Vedic tradition. He did not believe in any supernatural power. To put it briefly, Buddha did not believe in anything beyond the sphere of perception and reason.

**Heterodox Systems** One of the most important features of Buddhism is that it is pragmatic. Buddha taught only what was necessary for overcoming evil. Deliverance from pain and evil was his one concern and he did not find any need to unravel metaphysical subtleties. He was evidently practical in his teachings. He said, “Philosophy purifies none, peace alone does.” From what has been said so far it is clear that we should not look for any metaphysics as such in the teachings of the Buddha. We can truly say that, though there is no metaphysical aim in the teachings of the Buddha, there is a metaphysical view underlying it.

### Check Your Progress I

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

1. Write a note on the Siddhartha’s journey for truth.

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2. Do you find any relation between Buddha’s philosophy and Upanishadic Philosophy?

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## 16.2 METAPHYSICAL VIEWS OF BUDDHISM

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

Sensation or feeling (vedanā) of pleasure, pain and indifference; Perception or idea (saṃjñā) conceptual knowledge; Conative disposition (saṃskāra);

Discriminative intelligence or reason (*vijñāna*); Physical form.

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

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

### **16.3 DOCTRINE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION**

According to this doctrine, "this arising that arises, this ceasing that ceases to be." The doctrine of universal change and impermanence follows from this fundamental teaching of Buddhism, viz., Pratitya Samutpāda (*Pacciya Samutpāda*). Change can be understood in terms of conditional existence. This law of causation is the basis of continuity. Both the elements of the material world and of the mental world are subjected to laws of physical and moral causation. This law insists on the necessity of sufficient conditions. Buddha neither believed in 'Being nor non-Being'; but only in 'Becoming'. Thus he gave a dynamic explanation of the real. The symbols generally used to illustrate this conception are the stream of water and the self-consuming flame. Just as the flame and the stream of water, both the mental and the physical reality are subjected to constant flux. When we view the aggregate, be it the self or the material object in time, we notice that they are not the same even for two moments. So the self and the material world are each a flux (*saṅtāna*). Just as the flame and the stream of water, everything is only a series (*vithi*) – a succession of similar things or happenings. The notion of fixity we have of them is wholly fictitious. There were two views currently during the time when



**Heterodox Systems** Buddha philosophized – one believing in Being and the other in non-Being. Buddha opposed both these views when he propounded his view of reality as dynamic. . Thus, according to Buddhism, neither Being nor non-Being is the truth; the truth is that everything is ‘Becoming’. We know through experience that everything is characterized by birth, growth, decay and death, which means that everything is subjected to constant change and that nothing is permanent. What is important to note is that for Buddha, there is incessant change but at the same time there is nothing that changes. There is action but no agent. Since everything is a series, it is relevant to ask as to what is the relation between any two successive members of the series. One explanation given during the time of the Buddha was that it is accidental, and the other explanation did recognize a causal relation as underlying the succession but introduced a supernatural power like God in addition to the known factors. Buddha rejected both these views and postulated necessity as the sole governing factor. In denying chance he took his stand on the uniformity of nature and in denying supernatural intervention; he disassociated himself from all dogmatic religion. According To Buddhism, the causal law governing change in the phenomenal world is not a mere unfolding of a cause but the result of certain external factors co-operating with it. Change can be understood in terms of conditional existence. In other words, a causal series will not begin unless certain conditions are fulfilled and the series will continue so long as all the factors are there. The series will end only when one or more co-operating factors are withdrawn. For example, the flame series will not start until the wick, the oil, etc. are there and will continue till one or more of the factors are withdrawn. The law itself is universal and does not admit of exceptions but yet the operation of the law is dependent on conditions. This is the precise reason why it is called “dependent origination” or “*pratītya samutpāda*” - that being present, this becomes; from the arising of that, this arises”. The literal meaning of the phrase ‘*pratītya samutpāda*’ is “arising in correlation with”. Conversely, the law indicates that when the conditions cease to be, the series will cease, or “from the cessation of that, this ceases.”

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

*Pratītya Samutpāda* or the theory of dependent origination is the most significant in early Buddhism. It is central to all the views of the Buddha. Unlike the other causal theories like *svabhāva vāda*, which lead to determinism, Buddha’s views make room for human effort. After the great renunciation, under the bodhi tree, it is the law of contingent causation, which, at last, flashed across Siddhārtha’s mind and made him the ‘Buddha’. The theory states, “that becoming, this becomes or that being absent, this does not become” which means that every



effect has a series of causes and hence the Buddha went on to find the cause of suffering and the method by which with one's own effort, freedom from suffering is possible. Before going on to Buddha's practical teachings it is necessary to examine some of the criticism leveled against Buddhism.

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

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

The world of phenomenal manifestation.

The state of 'thusness' or noumena.

The causal theory of Buddhism usually applies to the phenomenal world but in speaking of the ideal world as realized the latter sense is also applied. Taking the first sense of the term 'dharma dhātu' it refers to the actual world, the realm of all

**Heterodox Systems** elements of phenomenal existence. Causal origination is thus the theory, which sets out the fact that all beings are correlative, interdependent and mutually originating. Matter and mind arise simultaneously due to interdependence. It refers to the totality of all existence- Dharma dhātu, in its reference to the world, speaks of the sphere of saṃsāra (life flux), the cycle of birth and death, which is one of dynamic becoming. Thus, all created beings dependent on the principle of cause and effect are within its realm. Taken in this sense, only the Buddha or enlightened being is outside the dharma dhātu. In the second sense, i.e., in the sense of thusness or noumena, it signifies the state of liberation or 'Nirvāṇa.' It is the stage of cessation of all becoming, it is the true state of all things in the universe, freedom from bondage and the final release from suffering.

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## 16.4 PRACTICAL TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM

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Practical teachings of Buddhism are in conformity with their theoretical philosophy. If all the things in the world are impermanent, then our effort to secure them either for ourselves or for others is meaningless. The very desire for them is a delusion. We must get over desire. More than desiring things, we are overcome with a desire to preserve ourselves. Since there is no self (anattā), we should get over the craving. With the negation of self, all the narrow selfish impulses necessarily disappear, along with the whole range of narrow love and hatred. Since The Belief In Self-identity is false, ignorance or *Avidyā* becomes the true source of all evil. Thus, here in Buddhism, as in the *Upaniṣads*, evil is traced to ignorance and the way to escape from saṃsāra is through right knowledge. But the meaning of '*Avidyā*' in the two teachings is different. *Avidyā* in the *Upaniṣads* represents the ignorance of the essential unity of all existence but in Buddhism, it means the failure to realize the hollowness of herself. The True Knowledge or *vidyā* in Buddhism is called the Arya-Satya or the Four Noble Truths. They are:

Duhkha– Suffering

Samudaya – The origin of suffering – cause of sufferings Nirodha – Removal of suffering

Mārga – The way to remove suffering

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

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

The Second Noble Truth is about the origin of suffering. That there is a cause

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

Ignorance (*Avidyā*)

Action (*Samskāra*)

Consciousness (*vijñāna*)

Name and form (*nāma rūpa*)

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

Contact between the senses and the objects (*sparśa*)

Sensation (*vedanā*)

Desire (*tṛṣṇā*)

Clinging to existence (*upādāna*)

Being (*bhava*)

Re-birth (*jāti*)

Pain old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*)

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

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

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

Right faith (*Samyak Dṛṣṭi*), Right resolve (*Samyak Saṅkalp*), Right speech (*Samyak Vāk*), Right action (*Samyak Karmānt*), Right living (*Samyak*

**Heterodox Systems** Ājīva), Right effort (Samyak Vyāyāma), Right thought (Samyak Smṛti), Right Concentration (Samyak Samādhi).

To put it briefly, prajña or right knowledge of the four-fold truth is the basis of the whole discipline. But prajña does not mean mere intellectual conviction, but it means an intuitive experience. Buddha Said That Salvation Is Possible Only Through Self-reliance. For knowledge to become an internal certainty, śīla and samādhi are necessary. Śīla means right conduct which includes virtues like veracity, contentment and non-injury (ahimsā). Samādhi is meditation, which aids in securing tranquility of mind gaining a clear insight into the truth.

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

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### **16.5 NIRVĀṆA (IN PĀLI, NIBBĀNA)**

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The goal of discipline is Nirvāna. Nirvāna is the Summum Bonum of Buddhism and the person who has attained the ultimate goal is called Arhat. What is Mokṣa to the Hindu, the Tao is to the Chinese mystic, Fana to the Sufi, Eternal Life to the followers of Jesus, that is Nirvāna to the Buddhist. The word Nirvāna literally means, ‘blowing out’ or ‘becoming cool’. It is the blowing out of the fire of lust (rāga), of resentment (doṣa), of glamour (moha). It is thus becoming cool, reaching perfect calm, to be reached within the four corners of the present life. An Arhant, after the dissolution of his body and mind, reaches the state of Pari-Nirvāna. Thus, “blowing-out” and “cooling” is not complete annihilation but the extinction or dying out of hot passion. It is the destruction of the fires of lust, hatred and ignorance. These Two Implications Of Nirvāna, namely, ‘blowing-out and ‘cooling are to be understood as the negative and positive sides of one ultimate state of being which cannot be adequately described in terms of thought but it is given to one’s own experience. Buddha asked his followers to be a light unto themselves.

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### **16.6 KARMA**

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Check Your Progress II**

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

1. Write a note on Four Noble Truths.

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2. Write a note on Buddhist concept of Nirvāna.

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**16.7 LET US SUM UP**

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

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**16.8 KEY WORDS**

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

**The Jātaka Tales** : The Jātaka Tales refer to a voluminous body of folklore-like literature native to India concerning the previous births (jāti) of the Buddha. The word most specifically refers to a text division of the Pāli Canon of Theravada Buddhism, included in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Jātaka also refers to the traditional commentary on this book.

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**16.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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## 16.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. When Siddhārtha (Siddha+ artha) woke up to the fact that the world is full of suffering, his mind got restless to find a solution for the ills of life. In fact, for him the individual instances of suffering were illustrations of a universal problem. Finding that the things of sense are empty, Siddhārtha decided to renounce the comfort of the palace and became a wanderer, for in those days the seekers of light began their search by repudiating the comforts of life and wandering in search of truth.
2. Though Buddhism is a non-Vedic school and essentially different from the *Upaniṣads* in one sense we can say that certain Upanishadic tendencies are carried to their logical conclusions by the Buddha. For example, the *Upaniṣads* are against the belief in a personal God and the Buddha dismisses that conception altogether. So also, the self is explained negatively in the *Upaniṣads* and the Buddha eliminates the conception of self, altogether. Buddha's Belief in Karma doctrine is a clear proof of the connection of Buddhism with the *Upaniṣads*.

### Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. The true knowledge or *vidyā* in Buddhism is called the Ārya-Satya or the Four Noble Truths. They are:
  - Dukkha– Suffering
  - Samudaya – The origin of suffering – cause of sufferings
  - Nirodha – Removal of suffering
  - Mārga – The way to remove suffering
2. The word Nirvāna literally means, 'blowing out' or 'becoming cool'. It is the blowing out of the fire of lust (*rāga*), of resentment (*dosa*), of glamour (*moha*). It is thus becoming cool, reaching perfect calm, to be reached within four corners of the present life. An Arhat (In Saṅskṛt)/Arhant (In Pāli), after the dissolution of his body and mind, reaches the state of Pari-Nirvāna. Thus,

## Heterodox Systems

“blowing-out” and “cooling” is not complete annihilation but the extinction or dying out of hot passion, if it is the destruction of the fires of lust, hatred and ignorance. These Two Implications Of Nirvāṇa, namely, ‘blowing-out’ and ‘cooling’ are to be understood as the negative and positive sides of one ultimate state of being which cannot be adequately described in terms of thought but it is given to one’s own experience. Buddha asked his followers to be a light on to themselves.



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**Structure**

- 17.0 Objectives
- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika Schools
- 17.3 Yogācāra School of Buddhism
- 17.4 Mādhyamik School
- 17.5 Metaphysical Views of the Schools of Buddhism
- 17.6 Śūnyavāda of the Mādhyamikas
- 17.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 17.8 Key Words
- 17.9 Further Readings and References
- 17.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

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**17.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

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

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**17.1 INTRODUCTION**

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

\*Prof. Sudha Gopinath, Koramangala, Bangalore.

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

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

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

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



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

### Check Your Progress I

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

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

1. Write a note on the silence of Buddha.

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2. What are the main divisions of Buddhism.

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## 17.2 VAIBHĀSIKA AND SAUTRĀNTIKA SCHOOLS

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

**Heterodox Systems** They hold that the external objects are not perceived by us directly but are inferred from the perceptions, which are representations or copies of external objects. Therefore the Sautrāntika view is called copy-theory, or representations or representative theory of perception. But they are realists in so far as they do not deny the independent existence of external objects. Where the objects are not really existent, we will have illusions.

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

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### 17.3 YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL OF BUDDHISM

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

The view of Vijñāna Vāda can be summarized as follows:

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

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

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

We can explain all facts of experience on the view that *Vijñāna* manifests the object content from time to time owing to its own internal modification, which are the results of its latest forces or *Vāsanās* i.e., karmic impressions from the past, latent in the stream of consciousness. Just as out of the countless things in our memory, we only recall certain things at certain times, of the myriads of impressions that lie deep in our consciousness, only some rise to the surface at some time and under certain circumstances and appear as objects both internal and external.

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

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## 17.4 MĀDHYAMIKA SCHOOL

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

*Vijñāna Vāda* does not believe in the duality of subject and object and it is a form of *nis-svabhāva vāda*, so also *Mādhyamika* is a form of *nis-svabhāva vāda* for it

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

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

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

Diñnāga says that perception is a source of knowledge which is non-constructive

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

Jāti Kalpanā, having universal as its content

Guna Kalpanā, having an attribute as its content.

Nāma Kalpanā, having a name as its content

Karma Kalpanā, having an action as its content.

Dravya Kalpanā, having a substance as its content.

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

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

### Inference

The cognition of a non perceived object through a perceived object is called inference. It is an indirect cognition, cognition of an object through its “mark”. The inferential judgment is possible only because the ‘mark’ that you see is related to the object yonder by a necessary relation or vyāpti. According to the Buddhists only two types of vyāpti are legitimate. They Are:

Sphere of causation – we can infer fire from smoke because smoke is caused



**Heterodox Systems** by fire. To doubt the law of causation is to take away the meaning from life's activities.

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

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

wherever there is smoke, there must be fire as in the kitchen. There is such a smoke on the hill.

Therefore there must be fire on the hill.

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

Diñnāga gives three rules that should be followed. The presence of the reason in the subject

Its presence is necessarily in all similar instances. It's necessary absence in all dissimilar instances

A fallacy will occur when anyone of these rules are violated.

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## 17.5 METAPHYSICAL VIEWS OF THE SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

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

According to Buddhism, when there is a change, the change is total and there is nothing that remains, which endures the change. For example, according to common sense, when XA changes, it becomes XB; such that X endures and it is the characteristic. A, which becomes B. Buddhism does not accept this view. For them change is total. It is a revolution not an evolution. Going back to our example, XA will become YB, because reality is becoming, change is not only total but perpetual. This follows from their conception of reality according to which, that which is capable of causal efficiency. For example; when a seed becomes a shoot it becomes wholly different without anything called seed surviving-niranvāyana. This causal efficiency is described in Sanskrit as artha-Kriyā Kāritva. To go back to the example taken, causal efficiency means

that when a seed gives rise to shoot the seed series will give rise to the shoot series and the activity is continuous. Also, no extraneous causes are required for the destruction of the thing. Non existence cannot be brought about. If anything does not annihilate itself, nothing can do it. Also, if the thing does not lend itself in the instant following its appearance, there is no reason why it should disappear at all. Hence if things are not momentary, they have to be eternal which is not acceptable.

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

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

Of The Four Schools of Buddhism, the Vaibhāṣika may be described as pluralistic realism. They believe only in the bare particular or the Svalakṣaṇa as what is independent of the perceiver. Time and space are also mental devises and no Svalakṣaṇa by itself has either duration or extension. But these Svalakṣaṇa are not ultimate. They are secondary. The ultimate elements of reality are the atoms. The critics of Vaibhāṣika point out that the Svalakṣaṇa is not able to explain the world view and it can as well be dispensed with. Since it is always accompanied by the subjective categories or sāmānyalakṣanas, the critics say that it is not much of a realism. However the Hīnayānists were not idealists and in attempting to be most loyal to Buddha's teachings, they committed some subtle errors and the dimensionless Svalakṣaṇa is a weakness. To improve on this, the Sautrāntikas advocated the representative theory of perception.

Vijñāna Vāda represents the idealist view-point. They are called Yogācāra because they believe that Buddhahood is attainable through the practice of yoga. In this school, all reality is reduced to thought-relations. The truth is one homogenous Vijñāna which is not an abstract but concrete reality. The whole system of facts is placed within the individual consciousness. It is Ālaya Vijñāna. The Ālaya with its internal duality of subject and object becomes itself a small world. It is confined to its own circle of modifications. The Ālaya which is a continually changing stream of consciousness is contrasted with the Ātman which is immutable. Every individual has in him this vast whole of consciousness, the great tank, and we are not aware of the entire contents. Our personal consciousness knows but a small fraction of the sum total of our

**Heterodox Systems** conscious states, the Ālaya Vijñāna. Particular phenomena are manifestations of the Ālaya according to the number and nature of the conditions. Ālaya Vijñāna is the absolute totality, originality and creativity, unconditioned space and time. Space and time are the modes of existence of the concrete and empirical individuality. Ālaya Vijñāna is the whole containing within itself the knower and the known.

Śaṅkara criticizes this theory on several grounds.

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

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

### Check Your Progress II

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

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

1. What arguments Vijñānavādin give to refute the existence of the external world?

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2. Write a note on the divisions of knowledge in Buddhist philosophy.

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## 17.6 ŚŪNYAVĀDA OF THE MĀDHYAMIKAS

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

The phenomenal nature of the world follows from the doctrine of *pratityasamutpada* or dependent origination. Nothing is by itself. Everything depends on something else. The *Mādhyamika* do not dismiss all dharmas as well as their collections as unreal, though they look upon them as phenomenal and momentary (the word ‘dharma’ here in Buddhism stands for the causal elements). According to the *Mādhyamikas*, if incapacity to explain is sufficient reason to deny the reality of a thing, then, neither external objects nor inner souls are real. The *Yogācāra* argues that external objects are unreal since we cannot say whether they arise from existence or not, from atoms or complex bodies. *Nāgārjuna* goes one step further and says even consciousness or *Vijñāna* is unreal, because we cannot say anything consistent about it. *Mādhyamika* calls the objective world *śūnya*. Empirical reality is designated as *śūnyata*, it is the non-existence of individuality or *puḍgala śūnyata* or *dharmā śūnyata*. This word *śūnya* had been used in early Buddhism but not in the *Mādhyamika* sense. When this word was used by *Hīnayānists*, it was used as the fourth term, along with the usual three terms, namely, *duḥka*, *anitya*, *anātma*. So for the *Hīnayānists*, *śūnya* was used as *anatama*, and *śūnya* connoted no other sense. For the *Mādhyamikas* *śūnyata* is the middle way, it is the logical consequence of *pratityasamutpada*. The *śūnya vādin* is neither a thoroughgoing skeptic nor a cheap nihilist, who doubts and denies the existence of everything for its own sake, or who relishes in shouting that he does not exist. His object is only to show that world-objects when taken to be ultimately real, will be found self-contradictory and relative and hence mere appearances. However, *Nāgārjuna* maintains the empirical reality of all phenomena. *Mādhyamika* is aware that absolute negation is impossible because it necessarily presupposes affirmation. *Nāgārjuna* denies the ultimate reality of both affirmations and negation. *Śūnya* is understood as what is indescribable. It is beyond the four categories of understanding. It is neither affirmation nor negation, nor both affirmation and negation and neither affirmation nor negation. Empirically *śūnya* is relativity and transcendently it is indescribable. Therefore everything is *śūnya*. Appearances are *svabhava śūnya*, that is devoid of ultimate reality.

Reality is *prapañca śūnya* or devoid of plurality. Dialectic is the soul of *Mādhyamika* philosophy. The primary alternatives are the affirmative (*sat –is*) and the negative (*asat –is not*). These are conjunctively affirmed and denied, yielding two derivative alternatives of the form both ‘is’ and ‘is not’ (*sadāsat*) and neither ‘is’ nor ‘is not’ (*na sat naiv asat*). This is the celebrated ‘*catus-koṭi*’ of the *Mādhyamika*. According to *śūnya vādins* he who knows that all empirical dharmas are *śūnya* or devoid of self reality, knows the supreme wisdom of the Buddha. He who knows that all worldly objects are like illusion, dream, echoes of reality reaches blissful *Nirvāṇa*.

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## 17.7 LET US SUM UP

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The practical teachings of the Buddha (early Buddhism) were carried forward almost faithfully by all the followers of Buddhism. That all is suffering and pleasure itself is ‘attenuated suffering’ continues to characterize later doctrines as also that knowledge is the means to overcome it. The course of discipline laid down for *Nirvāṇa* is also the same as before, partly moral and partly intellectual. But the divergence of *Mahāyāna* from *Hīnayāna* is in their conception of the ideal of life. Both *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna* do believe in aspiring for one’s own

**Heterodox Systems** salvation, but in Mahāyānism the salvation is not recommended for its own sake but it is regarded as a qualification to strive for the salvation of others. This is the ideal of Bodhisattva as distinguished from that of the Arhat of the Hīnayāna schools. The bodhisattva, having perfected himself, renounces his own salvation work for the good of others. It is even believed that the Bodhisattva can even transfer his good deeds to others thereby helping them in their struggle for freedom from suffering. This new feature has a special appeal to the layaspirant and that is shown by the large following that is therefore Mahāyāna Buddhism. The other significant change that one notices in the Mahāyāna faith is the deification of Buddha. Buddha is revered as a God. The iconic worship of Buddha became popular by 1st century A.D. the formula of the “Three Jewels”... “I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the doctrine, I take refuge in the order”... became the Buddhist profession of faith and is used by monk and layman alike.

“Buddham sharanam gaccāmi; Dhammam sharanamgaccāmi; Sangam sharanam gaccāmi.”

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## 17.8 KEY WORDS

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**Monastery**

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

**Stimulus**

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

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## 17.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Buddhism as propounded by Gautama Buddha is pragmatic and practical. The chief aim of Buddha's philosophy was to find a way out of suffering. Hence he did not indulge in abstract, metaphysical arguments. A story in one of the Suttas makes this point very clear. Sitting under the Śimśupa tree, the Buddha gathered some leaves and asked his disciples if these were the only leaves on the tree. The disciples said that surely there were many more. Then, the Buddha said, similarly, he knew much more than what he had told the disciples and it was not necessary to say everything, since it has no practical utility.
2. According to scholars, there are four chief schools, of which two belong to the Hīnayāna and two to the Mahāyāna. The Hīnayāna schools are Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas and the Mahāyāna schools are the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikas. Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas are realists or Sarvāstivādins. They believe in a self-existent universe actually in space and time while the Yogācāras are idealists and the Mādhyamikas believe in Śūnyavāda.

### Answers to Check Your Progress II

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

## Heterodox Systems

ways, and sometimes the same person differently at different times. The Yogācāra argues that this is so because really there is no object out there. The above arguments do not assume the dimension of a proof of subjective idealism because these thinkers forget that the contact apprehended may have a subjective side and may at the same time, point to a real object outside.

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



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