Explain the Mimamsa theory of knowledge in detail.

Mimamsa in sanskrit, means “reflection”, “revered thought” or “critical investigation’. Also known as Purva-mimamsa or Karma Mimamsa is one of the six orthodox schools of Hinduism.

**The Mimamsa theory of Knowledge**

The validity of knowledge is defined as getting an information about something, which is not contradicted by another knowledge. Knowledge arisen from the determinate source is accepted as valid. Evidence is required for falsity of truth.

Mimamsa prominently discusses the validity of knowledge, criterion of truth, and falsity and sources of knowledge. In Mimamsa, the theory of intrinsic validity, called swatahpramanyavada is given greater credence.

Mimamsa admits two kind of valid knowledge, immediate and mediate, in terms of perception, called pratyaksha. Percetion, which is completed in two stages, gives the real knowledge of the world, composed of different objects.

**Nature and sources of knowledge**

The **pramana**, enable a person to have correct cognitions of the world. When the information flows from the five senses, called pramanas, to the mind, called manas, and ultimately realised by the soul, it is termed as Immediate knowledge. At the sensory level, it is the bare knowledge, and the subject knows the object, and it is not known what it is. This primary, intermediate and immediate knowledge is called nirvikalpa pratyaksha, or **alocana jnana**.

At the next level, the knowledge of object is processed, with the light of the subjects past knowledge, and comes to understand what it is, about its qualities, and the name it possesses. At this level, the subject gets a determinate perception, called savikalpa pratyaksha.

Non perceptual sources of Knowledge

There are five other valid sources of knowledge, admitted by Mimamsa :

1. Inference, called Anumana:
2. Comparison, Called Upamana:
3. Authority or testimony, Called Sabda:
4. Postulation, called Arthapati:
5. Non-perception, called anuplabdhi:

Inference, called Anumana: is the knowledge of objects, not through perception, but through the apprehension of some mark, called Linga, which is invariably related to the inferred objects, called sadhya. There is an invariable relation between the two, called vyapti.

Comparison, called Upamana: The term upamana can be translated as comparison, analogy, identification, knowledge by similarity or knowledge by assimilation, etc. Upamana is derived from the words 'upa’ meaning ‘sadrsya’ or “similary” and “mana” meaning “cognition” (upa Mat lyut). Upamana derivatively means the knowledge of the similarity between two things. In Mimamsa, comparison is perceived as the knowledge of an object, which is experienced, is related to the experience of objects perceived in the past.

**Authority, or Testimony called sabda**: The source of knowledge is given great attention in Mimamsa philosophy, and it is also prominent in the Vedas. IT could be defined as knowledge derived from the words spoken or written by an authoritative Individual, is personal testimony, called Pauruseya, Authority may give information about the existence of something, called Siddhartha-Vakya or provide mere directions about the existence of the action, called Vidhaya-vakya.

The knowledge derived from the Vedas, is impersonal, called apauruseya. The vedas provide the directions for performing sacrificial rites, which extend to show all existential sentences, regarding, soul, immortality, etc. The vedas are considered as the book of commandments. This supports the modern pragmatism which holds that every type of knowledge, could be ordinary, scientific, or philosophical, should be valuable only when it leads to some practical activity.

**Postulation, called Arthapati**: is the necessary supposition of the unperceived fact, which alone can explain the phenomenon that demands explanation. If, a fact is not being explained by a single instance, or understanding, it requires another fact which could be supposed, or postulated, in order to obtain knowledge about the existence of the first fact.

Non-Perception, called Anuplabdhi: Non perception, called anuplabdhi, of an object is its non impact on any of the perceptions. If no perceptions are simulated, by the object, it is perceived to be non existent.

This is accepted only by the Bhatta school of Mimamsa.

2. Make a detailed exposition of the Samkhya theory of evolution.

Samkhya System, founded by Sage Kapila, is a philosophy of dualist realism. The self is different from the body and the senses, the manas, and the intellect. Purusa is the Self, which has the characteristics of intellect, and the consciousness (caitanya). The eternal unconsciousness principle is the Prakriti, is the ultimate cause of the world. Prakriti has three main characteristics, called gunas, namely, Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva.

Theory of Evolution:

As per Samkhya, the point of contact, called samyog, between Purusa, the self, and the prakriti, or primal matter, is the starting point of the evolution. The point of contact, called samyoga, is a sort of effective relation through which primal matter, prakriti, is influenced, by the presence of self, the Purusa.

The existence, of Purusa or Prakriti alone could not result in the theory of world. The intelligence of Purusa, guides the process of evolution, but cannot do anything on its own. The Prakriti, does not have any consciousness or intellect to make any decisive moves, and is directed from inactiveness to activation. It is only the cooperation of Purusa and Priakriti, which results in the creation of world objects. The geometrically opposite nature of Purusa and Prakriti, lead together the world objects, just like a blind man is guided by the lame man. Prakriti is appreciated by Purusa, called darshanartham. Purursa requires prakriti, to discriminate itself from the latter, and thereby attain liberation, called kaivalartham, as the oxen are different from the cart they draw.

The contact between Purusa and Prakriti creates a disturbance in the equilibrium, which is present between the three gunas. Although this creates a chaos, which is existent almost everywhere in the universe, it is a systemised chaos, as opposed to the randomised chaos, as exists on other planets of the solar system and the universe beyond. The contact produces a tremendous commotion in the infinite bosom of prakriti, and each of the three gunas tries to preponderate over the rest.

The first product of evolution after the contact is called mahat, or buddhi. It is a psychological aspect. Special functions of Buddhi are ascertainment and decision making. The subject makes the distinction between subject and object through intellect. The budhhi, at this level has the purest existence in the Sattvic form, which means the characteristic, guna, of Sattva form. It has the attributes of virtue, called dharma, knowledge, called gyana, detachment, called vairagya, and excellence, called aisvarya. When Buddhi is vitiated by the next guna, tamas, it has contrary attributes as vice, called adharma, ignorance, called agyana, attachment, called asakti or avairagya and imperfection, called anaisvarya. The purusa attaches itself to Buddhi and start to classify it as itself. Buddhi stands nearest to consciousness.

Ego, called Ahankara, is the second product of prakriti, which is formed as the contact, or samyog happens. This is the next product of mahat. Ahankara, or ego is the feeling of “I and mine”, or Abhimana. It is ahankara, which the self considers itself, as the agent or the cause of actions. Ahankara considers itself as the owner of properties. Ahankara could be existence in the predominance of any of the three gunas. It could be Sattvika, with the element of Sattva predominating, taijas, or rajas, when Rajas predominates and bhutadi, or tamas, when Tamas predominates. With the predominance of sattva, it arises eleven object, the manas, the five organs of perception, called gyanindriyas, and the five organs of actions, called karmendriyas. The third charcteristic, or Tamas, derives the five subtle elements, called tanmantras. These tanmantras, or the five subtle elements, evolve into the five gross elements of earth, water, light, air, and ether. The second characteristic, or Rajas, is concerned into both the first, Sattva, and third, Tamas. It supplies the energy needed for the transformation of Sattva into Tamas and its products.

The five organs of perceptions, buddhindriyas, are developed by Ahankara, for the enjoyment of the self. The mind is the central organ which partakes the nature of the organs of both knowledge and action. The mind, ego and intellect are internal organs, or antahkarana, and the organs of action are the external organs, of bahyakarana.

The evolution of Prakriti into world objects makes it possible for the selves to enjoy or suffer the consequences their good actions, or merits, or bad actions, or demerits.

3. Answer any two of the following questions in about 250 words each:

a) Discuss the salient features of Indian philosophy.

Indian Philosophy refers to the philosophy, or the set of philosophies which originated in the Indian soil, not limited to our country named India, but includes the areas which were having the same set of ideas in the South Asian Peninsular region. “Philosophy” is the nearest word for the Indian equivalent of “Darshana”.

Salient features of Indian Philosophy

1. Moksha or Liberation is the ultimate goal of life. It is also the highest form which could be attained by an individual. Some philosophies also refer to as Nirvaan, mukti and Kaivalya. The puranas describe life and death as a continuous cycle, and liberation is to free oneself from these cycles. The four values which are proper goals, or the ultimeate aims in life are termed as Purusharthas, which are Dharma, which is righteousness, or moral values, Artha, which is prosperity or economic values, Kama, which is pleasure or psychological values and Moksha which is liberation. Artha and Kama are lower values, and Dharma and Moksha are higher values.
2. The seekers of truth are expected to live the life of renunciation, and a life of detachment, which will lead to external solace. Suffering, or pain is believed to be the main motivator to attain moksha. Non attachment, opens up and purifies the mind, and leads to pure and perfect wisdom and self-illumination.
3. The darker side of life, which is suffering, pain and sorrow are emphasised quite highly. Indian philosophy starts with pessimism, and moves to optimism and culminates in eternal pragmatism. The seekers find ways to eradicate and eliminate suffering, and enjoy the life of bliss, or ananda. This is termed as Parmananda, or sat chid ananda.
4. The law of karma has been given a high importance. All actions yield results, and the efficacy of fruits Is karma. The karmas are deposited in our intellect, and consciousness, and are termed as Sanchit Karma.
5. Religion is an important part of philosophy. Vedic religion, or sanatan dharma is the starting point of Indian philosophy. Visista Advaita and Dvaita are primarily based on Vaishnava traition, and Saiva Sidhhanta is based on saivic tradition

b) Explain the Atomic theory of Vaisesika.

Atom, or Parmanu, is considered as the minutest particle which could not be further broken into subtypes. This should not be confused with the atom, as used in modern science or Quantum Physics. All physical things are composed of atoms.

A Dravya, or substance, is the element in which a quality or action can exist. The Dravyas in this philosophy are of nine types, in which first four are physical, viz, earth, or Prithvi, water, or jala, light, or tejas, air, or vayu. When an element is broken into smaller to smallest parts, we reach a level after which the part could not be broken or separated into smaller part. These indivisible or inseparable parts are called Paramanus, or atoms. If we do not believe in indivisibility, this will be the fallacy of infinite regression. Hence, these parmanus could neither be produced or destroyed, and hence are considered eternal. The atoms for the elements are different from each other in quality, and characteristics. Each atom has its own separate reality.

The atomic theory of vaisesikha explains the part of the world which is non eternal. All composite objects, begin with combination of two atoms, called dyad, or dvyanukas, or the first compound, and the combination of three atoms is called triad, or tryanukas. The atomic theory deals with the creation and destruction of these non-eternal objects. The destruction is defined by the separation of these combinations. Further, more types of compounds arise from these dyads and triads.

The universe, which is a combination of physical bodies, mind, intellect, and egoism, exists and interact with one another in time and space, akasha.

Vaisesikha agrees to the existence of Soul, or atma, and god, parmatma, and also agrees to the law of karma. The physical world presupposes the moral order. The universal law, or adrsta, is the process of creative will of god. Directed by adrsta, the soul makes contact with atom, and primeval motion comes into being. The creation and annihilation is actually orderly and morally systemisated composition and decomposition of compounds.

4. Answer any four of the following in about 150 words each:

a) How many elements of the material world do the Carvakas believe in?

Carvaka is the heterodox school of philosophy. They believed that perception, or pratyaksha, is the only valid source of knowledge, called pramana. Hence they held that nothing exists except the five senses, and refuted the inference, or anumana and testimony, or sabda.

Carvakas established that materialism is the only theory that matter is the only reality. Only material objects can be perceived and their reality could be asserted.

They hold that matter is composed of only four kinds of elements, or mahabhuta, namely, air, or vayu, fire, or agni, water or ap, and earth, or ksiti. Carvakas did not consider ether, which is unlike other schools. Thee four elements are gross forms, rather than subtle. Material objects, as well as living organisms, are composed of these four elements and their composition. They are produced by these elements and decomposed at death.

The consciousness was perceived by Carvakas, as a quality of the body, composed of material elements, as an afterglow of matter. The soul was understood, as the conscious living body itself, as caitanya visista deha eva atma.

b) What is Avidya according to Advaita Vedanta?