

Indeterminate Substance (e.g. of Spinoza), the Primordial Principle (e.g. of Whitehead). The exact sense in which 'God' has been used in this book will be clear from the context. Confinement of 'God' only to the Deity of Religion, and of 'Absolute' to the ultimate philosophical principle, while convenient in one respect, suffers from the disadvantage of suggesting as though they stand for two distinct realities, and not for two aspects of the same reality, as is the case in the Vedānta.

#### PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The authors feel highly gratified that the book is now being widely used in India, America, Great Britain and other countries, and that another edition has been called for so soon. This gives an opportunity for further revision and improvement. The authors are grateful to Professor Charles A. Moore of the University of Hawaii and all other teachers of Philosophy who favoured them with their opinions and suggestions for some improvements in the previous editions. They also express their thanks to Sri S. Kanjilal, Superintendent of the Calcutta University Press, and his colleagues for their help in bringing out this edition in time.

#### PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

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## Module 1:

### Indian Philosophical Thought

#### CHAPTER I

##### General Introduction

#### THE BASIC FEATURES OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

##### 1. The Nature of Philosophy

Like all other living beings, man struggles for existence. But while the lower beings struggle more or less blindly without any conscious plan and purpose, and work by instinct, man uses the superior gift of his intellect to understand the conditions and meaning of the struggle and to devise plans and instruments to ensure success. He wishes to lead his life in the light of his knowledge of himself and the world, taking into consideration not merely the immediate results of his actions, but even their far-reaching consequences. Desire for knowledge springs, therefore, from the rational nature of man. Philosophy is an attempt to satisfy this very reasonable desire. It is not, therefore, a mere luxury, but a necessity. As an eminent English writer puts it: 'Men live in accordance with their philosophy of life, their conception of the world. This is true even of the most thoughtless. It is impossible to live without a metaphysic. The choice that is given us is not between some kind of metaphysic and no

metaphysic; it is always between a good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic.<sup>1</sup>

Philosophy in its widest etymological sense means 'love of knowledge'. It tries to search for knowledge of himself, the world and God? These are some of the many problems, taken at random, which we find agitating the human mind in every land, from the very dawn of civilisation. Philosophy deals with problems of this nature. As philosophy aims at the knowledge of truth, it is termed in Indian literature, 'the vision'. Every Indian school holds, in its own way, that there can be a direct realisation of truth (tattvadarśana). A man of realisation becomes free; one who lacks it is entangled in the world.<sup>2</sup>

In the history of Western philosophy, we find that as human knowledge about each of the different problems mentioned above began to grow, it became impossible for the same man to study everything about every problem. Division of labour or specialisation became necessary and a group of men devoted themselves to a particular problem or a few connected problems. There came into existence in this way the different special sciences. Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Astronomy, Geology and similar sciences, each took up a part or aspect of the world of nature. Physiology, Anatomy and the other medical sciences devoted themselves to the different problems of the human body. Psychology began to study the problems of the human mind. The detailed study of many of the particular problems with which philosophical speculation originally started became thus the subject-matter of the *special sciences*. Philosophy then began to depend on the reports of the investigation made by the different sciences, tried to understand their meanings and implications critically, and utilised these results for understanding the *general nature of the universe—man, nature and God*.

1. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 252.

2. Vide *Manu-Saṁhitā*, 6.74: 'Samyaṅ-darśana-sampannah karmabhirna nibadhyate; darśanena vihīnastu saṁsāram pratiṣṭadyate.'

Western philosophy at the present day has for its main branches (a) Metaphysics, which discusses the general problems regarding reality—man, nature and God; (b) Epistemology or theory of knowledge, which enquires into the nature of human knowledge, as to how it develops and how far it is able to grasp reality; (c) Logic, which discusses the laws of valid reasoning and other incidental problems; (d) Ethics, which investigates the problems of morality, such as the standard of moral judgment, the highest goal of human life and other cognate problems; and (e) Aesthetics, which deals with the problems of beauty. Another recent development of philosophy in the West, called Axiology, is devoted to the discussion of the problem of values. Social Philosophy is also regarded as a branch of philosophy and often discussed along with Ethics. Psychology had been for long a very important branch of philosophy, but the tendency now is to treat it as one of the special sciences like Physics and Chemistry and give it a place independent of philosophy.

Though the basic problems of philosophy have been the same in the East as in the West and the chief solutions have striking similarities, yet the methods of philosophical enquiry differ in certain respects and the processes of the development of philosophical thought also vary. Indian philosophy discusses the different problems of Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic, Psychology and Epistemology, but generally it does not discuss them separately. Every problem is discussed by the Indian philosopher from all possible approaches, metaphysical, ethical, logical, psychological and epistemological. This tendency has been called by some thinkers, like Sir B.N. Seal, the synthetic outlook of Indian philosophy.

## 2. The Meaning and Scope of Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy denotes the philosophical speculations of all Indian thinkers, ancient or modern, Hindus or non-Hindus.

theists or atheists. 'Indian philosophy' is supposed by some to be synonymous with 'Hindu philosophy'. This would be true only if the word 'Hindu' were taken in the geographical sense of 'Indian'. But if 'Hindu' means the followers of a particular religious faith known as Hinduism, the supposition would be wrong and misleading. Even in the ancient writings of the orthodox Hindu philosophers, like the *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha* of Mādhyavācārya which tries to present in one place the views of all (sarva) schools of philosophy, we find in the list of philosophies (darśanas) the views of atheists and materialists like the Cārvākas, and unorthodox thinkers like the Buddhists and the Jainas, along with those of the orthodox Hindu thinkers.

Indian philosophy is marked, in this respect, by a striking breadth of outlook which only testifies to its unflinching devotion to the search for truth. Though there were many different schools and their views differed sometimes very widely, yet each school took care to learn the views of all the others and did not come to any conclusion before considering thoroughly what others had to say and how their points of view could be met. This spirit led to the formation of a method of philosophical discussion. A philosopher had first to state the views of his opponent's case which came to be known as the prior view (*pūrvapakṣa*). Then followed the refutation (*khaṇḍana*) of this view. Last of all came the statement and proof of the philosopher's own position, which, therefore, was known as the subsequent view (*uttarapakṣa*) or the conclusion (*siddhānta*).

This catholic spirit of treating rival positions with consideration was more than rewarded by the thoroughness and perfection that most of the Indian schools attained. If we open a comprehensive work on the Vedānta, we will find in it the statement of the views of all other schools—Cārvāka, Buddhist, Jaina, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika—discussed and weighed with all care; similarly any good work on the Buddhist or Jaina philosophy discusses the other views. The systems thus became encyclopaedic

in their grasp of ideas. Naturally we find that many of the problems of contemporary Western philosophy are discussed in Indian systems of philosophy. Besides, we find that indigenous scholars with a thorough training, exclusively in Indian philosophy, are able to deal even with abstruse problems of Western philosophy with surprising skill.

If the openness of mind—the willingness to listen to what others have to say—has been one of the chief causes of the wealth and greatness of Indian philosophy in the past, it has a definite moral for the future. If Indian philosophy is once more to revive and continue its great career, it can do so only by taking into consideration the new ideas of life and reality which have been flowing into India from the West and the East, from the Aryan, the Semitic, the Mongolian and other sources.

### *3 The Schools of Indian Philosophy*

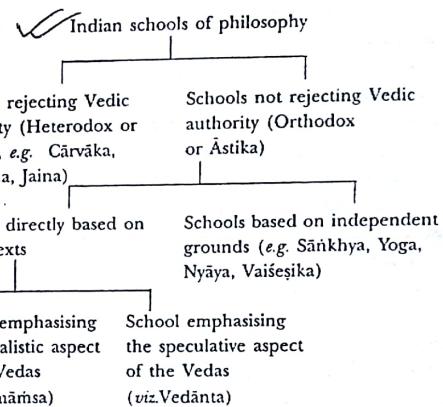
According to a traditional principle of classification, most likely adopted by orthodox Hindu thinkers, the schools or systems of Indian philosophy are divided into two broad classes, namely, orthodox (āstika) and heterodox (nāstika). To the first group belong the six chief philosophical systems (popularly known as śad-darśana), namely, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. These are regarded as orthodox (āstika), not because they believe in God, but because they accept the authority of the Vedas.<sup>3</sup> The Mīmāṃsā and the Sāṅkhya do not believe in

3. In modern Indian languages, 'āstika' and 'nāstika' generally mean 'theist' and 'atheist', respectively. But in Sanskrit philosophical literature, 'Āstika' means 'one who believes in the authority of the Vedas' or 'one who believes in life after death'. ('Nāstika' means the opposite of these). The word is used here in the first sense. In the second sense, even the Jaina and Buddhist schools are 'āstika', as they believe in life after death. The six orthodox schools are 'āstika', and the Cārvāka is 'nāstika' in both the senses.

God as the creator of the world, yet they are called orthodox (*āstika*), because they believe in the authoritativeness of the Vedas. The six systems mentioned here are not the only orthodox systems; they are the chief ones, and there are some other less important orthodox schools, such as the Grammarian school, the medical school, etc., also noticed by Mādhyavācārya. Under the other class of heterodox systems, the chief three are the schools of the Materialists like the Cārvākas, the Buddhists and the Jainas. They are called heterodox (*nāstika*) because they do not believe in the authority of the Vedas.

To understand this more clearly, we should know something regarding the place of the Vedas in the evolution of Indian thought. The Vedas are the earliest available records of Indian literature, and subsequent Indian thought, specially philosophical speculation, is greatly influenced by the Vedas, either positively or negatively. Some of the philosophical systems accepted Vedic authority, while others opposed it. The Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta may be regarded as the direct continuation of the Vedic culture. The Vedic tradition had two sides, ritualistic and speculative (karma and Jñāna). The Mīmāṃsā emphasised the ritualistic aspect and evolved a philosophy to justify and help the continuation of the Vedic rites and rituals. The Vedānta emphasised the speculative aspect of the Vedas and developed an elaborate philosophy out of Vedic speculations. As both these schools were direct continuations of Vedic culture, both are sometimes called by the common name, Mīmāṃsā; and for the sake of distinction, the first is called Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā (or Karma-Mīmāṃsā) and the second, Uttara-Mīmāṃsā (or Jñāna-Mīmāṃsā). But the more usual names of these two are Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta respectively, and we shall follow this common usage here. Though the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika based their theories on ordinary human experience and reasoning, they did not challenge the authority of the Vedas, but tried to show that the testimony of the Vedas was quite in harmony with their rationally established

theories. The Cārvāka, Buddhist and Jaina schools arose mainly by opposition to the Vedic culture and, therefore, they rejected the authority of the Vedas. These facts may be summed up in a tabular form as follows:



#### 4. The Places of Authority and Reasoning in Indian Philosophy

The distinctions discussed above can be ultimately traced to distinctions in the methods of speculation, adopted by the different schools.

Solutions of philosophical problems, like 'What is the ultimate cause of the world?', 'Does God exist?', 'What is the nature of God?', cannot be obtained by observation. The philosopher must employ his imagination and reasoning, and find out answers consistent with truths already established by experience. Like most other branches of knowledge, philosophy proceeds, therefore, from the known to the unknown. The foundation of philosophy

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is experience, and the chief tool used is reason. But the question that arises here: 'What experience should form the basis of philosophy?' Indian thinkers are not unanimous on this point.

Some hold that philosophy should be based on ordinary, normal experience, i.e., on truths discovered and accepted by people in general or by scientists. This is the view of most modern European thinkers. In India the Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika, the Sāṅkhya and the Cārvāka schools accept this view; the Buddha and the Jaina schools also accept it mostly. On the other hand, there are thinkers who hold that regarding some matters, such as God, the state of liberation, etc., we cannot form any correct idea from ordinary experience; philosophy must depend for these on the experience of those few saints, seers or prophets who have a direct realisation (*sāksātkāra* or *darśana*) of such things. Authority, or the testimony of reliable persons and scriptures thus forms the basis of philosophy. The Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta schools follow this method. They base many of their theories on the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. Even the Buddha and the Jaina schools depend sometimes on the teachings of Buddha and Jainas who are regarded as perfect and omniscient. In Europe, the scholastic philosophy of the middle ages was based similarly on the authority of the Christian scriptures.

Reasoning is the chief instrument of speculation for philosophers of both these classes. The difference is that while by the former reasoning is always made to follow the lead of ordinary experience, by the latter, reasoning is made to follow in some matters the lead of authority as well.

The charge is often heard against Indian Philosophy that its theories are not based on independent reasoning but on authority and, therefore, they are dogmatic, rather than critical. This charge is clearly not true of the majority of Indian systems which are as much based on free thinking as any we can find in the West even in this modern age of critical speculation. The criticism may be chiefly levelled against the two systems of the Mīmāṃsā

and the Vedānta which, we have found, give an important place to authority. Though these systems start from authority, the theories they develop are supported also by such strong independent arguments that even if we withdraw the support of authority, the theories can stand well and compare favourably with any theory established elsewhere on independent reasoning alone. Man, as a rational creature, cannot of course be satisfied unless his reason is satisfied. But if arguments in favour of a philosophy are sufficient to satisfy his reason, the additional fact of its being based on the experiences of persons of clearer minds and purer hearts would only add to its value.

## 5 How the Indian Systems Gradually Developed :

In the history of Western philosophy we usually find the different schools coming into existence successively. Each school predominates till another comes in and replaces it. In India, on the other hand, we find that the different schools, though not originating simultaneously, flourish together during many centuries, and pursue parallel courses of growth. The reason is to be sought perhaps in the fact that in India philosophy was a part of life. As each system of thought came into existence it was adopted as a philosophy of life by a band of followers who formed a school of that philosophy. They *lived* the philosophy and handed it down to succeeding generations of followers who were attracted to them through their lives and thoughts. The different systems of thought thus continued to exist through unbroken chains of successive adherents for centuries. Even today, we find the active followers of some of the chief philosophical schools in different parts of India, though development of indigenous philosophy has been much retarded now, owing to social and political vicissitudes.

It should not be supposed, however, that the different systems developed within their respective circles of active followers,

without mutually influencing one another. On the contrary, as we have pointed out previously, each philosophy regarded it as its duty to consider and satisfy all possible objections that might be raised against its views. In fact, it is by constant mutual criticism that the huge philosophical literature has come into existence. Owing to this, again, there developed a passion for clear and precise enunciation of ideas and for guarding statements against objections. Mutual criticism further makes Indian philosophy its own best critic.

Bearing this fact of mutual influence in mind we may try to understand the general process by which the systems originated and developed. The Vedas, we have said, are directly or indirectly responsible for most of the philosophical speculations. In the orthodox schools, next to the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, we find the sūtra literature marking the definite beginning of systematic philosophical thinking. 'Sūtra' etymologically means 'thread' and in this context it means a brief mnemonic statement. As philosophical discussions took place mostly orally, and as they were passed down through oral traditions handed down by teachers to students, it was perhaps felt necessary to link up or thread together the main thoughts in the minds of students by brief statements of problems, answers, possible objections and replies to them. A sūtra-work consists of a collection of many sūtras or aphorisms of this kind, arranged into different chapters and sections according to different topics. The Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, for example, contains the aphorisms that sum up and systematise the philosophical teachings of different Vedic works, chiefly the Upaniṣads, and also briefly mention and answer actual and possible objections to these views. This work is the first systematic treatise on the Vedānta. Similarly, we have for the Mīmāṃsā, the sūtras of Jaimini, for the Nyāya, the sūtras of Gotama, for the Vaiśeṣika, the sūtras of Kaṇāda, for the Yoga, the sūtras of Patañjali. According to tradition, for the Sāṅkhya also there were the sūtras of Kapila, who is regarded as the

founder of the system. But the sūtras now available are not recognised by all as the original sūtras. The earliest systematic work available now is the Sāṅkhya-kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa.

The sūtras were brief and, therefore, their meanings were not always clear. There arose thus the necessity for elaborate explanation and interpretation through commentaries. These chief commentaries on the respective sūtras were called the Bhāṣyas, the names and further particulars about which will be found later in the chapters on the different schools. But it should be noted that, in some cases, on the same sūtra-work different authors wrote different major commentaries (bhāṣyas) and interpreted the sūtras to justify their respective standpoints. Thus came into existence, for example, the different Bhāṣyas as on the Brahma-sūtra by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka, Baladeva and others. The followers of each interpretation formed into a school of the Vedānta and there arose the many schools of the Vedānta itself.

As time went on, commentaries on commentaries arose and sometimes independent works also were written to supply handbooks or to justify, elaborate or criticise existing doctrines. The philosophical literature of the orthodox schools developed in this way. The history of the development of the heterodox schools is also more or less the same. They do not start, however, from any sūtra-work of the above kind. The accounts of these will be given in the chapters dealing with those schools.

Though the different schools were opposed to one another in their teachings, a sort of harmony among them was also conceived by the Indian thinkers. They believed that all persons were not fit for all things and that in religious, philosophical and social matters we should take into consideration these differences and recognise consequent distinctions of natural aptitudes (adhibhātla). The different philosophical disciplines, as already pointed out, were taken in India as the different ways of shaping practical lives. Consequently, it was all the more

necessary to discriminate the fitness of their followers. The many systems of philosophy beginning from the materialism of the Cārvāka school and ending with the Vedānta of Śaṅkara were thus conceived to offer different paths for philosophical thinking and living to persons of differing qualifications and temperaments. But even apart from this pragmatic explanation, we can discover in these schools, outwardly opposed, many positive points of agreement, which may be regarded as the common marks of Indian culture.

#### 6. The Common Characters of the Indian Systems

The philosophy of a country is the cream of its culture and civilisation. It springs from ideas that prevail in its atmosphere and bears its unconscious stamp. Though the different schools of Indian philosophy present a diversity of views, we can discern even in them the common stamp of an Indian culture. We may briefly describe this unity as the unity of moral and spiritual outlook. To understand this, let us consider its main aspects and illustrate points of agreement among the different schools.

(1) The most striking and fundamental point of agreement, which we have already discussed partly, is that all the systems regard philosophy as a practical necessity and cultivate it in order to understand how life can be best led. The aim of philosophical wisdom is not merely the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, but mainly an enlightened life led with far-sight, foresight and insight. It became a custom, therefore, with an Indian writer to explain, at the beginning of his work, how it serves human ends (*puruṣārtha*).

But it should also be remembered that the presence of a practical motive did not narrow the scope of Indian philosophy to Ethics and Theology alone as some Western critics<sup>4</sup> would like

4. E.g., Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 3; Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 14.

to believe. Not only from theoretic motives; but even on theoretical grounds some branches of Indian philosophy, like Metaphysics, Epistemology and Logic can easily hold their own against any system of the West.

(2) The reason why the practical motive prevails in Indian philosophy lies in the fact that every system, pro-Vedic or anti-Vedic, is moved to speculation by a spiritual disquiet at the sight of the evils that cast a gloom over life in this world and it wants to understand the source of these evils and incidentally, the nature of the universe and the meaning of human life, in order to find some means for completely overcoming life's miseries.

The attitude of the mind which looks at the dark side of things is known as pessimism. Indian philosophy has often been criticised as pessimistic and, therefore, pernicious in its influence on practical life. How far this criticism is justified will be seen in the course of this book. But one general point should be noted here. Indian philosophy is pessimistic in the sense that it works under a sense of discomfort and disquiet at the existing order of things. It discovers and strongly asserts that life, as it is being thoughtlessly led, is a mere sport of blind impulses and unquenchable desires; it inevitably ends in and prolongs misery. But no Indian system stops with this picture of life as a tragedy. It perhaps possesses more than a literary significance that even an ancient Indian drama rarely ends as a tragedy. If Indian philosophy points relentlessly to the miseries that we suffer through short-sightedness, it also discovers a message of hope. The essence of Buddha's enlightenment—the four noble truths—sums up and voices the real view of every Indian school in this respect, namely, there is suffering; there is a cause of suffering; there is cessation of suffering; there is a way to attain it. Pessimism in the Indian systems is only initial and not final.<sup>5</sup> The influence

5. For a full discussion of this point, see Introduction to Prof. Radha Krishnan's *Indian philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 49-50.

of such pessimism on life is more wholesome than that of uncritical optimism. An eminent American teacher rightly points out: 'Optimism seems to be more immoral than Pessimism, for Pessimism warns us of danger, while Optimism lulls into false security.'<sup>6</sup>

(3) The outlook which prevents the Indian mind from ending in despair and guarantees its final optimism is what may be described as spiritualism after William James. 'Spiritualism,' says James, 'means the affirmation of an eternal moral order and letting loose of hope.' 'This need of an eternal moral order is one of the deepest needs of our breast. And those poets, like Dante and Wordsworth, who live on the conviction of such an order, owe to that fact the extraordinary tonic and consoling power of their verse.'<sup>7</sup> The firm faith in 'an eternal moral order' dominates the entire history of Indian philosophy, barring the solitary exception of the Cārvāka materialists. It is the common atmosphere of faith in which all these systems, Vedic and non-Vedic, theistic and atheistic, move and breathe. The faith in an order—a law that makes for regularity and righteousness and works in the gods, the heavenly bodies and all creatures—pervades the poetic imagination of the seers of *Rg-veda* which calls this inviolable moral order *Rta*.<sup>8</sup> This idea gradually shapes itself (a) into the Mīmāṃsā conception of *apūrva*, the law that guarantees the future enjoyment of the fruits of rituals performed now, (b) into the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of *adṛṣṭa*, the unseen principle which sways even over the material atoms and brings about objects and events in accordance with moral principles, and (c) into the general conception of karma, which is accepted by all Indian systems. The law of karma in its different aspects, may be regarded as the law of the conservation of moral values,

6. George Herbert Palmer, *Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. I. p. 51.

7. *Pragmatism*, pp. 106-107.

8. Cf. *Rg-veda*, 1.1.8, 1.23.5, 1.24.9, 1.123.13, *passim*.

merits and demerits of actions. This law of conservation means that there is no loss of the effect of work done (*kṛtaprāṇāśa*) and that there is no happening of events to a person except as the result of his own work (*akṛtābhypagama*). The law of karma is accepted by the six orthodox schools, as well as the Jainas and the Buddhists. It will be more fully explained when we come to these systems.

In general, the law of *karma* (action) means that all actions, good or bad, produce their proper consequences in the life of the individual who acts, provided they are performed with a desire for the fruits thereof. This law helps us to explain certain differences in individual beings, which cannot be explained by the known circumstances of their lives. It is not infrequently that we find that men who are born and brought up under the same or similar circumstances differ very much in respect of their achievements and enjoyments in life. Some men are happy and some miserable, some wise and some ignorant. We see also how some virtuous men suffer and many wicked people prosper in this world. How are we to explain these variations and anomalies in our worldly life? Some of them, we find, are obviously due to the different actions performed by us in this present life. But many of them cannot be explained by reference to the deeds of this life. Now if some good or bad actions are thus found to produce certain good or bad effects in the present life, it is quite reasonable to maintain that all actions—past, present and future—will produce their proper effects in this or another life of the individuals who act. The law of karma is this general moral law which governs not only the life and destiny of all individual beings, but even the order and arrangement of the physical world.

The word *karma* means both this law and also the force generated by an action and having the potency of bearing fruit. Karma in the second sense is variously classified. According to one principle, karmas are broadly divided into (a) those which

have not yet begun to bear fruits (*anārabdha karma*), and those which have already begun to bear fruits like the present body and its accompaniments (*ārabdha* or *prārabdha karma*). *Anārabdha karma* again can be subdivided into two classes, accordingly as it is accumulated from past lives (*praktana* or *sāncita karma*) or is being gathered in this life (*kriyamāna* or *sānciyamāna karma*).<sup>9</sup>

Some systems of Indian philosophy like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika believe that the law of karma is under the guidance and control of God the Supreme Being who creates the world in accordance with the law. It is here held that the *adṛṣṭa* or the stock of merits and demerits of karmas of the individual souls, cannot by itself lead to their proper effects, because it is an unintelligent and unconscious principle. It is God who controls our *adṛṣṭa* and dispenses all the joys and sorrows of our life in accordance with our karma. In some other systems, e.g. the Jaina, the Buddha, the Sāṅkhya and the Mīmāṃsā, the law of karma is autonomous and works independently of the will of God. These systems hold that the origin and order of the world may be explained by the law of karma without the supposition of God. But it should be noted here that whatever may be the status of the law of karma, it has a limited application to the world of actions done under the influence of the ordinary passions and desires of the worldly life. All actions, of which the motives are desires for certain gains here or hereafter, are governed by this law. Disinterested and passionless actions, if any, do not produce any fettering effect or bondage just as a fried seed does not germinate. The law, therefore, holds good for individuals who work with selfish motives and are swayed by the ordinary passions and impulses of life and hanker after worldly or other-worldly gains. The performance of disinterested actions not only produces no fettering consequences but helps us to exhaust and destroy the accumulated effects of

9. Vide *Prakarīṇa-pañcikā*, p. 156 (Chowkhamba ed.)

our past deeds done under the influence of attachment, hatred and infatuation, or of interested hopes and fears, and thereby leads to liberation. With the attainment of liberation from bondage, the self rises above the law of karma and lives and acts in an atmosphere of freedom. The liberated one may act for the good of mankind, but is not bound by his karma, since it is the self free from all attachment and self-interest.

A distinguished Danish philosopher, Harald Höffding, defines religion as 'the belief in the conservation of values'.<sup>10</sup> It is mainly such belief that raises Indian systems like Jainism and Buddhism to the status of religion in spite of the absence of a belief in God.

It is again this faith in 'an eternal moral order,' which inspires optimism and makes man the master of his own destiny. It enables the Indian thinker to take the present evil as the consequence of his own action, and hope for a better future by improving himself now. There is room, therefore, for free will and personal endeavour (*puruṣakāra*). Fatalism or determinism is, therefore, a misrepresentation of the theory of karma. Fate or destiny (*daiva*) is nothing but the collective force of one's own actions performed in the past lives (*pūrvajanma-kṛtāni karma*). It can be overcome by efforts of this life, if they are sufficiently strong, just as the force of old habits of this life can be counteracted by the cultivation of new and opposite habits.<sup>11</sup>

10. Vide Perry, *Philosophy of the Recent Past*, p. 206 f.s. Cf. Höffding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 1-13.

11. Vide *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa*, Park. 2, Sar. 4-9, for discussion. Also in *Mahābhārata* (Sāntiparva), Bhiṣma says, 'I consider personal effort to be above all; belief in fate makes man dull.' (*Pauruṣam hi param manye; daivam niścītya muhyate.*) Among the conditions responsible for the success of any work Bhagavad-Gītā (18.14) mentions both *cēṣṭā* and *daiva*. *Pāñcadaśi* (6.158) says: 'God in man is transformed into effort.' So also *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* (1.351) says: 'Just as a chariot cannot move on one wheel, so fate (daiva) without personal endeavour (*puruṣakāra*) cannot lead to success.'

(4) Intimately connected with this outlook is the general tendency to regard the universe as the moral stage, where all living beings get the dress and the part that besit them and are to act well to deserve well in future. The body, the senses and the motor organs that an individual gets and the environment in which he finds himself are the endowments of nature or God in accordance with the inviolable law of karma.

(5) Another common view, held by all Indian thinkers, is that ignorance of reality is the cause of our bondage and sufferings, and liberation from these cannot be achieved without the knowledge of reality, i.e. the real nature of the world, and the self. By 'bondage' is commonly meant the process of birth and rebirth and the consequent miseries to which an individual is subject. 'Liberation' (mukti or mokṣa) means, therefore, the stoppage of this process. Liberation is the state of perfection; and according to some Indian thinkers like the Jainas, the Bauddhas, the Sāṅkhyas and the Advaita Vedāntins, this state can be attained even in this life. Perfection and real happiness can, therefore, be realised even here, at least according to these chief Indian thinkers. The teachings of these masters need not make us wholly unworldly and other-worldly. They are meant only to correct the one-sided emphasis on 'the here' and 'the now'—the short-sightedness that worldliness involves.

But while ignorance was regarded as the root cause of the individual's trouble and knowledge, therefore, as essential, the Indian thinkers never believed that a mere acquaintance with truth would at once remove imperfection. Two types of discipline were thought necessary for making such understanding permanent as well as effective in life, namely, continued meditation on the accepted truths and practical life of self-control.

(6) The necessity of concentration and meditation led to the development of an elaborate technique, fully explained in the Yoga system. But *yoga*, in the sense of concentration through self-

control, is not confined to that system only. It is found in some form or other in Buddhism, Jainism, the Sāṅkhya, the Vedānta, and even in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems. The followers of these various views believed, in common, that the philosophic truths momentarily established and understood through arguments were not enough to dispel the effects of opposite beliefs which have become a part of our being. Our ordinary wrong beliefs have become deeply rooted in us by repeated use in the different daily situations of life. Our habits of thought, speech and action have been shaped and coloured by these beliefs which in turn have been more and more strengthened by those habits. To replace these beliefs by correct ones, it is necessary to meditate on the latter constantly and think over their various implications for life. In short, to instil right beliefs into our minds, we have to go through the same long and tedious process, though of a reverse kind, by which wrong beliefs were established in us. This requires a long intellectual concentration on the truths learned. Without prolonged meditation, the opposite beliefs cannot be removed and the belief in these truths cannot be steadied and established in life.

(7) Self-control (sahyama) also is necessary for the concentration of the mind on these truths and for making them effective in life.<sup>12</sup> Socrates used to say, 'Virtue is knowledge'. His followers pointed out that mere knowledge of what is right does not always lead to right actions, because our actions are guided as much by reason as by blind animal impulses. Unless these impulses are controlled, action cannot fully follow the dictates of reason. This truth is recognised by all the Indian systems, except perhaps the Cārvāka. It is neatly expressed by an oft-quoted Sanskrit saying which means: 'I know what is right, but

12. In the *Mahābhārata* (śāntiparva) Bhīṣma teaches that self-control (dama) is the sun (samudaya) of all virtues and the secret (upaniṣad) of truth (satya).

feel no inclination to follow it; I know what is wrong but cannot desist from it.<sup>13</sup>

Our speech and action cannot always follow our intellectual convictions because of the contrary impulses deeply rooted in our character owing to the past misconceptions about things and their values. These impulses are variously described by different Indian thinkers; but there is a sort of unanimity that the chief impulses are likes and dislikes—love and hate (*rāga* and *dveṣa*). These are the automatic springs of action; we move under their influence when we act habitually without forethought. Our *indriyas*, i.e. the instruments of knowledge and action (namely, the mind, the senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, sound, and the motor organs for movement, holding things, speaking, excretion and reproduction), have always been in the service of these blind impulses of love and hate and they have acquired some fixed bad habits. When philosophic knowledge about the real nature of things makes us give up our previous wrong beliefs regarding objects, our previous likes and dislikes for those objects, have also to be given up. Our *indriyas* have to be weaned from past habits and broken to the reign of reason. This task is as difficult as it is important. It can be performed only through long, sustained practice and formation of new good habits. All Indian thinkers lay much stress on such practice which chiefly consists of repeated efforts in the right direction (*abhyāsa*).

Self-control, then, means the control of the lower self, the blind, animal tendencies—love and hate—as well as the instruments of knowledge and action (the *indriyas*). From what has been said above, it will be clear that self-control was not a mere negative practice, it was not simply checking the *indriyas*, but checking their bad tendencies and habits in order to employ them for a better purpose, and make them obey the dictates of reason.

13. Vide *Pañcadasī*, 6. 176.

It is a mistake, therefore, to think, as some do, that Indian ethics taught a rigorism or asceticism which consists in killing the natural impulses in man. As early as the *Upaniṣads*, we find Indian thinkers recognising that though the most valuable thing in man is his spirit (*ātman*), his existence as a man depends on non-spiritual factors as well; that even his thinking power depends on the food he takes.<sup>14</sup> This conviction never left the Indian thinkers; the lower elements, for them, were not for destruction but for reformation and subjugation to the higher. Cessation from bad activities was coupled with performance of good ones. This we find even in the most rigoristic systems, like the *Yoga*, where, as *aids to the attainment of perfect concentration* (*yogārīga*), we find mentioned not simply the negative practice of the 'don'ts' (*yamas*), but also positive cultivation of good habits (*niyamas*). The *yamas* consist of the five great efforts for abstinence from injury to life, falsehood, stealing, sensuous appetite and greed for wealth (*ahiṁsā, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha*). These are to be cultivated along with the *niyamas*, namely, purity of body and mind, contentment, fortitude, study and resignation to God. Essentially similar teachings can be found as much in the other orthodox schools as in Buddhism and Jainism which, like the *Yoga*, recommended, for example, the cultivation of love (*maitri*) and kindness (*karuṇā*) along with non-violence (*ahiṁsā*). That the action of the *indriyas* is not to be suppressed but only to be turned to the service of the higher self, is also the teaching of the *Gītā*, as would appear from the following: 'One who has controlled himself attains contentment by *enjoying objects through the indriyas which have been freed from the influence of love and hate*'.<sup>15</sup>

(8) Lastly, all Indian systems, except the *Cārvāka*, accept the idea of liberation as the highest end of life. The conception of liberation received, of course, slightly different meanings. All

14. *Chāndogya Up.*, 6. 7.

15. *Bhagavadgītā*, 2. 64.

negatively agreed that the state of liberation is a total destruction of sufferings which life in this world brings about. A few went a little beyond this to hold that liberation or the state of perfection is not simply negation of pain, but is a state of positive bliss. The Vedānta and Jaina thinkers belong to this latter group that includes even some Baeddhas, later Naiyāikas and Mīmāṃsakas.

#### The Space-Time Background

In addition to the unity of moral and spiritual outlook described above, we may also note the prevailing sense of the vastness of the space-time world, which formed the common background of Indian thought and influenced its moral and metaphysical outlook.

The Western belief that the world was created six thousand and odd years ago and all for the purpose of man, constituted a narrowness of outlook and exaggerated the importance of man. This belief has been shaken by the biological discoveries of Darwin and others who show that the evolution of living beings has to be conceived in terms of millions of years, not thousands. The science of astronomy, again, is gradually generating the belief in the vastness of the universe, the diameter of which is 'at least hundreds of millions of light-years'.<sup>16</sup> The sun in this calculation is a mere speck in the universe, and the earth is less than one-millionth part of this speck. And we are reminded that each faint speck of nebula observable in the sky contains 'matter enough for the creation of perhaps a thousand million suns like ours'.<sup>17</sup>

Our imagination feels staggered in its attempt to grasp the vastness of the space-time universe revealed by science. A similar

16. Sir J.H. Jeans, in *Nature*, 26-2-27. A light-year the distance travelled by light in a year, at the rate of 186,325 miles per second =  $60 \times 60 \times 24 \times 365 \times 186,325$  miles = 5,875, 945,200,000 miles.

17. *Ibid.* (quoted in *Everyday Science*, by L.M. Parsons, pp. 14-15).

feeling is caused by the accounts of creation given in some of the Purāṇas, which would, but for modern discoveries, be laughed at as pure fantasy. In the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*,<sup>18</sup> for example, we come across the popular Indian conception of the world (*brahmānda*) which contains the fourteen regions (*lokas*) of which the earth (*bhūtalā*) is only one and which are separated from one another by tens of millions (*kotis*) of *yojanas*, and again the infinite universe is conceived as containing thousands of millions of such worlds (*brahmāndas*).

As to the description of the vastness of time, we find that the Indian thinker, like the modern scientist, feels unable to describe it by common human units. The unit adopted for the measurement of cosmic time is a day of the creator Brahmā. Each day of the creator is equal to 1,000 yugas or 432 million years of men. This is the duration of the period of each creation of cosmos. The night of the creator is cessation of creative activity and means destruction or chaos. Such alternating days and nights, creation and destruction (*srṣṭi* and *pralaya*), form a beginningless series.

It is not possible to ascertain the first beginning of creation. It would be arbitrary to think that creation began at first at some particular time and not earlier. As there are no data for fixing the first beginning of the universe, Indian thinkers, in general, look upon the universe as beginningless (*anādi*). They try to explain the beginning of the present creation by reference to previous states of dissolution and creation and think it idle and meaningless to enquire about the first creation. Any term of a beginningless series can only be said to be earlier or later in relation to others; there is nothing like an absolute first in such a series.

With this overwhelming idea of the vast universe as its background, Indian thought naturally harped on the extreme

18. part 2, Chap. 7.

smallness of the earth, the transitoriness of earthly existence and the insignificance of earthly possessions. If the earth was a mere point in the vast space, life was a mere ripple in the ocean of time. Myriads of them come and go, and matter very little to the universe as a whole. Even the best civilisation evolved through centuries is nothing very unique; there is not one golden age only in the life of the earth. In the beginningless cycles of creation and dissolution, there have been numberless golden ages as well as iron ones. Prosperity and adversity, civilisation and barbarity, rise and fall, as the wheel of time turns and moves on.

The general influence of this outlook on metaphysics has been to regard the present world as the outcome of a past one and explain the former partly by reference to the latter. Besides, it sets metaphysics on the search for the eternal. On the ethical and religious side, it helped the Indian mind to take a wider and detached view of life, prevented it from the morbid desire to cling to the fleeting as the everlasting and persuaded it always to have an eye on what was of lasting, rather than of momentary, value. While man's body is limited in space and time, his spirit is eternal. Human life is a rare opportunity.<sup>19</sup> It can be utilised for realising the immortal spirit and for transcending thereby the limitations of space and time.

## H. A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE SYSTEMS

### 1. The Cārvāka System

In Indian philosophy, the word 'Cārvāka' means a materialist. The Cārvākas hold that perception is the only valid source of knowledge. They point out that all non-perceptual or indirect

19. Vide *Bhāgavata*, 11.2.29, and *Dhammapada*, 14.4.

sources of knowledge like inference, the testimony of other persons, etc., are unreliable and often prove misleading. We should not, therefore, believe in anything except what is immediately known through perception.

Perception reveals to us only the material world, composed of the four bhūtas or elements of matter, viz. air, fire, water and earth, the existence of which we can directly know through the senses. All objects of this perceptible world are composed of these elements. There is no evidence that there is anything like an immaterial soul in man. Man too is made wholly of matter. We say 'I am stout,' 'I am lean,' 'I am lame'. These judgments also tend to show that the individual is identical with the body. There is of course consciousness in man, but consciousness is the quality of the living body which is a product of matter. It should not be thought that because the elements of matter are unconscious, there can be no consciousness in objects made of them. There are many examples in which qualities originally absent in the component parts are developed when the parts are combined together in a particular way. There are examples even of the same substance acquiring new qualities under different conditions. Betel leaf, nut and lime chewed together acquire a red tinge originally absent in any of the constituents: molasses acquire by fermentation the power of intoxication originally absent. Similarly, the elements of matter combined together in a particular way give rise to the living body having consciousness. Consciousness ceases apparently with the body. When man dies nothing is left of him to enjoy or suffer the consequences of his actions hereafter.

The survival of man in any form after death is, therefore, unproved. The existence of God also is a myth. God cannot be perceived. The world is made by the automatic combination of the material elements and not by God. It is foolish, therefore, to perform any religious rite either for enjoying happiness after this life in heaven or for pleasing God. No faith should be put

in the Vedas or in the cunning priests who earn their livelihood by exploiting the credulity of men.

The highest end of life, for a rational man, should, therefore, be the enjoyment of the greatest amount of pleasure here in this life, of which alone we are sure. It is foolish to forgo the pleasures of life simply because they happen to be mixed with pain. It would be as though one would reject the kernel because of its husk or cease sowing crops for fear of cattle. We should try to get the best out of this life by enjoying it as best as we can and avoiding as far as possible the chances of pain.

## 2. The Jaina System

The origin of the Jaina faith lies far back in the prehistoric times. The long line of teachers through whom the faith was handed down consists of twenty-four Tirthankaras or liberated propagators of the faith, the last of whom was Vardhamāna (also styled Mahāvira), a contemporary of Gautama Buddha.

The Jainas reject the Cārvāka view that perception is the only valid source of knowledge. They point out that if we are to reject altogether the possibility of obtaining correct knowledge through inference and the testimony of other persons because sometimes they prove misleading, we should doubt the validity of perception also, because even perception sometimes proves illusory. In fact, the Cārvākas themselves take the help of inference when by observing *some* cases of inference to be misleading they come to hold that *all* inference is invalid, and also when they deny the existence of objects *because* they are not perceived. The Jainas admit, in addition to perception, inference and testimony as sources of valid knowledge. Inference yields valid knowledge when it obeys the logical rules of correctness. Testimony is valid when it is the report of a reliable authority. In fact, the Jainas hold that it is on the authority of the teachings of the omniscient liberated saints (Jainas or Tirthankaras) that we can have unerring

knowledge about certain spiritual matters, which our limited sense-perception and reasoning cannot reveal to us.

On the basis of these three kinds of knowledge, the Jainas form their view of the universe. Perception reveals the reality of material substances, composed of the four kinds of elements, as the Cārvākas hold. By inference they come to believe in space (ākāśa), because material substances must exist somewhere, believe in time (kāla), because changes of succession of the states of substances cannot be understood without it and believe also in the two causes of motion and rest respectively, for without them movement and cessation of movement in things cannot be explained. These last two are called respectively dharma and adharma which should not be taken here in their ordinary moral sense, but in the technical sense of the causes of motion and rest. But the physical world, consisting of the four elements of matter, space, time, dharma and adharma, is not all. Perception, as well as inference, proves the existence of souls in all living bodies. When we perceive the qualities of an orange such as its colour, shape and smell, we say we perceive the existence of the orange. On similar grounds, when we internally perceive pleasure, pain and other qualities of the soul, we should admit that the soul also is directly known through perception. Consciousness cannot be said to be the product of matter; the Cārvākas cannot point out any case where the combination of material substances is *perceived* to generate consciousness. The existence of the soul can also be inferred on the ground that if there had been no conscious agent to guide them, material substances could not be formed into living bodies by themselves. Without a conscious substance to regulate them, the body and the senses could not do their work so systematically.

There are, then, as many souls as there are living bodies. There are souls, the Jainas hold, not only in animals, but also in plants and even in particles of dust. The existence of very minute living beings (such as germs) in dust and other apparently

non-living material things is also admitted by modern science. All souls are not equally conscious. Some, like those in plants or dust-bodies, have only the sense of touch and have factual consciousness alone. Some lower animals have two senses, others three, still others four. Man and some higher animals have five senses through all of which they know things. But, however developed the senses may be, the soul in bondage is limited in knowledge; it is limited in power also and is subject to all kinds of miseries.

But every soul is capable of attaining infinite consciousness, power and happiness. These qualities are inherent in the very nature of the soul. They are obstructed by karmas, just as the natural light of the sun is obstructed by clouds. The karmas or the forces of passions and desires in the soul attract to it particles of matter which permeate the soul just as particles of dust permeate the light of any flame or the sun. In a word the karmas lead to the bondage of the soul by matter. By removing karmas, a soul can remove bondage and regain its natural perfections.

The teachings and lives of the liberated saints (*Tirthankaras*) prove the possibility of liberation and show also the path to be followed for the purpose. Three things are necessary for the removal of bondage, viz. perfect faith in the teachings of the Jaina teachers, correct knowledge of the teachings, and right conduct. Right conduct consists in the practice of abstinence from all injury to life, from falsehood, from stealing, from sensuality and from attachment to sense objects. By the joint culture of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct, the passions are controlled and the karmas that fetter the soul to matter are removed. The obstacles being removed, the soul attains its natural perfection—infinite faith, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss. This is the state of liberation.

The Jainas do not believe in God. The *Tirthankaras*, to whom all the godly powers like omniscience and omnipotence belong, take the place of God. They are adored as ideals of life.

Sympathy for all living beings is one of the chief features of the Jaina faith. Coupled with this there is, in Jaina philosophy, respect for all opinions. The Jaina philosophers point out that every object has infinite aspects, judged by what it is and what it is not from different points of view. Every judgment that we ordinarily pass about a thing is, therefore, true only in relation to a particular aspect of the thing seen from a particular point of view. We should remember, therefore, the limited nature of our knowledge and judgment and should refrain from thinking that any view is the whole truth about any thing. We should guard and qualify our own statements and also learn to appreciate the possibility of the correctness of others' views.

The Jaina philosophy is a kind of realism, because it asserts the reality of the external world, and it is pluralism, because it believes in many ultimate realities. It is atheism as it rejects the existence of God.

### 3. The Buddha System

The Buddha system of philosophy arose out of the teachings of Gautama Buddha, the well-known founder of Buddhism. Gautama was awakened to a consciousness of human suffering by the sight of disease, old age, death and other miseries, to which man is subject. He spent years in study, penance and meditation to discover the origin of human sufferings and the means to overcome them. At last he received enlightenment, the result of which was set forth by him in the form of what has come to be known as 'the four noble truths' (*cattāri ārya-satyāni*). These are the truth that there is misery, the truth that there is a cause of misery, the truth that there is cessation of misery and the truth that there is a path leading to the cessation of misery.

The first truth about the existence of misery is admitted by all in some form or other. But with his penetrating insight Buddha saw that misery is not simply casual; it is ordinarily

present in all forms of existence and in all kinds of experience. Even what appears as pleasant is really a source of pain at bottom.

Regarding the second truth, Buddha's conclusion is deduced from his analysis of causation. He points out that the existence of everything in the world, material and mental, is caused by some other thing. There is nothing which is unconditional and self-existent. Nothing is, therefore, permanent in the world. All things are subject to change. Our sufferings are similarly caused by some conditions. Sufferings depend on birth in this world, Birth again is caused by our desire (*taṇhā* or *trṣṇā*) for the worldly objects. The force of desires drags us down to the world. But our desires can be traced ultimately to our ignorance. If we had a correct knowledge of the things of the world, understood their transitory and painful nature, there would be no desire for them; birth would then cease and along with it also misery.

As suffering, like other things, depends on some conditions, it must cease when these conditions are removed. This is the third truth about cessation of misery.

The fourth truth about the path that leads to the cessation of misery concerns the control of the conditions that cause misery. This path is known as the eight-fold noble path as it consists of eight steps, namely, right views, right determination, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right concentration. These eight steps remove ignorance and desire, enlighten the mind and bring about perfect equanimity and tranquillity. Thus misery ceases completely and the chance of rebirth also is stopped. The attainment of this state of perfection is *nirvāna*.

The teachings of Buddha are contained in the four noble truths described above. It will appear from this that Buddha himself was not concerned so much with the problems of philosophy as with the practical problem of how human misery can be removed. He regarded it as a waste of time to discuss metaphysical problems, while man is writhing in misery. But

though averse to theoretical speculation he could not avoid philosophical discussions altogether. Thus we find from early literature, the following theories among his teachings: (a) All things are conditional; there is nothing that exists by itself. (b) All things are, therefore, subject to change owing to the change of the conditions on which they depend; nothing is permanent. (c) There is, therefore, neither any soul nor God nor any other permanent substance. (d) There is, however, continuity of the present life which generates another life, by the law of karma, just as a tree generates another tree through its seed, and the second continues while the first withers away.

The later followers of Buddha, in India and outside, developed the germs of philosophical theories contained in Buddha's teachings, and many schools thus came into existence. Of these the four schools that became well known in Indian philosophy may be mentioned here.

The Mādhyamika or Śūnyavāda School. According to this, the world is unreal (*śūnya*); mental and non-mental phenomena are all illusory. This view is known as nihilism (śūnyavāda).

The Yogācāra or Vijnānavāda School. This holds that external objects are unreal. What appears as external is really an idea in the mind. But mind must be admitted to be real. It is self-contradictory to say that the mind is unreal; for, then, the very thought that mind is unreal stands self-condemned, thought being an activity of the mind. This view is called subjective idealism (vijnānavāda).

The Sautrāntika School. This holds that both the mental and the non-mental are real. If everything that we perceive as external were unreal, then our perception of an object would not depend on anything outside the mind but absolutely on the mind. But we find that the mind cannot perceive any object, like a tiger, at any place it likes. This proves that the idea of the tiger, when we perceive it, depends on a non-mental reality, the tiger. From the perceptual idea or representation of a tiger in the mind we

can infer the existence of its cause, the tiger, outside the mind. Thus external objects can be *inferred* to exist outside the mind. This view may be called representationism, or theory of the inferability of external objects (bāhyānumeya-vāda).

*The Vaibhāṣika School.* This school agrees with the last on the point that both internal and external objects are real. But it differs from it regarding the way external objects are known. External objects, according to the Vaibhāṣikas, are *directly perceived* and not inferred from their ideas or representations in the mind. For, if no external object were ever *perceived* corresponding to any idea, it would not be possible to infer the existence of an external object from any idea. This view may be called direct realism, because it holds that external objects are perceived directly (bāhya-pratyakṣa-vāda).

Buddhism is divided, on religious matters, into the two well-known schools, Hinayāna, flourishing now in the south, in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, and Mahāyāna, found now in the north, in Tibet, China and Japan. The first two of the four philosophical schools mentioned above come under the Mahāyāna and the last two under the Hinayāna. The most important religious question on which these two schools differ is: What is the object of nirvāṇa? The Hinayāna holds that nirvāṇa should be sought in order that the individual may put an end to his own misery. The Mahāyāna thinks, on the other hand, that the object of nirvāṇa is not to put an end to one's own misery, but to obtain perfect wisdom with which the liberated can work for the salvation of all beings in misery.

#### A. The Nyāya System

The Nyāya system is the work of the great sage Gautama. It is a realistic philosophy based mainly on logical grounds. It admits four separate sources of true knowledge, viz. perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna), comparison (upamāna) and

testimony (śabda). Perception is the direct knowledge of objects produced by their relation to our senses. It may be external (bāhya) or internal (āntara), according as the sense concerned is external, like the eye and the ear, or internal, like the mind (manas). Inference is the knowledge of objects, not through perception, but through the apprehension of some mark (liṅga) which is invariably related to the inferred objects (sādhyā). The invariable relation between the two is called vyāpti. In inference there are at least three propositions and at most three terms, viz. the pakṣa or minor term about which we infer something, the sādhyā or major term which is the inferred object, and the liṅga or sādhana or middle term which is invariably related to the major, and is present in the minor. To illustrate: 'The hill is fiery, because it smokes; and whatever smokes is fiery.' Comparison is the knowledge of the relation between a name and things so named on the basis of a given description of their similarity to some familiar object. A man is told that a *gavaya* is like a cow. Then he finds an animal in the forest, which strikingly resembles the cow, and comes to know that the animal must be a *gavaya*. Such knowledge is derived from upamāna or comparison. Śabda or verbal testimony is the knowledge about anything derived from the statements of authoritative persons. A scientist tells us that water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen in a certain proportion. Although we may not have verified the truth ourselves, we know it on the authority of the scientist. Here our knowledge is derived from Śabda or testimony. All other sources of knowledge have been reduced by the Naiyāhikas to these four.

The objects of knowledge, according to the Nyāya, are the self, the body, the senses and their objects, cognition (buddhi), mind (manas), activity (pravṛtti), mental defects (dosa), rebirth (pretyabhāva), the feelings of pleasure and pain (phala), suffering (duḥkha), and freedom from suffering (apavarga). The Nyāya, like many other systems of Indian philosophy, seeks to deliver

the self from its bondage to the body, the senses and their objects. According to it, the self is distinct from the body and the mind. The body is only a composite substance made of matter. The mind (manas) is a subtle, indivisible and eternal substance (āṇu). It serves the soul as an instrument for the perception of psychic qualities like pleasure, pain, etc. It is, therefore, called an internal sense. The self (ātman) is another substance which is quite distinct from the mind and the body. It acquires the attribute of consciousness when it is related to any object through the senses. But consciousness is not an essential quality of the self. It is an accidental or adventitious quality which ceases to qualify the self in the state of mukti or liberation. While the mind (manas) is infinitesimal like an atom, the self is all-pervading (vibhu), indestructible and eternal. It is an agent which likes and dislikes objects and tries to obtain or avoid them and enjoys or suffers the consequences of its actions. It is ignorance of the truth (mithyā-jnāna) and the consequent faults of desire, aversion and infatuation (rāga, dveṣa and moha) that impel the self to act for good and bad ends and plunge it into the world of sin and suffering, birth and death. Liberation (apavarga) means the absolute cessation of all pain and suffering brought about by the right knowledge of reality (tattva-jñāna). Some people think that it is a state of happiness. But this is entirely wrong, for there is no pleasure without pain, just as there is no light without shade. So liberation is only release from pain and not pleasure or happiness.

The existence of God is proved by the Naiyāyikas by several arguments. God is the ultimate cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world. He did not create the world out of nothing, but out of eternal atoms, space, time, ether, minds and souls. This world has been created in order that individual souls (jivas) might enjoy pleasure or suffer pain according to the merit or demerit of their actions in other lives and in other worlds. The most popular argument for God's existence is: 'All

things of the world like mountains and seas, the sun and the moon, are effects, because they are made up of parts. Therefore, they must have a maker (kartā).' The individual selves cannot be the maker or creator of the world, because they are limited in power and knowledge, and so cannot deal with such subtle and imperceptible entities as atoms, of which all physical things are composed. The creator of the world must be an intelligent spirit with unlimited power and wisdom, and capable of maintaining the moral order of the universe. God created the world not for any end of His own, but for the good of all living beings. This, however, does not mean that there must be only happiness and no misery in the world. If individual selves have any freedom of will in them, they would act for good or bad ends and thereby bring happiness or misery on themselves. But under the loving care and wise guidance of the Divine Being, all individuals can sooner or later attain right knowledge about themselves and the world, and thereby final release from all suffering (mukti).

#### 5. The Vaiśeṣika System

The Vaiśeṣika system was founded by the sage Kanāda also named Uluka. It is allied to the Nyāya system and has the same end in view, namely, the liberation of the individual self. It brings all objects of knowledge. i.e. the whole world, under the seven categories of substance (dravya), quality (guṇa), action (karmā), generality (sāmānyā), particularity (viśesa), the relation of inherence (sāmavayā), and non-existence (abhāva).

A substance is the substratum of qualities and activities, but is different from both. There are nine kinds of substances, viz. earth, water, fire, air, ether (ākāśa), time, space, soul and mind (manas). Of these, the first five are called the physical elements (bhūtas) and have respectively the specific qualities of smell, taste, colour, touch and sound. The first four are composed of

the four kinds of atoms (of earth, water, fire and air) which are invisible and indestructible particles of matter. The atoms are uncreated and eternal entities which we get by resolving any material object into smaller and smaller parts till we come to such as cannot be further divided. Ākāśa, space and time are imperceptible substances, each of which is one, eternal and all-pervading. The mind (manas) is an eternal substance which is not all-pervading, but infinitely small like an atom. It is the internal sense which is directly or indirectly concerned in all psychical functions like cognition, feeling and willing. The mind being atomic we cannot have more than one experience at one instant of time. The soul is an eternal and all-pervading substance which is the substratum of the phenomena of consciousness. The individual soul is perceived internally by the mind of the individual, as when one says 'I am happy'. The supreme soul or God is inferred as the creator of the world of effects. God creates the world out of eternal atoms. The composition and decomposition of atoms explain the origin and destruction of the composite objects of the world. But the atoms cannot move and act by themselves. The ultimate source of their actions is to be found in the will of God, who directs their operations according to the law of karma. The atoms are made to compose a world that befits the unseen moral deserts (adṛṣṭa) of individual souls and serves the purpose of moral dispensation. This is the atomic theory of the Vaiśeṣikas. It is rather teleological than mechanistic and materialistic like other atomic theories.

A quality is that which exists in a substance and has itself no quality or activity. While a substance can exist by itself, a quality cannot exist unless it be in some substance. There is no activity or movement in the qualities of things. There are altogether twenty-four kinds of qualities, viz. colour, taste, smell, touch, sound, number, magnitude, distinctness (pr̥thaktva), conjunction (saṃyoga), disjunction (vibhāga), remoteness (paratva), nearness

(aparatva), fluidity (dravatva), viscosity (sneha), cognition (buddhi), pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, striving (prayatna), heaviness (gurutva), tendency (sainskāra), merit (dharma) and demerit (adharma).<sup>20</sup>

An action is a movement. Like quality, it belongs only to substances. There are five kinds of action, viz. throwing upward (utkṣepana), throwing downward (avakṣepana), contraction (ākuñcana), expansion (prasāraṇa) and going (gamana).

All cows have in them a certain common nature for which they are grouped into one class and excluded from other classes. This is called 'gotva' or cowness and is the sāmānya or universal in them. Since cowness is not generated by the birth of any cow nor destroyed by the death of any, it is eternal. A universal is thus the eternal essence common to all the individuals of a class.

Particularity (viśesa) is the ground of the ultimate differences of things. Ordinarily, we distinguish one thing from another by the peculiarities of its parts and other qualities. But how are we to distinguish the ultimate simple and eternal substances of the world, like two atoms of the earth? There must be some ultimate difference or peculiarity in each of them, otherwise they would not be different, both having all the qualities of the earth. Particularity stands for the peculiarity or individuality of the eternal entities of the world. It is the special treatment of this category of viśesa that explains the name 'Vaiśeṣika' given to this system of philosophy.

Inherence (samavaya) is the permanent or eternal relation by which a whole is in its parts, a quality or an action is in a substance, the universal is in the particulars. The cloth as one whole always exists in the threads, qualities like 'green,' 'sweet' and 'fragrant,' and motions of different kinds abide in some

20. 'Paratva' stands for both remoteness in space and remoteness in time and 'aparatva' for nearness both in space and time. 'Samskara' really stands for three qualities. viz. velocity, elasticity and memory-impression.

substances. Cowness as a universal is in all cows. This permanent relation between the whole and its parts, between the universal and its individuals, and between qualities or actions and their substances, is known as *samavaya* or inherence.

Non-existence (abhāva) stands for all negative facts. 'There is no snake here,' 'that rose is not red,' 'there is no smell in pure water' are propositions which express respectively the non-existence of the snake, redness and smell in certain things. All such cases of non-existence are brought under the category of *abhāva*. It is of four kinds, namely, *prāgabhāva*, *dhvamsabhāva*, *atyantābhāva* (these three being put together under *samsarābhāva* or the absence of one thing in another thing), and *anyonyābhāva*. The first means the non-existence of a thing before (prior to) its production, e.g. the non-existence of pot in clay before it is produced by the potter. The second is the non-existence of a thing after its destruction (*dhvarisa*), e.g. the non-existence of the pot in its broken parts. The third is the absence of a thing in another thing for all time—past, present and future, e.g. the non-existence of colour in the air. The last kind represents the difference of one thing from another. When two things (say a jar and a cloth) differ from each other, there is the non-existence of either as the other. The jar is not the cloth, nor is the cloth the jar. This mutual non-existence of two different things is called anyonyābhāva.

With regard to God and liberation of the individual soul, the Vaiśeṣika theory is substantially the same as that of the Nyāya.

#### 6. The Sāṅkhya System

The Sāṅkhya is a philosophy of dualistic realism, attributed to the sage Kapila. It admits two ultimate realities, namely, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, which are independent of each other in respect of their existence. The *puruṣa* is an intelligent principle, of which consciousness (*caitanya*) is not an attribute, but the very essence.

It is the self which is quite distinct from the body, the senses and the mind (*manas*). It is beyond the whole world of objects, and is the eternal consciousness which witnesses the changes and activities going on in the world, but does not itself act and change in any way. Physical things like chairs, beds, etc. exist for the enjoyment of beings other than themselves. Therefore, there must be the *puruṣa* or the self which is distinct from *prakṛti* or primary matter, but is the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of the products of *prakṛti*. There are many different selves related to different bodies, for when some men are happy, others are unhappy, some die but others live.

*Prakṛti* is the ultimate cause of the world. It is an eternal unconscious principle (*jada*) which is always changing and has no other end than the satisfaction of the selves. Sattva, rajas and tamas are three constituents of prakṛti which holds them together in a state of rest or equilibrium (sāmyāvasthā). The three are called *guṇas*. But they are not qualities or attributes in any sense. Rather, they are three substantial elements which constitute *prakṛti* like three cords making up a rope. The existence of the *guṇas* is inferred from the qualities of pleasure, pain and indifference which we find in all the things of the world. The same sweet is liked or disliked or treated with indifference by the same man in different conditions. The same salad is tasteful to some person, distasteful to another and insipid to a third. Now the cause and the effect are essentially identical. The effect is the manifested condition of the cause, e.g. oil as an effect manifests what is already contained in the seeds. The things of the world are effects which have the qualities of pleasure, pain and indifference. Therefore, *prakṛti* or *pradhāna* which is their ultimate cause must have the three elements of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which respectively possess the natures of pleasure, pain and indifference, and cause manifestation, activity and passivity.

The evolution of the world has its starting point in the association (samyoga) of the *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*, which disturbs

the original equilibrium of the latter and moves it to action. The course of evolution is as follows: from prakṛti arises the great germ of this vast universe which is called, therefore, the great one (mahat). The consciousness of the self is reflected on this and makes it appear as conscious. It represents the awakening of nature from her cosmic slumber and the first appearance of thought; and, therefore, it is also called the Intellect (buddhi). It is the creative thought of the world to be evolved. Ahaṅkāra, the second product, arises by a further transformation of the Intellect. The function of ahaṅkāra is the feeling of 'I and mine' (abhimāna). Owing to its identification with this principle, the self considers itself to be an agent (kartā) which it really is not. From ahaṅkāra, with an excess of the element of sattva, arise the five organs of knowledge (jñānendriya), the five organs of action (karmendriya) and the mind (manas) which is at once an organ of knowledge and activity (ubhayendriya). With an increase of tamaś, ahaṅkāra produces, on the other hand, the five subtle elements (tanmātra) which are the potentialities of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. From the five subtle elements come the five gross elements of ākāśa or ether, air, fire, water and earth in the same order. Thus we have altogether twenty-five principles in the Sāṅkhya. Of these, all but the puruṣa is comprised by prakṛti which is the cause or the ultimate source of all other physical objects including mind, matter and life. Prakṛti is the uncaused cause of all objects. The seven principles of mahat, ahaṅkāra and the five tanmātras are causes of certain effects and themselves effects of certain causes. The eleven senses and the five gross elements are only the effects of certain causes and not themselves the causes of anything which is substantially different from them. The puruṣa or the self is neither the cause (prakṛti) nor the effect (vikṛti) of anything.

Although the self is in itself free and immortal, yet such is the influence of avidyā or ignorance that it confuses itself with the body, the senses and the mind (manas). It is the want of

discrimination (aviveka) between the self and the not-self that is responsible for all our sorrows and sufferings. We feel injured and unhappy when our body is injured or indisposed, because we fail to realise the distinction between the self and the body. Similarly, pleasure and pain in the mind seem to affect the self only because the self's distinction from the mind is not clearly perceived by us. Once we realise the distinction between the self and the not-self including the body and the senses, the mind, the intellect and the ego (vivekajñāna), our self ceases to be affected by the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs of life. It rests in itself as the dispassionate observer of the show of events in the world without being implicated in them. This is the state of liberation or freedom from suffering which has been variously described as mukti, apavarga, kaivalya, etc. It is possible for us to attain this state while alive in this world (jivanmukti) or after this life in the other world (videhamukti). But mere knowledge or intellectual understanding of the truth will not help one to realise one's self and thereby attain final release from sin and suffering. For this we require to go through a long course of spiritual training with deep devotion to, and constant meditation on, the truth that the self is the pure eternal consciousness which is beyond the mind-body complex and above the space-time and cause-effect order of existence. It is the unborn and undying spirit, of which the essence is freedom, immortality and life eternal. The nature and methods of the spiritual training necessary for self-realisation have been elaborated in the Yoga philosophy.

With regard to the problem of God, we find that the main tendency of the Sāṅkhya is to do away with the theistic belief. According to it, the existence of God cannot be proved in any way. We need not admit God to explain the world; for prakṛti is the adequate cause of the world as a whole. God as eternal and unchanging spirit cannot be the creator of the world; for to produce an effect the cause must change and transform itself into the effect. Some Sāṅkhya commentators and writers, however, try

to show that the system admits the existence of God as the supreme person who is the witness but not the creator of the world.

#### **7. The Yoga System**

The sage Patañjali is the founder of the Yoga philosophy. The Yoga is closely allied to the Sāṅkhyā. It mostly accepts the epistemology and the metaphysics of the Sāṅkhyā with its twenty-five principles, but admits also to the existence of God. The special interest of this system is in the practice of yoga as the means to the attainment of vivekajñāna or discriminative knowledge which is held in the Sāṅkhyā to be the essential condition of liberation. According to it, yoga consists in the cessation of all mental functions (cittavṛtti-nirodha). There are five levels of mental functions (cittabhūmi). The first is called kṣipta or the dissipated condition in which the mind flits among objects. The second is mūḍha or the stupefied condition as in sleep. The third is called vikṣipta or the relatively pacified condition. Yoga is not possible in any of these conditions. The fourth and the fifth levels are called ekāgra and niruddha. The one is a state of concentration of the mind on some object of contemplation. The other is the cessation of even the act or function of contemplation. The last two levels of the mind (cittabhūmi) are conducive to yoga. There are two kinds of yoga or samādhi, viz. saṃprajñāta and asaṃprajñāta. In the first we have yoga in the form of the mind's perfect concentration on the object of contemplation, and, therefore, involving a clear apprehension of that object. In the second, there is the complete cessation of all mental modifications and, consequently, the entire absence of all knowledge including that of the contemplated object.

There are eight steps in the practice of yoga (yogāṅga). These are: yama or restraint, niyama or moral culture, āsana or posture, prāṇāyāma or breath-control, pratyāhāra or withdrawal of the senses, dhāraṇā or attention, dhyāna or meditation and

samādhi or concentration. Yama or restraint consists in abstaining from injury to any life, from falsehood, theft, incontinence and avarice. Niyama or moral culture is the cultivation of good habits like purification, contentment, penance, study of the Vedas and contemplation of God. Āsana is the adoption of steady and comfortable postures. Prāṇāyāma or breath-control is regulated inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath. Pratyāhāra or sense-control consists in withdrawing the senses from their objects. Dhāraṇā or attention is fixing the mind on some intra-organic or extra-organic objects like the nose-tip or the moon. Dhyāna or meditation is the steady contemplation of the object without any break. Samādhi or concentration is that state in which the contemplative consciousness is lost in the contemplated object and has no awareness of itself.

The Yoga system is called the theistic (seśvara) Sāṅkhyā as distinguished from the Kapila Sāṅkhyā which is generally regarded as atheistic (nirīśvara). It holds that God is the highest object of contemplation for concentration and self-realisation. He is the perfect Being who is eternal, all-pervading, omniscient and completely free from all defects. The Yoga argues for the existence of God on the following grounds: whatever has degrees must have a maximum. There are degrees of knowledge; therefore, there must be such a thing as perfect knowledge or omniscience. He who has omniscience is God. The association of puruṣa with prakṛti is what initiates the evolution of the world, and the cessation of this leads to dissolution. Neither the association nor the dissociation is natural to prakṛti and puruṣa. Therefore, there must be a supreme being who is able to bring about these relations between prakṛti and puruṣa according to the moral deserts of individual souls.

#### **8. The Mīmāṃsā System**

The Mīmāṃsā (or Pūrvā-Mīmāṃsā) school was founded by Jaimini. Its primary object is to defend and justify Vedic ritualism.

In course of this attempt, it had to find a philosophy supporting the world-view on which ritualism depends.

The authority of the Vedas is the basis of ritualism, and the Mimāṃsā formulates the theory that the Vedas are not the works of any person and are, therefore, free from errors that human authors commit. The Vedas are eternal and self-existing; the written or pronounced Vedas are only their temporary manifestations through particular seers. For establishing the validity of the Vedas, the Mimāṃsā discusses very elaborately the theory of knowledge, the chief object of which is to show that the validity of every knowledge is self-evident. When there are sufficient conditions, knowledge arises. When the senses are sound, objects are present to them and when other auxiliary conditions also prevail, there is perception. When there are sufficient data, there is inference. When we read a book on geography, we have knowledge of the lands described, through authority. In each of these cases, the knowledge that arises claims to be true and we accept it without further argument. If there is any cause for doubt, then knowledge does not arise at all, because belief is absent. Similarly, by reading the Vedas we have at once knowledge and belief in what they say. The validity of Vedic knowledge is self-evident like that of every other knowledge. If any doubts arise, they are removed with the help of Mimāṃsā arguments; and the obstacles being removed, the Vedas themselves reveal their contents to the reader. The authority of the Vedas thus becomes unquestionable.

What the Vedas command one to perform is right (dharma). What they forbid is wrong. Duty consists in doing what is right and desisting from forbidden acts. Duty must be done in the spirit of duty. The rituals enjoined by the Vedas should be performed not with the hope of any reward but just because they are so enjoined. The disinterested performance of the obligatory rites, which is possible only through knowledge and self-control, gradually destroys the karmas and brings about liberation after

death. The state of liberation is conceived in the early Mimāṃsā as one of unalloyed bliss or heaven. But the later Mimāṃsā conceives liberation only negatively as the cessation of birth and, therefore, of all pains.

The soul must be admitted as an immortal eternal substance, for if the soul perished on death, the Vedic injunctions that certain rites should be performed for the attainment of heaven would be meaningless. The Mimāṃsā writers also adduce independent arguments, like the Jainas, to prove the existence of the immortal soul, and refute the materialistic view that it is nothing other than the body. But they do not admit consciousness as intrinsic to the soul. Consciousness arises in it only when it is associated with the body and then also only when an object is presented to the organs of knowledge (the five outer senses and the inner organ called manas). The liberated soul, which is disembodied, has no actual consciousness, though it has the potentiality for it.

The soul in the body has different kinds of knowledge. One school of the Mimāṃsā founded by Prabhākara admits five different sources of knowledge (pramāṇas), namely, perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna), comparison (upāmāna), testimony (śabda) and postulation (arthāpatti). The first four are admitted as in the Nyāya system. There is, however, one notable difference regarding comparison. According to the Mimāṃsā, knowledge by comparison arises in a case like the following: a man who has seen a monkey goes to a forest, sees an ape and judges, 'this ape is like a monkey'. From this judgment of perception he passes to the judgment 'the monkey I saw before is like this ape'. This last knowledge is obtained by comparison and not by perception, because the monkey is not present then. Knowledge by postulation arises when we have to postulate something as the only explanation of an apparent conflict. When we find that a man does not eat anything in the day, but increases in weight, we postulate that he must be eating at night. When

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a man is known to be alive and yet not found at home, it is known by postulation that he exists somewhere out. Another school of the Mimāṃsā founded by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa admits another source of valid cognition, in addition to the above five. This sixth pramāṇa is called non-cognition (*anupalabdhi*). It is pointed out that when on entering a room, and looking round one says, 'There is no fan in this room,' the non-existence of the fan cannot be said to be known by perception. Perception of an object arises when our sense is stimulated by the object, and non-existence, which is the object known here, cannot be admitted to stimulate sense. Such knowledge of non-existence takes place by non-cognition. We judge the absence of the fan not because other things are perceived, but because the fan is not perceived.

The Mimāṃsā believes in the reality of the physical world on the strength of perception. It is, therefore, realistic. It believes, as we have seen, in the reality of souls, as well. But it does not believe that there is a supreme soul, or God who has created the world. It does not hold like other orthodox systems that there is a cycle of creation and dissolution. The world has always been as it is. It has neither a beginning nor an end. The world's objects are formed out of matter in accordance with the karmas of the souls. The law of karma is an autonomous natural and moral law that rules the world. The Mimāṃsā also admits that when any man performs any ritual, there arises in his soul a potency (*apūrva*) which produces in future the fruit of the action at an opportune moment. On account of this potency generated in the soul by rites performed here, one can enjoy their fruits hereafter.

## 9 The Vedānta System

This system arises out of the Upaniṣads which mark the culmination of the Vedic speculation and are fittingly called the

Vedānta or the end of the Vedas. As we have seen previously, it develops through the Upaniṣads in which its basic truths are first grasped, the *Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa which systematises the Upaniṣadic teachings, and the commentaries written on these sūtras by many subsequent writers among whom Saṅkara and Rāmānuja are well known. Of all the systems, the Vedānta, especially as interpreted by Saṅkara, has exerted the greatest influence on Indian life and it still persists in some form or other in different parts of India.

The idea of one Supreme Person (*puruṣa*), who pervades the whole universe and yet remains beyond it, is found in a hymn of the *Rg-veda*. All objects of the universe, animate and inanimate, men and gods, are poetically conceived here as parts of that Person. In the Upaniṣads this unity of all existence is found developed into the conception of One impersonal Reality (*sat*) or the conception of One Soul, One Brahman, all of which are used synonymously. The world is said to originate from this Reality, rest in it and return into it when dissolved. The reality of the many particular objects perceived in the universe is denied and their unity in the One Reality is asserted ever and again: All is God (*sarvam khalu idam Brahma*). The soul is God (*ayam Ātmā, Brahma*). There is no multiplicity here (*neda nānāsti kiñcana*). This Soul or God is the Reality (*satya*). It is infinite consciousness (*jñāna*) and Bliss (*ānanda*).

Śaṅkara interprets the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma-sūtra* to show that pure and unqualified monism is taught therein. God is the only Reality, not simply in the sense that there is nothing except God, but also in the sense that there is no multiplicity even within God. The denial of plurality, the unity of the soul and God, the assertion that when God is known, all is known, and similar views found in the Upaniṣads, in fact the general tone that pervades their teachings, cannot be explained consistently if we believe even in the existence of many realities within God. Creation of the many things by God (Brahman) or the Soul

(Ātman) is, of course, related in some Upaniṣads. But in others, and even in the Vedas, creation is compared to magic or jugglery; God is spoken of as the Juggler who creates the world by the magical power called Māyā.

Śaṅkara, therefore, holds that, in consistency with the emphatic teaching that there is only One Reality, we have to explain the world not as a real creation, but as an appearance which God conjures up with his inscrutable power, Māyā. To make the conception of Māyā more intelligible to ordinary experience, he interprets it in the light of ordinary illusions that we have in daily life, when a rope appears, for example, as a snake or a glittering shell appears as silver. In all such cases of illusion, there is a substratum or a reality (e.g., rope, shell) on which something else (e.g., snake, silver) is imagined or superimposed owing to the ignorance of the substratum. This ignorance not only conceals the underlying reality or substratum, but also makes it appear as something else. Our perception of the world's objects can be similarly explained. We perceive the many objects in the One Brahman on account of our ignorance (Avidyā or Ajñāna) which conceals the real Brahman from us and makes it appear as the many objects. When the juggler produces an illusory show, makes one coin appear as many, the cause of it from his point of view is his magical power; from our point of view the reason why we perceive the many coins, is our ignorance of the one real coin. Applying this analogy to the world-appearance, we can say that this appearance is due to the magical power of Māyā in God and we can also say that it is due to our ignorance. Māyā and ignorance are then the two sides of the same fact looked at from two different points of view. Hence Māyā is also said to be of the nature of Ignorance (Avidyā or Ajñāna). Lest one should think that Śaṅkara's position also fails to maintain pure monism, because two realities—God and Māyā—are admitted, Śaṅkara points out that Māyā as a power of God is no more different from God than the power

of burning is from fire. There is then no dualism but pure monism (advaita).

But is not even then God really possessed of creative power? Śaṅkara replies that so long as one believes in the world appearance, he looks at God through the world, as the creator of it. But when he realises that the world is apparent, that nothing is really created, he ceases to think of God as a Creator. To one who is not deceived by the magician's art and sees through his trick, the magician fails to be a magician; he is not credited with any magical power. Similarly, to the few who see nothing but God in the world, God ceases to have Māyā or the power of creating appearances.

In view of this, Śaṅkara finds it necessary to distinguish two different points of view—the ordinary or empirical (vyāvahārika) and the transcendental or real (pāramārthika). The first is the standpoint of unenlightened persons who regard the world as real: our life of practice depends on this; it is rightly called, therefore, the vyāvahārika or practical point of view. From this point of view the world appears as real; God is thought to be its omnipotent and omniscient creator, sustainer and destroyer. Thus God appears as qualified (saguṇa) by many qualities. God in this aspect is called by Śaṅkara Saguna Brahman or Iśvara. From this point of view, the self also appears as though limited by the body; it behaves like a finite ego (aham). The second or the real (pāramārthika) standpoint is that of the enlightened who have realised that the world is an appearance and that there is nothing but God. From this point of view, the world being thought unreal, God ceases to be regarded as any real creator, or as possessed of any qualities like omniscience or omnipotence. God is realised as One without any internal distinction, without any quality. God from this transcendental standpoint (pāramārthikadṛṣṭi) is indeterminate, and characterless; it is Nirguna Brahman. The body also is known to be apparent and there is nothing to distinguish the soul from God.

The attainment of this real standpoint is possible only by the removal of ignorance (*avidyā*) to which the cosmic illusion is due. And this can be effected only by the knowledge that is imparted by the Vedānta. One must control the senses and the mind, give up all attachment to objects realising their transitory nature, and have an earnest desire for liberation. He should then study the Vedānta under an enlightened teacher and try to realise its truths by constant reasoning and meditation. When he is thus fit, the teacher would tell him at last: 'Thou art Brahman'. He would meditate on this till he has a direct and permanent realisation of the truth, 'I am Brahman'. This is perfect wisdom or liberation from bondage. Though such a liberated soul still persists in the body and in the world, these no longer fetter him as he does not regard them as real. He is *in* the world, but not *of* the world. No attachment, no illusion can affect his wisdom. The soul then being free from the illusory ideas that divided it from God, is free from all misery. As God is Bliss, so also is the liberated soul.

The teachings of the Vedānta are interpreted and developed by Rāmānuja in a different way, as follows: God is the only Reality. Within Him there exists as parts the different unconscious (acit) material objects as well as the many conscious souls (cit). God is possessed of all supremely good qualities like omniscience and omnipotence. Just as a spider spins the cobweb out of his own body, so God creates the world of material objects out of matter (acit) which eternally exists in Him. The souls are conceived as infinitely small (aṇu) substances which also exist eternally. They are, by their very nature, conscious and self-luminous. Every soul is endowed with a material body in accordance with its karma. Bondage of the soul means its confinement to this body. Liberation is the complete dissociation of the soul from the body. The cause of bondage is karma which springs from ignorance. The soul identifies itself with the body, through ignorance of its real nature and behaves as though it were the

body. It hankers after sensuous pleasures. Thus it becomes attached to the world and the force of this attachment causes its repeated rebirth. Ignorance is removed by the study of the Vedānta. Man comes to know that his soul is distinct from the body, that it is really a part of God or Brahman, on whom his existence depends. The disinterested performance of the obligatory duties enjoined by the Vedas destroys the accumulated forces of attachment or karmas and helps the perfection of knowledge. God is known as the only object worthy of love. Such knowledge leads to constant meditation on God and resignation to His will. God is pleased by devotion and releases the devotee from bondage. He is never born again after death. The liberated soul becomes *similar* to God, because like God it has pure consciousness free from imperfections. But it does *not* become *identical* with God, as the finite can never become infinite.

According to Rāmānuja, though God is the only Reality and there is nothing outside God, yet within God there are many other realities. Creation of the world and the objects created are all as real as God. It is, therefore, not unqualified monism (advaita), but a monism of the One qualified by the presence of many parts (viśiṣṭādvaita). God possessed of the conscious souls and unconscious matter is the only Reality.