UNIT 1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Contents

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

- to dispel certain misconceptions about Indian philosophy held mainly by western scholars and certain other misconceptions held by some Indian scholars. In order to grasp Indian philosophy in proper perspective it is necessary that these misconceptions are erased;

- to distinguish philosophy from religion in the Indian context. This unit shows that, taken in the strict sense of the term, philosophy is not the same as religion. Some key philosophical issues developed in Indian context on very different lines when compared with western thought;

- to project the essence of Indian thought.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Indian context, philosophy is taken to mean *darshana* or *tattva*. We shall consider how the etymological meaning of 'philosophy' correlates itself with *darshana* or *tattva*. '*Drisyate anena iti darshanam*' - the one through which it is seen. The word seen can be understood either literally or philosophically. Though the difference is irrelevant, let us consider only the latter. To 'see' in philosophic sense means to 'realise'. *Darsana,* therefore, means to realise. Again, the verb 'realise' is a transitive verb. We always realise 'something' whenever we realise. To say that we realise 'nothing' is to admit that there is no realisation at all. If we recollect whatever that was said about 'know', then it becomes clear that to a great extent 'to realise' corresponds to 'to know', and hence realisation corresponds to knowledge. This correspondence is nearly one-to-one; i.e., it is nearly isomorphic. This aspect unfolds itself in due course. Before proceeding in this direction, we should know what '*tattva*' stands for.

The word *tattva* is derived from two words '*tat*' and '*tva*'. *Tat* means it or that and *tva* means 'you'. Therefore *tattva,* etymologically, means 'you are that'.

What is important is to know what *tat* stands for in Indian thought. It means reality or 'ultimate' reality. This is also what one division of philosophy, i.e., metaphysics talks about. The word 'it', which appears in the meaning of *darshana* stands for *tat,* i.e., ultimate reality. Since *darshana* , is knowing reality, it involves not only an important metaphysical component but also an important epistemological component. Hence, the summation of these two components more or less satisfactorily completes the description of philosophy as *darshana* in Indian context.

There is yet, another component that remains to be understood. Obviously, 'you' (*tva*) stands for knower, i.e., the epistemological subject and by identifying the epistemological subject with reality, we arrive at an important corollary. Indian thought did not distinguish between reality and the person or epistemological subject and hence etymologically, knowledge in Indian thought became inward (however, it must be emphasized that it outgrew the etymological meaning in its nascent stage itself). But what is of critical importance is the philosophical significance of the above mentioned corollary. Wherever man is involved, directly or indirectly, value is involved. So axiology surfaces. When man is identified with reality, it and the whole lot of issues related to reality gain value-overtones. Hence, in Indian context, value is not merely a subject matter of philosophy, but philosophy itself comes to be regarded as 'value'. Consequently, the very approach of Indian thinkers to philosophy gains some distinct features.

1.2   PHILOSOPHER'S LOOK AT REALITY

Indian thought is essentially pluralistic as regards arguments which give an exposition of reality. First, we can begin with types of reality and this can be done from two different angles.
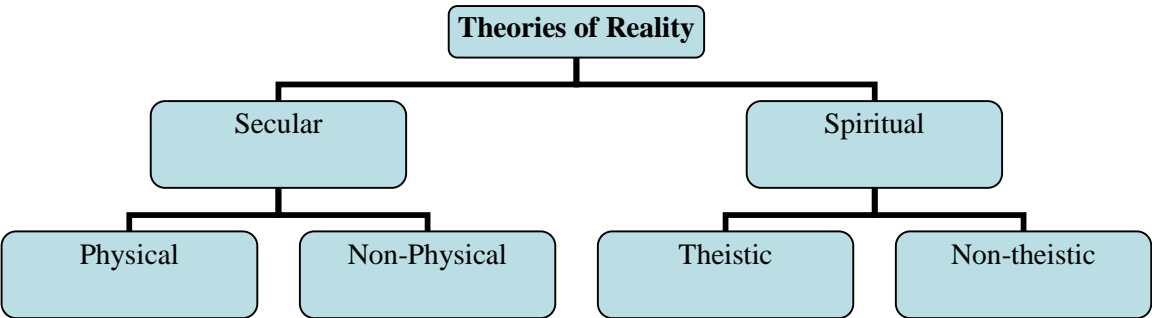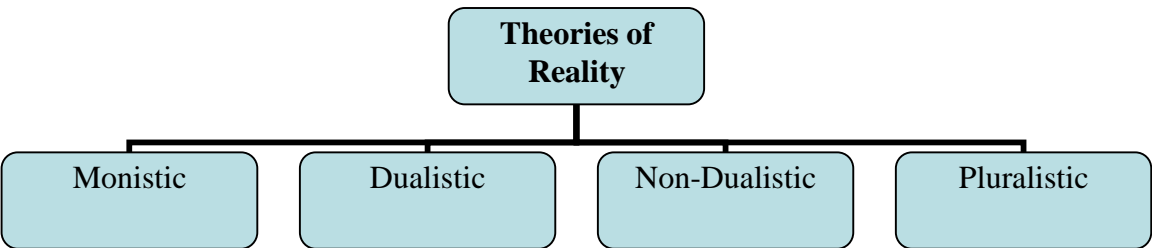
Table 1:

Table 2:

Let us try to understand what Table 1 says. But before doing so, it is better to answer the question; what is reality? Indeed, this is the most difficult question to answer. To start with, 'reality' can be defined as the one which is the ultimate source of everything and itself does not have any source. It also can be taken to

mean that which is independent. This definition itself is hotly debated in philosophical circles. If we take this as a working definition of reality, then we find to our surprise that ancient Indians offered various answers resulting in 'proliferation of an ocean of theories', to use the phrase used by Feyerabend. Contrary to widespread belief prevailed in the past, all Indian thinkers did not recognize reality as spiritual. Nor did they unanimously regard it as secular. A complex discipline like philosophy does not allow such simple division. Surely, some thinkers accepted only spiritual reality and on the contrary, some other thinkers accepted only 'secular' reality. However, in many cases, these two divisions crossed and the result is that in those cases we discover that reality has two faces, secular and spiritual. An upshot of this conclusion is that thinkers in India neglected neither this world nor the 'other' (if it exists). This is a significant aspect to be borne in mind.

Curiously, at Level 2, the divisions of secular and spiritual theories are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive, i.e., physical and non-physical, on the one hand and theistic and non-theistic, on the other. Though within secular range (and similarly within spiritual range) the divisions exclude each other any division of secular theory can go with any division of spiritual theory without succumbing to self-contradiction. Accordingly, we arrive at four combinations which are as follows:

1) Physical   –   Theistic
2) Physical   –   Non-Theistic
3) Non-Physical   –   Theistic
4) Non-Physical   –   Non-Theistic

Now let us get to know the meaning of these terms. A theory which regards the independence of physical world is physical. Likewise, a theory which regards the independence of any other substance than physical world is non-physical. The former need not be non-theistic. A theory of reality can accord equal status to this world and god. Surely, it does not involve any self-contradiction. The *Dvaita* and the *Vaisesika* illustrate the former, whereas *charvaka* illustrates the latter. A diagram illustrates the point.

Physical   Theistic
  (A)   (C)

Non- Physical   Non-theistic
  (B)   (D)
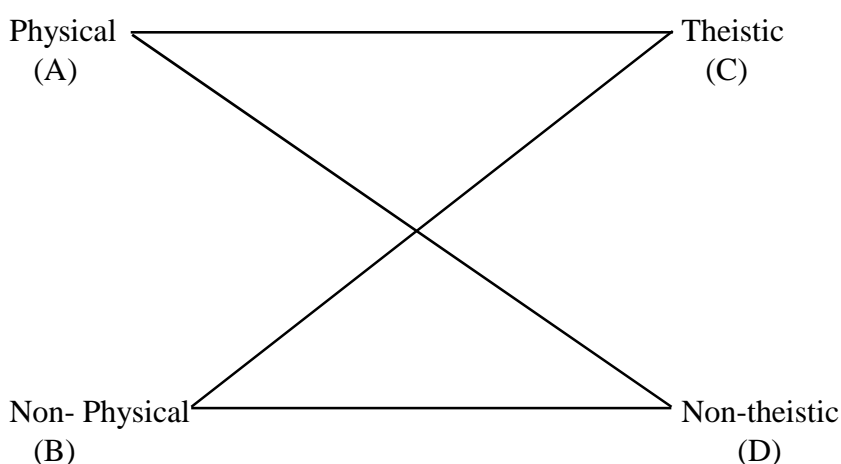
What is to be noted here is that A and B lack connectivity; and so also C and D. In western tradition, the term 'mind' replaces the term non-physical. However, in Indian context such usage is inaccurate because, at least, some schools regard mind as sixth organ. The *Sankhya* is one school which regards mind as an evolute

of *prakriti*. Hence, it is as much physical as any other sense organ. The *Vaisheshika* is another school which has to be bracketed with the *Samkhya* in this regard. At this stage, we should get ourselves introduced to two key metaphysical terms, realism and idealism; the former with all its variants regards the external world as ultimately real, whereas the latter with all its variants regards external world as a derivative of mind. Of course, here mind is not to be construed as sixth organ. The *Yogachara,* a later Buddhistic school is one system which subscribes to idealism.

Now it is clear that (A) and (B) are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive. Under (D) there are two sub-divisions; atheistic and agnostic. (C) on the one hand, and atheistic and agnostic on the other hand are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive. Since, atheistic and agnostic doctrines are philosophically different, 2nd and 4th types are further split into two each. So, instead of 4, we will have six theories. Each theory differs from every other theory. The differences are, sometimes gross and some times subtle.

It is, now, more than obvious that Indian philosophy does not lend itself to simple and easy categorization. Complexity and variety must be regarded as salient features of Indian thought. This aspect is further compounded when table 1 and table 2 intersect. Before considering such intersection we should first elucidate table 2.

Table 2 explicates theories of reality and distinguishes theories on the basis of number, i.e., the number of substances, which are regarded as real, becomes the criterion to make any distinction. Monism asserts that reality is one. The assertions of dualistic and pluralistic theories can be ascertained without difficulty, since they stand for 'two' and 'more than two' respectively. Non-dualistic theory, i.e., The *Advaita* is unique. It does not make any assertion about number, but only negates dualism (if dualism is inadmissible, then pluralism is also inadmissible). The *Upanisads* are monistic and The *Vaisesika* is pluralistic.

Now we shall integrate table 1 and table 2. An integration of this sort yields in all twenty four systems. This is not to imply that twenty-four systems dominated the scene. But majority of them did flourish at one time or the other.

Consideration of questions in respect of reality should make it clear that no qualitative difference can be discerned between the Indian and the western traditions. Questions are alike; because problems are alike. But the same set of questions may elicit different answers from different minds at different times and places. Always, *spatio-temporal* factor plays a major role in determining solutions. The last aspect becomes clear after we consider issues in respect of knowledge.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) Show how the key terms Darshana and Tattva can be integrated into the etymological meaning of philosophy.

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2)   How do you explain that ultimate reality is knowing reality?

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1.3   KNOWLEDGE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Desire to know is not an extraordinary quality of man. This is an instinct which can be discerned in any animal. However, differences lie elsewhere. The extent of knowledge acquired or capable of being acquired varies from species to species. This is one difference. Second, man's motive to acquire knowledge and his concept of knowledge differ from culture to culture. Previous statement, surely, does not imply ranking of culture. It only shows that the concept of knowledge is relative to culture. The essence of philosophy consists in these two principal factors; motive and idea.

Indian and western concepts, whether ancient or modern, are best understood when they are compared and contrasted. Ancient Greeks believed in the principle 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge', which gave impetus to birth and growth of pure science. In contrast, post-renaissance age heralded the contrary principle 'knowledge is power'. This dictum propagated by Bacon changed for ever the very direction of the evolution of science. However, ancient Indians exhibited a very different mindset. While medicine and surgery developed to meet practical needs, astronomy and mathematics developed for unique reason, neither purely spiritual nor purely mundane, in order to perform *yagas* to meet practical ends and *yajnas* to achieve spiritual gain. At any rate, ancient Indians never believed in Greek dictum. Nor did they, perhaps, think of it. If we regard knowledge as value, then we have to conclude that it was never regarded as intrinsic. On the other hand, it was mainly instrumental. The only exception to this characterization is the *Charvaka* system which can be regarded as the Indian counterpart of epicureanism.

In a restricted sense, the Indian philosophy of knowledge comes very close to the Baconan philosophy of knowledge. Truly, Indians regarded knowledge as power because for them knowledge (and thereby, philosophy) was a way of life and this is the reason why for them knowledge was never intrinsic. But, then, it is absolutely necessary to reverse the connotation of the word 'power'. While the Baconan 'power' was meant to experience control over nature, the Indian 'power' was supposed to be the instrument to subjugate ones own self to nature. This is the prime principle which forms the cornerstone of early *vedic* thought. This radical change in the meaning of the word 'power' also explains the difference in world view which can be easily discerned when the belief-systems and attitudes of Indians and Europeans (for our purpose 'west' means Europe only) are compared and contrasted. Post-Baconian Europe believed that this universe and everything in it is meant to serve the purpose of man because man is the centre of the universe. (The spark of this thought did characterize a certain phase in the development of *vedic* thought, only to be denounced at later stage). On the other hand, ancient Indian believed in identifying himself with nature.

We should carry further our analysis of Baconian 'power' *vis-à-vis* the Indian 'power'. The repetition of what was said earlier is only to reinforce the critical importance of consequences. Knowledge was not only 'power' but became a powerful weapon for the westerners to address their economic and political agenda. At no point of time did westerners look upon knowledge as a means to achieve anything even remotely connected to spiritual goal. Just as the *charvaka* is an exception in Indian context, Socrates and Spinoza can be regarded as exceptions in western context. Indians, however, did not regard worldly pleasure as ultimate. For them there was something more important and enduring and therefore the conquest of nature never mattered. Precisely, this attitude has generated lot of needless controversy. This characterization, which, no doubt, is true, was grossly misunderstood and, consequently, it was argued that the Indian thought rejects altogether this world and present life as totally irrelevant and insignificant. This argument, which stems from total misunderstanding, is altogether unwarranted. To say that x is more important than y is not to say that y is insignificant. If something is more important, then it means that something else is 'less' important. In other words, Indian tradition, surely, includes the 'present' life, but it is not restricted to it; goes beyond it. This point becomes clear in the third chapter.

Evidently, Indian tradition maintains a certain hierarchy of values unlike western tradition. Knowledge, as a way of life, encompasses not only all sorts of values but also it changes one's own perspective. Accordingly, the so-called spiritual goal in life can be attained only by one who has acquired knowledge. It points to the fact that ignorance or *avidya* is a hindrance to attain spiritual goal in particular and any other goal in general. One who has acquired true knowledge or knows truly, acts and thinks, very differently, different from ignorant, a characteristic Socratic thought in Indian attire. However, this characteristic is conspicuous by its absence in western tradition. It was not necessary that personal life of a philosopher should match his philosophy, in the sense that a philosopher's life need not be a role model for lesser mortals to emulate. While Socrates and Spinoza are at one end of the thread, Bacon and Heidegger are at the opposite end. The point is that in Indian tradition, philosophy and value are inseparable, whereas in the west it is not so. A philosopher, in the west, can be (not that there are) worse than a hardened criminal. But in Indian context it is inconceivable.

This sort of emphasis upon values led to a hermeneutic blunder. Without batting his eye lid the critic, just like protagonist, argued that in Indian philosophy was never distinct from religion. Hence in India there was no philosophy at all worth the name according to critics. That there was no religion in India (with the exclusion of tribal religion) is a different story. The so-called *Hindu dharma* cannot be mistaken and ought not to be mistaken for religion. This confusion arose because many scholars mistakenly identified religion with spirituality. An analogy may clear the mist surrounding Indian philosophy. Western philosophy is not divided into Christian philosophy and Jewish philosophy, though all western philosophers (excluding Greek philosophers) in loose sense are either Christians or Jews. Likewise, it is highly inappropriate to talk about '*Hindu philosophy*', though majority of Indian philosophers were 'committed' *Hindus*. It is true that a few philosophers in India became the heads of religious groups or sects (eg. *Ramanuj or Madhva).* But then we have St. Augustine, St. Aquinas, etc. in the west also. But nobody characterizes their philosophy as Christian philosophy. But surely, we have *Buddhist* or *Jaina* philosophy because neither *Buddhism* nor

Jainism is a religion in the strict sense of the term. At this point, a pertinent question arises, if there is Buddhist philosophy, then why not Hindu philosophy? To believe that there is such philosophy amounts to putting the cart in front of the horse. Philosophy in India did not originate from *Sanatana dharma* – or Hindu *dharma* as it is popularly known as – but it is the other way round.

Therefore, in sharp contrast to western tradition, Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual. When it was said earlier that in India also knowledge is regarded as power, what was meant was that knowledge was regarded as spiritual power; spiritual which is totally non-religious in its nature.

It is an error to assume that spiritual overtones can be discerned only in knowledge. The concept of reality and aesthetic values also are endowed with spirituality. The *Upanisadic* or A*dvaitic* notion of *Brahman* is a classic example. It is spiritual because it is neither worldly (physical) nor religious. If knowledge is spiritual, then its *prama* (object) also must be spiritual. '*Raso vai sah*' (that is, indeed, *rasa*) is an example for spiritual status of aesthetic value. In this case 'that' according to, at least one interpretation means '*Para Brahma*' or highest reality and Rasa may be taken to mean beauty. The metaphysical or spiritual element involved in philosophy must have been hijacked by religions to formulate their notions of gods (and perhaps to counter their rivals).

Let us return to knowledge again. Indian philosophy recognizes knowledge at two levels; *Para Vidya* (higher knowledge) and *Apara vidya* (lower knowledge). Since knowledge is spiritual, only the former is true knowledge, whereas the latter is not knowledge at all in the strict sense of the term. Though the *Upanisads* subscribe to this view, subsequent systems, (with the exception of *Purva Mimamsa*) which are supposed to be commentaries on the *Upanishads*, regarded perception, for example, as a way of knowledge. *Upamana* is another *pramana*. Not only lower knowledge, but also erroneous knowledge was seriously considered as species of knowledge (e.g., *akhyati*) by systems of philosophy. Therefore even *Apara Vidya* retained its place. Does Indian philosophy integrate spiritual life with worldly affairs? If the claim, that upholding of the former is not tantamount to the rejection of the latter, then it does not. The truth is that the former does not entail the latter. Therefore these two had to be fused and it was achieved in a remarkable manner; *purusartha* scheme clarifies that only through *Dharma,* i.e., righteous means, man should acquire *artha* (wealth) and satisfy *kama* (any sensuous desire), the very same means to attain *moksha* (liberation). The law of parsimony is very well adhered to as regards the questions of social philosophy and moral philosophy.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) Explain briefly that theories of reality can be understood from two different angles, that is, from spiritual and secular angles.

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2)   Do you agree with some Indian schools that regard mind as sixth organ?

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1.4   PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

Earlier, it was said that in India philosophy itself was regarded as a value and also that value and human life are inextricably blended. What is the aim of life? Against this backdrop, it is easy to discover solution to this quest in Indian philosophy. It is not so easy to reach the same in western tradition (it is true that existentialism attempted the same, but it remained a sort of island and was obliterated by analytic tradition). The aim of life according to Indian tradition is to make a pilgrimage from 'misery to happiness'. This is a single thread which runs through the whole gamut of Indian philosophy. At one point of time, vertical split occurred in philosophical tradition leading to the birth of orthodox and heterodox schools of thought. However, they concur on one issue, i.e., the aim of life. (It is a commonplace practice to regard them as *vedic* and non-*vedic* schools though it is not very satisfactory to regard so). The dispute between these two poles did not prevent them from embracing a common goal. In what sense is this goal a philosophical issue? This is one question which arises in this context; how can two opposing schools of thought have a common denominator? This is another. Answer to the first question can be construed as follows. Knowledge as value is unique by itself. If the instrument which gives thrust to the quality of lifestyle has any economic value, then from a different perspective, if any, knowledge which reforms lifestyle also must possess value. Therefore knowledge became 'the' value in Indian thought. A *Jnani* in Socratic sense perceives not only routine life, but also the world in which he lives, differently because knowledge changes his world view. This type of change carries with it moral value. It means that the aim of life becomes an ethical issue. In this sense it becomes a philosophical issue. Answer to second question is still simpler. All schools of philosophy unanimously admit that the pursuit of happiness is the sole aim and unanimity stops there. But these two poles differ when they specify what happiness is. An example may make the point clear. All political parties, in their election manifesto, proclaim that their sole aim is uplifting the downtrodden. But the mechanism of doing so differs from one party to the other. Now the position is clear. Orthodox and heterodox schools differ on what happiness is and on what constitutes happiness. Even within heterodox system the idea of happiness differs. The *Charvaka* school maintains that happiness consists in pleasure whereas the Buddhism asserts that happiness consists in *nirvana* if happiness is to be construed as elimination of misery.

Earlier, it was mentioned that spirituality is the essence of Indian philosophy. Against this background, let us analyse what happiness is. Neither this physical

world nor earthly pleasure is permanent. Nor are they ultimate. Hopefully, no one entertains the illusion that this world is eternal. However, not many care to think whether or not everlasting peace or happiness is possible within the bounds of finite world. Indian philosophy is characterized by this thought. The desire to attain eternity is common to the Greek and the Indian traditions. However, in the latter case this desire takes a different form. Hence eternity is tantamount to permanent liberation from misery. A permanent liberation from misery is tantamount to attainment of permanent happiness and this it eternity. It is variously designated as *moksha*, *nirvana*, etc. In its ordinary sense *vairagya* means renouncing happiness. But in real sense what has to be renounced is not happiness, but pleasure. *Vairagya* in conjuction with knowledge leads to eternal happiness. Hence in Indian context *vairagya* is 'renounce worldly pleasure and attain eternal happiness'. It is possible that the very idea of renunciation invites strong objections. But in one definite sense such a renunciation is desirable. *Vairagya* should be construed as elimination of greed and inclusion of contentment in life. This is the hidden meaning of *vairagya.* What happened, in course of time, was that both dimensions were wrongly interpreted leading to the conclusion that *vairagya* is not only negative but also is the sign of pessimism. It did not stop at this stage, but extended to the whole of Indian philosophy.

At this point, it is necessary to digress; In the twentieth century, westerners believed that in India there was noting like philosophy, but only myth and casuistry in the garb of philosophy. While the western scholars argued that in India, philosophy was totally corrupted by religion, some Indian scholars under the influence of Marxism failed to separate philosophy from custom and tradition afflicting Indian society. The merits and demerits of their arguments and counterarguments are not relevant presently. But the sense, in which the world religion has to be construed, if it has to be regarded as philosophically constructive, is important. If the word religion is taken to mean tribal religion, then its association with philosophy spells doom to the latter. In India, philosophy was not influenced by religion in this sense. On the other hand, various religious sects, which grew later, were influenced by philosophy.

But the criticisms of those scholars, who admit that in ancient India there was philosophic movement, merit our considerations. According to one criticism, Indian thought prompted negative outlook and therefore, is self-destructive only because it negates the reality of physical world. This criticism can be rebutted in two stages. In the first place, Indian philosophy does not deny the physical world in absolute terms. A particular system of philosophy does not become a negative doctrine just because it regards the world as impermanent and that what is impermanent is regarded as not ultimately real. No scientist has ever dared to say that the universe is eternal. If the critic's argument is admitted, then Plato's philosophy also becomes negative in character. Indian philosophers, like Plato, admitted something permanent. Impermanence and permanence are relative terms; relevance of any one of them demands the relevance of another. Secondly, what is relative is always relative to something different. There is noting like absolute relativity. The last two statements which, actually, explicate the essence of the theory of relativity holds good here also.

Now let us consider the second stage of refutation. Is it legitimate to categorize any doctrine as negative? Refutation is an important step in arguments. But it is

not final. If science can be 'characterized as satisfying a negative requirement such as falsifiability' (Karl Popper, 1959, p.41), then philosophy, whether Indian or western, also is entitled to the same benefit or status. To a great extent Indian philosophy followed the principle of 'Assertion through refutation'. Precisely this principle was upheld by Popper.

Second criticism is as follows; it is pessimistic. Any theory, which negates this world and life in absolute sense, ought to be pessimistic. The very fact that this criticism draws support from two sources of error shows the degree of misunderstanding. First, the desire to escape from misery was misconstrued as the desire to escape from external world. Second, it discourages earthly pleasure. Let us consider the second source first. Negation of earthly pleasure is not tantamount to the negation of happiness because pleasure and happiness are, evidently, different. *Moksha* is simply Sanskrit version of happiness. Pleasure is not only momentary but also is not pure in the sense that pleasure always comes with pain. If we consider Bentham's criteria, then these criteria satisfy not pleasure but happiness. Duration, intensity and purity do not, in reality, characterize pleasure but happiness. Perhaps proximity alone satisfies pleasure. If so, even from practical standpoint any philosophy which regards *moksha* as ideal ceases to be pessimistic.

Now let us turn to the first source. Desire to escape from this world describes the mindset of an escapist. There are references to rebirth. Rebirth may only be a myth and something beyond verification. But when attainment of *moksha* is regarded as a possibility during the lifespan of an individual (this is what is called *jivanmukti*), there is no reason to regard the external world as an evil. It is, however, true that not only critics, but also the votaries of Indian philosophy misunderstood the concept of *moksha* and it led to the cardinal mistake of treating external world as evil.

One more objection can be raised to *moksha.* Is *moksha* a meaningful ideal? In the first place *moksha* must be possible, and secondly, its realisation must be humanly possible. In the absence of either of them does it not cease to be meaningful? Let us assume that it is humanly possible to attain *moksha.* Then it remains an ideal. If we pursue an unattainable ideal, then we progress towards that ideal. What matters is progress. Plato's Utopia is an example which comes very close to the ideal of *moksha* in this respect. Progress in right direction is true progress. Therefore, knowing fully well that it is humanly impossible to achieve a goal like *moksha,* man pursues *moksha.* Thereby man progresses from lower level to higher level. This is a singular advantage of accepting something like *moksha* as an ideal.

In the western tradition only Greeks believed in the immortality of soul. It became totally alien to modern western philosophy, though it found favour with Christianity. The paradox is that immortality of soul is a common theme to Christianity and Indian philosophy, whereas it ought to have been a common to western philosophy and Christianity because west happens to be the mainland of Christianity. It illustrates one crucial factor. Religion does not determine philosophy. On the other hand, philosophy has the required potential at least to influence religion, if not determine the same.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

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

1) What do you understand by the belief that 'knowledge is power' in the Western and Indian context?

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2) Do you agree with the view that Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual?

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1.5   LET US SUM UP

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words which mean love of knowledge or wisdom. In Indian tradition philosophy means *Darshana* or *tattva*. Indian outlook is essentially different from western outlook. In terms of problems there is no difference between Indian and western philosophical traditions. Indians perceived knowledge as power in a different perspective. Bacon regarded knowledge as the means to establish authority over external world. On the other hand, Indians regarded knowledge as essential to establish control over ones own self. Indians recognized philosophy itself as a value. Therefore philosophy, in India, was accepted as a way of life. With the sole exception of the *Charvaka*, all other systems of philosophy in India accepted liberation in one or the other sense. *Moksha*, is one such ideal. Philosophy is independent of religion. However, religion may or may not be independent of philosophy.

1.6   KEY WORDS

Yagas and **Yajnas :**   Yagas amd Yajnas are sacared rituals done to appease God, performed during the Vedic period.

Pessimism   :   Pessimism, from the Latin '*pessimus*' (worst), is a painful state of mind which negatively colours the perception of life, especially with regard to future events. Value judgments may vary dramatically between individuals, even when judgments of fact are undisputed.

1.7   FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.8   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1)   In Indian context philosophy is understood as '*darsana*' -to see or to realize. This realization corresponds to that of knowledge. When we say that we are realizing a thing, it amounts to say that we have some sort of knowledge. This correspondence relationship is one to one and it is nearly isomorphic. *Tattva* stands for two words '*tat*' and '*tva*'. The etymological meaning of this word is 'you are that'. This mainly refers to the Ultimate reality in Indian philosophy. The word *darsana* stands for the ultimate reality and it is a knowing reality thus involving both metaphysical and epistemological component and satisfactorily explaining the description of *darsana* in Indian context.

2) The word '*darsana*' comes from the word *tattva* – the ultimate reality. This ultimate reality is the knowing reality. It not only describes about metaphysical component but also epistemological component. However, the summation of both the components is necessary in describing *darsana*. Epistemological component is very important, since it involves in knowing the ultimate reality. In the initial stage there was no distinction between reality and epistemic subject. Epistemologically knowledge became inward. In the course of time human related oneself to value and identified with the reality. So in Indian context, value is not regarded only to the subject matter of philosophy but philosophy itself is regarded as value.

Check Your Progress II

1) Theories of realities can be understood in two different angles, that is, from spiritual and secular angles. First of all, reality is defined as the ultimate source of everything but that itself does not have any source. Feyerabend comments that this sort of definition failed to recognize reality as neither spiritual nor secular. However complex discipline like philosophy does not allow such divisions. Obviously, we discover that reality has both spiritual and secular face which are mutually exhaustive and totally exclusive, that is, physical and non-physical. We arrive at four combinations. They are 1) physical theistic, 2) physical non-theistic, 3) non-physical theistic, 4) non-physical non-theistic. The theory which regards the independence of the physical world is physical while the theory which regards the independence of any other substance other than the physical world is non-physical.

2) In Indian context, some schools regard mind as sixth organ. *Samkhya* is one school which regards mind as evolutes of *prakrti*. Hence, it is as much physical as any other sense or another organ. *Vaisesika* is another school which has to be bracketed with *Samkhya* in this regard. At this stage, we should get ourselves introduced to two key metaphysical terms, realism and idealism; the former with all its variants regards the external world as ultimately real, whereas the latter with all its variants regards external world as a derivative of mind. Of course, here mind is not to be costumed as sixth organ. *Yogacara,* a later Buddhistic school, is one system which subscribes to idealism.

Check Your Progress III

1) In post-renaissance age Bacon propagated the famous dictum 'knowledge is power'. This principle changed for ever the very direction of the evolution of science. But the ancient Indians never believed in this dictum. On the contray, they performed *yagas* to meet practical ends and *yajnas* to achieve spiritual gain.

    But in a strict sense, Indians regarded knowledge as power because for them knowledge was a way of life and this is the reason why for them knowledge was never intrinsic. However, it is necessary to look into the connotation of the word power. The Baconan 'power' was necessary to experience control over nature, but the Indian 'power' was supposed to be the instrument to subjugate ones own self to nature. This is the prime principle which forms the cornerstone of early *vedic* thought. This radical change in the meaning of the word 'power' also explains the difference in worldview which can be

easily discerned when the belief-systems and attitudes of Indians and Europeans are compared and contrasted.

2) Unlike western tradition, Indian tradition maintains a hierarchy of values. In Indian context, spiritual goal in life can be achieved by the one who has acquired knowledge. However this type of characteristics is absent in western tradition. Many times Indian Philosophy was mistaken to be religion. This confusion made many to identify religion with spirituality. Philosophy in India did not originate from *sanatana dharma* – or Hindu *dharma.* Therefore, in sharp contrast to western tradition, Indian philosophy is essentially spiritual. When it was said earlier that in India also knowledge is regarded as power, what was meant was that knowledge is spiritual power, spiritual which is totally non-religious in its nature. Indian philosophy recognizes knowledge at two levels; *Para Vidya* (higher knowledge) and *apara vidya* (lower knowledge). Since knowledge is spiritual, only the former is true knowledge; whereas the latter is not knowledge at all in the strict sense of the term.