

Ethics in Indian Materialist Philosophy

(IN ITS SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE)

Bijayananda Kar

IIAS

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY
RASHTRAPATI NIVAS, SHIMLA

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Preface

I submitted a proposal for undertaking a research project on Ethics in Indian Materialist Philosophy to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla in 2004 and, on the basis of being awarded a Fellowship by the IIAS, I worked on the project, being stationed at Shimla for about three years.

The work of mine covers the rise and development of ethical and moral ideas in Indian Materialism (in its different major changes and ramifications) from the ancient time till the present-day. It is primarily an analytical exposition as well as a constructive appraisal of the available sources. It is notable that the major classical sources and thinkers which are referred to in this work do not present ethical implication of Indian materialism in detail. Despite that, attempt has been made to explore and expose the ethical ideas in such presentations.

For my research, I have been greatly benefitted by the library of IIAS which has an excellent collection of both books and journals (including the back numbers). I am thankful to the authorities of IIAS for providing me the opportunity to work at Shimla and also the office-staff for extending to me all co-operation and required facilities. I am grateful to the National Fellows, Fellows, Associate Fellows and the Visiting Scholars for a lively meaningful interaction by way of exchange of thought and ideas.

Lastly, I am to record my sincere indebtedness to my wife (Namita) for extending her help and inspiration in completing the work. I also thank Shri Naresh Sharma for neatly typing the manuscript.

V.S.S. Nagar
Bhubaneswar

BIJAYANANDA KAR

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The materialist philosophical outlook has been prolonging in India since antiquity. There has been several forms of materialistic trends, often not precisely articulated. The relevant data relating to such forms are found to be, quite often, not clear and precise. Either the concerned data are not traced or whatever data are available are noticed in a deflected or diffused form. Further, on certain occasions, the materialist outlook is distorted and misrendered by the opponents. Their exposition of materialist point of view is very often shrouded with pre-conceived bias or prejudice. Not only the classical materialist thinkers but also the modern materialist and like-minded thinkers like M.N. Roy, Periyar EV Ramasami and others have been almost ignored with contemptuous indifference and callousness in certain quarters where rigidity and orthodoxy have been given undue importance.

It is probably because of strong spiritual leanings found in both classical and modern trends of philosophical setup, serious studies on Indian materialist philosophy have not been usually taken up. Of course, there are some notable exception in this regard. There are some distinguished researchers like D.P. Chattopadhyaya (elder) and D.R. Shastri who have become pioneers in exposing Indian materialistic thought (in the classical sense). A brilliant scholar of Indian origin, but who was mostly engaged in research at the University of Harvard (USA) is responsible for bringing out a good and substantial work on Indian materialism, which he himself entitled as: *Studies in Hindu Materialism in 1932*. He is Dr. K.B. Krishna who passed away in 1948, much before his work

came in printed form as a book in 1994. Rahul Sankrityayan is another important scholar who has worked out in detail about Indian materialist thought in Hindi language. All such works are definitely encouraging.

But a systematic study of Indian materialism, both in its ancient and modern perspective needs to be undertaken in greater detail and thoroughness. In this regard, I would like to take up a theme of lesser dimension, i.e. focusing attention to the ethical and moral implications of the materialistic thought as displayed in the major classical as well as modern writings. So far as the ancient trends of thought, in this connection, are taken into consideration, it may be well seen that in most cases the moral implications of the materialist point of view are not clearly spelt out. Those need to be explored and exposed, keeping in tune with the original materialistic philosophical background, both in its moral and epistemological framework. It is very often adversely remarked that materialist philosophical outlook gives rise to immorality, abuse of ethical norm and conduct at the social plane. It leads to irresponsible whimsicality so far as individual's dealing within a social setup is concerned. It gives rise to gross egoistic passionate pleasure, causing thereby social chaos and confusion. It has been held that materialist philosophical outlook can never make any room for sound social ethics. The individual, according to this trend of reasoning, is thoroughly self-centred, passionate and, in that way, anti-social and immoral.

An attempt has been made in this work to expose the general ethical format in several materialist tendencies found in the Indian tradition. Of course, while making such a move, critical appraisal of diverse materialistic formulation will also be taken up and those are to be exposed in terms of their strength and weakness as well. It is, however, true that due to the paucity of materialistic literature belonging to the ancient and classical phase, there has been, as already hinted, scope for misunderstanding and even misrendering. There has been, on account of this, room for certain amount of conjecture and surmise. This is quite natural. But whatever has been made available and is fairly conceded to be dependable source-material concerning the ancient materialist

trends of thought, an effort seems to be not futile to locate the moral implications of certain key-materialist expressions and statements which can be held as least dissatisfactory and reasonable.

It is, however, the case that in the strict sense of the term, no ethical theory has originated and developed in the detailed form with its technical ramifications, so far as classical Indian philosophical tradition is concerned. But there is definite preference of very many ethical and moral ideas in different sources (inclusive of the Lokāyata sources). Such ideas need philosophical analysis so that its ethical importance can be duly exposed and the concerned ethical theorization can be brought into focus. In this sense, ethics in the classical Indian philosophy in general and materialist thought in particular seems to be quite reasonable.

The Cārvākas or Lokāyatas who are mostly identified as classical Indian materialists are morally put down on account of their preference to move on for debt (*ṛṇa*) for the purpose of having a joyful life of happiness (*sukha*). Here the issue is: there is nothing wrong in aspiring for happiness. Cessation of sorrows and sufferings (*duḥkha-nivṛtti*) and attainment of joy or bliss (*sukha* or *ānanda*) are more or less desired by people in general, irrespective of the life-view or life-pattern that an individual chooses or adopts. Even the classical Indian darśanajña (*āstika* or *nāstika*) does aspire to have a life free from sorrows and sufferings. To seek for happiness and to avoid sorrows cannot by any means be treated as something immoral and unethical.

Further, when there is need for moving for loan in order to redress and heal up the physical and psychological ailment, any step that is entertained in that direction need not be rejected outright as immoral. So, the move for borrowing or taking loan is itself not to be despised unless there is clear evidence of ill motive or bad intention of cheating and not repaying the debt. Cheating, of course, is immoral in the social setup. But there is no indication found available in the Cārvākian source that there is the advocacy for taking loan and not paying it back. At least there is no support for cheating and adopting fraudulent move.

As a matter of fact, taking loan at the time of necessity is well recognised as a legitimate step universally and that is also morally not at all controversial. It is only when loan is executed with ill motive/intention, it is rated as immoral. The Cārvāka viewpoint seems to be outside the immoral move.

It is significant to note that the classical materialists (of any denomination) are found to be anti-spiritualists/non-spiritualists in general. They are against the admittance of supernatural/transcendental entities like God, soul, heaven and hell. It is not simply because such entities are not known through sense-perception, but also those cannot be legitimately inferred by means of rational procedure. Those are articles of baseless faith and dogma. Those ideas may attract certain individuals on account of sentimental appeal and lofty imagination; but, on the basis of that, those cannot be admitted as significant from the existential point of view. Further, the idea of eternal existence and infinite perfect being are not that logically clear. The Indian materialist's viewpoint seems to be in the line of such philosophical tradition which is critical about all sorts of abstract theological speculations but not indifferent to morality. For instance, Kant is a critic of theology but not of morality (practical reason). Morality is clearly different from spirituality in the western philosophical tradition. And, the same thing holds good in the Indian tradition too. A moralist, by conviction, may be also a spiritualist; but that is not on account of his moral setup. It is as good as one may be both a musician and a good football player; but from this it does not follow that to be a good musician one is bound to be a good football player. So also the case goes with a materialist. Having accepted the view that matter is the basis of everything, one need not necessarily be one immoralist in the socio-individual front of mundane dimension. There seems to be no logical impropriety in conceding the boundary between ethics and religion.

Non-approval of transempirical entities at the metaphysical plane has no necessary linkage with adoption or non-adoption of a moral life or ethically disciplined life in the social framework. Morality is based on autonomy of rules. It is neither necessarily related with a spiritualist or a materialist basis. So, to arrive at the

conclusion that materialism is logically bound up with immorality is not sustainable. The classical materialist philosophy in India can be well reviewed from this fresh angle of vision.

The modern materialists in India are against social disparity, discrimination and injustice. Blind ritualism is still strong in the general Hindu psyche on account of spiritual dominance over socio-individual morality. In the name of spiritual attainment (*ātma-siddhi*), there have been unwarranted spiritual dogmas and taboos which are clearly unethical. Approval of child-marriage and *satī* are still noticed today and those are executed in the name of spiritual need. Even a state government has recently confessed (out of helplessness or fear of loss of political power)¹ that it cannot check and prevent child-marriage. Sacrifice of animals before the deity is carried on vigorously in many religious centres openly without any moral sense of guilty. Tons of milk and other food-materials are put on the images of gods and goddesses with the blind belief that such action would do good to the individual concerned and also to the society. Female, after marriage (*strī/kalatra*) is still considered as a *paragotrī* and is offered as a gift like a commodity. *Dharma* is misleadingly rendered as a means for *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is regarded as *parama puruṣārtha* or highest goal and is held as end in itself, whereas *dharma* along with *kāma* and *artha* are taken as only means or instrumental value. From the logical point of view, at least, the move advanced by some noted social reformers of modern India can be viewed as having more leanings for a non-spiritualist frame of reference, despite the fact that some of such reformers prefer to remain in the spiritualist camp because of their long-standing psychological addiction.

It is notable that *dharma* (meaning morality) can never be construed as instrumental or means to achieve certain higher goal. That would surely affect its free and autonomous character. The modern materialist thinker's point of view can possibly be interpreted as well as evaluated from this standpoint and thereby his viewpoint can be found as quite meaningful.

It is marked that giving undue emphasis on spiritual refinement has caused noticeable imbalance in the economic and political setup. Maximization of the gradational hierarchy between a laity

and a clergy breeds serious imbalance. The clergies are expected to be thorough about rituals and code of conduct, acceptable to certain specific spiritual order. But it does not mean that necessarily they are morally superior to the commoner. A common man's moral sense depends upon his rational conscience and his mental resolve. In Indian tradition, there is a forceful illustration to corroborate this point. One commoner: Ekalavya is depicted as not only a superior archer to Arjuna but is also presented as morally illustrious, in not showing any sense of false-pride and vanity. Ekalavya volunteered to sacrifice his skill and efficiency in order to keep the prestige of Droṇācārya. It seems evident that the Indian materialist philosophy needs to be reevaluated and reassessed without having any pre-conceived set idea that being non-spiritual, it must have been rooted on immorality and the materialist's approach is nothing but socially obnoxious. A relook on the whole issue is not that futile and unwarranted.

It is, of course, noticeable that some thinkers belonging to the medieval and to the contemporary period have introduced several modifications and reinterpretation of the classically established spiritualism. By such moves, the rift between the spiritualist and the materialist approach to dharma or morality has been considerably minimized. Some spiritualists have accommodated materialist outlook and, in that way, transcendental spiritualism, in their mode, has given way to what may be called as socio-empiric spiritualism, not repugnant to the material necessities and requirements. Some of them are not, however, authorities in scriptures; but, nonetheless, they are quite resolute in raising their voice against immoral and unethical moves being propagated and supported under the pseudo-coverage of spiritual attainment of the individual/community. Either a spiritualist or a materialist cannot bypass and overlook the human concern. It is, in that way, noted that some of the notable thinkers have duly acknowledged the supremacy of socio-individual moral fabric in the secular front. In other words, both refined spiritualists and moderate materialists have now turned towards a neutral form of humanism, neither being tilted to uncompromising spiritualism

nor to radical materialism. In this regard, the prominent figures in the contemporary phase are: Lala Lajpat Rai, Ram Mohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Iswar Chandra Vidyāsagar, Pandit Nilakanatha Das and Dr. Abraham T. Kavoov. Vemana is a notable thinker of early period who has shown great zeal for social reform and reconstruction. Bhīma Bhoi of 19th century can also be regarded as a notable contributor in this context. Both Sri Aurobindo and Rabinadra Nath Tagore are found to be great advocates of spiritualistic humanism with clear undertonal emphasis on social reforms and avoidance of religious dogmas and rituals. However, their acceptance of matter is quite modest and rather conditional.

With this introductory remark, it is to be seen that somehow the materialist philosophy has never been given due recognition because of overdose of spiritualism in the classical as well as modern philosophical discussion. It is not for nothing that on account of giving undue emphasis on spiritualism in a trans-empirical and transcendental sense, materialist outlook has been ignored and that line of thinking is found to be rather extruded than exploded. The philosophical opponents of materialistic standpoint have, in most cases, deliberately misrepresented it in order to thrash it out from legitimate philosophical discussion.

Up to Mādhavācārya (1300 CE) writer of the compendium, *Sarva Draśana Samgraha*, no one has clearly recognized Cārvāka as an independent darsanika or philosophical viewpoint. The reference about the materialist outlook has been presented with a scornful attitude, giving the impression that materialism does not need any treatment in the rational platform. A very cursory reference has been made with a non-justifiable sense of indifference and callousness. The impact of such attitude still remains among the modern writers (omitting few exceptions) and the materialist viewpoint is almost side-tracked to the periphery. It is openly pronounced without slightest hesitation that classical Indian philosophy is spiritual. Without spiritual foundation, darśana cannot be conceived according to such pronouncement.

Notes and References

1. Vide Mr. Gour's statement (Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh) on 11.5.2005 as reported in the National Daily (*The Hindustan Times*) Dated 12.5.2005.

CHAPTER 2

The Pre-Vedic and the Post-Vedic Period

The Cārvākas/Lokāyatas, as already hinted, have been pictured as materialists, atheists and that is due to their not accepting the validity of religion and theology. And, again on account of their strong critical attitude towards religious and theological transcendence, they are viewed as immoral, fraud and unprincipled. Any student of Indian philosophy is usually exposed to this type of rendering from the beginning. Not only the secondary sources on Cārvāka view found in modern writings, but some of the classical sources, composed in Sanskrit and Pali also more or less bear such testimony. Such a reading of the Cārvāka point of view remains mostly accepted and unopposed because of non-availability of the original Cārvāka sources. As already pointed out, in most of the cases, the Cārvāka view is referred to in the writings of the opponents and such exposition is found to be not free from some sort of subjective fancy and prejudice.

However, this has to be conceded that on account of non-availability of the original sources, there is scope for such blind conjecture and misinterpretations. The point about the founder of materialist philosophy still remains a mystery. Questions and doubts are raised whether Cārvāka or Bṛhaspati are names of real persons or are fictitious. The term: Lokāyata which is often used as a substitute/synonym for Cārvāka does not have one definite connotation so far as classical references are concerned. For instance, Kumārila uses the term as atheistic,¹ Śāṅkara treats Lokāyata as the view according to which ātman (soul) is identical with śarīra (body).² In certain Buddhist source, Lokāyata is taken as false knowledge.³ The followers of Lokāyata are designated

as foolish chatterers.⁴ It is also claimed that Lokāyata originally meant, disputation or the science of disputation.⁵

Scholars are not unanimous on the issue whether Bārhaspatya-sūtras which have been cited by Mādhavācārya are genuine or spurious. All these controversies among the scholars may reveal that the source-materials with regard to the Cārvāka/Lokāyata viewpoints are not precise and authentic. It may be stated, in this context, that whatever is noticed in connection with the original source of Cārvāka, similar state of uncertainty can also be raised with regard to the original founder of Jaina dharma-darśana (Tirthaṅkara), the original founder of Sāṅkhya Sūtra (Kapila). These are, of course, some sort of initial difficulty; but for all that there is no need for suspending further studies and research over the matter.

It is true that in India there has been no proper historiography (scientific history). There are several factors responsible for that. But, even then, whatever is found available from different sources, basing upon that a more or less dependable account of various disciplines which have been studied and worked out in India through centuries has been advanced for future investigation and research. Keeping this thing in mind, further studies on Cārvāka darśana in general and its view on ethics and morality can be fruitfully enquired into. As a matter of fact, right from nineteenth century⁷ till today considerable amount of review on the Cārvāka point of view has been advanced by the modern writers. The account, presented by the opponents, has been critically studied and attempts, in certain circle, have been made to bring to light the Cārvāka standpoint in its own setting, without being polluted through the opponent's version.

But the issue is raised as to how this programme can be properly executed when the exact source of the Cārvāka stand is not available. At least in the case of other systems of Indian darśana, there is a continuity in form of the composition of *sūtras*, *bhāṣyas*, and *ṭīkāś*. This trend is all along noticeable in the Vedic, Jaina and Bauddha framework. But, notably, this is not traceable in the Cārvāka darśana. Neither there is one full-length original treatise in the form of *sūtra/kārikā* nor is there any follow-up

ancient or modern work, primarily basing upon that and developing the original stand to further new horizons.

Despite the difficulty which is pointed out here, it seems that there is still a ray of hope of crossing this state of impasse and that also would be philosophically worth-pursuing, even though it may not be that accurate and defensible from the historiographic point of view. In philosophical reading and understanding of certain ideas, concepts and views the emphasis is made on their rational profundity and consistency, in theoretical as well as practical dimension. Any philosophical theory which remains purely theory-bound in the dry speculative sense does not usually become that convincing and, in due course, it becomes a closed-chamber document. It loses its rational rigour and in that context praxis comes into prominence.

So far as the Cārvāka standpoint is concerned (particularly its stand on ethics and morality), there is the necessity for review and reconstruction, keeping in tune with the fundamental tenets of the Cārvāka philosophy (in whatever form it has been placed before us). At the present stage, for our purpose, it seems quite proper to pick up certain key lines and expressions which are found available from different traditional sources and which either directly or indirectly bear certain moral and ethical importance at the human social perspective. Some effort to explore certain moral implications will be made and, if possible, it would be suggested as to what sort of ethical conceptualization the Cārvāka stand can possibly exhibit that is quite effective at the applied level. The type of findings which would be brought from such type of conceptual exploration might not have been literally spelt out in any of the available description of the Cārvāka darśana. But it does not philosophically seem to matter much. The most important point is: whether the reconstruction that would be advanced here in respect of the Cārvāka standpoint is logically viable and practically efficacious at the social front. From this angle of approach it is not that significant to raise the issue whether Cārvāka is a system of thought or a school of philosophy.⁸ So also the historicity of Bṛhaspati or Cārvāka would not be sorted out, though such an effort may be important otherwise.

Whatever source-materials (in any form) are available and are usually ascribed to the Cārvākas/Lokāyatas, those are to be kept in view so far as the present study is concerned. For a philosophical appraisal of Cārvāka, certain amount of selection by way of analytical scrutiny is, of course, necessary. For carving out metaphysics or epistemology or even ethics of Cārvākas, some attempts have already been made and those have earned some currency in the general intellectual forum.⁹ Those viewpoints need to be critically dealt with and specially a review of the Cārvāka standpoint needs to be undertaken from the moral point of view.

The review of the Cārvāka standpoint begins with certain preliminary assertions on which, by now, there is more or less unanimity. The followers of Cārvāka in general, are opposed to the acceptance of any form of supernaturalism and transempiricism. According to them, there is no need (logical necessity) of admitting ātman (soul), Īśvara (God), Law of karma (principle of action, regulating birth and death). They are, more or less, against various sort of blind beliefs and prejudices, dogmas and taboos. They are rather free thinkers in the sense they are opposed to accept any scriptural saying without proper enquiry. Any sense of other-worldly existence either in terms of heaven or hell is not warranted in their view. Any speculative thought about the transempirical realm is never entertained by them. In short, they confine to mundane and they never aspire for supramundane. They are also free from any form of occultism and tāntrism.

From the metaphysical point of view, the Cārvākas are usually treated as materialists and in the epistemological plane, they are viewed as sensationalists. Though such readings are not indisputable,¹¹ here no detailed discussion on such issues would be taken up, because of the set plan of confining the discussion to ethics and morality. While dealing with ethics and morality, the discussion would be carried on in a broader perspective. Ethics, in the technical sense, is treated as the science of morality in which the theoretical foundation of morality, i.e. principles and criteria are dealt with. To be moral or to preach morality, it is not necessary to work out or to evolve the criteria. All such subtle

nuances, though otherwise are important, need not be emphasized in the present context. The aim here is rather to explore the moral implications of different sayings/expressions that are generally attributed to the Indian materialists. The enquiry, in this regard, is to be made in the historical phase that is already more or less acceptable to the researchers and general readers as well.

The earliest phase of Indian materialism has been traced to the Vedic period by the scholars. Even some of them hold that materialism is the earliest classical Indian school.¹² In the beginning, the ideas encircling Indian materialism are obviously not brought out in detailed form. Because that is the formative stage. It is a span of long period in which the different topical ideas have gradually taken shape and form. In the following section, it is proposed to discuss the rudimentary traces of materialistic thought in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. While referring to such traces, attempt is also to be advanced as to how such elementary thoughts pave the way for certain moral and ethical perspectives.

Materialistic Trends in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads (with their ethical and moral implications)

The Vedas are held with high esteem in the Indian tradition, The Vedic utterances are gracefully adored by the Hindus in general. Those are regarded as the revealed words of wisdom to the advocates of the Vedas. Those embody deepest form of spiritual realization. For the supporters, the Vedic utterances (*Vedoktis*) are infallible and self-valid. As such, there is no point of casting any doubt or raising any question on their authenticity.

Though there is difference of opinion among the Vedic exponents regarding the origin of the Vedas, yet such difference does not stand in the way of paying reverence to the Vedic tradition as a whole. Whether the Vedas are composed by any person (*manuṣya* or *Īśvara*) or just revealed texts to the seers (*dr̥ṣṭās*) of that age is held to be pointless so far as the importance of the Vedas are concerned. The prominence of the Vedic utterances lies in their revealed expressions of great spiritual significance.

But, when one makes a serious and critical study of the Vedas, one notices a different rendering also. Along with some few lines that may have some sort of spiritual suggestion, there are found to be a number of references in the Vedic source that clearly indicate a different trend of thought. At least such trend of thought is not spiritualistic, but distinctly something otherwise.

In the *Ṛg Veda*, one comes across the mention of the famous deva: Indra. He is regarded as the mightiest among all the devas and he has been invoked by the people for help at the time of necessity during his lifetime (*Ṛg*: 30.7). This shows that the later distinction between this world (*ihaloka*) and other world (*paraloka*) is not formulated during that stage. Indra deva is invoked not because he is to place men in the most perfect state after death in some realm of divinity. The invocation to Indra is primarily set for making the earthly life more pleasant and joyful. Prayers are advanced for more horses, better rain and sound protection from dangers and difficulties. It is interesting to note that the Vedic ṛṣis find no glory in begging and there is no dignity attributed to poverty. The Vedic devas are painted as human and not superhuman.

Indra is found to have been addicted to soma (*Ṛg*: 1.104.9). On account of this, it is said that he even has committed patricide (*Ṛg*: III.48.2, 4:IV.18.12). There is no symptom of spiritual ecstasy in connection with soma intoxication. It is indicated that soma increases physical strength and vigour (*Ṛg*: I.83.2; V.44.2; VIII.2.18.58; IX.76.1 etc.). Indra has been depicted to be one irresistible warrior, killing his own father (*Ṛg*: IV.18.12).

Like Indra, there are found to be number of other devas who are depicted as mortals. They are not very much different from men, having both birth and death. Maruts, Ṛbhus, Angiras, Atharvans and Bhṛgus are noted in this regard. It is said that the Vedic devas are glorified human beings with human motives and passions.

It is held that the Vedic people during the *Ṛg Vedic* period did not worship gods, but rather 'powers' operating in nature.¹³ The hymns found in the *Ṛgveda* are addressed to glorified men, deified animals and even inanimate objects. It is the power underlying these things and beings that is said to have been invoked. Anything

divine or of theistic import has not been mentioned in this context. The devas are not conceived to be all good and perfect; but, on the contrary, they are viewed also like men not free from occasional moral lapse like whimsicality and deceit. Consequently, the Vedic worshipper puts trust in his own capacity and never advances unconditional trust and confidence on any divine gods.¹⁴ From all this, the scholars quite often draw the remark that the so-called Vedic religion is not spiritualistic but materialistic and there is the blending of magic in the Vedic religion,¹⁵ Even some have gone on to conclude that the Vedic religion, on account of that, is unethical.¹⁶

But religion, as per established convention since centuries, stands for some sort of spiritual connotation. It cannot be delinked from the theo-centric sense of divinity. At least this is found to be the standard use of the concept of religion. Any deviation from that core meaning is rather an improper modification so far as common usage is concerned. In this context, it is held by some that Marxism too is a religion. But such an extensional use is obviously not descriptive but rather dubious or questionable. Similarly to say that the Vedic people have opted for materialistic religion on account of the fact, they have given primary importance to material prosperity and aspiration for power seems to be not justified. Rather, in view of the fact, they have not shown any definite indication for the acknowledgement of faith or unconditional surrender to the divine, personal or impersonal (in the religious sense), it seems proper to designate them as materialist/naturalist. Instead of having a spiritualistic view towards life, they seem to have a preference for a natural setup, without any longing for supernatural divine and spiritual transcendence.

Further, from the fact that the Vedic “prayers are nearly always for material objects” it is not reasonable to conclude that the Vedic people do not have any ethical or moral content. Because a moral sense is not necessarily to make withdrawal from material well-being. Such a reading of morality seems to be rather a forced one. Thereby morality is necessarily confined to a spiritual or religious framework and, by means of which the sense of freedom and autonomy on which ethics and morality are founded, rather gets dissipated.

So from the brief aforesaid discussion, it is evident that the Vedas are not clear in emphasizing the thought of spiritualism; rather, on the contrary, those show clear indication for a non-spiritualist, physicalistic and materialistic attitude to the life and the world. Materiality is not decried. In addition, emphasis has been laid upon a happy and prosperous living in the social plane of earthly setup without having any leaning towards esoteric spiritual outlook. The Vedic seers are not anti-naturalists. They seem to take due regard of the natural phenomena and have legitimate aspiration to delve into the secrets of nature by controlling nature with all power and intelligence. The motive for adoring the devas seems to have been based upon the thinking that those mighty men of great power and strength have been able to dominate and control different aspects of natural surrounding and thereby they think of bringing joy and happiness in human life.

Now the Upaniṣadic source may be investigated. At first, it may be noticed that the Upaniṣadic thought has widely been accepted as spiritualistic. The Upaniṣads, in general, are treated as either the end of the Vedas or as the cream of the Vedas. In general Indian philosophical context it is held as Vedāntic and later on different interpretations of Upaniṣadic or Vedāntic point of view have been advanced by prominent *darśana*jñas like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka, Vallabha, Biswanatha Baba and others, They more or less claim that their philosophical rendering is essentially Upaniṣadic. Despite their mutual dārśanic differences, all of them share the common view that the Upaniṣadic *dr̥ṣṭi* is spiritualistic. Upaniṣads mainly advocate the reality of Ātman/Brahman. Except Madhva, all the commentators propagate Upaniṣadic darśana to be monistic, i.e. Brahman is ultimately real. It is considered as philosophically monistic and from the theological angle, it is held as monotheistic. Madhva, even being a dualist, does not oppose theistic spiritualism as the basis of Upaniṣadic thought.

This is almost accepted as the official or authoritative rendering of the Upaniṣadic thought among the scholars of Indian religio-philosophical tradition. But such a viewpoint, as noted by the scholars, never goes unopposed. Quite serious

issues are advanced by critics to review such general remark about the Upaniṣads. First of all, it is questioned as to whether there is at all any clear-cut, systematic and consistent viewpoint which can be attributed to the Upaniṣadic saying. Do these Upaniṣadic texts advocate any single distinct point of view? Do the Upaniṣads present views which are mutually compatible? Do they really present the essence of the Vedic thought? Can anything be justifiably said as the philosophy of Upaniṣads? If philosophy or darśana means a viewpoint supported or grounded by some argument or justification, then is there any evidence of such type of thought in different Upaniṣads?

Garbe holds that the Upaniṣads belong fully to a different tradition from that of Vedic Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁷ Similar views are also expressed by other noted scholars like Deussen,¹⁸ Keith¹⁹ and Pargiter.²⁰ Another prominent indologist: Edgerton²¹ states that nowhere is pure philosophical thought found in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The Vedic thought is mixed up with magic and ritualism. There is no search of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Vedic philosophy may at best be described as some sort of philosophy of magic or magical philosophy. He further maintains elsewhere that the Upaniṣads, as a whole, proclaim no system of philosophy. In the Upaniṣads themselves, there is the finding of passage after passage in which one can clearly discern many other things identified with each other. Besides these scholars, there are a number of other indologists who also admit that leaving aside a few hymns of *R̥g Veda*, as having philosophical import, a vast number of them are a mixed lot representing pure poetry, folklore, mythology, magic, rituals, etc. By making a comparative study, Mittal has pointed out that out of the total number of more than a thousand (1017) hymns or *Sūktas* constituting *R̥g Veda Saṁhitā* only less than a dozen of hymns can be said to be of philosophical import and those too, not in their entirety but only partially.²⁴

Such is the critical view advanced by noted scholars in the field which more or less presents a negative view with regard to both the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic philosophical thought. Even then, scholars (mostly from India) continue to advocate that

there is something distinctive as Vedic/Upaniṣadic philosophy at the background of classical Indian philosophical tradition. Radhakrishnan, in this regard, maintains that philosophy in India is essentially spiritual. He further holds that Indian philosophy “has accepted idealism as the only tenable view, whatever specific form that idealism may take”.²⁶ The Vedic and the Upaniṣadic thought in general is also found to have been acclaimed as monotheistic by noted leaders of Indian renaissance like Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Ankul Chandra Mukherjee, Pandit Nilakantha Das (to name a few).

But, of late, not only the western indologists, scholars from India too have come forward to question the characterization of spiritualism to classical Indian philosophy. Prominent among them are: P.R. Damle,²⁷ B.N. Seal,²⁸ B.K. Sircar,²⁹ and D.P. Chattopadhyaya.³⁰ In recent past also the spiritualistic version is quite critically reviewed by noted researchers like Daya Krishna,³¹ Ganeswar Miśra,³² Rajendra Prasad³³ and J.N. Mohanty.³⁴ It has been already indicated before that neither the Vedas nor the Upaniṣads contain any clear, systematic presentation of certain unified philosophical position. There are certain passages in both the sources that have some philosophical implications of significance; but, this is also to be conceded that those are neither elucidated nor argued out. That is why, at a later stage there is the emergence of *sūtras*, *bhāṣyas*, *ṭikās*, etc. Of course, it should also be noted that while advancing commentaries, the later *darśana*jñās have propounded their own original and creative philosophical theories and the Vedic or the Upaniṣadic references that are cited serve only the purpose of their respecting or adhering to a cultural heritage. Such citations do not serve the purpose of logical justification. The claim is rather always on the point that what they propound is also there in the śrutis. But, all the same, it is the case that the Upaniṣads do not present any single and specific philosophical position. There are some references which indicate some sort of spiritualistic rendering; but there are also quite considerable indications found both in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads which give rise to a materialistic and non-spiritualistic reading. Because of the predominance of the Vedāntic influence

at the later stage, such types of different readings are not duly acknowledged. As a result of which, the philosophical appraisal of both the sources remain rather incomplete and also improper.

In what follows, attempt has been made to expose as well as explore the materialistic trends in the Upaniṣads. Such a step has already been undertaken by scholars.³⁵ Those are quite interesting; but those, I think, need further analytical clarification to assess properly the philosophical import of the Upaniṣadic utterances, specifically at the background of considering the moral philosophical implications. It goes without saying that the Upaniṣads comparatively display distinct philosophical insights than the Vedas.

Īśāvāsyopaniṣad (one of the smallest among the major Upaniṣads) recommends the ideal of living for hundred years in this world (verse: II) and this is not insignificant and a mere casual suggestion in view of the fact that it appears to be a clear indication for this-worldly, life-affirming attitude. This is definitely against life-denying negative attitude, which has found its glaring expression in some later Upaniṣadic as well as non-Upaniṣadic sources. In addition to this, the same Upaniṣad (verse: IX) declares that those who neglect this-worldly duties and obligations plunge into greater darkness than those who neglect other-worldly knowledge. Such an expression is clear indication for secular morality than for spiritual sacerdotalism. Such a conception is distinctly close to a mundane, naturalistic and materialistic approach.

Naturalism (*svabhāvavāda*) and materialism (*bhautikavāda/dehātmāvāda/Lokāyatavāda*) have their traces in the classical Indian philosophical sources. Particularly about the naturalistic tendency, there is already some pioneering study by the western scholars.³⁶ In *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (1.2: VI. 1) it is stated that the creatures are supposed to have been originated from various natural causes such as *kāla* (time), *svabhāva* (nature), *niyati* (destiny), *yaddṛcchā* (chance) and *bhūtāni* (material units). This expression of the Upaniṣad has a naturalistic flavour, but not in full-fledged manner. Originations of different things and beings have been supposed to be there due to natural courses. Causal

explanation seems to have been accepted only within and not without nature.

There is, however, difficulty with regard to the inclusion of *niyati* which usually stands for destiny and that has some supernatural bearing. But there is also the scope for another meaning of the term: *niyati* (*nayam+ktin*) stating stability (*sthiratā*) and rule (*niyama*). In this sense, *niyati* can be interpreted as not very far from natural flow which operates as per natural order or rule and thus it conveys stability. In this manner, *svabhāvaāvda* does not seem to have any logical incompatibility with the well-known Vedic concept of *ṛta* or order. From this angle, it can be held that both the concepts of *niyati* and *ṛta* have the sense of plausibility on the basis of naturalistic ontological foundation, instead of opting for a supernatural and spiritual ontology. At least that is not necessarily warranted. Of course, the concept of *ṛta* does import a valuational sense, having clear moral tone; and it can be pointed out in this regard that such a sense of moral value can also be seen as logically consistent with naturalism/materialism in the Indian context on a secular basis. The sense of stability and order goes with the chance factor in the sense that the course of events and occurrences do not have any supernatural, predestined and theological causal factors. Here chance does not necessarily imply chaos or disorder. It only suggests that nature's flow of operation is in order, though not always comprehended by general human intellect on account of certain extraneous limitations. This is how a naturalistic view has been indicated in the Upaniṣad. But, it is to be also conceded in all fairness that naturalism is just hinted, not articulated by reason and justification.

However, the inclusion of the term: *bhūtani* does indicate the materialistic trend. It expresses clearly that there is the supposition about the primeval origin in terms of material elements, without having any reference to spiritual source. Such reference has led some modern scholars to advance the remark that some classical Indian thinkers "did not believe in anything except what exists in this world (*nai'tad asti'ti vādinah*)".³⁷ *Svabhāvavāda* has a considerable influence on Indian mind.³⁸

In some theistic sources. Prajāpati is adored as the creator

of the Universe and, as per certain traditional basis, Prajāpati is identified as Brahmā, i.e. one among the trinity. But the interesting point is that along with this supposition there are references in the Upaniṣads where Prajāpati is not attributed with any such sense of personification and, accordingly, the mark of divinity is found to have been conspicuously absent. For instance, *Praśnopaniṣad* (1.14.15) regards *anna* (food) and, on some occasion, it also refers to earth in general as identical with Prajāpati. It goes without saying that such reference has a suggestion for materialistic as against spiritualistic rendering. The same Upaniṣad, at another setting (IV.8) has referred to five gross elements (*Pañcabhūta*) and also their subtle forms (i.e., *Pr̥thimtāra*, *Ammātra*, *Tejamātra* etc.). This reference about *bhūtas* and *mātras* clearly corresponds to the *Sāṅkhya* account of *tanmātras* and *mahābhūtas*.

The Upaniṣad further mentions (1.4) *prāṇa* (life) and *rayi* (wealth) as the parents of everything. Such view expressed in the *Praśnopaniṣad* is also found to have been corroborated in the *Aitreya Upaniṣad* (III.3) and *Maitrayāṇī Upaniṣad* (III.2). In other words, such references can be taken as hints in favour of a materialistic world-view.

In another major Upaniṣad, viz. the *Taittirīya*, one comes across an interesting account of Ātman. Quite suprisingly Ātman there is not identified with Brahman, as is generally accepted as the established or official view of the Upaniṣads and on which the Vedanta darśanajñas later, specially the Advaitins give emphasis. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.2.1 and II.3.1) identifies either *prāṇa* with Ātman or *manas* with Ātman. By means of such account, a clean passage for a non-spiritualistic rendering becomes rather smooth. *Prāṇa* never connotes anything supernatural or spiritual entity. It is empirically identifiable and there is no trans-empirical spiritual involvement. So also *manas* is regarded as passive or inert. It is held to be insentient or *jaḍa*. It itself is not sentient or conscious; but it becomes intellegised as it were by means of either *sannidhi* (proximity) with *puruṣa* (*Sāṅkhya* position) or by *sākṣi caitanya* (witness consciousness) (i.e., Vedanta position in general). If such be the case with regard to the concept of mind or *manas*, then to identify mind with Ātman virtually amounts to a non-spiritual and

even a materialistic rendering. For, mind being insentient, Ātman (being same as mind) cannot be a spiritual entity.

Again, it is held in the same Upaniṣad (II.1.1) that Ātman is *annarasamaya* (filled with food and water). Such an expression becomes a clear suggestion for this-worldly approach. It seems to have a distinct materialistic trend and is far from any transcendental spiritual interpretation. For healthy and joyful living, balanced food and drink, peace of mind and composed life-style are, of course, necessary and, it seems, the concerned Upaniṣad, in its various passages, points to such vital aspects of sound living. It concerns about man's well being in the earthly empiric setting.

The same Upaniṣad, in another context, (1.6) mentions about a teacher, imparting instruction to the students about certain technicalities what he has termed as "*mahāsamhitās*". Whosoever properly grasps those technicalities, the teacher asserts, would obtain offspring, cattle, food, luster of knowledge and heaven. This reference brings the suggestion that the concerned Upaniṣad delivers the message for a happier and joyful earthly living and no craving for a blissful state in other world. (The term heaven that occurs in this case seems to suggest a good and sound earthly living which is taken as heavenly in the eulogized sense.)

Such a supposition becomes strengthened when it is found in the same Upaniṣad (1.9) that men are exhorted to follow prosperity and happiness (by means of marrying and bringing forth children) along with seeking truth through study and contemplation. This seems to be highly significant and illuminating. The Upaniṣad does not advocate for pleasure and happiness of the gross hedonistic variety, it rather indicates for a balanced, composed and intellectually cultured living so that happiness and comfort that one attains in the worldly setting is towards the well being of man in the most refined sense. Similar views are also expressed in the same Upaniṣad again and again in many other places (III.7.8.9 ...)

Kāthopaniṣad is famous for the anecdote of Yama and Naciketā. Being pleased with the honest, straightforward and resolute character of Naciketā, Yama gladly offered him three boons of his choice. Naciketā first asked for boon by means of

which he was to safely return to his parents living in the world and he was eager to remain with them and others in the worldly setting without remaining in heaven with all the luxuries and comforts. This part of the story does convey a very significant message. Here the Upaniṣad does not have any craving or allurements for other worldly but for this-worldly state of existence. To remain well with family, relations, fellowmen in a social setup without any animosity, conflict and tension is what is desired and is expected to be worth pursuing than to have intense longing for any imaginary, visionary state of other world. Naciketā has never been depicted as an escapist but as very much brave in facing the challenges of the empirical world with all its merits as well as demerits.

In that Upaniṣad (1.1.20-22), Naciketā asks for third boon by way of asking a question for its solution. It says that there exists and existed (even among the devas) a doubt as to whether it (*ayam*) after death exists (*asti*) or does not exist (*nāsti*). Here the term: *ayam*, obviously, refers to man and the problem is raised as to whether he survives after death. Well, there has been long standing speculation in different discussions (philosophy included) as to whether there can be disembodied state of existence. Does man continue as the same man after death? Can there be personal identity without some form of bodily continuity? Is memory alone sufficient condition of personal identity? So many perplexing problems are alive in philosophical circles even in the recent period.

Some scholars have suggested that Kāthopaniṣadic message gives rise to “two great currents of thought, idealism and materialism”.³⁹ The interesting feature is that in the said anecdote while Yama, after little hesitation, has agreed to offer the boon asked for by Naciketā, he has not conveyed anything either about Ātman or about *bhūta-vastu* but has referred to a distinction of valuational importance between *śreya* and *preya*. And, further he has held the view that those men who move after *preya* (pleasurable in the grossly sense) are dull (*muddhāḥ*) and those who move for *śreya* (morally preferable) are *dhīrāḥ* (intelligent). The message is clearly for a proper living within socio-moral

setup, discharging duly one's obligations and responsibilities. The tone is distinctly valuational in the earthly setup. It seems to convey a sense of socio-moral ideality and not some form of esoteric spiritual ideality, pointing to transempirical and metaphysical existence. So instead of spiritual mysticism the direction given in this Upaniṣad is very much secular and human in content.⁴⁰

In the same Upaniṣad (1.2.20), it is stated that a person with a mind raised above troubles, sees the grandeur of Ātman with ease and pleasure of the senses (*dhātuprasādanmahimānamātmānaḥ*). With the declaration that Ātman cannot be approached through the study of the Veda, reasoning and much of listening (1.2.23), the implication of the passage seems to make oneself balanced and composed for a steady and smooth living. He is not required to withdraw himself from the pleasure of the senses; but he is required to have a control over erratic and unsound pleasure. The illumination that is aspired for by the Upaniṣadic thinker is not simply through reading the Vedas or through bare ratiocination or mere memorizing the Vedic passages, but suitably mending one's character and conduct at the practical front. This line of reading the view of the Upaniṣad becomes confirmed when one comes across the declaration that when all sensual desires and passions are duly regulated and controlled, then the highest excellence (*amṛtatva*) is attained here and now in the socio-empiric state of life. The tone of the Upaniṣad is very much to direct one's attention towards the practice of secular morality and that has no concern with any obscurant transcendence.

Kāthopaniṣad (1.20; 11.26) holds that this is the world, there is no other (*ayam lokaḥ paraḥ nāsti*). Such expression undisputably confirms this-worldliness as against any form of transempirical spirituality. Materialistic (*Lokāyatika*) trend is very much anticipated here. Not in a different spirit, a similar point has been stated (of course, at a different background) in the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (1.7). While the *jīva* (ātman) is identified with Brahman, the latter told "The primeval waters, in truth, are my universe (as *Hiraṇyagarbha*) and it is thine".⁴¹ This expression suggests that the whole Universe or reality is only material (i.e., water).

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII), there is the well-known dialogue between Nārada and Sanata Kumāra. By way of imparting instruction about Ātman, Sanata Kumāra states that speech is higher than name (VII.2); mind is greater than speech (VII.3); will is greater than mind (VII.4); will is dependent on consciousness (VII.5); attention (*dhyāna*) is superior to consciousness (VII.6); intellect (*viññāna*) is greater than attention (VII.7); physical strength (*bala*) is that on which intellect depends (VII.8); physical strength rests on food (*anna*) (VV.9); food depends on water (VII. 10); water on fire (VV.1 I). It is to be noted here that Sanata Kumāra does not stop here. Moving further he arrives at the Ātman through memory (*smaraṇa*), hope (*āśā*) and vital-breath (*prāṇa*) (VV.12-15). Even then, it is stated that Sanata Kumara at the end mentions that ‘purity of mind’ is dependent on purity of food’ (VII. 26). If the concerned Upaniṣadic passage is carefully considered, it may lead one to conclude that by emphasizing on food in the context of *ātma-jñāna*, the Upaniṣad does advocate some sort of materialistic outlook as against stark spiritualistic suggestion.

The same Upaniṣad, at another phase (VI), while presenting the dialogue between Uddālaka Āruṇi and his son: Śvetaketu holds that ‘out of subtle part of food, mind is formed and out of the other grosser part, the body is formed’ (VI.5.1). This expression of the Upaniṣad suggests that food is of primary significance and both body and mind are due to food. This obviously has the implication for materiality and not spirituality so far as philosophical message of the concerned Upaniṣad is considered.

Further it is held there (VI.5.4) that *manas* (mind) is *annamaya* (filled in with food) and life (*prāṇa*) is *ammaya* (water). In another context, the Upaniṣad (IV.3.1-2) refers to a commoner, Raikva, teaching a king: Jānaśruti that air is the first principle since it absorbs fire, sun, moon, water and everything. It also speaks of *prāṇa* as the vital principle of man because it absorbs in it speech organs, eyes, ear, mind, etc. (IV.3.3-4). All such expressions are never further elucidated in the Upaniṣad. But, whatever is expressed, it seems that the meaning conveyed is closer to a materialistic view.

There is a line in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad which is quite often cited, according to which, *sat* (Being) was in the beginning (VI.2). The idea that *sat* arises out of *asat* (non-Being) is rejected on the ground that nothing can come out of nothing. Subsequently it is pointed out in the same Upaniṣadic source that from *sat* arises *tej* (fire); from *tej* arises *ap* (water) and from *ap* arises *kṣiti* (earth). All other things contain those three basic elements (i.e., earth, water and fire). The proportionate composition of three elements is termed as ‘*trivṛtkaraṇa*’ which is supposed to bring out the origination of everything of the universe. Such an account boosts up a clear materialistic reading.

But some scholars have interpreted *sat* as Brahman and thereby offer a spiritualistic rendering.⁴² As against this, it has been pointed out that *sat*, giving rise to material substances like fire, water and earth cannot be of an entirely different nature from its evolutes.⁴³ This interpretation seems to have some traditional footing, particularly in the Sāṅkhya darśana in so far as there the evolutes are supposed to have been caused by *jaḍa*, Prakṛti or insentient matter.

The reference from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII.3.1) that mind is the ātman is described as *mano-ātmavāda*. This is definitely from the Vedāntic account of *ātmavāda* (i.e., identifying ātmān as Brahman). The suggestion that *mana* is the highest principle, reveals that such Upaniṣadic move is for interpreting the first principle in terms of *jaḍatva* or insentiency and not in terms of spirituality. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the doctrine of *mano-ātmavāda* is held by the suśikṣita (refined or cultured) Cārvākas.⁴⁴ In this regard, the statement of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI.4.5) “Let no one speak of anything but that which is heard, perceived or cognised” is quite revealing. Because it is clear indication that the Upaniṣadic thinker, in this context, never entertains anything that is beyond the purview of sense-perception. It definitely has the tendency of sense empiricism, which is acceptable to a materialist standpoint. *Dehātmavāda* has been attributed to the Cārvākas by Śaṅkara.⁴⁵ But, while the Cārvāka stand does not admit *ātman*, the attribution of *ātman* (either as same or as a product of body) to that stand

appears to be misleading. In fact, for Cārvāka stand, *caitanya* (consciousness) is empirical and is not identical with *ātmā*. This doctrine has been referred to in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VIII.7.12) as the view of Virocana.

The desire for a conquest of this world is referred to in the same Upaniṣad (II.24.4-5 and 12-13). Here conquest does not signify a desire for military conquest. Whatever is just expressed, from that it seems that the meaning conveyed in the concerned Upaniṣadic passages is closer to a materialistic position. It is not like Alexander's desire for conquering the whole world. Rather it can be better read as the attempt of exploring the world in its multiple facets. It seems to encourage for a scientific search in order to know more and more about nature. It is for the advancement of knowledge and not for embracing the darkness of ignorance.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad is the biggest of all the major Upaniṣads. It has the mention of a great sage: Yājñavalkya who is well known as a prominent spiritualist or ātmavādin. A number of passages of this Upaniṣad are cited for a spiritualist version. But, all the same, there are also references found in the Upaniṣad about the doctrine of complete destruction of consciousness with the bodily death (II.4.12). Such a view is obviously incompatible with the spiritualist viewpoint. Later well-known writers like Mādhavācārya⁴⁶ and the Jaina thinker: Śīlaṅka,⁴⁷ have noted that such doctrine regarding destruction of consciousness as the expression of materialism. It is thus a fact that the Upaniṣad has the mention of two opposing trends of spiritualism and materialism.

There is a passage in the Upaniṣad that water is the primal existent (*Br. Up.* V.5.1). This corresponds to Ṛg Vedic hymns (X.121 and X.190) that water is the primordial matter. There is, however, no elucidation of this Upaniṣadic declaration. But, even then, this reference does indicate that the Upaniṣadic thinker has made an attempt to regard water as the first principle. Such a view about the whole cosmos gives rise to a materialistic rendering. In the same Upaniṣad (1.2.2), a mythological account has been presented. It is said that there is the rise of three basic material

elements of earth, water and fire through a hymn, sung by Prajāpati (who is regarded as the creator).

In another context, Yājñavalkya says (III.2.13) that arising out of the material elements (*bhūtani*), all living beings enter into those elements again. It is further mentioned that after death different parts of a being return to different parts of nature where from those have come, i.e. voice goes into fire, breath into wind, eyes into sun, mind into moon, hearing into the quarters of heaven, heirs into plants, blood into water and even his soul into space. Such sayings are not detailed out. There is no justification advanced for such utterances. On account of this, hardly such utterances can have any bearing either on science or on philosophy. But, even then, this much can be held that the composer of such utterances must have formulated at least a simple and naive idea about the origin of everything at the cosmic background. And, the world-view which is indicated here seems to have strong leanings towards materialistic speculations.

Whatever references are cited from the different principal Upaniṣads are only a few illustrations. Many other similar cases can be traced from different Upaniṣadic sources. However, as is already stated, the illustrative cases do not mostly display philosophically argued out assertions: those need definitely some sort of philosophical grinding. As already indicated before, there are also some passages in different Upaniṣadic sources which are suggestive of some sort of idealistic/spiritualistic reading. Not only material or spiritual but even one can trace other types of philosophical readings from the lines of the Upaniṣads in certain cases. All this can be viewed as leading to the point that the Upaniṣads by themselves do not display full-fledged philosophical views or theories; but, none the less, those do contribute as powerful indication for later refined dārsanic or philosophical positions. It is not fair and legitimate to state only one view as the acceptable, legitimate viewpoint and others as insignificant and negligible ones. Ranade⁴⁸ has brought out the relevant traces for different later philosophical viewpoints inclusive of the Bauddhas, the Jainas and the Cārvākas. All such references are quite relevant and meaningful. Those are definite boosting and those serve as good starter for subsequent philosophical development.

Confusion has been spread out widely by way of dividing the later classical Indian philosophical developments into *āstika* and *nāstika* darśanas, meaning thereby that the former supports the Vedic/Upaniṣadic legacy or heritage and the latter is opposed to that. This is actually not the case. To put it rather precisely and straightforwardly none of the later philosophical views move for unconditional dogmatic acceptance of Vedic/Upaniṣadic thought. Neither the Pūrva Mīmāṃsakas nor the Uttara Mīmāṃsakas (Vedāntins) have ever cited Vedic/Upaniṣadic sources indiscriminately. In view of the fact there is no single, uniform point of view indicated in those sources, the later philosophers (the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vedāntins) have selected and picked up only those lines which suit their philosophic *drṣṭi* and set aside other either to periphery or to ignore those altogether.

The Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika darśana-jñas have their independent philosophical heritage and their founders are Kapila, Patanjali, Gautama and Kaṇāda, respectively. In their cases, the Vedic/Upaniṣadic allegiance is distinctly marginal. In the dārśanic context, *śabda/śruti* as a *pramāṇa* has been accepted in a technical sense and not in the sense of blindly accepting what the Vedas state. Sāṅkhya, for instance, accepts *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* in the sense of a tool for sentential meaning (*vākya janitam vākyaṛtha jñānam*). There is no surrender before the so-called Vedic authority. The Vaiśeṣikas do not accept *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*. The Jainas, the Bauddhas and the Cārvākas have opposed and are critical of certain customary views which are traced in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. But, nowhere, the so-called *nāstika darśana-jñas* condemn the entire Vedas and the Upaniṣads. In fact, they have supported certain ideas and concepts which are also approved in the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic sources. It is, therefore, unfair to label them as Veda *nindukas* (haters) and so also it is misleading to characterize the so-called *āstika* darśana-jñas as just Veda *stāvakas* (admirers). Nevertheless, the views which are propagated by the later darśana-jñas are, to a considerable extent, flashed in the Vedic/Upaniṣadic source. The Upaniṣads, as it is seen, display divergent philosophical flashes which require further elaboration and elucidation at the

subsequent stage. And, that is what has been actually attempted by the subsequent thinkers.

From the aforesaid discussion, it seems fairly clear that the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, in general, do not convey only one definite philosophical world-view like spiritualism or materialism. Since spiritualism is highlighted in many subsequent writings, a modest attempt has been made to focus the materialistic, naturalistic and non-spiritualistic trends in these sources.

With regard to moral and ethical implications indicated in different writings of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, it can be said that by emphasizing on the human welfare in the earthly framework, the Upaniṣads, to a considerable extent, it seems, give priority on secular morality. It is neither aimed at establishing pure egoistic nor pure altruistic ethics. On the contrary, it seems to have opted for a balanced, composite outlook in which the human welfare is rather envisaged. The message is for a harmonious growth and development of individual personality in the socio-empiric framework.

Attempt has also been made in certain circle later on to integrate both spirit and matter and thereby to set aside the exclusive emphasis of either spiritualism or materialism. Sri Aurobindo, for instance, in the modern period, has advocated the doctrine of Pūrṇa Advaita according to which the reality is one integrated whole, having the composite structure of both matter and spirit. His view is neither in favour of pure asceticism nor for gross hedonism. But, nonetheless, he is clearly to boost up some form of deeper consciousness which, according to him, monitors, regulates and controls both the spiritual and material tendencies. The advocacy of deeper consciousness is, of course, not free from rational scrutiny. It at least is found to be not that clear and precise. The element of mystical obscurity does not seem to be fully eradicated from that visionary setup. The spark of visionary message is found to be rationally at least not that convincing.

However, what has been discussed here from that it seems fairly clear that the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic writings do not necessarily neglect the human aspiration, development and welfare in the socio-empiric framework. It does not necessarily advocate

escapism, negativism and transcendentalism. The approach is not to favour transhumanism but humanism in a distinct form. Of course, the humanistic ethics that is indicated in different Upaniṣadic passages are not elucidated. Those are only flashes and are required to be elaborated in subsequent discussions. One thing needs to be emphasized here. The humanistic ethics that is indicated therein need not be assimilated with gross humanistic approach of the Protagorean type. It is not for the welfare of man at the cost of other beings and objects. The ecological and environmental awareness is indicated along with human welfare. There is, it seems, a balanced and composite outlook for bringing a harmony between man and nature, a materialistic philosophical outlook is not found to be antagonistic to humanistic ethical objective to be followed and pursued within the empirical fold. So materialist philosophy is harmoniously linked up with secular morality and the human welfare is pursued not at the cost of other things and beings. In this way, the materialistic trends of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads can be reviewed with the background of secular moral foundation.

Bṛhaspati and His Followers

The first collection of Cārvāka fragments has been attempted by H.T. Colebrooke⁴⁹ in 1827. D. Shastri has compiled the fragments in a volume: *Cārvāka Shaṣṭi* (i.e., sixty verses), containing *sūtras* that are attributed to Bṛhaspati.⁵⁰ All those *sūtras*, he collected, are from the writings of Śrīharṣa, Mādhavācārya, C. Bhattacharya and Haribhadra.⁵¹ Shastri later on has brought out another collection: *Cārvāka-pañcaśika* and has designated that as *Bāraspatyadarśana*.⁵² Again, later he has made a selection of certain *sūtras* from that compilation and has published another volume: *Bārhaspatyasūtram*.⁵³ In the successive period, there are some more attempts to compile the *sūtras* (attributed to Bṛhaspati) found in other sources. M. Namai, a Japanese scholar, has made a compilation of *Bārhaspatyasūtram*, bringing in some *sūtras* from Tibetan source.⁵⁴ Ramkrishna Bhattacharya has brought out a new compilation recently, excluding as well as including some more

*sūtras*⁵⁵, and giving his own grounds for that. But he questions about the genuineness of the *sūtras* attributed to Bṛhaspati on the basis that such *sūtras* are found in later classical works between 800 and 1200 CE and which are composed by scholars, belonging to Vedānta and other opponent schools of thought.

In this connection, Bhattacharya points to the case of Cārvāka stand on *pramāṇa* and he thereby points out as to how there is variance between “*pratyakṣam eva pramāṇam*” (sense-perception is the valid ground of knowledge) and “*pratyakṣam evaikam pramāṇam*” (sense-perception is the only one valid ground of knowledge). And, also the expression: “*nānumānam pramāṇam*” (inference is not a valid ground of knowledge) goes counter to Purandara’s (a noted Cārvāka, relatively of later period)⁵⁶ view which seems to be definitely logical and convincing. Pointing to this and many other similar issues, he comes to the conclusion that the *sūtras* which are found available from different foreign sources are not all genuine. But, for that he concedes that all those need not be fully set aside. Even though he does not move along with many other notable scholars⁵⁷ to make sweeping remark that Bṛhaspati is the founder of materialism in India and he is the architect of a distinct school of philosophy. It is, however, held that these are trends of certain philosophical insights in the earliest phase of Cārvāka/Lokāyata, even if one does not find enough reasonable ground to treat Bṛhaspati or Cārvāka as historical person,⁵⁸ it does not thereby necessarily follow that the early phase of Cārvāka (usually identified as materialistic) does not have philosophical importance.

Bṛhaspati⁵⁹ and his direct followers belong to the earliest phase (i.e., both Pre-Vedic and Vedic period). Some of the important views that are ascribed to them in tradition (mostly by the opponent philosophers and also subsequently more or less accepted by the modern writers) need reconsideration. Some of the cardinal points that are raised in this connection may be analysed in the following manner, keeping in view of the generally accepted fundamental tenets of Cārvāka darśana (which are outlined before).

It is held that the Bārhaspatyas are anti-authoritarian. Some Vedic hymns have reference to the unbelievers. They are against

mere verbal study of the Vedas and assert that a person who makes a sincere effort to understand the implication of the Vedic utterances is far superior to a mere sacerdotal priest.⁶⁰ If this is the point that is held by the Bārhaspatyas, then obviously it is in the least sense unreasonable. It perfectly caters to the need of intellectual honesty and it can never be socially treated as something immoral. In order to follow certain rules of action, it is obligatory to know its implication and also to understand its effect in the socio-individual dimension. It is notable that during the Vedic phase also there is due regard to this revealing insight of the Bārhaspatyas in certain context. Jaimini, for instance, holds that learning the Veda consists of being aware of its spirit and not simply having a verbal memory of it. The authoritativeness of the Vedas has been questioned by Kautsya. If a sacrifice is performed without caring for its baneful consequence on the individual as well as on society, then such sacrifice has to be stopped, however deep-rooted it is among the mass on account of long standing dogma and prejudice. To raise voice against this is surely a mark of respecting social norm and it is obviously moral in essence.

Svabhāvavāda and Its Followers

It is said that Bārhaspatyas are not simply to oppose and to develop a negative attitude to the Vedas but also they later on have formed a positive attitude. This has given rise to the formulation of *svabhāvavāda* according to which, it is held, the rejection of causal principle, denial of good and evil consequences of action are the important features.⁶¹ It is on account of this rejection or denial, the opponents of Bārhaspatyas probably make the sweeping remark that the doctrine of *svabhāvavāda* (naturalism) is against common-sense as well as scientific notion of causality and also it is opposed to social morality. Once this flow of impression is unchecked, it is convenient to brand the Bārhaspatyas/*svabhāvavādins* as irrational and immoral too.

But such a reading is most unwarranted. The critical comment against the application of causal principle and the non-acceptance

of good and evil, as advanced by them, have to be viewed as being operated in a specified context. Any decontextual application of causal principle and also the attribution of good and evil bring in nothing but conceptual confusion. It also gives rise to practical disorder. It is not the case that these early materialists are opposed to the causal principle in the mundane (*laukika*) plane. They do not at all seem to be objecting to the common-sense and scientific application of causal principle. The application of causality within the spatio-temporal framework is found to be quite plausible and the early materialist's position on that account is not different at all. He too seems to have accepted the application of causal principle in ordinary day-to-day affairs of life. But when the principle of causality is sought for an extra-mundane, meta-spatio-temporal extensional application, the materialists, under discussion, are found to be negative and critical. Such application is rejected not simply on the basis, that application is not sensibly confirmed but such extension is also not plausible even according to ordinary common-sense reasoning.

Similarly, it is to be noted that the svabhāvavādins are found to be denying the good and evil consequences of action. What does the denial amount to? Does it necessarily imply that they do not approve and vehemently oppose the ordinary sense of the use of 'good' or 'bad'? Does it mean that they are fully opaque to the sense of good or bad from the moral point of view in the normal socio-individual plane? Frankly speaking, it appears to me to be not the case at least in so far as one tries to explore the logical implication of the sayings which are attributed to them in the tradition. If they are critical about the good and evil consequences of action, then it follows clearly that it is in the context of the classical doctrine of karma, the Bārhaspatyas/svabhāvavādins advance the view that there is no logical justification of assertion that actions performed by men now in the present life must yield good or evil consequence in the future birth and the present state of human existence is due to the consequence of his action performed in the past life. The continuance of human life beyond the mundane or empiric plane is not only not scientifically established, it is found to be implausible and logically incongruent. But, rejection

of the doctrine of Karma (as usually presented in the tradition) does not mean that the ordinary and normal sense of 'good' and 'bad' from the moral point of view must have to be set aside or rejected. Such a reading of the Indian materialist's position does not seem to be at least logically warranted.

A naturalist/sense-empiricist is, of course, committed not to accept the existence of anything supra-natural or supra-empirical. But from this it does not logically follow that he has to deny the use and application of the principle of causality and also he is bound to reject the moral sense as irrational. The use and application of morality is plausible only in the socio-empiric context and not beyond that. It is not the case that the early materialists are opposed to the use of such concepts like causality and morality. They do not at all seem to be objecting to the common-sense and scientific application of causality and also the moral sense of good and right in the ordinary socio-empiric level. But, when in the name of boosting the Vedic sacrificial rites and rituals, the fanciful stories of the other world (*paraloka*), the imaginary talks of *deva-pitrloka* are boosted up, the rejoinder advanced by the svabhāvavādins is not groundless. Quite consistent to their stand, they seem to maintain that causality is a rational device genuinely applicable in the spatio-temporal or empirical framework. This position is not meant for tampering either the ordinary or scientific notion. The difficulty starts once this causal mechanism is allowed to transgress its normal limit to move for a transcendental application in terms of ultimate cause, creation of everything by one Supreme Being or God who is the first cause or the uncaused cause and so on. It is evident that the early materialist's point of view is logically linked with this approach and it is also interesting to note, in this connection, that Saṅkara, in his criticism of the Nyāya doctrine of creation, comes very close to this point of view.⁶²

It is wrong to characterize the materialist as inhuman and morally opaque. The critical remark of the svabhāvavādins is directed against spiritualized superimposition on the concept of morality. Their point of view clearly anticipates the legitimate point that to be moral is not necessarily to be spiritual. Morality

is of secular formulation, while spirituality is of sacerdotal foundation. There is no necessary link between them. Some hymns of the Vedas that are ascribed to Bṛhaspati are very insightful and noble. He and his followers appear to be free thinkers and not close-minded. It is their freedom of thought that is perhaps not tolerated by the dogma-based spiritualists and, as such, their point of view is mostly ignored rather than properly assessed. Consequently the Vedāntic, the Jaina, the Bauddha, the epic and the purāṇic sources contain filthy stories against the early materialists.⁶³

The svabhāvavādins repudiate *niyati* (fate) which is also sometimes turned as *adrṣṭa* or *daiva* (unseen divine power). Such is the ordinarily accepted meaning of *niyati*, accepted in the tradition. It is to be noted that we have referred to a different technical meaning of the term before, indicating thereby that *niyati* also points to stability and order.⁶⁴ The adoption of such technical meaning is, however, not incompatible with the general materialist position. But the usually established meaning of 'niyati', as presently indicated, is not compatible with their framework. Accordingly, they are found to be critical about that. Their reasoning against the acceptance of *niyati* may be explored in the following manner.

It is held by the materialists/naturalists that there is spontaneous generation of things according to their respective natures. This point of view is criticized by the opponent on the ground that it puts a block against religious sense of divinity and merely points to a mechanical explanation of everything. God's interference in the human world for its betterment is ruled out in the scheme of naturalism and materialism. Prayer, worship and seeking God's grace are not entertained in such philosophical framework and it consequently breeds anti-religiosity and also thereby immorality and unethicity.

But, on closer analysis, it can be realized that such an impression, accelerated from the opponent's point of view, can be exposed as totally unwarranted and undesirable. The Cārvākas or the Bārhaspatyas are not advocates of naturalism in the sense of offering another alternative supernatural, supra-empirical and

transcendental metaphysical-cum-theological explanation. In order to explain the inequalities among men, disparity in availing the natural resources, a metaphysical-cum-theological explanation is not that logically binding. It is not logically necessary that either unseen fate or divine ruling has to be supposed to explain the natural distinction and difference. To maintain that there is spontaneous generation of things is only to suggest that this is what is empirically known and phenomenally presented. Human effort to meet the challenges of natural calamity and disorder is not thereby discouraged. Man is born amidst a natural situation. He is to face nature and is to adjust himself in that situation. If required, he is of course to meet the natural challenge within his own capacity and in that context to seek for divine grace in a supernatural setting is neither necessary nor reasonable. Any trans-human explanation to solve the human problem is rather uncalled for. Such a move rests on blind faith and lofty imagination, having no foothold of reason.

From this explanatory assertion it does not, however, follow that the materialist/naturalist is absolutely confident of human strength and ability in the sense man amidst nature can do and undo anything and he is all powerful and supreme Lord of everything. The Bārhaspatyas and the svabhāvavādins are found to be quite aware of human frailty and limitation. But, all the same, they do not find any rational justification to take resort to any so-called supra-natural theological explanation. Further, such type of explanation is found to be not conducive to morality but rather creating obstacle for smooth and steady flow of moral awareness. In Cārvāka's framework, moral sense in the human platform is never discarded. Social inequality and disparity are empirical issues; those are to be dealt with within the bounds of empirical and natural domain and here any noumenal-cum-theological presupposition is not warranted because of its being a victim of dogmas and prejudice.

The Lokāyata's stand, it seems, is not for the establishment of supernatural metaphysics of spiritualism but to remain confined within the bounds of sense. This stand is not for breeding immorality but, on the contrary, to protect its normal course

so that it would not be affected by the fanciful conjecture and surmises. It seems that the Lokāyatas are not shy of metaphysical construction. As a matter of fact both materialism and naturalism are philosophical positions in the sense of certain type of metaphysical construction. But the point is: such metaphysical stand has been designed to preserve and sustain the socio-empiric fabric of mundane existence without hankering after any supra-mundane noumenal existence which brings a supposition thereby that the noumenal realm of speculative construction is far more real and valuationally superior than the phenomenal plane. At least from the moral point of view of valuation the Lokāyata's stand does not appear to be that unworthy and degenerate.

The *putreṣṭiyajña* (sacrificial rite that is performed for getting a male child) is repudiated not simply because it is based on theological fanaticism but it is socially an act of gross immorality. The protest advanced by the Bārhaspatyas can be construed as a protest against the theological practice of giving undue disregard for social morality. Social relationship is rooted on human fellow-feeling and thus it is based on humanistic ethics without any gender discrimination. It seems, the Indian materialist's movement, in this regard, is virtually for safeguarding human welfare in the mundane plane. It is founded on the sense of freedom from dogmas and prejudices. It is for freedom of individual within the social framework irrespective of caste, colour and creed. There is no scope for gender inequality.

It is highly probable that the Bārhaspatya's and the svabhāvavādin's reformative moves, based on rational and moral grounds, have paved the way for the rise of Buddhism.⁶⁵ There are certain similarities noticed in the reformative approach between the Lokāyatas and the Bauddhas. The Buddhists have voiced against the Vedic ill-grounded rituals and superstitious sacrificial acts, fanciful speculations about creation, belief in the existence of *ātmā* and *paramātmā*. For them too, morality is operational within the socio-empiric dimension. It does not need any authenticity from any supernatural and supra-empirical sources. Both of them, thus seem to have a firm stand on secular morality.

Notes and References

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 46. Mādhavācārya, *Sarva Darśana Saṅgraha*, Sans. edn. Vasudeva Abhayankara, Poona, Eng. trans., Cowell & Gough, London: 1914, p. 2.
 47. Śīlānka, *Sūtra-kṛtāṅga*, ed., Dhanapati Singh Bahadur, Calcutta, p. 290.
 48. Ranade, R.D., *A Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, Poona: 1926.

49. His work of compilation was first presented in a public meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society on February 3, 1827 and later on he referred to that in his *Miscellaneous Essays*, op.cit.
50. Vide his *Cārvāka-Shaṣṭi*, Calcutta: The Book Company, 1928.
51. Vide the works: *Naiṣadhiya-Caritam*, *Sarva Darśana Saṅgraha*, *Vidvanmodatarangiṇī* and *Ṣaḍ Darśana Samuccaya*.
52. Vide *Bhāratavarṣa* (in Bengali), Calcutta: 1944.
53. op.cit., Vide Footnote (FN), No. 6.
54. Namai, M., “A Survey of Barhaspatya Philosophy” in *Indological Studies*, Kyoto: No. 2, 1976.
55. Op.cit.
56. Vide Kamalasila, *Tattvasaṅgraha-Pañjika* on Śāntaraksita’s *Tattvasaṅgraha*, Ch. 18 V, 1481 (ed.: D. Shastri), Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1968, 1981.
57. Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, 1921.
58. But this is found to have been applicable to many other notable figures referred to in other darsanic traditions like Kapila, Vyasa and Gotama.
59. Bārasapatya is also addressed as Bṛhasapati Laukya or Brāhmaṇaspati, Vide D. Shastri, *Indian Materialism*, op.cit. p. 53.
60. Ibid., p. 8.
61. Ibid., p. 20.
62. Vide, “*sṛṣṭi cintakāḥ nirarthakāḥ*” (The creation-thinkers are senseless/pointless) in his *Gītā-Bhāṣya*.
63. Cf. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Vol.II.2-8, Jaina work: *Bhagavati*, 11.248 (quoted by Weber, “Veber ein fragment der Bhagavati”). See also Weber’s *The History of Indian Literature*, 1892
64. Vide relevant discussion contained in Chapter: II, Section: A.
65. Vide D. Shastri, op. cit., p. 27.

CHAPTER 3

The Post-Upaniṣadic Phase

During the period of Bṛhaspati, there are some thinkers whose views (as referred to in certain external sources) roughly correspond to the Lokāyata stand. But a clear account of their philosophical position is not available from such external sources. Names like Parameṣṭhin, Anniniyas and some others are referred to in this connection¹. Since their philosophical standpoints are not well delineated, it is perhaps not worthwhile to make any proper assessment about their stand on morality.

However, the Bārhaspatyas as well as the svabhāvavādins, as is already noticed, seem to have continued with considerable amount of vigour during the pre-Vedic and also the post-Vedic period. Their philosophical impact must have been remarkable in view of the fact they are frequently cited and dealt with by the opponents in their various writings.

In the post-Upaniṣadic stage, a good number of Lokāyatas quite often pictured as radical heretics are found. They are said to be *nāstikas* either in the sense of rejecting the importance of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads outright or denying the significance of religious belief in the existence of God and divinity or both. Some of them are also depicted as skeptics (*saṃsayavādins*). Whatever it may be, they have contributed their lot to the rise and growth of early Indian materialism. As will be discussed hereafter, their views, as found from different sources, supply definite indication about moral and ethical issues. Broadly speaking, they seem to have continued the Lokāyatika trend of morality at the background of non-spiritualism. Their period of existence has roughly been fixed by the scholars as ranging between 1000 and 600 BCE.² In

what follows, some of such prominent figures will be touched upon.

Ajītakeśa Kambalin

He is referred to as one prominent ascetic of the materialist tradition. It is held that his lifetime is around 600 BCE and he is used to wear hair-garment³ and that is why he is addressed as Keśa Kambalin. He is a critic of the doctrine of karma and spiritualism. There is non-admittance of both past and future life, so far as his view is taken into account. The interesting point is that he has preferred to live as an ascetic and to remain away from the ordinary social setup, despite the fact of his being a *nāstika*, having denied both God and soul. His philosophical outlook is found to be against Vedic ritualism and Upaniṣadic ātmonism. His viewpoint is often identified as Cārvāka materialism⁴.

From the records available, it seems evident that there is no trace of immorality in his philosophical position. His stand is clearly against spiritualistic rigid orthodoxy that solely rests upon giving higher value to transempirical existence (implying that to be ultimately real) and disregarding the socio-empiric existence as far inferior (or even unreal). Such another worldly outlook is not only rationally indefensible, but it also works against the sustenance of social stability. It does affect (negatively) the individual morality within the socio-human framework. Ajīta does not seem to have opposed to morality in the secular plane. He is only against the application of good and right to a transempirical realm of sacerdotalism. That extension is not socially warranted. Rather, by limiting morality to empirical plane, Ajīta seems to have grasped the clear bounds of morality and spirituality.

It is said that Ajīta does not move to identify body with soul or matter with spirit (which, in a sense, the doctrine of *dehātmavāda* holds). According to him, a particular object of experience must be viewed as an individual whole.⁵ If this is conceded, then it is definitely an interesting breakthrough. This reading clearly points to the case that Ajīta's stand is not exactly the same as the philosophical view that soul is not a different entity than body and

the view that is usually ascribed to the Cārvākas. Of course, it is the case that Ajīta does not subscribe to the suggestion that soul or spirit has any independent existence. But the notable point is that he is not in favour of admitting any exclusive independent ontological status either to body or to soul and also either to matter or to spirit. That means, he seems to have a distinct original philosophical stand, according to which the distinction between the body and the soul or between matter and spirit is only acceptable within the realm of experience and to move on that demarcation within the phenomenal plane is quite efficacious practically. For ordinary transaction of life, such use of difference may be conceded. But to conclude from this that the distinction (under reference) is of ultimate and noumenal significance is not logically warranted. Rather, both object and subject form an individual whole. Such a reading suggests that Ajīta's position is neither tilted to spiritualistic nor to crude materialistic interpretation. From this angle of vision, the concept of man can be analysed in consonance with Ajīta's position. Man is, from this point of view, neither a spirit nor a matter. It is one indivisible whole, a unitary concept. And the ethical sense can be meaningfully placed within the human level. There is no need to transgress this limit. Thereby no damage is done to the smooth flow of moral awareness. It is true with human welfare, not necessarily at the cost of other beings and things.

A point may be raised here as to why Ajīta has preferred to live as an ascetic and to remain away from the ordinary social habitat. If his view is not in favour of any form of transcendental doctrine, then his disinclination to remain in the ordinary social setup appears to be somewhat surprising. But an explanation can be traced out in this regard. It may be that his novel and uncommon view is not found to have been well grasped by the then commoners in society and in order to avoid the noisy, troublesome state-of affairs, Ajīta has opted to remain away from family and other social relations. However, this need not suggest that he is an escapist, inhuman and unsocial. Rather the view that he has professed seems to have profound socio-human significance and not morally abhorrent.

Sañjaya Belāthaputta

The name of Sañjaya and his viewpoint has been referred to in the Buddhist source: *Sāmaññaphala Sūta* which has been subsequently translated into English by Rhys Davids in his *Dialogues of Buddha*. It is said in that source that Sañjaya has remained hesitant to give either a positive or a negative answer to the question: whether there is another world. So also similar response was advanced by him with regard to the question, whether a man continues or does not continue after death.

Without going to the issue whether such a position was actually held by a historical person, say, Sañjaya Belāthaputta, one can advance a searching probe into the logical implication of such an attitude or response to the question as referred to before. It may be suggested that the questions are framed in such a manner so that no definite answer either in the positive or in the negative sense is possible without any disputation. *Arthāpatti* becomes meaningfully operative while different possibility is open within a specified and limited field of operation. If one is not taking food during day-time and still keeps himself fit in the normal sense, then the presumption that he takes food during night-time becomes plausible. But, in the case of one being dead and the dead being gradually decayed and decomposed (body and mind being both completely dysfunctional), the claim that the person continues and becomes the disembodied ghostly being, having no concrete frame of reference (absolutely *aśarīra* or body less), a pure *jīva* or soul is hardly clear and rationally cogent.

So also, when nothing specific is known about the so-called other world (*paraloka*), to move for a definite answer whether such a world exists or does not exist, seems to be a futile exercise. It is not that because no definite answer is available to meet the question and, as such, the attitude of indifference is advanced but because the question itself is so formulated that it cannot ever be answered without landing oneself in logical difficulty. So the indifferent attitude that is developed is about the ill-formulation of the question itself and not about the nonavailability of getting

any answer. This reveals the sharp critical position of Sañjaya's philosophical position.

Such an approach (as said to have been advanced by Sañjaya) is quite close to the response of silence as said to have been advanced by Buddha to the typical metaphysical questions (like whether the world is real, whether everything is a matter of chance or is predestined, whether there is the effect or no effect of the karmas performed in lifetime in some future birth, whether the present state of individual's existence is due to the consequence of the actions performed in some past life and so on). It seems, so far as the present issue is taken into account, both Buddha and Sañjaya, despite their philosophical differences on other front, have some affinity. They both share the positivist trend of thought.

But the Buddhist source that has referred to the view of Sañjaya has also mocked the view stating that it has given rise to equivocation and the proponents of such view were afraid of meeting the opponents. Honestly speaking, the remark made by the Buddhist opponent seems to have been an undue overstatement. Such a reading of the view attributed to Sañjaya does not seem to be logically valid on account of the following grounds. Firstly, as hinted before, the hesitance of taking any side (either positive or negative) on such issues concerning the existence of other world, etc. is not necessarily the mark of escapism or expression of cowardice mentality. The advocate of the view is not shy of making any categorical assertion. On the contrary, it is the frank admittance of one's taking recourse to silence, where in principle no legitimate answer can ever be made possible. In this sense, Jacobi seems to be in the right direction when he points to the similarity between the views expressed by Sañjaya and the Buddhist counterpart.⁶

Whatever is the view held by Sañjaya with regard to ultimate metaphysical issues, it does not at all become clear that Sañjaya developed immoral practices of cheating and fraud. His attitude of maintaining silence concerning metaphysical disputes does not reveal callousness to social morality. It does not either

display any sign of absence of moral rectitude. It is held that the tradition speaks of Sañjaya as the proponent of a “non-hostile system”.⁷ This shows that his position is based upon sound logicality, not affected by any sentimental or emotional whim and prejudice. To remain on the track of reasoning is not the mark of moral imbalance. It is, therefore, not fair to picture him as adopting wriggling. His agnostic remark need not be viewed in the pejorative sense; it is rather a mark of sound critical thinking.

Pakudha Kaccayana

In *Samyutta-Nikāya* there is the mention of Pakudhako Katiyano (Pakudha Kaccayana). There is reference about his viewpoint in *Sāmañña-Phala Sūta* and also in the writings of Buddhaghosha. According to him, it is said that there are primarily seven elements (earth, water, air, fire, pleasure, pain and soul). All these elements are existent in a composite unit and there is no real change or disjunction or separation amongst them. In other words, the very being of the irreducible seven elements is real and motion in any form is unreal. The viewpoint roughly resembles the standpoint advocated by Parmenides and Zeno to whom being is alone real and motion is impossible.

Pakudha is identified as one *akriyāvādin* or a thinker propounding non-actionism. It appears that the views which are attributed to him are not systematically well related. It is not clear as to how soul is regarded as an element and it is grouped along with water, air and fire, etc. to form one composite unit. By the admittance of soul as one of the real elements, Pakudha cannot be consistently classified as a materialist. Further the acceptance of seven elements being composed of one unitary whole does imply that the very point of composition involves some form of action or *kriyā*. But, in that case, the talk of *akriyā* or non-action is not coherent with the idea of reality as is presented in the thought attributed to Pakudha. To put in other words, Pakudha’s view (as exposed in the external sources) is not in a developed and matured form. It is neither argued out nor is defended. Because

of non-availability of relevant data, it is not possible to draw any moral implication of his standpoint.

Pūrṇa Kāśapa

References about Pūrṇa Kāśapa are found in Buddhist sources like *Sāmañña-Phala Sūta*, *Dīgha-Nikāya* and *Milinda-Panho*.⁸ He has been depicted as a great reformer of conservative religious tradition, especially he has vehemently opposed to religious rites, rituals and sacrifices. He is said to be very much critical about the continuance of merit and demerit beyond life in some transempirical plane of existence. It is held that Pūrṇa has strongly questioned the custom of providing gifts and giving alms to the ascetics.⁹

It goes without saying that whatever reports and descriptions about the views of Pūrṇa are presently available, those are not found to be adequate enough to arrive at the distinctive philosophical position that Pūrṇa might have formulated. But, all the same, from the indication about his viewpoint, as supplied through the foreign sources, some sort of meaningful suppositional reconstruction concerning his philosophical point of view can be advanced. His various reformative measures regarding religious traditions and customs reveal that his position is not committed to any type of religious spiritualism. It is found to be quite critical about transcendental application of morality. The retributive theory of justice that underlies the doctrine of karma is found to have been linked up with transempirical existence of past as well as future life. But such a supposition is not that sacrosanct from the socio-moral point of view. It is only in the context of socio-individual relationship within the empiric framework, actions are judged as morally meritorious or demeritorious and not beyond that. Moral judgmental decision may not be derived from empirical fact; but that is meaningfully applied and operative within the empiric framework. In this sense, Pūrṇa's critical remark about both meritorious and demeritorious actions seems to be quite revealing.

Further, Pūrṇa's criticism of the custom of providing gifts and giving alms to the ascetics does not seem to be pointless. The parasitical living of anybody, depending upon alms and gifts from others is never morally praiseworthy. Begging does not have any sense of dignity; rather it promulgates corruption. Begging profession in any form cannot be morally defensible. From this angle of vision, Pūrṇa's view seems to have moral insight.

Makkhali Gosala

He is another important thinker of the period whose reference is found in the Buddhist sources like *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, *Dīgha-Nikāya* and *Ambatta Siitta*¹⁰. His views are given the colour of radical determinism by the opponents and the uncritical exponents. It is said that, according to him, there is neither any ultimate cause for moral corruption, noticed among men nor also there is any proximate or remote cause for moral uprightness.¹¹ All beings are said to be without force and power. They are bent this way or that way by fate (*niyati*), by the conditions of the class (*sangate*) in which they are placed and by their individual nature (*bhāva*).¹² The prescription for purification is said to have been suggested by him through constant transformation. According to him, transformation or change is universal. His view is characterized as "the doctrine of change through re-animation."¹³

However, what has been said about his point of view through the external sources, it is not, perhaps, proper to depict Gosala as a "down-right determinist"¹⁴. Even if the term: *niyati* is ascribed to his viewpoint; it need not be understood in the radical sense of uncompromising fatalism or intractable destiny. By the admittance of *niyati*, *sangate* and also one's individual nature, the position of Gosala seems to be rather close for a flexible and liberal move towards life-situation. It is a fact that, on some occasions, things happen and events occur in human-life as well as in natural surrounding on which causal explanations cannot be traced. Those are not under human control. Despite our best efforts, we sometimes cannot check or prevent such untoward happenings. And, in such cases, if someone holds that it is beyond human

calculation, control and it is not easily accounted for, there is no sense of logical incongruity involved in such expression. But it need not necessarily suggest that the view thus presented leads to the acceptance of blind fate or destiny under which man has nothing but to face the difficulty and is not to make any effort to redress it.

Gosala has, it is notable, taken into consideration two more points in this regard. These are: condition of the class and the individual nature. Here by class it is understood normally as the social or circumstantial or even natural setting to which man or other living beings are put in their respective situations. The circumstantial factor need not be underestimated. That does play a vital role in shaping the natural setting for the individual. And, the physical as well as mental make-up of the individual beings takes the shape accordingly. Such factor cannot be brushed aside in the socio-normal setting. Of course, thereby it need not be suggested that such situational factors cannot be restructured and modified as per individual effort. There are a number of instances where human beings considerably face their set situation bravely and even are able to transform that through their individual as well as collective effort.

It seems that Gosala's admittance of *niyati*, *sangate* and the individual effort is very significant from the socio-empiric angle and it is morally also not that controversial or questionable. He has duly acknowledged all these three factors in living situation and as a naturalist and evolutionist, he has taken due effort to face all these within the empirical dimension. He is against any transcendental, metaphysical explanation of absolute theory of causation, metaphysical theory of fatalism or pre-determinism. He does not rule out human effort and, in that sense, human sense of freedom is acceptable to his viewpoint. Accepting the phenomena of change or transformation, his position perhaps anticipates the Buddhist doctrine of change to certain extent (of course with its own distinctiveness). Gosala's introduction of three principles: fate, species and nature put him rather in the empirical plane and not in any transempirical plane. And, in that way, he can be better pictured as a naturalist and phenomenalist rather than an

uncompromising fatalist or “down-right determinist”. His view, thus reviewed, need not place him as antagonistic to social and moral outlook. It is not the case that by recognising human effort, Gosala “demonstrates the futility of human endeavour”.¹⁵ Rather, on the contrary, it seems more evident that he duly regards the role of human effort and endeavour. Freedom is quite compatible with the admittance of *niyati* in his thought-construction.

Moral freedom to him, it seems, is not absolutely unlimited and uncontrolled. It has its legitimate operation within the specified situational front. Gosala’s point of view is rather clearly against any absolutistic explanation in the scheme of morality. His sense of freedom is not beyond the operation of moral law in a given setup. Only he is critical about the orthodox, conservative rigidity where laws are given absolute status, completely bypassing the individual’s rational choice and freedom within social dimension.

Kambalasvatara

There is no unanimity among the scholars about the period in which Kambalasvatara has lived. Nevertheless, it is held that he is posterior to Cārvāka and contemporary of Ajīta Keśa Kambalin.¹⁶ The Buddhist scholar: Santaraksita in his well-known work: *Tattvasaṅgraha* gives reference of Kambalasvatara.¹⁷ According to him, *caitanya* (consciousness) emerges from *śarīra* (body) and becomes extinct after the destruction of body. Accordingly there is no scope for the admittance of consciousness as surviving after death. In other words, there is non-acceptance of independent existence of soul. As such, there is no scope for the existence of past or future life. These views, attributed to Kambalasvatara, reveal him to be a materialist. Some have opined that he can be identified as Ajīta Keśa Kambalin¹⁸. But this opinion is not accepted by others.¹⁹ It is likely that both Ajīta and Kambalasvatara are two different persons, having advocated similar views.

However, one thing seems to be quite certain and plausible that Kambalasvatara, by way of rejecting independent existence of soul or pure consciousness, is found to be not at all a spiritualist. Rather by admitting consciousness to be the outcome of the

body, he can be easily regarded as a materialist of the Lokāyata group. The non-admittance or rejection of spirit as an independent entity does not amount to suggest him to be immoral or unethical. Denial of spirit as an entity does not necessarily have adverse effect on the practice of morality in the social living. It does not necessarily advocate or preach immoralism. Such a supposition is not reasonably warranted.

Buddha has drawn special attention to the fact of human suffering, both mental and physical. The Sāṅkhya philosophers also emphasize on dukṣa (sorrows and sufferings). The Advaita Vedāntins, by way of stressing on the ephemeral character of worldly living (*saṃsara-jīvana*), aspires for eternal existence of bliss. All these views, expressed by the classical Indian philosophers are, however, not fully baseless. Conceding that such views have some elements of truth, it does not follow that everything is nothing but sorrowful and full of sufferings. It does not follow either that behind the transitory existence there must be eternal state of bliss as such. Kambalasvatara and other like-minded Lokāyatas never give the impression that the world is all full of joy and pleasure. They do not seem to have denied the very fact of natural calamities and disasters that human beings often face. But, instead of being depressed over such states, it seems that these materialists prefer to adopt an attitude of meeting such challenges with courage and self-confidence. Instead of pining for a visionary state of absolute bliss and declaring the present worldly living as all illusory, they seem to have appealed for a reasoned and balanced outlook by means of which pleasure can be attained amidst sorrows and sufferings. Their approach is never life-negating but life-affirming. From all this, it can be held that their views cannot be rated as morally reprehensible.

It is evident that the materialist thinkers (whose views are discussed here) are not properly presented in the traditional sources. In the exposition of their views, made by the rival philosophers, there is found to be some sort of misrepresentation, at least so far as the logical implications of the views attributed to them are taken into account. This is more conspicuous when one tries to explore the moral suggestion and indications that

underlie their general philosophical views. Ajīta's criticism of spiritualistic mysticism, Sañjaya's silence about transcendental realm of noumena, Puṛṇa's critical note on ceremonial rites, rituals and sacrifices and Gosala's emphasis on human effort are some of the few instances that can be well interpreted with least force and pressure that all such moves act like sound booster for the continuance and preservation of morality in the social platform. Their viewpoints clearly safeguard the cause of secular morality and, in that way, their message seems to be highly relevant in the modern setup too. Gosala's reference to species or class-structure need not be understood as his acknowledging something as natural class. He is not a supporter of class-structure; rather he is a critic of that. He does not suggest that classes are innate or inborn. Those are not inviolable. But the hard reality of class-structure has to be met bravely and the human effort must be made to move beyond that. In this way, it is not unfair to make a surmise that his view anticipates Buddha's talk about caste annihilation. This is a positive mark for moral sense. It does not hinder but accelerates moral progress and refinement.

Notes and References

1. Shastri, D., op.cit., p. 53. Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 103 and Barua, B., *A History Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1921, pp. 281-286.
2. Vide Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 97, Basham, A.L., *History and Doctrines of the Ajivakas—A Vanished Indian Religion*, London, Luzac & Co., 1951.
3. Reference about him is found in several Buddhist sources. Vide *Ahuttara-Nikāya*, 286; *Digha-Nikāya*, I. 167; *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 1.77. 11.161.
4. Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.11, Poona, 1927, pp. 452-453.
5. Krishna, K.B., *Studies in Hindu Materialism*, op. cit, p. 103. Krishna, in this connection, refers to the classical Jaina text, *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, 2.1, 15-17 and vide Sen, A., "Schools and Sects in Jaina Literature" published in *Visva-Bharati Studies*, No. 3, 1931.
6. Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 105.
7. Ibid.
8. Vide *Dialogues of Buddha*, 1.66, 70.

9. Vide Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 112.
10. Op.cit., pp. 114-115.
11. Op.cit., p. 108.
12. Op.cit., p. 109.
13. Barua, B., op.cit., pp. 297-318, See also Rockhill's *Life of Buddha*, Appendix, II, p. 251 and Ernest Leumann's translation of Jaina text, *Extracts from Bhagavati XV* on the intercourse between Mahāvīra and Gosala Makkhaliputta.
14. Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 107.
15. Op.cit, p. 110.
16. Op.cit., p. 44.
17. Vide *Tattvasaṅgraha* of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary of Kamalaśīla edited with an introduction in Sanskrit by Pandit Embar Krishnamaeharya and a Foreword in English by the General Editor, Benoytosh Bhattaeharya, Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. XXX in two volumes, 1926, p. 521.
18. Shastri, Hara Prasad, *Lokāyata* (Bulletin of the Dacca University, No. D-P-2.
19. Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 44.

The Epics, the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas

The Cārvāka Dṛṣṭi

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, the materialistic trends are found in the Vedas and in the Upaniṣads. Bṛhaspati's philosophical view has been brought out from the scattered *sūtras*, attributed to him, as noticed from different sources. The reference to the svabhāvavādins has been made and their points of affinities to those indicated by Bṛhaspati have been discussed.

The post-Upaniṣadic thinkers, usually treated as the Ājīvakas, have been taken into consideration and the philosophical implication of their views with special reference to ethics and morality has been exposed.

In the later phase, i.e. the period starting with the epics, the *smṛtis* and up to the *major purāṇas*, a number of references about the Lokāyata/Cārvāka viewpoints can be traced. One can extrapolate the ethical implication as well as insights from such sporadic indications. Both in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in the *Mahābhārata*, there are clear hints about the Cārvākas at a number of places. So also in the *Manusmṛti* the Cārvāka stand has been referred to. Even in some of the major *purāṇas* like *Padma* and *Garuḍa* the materialistic viewpoints are hinted. However, most of such references in the epics, the *smṛtis* and the *purāṇas* are found to be somewhat hostile and negative. But, even then, the extrapolation of the Lokāyata/Cārvāka stand from the socio-moral dimension can be brought out from all such stray references. And those, as would be argued out in the subsequent sections, reveal positive account of ethics and morality in the Indian materialist

thought. Of course, for all that some amount of reconstruction and reevaluation are found to be necessary.

THE EPICS

The *Rāmāyaṇa*

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1800 BCE) there is reference about the Lokāyata.¹ Through the main character of the epic, Rāmacandra, the Lokāyatikas are described as Brāhmaṇas who are proficient in presenting wrong and injurious views. They pose themselves to be wise, but actually they are not. They are deceivers.² They are blamed as clever in useless things.³ On the basis of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, D.R. Shastri takes Lokāyata as *vitaṇḍā*. And, he interprets 'vitaṇḍā' as 'dry arguments' or 'casuistry'.⁴ Others have uncritically followed that characterization.

Now, before coming to the point: whether the version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* contributes anything at all on the issue of ethics and morality pertaining to the Lokāyata, it is important to note that *prima facie* the treatment of the Lokāyata as referred to in this epic is not expository but rather derogatory. It is not clarified in the concerned source as to how the proponents of Lokāyata are deceivers. How can the views presented by them be treated as wrong and injurious. As already indicated before, the Lokāyatikas are found to be raising serious objections against the acceptance of supernatural things and beings. It is not simply on the ground of those being not sense-perceived. But the very supposition of God, soul and divinity is not reasonably sound. The idea of attaining merit (*puṇya*) by performing rites and rituals before the sacrificial altar (*yajña-vedī*) and to obtain the fruits of such performance in after-life are not found to be valid and justified by means of any rational criterion. So the Lokāyatika position is not based on blind conjecture but is founded on argument and it is not shown in the cited reference from the epic as invalid or wrong. It is notable in this connection that the Lokāyatikas are characterized even in the opponent sources as *haitukas* or *hetuvādins* (i.e., taking resort to reason in order to arrive at the conclusion). Hence, the question

of blind belief or baseless conjecture seems to have no scope in the Lokāyata/Cārvāka framework.

Further, extending the jurisdiction of supposition from the empiric bounds to supra-empiric transcendence has not been vindicated to be sound and logical so far as the account found in the epic is taken into consideration. So the attribution of injurious views on the Lokāyata does not seem to be proper and fair. Rather such attribution being not well argued out turns out to be misleading and ill motivated. It may at best be characterized as refusal but not refutation of the Lokāyata stand. It is clearly found to be unwarranted accusation and is therefore morally questionable. In fact in the Rāmāyaṇa, in another context,⁵ the arguments from the Lokāyata point of view have been indicated and those, on the contrary, reveal that it is the advocates of supernatural and supra-empirical existence of heaven, hell, soul, God, etc. deceive the commoners cleverly by injecting blind superstitions into their thinking and thereby committing something wrong and improper. All such unjustified surmises block free thinking on the basis of reason.

The term *vitaṇḍā* is mis-rendered as ‘dry argument’ or ‘casuistry’. The English word casuistry, in its lexical meaning, stands for quibbling or sophistry, especially in the theological context.⁶ But it is notable that *vitaṇḍā* is a technical term used in Indian philosophy, especially in the Nyāya darśana where it is one of the sixteen *padārthas* or (subjects/issues). It is clearly distinguished from *both jalpa* and *chhala* and is also not a kind of fallacious reasoning (*hetvābhāsa*). Goutama in his *Nyāya-Sūtra* has termed *vitaṇḍā* as a mode of reasoning or argument where the opponent’s view is criticized.⁷ Quibbling is merely play upon words, but not establishing any definite point.⁸ It is therefore called as deceitful argument or casuistry.⁹ All this reveals that *vitaṇḍā* is a form of argument neither a show of argument (*tarkābhāsa*) nor a false argument (*pakṣābhāsa/hetvābhāsa*). It is aimed at being critical about the opponent’s view.

If this be the technical and established meaning of *vitaṇḍā*, to translate it as casuistry (as used in English language) is surely to bring misconception and confusion. Further, the Lokāyatika

position, as indicated before from the source of *Rāmāyaṇa*, suggests no sense of deceit or fraud. It is not a play of words. It does try to find fault with the opponent's view and it also thereby claims its own position as naturalistic and empiricistic (of course, in the crude unsophisticated sense). *Vitaṇḍā*, therefore, is an argument (reason stated) not necessarily a false argument.¹⁰ It, also in the philosophical context particularly, stands for disputation, wherein objection on intellectual basis is raised against a position or viewpoint, not implying thereby that it is crude, faulty arguing (out of rage and conflict).¹¹

If all this is conceded, then legitimately one can draw the conclusion that the Lokāyatika's raising dispute or argument against the opponent's position is not on emotional ground of ego-centric jealousy and vanity but it is the outcome of serious intellectual exercise. It poses itself as a sound and effective logical counter to the propagation of blind dogma in the name of infusing and inculcating sense of wisdom. The Lokāyatika's stand thus seems to be not a counter theological enterprise but rather a sound and reasonable argumentative step.

It reveals that the insistence upon blind surmises about transcendental theological entities/beings is not only reasonably unsound; it also has considerable adverse influence in socio-individual frame of reference. The individual is brainwashed with a psychological sense of apprehension and caution that if he does not accept the belief in supernatural state of existence with a spark of theological divinity, then his future life after death would be disastrous. Such superstitious dogmatic step blocks free thinking. Thus it hinders the tract of sound reasoning and it goes counter to moral sense also. The Lokāyatika's appeal for worldliness is not necessarily meant for its giving an ontological justification in the dry speculative sense of ultimate reality, but rather it is to posit the valid point that the issue of socio-individual morality can be well pursued and tackled quite meaningfully in the empirical plane and never beyond that.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* which otherwise displays an outstanding work of the great figure, Vālmikī and depicts the character of Rāma that is widely accepted in the Hindu world as a great judicious

person par excellence, is viewed on certain occasion that is highly controversial from the angle of socio-individual sense of justice and morality. Rāma's decision for killing Sambhuka on account of his reading the Vedas (being a *Śūdra*), and his resolve for sending Sitā to the forest on the alleged complaint of her being unchaste are treated as marks of moral lapse from the socio-individual point of view. Particularly the first instance, concerning Sambhuka has deliberately been kept out in later works on the *Rāmāyaṇa* on account of its dubious moral status at the social perspective. If one sees validity in questioning such issues on moral ground, then one can also notice the moral strength of the Lokāyatika stand of raising voices against the social discrimination based on class-distinction (*varṇa-bheda*) and the blind acceptance of the performance of rites and rituals for attaining heavenly bliss of transcendence.

The *Mahābhārata*

Like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the other great epic the *Mahābhārata* has some allusion about the materialistic thought. The interesting point is, here instead of the term Lokāyata, there is mention of the term Cārvāka which again is said to be a name of one demon (*asura*) and who is described as enemy of the gods and the Brāhmaṇas. Further it is stated that the demon appears in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa. In this connection, there is mention about the capacity of experiencing/being conscious of the collection of the material elements (*bhūtas*) and that is compared to the instance of water being dried up in association with fire.

It seems that such reference about the Cārvāka, though indirect, point to the Lokāyata (mentioned in the earlier sources), in view of indicating its doctrine that consciousness is the outcome of the material elements. But, in addition to that, the attribution of the Cārvāka view to demon as enemy of gods and Brāhmaṇas reveal the disapproval of the epic composer about the Cārvāka point of view not on any reasonable ground but with the undertone of hostility. It also indirectly attacks the Cārvākas on moral ground that those are, as demons, of evil and sinful nature, creating

disturbance to the smooth peaceful move in the social order. This can, of course, not overtly but covertly, be read from such remark.

But paradoxically, such a scornful remark about the Cārvāka does not go along with one of the main characters which is approvingly narrated in the epic from the moral angle. Let us take the case of Yudhiṣṭhira who has been morally acclaimed as the paragon of justice (*dharmarāja*). It is he who has persuaded rather prevailed upon Drupada to give his consent for getting his daughter: Draupadee married to five Pāṇḍava brothers (Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva). This move for polyandry was solemnised despite separate socio-moral practice prevailing during those days. In the case of the royal family having enough power and wealth, the king and other privileged persons could move for more than one wives (polygamy), but not that one female was given in marriage to more than one person (polyandry). At least this was not found to be socio-morally sanctioned. It is peculiar as to how this proposal was even pleaded by a person like Yudhiṣṭhira. And this point became further strengthened while later, on the occasion of Draupadee being utterly humiliated in the royal court (*kurusabhā*) and Vidura (procreated by Vyāsa of a maid-in-waiting) stubbornly protesting the inhuman and immoral attempt of denuding the lady (even in the public place), Karṇa argued against Vidura saying that Draupadee had given herself in marriage to five brothers, clearly in contravention of the prevailed customary law of monogamy and, as such, she was nothing more than a whore (*Bārāṅganā*). As if, even a whore has no sense of personal honour and dignity and she could be dragged in public for such shocking inhuman insult'.¹³ Instead of making a fair account of the Cārvāka position, the epic (like the opponents) has made a castigatory remark unreasonably.

One thing should be fairly acknowledged that from the basic stand of the Cārvāka/Lokāyata point of view, i.e. questioning the speculative unreasonable entities like God, soul etc., the violation of the socio-moral standard does not necessarily follow. The critical reflection about transempirical entities on rational basis can never be morally considered as a sinful move unless one illogically and unjustifiably draws the conclusion that challenging

the existence of hell, heaven, etc. is nothing but immoral and unethical. Being critical about transcendental reality does not necessitate abnegation of ethics at the socio-individual level. So also the philosophical view that consciousness is the outcome of material elements on the basis of perceptual evidences, say for example, some complicated neural disorder in the brain-structure giving rise to the de-functioning of brain and failure of consciousness does not evince something immoral and unethical. Such kind of reading of the Cārvāka viewpoint is not rationally sustainable.

The Smṛtis

Not only the epics, but also the *smṛti* sources do not present an impartial and balanced picture of the Cārvākas. There also an ill-balanced and prejudiced reference is noticed with regard to the Cārvākas in general. In the *Bh.Gītā*, the materialist's view is also referred to as the *asura-view*.¹⁴ It further states that the materialists are disbelievers in God (Īśvara).¹⁵ It is taken for granted (without justification) that the disbelievers are bound to be immoral. Probably, on account of advocating a theistic world-view, the text restricts the realm of social morality only within that theological background, ignoring altogether the free and autonomous feature of morality. But this is rationally least cogent and convincing.

The *Bh. Gītā*, despite of its being a part of the *Mahābhārata* and treated as *smṛti* is highly acclaimed almost among the wider section of the Hindu world and is even viewed as the most authentic text of Hinduism on par with *śruti*.¹⁶ But, when one moves for a dārsanic estimation of the text, one requires to assess and evaluate it, free from having any prior bias and prejudice, either religious or otherwise. So far as the issue of morality is concerned, the unsound remark about the Lokāyata/Cārvāka is not only a mark of bad taste but it is found to be paradoxical when one moves to certain references of the text which express its own stand. For instance, the *Gītā*¹⁷ proclaims that the four-fold division of man (*puruṣa/manuṣya*) is created by Lord Himself

creating the impression that as such the division is inviolable and further it states that while the three classes (*varṇas*) have specified duties to perform, the other class (*Śūdra*) is only to serve the three classes (*paricaryātmākam*). Minimum sense of moral justice is clearly violated when one class is meant to serve the rest three classes, having no independent specific duty of his own. Again the Gītā holds¹⁹ that even if *Vaiśya*, *Sūdra* and *stree* (woman/female) are of base origin (*pāpayonī*), they too are liberated taking His shelter. Such theological utterance is found to be unreasonably discriminative and morally repugnant. At least such kind of moral discrimination is not noticed in any of the sources of the Lokāyatikas that are even cited by the opponents. To find no valid argument for the existence of a transcendent Lord (*Īśvara*) is not a mark immorality; but to treat certain classes of people as higher and the entire group of human female as of base origin is obviously inhuman and immoral from any consideration. Again, the two classes of *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* belong to one type of division and *stree* belongs to another distinct type of division. To put all the three under one categorization is an instance of cross division and thus is not logically sustainable. It clearly goes against moral reasoning.

Manu takes *nāstika* as the condemner of the Vedas.²⁰ If it would have been just an objective account of the Cārvāka's position, then one need not be critical about that. But contextually at least this remark is found to be not that innocuous. It, on the contrary, is deliberately a castigatory note on the Cārvākas. The dogmatic acceptance of the sayings of the Vedas without any rational scrutiny and justification is what is heavily contested upon from the Cārvāka point of view. It does not condemn it on account of any scornful attitude. It seems to be unfair to refer to the Cārvākas as hater of the Vedas (*nāstikas*) with an implicit motive of degrading them as unsocial and immoral. That sort of characterization appears to be also ethically unwarranted. It is true that the Cārvākas do not accept the dogmatic and blind acceptance of the Vedic source beyond all doubts and questions. They are obviously critics of the Vedic orthodoxy. But to criticize the Vedic orthodoxy does not amount to its condemnation in the

emotionally charged pejorative sense (*ninduka*). Such a reading of the Cārvāka position is not only unreasonable, it is unjust also.

It is further interesting to note that Manu refers to the unorthodox thinkers (heretics, i.e. *nāstikas* in general including the Bauddhas, the Jainas and the Cārvākas) as *haitukas* or advocates of logic.²¹ While commenting, Medhātithī and Kullukabhaṭṭa hold that the Cārvākas are upholders of logic (*tarkayidyā*).²² This implies that the rejection of the Veda (*Vedavirodhī*) is actually in the context of the blind acceptance of the other world (*paraloka*), the belief on the utility of gifts and sacrifices for better placement after death in heaven (*svarga*) and so on. The criticism advanced by the Cārvākas is on the grounds of reason (*hetu*) and not on any sense of whimsicality.

Sadānanda, in his *Vedāntasāra*, has pointed out that some Cārvākas refer to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.1 and II.3) and also the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, (II.2) which express certain theories like *dehātmavāda*, *mano-ātmavāda* and *indriyātmavāda* which are supported by the Cārvākas as well.²³ This reference seems to be very much significant. Because this clearly vindicates that the Cārvākas are not completely opposed to the Vedic source. They, like others, choose the references from that source which suit their standpoint. Of course to validate their stand, they do not dogmatically rest upon the Vedic source as final and conclusive authority. They seem to have reached their viewpoint independently without resting upon Vedic authority. Selected Vedic sayings are supported by them not for the purpose of confirmation but rather for conformation. It establishes the point that in Indian philosophical tradition the sharp dichotomization between *aṣṭikā* and *nāstika* does not hold well. The *Upaniṣads*, as already indicated, do not present one single trend of thought. The Cārvāka point of view is, therefore, not to be rated as untraditional. Again, the doctrines like *dehātmavāda/mano-ātmavāda* which are, by some, attributed to the Cārvāka/Lokāyata cannot be viewed as suitable from the logical point of view. Because the Cārvākas being the critic of the doctrine of *ātmā* (soul/self) cannot again be consistently said as the advocate of *ātmā* as either identical with body or with mind. Such a step for them would be rather

accommodating *ātmā* in some way or other through a backdoor method. That would be only self-defeating. They need not reduce the person either to bare body or bare consciousness but to human person in the empiric sense of the term. It is notable that though from the Cārvāka standpoint, *ātmā* as referring to transempirical spirit/soul is not tenable; *ātmā* in the sense of referring to one's own person in the ordinary empirical context is admissible. It means the concrete individual in the empiric sense of living person. Such meaning has the traditional sanction too (vide the usages like *ātmā-kṛite* (self-excuted), *ātmaja* (one's own son, daughter, etc.), *ātma-jaya* (one's own victory), *ātma-nindā* (self-reproach), *ātma-tyāga* (giving up one's own life, self-sacrifice, suicide, etc.).

Manu recommends that such *nāstikas* should be excommunicated from all activities of good people. Because those undesirable people denounce the authority of the Vedas and are sheer disbelievers.²⁴ This clearly vindicates the attitude of bad temper and arrogance of Manu towards the Cārvākas. It is needless to point out that such remark of Manu is unethical and not grounded on reason.

The Purāṇas

The *purāṇas* too contain traces of materialistic thought on many occasions. References are found in the *Padma-purāṇa*,²⁵ the *Garuḍa-purāṇa*²⁶ and the *Visnu-purāṇa*.²⁷ In most of such cases, a considerable amount of severe and contemptuous treatment has been advanced against the materialist position in general. The remarks that are made seem to have been more or less of the similar type as noticed in the case of the epics and the *smṛtiśāstras*. The *haitukas* or the hetuvādins are referred to as the materialist heretics.²⁸ It is a matter of notable impropriety that the serious thinkers who have raised their voice against certain thoughts and practices based on dogma and prejudice on the ground of reasoned arguments are decried so outrageously.

All this reveals that the epics and the *smṛti* sources expose the Cārvāka position not in a balanced objective setting. Their offensive remarks act almost like boomerang to their own

position. Through the main characters whatever message has been conveyed is found to be (as already touched upon before) self-defeating at least from the socio-moral perspective. The *smṛtikāra*'s negative attitude towards the Cārvāka point of view suffers from lack of justification. The *purāṇakāra*'s remark on the Cārvākas is nothing new. It is equally damaging and distorting as well. Probably due to their deep establishment in the general psyche on other grounds, their adverse and baseless comments on the Cārvāka almost have remained unnoticed. Such comments do not seem to affect the logical foundation of the Cārvākian standpoint and also its impact on socio-moral issues. The Cārvāka stand continues to be popular amongst the commoners, despite the repugnant attitude of the pseudo pundits.

Notes and References

1. Ayodhyākhaṇḍa, II.103.
2. Ibid., 100, 38-39.
3. Ibid., II.109-29.
4. *A Short History of Indian Materialism, Sensationalism and Hedonism*, op.cit., p. 8 and 50.
5. Ibid., II-108-13-16.
6. Vide *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7th edn., Bombay, O.U.P., 1987, p. 143.
7. “*Pratipakṣa sthāpanāhīno vitaṇḍā*”, *Nyāya-Sūtra*.
8. Oxford Dictionary, op.cit., p. 847.
9. *Sanskrit-Hindi-English Dictionary* (compiled by Suryakanta), New Delhi, Orient Longman Ltd., 1975, p. 212.
10. Vide Williams, Monier, M. Sir. Dr. *A Dictionary English and Sanskrit*, Delhi, (MLBD), 1964, p. 24.
11. Ibid., p. 196.
12. *The Mahābhārata Śāntiparva, mokṣadharmā*, 218, verses, 23-39.
13. *Mahābhārata, Adiparva*, CLMXI and Śāntiparva, LXVI (quoted by Sinha and Basu, *Women in Ancient India*, Delhi; Khama Publications, 2002, p. 82).
14. The Bh. Gītā (XVI. 7.9).
15. Ibid., (XVI.8).
16. The scholars specially the historians and the archaeologists differ on the point of treating *Gītā* as a portion of the original *Mahābhārata* which is dated as early as 700 BCE. The original *Mahābhārata* is found

to have the linguistic structure which is strikingly different from that of the *Gītā*. Though there is the mention of certain prominent characters like Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Droṇa etc. besides Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, the style and language used in the *Gītā* is found to be of later time, say 300-400 CE, while the royal patronage was from the Gupta dynasty. The Guptas were of Vaiṣṇavite faith and during that period a number of Vaiṣṇavite treatises were composed including the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. All this has led some to make a notable presumption that the *Gītā*'s emphasis on the theistic Lord Viṣṇu, being identified as Kṛṣṇa and His being incarnated from time to time (*yuge yuge*) unlike other Lords of trinity, i.e. Brahmā and Maheśvara, is something remarkably conspicuous. The undertonal emphasis of the Vaiṣṇava cult is visible as contrast to other cults like the Śaiva, Śakta, Saurya and Gāṇapatya. Thus the inclusion of the predominance of the Vaiṣṇavite theology within the text of the *Mahābhārata* is considered to be debatable and controversial.

17. Ibid., IV 13.
18. Ibid., XVIII. 42-44.
19. Ibid., IX.32.
20. Vide *Manu Smṛti*, II.11. Manu is said to be prior to the *Mahābhārata*, because he is mentioned more than once in the *Mahābhārata*. Vide Sinha and Basu, op.cit., pp. 31 and 109.
21. Ibid., 11.11, IV.30.
22. Commentary on *Manusmṛti*, IV. 30.
23. *Vedāntasāra*, trans. and ed. by Jacob, G.A., London, Trubner's Oriental Series, 1880, pp. 70-71.
24. "Yo'vamanyeta te mūle hetuśāstrārayad dvijaḥ sa sādhubhir-bahiṣkāyo nāstiko vedanindukaḥ, *Manusmṛti*, II. 11.
25. *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, V. 13 (The dates of the composition of the *purāṇas* are not clearly determined on account of non-availability of relevant sources. However, there is a broad range, put by the scholars, starting with *ādi-purāṇa* ending with other mainly accepted *purāṇas* (total 18 in number), i.e. from 1000 BCE to 500 CE. Vide Sinha and Basu, op.cit., p. 120.
26. *Pūrvakhaṇḍa*, 98.17.
27. II. 13,111.150,161,1V.30,61,163,V.39, VIII.22,309,IX.65,66,X II.33,95,96. This *purāṇa* records a story about demons (*daityas*) gradually being overpowered, subsequently being enemies to the Brāhmaṇas and finally being averse to the Vedas. This clearly shows the scornful attitude of the composer of the *purāṇa* against the materialists.
28. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, XI. 18,30.

Some Prominent Post-Epic Thinkers

Kauṭilya

In and around 305 BCE the Mauryan empire under the leadership of Chandragupta was established, covering a large portion of north India including Punjab and even Afganisthan. His Prime Minister was variously identified in the historical sources. He is known in such records as Cāṇakya, Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇugupta, Kauṭilya, and Kauṭolya and also as Bṛhaspati II (meaning thereby different from Bṛhaspati who is treated as the composer of *Bṛhaspati-Sūtra*: the original source-material of Lokāyata/Cārvāka *darśana*). Without being himself claimed as Lokāyata, he is the pioneer to give the indication that Lokāyata is *darśana* on the logico-philosophical background. Without being a hostile critic, he is found to have indicated remarkably its logical basis. It is he who clearly holds Lokāyata as the science of logic.¹ He has nowhere become hostile critic of the Lokāyatikas (who are the opponent of the Vedic rites, rituals and sacrifices and also criticize supernaturalism and other-worldism on logical ground). One thing notable is that Kauṭilya has duly acknowledged the valid point advanced by the Lokāyatas. And that is: *dārśanic* views must be based on reasoned argument. In this context, their emphasis on *hetu* or reason is acclaimed and not disparaged. It is, in this sense, the Lokāyata point of view that is admitted is philosophical and not theological.

To Kauṭilya, the subject-matter of studies and learning (*vidyā*) can be broadly classified into four types.² Those are: philosophy (*ānvīkṣikī* or *darśana*), the three Vedas (*trayi*), politics with criminology and penology (*daṇḍanīti*) and political economy (*vārtā*). Amongst the four types of studies, he gives the highest

place to *ānvīkṣikī* on account of the fact that it analyses the roots of different concepts used in the applied situation by way of the employment of reason (*hetu*) and thereby, through the process of critical scrutiny, clarity is attained and confusion is dispelled out. It is both theoretically and practically very much needed. It is interesting to note that he has acknowledged the legitimacy of Lokāyata as philosophy in his framework.

The Vedas (*trayi*) are accommodated in his schematism not in totality, but only insofar as it is found to be auxiliary for the smooth operation of the governance. In other words, *ānvīkṣikī* is to play its vital and important role in the earthly socio-empirical domain and it is not to move beyond that domain for any dry speculation about transcendental realm of existence. This outlook concerning the method, scope and limits of philosophic enquiry is something refreshing in the classical Indian traditional setting and, to a considerable extent, such a point of view is well anticipated in the Lokāyata trend of thinking, particularly in its attack against supernaturalism and transempiric spiritualism. It is to be noted that the Lokāyatikas are found to be against the Vedic orthodoxy primarily insofar as it is solely emphatic on esoteric supraempiricism, completely neglecting the socio-moral necessity and requirement in the earthly plane.

The materialists in general in this context are shown to be against dharma (dharma *virodhī*). But their opposition needs to be assessed contextually. Dharma has been taken up with different shades of meaning by classical Indian philosophers, keeping in view of their respective philosophical positions. For instance, the Mīmāṃsā *darśana* takes dharma in the religio-ethical sense of man's duties without any theistic stance which later on has paved the way for the growth and development of law and jurisprudence in classical Indian socio-religious background, known as *dharmaśāstra*. Dharma in the Buddhist framework refers to some form of regularity or natural principle, governing both mental and physical sphere, not accepting any Lord (*Īśvara*). By dharma the Jainas mean action or motion in contrast to *adharmā* that stands for inactivity or rest.

So far as the Lokāyata view is concerned, it is not true that the view is a critic of dharma outright. It does not show any sign of rejecting the use and application of morality in the socio-individual plane. The empirical standard of morality is least objected. Dharma in the sense of performing duties and obligations within the social framework is well accommodated and adhered to. But, when dharma is restricted and confined to any particular set of theological/theistic belief or dogma and thereby has its application only to a limited section and neglecting thereby the vast number of other persons, remaining outside the concerned theological group or sect, the so-called morality with its dogmatic coating loses its acclaimed sense of universality. This is what is found to have been objected by the Indian materialists and also by Kauṭilya insofar as he does not approve morality with religious and theological supremacy. His view seems to treat morality on an independent footing, having greater emphasis on its linkage with social affairs inclusive of political as well as economic roots.

Kauṭilya's introduction of *daṇḍanīti* and *vārtā* is of great significance. It has definitely moved ahead in the line just indicated (but not developed) by the Lokāyatikas. It has ably pointed out that the principles of ethics and morality must have to be worked out in detail in different walks of social living. In handling both economic and political transactions, the need and efficacy of moral codes and rules are important. Such an emphasis seems to well anticipate the necessity of professional ethics. So also for the smooth governance of the state, there must be the operation of laws and rules in a consistent form without any sense of discrimination and violation. Otherwise that would give rise to both social and political unrest, causing thereby serious anarchy and social havoc. It seems plausible that Kauṭilya, by way of introducing and detailing out these two principles for serious studies and research, has been found as greatly innovative. He is one of the pioneers in classical Indian thought to have drawn attention to the social dimension of morality noticed in dharma and this point is found to be in consonance with the Lokāyata/Cārvāka framework. For Kauṭilya, political affairs must be controlled by the science of rod (*daṇḍanīti*) and not on religious basis.³ This is very

significant for viewing the nature of philosophy (*ānvīkṣikī*) within the bounds of actuality and to tackle the problems and issues not ignoring the socio-political reality. Instead of moving for any dry fanciful theological reading, it duly gives stress on analytical probe in terms of mundane than in terms of supramundane. And, that is why it has a rational affinity with the materialistic outlook.

Vātsyāyana

Not very much far from the period of Kauṭilya, there has been the rise of another influential thinker in the socio-cultural map of ancient India. He is Vātsyāyana, the prominent author of *Kamasūtra*. He is famous for narrating (rather compiling in his own words) vivid accounts of habits and customs of men and women in different parts of India (specially their sexual lives) during his period. Despite differences among the researchers about the time of Vātsyāyana, it is more or less established that his period is little after Kauṭilya. It is said to be in and around 200 BCE.⁴

Vātsyāyana has referred to the Lokāyatika views in his treatise.⁵ His presentation seems to be partly authentic and partly influenced by the anti-Lokāyatika's unsound remarks. He holds that the Cārvākas/Lokāyatikas are prone to momentary pleasures only. They refuse to accept the moral distinction between good and bad or between virtue and vice. According to them, as per the remark of Vātsyāyana, there is no consequence of either meritorious or demeritorious actions (*sukṛta-duṣkṛta karma*).

All these remarks concerning the Lokāyata/Cārvāka standpoint, particularly with regard to ethics and morality require serious reconsideration. First of all why should it be taken for granted that to their view, pleasure (*kāma*) must be momentary in nature. It is, no doubt, the case that they uphold the importance of pleasure in the human life-situation. Such a step advanced by them does not mean something unusual or unnatural. It is not by itself morally questionable. To seek pleasure is obviously normal and properly desirable. From this, however, it does not follow that pleasure that is sought must be momentary in nature; unless one

has made a set of dogmatic surmise that, as against momentary or transitory pleasure, there is something as everlasting, eternal and non-destructive supra-empirical pleasurable state which is there and which should be the goal of pursuit for everybody. But, it seems fairly evident that such an account of eternal pleasure is uncalled for in view of the limited span of human life itself. Ordinarily one does distinguish between momentary and permanent (relatively more durable) pleasure/pain and that does not become problematic. What the Cārvākas dispute is concerning eternal heavenly pleasure or eternal hellish pain. Such kind of religio-theological myths have no rational justification. Rather, such a blind belief about eternal pleasure rests upon a dogmatic supposition that human life somehow or other continues beyond death in some transempirical form of esoteric existence. As if man gets pleasure/pain without psycho-physical state of existence. This standpoint Cārvāka/Lokāyata rejects on account of its being rationally not tenable. But from this it need not be construed that the pleasure that he advocates is only momentary and his view does not accommodate pleasure as relatively permanent or enduring. If there is scope for the availability of such two types of pleasure, it goes without saying that the Lokāyatika position, quite consistent to its stand, is to opt for the permanent pleasure in the human situation. In this connection, it is held that for the Cārvākas, happiness of the whole life-time is preferred to the pleasure of the moment.⁶

Another comment made by Vātsyāyana that the Indian materialists do not acknowledge the legitimate distinction between good and bad or virtue and vice seems to be not fair at all. The normal sense of distinguishing between good and bad action or between right and wrong judgments from the normal socio-moral point of view is never challenged by the Indian materialists. The practice of dharma in the *laukika* or social level is well adhered to. It is evident from the fact that they oppose dharma in the name of the sacrificial rites and rituals, killing animals and even men under the so-called dharmic duty of attaining certain virtuous and noble state of transempirical existence. Such acts under the garb of attaining so-called dharmic excellence is obviously

repugnant from the ethical angle. Religious coating of dharmic or moral norm is reprehensible. In this context, the Lokāyatika's advocacy that the religiously prescribed rites and rituals should not be practiced (*nadharmāmscaret*) can be well comprehended. It is not clearly against the socio-empiric sense of morality; rather it is very much in favour of that.

From the logical point of view, it is perfectly admissible for the Lokāyatika stand to adhere to dharma if it is understood to regulate and monitor socio-individual rights and duties in just and judicious manner without making any disproportion between individual and social needs and requirements. Dharma, in the sense of abiding to moral codes and conduct within the socio-empirical framework, is not opposed. The codes are, of course, open for revision and modification as per situational demand. But, on that pretext, principles of ethics and moral norms need not be altered off and on without rhyme or reason. The Cārvāka/Lokāyata moral conceptual framework does not appear to be limited to the unworkable dichotomy of either absolute or relative categorization. It seems to opt for flexibility without any tinge of arbitrariness or whimsicality. Moral decision or moral choice needs to be operated within the socio-empiric dimension and it is not to be construed as opaque to change and modification. But that, as far as the Indian materialist stand entails, needs to be introduced as per the contextual necessities, of course, within a consensus rational standard.

Vātsyāyana tries to explicate the Lokāyata point of view holding that none but fool would give away that which is in his own hands into the hands of another.⁷ It seems that such expression and similar ones reveal the Cārvāka/Lokāyata point of setting aside the unreasoned surmises about the transcendental existence. It always (quite consistently) avoids to make any positive assertion or even negative assertion about the world of 'might have been'. Such would be, according to them, blind conjectures which not only can be graded as not knowledge but also not morally justifiable. For such expressions, in most cases, serve as boosters to hood-wink and camouflage the simple unsophisticated ordinary common people (*loka*).

With regard to the other remark concerning meritorious and demeritorious actions, a point is to be noted from the Lokāyata angle. In the normal human social framework, the characterization of certain action either as good or as bad does depend upon certain ethical rules and criteria. There may be certain flexibility with regard to the formulation of such rules, etc. depending upon the specific situation and circumstance. In the customary and conventional setup, the formation of moral principles are quite flexible being dependent on so many extraneous factors. But, all the same, it need not suggest that such sense of flexibility does amount to some sort of un-seriousness or looseness so far as the operation of morality in the human context is taken into account. By means of taking due consideration of all the relevant existing situations, the norms, etc. are adopted and normally there is the emergence of some sort of moral obligation in following such criteria.

The Indian materialists, so far as the logical foundation of their standpoint is taken into account are committed to proceed by that moral criteria at the socio-empirical domain. There is no logical binding for a materialist to be immoral and unethical. What he objects (and quite justifiably) is the illegitimate surmise that the actions done within empiric situation is to bear its moral consequence in a transempiric other-world (*paraloka*). The Cārvāka/Lokāyata stand does not oppose the use and application of morality within the empiric sphere at all. On the other hand, his view is definitely opposed to the legitimization of some sort of esoteric spiritualism as the overlord of socio-empiric morality. That move is rather recalcitrant to the operation of moral reasoning itself. In this way, Vātsyāyana's remark can be fruitfully assessed and evaluated.

Jayarāśi

After Vātsyāyana for a pretty long period, the reference about the materialist thought has not been traced out so far as the literary evidences are taken into account. However, there are some stray

and casual references noticed. But a full text is found to have been written by one Jayarāṣi Bhaṭṭa belonging to 700 CE.⁸ His treatise is: *Tattvapaplavasiṃha* (TPS) in which he acknowledges Bṛhaspati as his *sura guru* and also has stated that he follows the path (*mārga*) of the Laukikas.⁹ Thus his own expression makes it fairly clear that he treats himself as belonging to Bṛhaspati lineage and identifies himself as Lokāyata.

But, later on some writers have rated Jayarāṣi as a skeptic and not as a Lokāyata/Cārvāka due to his upsetting of all speculative theories (*tattvas*) and all methods of ascertainment (*pramāṇas*) including the method of perception (*pratyakṣa*).¹⁰ In this connection, a Jaina writer, Vidyānandin has been referred to who has distinguished between a sense perceptionist (*pratyakṣavādī*) Cārvāka and a critic of all theories (*tattvopaplavavādī*) as Cārvāka and thus takes Jayarāṣi to be a Cārvāka of a distinct variety.¹¹ But, recently Jayaras's identification as a Cārvāka/Lokāyata has been questioned in view of the fact that no Cārvāka (being an atheist and a critic of Veda (i.e., *nāstika*) can regard his mentor to be a god or demigod (*deva/sura*).¹² And, in this manner, it is held that Jayarāṣi's TPS cannot be treated as a materialist treatise in the Indian philosophical context.

It is true that Jayarāṣi criticizes all the *tattvas* and all the *pramāṇas*. But his criticism, I suppose, can be properly assessed contextually and not in a superficial manner. He is clearly not against *laukika* or ordinary common sense setting as is quite evident from his own declaration, stated before. He has precisely accepted his lineage with the tradition of Bārhaspatya in view of remaining within the natural setting and avoiding all sorts of supernatural and supra-empirical transcendental speculative theory-constructions. His criticism of all theories are thus against the metaphysical theories of all dry speculations, much removed from concrete actuality. Thus means of ascertainment or *pramāṇas* that are formulated for the support of such metaphysical theory-construction are critically reviewed by Jayarāṣi. That means, the critic of all *pramāṇas* (*pramāṇopaplava*) is not to be construed as rejecting the means of knowing like perception, inference,

etc. at the ordinary (*laukika*) level. The whole criticism is pointed to a different sphere, viz. the extraordinary (*pāralaukika*) metaphysical realm of speculative conceptual constructions. His or the Lokāyatika's/svabhāvavādin's/Cārvāka's preference for naturalism/empiricism/materialism need not be viewed as rival metaphysical theory-constructions. One can adopt naturalistic explanation in the ordinary plane without seeking for an ontological resort. So also he is not committed to hold that earth, water, air, etc. are the ultimate constituents of reality. A person's accepting the four elements on the basis of sense-perception does not necessarily imply the suggestion that he is bound to formulate or adhere to the metaphysical theory-construction that the four elements are ultimately real and can never be changed or altered. At least that claim does not follow from the basis of sense-perception. Hence, advocacy of naturalism, etc. so far as the logical foundation is concerned, need not be stretched to the extent that those are rival metaphysical theories and those offer different theories about reality. In fact they are not seeker of ultimate reality at all. To them such inquiry is rather futile¹³.

From this angle of vision, their views can be rated as mundane and not supramundane. Those do not carry the load of ultimate certitude or uncompromising static inflexibility. So there is clearly no logical oddity in somebody's refuting all metaphysical thought-constructions at the level of critical analysis and at the same time accepting the legitimacy of perception, etc. at the non-metaphysical ordinary (*laukika*) setting. Lokāyata is not another theory on the same par in which other *pāra-laukika* (metaphysical) theories are constructed. In this way only a partial affinity between Jayarāśi, Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara can be viewed insofar as all the three have taken cognizance of the futility of theory-constructions in the ultimate sense. But the affinity, again, need not be stretched too far, because of other noticeable form of differences. However, to go to that is not required at the present context.

The adjective: *sura* to Bṛhaspati need not necessarily suggest that Jayarāśi addresses Bṛhaspati as god in the usual theistic sense. The term: *deva* or *sura* has another meaning which is in use. That is: the word stands for somebody who is so shining and

bright (*dīptimān*) that he is to be honoured and adored. In that sense, Bṛhaspati has been invoked and honoured by Jayarāśi for his exemplary insight to have a novel view and a refreshing point of approach. So the sense of theistic divinity is not necessarily the output of the attribution of *sura* to the *guru* or the mentor.

As already indicated elsewhere, conceding the subtle differences between naturalism, empiricism and materialism, there seems to be a common ground (at least in the classical Indian context) of anti-theologism as well as anti-transcendentalism in which there is a consensus commonality arrived at and that is how the Lokāyata/Cārvāka tradition has its continuity.

Jayarāśi, of course, holds in his treatise that the ultimate reality of the four *tattvas* cannot be justified by means of reason (*hetu*); but this does not mean, according to him, that the acceptance of such *tattvas* on the basis of sense-experience is therefore futile and unwarranted. It has its legitimacy in the worldly plane of reference (*lokaprasiddhi*). In this context, Jayarāśi clearly opts for empirical approach (*indriyādhipatya pakṣa*) and thus setting aside trans-empiricism (*anindriyādhipakṣa*), empiric-cum-transempiric approach (*ubhayādhipatya pakṣa*) and dogmatic testimonial approach (*āgamādhipatya pakṣa*).¹⁴ On the basis of this, it is maintained that TPS is a work of the Lokāyata or Cārvāka school to be more precise of a particular division of that school.¹⁵

Now coming to the issue of morality, it must be conceded that TPS has no specific discussion on the subject. It is mostly preoccupied with the refutation of the metaphysical theories and keeping the bound of *darśana* to analytical scrutiny without damaging the worldly frame of reference. On the background of naturalistic and empirical outlook, it does not oppose the smooth flow of social relationship among individuals. It does neither propagate for avoidance or renunciation of social duties and obligation within the moral orbit nor does it prescribe for social imperatives, if those are found to be unreasonably affecting the individual's freedom of action and choice. Rather, its implication is all through for socio-individual harmony and balanced operational move within the gamut of ethical norms and objectives.

Purandara

Almost contemporaneous to Jayarāśi perhaps, there is one more important thinker: Purandara, belonging to the Cārvāka philosophical trend whose name is referred to by Kamalaśīla in his commentary: *Pañjikā* on Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasamgraha*.¹⁶ Since Kamalaśīla is said to have belonged to 800 CE,¹⁷ Purandara must be earlier to him. It is held that Purandra belongs to 700 CE.¹⁸

The difficulty is: none of his own writing is yet found available. But the references that are made by the authors, having the allegiance either to Buddhism or to Jainism reveal that Purandara is one of the most important original thinkers of the Cārvāka group, who has made a definite breakthrough in the materialistic viewpoint, especially in the field of knowledge-situation. It is from his own statement (cited by Kamalaśīla), a point is made clear that the Cārvākas accept *anumāna* or inference also at the ordinary level.¹⁹ This shows that the classical Indian materialist/naturalist is not a stubborn, hardcore sensationalist or sense empiricist who never moves beyond sensation or impression. He rightly accommodated within his field of judgment the legitimacy of reflection and understanding.²⁰ And, in that sense, the conceptual involvement is never rejected or thrown out. An empiricist account of knowledge-situation need not be anti-naturalistic. It does not necessarily reduce itself to gross sensationalism. The inferential extension is not denied; but only its root must be *a posteriori* not *a priori*. The root of inferential reasoning must not be trans-empiric and trans-natural. This is the position to which the classical Indian materialism/naturalism seems to have been better suited if, its logical foundation at least can be properly exposed.

Now, with regard to the impact of this position (that is indicated by the sayings of Purandara) on the socio-moral issues, one can confess at the outset that nothing is as such found from the source-material that is available. But that need not refrain one to probe the issue further. At least one can fruitfully move for a logical exploration of the epistemic stand that is advanced by Purandara, specially its role and influence on the ethical and moral issues. Admitting the validity of the ordinary common sense frame of

reference, the denial or refusal of social code and conduct, moral norms and discipline (required for smooth functioning of socio-individual relationship) does not necessarily follow. Rather, on the contrary, for the support and sustenance of normalcy in different walks of life, socio-moral setup is a necessity. Morality, in this sense, is not at all a matter of bare emotion and feeling. It has a distinct sense of rational justification. To be unsocial or anti-social or even angular and eccentric is unwarranted for the cause of society as well as individual too. That is why, there is the normal prescription for social reciprocity, general human welfare, promotion for mutual healthy and cordial relationship. Good will, love and affection as against hatred, malice and jealousy are universally accepted as moral virtues in any socio-empiric setup. Honesty, integrity of conduct and character, disciplined move in different situations are never normally questioned.

So the Cārvāka's point-of-view (modified and refined by Purandara and his followers) can better be appraised at the background of its being well founded on a solid basis of the acceptance of socio-moral norms and objectives. That seems to be the ground of being critical about the unreasonable extension of the scope of morality from mundane to transmundane. Such an extension is neither factually compelling nor even a moral necessity. Any attempt of spiritualized or trans empirical coating of morality is rather argued from this standpoint as self-defeating and unworkable. It also, as stated before, adversely affects the freedom of moral sense. The secular sense of morality in contrast to the sacerdotal conception has been found as a boosting factor for the rise and growth of art, culture and other facets in the earthly plane and thereby giving considerable opportunity for the promotion of all sects of individuals in the social strata, not simply confined to a class of elites or privileged ones.

Notes and References

1. "Sāṅkhya-yogo Lokāyata cetyānyoikṣiki" (The Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Lokāyata too are the science of logic), *Arthaśāstra* 102. It is held that the *Arthaśāstra* has been composed during 321-296 BCE.

2. Ibid., 1.2.
3. Stcherbatsky, Th. "History of Materialism in India" in Soviet Indology Series No. 2 (trans. by H.C.Gupta), Calcutta, *Indian Studies Past and Present*, 1969, p. 21.
4. Sinha and Basu, op.cit., p. 221.
5. *Kāmasūtra*, I.2.25-33.
6. Mittal, K.K., *Materialism in Indian Thought*, op.cit., p. 57.
7. "ko hy abāliśo hastagatam paragatam kuryāt" *Kamāsūtra*, I.2.28. This is what Vātsyāyana takes to be one of the Cārvāka *sūtras*.
8. Bhaṭṭa, Jayarāśi, *Tattvopaplavasimha* (eds, Pandit Sukhlaji Sanghavi and Prof. Rasiklal Parikh), Buddha Bharati Series-20, Varanasi, Buddha Bharati Pub., 1987.
9. "Ye yātā nahi suraguroḥ buddhevikalpā dṛḍhāḥ" and "laukiko mārgo 'nuśartavyaḥ" (TPS).
10. Mittal, K.K., op.cit., pp. 23-24.
11. Vide his works, *Aṣṭasahsri* and *Tattvārthaśloka-vārtika*, Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press.
12. Bhattacharya, R., "Cārvāka Fragments" in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, op.cit., p. 629, 43n.
13. Vide, in this connection, the remark made by Warder, A.K., *A Course in Indian Philosophy*, second edn., Delhi, MLBD, 1998, p. 122. "The four elements propounded by Bṛhaspati cannot be philosophically established as 'realities' *tattvas*....Bṛhaspati's purpose was not to set up the four elements as realities...." This observation by Warder is insightful. Here one is reminded of F.H. Bradley's well known comment "The anti-metaphysician is a brother metaphysician with a rival theory of his own". A rejoinder can be made in saying that the anti-metaphysician is not supposed to make any theory like that of a brother metaphysician.
14. Bhatta, Jayarāśi, TPS, op.cit.
15. Ibid.
16. Vide Śāntarākṣita's *Tattva Saṁgraha* with Kamalāśīla's *Pāñjikā*, ed. D. Shastri; Varanasi, Bauddha Bharati, 1981. Purandara is also found to have been quoted by Vadideva Suri (a Jaina exponent) in his commentary, *Syādvādaratnākara* on his own work, *Prameya-Nyāya-tattva Lokālaṅkāra*, edn, Moti Lai Ladhaj Osval, Poona. The name of Purandara is referred to also by Haribhadra in his *Saḍdarśanasamuccaya*, ed. Luigi Sualì, Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1905-1914.
17. Bhattacharya, R., "Cārvāka Fragments", op.cit, p. 602.
18. Krishna, K.B., op.cit, p. 45.

19. “*Purandarastvāh lokaprasiddham/anumānam Cārvākairapīsyata eva, yattu kaiścillaukikam mārgam atikramya anumānam ucyate tannisidhyate iti*” Purandara says that inference employed at the ordinary empirical worldly level is accepted by the Cārvākas too. But the attempt made for employing inference transgressing the ordinary empirical level is prohibited by them.
20. Vide Keith E. Yandell’s note on Cārvāka “...But in its most sophisticated form Cārvāka, not unlike logical positivism, allows inference at least to conclusions that concern perceptually accessible states of affairs.” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Gen. Editor, Robert Audi), 2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, U.K., 1999, p. 120.

CHAPTER 6

Some Later Changes

Kṛṣṇa Miśra

Since 700 CE, for several centuries no remarkable thinker representing the Indian materialist point of view is noticed. Despite some references about the Cārvāka/Lokāyata views in the opponent sources, any such original thinker of the materialist order like Jayarasi and Purandara cannot be located. After the lapse of several centuries one comes across a Sanskrit writer: Kṛṣṇa Miśra who has written an allegorical play entitled *Prabodha Candodaya* (PC) (The Rise of the Moon of Intellect). The writer, throughout the play, has given the focus to the Vaiṣṇavite formulation of Advaita Vedānta and, side by side, has referred to the views of the opponent of Vedāntic standpoint like Buddha, Jaina and Cārvāka. The peculiarity of the presentation of the opposing views is through the medium of dramatic personification and thereby effort has been made to introduce the tenets of rival viewpoints by means of dialogue. The purpose of the writer is to end the drama by way of putting the Vedāntic Vaiṣṇava Advaita as the only acceptable position in contrast to all other competitive viewpoints representing non-Vedāntic atheistic position (Cārvāka obviously included).

The place and date of the writer has not been conclusively fixed. However, amidst controversies among the scholars, consensus has been arrived at. Accordingly, PC is said to have been composed sometime during 1100 CE and Kṛṣṇa Miśra is said to have belonged to Mithila.¹ It is thought that because of the Vedāntic leanings, the rival viewpoints are not placed in their proper setup and, as such, they are shown in the drama as finally

being set aside. So, on account of this, one may be led to think that opponent's views are rather truncated and even distorted in the drama. But it is also held in certain quarters that the object of the drama: PC is to "awaken in the people a spirit of enquiry into the principles of Vedāntic philosophy".² It does not just ridicule the Cārvāka or other views. It, by means of dialogue, tries to bring to the focus the relative merits of the opponent views including that of the Cārvākas. Probably confirming this point of view, D. Shastri holds that PC gives almost a perfect account of the doctrine of the Lokāyata school.³ According to Keith, PC is designed to be a defence of the Advaita form of Visnu doctrine.⁴

In Act II of PC, there are some indications of the Cārvāka viewpoint. Through the allegorical character: Passion, it is held that *ātmā* (spirit or soul) is not different from body (*śarīra*) and is not to reap the reward or punishment of his actions performed in the present life or at some other life in future. Why should it be taken as irreversible and absolutely necessary to suppose that this woman belongs to X person and that woman to Y person? The Cārvāka standpoint, it is held in the drama, raises such question on this issue. Caste system is attacked in this connection. There is also reference to free love.

Through another allegorical character: Cārvāka, certain interesting points are raised. It is said that the present life is regulated by rewards and punishment. Law and morals guide man's behaviour (conduct and character). Law is secular and not divine.⁵ Further, in the drama, the Vedic/Vedāntic conception of virtue and vice is questioned through the character of Cārvāka. It is said that the Vedic classification of men into four classes (*catur varṇa*) is imbedded with social discriminations and inequalities.⁶ Such prescriptions cannot be rated as moral. It is, on account of this, there is the staunch critical remark made by the scholars that morality has no place in the Vedic system.⁷

From the aforesaid brief accounts of PC, it can be made fairly clear that the allegorical play supplies certain definite clues with regard to the Indian materialist stand on ethics and morality. Its attack on the doctrine of karma is not pointless. It raises a very pertinent issue on the logical status of the extension of morality

from social to trans-social plane of esoteric existence. In this connection the non-Cārvākas, specially the conservative as well as the orthodox religionist's charge that the Cārvāka stand completely smacks off the ground of morality is surely invalid and untenable. For, the very conception of morality is rooted in the social domain, i.e. man's dealing with others in a socio-empiric situation, and never transgressing that. At least such an extension of morality is not found to be logically sound.

Of course, attempt has been made elsewhere to defend the doctrine of karma as a least dissatisfactory hypothesis on the ground that it at least tries to give somewhat a plausible rational explanation regarding men being born in different unequal position—some rich and some poor, some privileged and some unprivileged and so on. The rival formulations are either in terms of inviolable fate or just due to chance-mechanism. While the former places man as bound by unknown factor/agency and curtails his freedom, the latter turns out to be purely mechanical and thus becomes intellectually boring. So far as the Cārvāka stand is concerned, it does not move for such metaphysical speculations, because there is no way for deciding which of those is true and which is false. Intellectually, all such speculations are of the same status, though one may prefer one to the other due to some emotional or attitudinal preference. But, so far as morality is concerned, the Cārvāka stand is that it is quite meaningfully operated within the socio-empiric dimension and any type of intrusion of trans-empirical speculation is simply not logically acceptable. It is never one neat argued out conclusion; rather it is a blind conjecture, giving rise to an illicit formulation that morality is governed, regulated by some extra-moral, supernatural, transcendental forces/agencies of divine nature or otherwise. All such steps take out the free, autonomous character of ethical norm itself.

There is reference in the drama about free love. And, also there is the issue raised with regard to a person being attached to one lady and not to the other. I think, the point that is raised here needs to be assessed contextually. That the Cārvāka stand takes due cognizance of moral and ethical consideration in the social sphere is least disputable. What is to be implied from the sayings of free

love and raising issue with regard to one person being attached to one lady and not to other is something different and that need not be morally disturbing at all. It seems that the Cārvāka only questions any sort of religio-theological supremacy over the issue of social morality. That is the background on the basis of which the issue concerning free love, etc. has been raised. There is no necessary binding that the adult person is to marry or is to make love with some other person only because under the so-called socio-religious custom or convention, he is bound or compelled to abide to that. This is obviously one unjustified ruling. He, as an individual, is free to exercise his own free will to have his life partner (of course, subject to the willingness of the partner). That is for a smooth operation of social morality. Free love does not mean here to make a move for licentious bond between any man with any woman. Rigidity, compulsion and coercion from both the sections need to be arrested. This is prescribed within the norms and regulations of a social order that takes due regard for legitimate sound freedom of choice and decision so far as an individual in society is concerned.

By way of limiting the jurisdiction of reward and punishment to the socio-empiric level, the Cārvākas acknowledge the value and necessity of moral practice both in thought and action. That the Vedic classification of men into four classes has been misleadingly led to a rigid and uncompromising social discrimination, causing thereby social unrest and indiscipline is least disputable. In this regard, the Cārvāka's encounter is not morally discouraging at all. On the contrary, it is a positive measure towards the clearance of meaningless theological dogmas and taboos which block and arrest social justice and harmony. To summarize, the Cārvāka point of view that is presented through the dialogue of PC appear to be very significant from the angle of socio-moral perspective, provided one becomes careful to extrapolate its finer underpinning of moral worth.

Mādhavācārya

According to Mādhavācārya (composer of *Sarva Darśana Sarigraha* (SDS) of 1300 CE), the Cārvākas are naturalists and are

opposed to any form of supernaturalism. The very notion of heaven (*svarga*) and hell (*narka*) is viewed by them as not separate distinct transnatural entities, existing elsewhere. Those are to be felt in terms of the attainment of pleasure and pain, respectively. So, in the human plane there is the natural aspiration to have more and more pleasure and to get rid of pain as far as is possible. There is no sense in renouncing pleasure on the pretext that pleasure that is attained during lifetime is temporary and mixed with pain. It is preferable to have mixed pleasure than not to have pleasure at all.

Vedic prescription is critically viewed by the Cārvākas on the ground that it advocates for sacrificial rites and rituals to the extent of moving forward for killing animals (even men), offering flowers, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk-product in large quantity before the sacrificial altar with the blind belief that something good would befall the concerned individual or group or community miraculously. Such kind of directive does not deserve any rational consideration at all. To depend upon all such groundless supposition is rather to make no exercise, no effort so far as man is concerned. The Cārvākas, in this context, seems to have given importance to human will, determination and courage. All those steps accelerate to utilize man's strength and ability in facing the challenges found in the natural setting, instead of looking for an escape-root of resignation and renunciation. It does not thereby suggest man's egocentricity and undue self-complacency. It rather gives due recognition of man's potentialities in meeting the odds and that too in the life-situation. It is, to put in a word, perpetually set for life-affirming and not life-denying world-view.

The Cārvākas are not anti-socials. They do emphasize for an ordered social setup so that peace and happiness would prevail during the lifetime as far as practicable. This is not possible if the bond of relation between individual and society is not well maintained. It is not simply a matter of prudential requirement; but it is ethically sound and justified. It moves along with the moral dictum: I live, letting others live as well. So far as this point is well grasped, it can be seen that the Cārvākas are not opposed to the ordinary common sense notion of social ethics. It is surely against the opponents when they ignore this important practical

implication of morality and press for some unreasonable scaffold of transcendental dehumanized code of morals. It is, therefore, rightly held that a narrow egoistic and degraded interpretation of *kāma* and *artha* does not follow from the overall position of the Cārvāka.⁸ It clearly seems to have a solid basis for morality and ethics (dharma not in the sense of performing sacrifices and rituals but in the sense of adhering to social norms and conduct, having due recognition of legitimate expectation and necessity of the individual within the social setup).

The Kāpālikas

The Kāpālikas are identified in the tradition as the worshippers of Lord Śiva. They are known as *vāmācārīs* or as belonging to left-hand order. They are characterized as such typical people carrying human skulls and putting those in the form of garlands and even eating and drinking by way of using the skulls as bowls and pots.⁹ *Prima facie*, it needs to be pointed out that the Kāpālikas are distinctly theists of a particular variety. They identify themselves as Śaivites of a specific type. They are tāntrikas of a particular type. In addition to their belonging to the Śaivite sect, they are the followers of tāntric occultism of a specific type (mainly worshipping the Śakti or female energy personified as the wife of the Śiva).¹⁰ The mode of rites and rituals undertaken by them is found to be mostly an expression of gross sensuality and involves erotic element.

If this be the case, then it becomes definitely untenable from the logical point of view at least to classify them under the category of Indian materialism. There cannot be any reasonable assimilation of the Kāpālikas with the Cārvākas/Lokāyatikas. Because, under no stretch of extended version, the Lokāyatikas, having stubborn opposition to any form of supernaturalism and transempiricism, can embrace a theistic sect within their fold. Theism, in any sense, does have its root in supernaturalism and transempiricism as well. Śaivism or Śaktism can never be logically made compatible with naturalism and empiricism in any case.

The Cārvāka standpoint might have been ridiculed by the opponent as grossly sensualistic and hedonistic; but a careful assessment of the Cārvāka view reveals that radical egoistic hedonism and gross sensualism are not the marks of Indian materialism/naturalism/empiricism. Their point of view is neither directed towards anti-social interest, solely confining to egoistic cause nor in favour of occultism of any sort. The issue of aspiring for the attainment of gross sensual erotic pleasure at the cost of social order, discipline and integrity is never the outcome of the Indian materialistic outlook. At least there is no philosophic necessity for that. If historically, there is the occurrence of such degeneration and some instances of such aberration are traced, that does not, in any way, affect the logical root of the Lokāyata/Cārvāka position. Such kind of extra-logical aberrations may be noticed in the views of the opponents also. Hence, that need not be surprising. Nevertheless, on the basis of above discussion, it can be well marked that there is no scope for social morality within the dimension of Kāpālikavada and there is no point in including that cult within the fold of Indian materialism. Reading of materialism through the glass of hedonism (of the gross variety) and also sensualism (in the gross sense of eroticism) is highly misleading.

D.R. Shastri, in this connection, seems to have moved one step further in assimilating in his writing sensationalism with sensualism. But, sensationalism is an epistemological theory of the Humean type of empiricism where empirical knowledge-claim is reduced to mere sense-impression. That is a distinct philosophical theory, having no concern for eroticism. It has got nothing to do with immoral and unsocial move of utter sensuality. Shastri refers to both the Kāpālikas and the Sahajīās (whose view would be discussed later) as practitioners of erotic sensualism; but he has mischaracterized them as sensationalists, which they are not in the precise sense of the term. So also hedonism in the refined sense needs to be distinguished from the gross variety. The Cārvāka formulation of refined hedonism can be assessed and evaluated separately. Logically it even accommodates virtues like charity and compassion.

The Tāntrikas

Whether valid or invalid, religion in the primitive stage has a blending with some form of magical spell. Even, as per the modern anthropological readings, religion is magical both in its earlier and modern form.¹¹ In the vast Vedic literature, one finds references to *devas* who are not all benevolent, but also malevolent.¹² The conception has led the Vedic seers not to worship the *Devas* as gods, but rather as 'powers' as operating in nature where the seers have to survive and face the challenges from nature.¹³ Under such circumstances, they are found to have given more emphasis on magical spell rather than on the sense of devotional surrender to have grace from such *devas*. It is, therefore, rightly remarked that the Yajurveda formulae aim at not worshipping the *devas* but at compelling them to fulfil the wishes of the sacrifices.¹⁴ The Atharva Veda shows explicitly the fusion of magic and religion. The charms and spells therein are claimed to have both auspicious and harmful character. With this brief background-reference of the Vedic religious trend, it is better to move into the intrusion of the element of magic in Buddhism.

Though Buddha himself has been described (in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*) to have disapproved in magical and miraculous practices (pertaining to *tantra*) of his own disciple; Bharadvāja,¹⁵ Buddha's later followers have practised magical and miraculous practices (might be for attracting the ordinary folk to their faith-group through that means which remains more emotionally attractive for the common mass). They even have moved to depict Buddha to have practised magical wonders.¹⁶ Though Buddha has never entertained any form of supernaturalistic speculation regarding transcendental issues and has been silent about the metaphysical queries, later on his followers, particularly the Mahāsaṃghikas have treated *Bodhisattvas* as superhuman beings with supra-mundane features.¹⁷ The forceful mystical elements in the Mahāyāna Buddhism have given incentive in later days to formulate *mantrayāna* and *pāramitānaya* and on the basis of which Tāntric Buddhism has come into force.¹⁸ In other words, *mantrayāna* has become the primary phase of

Tāntric Buddhism. It has given rise to three schools of tāntrism within the Buddhistic fold. All those are known as *Vajrayāna*, *Kālacakrayāna* and *Sahajayāna*. All the three Buddhistic tāntric formulations flourished well in the eastern India, particularly in Assam, Bengal and Orissa during 600-800 CE.

D.P. Chattopadhyaya has tried to locate the source of Indian materialism (Lokāyata) in some form of sexual performance that has obvious linkage with the movement of body in a specific way.¹⁹ This has been traced to some form of ancient mode of agriculture in which there is some sort of involvement of tantra, symbolizing the earth as mother and performing rites thereupon. The doctrine of *dehātmavāda* that is attributed to the Lokāyatikas/Cārvākas by rival thinkers (cf. Śāṅkara in his *Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya*, II.2.2 and III.3.53) has probably led the scholars to trace the element of tantra in the texture of Indian materialism. Once this is conceded, it becomes fairly smooth to find out a link between Lokāyata/Cārvāka with tāntrism in general and Buddhist tāntrism in particular.

It is not the objective here to find out or locate any Indian materialist of the classical phase who has actually propagated his materialistic viewpoint by way of indulging in any such tāntric erotic practices. Even if there is some historicity of such occurrences that is not what seems to resolve the logical issue concerning materialism being juxtaposed with tāntrism. Taking into account the salient features of Indian materialism, it can be marked that the viewpoint is clearly against any form of spiritualism, based on theology. It does not acknowledge the validity of supenaturalism and transempiricism in any sense at all. Advocating naturalism (without moving for any metaphysical construction) and viewing life from the popular commonsense perspective (refraining from any kind of speculative verbosity or prolixity), the Indian materialist seems to be not logically committed to embrace any form of tāntrism that is necessarily linked with some form of religio-theological occultism. And, further one radical form of tāntric ritualism leading to sexual practices in order to attain some miraculous, magical power and to thereby realize some form of mystical ecstasy clearly appear

to be contrary to the tenet of Lokāyata which cannot concede to any variety of obscure occultism and also to magical spell that disrupt the smooth functioning as socio-individual transaction. The Indian materialist point of view is distinctly social-based and, as such, can never adopt such thought and action which are detrimental to social security and morality. It cannot accommodate that which is counter to social ethos. Hence, the degeneration of Indian materialism to tāntrism (even if, it has the occurrence in certain quarters) is surely a mark of aberration and need not be rated as compelling.

The Sahajiās

D.R. Shastri has referred to an old sect of the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism which was mainly concerned with sexual romance, gave up its independent existence and subsequently became one with the *nāstika* Lokāyatikas and the sect was designated as the Sahajiā sect in Bengal.²⁰ The identification of the materialistic thought with the Sahajiā cult has been found acceptable to H.P. Shastri²¹ and also to Chattopadhyaya.²² Such an attempt of locating a link between Lokāyata/Cārvāka with the Sahajiā cult is found to have been traced in some earlier sources.²³

Despite the fact of such a reading of the Indian materialist viewpoint in terms of the later movement of the Sahajiā cult (as referred to earlier), the logical and conceptual difficulties in such type of rendering, it seems, cannot be overlooked. As it has been already hinted before, the Buddhist formulation of Sahajayāna is found to be a great departure from the original Buddhist viewpoint (which is acceptable to both the Theravādins and the Mahāyānists as well). The Sahajayāna moves for the promotion of all kinds of sensual desire (*kāmanā*) for the ultimate spiritual realization (*antima siddhi*) as against the restraint of desires. It has thus been found to be a degradation of the original programme of the Buddhist stand. The aim of the tāntric yogic practices (*sāadhanā*) is found to have been embedded with gross sensuality for the attainment of spiritual ecstasy.

In view of this, the Sahajayānists (grouped under tāntric

Buddhsim) cannot be consistently absorbed with the Lokāyatikas/Cārvākas who are distinctly on the foundation of non-spiritualism. The classical Indian materialists, as their basic philosophical stand entails, discourage all such radical puritanic moves like absolute self-restraint and complete renunciation of the worldly ties (*saṃsāra-moha*) for the attainment of so-called spiritual salvation of the mythical sort; but that does not imply that they thereby necessarily accelerate all types of anti-social, anti-moral, gross erotic sensualism and licentious tendencies. Such a reading of the Lokāyata point of view is at least reasonably not sustainable; even if, in some corners, there are some sporadic lapses, those do not upset the basic assertion of the classical Indian materialism.

The Sahajīā movement that is later found to have been originated and advocated among some people mostly in different parts of eastern India seems to be on a different footing other than that of Lokāyata/Cārvāka. It is held that the Sahajīās need not be assimilated with the Indian materialists.²⁴ Lokāyata, having a popular basis within the social stream, cannot afford itself to such type of social degeneration and ethical depravity as well.

It is true that the Sahajīās do not admit the authority of the Vedas and other allied sources. They do not have any support for religious orthodoxy or theological rigidity. They are against any form of religious priesthood, rites and rituals. They do not entertain any belief in past or future life beyond birth and death. On account of their strong and radical views, they do not have any popular base and they are simply confined to their small group. They have their meeting secretly, preferably not in the daytime but in the night and the specific language in which they are used to communicate is called as language of the evening (*sandhyābhāṣā*).²⁵

But, all these features do not entitle them to be Lokāyatikas. The basic and fundamental difference between the Sahajīās and the Lokāyatikas is that while the former are unsocial, morally unscrupulous and radically free, having no sense of compunction, the latter, on the other hand, are for the people at large (*loka* based). Despite their rational and critical outlook against religious sacerdotalism, theological authoritarianism and blind dogmatism,

they are never anti-social and anti-moral in the secular plane. They are, of course, for free thinking and openness. But that does not mean that they are committed to escape from the bonds of social relationship. They are definitely against caste-discrimination and racial prejudices. But that need not suggest that they are committed to 'free love' bypassing social ethics altogether. At least the logic of their standpoint does not warrant such a reduction. That is why, it has to be conceded that the affinity between the Sahajjā and the Lokāyatikas is only superficial and not genuine.

Vemana

It is needless to point out that in the early phase of classical Indian sources, much of the cultural-cum-intellectual activities are found to have been carried on through the medium of Sanskrit. Some of the thoughts, especially of Buddhism are also traced in Pāli/Prākṛit and even in Tamil language, as already referred to before. A text: *Maṇimekhalāi* (by Sattanar) is said to have been composed as early as 200 CE. But, in due course, there has been the evolution of number of regional languages in different parts of the country with their own script and grammar commencing in and around 1000 CE onwards. Such languages are not simply confined to the general public but serious, intellectual thought are found to have been codified and discussed in various disciplines. Quite a good number of literatures have grown in religio-philosophical dimension and a systematic study and research of intellectual activities in that direction is yet to be given a clear and definite shape.

However, in that context one comes across a notable popular text: *Śataka* in Telugu language (one of the principal languages of South India with its independent script and covering a substantial populous group) by a popular figure in Andhra region, Vemana. His date and place of birth is not yet clearly determined. However, K.B. Krishna holds that Vemana probably belongs to the early part of 1500 CE. It is he who has included Vemana as a materialist.²⁶

Vemana's *Śataka* reacts strongly against casteism, racialism and regionalism. He is opposed to all forms of pilgrimage,

performances of ritualistic sacrifices, and in chanting of śāstric verses as routine daily habit for the purpose of having religious attainment. He is very critical about idol-worship and Brāhminic priesthood. But, nevertheless, he believes in the independent existence of soul and God or *Īśvara*. Of course, he does not subscribe to the talk of transmigration of soul. After death, according to him, the soul moves to the divine. Though, he is against all forms of religious institutionalism and showmanship of prayers and worship, he takes full cognizance of right conduct and practices of morality in the social sphere. He is not an atheist but reacts strongly against the exploitation of the poor, uneducated and unenlightened means in the name of religious sanctity. His poetic expressions in Telugu language are simple and easily suit to the general public temper.

From this brief expository remark about Vemana's thought and contribution, it goes without saying that he has been a great social reformer against unfounded social customs and practices, oppressions of the poor in the name of observance of religious codes and practices. His zeal for the eradication of social evils, injustice and religious blind beliefs and practices is definitely commendable. But, for all this, to list him as one Indian materialist seems to be not up to the mark.²⁷ He is distinctly a theist and, in this sense, he does not oppose supernaturalism and supra-empiricism. He does not advocate either materialism or naturalism. His belief in soul and its independent existence in the world of divinity after death is hardly to be accepted under any materialistic formulation.

Besides Vemana, there are found to be a number of thinkers in different parts of the country since 1500 CE who have raised their protests effectively against diverse forms of social injustice and discrimination. Reformative movements have been made alive all through. Many of them, despite their support to such type of reformative measures, do not oppose the well-established religious and spiritual world-view. They have favoured social reforms within the theistic and spiritual framework. Caitanya, Kabir, the early pañca-sakhās of Odisha, Śaṅkaradeva of Āssam, Svāmī Narāyāna from Gujarat, Santh Tukāram from Maharashtra, Bhīma Bhoi of Mahimā-dharma-fame and many others have

shown remarkable courage and spirit in raising voice against social injustice, oppression and exploitation. But all such moves need not be assimilated with the programme of materialism and naturalism. The spiritual outlook seems to have some impact on such type of prominent social reformers. Since here the discussion has been centred around the moral and ethical issues concerning the Indian materialist philosophy, we have not taken up their contributions for detailed discussion.

However, the rationalistic emphasis, noticed in some such reform movements (mainly during the last century) seems to have closeness to the rational foundation noticed in the Lokāyata framework. Because, in some such quarters, the spiritual element (though admitted because of the then strong regional socio-cultural setup) is found to have been kept to the periphery and the main focus is given for social solidarity with due regard to socio-individual morality. That is why, an elaborate discussion on such movements would be attempted in the subsequent chapters.

Notes and References

1. Krishna, K.B., op.cit, p. 145. But from the religio-philosophical viewpoint that he advocates (i.e., Advaita Vaiṣṇavism) it reveals that he must have travelled in eastern India (particularly Bengal and Odisha). Because the interpretation of *Advaita Jñānavāda* is considered to have been accommodated, with the Vaiṣṇavite *bhakti* movement in both the places under the patronage of Śrīdhara Svami (from Odisha, *Śrīdhari Tīkā* fame) and from Bengal, Caitanya (who was originally a *sannyāsi* (ascetic) of the Advaita group, being inspired by Śrīdhara whom Caitanya regarded as his *guru* (mentor) and remained last 16 years of his life at Puri, Odisha).
2. Vide Taylor's introduction (while translating PC into English) *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, Bombay 1886, p. 4.
3. Shastri, D.R., op.cit., p. 29.
4. Keith, A.B., *The Sanskrit Drama*, 1924, p. 251.
5. Krishna, K.B., op.cit., p. 154.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
7. Sylvan Levi, "Doctrine du Sacrifice Chizles Brahmanas." Paris, 1898, p. 9 (quoted by Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 240-241).

8. Mittal, K.K., *Materialism in Indian Thought*, op.cit., p. 58.
9. Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1872, p. 219.
10. Ibid., p. 903.
11. Noss, J.B., *Man's Religions*, New York, Macmillan, 1963, p. 16.
12. R̥g. Veda, 1.114.
13. vide Uma Gupta, *Materialism in the Vedas*, op.cit., p. 75.
14. MacDonnell, A.A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1958, p. 184
15. *Sacred Book of the East*, XX, 78f.
16. Vide *Majjhima Nikāya (Sūta Piṭaka)* (eds. Rahul Sankrtyana and J. Kasyapa), pp. 196-197.
17. Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Unity, History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1968, p. 381.
18. Vide *Advayavajra Saṅgraha* (ed. H.P. Sastri) "Mahāyānam cha dviṅvidham Pāramitānaya mantranayaścheti".
19. Vide his *Lokāyata*, op.cit., pp. XVII-XXII.
20. Shastri, D.R., op.cit., pp. 45-49. The Sahajayana has continued to influence Odishan culture too from 900 to 1900 A.D. Vide Misra, Ramprasad, *Sahajayāna—A Study of Tantric Buddhism*, Calcutta, Punthi Pustak, 1991, p. 198.
21. Shastri, H.P., *Lokāyata*, op.cit., pp. 14-15.
22. Chattopadhyaya, D.P., *Lokāyata*, op.cit. pp. 16ff.
23. Vide *Brhaspati Sūtra* (ed. Thomas, F.W.), Lahore, The Panjab Sanskrit Book Depot, 1921 and the Jaina writer, Gunaratna's Commentary, *Tarka-rahasya-dīpikā* on S.Sm (ed.L.Suali), Calcutta, The Asiatic Society, 1905-1914.
24. Mittal, K.K., *Indian Materialism*, op.cit., p. 38.
25. Shastri, D.R., op.cit., p. 48.
26. Vide his *Studies in Hindu Materialism*, op.cit., pp. 159-169.
27. Vide Murty, K.S., *Foreword* to Krishna's book, op.cit. p. V.

Major Trends in the Twentieth Century – I

Ambedkar as a Critic of Hinduism

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar of Maharashtra was undoubtedly one illustrious figure of modern India. Not simply he was one of the principal architects of Indian Constitution, but his most incisive, thought-provoking critical arguments against certain dogmatic, inhuman orthodoxies of Hinduism, prevailed among certain dominant Hindu fundamentalists, are remarkable and have drawn attention of both admirers and critics.

I

So far as our present work is concerned, a point of clarification is required as regards the inclusion of Ambedkar's viewpoint for discussion. Ambedkar was not a materialist. He had nowhere spelt out his appreciation for a Cārvāka/Lokāyata stand. In this situation, what could possibly be the relevance of discussing Ambedkar's viewpoint in the context of ethics and morality in the Indian materialist philosophy? As a matter of fact, Ambedkar had never shown himself as a critic of religion. He was not one anti-religionist. He held the view (following Edmund Burke) that true religion is the foundation of society. His critical observation was advanced against Hinduism and not against religion as such.

In view of all these clear findings, it appears to be difficult to locate the traces of Cārvākian materialism in his presentation. But, despite this initial hurdle, there seems to be some indirect line of indication by means of which a link can be found out between Ambedkar's viewpoint and that of the Cārvākas/Lokāyatas. Both of them have given primacy to reason (*hetu*) for settling disputes

and controversies. Instead of blind faith and scriptural addiction, they have shown preference for free and open-textured discussion/debate in settling the problems. The Lokāyatika stand has been distinctly oriented towards social cause as against any form of supra-social theological transcendence. It has been clearly against division of men in terms of high and low, discrimination on the grounds of elites and the commoner. So also, Ambedkar's stand has been precisely to have the reorganization of human society (i.e., Hindu society) in terms of the broad principles of equality, fraternity and liberty. Both seem to have clear allegiance to human welfare and progress in terms of social justice with a spirit of openness and free-thinking. In this sense, both are found to be critical about divine or theistic interpolation and misrendering of social issues and problems. Moral sense of justice has to be comprehended as well as operated within the earthly human plane than to take resort to some shallow sense of transhuman spiritual transcendence. In this sense, it appears that secular morality seems to be the prime concern as against sacerdotal reading of morality for both. From this perspective, there seems to be justification for discussing here Ambedkar's viewpoint on social disparity and discrimination, prevailed in Hinduism.

II

Ambedkar has approvingly quoted a saying (in his writings)¹ that he that will not reason is a bigot, he that cannot reason is a fool and he that does not reason is a slave. This has clear resemblance with the saying attributed to the Cārvākas/Lokāyata in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*² that only assertions founded on reasoning are accepted by me and by other intelligent ones like yourselves. With this background, Ambedkar has moved on to criticize the centuries-old certain gross socio-human maladies in Hinduism, especially casteism (*jātivāda*) which is found to be a degenerated outcome of the four-fold classification of men (*catur-varṇa vyavasthā*).

To the defensive argument that *catur-varṇa* classification is primarily based on division of labour and not on any kind of social discrimination, Ambedkar has retorted by saying that it is

virtually a division of labourers.³ According to him, unreasonable move has been advanced by way of advocating a hierarchy among different *varṇas*, accelerating the clear violation of social morality. This precisely corresponds to the Cārvākian criticism against priestly supremacy in the Vedic age, by way of downgrading the commoners/labourers in different sectors as slaves (*dāsas*). The caste-system, a degenerated offshoot of *varṇa*-system has, according to Ambedkar, fully disorganized and demoralized the Hindus.⁴

The argument advanced by the Ārya Samājjist that *varṇa-vyavasthā* is not grounded on birth but on *guṇa-karma* (worth) of the individual and need not be assimilated with *jāti-vāda* has been set aside by him on the ground that such scheme is both harmful and impracticable.⁵ *Guṇa* and *karma* need not be construed as something fixed and unalterable. Those go on changing as per changing situation and individual changes his own decision from time to time by his own judgement and intellectual status. In this context, his nature (*svabhāva*) need not be viewed as something inborn or innate. As one engineer leaves his profession and becomes a philosopher (cf. Wittgenstein); a hermit (*sanyāsī*) becomes a householder (cf. Śaṅkara) temporarily to acquire some knowledge and experience which he has not acquired before. So flexibility has to be admitted in this connection and the rigidity of *varṇa-vyavasthā* on the so-called basis of religion and theology has to be relinquished.

The prescription advanced in *Bh-Gītā* (XVIII. 44) that Śūdra is to serve as ward and other three *varṇas* (*dvija*) are his guardians has turned out to be clear violation of social solidarity. It breeds social dissension and disparity and reveals abominable unjust grading. Ambedkar has not approved the four-fold classification of men on the alleged theological ground that the same has been sanctioned by Lord (Kṛṣṇa) Himself. This is significant in so far as it is found to be on par with the Cārvāka/Lokāyata critic on theological stand.

In this context, Ambedkar has referred to Pope and his papal authority. He has found similarity between the Christian order and that which has been sanctioned traditionally in Hinduism.

There is the supremacy of Brāhmin class over other classes on matters of theological ideas and practices consequent to that. Similar to that of papal authority, within Hinduism, Brāhmins have been adored as *Bhū-devas* (God on earth).⁶ Thus they have acquired some sort of divine right and authority. All this has given rise to unwarranted rigid dogmatism and has blocked the passage for free and rational investigation. In a similar manner, the Cārvākas/Lokāyatās have raised opposition against priestly authority in manifold matters of social transaction amongst men. Perpetually, on the so-called grounds from the theological source, there has been the propagation of social discrimination between one class and the other. There has been the overdose of spiritual transcendentalism, neglecting the socio-moral fabric in the empiric plane.

The very sense of high and low among men on the grounds of birth, inborn quality/feature, unseen fate or destiny does not possess any amount of rational validity. The religio-theological defence of hierarchical gradation of men in the social strata is found to be theoretically least convincing and also practically unworkable. If it has not been opposed adequately in the past, it is rather due to some extraneous pressure and blockade, not because of its rational strength and moral vitality. Ambedkar has become a formidable critic at the socio-moral front, on justified ground.

III

It is true that the time and the place to which Dr. Ambedkar belonged has been undoubtedly under the bad and injudicious impact of number of dogmas and superstitions. In many areas of the sub-continent, especially in Maharashtra there has been untold suffering and even inhuman treatment of the class of people, born of Śūdra parentage. In all walks of social life there is clear manifestation of caste rigidity and the social morality and civic sense of duties and responsibilities are very much in the lower ebb, if not totally non-existent. Even, in making a cursory glance of the past records, one can notice a number of such socio-moral lapses on different occasions. Chandragupta Maurya (in BCE),

despite being boosted up by the revolutionary Brāhmin, Kauṭilya and being able to destroy the corrupt ruling of Mahāpadma Nanda, could not get the authority from the then public on account his being born of Śūdra family and he had to be initiated into the Jaina dharma. Shivaji, despite facing heroically the challenge of Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb and being able to organize the strong Marahatta *Vargī* military power, could not obtain the local public sanction to get himself coronated as the great ruler (*Chhatrapati*) of the region. He had to move to Rajasthan and through some kind of process of initiation and performance of ritual, was upgraded to the status of Kṣatriya and then he had the public sanction and authority to become *Chhatrapati*. Even Saṅkarāchārya, in view of his being a hermit (*Sanyāsī*) of the Hindu order, was not allowed by his own kith and kin and was almost excommunicated. He had to cremate his mother all by himself and left home for good to join in the dharmic and missionary activities.

There are many śāstric references where casteism has been advocated in unmistakable terms. This is, no doubt, a slur in the Hindu social order. Not only casteism, but female-torture, i.e. depriving the women from any spark of liberty and freedom is noticed. They were to remain life-long obedient and faithful servants of husband and his relations. That was considered to be the ideal. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (IV.4.7), it is stated that if a female does not grant the male his desire, he should buy her with presents, if she still does not grant him his desire, he should beat her with a stick on his hand and overcome her with power and glory. In the purāṇic source (cf. *Skanda Purāṇa*), there are a number of instances where the chaste women are depicted as those who had not objected but passively tolerated the loose morals of husband and surprisingly wished well for his betterment. Many more instances of such pernicious custom and mandatory instructions can be traced out in the sources of Hinduism. Of course, side by side, one also comes across a number of stray but important cases where the Hindu social order has legitimized the awakening of Śūdra and also that of woman in different ages and also in different regions, as found from the recorded documents; both written and oral sources.

But one thing is to be emphasized in this context. It is not Hinduism alone but in every religious setup, in some form or other there has been the presence of socio-moral lapses. The manner, in which the Greek philosopher, Socrates (469-399 BCE), the Italian philosopher, G. Bruno (1548-1600 CE) were sentenced to death on account of their expressing free views about ethics and astronomical science and were ruthlessly condemned by the religious sources as heretical, reveals such gruesome incidents of anti-human, anti-social and anti-moral religious oppression. The Islamic law based on fundamentalism insists upon the discriminative rules and restrictions for woman's freedom and liberty (cf. *pardāh* system). Jainism has clearly prescribed the unethical ruling that woman, as woman, is not entitled for spiritual enlightenment (*mukti*) and she has to be born again as man in the next birth to aspire for *mukti*. Because of male chauvinism, prevalent in almost all ancient civilizational setup, the social justice to women in general has been a matter of stupendous negligence. Even now also, the discriminative attitude continues, of course, all not necessarily due to religio-theological origin.

Whatever that may be, in view of all these factors, Ambedkar's criticism of Hindu religion and tacit acceptance of other religion/religions appears to be not on the proper track. It is rather to be conceded that almost any religion, as religion in the standard sense of its use and operation, is bound to be not simply a matter of personal faith or attitude, but it also, as per its conceptual status, is bound to be communal, institutional and overtly or covertly esoteric spiritual. There is all along the tacit recognition of some sort of theistic transcendence to which human being is to completely surrender and pay his obeisance, even bypassing the socio-human needs and requirements. And moreover, as indicated before, no religion can thrive without having some set beliefs and attitudes and treating those as purely supra-rational and trans-intellectual. In that case, it seems more plausible to hold that dogmas and taboos are inbuilt in the very constitution of religion itself. As such, to downgrade one and to upgrade another seems to be logically at least not that coherent. The more

one is involved in the sacerdotal matter, the more one becomes away from the secular affairs. Religionist needs to have more concern for socio-human welfare at the empiric plane, instead of craving for some woolly realm of transcendence. The concern of humanity is definitely of paramount significance than anything that is transcendental and supra-human. Any attempt of redefining man in terms of transcendent being (self/ātman/spirit) brings only conceptual bewilderment. Morality is primarily of socio-human concern. It has its significance within human framework and man's being in the empiric level with other things and beings. That is obviously the major and most vital prerequisite. In that way, the Cārvākas/Lokāyatika's insistence on this world (*iha loka*) and therein man's well-being amidst other items of nature seems to be definitely more convincing. Ambedkar's call for social justice would have been more forceful and rationally compelling if it would have become cognizant of the whole issue from a broader secular human perspective than simply being confined to a rejection of Hinduism (in its particular rigid formulation).

While advancing stringent criticism against certain customs and instructions prescribed in Hinduism, he has vehemently attacked the *śrutis*, *smṛtis* and other allied *śāstras*. According to him, there should be one and only one standard book of Hindu religion acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus.

This of course means that all other books of Hindu religion such as Vedas, epics, purāṇas and which are treated as sacred and authoritative must by law cease to be so and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be abolished, be penalized.⁷ It seems that to Ambedkar, Hinduism is a religion like any other religion. As the Semitic religions like Christianity and Islam have definite authentic scriptures like Bible and Koran, Hinduism, as a religion, should also have one standard authoritative text, and, as such, the multitude of *śāstras* inclusive of *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, *purāṇas*, etc. are to be banned.

First of all, it is to be marked that Hinduism is not a religion in the Semitic sense. It is not that rigid and fundamental in its nature and scope right from its hoary past. All the while, there are

found to be expressions and advocacies of different views about human living in the world. In the Vedas, traces of spiritual as well as material outlook are found. Devas are not depicted as theistic necessarily. Along with Brahmvāda (which is not only theistic but transtheistic too), there are the clear presence of naturalism (*svabhāvavāda*) atheism/materialism (*Lokāyatavada*). Even the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsakas, the Sāṅkhyaites, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas have no scope for theistic conception in their theoretical structures. Both Nyāya and Sāṅkhya philosophers (*darśana-jñas*) have overtly claimed their independent traditions without being dependent on Vedic lineage. And, even then, nowhere all these thinkers have ever been disclaimed as *adhārmika* or *non-sanātani* Hindus. The reading, rereading, and reviewing the traditional source are ever entertained and that amply reveals the non-dogmatic, liberal and flexible trend of dharma which is later designated as Hindu Dharma. Dharma, in this context, is not religion in the Semitic sense of having been confined to a definite sacred text/scripture. It always moves for change, if required under different social setup. Hence to treat Hinduism on par with religion and then to criticize it as dogmatic and rigid seems to be not proper. Free thinking is not disallowed here. Only certain ideas are taken up and others are set aside (even if those are rationally cogent) because of other external pressures, other than dharmic basis. Dharma basically stands for socio-human morality. Whenever there is something, which goes against this crucial issue, change and reformation are advanced and accommodated. Hinduism is not a fixed religious doctrine; it aims at a form or way of life that is flexible and elastic as per the demand of the situation, accepting the broad principle of morality intact.

So also to hold a strong and ill-founded view that all *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, etc. are to be banned by law just because there are some lines and expressions in such treatises which are found to be either not suitable to the present social conditions or are grossly immoral, inhuman and unreasonable is surely untenable.⁸ Such a view rests upon illicit generalization. The critical approach should have been a thorough and careful scrutiny of the old treatises and to reject

those which are contrary to socio-moral human framework and accept those which are of relevance. The wholesale condemnation of scriptures or śāstras is definitely a wrong approach.

Dr. Ambedkar has maintained, “Brāhminism is to be killed”.⁹ First of all it is to be noted that in the dharmic classical source there is no such word which can be traced corresponding to which the English term ‘Brāhminism’ has been coined. ‘Brāhmaṇa’ refers to either a portion of the Vedas or it refers to one of the four *varṇas* indicated in the Ṛg Veda (*Puruṣa-Sūkta*, 10th *maṇḍala*). But there is no specific doctrine which has gone with the label: Brāhmaṇya-vāda or Brāhminism. It is again a matter of illicit generalization to treat the whole Brāhmin class as unworthy social reorganization and reconstruction on the plea that some of them have acted purely in unsocial and unethical manner to safeguard their vested interests. Their move, it is true, was found to be detrimental for a smooth operation of the social order. Accepting that some Brāhmins are found corrupt and to conclude thereby that the whole class is corrupt and so all of them are to be fully excommunicated from any social work of common welfare is clearly a wrong step and it cannot be justified by any sort of rational scrutiny. In fact, some Brāhmins (as the historical documents and other sources testify) have been found to have launched strong protests against social maladies including casteism and preventing women to have liberty and to prohibit their just rights and demands. So the remark for killing Brāhminism and to excommunicate Brāhmin from some noble cause for the betterment of social status or conditions is neither practically efficacious nor morally sound. It is rather an emotional upsurge out of a strong sense of retaliation than any considerate, judicious, reasoned move.

It seems that Ambedkar’s original stand that “people and then religion must be judged by social standards based on ethics and morality gets” perhaps derailed by such radical step of making wholesale condemnation of all the śāstras and excommunicating whole of Brāhmin class from the task of social reconstruction and reorganization.

The Indian Positivist Movement (in Bengal)

Before we take up positivism in Bengal for discussion in the present work, a point of clarification is needed. Bengal positivism mostly flourished between 1857-1902 CE. It was not, strictly speaking, grounded on materialistic philosophy in the sense that it did not subscribe to the view that matter is the ultimate real-stuff from metaphysical standpoint. The thinkers belonging to this movement never overtly claimed themselves to be the Cārvākas/Lokāyatikas. The type of positivistic thoughts which they, more or less, supported had greater affinity with that of the London Positivist Society under the leadership of Richard Congreve (1818-1899) who, having evangelical vehemence, had taken up the dominant ideas of positivism, as focused by the notable French thinker: Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the founder of Positivist philosophy¹⁰. Though the movement was mostly confined to some Bengali the then intellectuals, it had pan Indian outlook in so far as its message is meant for the whole Indian religio-socio-cultural setup.

Despite this notable distinction, the Indian positivist movement had certain important facets which are also found to be remarkably similar to the basic traits of the Cārvāka/Lokāyata philosophy. Both classical Indian materialist philosophical stand and the Indian positivism are found to be against the traditional conservative form of religious beliefs and practices. The dogmatic speculations about the continuity of human person (soul/spirit) in a supernatural, transcendental reality are neither of any interest for the materialists nor for the positivists. Both of them are found to be more concerned about the socio-empiric condition of men in the earth than to think of anything about its so called transcendence. In this regard, the point of emphasis is on social welfare to which both seem to have clear endorsement. The Bengal positivists, having been exposed to western education and scientific outlook, were no more blind supporters of traditional religion and they were eager to bring some social changes and reforms that could be made acceptable to the general man without any opposition. That is why the positivists in India tried to emphasize social

change without any spiritual propagation, but rather by means of advocating the cause of humanity or human welfare. So far as this point is taken into account, both the positivists and the Lokāyatikas do have the same objective to pursue.

While taking up the cause of humanity, the positivists emphasized on the adoption of morality that is of social not of trans-social significance. They did not link morality with supernatural or supra-empiric realm of transcendence. Morality, for them, has to be operated meaningfully within the human social platform. In this respect, their point of view goes along with the Cārvāka's stand that morality in terms of human social framework needs to be preserved and operated at all costs. In this way, the Bengal positivist move was empirical, scientific and socio-human in its general format. So far as the early writings¹¹ of Comte are taken into account, John Stuart Mill expressed great appreciation of that, on account of its being prone to scientific and humanistic outlook.¹² One of the disciples of Comte in England, Frederic Harrison (1831-1923) clearly held that their positivism emphasized on man's social duty and that, he thought, was to replace religious duty.¹³

Basically three fronts, i.e. to boost up the cause for social change by employing scientific method of pursuit both in physical and social dimensions, to emphasize on human welfare and progress in the socio-empiric level in contrast to aspiring for anything in a trans-social, supernatural, speculative frame of reference and to have strict adherence to social morality for enriching human civilization, are found to be common points acceptable to the theoretical structure of both Indian positivism and classical Indian materialism. Thus far, there are no major points of difference.

Both seem to have due regard for civic sense of morality. Both private and public conception of morality can be seen as compatible to the Cārvāka as well as positivistic framework. But such general feature of resemblance need not be construed as the final and the last word. Along with such points of similarity, one cannot ignore the striking factor of divergences between the two. The logical structure of the Cārvāka/Lokāyata position cannot

have any compromise with religion and theology. If religion stands for belief in supernatural power or being and if theology means rational analysis of theistic faith/belief with a view to exploring its validation, then the Cārvākian position is clearly incompatible with those two formulations. It has no scope for the acceptance of supra-empirical form of divine existence. The denial, advanced from the Cārvāka point of view, is not because of its being not sense-perceived, but because of such stand being logically not sustainable. It is on the ground of reason and logic, the Carvakian stand against religion and theology can be properly viewed and assessed.

It is exactly here the positivistic movement in Bengal had taken a different turn. Comte designated Richard Congreve as the leader of the London Positivist Society that formally started functioning in 1867. Three Britishers: Samuel Lobb, James Geddes and Henry J.S. Cotton were employed in Indian Civil Service and acted as the positivist ‘missionaries’ to initiate the positivist movement in India. Their advocacy of positivism appealed to some section of Bengali intellectuals. “Their deep concern with Indian problems, their approval of traditional Hindu social institutions and their opposition to various aspects of British rule”¹⁴ attracted specially the educated Indians and consequently the Indian positivist society having its linkage with the London Church of Humanity was formed in Bengal under the leadership of J.C. Ghosh (1842-1902).

The earlier emphasis of Comte’s positivism on non-theological scientific temper was found to be somewhat side tracked and the acceptance of a liberal form of religion following the slogan of Comte ‘Catholicism without Christianity’ was imputed into Indian positivism taking into account the long-standing theocratic structure inbuilt in Indian psyche. J.C. Ghosh, throughout his involvement with western positivist ideas, tried to install those slowly in the plane of traditionally bound Hindu social order, without overthrowing its dharmic/religious foundation. He was not an outright opponent of *varṇa*/caste system. May be, because of the then predominance of the rigid, orthodox social structure among the Hindus (the major community) to which he belonged,

he supported the superiority of priesthood (without himself being a Brāhmin) and joint-family system (in which he was born and brought up).

But, all the same, his being characterized as a “Hindu-Positivist”¹⁵ does not mean his full unconditional acceptance of Hindu rigid orthodoxy of conservatism. As rightly viewed by Forbes, it was for Ghosh distinctly social rather than theological.¹⁶ The language of religion was adopted to suit the demand of the then situation. He wanted to modernize Hinduism through the positivist ideas. He opted for social reform, by way of reviewing dharma with an aim to explore in it the roots of rationalism, materialism and atheism (rather non-theism) in order to vindicate modern (western) scientific and materialistic ideology that is not incompatible with the classical Indian philosophical tradition.¹⁷ This point is quite significant insofar as it clearly boosts up to take cognizance of the steps already advanced by the Lokāyatikas, Ajīvakas and even *Kauṭilya* to trace reason (*hetu*), non-dogmatism, non-theism and secularism in the tradition both in theory (*vicāra*) and in practice (*ācarā*).

That *varṇa* system was retained by him (Ghosh) not in the original four-fold formulation shows that it was construed by him as flexible and modifiable. It is division of social root and is amenable to change as per the necessity of situation. In his numerous articles published on “*Jātivād*” (in *Banga darshan*), he took caste in terms of class-division on the basis of different occupations, sans any type of supernatural/spiritual justification.¹⁸ He distinctly advocated those elements of Hindu dharmic order that encourage man to be better suited to the society (e.g. the sense of duty and obligation of one individual to other fellow-beings).¹⁹

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that he was for the ‘Indian Positivist’s Goddess of humanity’ that had its closeness with socio-secular humanism than with religio-theologism of the orthodox variety. The main aim was to spread and inculcate the spirit of positivistic humanism under the garb of religious godhead only with the purpose of being accessible to the Indian ethos of that age. The method or mechanism that was adopted was purely contemporaneous but not necessarily mandatory for a

different situational setup. The thrust was mainly centred around societal humanism.

But, despite all these sincere and dedicated efforts made by Ghosh, Hindu-Positivism or Indian Positivist movement came almost to an end after his death (1902). His doctrine had few intellectual followers and those could not effectively carry out the movement further because of so many obstacles. Mainly, the technical nuances of Ghosh's stand were not communicable to people at large. There were other social-reformative organizations like Brāhmo Samāj, Ārya Samāj which acted as strong competitors. There was the rise and spread of the Indian National Congress that gained popularity at a higher rate. Ghosh's acceptance of religion within the positivistic programme could not, however, be successful in view of the fact that it did not attract the priestly class of Hindu community to a considerable extent. It also did not attract the young intelligentsia adequately. It is, on account of all this perhaps, the programme of Ghosh "to modernize Hinduism through positivism" had not become quite effective.

But, despite its not being successful in the long run, positivism in India (specially in Bengal) had struck an important point that no change in Indian social conservative and dogmatic status could be implemented by way of completely rejecting the age-old traditional heritage altogether. The attitude of reform rather than rebel was chosen to be fruitful. So, instead of fully debunking the tradition, a conciliatory move was preferred. A blind thoughtless imitation of foreign culture was never considered to be the motto of the Indian positivists. They tried to introduce some modern western ideas through the acceptance of what was also prevalent in the tradition.

This move, as advanced by them, was definitely on the right track. But, by giving stress on age-old religious customs and traditions which were found to be creating social dissension and disequilibrium the reasonable aim of introducing effective change and reform became rather diffused. The acceptance of *varṇa*-system (even in the revised form) in the modern social setting was neither theoretically nor practically cogent. Religion in the sense of surrendering to supra-human transcendence and

humanism in the sense of aiming at human progress and welfare in all fronts are not reasonably quite compatible with each other. The former ultimately leads to some amount of passivity and dejection while the latter leads to some sense of activity and determined attempt. That is why, perhaps, the slogan of ‘Goddess of Humanity’ could neither be found as intellectually convincing nor had the popular appeal. It was rather groundless on the part of the Indian positivists to take it for granted that the Indian tradition was solely confined to religious conservatism and orthodoxy. Reforming and reconstructing the traditional beliefs and customs (as per the need of newer social situations) was never disparaged and all through there has been efforts advanced by few but enlightened classical thinkers (cf. Kautilya of 300 BCE) to introduce new ideas and also implementing those in practice. Only for such moves, the well-constructed plans and vision are necessary and one need not be discouraged by finding such rare insightful persons as few in number. It is the resolute sustained operational conviction that matters than simply being tied down to tradition and brooding over the past-unfounded legacy.

The attempts to revive Brāhminic orthodoxy through Hindu positivism failed in several fronts. It did not appeal the priests because the Goddess of Humanity could never, according to them, replace the mother Goddess of theistic temper. The general man was not prepared to digest the foreign doctrine of religion of humanity. The intellectuals who were in favour of science and technology on account of the impact on human progress of development were not ready to appreciate an attempt of blending the two opposite moves, i.e. religion and science.

Anyway, along with J. Ghosh, there were few others who carried on the activities relating to Indian positivist movement in their own ways to few more years. Among them, the important figures to note in this connection were: Nagendra Nath Ghose, Nilakantha Majumdar and Krishna Nath Mukherjee. All three of them were the active members of the Positivist-society (besides few others) during the later part of the 19th century but could not carry on the movement beyond the early years of 20th century.

All of them had more or less a common role in implementing the positivist programme in the Indian setup by means of reformulating and restructuring the educational pattern. N.N. Ghosh pleaded for modification of educational system by means of what he termed 'liberal' education. In his article on "Higher Education in India" (published in the *Calcutta Review*, 1884), he advocated for the greater inclusion of science and history in the curricula, meant for the Indian students at large. K.N. Mukherjee joined with him in pleading for reorganizing the educational system by way of incorporating certain positivist ideas. N. Majumdar was the foremost educationist among the whole group (being a philosophy-teacher in famous colleges of Dacca and Calcutta and finally as the first Indian (Bengali) Principal of Ravenshaw College at Cuttack, the first-grade Government College).²⁰

He advocated in favour of religion of positivism (in Indian context) that was based on what he called on "reason, truth, common sense and hope" and, in this context, he was a severe critic of other reformatory and revival movements in Hinduism like Brāhmo Samāj, Ārya Samāj and Indian theosophical society.²¹

But the shortcoming was that none of these enthusiastic Indian positivists were clear in their ideas, to be worked out. Majumdar did not spell out precisely as to how reason and common sense move all along together. N.N. Ghosh did not bring out the detailed argumentative structure for the inclusion of science and history in the curricula. K.N. Mukherjee's ideas about positivism were rather vague, particularly in their being linked up with the Indian situation. The problem with all of them was mainly their not being able to clearly disentangle the original plan and programme of positivism of social change towards betterment of human living conditions on the basis of open-textured reason based science, from the ambit of emotion-based religious dogmas and orthodoxies. The spurious amalgamation of the two opposite trends was neither theoretically sustainable nor practically operative. Therefore, such measures, initiated by the Indian positivists, did attract neither the intellectuals nor the commoners and the whole movement did not last long.

Devatma

(Morality and Ethics in Devatma's Thought)

I

Since Devatma and his viewpoint is not widely known to both intellectuals and commoners, it seems to be not unfair to have a brief introduction about him and his general background, before directly coming to discuss regarding the implication of morality and ethics, so far as his point of view in general is taken into account. Devatma (S.N. Agnihotri: 1850-1929) had academic background especially in engineering and took it as profession for sometime. Later on he was interested in fighting against socio-individual taboos, superstitions and dogmas, mostly based on long-standing so-called religious faiths and beliefs. In this missionary move, he got inspiration from the then most famous reform-movement of India, i.e. Brāhmo Samāj, founded by Raja Rammohun Roy. However, he left the organization (1887) on account of its drifting away from main principles of the Samāj, by its principal adherents and spokesmen. He formed thereafter his own Seva Samāj/Deva Samāj. which is still alive and its present headquarters is at Chandigarh and since then he has been adored by his ardent followers and supporters as 'Devatma', on being the founder of new religion: Deva dharma.

It is to be marked that Devatma was neither a life-long professional scientist in the laboratories and research-chamber, nor an academic professional philosopher. His main interest was to focus some important reformative move in the human social sector to fight out dogmas and superstitions. His writings are impressive and well exhibit his standpoint which does have some philosophical suggestions and future meaningful reconstruction, keeping in tune with his general scientific background. He belongs to the period of renaissance in which some of the prominent Indian intellectuals and social activists, with their sincere zeal, have introduced some reform through certain expressions of thought that may be found to be not so precise and articulate in later times. But that sort of inaccuracies do not, in any way, adversely affect

the originality and genuineness of their moves. It is with this preliminary outlook, a critical reappraisal of Devatma's writings would be taken up here and, if required, with some amount of positive reconstruction, in his philosophical trend, with ethical undertone.

II

Devatma's view is found to be radically opposed to all sorts of supernatural and trans-empirical speculations and surmises. Any form of visionary, imaginary conjectures about disembodied existence of soul (*ātmā*), transcendental God and His creation are not entertained in his framework. His approach is totally against all sorts of mystical and esoteric spiritualism. Because of his disavowal of spiritual and ideal vision, his standpoint is viewed with materialistic leanings. His rejection of disembodied spirit has a suggestion that body with all its material component is empirically real. Of course, materialism seems to have a distinct orientation in his view. The concept of matter is not viewed substantively as an entity or entities in the metaphysical sense. In that way the metaphysical ultimate reality of matter is not advocated by Devatma. He points to scientific finding of 'force' to be elemental and force is treated in terms of change that is indicative of both progress (evolution) and regress (devolution). Hence matter, in terms of 'force', is accepted as evolved incessantly both with forward and backward movement. To him, "there is ceaseless change and Nature is entirely different in every movement of its existence".²² If nature is conceived as changing incessantly, then to conceive nature as one unlimited substantive in Devatma's philosophical framework is clearly inadmissible even though his expression, in this regard, is found to be somewhat not precise. Such inaccuracy can be best tolerable in view of his not well versed in technical philosophical mode of expression. His point, in order to be logically consistent to his general standpoint, has to be given a non-metaphysical rendering. Hence, his notion of matter is rather close to science than to metaphysics. A metaphysical concept of matter in the form of

‘matter alone is real’ (in the substantive existential form) is not noticed in Devatma’s writing.

Instead of one crude or raw form of traditional form of metaphysical notion of materialism, Devatma’s view is often identified as a type of naturalism. But it should be noted here that naturalism for him is not metaphysical but clearly on the non-metaphysical footing, close to science. It does not advocate that ‘Nature’ (the one single substantive entity) alone is real. Even though nature is conceived by him as ‘one unlimited, uncreated, self-existent whole of embodied existences in ceaseless change’,²³ it need not suggest a metaphysical concept of Nature as one existent reality. It also need not suggest another metaphysical view that not being but change or pure becoming alone is real in the Heraclitian sense. For both the metaphysical concepts are not empirical but supra-empirical; and Devatma’s view, as is already stated, is opposed to all form of supra-natural, supra-empirical metaphysical move. He never shows his disinterest for naturalistic interpretation of human personality. Man’s personality is not said to be dissociated from body (whether gross physical or subtle physical). He does not opt for the independent being or pure psyche or gnostic being to borrow Sri Aurobindite terminology. The concept of body has definitely a physicalistic import, so far as Devatma’s philosophical stand is taken into account.

To put differently, his version of matter-cum-nature has scientific background. In that way, it is rather positivistic and world-affirming, not world-denying. Of course, there are some specifications in his scientific naturalism, sans metaphysical transcendentalism.

III

Devatma has given emphasis on scientific mode of investigation for meeting the issues and challenges of life and existence. Empirical observation and experiment are, of course, required for knowledge concerning matter of fact. It is said that according to Devatma nature is not a conscious agency,²⁴ so that the attribution of purpose to nature is not warranted. His approach is totally

against the religio-theological reading of human life and existence. His approach for naturalism is from the angle of science and not from that of metaphysics. He has shown his commitment for pursuing scientific reason instead of transcendental speculation.

His unique contribution is that he has appealed for a legitimate juxtaposition of both fact-enquiry and value-enquiry in his philosophical framework. His emphasis on the use and application of scientific methodology is from a wider perspective. It is not simply limited to physical sciences. As an advocate of the theory of evolution, he has also taken due note of the role and importance of biological sciences for the purpose of acquiring scientific knowledge. However, in this context, he has made a move unlike the usual biological scientists in advancing a view that accommodates evolutionary process in dual facets (i.e., both progressive and regressive devolution). This move is perhaps due to his inclination of finding a reconciliatory bridge between fact-enquiry and value-enquiry (mark his reference to the progressive move of spreading 'higher-love and higher-hate' and regressive move of checking progress by means of leanings towards 'lower-love and lower hate').

It is, in this regard, Devatma's point of view seems to have taken due recognition of the role and utility of social sciences, in addition to the role of natural sciences. It is in the sphere of social sciences, there is the search for knowledge of a different variety, which is imbedded with value-structure not completely avoiding the factual-structure too. Devatma's viewpoint takes cognizance of this area with a view to attain conceptual clarity and progress in both thought and action of human significance, not relinquishing the demands of natural phenomena.

For him, both nature of man and natural world are important issues. He holds "I am first a part of humanity and then a part of the universe".²⁵ This clearly reveals the primary concern of Devatma for humanity and human welfare amidst the natural framework. And this is advanced at the scientific background. Devatma's naturalistic humanism on the scientific footing does not suggest (as some have apprehended),²⁶ self sufficiency in the narrow sense of egotism. It does not mean that man is the supreme monarch

of the whole universe of everything that is there. It also need not suggest that man is the controller of all and the concept of man is arbitrarily replaced over that of God in Devatma's philosophical move. It seems, self-sufficiency and autonomy, in this context, signify that for any matter of fruitful enquiry concerning truth, a cognitive and rational method aided with sense experience (not an egoistic aggressive sense of self-pride and possessiveness) has a distinct mark of autonomy and it can neither be overridden by personal/private inclination nor by simple prejudiced/dogmatic social pressure and populist demand of mass. It rests neither on uncontrolled egotism nor on ill balanced altruism but on having due acknowledgement of reason and logic in the usual socio-empiric level of human concern.

It is held²⁷ that naturalism commits the blunder of resolving the axiological into natural. This observation is made with reference to Devatma's case for naturalism. But it should be noted that, in all fairness, Devatma's presentation of naturalism is not in the crude sense of materialism, downgrading or set asiding all that men, in their usual living, have opted for the sense of value in terms of axiological taste. Devatma does recognize the distinction between fact and value. He does hold that the difference between the two implies not a sense of absolute opposition. He, on the contrary, pleads for a bridge between the two at the background of nature itself. It is only amidst nature, man is situated and he cogitates and looks into different facets like fact and value and then moves forward in a composite manner without reducing or resolving one to the other. It is unfair to say that Devatma has a 'scientific bias'.²⁸ As a matter of fact, he is not for scientism. For him, scientific enterprise is not confined to physicalism. He attempts to relate the findings and subtleness arrived at by the serious and sincere investigations both in the field of science and social science. That axiology, as a descriptive enterprise, is not supra-natural but is precisely meaningful within the natural framework seems to have been well indicated in Devatma's approach.

Question is raised as to why nature as 'ceaseless change' and 'different in every movement of its existence' behaves in such

a manner. What is the purpose behind it? To such question, the response is quite significant.²⁹ To expect or anticipate nature having certain purpose is most unwarranted, because purpose, desire, wish and will etc. are self-conscious operational activities of individual persons. To attribute all such features to nature is clearly due to some categorical confusion. However, a defence from Devatma's standpoint has been advanced, maintaining that the history of evolution shows a direction towards bringing about a species which has the capacity for understanding and discovering truth.³⁰ But this reading does not clearly necessitate that nature is endowed with a sense of direction; it is rather a specific reading of natural process of change with a pre-set suggestion and motive, aroused by subjective factors. An unnecessary reading of idealizing the natural phenomena seems to be due to underlying motivation.

This clarificatory note that is advanced that the concept of *devajivana*, *deva prabhavas* and *devasakti* that are attributed to Devatma are not theological in the sense of supra-empirical transcendence is effective in limiting the discourse to the socio-human framework of empirical plane. But, then to suggest that such *devasakti* continues in a subtle body beyond physical death is definitely obscure. It is neither scientifically established nor conceptually intelligible. S.P. Kanal, an authoritative exponent and advocate of Devatma, admits that Nature is not a conscious agency³¹. But, again, to hold that it is endowed with good and bad ends seems to be logically incongruent. It seems quite clear that all such attempts are due to man's deliberate misascriptions which are the outcome of his own subjectivity and, therefore, does not carry conviction.

IV

Devatma's philosophy has recognized the legitimacy of both scientific and social scientific investigations, without accommodating any scope for religio-theological mysticism. His thought never opts for any traditional religio-theological cult or visionary ideology (ism) in that sense. It is rather prone towards secular and

human enterprises, without having any space therein for supra-empirical transcendence. It does recognize the validity of values and morals in the human framework. Values are not objective in the sense facts are. But that does not mean that values are just the products of subjective fancy and have no sense of validity at all in the human living set-up. It has a sense of objective status (of course, of different categorial variety). Devatma's mission seems to be mainly to establish the authoriality of that sense of moral value, sans any transcendental spiritual coating of the mystical type. In this context, he has framed a new formulation: secular religion.

The critical remark that is advanced in certain circle about the ethical dimension of scientific humanism is that its sole emphasis is on 'betterment of society' or of 'general human welfare'. That is, it is argued, heavily loaded with altruistic motives or tendencies, sidetracking the individual urges. And, therefore some sort of religious sanctions involving supernatural considerations are pleaded within that context.³² From the standpoint of Devatma, it is held that just as health department educates about good physical health by creating consciousness of health, in the same way, a secular religion develops soul consciousness for discipline into right conduct.³³

But, it seems, the criticism as well as the defence are not in the right track. It is not at all clear that secular humanistic ethics must be reduced to sole altruism, fully neglecting the individual needs. A society is not meant as a dictatorial lord, over and above individuals. It is conceived as a combination of individuals to look for the cause of individuals within the human social framework and not outside it. In that way, the human aspect of society is emphasized. That does not suggest that human concern is solely in terms of egoistic humanist outlook in radical form, ruthlessly exploiting the nature and ecology. For, that would be working as a boomerang. Secular humanism strives to keep a balance between both altruistic and egoistic needs. Its ethical outlook is precisely formulated on that basis. This, as is discussed by us elsewhere in this work, is well anticipated in the logical structure of classical Indian materialistic thought of the Lokāyata/Cārvāka type.

Such an ethical outlook, advocated by secular humanism does not warrant any religious belief and faith. It thrives for independence from religio-theological foundation. Because the belief/faith structure of religion by itself is never found to be self-adequate; it always rests upon social sanction in terms of tangible benefits and developments of the social community of the concrete nature, not on mere emotional/sentimental craving. Only because religio-theological approach is found to be mostly dependent not on this-worldly but on other-worldly foundation and some sort of non-rational and non-scientific prejudice, it gradually loses its vitality through the advancement of open-textured civilizational process by means of enlightenment. In this context, Devatma's attempt for introducing 'secular religion' seems to be both theoretically and practically ineffective, insofar as such a combination is neither rationally comprehensible nor practically operative.

Here, in this regard, Devatma's move for new religion, a new religion of scientific humanism, which should combine a moral system with a scientific outlook, appears to be conceptually not that compelling.³⁴ Because scientific outlook (inclusive of science and social science), is secular. It explores the depths of both human and natural phenomena in its various aspects purely from rational angle that is least affected by personal emotional or sentimental elements. It is not easy to avoid the emotive aspect in man, but that does not mean that it is to be legitimized and is to be rated on par with reason. The logical and workable distinction between free open-textured rational probe need not be fused with emotion and sentiment. In this manner, there is a clear demarcation between religious and secular outlook. In this context, J.S. Mill's comment "whatever is not religious is secular" is to be noted. It does not suggest that secularism is antireligious; it only directs to the important point that trans-empirical religious encroachment and dominance on secular and socio-human affairs (inclusive of political, economic issues), need to be checked. That is good for both religious and scientific pursuit. Devatma's move for amalgamating science and religion (which has also been boosted up on different procedures by some other thinkers during

his period and after that also) seems to be redundant. Thereby the independence of both the enquiries is rather affected. Probably the motive behind such attempt for unification lies on the basic unfounded assumption that different enquiries made by men at different spheres on different occasions need to be unified under one common whole or total system. This sort of dull uniformity is not necessary. Rather it is both conceptually obscure and factually inoperative.

Ethical and moral outlook is grown in man amidst his social placement. It does not need any trans-social supervision and control. It is not dependent on any ideal visionary romanticism. Peaceful co-existence and natural tolerance as moral virtues are of practical necessity for man remaining in a social setting. ‘God’ and ‘evil’ are socially structured concepts in which the individual requires to keep himself regulated and disciplined for his purpose also. Morality thus is a social necessity and of secular dimension and, in that way, there is no validity for a transcendental ethics. From this point of view, the Cārvāka/Lokāyata move for socio-human morality and ethics is commendable. Devatma’s non-theological scientific and rational edifice is definitely praiseworthy. But later on his attempt to accommodate religion (even in a non-theological fashion) within the secular-humanistic framework is not rationally necessary. It might have been advanced mainly for the then unenlightened, unscientific popular mass, having been addicted with age-old dogmatic religious process and being unused to understand and appreciate the language of secular and humanistic orientation. But, with all fairness, it can be pointed out here that such a reading of moral and ethical values is not at all indispensable.

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Major Trends in the Twentieth Century – II

The Rationalist Movement in India With special reference to Odisha

Throughout different ages both in classical and modern phases despite the stronghold of dogmas and superstitions that prevailed in different major as well as minor cults of diverse religions including Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, there are few notable thinkers, intellectuals and social reformers (born and brought up in different religious setting) who have come forward to be critical about unreasonable dogmas, blind beliefs that arrest social mobility and progress and those which act as detrimental to human welfare and prosperity. It has been already pointed out as to how the Cārvāka/Lokāyata hetuvādins have raised their voice against supra-empirical, transcendental surmises that are not grounded on reason and scientific testability but on sheer fantastic imagination and baseless surmises. In the name of attainment of religious excellence, there has been the ritualistic practice of sacrifices of various animals, and even including men. Lokāyata's opposition to all such ritualistic practices are, of course, human and never inhuman, social never anti-social. Kauṭilya's insistence on *hetu* (reason) for settling all types of disputes and thereby acknowledging *darśana* as *ānvikṣiki* and also acknowledging Lokāyata as *darśana* and fully ignoring Mimāṃsā (*both pūrva and uttara*) are quite revealing. Santh Kabirs attempt of uniting the Hindu and the Muslim community by advocating the sameness of Ram and Rahim, Caitanya's advocacy for including the Mohammedans within the Hare-Kṛṣṇa Bhakti Cult, The Ārya Samājist's attempt of reinterpreting *Hindutva* (under the leadership of Dayananda) not in terms of *Jātivāda* but in terms of Varṇaśarma (i.e., interpreted not in terms of birth

but in terms of quality and action—*guṇa* and *karma*), Mahimā Svāmī's promulgating the Mahimā Cult within the Sanātana Vedic fold fully sidelining caste-discrimination, idolatry and sacrifices are notable attempts to reinterpret religious beliefs in a flexible and liberal manner to accommodate social solidarity in order to boost up human fellow-feeling and socio-empiric moral sense. Religious leaders of different groups have come forward to introduce effective patchwork within the religious fold to meet the social demands under the canopy of socio-individual moral dimension. This is not simply due to prudential necessity but is also based upon the awareness of moral reasoning that sustains the humanity not with disregard or antipathy to others but along with other things and beings in a reasonable setup.

I

Critical outlook against religious dogmas and superstitions is not a recent phenomenon in western intellectual-cum-cultural tradition. The scientific enquiry and intellectual free-thinking have been radically suppressed and the unjust, inhuman cruelty that has been imposed upon Bruno, Socrates, Galileo and many others reveal the dark side of human history. That religious temper grows out of fear has, in some way or other, been confirmed by a number of prominent extraordinary figures like Voltaire, Marx, Freud and Russell. In recent times, famous American rationalist, E. Haldemen Julius (*The Meaning of Atheism*); the great British Humanist philosopher, A.J. Ayer (Vide the Chapter "The Claims of Theology" in his book: *The Central Questions of Philosophy*); Chapman Cohen, the third President of the Nationalist Secular Society of U.K.); Madalyn Murray O'heir (the noted atheist who was the founder of the American Rationalist Federation and who was murdered in 1955), P.B. Shelly (the noted poet and a staunch advocate of atheism) and many others have worked out seriously in thought and action against the blind, closed-minded fanatic outlook of religion.

In India, during the last century, there have been a number of noted thinkers from different regions who, with their both

oriental and occidental background, have come forward for social reforms by way of setting aside dogmas and taboos, intermingled in the centuries-old cultural tradition. Some of them have, of course, tried to uproot the dogmas without advocating wholesale condemnation of religious outlook. Instead of supporting a rigid, fanatic view of religious conservatism, they have advanced a liberal and flexible approach. Their stand is not against theistic world-view outright; but instead of rejecting or crushing the sentimental attachment to personal belief/faith, it has given emphasis on human welfare at the social level without disrupting the general moral framework.

But making a sharp departure from this line of approach, there has also been the presence of certain other important figures who are found to be radical against all forms of religious beliefs and practices. They have not found any rational justification either for God-based religion or even for God-less form of religion with a different spiritual setup. As a matter of fact, they are found to be uncompromising atheists. To them, dogmas and superstitions are bound to prevail so long as theism/spiritualism in some way or other is accommodated. They have either overtly or covertly claimed themselves to be free-thinkers, rationalists with secular and humanistic background. Some of them have condemned religion as stupid and utter nonsense. There has been the formation of the Federation of Indian Rationalist Association with a number of noted personalities like Periyar E.V. Rāmasami Naiker, Dr. Abraham T. Koor, Gora (G.R. Rao), Abu Abraham, Dr. Ramendra and Dr. Jagannath D. Vora. All of them have moved for atheism, secularism, humanism and rationalism to a considerable extent and, in this way, their stand resembles the traditional Lokāyata position remarkably.

Periyar E.V. Rāmasami Naiker (1879-1973)

He was an outright committed atheist. Not only he asserted the non-existence of God/gods, he went on to the extent of condemning the theists/believers as stupid and fools, scoundrels and barbarians. He held that negation of God leads to the growth

of man in society. He moved on to propagate iconoclasm by holding that all the religious idols should be broken and churches, mosques and temples need to be discarded. Rationalism should be taught systematically in academic institutions. His slogan is: forget God and think of humanity. His exhortation was “Let us strive for a society of no God, no religion and no caste, to lead a life of self-respect”. He was convinced that reasoning is the essence of man and since religion is trans-rational, it turns out to be trans-human too. Religion is bound up with rituals, celebration of festivals and all this virtually amounts to a huge waste at the socio-human level. Religion has become a total failure in concretizing the sense of nobility among men. Instead, it accelerates discrimination, inequalities, immoral exploitation of the minorities and corruption of various sorts. Women are discriminated in each religion in one way or other. According to him, rationalist needs no religion. Religion is found to be opposed to scientific enquiry and thus it is regressive, conservative and not progressive and liberal. It does not reform mankind, rather it leads to slavery. Periyar was a globalist-humanist. He accepted that which is intelligible, does good to humanity at large. Thus he was a sincere secular humanist.

Abraham T. Kovoov (1898-1978)

He was acclaimed as a prominent rationalist and he was totally committed to human progress and welfare through scientific and non-theocratic procedure. His two important publications: *Gods, Demons and Spirits* and *Begone Godmen* are meant to uplift society from all sorts of theologism. He was born to a Christian family in southern India, but later on, on the basis of his own conviction, he became a firm atheist-humanist.

To him, Bible sanctions and defends all socio-immoral practices like cheating, slavery, cannibalism, incest, adultery, tyranny and torture. Bible, he held, is not a moral/ethical guide. The Bible prescribes death penalty for any one who moves for a change of religious belief. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament is also intolerant of changes and reforms. It is mentioned therein

(Ch. I, verse 9) that St. Paul declares “if any man preaches any other gospel unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed”. In 28th Chapter of Deuteronomy it is held “And thou shall eat the flesh of thy sons and daughters”. According to Jesus Christ it is moral to have sex with one’s brother’s widow if she has no child. There are many more instances, pointed out by Dr. Kovoov in his writings which expose immorality in the Biblical sources. As such, Bible is shown to be the most dangerous moral guide.

Dr. Kovoov has taken up the concept of God seriously in his searching analysis. He held that there cannot be intelligence without life and body and also there cannot be life without body. In this respect, his view is found to be close to that of Lokāyata/Cārvāka. To hold about impersonal intelligence/consciousness is neither verifiable sensibly nor plausibly conceivable. The modern defender of religion (Christian), Teilhard de Chardin has held that the evolution is made possible by an all-intelligent omnipotent power. But the organic evolution, Dr. Kovoov maintained, is like all evolutions in nature, a process bringing forward fit as well as unfit organisms depending upon different environmental as well as genetic factors.

Dr. Kovoov’s criticism against Bible is also applicable to the scriptural sources of other religions *mutatis mutandis*. His forthright critical remarks about God-men has the aim to expose the lack of rational strength in Sai Baba’s claim concerning spiritual excellence.

Gora (Goparaju Ramchandra Rao, 1902-1975)

He was from Andhra Pradesh, an academician, a noted rationalist and an atheist. He established the Atheist Centre at Muduner of Krishna district in 1940 and organised the first World Atheist conference at Vijayawada in 1972. According to him, atheism stands for freedom of the individual. He supports scientific outlook. It is prone towards mundaneness that increases social awareness, morality and integrity.

The atheistic way of life, according to Gora, is of aspiration and initiativeness. It is life-affirming and realistic in its outlook.

Instead of brooding over the unsolvable issue about the ultimate “Why is it so?”, it is concerned with the issue “What is to be done?” It is thus explorative, inquisitive and progressive in its general temper.

Abu Abraham (1924-2002)

He was a free-thinker and a committed atheistic humanist. He was against all types of religious conversion. In that way he was outright secular, having no scope for the acceptance of any particular religion in preference to others. His motto was “Be your own man” without depending on any blind tradition and hearsay. This is not an expression of personal egoism but a mark of heedfulness to abide by open-textured reason, avoiding emotion and sentiment.

Dr. Ramedra

He is a philosophy-professional with full commitment to atheistic humanism. He is fully active in his mission and is the Secretary of Bihar Buddhivādi Samāj at Patna. According to him, the idea of God is an obstacle for the growth of human knowledge and morality. It is detrimental to the cause of social progress. He unconditionally opts for secular morality, free from dogmas. He has a book in Hindi (*Kyā Īśvar mar chukā hai?*). There he holds that an atheist can be moral in the true sense, for he is a free thinker and a rationalist. To him, the theist’s insistence for divine will does not have any scope for man’s freedom of will. It is misleading to hold that the idea of God is essential for the sustenance of social morality. Rather it is just the reverse that is practically efficacious. His views are published in the journal: *The Secularist*, published by the Indian Secular Society in Mumbai.

Dr. Jagannath D. Vora

He is relatively one young enthusiastic atheist with leaning towards rationalism. He, in his book, *Ignorance about God*

(1980) is critical about *samādhī* or self-realization. On the plea of attaining ultimate peace, the idea of self-realization turns out to be foggy and misleading. The very idea that life persists outside body is not a fact of scientific establishment; but, on the contrary, is a figment of blind imagination. Dr. Vora comes to the conclusion that life is the property of the body, as energy is the property of matter. “Both are born together, both die together. They are not two. They are one”.

II

In Odisha, so far as the classical phase is concerned, there is the well-known purāṇic (cf. The *Skanda Purāṇa*) anecdote about the origin of the cult of Jagannātha which is unique in the entire Hindu world for assimilating both Aryan and non-Aryan dharmic cultural setup under one common platform amicably without any bloodshed and warfare. The mode of dharmic rituals and practices, in addition to the social customs and tradition centring around it, bears clear evidence of syncretism. Even now, there is the sanctioned dharmic practice according to which the deity is worshipped by the Śabara tribe in the tribal procedure for fifteen days before the famous car festival (*Rathyātrā*) and by the Daitāpatis (the offsprings due to the parenthood of a Brāhmin and a Śabara (designated as Aryan and non-Aryan respectively) at the Guṇḍichā *mandira* (temple). The Sevāyatas (one important group, engaged in the temple-service) are said to be of Śavara origin (on the basis of socio-anthropological survey). There is no discrimination of caste or creed with regard to *Prasāda sevana* (i.e., taking the food which is offered to the deity) both in private and public setting.

The Vaiṣṇavism, initiated and propagated by the famous Hindu dharmic leader: Caitanya, has embraced even the Muslims as its followers who are found as sincere devotees of that cult. In the Odishan Vaiṣṇavism, duly acknowledged and appreciated by Caitanya, the element of *bhakti* (devotion) has been synchronized with *jñāna* (knowledge). The famous Śrīdhara Svāmī of Odisha (whom Caitanya had accepted as his mentor) held that *bhakti* is

not incompatible with *jñāna*. The point of referring to this trend is to emphasize that in Odisha, throughout the ages, the point of assimilation that is entertained in different facets (whether in terms of synthesizing different cults or assimilating knowledge and devotion) has been made possible not in terms of theological necessity but in terms of socio-human needs and pressures. When there is conflict in terms of diverse cultism, the syncretic tendency usually comes up as an effective device to maintain peace and solidarity. It is the human pragmatic device that is adopted for smooth living without conflict and tension. Moral consciousness of living together with harmony and peace is thus found to be a socio-empiric need. But, in certain circles, the coating of transcendental sense of divinity is for deliberately confusing the ignorant mass and to exploit them for the vested interest of the so-called intellectual-cum-elites. In the outer garb of social justice, there is virtually the propagation of pernicious feudalism to keep the mass as destined to be oppressed and exploited.

In the Odishan cultural tradition, there is, however, a notable opposition against this exploitation and oppression and there is all along a distinct move for assimilation and unification through the medium of theistic form on the ground that is best acceptable to the common man. The language of theism is more suitable to them than anything else. But, it is all through held that such medium is adopted only as practically convenient to a particular setup without ever claiming thereby that socio-human sense of justice is to be completely sacrificed at the call of obscurant divinity. The human need is all the while given top primacy over and above the transcendental sense of divinity. The deity is evoked and addressed as *dīnabandhu* (the friend of the oppressed), *patitapāvana* (the saviour of the fallen ones) and so on.

This noble sense of humanity is expressed in the invocational enchanting of the Mahimāites of the tribal origin (Bhīma Bhoi) that the sacrifice of individual himself is even tolerated if it is for the sake of collective human welfare and solidarity. The implication of Bhīma Bhoi's saying clearly reveals the primacy of human welfare in the social dimension over and above any theological sense of personal liberation/salvation. In short, the

human element, on the basis of moral reasoning, is all through highlighted as the most primary and fundamental one at the socio-individual level. Even the theistic sense of divinity is kept at the secondary level only to cater to the then expectation of some ones who are indoctrinated and addicted to the uncompromising, unprogressive conservative orthodoxies.

But a definite breakthrough has been advanced in Odisha at a later date (during the last century) by some few but enlightened intellectuals and social reformers who have come forward to be critical about the theistic devotionalism and to emphasize upon the practice of morality at the socio-empiric level, fully acknowledging and appreciating the human needs and expectations without any kind of caste/creed discrimination. Some of those like Ācārya Hari Hara Das, Mohini Mohan Senapati, Nilakantha Das, Bairagi Misra and Ganeswar Misra need to be referred to and their views, in this regard, require to be exposed to a wider audience. Virtually all of them, more or less, have duly acknowledged the significance of the rationalist movement in meeting the moral issue of socio-human concern within the phenomenal level and that is given the primary importance over and above the concern for noumena.

Acarya Hari Hara Das (1880)

He belonged to the group of famous pañcasakhās (II) of the recent past. Under the leadership of the foremost patriotic leader: Gopabandhu Das, the four other associates including Hari Hara were involved with diverse socio-political reformative issues both at the level of theory and practice mostly among the Odishans. In the early period of 2000 CE, they were able to start one open-aired school under the *bakul*-grove at Sakhi-Gopal where education was imparted to the young children without any cast/creed discrimination. Nilakantha Das was the Headmaster and Hari Hara Das was the Boarding Superintendent of the school. The well-known five associates (all born as Brāhmin) were great reformers in raising protests against conservative Brāhminic orthodoxy, propagated by some ignorant stubborn fanatics. Among them, Hari Hara moved significantly a step further so far as casteism

is concerned. He removed his sacred thread which was a symbol for the Brāhmins to demarcate them from other *varṇas*. Hari Hara remained with non-Brāhmins throughout the major period of his life, leaving his own Brāhmin family and relatives. He dedicated himself to the Bhoodan movement and was lovingly adored by the Odiyas as the saviour of the landless peasants of Odisha. His closest associate during his old age was Shree Sachi Mohanty, a noble and dedicated social worker of eminence.

Hari Hara was a sincere humanist in his thought and action. He never aspired to get any transcendental salvation or liberation. His only mission was to serve the humanity with one's best effort and confidence. All this implies that his approach is precisely secular as distinct from being sacred. It is clearly on non-theological foundation and, in that way, it is quite similar to the Lokāyata stand which is too non-theological and is not averse to human concern. His pertinent motto is "Be a man" ("*maṇiṣa hua*") suggesting thereby to be a good and noble man in the society.¹

Mohini Mohan Senapati (1881)

He was the son of one of the most famous and celebrated modern Odiya prose-writers (Fakir Mohan Senapati) and was himself one of the early philosophy professionals, serving at the famous Ravenshaw College at Cuttack from 1911 to 1936. He wrote one Oriya book: *Bibidha Prasanga* (1939, a collection of reflective essays) which has clearly revealed his intellectual position. During his time Brāhmo Samāj, a Hindu reformist movement was on the forefront under the leadership of Raja Rammohun Roy. The movement was a sort of revival of Vedāntic monotheism, without the dogmatic caste-rigidity and it propagated meditation of formless absolute Brameśvara, avoiding all conservative rites and rituals.

Despite his close association with Brāhmo Samāj on account of family ties, Mohini Mohan advanced formidable critical arguments against the validity of the Brāhmo Samāj movement. According to him, there is no rational justification in choosing one religious belief of monotheism in preference to polytheism. All the variety of religious beliefs, as being grounded on attitudinal

faith, are translogical. The belief in one formless God is not logically compelling. The Brāhmo-dharmic assumption that God is all love is counteracted, according to Mohini Mohan, by the presence of so many undesirable ghastly natural calamities like earthquake, etc. that gravely affect human welfare and stable sustenance. He has raised a fundamental question as to how can there be the conceivability of spiritual suffering when there is complete cessation or destruction of the body. The supposition about heaven, hell, etc. are controversial irrespective of the fact whether those are pleaded by the Brāhmo Samājists or other religious circles.

Quite often, the religious mystics claim that they get inspiration from God or supernatural powers through prayer and meditation. The Brāhmo Samājist (of Nava Vidhan fame); Keshab Chandra Sen claimed to have obtained guidance from Brahman or God. Mohini Mohan questioned all such assertions and held the view that such strong beliefs advanced by the religionists are due to psychological abnormalities and imbalances. In whatever form, mysticism, to him, cannot have any rational foundation. The religious propagation about other world and trans-socio-empiric extension of moral sense is logically unconvincing and is also detrimental to the smooth functioning of morality in the human level. In Mohini Mohan's thought framework, there is clear acceptance of humanistic trend and viewing ethics and morality on the naturalistic basis. There is no scope for any variety of supernaturalism and trans-empiricism. In this sense, His view comes close to that of Cārvāka/Lokāyata trend with full regard to socio-individual moral awareness that is reasonable, pragmatic and human in essence. His standpoint is thus based on reason and is close to scientific temper. He was a confirmed non-theist naturalist having full regard to human sense of nobility and progressive outlook. During his lifetime, he remained throughout consistent to his non-theistic stand.

Nilakantha Das (1884)

Pandit Nilakantha Das was one among the five famous group of friends (pañcasakhās) of early phase of 2000 CE, who courageously

as well as sincerely tried to establish the distinct socio-cultural identity of Odiyas by way of fighting for the cause of separate political establishment. Pandit Das was one of the first batch of Odiya students of Calcutta University, obtaining M.A. degree in Philosophy. He was appointed by Sir Ashutosh Mukherji (the then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University) as Professor of the University on the subject of Philology-cum-Comparative Literature. But after short span of almost two years, he resigned from the service and joined the Non-Cooperation Movement on the call of Gandhi. He was arrested and was sent to Hajaribagh jail as political prisoner where he came in direct contact with other Congress leaders. In course of his discussion with Gandhi, he was prompted to study *Bh. Gītā* in detail. Consequently he wrote an independent, full-length commentary (*bhāṣya*) on *Bh. Gītā* with the original Sanskrit and the Odiya translation. Besides this, the text has a detailed critical introduction of almost 500 pages. The commentary on *Bh. Gītā* by Pt. Das is an original, unorthodox, secular interpretation with a distinct humanistic touch, based on a rational rendering of the text all through. The book has fourth edition and a concise English exposition of its central thesis has been printed in different scholarly sources for wide publicity. Pt. Das was awarded Padma Bhushan by the Government of India for his multifaceted contributions in the fields of socio-political activities in literary and scholarly sources including philosophy, religion and culture.

He was, all through, a critic of Vaiṣṇavite theism, specially its emphasis on *bhakti* and avoidance of independent rational probing. In this context, his interpretation of *Gītā* was unique. He, for the first time, has maintained most boldly that *Gītā dharma* is *abhakti* (non-devotional) *dharma*. It is also *Īśvara-bihina* (non-theistic) and *yukti* (reason-based) *dharma*. Kṛṣṇa in *Gītā* symbolizes, according to him, not a transcendental divine esoteric Being, but the rational conscience (*viveka-buddhi*) and, in this sense, he has taken *Gītā's* message as pointing to *mānava dharma* (i.e., dharma having profound human significance). The rationalistic trend has been advocated by Pt. Das with a sense of justification from the traditionally accepted śāstric (scriptural) sources. *Dharma*, in his

sense, is basically rooted on socio-empiric morality and not on vague sense of spiritual transcendence. From this perspective, his approach has been consistently modern and secular. It is dharmic in the moral sense, avoiding theological obscurantism.

Pt. Das composed a number of treatises in Odiya literature, including its evolutionary stages of grammatical structure, poems and proses, depicting various facets of cultural history, and his autobiography. His contributions continue to have impact on Odiya psyche in general. His activities for ameliorating the socio-political status of Odiyas were remarkable and his role as the Speaker of the Odisha State Assembly was distinguished in the national level for emphasizing on the autonomous structure of Legislative Body.

His insistence on interpreting the dharmic message in terms of *buddhi/yukti* (not bare ratiocination but that which is pragmatic as well as efficacious from the socio-empiric moral standpoint) is quite significant. In this respect, his approach is similar to the Lokāyata/Cārvāka stand on reason (*hetu*) and also retaining the validity of socio-individual moral fabric without making any dive into the spiritual transcendence. He passed away in 1967. During his lifetime, he remained all along firm in his rational, non-devotional stand.

Bairagi Charan Mishra (1885)

From the auxiliary record concerning birth, it can be ascertained that Bairagi Mishra was contemporary of both Mohini Mohan and Nilakantha. However, unlike them, he could not have higher study due to his lower pecuniary condition. But his judgmental conviction was very sharp and remarkably progressive. He had good background of reading the original scriptures, specially the *Bh. Gītā*. He had pointed to a striking passage of *Gītā* (11.49), basing on which his rendering of the *Gītā* concept of Kṛṣṇa was found to be novel, unorthodox, revealing and both modern and secular in character. To him, Kṛṣṇa stands for *buddhi* (intellectual reasoning) and the message of *Gītā* is to take resort to reason (*buddhi śaraṇāgati*).² Thus it, according to him, does not stand

for theistic personification but it is to interpret scriptural message in terms of unbiased, cool open-textured reason. Morality is based on reasoning that is not detrimental but conducive to the socio-individual legitimate needs and expectations. This idea led Bairagi Mishra to launch campaign for legitimate social reforms within the Hindu-fold like widow-marriage, performance of certain social functions without insisting upon extravagant rites and rituals which are neither dharmic nor socially relevant. Such practices are baseless and rationally indefensible according to him. Those also do not cater to the need of the present social setup. In introducing such reformative steps, Bairagi Mishra had faced initial opposition; but gradually his stand was taken up seriously by the people and his view, in this regard, got due recognition.

He was mainly famous for social reforms. But his clear decision against the unjust oppressive as well as expensive performance of the funeral rites and rituals, belief in the esoteric existence of the disembodied soul (*ātmā*) and his emphasis on deciding all issues and problems on the track of cool and unbiased reason, made him as an original thinker on the classical Hindu tradition. In this regard, his rationalistic approach is found to be close to the classical *Lokāyata/Cārvāka* stand to a considerable extent. During his life-time, he consistently raised his voice against Hindu social maladies with a sense of justice and validity.

Ganeswar Misra (1918)

He was the most brilliant product of his generation, a student of top rank right from his school days, the only best graduate, having Philosophy Honours from the Ravenshaw College (now one Unitary University) at Cuttack and the only successful Indian scholar to get the award of Ph.D. within the minimum period of two years under the guidance of world-famous philosopher A.J. Ayer, from the London University in 1955. He was well versed in both western and Indian philosophy inclusive of having specialization in analytical philosophy, as advanced by Russell, Ayer and Wittgenstein. His specific contribution to the philosophy of Śāṅkara from the analytic point of view has been duly recognized

in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (published from U.S.A.). He was the first Professor and Chair-person of the Post-Graduate Department of Philosophy (now Centre of Advanced Study), Utkal University for more than a decade. Misra passed away in 1985.

In his philosophic conviction, he was a profound humanist without being tilted to either spiritualism or to materialism. The philosophy of humanism which he preferred is on rational foundation. The sense of morality is well adopted within the socio-empiric framework and his view on the Vedic/Vedāntic ideas and thought are found to be both novel and insightful. It has a distinct humanistic and secular touch. In that way, it avoids all forms of sacerdotality, theologism, dogmatism and closed-mindedness. It is found to be not regressive but progressive in its outlook. So far as rationalistic movement is taken into account, his contribution is definitely remarkable.

The rationalist movement is still in vogue in Odisha's intellectual climate. The direct students as well as followers of Misra's thinking, inclusive of other serious intellectuals and social activists, in some way or other, are progressive in their intellectual make-up. They are, by and large, for the sound sustenance of rationalistic temper in different matters of socio-individual issues and problems. The Humanist Philosophical Foundation (a government Registered Association, established in 2000) is being run in Bhubaneswar by some of Misra's students and followers.

B. Ramchandra CST Voltaire (1945)

He is relatively one young promising intellectual (a post-graduate in political science and formerly in teaching profession under Government of Odisha), Secretary of AMOFOI (Anti-caste Marriage and One-child Family Organization of India). The organization aims at strengthening the cause of humanism, rationalism and atheism in order to boost up both free-thinking and warranted social reforms. In this way, it can be seen as following the track similar to that of Lokāyata/Cārvāka foundation. Rāmachandra is deeply committed to social reforms and progress with the sole aim of betterment of human society, its

living standards in different facets including casteless marriage, family welfare and restriction of population. His organization has remarkable impact on the social level by way of registering more than 2600 anti-caste marriages in the state of Odisha. Under the banner of AMOFOI, he has published books (Vide Bibliography at the end) on social cohesion, solidarity and he is a severe critic of all forms of theological dogmas. AMOFOI got national award in 2001 by the Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations for organizing exogamous marriages to promote the cause of national integration and humanism. His radical anti-theistic approach is found to be on the similar line to that of Mohini Mohan Senapati as already referred to. Rāmachandra lives in Bhubaneswar (121, Dharma Vihar) and he is quite active in his programme of promulgating social justice, and secularization of academic institutions, study of comparative religions with their shortcomings and exposing the vacuity of soothsayers of different types.

III

The Rationalist Movement in India is a laudable step towards eradicating dogmas and superstitions. It awakens the rational and scientific temper in the modern Indian mind in general. It is a sort of revival of paying due attention to *hetu* (reason) in settling issues and problems of different variety. This is, no doubt, a sound critical move and, in this regard, the attempts made by the intellectuals and the social activists of various categories are worth noting. In their respective ways, means and situational placements they have surely contributed towards the advancement of knowledge and reduction of ignorance.

However, it need not be construed that what they have contributed is something final and ultimate so that no further change or modification can be made on it afterwards. Because, if one insists upon finality and absolute certitude on the plea of attaining clarity and preciseness, then that would be again an instance of closed-mindedness and would work as an obstacle for free and open thinking.

Against cannibalism, male chauvinism, women-torture and caste/ethnic discrimination, etc., the reformative measures introduced by a few notable persons of the past as well as of present are, of course, remarkable. But this does not suggest that the goal is finally reached and there cannot be any reappraisal or rethinking over the issues. Even in scientific pursuits, the findings are not final. Never has it been claimed that the theories and the conclusions, based on discoveries/inventions are ultimate. Science rests upon the principle of uncertainty. Its findings are conjectural and are open to falsifiability. That is why probability and not absolute certainty is the mark of all types of scientific and rational enterprises.

If theism, theocracy and theologism suffer from closed-mindedness by way of being succumbed to the dogmas and blind faith/belief then atheism too, by way of, being categorically negative in the final or ultimate sense of the term seems to be equally exposed to the limitation of closed-structure and is not prone to openness. If God's existence cannot be proved, then it cannot be disproved either. It is not because God is to be conceived in such peculiar fashion that it exists in itself beyond proof or disproof. It is rather the questioning background on the basis of which either the theistic or the antitheistic surmises are advanced and that all the while needs further critical analysis and investigation. So where the question itself is not clear and precise, the scope for answer is not that relevant. Probably, on account of this, there are some great thinkers both in west and in east, who pronounce that what one cannot state, one must be silent about. On the issue concerning ultimacy and finality (in that abstract metaphysical sense), any categorical assertion either positive or negative, thus, seems to be unwarranted and unreasonable. In this context, a critical rational-cum-scientific attitude seems to be close to non-commitment than to any dogmatic/rigid commitment. Agnosticism is neither escapism nor a mark of vagueness, but is rather a mark of caution. There are some occasions where ready-made answer in form of 'yes' or 'no' involves illogicality. It is due to what is often called as succumbing to a fallacy of many questions.

In this regard the remark that he who invented God is a fool, scoundrel and barbarian cannot be treated as the outcome of serious analytical scrutiny, but is rather an expression of uncouth rebuke. To be a free thinker means one should be critical about religious dogmas and superstitions. But, it also does not suggest that one should dogmatically be addicted towards scientific theories as providing truth for all time to come. It should be noted that the scientific findings are probable (of course, not in the pejorative sense) and never are treated as apodictically true.

Hence, one needs to be open-minded and analytical to each and every issue, be it of religion or of science. It is not the dogmatic addiction but critical awareness that is actually required in all kinds of enquiry. Sentiment and emotion are, however, parts of human living. Those cannot be forthwith annulled; but those need to be located and retained at their respective positions without being rationally over legitimized. Human, secular tendencies cannot be reduced to the four walls of physical or experimental science. The legitimate distinction between physical sciences and social sciences need not be brushed aside. Secular demands and expectation are reasonably found to be cogent and plausible. The reason that is operated in that sphere is, of course, not identical with that which is required in the realm of experimental physics or chemistry. However, the distinction between the two groups of sciences does not imply absolute opposition or sharp contrast. After all, the common parameter of reason need not be overlooked and one is not to take shelter on dogmas and blind faith.

M.N. Roy on Materialism

(Its moral and ethical implications)

M.N. Roy (originally named as Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) was one of the front-ranking materialist-cum-humanists of India during the first half of the twentieth century. He was, at the early stage of his life, associated with the then Bengal revolutionary group led by Bagha-Jatin. Subsequently he was attracted towards communism, became a supporter of Leninism and, on that account, hostility grew between him and Stalin, while Roy was in Russia. He escaped to India in 1928, being afraid of Stalin's possible

conspiracy against him. Soon after his return to India, Roy was imprisoned by the British Government for his communistic background. However, later on he was released and he settled in Dehradun with his wife of French origin.

His major contribution on materialism and humanism inclusive of his critical comment on idealism, religionism and spiritualism was made possible during his stay in Dehradun. In fact he was principally responsible for the formation of the Indian Renaissance Association Ltd., at Dehradun which was created with the object of quickening the regeneration of the Indian people as free, prosperous and progressive, by the way of organizing and co-ordinating their intellectual activities towards political freedom and social progress. Roy's principal publications are *Materialism, Science and Superstition, Reason, Romanticism and Revolution, Scientific Politics and New Humanism*.

By intellectual conviction, he was a stark rationalist and was opposed to all forms of religious spiritualism with its dogmas and superstitions. At the early phase, he favoured a materialistic view of life and, in that way, his leaning towards communism in the socio-political platform was quite conspicuous. Later on, he shifted his ground and adopted a typical form of humanism that was designated by him as both new and radical. In fact, he did not approve the *Communist Manifesto* and, in that context, brought out another manifesto and termed that as New Humanism.

But, what is this new humanism? What is its relation with the materialistic world-view? In what way does it differ from the humanism of the usual type? Roy became critical about communism as advocated by Stalin which became the official doctrine of Soviet Russia during his time. But that does not imply that he deviated from his materialistic position. For him, 'materialism is as old as philosophy itself; it is the explanation of the world without the assumption of anything supernatural'³. This clearly vindicates the similarity between the classical Lokāyata and Roy's standpoint. Both adhere to anti-spiritualism and, in that way, opt for anti-religionism. In the modern period, Comte's positivism is also known as being grounded on humanism. One of his strong followers in England was Congreve who tried to

popularize the cause of positivism in England with religious touch of humanism and he also influenced considerably Bengal positivism (as discussed before). Bengal positivism (with which Roy might have been aware) tried to establish Indian positivist movement with a religious coating. In fact, there was the clear move to introduce “Goddess of humanity” within the fold of positivism. That was not obviously acceptable to Roy. Probably due to that, he designated his version of humanism as new and radical insofar as it does not embrace within itself any form of religionism and spiritualism.

By disregarding any form of supernaturalism, Roy’s materialistic stand was prone to science. That is why he held “science is a higher thing than philosophy. But philosophy needs not to be degraded, if it is conceived as the sum/total of scientific knowledge”.⁴ This speaks of his conception of philosophy as close to science.

In this regard, Roy is found to be highly critical about classifying western civilization as materialistic and eastern culture as spiritualistic. In west, at the earliest phase there was the dominance of faith and dogma as usually noticed in other civilizational trends. But gradually western outlook has become adapted “more in terms of reason and positive knowledge than in terms of faith and metaphysical fantasies”.⁵ Roy held “the anti-thesis of spiritualism is philosophical materialism which has absolutely nothing to do with the vulgar characterization eat, drink and be merry”⁶. It means that according to him, philosophy is bound to be materialistic and, in that way, its outlook is this-worldly and not other-worldly. “Eat, drink and be merry” had been viewed by him as a positive and life-affirming attitude and was thus far away from the advocacy of immoral lust. In this respect also, there is clear affinity between Roy’s stand and the classical Lokāyata’s point of view. To Roy, “philosophical materialism is the message of freedom” and, in that context, he castigated the Indian spiritualists as “avowed enemies of the philosophy of freedom”.⁷

Spiritualism and supernaturalism, by way of neglecting natural phenomenon and advocating sole emphasis on supra-sensible

transcendence, give vent to obscurantism. Those arrest free rational enquiry. And freedom of thought is thereby drastically curtailed. Such dogmatic, rigid move limits philosophic rationality and scientific pursuit of knowledge. On the plea of attaining absolute certainty and ultimate beatitude, the religio-spiritual outlook, all the while, puts obstacle to reasonable innovation and insightful enlightenment. True, the scientific findings are provisional and probable; but that does not rub out its validity as a matter of fact. Nor does it make a challenge to scientific methodology and mode of investigation. Accordingly, Roy pleaded for scientific materialism instead of speculative metaphysics of materialism. His philosophical materialism thus is set in terms of scientific background. In that way, it has some resemblance with the Viennese positivism, in so far as it prescribes for a science-based philosophical thinking as against metaphysical grounding. Of course, this need not suggest that both the approaches are fully on the same plane.

But, one thing is nevertheless clear that Roy, by way of giving emphasis on philosophy of freedom, seems to be prone to openness in different facets of human life, including morality and ethics. He never approved any religious, conservative, dogmatic supremacy or control over free morality. He clearly moved for viewing morality as a socio-empirical concept to be used and operated in the human plane. It is socio-individual necessity and its workability can be only meaningfully conceived in and through the phenomenal plane. And there, no transmundane, noumenal authenticity is legitimately called for. Roy is thus found to be not against socio-individual moral practice as well as reasoning. His stand only is found to be against any form of supra-natural and spiritualistic coating of transcendental ethics.

According to Roy, social revolution is necessary for the freedom of individual in society. It is man who is to strive for the survival of nature as well as human welfare in the best possible manner. He pleaded for the harmonization of socio-ethical norms and criteria for the accomplishment of peace and happiness. A philosophical revolutionary move is necessary, Roy thought, to fructify this objective. His radical or new humanistic outlook had

been advanced as a new form of social philosophy to achieve the goal.

Roy viewed man as a living organism in a social setup. Man is the outcome of biological evolutionary process. Ordinarily he is a self-conscious individual who is normally prone to reason, goodness and justice. All these important facets can be well sustained and practically operated in a suitable situation and social setting. A balanced and composed thinking amidst solid socio-individual framework is not a visionary dream or Utopian ideal. It can be actualized by way of meaningful and effective social reform and transformation. In this respect, Roy moved along with Marx to a great extent that philosophy is not to explain the world-setting but is meant for changing it for the betterment of human lot in the socio-empiric level. It may be noted that, in this respect, Roy's philosophical stand differs from the positivist view of philosophy as merely logical analysis of the language of science.

The significance of Roy's viewpoint is that he frankly held materialism "as not a closed system".⁸ This shows that according to him philosophy is not a speculative closed system, having no scope for any change and progress. On the contrary, philosophy is dynamic and, in that way, knowledge both in philosophy and science is never viewed as a finished product and absolute. It is ever developing and progressive on the basis of novelty. Materialism, in this sense, is also viewed as dynamic in character. It is never static and immobile. It is true that Roy, in his writings, did not develop any detailed account of ethical theory. But, nevertheless, as a socio-political thinker the materialistic view that he advocated seems to have certain definite ethical implication.

Quite consistent to his philosophical stand of materialism, it can be maintained that morality cannot be meant as something static and absolute. There is no scope for absolute morality which is immune from any change or modification. It is, in fact, altered in different situation and there is no logical incongruity in that.

However, this does not suggest and Roy's standpoint does not subscribe to the conclusion that there is nothing like morality in

the human affair and one is to be impelled to the vulgar doctrine of “eat, drink and be merry”. It is never implied that man is to reduce himself to a radical camp of ego-centric opportunism and can move for any step without any regard to his placement in the social set up. Roy, in this connection, referred to the Epicurean conception of materialistic ethics. According to Roy, Epicurus cast away the belief in gods, and threw off the shackles of religion, not to “eat, drink and be merry”, but “in order to be noble and virtuous because it is a pleasure to be so”⁹. This clearly reveals that Roy’s philosophical materialism is not against morality and ethics. Rather, on the contrary, it has a distinct legitimate scope for morality within the human social framework. Only the trans-human, divine spiritual coating of morality is declared to be uncalled for and also that is based on logical misunderstanding. The spiritualization of morality negatively affects the autonomous character of morality itself.

Roy is found to be well concerned about social justice so far as man is considered. Despite the presence of diversities with regard to language, race and culture, man is through and through placed in social order. And, in that sense, the balanced harmonization between man as an individual and society as a collective unit has to be viewed as a practical necessity. It is not simply for prudential requirement; it is also morally justifiable. Roy’s approach seems to be duly emphatic on this point. To him, “ethical concepts like justice, nobility, and wisdom are not abstract categories. They are relative, changeable conceptions determined by the standard of (human) happiness which, in its turn, is derived from knowledge”¹⁰.

In other words, Roy’s philosophical position is not to be construed as apathetic to morality but is well concerned about morality within its legitimate bounds. The socio-individual moral foundation is well retained, only the transcendental, spiritual mystification of moral norms and rules are critically viewed. Despite cultural, racial and linguistic diversities, a set concept of morality can be adhered to while keeping with the general human civilizational structure intact, conceding flexibility as well as liberality.

A word of explanation is needed with regard to Roy's view of taking philosophy only as scientific materialism. Does it adequately account for socio-human ethic? Ethical reasoning has its autonomy. It is flexible as per the needs and requirements of man in the social setting in diverse situations. Can that be measured in terms of technical precision? Can the freedom of moral life be reduced to physical/natural scientific model? Morality, being a social phenomenon, is operational in a different plane altogether and therefore to reduce it to scientific materiality perhaps needs reconsideration.

Nehru and Materialism

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was a great Indian leader of recent era. He was the first Prime Minister, one of the pioneers of democratic socialism based on the secular principles of humanism and was one of the founder figures of Independent India's socio-political set-up. He never claimed himself to be either a materialist or a spiritualist in the traditionally established sense. But his views, as briefly will be touched upon hereafter, would reveal his clear adherence for a general scientific, rational and down-to-earth standpoint and, in that way, his common preferential attitude seems to have some affinity with this-worldly and dynamic/progressive approach of the Lokāyatas. His major affinity is also directed towards the eradication of theological dogmas and prejudices. However, this does not fully rub out the sporadic incoherencies in some of his writings and speeches, as would be indicated later on.

Nehru was well conscious of the tremendous progress made by science in general during the last century to which he belonged. The merits of science, its quest towards betterment of human living condition, advancement of human knowledge in terms of inventions and discoveries and exposition of ignorance in different areas cannot be gainsaid. But, at the same time, he expressed the remark that science has posed "problems which most of us are incapable of understanding, much less of solving".¹¹ In this context, he was notably also critical about religion. To him,

religion does not provide due place to moral and spiritual. It remains in ivory tower and does not fit itself to the socio-empiric situation on many fronts. Even regarding rationalistic enterprise, he was explicitly apprehensive of its not “uncovering the inner core” only being confined to “deal with the surface of things”.

Nehru was keen on the perseverance of standards and values in human affair and, in that way, he was quite critical about communism that drastically ignores “the moral and spiritual side of life”. The excess of violence adopted in the communistic framework curtails human freedom, as viewed by him. The capitalistic framework, on the other hand, has also given rise to mass-exploitation and class-conflict. However, the introduction of democracy in the modern socio-political establishment has, to certain extent, eliminated much discrimination and inequality. But, even then, the adoption of violence and colonial attitude by both capitalistic and communistic forces has not been found to be successful in suppressing the legitimate urge of freedom from foreign control (both political and economic), so far as other countries are concerned.

In this regard, Nehru sided firmly with Gandhi’s peaceful approach and he neither supported “big-scale violence” nor “small-size violence” in settling sociopolitical issues and conflicts. Nehru emphasized that the avoidance of violence is not “merely an ethical doctrine but a practical proposition”.¹²

It is notable that he twisted the concept of spirit as completely distinct from religion. He held that there is “the spiritual element in human nature” and it cannot be ignored. While fully acknowledging the proper utilization of scientific techniques and sources, Nehru did not set aside the human element which stands for the objective of individual improvement within the social framework. In this regard, any socio-political formulation cannot bypass “the ethical and spiritual aspects of life”.

In the Indian context, his democratic socialism is not rigid but rather liberal in its form as well as content. It accommodates both private and public enterprise. Without being inclined either to western capitalist or to communist (Marxian) economy, Nehru preferred to a form of mixed economy, which in due course has

given rise to mixed result. In his own language, he opted for “the old Vedāntic ideal of life-force which is the inner base of everything that exists”,¹⁴

This, in brief, is Nehru’s approach towards socio-political affair, specially in the Indian context. It has, of course, varied implications in respect of his view concerning morality, spirituality, religion and science. It indirectly does spell out his attitude towards human life as a whole. It seems evident that Nehru was never in favour of conservative rigidity, particularly in the form of religious rites and rituals. He was found to be moving beyond religious dogmas and taboos. In this respect his attitude towards theistic-bound religious belief was clearly negative. In contrast to religion he had his preference for scientific pursuit that leads to novelty and progress in different fields. He was definitely in support of that scientific investigations which provide advancement of knowledge as well as human welfare and happiness. In this sense, it is remarked in certain circle that he was essentially a scientific humanist.

But his support for scientific enquiry and research need not be construed as fully unconditional. As hinted earlier, he opposed to the misuse of science that glaringly becomes apathetic and unconcerned about human values which sustain peace and happiness. Science, according to him, must be pursued, having the objective that is not merely a matter of ideal fancy but is of enormous practical significance.

He was critical about the uncompromising rigidity of religious customs and conventions, adherence to unsound blind beliefs and superstitions. By emphasizing upon the application of theological taboos on socio-political transactions, the religious move turns out to be detrimental to human welfare. It stands not on the basis of morality but works rather against that. Nehru was of firm conviction that religious move is counter to spiritual awareness.

But, it is here, some conceptual difficulty occurs in his viewpoint. The term: spiritual is derived from “spirit’ which connotes a disembodied person/incorporeal being. In this established and prevalent use, the term refers to theological being like god, Holy Ghost, God, soul-embedded with different

ecclesiastical implications. Accordingly, the concept does have sacerdotal meaning, as distinctly different from secular sense. It has precisely transcendent and transempiric implication which is beyond human social setup; whereas morality is of socio-individual concern in the human plane. To introduce social perspective into the connotation of spirit is to move for an extension, much away from its original stand.

However, the moral sense is also sometimes extended to the realm of animals and plants, only with the proviso that such extension is not recalcitrant to the human interest and welfare. Thus the primary thrust of morality lies in its due application in the socio-empiric plane and not transcending that. Moral value is not empirically derived or originated like sensible fact or event. But, nevertheless, moral value has its legitimate significance concerning man in socio-empiric plane alone. In this sense, morality is rightly treated as secular and not sacerdotal. So also spiritual, being transcendental and transempirical cannot be justifiably amalgamated with morality. That sort of move only brings in conceptual distortion. It is notable that spirituality has logical affinity with theistic-bound religion and morality is distinctly independent of that. That is why morality (dharma) is viewed as fully autonomous and is not bound with either theism or atheism. It is thus independent of theological clutch. Nehru's democratic socialism points to secular outlook and thereto bringing spirituality thus rather turns out to be intriguing.

As noticed before, Nehru was not only critical about religion and science, he was also quite diffident about rationalistic enterprise. According to him reason only deals with surface; it cannot uncover the inner core. Well, what does it amount to? Ordinarily, when any task is not seriously accomplished and is done somewhat carelessly, it is rightly said that the performance is superficial and has only touched the surface. That means, by way of further scrutiny and careful endeavour, that task can be carried out. This is possible not by abandoning rational scrutiny but deepening the rational probe. So, if in certain case, reason has not been properly applied, the deficiency can be recouped by a further vigilant application of proper reason and not by completely

forsaking it. It seems that Nehru's apprehension against reason in this context is totally unfounded.

It appears Nehru's approach to spiritualism is somewhat ambivalent. At one place he seems to favour spiritual as opposed to religion. In that context, he put moral and spiritual on the same plane as distinct from religion. At another place his remark about spiritualism is found to be of sharp opposition. He wrote "So far spiritualism with its seances and its so called manifestations of spirit and the like have always seemed to me rather absurd and impertinent way of investigating psychic phenomena and the mysteries of the after-life"¹⁵.

Further, the misuse of scientific invention and discovery is surely a matter of grave concern. It becomes a threat to humanity itself. Hence to check or prevent such misuse is surely an encouraging move. But for that misuse, one need not move on to put all blame to science itself. This is again a matter of conceptual confusion between scientific pursuit and misuse or misapplication of scientific investigation. Science in itself never poses problems; it is the mishandling of scientific research that brings in all problems and difficulties.

With regard to materialism, as already indicated, Nehru did not subscribe to materialism in the classical sense of the term. That, of course, does not matter much. For, the classical Indian Cārvākas/Lokāyatās, as we have viewed, cannot be treated as materialists in the metaphysical/ontological sense. There is no evidential testimony to the effect that they ever have subscribed to any ontological presupposition about ultimate reality. Nehru's point of view also seems to have no metaphysical/ontological preference either to materialism or to spiritualism. At least there is no such compulsion so far as the logic of his view-point is taken into account. Basically his point of view is found to be liberal and open-textured, free from dogmas and blind conjectures. His approach is found to be all through this-worldly, secular and human. Though, there are instances in his occasional speeches and writings where he had shown an inconsistent move towards Vedāntic view of life which, in his own account too, is shown to have an incoherent blending of spiritual and moral, all such

stray elements in his over-all judgmental set-up never have been figured as the fundamental core. Taking his general point of view into consideration, it can be held that there is remarkable affinity between his and the Cārvāka's stand, specially in respect of their being critical about theologism and spiritualism that totally neglect the secular human concern.

Notes and References

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2. Bairagi Mishra's drawing attention to reason in *Gītā* has been referred to by Prof. G.C. Nayak's pioneering writing "On *Buddhi-Śaraṇāgati* or Taking resort to Reason a Plea for Rationalism *a la Bhagavad Gītā*", 55th session, Indian Philosophical Congress, subsequently published in different form in his book, *Philosophical Reflections*, Delhi, MLBD, 1987.
3. *Materialism*, Dehradun, Renaissance Publication, 1940, Preface & p. 227.
4. *Scientific Politics*, Calcutta, Renaissance Publishers, 2nd edn., 1947, pp. 36-37.
5. *Materialism*, op.cit, p. 8.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
11. Quoted from his writing by William Ebenstein, *Modern Political Thought—The Great Issues*, second edition, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1970, p. 611.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 613.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 615.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 616.
15. Vide his *The Discovery of India*, O.U.P., p. 28.

Conclusion

Now, it is required to bring things summarily together along with concluding remarks and critical evaluation. It is needless to emphasize that the Indian materialist philosophical tradition has undergone a number of modifications and ramifications. Amidst all such changes and alterations there are some notable points of commonality. First of all there is noticeable emphasis on the primacy of empiric epistemological foundation than on any transempiric metaphysical theorization. Earth, water, air and fire are admitted on the basis of their being empirically perceived or known. Those are never asserted to be real in themselves without being known. In other words, there is no documentary evidence traced in the traditional source ascribed to the Lokāyatas/Cārvākas which clearly state that they have advocated any metaphysical theory about reality as noumena as such. There is no reference to ultimate reality (*parama sattā*). In this sense, Lokāyata/Cārvāka darśana is rather found to be a form of phenomenalist empiricism of the epistemic type, instead of metaphysical ontologism. At least, this seems to be a logically drawn out philosophical position.

On the basis of this observation, it can be held that Indian materialism, so far as the classical formulation is taken into consideration, does point to some distinctive specification. It is not ontologically committed to the doctrine of materialism according to which matter alone is ultimately real. But, along with its avoidance of metaphysical materialism, it is opposed to any form of spiritualism. It does not find any logical justification for admitting spiritual entity (in any form) either as being known or as being independently existent in itself. From this point of view, Lokāyata's admittance of basic elements like earth, water, air and fire has definitely a materialistic bearing without any transempirical, spiritual commitment.

With regard to the concept of morality, the Indian materialist stand is never trans-social but is very much within the socio-human framework. That which is acceptable and fruitful to men in general within socio-empiric sojourn is never found to have been decried. At least the logical implication of their standpoint never seems to have despised the socio-individual ethico-moral ideas. Rather, on the contrary, their critical opposition to certain spiritually based dogmas and taboos clearly evince their socio-moral refinements.

Śrīharṣa, for instance, holds¹ that, according to the Cārvākas, amorous amusement is preferable to earn virtue (*dharmapunya*). It is stated that the Cārvākas even do not mind to have adultery with other on the ground what Indradeva did to Gautama's wife: Ahalyā. There are many similar piquant observations made by some of the classical writers with reference to the Cārvāka's position on ethics and morality. In all such cases there has been perpetual and deliberate attempts made by the concerned writers to pull down the Cārvāka point of view to a most ignoble status and to create an impression that from the moral perspective the Cārvākas do not at all deserve any minimum sense of consideration. Since, in most cases, the exposition of the Cārvāka stand is found to be from the opponent sources, such kind of biased and prejudiced account is something not so much surprising. In such type of references, no attempt has been made for an impartial and objective assessment of the Cārvāka stand on the issue.

But, what is more surprising and quite disturbing from the generally accepted form of critical enquiry is that even, during the modern times, celebrated and established exponents of the classical Indian philosophy have more or less continued to follow the same track set by their classical predecessors. They also seem to have not taken care to notice the subtle but important distinction between two meanings of the concept of dharma – one in the sense of rigidly following religious rites, rituals, prescribed in the concerned source with a supra-natural and supra-empirical foundational structure and the other following that course of principles and rules which are socio-individually acceptable from the stand-point of moral reasoning in the worldly plane. The Indian

materialist's critical voice is found to have been raised against the religio-theological coating of socio-moral rules and norms. A Cārvāka is not against social morality but is precisely against the theological and transcendental justification of morality and ethics. The Cārvāka position is clear in acknowledging the autonomy of morals and is not thereby giving any scope for justification of morals from a transcendental divine source.

Some modern Indian thinkers, because of their not being able to properly comprehend the autonomy of ethical framework (may be because of their spiritual-cum-idealistic prejudice) are led to completely ignore the importance of the Cārvāka stand on morality. Radhakrishnan, for instance, moves on to advocate that ethics must be rooted in the other-worldliness.² But, it is not unfair to point out in this regard that the supposition of otherworldly state of existence is not logically necessary to lead a moral life in the earthly plane. On the contrary, the very desire or expectation that if one does duty as per the direction of certain religious prescriptions or imperatives, happiness or bliss would result in heavenly state of disembodied existence, does rest upon one unfounded dogma that to be moral must mean some sort of personal gain or advantage, even in a peculiar state of esoteric existence. Ego-centrism, individualism and hedonistic self-interest in some form or other lurks from behind. And further, this move too goes counter to the other lofty slogan, often advocated by the Indian spiritualists in another front, i.e. pure unselfish action or *niṣkāma karma*.

It has been widely held and is taken for granted without any slightest pause that the classical Indian materialists are only the advocates of *kāma* (which is not simply pleasure in general but solely the gross erotic sexual pleasure by hook or by crook, completely dishonoring the civilized socio-moral norm and decorum. It has been held that for the Cārvāka, pleasure is the only aim of life (*kāma evaikaḥ puruṣārthaḥ*).³ There is another *sūtra* which is attributed to Bṛhaspati by both Mādhavācārya and Kṛṣṇa Mīśra.⁴ That is "*arthakāmau puruṣārthau*". It means that wealth and pleasure are the aims of life. In addition to both

these two references one more move is also noticed according to which “death is exactly freedom” (*maraṇam eva apavargaḥ*).⁵ All these references obviously give rise to certain queries. Is it the case that the position of the Cārvāka is committed to admit one or two as *puruṣārtha*? In what sense can death be treated as the state of freedom? Bhattacharya has rejected these *sūtras* as not genuine but mere conjectures of the later writers as representing the Cārvāka viewpoint on the ground that *puruṣārtha* is a typically Brāhminical concept and *apavarga* too like *puruṣārtha* cannot be consistent with the Cārvāka position which does not have any scope for rebirth or emancipation.⁶

Of course, the admittance of *kāma* alone or both *kāma* and *artha* as the final aim/aims of life are clearly seen to be mutually incongruent. Both the references therefore need some further elucidation and explanation. The word: *kāma* in the broad sense refers to wish and desire. In this broad sense, even the concept of *mokṣa* is also held by the Advaitin as the object of desire. The aim or value of life is also spoken there as ‘object of *desire*’ (*iṣṭa*).⁷ In the context of the Cārvāka standpoint, *kāma* is held to be pleasure and thus one hedonistic rendering of the Cārvāka on morals has been advanced. Further, in certain section, a reductionistic move to interpret pleasure in terms of sensuality too has been advanced. And, once this reductionistic move is boosted, the flood-gates are opened up for gross hedonism as well as sensualism.

But it is not that clear as to why *kāma* in the context of the Cārvāka standpoint be not taken as desire for pleasure in general (inclusive of psycho-physical happiness in the earthly mundane plane, within the bounds of socio-individual moral framework) and *kāma* should only be restricted to amorous erotic sensual expression alone that lacks sense of morality at the socio-individual plane. The Cārvāka’s emphasis on pleasure in this broad sense need not be looked down upon while the non-materialist-cum-spiritualist of any formulation also aspires for the cessation and complete removal of sorrows and sufferings and, on certain cases, he pines for full happiness (*pūrṇa/pamma*

sukha) or bliss (*ānanda*) either in this life (*jīvan muhti*) or life after death (*videha mukti*). It means that to the Cārvākas, pleasure and happiness are accepted in the ordinary pragmatic sense (inclusive of its valid varied nuances).

Lokāyata has been regarded as the basis of hedonism in ancient India.⁸ It is held, in this context, that there is the peculiar conglomeration of all the theoretical structures like materialism, skepticism, hedonism and sensationalism. It is, however, the case that at the early stage of the Lokāyata thinking the subtle distinction and demarcation between different theoretical constructions might not have been possibly deciphered and that is quite natural. But when someone moves on now for a critical exposition of the Lokāyata *darśana*, one is required to explore its logical cogency and thereby can profitably dissect as to which trend of thought is compatible and consistent with the basic position by which the Lokāyata stand can be positively identified, setting aside the negative aspersions propagated by the opponents and uncritical exponents. He finds logical difficulty in all such formulations as such. It has been indicated before that materialism, at least in its classical Indian phase, is distinct from metaphysical materialism insofar as it does not subscribe to any metaphysical speculation that matter alone is ultimately real or the only reality in the transcendental noumenal pure existential sense. In fact, the Indian materialists do not bother for advancing a metaphysical justification of the material elements (*bhūtas*) as ultimate reality (*parama sattā*). They only hold that such elements are acceptable as those are perceptible. The acceptability is on epistemic phenomenal consideration alone without even having any tacit noumenal claim. The materiality is admitted on the basis of unsophisticated popular sense or empirical structure. It does not necessarily warrant any ontological commitment. Whether such a radical phenomenalist position is absolutely perfect and flawless is, however, another issue, not relevant at the present context.

The Lokāyata/Cārvāka view is often decried as skeptical. But, it is to be noted that the view is critical about any speculative transempirical ontological theory-constructions and not skeptical

about normal conception of knowledge in the ordinary sense. This is true to the Cārvāka position in general and even to the stand advocated by Jayarasi (*Tattvapaplavasimha*).

So also the case goes with such conceptual formulations like hedonism and sensationalism in the background of ethics and morality. Hedonism as the ethical doctrine stands for the view that pleasure is the ethical goal or *summum bonum*. This broad position may be again viewed in terms of different types like egoistic, altruistic and so on. It is evident that the Cārvākas have their preference for pleasure (*kāma*). And, that again is on the basis of common ordinary observational source. It is also to be marked, in this context, that they never move on to that extent of advocating that pleasure and pleasure alone is the only ultimate goal to be realized or attained in the metaphysical sense of transcendence. They find pleasure and pain as natural occurrences in life-situation. And, in that context, they prefer pleasure and avoid pain as far as possible. Such type of advocacy for pleasure is normal. It appears to be hedonistic, but in a specific sense. It is not rooted on passion or sensual desire of the gross type. It is not exclusive of refined aesthetic sense either. It is not averse to reason and is not solely bent upon overfed emotion and bloated sentiment. It has a distinct ethical tone and it need not be assimilated with either gross hedonism or rigid altruism. Its distinction and specificity need to be explored for proper understanding and conceptual clarity. The advocacy of pleasure is found to be rooted within the social structure and never beyond that. The Lokāyatika/Cārvāka point of view, in this respect, need not be viewed as anti-social. It moves for social reform and not for social abnegation. It is rightly said that the Cārvākas never move for social disability and disparity.⁹ Their ethical stand is found to be socio-empirical and not transcendental.

Further, the inclusion of *artha* need not necessarily bring in any inconsistency. It can be maintained that the uniqueness of *kāma* is not disturbed thereby. It continues to be one value along with *artha*; for it is found to be a necessary accompaniment in order to have pleasure within the social setup.

Now, without raising any issue concerning the genuineness of the two *sūtras* (which is otherwise an important point to be pursued), the point raised, in this context, is about death as the state of freedom or emancipation. It can be noted that *apavarga* is found to be a technical concept in classical Indian dārśanic discussion, particularly in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika context. There *apavarga* stands actually as an escape from sorrows and sufferings. Death is not held to be a state of *apavarga* in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. That is on the ground that even though on the occurrence of death, the *jīva* (soul) is no more attached to the *śarīra* (body) and, on account of that, there is no presence of consciousness, and thereby there is neither the awareness of sorrows and sufferings nor there is the awareness of pleasure. The state of death is not construed as the state of freedom or emancipation. Because this does not guarantee that there is the final stoppage of rebirth and the non-continuance of sorrows and sufferings in the subsequent state of another life of the individual. The very continuance of the individual to reap the consequence of karmas performed by him in the past life necessitates that within the framework of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika darśana, death cannot be interpreted as the final state of escape in the sense of attaining emancipation. That means, *apavarga* refers finally a transcendental or transempirical background in the scheme provided by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

It is notable that the logic of the Cārvāka philosophical framework cannot accommodate any kind of supra-empirical and transcendental state of absolute cessation of sufferings and also the state of final emancipation. A de-humanised, disembodied state of pure existence, having the sense of freedom and release is not possible within the Carvakian scheme. It is not accepted in their philosophical stand not simply because such a state is not sense-perceived, but also to admit such a state is not reasonable. It is on the ground of epistemic logic, the Indian materialists have found no justification for speculating an obscure transempirical state of pure release. Hence, death as a state of *apavarga* cannot be found as acceptable to the Cārvāka standpoint. Since on the occurrence of death, the individual ceases to exist, the point of

identifying death as the state of release or *mukti* does not make any sense in the classical Indian materialistic philosophy.

On similar ground the concept of annihilation of body as final release (*dehucchedomokṣaḥ*)¹⁰ is not admissible in the Carvakian scheme. *Mokṣa* as something of transcendental value has no place in the Cārvāka philosophy. From the point of view of the Cārvākas/Lokāyatikas, it can be said that death is the extinction of life and that amounts to the annihilation of the individual. There is no ground for speculating about the being of the individual after the cessation of life. It, therefore, cannot be state of *mukti* or *mokṣa* or a state of pure consciousness or bliss.

Again, why should the concept of *puruṣārtha* be necessarily construed as Brāhminical? The concept rather plays an important role in the classical Indian cultural setup in the valuational perspective and it is neither limited to the *Brahmanas* of the Vedic source nor is it confined to so-called higher caste of Brāhmins. It rather stands for the goal or aim of life which the tradition accepts as valuationally significant. And, in this sense, both *kāma* and *artha* are *puruṣārthas* or aims of life to be pursued in the socio-empiric worldly plane. In other words, pleasure and wealth are social values, which an individual ought to pursue in the life-situation. There is clearly no necessity for admitting any theological transcendence in this regard. The two values are worldly (*laukika*) and never otherworldly (*pāralaukika*). Hence, the Cārvāka's adherence to these two values is quite reasonable and consistent to their philosophical construction. The acceptance of *kāma* and *artha* can thus be viewed as morally significant. Only it is to be emphasized that so far as the Indian materialistic framework is taken into account, neither *kāma* nor *artha* either singly or both together can be pursued as values unconditionally, neglecting or bypassing other needs and requirements in the human socio-moral dimension. Avoidance of excess and meaningful restraint are not to be discouraged or overlooked so far as the Cārvāka stand is concerned. The ethical and moral facets of the two values are well recognized in the Carvakian stand, of course, within the socio-empiric bounds and not transcending that.

Needless to point out here that the acceptance of both is treated as moral objective in the socio-human perspective.

Now, the next issue for discussion, in this context, is about dharma. Vātsyāyana, as already discussed, has ascribed a *sūtra* to the materialists stating that the dharmic duties and such other type of actions prescribed in religious source need not be practiced.¹¹ Shastri accepts this *sūtra*;¹² while Bhattacharya holds that the Cārvākas presumably have not any of the aforesaid aims of life (i.e. *kāma, artha and dharma*).¹³ But, it seems that from the logical point of view at least there is no difficulty in ascribing all these three values to the Lokāyata/Cārvāka stand. The *sūtra* prohibiting the performance of the prescribed religio-theological acts/duties does not have any conflict with the performance of other acts or duties that are found to be smoothly conventional under certain socio-individual moral framework, creating no chaos and confusion in the human living situation. The rejection of dharma virtually amounts to the rigid prescription of drastic rules and regulations (which are based upon absolute reliance on certain transcendental divine-attainment and which are neither practically feasible nor are theoretically sustainable by means of sound rational procedure). The prohibition advanced by the Cārvākas thereby is not directed towards the practice of moral codes and conduct which are necessary for the trouble-free social order. Of course, this does not mean that there is thereby the tacit admittance of any fixed, unalterable socio-moral code and conduct. Social functioning is never to be construed as static and immobile. It accommodates change, revision and modification in the case of moral necessity: but that change need not mean the total extinction of socio-empirical framework. It is revised to another social setup for the preservation of moral fabric of humanity which remains unimpaired in the broad sense of the term.

It appears that the Lokāyatikas/Cārvākas too are logically obliged to accept such notion of dharma that has clear and distinct moral bearing. Their campaign is against the transcendental chimeric speculations that are not only unfounded by the parameter of reason but also are morally very much dubious and shaky. Dharma as social value is very much accommodated so far as

the logical basis of their philosophical framework is taken into consideration.

Besides the Lokāyatas/Cārvākas being castigated as gross materialistic metaphysicians by some modern exponents, their position is also, in certain quarters, assimilated with skepticism, agnosticism and sensualism, adversely affecting moral sensibility. But, from the logical point of view, it can be well marked that the position held by the Lokāyatas/Cārvākas is not necessarily committed to the state of denying the possibility of knowledge itself. Yes, it is critical all through about transcendental knowledge, having no empirical anchorage; but that does not imply that it is allergic towards empirical knowledge in the ordinary common sense. Lokāyata is not adverse to ordinary knowledge and even its position is not necessarily opposed to sophisticated scientific knowledge that clearly has its root in empirical base. Being held as the philosophy of common sense (Lokāyata), it raises questions concerning the so called *real* knowledge (*divya jñāna*) of the transcendentalists (metaphysical spiritualists and theologians). Accepting the legitimacy of perception and even inference in the empirical (*laukika*) level, it is precisely unfair to brand Lokāyata as skeptical.

On the same ground, the charge of agnosticism is also not legitimate. There is no sense of agnosticity with regard to the empirical knowledge. Only question is raised with regard to the knowledge of divinity, God, etc. which are, by definition, beyond the empirical domain. The position of Lokāyata/Cārvāka is, in a specific sense, non-committal about such entities and beings.

Maximum confusion has been imputed in assimilating Carvakism with sensualism and thereby creating a misleading impression that the classical Indian materialistic point of view is nothing but immoral and unethical. As already indicated before, the logical implication of the Lokāyata/Cārvāka standpoint does neither necessarily lead to radical sensationalism of the type of Humaen impressionism nor does it entail gross sensualism of some sort of loose morals. There is no evidence found to the effect that the Indian materialism abnegates morality – either private or public in the socio-individual framework.

There is no corresponding term in classical Sanskrit usage for the word individual. The present use of the Sanskrit term *vyakti* is definitely modern. But, despite the non-availability of a corresponding term, there is, of course, the presence of the concept of individual in the classical Indian sources. Particularly, in the context of Lokāyata/Cārvāka philosophy there is reference to the term *manuṣya/mānava* in which the sense of individuality is clearly implied. The sense of man in relation to society is very much current in classical standard usages, like '*loka-prasiddhi*' (prevalent custom among men) '*loka-bhavana*' (welfare of men), '*loka-ranjana*' (gaining, public/popular confidence), '*loka-vartana*' (conduct of men), '*loka-vyavahāra*' (observance/custom prevalent among men), *loka-siddha* (current among the people).¹⁴ All this reveals that the view held by the classical Indian materialism is not opaque to the sense of socio-individual morality in the human framework.

Only one thing is to be marked in this regard. Moral or ethical sense is meaningfully applied in the socio-empiric foundation and never beyond that. The so called transcendental sense of morality is inadmissible in the Cārvākian philosophical domain. As stated before, moral sense is not derived from sense-perceptual source; but that does not imply that it has transempiric usage and application. On the contrary, it is only within man in relation to socio-empiric situation, the valid applicability of moral sense prevails or persists. The sense of fellow-feeling, the sense of justice, goodness, virtue, etc. are all meaningfully applied in the socio-human context and never transcending that. In this regard, the classical Indian materialist position on ethics and morality is quite clear and relevant.

In the post-medieval and modern period, there has been a tremendous change in the socio-political map of India. The impact of cross-cultural contact is also found to be conspicuous. Indians have come in direct contact with western mode of thinking and that has given rise to rethink and reconsider about traditional beliefs, customs and socio-individual dealings in general. Gradually, there has been the occurrence of renaissance in various fields including art, culture and learning. The impact of science is gradually felt

and that has considerably affected the set ideas in the fields of religious institutions, their prescribed form of dogmas, rites and rituals. During the last two centuries, there are intellectuals and social reformers who have made significant contributions towards social cohesion, stability and progress. In the preceding chapters, some of them have been referred to and their contributions have been critically evaluated.

Despite the fact that Ambedkar is known to be a religionist, unlike the Indian materialist, he has opted for the primacy of reason (*hetu*) and in this respect he is found to be somewhat close to the materialist stand. Both Ambedkar and the Indian materialist are for social justice and they have equally raised their voice against caste-discrimination, prevailed in the Hindu society. Both adhere to the view that the moral sense of justice has to be operated within the earthly plane. That means both have preferred for secular morality. But, at the same time, his acceptance of the view (held by Burke) that true religion is the foundation of society, is not free from difficulty. It is not made clear as to what is to be accepted as true religion. Can there be any religious formulation which becomes fully free from dogmas and institutional rites? Can dogmatic faith and open-textured reason be placed on the same footing? Ambedkar's preference of one religion as against another does not, therefore, appear to be rationally that compelling. His preference for reason, in this respect, seems to be rather weak.

Devatma is another important figure in the recent past who is clearly opposed to all sorts of mystical spiritualism. His version of materialism is distinct from that of classical form of metaphysical materialism and his viewing of matter not as a substantive entity but as incessant changing force is notable. His thought-pattern, having a scientific basis, is found to be positively down-to-earth and, in that way, it has resemblance with classical materialism. He has tried to juxtapose both fact-enquiry and value-enquiry. In this regard, his saying "I am first a part of humanity and then a part of the universe" is notable. It shows his concern for socio-individual welfare in the empiric setting without craving for any transempirical beatitude. His philosophical outlook acknowledges

the validity of both scientific and social scientific enquiry without indulging in any form of religio-theological mysticism. His humanism does have secular outlook and his view on ethics and morality is framed accordingly.

But, it is here, the move advanced by Devatma for a new religion (Dev dharma)—a religion of scientific humanism does not appear to be that clear and impressive. For, secular outlook cannot accommodate consistently any form of religious conservatism. Both are poles apart, to borrow the view of J.S. Mill. Both religion and science move on different track with totally different objectives. Any attempt to amalgamate both science and religion only exhibits conceptual obscurity. Such an attempt for unification for both is found to be factually inoperative too. It also does not successfully combat with ethico-moral dilemmas and problems within social dimensions.

M.N. Roy was a full-fledged materialist in India during the last century. He has been bold enough to hold that materialism is the only possible philosophy insofar as the rational account of the world is concerned. As a social philosopher, his concern is to safeguard the interest of mankind as a whole. And for that, his mission is to change the existing society, if needed through radical and revolutionary procedure. In him, there is thus a peculiar combination of both materialism and humanism which he terms as “Radical humanism”. His overall concern for welfare of humanity is obviously sincere and genuine. Only the procedure for changing the social structure through violent revolutionary measure cannot be practically successful at least in the long run. History has witnessed many such unsuccessful instances. However, so far as the objective of human welfare in the socio-empiric frame is concerned and in this connection the emphasis on scientific enterprise is accepted in general, M.N. Roy’s viewpoint seems to be quite close to the classical version of Indian materialism that is found to be also positive, this-worldly and is quite akin to socio-individual welfare in the empirical plane.

Nehru has never claimed himself to be a materialist. The spiritualist’s claim has never fascinated him either and he has no hesitation in treating it to be ‘absurd’. Though he concedes the

impact of science in man's day-to-day life, he is equally concerned about human welfare in the social surrounding and, in the Indian context, he always pleads for individual's dignity, self-respect and equal status in society being its bona-fide member. He considers the importance of ethical and moral values at the background of scientific pursuit and progress. 'Science for peace' remains as his favourite motto. He insists for the recognition of human element in all form of scientific enterprise. It is in this sense, his scientific humanism has been set in providing due recognition and regard for socio-individual moral status.

It is already indicated before as to how in Nehru's view, religious belief in a super-natural divine source has given rise to dogmas and blind-beliefs in the social plane, causing thereby harm to man in society. But, again, his view that man has an essence, which is nothing but his 'inner urge' seems to be neither scientifically established nor is it warranted from the core of humanistic attitude. Such a move does not seem to be free from obscurity.

Nehru is undoubtedly one of the foremost patriots of modern India. His patriotic feeling is honest and genuine. His *Last Will and Testament* is, of course, a testimony for this. He has desired therein that a portion of his ashes (after his death) be thrown into the river, Ganga at Allahabad and the rest be thrown from the aeroplane over the cultivated fields of India. This desire, Nehru has clarified therein, is not due to religious sentiment but it is due to his patriotic attachment to India.

In recent past, attempt has been advanced to analyse such expressions of Nehru literally and to find in it some sort of "self-deception of the most intransigent type".¹⁵ It is likely to lead one to the conclusion that Nehru's patriotism, at least in this respect, is not consistent with his usual rationalistic temper. For, what is the status of one's own wish or desire when he is no more after his death? Such wish, it is argued, rests upon some sort of "futile longing on the part of a man to be distinguished even after death".

It seems to me that a literal scrutiny of such expressions of Nehru brings out such critical implication. But, contextually Nehru's statement found in the *Last Will* does not necessarily

warrant for such analytical scrutiny. Being a rationalist and far removed from any sort of religious compulsion, Nehru cannot consistently aspire for his disembodied continuity after death. His last wish, therefore, needs another reading, quite consistent to his general rationalistic temper. It is rooted in deep patriotic feeling that let love and regard for Indianness be there in each and every Indian. All should try their level best to keep up the prestige of India at the highest. It is an expression of deep national feeling and it need not call for a rigorous literal scrutiny.

Not only the religionist or theist aspires to express his last wish, but anybody including a rationalist, humanist, non-theist and even one staunch atheist is free enough to express his last wish. That only points to his message for the people in general, whether it is accepted or rejected by them is of no longing to him in any way.

In the preceding chapters, there has been succinct exposition-cum-appraisal of the two major movements, viz. the Indian positivist movement and the Indian rationalist movement. The former one is not strictly materialistic. It neither subscribes to the metaphysical doctrine of material reality nor does it confine itself to the perceptual knowledge of the basic elements like earth, fire etc. All the same, it favours, like classical Indian materialism human welfare within the socio-empirical framework. In a specific sense, the movement turns out to be humanistic and avoids transhumanism of any sort. It very well accommodates rather welcomes scientific enquiry and investigation in meeting the human issues and problems, as against any kind of supernatural and transcendental speculation. To that extent, its positivistic outlook becomes close to that of materialism. Nevertheless, such resemblance becomes somewhat beclouded on account of Indian positivists moving towards having a bridge between religion and humanism by way of introducing what is termed as "Godess of humanity" which has neither been acceptable to the conservative orthodox religionist nor to the intelligentsia who are not prepared to accept the bridge, on account of its inherent incompatibility.

The Indian rationalist movement has been introduced and developed in two distinct forms. One emphasizes on the importance of reason within the liberal or catholic formulation of

spiritualism that very much strives for accommodating material as well as humanistic outlook under its purview. The other is found to be a rigid form of humanism, having no concession for spiritualism in any sense of the term. This extreme form of materialistic humanism is avowedly atheistic, even in some cases, pleading for a move towards iconoclasm, fully ignoring the human situation so far as the social reality is concerned.

Despite, its not being well taken up by the orthodox conservatives, the moderate form of spiritual rationalists have been able to impress upon the general mass to a considerable extent, because of their liberal approach. Their appeal for change and reform in beliefs and attitudes are found to be gradually gaining the ground mostly because, the general man is well aware of the necessity and utility of reason as against blind faith and prejudice. There is a conspicuous impression laid upon the general psyche on the basis of stupendous scientific progress during the last century. People now, by and large, realize that horrors caused to humanity in the present day is not due to science but due to misuse of scientific research by the corrupt leaders, politicians and a group of intelligentsia who are heavily preoccupied with their vested interests than with socio-human welfare.

It is thought that spiritual awareness can be retained in the individual's psyche for his emotional satisfaction and relief without moving for any clash with reason that is employed for scientific/social scientific knowledge. Of course, the rationalists of other variety perpetually move on to protest against any sort of inclusion of theological spiritualism within the circuit of reason. To them, spiritualism, in any form, is ingrained with some form of transcendence beyond the periphery of rational investigation. And, that is why, any attempt of union between faith and reason is bound to be a failure from their standpoint.

The debate still continues in India at present between the moderate and the radical materialist, the moderate and the radical rationalists and also the moderate and the radical humanists. What would be the output of such debates and dialogue? Future perhaps is to unravel it.

However, one thing remains certain. The Indian materialist's

(whether classical or modern) insistence to demarcate the bounds of ethics and morality within the socio-empiric human framework as against any transempiric/transcendental domain is definitely in the right direction. It is well based on reason than on any blind conjecture. Morality is a human concern in and through the empirical platform. Any kind of transgressing this legitimate limit only causes conceptual muddle as well as practical imbalance.

Notes and References

1. Vide his *Naiṣadha-Carita* (NS) (XVII-49).
2. Vide his *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, Oxford, 1940, p. 83.
3. This *sūtra* is attributed to Bṛhaspati. Vide Shastri, D., and op.cit. p. 55. This *sūtra* is cited by several commentators on *Bh. Gītā*, i.e. Śrīdharaśvamī (1400 CE), Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1600 CE), Nilakantha (1700 CE) and *Advaitabrahmasiddhi* by Sadānanda Kasmiraka (1700 CE) vide Bhattacharya, R., op.cit., p. 618.
4. Vide *Sarva Darśana Saṁgraha* and *Prabodha Candrodya* (referred to by Bhattacharya, R., op. cit.
5. Vide Shastri, D., ibid and Bhattacharya, R., ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Hirianna, M., *Indian Philosophical Studies*, op. cit., pp. 127 ff.
8. Sinha C.C., "Hedonism in Ancient India" *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol.XIV, part II, 1928, p. 187.
9. Negi, Surendra Singh, *Bhāratīya Darshan* (ed.) (in Hindi), Gaziabad, K.M. Prakashan, 2001, p. 30.
10. Vide *Mādhavācārya's Sarva Darśana Saṁgraha*, op.cit.
11. "na dharmāmścareṭ" *Kāmasūtra*, 1.2.25-30.
12. Shastri, D., op.cit., p. 59.
13. Bhattacharya, R., op.cit., pp. 618-619.
14. Vide Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, op.cit., p. 872.
15. Nayak, G.C. "Indian Culture and Nehru, the great patriot and rationalist" pub. in his edited volume, *Nehru and Indian Culture*, Puri, Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University, 1991, p. 41.

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Appendix

The monograph, *Ethics in Indian Materialist Philosophy* is, though formally completed, yet it (seems to me) needs certain clarifications in order to vindicate the philosophical profundity of the viewpoint under reference.

The lexical source points to the meaning of a word without paying attention to the way that is used or to the words that occur with it (Vide *Oxford Dictionary*, 2010 reprint, p. 883). From this, it is evident that meaning, in actual use, is found to be wider than the meaning, being restricted to the word precisely. 'Materialism' lexically points to the belief that only material things exist (Ibid., p. 946). However, actually the term refers to multiple uses, not simply restricting to existence/real existence/ultimate existence. It sometimes points to a materialist attitude to life in general. There is also the adoption of a materialist standpoint without meaning any positive or negative claim about ontologization. Someone affirms that material things being perceived without ever meaning thereby that material things alone are ultimately or eternally existent. So also the view that 'ethics is normative' is different from 'descriptive ethics' which is concerned with analysis of ethical terms and concepts in discourse, not necessarily either to approve or to disapprove a moral norm. Of course, this is not totally undebatable insofar as approval or disapproval of moral ideas in the socio-individual framework is not purely arbitrary and pointless. That is determined generally as per the context and situation. A scope for openness and flexibility seems here to be quite significant.

Keeping this in view, when one moves on to ethics and morality in Indian materialist philosophy, it is revealed that neither the term ethics/morality nor the term materialism/materialist philosophy

has any absolute and distinct precision so far as their connotations are concerned. While the Upaniṣadic expressions like ‘Let your mother be a goddess unto you let your father be a god unto you. Let your teacher be a god unto you. Let your guest be a god unto you (*mātr̥-devaḥ bhava, pit̥rdevaḥ bhava, āchārya-devaḥ bhava, atithidevaḥ bhavaḥ*—*Tatt. xi, 2*) have indirect moral implication of socio-individual dynamics, “Brahman is the only Reality; the world is ultimately false, and the individual soul is non-different from Brahman” (*brahma satyam jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*) has a definite leaning towards a form of trans-social implication. Despite the avowed acclamation of “let all be happy” (*sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ*) etc. which indicate socio-moral significance, mostly religious goal has been set in certain dominant circle for individual or personal self-realization, leaving aside others in society. Ethics as an independent theoretical study of moral concepts has not been found in detailed form. The logic of moral discourse has also not been carried out systematically in the classical phase.

It can be noted that the term materialism cannot be singly applied to any one system of thought in clear precision. The Cārvākas are classified as materialists on the ground that they accept only earth, water, air and fire (*khiti, ap, tej and marut*) as perceived ones and reject the claim of unperceived entities and objects as ultimately existent. In other words, the standpoint is never set to extend the meaning of existence to anything trans-empirical, while there are other materialists in the philosophical circle who have maintained that only matter exists and nothing else. But from the Cārvāka standpoint, it can be noted that though it accepts the existence of material elements as basic on the ground of knowableness, it is not committed, to adopt (at least on logical ground) that the material elements which are perceived are ultimately real in the ontological sense. In fact, as commonsense sense-empiricism, the standpoint holds the meaning of existence only in terms of knowableness and never commits itself to assert that material elements are eternally real existents when nobody is to have any knowledge of those and those remain unperceived. Because for them, unperceived and

unperceivable objects are not acceptable. Metaphysical reality of matter/material element is not warranted in the viewpoint of Cārvāka. It is precisely non-metaphysical in the trans-empiric sense and is prone to commonsense.

If this elucidation is well taken, then it is plausible that a Cārvāka is not materialist in the usual lexical sense. His viewpoint need not be assimilated with the view of the material atomists. Even Marxism which is regarded as a modern variant of materialism, is rooted, on the economic factor of class struggle between haves and have nots. It is not, therefore, materialism of the atomist variety. All this seems to justify that the term, materialism is used with different meanings as per the contextual/circumstantial factors and to insist for one meaning (*whether lexical or any other suggested stipulative*) as the only correct use in all cases is not reasonably sound. This, of course, does not imply that a particular use is either fully right or fully wrong on any occasion indiscriminately. Neither it is partially right nor is it partially wrong in the formal sense. Its plausibility or forcefulness virtually arises on its well accounting the specific situation that it sticks. In this way, it is perhaps not cogent to expect sheer atomist or like account of materialism from the Cārvākas or vice versa. Each position needs treatment from its respective footing.

It appears that the Cārvāka's acceptance of material elements as basic in its philosophical framework is based on its adhering to epistemic bounds of sense-empiricism of a general formulation (*not necessarily reducing its stand to sense-impressionism of, say, Humean variety*) and, in that way, its denying any supra-sensible phenomenon/phenomena carries meaning. Materialism, has to be comprehended within this background for a Cārvāka.

It is argued that the position of Cārvāka materialism is open-textured. It is not necessarily committed to unethicality or immorality. To brand them as socially unworthy and individually self-centred and grossly egoistic is fully unfounded. A question is raised as to whether this is also equally applicable to the spiritualists and non-materialists. If atheism is not necessarily committed to immorality does theism not so committed? Yes, belief in immorality, can be noticed anywhere, depending upon

respective individual, social, circumstantial factors/attitudes and not on the acceptance of either theism or atheism. There seems to have some force in this mode of reasoning.

But from the Cārvāka point of view, it can be held that the spiritualist with a theistic belief or even a non-theistic faith on some sort of trans-empiric structure leans upon a type of supra-sensible divine transcendence and thereby evades (sometimes neglects) the socio-individual human commitments and obligations considerably. Upgrading self-realization in the sense of spiritual transcendence and lowering the ordinary, commonsense socio-individual relationship of equitable reciprocity is more or less a general feature of different forms of spiritualist thinking. It is that to which the Cārvāka's critical outlook seems to be pointing at. The defence that a spiritualist too is not oblivious of socio-individual duties and responsibilities is perhaps not strong enough to preserve the sense of autonomy of ethics. Because, in his case the ethical attitude is not independent in itself but is rather a means or subservient to spiritual goal of final realization. And, grading spiritual transcendence as the most excellent (*parama śreya* or *paramārtha*) and grading worldly socio-human mutual adjustment and co-existence as relative, do give rise to some form of questionable disparity and undue discrimination. It indirectly rather boosts for a shaky moral foundation. In the name of spiritual excellence, there are gruesome instances of human torture, social injustice in the course of historical movement. In most cases, the strong sense of spiritualism gives rise to some sort of narrow communalism, groupism and institutionalism. A Cārvāka rejoinder, in this regard, is not redundant and pointless.

Nevertheless, the Cārvāka stand is regarded as a form of materialism insofar as it denounces any speculative assertion about spiritual entities as existents (reals), being not sense-perceivable in principle (publicly). It does not reject magic as a technique which is communicable both in theory and practice. But the metaphysical, purely transcendental speculative conjectures about beings/entities, having neither socio-empiric human significance nor any usual sense of objective validity, turn out to be vacuous, however quixotic and emotionally poignant it may

be otherwise. The Cārvāka stand can likewise be regarded as vindicating a form of socio-human ethical outlook, though it is too much to expect one systematic ethical position from the scanty source-materials that are now available. But this deficiency does not undermine the attempt to reconstruct the Cārvāka stand afresh at least from a logical angle to explore as to how far its stand is compatible and coherent.

It is thought that the unanimous condemnation of the materialist in the Indian tradition is not because that it is anti-Vedic or atheistic. For there are Sāṅkhya, Nyāya and Mimāṃsā philosophies in which either there is non-admittance of God/gods or some of those are independent of Vedic orthodoxy.

Yes, it is true that, in general the Cārvāka stand has not been adequately dealt with in the traditional sources. The stand is given a cursory treatment without reasonable study. Quite often, the stand is filthily ridiculed. It seems that primarily the condemnation lies on its not acknowledging spiritual transcendence of divinity in any form. The Cārvāka stand is empirical and it does acknowledge the socio-individual stability in the ordinary common-sense pattern. Never does it allow anything that is simply airy, visionary and not having any relevance in the realm of actuality. Since belief in God/gods and accepting Vedas as inviolable rest on some form of dogmatic prejudice, the Cārvāka stand moves against this and thereby vindicates its materialistic and non-spiritualistic stand in commonsense framework.

The issue of Sāṅkhya, Nyāya and Mimāṃsā are clearly different. The Sāṅkhya position is not dependent on Vedic orthodoxy (vide Vācaspati's account of *śruti* as not Veda but "*Vākya janitam vākyaārtha jñānam*") and it is also independent of the acceptance of God/gods. But, nonetheless it has the admittance of spiritual transcendence of the non-empiric form in the sense of accepting individual *puruṣas* (disembodied spiritual conscious beings) as independent beings. To that extent, the Sāṅkhya is considerably spiritualistic and cannot be placed on the same footing as that of the Cārvāka.

So also the case goes with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position. The Vaiśeṣikas admit *dravya* (substance) but includes therein

ātman (self) which is not acceptable to the Cārvāka. Though consciousness is held by the Vaiśeṣika as an adventitious attribute, self is not identical with body. It is held to be a separate, independent, individual substance/entity being eternal and all-pervaded, having the capacity of being the substratum of consciousness (which the bodily substance lacks). This shows that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position also clearly leans upon some form of trans-empiric spiritualization, contrary to the Cārvāka stand.

The Mīmāṃsakas, though admitting the Vedic orthodoxy partly (*the karma-kāṇḍa portion*) do not find any necessity of accepting theistic creator-God which is indicated in the Vedic source, besides a number of gods. Here it is notable that the Mīmāṃsaka accepts the concept of divinity and pines for the attainment of heaven (*svargakāma yajeta*) or some sort of spiritual transcendence, of course without accepting any theistic supervision. Each individual shapes his destiny as per his own work and deed. Any sort of theistic interference is unwarranted in this framework. Its final goal, however, is directed towards some form of spiritual transcendence in the form of transempirical heavenly existence, obviously counter to the Cārvāka stand.

In the classical Indian tradition the Cārvāka is thoroughly ignored on account of its neglecting the non-empiric spiritual realm of transcendental existence whereas the Sāṅkhyaits, etc. under reference have the admittance of spiritual transcendence. That is why there is found to be the wholesale condemnation of Cārvāka in the tradition, however questionable it may be from unbiased rational angle. The classical tradition thus seems to have suffered from one overdose of unwanted spiritualistic fad.

It is viewed that in classical Indian tradition there are certain thinkers who are identified as skeptic (*Śamsayavādī/uccedavādī*), fatalist (*bhāgya-vādī/niyatīvādī/daivavādī or ajīvakavādī*), agnostic (*ajñeyavādī/ajñānikavādī*) and the general materialist (sometimes termed as *pādārthikavādī*). It is argued that it is not proper to assimilate all of them to one category. In this connection, it is held that Buddha is said to have met all these thinkers but later on has made a separate space for himself in presenting a different form

of philosophical outlook. To put the views of all such thinkers under one common basket of materialism is perhaps not correct.

Yes, apparently there is found to be some force in this remark. At the outset, the different views (as stated before) are found to be not the same and they seem to emphasize different points. All of them need not be materialists at least in one of the versions of materialism (viz, Mather or material elements alone are real).

Before moving further on this issue, let us briefly probe about the views (stated before) one by one. The term skeptic stands for the person who doubts any statement as true. In its radical form it often means doubting for the sake of doubting. Such a stand seems to be negative and pejorative. Jayarasi who is regarded as skeptic has raised philosophical question about the validity of any *pramāṇa* that is advanced for knowledge. His stand is not that of a skeptic in the radical sense. He is not doubting for the sake of doubting. He raises certain critical questions about the validity of *pramāṇa* from the philosophical angle. He does not thereby doubt the statements concerning ordinary state of affairs. As such, his position need not be construed as necessarily negative. His doubt is not about ordinary knowledge of day-today affairs. He raises questions about the validity of such speculative claims of knowledge concerning any issue of supra-sensible or trans-empirical entities. In that way, his stand seems quite close to that of the Lokāyatikas who too raise question about the knowledge-claim of trans-empirical entities. Perhaps that is why, Jayarasi is treated as a Lokāyata and there seems to be no incoherency in such a move, Jayarasi himself, in his writing, has indicated his approval for such a reading.

Fatalism is used at least in two different senses. It stands for belief that events take place by fate about which one does not have any control. Secondly, it is the fact of accepting that one cannot prevent something from happening. In other words, the first sense seems to speculate about the fate which is unseen power/being and that controls everything. This leads to the acceptance of a metaphysical being/entity and by whom man is fully bound. But, in the second sense, fatalism need not stand for the belief in the

metaphysical existence of any unseen power/being. It is just the acceptance of the fact that person, on the occurrence of certain events does not have any control. Such events occur by chance or by accident or by some casual factor which is not yet known on account of lack of scientific effort. Such fatalist is thereby not committed to hold any trans-empirical or supersensible being or powerful person as the controller. At least the supposition of any anthropomorphic God or gods is not entertained. It is only held that as a matter of fact there are occurrences of certain devastating events which the human mind is not yet able to avoid or to combat successfully. It is usually designated as a form of accident or miracle. Any causal explanation of it is not yet possible. But that does not imply that such case of inability is fully pre-determined and probable accounting of such events in future by human investigation is fully closed and sealed.

Whatever it may be, it seems clear that these thinkers are different from the first group of fatalists who insist to regard fate as trans-empirical supra-being/Being by the control of whom person is a mere puppet. Such closed outlook towards unseen fate is not the necessary mark of identity for all the fatalists, including the ajivakavādins of the past. At least, the accident list's approach, on this issue, appears to be quite close to that of the Cārvākas insofar as those two are close to accidentalism and are averse towards the admittance of transempirical, supersensible, noumenal Being. They seem to be not closed but quite open in their approach and that brings them somewhat close to the Cārvākian materialistic frame of reference.

Philosophically, the agnostic is he who expresses his inability in committing something about noumena. For him, it is not simply unknown but is unknowable. The Cārvākas, while being treated as materialists, are taken for granted that they, on the contrary, are emphatic in insisting the material elements as only *ultimate reals* and not thereby accepting the separate, independent reality of self, God, heaven, hell etc. In philosophical circle, Immanuel Kant, for instance, is regarded by some as agnostic insofar as, for him noumena is unknown and unknowable. In the lexical source two different meanings of agnostic can be noted.

To *Oxford* dictionary, agnostic believes that it is not possible to know whether God exists (Ibid., p. 30). To *Chambers* dictionary (Vide 1991 reprint, p. 17), agnostic holds that we know nothing of things beyond material phenomena. It is notable that the second meaning is quite close to Cārvāka; since it does not admit anything beyond material phenomena. However, the first meaning is not totally unconcerned to a Cārvāka, since it does not have any ground to know the existence of God that is regarded as distinct spiritual Being. Virtually it comes to indicate that God as distinct from sense-perceived matter is unknowable.

If this line of interpretation is conceded, then the stand of Cārvāka is not also very much away from the agnostic. Neither has he held anything about metaphysical existence nor non-existence. In fact, he does not have any ground to make any commitment so far as the knowledge of metaphysics of trans-empirical realm is concerned. He has a negative stand only insofar as the spiritualists' claim is not within the realm of sense-phenomena.

If all the explanations (as presented here) are accepted, then the views of Jayarāṣī and other thinkers (who are referred to before) can be noted as quite similar (if not identical) with the Cārvākas and to locate the points of similarity is not unimportant. At least one thing is noteworthy that all of their views go against the admittance of spiritual framework in philosophical outlook and, in this regard, they appear to be this-worldly and not trans-social, other worldly. For example, the Sāṅkhya philosophers who are usually held to have a long ancient legacy, are clearly hesitant to admit creator/theistic God over and above the two principal entities (*tattvas*) as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Some of them, however, admit *Īśvara* (viz. *Vijñānabhikṣu*). But, it is notable that the *Īśvara* that is mentioned (in *Sāṅkhya-yoga sūtra*) is only *puruṣa viśeṣa* and not the theistic God. However, the mark of spiritual connotation is very much present in such concept of *puruṣa* and, in that way, the Sāṅkhya stand is distinct from that of the Cārvākas.

An attempt has been made in the discussion (so far presented in this work) to highlight the different non-conventional thinkers in the Indian philosophical tradition in order to find out their

points of affinity in favour of some sort of non-spiritualistic framework. They are surely not identical in their philosophic pursuit. But, nonetheless, they are very much close in their philosophic observations insofar as they more or less are found to be quite critical about the speculative conjectures concerning trans-empirical, trans-human realm for attaining any individual/personal beatitude. Some of them may not have overt support for social welfare; but they also do not show any leaning for individual well-being at the cost of evading social obligations. At least, whatever is found in the classical sources (*Brhaspati sūtras*), such an emphasis for aiming at personalistic excellence/beatitude/salvation, neglecting the socio-human cause in the empiric plane seems to be a forced or laboured rendering.

In a wider perspective, there appears to be a family-resemblance which is found among the different non-conventional thinkers and they, more or less, seem to share a materialistic outlook to a considerable degree. Further in them, there is no clear and definite evidence of their evading and neglecting general socio-human sense of morality. The view of the modern Indian materialists is not fully identical with that of the classical Cārvākas. But, in matters of a general materialistic attitude towards life and free from theistic-cum-spiritualistic stand, they also are noted as not far away from the classical Indian materialists, especially with regard to socio-human moral dimension.

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