CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA AND REBIRTH IN CLASSICAL ORTHODOX AND HETERODOX SYSTEMS

The Hindus classify the whole system of Indian philosophy into two classes, namely the Āstika and the Nāstika. Various meanings given to the word Āstika are, (1) one who believes in the life after death, (2) one who believes in God and (3) one who accepts the authority of the Vedas. As applied to the schools of Indian philosophy, Āstika is to be understood in the third of the above senses. To the Āstika group belong the six Darsanas, Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedanta. On the other hand Nāstika views are those which neither regard the Vedas as infallible nor try to establish their validity on their authority. These are principally three in number, the Buddhism, Jainism and the Cārvāka. The term ‘Hindu Philosophy’ is narrower than Indian philosophy as it denotes only the Orthodox schools.

It is true that with the exception of the Cārvāka materialist, all the other systems of Indian philosophy, whatever may be their difference of opinion in other matters, agree on some fundamental points of importance, i.e., the realisation of the transcendent state, the ‘sumnum bonum of life’.

All the Indian philosophical systems (excluding Cārvāka) believe in the Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth. They hold that whatever action is done by a man
leaves behind it some sort of potency which has the power to produce joy or sorrow according as it is good or bad in the future and when the fruits of this actions cannot be enjoyed in the present life, he has to take another birth as a man or any other being to suffer them.

The philosophical systems in India is called Mokṣa śāstra, the science of liberation. The aim of all the systems of Indian philosophy is to show us the means for the attainment of Mokṣa. Mokṣa means to be free from the circuit of birth and death and consequently from all kinds of worldly pain. They believe that this beginningless chain of karma and its fruits, of birth and rebirth, has somewhere its end. This end was not to be attained at some distant time, but was to be sought with in us. The belief that the soul could be realised in some stage as being permanently divested of all actions, feelings or ideas, led logically to the conclusion that the connection of the soul with these worldly pursuits was extraneous, illusory or artificial and in its true nature the soul is untouched by the impurities of our ordinary life. The realisation of this state is the goal and the final achievement of human life.

In Indian thought there is a pessimistic attitude towards the world and the optimistic faith in the end. Though the belief that the world is full of suffering has not being equally emphasised in all systems, yet it may be considered as being shared by all of them. What appears as pleasures are but mere appearances or
pain in disguised form. The pleasurable or painful experiences were looked upon as nearing no peaceful end and are artificial or illusory. The only way to get rid of this illusory experiences is through self purification. When the mind is so purified from the worldly impurities, the self shines in its true light and its true nature is rightly conceived. This is the real state of bliss according to Indian thinkers.

For the attainment of salvation there is a common agreement upon the general principles of ethical conduct must be followed for the purpose. Though there is a difference in certain details, there was a unity in ethical practices for self purification. It is also said that except Buddhism and Carvaka all other Indian systems accept the existence of a permanent soul named as Atman Jiva or Purusa. Though the Buddhists do not believe in the permanent existence of the soul, yet they believe in the doctrine of karma and rebirth.

2.1 Orthodox Schools

2.1.1 Sankhya - Yoga View On Karma And Rebirth

The relation of Sankhya with yoga is a matter of discussion since ancient times. In Mahabharata and 'Bhagavat Gita', the question has been raised more than once, and the established conclusion is that they are ignorant, who think that the Sankhya and Yoga are 'two' and different systems of philosophy. Wise are those, who do not see any difference between the two. Roughly speaking, the
relation of Sānkhya with Yoga is that of theory and practice. While Sānkhya primarily is a metaphysical theory, Yoga provides a definite path for the attainment of the goal of liberation envisaged by the former.

In dealing with problems concerning the creation of universe, its process of action, the power behind it to initiate and it promotes action, both in animate and inanimate worlds, this system relies on dualism of Puruṣa, and Prakṣī. Puruṣa is perfect, independent, ever free spirit or soul, inactive, conscious, formless, a quality less entity. Prakṣī is unintelligent, uncaused, objective, ever-active, eternal, composed of three constituents but produced everything else. Whole of the phenomenal world is produced by Prakṣī through its modifications. The Prakṣī with three gunās, are not perceived but are inferred from their effects. The three gunās are sattva, which is potential consciousness and therefore tends to conscious manifestations, Rajas is the source of all activity and produces pain and Tamas which leads to ignorance, passivity and indifference. Prakṣī is a string of these three strands.

When Prakṣī and its gunās are in the state of equilibrium, there is no action. This is the natural condition of Prakṣī. But when the Prakṣī comes in

3 Ibid., XIII, p. 39.
contact with puruṣa, the equilibrium is dissolved and evolution starts. Prakṛti evolves under the influence of puruṣa. Mahat or the Great, the Cause of whole universe, is the first product of the evolution of Prakṛti. It is the basis of the intelligence of the individual: Ahaṅkāra or the principle of individuation arises after mahat. Through its action the different spirits become endowed each with a separate mental background. Psychologically, the function of ahaṅkāra is self-love. Mahat stands to ahaṅkāra as consciousness to self-consciousness. The gunās take three different courses of development from ahaṅkāra according to which the latter is said to be sātvika, rajasa and tamasa. From ahaṅkāra in its sattva aspect are derived the mind and the five organ of perception, and the five of action, and from the same in its tamasa aspect, the five fine elements. The rajasa ahaṅkāra plays its part in both and is present in the results. From the fine five elements, the five gross elements arise. One of the gunās may be predominant in all these developments. Others are also present and perform their functions but help indirectly in the evolution of the products.

As mahat or the principle of intelligence is the first product of evolution it is the first form of activity to initiate further activities. Past actions which are responsible for illusion, are themselves a result of the unity of the Prakṛti and puruṣa, which have been working since beginningless time, compel the soul to

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5 Ibid., pp. 268-269.
take birth. When born, it lives, and performs actions during the lifetime. When an action is executed, it yields results, and consequently leaves impressions on the doer and these impressions stand to be the cause other action and then the cycle of action and impression go on.

Merits and demerits of actions reside in the intellect, is considered to be the locus of basic inclination of man. The impression formed out of all, what a man has done previously find a place in intellect. These impressions are the determining factors of the life cycle of man. They motivate him to become what he actually becomes.

The Sāńkhya holds that the birth of the body in the next form of life is an effect of actions done in the previous birth. They believe that every soul possesses a subtle body, which accompanies the soul through all its transmigration. It can’t be destroyed as long as the soul is liberated. If it is dissolved, there would not be a continuity of the self with the impressions of its past lives. Whatever actions are done by the body, and its organs in former births, leaves their traces on the subtle body, and hence thus it must move from life to life in order to bring out the fruits of past deeds. There are infinite number of puruṣas who are bound to different psychic apparatus, through which they move from one body to another. As the subtle body moves the self in all its rebirths, it

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7 James R. Ballantyne, (Trans.), The Sāńkhya Aphorisms of Kapila, Book I. APH 149, p. 166.
is natural that the effects of both virtues and vices of past lives should reside in it. It is in this way the past action brings out this effect in the future life.

Thus in the Sānkhyā yoga system, it is the subtle body which is the result of connection between prakṛti and puruṣa, caused by ignorance, which in turn formed by the impressions of karmas, for, karmas took place only when and puruṣa are united. This subtle body formed primevally, unimpeded, constant, composed of intellect which migrates because of being endowed with dispositions. Hence once the puruṣa is united with prakṛti, the self is subjected to the law of karma followed by the cycle of births and deaths.

The Sānkhyā thinkers do not feel the need of a supernatural power like God to be responsible for creation. The evolution of the world from prakṛti takes place in the presence of puruṣa without the interference of any other agent. The evolution shall then be followed by the automatic functioning of the law of karma. Yoga, however accepts God. Iśvara is a particular soul untouched by affliction, works, fruition and impression. But even in the system, the nature and status of God doesn’t appear to be important. Patanjali puts in an Iśvara more for the purposes of meditation and other subordinate conveniences than for any

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cardinal important purpose. God has been presented rather as a practical convenience in order to help one's concentration.

Since union of prakṣṭi and puruṣa is the ultimate cause of bondage, it is their final separation which brings liberation. The right knowledge about the self as pure consciousness and prakṣṭi as the source of all pains and pleasures is the necessary conditions for liberation of man. The evils of life cannot be removed either by scientific knowledge or by religious practices. Actual bondage is that of prakṣṭi but it is attributed to puruṣa. It is the indiscrimination which makes puruṣa, to remain in bondage. Like Buddhism, Sāṅkhya yoga also admits the fact that the world is to be full of sorrow and pain. To the enlightened, all is misery, says Patanjali. Three kinds of sufferings have been explained in the Sāṅkhya.

1. Adhyātmika (Intrinsic pains)- those pains caused by the psychological nature of man, such as, the disorders of mind, body etc.

2. Adhibhautika (Extrinsic pains) – those pains caused by the external world such as, men, beasts and other external elements of nature.

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3. *Adhidivika* (Supernatural pains)- those are the pains caused by the supernatural agencies.\(^\text{12}\)

*Sānkhya* holds that ultimate objective can be achieved by means of any course of action, but, it recommended the actionlessness or renunciation of all action for achieving the purpose. Complete renunciation should be achieved sparingly life after life and gradually all actions came to an end. *Sānkhya* thinkers affirm that when perfect knowledge will be acquired, automatically all actions will cease to take place. Here we can see that *Sānkhya* regards action to be a necessary evil, not a necessary good. In this spirit, it advises to give up all sorts of action, whether moral or immoral, virtues or vicious, good or bad etc.

*Sānkhya* maintains that karmas took place only when *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* were united. Their isolation leads to liberation, though yoga accepts the *Sānkhya* view of isolation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, yet its points of view regarding the role of action in the attainment of the highest goal is not exactly the same as *Sānkhya* thinkers held. *Sānkhya* evaluates karma only as a help to spring forth the true knowledge, but the yoga regards it as indispensable means for the attainment of liberation. Yoga believes that mere knowledge, unaided by the efforts of man, will not help to liberate the soul from *prakṛti*. Hence it lays equal emphasis on both knowledge and action in liberating the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*.

The state of liberation in Sānkhya yoga is called kalivalya. The self becomes omniscient in the state of kalivalya. According to Sānkhya, the absolute elimination of suffering and the experience of immorality are possible only in the disembodied existence. Even if a few privileged selves go to heaven on account of their good deeds, the life there is not free from the influences of the three gunas and consequence of sufferings. The rituals can lead as to heaven. But one has to return from these when his merits are exhausted.\(^\text{13}\) The yoga thinkers consider the practice of yoga as an essential requirement for the attainment of liberation. Right knowledge enables the self to discriminate between itself as purusā, who is absolutely distinct from prakṛti.

### 2.1.2 Nyaya Vaisesika View on Karma and Rebirth

Nyaya and vaisesika are not two different systems of philosophy. They jointly form one system of philosophy known as Nyaya-vaisesika. Nyaya is mainly logical and methodical, while vaisesika is metaphysical. Because of the fact that nyaya accepts vaisesika metaphysics and vaisesika accepts nyaya epistemology and logic, both form jointly one system of thought. The difference between the two is the difference of emphasis only. The approach of the system to the philosophical problems is thoroughly rational in so much so that even the

\(^\text{13}\) S.S. Surya Narayana Sastri, (Ed. and Trans.), Sankhya Karika of Isvara Krishna, 44, p.87.
problems relating to God, rebirth, liberation etc. have been tried in solving them by means of pure reason.

Every individual reaps the consequence of his actions. It is said that virtuous action result into happiness and vicious actions into sorrow and good actions purify the mind and bad actions corrupt it. But in our daily experience of life, we find that some actions yield fruits immediately and while some actions go without producing their fruits before our eyes. It is assumed that the sorrow and joys experienced by us in this life are not necessarily the results of our actions in the present life. They are generally regarded to be the fruition of our deeds done in the past lives, the memory of which we have already lost.

Like other orthodox systems, nyaya-vaisesika also speaks about the doctrine of karma and rebirth but in their own respective manner. They assert that pleasure and pain experienced by men are the results of their karmas. The results of actions can be classified under two categories.\(^\text{14}\)

1. Primary consequences - they consist of the feelings of pleasure and pain and those ingredients which produce them.

2. Secondary consequences - they consist in the body, the senses and sense objectives.

Man is responsible only for his voluntary actions, which are the objects of moral judgment. These voluntary actions can be divided into two kinds, in nyaya vaisesika system.

1. Righteous actions, produce Dharma (merit)

2. Unrighteous actions, which produce Adharma (demerit)

*Dharma* and *Adharma* are produced from good and bad actions and their stock is called, in *nyaya-vaisesika* as *Adrsta*, the unseen power of actions performed and this power is produced in the agent by the performance of actions only. The *Adrsta* or unseen power which moves the atoms and the mind and also is the cause of rebirth.\(^{15}\) Though the actions perish after their performance, yet due to the motivation behind these actions, certain impressions or *sariskāra* are produced in the agent. These impressions do not disappear, but stay in the agent and continuous to persist in him until fruits of actions are brought about.

With regard to the source of taking place, the voluntary actions which *Dharma* or *Adharma*, can be classified into three groups.

1. Bodily actions, spring forth from movements of organs.

2. Verbal actions spring forth from movement of speech

3. **Mental actions spring forth from movements of mind**

There is also a further division of each of the above three groups into meritorious and demeritorious.

*Nyaya-vaiseka* system regards *Adrsta* as an unintelligible principle. So it is not in a position to work automatically and brings about the exact results of the past actions. And also the responsibility of producing results can’t be laid upon the individual soul for it does not know anything about their *Adrsta*. That in this system soul has been regarded as unconscious in its true nature, so there is a necessity of supreme wise being God, who is said to be eternal, omnipotent, omniscient and devoid of any false knowledge. Here the intervention of God in the realm of karma creates certain confusions. Whether God is merely the supervisor of the law of karma or he can exercise his own will bestowing happiness as he likes, in violation of the law of karma? But the thinkers of the *nyaya-vaisesika* try to remove the clouds of the doubt by saying that it is God who causes it to produce the exact result of the action strictly in accordance with *Dharma* and *Adharma*. His design is such that He will have to take into account the deserts, the *Adrsta*, of the individual beings and act accordingly i.e., God creates for the sake of others. The individual beings hold a key position as far as the design of distribution of results, for the nature

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and its objects are made into existence with a view to provide the reward or punishment to individuals against their own past karmas.

No serious attempt is made to prove the pre-existence since it is generally accepted, in this system. However, they hold that children show the signs of pleasure and pain at birth, through their facial expression. This show of pleasure or pain at the time of birth proves the existence of a life other than the present one as the experiences of pleasure and pain in this life have not yet begun. It is again stated that the just born infant has the desire for sucking the mother’s breast as a result of the habit of having food in the previous birth and no living being is observed to be born with out desire. It is also argued by them that the inequalities in the power and the position of this life refer to the qualities of actions of the previous life.

As regards the nature of soul, Gautama, most eminent nyaya thinker, is of the opinion that it is a kind of spiritual substance, which possesses different qualities. Nyaya-regards self as the agent, the doer and the originator of all voluntary actions in which the body on enveloping the self is involved. Soul is considered as a substrate of the quality of consciousness, which is not its

20 Ibid., III:1.21, p.185.
21 Ibid., III:1.24, p.187.
essence, but on an accidental attribute. This accidence takes place when the soul comes into contact with the body. It has been maintained that the consciousness arises in the soul when it is related to manus, manus again should have its contact with the senses, and the senses should establish the contact with the objects of the external world.

The soul is an eternal entity which is free from time to time connected with the body suitable to its descent. The body has its source in the acts done by the person and in the basis of pleasure and pain. It is formed under the influence of the unseen force of destiny, and is the result of the persistence of the effect of the previous acts. Each man becomes endowed with a body fit for being the medium of the experiences which he has to undergo. The connection of the soul with the body is called the birth of the body, and its separation from it is its death.

_Nyaya vaisika_ considers ignorance as the ultimate cause of karma and thus to bondage. This ignorance, according to them, is the wrong knowledge about the nature of categories, which results in a misappropriation of that which is 'not' soul as 'soul'. From this ignorance, springs the threefold _dosa_ (evils) consisting of _reyga_ (attachment), _dvesa_ (Antipathy) and _moha_ (delusions). By

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23 P. C. Shukla, _The Concept of Soul in Indian Philosophy_, Newman and Company, New Delhi, 1976, p.98.
25 Categories: substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, inherence and non-existence.
the combined forces of Dharma and Adharma, the continuous embodiment of soul became inevitable. All activities, good or bad, bind us to the wheel of samsāra lead to some kind of birth, high or low. Rebirth is being born again after death for previously born in any form of organism. After abiding in an organism when a self leaves his previously acquired body etc., it is said to depart when it assumes other body etc. of similar or dissimilar organisms, it is said to reborn. This rebirth, in which but the continuous cycle of births and deaths is to be viewed as without a beginning but ending in liberation. This process of births and deaths is terminable only with the final release.

The Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika thinker assert that this world is full of miseries and we should try to get rid of all the worldly troubles. No pleasure is unmixed, it is immediately followed by pain. So really speaking, they are not pleasures, but pains in a disguised form. We cannot attain complete freedom from pain as long as our souls are associated with the bodies. So they think that liberation is absolute freedom from all painful as well as pleasurable experiences, i.e., it is the absolute distribution of all qualities of soul, like knowledge, pleasure, pain, anger, righteousness, unrighteousness and impressions.

The state of mukti according to Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika, is neither the state of pure knowledge nor of bliss but a state if perfect qualitylessness in which the

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self remains in itself in its own purity. A liberated soul is like a neutral substance which has attained absolute freedom from all pains and pleasures for all times to come. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "Mokṣa is supreme felicity marked by perfect tranquillity and freedom from defilement. It is not the destruction of the self, but only of bondage. It is define negatively as the cessation of pain and not as the enjoyment of positive pleasure. In short the liberated soul retains its own peculiar individuality, and particularity and remains as it is knowing nothing, feeling nothing, doing nothing.

Liberation is attained through the right knowledge of reality accompanied by the performance of one’s own duties. First of all, the aspirant of liberation should attain a comprehensive knowledge of the categories. The non-performance of duties would produce sin of omission, which will require another birth to be exhausted. They do not believe in moksha at the state of embodiment. According to them, since the every cause of bondage is embodiment, this concept of jivan mukti is a contradiction.

The critics of Nyāya - Vaiṣeṣika philosophy assert that their concept of mokṣa is a word without meaning. There is not much to distinguish this system

from materialism in the concept of liberation. Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika thinkers regard the individual as neither the soul nor the body, but the result of their union.²⁰ Like materialists they maintained that consciousness is an accidental quality of the soul and being an accidental quality, it should leave the soul in the state of liberation. Therefore the soul is unconscious in the state of liberation.

2.1.3 Purva mīmāṃsā View

The earlier portion of the Veda i.e., the Mantra and the Brahmana portion is called karmakanda, while the later portion is, i.e., the Upanishads, is called jnanakanda because the former part deals with action, the rituals and the sacrifices, while the later deals with the knowledge of reality: Purva mīmāṃsā deals with the earlier portion of the Veda and the distinguishing feature of this system in its adherence to the Vedas as in itself as infallible authority. Their main object is to establish authority of Vedas, for Veda is the highest authority according to them, and by performing their sacrifice and rituals, which is the central teaching of the Vedas, one can attain freedom from the worlds and may go to the heaven. It is because of its emphasis on the nature of dharma and the performance of sacrifice as the means to go to heaven, the Mīmāṃsā dharsan has got very popular appeal among Hindus.

To help and support ritualism, Jaimini founded this system, who wrote *Mimamsa Sutra*, which is the oldest work on the system. Later on, Sabara Swamin wrote a commentary on it, *sabara bhasya*, which is explained by Prabhakaran Misra and Kumarila Bhatta in their own way. As they differed in their interpretations, they formed their separate schools.

The perspective of *Purva Mimamsa* on Karma and rebirth is unique in the sense that *purva mimamsa* is the only system of philosophy, which places Karma in the central core of its thought. In this sense, it is rightly called itself *Karma Mimamsa*.

*Dharma* is the subject of inquiry in *purva mimamsa*. It is in fact, the problem of moral order in human society and is regarded as a law which is eternal, absolute, supreme and consists in the commands of the Veda. They hold that *dharma* has not been created by anybody, not even by the king or any other power like God. Jaimini defines *dharma* as a command or injunction which impels men to action. Action is the final import of Veda which commands us to do certain acts and to refrain from doing certain other acts. *Dharma* imbibes in itself the salient characteristics.

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31 K.K. Mittal, *Perspectives on Karma and Rebirth*, Department of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University, Delhi, 1990, p. 14.
1. It impels the soul to act

2. It leads to the attainment of the highest good

3. It indicates the nature of both good and evil.

All the acts, like the performance of sacrifices rites, rituals, ceremonies etc, prescribed by the Vedas along with all the ingredients necessary for them, are to be regarded as dharma in Purva Mimāṃsā. Vedas are essentially the ‘sources of knowledge’ for knowing what dharma is. A life leads in obedience to the vedic comments is supposed to be a good life. Purva Mimāṃsā lays down the responsibility on man to fulfill the requirements of dharma and leads his life accordingly and it is the scheme of right living.³⁴

The Mimāṃsā maintains that action themselves are capable of giving their fruits. Actions are enjoined with a view to their fruits. There is a necessary connection between the act and its results. An act performed today, can not effect a result at some future date, unless it gives rise before passing away to some unseen results. It is certain that this capacity of reward never existed prior to the performance of the act. By the performance of an action, some potency is created in the soul of the agent, which continues to exist, yield results when obstructions are removed and time becomes ripe for its fructification. This

potency has been named as *Apurva* in *Purva Mimamsa* which in the course of time will secure for him the end desired. *Apurva* is the metaphysical link between action and its result. The existence of this potency is testified to in the scriptures; its necessity is apparent by the means of proof known as presumption.\(^{35}\)

According to Kumarila, *Apurva* is a capability in the principal action or in the agent, which did not exist prior to the performance of the action, and whose existence is proved by the authority of the scriptures. *Apurva*, which yields the fruits of the action, is generated by the action, not all of a sudden, but through all successive stages of the performance. As this potency resides in the soul, so it can have its effect in producing the result even after the destruction of the components of action. What Kumarila holds here is that the action produces certain potency in the agent, and that potency leads to the result of the action when other favourable condition combine together.

But according to Prabhakara, *Apurva* can not be in the self, since by its very omnipresence the self is inactive. He does not accept the view that the action tends to produce in the agent a certain faculty, which is the immediate cause of the final result. Action is brought out by the exertion of the agent, and causal potency must reside in this exertion. So we must assume the potency in

the action, not in the agent. The exertion produces in the agent a result, to which Prabhakara gives the name ‘Neyoga’, since this acts as an incentive to the agent to put forth exertion towards the performance of the action.\footnote{S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Op. cit.} 4, pp. 421-422.}

The necessity of the survival of soul after death is quite obvious in \textit{Mim\=ns\=a} philosophy, otherwise, the \textit{Vedic} injunction will be ‘meaningless. It is said that the person who performs sacrifices according to the \textit{vedic} rules, goes to heaven. And it is sure that the heaven will be attained only by souls who survive the death and not by body. Hence the survival of soul after death in the \textit{Mim\=ns\=a} philosophy is proved.\footnote{P.C. Shukla, \textit{Op. cit.} 23, p. 137.}

\textit{Mim\=ns\=a} admits the plurality of the individual souls, and regards soul as an eternal, omnipresent, infinite substance which is the substratum of consciousness, and which is a real knower, agent of the action and enjoyer of the fruits of action.\footnote{Ganga Nath Jha, (Trans.), \textit{Sloka Vartika, Atma-vada} 29, Sri. Satguru Publications, Delhi. 1983, p.387.} They assert that the Law of Karma will be meaningless without a permanent soul substance which should be held responsible for all the actions, and the enjoyer of the fruits of these actions. The soul is directly affected by the morality of the actions. It earns the merit and demerits by the actions it performs. Here it is the morality of the actions which determines all what is possessed by the soul as its body, organs, worldly objects and so forth.
For Jaimini, the ultimate goal of the human life is heaven. If one performs his actions according to the Vedic rules, he would go to heaven after his life. All schools of Purva mimamsa agree with the view that the Vedic sacrifices are the only factors which shape human destiny. The action of the sacrifice is principal and it depends on an injunction. The purificatory rite is performed on its materials. The actions or sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas are the only remedy for overcoming all sorts of evil. Jaimini classified actions into Nitya Karma, Naimittika Karma, Kamyaka Karma and Niśidha karma. Nitya Karmas are those rituals which are to be performed daily. They are necessary for salvation. The naimittika karmas are certain rituals which are to be performed when the proper occasion arises. They are done unconditionally. Mimamsa thinkers are of the view that the non-performance of these karmas results in committing sin. The kamyaka karmas are those which are performed to gain the selfish ends and so they need not be performed if one is free from selfish ends. The Niśidha karma are those, the performance of which take us to hell. These are the lowest type of karmas which should be avoided by every one. The Nitya and Naimittika karmas are the only good ones conducive to the realization of our ultimate goal of life.

According to Prabhakara, liberation consists in the total disappearance of all the dharmas and adharmas from man, which is the end of human life. He

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maintains that in liberation there is a total cessation of all the pains and sufferings of life. He opposes the view that liberation is a state of bliss. When the soul is regarded as an attributeless substance, it is misleading to think that it is blissful in the state of mokṣa. But Kumarila considers mokṣa as a state of Ātman itself. Here the person concerned is away from all the worldly pains and pleasures.\(^{40}\)

Both the schools of Mimamsā view the embodiment as the cause of bondage. Embodiment is the result of merit and demerit achieved through karmas. Liberation is the absolute cessation of the body caused by the disappearance of all dharmas and adharmas\(^ {41}\). It is the knowledge of the self and the performance of duties together that brings about the liberation of the soul. Dr. Das Gupta correctly explains how such a state can be attained. He says “salvation is brought about when a man enjoys and suffers the fruits of his good and bad actions and thereby exhausts them and stops the further generation of new effects by refraining from the performance of kamya karmas (sacrifices etc. performed for the attainment of certain beneficent results) and guarantees himself against the evil effects of sin by assiduously performing the nitya karmas... This state is characterized by the dissolution of the body, and the non-production of any further body or rebirth”.\(^ {42}\)

\(^{40}\)Ibid., p.140
2.1.4 Karma and Rebirth in Vedanta

Vedanta is the philosophy contained in the Upanisads, the Bhagavat Gita and the Brahmasutra of Badaryana. These three are known ‘prasthānathray’ or three legs on which the Vedanta philosophy is found. The different interpretation of these sources have given birth to various schools in Vedanta philosophy. Advaita Vedanta of Sankaracharya and Viśistadvaita of Ramanuja are relevant among them.

a) Advaita View

In Advaita, the individual soul or jīva is regarded as essentially identical with Brahman. The jīva is the Brahman limited by the adjuncts of the body, sense organs, mind, intelligence, and ego. It is only due to false knowledge that the Ātman identified itself with intelligence. This connection between jīva and intelligence continues even after the death. According to Sankara, the individual soul is caught up in the web of saṃsāra, so that it is completely imprisoned by the endless cycle of rebirths.

Sankara admits the plurality of souls from the empirical point of view. They undergo changes and are subject to birth and death. They have to bear the consequences of their past karmas. The departed souls are born again as a result of their previous actions. These karmas remain with them in the form of subtle bodies, which migrate into their respective bodies in accordance with its past
actions. In many cases life in *samsāra* ultimately means to suffer an endless series of the most many fold evils. Karmas depending on their qualities yield the soul the good or the bad body.

Karma in Sankara’s view is a product of *maya*. It might be viewed as a particularised aspect of *maya*. Individuality is due to karma, which has its origin in *avidya* or ignorance. The kind of worlds into which one is born is just the result of his past deeds, i.e., the coming of jiva into the world and the status in the world are entirely determined by its past karmas. As the present state of the jiva’s existence is determined by past karmas, so his present activities will be responsible for determining his future course of life. He accepts karma as an end in itself. According to him good action yields the agent after his death, a good life, such as a life in heaven and equip the soul with a suitable body to enjoy the pleasures of that life. Similarly bad actions yield him hell or give rise to bodies of inferior creatures like, animals. But the balancing of good and bad actions would make him to take birth again as man. In *Advaita Vedanta*, as in the system of Nyāya - *Vaiśeṣika*, God has been attributed with the task of distributing the fruits of actions performed by men. Though the seeds for happiness or sufferings are

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44 Sankara Bhasya on Bhagavat Gita II.51.
sown by man's own actions, their growth and fruition in the next world depend on God.

According to Advaita, there is no hope of immortality merely by worldly goods. Hence it is clear that Karma cannot be the cause of liberation.\textsuperscript{46} We perform actions for the attainment of something unattained. Advaita regards true knowledge as the only means to liberation. But this does not mean that karma is not in any way useful with reference to liberation. Karma is of use in the arise of knowledge. Knowledge itself can arise only if certain conditions are fulfilled. These conditions are the possession of virtues like tranquillity and self-control, which indicate the absence of egoism. For the production of these virtues, karma is useful. This karma is not complementary to jnana, but sub-ordinate to it, and its utility lies in removing the obstacle that lies in the way of knowledge.

The subordinate role of karma becomes clearer when we consider the fruits of karma. Every action tends to produce for the agent results in two directions, objective and subjective.\textsuperscript{47} On the objective side each action produces for the agent a specific reward or punishment according as the action is good or bad. No ordinary man would perform a good deed without expecting some rewards for it. It is the nature of desire to necessitate enjoyment of the result

\textsuperscript{46} P. Sankara Narayanan. (Trans.) \textit{Vivekacudamani.}, 7, Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bombay, 1979, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{47} T. P. Ramachandran, "The Nature and Significance of Karma according to Advaita", \textit{The Voice of Sankara}, Vol.11, No. 3, 1986, p.245.
desired. To desire a thing is to put oneself under an obligation to enjoy it. If the attainment of the object of desire is delayed, such that, it is not secured within the brief span of a single life, the condition for its enjoyment will have or be forged by a new life. In this way desire leading to enjoyment, and enjoyment to greater desire, and the soul is obliged to pass from birth to birth.

On the subjective side, every action influences the character of the agent himself. It produces in the mind of the doer a tendency for similar actions. A bad action develops a tendency to be anti-social, but this tendency can be removed by cultivating a counter tendency of good actions. The purification of mind is the general effect of all good actions on the agent as distinguished from their specific objective benefits to him.

So long as the objective reward expected from action, is something pleasing, the desire for it will confirm the sense of ego by reinforcing desires and causing rebirth. Hence the aspirant is to renounce desire for all objective results of action including celestial enjoyment and make self-purification, the only immediate aim of action. Such a purification can be done by dedicating all actions to the Lord.\textsuperscript{48}

\hspace{2em}\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p.247.
b) Viśiṣṭadvaita View on Karma and Rebirth

The Vedanta philosophy formulated by Ramanuja is primarily a theistic philosophy, with almost emphases upon devotion leading to the blessing of God as the means for the liberation of man. Hence it expresses itself an attempt to develop a personal theism while fully recognizing the absolution as found in the Upanisad and Brahmasutra. This quality of a combination between theism and absolutism has rendered the Viśiṣṭadvaita system acceptable to both the common man and the elite.

Ramanuja disagreed with Sankara with regard to a number of doctrines such as *maya*, *avidya*, God, and the nature and means of liberation. In his interpretations of Brahmasutra, Bhagavat Gita and other religio-philosophical works, he tried to demonstrate God as the creator of the world. While God is absolutely self-existing and independent reality, soul and matter are depended on God. Ramanuja conceived the relation between God and other realities analogues to the relation between man’s soul and his body. Hence there exists an inseparable unity between God and the world of matter and mind\(^{49}\). Being a creation of God, the world must be real. *Maya*, for him, was the real power of God by which he creates the world.

Ramanuja insists that, no one can remain without performing his duties even for a moment. As Bhagavat Gita says, "no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; every one is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature".\textsuperscript{50} Visistadwaita, therefore, recommends the performance of daily and obligatory duties as long as the body lasts. It fully agrees with the philosophy of action as taught in the Bhagavat Gita. All actions do not bind the doer, but only those actions which are performed in attachment bind the soul.

The individual soul, according to Ramanuja, though a mode of supreme, is real, unique, eternal, endowed with intelligence and self-consciousness, without parts, unchanging imperceptible, and atomic. Eternal and independent existence of individual soul is the essential part of his philosophy. Souls are infinite in number and they are essentially the nature of knowledge. Though it is of the nature of the knowledge, it is also the substrate of knowledge, emphasising the fact that it is a knowing subject. It is thus the agent of action, and the enjoyer of pleasure and pain\textsuperscript{51}. The same \textit{Atman} which performs karmas also enjoys the fruits of action\textsuperscript{52}.

Three kinds of souls are recognized by him: eternal, liberated and bound. The eternal are those who live in the abode of God forever, and they are never

\textsuperscript{50} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{The Bhagavat Gita}, III, 5, New Delhi, 1976 p.133.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p.197.
subjected to birth on earth. Free from the karma and prakṛti, they eternally enjoy the bliss of God. Liberated souls are those who once lived in bondage, and now liberated by their efforts and by the grace of God. Bound souls are those who are still in bondage, subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth. The bound souls include all the celestial or superhuman souls, human souls, animal souls and other mobile and rational souls.

According to Ramanuja, the embodiment is the bondage of the soul, is caused by the karmas of the past lives. He explains the bondage with the hypothesis that the karmas are attached with the soul since beginningless time. Karmas result into embodiment, and is again bound. This cycle is going on since eternally and the chain of rebirth cannot be broken unless the bound souls determine to free themselves and work for their release with the grace of God.

The souls remain unchanged in its essential nature through all the processes of birth and death. It is born many times into the sensible world and departs from it again; but throughout it maintains its identity. The souls cannot escape from the consequence of their past lives. Association with or disassociation from bodies is what is meant by birth or death, and until release, the souls are attached necessarily to bodies, to experience the fruits of karma.

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In Viśiṣṭadvaita it is accepted that Jiva’s action is caused by paramatman, because it is stated so in the śruti and smṛti texts. Now a question arises is ‘if the action of jiva is controlled by paramatman does the jiva have any freedom at all to act’? If so, the scriptural injunctions enjoining duties to be performed by the individual can have no significance. Here Ramanuja answers the question by providing a distinction which is drawn in the initial action of the individual and the subsequent activity. Usually in all human efforts the individual initially wills to do a thing. He is free to do what he desires in this extent. Based on this initial action the subsequent activity which follows, it is approved by Isvāra. By such an approval, Isvāra prompts the individual to proceed further. The real karta is the individual. Isvāra is considered to be the controller of human actions and only to this extent the human freedom is not affected. It is also contended that the initial action is important and that alone determines the moral responsibility of the individual and the God has given the ethical code as a guide to act in the right way, and avoid what is considered to be sinful.

Viśiṣṭadvaita holds that, the bondage of soul is due to three knots which bind it to the wheel of saṃsāra. They are the knots of ego consciousness, body consciousness, and desire consciousness. These knots manifest themselves in certain performances due to ignorance. Thus owing to the knot of ego consciousness, the self imagines itself to be a self-sufficient entity. The knot of body consciousness makes the self to believe that it is a material entity subject to
all the conditions and limitations of matter. The knot of desire consciousness is the further consequence of the first two knots. The soul due to this knot is led to the impression that the aim of its active life is to cultivate the self-centred, dissolving these knots, that the self would be in a position to put an end to the operation of karma based upon ignorance.

Ramanuja sees liberation as the result of a combined effort on the part of the seeker consisting of worker’s knowledge and devotion followed by the grace of God. According to this system, Karmas alone are not enough for the attainment of liberation. Karmas are only purificatory. They remove the evil from the mind and prepare it to grasp knowledge, which can dawn only in a pure mind. Devotion to the God and the dedication of all results of action to God are of great importance in this system. Hence the progress towards liberation includes the proper performance of duties (karma marga), right knowledge (jnana marga), and absolute devotion (bhakti marga) to God in the light of the true knowledge about God and the self. Besides the general scheme of liberation, Ramanuja prescribes another simple way to liberation for all is called Prapatti, which requires a great faith in the Lord, whereby the devotee surrenders himself to God in an absolute trust, for the forgiveness of all his sins and for final liberation. Mukti for Ramanuja is not only the direct apprehension of Brahman, but a spiritual pilgrimage to, or the progressive attainment of Brahma-loka. Thus
in Viśiṣṭaadvaita liberation is a combined product of human effort as well as the grace of God.

2.2 Heterodox Schools

2.2.1 Jaina View on Karma and Rebirth

The Jaina tradition ascribes the origin of the system to Rṣabha, the earliest Tirthankara or sage. Vardhamana is said to be the last Tirthankara who expounded the tenets held by the earlier sages, earned a title jina, and his followers came to be known as the Jainas. Though this system is generally considered as atheistic, yet we see their philosophy does ascend on the steps of same ladder of their development of the philosophical thoughts on which have ascended the philosophies of the theists. Their objective is to end the misery and pain of life and to obtain the highest bliss for which, it stresses upon the purity of mind, speech and body, by way of severe austerity and control of senses.

Jainism believes in the doctrine of Karma and Rebirth. The concept of karma in Jaina philosophy revolves round the concept of jīva. Hence it is necessary to understand the concept in order to know karma. In Jainism the whole universe of things is traced to two categories namely jīva and ajīva. These categories are regarded to be everlasting, uncreated, co-existing, but independent.
Jivas are those beings which are full of consciousness and are composed of soul and body and which know and perceive the various objects, desires pleasure and dreads pain, acts beneficially or harmfully and experience the fruit thereof. Jivas are co-extensive with the body and capable of expansion and contraction. They expand gradually with the development of the body and at the time of death they contract into the seed of the next birth, which they have to undergo. So they import its intelligence to the whole body in which it resides. In their intrinsic nature, Jivas are considered as pure souls. According to jainism these souls, since times begemningless, have bound themselves, with their own predispositions, the karmic particles, with the result that they have made themselves in the states of Jivas.

Karma in Jaina philosophy, does not mean a mere deed or work. Neither do the Jainas consider it as some invisible mystical power, like Adrsta as done by the Nyaya - Vaisesika schools. Karma, according to the jains is of material nature. It is nothing but a complexity of matter in a very subtle from which is imperceptible to our senses. Jainism is distinguished from all other systems of Indian thought on this point. Karmas of jaina are infra-atomic particles of matter. Jainas maintain that the thoughts and ideas, which affect our character and create or modify the tendencies of our soul, are in fact the results of such matter. The

karma particles penetrate the soul when it comes into their contact. They flow in through the organs of the sense, and stick with it, do not leave till its final emancipation. In other words, karma works in such a way that every change which takes place leaves a mark which is retained and built into the organism to serve as the foundation for future actions.\textsuperscript{55}

The \textit{Jivas} possess the faculty of cognition and of activity. Jainas hold that when the soul puts into motion, the material particles of its activity, the vibration of the particles of the soul takes place. It is through such vibration that the infra-atomic particles of matter pervading the whole cosmos are attached to the soul and are drawn to unite themselves to it. When they enter into union with \textit{Jiva}, they become Karmas.\textsuperscript{56}

It is held that the entrance of matter into the \textit{Jiva} and its transformation into Karma proceeds through the activity of the \textit{Jiva}, which because of its consistency in thoughts, words, and deeds, is produced through the mind, the organ of speech and body. This three-fold activity, creates vibration of movements in the particles of soul. It is a vibration which attracts the senseless matter towards soul.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.319.
\textsuperscript{56} K.K. Anand, O. cit.6, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p. 69.
With every activity mental, physical or however subtle that may be, the Karma particles will penetrate the soul and cover it. But their number and character will depend upon the contact of Jiva. It is on account of their merits and demerits, that the Jivas are born as gods, men, animals, or denizens of hell. The Karma once having entered into the soul may remain in it without bringing forth any result for an indefinite time till it gets a right occasion to manifest itself. Accordingly as any karma matter has been generated by good, bad or indifferent actions, it gives us pleasure, pain or feeling of indifference. There is an emphatic assertion in Jaina philosophy that if man is a responsible being, he is responsible not merely for the good and the bad acts he does at the human level, and for which he answers at the human level- in the same or in a future life\textsuperscript{58}. Thus the natural perfection of pure soul are sullied by the different kinds of karma matter. The state when karma particles actually begin to flow towards the soul to bind it is called \textit{Asrava} and the state when these particles actually infiltrate into the soul and bind it is called as \textit{bandha}, or bondage, in Jaina philosophy. In bondage, the karma matter unites with the soul by intimate inter-penetration just as water unites with milk or fire units with the red hot iron ball\textsuperscript{59}. The more deeply the person is involved, the more attachment the person lies, the stronger is the binding power of karma.

It is held that the karma particles bind man for varying lengths of time.\textsuperscript{60} It is because of that the length of experiences both good and bad also vary. It is important to notice that whatever might be the length of time during which the karma particles affect the \textit{jiva}, the Jainas firmly believe that the \textit{jiva} can free itself from the shackles of karma. Here the time factor refers to the duration of karma.

Jainas also accept rebirth as a corollary of karma. Karma acts in such a way that every change which takes place leaves a mark, known as impressions or predispositions or tendencies, which is retained. Every bounded \textit{Jiva} is endowed with such impressions created by the actions of the previous births. These impressions in \textit{Jivas}, wishing to be satisfied, will compel the intrinsic activity of the soul to cause movement of its particles. As a result of this, the necessary \textit{pudgalas} will be attracted to the \textit{Jiva} and built into the organism to serve as the foundation for future action. In this body-making process, the \textit{Jiva} will work as the efficient cause, the whole \textit{pudgalas} as the material cause.

Hence it is through the manifestations of certain karmas, that \textit{Jiva} receives certain birth, during the life of which more and more karma particles penetrate the \textit{jiva}, causing it to get the new birth. In this way, the \textit{Jiva} roams in several lives, one after the other, conditioned upon his karmas. This process goes

on till its final release from the karma. In short the Jivas get different births and states of existence according to its karmas. A beginningless association between karma and soul is the starting point as well as the central point of Jaina philosophy.  

Since the soul has lost purity, power, knowledge and bliss, due to karma particles, the path of liberation lies in its complete removal from the soul. This could be done only through a simultaneous stoppage of further influx of matter into the soul (samvara) and the removal of the accumulated matter from it (nirjara). It is due to the craving of the soul by way of anger, pride, infatuation and greed that the karma matter is attracted to the soul. The root cause of these passions is man’s ignorance about the real nature of soul. Hence Jains teach that right knowledge which has been imparted by the Tirthankaras alone can remove the ignorance of the soul and lead to it to the path of mokṣa.

Mokṣa is a positive state of the soul, consisting of infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite bliss and of infinite detachment. It is an escape from the body, though not from existence. But body is necessary for the attainment of mokṣa for without the body the desire for mokṣa is not possible. And the

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acceptance of the jivan mukta points out that the mukta jiva may continue with body.\textsuperscript{65}

The quintessence of Jaina theory of mokṣa contains in the concept of ‘triratna’ since the right knowledge comes to man from the Tirthinkaras, the first requirement for a seeker after salvation is right faith. Right faith together with the study of scriptures would result in the attainment of right knowledge which in turn should lead one to right conduct. Right conduct includes the five great vows of ahiṃsā [non-injury], satya [truthfulness] asteya [non-stealing], aparigraha [non-attachment] and brahmacharya [chastity]. Since faith, knowledge, and conduct are interdependent, they go hand in hand, and are perfected together in the self whereby the soul is released from the bondage of karma and regains its original perfection. S.P. Banerjee remarks that Jaina theory of mokṣa strongly suggests the possibility of continuance of individuality after liberation. It may throw new light on the highly interesting problem of personal immortality. If the theory of person and personal identity is construed in the fashion in which bodily criterion can be dispensed with, some forms of individual existence may very well appear plausible in Jainism.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
2.2.2 Buddhist Interpretation of Karma and Rebirth

It was in the 6th century BC, that the world saw, the light of Asia, that perfect embodiment of knowledge, courage, love and sacrifice, the advent of Buddha, is certainly a strange event. In the history of world literature, great men like Buddha are rare in number. The greatness he achieved in his personal life, was really his personal endeavour.

The basic tenet of Buddhist philosophy is the ‘Four Noble Truths’. All other ideas that we see in Buddhist dharsana is depended on it. It is the central core of Buddhist philosophy. They are the result of the enlightenment of Lord Buddha. The four Noble Truths are

1. There is suffering (duhkha)
2. There is a cause of suffering (dukhha samudaya)
3. There is a cessation of suffering (duhkha-Nirodha)
4. There is a way leading to this cessation of suffering (duhkha-nirodha-gamini pratipat)67

According to Lord Buddha, everything in this empirical world is painful. Birth is painful, decay in painful, disease is painful etc. In the whole history of

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thought, no one has painted the misery of human existence in blocker colours and with more feeling than Buddha. As he believes in the law of causation that every event must have a sufficient cause, there must a cause for the sufferings, and the cause for suffering originates from our birth, and birth originates from our death, and this cycle of birth and death is very well explained in his theory of causation known by the name Pratityasamutpada or dependent origination. The karma and rebirth theory of Buddhism is embodied in this theory of causation.

The twelve links of the causal wheel of dependent origination are:

1. Ignorance (avidyā)
2. Impressions of Karmic forces (sarīskāra)
3. Initial consciousness of the embryo (vijñāna)
4. Psycho-Physical organism (nama-rupa)
5. Six sense organs including mind (sadayatana)
6. Sense-object contact (sparśa)
7. Sense Experience (vedāna)
8. Thirst for sense enjoyment (ṛṣaṇa)
9. Clinging to this enjoyment (Upadana)
10. Will to be born (bhāva)
11. Birth or rebirth (jāti)

12. Old age and death (jātihāraṇa)

Troubled by the sight of disease, old age and death, Buddha left his home to find a solution of the misery of earthly life. Theory of dependent origination is the solution which he found. Why do we suffer old age and death, because we are born. Birth could only be if there were previous existence. There could not be existence unless there were clinging to the worldly objects. This clinging is due to the thirst for sense enjoyment, which results from sense experience. Sense experience results from sense-objects contact. This sense-object contact is caused by six sense organs, including mind. There must be the mind and body in order that there may be six fields of contact and without initial consciousness of the embryo, there could be no namarupa or mind and body, and in order that there might be consciousness, there must be the predispositions or impressions of karma. These impressions can only if there is ignorance. Hence ignorance, according to Buddha, is the root cause of sufferings. Out of these twelve links, the first two are related to past life, the last two to future life, and the rest to present life.

The seeds of future existence and suffering therein, are sown in the impressions of acts done in ignorance. Karma in Buddhism, is not a mechanical principle, but organic in character\(^70\). Though the present determines by the past,

the future remains open depends on the direction of our will. The determination of the present by the past is not a merely mechanical one. There is continuity between the past and the present, that the present accords with the past. But this does not mean that the present is the only possible outcome of past.

In Buddhism, karma seems to assume the role of the controller of the world. Buddha did not feel the necessity of God to control and regulate the worldly life. He held that man is fully responsible for the position in which he is, whether it is miserable or happy. According to him, the world as well as human beings exists through karma. Every action will bring forth its fruit sooner or later. One is born because of karma and the wheel of samsāra goes on endlessly due to the operation of law of karma. One’s present life is the result of his past karma. Death can not take away the effects of karma, which follows a man like his own shadow.

All different actions, whether they are good or bad, are regulated by the principle of karma. When man dies, his body perishes, but a new thing is born to inherit his karma. It will remain and will not leave man until its results in suffering or enjoyment as the case may be, in accordance with good or bad action.

In Buddhism, there is no permanent soul to reap the consequences of one’s actions. What is looked upon as a permanent self is nothing but a stream of
consciousness. Buddhism, therefore, presents us with a doctrine of transmigration, without admitting the existence of a permanent soul. What transmigrate after the death of a man amounts to the transmigration of character. What is reborn is not a self, but the character. The conscious stream of man is carried on to another body by the force of karma. The successive lives are linked by a chain of natural causation. Throughout our life, mind and body change. Birth and death are the vital changes. The dissolution of the old body is the formation of a new one. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "The man who is reborn is the heir of the action of the dead man. Yet he is a new being while there is no permanent identity there is at the same time no annihilation or cutting off. The new being is what its acts have made it." But Buddhism does not explain the mechanism by which the continuity of karma is maintained between two lives separated by the phenomenon of death. It simply assumes it.

There is nothing permanent in a living man. He is only a series of physical and mental states. Man is a complex, composed of five skandhas or aggregates of bodily and psychical states, which are immediate with us and are subject to constant change. They are the linkages of causes and effects and are divided into five. 1. Rupa [four elements, the body the senses, sense data etc.] 2.

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73 Ibid., p. 444
Vedana [feeling pleasurable, painful and indifferent]. 3 Conceptual knowledge. 4. Impressions or saṃskāra. 5. Consciousness.

Thus, in Buddhism, it is sure that karma produces consequences, retribution is born of action, action is the cause of rebirth, in this way the world continues. No action passes from the past life to the present or from present to the future. It is the retribution of the action that goes. Retribution or vipāka does not exist without karma. It can come into existence only on account of karma but it is not seen within the karma or outside it i.e. no karma in vipāka and no vipāka in karma, at the same time, no vipāka without karma.

According to Buddhism, the aim of life is to end the suffering. The third and the fourth noble truths point to this. The misery can come to an end only when the cycle of rebirths and deaths is broken. The state of liberation in Buddhism is named as Nirvana, when the series of consciousness passing from life to life is stopped, and a man becomes free from lust, hatred, ignorance and the like, he is said to be perfect and liberated. It is the dissolution of five skandhas is identified with positive bliss, not the annihilation of everything. It is the highest and indestructible state.

The system enunciated by Buddha for attainment of Nirvana is free from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. It is the way, leading to the cessation of suffering that is the fourth noble truth. This way takes the form of
eight fold path, that is to say, right beliefs, right aspirations, right speech, right
can duct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindedness, and right
concentration, lead to Nirvana. It is said that this eight-fold path is powerful
enough to break the chain of causation, the root of all miseries. However, as Dr.
S. Radhakrishnan, points out, “Buddha’s real attitude is probably, that nirvana is
a state of perfection inconceivable by us, and if we are obliged to offer
description of it, it is best to bring out its inconceivability by negative description,
its richness of content by positive predicates, realising all the time that such
descriptions are best approximation only”76. Thus the path of deliverance from
pain and suffering must be opened with our initiative, which may not result into
complete cessation of Duhkha till we are living, but may at last change our
approach and perspective about it in such a way that we might be able to endure
it without allowing hopelessness and despair overwhelming us. 77

2.2.3 Čārvaka and Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth

The Čārvaka are evidently materialists, atheists, and egoistic hedonists. The classic authority on this system is said to be the sutras of Brahaspati, a
heretical teacher regarded as the traditional founder of this school. There is no
deep thinking in Čārvaka philosophy. There is no consistent and completed

77 Mangala R. Chinchore, “Duhkha: An analysis of Buddhist clue to understand human nature,”
Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XX, No. 1, January 1993, p. 67.
account of their philosophy of its own. We find only a few aphorisms - about a
dozen - quoted by the authors of the other schools of thought, - our chief sources
for knowing them, and their philosophical stand points.

The metaphysics of this system depends on its epistemology. They regard
sense perception as the only means of valid knowledge, reject all other means of
knowledge as invalid. Since sense perception is the only form of knowledge,
matter becomes the only reality. It alone is cognisable by the senses. What is
material is real. Therefore they naturally hold the perceptible world as the only
reality.\textsuperscript{78} i.e., the physical world perceptible to the external senses is recognised
by them as the only existing reality. The four categories earth, water, air and fire
constitute the universe. In other words, according to \textit{Cārvākas}, the world is
composed of these four gross elements. They do not believe in Doctrine of
Creation. We cannot and do not find any purpose in the universe. We do not need
anything beyond nature to explain it. \textit{Cārvākas}, therefore, rejects the agency of an
intelligent being as the cause of the universe. The world, according to \textit{Cārvāka} is
the result of a development from the combination of the four elements in various
propositions giving rise to a variety of things, objects, and beings.

Since sense perception is the only source of knowledge acceptable to the
\textit{Cārvākas}, the theory of causation is not acceptable to them. Everything which

exists, including the mind, is due to a particular combination of these four elements. The elements are eternal, but their combinations undergo production and dissolution. According to them, consciousness is the effect of the collocation of the four elements, in the form of an organism, but it is not an independent entity. Although the material elements do not severally possess consciousness, yet when they form a group in a particular way, consciousness arises in it spontaneously, as a by-product of matter, and manifests itself in the living body. Their doctrine is svabhāva vada, svabhāva is not to be understood to stand for any mysterious entity like Adrsta. "It is to be understood as ‘nature’ of things, objects, persons and events - of the four elements to combine and give rise to certain things, having natural behaviour of their own, and then to dissolve, after reaching a point of saturation in combination, bringing about the end of those things".79 According to them it is the ‘internal go’ of matter itself that explains the coming into being and passing into non-being of things.

Since consciousness is the product of the mixture of four elements, it remains there so long elements collaborate in the form of body in a particular proportion. When the body is disintegrated, consciousness disappears automatically.

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According to Carvāka system, there is no proof for the existence of the soul apart from the body. The Carvākas are the materialist explaining the origin and the development of everything through a harmonious combination of the four elements of earth, air, water and fire in various proportions and they reject supernaturalism with all that it implies i.e., God, life beyond present one, existence of heaven and hell, karmaphala and Adrsta etc. Its existence cannot be proved by sense perception. They hold that when the body disintegrates, consciousness disappears automatically, then it is the end of all. In reality, with death and distraction of the body, everything ends, for, nothing returns when the body is reduced to ashes. Since there is no soul, there is no transmigration.

They hold it is foolish to think that after death, the fruits of karma will be reaped, in succeeding lives. According to them the future life is not regulated by the karmas of the present life. So to hold that good actions yield pleasure, and bad actions result in pain, is all baseless. Everything is continuing, and will be continuing in its natural course. There is no doer or no cause behind. There is nothing like transmigration, the existence of other world, heaven or hell. The soul is nothing but the body endowed with consciousness⁸⁰. Hence Carvāka materialists believed in purely sensible elements of the actions of earth, water, air and fire, and their combination. In the field of logic, they believe in nothing but

what can be directly perceived. They deny karma, fruits of karma, and rebirth. Sins and virtues have no meaning for them, they are only the words with which people are scared to behave in a particular manner, advantageous to the priests. Thus the existence of omniscient God, and immortal soul is a fictitious episode for them.

The only thing that the Carvākas cared for was the momentary sense-pleasures, unrestrained enjoyments of sensual joys, i.e., only pleasure is the ultimate aim of life. That is why, the leading of life in an unobstructed and independent way is very much encouraged and this is regarded as the best way to enjoy the pleasures of life. They believe in manly strength and the efficacy of human endeavour in the attainment of happiness, even though they are realities enough to realise the difficulty in attaining unmixed happiness. Carvākas thus advise us to avoid as well as endure pain in order to get happiness. It is not foreseeable that whether the so called good actions would yield any reward, deserving the pleasure in future as a result of good actions in the present, is meant to them the murder of the present pleasure. The past is past, there is no control over it, and the future is unbelievable. So the present is to be made full of meaning, full of joy, happiness and pleasures, no matter whatever the means, fair or foul, have to be employed for the purpose, keeping always in view that nothing

81 Ibid., p. 54.
remains life after death.

Among the four values of life, *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Mokṣa*, they recognise only two values. *Artha* (riches) and *Kama* (sensual enjoyments), and here the former is regarded as means to the latter. *Dharma* and *mokṣa* have no meaning in *Cārvāka* philosophy. The *Cārvāka* is shown to strike at the very root of morality by denying important ethical distinctions as between good and bad, virtue and wise, merit and demerit by attributing inefficacy to all action and thus absolving the individual from responsibility of any sort what he does. It is to be noted here that one may think of a school of thought without the ideal of *mokṣa*, but not with out that of *dharma* also. But to believe in an ideal of life devoid of *dharma* is to reduce man to the level of the brute.