

# Cārvāka Philosophy



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# Introduction



- ❧ Darśana- दृश- to see
- ❧ Outlook/ vision/ perspective
- ❧ Multiple perspectives of looking at the world
- ❧ Experiential knowledge
- ❧ Vedic literature has seeds of philosophical systems developed later
- ❧ Philosophical hymns in tenth mandala of *R̥gveda*
- ❧ *Upaniṣads* are considered the basis of Indian Philosophy

# Different schools

☞ *Āstika* (orthodox) and *Nāstika* (Heterodox) *darśanas*



# Nastika - atheist /heterodox system



- ❧ Protest against the excessive monkdomb of the *Brāhmaṇa* priests
- ❧ Admits *pratyakṣa* as only *pramāṇa*
- ❧ Denied the existence of soul, other world, liberation
- ❧ Denied scriptural authority or any other means of knowledge except perception
- ❧ Denied concept of God as creator or invisible power
- ❧ Denied the concept of merits and sins
- ❧ Denies ritualism done for attaining anything
- ❧ Denied the authority of Brahmin class
- ❧ Denied everything which is based on faith

# Sources



- ❧ Primary source *Bṛhaspati Sūtras* are missing
- ❧ No original work of this school survived with the single exception of a much later work, *Tattvoplavasim̐ha* of Jayarashi Bhatta, published by Oriental Institute Baroda in 1940.
- ❧ Chief sources are therefore references into other works in order to refute materialism (chances are that their fundamentals are misinterpreted.)
- ❧ *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha* gives a summary of this school (14<sup>th</sup> CE)
- ❧ Second act of *Prabodhachandrodaya*, teachings of this school are summarized
- ❧ Buddhism, Jainism, Nyāya and Vedānta have mentioned their views in order to refute

# *Kauṭīliya Arthśāstra*



- ❧ Kauṭīliya says that king should learn four leaning faculties
  - ❧ Vedas, Vārtā (agriculture and commerce), Daṇḍanīti (administration) and ānvikṣiki (philosophy)
- ❧ Kauṭīliya mentions Sāṃkhya, yoga and Lokāyata s in philosophy
- ❧ Lokāyata as ānvikṣiki-reason oriented inquiry
- ❧ Gives their own system on logically based principles
- ❧ Reason predominates rather than faith
- ❧ Philosophical discipline which investigates strengths and weaknesses of different sciences by applying reason

# Rationalist movement



- ❧ Lokāyata must have developed as a rational approach towards philosophy
- ❧ Disregarded scriptural authority either Vedic or non-vedic
- ❧ Challenged scriptural testimony, soul, rebirth, other world, God
- ❧ Rationalist philosophical movement which attempted to solve individual, social issues merely on empirical, rational and practical grounds without taking recourse to religion

# Works on Charvaka philosophy



## œ Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya-

- Secular approach, Marxist viewpoint, sympathetic towards Lokāyata s
- Chattopadhyaya reconstructed the image of Carvaka Darśana from the sources like *Kautiliya Arthashastra* and *Tattvasamgrapanjika*

## œ Ramkrishna Bhattacharya-

- Collected and rearranged scattered references to Lokāyata
  - Tried to restore Lokāyata aphorisms
  - Reinterpreted this literature and strengthened the basic framework of Chattopadhyaya's version.
- Sadashiv Athavale, Shubhada Joshi, Pradeep Gokhale
    - Refuted views of Debiprasad Chattopadhyay



# Lokāyata



- ❧ Prevalent / spread (*āyatah-spread*) among the people (*lokeṣu*)
- ❧ (Viewpoint spread among people)
- ❧ Though suggests popularity may have derogatory sense
- ❧ One who believes in this world, directed toward this world / worldly
- ❧ Contrast to the other world (not *alaukika* or *lokottara*)
- ❧ Philosophy whose basis is in the material world
- ❧ Controlled or restrained (*āyatam-controlled*) or *lokena* (by people)

# Lokāyata / Cārvaka / Bārhaspatya



- ❧ Lokāyata - earliest nomenclature
- ❧ It may be more like a movement rather than rigid system
- ❧ Cārvāka and Bārhaspatya Darśana was later identity
- ❧ Cārvāka or Bṛhaspati are also considered as founders
- ❧ Many Bṛhaspatis in tradition, Bṛhaspati was identified with Śukrāchārya
- ❧ Bṛhaspati may be mythical author
- ❧ Lokāyata Darśana, Cārvāka Darśana and Bārhaspatya Darśana may not be the names of a uniform single system but family systems or a family of philosophical trends
- ❧ Different schools of the same system are possible

# Cārvaka



❧ Cārvāka may be the proper name of its founder

❧ It is etymologized in following ways-

❧ **Carva-** to eat

i. a person who believes in eat, drink and be merry

ii. a person who eats up his own words, or who eats up all moral and ethical considerations

(चर्व्यन्ते पुण्यपापादिकं वस्तुजातमिति चार्वाकाः। )

❧ **Cāru vāk-** having sweet tongue (superficially attractive doctrine)

# Three broad schools



- ❧ Sceptic Cārvāka Darśana
  - ❧ which denies all ways of knowing
- ❧ Extreme or narrow empiricist Cārvāka Darśana
  - ❧ which accepts perception as the only means of knowledge
- ❧ Sophisticated empiricist or broad empiricist
  - ❧ Accepts perception and also kind of special kind of inference as a means of knowledge

# Time period



- ❧ **Radhakrishnan-** Materialism as old- pre-buddhist era, germs found in Rgveda, arose during the epic period 600 BCE-200 BCE
- ❧ Doctrines had numerous followers like today
- ❧ Fundamental discussion over Cārvākas is found after 600 BCE
- ❧ **Bhattacharya-** Cārvāka- several atheistic schools existed
- ❧ **Ajita Kesakambali-** It was systematized by Cārvākas, though material schools existed before
- ❧ **Hopkins-** contemporary to Jainism and Buddhism
- ❧ **Rhys Davids-** came as scepticism in general without being organized as philosophical school in 500 BCE

# Metaphysics



- ❧ Matter is the only Reality - **Dehātmavāda, Bhogavāda** (materialism, hedonism)
- ❧ तत्र पृथिव्यादिनि भूतानि चत्वारि तत्त्वानि । तेभ्य एव देहाकारपरिणतेभ्यः किण्वादिभ्यो मदशक्तिवत् चैतन्यमुपजायते ।
- ❧ Whatever exists is the combination of four elements.
- ❧ Consciousness is a mere product of matter. It is combined when the elements combine in certain proportion. Matter secrets mind due to process like fermentations
- ❧ So called soul is nothing but this living body.

# Epistemology



- ❧ *Pratyakṣa* (perception) is the only valid means of knowledge.
- ❧ Validity of (inference) *anumāna* is rejected as we proceed from known to unknown.
- ❧ *Vyāpti* is the very nerve of inference.
- ❧ Cārvākas challenge this relation of universal and invariable relation of concomitance.
- ❧ E.g: Mountain has a fire (*pratijñā*)
- ❧ Smoke – (*hetu*) cause
- ❧ wherever there is smoke, there is fire (*vyāpti*) Universal statement
- ❧ As in kitchen (*udāharanam*)

# *Vyāpti* remain unproved



Inference is dependent on *vyāpti* (statement of universal relation)

How *vyāpti* can be proved ?

*vyāpti* can be proved by *pratyakṣa* or *anumāna* ?

If depends on *pratyakṣa* then how universal statement is possible?

If depends on *anumāna* then how it leads to prove *anumāna* ?

❧ *Anyonyashraya doshā*

❧ *Anavastha dosha*



# Criticism



- ❧ Cārvākas position on inference is vehemently criticized by other philosophical systems.
- ❧ To refuse the validity of inference is to refuse thinking and reasoning process.
- ❧ Thoughts being abstract can only be inferred.
- ❧ We perceive the earth as flat but its round, earth as static but moving round the sun.

# Verbal testimony -invalid



- Verbal testimony – cannot be authoritative
- Heard words- knowledge through perception is valid
- Knowledge of the unperceived words, objects is invalid
- Authority of the Vedas- work of some cunning priests

अग्निहोत्रं त्रयो वेदास्त्रिदण्डं भस्मगुण्ठनम् ।  
बुद्धिपौरुषहीनानां जीवेकेति बृहस्पतिः ॥

# No Eschatology

- There is no *paraloka* like heaven and hell or not rebirth
- कण्टकादिजन्यं दुःखमेव नरकः । लोकसिद्धो राजा परमेश्वरः । देहच्छेदो मोक्षः । देहात्मवादे च 'स्थूलोऽहम्', 'कृशोऽहम्', 'कृष्णोऽहम्', इत्यादिसामानाधिकरण्योपपत्तिः ।
- Naraka* is nothing but sorrow experienced in this very world. There is no god. A king who rules is the controller. You don't have to strive for liberation because death itself is *mokṣa*.
- न स्वर्गो नापवर्गो वा नैवात्मा पारलौकिकः ।
- If one goes to other world after death then why one can't come to the family where he lived?

# Criticism to rituals



न स्वर्गो नापवर्गो वा नैवात्मा पारलौकिकः ।  
नैव वर्णाश्रमादीनां क्रियाश्च फलदायिकाः ॥

- It's useless to perform *pretakarmans*. It's nothing but a technique of Brahmins to earn money.
- There is no point in performing duties ordained by particular *varṇa* and *āśrama*.
- Śrāddha karmans* are done by foolish people.

स्वर्गस्थिता यदा तृत्पिं गच्छेयुस्तत्र दानतः ।  
प्रासादस्योपरिस्थानातत्र कस्मान्न दीयते ॥

# Atheism



- ❧ God is not necessary to account for the world and cannot be perceived
- ❧ Materials elements give rise to the world— no creator
- ❧ No need of efficient cause
- ❧ ***Yadṛcchāvāda / svabhāvavāda***
- ❧ No conscious purpose behind the world
- ❧ Mechanism of the world is automated
- ❧ Self-automated world

# Ethics



- ❧ Sensual pleasure - *summum bonum* of life i.e. eat, drink and be merry.  
यावज्जीवं सुखं जीवेदृणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत् ।  
भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः ॥
- ❧ Pleasure is mixed with pain but there is no reason why it should not be acquired.
- ❧ Nobody casts away grain because of husk.
- ❧ Out of *Dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, only *kāma* (sensual pleasure) and *artha* (wealth) are accepted.
- ❧ अङ्गनाद्यालिङ्गनादिजन्यं सुखमेव पुरुषार्थः । न चास्य दुःखसंभिन्नतया पुरुषार्थत्वमेव नास्तीति मन्तव्यम्, अवर्जनीयतया प्राप्तस्य दुःखस्य परिहारेण सुखमेव भोक्तव्यम् ।
- ❧ One should enjoy pleasure, keeping away sorrows
- ❧ All values are mere phantoms created by diseased mind.

# Downfall of *Cārvāka*



- ❧ Rejection of Authority and denouncement of the *Brāhmaṇa* priests, God
- ❧ Extreme hedonism
- ❧ Rejected values which make life worth living
- ❧ Questioning the soundness of popular notions and giving rise to new problems of philosophy



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