

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CARVAK

Abstract

Carvak philosophy is materialistic school of Indian philosophy. In this philosophy carvak observes epistemological outlook is empirical, their metaphysical, materialistic and ethics of hedonistic. Carvak etymologically means “sweet tongued” (caru+vak). Carvak was also called “Lokayata” which accepts only the material world as real. Brhaspati is the founder of the school. Carvak accepts perception is only means of knowledge and denies inference and testimony of knowledge. Carvak believes four elements of the material world such as earth, water, fire and air and also he denies the existence of ether because it cannot be perceived. Carvak does not believe in God because the existence of God, which is not material. Hence, God who is supposed to be supernatural and transcendental being is not a reality as God cannot the object of perception. Carvak also does not deny the existence of consciousness. So, this is my life, I have to enjoy this life and to seek the pleasure every time. For carvak, bondage is the root cause of pain and suffering in the world and the cessation of pain and suffering is Liberation. Liberation is attained only after death.

Keywords: Carvak, Lokayata, Epistemology, Metaphysics and Ethics.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Carvak philosophy is materialistic school of Indian philosophy. In this philosophy carvak observes epistemological outlook is empirical, their metaphysical, materialistic and ethics of hedonistic. Carvak etymologically means “sweet tongued” (caru+vak). Carvak was also called “Lokayata” which accepts only the material world as real. Brhaspati is the founder of the school. Carvak accepts perception is only means of knowledge and denies inference and testimony of knowledge. Carvak believes four elements of the material world such as earth, water, fire and air and also he denies the existence of ether because it cannot be perceived. Carvak does not believe in God because the existence of God, which is not material. Hence, God who is supposed to be supernatural and transcendental being is not a reality as God cannot the object of perception. Carvak also does not deny the existence of consciousness. So, this is my life, I have to enjoy this life and to seek the pleasure every time. For carvak, bondage is the root cause of pain and suffering in the world and the cessation of pain and suffering is Liberation. Liberation is attained only after death.

Carvak philosophy is a heterodox school of Indian Philosophy. Carvak Philosophy does not believe in authority of Vedas. Carvak accepts only materialism and he rejects the existence of other worldly entities like God, soul, heaven etc. The term ‘carvak’ refers to a materialist expression in the philosophy of ‘eat, drink and be merry’. Brhaspati is the founder of Carvak School. Carvak is hedonists and for him, pleasure is the ultimate end of life. The carvak being pure materialistic and he holds that consciousness as the product of material elements. Carvak philosophy focuses mainly on three issues.

Such as:

- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Ethics

- 1. Literally sources of carvak or lokayata:** The philosophy of Carvak is also called “Lokayata Darshan”. It is called Lokayata because this philosophy rules out other worldliness and deals with this world only. Literally meaning of ‘Lokayat’ term is philosophy of people, which an ordinary person with low, bad, impure tastes and tendencies. In 15th century AD, a vedantin “Madhavacarya” constructed carvak philosophy from the criticisms of other systems in his work “Sarvadarshan sangraha”. So, philosophy of carvak is relying on the work of “Madhavacarya”. In 20th century Prof. D.P.Chattpadhyaya and some others have made extensive and intensive research on carvak philosophy and they have brought out many novel and illuminating ideas about carvak philosophy.
- 2. Carvak epistemology:** The word ‘Epistemology’ meaning is the theory of knowledge. This theory is followed by three question i.e. How can we know knowledge? How does knowledge originate and develop? What are the different sources of knowledge? The carvak epistemology is based on valid source of knowledge which is perception (Pratyaksa). All other knowledge derived from inference, testimony etc. is rejected as invalid. This is because the knowledge is obtained by them is not directed and certain. Perception as the primary source of knowledge. For them, human knowledge is

aposteriori. Man is endowed with five sense organs (Jnanendriya) and we know the world by help of our sense organs. So, whatever is knowable is empirical and human knowledge is sense-bound. Anything that is beyond our sense or natural order is unknown and unknowable.

- 3. Carvak metaphysics:** The word 'Metaphysics' meaning is the theory of reality. The theory states that only those things that are perceivable are knowable. The material objects exist and are real, since there are perceived. The entities like God, Soul etc. being non-perceptible, there are not real. Hence, it is only the material things that is the reality. So, matter is only real.

There is five elements in a world, they are earth (ksiti), water (AP), fire (Agni), air (vayu) and ether (akasa). But carvak philosophy rejects ether (akasa) because it cannot be perceived, but only be inferred. Carvak accepts the elements of earth, water, air and fire to be ultimately real. The objective of the world is the context of our perceptual knowledge. The idea of heaven, hell, God etc. is rejected as they do not exist in the spatio-temporal framework, it is only an imagination.

- 4. Carvak views on god and soul:** According to carvak, there is no soul. Soul is a product of matter, it is the quality of the body and does not exist separately outside body. We do not perceive any soul then we perceive only body in a conscious state. Again, carvak does not accept the existence of God, which cannot be perceived. There is nothing existence beyond this material world. There is no other world and no God as creator of the universe. The world comes to into existence by the spontaneous combination of material elements.
- 5. Carvak ethics:** Ethics is the science of morality. For carvak, sensual pleasure is the highest end of life. If one is get sensually pleasure, he has reached his highest goal. Hence, carvak's doctrine 'Eat, drink and merry making. Out of four purusarthas, carvak considers kama (sensual pleasure) as the highest end of life and regarded artha (wealth) as the means to the realisation of this end. Thus, carvak ethics is hedonism. Carvak do not believe in dharma and moksha. According to carvak, a person begins life with birth and ends in death. Carvak does not believe in the theory of karma and rejects the notion of re-birth and there is nothing called after life or life after death.

II. LIBERATION

Carvak rejects 'Moksa' is the ultimate aim of human spirit. If liberation is freedom of the soul from its bondage to physical existence, it is ridiculous because there is no soul. For carvak, liberation can be attained on death alone.

III. CONCLUSION

Carvak philosophical principles is truth as it contains the material element of objects. The philosophy denies the human value, it emphasizes upon the sensual pleasure. It is also a rejection of God and soul. Thus, this philosophy aims at an individual's enjoyment in life.

For carvak, happiness in life is heaven and suffering is hell. It takes morality as a social obligation and it give emphasis on human welfare and happiness. In carvak

philosophy, pain and suffering in the world is due to bondage and the cessation of pain and suffering is liberation. Liberation is attained only upon death. So, death is liberation.

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