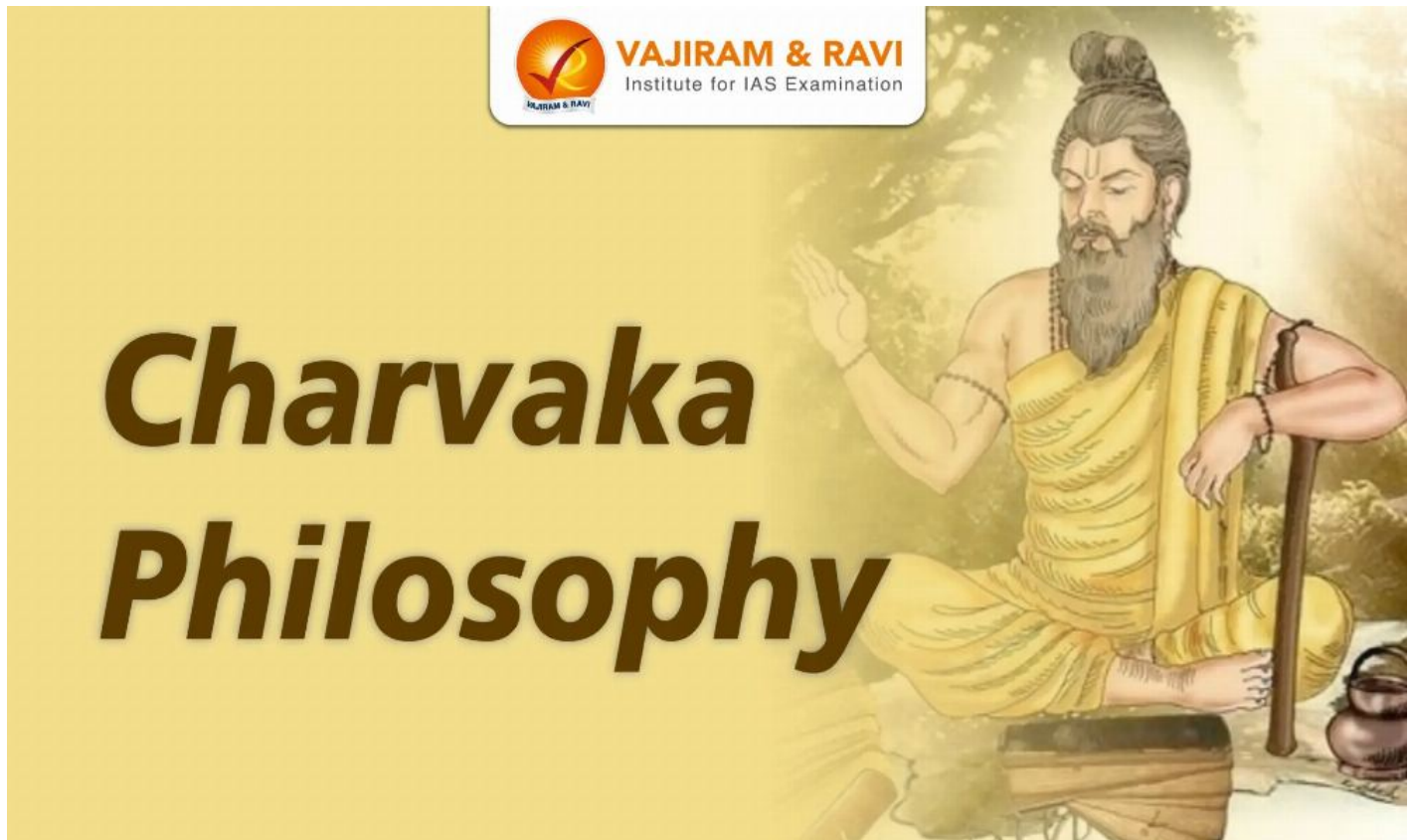


Charvaka Philosophy, History, Principles

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Charvaka, also known as **Lokayata Philosophy**, is a **heterodox school** of Indian philosophy that emerged around 600 BCE, emphasizing materialism and empirical understanding as the foundation of knowledge. This philosophy fundamentally rejects the concepts of an afterlife, karma, and liberation (moksha), along with the authority of sacred texts such as the Vedas.

Furthermore, Charvaka's Philosophy emphasizes that knowledge derived from observations should be approached with scepticism, acknowledging that inferred truths are conditional. This perspective encourages a pragmatic understanding of existence, challenging traditional beliefs and advocating for a more rational approach to knowledge.

Charvaka Philosophy

Charvaka (**Lokayata**) is an Indian materialistic school of philosophy named after **a sage** called **Charvaka**, the founder of this system. While some historians believe that Charvaka was a prominent disciple of **Brihaspati**, the actual founder of the school. It advocates for a sensory-based understanding of the world, rejecting supernatural explanations and metaphysical speculations.

- The origin of the school can be traced back to the post-Upanishadic period (**600-400 B.C.E.**). The Buddhist texts of this period mention several heterodox teachers such as **Sanjaya**, Ajita, Purana Kasyapa, and Kosala, whose ideas in some way or the other come closer to the views of Charvaka.
 - It is probably in this ambience of scepticism, materialism, and nihilism that Carvaka's philosophy would have originated.
- **Source of philosophy:** *Tattvopaplavasimha* of Jayarasi Bhatta.
 - Mention in other works: **Shatdarshan Samuchay** and **Sarvadarsanasangraha of Vidyaranya**.
 - Sanskrit poems and plays like the **Naisadha-Carita**, **Prabodha-Chandrodaya**, **Agama-Bambara**, **Vidvanmoda-Tarantini** and **Kadambari** contain representations of the Charvaka's thought.
 - **Lokayata-sutra:** It is generally attributed to Brihaspati. The texts of the second century C.E., namely, the Kamasutra of Vatsayana and the Nyayasutra of Gautama, contain the views of Lokyata Sutras.
 - **Brihaspati-sutra:** a work on political economy attributed to the same author brings in more ambiguity.

Charvaka Philosophy Principles

Charvaka's philosophy rejects spiritualism and **establishes materialism** to support its metaphysical theories.

Materialism is a form of philosophical monism that holds matter to be the fundamental substance in nature, and all things, including mental states and consciousness, are the result of material interactions.

- **Perception:** Charvaka emphasizes sensory perception (Pratyaksa) as the primary source of knowledge, distinguishing between external (five senses) and internal (mind) perception.
 - It critiques inference as flawed, highlighting that conclusions drawn from observations may be misleading due to alternative explanations.
- **Metaphysics:** The philosophy rejects concepts such as reincarnation, the immaterial soul, and supernatural explanations, asserting that all natural phenomena arise from their inherent nature. It views the Vedas as human inventions lacking divine authority.
- **Ethics:** Charvaka prioritizes individual desires and pleasure over collective interests, advocating for a hedonistic approach to life.
 - It challenges ethical systems rooted in supernatural beliefs, emphasizing personal happiness and indulgence while opposing austerity.
- **Pleasure:** Sensual pleasure is not seen as inherently wrong; wisdom is defined as the ability to enjoy pleasure while minimizing pain. Charvaka rejects the renunciation of pleasure out of fear of pain, viewing it as foolish.
- **Public Administration:** Charvaka thinkers are noted for their contributions to public administration, as highlighted in historical texts like the Aaine-Akbari.
 - Their strategies were praised for promoting welfare and effective governance.
- **Influence on Indian Philosophy:** Charvaka's emphasis on sensory experience and scepticism significantly influenced various Indian philosophical traditions, prompting reevaluations among Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thinkers.

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