1. Write an essay on the Dalit philosophy of life. What is the role of philosophers in this discourse?

**Ans:** The world-view of status quoism is found among those beneficiaries enjoying the privileges reaped from caste hierarchy. Dalits on the other hand, seeking to wriggle themselves out of this oppressive system, have their mind-set and pre-understanding in terms of complete annihilation of it. This agenda is not mere subversion of converting the caste system upside down wherein the oppressed at present will turn out to be the oppressors in future and vice versa. Dalits, in the last analysis, do not demand the ‘pound of flesh’ from the caste people. Nor do they cry for the role exchange between the oppressors-and-the-oppressed. The existing Dalit discourses, ideologies, philosophies, theologies, strategies and programmes, by and large, seem to articulate the aspects of their deprivation (Dalits as Victims), or/and also of their assertion (Dalits as Subjects). Besides the labour from the Dalit manual power contributing to the welfare of the society, the passion for creating a casteless humanity is the unique Dalit agenda in building up the human community. Hence the existing Dalit discourses have to deepen their commitment and broaden the scope of their strategies to accomplish the desired result of integral Dalit emancipation. In other words, the Dalits themselves are challenged to extend their hands out of this Dalit-centredness to reach out to a broad-based Dalit discourse while deepening their commitment to their emancipation. What could be the role of Dalit solidarity with other communities of victims around them and across the globe? What are the practical implications of the role of Dalits as the community of community-builders? Exploration into the new spaces for dialogue between Dalits and others (both at the intra and inter levels) is the need of the hour in constructing Dalit Philosophies. Hence the Philosophers need to trace the mythos, religio-cultural practices, ethical sensibilities, intertextuality, impact of the history of successes and failures of the Dalit communities in the past. This could help the present Dalit world-views to be artificulately explicitated. Similarly these aspects from the textual world of various religio-cultural resources are to be traced. Both of them are to be brought together for a meaningful Hermeneutical dialogue. It is through the prism of the present Dalit world-views in continuity with its past mythos, the ancient life-world portrayed in other textual worlds is encountered by the Dalits. In this process, the new possible world projected by rereading them is to be identified. That is to say that a future world is constructed through the present eyes in the light of the past world, both of the Dalits and other textual worlds.

In the meaning effect thus created by the Hermeneutical dialogue, the Philosophers could identify not only the humanizing inspirations but also the dehumanizing ethos from both the worlds. The life-promoting aspects could be appropriated and the life-negating aspects rejected from both the worlds. For instance, the strong sense of determination and historical consciousness of the prophetic voice of dissent to dehumanization and assent to rehumanization can be an effective antidote to the sense of determinism and magical consciousness prevailing in the Dalit world.

**OR**

**Explain the basis of Dalit eschatology. Discuss its various materialist features.**

**Ans:** BASIS FOR DALIT ESCHATOLOGY ARE -

Egalitarian community

Dalits are those people who have been differentiated and discriminated by the caste system which, was introduced by the Aryans who invaded India in the third millennium BC. When the Aryans invaded India, they did not come as tabularasa, i.e. without any religious and philosophical background. They came with their own religious system and philosophical purports which were squarely opposed to the philosophical thoughts of the people who were originally living in the sub-continent.

This-worldly Assertion

Dalit eschatology is the combination and even the summation of many philosophical and theological viewpoints which came into existence at different times as a revolt to brahminic and late on hindu philosophical and religious teachings about life after death, spirituality, prayer and many other social teachings in the name of religion and philosophy. Of the system that was prevailing among the local people who lived in this country before the Aryan colonization, Carvaka philosophy is said to be the most ancient school of thought.

Matter is real

The Carvakas state that consciousness is not due to the atman. When a man/woman dies, his/her consciousness goes away and one cannot prove that it vanishes and exists somewhere else. Being conscious is a peculiar quality of the living human body. It can keep back the consciousness so long as the physical parts are healthy and stay together in a certain form.

There is no spirit

The Carvaka metaphysics speak of the mind (manas), which is different from the atman. But the Carvakas appear to think of mind as the consciousness in its knowing function, which of course is not separate from the body. The body together with its consciousness is the atman and consciousness in its experiencing function is the mind. Mind knows the external world through the senses. According to the Carvaka metaphysics, it does not consist of five elements.

There is no external cause

Carvaka metaphysics are of the faith that there is no external cause for the four elements coming together and obtaining the qualities of life and consciousness. It is their inherent quality to come together and to have those qualities. However, one cannot generalize on this process and establish a law that, whenever these four elements come together in certain ratio, life and consciousness will emerge.

Indian Materialism

Naturalism

As happened in ancient Greece, so in India also the human intellect tried to probe and understand nature. It gave birth to philosophy. Since the attempt was to understand and explain natural phenomena, philosophical thought was materialism. So philosophy in India started as materialism. It was called Swabhava vada (naturalism). The Vedas and early Upanishads refer to Swabhava vada and its concepts. Though Indian Materialism is as old as the Vedas, or even earlier to Vedas, they became very prominent and pronounced during the time of the Vedas as the Vedic philosophy came as a blow to the life and beliefs of the people. The first thing is that the Vedic gods were thirsty after power, prominence, food, money and everything that the world craves for.

Various materialist features are -

God is non-existent: According to Carvaka, there is no God who is said to have created the universe. The universe came to be by natural phenomenon and it has been there from time immemorial. Hence there is no God who is the cause of the universe. There is no pre-existence or after-life: Since there is no primal cause for the existing world and all that is in it, there is also no pre-existence of life and also there is no