

Concept of Liberation and Its Pre-requisites

(According to *Pañcasūtrakam* of Cirantanācārya)

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Pañcasūtrakam is a small but important treatise of the Jaina philosophy written in Prākṛt language. Its author is stated to be Cirantanācārya. It is, however not sure whether Cirantanācārya is the real name of its author or this epithet has been attributed to signify the antiquity of the author of this book. Neither the text nor its Saṁskṛta commentator, Shri Haribhadra sūri, makes any mention of its author. The name of its author is mentioned in some of the manuscripts in the scribal notes. Some scholars do not consider this work as the creation of one single author because in the scribal notes in some of the manuscripts, plural is used regarding its authorship, i.e., *kṛtam cirantanācāryaih*¹. However, the style and language of the text instantly reveal without doubt that the work belongs to the single author. The plural use seems to have been made to follow the Indian tradition of showing reverence.

The *Pañcasūtraka* is so called because of its division into five sections, viz.

- (1) *pāpapratiṅghātaguṇabijādhānasūtram*,
- (2) *sādhudharmaparibhāvanāsūtram*,
- (3) *pravrajyāgrahaṇavidhisūtram*,
- (4) *pravrajyāparipālānasūtram* and
- (5) *pravrajyāphalasūtram*.

In all the principal systems of Indian philosophy, liberation is considered to be the ultimate aim of *jīva*, the creature. Jainism is also not an exception in this regard. *Pañcasūtrakam*, which deals mainly with the discipline to be observed by Jaina monks, states in the salutary passage itself where obeisance is paid to the liberated souls that bondage of soul is the real cause of miseries. This bondage is sought to be terminated².

Bondage from Eternal Times

Jaina philosophy does not consider it worth pondering over as from what time the soul began to transmigrate in a bonded state. It accepts the bondage of

soul as a natural certainty from the eternal times. As described in the *Pañcasūtrakam*, the bonded soul known as *jīva* is an eternal entity³. This theory agrees to what has been propounded in the Sāṅkhya philosophy. This universe has a real entity, as a non-real thing cannot exist⁴. Thus, the real thing should have a real cause and hence the eternality of the causal element. *Gītā* also speaks in the similar manner when it says that an unreal thing cannot exist and a real thing cannot have its negations.⁵

Cause of Bondage

Resting on the theory of cause and effect the Jaina philosophy lays down that the association of soul with the deeds is the cause of bondage. The soul in its pristine form must be pure and free from all activities. However, it becomes bonded when it comes into contact with deeds. This contact with deeds is also from eternal times and this also is the cause of constant flow of creation. Though this association is from eternal times, yet it does not mean that it cannot be terminated. By eternality it is meant that we do not know the origin. The bondage of the soul which is the cause of the world is due to the pre-existing cause and that is the association with deeds. Since, the deeds are produced they can have their end also. Apparently the two situations appear to be paradoxical. As propounded by *Gītā*, whatever is produced has an end and conversely whatever has an end has a beginning also⁶. Thus, there will be no real liberation. A liberated soul can again transmigrate on coming into contact with deeds. This, however, is not the case according to the Jaina philosophy. A liberated soul cannot be subjected to re-birth as on the termination of the deeds there will be no cause to effect the re-birth. Thus the eternality in the case of association of soul with deeds is not absolute but conditional existing only till the state of deedlessness is acquired. Hence, according to Haribhadra sūri, the commentator, there is no contradiction in the two situations⁷.

Pañcasūtrakam deals with this matter in detail in the fifth section, i.e., *pravrajyāphalasūtram*. Substantiating the view that the soul is bonded from eternal times, *Pañcasūtrakam* quotes an example of gold in the ore form. As the gold is found in ore form and cleansed later on to bring it to its pure form, similarly the soul is bonded from the beginningless times and it acquires its pure form after setting aside the association with deeds. Had the soul been un-bound from eternal times and bound later on then there would have been no real liberation as it would have been bound again. With this continuous process of liberation and bondage again and again there would have been no real purpose of liberation.

Further, had the soul been without bondage from the eternal times then indeed no desire (*didṛkṣā*) would have existed to get liberation, because desire is the characteristic of bonded soul.

Bondage is Misery

Pañcasūtrakam describes the nature of the soul associated with deeds as *duḥkharuva* (*duḥkharūpa*), *duḥkaphala* (*duḥkaphala*) and *duḥkhānubandha* (*duḥkhānubandha*)⁸. It means that it is of the form of misery, results in misery and bonded in misery. The basic inspiration to get liberation is to get freedom from the pain which the bonded soul constantly feels. The bonded soul according to Haribhadra sūri, the commentator, suffers from such situations as birth, old age, death, disease, shock, etc. That is why it is stated as *duḥkharūpa*. It is stated as resulting in misery (*duḥkaphala*) because it transmigrates into another birth and the same cycle of experiencing miseries continues. It is stated as bonded in misery (*duḥkhānubandha*) because it has to undergo the rigours of performing actions for the success of the worldly affairs⁹.

The kernel of Indian thought right from the earliest times has been the desire to attain eternality by transcending the state of mortality. The *Vedic Saṁhitās* abound in the prayers to cross over the state of death. By the time of *Upaniṣads* the thought had developed into a full-fledged philosophy of painfulness of this world. The famous dialogue between *Naciketā* and *Yama* in *Kāthopaniṣad* highlights the mundane character of the worldly pleasures. *Naciketā* was offered by *Yama* to choose all the pleasures of the world but the former rejected, describing them as subject to decay and the senses, the means of pleasure, and the life itself as of short duration¹⁰. Later, *Yama* himself described the worldly pleasures as unreal (*avidyā*) and stated that the persons engrossed into worldly pleasures wander confused perpetually into various births as a blind is led by a blind.¹¹ In the *Gītā* also, the sensual pleasures have been described as painful and transitory, being acquired and destroyed frequently¹². The Sāṅkhya philosophy has emerged just out of the desire of destroying the three-fold miseries.¹³ Lord Buddha also went for enlightenment out of the morbid experience of the world.

Jaina philosophy also centres round the above feeling of painfulness of the worldly circle which is sought to be terminated to attain the eternal blissful state.

Termination of Bondage

As the cause of the bondage of soul is its association with deeds, the bondage is terminated by terminating this association. *Pañcasūtrakam* here draws

a distinction between good deeds and evil deeds. It prescribes the termination only of the evil deeds and not the good deeds, rather it enjoins to perform the good deeds¹⁴. While prescribing the means to attain the capability of acquiring liberation, *Pañcasūtrakam* enjoins to perform the righteous deeds (*sukhadasevanam*). The cause of bondage lies in evil deeds. The effect of evil deeds is neutralised not only by abstaining from them but by performing good deeds. Repeated study of holy scriptures dissuade a person from evil deeds and persuades him to go for good deeds. Virtuous deeds remove or minimise the effect of evil deeds as the effect of poison is minimised or rendered easy to be removed by the application of proper remedy. The evil deeds in this manner are removed for ever and their effect cannot occur again as the effect of poison, once removed does not recur.¹⁵

Thus, the Jaina philosophy is a positive philosophy. It does not teach abstention from work. Merely to live in reclusion is not helpful to get liberation. One has to render service to the living beings to counter the effect of evil deeds done previously. It agrees with the main Indian stream of thought that the service to others is goodness whereas torturing other is evil (*paropakārah punyāya pāpāya parapiḍanam*). It goes side by side with the message of *Gītā* which teaches that the obligatory duties (benevolent in nature) prescribed in scriptures do not cause bondage. Other actions done with a definite desire to attain fruit for himself do cause bondage. The *Gītā* lays special emphasis on the renunciation of attachment and desire in fruits. Jaina philosophy also purports the same thing as an action can be benevolent only if it is shorn of the desire to get dividend in return.

Pañcasūtrakam specifically lays down that the seed of liberation lies in the realisation by the aspirant that he should become capable of rendering service to others. He should avoid all such actions as are against the interests of the people. He should be kind to them.¹⁶ He should not hurt any living being nor should he covet another's belongings.¹⁷ He should, in fact, be benevolent to everybody (*savva- hiyakari*), because hurting the feelings of others is the real obstacle in the path of attaining liberation.¹⁸

State of Liberation

Liberation is the highest achievement. When it is acquired, the soul becomes free from all worldly desires. It becomes pure *Brahma*, the most powerful entity. It becomes of the form of eternal pleasure. The seed in the form of deeds having been destroyed, the liberated soul becomes free from the states of birth, old age and death. It realises its own true nature. All its activities are ceased. It

becomes of the form of eternal knowledge and eternal perception.

The liberated soul is not affected by, or is not of the form of the objects of senses such as word, form, odour, taste and touch. It is a formless entity having unlimited powers. It is not fettered by any obstacle. Free from all desires, it becomes absolutely calm. Activity is the cause of miseries. The activity is produced only by contact with other things. The liberated soul removes all such contacts. Hence it becomes calm without any ripple of activity. Therefore the question of any feeling of misery coming to it does not arise. It is all pleasure. It does not require even space for its substratum, because it in itself is the substratum of everything. It is a formless element beyond all perception and thought. The nature of pleasure, which it is, defies all descriptions as it has no comparison. It is an experience only of the liberated soul which becomes omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. The blissful state of a liberated soul is infinite because such a *siddha* is devoid of curiosity and in the absence of curiosity or desire a feeling of pain can never be experienced. Thus the cause, i.e., the lack of curiosity is infinite, its result that is the blissful state is also infinite.¹⁹

The abode of a liberated soul is above the universe.²⁰ *Pañcasūtrakam* mentions plurality of souls. The infinite souls can live in as much place as occupied by one soul. It indicates the subtleness of the liberated soul having no perceptible form. A question arises here as to how the liberated soul rises above the universe without the cause when it is dissociated from actions. *Pañcasūtrakam* explains that the liberated soul rises above the universe because of its very nature. It means that in a bonded state the soul is laden with the weight of actions. Being weighty with actions it comes downward in the universe but when it is stripped off the actions it goes upwards just in the same manner as the gourd fruit rises upwards on the surface of the water after it is freed from the layers of clay.²¹

The liberated soul never comes back to the worldly cycle because of its infinite capacity. Any achievement attained with limited capacity is subject to an end after its capacity is over. But the liberation is acquired only by those who acquire the never ending capacity. Therefore, *Pañcasūtrakam* describes this power as the most infinite of all infinite entities.²²

Pre-requisites of Liberation

1. Preparation

Pañcasūtrakam mentions three means of acquiring the capability (*tathā bhavyatā*) to get liberation. They are :

(i) *causaraṇagamaṇam*, i.e., to take refuge in the four-fold. The four are the *arhats*, the *siddhas*, the *sādhus* and the *kevaliprajñaptadharmas*. The soul has an inherent capability of acquiring liberation. To stimulate that capability one requires proper guidance and environment. Therefore, one should take shelter of the most authenticated persons competent to guide them properly. Realising that the *arhats* are the lords of the universe; possessed of unparalleled virtues; rid of attachment, hatred and delusion; inconceivable precious jewels; ship for the ocean of the world and the refuge of one and all, one should take their shelter for the whole life.²³ Haribhadra sūri defines *arhats* as worthy of worship.

Thereafter one should take refuge in the *siddhas* who have acquired liberation. He should realise that the *siddhas* are beyond the state of bodily changes as old age or death. They have washed off all the stains of deeds. They have destroyed all the obstacles. They are perceivers of the absolute knowledge. Their abode is *siddhipur* (above the universe). They enjoy an unparalleled pleasure (not born out of sensual contacts). They have achieved the highest goal.

Then he should go to saints (*sādhus*). By *sādhus*, those holy persons are meant who are far advanced on the path of liberation. They have a tranquil and deep understanding. They have separated themselves from sinful deeds. They know five kinds of conduct. They remain busy with benevolent deeds. They remain unattached with the fruits of the actions as the lotus flower shines over and above the mud and water. They remain constantly engrossed in meditation and study of scriptures. All their actions are pure.

Then he should take refuge in the religious faith which enunciates absolute truth (*kevaliprajñaptadharmas*). Such a faith is revered by gods, demons and human beings. It is sun to dispel the darkness of delusion. It is the most efficient *mantra* to remove the effect of the poison of attachment and hatred. It is the promoter of the welfare of all. It is fire to burn the forest of deeds. It is the means to give liberation.

(ii) *dukkāḍagarihā* (*duṣkṛtagarhā*), i.e., censure of evil deeds. After having refuge in above he should develop distaste for evil deeds. He should censure all such evil deeds which he might have done knowingly or unknowingly, physically, mentally or by speech towards *arhats*, *siddhas*, teachers, saints or any other person in this birth or in other births under the influence of attachment, hatred or delusion. Such a censure indeed is a mental preparation to cleanse himself of sinful thoughts. Purity of thought is the basis of acquiring the highest goal of liberation.

(iii) *sukaḍāsevanam* (*sukṛtasevanam*), i.e., to perform benevolent deeds. After having developed hatred and repentance for evil deeds, the aspirant should make up his mind to perform benevolent deeds. He should generate in himself the feeling of service towards everybody whether he may be the most reverend authority as *arhat*, *siddha*, *sādhū* or teacher or the common man. He should repeatedly announces his promise to render service and perform auspicious deeds.

The above means, prepare the aspirant to step on the path of liberation. A seed of destruction of sinful deeds is thus shown and the ground for the process of liberation is prepared.

Righteous Practice

After making preliminary preparations, the aspirant of liberation should lead a life of righteousness. He should reflect on the qualities of virtuous deeds, their inherent goodness, their fruit, their beneficence and their serving as the means of liberation. He should follow the practice prescribed by religious scriptures. He should take a vow to abstain from (i) causing injury to the living beings, (ii) telling lies, (iii) stealing, (iv) sexuality and (v) storing. He should seek and obey the injunctions of righteousness. He should avoid the company of unvirtuous persons. He should abstain from the acts not conducive to the interests of the people. He should be compassionate to human beings. He should renounce all sinful deeds realising that they are the cause of bondage. He should keep the company of virtuous persons. He should perform the righteous duties of his household. He should maintain the purity of mind, speech and actions. He should free himself from emotional impulses such as pain or pleasure. He should free himself from the feeling of attachment because attachment is the cause of bondage.

While practising his household duties in the chaste manner he should awake from the slumbers of worldly delusion. He should realise that the sensual pleasures are without substance and inevitably perishable. He should also keep in mind the all-annihilating and irresistible death noting that only the righteous living can remove the fear of death.

Renunciation of the World

After having performed his household duties the aspirant should resort to asceticism. Realising the cycle of miseries in the process of birth and death and transitory character of worldly relations, he should renounce the chase for worldly affairs. Resorting to the feet of his preceptor he should maintain equanimity with regard to the pain and pleasure. He should renounce the greed and the sense of difference. He should consider a clod of earth and gold or a friend or foe alike.

Such a situation brings tranquility and real happiness.

Stages of Liberation

Becoming pure and pure the aspirant of liberation gradually terminates the contact with sinful deeds. The virtuous deeds performed without any feeling of attachment do not become the cause of bondage. Thus he becomes free from the association of deeds and acquires liberation. The cause of bondage having been removed for ever and no rebirth is caused.

Jaina philosophy believes in *jīvana-mukti*, i.e., liberation while living. *Pañcasūtrakam* mentions four stages of liberation, i.e., (i) *sidhyati*, (ii) *budhyate*, (iii) *mucyate* and (iv) *parinirvāti*. When the actions, the seed of bondage, are removed, the soul becomes free from the dirt of the *rajas* quality of the nature and the aspirant becomes *siddha*. In this state he acquires all powerfulness. He acquires true knowledge. Indeed he becomes identical with knowledge. Then he is liberated. On acquiring liberation, he causes an end to all sufferings. All these achievements, indeed, are gained at one and the same time.

While comparing the concept of liberation of Jaina philosophy as enunciated by *Pañcasūtrakam* with that described in other systems of Indian philosophy, it is observed that it is a combination of Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and Yoga philosophies. Like Sāṅkhya, the Jaina philosophy believes in plurality of souls. It also believes in the continuity and eternality of creation, as Sāṅkhya believes in the eternality of *Prakṛti*. As in Sāṅkhya the soul is the real experiencer of pain and pleasure in the Jaina philosophy. The desire to get liberation is inherent in the individual soul. Jaina philosophy accepts the *Brahma* of Vedānta and its true form as pure knowledge, but it does not pronounce the world as non-existent or a mere semblance as does the Vedānta. The concept of equanimity (*śamatva*) and performance of deeds in detached manner is the same as propounded in the *Gītā*. Jaina philosophy has some resemblance with Yoga philosophy also. Though in *Pañcasūtrakam* powers of a *siddha* are not described, yet Haribhadra sūri, the commentator, describes the state of a *siddha* as all powerful equipped with such achievement as *aṇimā* etc. These powers resemble with the powers described in the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali.

Though the Jaina philosophy has many similarities with the Sāṅkhya philosophy yet it differs in one important aspect. The Sāṅkhya philosophy believes that in reality the soul is never bound and it is the nature which is bound by itself, whereas the Jaina philosophy believes the soul as bound from eternal times. The *puruṣa* of Sāṅkhya is an indifferent seer whereas the soul of Jaina philosophy is

the enjoyer of infinite bliss after liberation. The two statements of Sāṅkhya doctrine that the *puruṣa* is an enjoyer (*bhoktā*) and at the same time an indifferent seer appear to be inconsistent but the Jaina philosophy has no such ambiguity.

The Jaina doctrine, as propounded in *Pañcasūtrakam*, is not atheistic. Though it does not mention any God as the controller of the Universe but it enjoins obeisance and obedience to the liberated souls giving such epithets as the lord of the universe (*paramalokanātha*) and Bhagavāna to them. It is a doctrine of righteousness and human service conducive to the worldly existence.

References

1. "*Kṛtaṁ Cirantanācāryairvivṛtaṁ ca jākinīmahattarāsūnu śrī Haribhadrācāryaiḥ*". *Pañcasūtrakam*, Ed. Muni Jambuvijayaji, p.79, f.n.2.
2. "*Iha khalu añāi Jīve añādijīvassa bhavē añādikammasañjogaṇivvattiye, dukkharūve, dukkhapphale, dukkhāṇubandhe*." *Ibid*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid*, p. 3.
4. "*Asadakaraṇādūpādānagrahaṇāt, sarvasambhavā bhāvāt śaktasya śakyakaraṇat kāraṇabhāvācca satkāryaṁ*." *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 9.
5. "*Nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhavo vidyate sataḥ*." *Gītā*, 2.16.
6. "*Jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyurdhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca*." *Ibid*, 2. 27
7. "*Kṛtakatve'pi pravāhatstathāvidhakālvat anāditvāvirodhāt*." *Pañcasūtrakam*, p. 6.
8. See F. N. 2 above.
9. "*Tatra duḥkharūpaḥ, janma-jarā-maraṇa-roga-śoka rūpatvāt, eteṣāṁ ca duḥkhatvāt, tathā duḥkhapphalaḥ, gatyantare'pi, janmādidbhāvāt, tathā duḥkhānubandhaḥ, anekabhavavedaniya karmavahatvāt*." *Pañcasūtrakam*, p. 6.
10. "*Śvobhāvā martyasya yadantakaitat sarvendriyāṇāṁ jaryanti tejaḥ. api sarvaṁ jīvitamalpameva tavaiva vāhāstava nṛtyagīte*." *Kāthopaniṣad*, 1. 1. 26.
11. "*Avidyāyāmantare vartamānāḥ svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitammanyamānāḥ. Dandramyamānāḥ pariyaṁti mūḍhā andhenaiva nīyamāṇā yathābandhaḥ*." *Ibid*, 1. 2. 5
12. "*Mātrāsparsāstu kaunteya śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadā Āgamapāyino'nityāstānstitikṣasva bhārata*." *Gītā*, 2.14.
13. "*Duḥkhatrayābhīghātājijñāsā tadabhighātake hetau*." *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 1.
14. "*Eyassa ṇaṁ vochhitī sudhadhammāo. Sudhadhammasampattī pāvakammavigamāo*." *Pañcasūtrakam*, p. 6.

15. *Kadagabaddhe via vise appaphale siā, suhavaṇijje siā, apuṇabhava siā.*
Pañcasūtrakam, Shri Jaina Dharma Prasarak Sabha,
Bhavanagar, Veer Samvat - 2453, p. 10.
16. *Ibid*, p. 17.
17. *Na giṇhijja adattam*, *Ibid*, p. 17.
18. *Sahudharmaparibhavaṇa suttaṃ* - 2, *Ibid*, p. 20.
19. *Pañcasūtrakam*, p. 59.
20. *Logantasiddhivāsiṇo*. *Ibid*, p. 59.
21. *Ibid*, p. 59.
22. *Eamaṇamtaṇamtayam*. *Ibid*, p. 59.
23. *Khiṇarāgadosamoha acintacintamaṇī bhavajalahipoā egantasaraṇa saraṇam*. *Ibid*, p. 2.

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