

JAIN ABSOLUTE

Jain Darshan is usually supposed to be atheistic. Is that so ? Although learned Jains believe in Atheistic Philosophy of Jain Darshan, the Jain laity, by and large does not consider Jainism to be atheistic. A long tradition exists that Jainism is a Godless religion. But that tradition is confined to those who are learned in Jain Philosophical doctrines. Ordinary Jain is unaffected by this tradition. The question is, Is Jainism really atheistic ? Is Jain religion without God ? Before giving the answers to those questions one requires a cool consideration of the doctrines involved in Jain system of Philosophy. I can go to the extent of saying that even one doctrine, namely Syadwad if examined, one can come to the definite conclusion that Jainism is not Godless, can not be Godless. Let us examine this.

Syādwād is Jain Dialectics. It is a very powerful and important doctrine of Jainism. *Syādwād* is a sort of Logic In ordinary logic there are two types of Propositions; positive propositions and negative propositions. In ordinary logic either a thing is or is not. A thing cannot both be and not be. But in Jain logic this is not so. In Jain Logic, i.e. Syadwad, a thing can both be and not be at the same time. According to Jain Darshan anything of the world has infinite characteristic (*anantdharmakam vastu*) Now one cannot know all the characteristic of a thing. It is physically impossible to know the infinite characteristic of a thing. One can know; only certain aspects of a thing. Usually what is predicated of a thing is an aspect of a thing and aspect is never absolute; it is always relative. According to Syadwad what ever is, is under a particular circumstance. And

therefore a thing can both be and not be. When we say a thing is, it is always under certain conditions. If these conditions are not there, the thing will not be there. The thing is because of those conditions. Apart from those conditions, the thing is not. So any object according Jain darshan has a 'conditional existence'. In other words things have relative existence. To denote the relative existence of a thing the Jains use the word *Syād*. *Syād* in Sanskrit means probability. In ordinary logic we say the pot is (*ghat asti*). In - Jain Darshan one does not say the pot is but one says 'probably the pot is' (*syād ghat asti*)

The structure of human body is such that it is impossible for it to have absolute knowledge of anything. The senses can give only relative knowledge. Therefore absolute propositions are not recognised by Jain Logic. Jain Logic recognises seven relational propositions which are called Naya. It is also called *Saptabhangi Naya*. Now a pot is in the form of clay. So as a form the pot is but in fact pot is clay. And therefore when we look to form a pot is and when we look to clay a pot is not. And therefore Jain Logic would say probably a pot is and is not. This is how Jain Darshan expounds the relativism of knowledge.

The question is can there be any relativism without there being any Absolutism ? Relative is always with reference to an absolute. There cannot be any "relative" without there being any "Absolute". This is very obvious. I for one do not understand how such an obvious thing could not be noticed by Jain philosophers. Jain logic does imply an Absolute. In other religions and philosophies such absolute is called God. For me a doctrine of relativism cannot be logically, sustained without absolutism. And when I view this position in this manner I have an unavoidable feeling and a sort of conviction that in relativism as expounded by *Syādwād*, Absolutism is implied. In other words *Syādwād* discloses an implied Absolutism.

Now we go to Jain Doctrine of souls in state of liberation. According to Jain Darshan all Jivas are intrinsically alike. And in the state of Liberation all Jivas possess infinite knowledge, infinite happiness, Infinite power and infinite bliss. These characteristics are

possessed by all the souls in the state of liberation. Although each soul exists separately all the souls share these characteristics. From this it is very obvious that all souls are alike. When all souls are alike their difference is indiscernible. There is no qualitative difference between them. According to Jain Darshan soul in the state of liberation possess quantitative difference but quantitative difference is no difference. If twenty pieces are made of a sugarcane, each piece is a sugarcane There is no qualitative difference between one and the other. Each separate piece of Sugarcane warrants unity. Same is the case with the souls. Although souls may have quantative difference they have no qualitative difference. To put it in other words souls are qualitatively the same. This implies an ontolglcal unity. The quantitative difference among the souls is not, and can not be real, and when difference is not real it is no difference at all. This means there is no difference between one soul and other soul in the state of Liberation. All are one. Can we not call this ONE, God ? Jainism has rejected qualitative differences among souls. I do not understand why should it inconsistently click to numerical differences which are only nominal and not real. In my humble view, Jain Philosophy does contain God. God of Jain darshan is not apparent but we have to bring Him out with effort. Jain darshan appears to be atheistic but in fact it is theistic. Jain darshan does contain a latent God. (*prchanna iswara*)