

The Jaina Idea of Universe

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In metaphysics, man through different ages and stages of philosophy has observed the self and the non-self. He has always tried to give importance to the one or the other or to strike a sort of compromise between the two. He has formulated either one substance, like the *Brahma* of the Vedāntist or the matter of the materialist or else many substances like the Sāṃkhya. Jainism takes its stand upon a common-sense basis, which can be varified by everyone for himself. Jaina metaphysics divides the Universe into two everlasting, uncreated, coexisting but independent categories (i) Jīva (the soul) and (ii) Ajīva (the non-soul). Logically it is a perfect division and unassailable. The soul is the higher and the only responsible category. Except in its perfect condition in the final stage of *Nirvāṇa* (liberation), it is the always in combination with matter. The body (the non-soul—Ajīva) is the lower category, and must be subdued by the soul.

According to Jainism, the Universe is uncreated and existing from eternity though undergoing modifications. Any object of knowledge that exists is called *Artha* which must be associated with *Dravya* (substance), *Guṇa* (quality) and *Paryāya* (modification)¹. A substance exists in its own nature and has its own attributes and modifications. Moreover, it is united with *Utpāda* or *Sambhava* (origination), *Vyaya* or *Nāśa* (destruction) and *Dhruvya* or *Sthiti* (permanence), which are at one and the same time². One modification of a substance originates and other one vanishes; but the substance remains the same. Viz., the golden ring is changed into a new form called an earring, one form vanishes and the other one originates; but the substance gold remains the same.

Substance is divided into (I) Jīva (soul) and (II) Ajīva (non-soul)³.

I. **Jīva**—Soul is the central theme in the Jaina system. The soul is not created by anybody, nor is anybody created by the soul. It is essentially an unit of *Cetanā* (consciousness) and *Upayoga* (conation)⁴. The soul is eternal but not of a definit size, since it contracts or expands according to the dimension of the body in which it is incorporated for the time being⁵. Souls are classified under two principle heads: *Samāsārī* (mundane) and *Mukta* (liberated)⁶. Liberated souls will be embodied no more; they have accomplished absolute purity; they dwell in the state of perfection in *Nirvāṇa* at the top of the universe and have no more to do with worldly affairs. Mundane souls are the embodied souls of living beings in the world and still subject to the Cycle of Birth. Mundane souls are *Sthāvara* (immobile) and *Trasa* (mobile).

1. 'तं परियाणहि दद्वं तुहं जं गुणपञ्जयजुत्तु ।
सहभुव जाणहि ताहं गुण कमभुव पञ्जउ बुत्तु ॥', परमात्मप्रकाश, I/57
2. 'दव्वं संलक्खणियं उप्पादव्वयधुवत्तसंजुत्तं ।
गुणपञ्जायासयं वा जं तं भण्णंति सव्वण्णू ॥', पञ्चास्तिकाय, 10
3. 'जीवमजीव दव्वं ।', द्रव्यसंग्रह, 1
4. 'जीवो पुण चेदणोवओमओ ।', प्रवचनसार, II/ 35
5. 'अप्पा देहपमाणु मुणि ।', परमात्मप्रकाश, I/51;
6. 'संसारिणो मुक्ताश्च ।', तत्त्वार्थाधिगमसूत्र, II/10

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Being caused by *Aśubha* (inauspicious) and *Śubha* (auspicious) *Karman*, they wander in the cycle of the four grades of existence, i.e., *Nārakī* (denizens of hell), *Tiryāñca* (lower animals), *Manuja* (men) and *Deva* (gods).

II. *Ajiva*—Non-soul is lacking of sentiency and it comprises five substances: matter, principle of motion, principle of rest, space and time¹.

i. *Pudgala*—Matter is non-sentient concrete principle. It is either in the form of *Paramāṇu* (primary atoms) or *Skandha* (aggregates)². These *Skandhas* are the lumps of *Paramāṇus*. The aggregatory process is going on because of their inherent qualities of *Snigdha* (cohesiveness) and *Rūkṣa* (aridity)³. It possesses the four qualities as touch, taste, fragrance and colour⁴. They are grasped by sense organs. Matter also possesses origination, destruction and permanence.

ii. *Dharma*—It is the principle of motion. It assists the movement of moving souls and matters as water helps the moving fish⁵.

iii. *Adharma*—It is the principle of rest. It serves as the medium of rest as the shadow helps the resting of travellers, or like the earth to falling bodies⁶.

We see around us things moving, coming to rest, again moving and so on. There must be some media to help the moving and resting things. If there were no medium of motion, all things in the universe will be at a standstill. There will be universal cosmic paralysis. If there were no medium of rest, the things in the world will be scattered and flying about in the space and instead of cosmos there will be only chaos. Hence, the existence of these substances is postulated.

iv. *Ākāśa*—Space gives accommodation to all the five substances⁷. It is eternal, pervasive and formless and it includes our world (*Loka*) and beyond (*Aloka*).

v. *Kāla*—Time is a substance characterised by *Vartanā* (continuity), being an accessory cause of change. The moments of time are individually separate like jewels in a heap of jewels⁸.

Of these matter alone is corporal or concrete (*Mūrta*) and the rest, including soul, are incorporeal or non-concrete (*Amūrta*), i.e., devoid of sense qualities and hence cannot be grasped by sense-perception. Time is devoid of *Pradeśa* (space-points), while the remaining five substances have innumerable space-points, and therefore they, are called *Astikāyas* (magnitudes).

It is not maintained these six causes created the world at some particular time; but they are eternally existing, uncreated and with no beginning in time. As substances, they are eternal and unchanging; but their modifications are passing through a flux of changes. Their mutual co-operation and inter-action

1. 'जीवु सचेयणु दव्वु मुणि पंच अचेयण अण्ण ।
पांगलु धम्माहम्मु णहु काले संहिया भिण्ण ॥', परमात्मप्रकाश, II / 17
2. 'अणवः स्कन्धाश्च ।', तत्त्वार्थाधिगमसूत्र, v / 28
3. 'स्निग्धरूक्षत्वाद् बन्धः ।', तत्त्वार्थाधिगमसूत्र, v / 32
4. 'स्पर्शरसगन्धवर्णवन्तः पुद्गलाः ।', तत्त्वार्थाधिगमसूत्र, v / 23
5. 'गइ परिणयाण धम्मो पुग्गलजीवाण गमणसह्यारी ।
तोयं जह मच्छाणं अचउंता णेय सो णेइ ॥', द्रव्यसंग्रह, 17
6. 'ठाणजुदाण अधम्मो पुग्गलजीवाण ठाणसह्यारी ।
छाया जह पहियाणं गच्छते णेय सो घरइ ॥', द्रव्यसंग्रह, 18
7. 'आकाशस्यावगाहः ।', तत्त्वार्थाधिगमसूत्र, v/18
8. 'कालु मुणिज्जहि दव्वु तुहुं वट्टणलक्खणुएउ ।
रयणहूं रासि विभिण्ण जिम तसु अणुयहूं तहभेउ ॥', परमात्मप्रकाश, II / 21

explain all that we imply by term 'creation'. There are always two causes in any event, namely, the *Upādāna* (substantial cause) and the *Nimitta* (the instrumental cause). Viz., fire would be the instrumental cause determining water to boil, water being the substantial cause of the event 'boiling'. Each of the above named substances or realities is both substantial cause and instrumental cause, each act upon the others and is itself acted upon by the others. Each has the power of originating new states, destroying old ones and keeping permanent. The basic substance with its qualities is something that is permanent, while the modes or accidental characters appear and disappear. Viz., the soul is eternal with its inseparable character of consciousness; but at the same time it is subjected to accidental characters like pleasure and pain and super-imposed modes such as body etc., both of which changing constantly. This power is called '*Sattā*'. It is not a separate entity existing outside these six realities. It is a power inherent in them and inseparable from them.

The modern physics also proved "Nothing new is created, nothing is destroyed, only modifications appear. Nothing comes out of nothing, nothing altogether goes out of existence; but only substances are modified."

As Jainism is a dynamic realism, its doctrine is similar to the views held by the philosophers in the west, especially those belonging to the Realistic School. The Jaina conception of *Dravya*, *Guṇa* and *Paryāya* is approximately similar to Spinoza's view of substance, attributes and modes, though he uses the term 'attribute' with a technical meaning, while in Jaina metaphysics it means qualities. Hegel had a conception of reality similar to the Jaina conception of *Dravya*. *Sattā* and *Dravya* are one and the same as Hegel maintained. Thing-in-itself and experience are not absolutely distinct. *Dravyas* refer to facts of experience and *Sattā* refers to existence or reality. The French philosopher Bergson also recognised substance as a permanent thing existing through change.

The position is the same in Jainism and Sāṃkhya so far as the initial start is concerned. One accepts the thesis and antithesis of *Jīva* and *Ajīva* and the other of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. Thus both are dualistic of even pluralistic in view. But in Jaina system, *Jīva* is an active agent, while in Sāṃkhya system *Puruṣa* is always *Udāsīna* (indifferent) and is only a passive spectator. Jainism is a realistic religion with a philosophical background, while Sāṃkhya remained till the end only a system of intellectual pursuit.

Jainas and Mīmāṃsakas agree in holding that *Ātman* is constituted of *Caitanya* and that there is a multitude of separate souls. But according to Jainism pleasure and pain come to be experienced because of Karmic association; while Mīmāṃsakas simply say that they are changes in the Soul. In the condition of liberation, the soul, according to Mīmāṃsakas, exists without cognition; but Jainism holds that the liberated soul is an embodiment of entire cognition (Ananta-Darśana), omniscience (Ananta-Jñāna), infinite energy (Ananta-Vīrya) and the highest bliss (Ananta-Sukha).

The Jaina *Ātman* is a permanent individuality and will have to be distinguished from Buddhistic *Vijñānas* which rise and disappear, one set giving rise to a corresponding set.

Unlike in the Nyāya system the soul in Jainism is not physically all-pervading but of the same size as that of the body which it comes to occupy. Jainism does not accept any idea like the individual souls being drawn back into some Higher soul *Brahman* or *Īśvara* periodically.

Soul's inherent qualities cognition (Darśana) and knowledge (Jñāna) are similar to that of Kant's view of sensibility and understanding.

The Jaina conception that *Jīvas* are potentially divine and are found in different states of existence is echoed in the following lines of the Sūfī Mystic :

'God sleeps in the minerals
Dreams to consciousness in animals

To self-consciousness in man
And to God consciousness in
Man made perfect.'

Matter in Jainism is concrete, gross, common place stuff amenable to multifarious modifications and realistic; while Sāṃkhya *Prakṛti*, though it involves much that is gross as well as subtle, stands for what is ordinary termed as undeveloped permordial matter, and it is an idealistic concept.

Some Buddhist heretics known as Vātsīputīryas too, as Sāṃtarakṣita says, take Pudgala equal to *Ātman*.

That body, mind and speech are material corresponds to the Sāṃkhya view according to which they are all evolved from *Prakṛti*. The four kinds of *Ahaṅkāras*: *Vaikārika*, *Taijasa*, *Bhūtādi* and *Karmāṭman* remind us of the four bodies in Jainism: *Āhāraka*, *Vaikriyika*, *Taijasika* and *Kārmaṇa*.

In explaining the phenomenon of Saṃsāra, the Karmic matter plays the same part in Jainism as *Māyā* or *Avidyā* in the Vedānta system. The *Karma* doctrine, as an aspect of Jaina notion of matter, is complex and elaborated subject by itself.

The Jainas and Vaiśeṣikas agree in holding that an atom is beyond sense-perception. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, it is the will of God, the creating agency, that produces motion in the atom; and so they combine *Dvyaṇukas*, *Tryaṇukas* and so forth, till masses of earth, water, fire and air (Pṛthivī, Ap, Teja and Vāyu), the four elements are produced. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ideas and hair-splitting discussions of *Dvyaṇukas* and *Tryaṇukas* have no place in Jaina exposition.

The Jaina *Paramāṇu* is similar to the atoms recognised by Lencippus and Democritus in its basic conception that it is an eternal and indivisible minute particle or matter, that it is beyond sense-perception, that it is made of the same substance and that there are no four classes of atoms corresponding to elements ; but the varying size and form of atoms with corresponding sourness etc., accepted by them is not possible in Jainism.

As in Jainism, *Dharma* and *Adharma* are never used as the medium of motion and rest anywhere else. The Sāṃkhya idea that *Dharma* leads upwards and *Adharma* downwards is merely the ethico-religious idea quite usual in Gītā and other works. In Jainism, they are non-corporal and homogeneous-whole substances. Dr. Hermann Jacobi holds this as mark of antiquity of Jainism. The function of *Adharma Dravya* corresponds to Newton's theory of gravitation.

Like the Jainas, the European mathematicians Cantor, Peano and Frege have accepted the reality of Space and Time. Jainism and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika agree in holding *Ākāśa* as all pervading and eternal, but Jainism does not accept that sound is a quality of *Ākāśa*; but it is produced only when molecules strike against one another. This view is now moved by the modern science also. The realistic philosopher Bertrand Russell also says that though Time is the existent substance; still it is not merely experienced. Jainism holds that Time is unilateral and in mathematical language it is called monodimensional.

Considering the above discussion, I now conclude my article in H. Warren's words:

"The power which creates and destroys things
is not extra-cosmic outside the above named
six realities, the power is inherent in the
things themselves, and is found in both the
intelligent and in the non-intelligent realities.
This power is not called God in Jainism.
That is the Jaina position."