

JAINISM

(Shri K. L. Banthia, M.A.)

Jainism is more than a mere religion or philosophy. It is a way of life, supreme science of leading a happy life; life's beacon light. The problem of existence of God (creator) World (creation) and Soul (jivatma) has been the subject of searching enquiry with different answers by various religion and philosophies prevailing in the East and West. Let us begin with a natural, undisputed, undeniable and real phenomenon, the world, or universe at large, which we all see and experience. What we also see all around is matter or Dravya or Padarth. All matter is endowed with character quality and mode. It is observed that there is origin (Utpad) decay (Vyay) and permanence (Dhruavya). Thus the matter or substance or PADARTH is undivided whole having infinite qualities and it's characteristic qualities are Jiva and Ajiva (animate and inanimate objects) or soul and non-soul. The universe is made of these two elements.

Without going into the extreme views propounded by different religious thinkers, philosophers, logicians and theorists to know and understand God (Creator) Creation (Universe) and Soul (Jiva) Jainism advocates beginninglessness or eternity and infinity of the creation without any Creator and of the elements of which it is made. We observe that all living beings (animate objects) are bound with pudgal or Sarir or body (inanimate objects).

Jain religion has classified all beings broadly into two categories, Immobile (Sthavar) and Mobile (Tras). Bodies having one sense organ (Ekendriya) are Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Flora bodies are STH AWAR, Bodies having two, three, four and five sense organs include insects, birds, beasts, infernal beings (Narkas), humans (Manvas), and gods (Devas) are (Tras).

Birth and death of all beings is a natural pheomena. Embodied souls are subjected to cycles of life and death till their liberation from the matter. No sooner the Jiva or Chetana or Consciousness departs from the body of any being what remains is a dead matter or corpse. Birth and death are proved by direct experience. The Jivatma animating the body though imperceptible is transmigrating from body to body as a result of actions and reactions taking place on account of it's activities conditioned by it's contact with various bodies. Thus the Soul though not apart nor perceptible by senses is different from body.

When the soul or Jivatma in the course of it's journey through various bodies from dormitory stage to human being attain the status of manhood it's consciousness or chetana is highly developed. It has choice and power for good activities and bad activities. Results of good activities and bad activities are so very

obvious and perceptible to mankind that every human being desires only happniess (Sukha) and no misery (Dukha). Obviously there is need for a way of life which prevents men from wrong doing or evil acts.

Central theme of Jainism is the principle of AHIMSA or nonvoilence. Nonvoilence presupposes other moral acts e.g. Truthfulness (Satya), Non-stealing (Achaurya), Celibacy (Brahmacharya) and Nonpossession (Aparigrah) Ahimsa means abstinence from voilent activities through mind speech or body. Voilent activities are generated by Kashayas i.e. pride, anger, lust and greed, PRAMAD, KAM, KRODH, LOBHA etc. All such acts are degrading the soul causing endless bondage with matter to born and die times without number.

Jain Tirthankaras born as human beings proved beyond doubt that the soul defiled and polluted through it's contact with various bodies is capable of deliverence, salvation or Moksha. Liberation of Soul or Jivatma from matter is possible through Right Seeing, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct. The process of purification and perfection of soul is long and arduous but if followed as prescribed by Jain Ethics it can regain it's true attributes i.e. infinite knowledge, infinite power infinite happiness and infinite potency. These are the natural characteristics of the soul and come to full manifestation in the state of salvation.

The process of self realisation prescribed by Jainism is useful not only for salvation but also for a man who wishes to live a happy life by rising above inner conflicts and complexes. Modern world with it's discoveries and knowledge of potentiality of material sceince is standing on the precipice of total annihilation. Therefore in this war oriented world there is crucial need to spread and inculcate Gospel of Non-voilence for creating good world order free from hatred lust and voilence. Jainism teaches a way of life with sense of moral need good conduct or behaviour or charitra to live and let live all things for orderly growth and development of human moral and spiritual culture. It is a sad reflection on the followers of Jainism why it's philosophy could not be spread throughout the world for the benefit of the entire human race.

It is my earnest prayer to our prodigious present Acharya Shrimad Jayantsen Suriji Maharaj through these lines on the eve of the publication of a commomerative volume of his multifarious activities and achievements to spread the gospel of Jainism throughout the world. Present time is the most opportune period in the history of the world to do so when all the latest various communication medias are available.