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NATURE OF SALVATION

(a Jain Point - of - View)

Introduction

Before we talk about the "Nature of Liberation" in Jainism, let us be clear about Jainism as religion and its philosophy as a significantly important school of Indian Philosophy. Jainism - a religion of Jainas - is considered very ancient as old as Vedas or may be even before that. It possesses all the postulates required for any system to become a religion. Understanding religion is a wide topic and we would not enter into its full details. However, we must note that "of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of human race, none, certainly, is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion" In the very distinction between the living and the dead we find in the living there is freedom, there is intelligence. This freedom is what we are all striving for. To be more free is our constant goal, for 'in perfect freedom can there be perfection'. This longing for freedom leads to idea of 'absolutely free'. The concept of God is thus a fundamental concept in human constitution. Both, the conception of bondage and the conception of God are the outcome of the idea of freedom. Religion shows the path, a way to gain freedom.

Jainism as religion of Jainas, is not different from the others in the above mentioned point of view. It certainly does not accept the authority of Vedas and is fundamentally different from the other systems of Indian Philosophy. We must note, the following fundamental principles of Jain religion and thought.

- i. Jainism believes in soul. Soul in Jainism is a substance.
- ii. Jainism believes in pluralism of Souls.
- iii. The Jiva or embodied Soul is a Soul in bondage.
- iv. According to Jainism Karma is the cause of bondage.
- v. Total annihilation of Karma is total freedom from bondage.
- vi. A soul totally free from bondage is a liberated soul.
- vii. Liberated Souls have all infinite bliss, power, knowledge and so are Gods.

Keeping these in mind, we will see the Jaina Philosophy of Soul first. Then we will talk about the doctrine of Karma - the cause of bondage. Unless we know the causes of bondage we will not be able to remove the causes and till the causes are not removed the bondage cannot be removed. When bondage is removed, liberation or *Moksa* is attained. Liberation or *Moksa* in Jainism is a state of Soul in its all the capacities in infinite degree. At this stage the soul is free - free from the cycle of birth - death. And towards the conclusion we will talk about the nature of liberation.

Philosophy of Soul in Jainism

Except the behaviourist school of psychology, the most important presupposition of all schools is consciousness. We can not deny the consciousness because the truth of consciousness is again based on consciousness. Jaina philosophy holds a close relation between the Soul and the consciousness. For almost all the 'Atmavādi' (Believing in the existence of Soul) schools the consciousness is one of the qualities of the Soul. Soul (Jiva), in Jainism is a substance, and consciousness (Chetanā) is its differentiating characteristic. Where there is soul (Jiva) there is consciousness and vice versa. They are always found together.

Meaning:

Jainism recognises nine categories of the fundamental truth. They are (1) Jiva, (2) Ajiva (3) Punya, (4) Pāpa (5) Asrava (6)

Samvara (7) Bandh, (8) Nirjara and (9) Moksa. The whole universe is also analysed into two eternally independent catagories of Jiva and Ajiva. The Jiva is 'chetan' and the 'Ajiva' is 'Jada'. The Jive (Soul) has consciousness and the Ajive (matter / objects) has no consciousness. "Roughly speaking what is 'Purusa' in Samkhya and Yoga system of philosophy, Atmā in the 'Nyaya', the Vaisesika and the Vedanta thoughts, is Jiva in the Jain Philosophy. The essence of Soul is conceived in self consciousness absolutely devoid of any materiality.

Like most of the schools of Indian Philosophy, according to Jainism the knower is the soul. The knowledge is apprehended by the soul." The soul is not an exclusive possession of human beings, according to Jainism. It allows the soul principle to extend to all the living things of the universe" "It is these souls in plasma that lie scattered in every nook and corner of the universe and each is the doer of good or bad deeds to reap the consequences of which each takes the repetition of births and deaths according to the merits of its own karma" "

The Jaina Scriptures in general and the Ganadharvawada (Lord Mahavira's last discourse with his chief disciples) in particular describes "this soul as traversing in this transitory world" It is called a great traveller who sails his ship (body) into the ocean (samsāra). "The life is the journey and the liberation is the destination."

Existence of Soul: 'Existence' is an ontological status of a substance or entity. It is of great importance because fundamentally all the discussions about the nature, the characteristic and classification of a thing becomes tenable only and only if it exists. This ontological status called 'existence' is proved directly by experience e.g we see and prove the existence of what we see. But then there are things that exist but we can not have direct sensuous experience, such existence is proved through Logic (inference etc) or though language etc. 'Soul' or Jiva is a very 'subtle substance' and its direct perception is not possible. Gautamswami, one of the chief disciples of Lord Mahavira, when doubted the

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existence of soul, Lord Mahavira proved its existence logically and was at last convinced. The existence can be proved logically, empirically, operatively (effective operation), by negation, by opposites, by Utterer and Utterances (Vacaka and Vacc'ya) and ofcourse metaphysically. One more proof, is the words like I, 'my', 'mine', etc. The famous philosopher Descartes when says 'Cogito Ergo Sum': (I think therefore I am) the thinking quality of the soul proves the existence of soul. In spite of all these proofs, even if someone still doubts, the very doubt also proves the existence. Who doubts? And obviously we know it is the soul that doubts. The existence of soul can be logically inferred with the help of a metaphysical principle. An object is substance and qualities, both are inseparable. Substance is always in the form with the qualities. From qualities like knowledge, consciousness, happiness, anhappiness etc. we infer the substance. This substance is the Soul. Every action also presupposes the doer of the deed. The doer is the Soul. Senses or body are the tools, they can't do anything when the soul is not there. Lastly the existence of soul can be even proved by Testimony or Sabda Pramāna. In Jainism the testimony is Agama - Pramāna, which tells us "Souls Exist". Thus we find that the Jaina system recognises the existence of Soul or Jiva. The acceptance of the existence of soul is the very fundamental plank in the spiritual science or for the concept of liberation. What is very significantly important to note is that with regards to the nature of soul Jainism is quite distinct. Without the accurate picture of the nature of Jiva or Soul, its characteristics, classifications, qualities, status etc. the conception of soul can not be understood. Let us see all these in brief.

Nature of Soul: Vadi-Devsuri in his "Pramāna - nay - tattva - lokalankara" describes the soul as, "That (i.e. the soul) is essentially conciousness; undergoes modifications; is a doer (of acts); is the direct enjoyer (of the fruits of its acts); is of the same extent as its body: is different in each individual and being attached to material elements has birth and rebirth." "The most important quality of the soul is consciousness, it is the essence of the soul. The same consciousness in our daily affair we call "life" and "the sacred

scriptures have declared, soul is characterised by life"6 Consciousness is cognition of all things having forms or no forms. Without consciousness the soul can not know, can not discriminate, and can not will Inana, i.e. knowledge, though a very important characteristic of the soul, depends upon the particular state (of consciousness) in which the soul appears" Thus consciousness (chaitanya) is the natural and essential characteristic of Jiv. Prof. J L Jaini explaining the nature and characteristics, writes about the Jiva or Soul, "The soul is a Dravya, therefore, like every other Dravya it is eternal. Its peculiar attributes are perception and knowledge. It is different from Karma and matter and therefore immaterial. It has identified itself with matter, therefore it assumes a body, to which it must fit. It is responsible for its Karmas, because it has the power to get rid of them all. It must reap the harvest of the seeds that it has sown, and therefore, must remain in the field or Samsāra, or a cycle of existence. And still all these evils are self assumed, and in its pure condition the soul is siddha." Lord Mahavira says, "This Jiva (or soul) is since the beginningless (Anādi) time, it is immortal, indestructible, eternal and permanent."9 Every soul, in its essence; in its pure state, possesses infinite qualities (Guna) the following eight (according to Jainism) are the chief of them.

- 1. The faculty of Omniscience (Keval Jnāna)
- 2. The faculty of absolute undifferentiated cognition (keval Darshan)
- The superiority over Joy and grief (Avabadha)
- 4. The possession of complete religious truth (Samyaktva) and irreproachable moral conduct (caritra)
- 5. The possession of eternal life (aksayasthiti)
- 6. Complete formlessness (Amurtava)
- 7. Complete equality in rank with other Jiva (Agurulaghutva)
- 8. Unrestricted energy (Virya)**

The above qualities are also described as: infinite faith, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss (Ananta Darshan, Ananta Jnana, Ananta Vrya, and Ananta Sukh: Ananta Catustaya) The soul in its impure stage possesses the following main nine properties:

- 1. The soul lived, is living and shall live for ever,
- 2. It has perception and knowledge,
- 3. It is immaterial, no touch, tate, smell, colour,
- 4. It is the only responsible agent of all its actions,
- 5. It completely fills the body which it occupies,
- 6. It enjoys the fruits of all its karmas,
- 7. It wanders in Samsāra,
- 8. It can become in its perfect condition Siddha,
- 9. It goes upward.

Classification of Souls:

With reference to number, Jainism believes in pluralism of souls. According to Jainism there are infinite Jivas or Souls. The souls are innumerable and all livas i.e. embodied souls, as per the degree of its pollutedness beat the consequences and status. Thus Jivas or Souls could be classified in different ways from different standpoint. The Jains make an exclusive classification of souls (Jivas) on the bases of various physical differences. The main classifications are as follows: "With reference to its common essence, the Jiva (Soul) is of one kind. It is of two kinds in as much as it may be in bondage or liberated (emancipated). The Jivas may be imperfect, nearly perfect or perfect and thus be of three modes. With respect to its state of existence, the Jiva may be divided into four classes : viz. central being, internal being, human being and sub-human being. In consideration of its five fold conditions viz. mitigation, annihilation, partial annihilation and partial mitigation, modification and genesis or rising, the Jivas are of five kinds. The six modes of cognition divide the livas into six classes."12

What is mainly to be noted is the main division of souls into *Mukta* (liberated / emancipated) and *Baddha* (in bondage) - all

samsari Jivas. Of course this classification is based on physical differences and is not metaphysical. On metaphysical level we can classify from the *Gunsthana* point of view i.e. Jivas divided into fourteen divisions or fourteen ranks -from utmost polluted (rank 1) to perfectly pure (rank 14). The Jaina literature tells the Gunasthana as the "Ladder of Spiritual Ascent". Soul, according to Jainism is inherently pure, conscious, blissful, omniscient and omnipotent; owing to its past karmas, its inherent perfection is concealed or diffused. At this stage we avoid going down deep into the steps of this Spiritual Ascent which in Jainism are called Gunassthana

When we talk of classification of Souls in Jainism, let us note the "Holy Pentad" (Panch - Parmesthin) - five Holy Souls in the Jaina form of religiousness where the central theme is obeisance or adoration (Namaskār) to these holy souls. These souls are: (1) all the arhats (i.e. Tirthankaras), (ii) All the Siddhas, (iii) All the Acharyas, (iv) All the Upādhyas and (v) All the Sadhus (Good human beings). This classification is not of all the souls but only of the holy souls, souls having spiritually elevated - higher than we ordinary Samsāris (house holders).

In our concluding remark about the philosophy of soul in Jainism we saw the Jaina concept of Jiva or Soul, its meaning, nature and its types. The nature of souls, the properties and classification of souls, all this reflect the originality of Jaina system. At the same time the Jain concept is so simple in understanding and so sound in its logic that the soul in its essence is pure, is hindered by Karmic veil and its original purity is sullied, can regain its original pure status (form) by removing the veil or annihilating the karma. Thus in Jainism soul is always discussed and understood in its two stages: the state of bondage and the state of release. Of course our talk is about the second one, we talk something about both the states.

The Soul in State of Bondage:

We can not and will not give full justice to state of Bondage by discussing it into the full details. We have time limitation, and besides we want to understand it only so far it is relevant to make us understand the sate and nature of liberation. According to Jainism 'Soul in Bondage' is the soul that is embodied and is trapped into the cycle of birth and rebirth. Jainism does not say that the bondage is for ever and ever and is eternal. It has a solution too. Here Jainism proves to be quite optimistic, meaningful and aspiring.

The word bondage presupposes - duality or plurality. Here bondage is of Karma. Thus the soul in state of bondage is in opposition to soul in state of liberation. The soul in bondage is not the soul in liberation. The soul in liberation is immortal, eternal, indestructible and even indivisible; potentially all powerful and all knowledgeable. The liberated soul is pure and totally free. The soul in bondage is not this. The soul in bondage is not pure but polluted (or impure) not immortal but mortal, not free but in chains, not powerful but ineffective.

The root cause of bondage is due to soul's union with karma. The karma has polluted soul and has hindered soul's original essential qualities including its freedom and powers. Bondage means <code>Jivātmā</code> the embodied soul, liberated means <code>Paramātmā</code> or <code>Siddhas</code> - the Soul in its pure light. The veil of Karma as per the doctrine of karma, is the cause of births and rebirths. Thus bondage also means <code>Samsāra</code>, and in this sense release or liberation means <code>Moksa</code>.

Regarding 'Bondage state of soul', we should also note that according to Jainism, this state is not the natural state of soul, it is neither a desired state as nobody wants bondage. "The five causes of bondage, are as follows:

- i. Subreption or Unbelief (Mithyātva)
- ii. Non observation of the vows and commandments (Avirati)
- iii. Idleness or Inactiveness (Pramāda)
- iv. Passions (Kasāya), and
- v. Activities (yoga)"13

Jainism discusses in full details the kinds of bondage, nature and duration (Sthiti), intensity and quantity (Rasa and Pradesa) of

bondage. We have seen that the cause of *Samsara* or the suffering is the Karma. The soul being polluted due to Karma is in bondage of Karma. We have seen the reasons for the bondage of Karma. The reason behind all the different causes is ignorance or nescience.

With this much preliminary, informative and brief note of the Soul in state of Bondage we will try to understand: 'Soul in state of Release' (liberation), and 'the Nature of Liberation' in Jainism.

Soul in State of Liberation:

First let us talk about *Moksa* - liberation in general in Indian Philosophy. In Indian Philosophy all the schools talk about liberation (Moksa). Every school starts with *Ināna* (Knowledge) and ends with *Moksa* (liberation of the soul). The ultimate goal of life is *Moksa* - Every system has its own philosophy (or Science) of liberation.

Indian philosophy talks about Four Purusharthas - Artha (wealth), Kama (Desire), Dharma (Duty - Responsibility) and Moksa (Liberation). In these four, the Moksa is considered to be the last & final one. Thus Moksa or liberation becomes the ultimate goal of life in Indian Philosophy. The moment we talk about liberation we have to talk about the bondage. To all, the bondage is due to ignorance or nescience. The suffering - the Samsara - the cycle of births and rebirths all these are due to Bondage of the soul -due to Karma. Every school talks about the absolute release from the bondage - the total freedom - emancipation or liberation. For the total freedom one has to transcend from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light and so from mortality to immortality. In short the freedom from suffering is through knowledge. All the schools of India Philosophy say that knowledge is the only way. But to them all, the meaning of knowledge that leads to liberation is different. Here they differ: The liberation is possible by attaining:

According to Jainism: Absolute knowledge (Keval Jnāna),

According to Buddhism: Metaphysics or Philosophical knowledge (*Tattvajnāna*)

According to Samkhya: Discriminatory knowledge (Vivek Ināna)

According to Vedanta (Samkara): Self Realization (Brahma - Ināna)

According to Vedanta (Ramānujācharya, Vallabh, Madhva): Differentiated Knowledge (Bheda Jnana)

According to Nyaya: Material knowledge (Padārtha Jnāna)

According to Jainism the absolute knowledge to the soul is liberation. Till the stage of shedding of the Karma (i.e.Nirjara) is going on there is no liberation. Till Nirjara, absolute knowledge is not possible. Remember karma, according to Jainism is matter and according to Jainism the matter can cover the spirit. Let us talk about the nature of liberation in Jainism.

Nature of Liberation:

In the 10th and the last chapter of Tattvarthasutra, its author Umaswati discusses the nature of liberation. Earlier to this he has discussed how good deeds and bad deeds: both types of deeds become the cause of bondage of the soul. He says that "the root cause is Mithyātva i.e. false knowledge which means nescience. Mithyātva means perversity of out look. It leads one to wrong perception. He perceives non soul as soul, irreligion as religion, wrong way as the right way etc."14 The other causes are avirati (vowlessness), pramād (carelessness), kasāya (passions). He talks in this chapter about the extreme (or total) annihilation of Karma which is possible according to Jainism through double action: One, by not allowing any new karman to pollute the soul, and two, by shedding off (nirjarā) the karma which are bounded due to previous deeds. The Nirjarā i.e. shadding off the karma could be attained through Penance (tapa) and Meditation (Dhyāna). The karma when anihilliated, absolute non-attachment (Vitaragatva) and Omniscience (Sarvagnata) shine out. Even at this stage karmas which determine the duration of life (Ayus karma) and such other karmas remain. They are, though less, being not yet annihilated the bondage remains, and so the liberation is not possible till they are also totally annihilated. When they are, in due course, annihilated, the soul regains its pure form, its all infinite qualities and becomes free from suffering (Dukha) and free from birth and rebirth cycles. The soul liberated is liberated from bondage, from samsara. This is Moksa.

The liberated souls (Siddha Jiva) are devoid of motion, gender and wordly feelings, are identical and are not different from each other. Yet they may be differentiated from their past point of view. The liberated souls are souls that have attained Moksa which means souls absolutely pure and have regained the powers: infinite knowledge, perception, potency and bliss. "Jainism, thus, pictures the state of Moksa not as something which is created a new by human efforts; but it is something like the recovering or regaining of lost object. Moksa according to Jainism means self finding, it consists in recovering one a consciousness of soul which had been forgotten or had become obscure due to delusion or subreption (Mithyātva). It consists in regaining one's lost self."

The Gunasthanas or Stages of Spiritual Development:

From the state of complete dependence upon the Karman to the state of complete detachment from it. 14 stages; the so called, Ganasthanas (state of virtues) can be distinguished. These fourteen stages are marked by the gradual subsidence of eight Karmas, "There are stages of development in which the soul gradually delivers itself, firstly from the worst, then from the less bad, and finally from all kinds of Karman, and manifests the innate faculties of knowledge, belief and conduct in a more and more perfect form." The following are the different stages:

- 1. Mithyādrsti: the unbeliever
- Sasvadanā Samyagdrsti: the one who has only a taste of the true belief.
- Samyag mithyādrsti (Or Misra): the one who has a mixed belief
- Avirata Samyagdrsti: the one who has true belief but has yet self control.
- 5. Desvirata: the one sho has partial self control.

- 6. Pramattā Samyata: the one who has complete self control, sametimes, however brought into wavering through negligence.
- 7. Apramatta Damyata: the one who has self control without negligence.
- 8. Apurva Kārana (or Nivratti Badara Samparaya): the one who practices the process called Apurva Karana in whom, however, the passions are still occurring in a gross form.
- 9. Anivrti Badara Samparaya: the one who practices the process called *Anivratti Karana* in whom, however, the passions are still occurring in a gross form.
- 10. Suksma Samparaya: the one in whom the passions still only occur in a more subtle form.
- 11. Upasanta Kasaya Vitaraga Chadmastha (or shortly Upasanta Moha): the one who has suppressed every passion, but who does not yet possess omniscience.
- 12. Ksina Kasaya: Vitaraga Chadmastha (or Ksina Moha): the one who has annihilated every passion, but does not yet posses omniscience.
- 13. Sayogi Kevalin: the omniscient one who still practices an activity (Yoga) - At this stage Mohniya and the three other forms of Ghattya Karmas drop off from the soul completely.
- 14. Ayogi Kevalin: the omniscient without Yoga. It is in this final stage that the already pure, perfect and all knowledge self becomes free from the other non-destructive (Aghati). Karmas. It is immediately antecedent to the disembodied state of liberation.

These 14 gunasthanas could be classififed into five groups

- First Gunasthana where all the 4 causes of Karma are operating
- 2. In 2nd to 5th only 3 causes are operating: unbelief is absent

- In 6th to 10th only 2 causes are in operation i.e. passions and activity. The unbelief and lack of self control are absent
- In 11th to 13th only activity cause operates. The other three are absent.
- In the last Ganasthana a bondage of Karma no longer takes place.

The state of the Release:

The soul when totally free from Karma, is a released soul and it does not need to be embodied. The released one, according to Jainism, goes to the end of the world. "Relieved of all matter, the soul ascends in a strait line during a *Samaya* to the summit of the world, as a gourd freed from all filth sinks no longer to the bottom but rises to the surface of the water" "Without visible shape, bodiless, but a dimension in space of 2/3 of that which they had during their last existence, they dwell there thence forward into all eternity and enjoy the infinite, incomparable, indestructible, supernatural happiness of salvation." "18

According to Jainism the soul released is a soul in state of Sidddhahood. In this state the soul is free and enjoys Ananta catustaya i.e.Four Infinites: knowledge, perception, energy and bliss. The released soul is a conqueror - a Jina and is thus a hero. He possesses all the attributes of God, such released souls have become the objects of worship. What is the state of Soul in or after Moksa? Here the philosophy ends and Theology begins. According to Jaina theology such liberated souls will go to Siddhashila, a mundane place, and will be there eternally.

The absolute purity of the soul is its liberation.

Conclusion:

The issue of nature of liberation' in Jainism, significantly, hints certain very important philosophical positions. Let us also note these positions.

 The Jaina philosophy of Soul begins with the assertive judgement: 'the soul exists'. Jainism is an Atmavādi

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Darshan. The soul essentially in its natural state is pure and divine. Metaphysically, Jainism puts before us the theory of pluralism of Souls. The concept of Soul goes beyond human beings, and so in Jainism, it results into pan spiritualism i.e. all is soul.

- Logically, from the above we see the soul in bondage. Jainism has explained the mechanism of bondage and schematism of liberation. Bondage, according to Jainism, though beginning less is not endless. Here we are reminded of Srimad Bhagwat Gita expressing Jain theistic spirit: "With faith one attains knowledge, and with knowledge one attains self restraint and such a person attains bliss with self knowledge." Jainism, on the line with the acceptance of soul and the bondage being not endless, paves the path to liberation. In Jainism the path to perfection or path to annihilation of Karmas is the path to liberation.
- Modern age is also the age of moral crisis. Jaina's concept of soul and its salvation talks about the spiritual treasure. This very concept of spiritual treasure of the soul leads to a presupposition of a kind of perfection.
- For a Jain the perception, knowledge, energy and bliss of the soul can never be totally extinguished and the karmic influence is subject to complete elimination. This concept of Jaina is highly optimistic. "Each soul when completely immune from Karmic influences become itself Svayambhu, and is transformed into divinity." The liberated souls are full and are perfectly divine in itself and by itself.

In our final conclusion we can say that Jainism while exploring the meaning, the nature and scope of Soul's salvation, gives entire stress on right perception, right knowledge and right conduct as path to complete liberation.

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