

THE SCIENCE OF *KARMA* IN JAINA AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

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1. WHAT IS *KARMA*?

The term *karma* is derived from the root '*kr*□*kara*)e' by adding the suffix '*manin*' to the root and the common meanings of the term are—action, worth doing, implementation, duty, act, profession, tendency etc. So whatever is done falls under the category *karma*.¹ The term *karma* stands for two different meanings viz.; action and the subtle aggregates of the karmic matter. All types of movements whether physical or mental are known as actions. Apart from it, in Jaina Philosophy the term '*karma*' denotes the subtle aggregates of the karmic matter which are attracted and assimilated by the soul.

Philosophy is dominated by religions in India. This is the reason why all the theistic religions here have acknowledged the existence of the power called *karma* or something equivalent to it which affects, covers and blunts the natural powers, attributes and purity of the soul. Different Philosophies talk of it by different names e.g. *Ved*□*nta* Philosophical system calls it deception i.e. ignorance.² Yoga Philosophy uses *karma* □*aya*' or *kle*•*a* (affliction) etc. words for it.³

The term '*ad* ♦•□*a*' (unseen) and '*sa*•*skara*' used in *Ny*□*ya* school of thought also represent the same. The Buddhists call *karma* as '*v*□*san*□ (predispositions) and '*avij*□*apti*' (non-knowledge).⁴ '*dharma*•*dharma*' the term used in *Vai*•*e*•*ika* Philosophy is also equivalent to the word *karma* used in Jaina Philosophy.⁵ The term '*pa*•*a*' (snare/fetter) employed in *Saiva* school of Philosophy is also synonymous to the word '*karma*' as used in Jaina Philosophy. The word *ap*(*rva*) (singular/unique) of the *m*×*m*□*s*□ school of Philosophy is also used to denote the same concept.⁶

Fate, meritorious action, sin etc., are numerous words that are commonly used in Philosophical scriptures. In Jaina canonical literature

along with the word '*karma*' the terms such as '*karmaphala*', '*karmaraja*' etc., are also used.⁷

Many schools of Philosophy merely make a mention of *karma* while many others go deep discussing its various aspects. According to Nyāya school of Philosophy *karma* (*ad♦ta*) is an attribute of the soul. Good as well as bad actions leave an impression on the soul, and that is *ad♦ta*. It lingers with the soul till it bears its results. Its results are brought forth through God.⁸ The Buddhists acknowledge the predispositions or impressions (*Vāsanā*) of the soul as *karma*. *Vāsanā* becomes the cause of pleasure and pain as per cause and effect relationship.

2. THEORY OF *KARMA* IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

Theory of *karma* in different Indian Philosophies are described below:

(i) Doctrine of *karma* in Vedic Philosophy

In the early Vedic period *yajñā* (sacrificial fire) and deity were accorded a high status. When *karma* replaced deity in significance, the supporters of *yajñā* assimilated *karma* theory and *yajñā* was accorded the status of a deity and believed that *yajñā* itself is *karma* and bears all results. In the age of logic and Philosophy this tradition was named as *Mīmāṃsā* Philosophy. But in the Vedic tradition, along with the development of *yajñākarma*, deliberation on deity also developed. In the Brahmaṇa period single God *prajāpati* replaced the multiple deities of ancients as the God of Gods. *Prajāpati* created room for *karma* theory in their tradition, and they also assimilated *Prajāpati* and the *karma* theory in their own fashion. They believe that all the creatures do face the consequences of their *karmas* but it is the God of Gods (*devādhideva*) who determines the results. *Īshwara* (*devādhideva*) determines the results according to their *karmas* and not at his will. The Vedic Philosophies who accept this theory are *Naiyāyika*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Vedānta* and the later theistic *śākhya* Philosophy.⁹

Karma has been classified into three groups in Vedic Philosophy :

- (a) Accumulated (*sa-cita*)
- (b) Fate (*Prārabdha*)
- (c) Present actions (*Kriyamāṇa*)

(a) **Accumulated *karma***—This is the total accumulation of *karmas* of all the past births, the result of which cannot be faced as yet.

(b) **Fate *karma***—Fate is that *karma* which was the most prominent and forceful of the accumulated *karmas* before the present life came into existence and which has been so designed that the present life is determined through it.

(c) **Present action *karma***—Whatever *karmas* the man accumulates throughout present life is called *kriyamāṇa* (present actions). The next birth is basically determined and ascertained by the most forceful (or according to some, the most primary) *karma* out of the total of accumulated and *kriyamāṇa karmas*.¹⁰

(ii) ***Karma* theory in *Upaniṣads***

Upaniṣads give a detailed description of the various singularities of this world in place of *karma*. This kind of contemplation is generally missing in the earlier Vedic literature.

(i) **Theory of time**—Time is discussed in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.¹¹ It is stated that the only reason behind all of social factors, individual differences, pleasure, pain and activities of man is time.

(ii) **Theory of nature**—Theory of nature is discussed in *Upaniṣads*.¹² Whatever happens, or is going to happen, is based on the nature of thing itself. The nature cannot be defied.

(iii) **The theory of free will**—There is no particular reason behind the events taking place in the world, their occurrence is a mere chance. This theory puts emphasis on chance and propounds causeless reason theory. The *Nyāya* theorists mentioned that existence comes into being like the sharpness of a weapon without any casual or non-casual reasons.¹³

(iv) **Fatalism**—Occurrence of events is predetermined and they occur in the same order and way. No one can alter them. That which is to be, would be as it is. This theory too is given for the first time in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, but the theory is not given due consideration either here in or in other *Upaniṣads*.

(v) **The elements theory**—According to this theory the four elements, namely, earth, fire, air and water, are the basic factors behind this universe;

all the material, living and non-living things are the outcome of the various combinations of the four elements.

(vi) Naturalism—According to naturalism the nature, endowed with three attributes, is the only reason behind the growth of the universe and pleasure, pain and bondage of human.

(viii) The theory of Gods—This theory propounds that God is the creator and sustainer of this universe. Whatever takes place in the universe is the play of his will.

Jaina and Buddhistic canonical literatures are highly critical of all these views. This critical thought forms the basis of a well-established theory of *karma*. According to Dr. Nathmal Tantiy, it seems that the theory of *karma* has come up in the protest to various nature-oriented theories and beliefs.¹⁴

(iii) The meaning of *karma* in Nyaya Vaiśeṣika Philosophy

In Nyaya Vaiśeṣika Philosophy the term *karma* is used in the sense of movement, as the movement in the hand through the association and efforts of the spirit.¹⁵ That which is a substance, dependent on the substance, devoid of any attribute and free from any causality in association and dissociation, is *karma*.¹⁶ In Nyaya Siddhānta Mukṭawali *karma*, has been differentiated into five types :

- (i) *Utkṛepa* (projection)
- (ii) *ḥkucana* (contraction)
- (iii) *Prasāra* (expansion)
- (iv) *Gamana* (movement).¹⁷

(iv) Interpretation of *karma* in Gṛhya

In the words of Tilaka, the term *karma* is used in the Gṛhya not only in the narrow sense of *yajña karma*, *yāga karma* (sacrifice) and *smṛta karmas*.¹⁸ All the physical and mental acts whatever man does are *karmas* according to Bhagwata Gṛhya.¹⁹ There are signs of the theory of time, nature, naturalism, God and deities in Gṛhya. The author of Gṛhya accepts all these theories as and when required. He assigns the status of casual factor

sometimes to time, then to nature, then to disposition and sometimes to *Puruṣa* or God.²⁰

Three types of *karmas* are mentioned in *Gītā*:

- (1) *Karma*,
- (2) Non-*karma* (*akarma*)
- (3) Bad *karma* (*vikarma*).

(1) ***karma***—All the good and auspicious actions performed with the desire of good results are *karmas*.

(2) **Bad *karmas***—All the bad/inauspicious actions that are performed to fulfill mere lust are called bad *karmas*. In addition to this, actions done with the desire of fruits and with malice, are called bad *karmas* too. According to *Gītā* the penance one undergoes with stupid stubbornness, with physical, vocal and mental pain and with a desire to harm others, is called a malignant penance.²¹ Generally, physical, mental and vocal violence, falsehood, stealing, etc. are considered to be bad *karmas*.

(3) **Non-*karma***—The actions performed with detachment. With a sense of duty, are termed as non-*karmas*. *Gītā* says that the actions performed by man becoming indifferent with God, without arrogance in his present condition, does not produce any other result but salvation, therefore, it is non-*karma*.²²

Taking *Manusmṛiti* as the base *Tilaka* describes the following ten kinds of sinful conduct in *Gītārahasya*²³ :

- (a) Physical—(i) violence, (ii) stealing, (iii) fornication.
- (b) Vocal—(i) falsehood, (ii) taunting, (iii) harsh words, (iv) improper betting.
- (c) Mental—(i) wishing to appropriate other's wealth, (ii) malice, (iii) wrong insistence.

The *Gītā* states that "He, who is equipoise towards all the creatures both in pleasure and pain, is a supreme yogi."²⁴ The author of *Gītā* hints that for salvation it is essential to get freedom from both auspicious as well as inauspicious *karmas*. / *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*) says, O Arjun! whatever actions you indulge in, whatever you eat, whatever sacrificial fire you do, whatever charity you give or whatever chanting you perform, entrust all the

auspicious/ inauspicious *karmas* to me, that is, relinquish any attachment or ownership towards them. Thus, having the feelings of renunciation, you will be free from bondage of *karmas* producing good or bad results and will get me.²⁵

The author in *Gxt* explains that both auspicious and inauspicious *karmas* are bondage and for salvation it is essential to rise above them. A wise man relinquishes both good and bad or virtue and sin.²⁶ Stating the characteristics of a true devotee he says that, he who has relinquished both good and bad, i.e. who has risen beyond them both, that devotee is dear to me.²⁷

The great Philosopher of his time Dr. Radhakrishna puts forward the same idea in his introductory essay to *Gxt*. Whether we are bound by good desires or by bad desires. We are ultimately bound, what difference does it make whether we are in iron chains or in golden chains? We are, after all, in chains.²⁸

Like Jaina Philosophy *Gxt* also states that when sinful actions are reduced to nothing through virtues then the man is free from dualism of love-hatred and devotes himself to me with a firm determination.²⁹

Thus, *Gxt* guides man from bad to good actions and from good to pure or desireless action for a moral spiritual life. **The ultimate goal of *Gxt* is to build up a desireless vision of life rising above good and bad.**

(v) *Karma* Defined in Epics

(a) **Idea of *karma* in *Ramāyaṇa***—Reference to reincarnation in *Ramāyaṇa* represent the general nature of *karma* theory. The theory of reincarnation is discussed in detail in fourth chapter in *Valmiki's Ramāyaṇa*. With reference to reincarnation, compulsorily facing the consequences of one's *karma* is undisputed acknowledged there.³⁰

(b) **Idea of *karma* in *Mahābhārata***—The essence of the Philosophy of *karma* in *Mahābhārata* is that the whole life is full of *karmas*. It is clearly acknowledged there that doing evil or righteous deeds, man essentially faces their evil or auspicious consequences in this world.³¹ Pleasing fruits of good *karmas* and painful fruits of evil actions is generally doubtlessly established. All kinds of creatures, wise, foolish, valiant and

coward have to undergo the evil or auspicious results of the un-availed *karmas* of their previous birth in the present life. One gets the results of only actions done by oneself at various stages of life, no one faces the results of the *karmas* not performed by him.³² *Mahābhārata* supports this view at several places. It is stated there that one must behave the same way towards others as one desires for oneself.³³

Under all types of circumstances—relinquishment—charity, joy-pain, dear-hated etc. one must treat others as his own soul.³⁴ Only he, who treats others as himself, enjoys the pleasures of paradise.³⁵ The treatment one finds pleasing to oneself must be given to others. O! Yudhi•tara! this is the distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness.³⁶ The seer pronounces in *Āiśhvāita Śāstra* virtues and sins committed in the previous lives are the root causes of progeny.³⁷

(vi) Doctrine of *karma* in Buddhist Philosophy

Buddhist thinkers too have used the term '*karma*' in the case of activity. They too call the physical, speech and mental activities as *karma*. Although the Buddhist have used the term *karma* for physical, linguistic and mental activities yet consciousness has been accorded primacy there and consciousness is called *karma*. Buddha pronounced, monks! consciousness is *karma*, I state. Man indulges in action (*karma*) physically, linguistically or mentally only through consciousness.³⁸

In this context the meaning of consciousness being *karma* implies that all these acts are possible only if consciousness is associated with them. Consciousness is recognized as *karma* in Buddhist Philosophy, but that does not mean other *karmas* stand cancelled. They acknowledge the relative significance of all the aspects of *karma*. Thus, we find that though the term *karma* has been used in the sense of activity there, the meaning of the term is wide ranging, more than activity, in *karma* theory. The term includes physical, mental and linguistic activity and the effect of these activities left on pure consciousness. Generally the term *karma* denotes activities, the purpose of activities and their outcome. *Ācārya Narendra Deva* writes, "Mere consciousness (purpose) and action are not the whole of *karma*. We need to take into consideration the resultant consequences of *karma* too."³⁹

Buddhism basically accepts two types of *karma*—

- (i) *Citta karma* (mental actions).
- (ii) *Caitya•ika karma* (*karmas* arisen out of acts and speech).

karma in Buddhism are classified in two more ways :

- (i) *Aku•ala karma* (sinful *karmas*).
- (ii) *Ku•ala karma* (virtuous *karmas*).

(i) ***Aku•ala karma***—According to Buddhism on physical, vocal and mental basis *aku•ala* (sinful) *karmas* are the following ten types :

(a) **Physical sin**—(i) *prātipātā* (violence), (ii) *adattādāna* (stealing), (iii) *kamesu micchāra* (fornication).

(b) **Vocal sins**—(i) *musavāda* (falsies), (ii) *pisunāvācā* (pishum speech), (iii) *pharusāvācā* (harsh word), (iv) *samphalāpa* (useless bragging).

(c) **Mental sins**—(i) *abhijjā* (greed), (ii) *vyapāda* (mental violence or malice), (iii) *micchādiṅghi* (false perception).⁴⁰

(ii) ***Ku•ala karma* (Virtuous deeds)**—It is stated in *sa•yukta Nikāya* that he who donates food, drinks, clothes, bed, sitting objects in charity enjoys virtues as if streams of virtues falling to him from all sides. The following acts are stated to be *caitya•ika* (virtuous) in *Abhidhammatya sa•grah* :

- (1) Devotion
- (2) Awareness
- (3) Shame towards sin
- (4) Fear of sins
- (5) Relinquishment
- (6) Friendliness
- (7) Equipoise
- (8) Purity of mind
- (9) Cheerfulness in body
- (10) Lightness of body
- (11) Sweetness of mind

- (12) Sweetness of body
- (13) Lightness of mind
- (14) Simplicity of mind
- (15) Simplicity of body.⁴¹

(vii) Doctrine of *karma* in Western schools of Philosophy

Numerous western thinkers consider it essential to rise above good and bad for fullness of moral life. Bradley believes that morality leads us beyond good and bad.⁴² The dualism of good and bad rules in moral life but that dualism must come to an end in the state of self fullness. Therefore, for complete realization we will have to rise above morality (good and bad). Bradley agreed that righteousness (spiritualism) is above morality. According to him morality ends in spiritualism, where individual establishes harmony with God rising above the dualism of good and bad. Bradley says that in the end we reach to such spot where all processes come to an end although the best action starts from here. Here our morality blossoms in the extreme and merge in God and we experience immortal love all around with all contradictions to an end.⁴³

What Bradley differentiated between morality and spirituality the same differentiated by Indian Philosophies between practical morality and spiritual morality. Practical morality pertains to good and bad. Here the vision of conduct is relative to society and its objective is public welfare. Spiritual morality pertain to the realm of pure consciousness (detached or renunciatory vision of life) and it is relative to the individual. **Its ultimate objective is to lead man from bondage to salvation.**

(viii) *Karma* in Patanjali Yoga darshan

When traces (*sa-skara*) of afflictions get accumulated in the mind they produce desired *karma*. There is no action possible without passion of love and pleasure (*rajoguṇa*). When the passion of love and pleasure associates with virtues (*satoguṇa*) there arises the tendency of knowledge, righteousness, renunciation and spiritual grace. When passion of love and pleasure associates with malignant qualities (*tamoguṇa*) there arises the tendency towards contrary acts like ignorance, lack of righteousness,

attachment and lack of gracefulness. These two types of *karma* are called auspicious-inauspicious, sin-virtue or lustrous-dark.

The consequences of such actions that are routed in five afflictions are to be faced in both the births, present and future.⁴⁴ These are in two forms :

1. afflictive (malignant dominant)
2. non-afflictive (virtue dominant).

The great sages and yogis who have uprooted afflictions through desireless, non-attachment practices reduced their *karmas* to mere duties do not have to face their consequences. Desired *karmas* arises only when the traces (*saṅkaras*) of afflictions are rooted in the subtle mind. According to *Yoga darśana* these *karmas* result into birth, life, pleasure, pain etc., since both virtuous as well as sinful actions bring their results.⁴⁵

(ix) Jaina Doctrine of *karma*

The Jaina doctrine of *karma* seems to have developed against a number of other doctrines about creation. Some regarded time (*kāla*) as the determinant factor of creation. Every event occurs in time and hence is determined by time, other believed in nature (*svabhāva*) as the determining factor of creation. Things are determined by their own inherent nature. There is nothing, inside or outside, over and above nature that determines the course of events. This leads to the doctrine of determinism (*niyati-vāda*). There were others who believed in the fortuitous and accidental nature of occurrences of events. There were other doctrines as well.⁴⁶ The believers in *karma* or unseen potency (adṛṣṭa), the after-effect of a good or bad action, regarded these theories as inspired by materialistic tendencies and therefore rejected them as untenable. The Jaina Philosophers accorded proper place to these doctrines as testified by our experience, while installing *karma* in the supreme position. *karma* is the ultimate determinant of the course of events. Even time, nature and *niyati* are determined by *karma* and that is no such thing as fortuitism. These factors, in so far as they are given to experience, are only the expressions of the working of the supreme law of *karma*.⁴⁷ *Karma* is the fundamental factor responsible for the relation between spirit and non-spirit, that is, the world order. ***Karma is a process where by an action (karma) produces its reaction (phala).***

In the words of the *Yuvācārya Mahaprajā* (presently *Ācārya*), spiritualism cannot be explained without the theory of *karma*. Therefore it is a great theory. It is essential for the man who wishes to feel the inner essence of spiritualism to dive deep into the unfathomable depths of the theory.⁴⁸ Generally, activities are called *karma*. Activities are of three types :

- (i) Physical
- (ii) Mental
- (iii) Vocal.

In classical terminology they are called 'yoga'. But in the Jaina tradition this activity oriented meaning of *karma* is only a partial explanation of the term '*karma*'. In this theory the intention or end of activity is also given due thought. *Ācārya Devendras* defines *karma* as 'the intention for activity of the creature'.⁴⁹ Prominent Jaina scholar *Pandita Sukhalāj* says that whatever is done by a creature owing to ignorance, passion etc., reasons, it is called *karma*.⁵⁰ Thus, he includes both the activities as well as the intention behind that activity into the fold of *karma*. There are two aspects of Jaina thought :

- (i) attachment—hatred, passions etc. feelings
- (ii) karmic matter (*karma pudgala*).

By karmic matter is meant those molecules which are attracted and glued to the spirit owing to a particular action of the spirit, associated with the spirit to form the karmic body (*karma āra*) and on the maturity of a particular time, producing some specific experiences in the form of their results, dissociate from the spirit. These are called matter *karmas*. In brief the concept of *karma* in Jaina Philosophy is concerned with the molecules that affect and blunt the power of the spirit. As the creature engages in any type of mental, speech or bodily acts, *karma*-oriented matter atoms rush towards him from all sides.

Through the attachment and hatred oriented activities of the soul, infinite subtle fine particles existing in the space rush magnetically to it and get associated to the soul and they are called *karmas*.⁵¹ According to Jaina *lakṣaṇavali* "like boxes full of collyrium powder, full of gross and subtle particles, ordained particles liable to be converted into *karmas* in the world, associating and binding the creature according to their acts, the particles

those obscure knowledge and perception (veil of knowledge and perception and forming pleasure-pain, auspicious, inauspicious, age, name, high-low status and energy obscuring etc.) are called *karmas*.⁵²

Jivas (spirit/soul) are conscious formless beings. The subtle filth glued to it is called *karma*. *karmas* are material atoms, inert. The atoms of *karma* are called *karmadala* (atom groups). The atoms of *karmas* get glued to the soul owing to its adhesiveness caused by attachment and hatred and activities of association. The *karma* atoms are glued to the soul from the time immemorial. If some of them get dissociated from the soul, the new ones get glued. Thus this activity goes on constantly.⁵³ The soul acquires the property to attract *karma Varga* because of false belief, vowlessness, negligence, passions and activities and that is *karma*. *Karma Varga* is a kind of subtle dust which can be perceived only by an omniscient individual.

The matter atoms, getting attracted through attribute and non attribute feature and getting attached to the soul veil its real form, deform it, such matter atoms gathered by the soul are called *karmas*. Well known scholar of Jainism Pa-dita Sukhalaj opines—Although there is some details in the theory of *karma* in the Vedic and Buddhist literature it is so little that there exists no significant and prominent literature. On the contrary, thoughts on *karma* theory in Jaina Philosophy is subtle, well organized and very wide ranging.⁵⁴

Professor Malava ji another prominent Jaina scholar also writes, "Present day scholars agree that in the *pre-upani•adika vedika* literature there is no deep thinking on *karma* or *ad•ta*. And that '*karma* is the cause' such a theory is unanimous opinion of *Upani•ads* also cannot be stated.⁵⁵ In Jaina Philosophy *karma* is accepted as a mass of matter atoms, *karma* is directly related to the soul and the body. *Karma* is a concrete matter, which gets bound to the soul. The cause of the action of the soul is *karma*.⁵⁶

Prominent Jaina scholar Pa-dita Sukhalaj says "the action that is performed by the soul under the influence of false belief etc. reasons is called *karma*. He has included both, the cause as well as the action of jiva under *karma*.⁵⁷ In *Jaina siddhant d•pik* (c•ryas • Tulas defines *karma* as "the subtle particles which are attracted by the tendencies of soul and which are fit to be transformed as *karma pudgala* are called *karma*."⁵⁸

3. METAPHYSICAL BASE OF THEORY OF *KARMA*

Metaphysical base of theory of *karma* is described as under—

(i) Characteristics of the soul

To understand the doctrine of *karma* we must first know about the soul and its characteristics. The soul is different from body. It is the soul which is providing vitality and knowledge required to make the body functional. Some people don't believe in the existence of soul. They must be asked the question as to why a dead body which has all the physical parts and component does not function. The answer is because the soul has left the body. It is the soul which experiences the pleasure and pain, receives signals from outside world through the sense organs, thinks and takes decisions and provides vitality and knowledge for functioning of a machine as complex as the body. **The life in the body is due to the soul.**

According to Jaina Philosophy, the soul is one of the six realities that constitute this universe. The other important reality is the physical matter, both subtle and the aggregate. The Jainas declared energy also as matter (*pudgala*)—more than two and half thousand years back. Science came to the same conclusion only in the twentieth century.⁵⁹

A reality of substance has three properties—

- (1) It undergoes transformation and changes its form. Each form is called a *pariyāya*.
- (2) It has the property to destructions, i.e. one form is destroyed and other originates.
- (3) In the process of transformation and destruction the intrinsic nature of the reality is preserved i.e. its basic characteristic is permanent and is not altered. Such properties are easily evident in physical matter. For example when a substance changes its form from solid to liquid and to gas, the chemical composition does not change.

So is the case with soul. The soul leaves one body on death and enters another body according to some well defined rules. Here 'death' only implies that the soul leaves the present body, the soul in fact does not die. **The soul**

is immortal and only changes its form when it enters from one body to another. In this process *karma* of soul are carried forward to the next body and the soul leaves a life in accordance with these *karma*. The *karmas* are the impressions of the actions performed by the soul.

The soul according to Jainas has the following characteristics :

- (i) It is beginningless and endless. Its origin cannot be known. It is immortal and cannot be destroyed by any means whatsoever, not even by a hydrogen bomb.
- (ii) It occupies body like oil in a seed i.e., why do people confuse body with the soul? Indeed they are different.
- (iii) The soul contracts or expands according to the size of the body. In this process of contraction and expansion the number of space points called *pradeśas* of soul remain unchanged.
- (iv) The soul is a non-physical entity, it is known only through its ability of knowing. **The soul is the knower.** All the knowledge that exist in the world today is due to the soul's power of knowing. For example, the discovery of law of relativity by Einstein was because of the power of knowing of his soul.
- (v) The soul is the basis of knowledge, perception, bliss and power experienced by a living organism.
- (vi) The soul is a source of innumerable kinds of power. The main powers are power of knowledge, power of vitality or potential and power of determination.
- (vii) The invisible soul is known by its ability of knowing. The soul is also known by functions of body like laughter, dancing, pleasure and pain, speech, movement etc. Without the soul these functions cannot be performed by the body.
- (viii) The fine subtle matter, known as *karma varga* (variform) attracted by the soul from the surroundings is converted in *karma*.
- (ix) The thoughts and actions of a person leave impression on the soul. The impressions are recorded on the *karma varga* attracted by the soul. These *karma vargan* constitute a material body known as *karma śarīra* or *karma* body. This *karma* body containing the

impressions accompany the soul when it transcends from one body to other.

- (x) The soul and *karma* body are always held together. The question as to who came first in existence is meaningless like the question of egg and hen.
- (xi) The soul is a non-physical entity but behaves somewhat like a physical body so long as the material *karma* body is attached to it. On liberation the *karma* body is dissociated and separated and the soul comes in its pure form.
- (xii) All souls are alike except for the *karma* body which differs. This means that every soul is at a different stage of development.

Full development means liberation or emancipation of the soul. The souls are of two kinds :

- (1) The Mundane soul (*j×va*)
- (2) The liberated soul

The mundane soul has *karma* body attached to it and takes rebirth. The liberated soul has no *karma* body and does not take rebirth, it is free from the cycle of birth and death. So by soul we shall mean the mundane soul (*j×va*).

In the absolute sense the soul has only characteristics cñtanñ or consciousness. The levels of development of consciousness of souls are different and so each individual in the world is different from other. The genetics says DNA of any two living beings of universe never resembles, so each individual in the world is different from other from the angle of genetics.

Consciousness is the exclusive property of the soul and is not found in any other substance. The liberated souls have the infinite power of knowledge and perception. Each liberated soul is omniscient, omnipotent and experiences infinite bliss. A liberated soul is perfect and independent and is not dependent on any other agency for any thing. The Jainas don't believe God as the creator of universe, in fact, each liberated soul is a God or *parmñtmñ*.⁶⁰

Consciousness sentient or the conscious substance is called soul.⁶¹ Such souls are infinite.⁶² They exist independently.⁶³ They are not part of

any other spirit or any supreme spirit. Every soul has infinite consciousness. They can know infinite universes. All spirits are same as regards consciousness but all don't have similar development of consciousness.⁶⁴ **The cause of difference of development of individual soul is due to his *karma*.**⁶⁵ Spirit itself is the doer of *karma*, when the spirit enjoys its own pure consciousness it is in tune with its pure nature. While it indulges in other emotions it is the doer of actions.⁶⁶ Spirit indulges in good as well as bad actions and as a result karmic matter enters into the spirit spaces and gets attached there. Thus spirit, is the doer of actions. That means, it is creator of its joy and sorrow. It is mentioned in *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* "spirit itself is *Vaitara* river and it itself is the *kṛta* tree. Spirit itself is the desire fulfilling cow *kṛmadhenu* and it itself is the *Nādana* forest. Spirit is that creates as well as does not create sorrow and happiness."⁶⁷ The reason behind this is that it is the spirit that indulge either in righteousness or in evil, its *karmas* are binding according to its deeds. It is these *karmas* that result into good or bad consequences. Spirit is free in earning good or bad *karma*. **Therefore, it is stated, *Bādhaṃ mokṣo 'jijñāsatā*, bondage or salvation depends upon the spirit itself.**

(ii) Characteristic of matter (*pudgala*)

That which associates and dissociates, such complementary—corporeal inert matter is termed as matter or 'atom'.⁶⁸ That which associates and dissociates through joining and separation are called atoms. Atom is a relational term for matter or whatever is swallowed or taken in by spirit in the form of body, food, sense, perceptions or sense objects etc. is called atom.⁶⁹ Worldly spirit takes upon matter body, senses etc. in every birth.⁷⁰ That which possess the quality of dissociation and completion is atom.⁷¹

(a) Atom with regards to attribute—It is mentioned in *Tattvārtha* "atom are attributed with touch, taste, smell and colour."⁷²

Atoms are of two kinds—

- (i) Atom,
- (ii) Group of atoms.

Atoms are endowed with 30 attributes—

Touch—cold, hot, sticky, dry, rough, smooth, light, heavy.

Taste—acidic, sweet, bitter, sour and pungent.

Smell—fragrance and stench.

Colour—Black, blue, red, yellow and white.

Although parabolic, circular, square etc. shapes are found in atoms but these are not its attributes.⁷³ The subtle molecule, though being partless and indivisible contains colour, smell, taste and touch—these four attributes and infinite modes.⁷⁴ One molecule attributes with one colour, one smell, one taste and two senses of touch (one pair out of cold-hot, dry-adhesive etc.). One atom having differentiation in colour, smell, taste and touch from one colour, smell, taste and touch is perfectly admissible in Jaina Philosophy. A mono attribute atom can stay minimum for one time and maximum countless time in one condition.⁷⁵ This rule stands true for all the atoms from double attribute atoms to infinite attribute atoms. Later on there are changes in them. This colour related rule applies to smell, taste and touch as well.

(b) Form of atom (matter)—In Jaina tradition impenetrable, indivisible, imperceptible and indivisible trace of matter is called atom or molecule.⁷⁶ A student of modern science may have doubts regarding the attributes of the atom because atom is no more indivisible. If atoms were not indivisible, it would not be termed absolute + particle. The particle accepted as atom in science is divisible, we do not deny. This problem is taken up in Jaina canonical text *Anuyogadwara* where the dual nature of atom is given in detail :

- (i) Subtle atom
- (ii) Practical atom.⁷⁷

Subtle atom is described in previous para. Practical atom is formed through an aggregation of infinite subtle atoms.⁷⁸ As a matter of fact, it is a lump atoms, still it is not generally perceptible and cannot be broken by common arms and weapons. It is extremely minute, therefore it is termed as practical atom. Atom described in modern science is comparable to this

practical atom in Jaina theory. So divisible nature of atom is acceptable to Jaina theory also from this aspect.

(iii) *Karam Varga* (groups)

There are many types of atoms in the space (*lokakāśa*). One type of atoms does not combine with others. These atoms fall into first *varga* (group). In second *varga* (group), two atoms combine, and onwards. Second group is subtler than first one, and third one subtler than second one. Every atom has colour, smell, taste and touch. There are eight touch qualities:

- (i) Rough
- (ii) Smooth
- (iii) Hot
- (iv) Cold
- (v) Light
- (vi) Heavy
- (vii) Sticky
- (viii) Dry.

The stickiness and dryness are the important qualities of the touch for binding two or more atoms together. There are infinite levels (degrees) of stickiness and dryness.

- (i) For atoms of similar touch quality (stickiness or dryness) to bond, there should be at least a difference of two levels in their stickiness and dryness.
- (ii) For atoms of opposite touch quality (one with stickiness and an other with dryness) they should have similar level (at least two) of touch quality or a difference of two. The quality level should be even (2, 4, 6 etc.) The atoms with odd levels (1, 3, 5 etc.) do not join with each other.
- (iii) Therefore there are infinite number of individual atoms that don't join with others. The group of such atoms is known as first *varga*.
- (iv) Similarly there are infinite numbers of 2 atoms joined (such groups are called second *varga*) infinite numbers of 3 atoms joined

(called third *varga*) are going upto the group of infinite atoms joined.

- (v) Now we come to great group called *Mahāvarga*. In the first *Mahāvarga* there are infinite number of first *Varga*s, second, third upto infinite *Varga*s. In second *Mahāvarga* the first group has one more atom joined than the last group of the first *Mahāvarga* (the first row of this *Mahāvarga* has infinite number of such groups) and the last group has infinite more atoms joined than the last group of first *Mahāvarga* (the last row of this *Mahāvarga* has infinite number of such groups). Similarly third, fourth and upto sixteenth *Mahāvarga* are there in universe. The number of atoms are more and the size is finer in the second *Mahāvarga* than in the first *Mahāvarga* and onwards.
- (vi) The *Mahāvarga* with odd number has no use to the living beings. The body of human beings and *Tiryanka* (other than humane, hellish and heavenly beings) called *Audrika* *āra*, is made from second *mahāvarga*. The body of hellish and heavenly beings called *vaikriya* *āra* is made from fourth *mahāvarga*. Similarly *hṛaka* *āra* (special holy body—only very knowledgeable monks can have capacity to develop), *Taijasa* *āra* (body of vital energy), *anpna* (respiratory system), *bhṣ* (speech), *Mana* / (mind) and *kṛma* *āra* are made from sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, fourteenth and sixteenth *Mahāvarga* respectively. All non-liberated living beings have *Taijasa* *āra* and *Kṛma* *āra* in addition to their gross body.
- (vii) The universe is full of *karma* particles. On the tip of a needle, there are infinite number of *karma* particles. The modern religious saints have exposed the fine *karmas* in terms of four touch energy particles spread all over the surrounding in the universe. All types of activities produce vibrations in the living being which attract the karmic particles producing a psycho-physical force called *karma*. Thus, *karma* is psycho-physical fine force. Many scholars suggest that the karmic force contributes some energy to slow down or

hasten the physical and psychical processes in our body and brain. This results in reducing or maximizing the glandular secretions, hence any material or mental state taken in the body may be causing karmic inputs of course, *karmas* are finer than these secretions or *genes* of body system. The *karmas*, thus, form one of the finer bodies of our system.⁷⁹

We shall now revert to the question, how the *karmas* are formed and bounded with the soul. Let us assume that a soul has a *karma* body attached to it. The past impressions on the *karma* give rise to *ka•ya* or passions. The passions are desires carrying feeling of love and hate or attachment and aversion. There are four main types of passions—anger, pride, illusion or deceit and greed. Based on the degree the passions can be further sub classified. These passions introduce impurities like aberration in the soul. The abilities of the pure soul in the form of infinite knowledge, perception etc. are diminished when passions are assimilated with it. Thus a mundane soul has limited knowledge, perception, vitality and pleasure. The property of pure soul is said to be obscured by *karma*. A *karma* is known by particular property it obscures. For example the knowledge of the soul is obscured by knowledge obscuring *karma*. More is the coverage less is the power of knowing of an individual and vice-versa.

A living being is engaged in actions all the times. The action can be performed by the body, speech or some combinations of these agencies. These actions are accompanying passions induced vibrations in the soul. The nature of vibration depends on the type of action and the magnitude of vibration depends on the degree of passion. Two things happen due to vibrations in the soul. First, the *karma* body vibrates on account of the principle of resonance, second the vibrating soul attracts *karma vargas* from the surroundings. The *karma vargas* are kind of subtle matter particles with four touch assumed to be present all over the cosmos. The *karma vargas* are aggregates of atoms but still are invisible to eyes. An atom called *paramanu* according to Jainas, is the smallest indivisible, indestructible particle of matter. There is only one kind of *paramanu* in the universe and all other material atoms and particles are aggregates of large number of *paramanus*. For example, the atoms of various elements known to

science are aggregates of Jaina *parama* μ s. The Jainas believe that the *parama* μ has not yet been discovered by science.

The *karma varga* λ s bonding with the soul become part of *karma* body and are called *karma*. This *karma* is a group of specific *varga* \square having four touch only that carries the impression of a particular action and which form a part of the *karma* body. How long do these *karma* remain in the *karma* body? Each *karma* has a life and after that it separates out from the *karma* body. The shedding of *karma* from the *karma* body is known as *nirjar* \square .

(iv) Principle of cause and effect of *karma*

The law which regulates the action of *karma* is based upon the principle of cause and effect, so that the saying "As you sow, so you reap" presents the whole doctrine in a nutshell. Every action whether mental or physical is a sowing of the "seed" or in the technical language of the Hindu Philosophy the engendering of *karma*. In the act of sowing the seed or engendering the *karma*, the soul has the choice of acting or retaining from action, but once the seed is sown or *karma* engendered, its freedom is replaced by an inevitable liability to bear its consequences. This is what constitutes the bondage of the soul. *karma*, therefore, is a kind of force which compels the soul to bear the consequences of its right and wrong actions, and this force originates in the very action itself which is performed by the soul and at the very moment of its performance.⁸⁰

The term *karma* means activity/actions by the living being mental, vocal or physical. If there is no activity, there is no life. Many actions are deluding, selfish or with attachment, while many are otherwise. The *karma* theory promotes the G \times t \square sermon of non attachment, non delusion, non-selfishness and desirelessness for the happy worldly life. It promotes self elevation along with public elevation morally and physically.

In general, the *karma* theory aims at individual spiritual upliftment. It is just unfortunate that this spiritualism has taken us too far to become self centered, egoistic and selfish. The individualism or spiritualism became an isolated system. The isolationism has its good and bad effect for the society. It is interconnected and interrelated system with environment and other

entities each effecting one another. Thus, the scope of *karma* theory has gone very wide to include group *karmas*, national or international *karmas*. This has improved the utility of *karma* theory for spreading universal brotherhood and increasing the overall happiness in the world. It has a potency of making the world more peaceful and as well as physically progressive.⁸¹

(v) Interaction of soul and *karma*

Jains have gone in extra ordinary depth to describe the theory of *karma*. The involvement of the soul with *karma* has no beginning. The soul of *sa·sar×* has always been impure, just as a gold in gold mine. As gold cannot be purified until it goes through the refinement process, the soul cannot be purified until it goes through proper purification process of achieving perception, perfect knowledge and perfect conduct. As long as the soul is impure, it will continue the cycle of birth and death (the cycle of transmigration—*sa·s□ra*). The impurities are called *karmas*. There is a continuous interaction between soul and *karma*. It is very likely that most souls will have endless journey through the cycle of four destinies—*deva* (heavenly beings), *manu●ya* (human beings), *n□rak×* (hell beings) and *tiryanka* (animal, plants and all other living beings). *karma ♣ar×ra* is made of *karma* particles, *karma* particles are *pudgalas* (non-living, *aj×va*), like □tm□, *pudgala* is one of the six basic substances (*dravyas*). *karma ♣ar×ra* is the subtle body. It cannot be seen by the most magnificent microscope or any similar instrument, obviously, atoms of *k□rma*) ♣ar×ra are the subtlest of all.

(vi) *Karma ♣ar×ra*

Jaina *karma* subject is '*dvandv□tmak*'. One meaning of *dvanda* is duality. It is duality of light and darkness, purity and impurity, detachment and attachment, alertness and carelessness, awareness and ignorance and insight and outwardness. Another meaning of '*dvanda*' is *yuddha* (battle). This is to the subject of battle between *j×va* and *aj×va*, battle between □tm□ and *karma*. The duality will be over when □tm□ wins the *yuddha*. All we have to do is to disassociate □tm□ from *karma*. In fact, our final and only

object is to disassociate $\square tm \square$ from *karma* and to realize our own ($\square tm \square$)s qualities.

We have seen that some students do very well in the class while others struggle. Some earn money easily while other struggle. There is nothing but suffering in some people's life while others enjoy their lives. Question may arise in our mind that how some live longer while others die at younger age. Why there is such a contrast in the life? What are the root causes behind these and how that can be overcome? These all happen due to our *karma* ($k \square rma$) $\clubsuit ar \times ra$).

(vii) Role of *karma* $\clubsuit ar \times ra$

We *sa·sar* living beings, are constituted of two *dravyas*, *j \times va* and *aj \times va*. $\square tm \square$ is formless and invisible, and it is everywhere in our body. In *sa·s \square r \times* (worldly-non liberated) *j \times vas*, *cetan \square* (quality of $\square tm \square$, consciousness) is associated by *karma* particles everywhere in our body. Also, *karma* particles are everywhere in the space. As long as they are not associated with *cetan \square* (quality of $\square tm \square$ -consciousness) they are ineffective. Our activities—"like and dislike" (attachment and aversion) work as a magnet and attract *karma* particles. When they associate with our soul they are called *karma*. *Karma* and soul have been associated since time immemorial. Every moment we are adding *karma* continuously due to our activities of attachment and aversion. Often we have partial separation meaning disassociation of some *karma* through austerities (*tapas*). *Karma* $\clubsuit ar \times ra$ is the hindrance (obstacle) that does not allow us to realize the true qualities of soul, does not let us become what we should be by our own nature, does not let us become *param $\square tm \square$* from $\square tm \square$. *Keval \times s* (*siddhas*) do not have any association with $k \square rma$) $\clubsuit ar \times ra$, we all want to achieve this state.

The relation between the spirit and non-spirit is responsible for the worldly existence. Apart from the gross body, there is a subtle body which serves as a link between spirit and non-spirit. The soul, with the Jains undergoes a change every moment although never losing its density. The soul has a number of potencies and each moment of its existence is an integration of these potencies. The nature of karmic body at any moment is

determined by this integrated existence of the soul. The soul is pure and perfect in its intrinsic nature. It is only due to its relation with *karma* that the soul comes to have passions (ka•ya). And the relation being beginningless, the problem which of the two—the passions and the *karma*—come first does not arise.⁸²

In *panc•stik•ya*, referring to the long ago linkage between soul and karmic matter as "soul karmic matter cycle". It is mentioned that, "the mundane soul which is bound in the cycle of birth and death, has the effect of love and hatred. These effects attract new *karma*. *Karma* leads to birth in various states. Birth produces a body, a body possesses senses, senses enjoy their subjects, interest in subjects gives rise to love and hatred. Thus, with emotions of mundane soul arise karmic *pudgalas*, with karmic *pudgala* arise emotions. This flow is beginningless and infinite with reference to non-awakened soul and beginningless and finite with reference to awakened soul.⁸³ **The conclusion is that when other Philosophical systems call action and *sa-sk•r* of soul as *karma* Jaina Philosophy calls the concrete karmic matter attached to soul as *karma* caused by love and hatred emotions of the soul.**

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- ⁷ (a) *Āstra Vārta Samucchaya*, 107 : *Adṛṣṭa-karmasa-skṛt* / *puṣṭiye śubhābhau dharmādharma tathāpāpāparyāstasya kṛtī*,
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- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, *hal̄dapatit̄paphal̄ | pū ȳpū yahetut̄.*
- ⁴⁶ Vide SV up I.2, SVS, II, p. 52-64.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. stp III 53; sus. II, 79-81.
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