THEORY OF KARMA (PART 1)

As a student, you have seen that some students do very well in class even when they don’t study, while others struggle to maintain their good grades in spite of studying very hard. In the same way, you might have heard that for some people the money come easily, while others cannot even find a job. You might have also heard that some people stay sick all the time, while others never get sick. Everybody is looking for an answer to these strange disparity. Some may say it is the God’s will, others may say it is his luck, and so on. The Jainism says everything happens due to the result of our past doings. You reap what you sow and no God or someone else can make this happen or change.

We and only we are the reason for our suffering or happiness. This can be explained by the theory of Karma. Therefore, it is very important that we understand this process very clearly. It also explains what karmas are, why and what role karmas play in our life (with soul), and how do we accumulate different kinds of karmas as well as how we get rid of them.

If you sit back and think, then you will realize that you are doing something all the time. Sometimes you might be talking or listening if you are not doing anything physically or you might be thinking. So you are always busy doing something. This is our nature. These activities may involve harm to others or help to others. We do not realize that everything we do brings karmas to our souls. When these karmas are mature that is when they are ready to depart form the soul that process results into happiness or suffering in our lives. This is how the karmas are responsible for our happiness or suffering.

Karmas are the derivatives of the karman particles. The Karman particles are made up of the non-living matter (pudgals). They are scattered and floating all over the universe (Lok). They are very very fine particles and we are neither able to see them with our eyes or with the regular microscope. A cluster of such innumerable karman particles is called a karman vargana. The karman vargana is one of the eight kinds of pudgal varganas. The karman vargana has the most subtle particles. When the soul acts with a passion like aversion or attachment; or anger, greed, ego, or deceitfulness, it attracts these karman varganas to itself. When these karman varganas get attached to the soul, they are called karmas. Karmas are classified into eight categories depending upon their nature. The karmas can be good (punya) or bad (Pap). The good karmas are the result of good or pious activities while the bad karmas are the result of bad or sinful activities.
PROCESS OF THE BONDAGE (BANDH) OF THE KARMAS

Once again as said earlier, whenever, we think, talk or do something, karman varganas are attracted to our soul, and get attached to it and these karman varganas are then called the karmas. This process is also called the bondage of karmas to the soul. When our activities are unintentional or without any passions, these karmas are called the Dravya Karmas. On the other side, when our activities are intentional or with passions, like anger, ego, greed and deceit these karmas are called the Bhava Karmas. The passions work as the gluing factors, and that is why the bhava karmas stay for a longer time with the soul while dravya karmas fall off almost immediately and easily from the soul.

Our activities are:

- physical,
- verbal or
- mental

We further do these activities in three different ways,

- We do the activities ourselves,
- We ask someone else to do for us, or
- We encourage someone else to carry on these activities.

Thus, in different combinations, we do our activities in nine different ways that cause bondage of the karmas to the soul. At the time of the bondage of karmas to the soul, the following four characteristics are determined about the karmas. They are:

- What Kind of (Nature) Karmas will these be?
- How many Karma particles (Quantity) will attach?
- How long (Duration) will these karmas stay with soul?
- How strong (Intensity) will be the bondage of these karmas?

The nature and the quantity of the bondage of the karmas depend on the vigor of activities while the duration and the intensity of the bondage of the karmas depend on the intensity of the desires behind those activities.

We will study these characteristics in detail in Theory of Karma Part 2.