

Basic Jain Concept of Universe

Jainism states that the universe is without a beginning or an end, and is everlasting and eternal. Six fundamental entities (known as Dravya) constitute the universe. Although all six entities are eternal, they continuously undergo countless changes (known as Paryaya). In these transformations nothing is lost or destroyed. Lord Mahavir explained this phenomena in his Three Pronouncements known as Tripadi and proclaimed that Existence or reality (also known as Sat) is a combination of appearance (Utpada), disappearance (Vyaya), and persistence (Dhrauvya)

Prakrit Name	Meaning	Characteristics
Utpada	Origination of a state	Mode (paryay)
Vyaya	Cessation of a state	Mode (Paryay)
Dhrauvya	Permanence	Substance (Dravya)

Here the phases, the changes of all substances are not only countless, they are infinite. The Omniscient Tirhankaras are not able to say all the phases – paryays in their sermon throughout their lives.

While Jainism does not believe in the concept of God as a creator, protector and destroyer of the universe, the philosophical concepts of Utpada, Vyaya, and Dhrauvya are consistent with the Trinity concepts of those religions believing in God. This indicates that Jainism is not an atheistic religion. However Jainism emphasizes freedom of soul from karma and gaining liberation through self-effort, not the "grace" of a Supreme Being.

The Six Universal Substances or Entities (Dravyas) :

Prakrit Name	English Name	Characteristics
1 Jiva	Soul or Consciousness	Living substance
2. Pudgal	Matter	Nonliving substance
3 Dharma	Medium of motion	Nonliving substance
4 Adharma	Medium of rest	Nonliving substance
5 Akasha	Space	Nonliving substance
6 Kala or Samay	Time	Nonliving substance

To begin with - the world, according to the Jainas, is composed of two principles viz. The Unconscious (Ajiva) and conscious (Jiva).

Ajiva

Ajiva is surely an unconscious component of what we ordinarily call the material world but is not to be identified with Maya of the Vedanta. Maya has no reality independent of the Brahma. The Ajiva, on the contrary, is as real, self-existent and eternal (having neither origin nor annihilation) as the Jiva. Nor is the

unconscious in any way similar to Sunya or the void of Buddhist nihilists. The Jain Ajiva is a reality. It is however not the same as the prakrti of the Sankhya school. For although the latter is self-existent, real in itself and eternal, it is held to be one. The Ajiva of the Jainas, on the contrary, is manifold and more than one. But again it is not to be identified with the Anu or atom of the Nyaya and the Vaisheshika philosophers, on that account. Besides the material atoms, there are other Unconscious Reals, according to the Jainas. The Ajiva is of five kinds, each self-existent, real in itself and eternal, -- viz. Pudgal (matter), Dharma (subsidiary principle of motion), Adharma (subsidiary principle of rest), Kala (subsidiary principle of mutation) and Akasha (space).

Pudgala

Roughly speaking Pudgala is what is ordinarily known as matter, Pudgala has form and is characterized by the attributes of being seen, tasted, touched and smelt. Sound, union, the subtle, the gross, the corporeal, the sundered, darkness, shade, light and heat are the various modes that arise from Matter, which is their ultimate basic substance. It may be said in this connection that the Jaina conceptions of Sound, Light and Heat as modifications of Matter foreshadow the corresponding modern theories to some extent an account for photography, radio etc. According to the philosophers of the Nyaya school, Darkness and Shadow are not real they are pure negations. Obviously, the Jaina views regarding Darkness and Shadow are opposed to those of the Naiyayikas.

Matter has been accepted as a Real from the earliest dawn of speculative thought; all physicists from the time of Democritus up to the modern age have also recognized its atomic character. The outlines of scientific materialism of today that atoms are infinite in number, that they are the subtlest possible ultimate units of matter and that the formation and dissolution of the gross things are the respective effects of the mutual combinations and separations of atoms, were clearly conceived by the Jaina thinkers. It appears, however, that the atoms conceived by the Indian philosophers were infinitely subtler than the atoms as conceived by the Greek school. According to the latter, atoms were after all but the smallest possible bits of gross matter. The Nyaya Vaisheshika school, on the other hand, held that the atoms, though material in substance, were absolutely devoid of all grossness, in as much as "they had neither an interior nor an exterior." In a similar manner, the Jainas went beyond the Greek theory and maintained, "an infinite number of atoms may be located in one and the same point of space". On the other hand, it is to be noticed that there is a general agreement between the Nyaya Vaisheshika school of Atomists and the western Atomists that the material atoms are eternal and indestructible. The Vaibhasika and Sautrantika sections of the Buddhist philosophers contended that the material atoms, though real, are but momentary in duration and the vedantists also like modern physicists expressly held that the atoms are destructible.

The Jainas hold that the atoms are eternal in some sense and non-eternal also in some sense. So far as Pudgala or their substantial basis is concerned, they are certainly eternal. In so far as the atoms are also the limit of all gross things, they are eternal, - 'Shashwata'. In some sense again, it is not proper to call the atoms "the ultimate basic cause" of the gross things. For atoms are products, in some respects. The Jainas are opposed to the conception that atoms are ultimate Real "in a beginningless state of pure atomicity," on the ground that such atoms would be pure abstractions and unable to produce gross things. The Jaina view accordingly, is that the atomic and the gross are equally real modifications of Pudgala and that the question as to which is prior to the other, does not arise, in as much as each is found to come out of the other. In the case of atoms, what we know is that they are come across only when the gross things are dissolved and in this sense, the atoms are non-eternal. Atoms are non-eternal in other respects also viz., new properties of Sneha etc., are found to be generated in them when a

chemical combination of atoms is to take place, so that, so far as those new properties are concerned, the atoms may be said to be non-eternal.

Dharma

Dharma is ordinarily understood as pious act. The Jaina metaphysics attributes a special meaning to Dharma. It is conceived as a real, self-existent and eternal substance, which makes possible, the motion of a moving substance. Dharma, however, is not an active principle. As a substance, it is absolutely passive and does not move a thing. Just as the water in a tank does not actually move a moving fish but is an indispensable condition of its motion, Dharma, in the same manner is the passive, basic and indispensable condition of the motions of animals and material things, which move themselves. Dharma is an inactive, although necessary, condition of motion. As a substance, it is formless and eternal.

Adharma

As one in the Jaina list of metaphysical substances, Adharma is the principle, which is the indispensable condition of all rests of stopping things. Like Dharma Adharma is absolutely passive, eternal and formless. Adharma does not actively operate in order to stop a thing in motion but just as the blinding darkness is the passive cause of a traveler's moving no further, Adharma is a passive, although invariable condition of all stoppages of moving animals and things in motion.

The physicists maintain that motion and rest are determined by the essential nature of the moving and the resting things. The Vedic school of philosophers in ancient India meant almost the same thing by saying that it is Adrista, an unseen force generated within a being that makes it move or stop. The Jainas agreed with these views to some extent and held that for the causes of motions and rests of things, we are to look into their essential natures. All the same, however, the Jainas admitted the independent reality of Dharma and Adharma as principles of motion and rest. They say that although the essential natures of things are responsible for their movements and stoppages, their actual motions and rests require something more that is to say, subsidiary conditions in as much as they move and rest within a particular part of the sky. These conditions, the Jainas pointed out, were Dharma and Adharma, which were perfectly real, though absolutely passive. Dharma and Adharma conceived only as subsidiary although real principles are thus peculiar conceptions in Jainism. In other respect, the Jaina principles of motion and rest are unique. According to all schools of thinking, each moving and resting being has its own cause, - the peculiar Adrista, - for its movements and rests. Motion and rest are thus not unitary and all-pervasive principles. According to Jainas, however, Dharma and Adharma are cosmic reals, - of which, the conditions of particular motions and rests in particular cases, are but particular instances, "modifications" as the Jainas say. The Jainas point out that simultaneous motions and rests of infinitely varied things of the world, show that underlying the conditions of these motions and rests there must be two Cosmic Principles viz. of Dharma and Adharma, as the ultimate basis of these conditions.

Akasha (Space)

Akasha is expansive space, which holds the other substances viz. matter, the conscious, and the principles of motion and rest and of change. Akasha is so called because all substances are "revealed" or "contained" in it. It is a passive substance, eternal and expensive. The Jainas divide space in two parts, which they call respectively the Loka and the Aloka. The former is filled with substances animate and inanimate and the principles of change, motion and rest. The Aloka is a void space beyond this Loka.

Newton recognized its reality. Even Berkeley was compelled to admit some sort of objectivity of it. The Jaina conception of space as a real is not essentially different from that of the Realistic schools of today. To Einstein also, space is an existent reality in some sense.

With thinkers of Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools of philosophy, Akasha is a mode of substance having the specific property of sound. The Jainas, on the contrary, hold that Akasha is not a form of matter and sound is not an attribute. According to them Akasha is the passive container of all things and sound is a mode of matter itself (and not its quality). The Stoics held that an infinite expanse of real void space encompasses the filled space of the world. The Jaina view of the Aloka is obviously in agreement with the Stoic theory of void space.

Kala

Kala is ordinarily understood as Time. It is the principle underlying all changes. It is to be observed, however that things change in accordance with their own nature and that Kala is not the substance actively effecting any change in them. Like Dharma and Adharma, it is a passive principle, - an indispensable condition of phenomenal changes occurring in things. It is eternal and formless. Kala is not conceived by the Jainas as one single pervasive substance, as in other systems of philosophy. Kala with the Jainas is a continuous series of atomic moments, although each of these is strictly separate from the other - a series, which is compared to "a heap of jewels."

The Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools of philosophy in ancient India agreed with the Jainas in admitting the reality of time but that even in modern times thinkers like Bergson recognize it. Newton spoke of "absolute, true and mathematical time" as an independent reality.

Soul (Jiva)

Different from the above five kinds of the Ajiva or unconscious Reals, is the conscious real substance, called, Jiva.

On account of its connection with the above unconscious substance, the conscious Real i.e. the soul is conceived by the Jainas to be in a state of bondage and unhappiness. The Samsara or the empirical world, so far as a particular soul is concerned, is beginningless. But the existential series, although, it thus stretches far into the infinite past, is not without termination. For the Jiva is essentially free and although it has been in bondage during the infinite past, it will be emancipated as soon as it extricates itself from the clutches of matter, - Karma, as it is called. Jivas are of two kinds. Bhavya are those possessing emancipative nature and those not possessing emancipative nature are Abhavya. Jainism thus maintains that final emancipation is possible for a Jiva.

The Jiva is described by the Jainas as having the following attributes. It is existent and eternal; formless; of the same extent as its body; possessing cognition, a real enjoyer of the fruits of its own actions; an active agent; maker of its own destiny; has the power of feeling; is conscious, has bondage and emancipation (salvation).

Some facts of biological interest seem to have been foreshadowed in the Jaina doctrine of the Jiva. For instance the Jainas believed in the existence of minute one-sensed animal-cules in the form of air and water; the microscopic organisms of modern biology will be found to be similar to these one-sensed animals of the Jainas. The ancient Jaina theory of the vegetables having life and a sensing power akin to

touch, supports to modern biological investigations.

Feeling (chetana) and Apprehension (Upayoga), psychologically speaking, are of course the most important aspects of consciousness.

The soul is the only living substance, which possesses knowledge. Like energy, soul is invisible and does not occupy any space. An infinite number of souls exist in the universe. In its pure form (a soul without attached karma particles), each soul possesses infinite knowledge, vision, power and bliss. In its impure form (a soul with attached karma particles) each soul possesses limited knowledge, vision, power and bliss.

Matter is a nonliving substance, and possesses the characteristics such as touch, taste, smell and color. It is the only substance that occupies space. Karma is considered as a matter in Jainism. Extremely minute particles constitute karma. These particles cannot be seen even by any microscopic equipment (similar to electrons). The entire universe is filled with such particles.

The medium of motion helps the soul and matter to migrate from one place to another in the universe. The medium of rest helps them to rest. The space is divided into two parts. The space belonging to the Loka (universe) is called Lokakasha and the space outside the Loka (universe) called Alokakasha, which is empty or void.

Time measures the changes in soul and matter. The wheel of time incessantly rolls on in a circular fashion. In the first half circle it revolves from the descending to the ascending stage (Utsarpini) where human prosperity, happiness and life span increases. In the second half circle it proceeds from the ascending stage to the descending stage (Avasarpini) where prosperity, happiness and life span decreases. Each half circle is further sub-divided into six-zone known as six eras.