

SCIENTIFIC DIMENSIONS OF JAIN KARMA DOCTRINE

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Abstract:

The Karma Doctrines of all Indian religions and philosophical schools of thoughts, believing in rebirth, directly deal with the laws of nature governing the living of all mundane beings. Karma Doctrines have pronounced effect on the fundamental principles that connect the past with present affecting the future of all mundane beings. Being based on scientific reasoning, the Jain approach to this doctrine is unique in itself, as all the related truth is perceived directly by the Arihantas by virtue of Unlimited Omniscience, in the entirety of operation of the laws of nature, fostering harmonious relationship at global level. The present study reveals that the scientific exploration of doctrine of Karma..

Key Words: Jainism, Karma doctrine, Religious beliefs, Kārmaṇa, Tejas

Introduction

The Karma doctrine has universal acceptance, all religions and cultures in the world believe that a person reaps good fruits for his good deeds and suffers in some way for his bad deeds. The Doctrine of Karma has deep implications on the process of improvement of the personal as-well-as the social life of a mundane being. Without an allegiance to any particular faith or belief, anyone seeking self-realization will find the propositions convincing and logical. To understand this Doctrine properly, it is imperative to understand the nature and working of the *Kārmaṇa* and *Tejas* bodies, the basic principles of the Doctrine, as promulgated by Jains, the concepts of energy bodies, Nādis and Cakras given by Vedic and western thinkers and the scientific principles of DNA, genome, bio-photons, etc., and then, establish a correlation between the Doctrine of Karma and the existing body of scientific knowledge.

A thorough comparative study is bound to lead to get a clearer understanding of the structure of *Kārmaṇa* and the *Tejas* bodies that can show the scientific findings corroborating with the relevant religious-propositions. Further, it is seen that, to get the answers to this Karma-Docctrine some of the questions in the scientific areas of genetic & bio-photon theory also are being examined by the present scientists.

Doctrine of karma is an important principle governing all mundane lives. Knowing its subtler details is interesting as well as gratifying. The fact that an automatic regulating process is working within every being, that keeps record of its actions, thoughts and feelings and gives reward and punishment at appropriate time for their good and bad deeds compels them to be conscious of what is right and wrong and inspiring them to take right and benevolent decisions. More studies and genuine research are required to know the

underlying science behind other aspects of this Doctrine. The Jain philosophy has strong logical and scientific basis which provides deep insight into the phenomena taking place in nature and this can have important implications for scientific progress.

To understand the doctrine of Karma it is first of all very important to know about the Soul and its characteristics. The Soul is different from the body. It is the Soul which is providing the vitality and knowledge required to make the body functional. It is well known that a body having all the physical parts and components is unable to function when dead; it is so because the Soul has left the body. It is the Soul which experiences the pleasure and pain, receives signals from the 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.

Souls exist in two forms -1]. The Mundane Soul -*Samsārī Jīva* and 2]. The Liberated Soul *Siddha* or *Muktā*. Every mundane Soul has an individual-specific Kārmaṇa śarīra attached to it and is subject to rebirths. The liberated Soul has no Kārmaṇa śarīra and does not take rebirth; it is free from the cycle of birth and death. Henceforth, by Soul we shall mean the mundane Soul (*Jīva*).

Soul is one reality among the six realities constituting the Universe, along with the other realities, viz., the *Pudgala* - physical matter, both subtle and aggregate. The Jains regarded energy also as a kind of *Pudgala*; this reality has three properties - (1). It undergoes transformation to change its form, each form called as a *Paryāya* – *Utpāda*. (2). It has the property of destruction, in terms of - one form is destroyed to originate the other form, -*Vyaya*. (3). In spite of all these processes of transformation and destruction, the intrinsic nature of the reality remains preserved and its basic characteristic is permanent and unaltered, - *Drouvya*. For example, in a substance undergoing physical changes its form from solid (ice) to liquid (water) and liquid to gas (steam), the chemical composition (H₂O) does not change. Similar is the explanation of the changes and permanency of the Soul.

The Soul leaves one body on 'death' and enters another body –'conceived', according to the well-defined rules. Here 'death' only implies that the Soul leaves the 'present' body now termed as a 'Corpse' wherefrom the Soul just migrates **never dies** - is immortal and only changes its form by entering into another body. In this process of migration the bound Karmas accompany the Soul and are carried forward to the next birth. The Soul lives in the new body, getting this body and life in accordance to these Karmas. Karmas are the impressions of actions performed by the Soul.

The characteristics of Soul:

1. Soul is beginning-less and endless, being immortal it is destruction free.
2. Soul occupies its body like oil in a seed.
3. Soul contracts & expands according to the size of its body. In this process of contraction and expansion the number of space points called *Pradeśa* of the Soul remains unchanged.
4. Soul is an extra-ordinary non-physical unique entity, known only through its own ability of knowing - Cognoscibility. Soul is the Cognizer - knower.
5. Soul is the basis of knowledge, perception, power and pleasure experienced by every living organism.
6. Soul is the source of innumerable kinds of power – power of knowledge, power of vitality or potential and power of determination.
7. The invisible Soul known by its ability of knowing is also known by functions of the body like laughter, dancing, pleasure and pain, speech, movement, etc. Without Soul these functions cannot be performed by the body.
8. The fine subtle matter, known as Karma *Vargaṇās* (Variform) attracted by the Soul from the surroundings is converted into Karma - *āśrava*.
9. The thoughts and actions of a person leave an impression on the Soul, which are recorded in the form of Karma *Vargaṇās* attracted by the Soul. These Karma *Vargaṇās* constitute a material

body known as *Kārmaṇa śarīra* or Karma-body. This *Kārmaṇa śarīra* containing the impressions accompanies the Soul when it transcends from one body to another.

10. Soul and the *Kārmaṇa śarīra* are always held together.
11. Soul is a non-physical entity but behaves somewhat like a physical body so long as the material *Kārmaṇa śarīra* is attached to it. On liberation the *Kārmaṇa śarīra* is dissociated and separated and the Soul comes in its pure state.
12. All Souls are alike except for their associated *Kārmaṇa śarīras* which differs. This means that every Soul is at a different stage of development. Full development means Liberation or emancipation of the Soul.

In the absolute sense, the Soul has only one characteristic and that is called *Cetanā* or Consciousness. The levels of development of consciousness of Souls are different and so each individual in the world is different from others. Consciousness is the exclusive property of the Soul and is not found in any other substance. All liberated Souls are alike but they preserve their individuality. The liberated Souls continue to have the power of knowledge and perception which, in fact, now assumes infinite proportions. Each one of the Knowledge, Vitality, Pleasure and Perception of a liberated Soul is infinite. Every Soul has simultaneous knowledge and perception of the entire universe and all its states, present, past and future. 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 anything.

Each Soul (*Jīva*) possesses innumerable qualities. In its purest natural state each Soul is exactly like another and is endowed with 8 primary qualities.

1. *Kevala Jñāna* (Omniscience) - Pure and perfect knowledge, the faculty of instantly cognizing, by direct experience, the contents of the whole Universe containing all **Realities**, without any contradiction or

discrepancy.

2. *Kevala Darśana* - Pure and perfect intuition/faith/Cogniscience (*Darśana*) – the faculty of instantly apprehending, by direct experience, the whole of real existence, without separation of contents, as a system with total internal consistency and structure but without reference to anything beyond.
3. *Ātmika Sukha* - Self generated blissfulness which transcends pleasure / pain and joy / grief and which has no reference to anything outside the Self.
4. *Ananta Vīrya* - Unfettered and unrestricted spiritual power.
5. *Kṣāyika Samkita* - Possession of complete Truth.
6. *Aṭala-avagāhanā* - Eternal unchanging existence, freedom from migrations.
7. *Amūrtatva* – Total formlessness.
8. *Agurulaghutva* – Total parity with other pure Souls.

All mundane beings, with their Souls defiled by Karma, have exposure to piecemeal and fragmented knowledge, intuition and energy, possess perverted faith and embodied existence, experience joy and grief and a limited life span and are therefore, subject to cycles of rebirth and death. Karma infects and defiles all mundane beings and veils, vitiates or obstructs the above-mentioned eight qualities of the pure Soul and keeps it away from its supreme state of existence. Accordingly the Karmas are primarily of eight types -

- *Jñānāvarṇīya* - Knowledge obscuring *Karma* obscures the pure and perfect knowledge.
- *Darśanāvarṇīya* - Intuition obscuring *Karma* obscures the pure and perfect intuition.
- *Vedanīya* - Feeling producing *Karma* holds up the self-generated bliss and produces pleasures and pain, joy and grief (in worldly life).
- *Mohanīya* - Deluding *Karma* produces delusion – metaphysical and ethical:
 - prevents the innate ability of belief in truth
 - destroys equanimity of conduct.
- *Antarāya* - Energy obstructing *Karma* obstructs / suppresses the spiritual energy.
- *Āyusya* - Life-span determining *Karma*

determines the biological species as well as the duration of life-span.

- *Nāma* - Body making *Karma* embodies the bodiless Soul and determines the diversities and individual traits.
- *Gotra* – Status determining *Karma* determines the clan and family conditions.

The *Samvara* - shedding of *Karma* from the *Kārmaṇa śarīra* is a reverse process. On the expiry of *Akarmaka* - passive time period or on account of *Sakarmaka* - initiative taken by the individual vibrations specific to the *Karma* to be shed take place in the Soul. These vibrations having specific frequency activate the respective *Karma* which transforms its state from particle (or plasma) mode to wave mode. The *Karmas* are shed uniformly and simultaneously from all the Soul *Pradeśa*. These Karmic waves interact with *tejas* body to produce *Leśyā* waves in case of *Ghāti* (destructible) *Karma* or produce bio photons, which operate at DNA and cell level, in case of *Aghāti* (indestructible) *Karma*. In either case the *Jīva* experiences the outcome of the shed *Karma*. The number of *Karma Vargaṇās* shedding from each Soul *Pradeśa* at any time depends on the intensity of annihilating penance. Strong annihilating penance shed large number of *Karma Vargaṇās* resulting in intense experience by the Soul, weak annihilating penance lead to light experience. As infinite number of *Karma Vargaṇās* bond for any given *Karma* the process of shedding continues for a certain time called the active period of *Karma*.

Scientific Dimensions of Karma

- The *Kārmaṇa śarīra* and the *tejas śarīra* are electromagnetic in nature. The *Kārmaṇa śarīra* is made up of coherent electromagnetic & magnetic field and the *tejas śarīra* is in the form of energy bodies. The *tejas śarīra* also contains *Nādis* and *Cakras* when the person is alive and physical body exists.
- The *Karmas* are stored in the form of light structure in the *Kārmaṇa śarīra*. The *Karma* remains in the passive mode for a long period of time and during this period they do not affect the working of the

physical body and *tejas śarīra*.

- When the *Karma* becomes active they control and regulate the body functions mainly in two broad ways.
 - The *Ghāti* *Karma* controls our feelings through *Leśyā* in the *tejas* body. The feelings regulate hormone secretions from the endocrine glands which control the body functions. The *Ghāti* *Karma* also controls the mind and the nervous system.
 - The *Aghāti* *Karma* operates at the level of genes and DNA. The genes contain the necessary codes for making different types of proteins and cells which can constitute bodies for all species. The working of DNA is supposed to be controlled by light photons emitted by the coherent magnetic field of *Nāma* *Karma* in the *Kārmaṇa śarīra*. Under the effect of feeling producing *Karma* these light photons can also produce faulty genes which cause disease of various kinds. The division of cells and hence the age of an organism is also controlled by *Karma*. There is evidence that *Ghāti* *Karma* may also influence the working of genes.
- The ultimate source of intelligence and knowledge is the Soul. It is the power of the Soul which can perform the feats like.
 - Control and regulate millions of chemical and biological activities in a cell per second in all the trillions of cells at a time.
 - Establish correlations between all the cells for a purposeful and meaningful functioning of the body.
 - Maintain a liaison and harmony with other organisms, the environment and with the cosmos at large through the powerful magnetic fields.

Some related interesting scientific statements

"..... There observations, among others, suggest control within the living state that is non-local and possibly electromagnetic and magnetic

in nature. Many significant correlations between features of the weak biological process, such as cell division, death, major shifts in metabolism, etc., exist. These correlations may indicate that the light (electromagnetic field of the organism) is a sensitive, global expression of biological regulating processes. Biological process may be integrated by the endogenous bio-electromagnetic field that has a primary organizational and informational role."

Conclusion

In this brief narration of the essentials of the Doctrine of Karma, the mechanism behind its operation, along with the scientific findings relevant to this doctrine and their relationships, have been introduced. These two streams of knowledge not only support each other but also enhance the understanding of the subtle secrets of life which are guiding and governing human behavior physically, mentally and emotionally. Science offers no contradictions with the religious themes but rather strengthens man's belief in the fundamental laws of life enunciated by the Omniscient and deepens the faith in the truth seeking path shown by Arihantas. This is of particular significance, for those who do not believe in the existence of Soul. Irrespective of his point of view or belief the law of nature is working in every individual and guiding his destiny. The Jain doctrine "What you sow is what you reap" is perfectly scientific and true.

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