UNIT 14: JAINA METAPHYSICS

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14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:-

- define the meaning of Jaina Metaphysics.
- analyze two important concepts in Jaina Metaphysics- (i) Astikayas (ii) Dravya.
- explain Dravya in detail.
- discuss the meanings of concepts like Jiva and Ajivas
- analyze the various inaimate substances (Ajivas)- (i) matter or Pudgala, (ii) Akasa or Space, (iii) Kala or time and (iv) Dharma or Adharma

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Jaina philosophy is regarded as the oldest Indian Philosophy that separates body (matter) from the soul (consciousness) completely. This philosophy concerns itself with reality, cosmology, epistemology (study of

knowledge) and vitalism. Jainism rigidly upholds individualistic nature of soul.

By its own admission, Jainism asserts that its teachings are eternal and therefore has no known founder. However, its origin may be traced to Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of the 6th century B.C., a contemporary of Buddha. Jainism, Buddhism and Carvakas, the schools of materialism of Indian Philosophy, are called the unorthodox (non-vedic) or nastika darsanas of Indian Philosophy, because these three darsanas believed that the Veda and the Upanishads has no authority to give us knowledge.

14.3 WHAT IS JAINA METAPHYSICS

Jaina Metaphysics offers a view on reality. Jaina Metaphysics and Epistemology are intimately related. Jaina Epistemology asserts that reality is multifaceted (anekanta). Therefore, no one view can give a true account of reality. That is, no single statement or set of statements can give the whole truth about the difficult objects of the Universe. None of the pramanas (as discussed in different schools of Indian Philosophy) can give perfect knowledge. Though Kevala, enjoyed solely by the perfected soul, and which cannot be expressed in language, may give us true knowledge. Therefore, any knowledge gained through singular standpoint, and few qualities known about any object is only tentative and provisional.

According to Jainism, this world of reality consists of two items (i) Loka, the concrete; Loka is the object of our experience; (ii) Aloka, the beyond, which consists of pure space. In Jainism, we find several elements of ancient natural philosophy, for e.g. the theory of atoms that explains the nature of the universe without taking the help of a creator. Besides, it also interprets Karma as particles of subtle matter, Jiva, that which is animate or soul, in Jainism is the "sentient" or principle of consciousness. The non-sentient principle is Ajivas or the inanimate. Both Jiva and Ajivas are exclusive categories as their intrinsic nature show. They co-exist as in the case of human beings but one cannot assume the nature of the other.

14.4 TWO IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN JAINISM

There are two concepts in Jainism which are quite baffling for readers of Jaina Philosophy. These two concepts are Astikayas and Dravya. Astikaya is a compound word and is derived from 'asti' meaning existing and 'kaya' meaning extensive magnitude. So, by astikaya, taken together, by conjoining asti and kaya, mean 'a real that has extensive magnitude'. Dravya means the real that is flowing, fluid or changing.

ASTIKAYAS : The Asthikayas are five in number. They are (i) Jiva (soul), (ii) Pudgala (matter), (iii) Dharma (principle of rest), (iv) Adharma (principle of motion) and (v) Akasa (space).

The five Astikayas are eternal. They are not created by anything, or by any external agency. In magnitude they may be huge or they may be minute. But since we can see them, they are Kayas. So Astikayas are existent reality and are connected to space. The five Astikayas build up the entire cosmos. All material objects relate to space. The living conscious being is conditioned by an organic body and it exists in space. Because, Jiva has this relation to an organic body, Jiva is also an Astikaya.

14.4.1 Substance (Dravya) : A Brief Introduction

Generally, a distinction is made between characters (dharma) possessed by an object and dharma, meaning that which possess the characters. The Jainas say that every substance possesses two kinds of characters - (i) Essential and (ii) Accidental. So long as the substance remains, the essential characters remain in the substance. The substance cannot be a substance without these characters. Consciousness is said to be an essential characters of the soul. The accidental characters of the substance change. They do not remain the same or constant. They come and go. The accidental characters like, desires, volitions, pleasure and pain, for example, in the soul-substance, help the substance to undergo change, mutation and variation. These accidental characters are the 'modes' of a substance. For the Jainas, the essential characters are the 'gunas' and the changing and varied characters which are accidental in nature are paryaya.

So we may define a substance or dravya as that which possesses unchanging qualities or gunas and also the changing modes or paryaya.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the two concepts you find in Jaina metaphysics?

Ans. (i) ..... and (ii) .....

Q 2: According to the Jainas, the Astikayas are ..... in number. They are

Ans : .....

.....

Q 3: What are the two characters possessed by every substance?

Ans : .....

.....

Q 4: What are 'modes' according to the Jainas?

Ans : .....

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ACTIVITY - 14.3



1. Give a brief description between essential and accidental characters of substance.

Answer : .....

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14.5 DRAVYA : ELABORATED

Dravya is a dynamic reality. It is a "permanent substantiality' and it manifests through changes, that of appearing and disappearing, Dravya is characterized by the triple natures of the Real - (i) Utapada or origin, (ii) Vyaya or decay and (iii) Dharauvya or permanency form. Dravya is characterized by difference, permanence and expresses itself through change.

Astikayas or substances are divided into two kinds - (i) Living or Jiva and the non-living or Ajiva. Living substances are identified with the souls or spirits.

Souls are again sub-divided into free or perfect and are Mukta; and again, there are souls which are bonded or 'baddha'. The baddha souls are of two kinds - (i) those which can move (trasa) and (ii) Immobile or Sthavara. Sthavara souls have imperfect bodies; they are five in number. They are earth, water, fire, air and plants. They possess the sense of touch or tactual consciousness.

Trasa or mobile living substance possesses different degrees of perfection. Hence, each of them possess different number of senses, some two, some three and few others, three or four senses. Worms possess two senses - touch and taste. Again, ants possess the senses of touch, taste and smell. Whereas, bees possess the senses of touch, taste, smell and sight. Living substances like beasts, birds and men, the higher animals possess the five senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing.

Dravya or substance has some intrinsic and inalienable qualities. These are called Gunas as have been mentioned earlier. For example, in the case of yellow Gold, the yellow colour, softness etc. are the qualities or Gunas of the substance gold. Along with these inalienable qualities, substance or dravya must have some state or form. The state of form is its mode of existence or paryaya. Mode or paryaya changes. It may be destroyed. A new mode may come into existence. But dravya is the constitutive substance and therefore it is not subject to creation and destruction. Creation and destruction belong to modes or paryaya. Dravya is, thus eternal.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Dravya is characterized by the triple nature of (i) ……, (ii) …….. and (iii) ……..

Ans : .....

.....

Q 6: What are Jivas and Ajivas according to the Jainas?

Ans : .....

.....

Q 7: Give example of Baddha souls.

Ans : .....

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14.6 SOUL OR JIVA

Soul or Jiva is referred to as a conscious substance. The essence of soul is consciousness, though there may be variation in its nature and degree in different souls. Keeping this is mind the souls may be arranged vertically according to the degree of presence of consciousness in the souls. At the top end of the vertical order, we have souls that free from Karma, are free and perfect and are omniscient. At the lowest end of the vertical order, lie the perfect souls inhabiting the bodies of earth, water, fire, air or vegetable. Life and consciousness may appear to be absent in them. But inspite of this, some form of consciousness may be there in them, though in a dormant state, due to the compelling influences of Karma. In between the highest and the lowest ends of the vertical order, we find souls, like those of worms, ants, bees and men, having different number of senses. [This fact has already been mentioned in a previous section of this chapter.]

The soul experience may states - it knows things, performs activities, enjoys pleasures, undergoes pains, can illuminate itself as well as other

objects. Though the soul is eternal, it is subject to change of states. Soul is different from the body. The existence of the soul can be proved through its consciousness of itself. Due to the effect of the past Karma, a Jiva occupies different bodies in a successive manner. Thus, though Jiva is formless, the Jiva is said to be occupying different bodies, and therefore has extension and occupies space. In this sense, Jiva becomes finite (not infinite) and is said to be co-extensive with the body consciousness, in this case, is found only in the body.

14.7 AJIVAS - THE INANIMATE SUBSTANCE

DHARMA, ADHARMA, AKASA and PUDGALA are the non-living or inanimate substances that possess extension. The physical world in which we live in is constituted by two parts - (i) the material bodies occupied by souls, and, (ii) the other material objects which constitute the environment. Apart from these material substances, the world is accounted for, by space, time and the conditions of rest and motion.

MATTER OF PUDGALA : The Jainas refer to matter as Pudgala. The literal meaning or the etymological meaning of Pudgala is "that which is liable to integration' and disintegration. Matter or material substances have the capacity to structure them to form smaller wholes and then form larger and still, larger wholes; further, material substances can also disintegrate, and break into smaller and smaller fragments. The smallest fragments of the material substances which cannot be further divided are partless and are called atoms or anu. Compounds (Sanghata or Skandha) are formed by the combination of two or more atoms, our bodies and the objects of the world are Skandhas or compounds, constituted by the combination of the material atoms. Pudgala or the material substances are qualified by the characteristics of touch, taste, smell and colours. These characteristics are similarly possessed by the atoms and their products, those combine together to form compounds. Unlike the other Indian Philosophers who believe that sound is an original quality of matter, the Jainas do not hold such a view. They say like light, heat, shadow, darkness, union, disunion

grossness, shape, sound is produced later as an accidental change of matter.

ĀKASA OR SPACE : Space or Akasa is a quality possessed by all extended substances. In space, soul, matter, dharma and Adharma exist. But space cannot be perceived, that is, it is imperceptible. Space can be inferred in the following way - when we say that substances are extended, we mean that they have extension in some place. This is called Akasa. Extension is an intrinsic character of material substance, substance devoid of this character, can never be extended in space. However, one should bear in mind that as a necessary factor, for extension, a substance requires space.

Extension cannot be fully explained merely by referring to substances being extended. It requires for its accurate explanation, the necessary condition of "Space". Substance occupies space, spread, permeate. In other words, they pervade. It is space that is occupied or pervaded. Unlike Descartes, the Jainas say that space is not same as extension. It is, as Locke asserted, it constitutes the locus of all extended things. The Jainas classify space into (i) Lokasa - that space in the world occupied by souls and other substances. (ii) Alokasa refers to the empty space beyond Lokasa.

KĀLA OR TIME : Jaina scholars like Gunaratna do not refer to time as a separate substance. He says that time is simply a mode (paryaya) of other substances. But, we need to have a proper explanation of what time or Kala is, and how the Jainas explain it.

Kala is an element which cannot be experienced or sensed directly. Therefore, it is not an element of physical experience. Like change and motion which are considered to be real, time is also regarded as real. Unlike the other elements of the universe, which are extended and are astikayas, Kala or time, in its absolutedness, is real. We need to contrast it with 'relative time' and break kala into parts. In reality, kala has no parts. But for all practical purposes, kala or time is divided into parts in order to understand other physical objects in reference to kala or time. The relative time is constituted of simple elements known as KALANUS, or instants. We find that the Jainas, while differentiating kala from the five Astikayas, refer to the Astikayas

characteristic of extensive magnitude by a technical term, known as TIRYAK pracaya or horizontal extension.

Each surface or extension may be referred to as series. We have arrangements of points or simple elements in a series where one term, as item may belong to another series. This is the two-dimensional series and corresponds to surface or extension. But this is not the case with Time or Kala. Time has only Urdhvapracaya where elements are arranged in forward direction. The series so arranged is mono-dimensional and is said to be in linear order. Therefore, from this, we can say that kala has no extension. It is not an astikaya. But without being an astikaya, it is a distinct and positive real entity, since it brings changes in other things. These are the real characteristics of Real Time or Paramarthika Kala. Thus we contrast Real time with relative or Vyvahara kala. Kala refers to traditional units of long and short periods. These long and short periods or durations have significance only when they are co-ordinated by a single Real Time series. The essence of Real time is continuity or duration (vartana).Whereas, the essence of empirical time is seen in all changes of the universe. Its is empirical or vyavahara time which we call 'SAMAYA' and which we conventionally and conveniently divide into moments, seconds, hours. We believe that empirical time has a beginning and an end, when in reality; it is beginning less and endless. Kala is the only non-extended substance, while the rest are astikayas or extended. Unlike Relative or Vyvahara time, Real or Paramarthika Time is indivisible, and is formless. It is eternal. Kala is Anastakaya.

DHARMA AND ADHARMA : Just as the existence of space and time cannot be proved directly, but whose existence is derived inferentially, similarly the existence of Dharma and Adharma are determined inferentially. The grounds of such inferences are mobility or motion and immobility or rest. The Jainas explain this in the following way - though the fish appears to begin its movement in water on its own, this movement would not have been possible without the necessary condition (medium) of water. Similarly, the soul, for its movement requires some assisting or supplementary conditions. Such

a condition is referred to as Dharma. But dharma helps a moving-object; it cannot offer its help to a non-moving object. Though the fish moves in water, water by itself cannot make the fish move. Adharma is the condition for the restful state or that which is responsible for the objects to be immobile. For, example, when a traveler takes rest under the shade of a true, or the objects is supported by the earth when they (the objects) rest on it (the earth). These are instance of Adharma. However, Adharma cannot restrain the movement or mobility of moving objects. We find that though dharma and Adharma contradict each other, the similarity between the two can be stated as that both are eternal, formless, non-moving and both occupy the entire world (Lokasa). They are not active, but passive, as they are the necessary conditions of motion and rest respectively. But one should bear in mind, that, in the Jaina philosophy, dharma and Adharma do not refer to the moral terms of merit and demerit, but dharma and Adharma are used by the Jainas in a purely technical sense.



14.8 LET US SUM UP

- Jaina is the oldest Nastika school of Indian philosophy that separates body from the soul.
- Jaina Metaphysics offers a view of reality. According to the Jainas reality is multifaceted (anekanta).
- The world of reality consists of two items – (i) Loka and (ii) Aloka. Loka is the 'concrete' and Aloka is the 'beyond'.
- Two important concepts of Jainism are Astikayas and Dravya.
- Astikaya is the real that has extensive magnitude.
- Dravya is the real, that which is flowing, fluid or changing.
- Astikayas are five in number – (i) Jiva (Soul), (ii) Pudgala or matter, (iii) Dharma (Principle of rest), (iv) Adharma (principle of motion) and (v) Akasa (space). Astikayas are eternal.
- Karma is interpreted as particles of subtle matter. Jiva is animate and is the 'sentient' or principle of consciousness. Ajiva is inanimate and is the 'non-sentient' principle.

- According to the Jainas, every substance possesses two types of characters – (i) Essential and (ii) Accidental. The essential characters are the gunas, and the changing and the varied characters which are accidental in nature, are paryaya.
- A substance or Dravya is defined by the Jainas, as that which possess gunas and paryaya. Gunas are unchanging qualities and the changing qualities are modes or paryaya.
- Dravya is characterized by the Triple nature of the Real. It has (i) Utapada or Origin, (ii) Vyaya or decay, and (iii) Dharauvya or permanency form.
- Astikayas are substances and divided into Living or Jiva (souls or spirits) and non-living or Ajiva.
- Souls are sub-divided into free or Mukta souls and bonded or baddha souls. Baddha souls are (i) Trasa or mobile, and (ii) Sthavara or immobile.
- Though the soul is eternal, it changes. It knows things, performs activities, enjoys pleasure, undergoes pain, and can illuminate itself as well as other objects.
- Ajivas or inanimate substances are Dharma, Adharma, Akasa and Pudgala.
- The physical world in which we live is constituted by – (i) the material bodies occupied by souls, and (ii) the other material bodies which constitute the environment.
- About Pudgala, the Jainas say that it is subject to integration and disintegration. The smallest particles of substances are partless and cannot be further divided, are called atoms or anu. Compound substances are called Sanghhata or Skandhas and are combination of two or more atoms.
- The characteristics of Pudgala are touch, taste, smell and colour.
- The Jainas say space or Akasa is a quality possessed by all extended substance.
- Space is imperceptible. Space can only be inferred.
- Jainas refer to space as (i) Lokasa and (ii) Alokasa.

- Kala cannot be experienced directly. Kala is non-extended, and is therefore anastikaya.
- Kala is absolute and is Real. But we need to break Kala into parts in order to understand other physical objects in the universe in reference to Kala or time. Therefore we have Relative time.
- Relative time is constituted by simple elements called KALANUS.
- Jainas differentiate between Kala and the five astikayas. The Jainas further, refer to the character of extensive magnitude by a technical term, TIRYAK pracaya or horizontal extension.
- Relative time or Vyavahara Kala refers to the traditional units of long and short periods.
- Dharma and Adharma cannot be experienced directly, but can be determined inferentially.
- The grounds of such inference are mobility or motion and immobility or rest.
- Dharma helps a moving object, but it cannot help a non-moving object. Adharma cannot restrain the movement of moving objects.
- Dharma and Adharma are both eternal formless and non-moving. Both occupy the entire world.



14.9 FURTHER READING

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