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Socio-Spiritual Analysis of Philosophy of Karma

Posted: 19.03.2016

Updated on: 16.12.2017

The entire ancient Indian philosophical thought, right from the *vedās* to the modern *Vedānt* of Sankar, has the law of *Karma* as its basic foundation. If this presupposition is negated or is shown to have no logical or scientific basis for its acceptance, all Indian philosophical systems except *Cārvāka* philosophy become redundant. The law of *Karma* is not only the foundation of India's philosophy but also guides all social actions of the people of this country. The Indian moral ideas have evolved from the *vedic* and *sramanic* traditions and the Law of *Karma* is one of the central principles on which the entire Jain philosophy rests.

As per Jain perspective, our *Karmas* determine what we deserve and what we can deserve. We are responsible for what we are. Moreover, what we wish to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If our present life is the result of our past deeds, it certainly follows that our future can be produced by our present actions. For illustration: X produces Y and Y produces Z and So on. So we can assert that Z is produced by X. So the law of causation upon which the entire structure of physical and biological sciences are based, strengthens our belief in the law of *karma*. The law of *karma* in turn ultimately based on the doctrine of rebirth. It is said that when a man is born in this world, his birth may be the result of anyone of his numerous acts, or a set of acts, which may have to be fructified through several bodies. The consequence of a person's acts not being fully worked out in this life, need a future life for their consumption. The doctrine of immortality of the soul which justifies the belief in a future existence of the individual, equally justifies the pre-existence of the Law of *Karma*

Karma, according to Jains, is of material nature, is a matter in a subtle form, having a substantial force. It has the property of developing the effects of merit and demerit. The soul, by its dealing with the outer, becomes associated with the particles of subtle matter scattered throughout the universe. These become *Karma* and build up a special body called *Kārmanaśarira*, which does not leave the soul till its final emancipation. As per Jain view, each *Karma* works in such a way that every change which takes place leaves a mark on our character. It produces effects on character, disposition, instincts and tendencies of the doer. The word *saṃskāra* is meant for the physical, moral and mental traits with which a person is born. They form part of his personality and are borne by him in this life time and carried into a future existence. This leads us to conclude that all that exists and happens in the phenomenal world is if. Thus, it may be said that all our miseries as well as happiness are due to our own *Karmas*. (the outcome our own deeds of. So, if our deeds are good, the results are also good and they are bad they lead to bad results.

The general maxim, 'As you sow, so shall you reap', which formulates the essence of the law of *Karma*, has no evidence in the empirical world. If we try to look into the lives of individuals, the law is operative in its negative form. You do wrong, and still you lead a happy life. You are virtuous still your life is full of miseries. Such cases have, no doubt, been attempted to be reconciled with the law of *Karma* on the other grounds, especially the present one. But what is the scientific basis for the acceptance of the past life cases? Cases have been reported wherein some persons are believed to be narrating the incidents of past life. But we have not as yet found an instance which has received universal acceptance as the scientific laws. Observation and experiment are the two important steps of scientific procedure. It is on the basis of verification that scientific laws are established. Can the law of *karma* be verified? The analysts would surely brush aside such laws for the simple reason that they are meaningless, because this theory cannot be verified empirically. So we have no scientific evidence for the law of *karma*. The law of causation itself is a presumption which has not been proved conclusively. Still moral arguments adduced in support of the law of *karma* can at best put in the category of a postulate of morality. Not only morality but also the entire structure of Indian philosophy rests on this law of karma presumption.

All the so called *Cārvākās* and western thinkers don't agree and believe in this law of *karma*. Those semantic religions like Christianity, Islamism, and Judaism don't believe in the concept of rebirth. So it is the belief system of a person which regulates the entire actions of the human beings. The history of India also repeated the very same things during the period of British rule colonise the belief system of Indians and colonise the Indians. This tool was adopted by the Britishers and they succeeded in their goal. In the same way, what we see in the western world situations today is an effect of their belief system which can be seen in the name of over materialistic life style, highly technological progress and comfort zone attitude leading towards the problem of deficiency of natural resources, deforestation, global warming, climate change, species extinction, reactive violence and all such dis-compassionate human behaviour. They were all together bearing the fruition or consequences of their own belief system backed up by their non-belief in law of *karma*.

But for the *Cārvākās* all the orthodox systems base their views upon the Law of *Karma*: For them, perception is the only valid source of knowledge. Nothing is real, which is not perceptible. As soul has no existence in the philosophy of *Cārvākās*, they do not believe in the future life and the Law of Karma. The ideal which *Cārvākās* present before us is that of hedonism. It lays emphasis on the individual happiness.

The denial of soul is as absurd as to say that "my mother is barren". If there is no soul as a separate entity then body is the soul, which is contradiction in saying. By rejecting the existence of soul, *Cārvākās* reject the doctrine of rebirth and Karma which reduces their philosophy to escapisms. They do not care even for moral values. As they reject every other source of knowledge other than perception and all moral values of life, 'Agnosticism' and 'Escapisms' are the necessary outcome of the philosophy of *Cārvākās*.

The Buddhists hold that everyone in the universe is subject to the influence of cause and effect. "What is that which sets the phenomenal world into motion in order to come into existence from the unknown and again, to disappear into the unknown to reappear again, as before, without ever stopping the continuity coming and disappearing? The only answer to this is that it is due to the *samskāras*, the result of our own day-to-day actions, that the continuity of the samsāra is maintained.

According to the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* school, our body has its source in the acts done by the person, and is the basis of pleasure and pain. The body is formed under the influence of the unseen force of destiny and is the result of the persistence of the effect of the previous acts. The birth of a being is not a mere psychological process. Uddyotakara says: The *karma* of the parents who have to enjoy the experiences resulting from the birth of the child, as well as the karma of the personality which has to undergo experiences in the world, both these conjointly bring about the birth of the body in the mother's womb. The connection of the soul with the body is called its birth and its separation at death. We come into the world not in entire forgetfulness, but with certain memories and habits acquired in the previous step of existence. There must be a future where we can experience the fruits of our deeds and a past to account for the differences in our lots in the present. When we exhaust all our deeds, the soul is freed from rebirth and attains emancipation. According to Vatsyayan, "the fruition of all one's acts comes about in the last birth preceding release".

In the philosophy of *Sāṃkhya-yoga* school, the law of *Karma* is assumed as a valid principle of life. They hold that our life, its character and everything are determined by it. They argue that though we do not remember our past lives, we can infer particulars about them from the tendencies of the present. These tendencies, according to them, will cease to exist on the disappearance of their cause (*hetu*), motive (*phala*), substratum (*āsraya*), and object (*ālambana*). The root cause is *avidyā*, though we may have other proximate causes..

Sāṃkhya's theory of *satkāryavād* also points out the admissibility of the Law of *Karma*. According to it, the effect subsists in latent in the cause. They argue for the same reason that the non-existent cannot be made existent. In the same way, our present is an outcome of our past lives and on the same logic; the future will be the result of our present lives.

Mimāṃsakās think attempt to prove the Law of *Karma* with the help of its doctrine of *apurva*. They say that our acts are enjoyed with a view to their fruits. There is a necessary connection between the act and its result.

Jaimini terms such unseen force, as *apurva*, i.e., something new, not known before. So, *apurva* is the metaphysical link between work and its result. According to them, man enjoy the fruits of his actions performed in the past life, here in the present by means of. In the same way, he will have to enjoy the fruits of actions performed in the present life, with the help of same *apurva*.

For Śankara individuality is due to *Karma*, which is a product of *avidyā*. The world, we live in, is just the return of the works of doer. The individual is working machinery intended to produce its effects in the form of suffering and happiness. Moral life is always active and is never exhausted. It takes endless forms, owing to the variety of the demands of the conditions of human life. This process goes on forever, unless perfect knowledge is gained. Perfect knowledge consumes the seed of Karma and makes rebirth impossible. Freedom from the subjection of the Law of Karma is the end of human life. To get rid of Avidya is to be freed from the Law of *Karma*.

Jains don't impose on anybody to have belief in this notion of *karma*. As Jain philosophy is basically *anekantic* philosophy, it do asserts and supports the contradictory notion in the light of the other infinite number of perspectives. We can manage to experience the difference in the responsible actions operated by the person having belief in this natural law of *karma*. The law of *karma*, therefore is a law, which dominates all other natural laws, but it is not a blind law. It is living and spiritual-cum-social law. We can proceed into the world of practical life where this philosophy of *karma* has its own socio-spiritual relevance in all spheres of human life. But in spite of the great importance accorded to the law of karma by the indologists and Indian as well as non-Indian-it has not been given a conceptual analysis which is very important from the philosophical point of view to understand the intelligibility of the doctrine of karma. Dayakrishna and Rajendra Prasad have attempted to give a conceptual analysis of the doctrine of karma. Bit in the process they have raised a number of conceptual issues which deserve a closes attention on the part of researchers. It is hoped that the study undertaken here is the extension of such a spirit. Unless we analyses the concepts of karma and *karma phala* and their relation to *kartā*, we cannot understand the doctrine of karma in a fruitful manner.

The notion of karma is conceptually connected with the notion of *saṃsāra*, transmigration, freedom and responsibility. In order to understand the notion of karma, a socio-spiritual analysis of the notion of *saṃsāra*, transmigration, freedom and responsibility is also required at which the present article aims. The objective of this article is not to ascertain the truth or falsity, validity or invalidity, of the doctrine of *karma* nor even to make a historical study of the different interpretations of the doctrine of karma.

Socio-Spiritual Relevance of *Karma* Theory

Karma and rebirth are the two most important presuppositions of all schools of Indian Philosophy with the solitary exception of the system of *cārvāka*. The Indian religions are intensely theistic and believe that God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and hence possessing absolute authority. The *cārvākās* were a school of total materialism and didn't believe in any metaphysical reality be it soul or God. Both Buddhism and Jainism didn't believe in God as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. They believe that the universe is *anādī*, without beginning and *ananta*, without an end. Among the systematic schools, only the *Nyāya Vaiśeṣika* admits God as the necessary condition for the fruition of the *kārman*, which remains as an unseen potency (*adrṣṭa*) consisting in merit and demerit in the soul. The yoga philosophy admits God only as an object of worship or meditation, and not as an agent in the fruition of the *kārman*. Śaṅkara accords a provisional place to personal God in his monistic *vedanta*. Even Christian religion also asserts God but does not believe in the concept of rebirth. The entire

ethics of Jain Philosophy is based on the strong foundation of the theory of *karma*. Now let us proceed to the relevance of this theory.

Change of *Karma* VS Doctrine of Self-effort (*puruṣārthavāda*)

In Jainism, the moral responsibility of each and every *karma* is not endorsed to the God, but it falls under the orbit of the individual self. This novel concept of moral responsibility of the individual self, which is based on the philosophy of *karma* can restrain the human race from blaming others for ones good or bad actions. Although it is sure and certain that bound *karmās* must be experienced by the self somehow or the other, after the completion of the duration of *karmās*. As per Jain philosophy, there are two types of *kārmic* bondage,^[1] *dalika karma* and *nikācita karma*. When the intensity of a bondage is extremely strong, it has to be suffered as it is, it cannot be mitigated. Such *karmās* are of *nikācita* nature, they can't be changed in any case.^[2] The other part of *dalika karmās*, which occupies the maximum space in the *kārmic* range, is changeable. The unchangeable part of *nikācita karma* is very small. On the basis of that small part of unchangeable *karma*, we can't declare that we can't change our destiny or bound-*karmās*.^[3] In *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, we get the reference of two types of *vedanā* (sensation) namely, *evaṃbhūta* and *anevaṃbhūta vedanā*. *Evaṃbhūta* means to experience the *karmās* as it is bound. *Anevaṃbhūta* means to experience the *karmās* with a difference. Gautam asked– Lord! Soul experiences *evaṃbhūta* or *anevaṃbhūta vedanā*?

Mahāvīra replied– Gautam! Soul experiences both the kinds of *vedanā*. This reference is authentic proof of concept of change in *karma*.^[4] So the *kārmic* atom of *dalika* type can be changed and in experiencing its fruition man is independent. One is free in experiencing the *dalika karma* as it is or can be made other-wise. Whereas in *nikācita* type of *karma*, all the possibilities of change, ceases in itself. Thus *tīrthāṅkara* Mahāvīra possessed *anekāntic* perspective. He didn't give absolute importance either to *karma* or to self-effort. He established the relativity of soul and *karma*.^[5] If we assert that once the *karmās* are bound, can't be altered in any state. Then, there will be no scope of transformation through meditational practices, auto suggestions and practice of different kinds of austerities. One should not give up ones hard work or efforts by giving importance to the small range of unchangeable *karmās*. The philosophy of *tīrthāṅkara* Mahavira is the philosophy of efforts (*puruṣārthavāda*).

The two most important revolutionary concepts of *tīrthāṅkara* Mahāvīra in the context of *karma* theory are *Udīrana* (pre-maturation of *karmās*) and *saṅkramaṇa* (change of *karmās*). On the basis of which we can call the doctrine of *karma* as the doctrine of *puruṣārthavāda* in the words of Mahāvīra.^[6] This concept of *puruṣārthavāda* as propounded by Mahāvīra must be understood clearly. The doctrine of *karma* truly speaking is a doctrine of self-effort. It is believed that *puruṣārtha* or human effort is essential pre-requisite for the maturing of past *karmās*. The *Mahābhārata* 136.7-8 compares past *karmās* to seeds which remain fruitless if they are not sown, the tilling of the soil for sowing is human effort which is essential for sown seeds to mature. This proposition is however not universally true. Birth, length of life, death and human sufferings generally has no relationship to human effort. Every soul has a right to do *ātma sādhana* and thereby transforming human-personality through freedom of action. The *Bhagavad Gītā* also emphasizes on "*ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ*", one's own self is ones friend and ones own self is ones enemy. Hence one should lift one's self up by one's own

effort. As Jain Āgama *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* avers: "*appā kattā vikattā ya duhāṇa ya suhāṇa ya*"^[7]: self or *ātmā* is the maker of sorrow or happiness. As compared to animals, man is endowed with the capacity to counter his *pravrttis* (actions) born of *saṃskāras* through the process of *udavartana*,^[8] *apavartana*,^[9] *saṃkramana*,^[10] *udīraṇā*, i.e. increased realization, decreased realization and transformation, prematuration. The energy whereby the soul increases the length of duration and the intensity of fruition of a *kārman* this process is called increased realization. And the energy whereby the soul decreases them is called 'decreased realization'. *Saṃkramaṇa* means transformation of the length of duration and intensity of fruition of a *kārman*. There are few exceptional cases, where the concept of *saṃkramaṇa* does not apply. They are as follows:

- a. *Saṃkramaṇa* (transference) always occurs in parallel *prakṛti* (sub-types) only but not in opposite sub-types of *karmās*.
- b. *Saṃkramaṇa* never occurs in main types but always occurs in sub-types.
- c. The four sub-types of life-span *karma* mutually don't change.
- d. Likewise deluded view and deluded conduct mutually doesn't change.^[11]

Pre-mature realization is the process by which a *kārman* is made capable of premature fruition. Thus there is an open room for changing the *dalika karmās* through the process of *nirjara* i.e. penances and tolerance of hardships etc. If there is no scope for change, then there will be no difference between the God and *karma*, both are once determined are unchangeable. Then there will be no scope for personal efforts of *sādhanā*, giving charity, observing vows, humanly behaviour, meditation, service to others etc. But through determined will power and self-effort we can change our future.

In the area of *nikācīta karma bhoga*, experiencing the results of past actions, a man is not free, but in the area of *yoga* as a discipline for transformation of human personality he is free. "Restrain" or "*Saṃyam*" is a supreme virtue which can be observed in various ways i.e. restrain over emotions or passions, restrain over thoughts, restrain of sensual organs, restrain over ones legs, hands, words etc. are possible only in the human realm.^[12] The believer of *karma* philosophy will always remain optimistic in his approach and accepts the existence of rebirth, heaven, hell and fruition of *karmās* according to ones deeds, i.e. asserts the concept of reward and punishment. Man is independent in binding new *karmās* as well as in shedding of the *karmās*. This belief acts as a remote control over ones behaviour, over ones attachment towards possessions, over ones consumable and non-consumable goods, over ones violent acts and over ones laxity and control over ones attachment and aversion. *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* explains attachment and aversion is the main cause of bondage. Kundakunda explains: "*Sauvarṇikampi niḡalam badhanāti kālāyasam ca yathā puruṣam badhanātyevam jīvam śubhamaśubham vā kṛtam karma*"^[13] i.e. a shackle made of gold is as good as one made of Iron for the purpose of chaining a man. Similarly the *karmās*, whether good or bad equally bind a person.^[14] It is quoted in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, *akāmaḥ*, a desireless person, transcends the human seed, that is overcomes rebirth and transmigration. According to Jainism, the inflow of *kārmic* matter, that is *āsrava*, is stopped by *saṃvara* coupled with the destruction of, or exhaustion of past *karmās* through *nirjarā*. Thus it is clear that each and every soul can get rid from bondage through positive efforts and can attain the ultimate goal of liberation. Thus *karma* is a doctrine of self-effort. It is not a doctrine of eternal damnation of a sinner in hell for one-time sin committed by

him, which is so eloquently and powerfully expressed by John Banyan: "one leak will sink a ship and one sin will destroy the sinner". The *karma* doctrine offers prospects of redemption, change of attitude, change of ones habits, change of ones nature through disciplined conduct and atonement. Impartial justice in the heart of society can be established automatically through the law of *karma*.

Ācārya Mahāprajña says, there is a great mystery of science hidden behind the theory of *karma*. The person who wants to establish good destiny, must concentrate on the main sources of *purushārtha* i.e. mind, body and speech activities, which work only after the destruction of *antarāya karma*. Tīrthāṅkara Mahāvīra showed the great path of establishing ones bright destiny through the practices of mental, vocal and physical inhibitions. Moreover Ācārya Mahāprajña says that *kuśala mana*, *kuśala vāṇi* and *kuśala karma* is a cause of establishing good fortune.^[15] It is a tenet in Jainism that man alone is responsible for his own condition of weal or woe. He is the architect of his own destiny. It is the result of the reciprocal interaction between himself and the rest of the world.

Doctrine of *Karma* and Non-transference of Merit

Jainism is the only religion which didn't countenance the concept of *puṇyadāna*. *Puṇya* is not treated as *dātavya*, the thing given. The Jain thinkers believe the concept of *karma* as being material in character.^[16] There is influx of *karmās* into the soul on account of performance of *karmās* and the same could be purged (*nirjarā*) by appropriate but there could be no question of transfer of *karma* as accepted in *smṛtis*, *purāṇs* and *vedās*. The sharing, inheritance or transfer of evil *karmās* is contrary to the doctrine of *karmās*, which postulates an exclusively personal responsibility for good and evil *karma*. But we find traces of the belief in sharing, inheritance, and transfer of evil *karma* in early literature like *Ṛgveda*, *Atharvaveda*.

The problem of mass or collective suffering such as due to natural calamities like draught, floods, earthquakes etc. was also explained as the consequence of the misdeeds of the ruler. The Buddha says that when kings are evil minded, his ministers become likewise; in consequence the rhythm of the seasons is disturbed, rain winds occur out of time and crops are poor, people suffer from sickness.^[17] The *Mahābhārata*^[18] attributes the natural calamities to the sins of the ruler. This was supported by the Manu^[19] that a king who fails to do his duty of protection towards the subject shares, one-sixth of the sins of his subjects, whereas the doctrine of *karma* which strongly emphasizes the element of personal responsibility for actions that each person enjoys and suffers the consequences of his own acts and there is no transference of merit. Nobody can share ones suffering and pleasure according to the theory of *karma*. Neither his kinsmen, nor his friends, nor his sons, nor his relations will share his suffering; he alone has to bear it; for the *kārman* follows the doer.^[20] Nearest or dearest whosoever it is, nobody can share or transfer ones deeds to others as per Jainism.

Lord Mahāvīra, in *Uttaradhyana Sūtra* rightly discussed that *appākattā vikattāya, duhāṇa ya suhāṇaya*. Soul experiences joy and sorrow according to one's own *karma*. If there is no law of *karma*, it means a complete abrogation of the law of *karma* by permitting an evil-doer to escape the consequences of his misdeeds by transferring the same to someone else and thereby make an innocent person suffer for the same. So *Milindapañha* 295-296 says emphatically, "An evil deed,

O king, cannot be shared with one who has not done it, has not consented to do it. Well, O King, so is it that a good deed can be shared but not an evil one. "It is not the case. The idea of sharing and inheritance of evil as embodied in the *R̥g-veda* and *Atharva veda* and *Mahābhārata* represents ideas of a stage prior to the formulation and universal acceptance of the classical doctrine of *karma* which strongly emphasizes the element of personal responsibility for actions.

Law of Personal Responsibility

The main difference between the acceptance of God and theory of *karma* is that in case of God, moral responsibility of an individual is transformed to the almighty God and on the other hand, theory of *karma* places a strong foundation and endorses moral responsibility of each and every action to oneself. The doctrine of *karma* is a revolutionary development which endowed man with free will, made him responsible for his own acts and the architect of his destiny. The doctrine of *karma* is a doctrine of personal responsibility for a man's entire actions. So each man is responsible for his own actions and he alone has to bear their consequences. It made him self-centred but not selfish. It is also an essential feature of the doctrine that a person must do well and avoid evil. He must not cause injury to various forms of life as, such acts produce demerit; likewise, he must do good to all beings to earn merit (*puṇya*) which will ensure rebirth in higher forms of existence and bring happiness. Thus, the doctrine of *karma* provided strong motivation not to act exclusively for personal benefit and disregard to the interests of his fellow beings. The graph of morality will be increased to the highest extent and an individual will not always stick to the materialistic objects leading a luxurious life and there will be a balance between spirituality and materiality.

The belief in the theory of *karma* can establish a society bereft of corruption, adulteration, terrorism, mal-practices, incidents of rapes, cruel behaviour with the animals and the employers etc. The members of society who believe in *karma* can never exploit the rights of others and can help in building an eco-friendly life on the earth. The cruel behaviour resulting through selfish urge in case of dowry, medical experiments causing environmental pollution, mismeasurement and mixing harmful materials in the milk products used for the babies etc. can also be avoided. Jainism asserts that one who tortures and kills other beings, who strives in an extra-ordinary manner after possessions and who is governed by life long passions, obtains *naraka āyusya* (infernal life). The deceitful, the fraudulent man, who is in possession of the thorns, binds *tiryunca āyusya* (non-human life), the humble, sincere one, whose passion is slight, *manuṣya āyusya* (human life).^[21] The belief in the above statements of canons can restrain the entire act of an individual. The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* cites, *kārmic* bondage occurs when the actions are done in the wake of non-vigilance. Thus the *karma* incurred due to non-vigilance is uprooted by means of vigilance (self-awareness).^[22]

Theory of Ātmakartṛtvavāda

A man has, at his disposal, three means to perform any activity, mind, speech and body. Activities may be good or evil. If mind, body and speech are themselves good, the activity will also be good, and if they are vitiated, the activity will also be evil. Thus it is clear that result of the three fold activity is the cause of new bondage. So according to Jainism, your soul is responsible for both good and evil *kārmic* bondage. It creates both pain and pleasures for itself.

Neither God nor anybody else nor any object is responsible for them. Thus Mahāvīra propounded the concept of *ātmakartṛtvavāda* (theory of creation by the self).^[23] In matters of pleasure and pain, the worldly soul is solely responsible for them, as self does all its actions consciously and automatically encouragement to moral values in life occurs. This is the greatest relevance of *karma* theory that crimes and punishments can be kept under control in the society.

Jainism believes that *puruṣārtha* is the key factor, through which a man can transform himself.^[24] It means, *puruṣa* (soul) is neither a toy in the hands of *niyati* (universal law) or *bhāgya* (fate), nor even everything is controlled by *karma*. It is the *puruṣārtha* that builds the system of *karma*. One should be very clear about the limitations of the power of *karma* or *niyati*. Some people say, "Whatever is destined in *bhāgya* (fate) is bound to happen." Jainism however does not conform to such absolutistic statements. If we enthrone *karma* or *bhāgya* i.e. fate of destiny on the seat of God, then what is sense in denying the theist conviction that man is not a mere puppet in the hands of God or almighty? As cited in the *Uttarājayaṇī*, my own self is the doer and undoer of misery and happiness; my own self, friend and foe, according as I act well or badly.^[25] Therefore, it would be absolutely wrong to believe that *karma* is everything or whole and sole. *Karma* is not the universal sovereign. Man can change ones destiny through efforts.

Equanimity in Bearing *Karmās* Leading to Liberation

Self, in its dynamic march through worldly lives is constantly earning and shedding *karmās*. It earns further *kārmic* bondages even while suffering the fruits of the past *karmās*, if it does not suffer the said fruits with equanimity and objectivity. A person, who passes through some calamity-mental or physical grumbles against his fate, loses temper and commits acts of indiscretion and violence with a view to avoid the uncomfortable circumstances in which he is placed. Another man who is passing through a period of prosperity or is invested with some power over his fellow men, he while enjoying this prosperity and power, he commits of acts of indiscretion and violence. Both these persons are reaping the fruits of their past or present *karmās* but while doing so, they are creating fresh bondages by their acts of indiscretion and violence. Even acceptance of fruits of good and bad *karmās* with over joy or sorrow disturbs the mental equilibrium and results in fresh bondage of *karmās*.

Therefore, the ideal way to face the fruits of ones *karmās* is to face them calmly, objectively and peacefully with full equanimity of mind. If you are oppressed with pains, treat the occasion with equanimity and understanding, thinking within yourself that it is a good opportunity to shed your *karmās*, which have been of your own creation out of some ignorance. If you are passing through a period of pleasure, thank the scheme of universe which has not failed to reward your good actions of the past, and be prepared to do further good without any strings of desires attached to it. One should constantly remember that pleasure and pain are the inseparable constituents of life and the true art of living consists in learning to bear with equanimity and understanding. If this is done, no fresh *kārmic* bondages are evolved while reaping the fruits of our past *karmās*.^[26]

Thus it can be concluded that in the context of Jain ethics, doctrine of *karma* is as important as the theory of cause and effect in the field of science. Thus the doctrine of *karma* is based on certain fundamental postulates:

(i) It is a law of personal responsibility; the doer himself must bear the consequences of his actions. This liability cannot be shifted. If a person escapes human retribution, he must face 'divine' retribution. The unexhausted *karmās* have to be experienced by the doer in his subsequent life or rebirth. The very belief in this *karma* theory restrains each and every action of the human conduct. Moral conduct of an individual is the cause of moral conduct of the society. So it can be said that peaceful co-existence, law and order in the society can be maintained through the faith in the law of *karma* in this L.P.G. era.

(ii) There is inequality and sufferings in life, the doctrine of *karma* is evolved as a parallel to and on the pattern of the general law of causation, cause and effect, which we notice in the physical universe. The doctrine of *karma* seeks to explain these phenomena in a "rational" manner, that they are not the result of blind functioning of the universe, an arbitrary fate. Hence, the doctrine is based on the maxim, 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. The inequality and suffering, which a man has to face or undergo, is nothing but the consequences of his own earlier acts. It is a law of retributive justice. Thus it is the doctrine of *karma*, which makes the world of sentient creation morally intelligible. There is no escape from the consequences of *karmās* in case of *nikācīta karmās*.^[27]

(iii) The doctrine of *karma* extended the causal law to the moral realm. It held that good and evil deeds have a necessary causal connection with the experience of happiness and unhappiness. Since this is intended in a more than psychological sense there was obviously need for a mediating agency which would connect *karma* with its result which might be separated from it widely in time and space. Brahmanical system tended to postulate God as the agency, which rewards or punishes good and evil deeds. Jainism, like Buddhism, however attributed an unseen power to *kārman* itself, which brought about its result at the appropriate time. One implication of this doctrine is that the distinction of good and evil must be held to be objective and independent of subjective relativity.^[28]

(iv) Another implication is that action must be held to create an unconscious and persistent force which remaining connected with the psyche of the agent and has the capacity of directing it into situations appropriate to its own fruition and controlling the affective reactions of the experiences arising from such situations.

(v) The doctrine of *karma* is useful in keeping mental equanimity in good and bad times and in receiving urge from within for performing good acts. He never become arrogant in the days of his happiness and good fortune, nor does he become downcast and depressed in the days of his miseries and misfortune.^[29] But he remains calm and composed and maintains balance of mind at all times favourable and adverse, because he knows that all the circumstances and situations that arise in

man's life are but plays of *karma*. He is convinced of the fact that by force of good works, man can overcome difficulties and remove miseries as also that he can make his life more and more happy by advancing on the path of righteousness. By doing so, man makes himself permanently happy and at the same time attains higher and higher stages of spiritual evolution and consequently attains liberation lying beyond the duality of good and evil.

(vi) The importance of human effort is emphasized by Mahāvīra, which rules supreme in Jainism. According to him, a man should lift his soul by his own efforts. He says, "The soul is the begetter of both happiness and sorrow, it is its own friend when it treads the path of righteousness and is its own enemy when it treads the forbidden path.^[30] The prerequisite to the path of righteousness is to conquer the four passions, viz., anger, pride, deceit and greed and the five sense organs. He says conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility deceit by straight forwardness and greed by contentment.^[31] According to Mahāvīra, conquering one's own self is the most difficult thing in the world. He says, Victory over one's self is greater than conquering thousands and thousands of enemies on the battle-field. A true conqueror is one who conquers his own self.^[32]

Conclusion

In short, doctrine of moral causation inspires optimism and makes man the master of his own destiny. It teaches man to remain always engaged in good works and to perform ones duties well. The doctrine of *karma* has the message for man that he can attain fortunes by good works. It is in his own hands to shape his own good or bad destiny and consequently to experience their good or bad fruits. Practice of righteousness, influence his *karma*, in accordance with their intensity, he can alter his *karma*, transform the bad *karmās* into the good and almost destroy it. No *karma* lasts forever. On the expiry of its time limit, it is destroyed and with its end, ends its fruition. This is the reason why the wise remains continuously engaged in the activity of creating good destiny in order to perpetuate forever their good state. By doing so man makes himself permanently happy and at the same time attains higher and higher stages of spiritual development. Thus Mahāprajña states that *karmavāda* is a powerful tool to root out the wide spread immorality. It is neither an escapist theory nor it calls for modify resignation, its actual, deep and practical meaning is to employ our efforts to our present and future for the better.^[33]

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Footnotes:

[1] Mahāprajña.*Jain Darśana Kā Samyak Darśana*, op. cit., p. 48.

[2] *Gommatsāra: Karmakāṇḍa*, verse 440.

[3] Mahāprajña.*Jain Darśana Kā Samyak Darśana*, op. cit., p. 49.

[4] *Bhagavatī*, op. cit., 5.118.

[5] Mahāprajña.*Jain Darśana: Manan aur Mīmāṃsā*, op. cit., pp. 298, 299.

[6] Mahāprajña.*Jain Darśana Kā Samyak Darśana*, op. cit., p. 46.

[7] *Bhagvad Gītā*.verse 6.5.

[8] *Karma Prak`ti* with *cūrṇi* and the commentaries of Malayagiri and Upādhyāya Yaśovijaya (1937), p. 19 (2).

[9] *Ibid*, p. 19 (2)

[10]*Ibid*, p. 19 (2)

[11] *Viśeṣāvaśyaka Bhāṣya* of Jinabhadra Gaṇī. Ed. Dalsukha Malavaniya and Bechardasji, Lal Bhai Dalpatabhai. Ahmedabad: Bhārtiya Samskr̥ti Vidyāmandir. Vol.-I, 1968, verse 1939.

[12]*Daśvaikālika Sūtra*, op. cit., 10.

[13]*Samayasāra*.verse 146.

[14]*Muṇḍaka Upani-ad*, op. cit., II.1.

[15]Mahāprajña.*Jain Darśana Kā Samyak Darśana*, op. cit., p. 46-47.

[16]Yuvaraj Krishan.*The Doctrine of Karma.Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass.1997, p. 39.*

[17]*Aṅguttar Nikāya.II, IV.70.*

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[19]*Manusmṛti*.VIII.304.

[20]*Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, op. cit., 13.23.

[21] *Thāṇaṁ*. Ed. Muni Nathmal with Prakrit text, Sanskrit Rendering and Hindi version with notes. Ladnun, Jain Vishva Bhāratī.1976, 4.628, 629, 630, 631.

[22]*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, op. cit., 5.4.74.

[23]Mahāprajña, *Philosophical Foundations of Jainism*, op. cit., p. 98.

[24]Mahāprajña, *Philosophical Foundations of Jainism*, op. cit., p. 34.

[25]*Uttarājijayāṇṇi*.20.37.

[26]*The Path of Arhat*, p. 109.

[27]*Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, 13.8.

[28]G.C. Pande, *Lectures on Jainism.Delhi: Delhi University Press.1977, p. 10.*

[29] *Jain Philosophy and Religion, Eng. Trans. Of Jain 'darśana'* by Muni Nyāyvijayaji, trans. by Nagin J.

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[30] *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, 20.37.

[31] *Daśvaikālika Sūtra*, 8.39.

[32] *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, 9.34.

[33] Mahāvīraṅga Galera. *Jain Studies and Science*, p. 154.

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