

Consciousness and Knowledge: A Jain Perspective in Modern Context

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1 Introduction

Etymologically, consciousness implies one's ability to know and perceive. Through consciousness, one can have knowledge of the external world or one's own mental state. The thing, which distinguishes us from inanimate matter, is consciousness. A proper explanation of consciousness is eluding the western philosophers and scientists. Explaining the nature of consciousness is one of the important and perplexing areas of modern philosophy and science.

There are two broad traditional and competing metaphysical views concerning the nature of mind and conscious mental states: dualism and materialism. While there are many versions of each, the former generally holds that the conscious mind or a conscious mental state is non-physical in some sense. On the other hand, materialists hold that the mind is the brain, or more accurately, that conscious mental activity is identical to neural activity. Some philosophers argue that we are simply not capable of solving the problem of consciousness. McGinn claims that we are cognitively closed as to how brain produces conscious awareness. He concedes that some brain property produces conscious experience, but we cannot understand how this is so or even know what that brain property is. Our concept forming mechanism simply will not allow us to grasp the physical and causal basis of consciousness.

Classically knowledge is defined as 'justified true belief'. In 1963 Edmund Gettier said that while justified belief in a proposition is necessary for that proposition to be known, it is not sufficient. Consequently revised definitions have been proposed involving some conditions. There is also a debate over the nature of knowledge. Externalists think that factors "external" meaning outside of the psychological states of those who gain knowledge can be conditions of knowledge. Internalists claim that all knowledge-yielding conditions are within the psychological states of those who gain knowledge.

The concepts of Jain philosophy offer solutions to many of the problems facing western philosophers and scientists. Consciousness and knowledge in Jain philosophy are attributes of the soul. The knowledge acquired through sensuous consciousness is, however, relative; the absolute knowledge is comprehended only by the Omniscient. We review below these concepts as obtained in Jain philosophy and briefly compare them with western thought.

2 Consciousness and Knowledge in Jain Philosophy

Soul (*Jiva*) is the generic name of sentient substance. *Jiva* substance is non physical and is not sense - perceptible; it does not have the properties of colour, smell, taste and touch. Consciousness and *upayoga* are the differentia of the *jiva*.

Consciousness is the generality of the attributes (if not of all the attributes of the *jiva*), which distinguish the *jiva* from the inanimate. *Upayoga* is the generality of the manifestations of such attributes. Knowledge (Intelligence) and perception (intuition) are agreed to be the two main manifestations (*upayoga*) of consciousness. Both of them are comprehensions of the object by the subject. Knowledge is the manifestation of intelligence of the *jiva* with respect to its comprehending capacity. The cognition function of *jiva* is determined by its intelligence attribute. It is a comprehension of the objects with their details.

Consciousness manifests itself in several ways: intelligence, knowledge, intuition, bliss, perception (cognitive elements), emotions, will, attitude and behaviour, awareness of pleasure and pain. Life and consciousness are coextensive. Wherever there is life, there is consciousness and vice versa. But there are degrees of explicitness or manifestation of consciousness in different organisms. In the lowest class of organisms, it is very much latent, while in human beings, it is very much manifest. *Jiva* is entirely distinct from inanimate existence, which does not possess consciousness.

“*Gyan*” (or “*Jnan*”) and “*Darshan*” are two important technical terms used in Jaina texts. There are no exact equivalents of these two terms in English. It makes more sense to suppose that they mean “Intelligence” and “Intuition” when used for atman and “Knowledge” and “Perception” when used in context with the external world. These equivalents are often used interchangeably but their distinction must be borne in mind for clarity.

Acharya Amritchandra in his commentary on Samayasara, Atmakhyati, has described 47 main powers of atman. The atman is known and identified through its intelligence attribute. Intelligence, a special attribute, is the identifying property of atman; it is not found in pudgala or in other non-living substances. Hence in order to know atman we must understand intelligence first. As a substance intelligence and atman are one and the same. Question then is why a distinction is made between them? This is because existence of intelligence can be experienced and proved, atman cannot. Atman has infinite attributes, the other attributes of atman, which may exist simultaneously or temporally, though different from intelligence are not different spatially. So change in one attribute causes a change in other attributes too. The other attributes are also known as forces or powers of atman. The intelligence attribute is the means to establish contact with the self as well as with external world. Some attributes may seem to oppose each other but they are property of the same atman. The atman is identified by intelligence and not other attributes like bliss etc because

intelligence attribute is free from the possibility that may prove atman to be non-spatial, extra-spatial or even non-existent. For instance, sensual pleasure through body may tempt one to deny the existence of atman. Atman does not possess the attributes of pudgala or other non-physical substances.

Knowledge is the manifestation of intelligence of the *jiva* with respect to its comprehending capacity. The cognition function of *jiva* is determined by its intelligence attribute. It is a comprehension of the objects with their details. In fact knowledge may be held as an attribute, a manifestation of an attribute, an ever changing series of cognitions, a process, an activity and also as an entity in itself. These are the partial descriptions of knowledge, and may be found consistent in a suitable context. None of them taken absolutely can give a full picture of the *jiva* with respect to its intelligence attribute; all of them describe the same entity in various aspects. The process of knowledge is constituted by the momentary modes of the intelligence attribute, and so it may be looked upon as a series of cognitions. When these modes are perceived along with the unity of the attribute behind, intelligence may be considered to be a process. As an element in the structure of the *jiva*, intelligence may be seen to be a potentiality. It can also be held to be an activity if viewed in its functional aspect; knowledge is an activity of the *jiva* with respect to its intelligence attribute. If knowledge is considered in isolation from its substratum, it may be taken to be an entity in itself.

3 Consciousness in Western Thought

Explaining the nature of consciousness is one of the most important and perplexing areas of western philosophy. The abstract noun "consciousness" is not frequently used by itself in the contemporary literature, but is originally derived from the Latin *con* (with) and *scire* (to know) Thus "consciousness" has etymological ties to one's ability to know and perceive. Through consciousness, one can have knowledge of the external world or one's own mental states. Perhaps the most commonly used contemporary notion of a conscious mental state is captured by Thomas Nagel's famous "what it is like" sense (1974). When you are in conscious mental state, there is something it is like for you to be in that state from the subjective or first person point of view. But how do you understand this? For instance, how is the conscious mental state related to the body? Can consciousness be explained in terms of brain activity? What makes a mental state be a conscious mental state? The problem of consciousness is arguably the most central issue in current philosophy of mind and is also importantly related to major traditional topics in metaphysics, such as immortality and free will.

According to psychologists, consciousness has three faculties: cognition, affection, and conation. Cognition includes the abilities of perception and knowledge. Affection refers to the emotions such as love, attachment, fear, aversion, and others. Conation includes the ability to make decisions and various tendencies to construct and learn that engage living beings into physical action.

Some philosophers attempt to explain consciousness directly in neurophysiological or physical terms, while others offer cognitive theories of consciousness whereby conscious mental states are reduced to some kind of representational relation between mental states and the world. There are a number of such representational theories of consciousness, including higher order theories which hold that what makes a mental state conscious is that the subject is aware of it in some sense. The relationship between consciousness and science is also central in much current theorizing on this topic: How does the brain "bind together" various sensory inputs to produce a unified subjective experience? What are the neural correlates of consciousness? What can be learned from abnormal psychology which might help to understand normal consciousness? To what extent are animal minds different from human minds? Could an appropriately programmed machine be conscious?

Distinction is made among creature consciousness, state consciousness and introspective consciousness. Creature consciousness is supposed to be a property possessed by creatures that are awake and sentient. State consciousness is a property of mental states that marks the difference between unconscious and conscious states. When a state is conscious, there is something it is like to be in that state. Introspective consciousness involves attending to one's own mental states. An intuitive way to talk about consciousness is to say that a mental state is conscious when you are conscious of it. But this intuitive formulation utilizes two different uses of the word "conscious". The first use is called intransitive, because this form of consciousness has no object. State consciousness is an intransitive form of consciousness. The second use is called transitive, because this form of consciousness takes an object; transitive consciousness is consciousness of something. Introspective consciousness is a transitive form of consciousness, because it takes mental states as objects.

It might seem that the term "conscious" referred to above is synonymous with say, "awareness" or "experience" or "attention". However it is not generally accepted by philosophies today. For example one might hold that there are unconscious experiences, depending of course on how the term "experience" is defined. More common is the belief that you can be aware of external objects in some unconscious senses, for example, during cases of subliminal perception. It is also not clear that consciousness ought to be restricted to attention. It seems plausible to suppose that one is conscious (in some sense) of objects in one's peripheral visual field even though one is only attending to some narrow (focal) set of objects within that visual field.

4 Soul and Mind

The mind in western philosophy is conceived as something that thinks, perceives, knows, experiences, holds beliefs and memories, desires, and interacts with the external world and so on. To explain such phenomena views have been presented by thinkers and philosophers who differ in their approach. Some philosophers think that mind is

different from body, some are of the view that such functions are performed by brain and there are those who hold that both mind and body have a common origin.

Western philosophies lack a clear distinction between soul and mind. While it is true that the term "soul" (or "spirit") is often used instead of mind, the problem in philosophy is that it is unclear just how the soul is supposed to differ from mind. The terms are often used interchangeably by many philosophers because it is unclear to them what else the soul could be other than "the mental substance". One might wonder "even if the mind is physical, what about the soul", May be it is the soul, not the mind, which is non-physical.

Jain philosophy clearly distinguishes between the non-physical atman and physical mind. It recognizes two types of minds, (1) physical mind (*dravya manah*), and (2) psychical mind (*bhava manah*).

1. Physical Mind. This is the physical part of mind and is composed of *mano vargana*. This part of mind interacts with the brain and nervous system. The physical mind stores memory.
2. Psychical mind. This is the part of mind which thinks, imagines plans, discriminates, and takes decision. The mind derives these powers from atman; in fact, the atman is the seat of psychical mind.

Jaina distinguishes between atman and mind. The mind does not possess consciousness which is the exclusive property of atman. Mind like atman is not a permanent entity, it exists only when consciousness manifests as thoughts, beliefs, desires, emotions and feelings. As all these activities are influenced by karma atman creates a separate entity for their execution. This new entity known as mind is manifested with consciousness of atman and is influenced by karma in its working. The karma is thus interfaced between atman and mind. The state of mind is now a function of karma and it changes with karma. This means that the perception of external objects made by the mind is highly karma dependent. The existence of mind is also connected with its activities, when the activities cease the mind also ceases to exist. The activity of thinking is prominent in five sense beings (vertebrates) and is limited in lower organisms. The five sense *jiva* are therefore, endowed with mind and *jiva* in lower organisms discharges the limited functions of instincts, desires, and feelings with the help of *adhyavasaya*.

5 Cognition

The mind establishes contact with the external world through senses. The sense signals are communicated to brain and than contact are made with mind. If the connection between sense organs and brain is broken due to some reason the mind does not know the object. The thinking process starts when the object is perceived by the mind. The perceptual cognition is the knowledge due to sense - organs and the mind. The knowledge is conceptual consciousness and is determinate.

There are different elements of perceptual cognition. Perceptual cognition (*mati*) takes stock of a present objective datum, recollection (*smriti*) has reference to a datum perceived in the past; recognition (*samjna*) is the cognition of the identity of a past object of perception with the present; thought (*cinta*) is the cognition of a future event. All these different varieties of cognition are regarded as identical in spite of the difference of determinations, because the substantive object is the same. *Abhinibodha* is cognition competent to take stock of an object with all its temporal determinations as past, present and future. *Matijnana* (empirical knowledge) is a comprehensive class which includes a large variety. Thus, for example, there are purely sensuous cognitions, purely mental cognitions and cognitions which are generated by both the senses and the mind. The sensuous cognition of animals, beginning with one-sensed and ending with five-sensed, but destitute of mind, are purely sensuous. Recollection and instinctive intuition are purely mental. The normal cognitions of beings endowed with the mind are generated by the cooperation of the mind and the senses. The cognition capable of communicating itself to others (in the way of instruction) by means of material symbols like words, gesture etc. is called verbal knowledge

6 Naya (Non-absolutistic stand point) and Anekanta

Knowledge is acquired from two sources: sensuous consciousness and transcendental consciousness. Thinking is related to sensuous consciousness but in transcendental consciousness there is vision and introspection but no thought. According to the Jain doctrine, the knowledge gained from sensuous consciousness is a partial, and not complete, knowledge of a substance. A person possessing sensory consciousness knows the part of the substance. That partial knowledge becomes the subject of controversy. Five individuals gain knowledge about five different aspects of any one substance and each of them believes their own knowledge to be perfect and true and that of the others to be untrue. In Jain philosophy an effort has been made to change this approach and understand truth through right vision; this is called "*Nayavad*".

Naya is a point of view, a vision, and a way of thinking. However, according to Siddhasen Diwakar - there are as many *naya* as there are ways of speaking. This extensive approach makes the areas of contemplation very difficult. It becomes problematic for the listener or the learner to come to any tangible conclusion. In order to ease up this problem the Jain Acharyas have described two separate areas for the thought.

1. *Dravyarthik naya* (the substantial point of view) - That means describing a thing with respect to its ultimate substance i.e. its persistence or permanence.
2. *Paryarthik naya* (the modal point of view) - That means describing a thing with respect to its modification i.e. its origination - cessation or impermanence.

These two views have been delineated for the convenience of contemplation and veritable ruling. In fact the thoughts cannot be made veritable by dividing them in permanent and impermanent. For exposition of persistence the substantial view point was adopted and for exposition of change the modal point of view was adopted. Both points of views are relative. Nowhere is persistence completely independent of change and vice versa. Yet, in order to get a holistic understanding of existence this arrangement was deemed fit. The substantial point of view analyses persistence of oneness, but does not completely rule out change, as every view point has its own limitations. It does not believe in polemics of the subject matter. Relativity means that there is nothing absolute. One *naya* only analyses a portion of the whole, so naturally the remaining portion too remains allied to it. This perception clarifies the theory of relativity.

This relativity is also expressed in the sentence- as many viewpoints exist in as many ways of thought. The basis of this argument is its mode. Modes are innumerable hence view points too are innumerable. Only does the combination of innumerable parts enable us to realize the substance in totality. This is not a correct perception to believe that one mode constitutes the whole. *Naya* is absolutism, but it is in no way the false angle to perception. It bears no eagerness to perceive wholeness in a portion; it is not an exposition of absolute truth.

The doctrine of non-absolutism falls under two divisions, viz., complete comprehension through *pramana* and partial assessment through *naya*. The entire object is revealed by the *pramana*, whereas only a particular aspect is determined by the *naya*. The entire object comprehended through the principle of non-absolutism is analyzed in parts by means of the system of *nayas*. A view point (*naya*) is limited in its activity to the presentation of its own subject - matter. It is called a *naya* so long as it does not refute the rival viewpoint. As soon as the refutation of a rival view point is attempted; it falls in the category of pseudo-*naya* (*durnaya*) on account of its being absolutistic in character. An absolutistic view point that asserts its own validity independently of any other view point gives rise to controversy whereas the relativistic view point or a coordinated viewpoint gives rise to reconciliation or absence of controversy.

7 Jaina Dialectic: Syadvada

We have seen that the structure of reality consists of both unity and diversity at the same time. It can be further analyzed into attributes, modes and traits. The relational nature of reality makes its structure all the more complicated. On the other hand human capacity for comprehension is so limited that it cannot know a thing in its totality. Thus the *Anekanta* theory of existence and the discursive nature of human thinking necessitate the formulation of the doctrine of *Syadvada* or the Jaina dialectic, which is mainly concerned, as W.T. Stace thinks, with "the correct joining and disjoining

of ideas". It aims at finding a suitable explanation for the fragmentary advance of our thought and comprehension. It also aims at seeking the type of consistence which such an advance of knowledge will evince.

Another spirit which the doctrine of *Syadvada* shows is that nothing can be affirmed of a real in an absolute way. Samantabhadra remarks that *Syadvada* is a way of comprehension of an entity by renouncing the absolute views about it. *Syadvada* emphasizes the fact that no predicate affirmed of a real is able to yield the whole truth about it. It gives us only a partial view of the real and such a view is affected by isolating some of the elements from the totality of the real. It means that the *Syadvada* doctrine is based on an analysis of reality into its constituent elements. "*Syadvada* effects a division or analysis of reality and the *naya* enlightens the particularity of the divided elements. *Syadvada* is the theory of fragmentary or partial comprehension and the *nayas* embody the principles by which the process of such a comprehension is governed. The possibility of an analysis of reality just shows that the process of comprehension based on such an analysis cannot be merely a subjective imposition. There must be something in the structure of the real itself to affect a partial comprehension about it. If it is said that the universe is permanent or transitory, the universe must contain something to correspond to such comprehensions. We have seen how the traits like position and negation, unity and difference, and permanence and impermanence are united in a real. Thus the subject-matter of *naya*-knowledge has a ontological validity. At the same time such characteristics cannot be affirmed of a real in the same context; this will involve contradiction. The world cannot be permanent in the same context in which it is held to be impermanent. Hence the application of contexts or reference systems is also an ingredient of the theory of *Syadvada*. The main function of the Jaina dialectic comes out to be the selection of a proper context and the discernment of the truth implied in it. Devanandi says: "A consistent comprehension of a particular element in reality having many determinants by assigning a proper reason (i.e., context) is the *naya*." Again "that particular view-point of the knower, which comprehends a part of the real (by throwing the rest into relief) and which has become the subject-matter of the *sruta pramana*, is the *naya*. Dr. Radhakrishnan also observes: "A *naya* is the stand-point from which we make a statement about a thing." The idea underlying these expositions is that the *naya* knowledge depends upon an analysis of a real affected from a particular view-point of the knower.

8 The *Pramana* Type of Knowledge and its Essential Nature

The *naya* is not the only form of knowledge. "Knowledge is accomplished", says Umasvati, "by means of *pramanas* and *nayas*." Generally we come across two types of knowledge. Firstly, there is a type which follows the fragmentary process of comprehension and touches only a slice of reality. The other type of knowledge aims at giving a comprehensive view of a real. The *pramana* and the *naya* types of knowledge

are mutually distinguished for their total and partial approaches to a real. Devanandi says: "A *pramana* takes the whole of a real as its subject-matter." Vimaladasa also mentions: "A total comprehension of reality is the knowledge of the *pramana* type." This may appear to lead to the impossibility of the *pramana* type of knowledge. Our experience testifies to the fact that we are never able to comprehend the totality of reality. Samantabhadra, therefore, has well said: "The knowledge of reality which enlightens the whole of it simultaneously is the *pramana*. Thus perfect knowledge or the *kevalajnana* alone can be designated as the *pramana* type of knowledge; and in the lower stages of existence a *pramana* cannot be experienced. But in the Jaina works along with the *Kevalajnana* sensuous knowledge, scriptural knowledge, clairvoyance and telepathy have also been enumerated as yielding *pramana* type of knowledge, though they never apprehend reality as a whole. The totality common to all the aforesaid types of knowledge must not be taken to mean the all inclusive totality of reality whose comprehension is held to be possible only in the perfect stage. So all the *pramana* types of knowledge except the perfect knowledge as enumerated by the Jaina comprehend reality only partially; and the total comprehension of reality does not form the criterion for the *pramana* type of knowledge, Hence in the *pramana* type of knowledge the meant totality is not vitiated by the fact that it does not comprehend reality as a whole. It also leads to the conclusion that the *pramana* knowledge is possible in spite of the fragmentation it may involve. The Jaina will have to give a similar meaning to the term *sakaladesa* which is taken to be the differentia of the *pramana* knowledge. *Pramana* knowledge must not presuppose a totality in the sense of all-inclusiveness, as the term *sakaladesa* may suggest, but it must be the totality of a system. When we aim at an isolation of one or the other aspects from a system presented as an object, we get *naya* knowledge; and when such isolation is not aimed at we get *pramana* knowledge. *Kevaljnana* comprehends the entire system of the universe, and the lower and smaller systems are comprehended by other *pramanas*. The totality of a system should not be taken to mean the aggregate of its constituents. So also an aggregate of partial comprehensions cannot yield a *pramana*. Rajamalla opposes the view that a *pramana* is an aggregate of the *nayas*. "A *pramana* has a different taste (essence) from the aggregate of *nayas*." "Negation is preceded by affirmation and affirmation by negation. The knowledge which comprehends the union of the two is the *pramana*". Joachim also maintains a similar view. He observes: "To treat science as a sum, aggregate, collection or class of single truths, each of which is what it is in its singleness and remains unchanged in the collection is utterly inadequate as a theory of knowledge. A *pramana* may include the *nayas* but is not identified with them; it always transcends the aggregate of the *nayas*. The totality of the *nayas* gains in essence which is lost when a surgical analysis of a *pramana* is affected. This special essence is suggested by assigning a different taste (*rasa*) to the *pramana*. In the bits of sensuous

knowledge the entity presented to the senses is comprehended as a whole and no isolation is meant therein, so this type of knowledge is classed with the *pramanas*.

9 Relations between the *Naya* and the *Pramana* Types of Knowledge

If reality is not completely comprehended by the *naya* and also by some of the *pramanas* the question of their validity needs consideration. The problem is what kind of validity the Jaina would like to assign to the partial comprehensions. We have seen that the determination of the partial comprehensions is also based on something ontologically true in the structure of the objects, so also the *pramanas* that fail to comprehend reality as a whole must proceed on a similar ground. The *nayas* as well as the *pramanas* yield a valid type of knowledge. "A *naya* comprehension is also valid as it yields a right cognition of its subject-matter." A *naya* is not admitted as an antithesis of a *pramana* because it embodies a type of knowledge. It is a part of the *pramanas*. A *naya* is neither a *pramana* nor an antithesis of *pramana*, being free from contradiction. Vidyananda also establishes a relation between the *nayas* and the *pramanas* by saying that the former are the parts of the latter. At the same time the Jaina would like to emphasize the fact that a *pramana* transcends the totality of the *nayas* by gaining a different essence. The *pramana* does not remain the same as it was in isolation. In this sense alone we can say that *nayas* lose their existence when they enter into a system to yield a *pramana*. A *pramana* is an integrated system of the *nayas*; and it is a system in which as Blenshard holds, "integration would be so complete that no part could be seen for what it was without seeing its relation with the whole, and the whole itself could be understood only through the contribution of every part."

10 Systems Theory

Systems theory is the Trans disciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomena, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities, and the (usually mathematical) models which can be used to describe them.

A system can be said to consist of four things. The first is objects-the parts, elements, or variables within the system. These may be physical or abstract or both, depending on the nature of the system. Second, a system consists of attributes – the qualities or properties of the system and its objects. Third, a system had internal relationships among its objects. Fourth, systems exist in an environment. A system then, is a set of things that affect one another within an environment and form a larger pattern that is different from any of the parts. The fundamental systems-interactive paradigm of organizational analysis features the continual stages of input, throughput (processing), and output, which demonstrate the concept of openness/closed ness. A closed system does not interact with its environment. It does not take in information and therefore is likely to atrophy, that is to vanish. An open system receives information, which it uses to interact dynamically with its environment. Openness

increases its likelihood to survive and prosper. Several system characteristics are: wholeness and interdependence (the whole is more than the sum of all parts), correlations, perceiving causes, chain of influence, hierarchy, suprasystems and subsystems, self-regulation and control, goal-oriented, interchange with the environment, inputs/outputs, the need for balance/homeostasis, change and adaptability (morphogenesis), and equifinality: there are various ways to achieve goals.

Systems theory provides an internally consistent frame work for classifying and evaluating the world. There are clearly many useful definitions and concepts in systems theory; it provides a universal approach to all sciences.

Systems thinking is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole. Systems thinking is not one thing but a set of practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationship with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Consistent with systems philosophy, systems thinking concern an understanding of a system by examining the linkage and interactions between the elements that compose the entirety of the system. System thinking is increasingly being used to tackle a wide variety of subjects in fields such as computing, engineering, epidemiology, information science, health, education, manufacture, management, and the environment.

It is in order to make some observations on the concepts of system described above. Care must be exercised to interpret the emergent properties of the system. According to Jainism the system cannot possess any property that is not the property of its elements. What actually happens is that some properties of the elements that are not expressed in the isolated state are expressed in their system mode. A system made of matter can only possess properties of matter, like its elements, and cannot possess the properties of *Jiva*, such as consciousness, or other substance. Jain philosophy denies the concept of epiphenomenalism, where consciousness is supposed to emerge from combination of matter.

The assumption that parts are not real in the theory of holism is not endorsed by Jain philosophy, which claims that the parts are as real as the whole. Non-absolutist Jains endorse neither absolute separateness nor absolute inseparableness - neither absolute unity nor absolute multiplicity - but explain both these apparently opposite extremes as real with reference to different aspects of the same physical reality. In the Jain view, the classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' are the fundamental reality is as much far from the whole truth as the modern notion that the whole universe is the fundamental reality. Neither of these rival aspects of the world of experience can be adopted as absolute truth in isolation from the other. Parts are as much real as the whole and neither the whole nor the parts are absolutely independent of the other. We may summarize the non- absolutist Jain position as under:

"Is Reality", ask the Jains, "One or many, unity of whole or multiplicity of parts and if it is both, how are they connected?"

"The world", replies the Jain "must be an orderly whole or system. To be a system at all, it must be the development or expression in detail of a single principle (Reality). Therefore, it cannot be a medley of independent elements which somehow luckily happen to form a coherent collection. But again, because it is a system, it cannot be a mere unit; it must be the expression of a single principle in and through a multiplicity of parts or constituents. Not only must it be one and many, but it must be many precisely because it is truly one, and one, because it is truly many. In a complete system, no single part can be missing or be other than it is. Also the number of distinct parts may be actually endless while the law of construction is perfectly determinate. And again the individual elements themselves may turn out to be systems of infinite complexity. Thus the unity of ultimate principle, in no way, excludes its possession of a wealth of detail infinitely infinite." Jains take a further important step forward. In the all embracing systematic whole physical reality, the unity and the multiplicity are equally real and each is real through the other.

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