

Moha, Knowledge and Enlightenment

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Introduction

It is emphasized in Jain philosophy, and other Indian philosophies, that Enlightenment is the aim of life. All Jain agamas and scriptures describe the importance of Enlightenment and the ways and means to achieve it. The worldly soul is in impure state due to its association with karma. All efforts to be made are aimed at eradication and annihilation of karma, auspicious and inauspicious, and to reach the state of *keval jnana*, Omniscience or Enlightenment, and to embark on the final state of liberation.

It has been said that *keval jnana* is not possible without elimination of *moha* first (eradication of *mohaniya* karma). *Moha* (delusion) is the principal “other element” (*vibhava*) that prevents the soul from attaining its natural state (*swabhava*). But what is the ultimate aim attainment of *keval jnana* or elimination of *moha*? Surely, *keval jnana* is the aim and elimination of *moha* is the condition for it. This shows the importance of *jnana*, or knowledge, in life. It is pertinent here to distinguish between *jnana* and knowledge. *Jnana* is the potential power of the soul to know and cognize the self as well as the non-self and knowledge is the information acquired with the application of *jnana* which manifests on *ksayopasama* of *janavarniya* karma. Scriptures contain knowledge, authenticated knowledge as it is based on the words of Omniscient, and not *jnana*. The knowledge, like *jnana*, can also be infinite. The scriptures contain finite knowledge and, therefore, there is immense scope to generate new knowledge. Knowledge is useful in worldly life but has no role in Enlightened or liberated state, in these states the infinite *jnana* of the soul manifests and the soul knows, besides the self, all that constitutes the non-self instantaneously by direct experience.

Knowledge and *Moha*

So, there are two important parameters for enlightenment, knowledge and *moha*. In the accepted Jain tradition importance to eradication of *moha* is given the top priority because on its elimination Enlightenment dawns automatically. This practice is the sure path to Enlightenment but ignores the role of knowledge in the worldly existence, particularly before attainment of the states of *samayakatva* or the right perception, and which is the state of vast majority of human beings.

In the modern era, particularly with the rise of western civilization, acquisition of knowledge has gained importance. In this school of thought focus is on generation of

knowledge and the role of *moha* in life takes the back seat. This is seen to bring distortions in life perceptions and create problems not only for humanity but for all life forms. The indication here is that in the contemporary world there should be a balance between the parameters of knowledge and *moha* to maintain peace, happiness and stability in the life of common people.

The Jain community in India continues to follow the ancient tradition of eliminating *moha* without giving much importance to knowledge. Most of our religious leaders also tread the same path without educating the followers that acquisition of knowledge is also important besides following the accepted practices. This perhaps is the reason that the educated mass today is disillusioned and is not attracted towards the ancient norms.

Acquisition of knowledge requires study of literature, irrespective of its source east or west, particularly the modern science, that is not only helpful for living but also to appreciate the values inbuilt in Jain tradition. Inculcation of this aspect would re-enforce the faith of our young generation in the supremacy of Jain principles and practices.

Knowledge is acquired by enquiry and not by just reading the texts. An inquisitive mind gains knowledge that is beyond just information. People must be taught to inquire into the facts and principles howsoever well established. This only shall bring conviction and understanding that is essential for faith. Once faith is developed the person is on the right path and the chances of diversion are reduced or minimized.

Case Study

It is seen that the practice for inquiry is developing fast in the knowledge oriented society of the west than in the traditional society of the east particularly the Jain community in question. I have seen the western students and scholars, Jain and non-Jain, to have a desire to know deeper aspects of Jain philosophy to understand it in the right perspective and evaluate it with respect to other traditions and knowledge sources. As an example I am giving below the questions raised by Shamini Jain of San Diego, USA, and my answers with regard to consciousness and its various aspects particularly in context to scientific developments. This shows the need for efforts on our part to disseminate the knowledge of Jain philosophy in modern context particularly to those who are inquisitive.

Questions

1. How do our Jain *shastras* describe the nature of consciousness?
2. How do Jains understand the concepts of consciousness, mind, emotions, and body? How are they connected?
3. From the Jain teachings, how do we understand what healing is, and how does consciousness relate to healing?

4. In the west we talk about a concept called “the bio field” as it relates to healing. This is the field of energy and information that appears to regulate different aspects of our nervous system. Some of this can be measured (such as electromagnetic energy coming from the body), and some which has been difficult to measure, which appear to be related to *prana* concepts in eastern philosophy. How do we understand Jain concepts of *lesya*, *taijas sarira*, *adhyvasaya* as they relate to this concept of the bio field?

Answers

1. Jain philosophy is the voice of Omniscient who experiences absolute truth. His words cannot be proved wrong by any means.
2. Jain philosophy says that the Universe has six kinds of substances, real.
3. Two main real are soul (*jiva*) and matter (*padgala*). Both are infinitely infinite in number.
4. These two real have different properties and are infinitely powerful in their own way.
5. Matter is sense perceptible, soul is not. Soul is known by experience.
6. The main property of soul is consciousness (*chetana*). Matter does not have this property.
7. Consciousness of soul manifests in two principal ways – power of knowing, cognition, (*jnana*) and power of awareness (*darshana*).
8. Soul can be aware of and cognize both the self and the non-self (including all objects and substances in the universe).
9. Worldly beings are combination of soul and matter and possess the properties of both substances. Such souls are impure.
10. Pure soul has infinite powers. These powers are veiled and not expressed in the impure state because of association with matter.
11. A liberated soul is in pure state, without matter, and experiences infinite powers.
12. Each soul is independent, not governed by any other soul (or God).
13. Each worldly soul is unique due to difference in matter that is associated with it.
14. The associated matter forms bodies of the soul. There are generally three bodies:
 - i. Karman body – made up of subtle matter and contains information records of all the actions performed by the soul in the past (lives) unless annihilated by different kinds of practices. The constituents of this body are called karma (*dravya* karma).
 - ii. *Taijas* (fiery) body – also made up of subtle matter. It is a kind of electric or energy body (say *prana*).
 - iii. Gross body – material body that is visible and studied by science.

15. Karman body and *taijas* body migrate with the soul from one life to another. The gross body is formed anew in each life according to the doctrine of karma.
16. Rebirth is a consequence of karma. A liberated soul has no karma and is not reborn. It eternally stays in the pure state.
17. Karma body and soul are bound together because of parallel processing between them. Changes in one makes corresponding equal changes in the other automatically.
18. The karmas are broadly of two kinds:
 - a. Psychological karma – that relates to the psyche of the soul. These karmas govern the psychological performance of the soul e.g. cognition, awareness, emotions and will power.
 - b. Biological karmas – these govern the design, structure, processes and operation etc. of the gross body system.
19. The three bodies and soul interact with each other and are interconnected. Interaction between bodies takes place through exchange of some kind of radiations.
20. Mind (*dravya manah*) is a suitable structure that comes in existence in higher organisms like humans and five sense animals due to subsidence-cum-annihilation of psychological karma.
21. All physical structures including the bodies and mind have a non-corporeal counterpart in the soul, known as *bhava* karma, and perform purposeful actions due to intelligence of the soul expressed through karma. Matter has no intelligence and cannot perform purposeful actions by its own property.
22. Mind is the instrument through which emotions, thoughts and memories of the soul are expressed.
23. Jain practices are devised to purify the soul and reduce the karmic load.
24. The term yoga, including meditation, means connecting to the soul by way of mental, verbal and physical actions (here with a view to purify the soul).
25. Purification or a higher state of the soul also improves the health, mental and physical. So improvement in health or healing is incidental to spiritual health (purification). Healing strictly is not the primary aim of yoga in Jain philosophy; it is secondary consequence or byproduct of spiritual efforts.
26. Soul processes occurring due to spiritual efforts are reflected in physical form in terms of processes taking place in the body. These processes are observed by scientists and psychologists. This is only a small part of the total effects taking place in the system, the major part takes place in the subtle bodies, including mind, which is not measured.

27. Now-a-days much emphasis is given to body health and healing, which can be measured by biological, neurological, physiological and psychological changes taking place in the body and on practices promoting such effects. Such practices may have only a marginal effect on spiritual health which is the main focus of Jain practices. Spiritual health, e.g. peace and happiness, is difficult to measure and escapes the attention of scientists.
28. Jain philosophy is not against the healing practices which bring comfort to lay people but are not prescribed for saints who are on the path of liberation with the sole aim of spiritual progress and purification of the soul. They tend to ignore the body comforts and maintain equanimity in all conditions.
29. Power of healing other bodies, as was the case with Jesus Christ for example, is a different process. Such powers are obtained by specific yogic practices and automatically on spiritual purification. Jain saints who develop such powers are not advised to use them as this may divert their attention from the path of spiritual progress. Such healing powers are expected to act through the medium of *prana*.
30. The concept of bio field is new to science but it has a mention in Jainism in a different way. To understand this concept we define a few terms.
31. *Adhyvasaya*. *Adhyvasaya* are the vibrations (*parinama*) of the soul due to presence of *bhava* karma. On account of activity in *bhava* karma the impure soul is agitating producing non-corporeal vibrations. This induces similar vibrations in the karman body. The vibrating karman body emits radiations which may be called *adhyvasaya* in physical form. These radiations interact with the *taijas* body and also with the parts of gross body.
32. *Lesya*. Interaction of *adhyvasaya* with the *taijas* body produces another kind of radiations known as *lesya*. *Lesyas* have colour, depending on frequency, and represent the type and quality of our emotions. The *lesyas* are supposed to interact with the nervous system, particularly the endocrine glands that secrete hormones which regulates the chemical activity and processes in the body. Scientific observations confirm the relationship between hormones and emotions.
33. Scientists have also observed emission of bio photons in the cells that regulates the reactions and chemical activity in the cells. The source of such emissions is not known with certainty.
34. According to Jainism the karman and *taijas* body form a field the radiations from which interact with nervous and other systems of the body. These radiations are expected to regulate the gene expression. The subtle bodies carry information and energy required for such regulation. Some radiations in the form of bio photons, coming from biological karma, have been measured but a large part remains inaccessible to scientific observations due to its subtleness.

35. The Omniscient sees the karman body and the *taijas* body and knows the process of interaction taking place through radiations.
36. It is now clear that the soul and the three bodies form a system. The system components are interdependent and the study of any one component, say the gross body, requires knowledge of other components and the interactions and interrelations between them.

References

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