

---

# JAINISM PHILOSOPHY AND METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

BY  
MONOJIT GOPE

# INTRODUCTION

- ❑ This is the product of 24 teachers (Tirthanakaras).
- ❑ Jains adore the Tirthanakaras the liberated souls through their own effort.
- ❑ Tirthanakaras are the perfect, omniscient and blissful beings.
- ❑ Rsabhadeva is the first.
- ❑ Vardhamana is the last of these teachers.
- ❑ Vardhamana is also called Mahavira which means the great hero.
- ❑ He lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C during the time of Gautama Buddha.
- ❑ Jainism has a vast literature mostly written in Prakrta.

# MEANING OF JAINISM

- The word 'Jaina' comes from 'Jina' which means a conqueror of all passions. All the 24 teachers of Jainism are Jinas in this sense. Advocates every spirit (Jiva) attains liberation of perfect knowledge, power and joy. Liberated saints are a testimony to truth that everyone can realize perfection.

# PRINCIPLE OF JAINISM

1. Common sense realism and pluralism.
2. Objects perceived are real and they are many.
3. World consists of living and non-living beings or realities.
4. Living beings have a spirit (Jiva).
5. Non-injury (Ahimsa) is the central principle of the Jain ethics.
6. Respect for others' opinion, reality is many-sided.

# EPISTEMOLOGY OF JAINISM

Two kind of knowledge

1. Immediate (Aparoksa).
2. Mediates (Paroksha).

# IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE

Perception of external and internal objects through the senses or the mind is immediate knowledge.

Immediate knowledge is of two kind.

1. Empirical (Vyavaharika):- Known by Sense Organ.
2. Transempirical (Paramarthika):- Soul attains by removing the obstacles of Karmas.

# IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE

Three immediate knowledge-

1. First is the knowledge of the gross objects that are minute and at a far off distance.
2. Second is the knowledge of the present and the other minds obtainable by a person who has overcome hatred, jealousy etc.
3. Third is the omniscience (Kevala Jnana), the absolute knowledge which the liberated soul obtains when obstacles to such knowledge are removed.

# ORDINARY PERCEPTION

❑ There are two kind of ordinary perception.

1. Mati:- Obtained through senses or through the mind.

2. Sruta:- Obtained from the authority.

➤ Knowledge obtained through mati and sruta (Sruti) are not absolutely free from error.

➤ Only the two higher kinds of immediate extra sensory knowledge is beyond error.

➤ Direct access to the present, the knowledge of other minds and knowledge of the soul (Manahparyaya and Kevala) is beyond error.



# EPISTEMOLOGY OF JAINISM

❑ Jainism accept the three Pramanas. Which are followed-

1. Perception (Pratyaskha).
2. Inference (Mati).
3. Verbal Testimony or Authority (Sruta).

# PERCEPTION

- ❖ Every judgement is relatively valid (Syadvada).
- ❖ Different kinds of immediate and mediate knowledge of objects with innumerable characteristics.
- ❖ Omniscient being obtains Kevala-Jnana, Immediate knowledge of object in all aspects.
- ❖ Imperfect being can look at an object from one particular point of view at a time.
- ❖ Have the knowledge of only one aspect of the object.
- ❖ Ordinary person can have only partial knowledge of things (Naya).
- ❖ Naya is the judgement (Paramarsa) based on partial knowledge.
- ❖ Every judgement is relatively true.

# PERCEPTION (CONTINUE)

- ❖ Judgement in daily life are not absolutely and unconditionally true.
- ❖ No scope for disagreement and quarrel about the truth of our judgements.
- ❖ Blind people form their ideas of elephant by touching either trunk, ears, legs and tail.
- ❖ They quarrel on the real form of the elephant because nobody has been whole of it.
- ❖ Each one thinks that his knowledge alone is true and complete.
- ❖ System of the philosophy are the different accounts of the many side universe.
- ❖ Different views are true are true like the different descriptions of elephant by the blind men.

# SYADVADA

- Judgement (Naya) should be qualified by term ‘somehow’ or ‘in some respects’ (Syat).
- For instance ‘somehow, the jug exists’ and not ‘The jug exists’.
- Former reminds us the fact that it is true only with regards to the many conditions ‘Somehow’ (Syad) prevents the possibility of misapprehension that jar exists always.
- Unqualified judgement ‘the jug exists’ leads to misapprehension of the jug in absolute terms.
- Judgement of ordinary people holds good only of a particular aspect of the object.
- Syadvada makes the Jaina thinkers Catholic in their outlook.
- Philosophies are different possible versions of universe from different points of view.
- Reject the dogmatic claims, for they lead to the fallacy of exclusive prediction (Ekantavada).

# SAPTABHANGINAYA

Jaina logicians distinguish between seven kinds of judgements.

All the seven are qualified with the prefix ‘somehow’.

For example:

1. ‘Somehow the jug is in the room’.(Sayat Asti).
2. ‘Somehow the jug is not outside the room’(Syat Nasti).
3. ‘Somehow the jug is in the room and also not in the room’ (Syat asti canasta ca).
4. ‘Somehow the jar(s) is indescribable’. (Syat Avyaktavyam).
5. ‘Somehow jugs is in the room but is also somehow indescribable’ (Syat astica, Avyaktavyam ca).
6. ‘Somehow jug is not in the room and is also indescribable’(Syat nasti ca Avyaktavyam ca).
7. ‘Somehow jug is in the room and also not in the room and is indescribable too’ (Syat asti ca, nasti ca, Avyaktam ca).

It is not sceptic or agnostic but realist subscribing to realistic view of truth.

# INFERENCE

1. Knowledge obtained through mind or reason.
2. Knowledge may be ordinary and immediate.
3. Based on perception and verbal testimony.
4. It is not free from error.

# VERBAL TESTIMONY

- Knowledge obtained from what is heard and spoken.
- Based on perception of sounds or written letters.
- Not free from chances or error.
- Even Sruti is liable to error.

# METAPHYSICS

## ❑ Anekantavada:

Metaphysics is the theory of reality. Every object has an innumerable characters (Ananta-Dharmakam Vastu), negative and positive. Object takes on new characters with the change of time. Our knowledge of it is never complete or perfect. Jaina thinkers hold that one who knows one object fully knows everything. Omniscient person (Kevali) who can have such complete knowledge of an object. For all practical knowledge purposes (Vyavahara) a partial knowledge is sufficient.



# METAPHYSICS

## ❑ Conception of substance:

Essential characters remain unchanged in the substance as long it exists. Without these characters, the substance ceases to be what it is. Consciousness for instance is an essential character of the soul. Jainas call the essential characters as qualities (Gunas).

# ETHICS

Three Virtues (Triratnas):

1. **Right Faith (Samyag Darsana):-** Attitude of respect for truth.
2. **Right knowledge (Samyag Jnana):-** Detailed cognition of the real nature of the ego and non-ego. Free from doubt and uncertainty.
3. **Right Conduct (Samyag Carita):** Refraining from what is harmful and doing what is beneficial for liberation.

# FIVE GREAT VOWS

Five great vows (Panchmaha Vratas)

1. **Ahimsa:-** Abstinence from injury of life.
2. **Satya:-** Abstinence from falsehood.
3. **Asteya:-** Abstinence from stealing.
4. **Brahmacharya:-** Abstinence self indulgence.
5. **Aparigraha:-** Abstinence from all attachments.

# THANK YOU

