

## THEORY OF MOKSA IN JAINISM

### I

Our actual conceptual structure works through identifying particulars around us. We communicate with each other and talk about things, persons and many other items of the world in which we live. Philosophy may take its rise primarily in the objective world—objects being of fundamental concern for the philosopher. Or, it may start with man—the subjective and attempt to look at the world as related to man. Whatever the starting-point and the objective, human concern cannot be completely avoided in Philosophy. Traditional philosophical systems of India are basically concerned with the problem of man. What is this concern, what is the problem that is to be solved? Is it sham or genuine? In a way, the answer is the same for all sorts of intellectual disciplines. The problem is the problem of human suffering and in its removal lies the solution of the problem. Science and technology try to tackle the problem on a very real level—that of man's physical existence. One may, of course, speak of the revolution in the cultural level due to science and of 'technological rationality' and it is pointless to deny it. It may equally be so to deny that man has another dimension of existence—human par excellence—which is the moral or the spiritual dimension. Not all problems in this realm are generated by science nor can they be solved by it. Philosophy and Religion, at least in India, have worked in depth in this realm and as a result the distinctive value-orientation of Indian systems of thought has led to a fusion/confusion (according to some western thinkers) between Philosophy and Religion. Philosophy in the tradition of Indian thinking is directly rooted in the actual life of man and its main purpose is to instruct and assist man in achieving the goal. This goal is generally known as self-realization or *mokṣa* (liberation or emancipation). To a critical intellect such a notion of the objective of philosophy might appear suspect and might lead

to an under-estimation of the value of such philosophy. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is a lofty ideal no doubt. But if such knowledge finally culminates in the fruition of *mokṣa*, there may not be much justification for despise or desperation. There is no denying of the fact that the basic urge for the Indian systems of Philosophy is a better form of human existence and this is coupled with the conviction that only in the spiritual level is this to be realized. *Mokṣa* is not only the conceptual end but also the perceptual one—it is, in a sense, *lived experience*. The concern thus of Indian Philosophy is basically anthropological and existential.

Jaina Philosophy is no exception to the predominantly spiritual outlook of the traditional climate of Indian thinking. It accepts *mokṣa* as the goal of human life and is convinced that it is humanly possible to attain it. But the system carves out a distinctive place for itself by its strong leaning to experientism and realism. In what follows, an attempt will be made to present the Jaina view of *mokṣa* and to evaluate it philosophically. In order, however, to determine the pattern of the discussion, a few questions are being formulated and the answers to these questions may precisely bring out the points of importance.

1. What is *mokṣa*? What is its nature?
  - 1.1. Why is it sought for?
2. Who is capable of attaining *mokṣa*? or, What is the nature of the being which can achieve *mokṣa*?
3. Is *mokṣa* an original endowment of this being or does it attain it through progressive development?
  - 3.1. If *mokṣa* is man's original accompaniment of the being, how is the being alienated from it? How does it regain it?
  - 3.2. If it is something new, how can this totally new state be acquired by a being?
4. Is there any possibility of reverting back to the non-liberated stage, once liberation is achieved?

5. Does body play any role in attaining *mokṣa* ?  
 5. 1. Does body continue after the attainment of *mokṣa* ?

## II

We have formulated some questions only to make out discussion precise. It is not being claimed that the formulation is exhaustive or all of them will be answered thoroughly in the present paper. Nor will there be a treatment strictly in accordance with the serial number of questions. It is, however, expected that all of them will be touched upon so as to reach an acceptable solution and to point out the distinctiveness of the Jaina treatment.

We have to try to grasp the key metaphysical points which may give us an insight into the development of the Jaina theory of *mokṣa*. According to Jaina Philosophy, the universe is composed of *dravya* (roughly translated as substance or thing) and *dravya* is of two basic types – *jīva* and *ajīva*. This appears to be a very realistic approach close to commonsense. And in the characterization of a *dyavya* one of the most important metaphysical views may be deciphered. A *dravya* is one which has some origination, decay and continuity.<sup>1</sup> It appears paradoxical to the eye of the absolutist or the metaphysical reductivist. But it is a matter of common experience that every *thing* somehow comes into being, continues identically and passes on to decay. Whereas continuity suggests some form of permanent existence the other two characteristics suggest that a *dravya* is never free from change. This appears to incorporate the truths, of Bauddha and Sāṃkhya theory of change and the theory of continuance of other systems. It is to be seen whether this viewpoint can be upheld upto the last i. e. upto the achievement of *mokṣa*.

Every existent must be either a *jīva* or an *ajīva* or a resultant of the two. *The concept of mokṣa is relevant only in the context of jīva. i. e. it is pointless to speak of mokṣa of the ajīva.* So, our main discussion will centre round the *jīva*, *Jīva* has been charact-

erized<sup>2</sup> by *upayoga amūrtitva* (formlessness), *karṛtva* (agency) - *svādehaparimāṇatva* (extension same as its own body), *bhoga* (enjoyment of the fruits of *karma*), existence in *samsāra*, *siddhatva* and *ūrdhvagatitva* (characteristic upward motion). These characteristics of *jīva* sharply point out the distinction of the Jaina view.

It may be clearly seen, as has been pointed out by Bramhadeva,<sup>3</sup> that the Jaina view of *Jīva* differentiates itself from that of the *Cārvāka*, *Nyāya*, *Sāṃkhya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Bauddha*, *Sadāsiva* systems etc.. He thinks that the author of the *Dravya Saṃgraha* has incidentally mentioned this difference by implication. This sort of refutation of rival views is very common in the tradition of Indian thinking in which the philosophical method is critical. It starts by faithfully presenting the views of the rival systems (*pūrva pakṣa*) and proceeds to the conclusion (*siddhānta*) by refuting (*Khandana*) them. The characteristics ascribed to the *jīva* are diverse and they point out the basic realistic tenet of the Jaina system. Though the infinite number of *jīvas* may not be a matter of *pratyakṣa*, they are asserted to exist. This point goes against the *Cārvāka* view which does not accept anything beyond *pratyakṣa*. The *jīva* has *upayoga* as its constituent. *Upayoga* is a resultant conciousness and is of two kinds - *Darśana* and *jñāna*. By defining *jīva* in terms of *upayoga* not only the *Nyāya* view of the distinction between substance and quality (*guṇa-guṇi-bheda*) is rejected but also the view that *jīva* cannot have *jñāna* ultimately is also repudiated. This point will be elaborated in the next section. The *jīva* is held to be formless (*amūrta*). This goes both against the view of *Bhāttas* and of the *Cārvākas*. The attribution of agency to the *jīva* goes against the *Sāṃkhya* view which maintains that it is indifferent (*udāsīna*). The *jīva* is asserted to be of the same extensions as its body and this goes against the views of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Sāṃkhya*. By maintaining that the *jīva* enjoys (or suffers) the fruits of its *karma*, the *Bauddha* view has been assailed. The *Sadāsiva* view has been refuted by main-

taining that the *jīva* is in the *samsāra* and the theory of *siddhatva* of the *ātmā* opposes the view both of the Bhattas and Cāravākas. The Jaina view that the *jīva* has a natural upward motion goes against the view of all the other systems. It may not be in our direct interest in this paper to enter into the detailed discussion of subtle logical points involved in this dialectical view.

It is certain that the *jīva* has consciousness whatever else it might have. Consciousness or soul may not, however, be the exact translation of *jīva*. *Niscaya Naya* emphasises consciousness as essential for *jīva* while *Vyavahāra naya* maintains that the *jīva* is possessed of four *prāṇas*—viz. *indriya* (senses), *bala* (force), *āyu* (life) and *āna-prāṇa* (respiration). *Vyavahāra Naya*, however, does not contradict the existence of consciousness; it is asserted through *upayoga*. The *jīva* has been characterized both as formless and as of the same extension as its body. This appears paradoxical but the paradox might be solved if one considers *jīva* both from the *baddha* and the *mukta* points of view. The *baddha jīva* must have a body but the *mukta jīva* is formless though it has *madhyama parimāna*.

There are innumerable *jīvas* and they are of two broad types *baddha* (in bondage) and *mukta* (liberated). We may then pinpoint our problem and mention that *mokṣa* is relevant only in the context of the *baddha jīva*. We may try to ascertain the character of *mokṣa* by considering the nature of a *mukta jīva* but in order to find out ways for attaining *mokṣa* we have to trace up the causes of *bandhana* (bondage). One may argue that the *jīva* is essentially *mukta* but due to some preventing conditions the *jīva* does not realize it. So, when the *jīva* attains *mokṣa*, it only regains what is originally its own (*prāptasya prāpti*). The alienation from *mokṣa* is apparent and when this appearance drops out the *jīva* realizes itself. Such a view does not appear to represent the Jaina thinking. Jaina thinking is close to our actual experience. It is a fact that there are the illustrations of gems among men like

the *Sarvajñas* or the *Tīrthamkaras* or the *Avataras*. They stand as shining stars exhibiting the reality and efficacy of religious/moral progress. Otherwise human life would not have been a moral life, human beings could not have been distinguished from other creatures. So, that there are *mukta jīvas* is a fact that appears quite plausible and there is overwhelming philosophical argument in its favour. It is also a fact that *mukta jīvas* are not many in number; most of the jivas are *baddha jīvas*. These *jīvas* become *mukta* when *bandhana* is removed.

Jaina Philosophy does not think that every *jīva* by the very fact of its existence is *mukta* and *bandhana* is only an appearance. *Niscaya Naya* maintains that *jīvas* are essentially conscious and they are not capable of *puṅgals-karmas*; but *Vyavahāra Naya* thinks otherwise. *Vyavahāra Naya* maintains that *jīvas* pass through fourteen stages (*gunasthānas*) for *Mokṣa*; *Śuddha Naya* suggests that *jīvas* are really possessed of such characteristics, viz., knowledge, bliss etc. and the stages of development are attributed to them only from the common sense point of view. Fundamentally *jīvas* are the possessers in infinite knowledge and bliss.

This apparent dichotomy in regard to the nature of the *jīva* may be plausibly explained. When the *jīva* is characterized from the point of view of the ideal it is capable of achieving, it has to be described in the way in which *Śuddha Naya* does it. But experientially and existentially *jīvas* are of different kinds and are at different levels of progress towards the goal. The religious/moral march is gradual and real. The *jīva* is not existentially *mukta*, it has to work out its liberation. The existence of *mukta jīvas* proves the worthwhileness of the urge for *mokṣa*. So, *mokṣa is not prāptasya prāpti* – it is a matter of progressive achievement.

There are numberless *jīvas* and they have been classified from different points of views. From one point of view they are classified

with the help of number of senses they possess. There are *jīvas* with one sense, two senses, three senses, four senses and five senses. Human beings come at the top of these classes with five *indriyas* and the internal *indriya – māna*. Not all *jīvas* are capable of attaining *mokṣa*. It is only the human beings that are fit for it. So, *mokṣa* is predominantly anthropocentric. Other *jīvas* have to develop to the stage of human beings for becoming worthy of *mokṣa*. We need not enter in the controversy regarding the limitations of a particular class (sex) of human beings for realising *mokṣa* (particularly the question of women being capable of it).

*Jīvas* are agents. Through their activities *jīvas* are associated with the influx of matter and this process of activity is beginningless. *Niscāya Nāyā*<sup>4</sup> maintains that the *jīva* is only the agent of *bhāva karmās* (thought action) and the *bhāvakarmās* generate *puṅgāla karmās*. *Vyavahāra Naya*, however, thinks that *jīvas* are directly capable of performing the soul (*jīva*) is associated with the influx of matter and it enjoys or suffers in accordance with the nature of the *harmās* (*pāpa and puṇya*).<sup>5</sup> This process of influx of matter is technically known as *āsrava* and this is the beginningless process of *karmās* and resultant *bandhana*. *Āsrava* ultimately is due to *avidyā*. The Jaina concept of *avidyā*, however, is different from that of *Advaita Vedānta*. It is the process of actual flow of eight types of *karmās*.<sup>6</sup> Through auspicious *bhāvas jīvas* perform *puṇya karmās* and enjoy their fruits; through inauspicious *bhāvas* they perform *pāpa karmās* and suffer accordingly. Though the nature of the birth and some resultant activities are due to *karmās* already performed, Jainas, like other Indian thinkers, reject complete determinism and admit the scope of free action without religious ideal and progress become meaningless.

As *āsrava* (*avidyā*) is the cause of bondage, the destruction of *avidyā* is the negative cause *mokṣa*. For this there must first be the stoppage of the flow of action (*saṁvara*) and finally, there

must be the purging of the results of actions (*nirjarā*). Jainas distinguish themselves from others by advocating that even the results of *Sāñcīa karma* (actions performed but results not enjoyed suffered) can be destroyed by meditation. The positive means for attaining *mokṣa* are included under three broad heads known as *tṛratnas-samyak śyaddhā*, *samyak jñāna*, *samyakcāritra*. Jñāna alone<sup>7</sup> does not lead to *mokṣa* as is held by the Advaita Vedānta. Bondage is caused by *mithyā jñāna*, *mithyā darśan* and *mithyā caritra*. So, all these must be removed in order that *mokṣa* is achieved. Negatively then, *karmas* is the freedom from the fetters of all types of karmas. This freedom comes through two stages—*bhāva mokṣa* and *dravya mokṣa*. Brahmadeva maintains<sup>8</sup> that *bhāv-mokṣa* consists in the destruction of *bhāva karmas* and *ghāṭīya karmas*<sup>9</sup> and *dravya-mokṣa* consists in the separation of the soul from the *aghāṭīya karmas*.<sup>10</sup> By *bhāva-mokṣa* the *jīva* is freed from the first four types and by *dravya-mokṣa* from the second four types of *karwas*. Both these stages of *mokṣa* taken together lead to full liberation.

### III

*Mokṣa* is the *positive state* of acquisition of infinite knowledge (*ananta jñāna*), infinite power (*ananta vīrya*) infinite bliss (*ananta Śakti*) and infinite detachment (*ananta vairāgya*)<sup>11</sup> The literated *jīva* is beyond the limitation of the dimensions of time, space and object. It has perfect knowledge of all objects simultaneously (*kevalajñāna*) as there is nothing to prevent this knowledge. As there is no impediment to its action, the *jīva* has infinite power and as it is free from the fetters of *karmas*, it has infinite bliss and detachment. An important point of the Jaina view is this that the *mukta jīva* is not totally immutable; it changes but changes do not result in anything new—it is repetitive. The literated soul with all its qualities remains the same through the changes. It is comparable to the *Svaiūpāvasthā* stage of the *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya



Philosophy. The character of dynamism does not go away in liberation.

The Jaina concept of *mokṣa* contradicts the views of the rival Hindu systems while trying to accommodate their good points. The jaina theory seems to be very critical of the *Nyāya* view which holds that in the state of *mokṣa* there are no *viśeṣa guṇas* in the *ātma*.<sup>12</sup> So, there is no *jñāna* also. When souls are devoid of *viśeṣa guṇas* there is no criterion to separate one from the other. *Mokṣa* becomes pointless on such a position. To the Buddha objection as to whether a distinction can be legitimately made on the background of *anekāntavāda*, the Jaina reply is that *anekānta* has to be understood in two ways—*kramānekānta* and *akramānekānta*.<sup>13</sup> The *jīva* which was in fetters previously has now attained liberation – and there is no contradiction between the two. It is admitted with the Vedāntins that there is infinite joy (*ānandam*) in *mokṣa*; but it has also to be admitted that there is awareness (*saṁvedanā*) of this joy. So, joy is not changelessly eternal; it is eternal with changes (it is *pariṇāmi nitya* but not *kūṭastha nitya*). The soul in the absence of impediments is itself the agent (*kartā*) of this change. So, the soul (*jīva*) retains its *kartṛtva* even in *Mokṣa*. The Jaina theory of *mokṣa* appears to be very much consistent with its conception of *vastu and jīva* and there is a sustained logical consistency to keep up the realistic point of view from the beginning to the end. In *Mokṣa* the *jīva* transcends *saṁsāra* and goes up to its permanent abode at the summit of *lokākāśa*.

We may now try to sum up the discussion by focussing our attention on the answers obtained through it on questions formulated at the beginning.

1. Mokṣa is a *positive state* of the soul (*jīva*) and it consists of infinite *jñāna*, *vīrya*, *śānti* and *vairāgya*.

1. 1. It is the *sumum bonum* of the *jīva—jīva* in the human form. It is the final ideal of the *jīva* and this is why it is sought for.

2. *Jīva* in the human form alone is capable of *mokṣa*. Body is necessary for the attainment of *mokṣa* for without body the desire for *mokṣa* is not possible.<sup>14</sup>

3., 3.1. & 3.3. *Mokṣa* is not an original possession of man (*jīva*), man has to attain it. So, it is not a question of existential alienation or of *prāptasya prāpti*. It is acquired through gradual development and this development is possible by abiding by the methods prescribed by Jainism (*Jaina yoga*). Though *mokṣa* is to be acquired there is hardly any inconsistency in the theory for attaining it. By rejecting the possibility of such attainment, religious/moral life and progress becomes totally unreasonable.

4. Once liberation is attained, there is absolutely no possibility of reverting back to the *baddha* stage. There is, however, activity even in this state as already pointed out.

5. Body plays a very important role in attaining *mokṣa*. It is through the body that the soul works. And the acceptance of the *jīvanmukta* points out that the *mukta jīva* may continue with body.

5.1. After *videhamukti*, however, body does not appear necessary nor does it continue. But soul has *madhyama parimāṇa* as distinguished from *anū parimāṇa* on the one hand and *vibhu parimāṇa* on the other.

The Jaina theory of *mokṣa* strongly suggests the possibility of continuance of individuality after liberation. This may throw new light on the highly interesting problem of personal immortality. If the theory of person and personal identity is construed in the fashion in which bodily criterion can be dispensed with, some forms of *individual existence* may very well appear plausible in Jainism. Jaina criticism of the Nyāya concept of *mokṣa* on this particular point is illuminating. Jainism tries to avoid the paradox of multiplicity without distinction on the one hand and total non-dualism which is the logical conclusion of the first on the other.

Notes

1. Cp. Umāsvāti - Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra. (Utpatti - vyaya-dhrauvya yuktaṃ sat )
2. Nemi Candra Siddhanta - Chakravarti, *Dravya Saṃgraha* ed. S. C. Ghosal, Central Jaina Publishing House, Agra, 1917, pp. 4-5 Śloka 2. [ Jīva upayogamaya amūrtih kartā svadeha-parimānah bhoktā saṃsārasthah siddhah sa visresa ūrdhvagati ]
3. Brahmadeva - *Dravya Saṃgraha Vṛtti* - pp. 4 - 7
4. *Dravya-Saṃgraha*, ed. S. C. Ghosal, Śloka 13
5. Cp. *Dravya Saṃgraha*, ed. S. C. Ghosal, Śloka 31, p. 99
6. See 9 and 10
7. *Prameya-Kamala-Mārtanda*-pp. 319-20
8. *Dravya-Saṃgraha-Vṛtti*
9. Ghatiya karma-jnana varaviya, darshana varaniya, mohaniya antaraya / Śloka- 14
10. Aghatiya karma- Āyu, Nāma, Gotra, Vedaniya karmas
11. Cp. Mokṣa phala-catuṣṭaya lābhah.
12. Cp. *Prameya Kamala Martanda* by Sri Prabha Chandra.
13. Ibid, p. 326.
14. Ibid, p. 279.

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NICHOLAS GRIFFIN

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