

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA AND TRANSMIGRATION IN JAINISM



ne of the most fundamental doctrines of Indian

religious thought is the doctrine of *karma*. It is found in all the Indian systems of religion and philosophy, and is one of those features of Indian culture which are known to every Indian. It is also one of those most ancient doctrines that are common to Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. It is closely related to the notion of transmigration or metempsychosis. In fact the theory of *karma* presents us with the Indian endeavour to explain the problem of suffering and happiness in the world of living beings. It is a moral law of causality which explains the causes and effects of actions. It is connected also with the doctrine of liberation, for liberation consists in the complete freedom from *karma* and its consequences.

The idea of transmigration of soul was known to some ancient Greeks and Egyptians. According to some scholars, the Greek philosophers like Pythagoras and Empedocles may have been influenced by the Indian theory. But the detailed philosophical and moral analysis of the law of *karma* is found especially in Indian systems.

MEANING OF KARMA

The word *karma* is derived from the root *kr* and means to act, to make, to do, a deed or action. Any action, either physical or mental is called *karma*. The word includes both the cause and the effect. It may be mentioned that the Sanskrit word *karma* includes both sacred as well as secular deeds. Thus the word includes the performance of religious rites, official duties, business, moral actions, and so on. The word is also sometimes understood as fate referring to certain consequences of acts in a previous existence.

The general conception of *karma* is that good deeds bear good fruits, and evil deeds bear evil results. The law of *karma* conditions the course of transmigration and influences the state of life in each existence. Theoretically there is no escape from the results of *karma*. The inexorability of the law extends to all kinds of actions mental as well moral. It has to be admitted that the law of causality of *karma* cannot be verified on the basis of observed facts. It has to be believed in as a spiritual principle. The necessity of this doctrine assumes special importance in Jainism and Buddhism which do not postulate any creator and ordainer of the world. The principle of *karma* is immanent in the world, and beings are governed by it. The doctrine of *karma* presupposes transmigration or rebirth. The results of a person's deeds may not appear in his present life. In order to reap the results of his deeds he has to be born again. Thus *karma* regulates not only the present but also the future ; the chain of moral causation links the three points of time in a being's existence, viz, past, present and future.

JAINA THEORY OF KARMA

Almost all systems of Indian thought except the Cārvāka accept the theory of *Karma*. In Jaina thought the *karma* theory is the pivotal point. The Jainas maintain that *karma* is the cause of bondage and its cessation leads to liberation. The *Tattvārtha - Rājāvarttika* mentions that from the phenomenal point of view *karma* is the transformation of the material objects. Caused by the self and also at the same time it is the transformation of the self caused by the material objects. But from the noumenal point of view *karma* is the transformation of the self through the self which is caused by the subsidence-cum-destruction of its energy and knowledge-obscuring nature, and *karma* is the transformation of the material objects through the material objects.¹ The commentator of the *Āptaparīkṣā* explains *karma* as that which makes the self dependent on others (*paratantra*), or in other words the performance of the self caused by perverted knowledge, perverted faith, etc. is known as *karma*.²

Thus according to Jainism, *karma* does not stand for deed, work and fate as understood by other systems of Indian thought, but it is an aggregate of the finest and minutest particles of matter which are not at all cognizable by our senses. *Karma* attracts the self and envelops it, which in turn produces pleasure and pain. It is a substantive force which binds the self to the consequences of its good and bad actions. It is also the cause of every change in the self like feelings of pleasure and pain, of birth and death and of bondage. The author of the *Rājāvarttika* points out that which is performed out of the result of the vibrations of the self is called *karma*. It makes the self dependent.³

Hence *karma* overpowers the essential and innate qualities of the self which are knowledge, faith, energy and bliss, leaving the self in bondage. In short, *karma* is "a complexus of very fine matter, imperceptible to the senses which enters into the soul and causes great changes in it. The *karman*, then, is something material (*karmapaudgalam*) which produces in the soul certain conditions, even as a pill which, when introduced into the body, produces therein manifold medical effects."⁴

The law of *karma* is based upon the moral principle of causality. It is based on the series of acts and effects in which

1. *Tattvārtha-Rājāvarttika*, 6.1.7, p. 504, lines 26-28

2. *Āptaparīkṣā-tikā*, 113, 296

3. *Rājāvarttika*, 5.24.9. p 488, line 20, *ātmapariṇāmena yogabhāva lakṣaṇena kriyata it karma*.

4. H.V. Glasenapp, *The Doctrine of Karman in Jain Philosophy*, p. 3.

each act is followed by its effect. This effect which is called the result of its antecedent act becomes the cause of its succeeding act in return. Thus an act is an effect from one point of view and the same effect is the cause of another act from another point of view. So every new effect produces another effect for which it serves as a cause. This is called the law of *karma*:

"The law which regulates the action of *karmas* is based upon the principle of cause and effect, so that the saying 'as one sows so must he reap', presents the whole doctrine in a nutshell. Every action, whether mental or physical, is a sowing of the 'seed', or in the technical language of the Hindu philosophy, an engendering of *karma*. In the act of sowing the seed, or engendering the *karma*, the soul has the choice of acting or refraining from action, but when once the seed is sown or *karma* engendered, its freedom is replaced by an inevitable liability to bear its consequences.

The harvest which is sown must be reaped, gathered, and assimilated in its unabated fullness. This is what constitutes the bondage of the soul. *Karma*, therefore, is a kind of force which compels the soul to bear the consequences of its right or wrong actions, and this force originates in the very action itself which is performed by the soul and at the very moment of its performance."⁵

HOW THE KARMIC PARTICLES ATTRACT THE SELF

There is an objection, how the immaterial nature of self can attract material particles of *karma*? The answer to the above objection is that just as the power of consciousness although immaterial is obscured by taking intoxicating drugs

5. C.R. Jain, *The key of knowledge*, pp. 876-77

and drinking alcohol, so the immaterial self can be attracted or obscured by material *karma*. Moreover worldly selves are always associated with material *karmas*, since they are not perfectly immaterial.

What is the basis of the belief in the material nature of *karma*? *Karma* produces pleasure, pain and sorrow etc, and that is why it is material in nature. It is possessed of material form and the effect of *karma* is material in nature, i.e. body, etc. Moreover *karma* is only an instrumental cause while the principal cause of all our actions is the self. *Karma* cannot produce any effect if it is not associated with self. Truly speaking, *karma* is nothing if it is not associated with self. Hence *karma* is material in nature.

A question may be asked how the most minute infinite number of indivisible atoms (*paramānu*) unite with self? *Karma* is that finest matter which an individual being attracts to itself by reason of certain impellent forces which are in the individual. It not only attracts but assimilates and changes the core of individuality. The self has the magnetic power to attract the *karmic* particles. Just as a magnet attracts the pieces of iron fillings, and the earth, due to its gravitational force, attracts the upward moving things, and a piece of cloth, when put into water, sucks the water, so an individual being (self) attracts the *karmic* particles. Therefore there is a kind of magnetism in the self which attracts and assimilates the *karmic* particles. The self produces various kinds of effects when the particles of *karma* have once entered into it.

Jaina thinkers hold that the association of *karma* with the self is from time immemorial. They hold that both *avidyā* and *karma* are beginningless. Though the self is pure, completely free and potentially divine, yet it becomes subject to limitation by the power of *karma*. So long as the self is not liberated, it is gathering new *karma* at every moment. It is said in the *Karmagrantha*:

"As heat can unite with iron and water with milk, so *karma* unites with the self."⁶

In the *Tattvārthasāra* it is also stated that the mundane self is obscured by *karmic* matter from the beginningless time, and on account of its bondage with the *karmas*, the self is united like the gold and silver when melted together, to become one mixture.⁷ According to Glasenapp, "through the vibration of the particles ... the *pudgalas* are attracted and are drawn to unite themselves to it, they become *karman* and enter into union with a *Jiva* more intimate than that between milk and water, than between fire and iron ball".⁸

But it is more appropriate when we say *karmic* matter veils the omniscience of the self as a dense veil of clouds obstructs the light of the sun. The self has indivisible *pradeśas* known as *ātmapradeśas*, so the *karma* does not mix with the self as milk mixes with water or fire with an iron-ball due to their divisible parts. The *karma* covers the essential qualities of the self as the cloud covers the light of the sun.

CLASSIFICATION OF KARMAS

Broadly speaking, there are two types of *karma*, physical *karma* (*dravya-karma*) and psychical *karma* (*bhāva-karma*). Jaina thinkers differentiate between the two. Physical *karma* is nothing but the particles of *karmic* matter. It is material in nature and enters into the self. The psychical *karma* is mostly the thought activity of mind. The psychical effects and states produced by the association of physical *karma* are known as

6. *Karmagrantha*, vol. I, p. 2.

7. *Amṛtacandra's Tattvārthasāra*, 16-18.

8. H.V. Glasenapp, *The Doctrine of Karman in Jain Philosophy*, p. 3.

psychical. The physical and psychical *karmas* are mutually related to each other as cause and effect.⁹

According to the nature of fruition (*prakṛti*), duration of fruition (*sthiti*), intensity of fruition (*anubhāga* or *rasa*) and number of space-points (*pradesas*), the *karmas* are classified into eight major types and one hundred and forty-eight sub-types.¹⁰

A. NATURE OF KARMA (PRAKṚTI)

The eight chief types of *karma* are :

1. Knowledge-obscuring *karma* (*JÑĀNĀVARANĪYA-KARMA*)
2. Perception-obscuring *karma* (*DARŚANĀVARANĪYA-KARMA*)
3. Feeling producing *karma* (*VEDANĪYA-KARMA*)
4. Deluding *karma* (*MOHANĪYA-KARMA*)
5. Age determining *karma* (*ĀYUŚ-KARMA*)
6. Physique making *karma* (*NĀMA-KARMA*)
7. Status determining *karma* (*GOTRA-KARMA*)
8. Power obscuring *karma* (*ANTARĀYA-KARMA*)¹¹

Of the above mentioned eight chief types of *karmas* the four viz., *jñānāvaraṇīya*, *darśanāvaraṇīya*, *mohanīya* and *antarāya*, are the obstructive *karmas* (*ghāti-karma*) as they create hindrance to the power of knowledge and intuition, take the self into wrong directions and obstruct its inherent energy. Some of them are completely obscuring (*sarvaghātin*) and others are partially obscuring (*deśaghātin*). The other four namely, *vedanīya-karma*, *nāma-karma*, *gotra-karma* and *āyus-karma* are called *aghāti-karma*, as they do not obscure the essential nature of the self. The results or effects of *ghāti-karma* can only be destroyed with hard labour, whereas the results or effects of *aghāti-karma* can be destroyed easily.

9. *Aṣṭasāhasrī*, p. 51 (Com. on *Āptamīmāṃsā*).

10. *Karmagrantha* 1.2.

11. *Ibid.*, 1.3; *Tattvārthasūtra*, VIII. 4.

After the four *ghāti-karmas* are destroyed, one can attain the stage of *kevalin*, but cannot attain the stage of final disembodied liberation unless the four *aghāti-karma* are destroyed. It means that when all the *karmas* are destroyed the self is freed and becomes a *siddha*.¹²

The self does not lose all its essential characteristics even if it is infected by *sarvaghāti-karma*. The analogy of the sun and cloud is useful here. As there is always some light, though the sun is covered with the dense veil of clouds so the self retains some fragment of pure or right knowledge, though it is covered with the dirt of *karma*.¹³

Each of the eight main types of *karma* (*mūla-prakṛtis*) can be divided further into a number of sub-types (*uttaraprakṛtis*). There can be further sub-divisions on the basis of sub-types, so there would be exceedingly large number of *karmas*. But for the present we have to consider eight main types which are as follows :

1. *JÑĀNĀVARAṆĪYA-KARMA* : it is divided into five sub-types, viz.
 1. *matijnānāvaranīya* which veils the knowledge attained through senses plus something else.
 2. *srutajnānāvaranīya* which obstructs the knowledge acquired through reading scriptures, studying symbols and signs.
 3. *avadhijnānāvaranīya* which hinders transcendental knowledge of material things.
 4. *manahparyāyajñānāvaranīya* which conceals the mind knowing knowledge of others.
 5. *Kevalajñānāvaranīya* which obscures the omniscience which has no limitation of space, time or subject.

12. *Sarvārthasiddhi*, X, 2.

13. *Nandīsūtra*, 42

2. *DARŚANĀVARAṆĪYA-KARMA* : it is divided into nine types corresponding to the four types of perception and five kinds of sleep, viz.

1. *caḅᅇudarśanāvaranīya* which covers the eye perception.
 2. *acacᅇudarśanāvaranīya* which veils non-eye intuition.
 3. *avadhidarśanāvaranīya* which produces the hindrance of transcendental undifferentiated cognition of material things.
 4. *kēvaladarśanāvaranīya* which covers the pure and perfect intuition.
 5. *nidrā* produces light and easy sleep.
 6. *nidrā-nidrā* creates deep slumber with difficult rising.
 7. *pracalā* causes a sound sleep while sitting or standing.
 8. *pracalā-pracalā* gives intensive sleep while walking.
 9. *styānarddhi* induces deep sleep while walking and doing some superhuman deeds.
3. *VEDANĪYA KARMA* : it is of two kinds creating pleasant and sorrowful feelings, viz.
 1. *sātāvedanīya* which produces healthy, glorious and pleasant feelings.

2. *asātāvedanīya* which creates unhealthy sensations like pain and suffering (*duhkkha*).
4. **MOHANĪYA KARMA** : it overpowers right faith and conduct. It has two main divisions: a. *darśana mohanīya* (faith obscuring) and b. *cāritra mohanīya* (conduct deluding).
 - a. *Darśana-mohanīya* is further sub-divided into:
 1. *mithyātva-mohanīya* (wrong belief)
 2. *samyaktva-mohanīya* (right belief)
 3. *miśra-mohanīya* (mixed belief)
 - b. *Cāritra-mohanīya* is further divided into sixteen passions (*kaṣāya*), six quasi-passions (*no-kaṣāya*), and three sexes (*veda*), totalling the number to twenty-five which are:
 1. Intense anger
 2. Less intense anger
 3. Mild anger
 4. Still milder anger
 5. Intense pride
 6. Less intense pride
 7. Mild pride
 8. Still milder pride
 9. Intense deceit
 10. Less intense deceit
 11. Mild deceit
 12. Still milder deceit
 13. Intense greed
 14. Less intense greed
 15. Mild greed
 16. Still milder greed
 17. Laughing and joking
 18. Prejudicial liking
 19. Prejudicial disliking
 20. Sorrow (*śoka*)
 21. Fear (*bhaya*)
 22. Disgust (*jugupsā*)
 23. The male sex desire (*puruṣa-veda*)
 24. The female sex desire (*stri-veda*)
 25. The neuter sex desire (*napuṃsaka-veda*)¹⁴

14. *Karmagrantha, I, 14-22*

5. **ĀYUṢKARMA** : Jainism recognizes four kinds of existence according to the age determining *karmas*. They are as follows:
 1. the celestial age
 2. the age of human beings
 3. the age of plants and animals

4. the age of hellish beings.¹⁵
6. *NĀMA-KARMA* : it is divided into four groups comprising ninetythree sub-types. It is responsible for the diversity of worldly beings and the theory of rebirth. The number of division into four groups is as follows:-
 1. Collective types
 2. Individual types
 3. Self-movable bodies
 4. Immovable bodies¹⁶

Sixty-five Collective Types

According to Jainism, all the worldly beings can be divided into four states of existence, they are:

1. The existence of gods (devagati)
2. The existence of human beings (manuṣyagati)
3. The destiny of animals and plants (tiryaggati)
4. The state of infernal beings (narakagati)

Five Classes of Beings

1. The beings with one sense like earth, water etc.
2. The beings with two senses like shell etc.
3. The beings with three senses like ants etc.
4. The beings with four senses like mosquitos, flies etc.
5. The beings with five senses like plants, animals and human beings.

15. *Ibid*, I, 23

16. *Ibid*, I, 23 51: *Jainendra Siddhānta Kośa*, Vol. II, p. 582

Five Types of Bodies

1. Physical body attributed to human and animal beings.
2. Transformed body possessed by superhuman power, gods, infernal beings etc.
3. Translocation body. It is created only by the highly spiritual ascetic in order to get information from the omniscient being, while his physical body remains there.
4. Fiery body. It is also used by the ascetics in order to burn some one and this body digests food in the stomach.
5. *Karma* body. This body always possesses *karmic* matter, is mixed with the self, and is always changeable.

The human beings always possess three types of body, namely physical, fiery and *kārmaṇa* body.

Three parts of bodies

Three parts concerning physical, transformable and translocation bodies are mentioned; fiery and *karmic* bodies have no sub-parts.

Five types of bindings

The five types of bindings are categorised according to the five types of bodies.

Five types of unification

These are also divided according to the five types of bodies as mentioned above.

Six types of stature determining bodies

They are perfectly symmetrical, round, of animal frame, with hunch back, dwarf, and *huṇḍaka* (entire body unsymmetrical).

Six types of firmness of joints

They are like adamant, like stone, unbreakable, semi-unbreakable, riveted, and crystal like.

Five colours

Black, green, yellow, red and white.

Two odours

Pleasant and unpleasant

Five tastes

Pungent, bitter, saline, sour and sweet.

Eight touches

Light, heavy, soft, hard, rough, smooth, cold and hot.

Four migratory forms

The hour of death, when the self goes to another state of existence, is called the state of *ānupūrvi*. According to the four states of existence, there are four *ānupūrvīs* or forms, namely celestial, human, animal and infernal beings.

Two movements

To move in a pleasant manner as oxen, elephant, etc. and to move in an ugly manner as camels and asses etc.

Individual types

They are of eight kinds, namely superiority over others, capability of breathing, hot body, cold body, a body which is neither heavy nor light, the body of a *Tirthaṅkara*, the normal formation of the body, and the abnormal formation of the body.

Ten Self-movable bodies

A body having more than one sense, gross body, completely developed body, individual body, firm parts of the body, beautiful parts of the body, worthy of praise without any obligation, lovely voice, sweet and suggestive speech, a body with honour and glory.

Ten Immovable bodies

The sub-types are opposite to self-movable bodies and include immovable bodies having only one sense, subtle body imperceptible to the sense, undeveloped body, a body common with others of their species, flexible body, ugly parts of the body, unsympathetic, ill-sounding voice, unsuggestive speech, creating dishonour and shame.

7. *GOTRA-KARMA*: it is of two types:

1. the *karma* that bestows the individual with superior family surroundings;
2. the *karma* that determines the individual of low family surroundings.¹⁷

8. *ANTARĀYA-KARMA*: the power of the self is obscured in the following five manners by this *karma*:
1. It hinders the power of giving charity, alms etc.
 2. It is an obstacle to gain or profit.
 3. It obstructs the enjoyment of things which can be taken once like eating and drinking food and water etc.
 4. It prevents the enjoyment which can be effected more than once like pictures, clothing etc.
 5. It is a hindrance to will power.¹⁸

The above classifications of the main eight types of *karma* are further sub-divided into one hundred and forty-eight sub-types.¹⁹

B. DURATION OF KARMA

The duration of each type of *karma* differs according to its nature and fruition. The Jaina texts distinguish three lengths

17. *Karmagranta, I, 52*

18. *Ibid.*,

19. See H.V. Glasenapp, *The Doctrine of Karman in Jain Philosophy* pp. 5-19

of the period of duration; of minimum duration, of intermediate duration and of the maximum duration. The duration of intermediate category of each action varies according to its intensity and gravity. The minimum and maximum duration of the eight main types of deeds may be formulated in the following table.

| Type of <i>karma</i> | Minimum duration | Maximum duration |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>jñānāvaranīya</i> | <i>one antarmuhūrta</i> | <i>thirty koti-koti sāgaropamas.</i> |
| 2. <i>d a r a ś a n ā v a r a n ī y a</i> | | <i>-do- -do-</i> |
| 3. <i>vedanīya</i> | <i>twelve muhūrtas</i> | <i>-do-</i> |
| 4. <i>mohanīya</i> | <i>one antarmuhūrta</i> | <i>seventy koti-koti sāgaropamas</i> |
| 5. <i>āyus</i> | <i>-do-</i> | <i>thirty-three sāgaropamas</i> |
| 6. <i>nāma</i> | <i>eight muhūrtas</i> | <i>twenty koti-koti sāgaropamas</i> |
| 7. <i>gotra</i> | <i>-do-</i> | <i>-do-</i> |
| 8. <i>antarāya</i> | <i>one antarmuhūrta</i> | <i>thirty koti-koti sāgaropamas</i> |

The word *antarmuhūrtha* denotes a period of time from one to in-between forty-eight minutes. A *muhūrta* means a period of fortyeight minutes; *koti-koti* means one crore multiplied by one crore. The word *sāgaropama* stands for an immeasurable period of time.²⁰

C. INTENSITY OF KARMA

Duration and intensity of *karma* are determined by passions attracted by the self. The stronger the passions the greater the intensity and duration of sinful deeds; similarly

20. *Karmagrantha*, II. 43 b.

the intensity of fruition and duration of good *karmas* correspond, to the strength of passions in the reverse order. In other words the duration of the actions of an evil being is longer; the strong effect of the evil tendencies weakens the effect of the good ones. On the other hand, greater purity of character and conduct in a being lessens the duration and intensity of evil *karmas* and promotes the wholesome tendencies.²¹

According to the *Gommaṣasāra* intensity of fruition of auspicious types of *sātāvedanīyakarma* etc. is the highest due to pure feelings whereas the intensity of the fruition of inauspicious types of *asātāvedanīyakarma* etc. is the highest due to impure feelings.²²

D. THE QUANTITY OF KARMIC PARTICLES

This universe is filled with *karmic* particles and every self attracts those particles which are within its range, like the fire that catches only those inflammable particles which are within its reach. The quantity of the *karmic* particles varies according to the passionate activity of the self. If the vibrations are strong more molecules of *karmic* matter are attached to the self, while low vibrations attract less *karmic* matter. Thus every part of the self attracts *karmic* particles through the vibrations of *yoga* and *kaṣāya*. This process leads to the generation of eight types of *karma*. The *āyusḥkarma* gets the smallest quantity of *karmic* particles while *nāma* and *gotra-karmas* will have more quantity than *āyusḥkarma*. The *jñānāvaranīya*, *darśanāvaranīya* and *antarāya-karmas* catch more *karmic* particles than *nām*-and *gotra-karmas*. The *mohanīya-karmas* receive more than the above three

21. See the *Karmapraṅkti*.

21. *Gommaṣasāra*, *karmakānda*, 163.

mentioned *karmas*. The greatest number of molecules will go to *vedanīya karma*.²³

FOUR STATES OF KARMA

There are four states of *karma* which are as follows :

1. Bondage (*bandha*)
2. Rise (*udaya*)
3. Process of premature realisation (*udiraṇā*)
4. Existence (*sattā*)²⁴

On account of perversity (*mithyātva*), the *karmic* particles like *jñānāvaranīya* etc. mix up with the self like the mixing of milk and water. This is called bondage (*bandha*).

When the result of a particular past deed, good or bad, comes into existence, it is known as rise (*udaya*).

The special kind of effort and condition responsible for premature realisation is called (*udīraṇā*). It is that process through which *karma* makes its past effect manifest.

The *karmic* particles attached to the self without producing the result, constitute existence of *sattā*.

THE TECHNOLOGY OF KARMA

There exists an intimate relationship between the self and the *karma*. This relationship has to be destroyed before liberation is achieved. The different states of the self are related to the functions of its vibration and passions. The influx of bondage creating activities is due to the energy of the self. The activity (*yoga*) of the self is an expression of the energy of the self. The word (*yoga*) is used here in a technical sense.

23. See *Karmaprakṛti*.

24. *Karmagrantha, Vol. II gāthā I.*

Nathmal Tatia, Studies in Jaina Philosophy, pp. 252-263;

Jainendra Siddhanta Kosa, vol. II, pp. 24ff.

According to *pañcasamgraha*, *yoga* is energy influenced by passions (*saṅsyaṃ-vīryam*). The freedom of the self from *yoga* or activity results in complete cessation of all association between it and the *karma*.

The different processes through which *karmic* matter passes are conditioned by numerous kinds of activities (*yoga*). These numerous activities are caused by numerous processes of energy; these processes of energy are technically called *karaṇas* or 'techniques of energy'. In some texts these *karaṇas* are classified into the following eight types;

1. *bandhana*, the condition of energy which causes bondage;
2. *samkramaṇa*, the condition of energy which causes transformation.
3. *advartanā*, the condition of energy which leads to increased realization;
4. *apavartanā*, the condition which leads to decreased realization;
5. *udīraṇā*, the condition responsible for premature realization;
6. *upaśamanā*, the condition which causes quiescence;
7. *nidhatti*, the condition which makes the *karmas* incapable of all processes or techniques except the third and the fourth;
8. *nikācanā*, the condition which makes *karmas* incapable of all *karaṇas*.

These processes of energy produce corresponding *karmic* processes which are known by the same terms. Every change in the self leads to a corresponding change in the self. These processes and techniques of *karma* together with the states of *karma* discussed earlier are important aspects of Jaina doctrine of *karma*.²⁵

CAUSES OF KARMA

Although *karma* means simply action, here we are concerned with *karma* as a religious-moral concept. From this stand point *karma* is either good (*puṇya*) or bad (*pāpa*). All those actions which promote spiritual welfare and advance man's approach towards liberation are good action. Contrariwise all those actions which defile the self, increase the burden of

samsāra and prolong transmigration are bad. Although in liberation all *karmas* good as well as bad are destroyed, eradication of bad tendency which leads to sinful deeds and cultivation of good tendencies and purification of the heart are essential prerequisites for the progress on the path of liberation.

There are two types of *karmas*, viz. good (*śubha*) and bad (*aśubha*). The *Karma* leading to wrong conduct is bad and that leading to right conduct is good. The bad *karma* brings suffering in the world while the good *karma* results in happiness. In other words good actions produce *puṇya* and the bad ones create *pāpa*. Where there is action either good or bad, the presence of *karmas* is there. Those who are the seekers of liberation are totally detached from both types of *karmas*. The good *karmas* lead to heaven which is also a part of the world, and the bad *karmas* lead to hell that is also a part of the world.

The author of *Samayasāra* also states that both kinds of *karmas* are to be avoided as they lead to chain of *samsāra*.

25. For a detailed treatment of the technology of karma see *Karmaprakṛti with commentaries, Bhavnagar (Seth Devchand Lal Bhai Jain Pustakodhar Fund Series, No. 17); Nathmal Tatia, Studies in Jaina Philosophy, pp. 252-263; Jainendra Siddhānta Kośa, vol. II, pp. 24ff.*

Good *Karma* is compared with gold-fetters and the bad *karma* with iron-fetters. For binding a man both the fetters are equally powerful. So the *karmas* whether good or bad equally bind the self.²⁶ The distinction between the good and bad *karmas* is meaningless from the liberation point-of view. The author of the *Paramātma-prakāśa* also holds the view that liberation consists in getting release from both types of *karmas*, i.e. good (*śubha*) as well as bad (*aśubha*).²⁷

The root cause of binding *karma* is desire. Desire is the source of human happiness as well as misery. It can be said that the bondage of *karma* is really the bondage of desire. The desire for possession, acquisition and enjoyment knows no end. It can be ended only by achieving its opposite, a state of complete desirelessness in which there is no trace of attachment to anything whatsoever (*vītarāga*). The moment the self thinks of enjoyment, its action-body (*kārmaṇaśarīra*) attracts minute and subtle particles according to the nature of enjoyment. No outside agencies are involved in this process, the self by its own force receives and retains those *karmic* particles. This process results in transmigration. S.N. Das Gupta is right when he says: "*Karma* only comes as a connecting link between desire and rebirth."²⁸ The assimilation of *karmic* matter by the self is due to its activities. the processes are described in the *Pañcāstikāya* in the following words:

"Penetration by matter is due to activity (*yoga*) and activity arises from mind, body and speech; bondage of the soul is due to thought activity, and that thought is accompanied by desire, passion, inflammation, and infatuation (or intoxication)".²⁹

26. *Samayasāra*, 146, pp. 109-109-10.

27. *Paramātma-prakāśa*, II. 63, ed. by A.N. Upadhye, p. 36.

28. S.N. Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 56.

29. *Pañcāstikāya*, 148; J.L. Jaini, *Outlines of Jainism*, p. 93

The rise of *karma*, its causes and consequences are discussed in detail in many Jaina texts. According to the *Tattvārthasūtra* the self, because of its association with passions attracts

karmic particles which are fit to turn into *karmas*. This is bondage.³⁰ A commentator of the *Tattvārthasūtra* has illustrated the association of the self with *karmic* matter in the following manner:

"Even as a lamp by its temperature draws up the oil with its wick and, after drawing up, converts the oil into its body (viz. glow) exactly so does a soul-lamp, with the attributes of attachment and the material aggregates by the wick of its activities and, after attracting, transforms them into *karman*."³¹

In the *Dravyasaṃgraha* five basic causes of assimilation of the *karmic* matter by the self are enumerated in the following order:

- I. *mithyātva*, false belief;
- II. *avirati*, laxity in thought, word and deed;
- III. *pramāda*, spiritual inertia or carelessness;
- IV. *yoga*, vibrations in activities;
- V. *kaṣāya*, passions and defilements.³²

- I. *Mithyātva*, Each of these factors has several varieties. Thus *mithyātva* or false belief has five varieties, namely 1. one sided false belief (*abhigraha-mithyātva*), 2. belief in opposite of what is right (*anabhigrahmīthyātva*) 3. sticking to belief even when one knows it to be false (*abhinivesa-mithyātva*), 4. doubt or unsettled belief (*saṃsaya-mithyātva*), and 5. indifference to right belief (*anābhoga-mithyātva*).

30. *Tattvārthasūtra*, VIII. 2.

31. Cf. Tatta, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

32. *Dravyasaṃgraha*, 29-31.

- II. *Avirati* or laxity in thought, word and deed is said to consist in 1. killing or injury to living beings (*himsā*), 2. falsehood (*asteya*), 3. stealing (*caurya*), 4. sensuality or unchastity (*abrahmacarya*), 5. attachment to worldly concerns (*parigraha*).
- III. *Pramāda* or carelessness has fifteen sub-types. Four vikathās viz. a. talking about women, b. idle talk about food, c. talking about politics, and d. useless talk about kings. At the root of *pramāda* are the four passions which are anger (*krodha*), pride (*māna*), illusion or deception (*māyā*) and greed (*lobha*). These are the resultants of the five senses-the sense of taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing; sleep and attachment.
- IV. *Yoga* consists of the vibrations in activities of mind (*manas*), speech (*vacana*) and body (*kāya*).
- V. *Kaṣāyas* or passions are four in number; anger, pride, deceit and greed. They are of different quality from the four appearing under *pramāda*. Each of these has four different varieties, according to various degrees, i.e. intense, great, moderate and mild. Thus we get sixteen types of passions. In some texts we get nine *no-kaṣāyas* along with sixteen varieties of passions. They are laughter, pleasure, pain, grief, fear, hatred, desire of the feminine, desire of the masculine, and desire of the eunuch.

One of the important concepts of Jaina doctrine of *karma* is that of *leśyā*. It is difficult to translate this word into English, though it is generally translated as 'tint' and 'colouration' The mental, vocal, or bodily tendency of a being saturated by passions is called *leśyā*. In the

scriptures six types of *leśyās* are discussed in such a fashion as to give the impression of their being six colours. Three of these are holy (*śubha*) and three are unholy (*aśubha*). The black, blue and grey are the unholy *leśyās*, whereas the red, yellow and white are the holy *leśyās*. The unholy *leśyās* produce miserable course of life of a *jīva* and the holy *leśyās* bring happy course of life of a *jīva*.³³

According to H. Jacobi, the word *leśyā* is derived from *klēṣa* which affects the self like the alternation on a crystal by putting coloured things on it.³⁴ Those activities by which the self is associated with *karma* are called *leśyā*. The relation between *karma* and self is called *leśyā*.³⁵

It is said that the self is tainted or identified with merit (*puṇya*) and demerit (*pāpa*) and this taint is known as *leśyā*.³⁶ It arises from *yoga* i.e. the activities of mind, body and speech, and with the application of four passions (*kaṣāyas*) i.e. anger, pride, deceit and greed.³⁷

There are two types of *leśyā*, *dravya-leśyā* and *bhāva leśyā*.³⁸ That which is produced by the body (*nāma-karma*) is called *dravya-leśyā*.³⁹ The colour of the body through which it is produced by *nāma-karma* is known as *dravya-leśyā*.⁴⁰ The six *leśyās* having different colours are stated as *dravya-leśyā*. The activity of mind, body and speech mixed with passion is called *bhāva-leśyā*.⁴¹ The feeling of the self on account of the rise, suppression, mixed suppression and annihilation of *mohanīya-karma* is called *bhāva-leśyā*.⁴²

The nature of *leśyā* is explained in a parable famous in Jainism. Six men went to a forest. They saw a mango tree full

33. *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra*, XXXIV, 56-57.

34. *Ibid*, XXXIV; *SBE*, vol. XLV, part II, p. 196fn.

35. See *Jainendra Siddhāntakōśa*, vol. III. p. 436.

36. *Gommatasāra*, *Jīvakāṇḍa* 488.

37. *Ibid.*, 489.

38. *Sarvārthasiddhi*, II. 6.

39. *Rājāvarttika*, 9, 7, 11, 604, 13.

40. *Gommatasāra*, *Jīvakāṇḍa*, 536.

41. *Ibid*, 490, 895; *Karmagrantha*, IV. 13, *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra*, XXXIV, 21-32.

42. See *Jainendra Siddhāntakōśa*, vol. III, p. 436.

of fruits. Every one wanted to eat the mangoes. The first man proposed to cut down the tree at the roots, the second recommended cutting the trunk, the third advised to cut off only big branches, the fourth wished to cut off small branches of the mango-laden tree, the fifth wanted to pluck mangoes from the tree and the sixth wanted not to give any injury to the tree but desired eating the mangoes fallen on the ground. Here the first man has a black, the second a blue, the third a grey, the fourth a red, the fifth a yellow and the sixth a white *leśyā*. J.L. Jaini rightly states :

"The six *leśyās* are the colours of the aura of the human body in occult Jainism. The theosophical view of the colours of the aura may be compared: the aura of the saint is ethereal-bluish, like the shimmering blue of pure white ice; that of the angry man is red, that of the wicked and sinful man black and so on".⁴³

The doctrine of *karma* is logically related with the concept of *leśyās* and they have a moral bearing. Dr. Radhakrishnan observes :

"Connected with the *karma* theory is the doctrine of *leśyās* of which there are six. The totality of *karmas* taken up by a soul induces in it a transcendental colour of complexion which cannot be perceived by the naked eye. These have a moral bearing. The state of a soul is produced by its inborn nature and the *karma* with which it is associated. Each kind of *karma* has its predestined limits within which it must be purged off."⁴⁴

The psychical condition of the self undergoes different processes due to its vibrations and attachment with *leśyā* and *karmic* particles. They are of five types.

43. J.L. Jaini, *Outlines of Jainism*, p. 47.

43. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 320fn.

1. Subsidence (*aupaśamika*) : the *karmic* matter does not produce its result but still it is there, just like fire covered by ashes.
2. Annihilation (*kṣayika*) : when the effects of all *karmas* are destroyed as the complete removal of the mud from dirty water.
3. Mixed subsidence and annihilation (*kṣāyopāśamika*): in this state many *karmas* are destroyed, many are neutralized and others still there.
4. Rise (*audāyika*) : in the common course of things, *karmic* particles attached to the self produce their proper effects.
5. Developments (*pāriṇāmika*) : it is the essential nature of self with the destruction of all *karmas*.⁴⁵

JAINA THEORY OF TRANSMIGRATION (SĀMSĀRA)

As has been discussed above, the theory of *karma* is inseparably connected with that of transmigration. The *ātman* in bondage is born again and again. Its course in *sāmsāra* is determined by the *karmic* particles attracted by it in every state of its existence. The theory of rebirth or transmigration of the self explains its continuous identity through a series of existences in three points of time, past, present and future.

MEANING OF SĀMSĀRA

In the *Sarvārthasiddhi*, *Sāmsāra* (world) has been explained thus : *Sāmsaraṇam Sāmsārah Parivartanaṁ ityarthah*.⁴⁶

The word *Sāmsaraṇam* means transmigration, cycle of wandering, metempsychosis. The word *parivartana* means change. The beings go round and round in *Sāmsāra* due to

45. *Sarvārthasiddhi*, II.

46. *Sarvārthasiddhi*, 11.10.275.

their attachment with the *karmic* particles. They are called transmigrating beings, beings going from birth to birth.

The text further states that the attainment of different states of existence of the self as a result of fruition of deeds is called *Sāmsāra*.⁴⁷

The word *saṃsāraṇa* is derived from the root *sam-sri* which means 'to follow together with'; 'going about', 'walking or wandering through'; 'passing through a succession of states'; 'birth and rebirth of living beings'. Thus the word *Saṃsāra* means going or wandering undergoing transmigration; course, passage, passing through a succession of states, circuit of mundane existence, transmigration, metempsychosis, the world, worldly illusion.⁴⁸

The *Kārttikeyānupreṣā* states that the being or the self (*jīva*) leaves one body and assumes another body, and afterwards leaves that body also. In this way the self takes and leaves body repeatedly. Thus the travelling of the self tied to false notions and impurities across numerous bodies is called *Saṃsāra*.⁴⁹

The existence in *Saṃsāra* is the existence in bondage, the very opposite of liberation. The concept of *Saṃsāra*, therefore, forms an essential strand in the theory of rebirth and *karma*.

The *jīva* in *Saṃsāra* is engulfed by desire and aversion; it is because of these desires and aversion that *karma* clings to *jīva* and leads him through different states of existence (*gatis*). Entering into any state of existence, *jīva* assumes a physical body and gets the senses. Through the senses arise

47. *Ibid.*, IX.7.801; *Rajāvārttika*, II. 10.1.124.15

48. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 119.

49. *Kārttikeyānupreṣā*, 32-32.

desire and aversion, and on account of desire the cycle of existence continues.⁵⁰ Thus desire produces *karma* and *karma* leads to four states of existence.

According to the *Dhavaḷā*, *Saṃsāra* is the bundle of such deeds as overwhelm the real nature of the self; the beings travel in the four states of existence because of diverse kinds of evil deeds.⁵¹

Jīva is in the cycle of existence so long as he associates himself with the activities of mind, body and speech. Freedom from these activities leads to *mokṣa*.⁵²

Saṃsāra is thus a designation of the process of birth and death. *Saṃsāra* is also sometimes described as five-fold change because of the change of matter (*dravya*), sphere (*kṣetra*), time (*kāla*), thought (*bhāva*) and destiny (*bhava*). The soul has been in *Saṃsāra* from the beginningless time; in the course of its journeying through *saṃsāra* it has accepted and given up innumerable times one by one all the atoms of the universe, all the space-points or spheres, all the molecules of time, all the passions and all the destinies including the hells.

At the root of *Saṃsāra* is *mithyātva* or perversity of outlook which causes the rise of *karmic* particles and their attraction by the self (*jīva*). *Mithyātva* is the root of *saṃsāra* or the worldly existence.⁵³

PROCESS OF TRANSMIGRATION

Regarding the transition of the self or soul from one body to another in the process of transmigration the Jaina view asserts that at death the self is associated with *taijasa* and *kārmaṇa* body (*śarīra*) and before transmigration to new body

50. *Pañcāstikāya-samayasāra*, 135-37.

51. *Dhavaḷā*, 13.5.4: 17.44.10.

52. *Samādhitāntra*, 62.

53. *Samsāramūla-bīam micchattam, Bhattapariṇaya, IV 591.*

it remains in the form which it had in the last existence for a few minutes and then it takes the shape of a new body.

Four states of existence (*gati*)

Jainism recognizes four states of existence;

1. Celestial state of existence (*dēvagati*)
2. Human state of existence (*manuṣyagati*)
3. Animal state of existence (*tiryaggati*)
4. Infernal state of existence (*narakagati*)

Jaina thinkers firmly believed that every individual has to bear the consequences of his own *karmas* in this life or another life. The good deeds have good results and take the *jīva* to celestial and human states of existence. The bad deeds have their evil effects and take the *jīva* to animal and infernal state of existence.

According to Jainism, every state of existence has four causes. The *karma* leading to the enjoyment of divine life has the following four causes :

1. Leading ascetic life with affection,
2. Leading ascetic life with pure mind,
3. Practising penance without knowing its consequences,
4. Practising austerities without any aim.

The *karma* leading to human life has four causes :

1. Simplicity of behaviour.
2. Humble character,
3. Compassion,
4. Want of envy.

Four causes of going to animal life are :

1. To deceive others,
2. To deceive others vigorously,
3. Speaking falsehood,
4. Practising fraud.

Four causes of going to infernal life are :

1. Possessing immense wealth,
2. Indulging in violent deeds,
3. Killing the living beings possessed of five sense-organs.
4. Eating flesh, etc.⁵⁴

54. *Sthānāṅgasūtra, IV. 4.39.*

The fruition of the deeds depends upon the length, duration and intensity of different types of *karmas*. Sometimes the *jīva* receives the result of his deeds in this life, if not in this life, then in the next life or next to next and thereafter. The *Sthānāṅgasūtra*⁵⁵ states the following eight ways as the fruition of *karmas*:

1. The bad deeds done in this life have their bad effects in this life as the thief bears the consequence of his theft in this life.
2. The bad deeds done in this life have their bad effects in another world, as an individual takes the birth in the hell after doing most sinful deeds.
3. The bad deeds done in the past life have their bad results in this life as one experiences sorrow and suffering in this life.
4. The bad deeds done in past life have their bad results in this life and

afterwards too, just like an individual due to his past bad deeds coming to animal life and then again going to hell etc. 5. The good deeds done in this life have good fruits in this life. 6. The good deeds done in the past life have good fruits in the coming life. 7. The good deeds done in the past life have good fruits in this life. 8. The good deeds done in the past life have good results in this life and afterwards also.

JAINA VIEW OF TRANSMIGRATION

Jainism accepts five kinds of bodies (*śarīrās*), namely *audārika*, *vaikriya*, *āhāraka*, *taijasa* and *kārmaṇaśarīra*.⁵⁵

1. *audārika* : the physical body of all men and animals.
2. *vaikriya* : this kind of body is attained only by the gods and infernal creatures which they can change into various forms according to their will. It is imperceptible to common man.
3. *āhāraka* : it is acquired only by the great ascetics. It is projected by the advanced *munis* in order to get clarification of the doubt or for solving questions by a visit to their Teachers.

55. *Tattvārthasūtra*, II. 36.

4. *taijasa* : it is constituted by fine molecules. It works for the consummation and digestion of food etc. 5. *kārmaṇa*: it is made of fine molecules of *karmic* particles which engulf the essential nature of the self.

Jaina process of transmigration can be understood only with reference to the above five bodies. The last two i.e. *taijasa* and *kārmaṇa*, are always attached to the self which requires the two bodies, namely *taijasa* and *kārmaṇa* in order to get new birth. It is in these two bodies that the elements of future birth are preserved in the form of seeds. The force which leads the self to rebirth is technically known in Jainism as the *kārmaṇasarīra* i.e. the body of *karmas*. It is nothing but the mixture of self and matter. As C.R. Jain states :

"This *kārmaṇasarīra* is the vehicle of transmigration and passes from life to life... There are periodic changes taking place mechanically in the constitution of this inner body or vestment of the soul and the form and conditions of next incarnation of life are determined by the new set of energies which arise in consequence of these changes... they adjust themselves, most accurately, mechanically. The *kārmaṇasarīra* as modified by action itself determines the type and conditions of the next incarnation."⁵⁶

This *kārmaṇasarīra* i.e. the body of *karmas* which plays an important role in the process of transmigration, is nothing but the compound of spirit and matter. It is the very seed of rebirth and has the major power to regulate our destiny.

The doctrine of *karma* and transmigration is the noble fruit of the highest wisdom. There is no logical proof or scientific evidence for this mystic concept. But the law of *karma* and transmigration is the real solution to the worldly sufferings.

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56. C.R. Jain, *what is Jainism* (Essays and Addresses), p. 179.