

The fundamental beliefs of a knower

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The fundamental beliefs of a knower define how the knower views and experiences the world. These fundamental beliefs are axioms the knower trusts or has faith in. The knower acquires more knowledge by building on these axioms. These beliefs, along with knowledge built upon them, when applied, affect the knower's conduct.

Different knowers believe different views. However almost all knowers believe that happiness is worth pursuing. For those who believe that a supreme and permanent happiness exists, consider this to be liberation or Moksh.

In order to attain Moksh, a knower's beliefs must first be right i.e. first, right belief (Samyagdarshan) must be attained. Then the knowledge built upon these beliefs must be right i.e. right belief is accompanied by right knowledge (Samyaggyan). Then finally, the knower's conduct needs to be right i.e. right belief and right knowledge are followed by right conduct (Samyakcharitra). Right belief, right knowledge and right conduct together form the path to liberation (Moksh Marg).

There are 4 levels (or steps) of right belief.

1. Trust in the correct God (Dev), scripture (Shastra) and teacher (Guru) on the path of liberation
2. Faith in the 7 correct fundamental beliefs (Tattva)
3. Special beliefs about the distinctions between self and non-self
4. Clear beliefs about the self

The correct God is one who is perfectly detached (Vitrag), free from all attachment (Rag) and aversion (Dvesh). Such a God is all-knowing (Sarvagya) and a giver of beneficial advice (Hitopdeshi) but does not interfere with or control any worldly activities. The correct scripture consists of the words of the correct God and features the true nature of objects (Vastu Svarup). Such a scripture views objects with many points of view (Anekant) while highlighting a pleasant point of view (Shubh Nay) i.e. one which encourages liberation. The correct scripture also implicitly or explicitly acknowledges Shyadvad which is the theory that any statement can be true, false, both, indescribable, etc. relative to various different points of view. The correct teacher is a detached possessionless naked saint (Muni) making continuous effort to become perfectly detached (Vitrag), free from attachment and aversion. He is free from all external ties and internal knots (Nirgranth). Without any clothes, he is clad by the directions (Digambar).

Unshakable trust in the correct God, scriptures and teachers is beneficial for a seeker of liberation. Knowledge acquired directly from the correct God, the correct scriptures and the correct teachers is right knowledge of the 1st level.

There are 7 fundamental beliefs which, if taken as fundamental axioms, help the knower to view the world with the aim and the potential of attaining liberation.

1. There is a soul or living substance (Jiv) characterized by its conscious nature, its ability to know and perceive, its potential for happiness and will-power
2. There are non-living substances (Ajiv) which are unconscious and only one of these, matter (Pudgal) which is made of molecules (Skandhs) and ultimate atoms (Paramanus) is characterized by its touch, taste, smell and color
3. There is an inflow (Ashrav) of Karm molecules towards the soul due to various activities of mind (Man), speech (Vachan) and body (Kay) produced by the mixing up of soul and matter
4. There is bondage (Bandh) of Karm matter that flows into the soul which mixes with the soul, keeping the living substance bound by matter
5. There can be a stoppage (Samvar) of the Karm inflow by adopting 10 virtues (Dharm), reflecting on 12 contemplations (Bhavna), enduring 22 sufferings (Parishah), adopting 5 types of carefulness (Samiti), practicing 5 types of conduct (Charitra) and 3 types of control (Gupti) over mind, speech and body
6. There can be a discharge (Nirjara) of the previously bound Karm molecules by performing 6 types of external penance (Bahya Tap) and 6 types of internal penance (Abhyantar Tap)
7. There is liberation (Moksh)

Accepting these truths axiomatically is beneficial for a seeker of liberation. More detailed knowledge may be acquired of each Tattva and may be continuously reflected upon. Consider the Jiv Tattva. The most pure or supreme soul (Paramatma), when free from matter, possesses the following 8 qualities:

1. Infinite knowledge or Omniscience (Keval Gyan)
2. Infinite perception (Keval Darshan) i.e. the ability to perceive all objects in the universe at all times, at all places and in all modes
3. Undisturbed peace (Avyabdh Sukh) i.e. the absence of material pleasure or pain
4. Infinite happiness (Anant Sukh)
5. Immortality (Avgahanatva) i.e. no birth, death or transmigration
6. Non-corporeality (Sukshmatva) i.e. the lack of a body
7. Perfect equality among all souls (Agurulaghutva)
8. Infinite power (Anant Virya)

Any soul, through individual effort, is capable of attaining this perfect supreme state.

Consider the Ajiv Tattva. There are verily 5 substances that are not conscious:

1. Matter (Pudgal) which is the only measurable substance, and the only substance knowable through the sense organs due to its essential qualities of touch, taste, smell and color along with sounds produced by matter molecules crashing against one another

2. Medium of motion (Dharmastikay) which aids in the movement of souls and matter without actually causing the motion, like the water of a lake provides a fish the ability to swim
3. Medium of rest (Adharmastikay) which aids souls and matter to remain stationary without actually stopping them, like the shade of a tree provides a traveler the ability to rest
4. Space (Alash) which provides a supporting place to all substances
5. Time (Kal) which aids all substances to undergo changes without actually causing the changes itself, like a stone underneath a potter's wheel provides the potter's wheel the ability to rotate

Where all these non-living substances co-exist along with souls is worldly space (Lokakash). Worldly space is bounded but is surrounded by endless unbounded non-worldly space (Alokakash) where only pure space exists infinitely without any other substances. Consider the Ashrav Tattva. There are 5 primary causes for the inflow of Karm molecules that are attracted towards the soul:

1. Wrong belief (Mithyatva) about the nature of reality and the universe, which can be of 5 kinds due to extreme one-sided viewpoints (Ekant), unneeded respect (Vinay) to those teaching wrong beliefs, opposite or perverse views about reality (Viprit) such as the belief that there is merit in violence, excessive doubt (Samshay) regarding the nature of reality, or ignorance (Agyan)
2. Lack of vows (Avirati) or laziness towards making effort towards liberation
3. Carelessness (Pramad) or unawareness
4. Passions (Kashay) of anger (Krodh), pride (Man), deceit (Maya) or greed (Lobh) which can be extremely severe so that they prevent right belief and are thus infinitely-binding (Anantanubandhi), or severe so that they allow right beliefs but are vow-preventing (Apratyakhyanvarniya), or mild so that they allow some vows but are sainthood-preventing (Pratyakhyanvarniya), or extremely mild so that they allow complete sainthood but are flaming-up (Sanjvalan) i.e. those which are truly fleeting but still hindrances towards perfect detachment
5. Activities (Yog) of the mind (Man), speech (Vachan) and body (Kay)

All these causes for the inflow of Karm are found in worldly beings with wrong belief while only the last 4 are found in householders with right belief who have not yet taken up all the vows of a saint. Only the last 3 are found in ordinary saints while only passion and activities are found in extremely careful saints with a high level of awareness and purity. The passion less saints (Vitrag Muni) and embodied Omniscients (Arihants) who are not close enough to liberation only have activities which cause the inflow of the pleasure-feeling (Sata Vedaniya) Karm. Once the embodied Omniscients become close enough to liberation, the activities of mind, speech and body also cease to exist. Consider the Bandh Tattva. When inflowing Karm molecules are bound to a soul, there are 4 different aspects of bondage:

1. Type of bondage (Prakriti Bandh) i.e. particular types of Karm are bound
2. Quantity of bondage (Pradesh Bandh) i.e. particular quantities of Karm molecules are bound in a particular proportion with respect to other types of Karm
3. Duration of bondage (Stithi Bandh) i.e. the Karm molecules are bound for a particular duration

4. Intensity of bondage (Anubhag Bandh) i.e. the Karm molecules are bound with a particular intensity or effectiveness

The particular activities of mind, speech and body that the soul engages in determine the type and quantity of Karm bound while the severity of the passion affecting the activities determines the duration and effectiveness of the bondage. For the passion less activities of an Omniscient who still experiences the inflow of the pleasure feeling Karm, the duration of bondage is one instant (Samay), which is the smallest division of time. Consider the Samvar Tattva. The adoption of 10 virtues leads to stopping the inflow of Karm molecules:

1. Supreme forgiveness (Uttam Kshama) which is not due to cowardice or laziness, but is due to forbearance, is of a peaceful nature, and is in opposition of the anger passion
2. Supreme humility (Uttam Mardav) which is not due to greed for any return, but is due to genuine belief in modest happiness, sincere respect, ego less ness, and in the absence of the pride passion
3. Supreme Straightforwardness (Uttam Arjav) which is not the simplicity of a simpleton, but is due to wise belief in simplicity and in the absence of the deceit passion
4. Supreme Purity (Uttam Shauch) which is not due to sanctimony, but due to genuine contentment with any outcome, genuine happiness by the limiting of desires, and in the absence of the greed passion
5. Supreme truth (Uttam Satya) which is not extremely one-sided nor is it truth which harms others, but the whole truth based on multiple viewpoints, which is beneficial and pleasant for the listener
6. Supreme restraint (Uttam Sanyam) which is not due to a disease nor is it restraint due to the activities of others, but self-initiated restraint with the intention of stopping the inflow of Karm and attaining liberation
7. Supreme penance (Uttam Tap) which is not done for showboating nor is it penance done to prove one self superior, but detached penance as per one's capacity done to destroy previously bound Karm and to attain liberation
8. Supreme renunciation (Uttam Tyag) which is not done out of pride or greed for any reward in return, but the desire less renunciation of unpleasant activities and objects, which is done to stop the inflow of Karm
9. Supreme detachment (Uttam Akimchanya) which is not due to poverty or inability to attain desired objects, but due to genuine belief that nothing is truly mine and that all objects besides the soul itself are only temporarily associated with it
10. Supreme chastity (Uttam Brahmacharya) which is not due to a lack of sensual organs nor due to a lack of means to fulfil sensual desires, but due to genuine belief that true happiness can only arise directly from the soul and not from the sense organs nor from sensual objects such as the bodies of women, etc.

Reflecting on 12 special contemplations also leads to stopping the inflow of Karm:

1. Impermanence of the world (Anitya Bhavna)
2. No real refuge in the world (Asharan Bhavna), especially when faced with death
3. The true nature of the world (Samsar Bhavna) consisting of birth, death, old age, diseases and other forms of suffering
4. The separateness of the body, family, friends and material possessions from the soul (Bhedatva Bhavna)

5. The solitariness of the soul (Ekatva Bhavna) as it travels through births and deaths all alone
6. The impurity of the body (Ashuchi Bhavna) which is made up of flesh, bones, urine and other matter that arouses disgust
7. The inflow of Karm (Ashrav Bhavna) that constantly takes place in the world
8. The stoppage of the inflow of Karm (Samvar Bhavna) and how a solution can be found to achieve this
9. The discharge of previously bound Karm (Nirjara Bhavna) and how this can be achieved
10. The true nature of the universe (Lok Bhavna) which consists of permanently existing substances that constantly change from one form to another
11. The rarity of attaining right belief, right knowledge and right conduct (Bodhi Durlabh Bhavna), which collectively constitute the path to liberation
12. Virtue and understanding the true nature of objects (Dharm Bhavna) as the single source of joy in the universe

Enduring 22 kinds of sufferings with equanimity results in stopping the inflow of Karm. Hunger, thirst, heat, cold, insect bites, thorns, filth, tiredness while walking, tiredness while sitting in one posture, tiredness while lying down to rest, injury, disease, temptations from women, boredom, ridicule, praise, nakedness, temptations to beg, failure to obtain food, conceit of knowledge, lack of knowledge, and slacking in belief are the 22 sufferings that should be endured with equanimity. 5 types of carefulness can be adopted in order to prevent the inflow of Karm:

1. Carefulness while walking (Irya Samiti) in order to avoid harming any living beings
2. Carefulness while talking (Bhasha Samiti)
3. Carefulness while eating (Eshna Samiti) which includes ensuring that one's food and drink does not contain meat, alcohol, etc. and has been obtained while minimising violence to all living beings
4. Carefulness while lifting and placing objects (Adan Nikshepan Samiti)
5. Carefulness while excreting

The inflow of Karm can be stopped by adopting 5 types of conduct which are the equanimity of saints (Samayik), the retained equanimity of a saint after falling from earlier equanimity (Chhedopsthapna), perfect non-violent activity (Parihar Vishuddhi) where absolutely no living beings are harmed, the presence of only subtle greed (Sukshma Samparay) without any other passion, and the perfect conduct (Yathakhyat Charitra) obtained by the complete destruction of all passion. 3 types of control over the activities of mind, speech and body also lead to stopping the inflow of Karm. The mind, speech and body are to be engaged in activities as pure as possible, which are a cause of liberation. Consider the Nirjara Tattva. There are 6 types of external penance that help in distinguishing the body from the soul:

1. Fasting (Upvas) which involves complete abstention from all food and drink for a certain time period
2. Eating less than one's appetite (Avamaudarya)
3. Renunciation of taste (Ras Parityag) which includes not consuming sweet food, salt, condensed butter (Ghee), milk, curd (Dahi), oil, etc.

4. Taking food only if certain conditions are met (Vritti Parisankhyan) which include limitations on the quantity of food (Dravya), the area (Kshetra) where food is taken, the time (Kal) during which food is taken, and the manner (Bhav) in which food is taken
5. Enduring bodily pain (Kay Klesh) only so far as the mind remains undisturbed
6. Staying in a lonely place (Vivikt Shayyasan) where one is not likely to disturb others nor where one is likely to be disturbed by others

There are 6 kinds of internal penance that help to purify the soul:

1. Repentance (Prayashchitt) which includes confessing one's wrongdoings, criticising one's faults, doing penance as a correction for the wrongs, etc.
2. Reverence (Vinay) towards the correct teachers and other means of liberation
3. Service (Vaiyavritttya) which includes serving the monks and other worthy souls on the path of liberation
4. Study (Svadyay) which includes reading, asking questions or clearing doubts, contemplating or reflecting, reviewing or ascertaining truths, and teaching or giving beneficial advice to others
5. Meditation (Dhyan) which is pure and on the nature of the soul
6. Renouncing one's body (Kayotsarg) along with bodily activities

Penance, hard work and concentrated effort can sever the soul from the clutches of Karm. Once the soul is free from all Karm and all other forms of matter, it attains liberation.

Indeed, one can study the 7 Tattvas in much greater depth and detail by referring to the correct scriptures and learning from the correct teachers. A detailed understanding and knowledge of the 7 Tattvas is right knowledge of the 2nd level.

Each substance (Dravya) has permanence (Dhruvya) since its essential qualities (Gun) have existed without beginning and will exist without end. Along with this permanence, each substance also has both creation (Utpad) and destruction (Vyay) since it constantly changes from one state (Paryay) to another with the creation of a new state and the destruction of an old state. The soul is the knower, the self, the conscious substance. Its essential nature of consciousness (Chetanatva) exists permanently but keeps changing as it constantly directs its attention to different objects. Matter, the medium of motion (Dharmastikay), the medium of rest (Adharmastikay), space (Akash) and time (Kal) are the 5 non-living, unconscious substances. Matter's essential qualities of touch, taste, smell and color permanently exist while constantly changing from one form to another. Only matter is known through the sense organs. The soul, as well as the other non-living substances, cannot be directly known through the sense organs. Special distinctive knowledge (Bhed Vigyan) that helps to distinguish the soul from other substances is right knowledge of the 3rd level.

A special happiness arises when the knower realizes that it is knowing and its attention (Upayog) is directed toward itself. This happiness is peaceful and arises naturally. Such a knower does not consider the self to be the cause or effect of various activities of matter. He considers himself merely an observer, a knower or one who perceives. Such a knower does not consider objects of matter to be his nor does he consider himself one with matter

and other non-living substances. He realizes himself to be separate from matter and other non-living substances. He realizes that objects knowable through the sense organs, the sense organs themselves, Karm, the body, the speech, the mind and all other objects of matter are really not his, they are all non-self. Clear knowledge about the self is right knowledge of the 4th level

Religion is an application of philosophy. For any seeker of permanent happiness, faith in the supremacy of 5 aspects of religion is helpful.

1. Of all 84 lakh magical chants (Mantras), the Panch Namaskar Mantra or the Namokar Mantra is the most supreme
2. Of all divinities, the perfectly detached (Vitrag), desire less God is supreme
3. Of all teachers and spiritual masters, the possessionless monk (Nirgranth) is supreme
4. Of all ethical principles or virtues, non-violence (Ahimsa) is supreme
5. Of all types of concentration or meditation (Dhyan), deep meditation on the self (Atma Dhyan) is supreme

The 5 most supreme beings (Panch Parameshtis) are paid obeisance in the Namokar Mantra. These are the Omniscient embodied Gods (Arihants or Jins) who are very near to liberation, the liberated perfected souls (Siddhs), the leaders (Acharyas) of groups of possessionless monks pursuing liberation, the teachers (Upadhyays) among monks who constantly acquire and impart right knowledge, and all monks seeking liberation (Sadhus) in the universe.

The perfectly detached (Vitrag) God is free from attachment (Rag) and aversion (Dvesh). Aversion consists of anger (Krodh), pride (Man), disinterest or boredom (Arati), sorrow (Shok), fear (Bhay) and disgust (Jugupsa). Attachment consists of deceit (Maya), greed (Lobh), laughter (Hasya), interest or indulgence (Rati) and lust towards females (Purushved), towards males (Strived), or towards both (Napunsakved). Such a God who is free from attachment and aversion attains Omniscience as well as freedom from faults such as hunger, thirst; sweat, surprise, delusion, disease, old age, etc.

The possessionless monk pursuing liberation has 28 major qualities (Mul Gun). These include the 5 great vows (Mahavrat), 5 types of carefulness, the conquest of 5 sense organs, 6 essential activities and 7 ascetic qualities. The 5 great vows are those of non-violence (Ahimsa), truth (Satya), non-stealing (Achaurya), chastity (Brahmacharya) or restraint from sensual indulgence and non-accumulation of possessions (Aparigrah). There are also 5 types of carefulness (Samiti) while walking, talking, eating, lifting or placing objects, and excreting. There is also the conquest of the 5 sense organs of touch (Sparshan), taste (Rasna), smell (Ghran), sight (Chakshu) and sound (Karn).. There are also 6 essential duties (Avashyak) to be performed daily:

1. Praise (Stuti) of the 24 special Omniscient ford-makers (Tirthankars) who specially taught the path of liberation for the benefit of all living beings

2. Prayer (Vandana) to any one particular ford-maker (Tirthankar)
3. Recalling past faults (Pratikraman)
4. Resolving to prevent future faults (Pratyakhyan)
5. Equanimity (Samayik) which involves reducing all vibrations of mind, speech and body while contemplating or dwelling on the soul
6. Renouncing the body (Kayotsarg) and bodily activities

There are 7 special ascetic qualities which are being naked or clad by directions (Digambaratva), plucking out one's hair (Kesh Lonch) with one's bare hands, not bathing, not cleaning one's teeth, eating once a day, only eating in the standing posture and sleeping on the floor without changing the sleeping position.

The principle of non-violence is the most supreme ethical principle and when applied to practice involves restricting one's acts of mind, speech and body which injure or cause any harm to other living beings. Beings with mobile, plant, earth, water, fire and air bodies are protected by the monks who practice the most strict non-violence.

Householders avoid the violence of mobile beings while minimising the harm caused to all other beings. There are 4 types of violence committed due to worldly activities. These are intentional (Sankalpi), household (Arambhi), occupational (Udyogi) and defensive (Virodhi). Intentional violence can always be avoided. Householders avoid all intentional violence while avoiding other violence as much as possible. Monks avoid all types of violence. There are 2 types of violence from another viewpoint, substantial or physical violence (Dravya Himsa) and metaphysical violence (Bhav Himsa). Actually injuring the vital body organs (Pran) of any living being is physical violence. Harboring thoughts of anger, pride, deceit, greed, etc. is metaphysical violence, which is harmful for oneself. Thus the ethical principle of non-violence indeed encompasses all morality.

Concentrating the mind on one thought is meditation. There are 4 types of meditation depending on the type of thought the knower concentrates on.

1. Cruel meditation (Raudra Dhyan) involves concentrating on enjoying violence, lies, stealing, accumulating possessions or enjoying sensual pleasures. It can be a cause of hell.
2. Anxious meditation (Art Dhyan) involves pitiable concentration on thoughts that arise upon separation with a desirable object, upon facing an undesirable object, upon experiencing pain, and upon wishing for rare objects or future enjoyments. It can be a cause of rebirth as an animal or plant.
3. Virtuous meditation (Dharm Dhyan) involves calmly concentrating on the words of the Omniscient embodied Gods, on trying to find a solution to attain liberation or right conduct, on the fruits and causes of Karm, and on the true nature of the universe consisting of substances with simultaneous permanence, creation and destruction. Virtuous meditation can also involve concentration on images (Pindasth) such as Arihant idols, concentration on words (Padasth) such as those in a Mantra, concentration on the embodied form of an Arihant (Rupasth) and concentration on the bodiless form of a Siddh (Rupatit). Virtuous meditation can be a cause of heaven but also leads to the discharge of Karm.

4. Pure meditation (Shukla Dhyān) involves concentrating with perfect detachment. This can be on the nature of the soul or other substances. It causes a major discharge of Karm molecules and is a cause of liberation.

Cruel meditation and anxious meditation which involve concentration on worldly activities or enjoyments regularly increase worldly miseries while virtuous and pure meditation which involve peacefully concentrating on right knowledge or on the nature of the self lead to the permanent happiness of liberation.

What is written here is based on my beliefs about the truth. I do not wish to offer arguments or proofs of these beliefs. I wish peace and happiness on all, whether they agree or disagree with me.