

THEORY OF KARMA AND ITS KINDS-JAINISM

DR. MUKUL RAJ MEHTA*

On the floor of Karma theory, all Indian philosophy systems are one, except Carvaka system. All schools of Indian philosophy believe in Karma theory, no matter they are pro-Vedic school of philosophy or non-Vedic schools of philosophy. Law of Karma has been accepted by Samkhy-Yoga, Nyaya-Vaishesika, Maimamsa, Buddhism and Jainism. The difference may be regarding the forms of Karma, regarding the fruits of Karma, regarding the definition of Karma, but the word, the principal of Karma is commonly available as an spiritual essence of Indian philosophy.

Generally 'Law of Karma' means, we get the same reward, how we act, like if we do good, we face good but if we do bad, we face evil. 'Krit Pranasa' means the fruits of Karmas done are never destroyed and the fruits of Karmas not done, can never come in existence. Happiness and sorrowness are believed to be the results of good Karma and evil Karma. In the ethical life, the law of Karma works as the law of causation.

Philosophers believing in law of Karma believe that our present life is the result of our past Karma and the future life will be based on our present Karma. So like this, past, present and future life has been chained in one law, and that is law of Karma. So if we want to make our future life happy, we will have to try in our present life.

* 인도 바라나시 힌두대학 종교철학과 교수

Jainism also, like other Indian philosophical schools, believe that a human being himself is capable of making his life happy and smooth. Some Hindu schools believe in the grace of God, but Jainism do not believe in the concept of God, it believes only in the law of Karma.

The needs of Karma theory are found in the Veda, where it has been named as 'Rta', means the management of world. Ethical management was also included in the 'Rta'. In the time of Upanisadas, this theory developed as a theory of Karma. The Nyaya-Vaisesika named Karma law as 'Adrsta', because the law of Karma was not visible by eyes, but all the goods of world, even the smallest atoms were also effected by this law, and this law is being controlled by God.

The law of Karma in Mimamsa is called as 'Apurva'. There is a difference between Nyaya-Vaisesika and Mimamsa. Nyaya believes that being unconscious, Karma can not give its fruit without God. But Mimamsa believes that Karma's fruit are self-controlled, so they do not require any God for it. But all Indian philosophers believe that the law of Karma does not work equally for every Karma(action). This law is limited only to those Karmas, which are full of attachment, jealousy and worldly desires. In other words, the Karmas performed with some worldly aim come under the limitation of law of Karma, whereas the Karmas performed without desire(Niskama Karma-Gita), are not controlled by this law of Karma. In other words, Niskama Karma is free from law of Karma, like the roasted seed are not able to give plants.

There are three general kinds of Karma in Indian philosophy named :

1. Sancit Karma--The Karma stored because of past life and have not started giving fruits till now.
2. Prarabdh Karma--These Karmas are also related to past life, but have started giving fruits in this life.

3. Sanciyaman Karma--The Karmas of present life, being stored for the future, which will give fruits in the future.

The law of Karma refuses the fatalism, because present life is based on the past life's Karma and the future life will be based on the present life's Karma. So there is no place for fatalism according to Indian philosophers. Human being himself can be the maker of his future according to the law of Karma.

The theory of Karma proves the differences among the life of human being, though they are born in one and the same situation in present, someone is rich, someone is poor, someone is happy, someone is with sorrows, this is all because of the fruits of the Karma of past life.

The second significance of the law of Karma is that it is very practical. Knowing this, that the fruits of good action will be good, and the fruits of evil action will be evil, one is always self controlled and self-disciplined. One's self never allows one to perform evil action.

The third significance is that we get consolation by belief in this theory of Karma. We do not fix the responsibility of our unsuccess on others but we know that it is because of fruits of our past Karma, we are getting unsuccess, despite of every effort.

The most important significance of this theory is that it creates optimism in every human-being's mind that by performing good Karma, one can make his future happy.

The general meaning of Karma is action. This action may be physical, mental or verbal. In Mimamsa it is used generally in the meaning of 'Yagya', a kind of religious ritual. Gita has stated that the work done according to the 'Varna'(caste system) is the real Niskama Karma. Buddhism also believes that the action of mind, body and speech is Karma, but this is only partial description of

Karma. One Jain scholar Mr. Devendrasuri says that the cause of action is Karma, whereas another scholar Pt. Sukhlal says that the action performed due to falseness or passions is Karma.

Actually almost every Indian philosophical school believe that the soul is covered by something, which prevent it from it's powers(natural power). Vedanta says it is Maya, Samkhya says it is Prakrti, Nyaya says it is Akrsta, Shaiva and Buddhism say it is Avidya(Vasana and Samskar). Jainism has given the name Karma, to the cause of bondage.

This bondage, due to different kinds of Karmas, has different kind of nature too. Jainism has told about 4 kinds of bondage:

1. Prakrtibandh
2. Sthitibandh
3. Anubhavabandh
4. Pradeshbandh

The Prakrtibandh is because of 8 kinds of Karma, so because of 8 kinds of Karma the Jainism talks about 8 kinds of Prakrtibandh.

1. Gyanavarān--The Karmas which cover the 5 kinds of knowledge is called Gyanavarān.
2. Darshanavarān--As sometimes clouds cover the light of sun, same like that, soul loses the power to see the things in its original form, due to Karma. Those Karmas are known as Darshanavarāniya Karma.
3. Mohaniya--It is of two kinds : Darshan Mohaniya and Caritra Mohaniya. Because of Darshan Mohaniya Karma, we start having mis-faith in the real form of the object(it is because of bad company sometimes). As a result of Caritramohaniya, one can lose the control on its own self(as in the case of intoxication).
4. Antaraya--This kind of Karma prevents a person from doing something good like donation or hospitality etc. Antaraya Karma's work is to put problem in the way of some good work.

5. Ayu(age)--Ayu(age) is a bodily Karma. Actually it is believed that because of Karma only one gets the worldly body and his age in the body is decided only by his performance of Karma. So according to this Karma, the duration of the body in the world is decided.
6. Nama(breed)--The Karma which decides one's breed, whether one has to take birth as human being , as bird or as animal or like anything, that Karma is called 'Nama' Karma.
7. Gotra(Caste)--The Karma which decides one's place in world, like one has to take birth in a high family or low, is decided by this Gotra Karma only.
8. Vedaniya--The Karma which enables one of experiencing pleasure or sorrowness is called the Vedaniya Karma.

So like this there are 8 kinds of Karma, which effect the human being. The first 4 of the 8 are called 'Ghati Karma'(which are destroyable) and the other 4 destroy itself, when first 4 are destroyed. So the other 4 are called 'Aghati Karma'

—'Sthitibandh' means not to leave the nature for sometime, like the milk remains sweet for sometime and after the time limit, the taste goes different. Same like that the particular Karma has its nature, which is changed after the certain duration.

—Anubhavabandh : every Karma has a certain capacity of(power of) effect, that capacity is called Anubhavabandh, as different medicines or different power.

—Pradeshbandh : When the Karmic matter enter into the body, where it has to go is called the Pradeshbandh of Karmic matter.

So like this, Jainism has the different description of the concept of Karma in Indian philosophy, which is very analytic and clear.