CHAPTER SIX

CRITICISM OF THE JAINAS

Etymologically, the word Jaina means a victor. It is traced to the root 'ji' which means 'to conquer'. The word 'Jina' is applied to all the twenty-four original Jaina teachers because they are believed to have conquered all base human passions. The voluntary achievement of liberation by these teachers led Jainas to uphold a universally attainable ideal of emancipation. As time rolled on, the school was divided in two branches—the Shvetāmbara and the Digambara. Any way, philosophically speaking there is no outstanding difference. The major Jaina literature is in Prakṛta. At a later stage, some Jaina scholars wrote in Sanskrit too.

After dealing with the criticism of the Bauddhas, Śaṁkara takes up the Jainas. Right at the outset, he labels their doctrine as the theory of "undressed" persons. He has given the following account of the Jainas as the hypothesis of the opponent: The Jainas advocate seven categories—Jīva, Ajīva, Āsrava, Sanvāra, Nirjara, Bandha

1. Vide Śaṁkara Bhāṣya on 2/2/33.
and Mokśa. In brief, all these categories may be brought under two main classes—Jīva and Ajīva. The Jīvas are of two types—the bound and the liberated. The bound Jīvas assume two forms: they may be immobiles or mobiles. Earth, water, light, wind, plants etc. constitute the immobile bound Jīvas. The animal and the insect-world constitutes the mobile bound Jīvas. The Jīvas may have five types of bodies. They are "audarika" or physical "Vaikriya" i.e. plastic sheaths of the gods and denizens of hell, "āhāraka", the bodies reserved for Saints alone; "taijasa", or manetic and Kārmāṇa. The bound jīvas possess audarika and Kārmāṇa bodies. "The souls are all immortal and have to undergo countless succession of transmigrations following their own Karman, until, by means of the saving doctrine of Jainism, they are transported to the realm of the blessed which is situated in the Highest Heaven".

Another 'Prapanca' of the Jainas goes to say that these two representative categories of Jīva and Ajīva, may be expanded into five, technically called the group of five 'Āstikyas'—Jīva, Pudgala, Dharma, Adharma and Ākāsha. All

1. The English rendering may be thus: 'the soul, the non-soul, the inflowing fluid, the inlet closing, the drying up, the bondage and release'. Adopted from Dr. S.K. Belvalkar's translation.

2. The English rendering runs thus: Soul, Body, the dynamic space, the Static Space, the Ether.
these varieties are further subdivided in various ways.

The Jainas introduce the 'Saptabhangī-Nyāya' to be applied to all their conceptions. This type of reasoning, or to be more faithful, speculations peculiar to the Jainas, are put thus: (i) Somehow it is; (ii) Somehow it is not; (iii) Somehow it is and it is not; (iv) Somehow it is indescribable; (v) Somehow it is and yet it is indescribable; (vi) Somehow it is not and yet indescribable; (vii) Somehow it is and is not and also indescribable. It is noteworthy that this type of speculative logic is to be applied also in determining the nature of Eternity and the One etc.

a) Criticism of the 'Saptabhangī-Nyāya'

Śaṅkara has objected to the above doctrine thus: ¹

It is plainly impossible that contradictory attributes may belong to one and the same thing at one and the same time. Hence the theory does not stand to reason. How incredible it is to admit that a cognition of a particular object can assume more than one nature and yet it may be said to give definite knowledge! This is all the more funny that the Jainas apply this 'Saptabhangī Nyāya' of indefinite results even to the knowledge and the means of knowledge, and also to the knowing subjects and objects. The logic of the Jainas is nothing more than a hoast of doubting judgement. Therefore, Śaṅkara asserts,

¹ Vide Śārīraka Bhāṣya on 2/2/33.
that no one who is mindful of his welfare, would be interested in such a doctrine of intellectual chaos which imparts nothing but indeterminate knowledge.

Śaṅkara makes, in this connection, a very true observation of universal application; People take up a course to follow a doctrine unhesitatingly only when the fruits of that doctrine are ascertained to be invariable results in case of those who follow their dictations.  

The indeterminate nature of everything, makes one agree with Śaṅkara that the doctrine of the Jainas is only a group of "utterances made in delirium or made by an intoxicated person'.

Hence they should not be attended to.

If we apply the speculative logic of the Saptabhangī-Nyāya to the five "Āstikyas", they became either more than five or less than five. They cannot be said to be definitely five. Hence the contention of the Jainas that they are five is incorrect.

The Jainas advocate their concepts as indescribable and yet they go to describe them'. The assert of nature of a thing in one way, and to act quite contrary to it, is no wise man's business. On the one hand, they say that a thing is knowable and at the same time they admit it to be unknowable. And then

1. Vide Śāriṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/2/33.
to crown all this, they say that their knowledge can be both perfect and imperfect! After going through such utterances of a man in delirium, one feels to agree with Shañkara's label put on the Jainas that they make statements like a maniac or the intoxicated one.

Shañkara is not alone in making such seemingly "uncivilised" statements about the Jainas. Ṣhāntarakṣita also calls this doctrine as a mad man's cry. Dharmakīrti goes a step further when he says," These shameless and naked Jainas make contradictory statements like a mad man".

The doctrine of the Pudgalas gets automatically refuted in the light of the refutation of the atomic theory of the Vaishesikas. Pudgalas, in Jain Philosophy, mean aggregates or atoms taken out from the aggregates. These atoms, according to the Jainas, can be fused into aggregates.

b) Criticism of the Conception of Soul

The Jainas say that the soul possesses the size of a physical body of an individual. Shañkara objects to this contention thus:-

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1. Vide Tattva-Samgraha, 311-327.
3. C.f. Chapter VII, Section (b) of this thesis.
(1) The conception reduces Soul to a limited entity. It is rendered a faithful obedient to the dictations of the body. Hence it is non-eternal and unreal. But this is not acceptable by the Jainas. That the soul is impermanent goes against their thesis. Thus the conception of Soul in Jain Philosophy is self-contradictory.

(ii) If the opponent's view is accepted then, it becomes difficult to account for the phenomenon of an ant taking up body of an elephant or an elephant taking the body of an ant, due to their merits and demerits. In other words, if the soul has the size of the body, the elephant's body will not find the required space if it is to take up the body of an ant due to its merits and demerits. Similarly, the soul of an elephant will not find sufficient space when it is to take up the body of an ant. The same difficulty comes up with regard to the different stages of human life; i.e. childhood, youth and old age etc.

To justify their doctrine, the Jainas may say that the soul gains or loses some new particles according as it is required to reside in a bigger or smaller body. One gets tempted to remark here: How adjusting is the soul of the Jainas! This new "escape" of the opponent is not acceptable on account of the following observations:-

This theory leads to the non-permanency of the soul because it admits soul as made up of parts. Consequently it goes against the conception of which is characterised
by permanency. The Jainas believe that the soul remains entangled in Sansāra on account of the eight bonds of Karma. At the time of release, it is held, the soul shoots up to the surface of Sansāra after breaking all its knots of bondage which kept it drowned in Sansāra.

(ii) Besides, the particles which get added to and substracted from the soul, are of the nature of origin and destruction. Therefore, they cannot be regarded as the nature of the soul whose nature is admitted to be eternal and permanent. Śaṁkarā makes a funny remark further: If some particular particle from among the other particles that are added and substracted is said to be permanent, we do not know which that particle is!

(iii) We do not know wherefrom those particles come when they are to join the soul and where do they disappear when they are required to quit the assembly of their other brethren particles! We know that the soul is immaterial and therefore, those particles cannot be said to have originated from the material elements so that they may dissolve in them when the emergency arises. We do not know, Śaṁkarā comments humorously, even some storehouse of these particles. The doctrine reaches its climax, when above all this, the soul and the particles of it are recommended to be of indefinite nature.

1. Vide Śaṁrīraka Bhāṣya on 2/2/35.
It will not be out of place to mention here that Brahmanical systems like Sāṇkhya, Nyāya and monistic Vedānta conceive Ātman to be all-pervading. On the other hand, the soul is conceived to be atomic by the other schools of Indian Philosophy, particularly the Vaishnava systems of Rāmānuja, Madhva etc. In spite of this difference regarding their conceptions of Ātman, none of these tolerates the conception of increase and decrease in the size of the Ātman.

The Jainas may still say that just as the stream of water remains unchanged even though the water changes, even so the soul may be considered to be eternally unchangeable. In fact, the Raktāmbaras do hold that the stream of ideas is permanent though individual ideas are passing. The soul may likewise be permanent.

To the above position Śaṁkara objects by contemplating two possibilities and proves that the stream explanation is inadequate from both the points of view. The stream, says Śaṁkara, can either be real or unreal. If it is unreal then there would result a doctrine without the conception of soul, because no unreal thing can be regarded as a distinct category in the scheme of a Philosophical system. This is such a finding that no school of Indian Philosophy can afford to ignore. Directly or indirectly all schools of Indian Philosophy aim at the permanent destruction of pain and attainment of highest bliss through liberation. This aim cannot be achieved without talking about soul.

1. Vide Śaṁśīraka Phāṣya 2/2/35.
If, on the other hand, the stream is real, the defects as regards the nature of the soul will ensue. In other words, if the soul-stream is a reality, then it would lead to an untenable position that the soul would have to be regarded as having such drawbacks as mutability etc. Hence in either case, the solution offered by the Jainas, cannot be logically maintained.

c) Criticism of the Concept of Liberation

According to Jain Philosophy, there are two fundamental types of Karmas: 'Aghati' Karmas and 'Ghati' Karmas, both of which are further sub-divided, making eight main types of Karmas in all. The Ghati Karmas are positive impediments to liberation, while the Aghati Karmas constitute the determinant factors of the next coming life of the soul. It is noteworthy, that the Aghati Karmas cannot be destroyed in one's present life.

When the Ghati Karmas are destroyed, the soul gains or 'Kevala-jñāna' absolute knowledge. The Aghati Karmas are also destroyed with the fall of the body. Immediately after this, the soul starts ascending higher and higher unless and until it reaches the top of the universe.
The only point which Shamkara has attacked is the Jainas' belief that the size of the soul at the time of final release is permanent. Such an assumption, Shamkara points out, will force the Jainas to recognise two types of earlier dimensions of the soul—the first initial and the second, the middle. Because the last size of the soul is permanent, therefore, the earlier sizes must also be conceived to be permanent. But this is an absurd assumption, because it contradicts an earlier contention of the Jainas that the soul assumes the size of the body. Over and above all this, the Jainas will have to admit that the soul is either atomic or all-pervading if they are to maintain the permanency of the ultimate size of the soul.

1. Vide Sharīraka Bhāṣya on 2/2/36.

2. According to Jainism, Dharma and Adharma stand for the initiating factors of motion and stability respectively. "Dharma helps movement as water does, it is said, the movement of fish; adharma on the other hand, makes it possible for things to rest".
Dualistic division of the Universe into Jīva and Ajīva must come up for refutation in a treatise of a school which goes to establish non-dualism. We do not know why Shaṅkara does not feel worthwhile to raise any objection in this connection.

Major part of the criticism of the Saptabhangī Nyāya seems to be a result of misapprehension of the doctrine. The Jainas regard, quite opposite to the belief of the monists, change as a characteristic factor of the Changeless. According to them, 'Utpāda' and 'Vyaya' are the qualities of the Immutable substance. Such an attribute towards the Ultimate can view an object from a number of view-points. Those conclusions about an object can never be uniform because of the difference of the outlook of the subjects. There is every likelihood of those speculations being contradictory. Shaṅkara's objections, though very logical and appealing, should be considered with a sympathetic attitude, in view of the following nature of the Saptabhangī Nyāya:

It is quite true that what is "Ghata" to me may be "Aghata" to another person. It all depends on the subjective conception of a Ghata. Similar differences can occur due to the difference of conception with regard to the shape of that very object. Thus individual conceptions about one and the same object vary infinitely. In view of all this,
the Saptabhangi Nyaya may amount to mean that the individual conclusions are to be always considered in keeping with their limitations of time, place, person addressed, intentions etc.

The Vedantins are also joined by the Buddhists in making a butt of criticism against this doctrine of Syadvada. The criticism revolves round one factor, and that is, the doctrine is self-contradictory. This seems to be a result of misunderstanding. The word 'Syad' does not mean probability. It is injustice to the right spirit of the doctrine. In fact the word should be translated, as a learned scholar, Dr. Chandradhar Sharma suggests, 'Relatively Speaking' or 'Viewed from a particular viewpoint which is necessarily related to other viewpoints'. The intention of the Jainas in advocating the doctrine of Syadvada, does not seem to imply that contradictory attributes belong to one and the same thing at one and the same time. This has been made clear in the Syadvadamanjari thus, "a thing may be spoken as existent from point of view of form, matter, space and time; the same thing may be non-existent from others' form, matter, space and time". Anyway, whatever be the line of defence of the opponent, Shastika's objection is one that compels assent and stands boldly as ever that

2. Cf. Page 176-7 of 'Syad-Vada-Manjari'.

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all this cannot lead to definite knowledge, without which no constructive or destructive aim can be achieved even if we uphold the bright future of "Liberation".

Pt. Chandradhar Sharma concludes the present issue quite truly, "The Jainas might retort that Syādvāda does not mean the theory of probability, that it is not Self-condemned scepticism, but it means the theory of relativity of knowledge. All judgements are relative and conditional and all truth is partial. But even now, the objection of Shamkarācārya stands with full force. Relativity itself cannot be sustained without the Absolute. If all truth is partial, then Syādvāda itself is only partially true and therefore partially false. Relativity itself is related to the Absolute and presupposes its existence. The fact that all ever judgements are relative leads us to presuppose an Absolute in which all the relatives fall and through which they are manifested."

The Jainas may defend themselves taking support of their Āgamas. This defensive aspect of the theory of Syādvāda probably did not strike Shamkara's mind. But still it does not bring any discredit to him. He, in that case can very well point out, that the Jain Philosophy does not recognise God or some Creator. Hence its Āgamas, considered from the demands of the authority of verbal

Testimony, are found wanting and consequently do not carry weight. However, we can't deny the justification of the argument that the Saptabhangī Nyāya is intended only to emphasize that we can look a thing from a number of angles.

At one place Shaṅkara says that the various categories of the Jainas are said to be indescribable. If it were so, they should not even be mentioned (not to talk of their explanation!). We may observe that this charge is true even about the "Māyā" theory of Shaṅkara which is called Anirvacanīya and yet the Advaitin has tried to bring out, however elaborately or concisely, its nature.

The Jainas may explain their conception of soul that it is of the size of the body, by saying that this description of the soul with relation to space is only figurative. Or they may suppose that eight central particles of the soul constitute its essential nature. But it may be remarked here that this is a post-Shaṅkara development and hence it does not bring any discredit to Shaṅkara as a critic.

But still, the Jainas can explain away their assertion with regard to the size of the soul by citing the example of 'pupil', a part of human eye, which

1. Vide Śārīraka Bhāṣya on 2/2/33.
contracts or expands in accordance with the intensity of light. If the intensity of light is too much to be comfortably tolerated, then the pupil contracts so that it allows only the desired quantity of light to enter, otherwise retina cells will be rendered insensitive and consequently the perceptual image received in the brain will only be vague and indistinct. In case there is dark or dim light, the pupil dilates to allow maximum amount of light to pass inside. Thus it serves to maintain the equilibrium of light by contracting or expanding automatically. Similar type of natural and involuntary action may be conceived by the Jainas to meet the problem of the size of soul. But, it may be regretted that they have no such belief.

Śaṅkara has said that the soul enclosed by a small body cannot possess infinite number of particles. Well, this is indeed a crude notion. For, if the particle is very very minute, their number may be beyond the calculations of human brain. Hence they may very well be regarded as infinite. Infinity after all, means something which cannot be calculated.

We may conclude the chapter with a note of sympathy towards the Jainas. The system should be evaluated more as a religion than as a Philosophy. This is probably the reason

1. Vide Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on 2/2/34.
why Śaṅkara has not gone deep while criticising the Jainas to find more inconsistencies in the system, just as he did with regard to Sāṅkhyā-Yoga and Nyāya Vaishēśikas. There is no denying the fact that the Jainas were interested in something other than metaphysical speculations. The contribution of the Jainas with regard to the variety and minuteness of the classifications of Karmas is indeed worth appreciating.