

## Contemplation (*Dharma dhyana*), Spirituality and Science

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### Introduction

The principles and propositions in Jaina texts have been described concisely as aphorisms. After a lapse of thousands of years it is difficult to understand their right meaning. One of the ways of writing aphorisms is to describe the principles through illustrations. Generally we limit the meaning of that principle to the illustration given and forget that this is only an example and is not the full description of the principle. Our knowledge of *dharma dhyana*, contemplation, also suffers from this kind of ignorance.

Dharma means the natural properties of the substance. Any substance has infinite properties and infinite modes. We know only a few properties and a few modes, the rest are unknown to us. Contemplation is a powerful method of knowing the unknown properties and modes. Ancient rishis and saints discovered many properties of substances which are beyond the reach of rational mind by *dharma dhyana* or contemplation on the nature of the substance.

There are two types of constituents of *loka*, living (soul) and non-living (matter etc.). A worldly soul is a mix of soul and matter and therefore to understand it, it is necessary to understand both the constituents. Knowing the soul is spirituality and investigating the matter is science. Knowledge of soul requires understanding the matter and science is incomplete without the knowledge of soul. Method of contemplation is useful to know the properties of both the soul and the matter. Traditionally some scholars limit *dharma dhyana* to soul and science is excluded. This is a narrow view of contemplation. Gatha 55 of Vrihad-Dravya Samgraha says that when a monk contemplating on an object becomes one with it and when his perceptions are pure then he definitely is in a state of meditation [1]. Here thinking of not only soul but thinking of nature of any object of interest is considered as contemplation. Acharya Mahaprajna also extended the definition of *dharma dhyana* and made it applicable to soul as well as to matter [2]. We use this approach here to understand spirituality and science in a wider perspective.

### *Dhyana*

*Dhyana*, meditation, is of four types (1) *aarta dhyana*, (2) *raudra dhyana*, (3) *dharma dhyana*, and (4) *shukla dhyana* [3]. The first two types force the soul to take rebirth and to go into the cycle of life and death and the last two types help the soul to achieve liberation.

- 1) *Aartadhyana*: Many people continuously worry about their painful and unhappy situations. Such mental worrying is termed as *Aartadhyana*. There are mainly four situations of worry, to avert the disagreeable situation, to avert the painful situation, to regain the lost favourable situation and the strong inclination to stake everything for some worldly gain.
- 2) *Raudradhyana*: Maintaining the violent, untruthful, stealthy and sensual mode of life constitutes *Raudradhyana*. In this state a person not only resorts to wrong and violent means, but he also enjoys such actions.
- 3) *Dharmadhyana*: Dharma has several connotations like religion, duty, natural property etc. and therefore can be defined differently. One of the significant definition is that dharma means the natural property of the object. In the light of this definition, *Dharmadhyana* means contemplating about the nature of the soul, that is, contemplation that leads to self-realization.
- 4) *Shukladhyana*: *Shukladhyana* denotes perfect meditation. This type of meditation is possible only for spiritually advanced monks who have considerably reduced their passions.

### ***Dharma Dhyana***

*Dharma dhyana* has four parts (1) *aagya vichaya*, (2) *apaya vivhaya*, (3) *vipak vichaya*, and (4) *samsthan vichaya*. Here *vichaya* means to contemplate. Thus the four parts mean

- 1) To contemplate on the teachings of the Omniscient Tirthankara which mainly refer to the inherently blissful nature of soul, impact of karma on the worldly soul and the way to get rid of karma.
- 2) To contemplate on the causes of distress and unhappiness. One contemplates that distress and unhappiness arise on account of inauspicious karma. Such contemplation can help in refraining from undertaking anything that would result in unhappiness.
- 3) To contemplate on the results of rising karma
- 4) To contemplate on the nature of *loka* (to identify the self)

This interpretation of *dharma dhyana* has been made from the point of view of spirituality. But taking a generalized view the four parts reveal an extended perspective. We elaborate on this approach here.

### ***Aagya Vichaya (Contemplation on teachings/findings of an authority)***

Jaina texts propound that plants and vegetations are living beings. Our senses are unable to directly know this fact and so we accept the teachings of the Omniscient Tirthankara with full faith. On the other hand without taking note of the teachings of Tirthankara modern science has also proved experimentally that plants have life. Then why don't we have faith in

science? The same fact has been discovered by extra ordinary perception of Omniscient and science then why don't we recognize both as authority? Question then arises why *aagya vichaya* should be limited to Omniscient only? The Acharyas of Ayurveda discovered the properties of medicinal plants by *dharma dhyana*, is that not authentic knowledge? Science has discovered subtle forms of matter that cannot be known by senses with experimental proof then is it not authentic finding (*aagya vichaya*)? Our one sided view may prevent us from knowing the full truth. So it is in order that we recognize all those principles and individuals that discover truth as authority in the respective fields.

In this perspective contemplation with pure perception on the teachings or findings of any text or individual that is authority in that field constitutes *aagya vichaya*. To contemplate on the laws of Newton or on the theory of Einstein constitutes as much *aagya vichaya* in their respective fields and scope as the teachings of Omniscient in life matters. None of these, of course, mean that we know the complete truth. Both these sources only express partial truth. It is necessary to know all the properties and modes of a substance to know the full truth and this is a matter of personal experience beyond senses and mind and is not the subject of science or any book. From this point of view both science and scriptures are incomplete and we are far from truth when we know the texts and teachings.

In practical life we come across many people and understanding our relations and interactions with them is necessary for happiness. In a family obeying the instructions and advice of the chief of the family brings happiness and cordial relations in the family. In social life it is essential to follow the constitution for maintaining order and avoiding punishment. Similarly the orders of guru are to be obeyed in spiritual life.

How do we know the teachings and findings of the authorities? Study and information is the only means for it. Great emphasis has been given on study and information collection in spiritual and practical life. It is evident that study and research are important tools for a person contemplating on truth.

### ***Apaya Vichaya (Analytical thinking)***

*Apaya vichaya* is the process of analytical thinking. For knowing the reality it is necessary to know the basics of a thing. The universe contains things that are related and mixed. The seeker of reality analyses these relations and by eliminating the non-essential elements and relations identifies the existence of the real thing. For instance, a spiritual person seeking answer to the question 'who am I?' thinks that he is not sound, shape, smell, taste, and touch, he is not body, speech, and mind, he is not senses and *prana*, he is not anger, ego, deceit and greed, etc. and in this way by eliminating the unrelated options ultimately arrives at the conclusion that he is the conscious soul. A spiritualist analyses his shortcomings and progresses

on his cherished path of liberation by removing them. In the same way a scientist finds out the elements present in a composition by the process of analysis and scientific method of elimination. Therefore, such a scientific method also constitutes *apaya vichaya*.

### ***Vipaka Vichaya (Results and transformation)***

In this process of contemplation the mind is focused on the results and transformations taking place due to changes in the system. Traditionally, this is related to rise of karma and thinking of the consequences on soul but this is only a specific example of the process. As we know there are two causes for rise of karma, the main cause (*upadaan*) and the auxiliary cause (*nimitta*). The same is also true for a chemical process. Reaction takes place due to the nature of the reacting elements (*upadaan*) and the catalyst (*nimitta*) present. Milk turns into curds because milk has the property of converting into curds and the added agent is the auxiliary cause in this process. Temperature is another factor. A material scientist or metallurgist knows the properties of the mixing elements and also knows the effects of the additives on the main elements. By this knowledge he devices process to change the properties of the basic elements. This process is followed to make steel from wrought iron and produce many special kinds of steels for different applications. Transformation in the properties of basic elements and their mixtures is an important area of science. All these scientific methods fall in the category of *vipak vichaya*.

### ***Samsthan Vichaya (Synthesis)***

By this process of contemplation the monks used to discover properties and modes of matter and know their shape, fundamental form and other authentic qualities required for their continued existence in a new form on combination. Combination and synthesis of basic elements having different properties produces new products and articles. Bhagawati canon describes many such combinations. This kind of knowledge was gained by the monks by the method of *samsthan vichaya*.

The process of synthesis forms an important branch of study in science and technology. By these processes new products, gadgets, equipments, appliances and machines are designed and produced. For example television, mobile phones, computers etc. have been developed and new models are being introduced in the market every day. There is no end to this process as there are infinite modes of *pudgala*, matter; hat can combine in endless ways. Thus the principle of synthesis is an important part of contemplation in spiritual life as well as in practical life.

### **Spirituality and Science**

*Dharma dhyana* is a methodology of exploring the nature of substance and discovering new properties and modes. The soul is the subject of exploration in spirituality and matter is the substance of study in science. The mind is focused on soul in spirituality and on matter in science. The two approaches are similar both aim at discovering the truth. *Dharma dhyana* is a scientific methodology and so spirituality is also science and a spiritualist is a scientist of highest order. This is one reason that Jainism is known as a scientific religion. A spiritual practitioner achieves his goal by four kinds of contemplation and the same is true for a scientist. This wider perspective of *dharma dhyana* enables us to integrate different human activities as the basic force behind them is the power of soul.

*Dharma dhyana* is considered as a means of liberation. This proposition has been made from the point of view of spirituality. But the question is whether a scientist following the same methodology is also going on the path of liberation? The traditional definition of *dharma dhyana* does not allow us to make this assumption. But this does not appear to be the full truth. All the chief disciples (Ganadhara) of Mahavira were perverse individuals before becoming his followers. But they were great scholars and were practicing *dharma dhyana* for their study. On coming in contact with Mahavira they became spiritualists and proceeding on the path of *moksa* became *kevali*. In the same way a scientist knowing the relevant methodology can advance on the path of spirituality on meeting a suitable source and can prove better than other people in this respect. From this point of view scientific study also prepares a person for spiritual activity. A scientist besides contributing to his field of study also enhances his candidature and ability for spiritual journey and on meeting an opportune occasion can tread the path of spirituality faster than ordinary individuals. So from the spiritual perspective also scientific study should be given the same recognition as religious activities in society.

## References

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2. "Jain Darshan: Manan aur Minansa", Acharya Mahaprajna, Adarsh Sahitya Sangh, 2013 edition, Part three
3. "Moksa Shastra (Tatvartha Sutra)", Pt. Pannalal Jain, 1978, Chapter 9.