

## Selections From Acharya Umaswami's Tattvarth Sutra

*Compiled by Dr. Duli Chandra Jain*

### Tattvartha Sutra

Auspicious Prayer

We pray to those  
who have led the path to salvation,  
who have destroyed the mountains of karma, and  
who know the reality of the universe.  
We pray to them to acquire their attributes.

### Chapter 1. ASPECTS OF REALITY

#### Path To Liberation

Rational (proper) perception, rational knowledge and rational conduct together constitute the path to liberation. (1)

#### Rational Perception

Belief in reality (substances ascertained as they are) is rational perception. It is attained by intuition or by acquisition of knowledge.

#### Aspects of Reality

Reality has seven aspects: (2)

1. Souls
2. Inanimate entities
3. Influx of karmic matter towards soul
4. Bondage of soul by karmic matter
5. Stoppage of influx of karmic matter towards soul
6. Shedding of karmic matter by soul
7. Liberation of soul from karmic matter

Reality is understood through experimentation (3) and logical thinking.

Understanding an entity or concept entails the consideration of its description, ownership, cause, place, duration and classification.

It also entails knowing its existence, number, extent, area, time, distinguishing features, quality and comparison.

## **Kinds of Knowledge**

Knowledge is of five kinds:

- Sensory cognition
- Literal knowledge (4)
- Extraordinary knowledge (clairvoyance)
- Mental knowledge (telepathy)
- Absolute knowledge (omniscience)

Sensory cognition includes recollection, recognition, induction and deduction. It is acquired by the help of the senses and the mind.

Scriptural knowledge is preceded by sensory cognition.

The subject of extraordinary knowledge is matter, including embodied soul.

The subtlest forms of matter forms the subject of mental knowledge.

All the entities of the universe, including their modifications, form the subject of absolute knowledge.

Sensory cognition, literal knowledge and extraordinary knowledge can be wrong knowledge.

## **Chapter 2. SOULS**

### **Nature Of Soul**

The thought-activities of a living being are guided by the following:

- Subsidence (waning) of karma
- Destruction of karma
- Destruction-cum-subsidence of karma
- Fruition of karma
- Inherent nature of the soul

The distinguishing characteristic of the soul is consciousness.

### **Classification of Souls**

The two kinds of souls:

- Worldly souls
- Liberated souls

The two kinds of worldly souls:

- With mind
- Without mind

Another classification of worldly souls:

- Mobile
- Immobile

The immobile living beings are of five kinds:

- Earth-bodied
- Water-bodied
- Fire-bodied
- Air-bodied
- Vegetable-bodied

The immobile living beings have the sense of touch only.

The mobile living beings have two or more senses.

Worms, ants, bees, and men each have one more sense than the preceding one.

There are five senses.

The five senses are touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing.

Material form and instrument constitute physical senses.

Capacity of sensory cognition and consciousness constitute abstract senses.

The living beings with mind are thinkers.

In the course of transit from one body to another, a worldly soul is guided by karma.

The bodies of living beings are made up of five components:

- Physical body
- Fluid body
- Assimilative body
- Splendorous (energetic) body
- Karmic body

The above components of bodies are successively more and more subtle.

Splendorous and karmic bodies are without impediment.

The association of soul with these two components of bodies is without beginning.

All worldly souls have these two components of bodies.

In addition to the splendorous and karmic bodies, a living being can have up to four components of bodies simultaneously.

## **Chapter 5. INANIMATE ENTITIES**

### **Definition Of Entity**

Existence is the characteristic of an entity.

Existence entails:

- Origination of new forms
- Destruction of old forms
- Permanence

Permanence implies indestructibility of intrinsic attributes.  
An entity possesses attributes as well as modifications.

### **Entities Of The Universe**

Inanimate entities include:

- Medium of motion
- Medium of rest
- Space
- Matter

Soul is also entity.

The entities are eternal (indestructible), and they cannot be transformed into one another, they cannot be detected through the senses, except matter.

Matter can be detected through the senses because it has touch, taste, smell and color.

Medium of motion, medium of rest and space, each is one single continuum and are motionless.

Medium of motion, medium of rest, and each soul have innumerable space-points (5).

Space has infinite points.

Pieces of matter have numerable or innumerable elementary particles.

An elementary particle of matter occupies one space-point.

All the entities inhabit the physical space.

A soul can occupy one or more space-points.

Depending upon the available volume (of the body), a soul expands or contracts and fills the whole body as does the light from a lamp.

### **Description of Matter**

Matter possesses touch, taste, smell and color.

Matter includes sound, heat, light, darkness and images.

Pieces of matter undergo binding and disintegration.

They are subtle or gross.

Matter consists of elementary indivisible particles and their aggregates.

### **Functions Of The Entities**

The medium of motion and medium of rest, respectively, support the motion and the rest of inanimate objects.

The function of space is to accommodate all the entities of the universe.

Various types of material substances form the basis of bodies, speech, mind and respiration of living beings.

They are also responsible for sensual pleasure and pain, life and death.

The function of worldly souls is to help each other.

The function of the sixth entity, time, is to support the existence, modifications and activity of other entities, and high and low priority.

## **Chapter 6. INFLUX OF KARMIC MATTER**

### **Yoga And Influx Of Karma**

The activity of body, speech and mind is called yoga.

Yoga causes the influx of karmic particles towards the soul of an individual.

Meritorious yoga results in the influx of good karma (6) and demeritorious yoga, in the influx of bad karma.

Living beings affected with passions, gain the influx of durable and mundane karmic particles while others have the influx of transient karmic particles.

Influx of mundane karmic particles results from:

- Activities of five senses
- Four passions of anger, pride, deceit and greed
- Activities involving violence, untruth, stealing
- Impurity of body and mind (unchastity) and possessiveness
- Other similar activities

The difference in the influx of karmic matter is caused by the intensity or mildness of passions, intentional or unintentional nature of the act, the living being and the environment, and the power to do the act.

The activities of body, speech and mind of the worldly souls, affected with passions of anger, pride, deceit and possessiveness, are the root cause of the influx of karmic particles.

Influx occurs when the individual decides to indulge in some activities, prepares to perform the activities and/or initiates the activities.

It makes little difference whether the individual performs the act himself, gets others to do the act or persuades others to perform the act.

## **Causes Of Influx Of Some Karmas**

The influx of unpleasant-feeling-producing karma is caused by suffering, sorrow, agony, crying, violence and lamentation, in oneself, in others or in both.

The influx of pleasant-feeling-producing karma is caused by feelings of compassion for all living beings, appreciation of votaries (those with vows), charity, self-control affected with the welfare of living beings, involuntary shedding of karmic particles, good conduct without proper knowledge, equanimity and nonpossessiveness.

Neglect of the principles propagated by the omniscient, of the scriptures, of religion and religious personages causes the influx of perception-deluding karma.

Feelings and emotions involving intense passions results in the influx of conduct-deluding karma.

Crooked activities of body, speech and mind, and wrangling lead to the influx of bad physique-determining karma. (7)

Speaking ill of others, self-pride, concealing others' virtues and boasting of one's own good qualities leads to the influx of low status-determining karma.

## **Chapter 7. ETHICAL CODE**

### **Vows And Observances**

The vows are renunciation of violence, untruth, stealing, unchastity and possessiveness.

The vows are of two kinds: Partial and total.

There are five observances each for imbibing these five vows. The five observances for the vow of nonviolence are

- carefulness of speech
- carefulness of thoughts
- carefulness in walking
- carefulness in lifting and placing objects
- carefulness in obtaining and preparing one's food and drink

The five observances for the vow of truth are speaking according to the principles of religion, and giving up anger, greed, cowardice and frivolity.

The five observances for the vow of non-stealing are

- residence in a solitary place,
- residence in a deserted habitation,
- sharing one's place and possessions,
- accepting clean and simple food, and
- avoiding criticism of peers in society. (9)

The five observances for the vow of chastity are renunciation of

- stories of attachment to the opposite sex,
- seeing their attractive bodies,
- remembering past sexual experiences,
- aphrodisiacs, and
- beautifying one's own body.

The five observances for the vow of nonpossessiveness are,

- giving up attachment to and aversion from pleasant
- and unpleasant objects of the five senses.
- Violence, untruth, stealing, unchastity and possessiveness lead to calamity and disgrace.
- Ultimate consequence of these is unhappiness.
- Therefore, we should have  
feelings of friendliness for all living beings,  
feelings of joy for the virtuous,  
compassion for those in distress and  
indifference towards those who mistreat us.

We should meditate upon the nature of reality to imbibe the spirit of non-attachment to the world and the renunciation of worldly pleasures.

### **Definition Of Violence**

Violence is defined as obstruction of the life processes of self and of others effected by lack of conscientiousness.

### **Characteristic of Votary**

A votary is beyond any sting. Intrigue, delusion and desire of future material pleasures are stings because they arouse feelings of guilt.

Votaries are householders and homeless ascetics.

Householders are with partial vows.

Householders also practice the following:

(a) The three augmenting vows:

- Limiting one's field of activity,
- limiting one's duration of activity and
- avoiding unnecessary activity.

(b) The four learning vows:

- Meditation of the soul and its relationship with nature,
- fasting,
- limiting the use of consumable and non-consumable goods, and sharing one's food with guests.
- In the final days of life, a householder observes peaceful death.

### **Transgressions (Failures Of Conduct)**

Skepticism, desire, disgust, and, appreciation and praise of irrational people and concepts are the transgressions of rational perception.

Misleading proselytizing, divulging other's secret, forgery, misappropriation and revealing other's intentions are the transgressions of the vow of truth.

Promoting stealing, dealing in stolen goods, violating or evading the laws, cheating in weights and measures, and dealing in adulterated goods are the transgressions of the vow of non-stealing.

Desire for life, desire for death, affection for relatives and friends, recollection of pleasures, and longing for worldly pleasures in future are the transgressions of peaceful death.

### **Charity**

Charity is giving one's wealth for mutual benefit.

Charity is distinguished by the procedure, material, donor and acceptor.

## **Chapter 8. BONDAGE OF KARMA**

Causes of bondage of karma are

- deluded perception,
- vowlessness,
- lack of conscientiousness,
- passion, and
- activities of body, speech and mind.

### **Bondage And Its Phases**

Bondage is defined as the assimilation of material particles which are fit to form karmas, by soul, owing to the soul having passions.

There are four phases of bonding of karmic matter:

- Nature (species) of karma,
- duration of bondage,
- intensity of bondage, and
- quantity of karmic particles.

The species of karma are:

- Perception obscuring,
- knowledge obscuring,
- feeling producing,
- deluding,
- life span determining,
- physique determining,
- status determining and
- obstructing.



There are maturing and fruition of karma.

The karma particles fall off after fruition.

Meritorious karmas are:

- pleasant feeling producing karma,
- good life span determining karma,
- good physique determining karma and
- good status determining karma.

## **Chapter 9. STOPPAGE AND SHEDDING OF KARMA**

Stoppage of karma is the absence of influx of karmic particles.

Stoppage of karma is caused by

- self restraint,
- conscientiousness,
- virtue,
- contemplation,
- endurance of suffering and
- proper conduct.

Both, stoppage and shedding, of karma are caused by penance. Self-restraint is rational curbing of the activities of body, speech and mind.

Conscientiousness constitutes proper care in:

- walking,
- speaking,
- eating,
- accepting and placing objects, and
- disposing waste products.

The ten ultimate virtues are:

- Forgiveness,
- modesty,
- sincerity,
- purity of spirit,
- truthfulness,
- self-control,
- conquest of desires,
- renunciation,
- nonpossessiveness and
- enjoyment of the attributes of the pure soul.

The twelve contemplations are on the following:

- Transient nature of life,

- absence of other's help in spiritual uplift,
- transmigration,
- individuality,
- distinctness,
- impurity of worldly soul,
- influx of karma,
- stoppage of karma,
- shedding of karma,
- nature of universe,
- difficulty in attaining enlightenment, and
- teachings of religion.

Endurance of suffering is essential for the continuation of spiritual advancement and for shedding of karma.

Proper conduct includes equanimity, reinitiation, absolute nonviolence, freedom from subtle passions and passionless actions.

### **Penance**

External penance includes

- total fasting,
- partial fasting,
- special restrictions in accepting food,
- giving up delicacies,
- sleeping in a lonely place and
- mortification of body.

Internal penance includes

- atonement,
- reverence,
- service,
- study,
- renunciation and
- meditation.

Atonement entails self-criticism, repentance, both, refined judgement, renunciation, penance, suspension, expulsion and reinitiation.

Study includes teaching, questioning, contemplation, recitation and preaching.

### **Meditation**

Meditation is concentration of thoughts on one particular object by a person with good physical constitution. It lasts for less than 48 minutes.

Meditation is of four kinds:

- Sorrowful,
- inclement,

- righteous and
- spiritual.

Righteous and spiritual meditations lead to salvation.

Concentration on removing disagreeable objects is sorrowful meditation.

Concentration on desires for agreeable objects is also sorrowful meditation.

Thinking of suffering from pain as well is sorrowful meditation.

Lastly, desires for worldly pleasures is sorrowful meditation.

Inclement meditation includes taking delight in violence, untruth and stealing, and making designs for preserving means of sensual pleasures.

Righteous meditation includes concentration on teachings of the omniscient, on the removal of delusion, on fruition of karma, and on the nature and constitution of the universe.

The four types of spiritual meditations are concentration on the attributes of soul that distinguish it from other entities, concentration on just one aspect of soul, concentration on the subtle activity of soul, and total absorption of the soul in itself which is devoid of all activities.

The first two types of spiritual meditation are practiced by sages who are well-versed in the understanding of scriptures.

The third and fourth types of spiritual meditation are attained by the omniscients with and without yoga activity, respectively.

## **Chapter 10. SALVATION**

Omniscience (absolute knowledge) is attained by annihilating

- deluding karma,
- knowledge obscuring karma,
- perception obscuring karma and
- obstructing karma.

Owing to the absence of the causes of bondage and to the shedding of karma, dissociation from all karmic matter is achieved which is liberation (moksha).

In addition to the material karma, abstract karma such as feelings and thoughts caused by fruition and transformations of karma, are also annihilated in the process of liberation.

A liberated soul (siddha) possesses absolute rationalism, perception, knowledge and perfection.

-----

1. Aphorism number

2. These are called seven tattvas. In some scriptures, merit (punya) and demerit (paap) have also been counted as aspects of reality, and thus nine tattvas have been described. Acharya Umaswami and some other

sages have considered merit and demerit as part of influx and bondage of karma.

3. Experimentation (pramana) means information and evidence obtained through the study of scriptures, observation of nature and experience.
4. Knowledge derived through signs, symbols, letters and words. It includes association, comprehension, etc.
5. A space-point is the smallest indivisible unit of space.
6. In the ultimate analysis, all karmas, are undesirable.
7. These obviously result in ill-health.
8. These are seen to lower one's social status.
9. These are for the monks.

---

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Pt. Sukhlalji's Commentary on Tattvartha Sutra, English Translation by K. K. Dixit, L. D. Institute of Indology,  
Ahmedabad, India, 1974.
2. Reality (English Translation of Shri Pujiyapada's  
Sarvarthasiddhi) by S. A. Jain, Vira Sasana Sangh, Calcutta, 1960.
3. Sacred Books of the Jainas, II, by J. L. Jaini, The Central Jaina Publishing House, Arrah, India, 1920.