

Six Universal Substances or Entities

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Structural View of the Universe

Jain Philosophy does not give credence to the theory that the God is a creator, survivor, or destroyer of the universe. On the contrary, it asserts that the universe has always existed and will always exist in exact adherence to the laws of the cosmos. There is nothing but infinity both in the past and in the future.

The world of reality or universe consists of two classes of objects:

- Living beings - conscious, soul, chetan, or jiva
- Non-living objects - unconscious, achetan, or ajiva

Non-living objects are further classified into five categories

- Matter - Pudgal
- Space - Akas
- Medium of motion - Dharmastikay
- Medium of rest - Adharmastikay
- Time - Kaal or Samay

The five non-living entities together with the living being, totaling six are aspects of reality in Jainism. They are known as six universal entities, or substances or realities.

These six entities of the universe are eternal but continuously undergo countless changes. During the changes nothing is lost or destroyed. Everything is recycled into another form.

The Concept of Reality or Entity or Substance:

A reality or an entity is defined to have an existence, which is known as Sat or truth.

Each entity continuously undergoes countless changes. During this process the old form (size, shape etc.) of an entity is destroyed, the new form is originated. At any given time, the form of a substance is called Paryaya.

In the midst of modification of a substance, its certain qualities remain unchanged (permanence). The unchanged qualities of a substance are collectively known as Dravya.

Hence, each entity (substance) in the universe has three aspects:

- Origination - Utpada
- Destruction - Vyaya
- Permanence - Dhrauvya

Both Dravya and Paryaya (mode) are inseparable from an entity or a substance.

The same principle can be explained differently as follows:

An entity is permanent (nitya) from the standpoint of its attributes or qualities (Dravya). This is known as Dravyarthik-naya.

An entity is transient (anitya) from the standpoint of its form or modification (Paryaya). This is known as Paryayarthik-naya. The modification that an entity undergoes either naturally or artificially is nothing but the transformation of its various shapes, sizes, and forms.

A natural description of reality takes into consideration these three aspects:

- Permanence in the midst of change
- Identity in the midst of diversity
- Unity in the midst of multiplicity

Examples:

A human being through the process of growth undergoes various changes, such as childhood, youth, and old age. These changes are the natural modifications.

- Childhood, youth, and old age are transient forms known as Paryaya
- Soul of a living being is permanent and known as Dravya

Clay is molded by a potter into a pot. Gold is crafted by a goldsmith into various ornaments. These changes are artificial modifications of the nonliving substances.

- Ornaments and pot are transient forms known as paryaya
- Gold and clay are permanent and known as dravya

While undergoing various modifications, either natural or artificial, the basic dravya of a substance remains unchanged and is permanent, while its form changes and is transient.

Six Universal Substances:

As explained above Jainism believes that the universe is made from the combination of the six universal substances. All of the six substances are indestructible, imperishable, immortal, eternal and continuously go through countless changes.

- Soul/Consciousness - Jiva (Living being)
- Matter - Pudgala (Nonliving being)
- Medium of motion - Dharma (Nonliving being)
- Medium of rest - Adharma (Nonliving being)
- Space - Akasa (Nonliving being)
- Time - Kaal (Nonliving being)

Soul (Jiva) or Living being:

Soul's essential characteristic is consciousness. This is the only knowing substance. It possesses knowledge, vision, power, and bliss. It also possesses the property of contraction and expansion like that of light. They

are of innumerable numbers. Living being can not be created or can not be destroyed. The total number of living beings remains same in the entire universe at all the time. All living beings are classified into two major categories.

1. Liberated or Free (Mukta) Soul

Liberated or Free soul is defined as a pure consciousness, a soul that has completely exhausted all of its karma. It is also known as Siddha. All Siddhas are defined as Gods in Jainism. All Tirthankaras and other Arihants become Siddhas at the end of their human life (death).

Liberated soul has the following qualities:

- Infinite or perfect Knowledge
- Infinite or perfect Vision
- Infinite or perfect Power
- Infinite or perfect Bliss
- Does not possess a body
- Lives in Moksha, which is located on the top of Lokakas.
- Never returns again into the cycle of birth, life, and death
- Innumerable in numbers

2. Worldly (Samsari) Soul

Worldly soul is defined as a soul that is covered by the karma particles. Hence its qualities are changed from the liberated soul as follows:

- Limited Knowledge
- Limited Vision
- Limited Power
- Limited Bliss
- Possesses a body (plants, hellish, animal, human, or angel)
- Wanders into the cycle of life and death
- Suffers from birth, death, pain, and pleasure
- Doer of all kinds of karmas (actions)
- Enjoyer of the fruits of the karmas
- Innumerable number of worldly souls
- Capable of becoming free from worldly life

Worldly souls are divided according to the number of senses they possess. There are total five senses; touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing a living being may possess.

One sense (Ekendria) living being:

Possesses one sense only - touch; It cannot move on its own accord

They are subdivided into five categories

- Soul possesses Earth as its body - Prithvikaya
- Soul possesses Water as its body - Apakaya
- Soul possesses Fire as its body - Agnikaya

- Soul possesses Air as its body - Vayukaya
- Soul possesses Vegetable as its body - Vanaspatikaya

The living beings of vegetables are further classified into two groups:

- Pratyek Vanaspatikaya - Individual soul has its own body of vegetable
e.g. Cabbage, Okra, Banana, Tomato
- Sadharan Vanaspatikaya - Many souls share one body of vegetable
e.g. Potato, Onion (root vegetables)
- Two sense (Be-indriya) living being:
Possesses two senses - touch and taste
e.g. worms, leeches.
- Three sense (Tre-indriya) living being:
Possesses three senses - touch, taste, and smell
e.g. ants, lice.
- Four sense (Chau-indriya) living being:
Possesses four senses - touch, taste, smell, and sight
e.g. flies, bees.
- Five sense (Panch-indriya) living being:
Possesses five senses - touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing
e.g. animals, birds, human, heavenly, and hellish beings, etc.

A soul with one to four senses does not possess mind. A soul with five senses may or may not possess a mind.

Matter (Pudgala)

Matter is a nonliving substance. It is the only substance, which possesses physical body consisting of mass and volume. Its qualities are as follows:

- Possesses physical body
- Have senses (touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing)
- Possesses color
- Does not have consciousness
- Does not have any knowledge
- Are of infinite number

The smallest particle of matter is known Parmanu (atom). A paramanu occupies only one unit of space called pradesa.

There are four divisions of matter:

- **Skandha (whole-matter):**
Any object, which has a mass of matter, is called skandha.
e.g. stick, stone, knife, a particle of sand
- **Skandha-desa (portion of matter):**
Desa means a part, portion, or division. An undetached portion of skandha is called skandha-desa. When a part of the skandha (skandha-desa) is separated from the whole, it also becomes another skandha.
e.g. A hand of a statue is known as a skandha-desa but when separated from the statue is known as Skandha.

- **Skandha-pradesa (smallest particle of matter):**

The smallest undetached portion of skandha, which cannot be further divided, is called skandha-pradesa.

- **Paramanu or Anu (atom):**

When the smallest portion of the matter is separated from its skandha, it is called paramanu or anu. Paramanu matter can not be further sub-divided, cut, or pierced.

Karma or Karmic Matter (Karma Pudgala):

Karma is one of the categories of matter. It is known as karmic matter (karma pudgala). Karma particles are of very fine matter not perceptible to the senses. The entire universe is filled with such karmic matter.

Every living being is covered by karmic matter from the beginning of time. It is the karmic matter that keeps the soul away from realization of its true nature. It is due to karma one feels pleasure and pain, reincarnates in the different form of life, acquires certain types of physical body, and the duration of life.

Medium of Motion (Dharma)

Jainism considers the Medium of Motion, a nonliving substance. Its primary function is to help in the movement of soul and matter. It possesses the following qualities:

- Helps in the movement of soul and matter
- Does not possess senses, color, or body
- Does not have a consciousness or knowledge
- Exists in the entire universe (Lokakas)
- e.g. - water provides medium for fish to move

Medium of Rest (Adharma)

Jainism considers the Medium of Rest, a nonliving substance. Its primary function is to help to rest the movement of soul and matter. It possesses the following qualities:

- Helps to rest soul and matter
- Does not possess senses, color, or body
- Does not have consciousness or knowledge
- Exists in the entire universe (Lokakas)
- e.g. - People rest in the shade of a tree

Space (Akasa)

Space provides room to all other substances of the universe. Its qualities are as follows:

- Provides room to soul, matter, medium of motion, and medium of rest
- Pervades everywhere (infinite)
- Supports everything and thus it is self supported
- Have no form, color, taste, smell, and touch
- Does not perform any active action (inactive)
- Provides accommodation to soul and matter of their actions

- Is one and whole

Space is divided into two parts:

- Lokakas - Where medium of motion and rest substances exist
- Alokakas - The remaining space, which is empty and void

The dimension of Lokakas is fourteen rajlok or rajju, however Alokakas is infinite.

Time (Kaal)

The changes in living being and non-living being substances (from one paryay to another paryay of a substance) are measured in the units of time. However time is not the cause of such changes.

There are two views exist in Jainism with regards to time.

1. Time is an imaginary thing; it has no real existence.
2. Time has a real existence consisting of innumerable time atoms.

The smallest indivisible portion of time is called Samaya. Combination of samayas are called moment, second, minute, hour, day, month, year, etc.

- Innumerable samayas = one avali (time required to blink a eye)
- 16,777,216 avalis = one muhurt (48 minutes)
- 30 muhurts = one day
- 15 days = one fortnight
- 2 fortnights = one month
- 12 months = one year
- Innumerable years = one palyopama
- 1,000,000,000,000,000 palyopamas = one sagaropama