

## JAIN THEISM - Concept Of God In Jainism

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### Abstract of the Paper : (In 300 words)

Jainism is the philosophy and religion of Jainas- the followers of religion preached and practised by the Thirthankaras, the last of whom was Lord Mahavir. Jainism is one of the nine systems of Indian Philosophy; and one of the systems that is considered as an Atheistic in its nature. In this paper, I have tried to show that Jainism is not atheistic; it is Theistic, believing in god and it has its own concept of God. But before doing this I have discussed the term Theism and God, I have also discussed the root causes that have misled the scholars and thinkers to consider Jainism as Atheistic. Here I have discussed the disapproval of Vedic authorities, revolt against Vedic Ritualistic Sacrifices, emphasis on emancipatory self-effort, exclusion of Divine Grace and extermine position of Law of Karina as some of the root causes to make one believe Jainism as not believing in God. In fact, it is not so. Jainism is Theistic and it does believe in God. The real essence of the paper lies showing the very important references and citations from the Traditional Cononical as well as quasi-canonical scriptures supporting my thesis. Moreover, even some of the authoriries and authors of authentic works on Jaina religion and philosophy also supports the view. The paper would have been incomplete if it would have ended only with the references and citation. I have therfore, further tried to give the conept and nature of Jain God and the nature of Jain Theism. Both the concept of God in Jainism, and the nature of Jain Theism are uniquely philosophical and different form the conventional ones. But then jainism beleives in God, it has its own concept of God and Jainism is Theism. To know this in much detail let us read the paper.

With this much introduction, at this point, I would like to say something about the terms Theism and Atheism, in Western and Indian Philosophy and the status of God in Theism.

1. Mr.Gandhi V.R., Selected Speeches, Jain Meditation International N.Y., Sri Vallabha, Shri Samrak Nidhi, Bombay 1964, P.16.
2. Dr.Jain, J.P., Religion and Culture of the Jains (1977) P.1.

### Theism and Atheism:

Though it is not the aim of this paper to discuss and examine critically the term Theism and Atheism, it is essential that the general view about the meaning of these terms is noted in an utmost bravery. The term "Theism" has many meanings, each one in detail could be obtained in any good encyclopaedia. But the term "Theism" in its widest sense and literally meaning means "belief in God". Atheism, on the other side means a system of belief which denies the existence of God. It is very necessary to note that the scholars and historians have observed that the term "Atheism" and "Atheist" have been used "in the most haphazard manner to describe even the most trivial divergence of opinion". In support to this observation we find Socrates who was charged with "not believing in the gods the city believes in"; we hear the cry in the Roman empire against Christians as: "Away with the Atheists" for the lack of idolatry in all Christian worship. In Indian Philosophy we find Jainism and Buddhism termed as atheist manily for not accepting Vedic-authorities. But then "Atheism" in its apparent sense means, "rejection of belief in God." Atheism, "in its

most scientific and serious usage is applied to the state of mind which does not find deity (either one or many) in or above the physical universe."

Theism, as we have seen, basically means belief in God, and where God is believed. It is also believed that upon God everything else depends, and thus the discussion of origin of universe, nature of soul etc. becomes justified along with the discussion of God. Theism has been, in the light of this broad consideration, approached differently by different thinkers and scholars. The concept of God in its traditional, religious or theological sense does not differ much between Indian and the Western concept. Even the worship or the role of God as accepted and practised by the devotees in their theistic way has a great deal of resemblance. Moreover, in view of the religious life, its asceticism, sacrifice, worship etc. though treated differently by different people, God enjoys, more or less, the same status.

3. Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th Edition), Vol. XXII, P. 744.

But then, Indian concept leads the meaning to a wider and deeper sense. The central force here is that of Spiritualism and Intuitionism. God is attached, here not to the critical intelligence but to the inner consciousness. Theism and even the place of God in it, is a logical pursuit in the Western Theology - God is proved and then accepted. On the other side, in Indian Philosophy God is to be realised, and for that one has to accept Him by Faith. Not reason but faith, not intelligence but intuition, not concept but consciousness is the way to realise God in Indian Philosophy. God in the Western Theism enjoys the status of a Master or Father or a Great First Cause or a Moral Law Giver or a Creator. In Indian Philosophy God is totality of which you are a part, God is all-in-all, within and without. God is Supreme Spirit, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent. God is both personal and absolute. To love this Supreme Spirit, to believe Him, to be devoted to Him and to enter into Him is the message and mission of Indian Theism. Since "God, in the sense of an extra cosmic personal creator, has no place in the Jain philosophy",<sup>4</sup> and since "it distinctly denies such creator as illogical and irrelevant in general scheme of the universe",<sup>5</sup> it becomes more challenging and at the same time more interesting to find out the specific nature of Jain Theism. In fact, Jainism "lays down that there is a subtle essence underlying all substances, conscious as well as unconscious, which becomes an eternal cause of all modifications, and is termed God".<sup>6</sup>

Jainism, in Indian Philosophy, is a theistic system. It believes in God and it has its own theories and interpretations. Before I show you the references and citations to prove God in Jainism and the concept and nature of Jain God, let me also tell you about some of the root causes that led the scholars and thinkers to believe Jainism as Atheism.

4. Mr. Gandhi, Selected Speeches, 1964. P. 6.

5. Ibid - P. 6.

6. Ibid - P. 6.

### **Roots of Jain Atheism:**

In our country religion is not different from philosophy and religion and philosophy do not differ from science. Jainism as practised and preached as a religion today was known as Nirgrantha Dharma. It was also known as Shramana Dharma and it had many branches or schools. This Shramana tradition was different from the Brahmana Tradition. Both these currents of ancient Indian thought have sufficiently interacted and have influenced each other to a great degree in the area of Theology, Philosophy, and even socio-cultural life. The insistence of Ahimsa i.e. non-violence and compassion towards all living beings- birds, insects and even animals, is Shramana influence over Brahmana; while on the other hand, the scriptures, ethics, prayers, rituals of Jainism and Buddhism is the Brahmana influence over the Shramanas. Both these systems have

quite a good number of differences, the most basic and the fundamental one of them is the "approach" towards reality. With the Jainas "bliss consists not in dependence but in independence; the dependence is the life of the world; but the life which is the highest life is that in which we are personally independent so far as binding or disturbing influences are concerned."<sup>7</sup> Jainism, in Indian Philosophy, is one of the systems that does not accept the Vedic authorities. Disapproval of Vedic authorities by Shramanas, and particularly by Jainas, is not simply on issues related to religion and rituals like "Yagna" and sacrifices, but also on issues which are metaphysical and epistemological by nature. Jainism does not accept Advait or Monism but believes in the pluralism of souls. This disapproval of Vedic authority leads to the disapproval of Advait-philosophy, disapproval of Monism, and disapproval of many theistic elements. As a result Jainism was treated as Atheistic or as we say not believing in God (nir-iswarvadi). The second most important reason that led towards the misconception is Jainism's strong emphasis on non-violence and therefore equally strong revolt against Vedic ritualistic sacrifices. This led Jainism, if not towards pure atheism, it definitely led it towards anti-theism of Veda and other orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy.

7. Ibid - P.24.

There were other grounds too. In fact the above mentioned two are the negative roots of the so-called atheism of Jainism. The positive grounds or causes, to make people believe Jainism as atheism are equally worth noting. Jainism's emphasis on self-efforts for the emancipation or liberation is the third root cause. All Indian thinkers hold a common view that "ignorance of reality is the cause of our bondage; and liberation from this can not be achieved without the true knowledge of reality i.e. the real nature of the world and the self."<sup>8</sup> Moreover Liberation or Moksha "has been regarded as the highest value and ultimate purpose of the life of the individual".<sup>9</sup> Jainism like other systems of Indian Philosophy accepts the concept of liberation or emancipation. But then Jainism believes in strong efforts to break the chains of Karma which is the cause of bondage. Jainism does not believe in a fruit-giver God, or God that will be pleased and will shower upon us all joy and power. The way to liberation is to make efforts for three-fold combination of Right-Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct.

As an offshoot of this third cause, automatically follows the denial of God's Grace. Jainism does not believe in Divine Grace as Christianity and Islam and other Theistic theosophies believe. In Jainism, there is no realisation of one's unity with God, as it is in Vedanta philosophy. In Jainism, we find neither God, as an outside agency, nor God's grace as inevitably required to attain the salvation. And the last, but certainly not the least, in the series of the root causes is Jainism's Law of Karma. In Jainism, we find the extreme position of Law of Karma.

Prof. Chatterjee S.C. and Dutta D.M., An Introduction to Indian Philosophy (1958) P.18.

Ramji Singh, Jain Concept of Omniscience. L.D. Institute of Indology, (1974), P.24.

The term Karma in its most general and simple sense means "action". The law or doctrine of Karma means that all deeds, good or bad, physical or mental "produce their proper consequences in the life of the individual who acts".<sup>10</sup> It is founded on the simple law of cause and effect. No effect is without a cause, and one has to bear the fruits of his deeds, sooner or later. There is no escape from this. The law of Karma occupies a distinct place both in Indian Philosophy and in Indian Theology. It is known as Karma-Marg (marg means path) or Karma-vada. But then it is found at its highest degree of minuteness and in its best form of preciseness in Jainism. To Jainas, "in fact, the science of Karma is the real science of Spirituality, in so far as it tries to unfold the real nature of spirit or self".<sup>11</sup> This extreme emphasis on Karma, its uncompromising sincerity and unshakable faith in dealing with Karma through penance and austerities, has no place for God's grace or God as the dispenser of fruits of deeds. Jainism maintains that every soul in its pure form is God, having all the four Infinities: Infinite Knowledge, Infinite perception, Infinite Strength and Infinite Bliss.

Thus the emphasis is not on God or God's grace but on spiritual development of soul lifting it to a higher and higher level and thus attaining Godhood has also led many to consider Jainism as Atheism.

10. Prof. Chatterji and Dutta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy (1958), P.15.

11. Ramji Singh, Jain Concept of Omniscience, (1964), P.109.

### **Jain Theism:**

1. The God of the Jainas.

2. Theistic colors in Jain Philosophy.

3. References and citations.

In the ancient period different phenomena of nature were considered to be the working of different gods and goddesses. "In the ancient times there was not rain but rainers, not thunder but a thunderer, and in that way personality is attributed, or living that consciousness and character, to those forces. There may be conscious entities in these forces as there may be living entities on a planets, but these forces themselves are not living entities. The Jainas discard this idea so far as the Godhead or Godlike character is concerned."12 In fact, with the development of science and with the better understanding of the science these phenomena become simple and the idea of these beings as character of the highest spiritual power goes away. Actually, so far I have only told what God of the Jainas is not, what is important is to tell you what is the God of the Jainas. Jainism believes in soul. It believes that: "the soul exists; it is eternal; it is the agent of all actions; it enjoys the fruits of actions; the embodied soul's liberation is possible; the means of liberation is also available."13

According to Jainism the embodied soul is a soul in bondage. The bondage is due to Karma. "The soul that is polluted and is having a veil of Karma on it due to subreption, passions etc."14 The soul in bondage is in the state of dependence - the complete dependence of the soul is its lowest stage while the complete freedom or liberation is its highest spiritual stage. As the soul becomes purer and purer from the veil of impurities of Karma on it, it becomes brighter and brighter.

12. Gandhi V.R., Selected Speeches, Jainism (1964), P.27.

Srimad Vijaya Laxmansuri, The philosophy of Soul, (1963), P.1.

Nahar and Ghosh, An Epitome of Jainism, P.617.

According to Jainism a soul, completely released from the bondage is a soul in state of siddhahood or Godhood. In this state soul is free and enjoys four infinities: Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Preception, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. The released soul is a conqueror - a Jina as is thus a hero. A released soul possesses all the attributes of God. Now if we interpret God as the manifestation of the highest values, highest virtues and highest morals then such released souls, are Jain gods.

Let me also show what Jain God is and what the theistic colours are in the background of Jain Philosophy, mainly its logic, ethics and epistemology. First we talk about Jain logic. "The Jainas admit that things are one in their universal aspect and many in their particular aspect."15 Thus along with the differences, the element of universal, which is in all, becomes the pure being or "Sat" from Jain's logical point of view. We may call this the Highest Universal or "Maha Samanya"; and this universal is the Absolute. It becomes Absolute. "The whole gamut of reality, however, reveals its universal unitive nature as one existence when it is envisaged from the synthetic angle of vision."16

Moreover, one of the greatest contribution of the Jain Philosophy is its theory of non-absolutism. But then the non-absolutism is relativism and there cannot be "relative" with absolute. Relative always pre-supposes the absolute, which could be clearly understood through its "Maha-Samanya" or Universal." So the collective idea derived from observations of the divine characters inherent in all beings is by us called God".<sup>17</sup>

15. Dr. Radhakrishnan S., Indian Philosophy, Vol.I (1977), P.177.

16. S. Mookerjee, The Jain Philosophy of Non-Absolution, (1978), P.270.

17. Gandhi V.R., Selected Speeches, Jainism, (1964), P.29.

Jain ethics deals with certain definite codes both for the householder as well as for the monks. these codes are rigorous in insisting on spiritual development through Right Conduct. The "keynote of the system is "Ahimsa" i.e. not hurting, not killing anyone. The sanctity of life, including that of birds, beasts and insects, itself is holy and religious. The full recognition of this sanctity, in any form turns out to be theistic. To a Jain self-perfection or self-realization is the highest goal. Complete eradication of emotions and passions is indispensable for self-realization for they disturb the tranquility of soul. "The Jain-ethics stresses meditation on love for all creatures, compassion for the distressed, delight at the virtuous and indifference to the vicious." It talks about the Five Great Vows and regards transcendental purity of the soul as the highest good. Like the philosophy of soul, the holy-panted, the Great Vows, Jain's Law of Karma equally strengthens Jainism as religion having theistic altitudes towards higher moral purpose. One of the definitions of religion is "the belief in the conservation of values". Jainism and Jain ethics from this point of view raises to the status of religion. Moreover, we find in all traditional theism there is devotion and the expression of devotion is through prayers, rites and rituals as well as faithful obedience towards the scriptural commandments. If we go into the Jain doctrines and Jain way of life we find it satisfying all these. We are, thus, observing that the Jain-ethics, its codes, doctrine of Karma and its philosophy of soul, all this "is the rational conviction and profound faith in the intrinsic purity and perfection of the soul, and the capacity and capability to realise, recover and retain for Godhood through philosophical enlightenment and a rigorous course of moral and spiritual discipline"<sup>18</sup> is the keynote of Jain Theism.

18. Dr. Jain J.P., Religion and Culture of the Jains, (1977), P.288.

### **Scriptural And Other Arguments for Jain Theism:**

When we go to Scriptural and personal arguments, it would be quite in fitness to talk about Jain literature which is very rich in its value and volume both. Dr. S.Radhakrishnan has rightly said, "The faith was preserved in man's mind, as usual. The knowledge of the scriptures was slowly decaying, till in the fourth century B.C. the need for fixing the canon was keenly felt."<sup>19</sup> Jainism being "the oldest living representative of that ancient Sramana current of Indian culture"<sup>20</sup>, being one of the earliest religions of India"<sup>21</sup>, being "shown to extend as far back as 3000 B.C."<sup>22</sup>, and being described as "a very original, independent and systematic doctrine"<sup>23</sup> it has, to its great credit proved to be "a complete system with all the necessary branches"<sup>24</sup> of philosophy, theology, mythology, cosmology, each one rich in its dogmes and literature. This big bulk of literature is primarily and essentially religious in character. Leaving here all the discussions about the names and number of canonical and quasi-canonical literature and the indological issues related to each of these scriptures, I would only concentrate to give few references from some of the high ranked, authentic and non-controversial scriptures as well as authors to prove that Jainism has never discarded the belief in Supreme state of Spirituality or belief in Theism. Jain believes the canons or scriptures or "Agam" as they call it to be the ultimate source of knowledge. Let us have some scriptural arguments as supportive reference to the statement that Jainism believes in God :

19. Dr. Radhakrishnan S., Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, (1977), P.288.

20. Dr.Jain J.P., Religion and Culture of Jains, (1977), P.2.

21. Prof.Ramaswami Ayanger.

22. Maj.Gen.J.G.R.Furlong.

23. Dr.Jain J.P., Religion and Culture of Jains, 1977, P.2.

24. Ibid - P.2.

(a) Argument from Sri Acaranga Sutra:

This is one of the important scriptures of Jainas. It provides a number of instances where Mahavir has been addressed as God.<sup>25</sup> Moreover in its 24th chapter, it describes Mahavir attaining Godhood. He is the Jaina God being worshipped by Devas, Human beings and others. He is the Lord, the "Arihanta" (one who has destroyed all in his weaknesses), the Jina (the conqueror), the Kevali (Oniscient) and the Sarvajna (having all knowledge).

(b) Arguments from Sri Upasakadasanga Sutra :

This scripture describes Right Conduct of a householder through a beautiful discourse and dialogues between Lord Mahavira and his disciples. Here we find aphorisms like "Super human being (Mahamanava), "progenitor of great religion", or "great regulator" (MahaDharmikathi), "a mysterious" (Maha Gopa) etc.<sup>26</sup> This canon deals with many aspects related to theistic aspects of a religious life e.g. it tells how Lord Mahavira is praised and worshipped by others.

(c) Arguments from Nandi Sutra :

The Nandi Sutra is known as the "Balance-sheet of all the Agamas (traditional canons)."<sup>27</sup> It contains the detailed description of the Worship of Lord, the characteristic of the Community, the five types of Knowledge etc. Its very first verse is a Prayer (an eulogy) to the Jain God - "Jinesvar Bhagwana". Here Tirthankar or god is addressed as the "knower of all generating states, grand and glorious, the savior of all beings, Father, and as ever victorious."<sup>28</sup> In all, as many as 50 verses of its beginning are full of theistic colour, reflecting the reverence and sense of worship towards Tirthankara who is the Jaina God, the Divine, the Pure, the Perfect and the Powerful.

25. Acaranga Sutra, 991-92-93.

26. Ibid -

27. Manatung Suri - Article in Gujarati (Indian) Language on Practising traditional Canons (aug-1985) P.183 to 188.

28. Ibid - P.183 to 188.

(d) Arguments from Anuyogadvara Sutra :

This is known as the "key to all canons"<sup>29</sup>. It contains full discussions on Metaphysical as well as Theological issues. It is comparatively more technical and tougher to understand. But then one can clearly observe Theism peeping from the discussions. Its main thesis is based on a powerful conviction that one who follows this canon (sutra) will be able to attain infinite capacities of the Pure soul, will become God. It also contains phrases like Devas (Gods) and Namaskara (Worship).

(e) Argument from Anupapatika Sutra :

This is the first amongst the quasi-canonical scriptures (Upangas). It discusses the issues regarding penance, meditation, worship, nature of heaven, and at the end nature of Siddhas who are Jain Gods. The twentieth verse of this scripture is a famous Jaina hymn which is full of the attributes of God, some of the attributes are : "Divine and Pure God", "Self-emanant", "the master of the World", "the welwisher of the world", "the path shower of the world", "the Omniscient", "the Good", "the absolute motionless", "the Pure and Perfect", "the unlimited and the changeless". This scripture also describes the Upasana (method of worshipping) of Lord. It explains three types of worships viz. Physical worship, phonic worship and mental worship. It also describes how infinite pure souls - Siddhas form "Monism" as they all shine having their light merge into each other. Thus apart from establishing Theism, this scripture also solves the metaphysical problems arising out of plurality of infinite liberated souls. A touch of not only Theism but Monism is clearly found here in this scripture.

29. Ibid - P.183 to 188.

(f) Argument from Uttaradhyayana Sutra :

This is also one of the four fundamental scriptures (Mula-sutra) of the Jaina canonical literature. It is very popular amongst the non-Jaina Scholars of Jainism. It contains the last sermons of Lord Mahavira, constituted in 36 chapters. It has a very big variety of subjects. In chapter 29 of this scripture Lord Mahavira explains the significance and benefits of such acts as "bowing (Vandana), singing hymns or eulogy (stuti), confession (Prayascitta), forgiveness (Ksamapana), Concentration and meditation (anupreksha and dhyana), penance (tapa) etc."30 The entire teachings of Lord Mahavira become unconceivable if Jainism is Atheism. On the contrary, here also, at number of places Mahavira has been addressed as God. At the end of this scripture there is an eulogy after Lord Mahavira composed by Sudharma Swami, Lord Mahavira's disciple. It is composed of twenty-nine verses expressing the attributes of Lord Mahavira. The entire eulogy is an example of the Jain conception of God and its theistic approach towards life and reality.

(g) Arguments from Quasi-canonical literature:-

The "Yogasara", having a control theme of soul merging out as absolute in the pure form, "describes the nature of Jain God, and says this God is worshipped mentally through the fulfilment of VOWS and physically through "Bhakti" (Devotion) and "Pooja" (rituals)"31

The "Adhyatmasara" also discusses the nature of soul, soul in its polluted state etc. But it also talks about prayer. Here through verse no. 714 to 274 the absolute has been described just as we find in Sri Bhagwadgita. The Adhyatmasara at the end defines God and says, "one who has attained absolute knowledge, detached from the worldly activities, annihilated all the karmas and has attained siddhahood is God."32

30. Uttaradhyayan Sutra - ch.-29, No. 10 to 23.

31. Yogasara - No. 29.

32. Adhyatmasara - No. 24.

The "Samana-Sutta" is a sacred text of Jainas and Jain-religion. It opens with a prayer to Jain God and to holy-pentad. It says, "it is the commandment of the Jain God that one should give up the soul's outer activities of the mind, of the speech and of the body; and should enter into the inner world of the soul and should thus concentrate on God."33

The "Syadavadamani" is the commentary on Sri Hemchandra's Mahavir-Stuti and was written by Sri



Mallisenacarya in 1293 A.D. It reflects author's deep study of the other systems of Indian philosophy. At the end of the work in the last five couplets it expresses God's capacity to know the reality in its pure form."<sup>34</sup>

Acharya Hemchandra's "Yogasutra" has its own place in the history of Jain religion. It tells how one who practices yoga "has to concentrate on his own soul as not different (abhinna) from God."<sup>35</sup> It also tells how a meditator becomes free from his sins & attains godhood.

Sri Nemichandra's "Dravyasāgraha" is one of the authentic treatises on Jain metaphysics. It begins with a prayer which is out and out theistic in spirit. It also discusses, in its 3rd chapter "the path of salvation" (Moksha-marga). The commentary on this treatise written by Sri Brahmadeva gives a detailed description of the nature of God.

We also find phrases, prayers, discussions of God, nature of God and of Jain Theism in Siddhasena Divakar's "Nyaya Karnika" and "Sanmati-Prakarana". In the same way, even in Sri Haribhadra's "Sad-darsana-samuccaya" Jain God is described.<sup>36</sup>

33. Samana Suttam No. 5.

34. Syadvadamanjari, Mallisenacarya - 1293, No. 17.

35. Yogasutra, Acharya Hemchandra, P.199.

36. Sadadarsana Samuccaya - ed. Mr. Jain Mahendrakumar (1970), P.165.

Excluding many scriptures and quasi-canonical works, I will now take some leading personalities - an authority as well as mystic in their achievements." Srimad Aanandghanji" of eighteenth century was a great spiritualist. He was a great poet and a Jain monk, similarly Srimad Rajendra, a contemporary and religious guru of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Sukhalalji, Pandit Dalsukh Malvania and so many authors of Jain Philosophy and Religion, including Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Dasgupta, Dr. J.P. Jain, Dr. Hari Satya Bhattacharya etc. have all shown Jainism to be highly theistic, believing in God and certainly not Atheism. Moreover, Jainism has its own popular beliefs, and Sadhana viz a way to practice the religion & rituals. All these canonical, quasi-canonical and other literature - all leading to some very important conclusions regarding Jain Theism. The most general concluding remarks could be summed up as :

\*... that Jainism is not atheistic

\*... that Jainism does not believe in a creator God, but does believe in God, as the Supreme, Pure, Perfect and Powerful Spirit.

\*... the Jains have their own concept of God & Godhood. God to them is a liberated soul or souls.

\*... In spite of emphasis on self-effort the scope of prayer & divine grace is there in Jainism - Prayer in Jainism is more a source of inspiration & devotion. Divine Grace, though not directly from God, becomes part of Jain rituals.

\*... In Jain mode of worship, the relationship between "I and Them" or "Devotee and Divine" or "Soul (Atma) and Super Soul (Paramatma)" is quite evident.

\*... Jainism is quite rich in its Theology as well as mythology, based on principles which are Theistic in nature.

\*... Jainism, as religion and thought, is theistic on it provides an unique variety of theism.



From the above discussed and referred citations from canons, literatures and authors, we could see Jainism has quite sufficient elements to be called a religion as well as Theism. We find the Jaina God all Powerful, having infinite apprehension, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. Besides He is pure in the sense, He is free from all the defilements and is worshiped by all. Such a Pure and Liberated soul- God is our savior & protector. His grace, His teachings and His worship can lead us to transcend our ordinary empirical self to a higher spiritual level. William James says, "Theism, whenever has erected itself into a systematic philosophy of the universe, has shown a reluctance to let God be anything less than All-in-All. In other words philosophic theism has always shown a tendency to become pantheistic and monistic, and to consider the world as one unit of absolute fact."<sup>37</sup> Needless to say that the same is found in Jainism.

In Jain theism God is there. But then God in Jainism, in spite of all powerful and all blissful like the God of other religions, is a Soul that was once embodied, in a bondage, and has become God by self-effort. We do not find such a situation in the conventional Theism. Moreover, Jain God is not the Creator of the world or the fruit-giver. The world, according to Jainism is since the beginningless of time (anadi). In conventional theism we find God as the world-creator. Thus, though Jainism is Theistic in its colour, it very much differentiates from the conventional Theism. This brings the Jaina theism to a peculiar position where Jainism appears to be having its own type of theism : not Theism in Jainism but Jain Theism in Jainism.

37. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experiences, (1952), P.129.

Coming to our last conclusions, let me say that Jainism is more "a way of life" than a form of thought. One is bound to be unjustified to Jainism if one is not clear in the terms: "Theism" and "Absolutism". Jainism as a religion, though finding room for devotion to God, decidedly regards the quest of absorption in the Absolute as a higher form of purity and piety. I would even say that any person who practices Theism purely metaphysically is bound to be a true Jaina. In other words Jainism is metaphysical theism.

Jainism in our final conclusion is Theism. There are thinkers and philosophers who have expressed this or such theism as "modified theism" (Prof. W.K. Wright) or "towards theism" (Dr. Radhakrishnan) or a "variety of theism" (Dr. J.A. Yajnik). In my final summing up I would like to say that with a distinct concept and nature of God in Jainism, Jainism is Theism. I have tried, through this, paper, to bring out this Theism which is latent or hidden, before the reader.

#### BOOKS CONSULTED :-

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