

LESSON 04

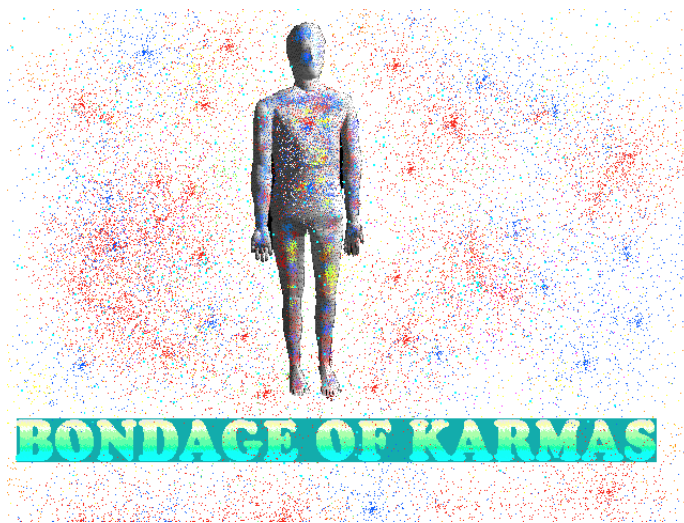
THEORY OF KARMA

As a student, you have seen that some students do very well in class even when they spend a little time to study while others struggle to maintain their good grades in spite of studying very hard. In the same way, you might have heard that for some people the money come easily, while others cannot even find a job. You might have also heard that some people stay sick all the time, while others never get sick. You might have heard someone lives over hundred years, while someone dies as a young child. Everybody is looking for an answer to these strange disparities. Some may say it is the God's will, others may say it is his luck, and so on. The Jainism says every thing happens due to the result of our own past doings. You reap what you sow and no God or someone else is there to make this happen or change.

We and only we are the reasons for our suffering or happiness. This can be explained by the theory of Karma. Therefore, it is very important that we understand this process very clearly. It also explains what karmas are, why and what role karmas play in our life (with soul), and how do we accumulate different kinds of karmas as well as how we get rid of them.

If you sit back and think, then you will realize that you are doing something every moment. Sometimes you might be talking or listening and if you are not doing that then you are thinking. So you are always busy doing something. This is our nature. These activities may be helpful or harmful to others or ourselves or may be just wasteful and purposeless. We do not realize that everything we do brings karman particles to our souls and formation of karma happens. When these karmas mature karman particles depart form the soul leaving behind happiness or suffering in our lives. This is how the karmas are responsible for our happiness or suffering and if we are not careful how to handle this happiness or suffering then same happiness and suffering become the cause of

accumulating more new karmas to the soul.



Karmas are the derivatives of the karman particles. The Karman particles are made up of the non-living matter (pudgals). They are scattered and floating all over the universe (Lokakash). They are very very fine particles and we are neither able to see them with our eyes or with the regular microscope. A cluster of such innumerable particles is called a vargana. The karman varganas is one of the eight kinds of pudgal varganas. The karman vargana are the most subtle particles. When

these karman varjanas get attached to the soul, they are called karmas. The karmas are grouped into two groups: 1) good (punya) karmas or 2) bad (Pap) karmas. The good karmas are the result of our good or pious activities while the bad karmas are the result of our bad or sinful activities.

PROCESS OF THE BONDAGE (BANDH) OF THE KARMAS

Whenever, we think, talk or do something, karman varjanas get attracted to our soul. At this time if our actions are associated with passions like ego, anger, greed, and, deceit etc., then these karman varjanas occupies same body space along with the atma pradesh (soul). Now these karman varjanas are called karmas. Though the soul and karman varjanas occupy same body space they neither merge into each other nor lose their independent existence but rather maintain their own independence separate state. This process of being together is also called the bondage of karmas to the soul. The karman varjanas with our soul are called the Dravya Karmas. While passions, like anger, ego, greed and deceit which arise into our soul are called the Bhava Karmas. The passions work as the gluing factor and that is why when passions are associated with our actions then dravya karmas stays for longer with soul and on the other side if there were no passions associated with our actions then dravya karma comes to the body space but do not stay there and fall off within a fraction of second. This falling of dravya karmas is explained in the following way: 1) in one samay (first samay) karman varjanas come to body space, 2) karman varjanas stay in body space with soul for next one samay (second samay) and 3) these karman varjanas fall off within next one samay (third samay). So this process of karman varjanas coming to the soul and falling off is considered as no bondage of karmas to the soul. While when there are passions associated with our actions these karman varjanas (dravya karma) do not fall off but stays with soul for a long time leading to thousands or millions of years. These long staying dravya karma when mature they fall off the soul giving rise to their effects like happiness or sufferings.

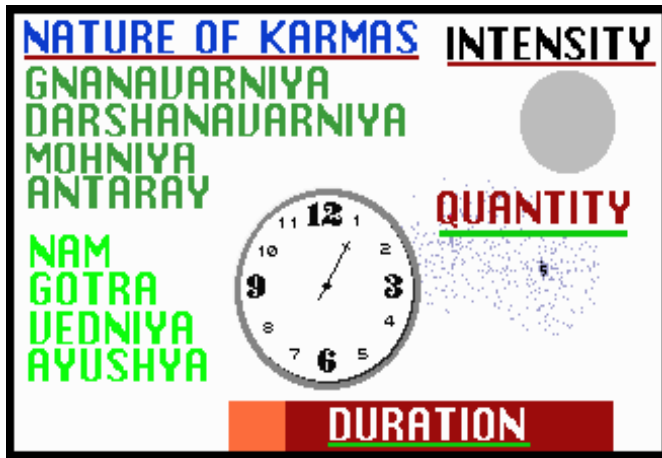
Now let us see what are the different activities we do and how. We do 1) physical activities, 2) verbal activities or 3) mental activities. We carry out these activities in three more different ways, 1) by doing them ourselves, 2) we ask others to do activities and 3) we encourage others to carry out activities. Thus, in nine different combinations, we do our activities that cause bondage of the karmas to the soul.

At the time of the bondage of karmas to the soul the following four characteristics are determined about the karmas. They are:

- I. What Kind of (Nature) Karmas will these be?
- II. How many Karma particles (Quantity) will attach?
- III. How long (Duration) will these karmas stay with soul?
- IV. How strong (Intensity) will be the bondage of these karmas?

I) NATURE OF THE KARMAS

Depending upon the nature of the results of the karmas, they are grouped into eight types. They are:



1. Knowledge-Obscuring (Jnanavarniya) Karma
2. Perception-Obscuring (Darshanavarniya) Karma
3. Obstructive (Antaräy) Karma
4. Deluding (Mohniya) Karma
5. Feeling-Producing (Vedniya) Karma
6. Body-Determining (Nam) Karma
7. Status-Determining (Gotra) Karma
8. Age-Determining (Ayushya) Karma

These eight karmas are also grouped into two categories,

1. Destructive (Ghati) Karmas
2. Non-destructive (Aghati) Karmas

Ghati means destruction. Those karmas that destroy the true nature of the Soul are called destructive or ghati karmas. Those karmas that do not destroy the true nature of the soul, but only affect the body in which the soul resides are called non-destructive or Aghati karmas. The first four types of karmas from above list are destructive (ghati) karmas, and last four are non-destructive (aghati) karmas.

II) THE QUANTITY OF THE KARMAS

If the physical vigor of our activities is weak, then we accumulate smaller number of karman particles, but if the physical vigor is stronger, then we accumulate larger number of karman particles on our soul.

III) DURATION OF THE KARMAS

Duration of the karmic particles on the soul is decided by how intense our desires are at the time of our activities. If the desire for the activity is mild, then the duration of the bondage will be for a short time, but on the other side if the desire is stronger, then the duration of the bondage will be for a long time. The minimum time could be a fraction of a second and a maximum time could be thousands or even millions of years.

IV) INTENSITY OF THE KARMAS

The intensity of karmas depends upon how intense our passions are at the time of our activities. The lesser the intensity of our passions, the less strong is the resulting bondage; the greater the intensity the more stronger the resulting bondage.

The intensity of the bondage of the karmas to the soul is described in four different levels.

1. Loose Bondage:

This would be like a loose knot in the shoe string which can easily be untied. Same way, the Karmas which are attached loose to the soul could be easily untied (shed off) by simple thing like repentance.

2. Tight Bondage:

This would be a tight knot which needs some efforts to untie it. Same way, the Karmas which are attached tight to the soul could be untied (Shed off) with some efforts like the atonement.

3. Tighter Bondage:

This would be a tighter knot which needs too much efforts to untie it. Same way, the Karmas which are attached tighter to the soul could be untied (Shed off) with special efforts like the austerities.

4. Tightest Bondage:

This would be a knot which could not be untied no matter how hard you work at it. Same way, the Karmas which are attached so tight to the soul would not shed off by any kind of efforts but we would have to bear their results to shed off.