

## Book Review

### DETERMINISM IN ŚRAMAṄIC TRADITIONS

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**Reviewer:** Pragma Jain \*

The conflict between fate and effort never gets old. About two thousand years ago, in his *Āpta-mīmāṃsā*, Samantabhadra refuted favoring any one side of these calling it *mithyā ekānta* (false one-sidedness). His argument for refuting fate is that if fate can grant the desired wishes, then why should we make efforts to earn fate? And if fate obtains fate in turn, then the propriety of salvation gets invalidated (in the absence of efforts), which also invalidates the efforts being made for salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, if only efforts grant the desired wishes, then how to obtain efforts; and if that is obtained by fate, it invalidates the whole equation. Also, if efforts obtain efforts, then no efforts can be infallible which is opposite to what happens as similar efforts do not always yield similar results.<sup>2</sup>

In order to establish the *samyak-ekānta* (true one-sidedness), he defines involvement of fate (*daiva*) in such favorable or unfavorable acts that take place without incorporating one's conscious efforts (*buddhi-vyāpāra*) while those favorable or unfavorable acts that take place by incorporating one's conscious efforts involve efforts (*puruṣārtha*). It is all a matter of primary or secondary point of view.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion does not completely refute the role of 'chance' in the appearance of an act, but it also questions whether an act taking place, involving fate or effort, was predestined. Determinism, if understood with the involvement of God in worldly affairs, is not very much said to be aligned with Jainism and Buddhism as they do not accept the involvement of an almighty in worldly acts. Ājīvakas, on the other hand, firmly believe in determinism implying all acts to be determined by previously existing causes. Jainism incorporates five co-factors in the appearance of an act among which one is determinism, while Buddhism brings two types of determinism to the table – theistic and karmic, calling will to be conditioned to a greater or lesser extent.

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<sup>1</sup> *daivādevārtha-siddhiścāiddaivaṃ pauruṣataḥ katham / daivataścedanirmokṣaḥ pauruṣaṃ niṣphalaṃ bhavet // (Āptamīmāṃsā 88)*

<sup>2</sup> *pauruṣādeva siddhiścet pauruṣaṃ daivataḥ katham / pauruṣāccedamoghaṃ syāt sarva-prāṇiṣu pauruṣam // (Āptamīmāṃsā 89)*

<sup>3</sup> *abuddhipūrvā'pekṣāyāmiṣṭā'niṣṭaṃ svadaivataḥ / buddhipūrvavyapekṣāmiṣṭā'niṣṭaṃ svapauruṣāt // (Āptamīmāṃsā 91)*

The three Śramanic traditions interpret determinism in unique ways. International School for Jain Studies (ISJS) organized a two-day seminar in collaboration with Mangalayatan University (MU), Aligarh on 11-12 January 2018 and discussed the vitality of the concept. The present book is the second edition of the seminar's procedures. The first edition was published digitally in 2020.

This edition, as also mentioned in the preface to this edition by the editor, is a transformation from the electronic version to physical version with minor changes. It also has a change in the referencing style. Although the references are maintained after the paper with a consolidated bibliography towards the end of the book, in-text is used, and notes are given in footnotes. The preface to the first edition identifies the three traditions and describes the difference between them regarding determinism.

Although twenty-eight scholars from across the country and overseas had presented their views upon the theme within two days spread in six technical sessions, a selection of ten papers is published in the book from the presentations at the seminar. The chief guest of the inaugural session at the seminar was Dr. Hukamchand Bharill, a renowned scholar of Jainism, who had explained *krama-baddha-paryāya* (sequence-bound modifications) which is the bedrock of Jain determinism. A list of all the delegates and distinguished scholars along with the schedule of the seminar is given after the papers in a section called Summary of Presentations in Seminar.

The first paper *Determinism in Science and Jainism* by Surendra S. Pokharna related scientific theories like quantum physics with Jainism. He correlates free will with multiple dimensions of time citing Neppe and Close (2012) who have developed a nine-dimensional model of reality including three dimensions of each – space, time and consciousness. He argues that the dimension of space explains ordinary physical time, the dimension of time explains pre-recognition, and the dimension of consciousness explains free will in the domain of psychology. Relating science and philosophy is more or less far-fetched but the paper presents several ideas that can be perused in the view of science and determinism in Jainism.

Prakash C. Kanthaliya's paper *Determinism and the Karma Theory of Jainism* revolves around the concept of karma in Indian Śramanic philosophies and explains the role of karma in attaining various fruits. He presents only four levels of bondage ignoring that all types of karmas once bound cannot be shed without giving fruits. Although they can change their condition provided the bearer of karma performs penance etc. He discusses *nikācīta* karma that does not change forms, but at the same time he says that we can change our fate as we have control over our karmas.

The third paper *Niyativāda in Jain Tradition* by Shugan C. Jain proposes fatalism as subjugation of all acts to fate making us powerless to do anything other than what we actually do. This theory need not be confused with determinism which, according to the author, implies all acts to have pre-existing causes. He compares fatalism with Jain karma theory, Jain ethics and Jain history. Taking refuge in *anekāntavāda*, the paper absurdly concludes

that pure soul after liberation goes with the flow of determinism while the empirical soul is unpredictable and does not support determinism.

Christopher K. Chapple's paper *Free Will in Jainism* takes its threads from the *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, the *Tattvārthasūtra*, the *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*, the *Samayasāra* and *Samaṇa Suttam*, and picks up occurrences where conscious actions are inevitable. As the title of the paper suggests, it focuses upon free will calling Jainism a 'solitary, heroic undertaking, a commitment to purify the soul of karma through the constant, mindful enactment of spiritual discipline.' The paper also presents various instances from field studies of Jain communities. Drawing upon the devotional practices of a householder as well as the practices of vows by a monk, the paper emphasizes that through action, one becomes trapped in karma; through action one can start to regain a sense of one's true identity. The paper sticks to its theme that 'meditation, an act of will to undo the will, provides the path to that realization.'

According to the schedule at the back of the book, Buddhism, another Śramaṇic tradition that incorporates determinism, was discussed in the seminar by few scholars. The only paper published in the book is by Bimalendra Kumar titled *Concept of Free Will in Theravāda Buddhism*. The paper clears its stand that the 'Buddhist theory of dependent origination is opposed to all deterministic theories.' Free will, according to Buddhism, is a morally and socially relative concept. The paper also identifies that freedom of thought is meaningless if one is denied choosing between two alternative courses of action.

*Śramaṇa Ethics: Determinism in the Contemporary Context*, the sixth paper, is by Meenal Katarnikar. She asserts that determinism in Jainism is conditional, and it is inappropriate to picture humans as mere pawns at the hands of destiny. Her discussion on contemporary relevance of Śramaṇa ethics delineates the modern century social factors that incline towards 'consumption, enjoyment, power, life of the rich, luxury and comfort,' questioning the moral value system of the twenty-first century, reasoning science and spirituality to be poles apart. The only logic that she proposes is to be rational for the sake of the current generation.

The seventh paper *Free Will in the Realm of Morality: A Jain Perspective* by Kamini Gogri discusses bondage and liberation in the light of seven basic concepts (*tattvas*) and three jewels (*ratnatraya*) and then drifts away towards morality and spirituality. The missing conclusion could have related these sub-topics with free will.

Navin K. Srivastav, in his paper *Niyativāda as Depicted in Jainism* presents different schools of thought having various theories of causation viz. *kālavādī*, *svabhāvavādī*, *niyatīvādī*, *adṛṣṭavādī* and *puruṣārthavādī*. While discussing determinism, indeterminism and freedom, he argues *niyati* to be a problem as effort cannot be determined by karma or fate, yet 'time, nature, determinism, chance-accident and self-effort cannot be thought separately.'

Paper by Jinesh R. Sheth titled *Determinism, Free Will and Morality* shows implied relation between omniscience and determinism. Further, while examining determinism with karma and *paryāya*, the paper speculates theological determinism as the determining factor of

omniscience, and metaphysical determinism as the determining factor of modification of a substance. Both of these are vital factors in determining free will and morality. Moral responsibility is in direct tandem with intention of a living being making Jainism to be closer to compatibilism than free will.

The last paper and the only one in Hindi on *Niyativāda aur Kathamcit Niyati* is by Rahul Kumar Singh. He argues that although determinism, the theory of Maṅkhaliputra Gośālaka, is pervasive in most of the Indian philosophies, it would be better if all causal factors are considered as equally vital for an act to be carried out. Basing his ideas on Haribhadra's *Śāstravāravārtā-samuccaya*, omniscience does not make things determined, rather it only knows them as it is, and that man cannot rely on any one of the two – destiny or efforts.

Although the publisher has kindly given a group photograph of the seminar's attendees after the papers, it has come out to be a small, black and white picture which could have been a colored full-page picture for the benefit of the readers. Some information is provided about Mangalayatan University, Aligarh, co-organizing institution of the seminar which had provided the space and services for its smooth organization after the summary of the presentations which follows a couple paragraphs about ISJS. After a consolidated bibliography, the book has information of the contributors. At the end, the book provides an exhaustive index of technical terms of Jainism used in the book with their page numbers.

Overall, the book is an effort to bring scholars at one page through the proceedings of the seminar on a burning concept of Jainism. Although some papers lack an explanation to the theme, the others present their views on determinism as a part of Jain philosophy. The title of the book suggests detailed discussion on determinism in Śramaṇic traditions, but the focus of most of the papers remained Jainism, also, the book contains nine papers on determinism in Jain tradition, and one on Buddhist tradition.

Well, the hard-bound book with an attractive jacket cover, having information about the theme and editors in a nutshell, would be a good buy for students as well as research scholars. It provides several references to the primary and secondary sources that need to be considered for a comprehensive study of determinism in Jainism.