

2.1 Jain Geography

What is Universe?

Universe according to Jainism is compound of the four primary ingredients viz. Time, Space, Soul and Pudgal. These are resolvable into minutest of minutest parts. They - every one of them – are instinct, with definite power by the virtue of which they are capable being developed in numerable ways through the processes of permutation and combination of these four original ingredients which form the true *Character*, composition and make-up of the Universe. But what is it really due to ? the variety in the arrangement and combination is due to:

1. *Kāl* - Time
2. *Swabhāv* - Nature i.e. conducive environment.
3. *Niyati* - 'Destiny or necessity'
4. *Karma* - Action or motion and
5. *Udaya* - Effort, self assertion.

These five determining causes all acting in conjunction with one another on the substance (*Dravyās*) produce changes and variations in the same. Regulate their manner and determine its growth, form and configuration as well. Universe has been the permanent theatre of perpetual changes and diversities - a strange array of ever occurring phenomena that bewilders us at every moment and can turn our life and thoughts.

- 1) **Time** : Time is an aggregate of one dimension. It flows on uniformly revealing itself in relation of sequence and seasons. Succession is in prime property and therefore all changes are possible in Time only.
- 2) **Swabhava (nature)** : Nature is the natural or external environment of a thing of organism. It consists of the soil, the air, the water, the heat and the light. The growth of the plant may be referred to the seed which is substantial cause of the plant and to the external environment (Like the soil, the water, the air the sunlight etc.) which determine the growth. That is why it is said that the life of an organism depends on the external Nature. Life is nothing but the continuous adjustment of inter-relationships of wants and demands of living organism. Metabolism is two processes of construction and destruction and form chief feature of a living organism. Normal growth of an organism means normal metabolism. The external nature thus stands to supply the needs, demands and requirements of an organism for its proper nourishment.
- 3) **Niyati** : *Niyati* means fate or destiny. In Jain Philosophy, the term '*Niyati*' signifies 'Necessity'. It is described as the concatenation of causes when all things must follow as simply as two plus two equal to four. There cannot be least possible resistance to it.
- 4) **Karms**: *Karma* means action or deed done. It implies a changes of relations or relative positions which is motion in one form or the other. The course of motion (*Karma*) is the substance, which produces action, and has to bear good or bad fruits of its own *Karmās*. As you saw, so shall you reap.
- 5) **Udhyam (Exertion / Efforts)** : *Udhyam* (Exertion / Efforts) is the desire to realize a particular end or idea. This desire.- to –do is the supreme reason for all existences.

All the true reasons and transcendent motives a man can assign for his action is it is according to his wishes his desires.

According to Jain philosophy, the universe is not a fortuitous concourse of dead, dull matter (i.e. *pudgal*) only; for that would mean mere materialism which Jainism does not allow. In addition to dead dull '*Pudgal*' matter, there is something super-physical, both in the living as well as in non living also. When this super-physical substance departs from living (or even non-living) we say it is dead now. This, according to modern science also, is true for animals and plants as well as substances like metal also. There is therefore, not only unknown arbitrary vital force, but also a law which acts uniformly from 'within' throughout the inorganic and the inorganic worlds.

Now that super physical (call it by any name, by departure of which the living becomes dead) is of highest spiritual essence, and it is common to all.

Description of World

1) The middle world (*Madhyā lokā*) :

This is also known as the Animal world. (*Tiryanchā Lokā*). It lies on the circular upper surface,, lies in the center of Universe. It is one *Ruju* broad and long. The other worlds, with their hells lie below it; and the heavenly world, the *Dev Lokās*, at the height of 1,00,000 *Yojāns* above it.

Mountain *Meru* is at the center of the middle world. The continent, known as *Jambu Dwipā*, surrounds it in the form of a circle and its diameter is 1,00,000 *Yojāns*. A ring formed ocean surrounds the *Jambu Dwipā*. It is an ocean of the salt (*Lavanoda*) and in its diameter is 2,00,000 *Yojāns*. The continent called *Ghatki Khand* joins them, again in the form of a ring, and in diameter is 4,00,000 *Yojāns*. *Ghatki Khand* is also bordered by a circular ocean. Thus, there are series of continents, and countless oceans one after the other, finally up to *Swayambhu Raman* ocean which washes around the whole middle world i.e. *Madhya lokā*. The names of the first eight of them are as under:

| Sr. No. | Continent | Ocean |
|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Jambu Dwip</i> | <i>Lavanoda</i> (Salt – ocean) |
| 2. | <i>Ghatki Khand</i> | <i>Kaloda</i> (Black sea) |
| 3. | <i>Puskarvar Dwip</i> | <i>Puskaroda</i> (Lotus Ocean) |
| 4. | <i>Varun Var Dwip</i> | <i>Varunoda</i> (Varun Ocean) |
| 5. | <i>Kshir Var Dwip</i> | <i>Kshiroda</i> (Ocean of milk) |
| 6. | <i>Ghrut Var Dwip</i> | <i>Ghrutoda</i> (Butter milk ocean) |
| 7. | <i>Ikshuvar Dwip</i> | <i>Iksuvaroda</i> (Sugar Ocean) |
| 8. | <i>Nandishwar Dwip</i> | <i>Nandishwaroda</i> |

The continents have been given the names as per their characteristics marks; which are peculiar to them. The oceans are given the name of such liquids, which resemble the water of ocean.

Of all the *dwips* (Islands) *Jambudwip* is very significant because it is in the center of the whole universe. Jains believe that our India and the present world as we see, exist in *Jambudwip*.

Jambudwip is surrounded by a very high and broad wall. The wall is supposed to be made from precious gold, diamonds and such other jewels. Even the grill work is done by gold and diamonds. There are 4 mighty gates, protected by deities.

Jambudwip continent has 6 mighty mountains, dividing the continent into 7 zones (*Kshetra*). The names of these zones and mountains are as under:

| Sr. No. | Zone | Mountain |
|---------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Bharat Kshetra</i> | <i>Himavan mountain.</i> |
| 2. | <i>Haimava Kshetra</i> | <i>Maha-Himavan mountain</i> |
| 3. | <i>Hari Kshetra</i> | <i>Nishadha mountain</i> |
| 4. | <i>Videh Kshetra</i> | <i>Nila mountain</i> |
| 5. | <i>Ramyak</i> | <i>Rukmi mountain</i> |
| 6. | <i>Hairanyvat Kshetra</i> | <i>Shikhari mountain</i> |

These mountains consist of Gold, Silver and beryl. On the eastern summit of every mountain, there are Jain temples embellished with Jewels. There is a large lake on each mountain with lotus flowers.

14 rivers spring from these 6 mountain. They flow into salt ocean flowing through the zones.

The south most zone is *Jambudwip*. It is bordered by *Himavan* mountain in the north. On another side, there is a salt ocean. We live on *Bharat Varsh* (India) which is part of *Jambudwip*. *Vaitadhya* mountain running parallel to *Himavan* divides *Bharat Varsh* into two parts- northern and southern half. The rivers *Maha-Sindhu* and *Maha-Ganga* flow down from *Himavan* into west and east respectively divide each one of these halves into 3 each. Thus whole *Bharat Varsh* is divided into 6 parts.

Bharat Varsh is a *Karma Bhoomi* i.e. it is a land in which human beings have to work, and in which all sorts of *Karmās* can be bound (by soul). The periodical changes of 6 *Arās* take place in it.

The *Himavart Varsh* zone, in north of *Himavart* mountain is four times bigger than *Bharat Varsh*. *Shabdpati* mountain lies in its center. *Himvat Varsh* is a *Bhog Bhoomi* i.e. a land in which human beings live the life of pleasure almost like fruits of *Kalpa Vriksha* (the wonderful wishing tree) Here prevails an age of only pleasure.

Harivarsh zone is on northern side of *Himavan Varsha*. It is four times broad than the former. The conditions of life here are better than *Himavart Varsh*. Here prevails an *arā* (age) of *Susmā*.

The *Nisadha* mountain separates *Harivarsha* from *Videh Varsh*. This is *Maha Videh Kshetra*. It is largest of all the *Kshetras*. The mountain *Meru* (*Mandar*) lies in the middle of this *kshetra*. *Meru* is, in a way, center or *Naval* of the whole *Jambudwipā*. On all the summits, there are beautiful lotus ponds, palaces, temples. Two big rivers *Sitā* and *Sitadā* flow at the foot of *Meru*.

Vakāra mountain ranges start from *Meru*.

- (1) *Saumanas* mountain consisting Silver.
- (2) *Vidhut Prabhā* mountain consisting Gold.

(3) *Gandh Madan* mountain consisting Gold.

(4) *Malyavan* mountain consisting Beryl.

Devkuru and *Uttarkuru* are two most fortunate of all *Jambudwip* region, because here is an era of all *Susmā Susmā*. Thus here there is only happiness permanently.

In *Purva Videh* and *upper Videh*, there is land of *Karmās – Karmā bhoomi*, like *Bharat Varsh*.

Ramyak Varsh zone is exact counter part of *Hari Varsh*. *Harin Varat* is exactly like *Haimavata*. *Airavat Varsh* is like *Bharat Varsh*.

The whole *Jambu dwip* is in a circular form. It is encompassed by a salt ocean. In its center, there is a gigantic barrel like container(*Patal*) Gods have their abode there.

There are series of island in *Lavanda* and 56 median islands.

2) The Nether world :

Seven subterranean regions lie story-like, thousand *Yojans* deep under the earth of middle world. Of these, only the upper ones serve as an abode for certain divine beings while the others shelter the hells where the souls for their bad deeds have to undergo horrible tortures.

The uppermost subterranean region is *Ratna Prabha*, having divided into 3 stories under one-another. Of these the third one of *Ratna Prabha* serves as a place of punishment for those who are condemned.

Each region of the hells has several stories. There is a central hell in the center of every story. Numerous row-hells spread from here into four directions. The number of hells decreases when one moves downwards.

Ratna Prabha (Shine of Jewels) have 13 stories and 30,00,000 hells. That is on the top. On 7th *Mahatmah – Prabha* (Shine of great darkness) there is only one story and only 5 hells) from 1st to 7th totally there are 49 stories and 84,00,000 hells. The inhabitants of hell, unlike human beings on the earth, are born in super natural manner- by suddenly coming out of the hole in a wall and falling down. Their complete evolution takes one *muhurat* (48 minutes). Their structure is completely unsymmetrical. They have only first 3 kinds of knowledge and have transcendent knowledge of material things. All these knowledge only add to their sufferings.

Self discipline is not possible here; therefore they cannot rise beyond 4th stage of *Guna Sthanakas*.

The deeper the hells, worse are their inhabitants, greater are their pains. Life span in lowest stories is the highest.

The conditions are horrible in hells. The smell is pestilent, the air is sharp and pungent and there is constant awful darkness. Walls and floors are covered with dirt and they are slippery everywhere. All kinds of punishment and ill-treatment are provided. The torturing include hacking to pieces, broken on a wheel, being roasted, skewered impaled, whipped cut with knives, droned in water, boiled in cauldrons etc.

3) The world of Gods:

Gods live the life of happiness. They have magnificent palaces to stay where they enjoy all pleasures of life. Their every wish is fulfilled. Here also self-discipline is impossible among them.

4) Main types:

Bhuvanvasi, Vyantar, Jyotiska and Vaimaniks. The minimum life span is 10,000 years and maximum is 33 *Sagarpoam*. Their appearance is marvelous, youthful and radiant.

They have no shadow. Their eyes do not twinkle and their hairs and nails do not grow. Everything is illuminated with the glitter of precious stones and diamond.