

Quotations From Scriptures:

Selections From Acharya Umasvati's TATTVAARTH SUTRA

Introduction

Acharya Umasvati's TATTVAARTH SUTRA presents a systematic and comprehensive view of the seven aspects of reality, relating to the basic principles of Jainism. The universe is an important element of reality. In the third and fourth chapters of the TATTVAARTH SUTRA, Acharya Umasvati has presented some aspects of Jain cosmology depicting the structure of the universe.

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong, accompanied by Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin, landed the lunar module Eagle on the surface of the Moon. Armstrong and Aldrin spent a day on the surface of the Moon before returning to the Earth. A total of six such manned moon landings were carried out between 1969 and 1972. Evidently, these Moon landings are at variance with the Jain concepts of the structure of the universe. Pandit Phool Chandra Jain Siddhantacharya had expressed² the opinion that the scholars who composed the scriptures were experts of spiritualism and not of geography or cosmology. Writing about the structure of the universe, they merely described the cosmological concepts prevalent during their times. Moreover, the structure of the universe is of little relevance as far as our pursuit of spiritualism at present is concerned. This has been quite eloquently expressed by Acharya Umasvati in PRASHAMARATI PRAKARAN in the following words:³

¹ Based on the following commentaries on TATTVAARTH SUTRA:

TATTVAARTH SUTRA by Acharya Umasvati, commentary by Pandit Sukh Lal Sanghvi, English translation by K. K. Dixit, published by L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1974.

TATTVAARTH SUTRA by Acharya Umasvati, commentary by Pandit Phool Chandra Siddhantacharya, published by Varni Granthmala, Varanasi, 1949.

TATTVAARTH SUTRA by Acharya Umasvati, commentary by Pandit Mohan Lal Shastri, published by Saral Jain Granth Bhandar, Jabalpur, 1983.

Reality, English translation of Acharya Pujya Pad's SARVAARTHASIDDHI by S. A. Jain, published by Vir Sasana Sangha, Calcutta, 1960.

'That Which Is', a commentary on TATTVAARTH SUTRA by Dr Nath Mal Tatia, published by Harper Collins, 1994.

² Private communication during the summer of 1969.

³ SWARGSUKHAANI PAROKSHAANYATYANTA-
PAROKSHAMEV MOKSHASUKHAM
PRATYAKSHAM PRASHAMASUKHAM
NA PARAVASHAM NA VYAYAPRAAPTAM

The happiness of heaven is indirect - it is beyond our experience. Thus we may be disinterested in it. The happiness of salvation (NIRVANA) is even more indirect. Hence we may have doubts about it. On the other hand, the peace and calm brought about by religion can be directly experienced right here. We are free to attain this happiness, which is the fruit of the freedom of spirit. We do not have to buy it with money. We achieve this happiness by taking a dip in the stream of satisfaction and balanced emotions.

In the same vein, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes,⁴ "We must use our reason to fight the superstitious beliefs and practices that have crept into religion. ... Heaven and hell are not physical areas. A soul tormented with remorse for its deeds is in hell, a soul with the satisfaction of a life well lived is in heaven. The reward for virtuous living is the good life itself. Virtue, it is said, is its own reward."

Chapter 3

The seven substrata:

RATNASHARKARAABAALUKAAPANKADHOOMATAMOMAHAATAMAHPRABHAA
BHOO MIYO GHA-NAAMBUVAATAAKAASHAPRATISHTHA SAPTODHODHAH [3-1]

RATNAPRABHA (gem-tinged), SHARKARAAPRABHA (pebble-tinged), VAALUKAAPRABHA (sand-tinged), PANKAPRABHA (clay-tinged), DHOOMRAPRABHA (smoke-tinged), TAMAHPRABHA (dark-tinged) and MAHAATAMAHPRABHA (pitch dark-tinged) constitute the seven substrata, which are situated one below the other. These substrata float on a dense ocean (GHANODHADI VAATAVALAY), which, in turn, is supported by a layer of dense air (GHAN VAATAVALAY), a layer of rarefied air (TANU VAATAVALAY), and finally, the self-supporting space (AAKAASH). Obviously, names like RATNAPRABHA, SHARKARAAPRABHA and PANKAPRABHA are predicated on their appearances. These substrata contain the seven hells.

According to the Jain religious books, physical universe (LOKAAKAASH) is the portion of space occupied by the souls, matter and energy, principle of motion, principle of rest and time. The space beyond the physical universe is vacuous space (ALOKAAKAASH). The physical universe is divided into three sections: the upper or celestial world (OORDHVA LOK), the middle or terrestrial world (MADHYA LOK) and the lower or infernal world (ADHO LOK). The seven substrata containing the hells are located in the lower world.

⁴ The Present Crisis Of Faith by S. Radhakrishnan, Orient Paperbacks, 1994, page 19.

The abodes of infernal beings:

TAASU TRINSHATPANCHAVINSHATI PANCHADASHADASHATRIPANCHONAIKA-NARAKASHATA-SAHASRAANI PANCH CHAIV YATHAAKRAMAMA [3-2]

These substrata contain three million, two million five hundred thousand, one million five hundred thousand, one million, three hundred thousand, ninety-nine thousand nine hundred ninety-five, and just five abodes for infernal beings, respectively.

The first hell has three million abodes of infernal beings, the second hell, two million five hundred thousand abodes, the third hell, one million five hundred thousand abodes, the fourth hell, one million abodes, the fifth hell, three hundred thousand abodes, the sixth hell, ninety-nine thousand nine hundred ninety-five, and the seventh hell has only five abodes.

The degree of painful experiences in the hells increases as one goes farther down. The lower the hell, the worse it is. The second hell is more horrible than the first one, and the third hell is more horrifying than the second one, and so on and so forth. On the other hand, the number of abodes decreases as one goes lower. This concept has an important connotation. A worldly soul is born into hell on account of its unscrupulous and perverse mental and physical activities. The degree of defilement in one's thoughts, feelings and actions determines the level of hell the soul obtains. It is observed that fewer and fewer individuals are capable of indulging in the activities of body, speech and mind defiled to progressively greater degrees. Thus the abodes in lower hells are progressively smaller in number as fewer worldly souls are born in them.

Characteristics of infernal beings:

NAARAKA NITYAASHUBHATARALESHYAAPARINAAMDEHAVEDANA AVIKRIYA [3-3]

The hellish beings incessantly possess inferior shades of passion (LESHYA), disgusting sensory perceptions (PARINAAM), horrible physique (DEHA), utmost torment (VEDANA) and abhorrent mutations of bodies (VIKRIYA).

There are six shades of passion, black (dark), blue, gray, yellow, light pink and white. The intensity of passions decreases from black to white.⁵ The hellish beings in the first hell have milder shade of passion such as gray, while those in the seventh hell have black (dark) shade of passion.

⁵ For details, please see 'Shades of Passion: An Aspect of the Jain Theory of Karma' by Manish Modi, Jain Study Circular, January 2000, pages 16-21.

The sensory conceits of the infernal beings are abnormal. Their senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing are abhorrent. They suffer from extreme cold or extreme heat. They suffer from severe pangs of hunger. The smells, sights and sounds that the hellish beings encounter are grievously unpleasant. Thus the infernal beings suffer severe agony.

The bodies of habitants of hell are deformed and out of proportion. Further their bodies mutate in abhorrent ways. These magnify the pain and sufferings of infernal beings.

Mutual interactions:

PARASPARODEERITADUHKHAAH [3-4]

The infernal beings inflict pain and anguish on one another.

The hellish beings suffer from extreme delusion and are irrational. So they constantly get into arguments with one another. Consequently, they inflict physical and mental agony on the self and fellow dwellers of infernal lands.

Mischievous demigods:

SAMKLISHTAASURODEERITADUHKHAASHCHA PRAAK CHATURTHYAAH [3-5]

The infernal beings living in the first three hells are misled by some demigods indulging in mischievous designs and consequently suffer grievous trials and tribulations.

According to ancient literature, there are demigods (ASURS) who take delight in watching other living beings fight and inflict pain on one another. These demigods visit the first three infernal abodes. They incite and provoke the infernal beings to quarrel and fight. This turns out to be one more source of suffering in hell.

In his commentary on TATTVAARTH SUTRA,⁶ Acharya Umasvati compares the demigods who visit the hells to wealthy men engulfed in lust, deceit and delusion. Such men have an irrational view of life and its purpose. Their focus is on material possessions and sensual gratification. So they organize and enjoy fights between bulls, chicken and humans. They indulge in community politics and create rivalries in society. Obviously, they enjoy these undesirable activities.

Considering that heaven and hell are merely the states of mind of worldly beings, the features presented above of the hellish existence are

⁶ SVOPAJNA BHAASHYA by Umasvati, edited by Pandit Khub Chand Siddhantashastri, Shrimad Rajchandra Shastramala, Bombay, 1932.

seen to exist in the lives of men who are immersed in passions such as sensual gratification, greed and ego. Their physical and mental state is adversely influenced by these traits. Obviously, individuals having extreme passions and abhorrent traits are few and far between. This corresponds to the concept that there are fewer and fewer abodes in lower hells.

Life spans of infernal beings:

TESHVEKATRISAPTADASHADVAVINSHATITRAYAMTRINSHATSAAGAROPAMA
SATVAANAAM PARA STHITIH [3-6]

The maximum life spans of infernal beings in the seven hells are one, three, seven, ten, seventeen, twenty-two and thirty-three SAAGARS, respectively. SAAGAR as defined in ancient books is an extremely long period of time.

The life spans of worldly living beings in various forms depend on life-span-determining karma. This aphorism states that the duration of the life-span-determining karma of hellish beings is extremely long.

Islands and oceans of the middle world:

JAMBOODVEEPALAVANODAADAYAH SHUBHANAAMAANO
DVEEPASAMUDRAAH [3-7]

Islands and oceans having propitious names such as JAMBU DVEEP and LAVAN SAMUDRA are located in the middle world.

The middle world lies on the top surface of RATNAPRABHA substratum. The center of the middle world is JAMBU DVEEP, a circular island. It is surrounded by an annular ocean called LAVAN SAMUDRA, which is encircled by a series of alternating islands and oceans.

Shapes and dimensions of islands and oceans:

DVIRDVIRVISHAKAMBHAAH POORVAPOORVAPARIKSHEPINO
VALAYAAKRITAYAH [3-8]

All islands and oceans (except the central island JAMBU DVEEP, which is circular) are shaped like concentric rings. Each ocean or island encircles the preceding island or ocean, and its expanse is twice the expanse of the preceding island or ocean.

Mount MERU:

TANMADHYE MERUNAABHIRVITTO YOJANASHATASAHASRAVISHKAMBHO
JAMBOODVIPAH [3-9]

The diameter of the central island JAMBU DVEEP is one hundred thousand YOJANS.⁷ It is circular having Mount MERU at its center.

Regions of JAMBU Island:

BHARATAHAIMVATAHARIVIDEHARAMYAKAHAIRANYAVATAIRAAVATAVARSHAAH
KSHETRAANI [3-10]

JAMBU island has seven regions: BHARAT, HAIMAVAT, HARI, VIDEH, RAMYAK, HAIRANYAVAT and AIRAAVAT.

The regional mountains:

TADVIBHAJINAH POORVAAPARAAYATA HIMAVANMAHAAHINVAN-
NISHADHANEELARUKMISHIKHARINO VARSHADHARAPARVATAAH [3-11]

Six tall regional mountains, HIMAVAN, MAHAAHIMAVAN, NISHADH, NEEL, RUKMI and SHIKHARI, divide JAMBU island into seven regions and so they are called regional mountains (VARSHADHARS). The mountains extend from east to west.

Six mountains divide JAMBU DVEEP into seven regions, which are like long strips, extending from east to west. The first region BHARAT and the seventh region AIRAAVAT are mirror image of each other, so are the second and sixth region, and the third and fifth region. The fourth region VIDEH is unique and it lies in the center.

Tints of the mountains:

HEMAARJUNATAPANEEYAVAIDOOYARAJATAHEMAMAYAAH [3-12]

The tints of the six regional mountains are golden, white as Arjun tree, crimson, sapphire blue, white as silver and golden.

Characteristics of mountains:

MANIVICHITRAPAARSHVA UPARI MOOLE CHA TULYAVISTAARAAH [3-13]

The sides of the regional mountains are speckled with gems of various kinds. Further, their tops and bases have the same expanse.

The lakes:

PADMAMAHAAPADMATIGINCHHAKESARIMAHAAPUNDAREEKA PUNDAREEKA
HRADAASTESHAAMUPARI [3-14]

Six lakes, PADMA, MAHAAPADMA, TIGINCHH, KESARI, MAHAAPUNDAREEK and PUNDAREEK, are located on the tops of the regional mountains, respectively.

⁷ One yojan is equal to 9.09 miles.

Dimensions of the first lake:

PRATHAMO YOGANASAHASRAAYAAMASTADARDHAVISHKAMBHO HRADAH [3-15]

The first lake, PADMA is 1000 YOJANS east to west and 500 YOJANS north to south.

Depth of the first lake:

DASHAYOJANA AVAGAAHAH [3-16]

Lake PADMA is 10 YOJANS deep.

The lotus:

TANMADHYE YOJANAM PUSHKARAM [3-17]

Lake PADMA has a one-YOJAN lotus at its center.

This lotus is not a plant. It is made of rocky material.

Features of other lakes:

TADDVIGUNADVIGUNA HRADAAH PUSHKARAANI CHA [3-18]

The expanses and depths of the other lakes, and the sizes of the lotuses are progressively double.

Goddesses living in the lotus palaces:

TANNIVAASINYO DEVYAH SHREEHREEDHRITIKEERTIBUDDHILAKSHMYAH

PALYOPAMSTHITAYAH SASAAMAANIKAPARISHATKAAH [3-19]

Six goddesses (DEVIS - consorts of heavenly beings) named SHREE (Fortune), HREE (Modesty), DHRITI (Patience), KEERTI (Fame), BUDDHI (Wisdom) and LAKSHMEE (Wealth) reside in the palaces built on the lotuses, respectively.

Rivers flowing in the seven regions:

GANGAASINDHUROHIDROHITAASYAAHARIDDHARIKAANTAASEETAASEETODAA-

NAAREENARAKANTAASUARNAROOPYAKOOLAAARAKTAARAKTODAAH

SARITASTANMADHAYAGAAH [3-20]

Rivers GANGA and SINDHU flow in the BHARAT region; ROHIT and ROHITAASYA, in HAIMAVAT region; HARIT and HARIKAANTA in HARI region; SEETA and SEETODA, in VIDEH region; NAARI and NARAKAANTA, in RAMYAK region; SUARNAKOOLA and ROOPYAKOOLA, in HAIRANYAVAT region; and, RAKTA and RAKTODA flow in the AIRAAVAT region.

Direction of flow of some rivers:

DVAYORDVAYOH POORVAAH POORVAGAAH [3-21]

The first river of each pair flows towards the ocean on the east side.

Direction of flow of remaining rivers:

SHESHAASTVAPARAGAAH [3-22]

The second river of each pair flows towards the ocean on the west side.

Tributaries of the rivers:

CHATURDASHANADEESAHASRAPARIVRITA GANGAASINDHVAADAYO
NADYAH [3-23]

Each one of the rivers like GANGA and SINDHU has fourteen thousand tributaries.

Expanse of BHARAT region:

BHARATAH SHADVINSHATIPANCHAYOJANASHATAVISTARAH SHAT
CHAIKONAVINSHATIBHAAGA YOJANASYA [3-24]

The expanse of BHARAT region is five hundred twenty-six and six-nineteenth of a YOJAN.

Expanses of other regions:

TADVIGUNADVIGUNAVISTAARA VARSHADHARAVARSHA VIDEHAANATA [3-25]

The expanse of the second region is twice that of the first region, that of the third region is twice that of the second region and the expanse of the VIDEH region is twice that of the third region.

Symmetrical pattern:

UTTARAADAKSHINATULYAAH [3-26]

The regions and mountains in the north are mirror image of those in the south.

The depiction of the middle world suggests that the earth is flat like a plate. Mount MERU lies at its center. The central region of JAMBU Island is VIDEH, the largest of the seven regions. The three regions in the north of MERU are mirror images of the three regions in the south. Seven long rivers flow towards the east and seven rivers flow toward the west. Each river has fourteen thousand tributaries. The expanses of various regions, mountains, islands and oceans follow a set pattern.

***Ascending and descending cycles in BHARAT
and AIRAAVAT regions:***

BHARATAIRAAVATAYORVRIDDHIHRAASAU SHATSAMAYAABHYAAM-
UTSARPINYAVSARPINEEBHYAAM [3-27]

BHARAT and AIRAAVAT regions undergo ascending and descending periods of time. Each period consists of six eras. During the six eras of

the ascending period (UTSARPINI), the physical and moral fabric of individuals and society improves, while during the six eras of descending period (AVASARPINI), the opposite happens.⁸

Steady state in remaining regions:

TAABHYAAMAPARA BHOOMIYOAVASTHITAAH [3-28]

In the remaining regions, the physical and moral fabric of individuals and society does not vary. They remain in steady state.

Life span in remaining regions:

AEKDVITRIPALYOPAMASTHITIYO HAIMAVATAKAHAARIVARSHAK
DEVAKURAVAKAAH [3-29]

The inhabitants, men as well as animals, of HAIMAVAT, HARI and DEVAKURU regions enjoy life spans of one, two and three PALYAS, respectively. The unit of time, PALYA, has been defined in the Jain religious books.

The VIDEHA region is divided into four zones by four mountains. Two mountains connect MERU and NISHADH, and the other two mountains connect MERU and NEEL. A zone in the south is called DEVAKURU, and an identical zone in the north is called UTTARAKURU.

Similarity between north and south:

TATHOTTARAAH [3-30]

The inhabitants of the regions in the north have the same life span as those in the southern regions.

The life span in HAIRANYAVAT region is one PALYA, that in RAMYAK region is two PALYAS, and the life span in UTTARAKURU is three PALYAS.

Life span in VIDEH region:

VIDEHESHU SAMKHYEYAKAALAAH [3-31]

The life span of living beings in VIDEH region is countable number of years. This obviously excludes the DEVAKURU and UTTARAKURU zones.

Expanse of BHARAT region:

BHARATASYA VISHKAMBHO JAMBUDVEEPASYA NAVATI SHATABHAAGAH [3-32]

The expanse of BHARAT region is 1/190 of the expanse of JAMBU Island. Note that this is in agreement with the figure stated in aphorism 24.

⁸ For details, please see 'Studies In Jainism: Reader 2', Lesson 3, pages 6-8.

DHAATAKIKHAND region:

DVIRDHAATAKEEKHANDE [3-33]

There are twice as many regions, rivers and mountains on DHAATAKEEKHAND Island as there are on JAMBU Island.

As stated earlier, LAVAN ocean surrounds JAMBU Island. The next island DHAATAKEEKHAND surrounds the LAVAN ocean. It is surrounded by KAALODHADHI Ocean, which, in turn, is surrounded by PUSHKAR Island.

A word about PUSHKAR region:

PUSHKARAARDHE CHA [3-34]

The inner half of PUSHKAR Island has the same number of regions, rivers and mountains as DHAATAKEEKHAND.

PUSHKAR Island is divided into two halves by a circular mountain called MAANUSHOTTAR. Only the inner half of PUSHKAR Island has regions, rivers and mountains like those on DHAATAKEEKHAND.

Abode of men:

PRAANGMAANUSHOTTARANMANUSHYAAH [3-35]

Human beings exist only up to the MAANUSHOTTAR Mountain. No humans live on the outer region of PUSHKAR and beyond.

Categories of men:

ARYAAMLECHCHHASHCHA [3-36]

Men fall into two categories: civilized (ARYA) and uncivilized (MLECHCHHA).

In view of the Jain doctrine of relativism, the terms civilized and uncivilized should be considered to be relative. However, in general, civilized implies one who follows the norms of behavior prevalent in society. On the other hand, those who do not care about others' feelings and interests, and those who indulge in untoward activities such as intrigue, possessiveness and greed are uncivilized. Such individuals disregard their civic responsibilities, and pollute the animate and material environment.

Exigent lands:

BHARATAIRAAVATAVIDEHAH KARMABHOOMIYOANYATRA

DEVAKUROOTTARAKURUBHYAH [3-37]

BHARAT, AIRAAVAT and VIDEH region, excluding DEVAKURU and UTTARAKURU zones are exigent lands (KARMABHOOMI).

There are two kinds of lands in the universe, exigent lands and facile lands. Inhabitants of exigent lands have to adopt a variety of

undertakings such as agriculture, business and handicrafts to sustain their lives. As opposed to exigent lands, there are facile lands (BHOGABHOOMI) where it is easy to sustain life on nature's bounty (KALPAVRIKSH).

It should be pointed out that the worldly beings living in exigent lands only can intentionally endeavor to acquire auspicious and inauspicious karmas. Further, human beings of exigent lands can pursue spiritualism and modify or shed the karmas associated with their souls. Inhabitants of facile lands do not have such facility.

Life spans in exigent lands:

NRISTHI PARAAVARE TRIPALYOPAMAANTARMUHOORTE [3-38]

In exigent lands, the maximum life span of human beings is three PALYAs and the minimum life span is less than 48 minutes (ANTARAMUHOORT).

Life spans of animals:

TIRYAGYONIJAANAANCHA [3-39]

The life spans of other animals are similar to those of humans.

To summarize, the design of cosmos described in Jain literature seems to be quite imaginative, ingenious and innovative. Evidently, it is not possible to reconcile it with modern scientific observations. Nevertheless, it is an interesting model of the universe.

* * * * *

Uniqueness Of Indian Religions

In 'The Hindu View Of Life', Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes, "The Hindu attitude to religion is interesting. While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realization. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (DARSHAN), or experience of reality (ANUBHAV). This experience is not an emotional thrill, or a subjective fancy, but is the response of the whole personality, the integrated self to the central reality. Religion is a specific attitude of the self, itself and no other, though it is mixed up generally with intellectual views, aesthetic forms, and moral valuations."