BOOK REVIEW

DESTRUCTIVE EMOTIONS: JAIN PERSPECTIVES

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Reviewer: Marie-Hélène Gorisse[1]

Professor Kanti V. Mardia, OBE, is Senior Research Professor in Applied Statistics at the University of Leeds and author of the celebrated *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism* (1990), which presents some principles of Jain philosophy in an axiomatic way and offers to understand the essence of Jain philosophy. His recent work on *Destructive Emotions: Jain Perspectives* is conceived as a practice manual that complements this around the Four Principles of Kaṣāya Doctrine. This was notably the fruit of a discussion with the esteemed Muni Jambuvijaya, who suggested that the work to come would be beneficial in understanding the concept of four passions (*kaṣāyas*) expounded in the *Praśamaratiprakaraṇa* and *Tattvārthasūtra*.

Doing so, Prof. Mardia provides the modern reader with significant tools to implement the Jain eternal teaching in their life. Such an enterprise is no mean feat and requires being rooted in both a strong and wide scholarship and a life dedicated to applying and thinking about these principles.

The Scientific Foundations of Jainism had started the process by explaining Jain metaphysics in terms that are meaningful to a modern audience. In *Destructive Emotions*, Prof. Mardia builds on this to assess in an intuitive way the implications of Jain metaphysics in one's everyday life and spiritual progress. He offers reflections around destructive emotions and ways to deal with them in a vast array of textual traditions, genres, and periods, thereby providing a holistic compendium useful for a great variety of practitioners. More precisely, *Destructive Emotions* considers Jain conceptions as found in early canonical literature; in classical treatises of philosophy like the *Tattvārthasūtra* and associated classical manuals; in the systematic guide to right conduct that is the *Yogaśāstra*; in 17th c. *sajjhāya* poems for self-study; in *dharmakathā* tales of virtues; in the developments of Jain conceptions of hells; in games of snakes and ladders representing spiritual progress; up to the contemporary practice of *prekṣādhyāna* insight meditation and to Gandhi's own philosophy of good conduct**.** This holistic compendium is designed to resonate with different sides of the practitioner by offering,

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next to philosophical classifications, concrete metaphors and illustrative stories, as well as intuitive visuals, pieces of music, games, and embodied practices.

To discipline and to overcome destructive emotions is so decisive for the dynamics of individuals and societies that methods towards this goal have an important status in most religions. The import of the Jain doctrine is to link these destructive emotions to the workings of different types of karma. While other South Asian traditions have done this much, Jains are unique in developing karmic conceptions with the meticulousness and rigor fit for sciences and in integrating them within systematic and exhaustive classifications.

The four main types of passions (*kaṣāya*) are anger, pride, deceit, and greed. Prof. Mardia focuses on the way in which these passions function as "destructive emotions", first because *kaṣāya* are responsible for the long-term binding of karmic matter, including harmful types of karmic matter like "conduct-deluding" ones; second, because these passional states can be considered as stable emotions of the soul. More precisely, it is bliss-defiling karma – especially conduct-bliss-defiling karma (*cāritra mohanīya karma*) – that manifests by means of them. In this rich and complex background, we are presented with a series of methods that take one's highly specific circumstances into account and that help each of us to act upon the karma responsible for – or the karma effect of – a given destructive emotion. Such useful methods include edifying stories, practices of austerity to promote a disciplined way of life, or meditation to help dissociate from an unwholesome emotional state or to cultivate a wholesome one.

Prof. Mardia contributes to this background also by developing his own models, linking Jain scriptures to modern sciences like mathematics, physics, and psychology. As such, this is no history of philosophy, but philosophy *in the making*. For example, following the classification in knowledge-obscuring (*jñānāvaraṇīya*), perception-obscuring (*darśanāvaraṇīya*), bliss-defiling (*mohanīya*), and energy-obstructing (*vīrya antarāya*) types of karmic matter, Prof. Mardia distinguishes between, respectively, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and executive quotients as the fields in which it is especially meaningful to weigh karmic effects. From this, he invites scholars in biology to consider a more inclusive set of parameters in DNA coding. He also invites contemporary scholars in psychology who, in the last decades, have started to integrate emotional quotient (EQ) next to intelligence quotient (IQ), to also consider the potential meaningfulness of spiritual (SQ) and executive quotients (XQ), which differently impact one's ability to discriminate between what is proper and what is not. Finally, he invites philosophers to rethink the hard problem of consciousness, which is a topic dear to me. To explain, in Jain philosophy, what we usually think of as mental phenomena are understood to be made of a very fine kind of matter. This subtle matter is just as capable of causing effects as traditional physical phenomena. As Prof. Mardia rightly says, quoting Galen Strawson, the hard problem of consciousness especially "shows us that we don't know what matter is. The hard problem is the problem of matter. Matter is even more extraordinary than we thought, as physicists have been demonstrating for a long time" (p. 269).

One thing I would like to keep from these different research directions is that Jain thinkers hold more inclusive classifications, classifications that go beyond the range of immediate phenomenal categories, thereby encouraging the practitioner to undergo transformative practices until they can realise how they are part of a bigger, more complex picture.

Prof. Mardia is a creator. He generates new research questions, new ways of relating to eternal concepts, including visuals and music. His oeuvre incites his reader to appraise in better, more inclusive, and complex ways what it means to be Jain in this society. To sum up, the book offers a clear, comprehensive, and accessible overview of *kaṣāya* in a way that no English-language book has done before. Whereas many do not even know that there are Jain accounts of destructive emotions (in the way that more may be aware of Buddhist accounts, for example), there is now a resource with this book that brings this into the public awareness with potential to reach a wide audience.

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