



# **Ethnicity and Religious Heritage**

By  
**T. U. Mehta**  
(Former Chief Justice, H.C. of H.P.)

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## **Author's Note**

During my long career I had many occasions to write on variety of subjects. I have, however selected only a few of them on the subject of Indian cultural and religions inheritance.

Chapter 1 of this book records my answers to some questions put to me to test to the knowledge acquired by me from the correspondence course in parted to me by Bharati Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

Chapter 2 and 4 are the articles written by me while writing my thesis on Jain perception of Shri Bhagwad Gita.

Chapter 3 is an article submitted by me several years ago to one of the research organisations in USA.

Chapter 5A & 5B were submitted during a periodical convention of Jaina – a well known forum for Jains in USA as I was one of the invitees of that convention which was held at Dayton in Ohio State of USA.

Chapter 7,8,9 are the articles written on different occasions in the past.

Chapter 10 is in reply to an article which tried to shows that Buddhism is not distinct from Hinduism.

Chapter 11 is the English version of my Gujarati book on Sufism.

**Book on Sufism**

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## **Chapter - 1**

### **Pre-historical beginning of culture in India**

*Q. What does the term Pre-History signify? which period is covered under the title called Pre-Historical? Would you differentiate it from Proto-History :*

India which has the longest past in the history of mankind can boast of a well developed system of thought in every field of human activity especially in the field of philosophical thought, but unfortunately there is no systematic written record to show its origin and gradual development. So far as the development of philosophical thought and metaphysical approach towards life and its problems is concerned, we can trace their sources in the third millennium B.C. much before the advent of Aryans

in this land. Finds of Mohan-Jo-Daro, Harappa and other Indus valley sites testify to this. But the point is that this testimony comes mainly from archeological finds and not from any written chronological record.

The accounts of all cultures which are not recorded in writing are generally classified as "Pre-Historic."

But this type of approach, so far as India is concerned, would be highly unrealistic, as the history of India's culture in its different facets in their earlier stages, is recorded not in writings but in the traditions of her people and their material expressions as found in their style of living and as culled out from philological, anthropological and archaeological finds. Even in the later historical period of Mahavir and Buddha when the country had achieved philosophical heights and entered the period of great social and religious revolution, the great ideas propounded by the Masters were conveyed from mouth to mouth and the knowledge thus acquired was called "shrut" (श्रुत). This type of literary tradition - a tradition which was all

comprehensive covering all fields of knowledge, the strong effect of which was to shape the destiny of man kind for millenniums to come.

Therefore, to differentiate this period from the prior "Pre-Historic" period and the subsequent "Historic" one, the term "Proto-Historic" is now used. "Proto" is a greek word meaning "first". "Proto Historic" period is therefore earlier historic period having no written chronological history, but having definite impact in shaping the history of man-kind. Indus Valley Civilization and various other contemporaneous chalcolithic cultures can be classified as "Proto-Historic."

It follows that the term "Pre-History" signifies that period of the development of man-kind which has left no discernible trace of the development of its culture and civilization and the impact of which is not known. This would be the period of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic and perhaps a part of Neolithic ages - covering the whole of stone age, which is believed to have ended some 6000 years ago.....



*Q. Who were the first inhabitants of India in Pre-Historic period preceeding the period of Indus Valley civilization?*

*The Negritos appear to have been food gatherers rather than food producers. Comment and discuss about the few surviving tribes of Negritos in India.*

These questions are inter-related and hence taken together.

The evidence of skeletal remains of early man belonging to pre-historic period prior to Indus valley civilization is so scanty that it is very difficult to postulate with certainty about the racial movements of people in India in two to four millemium B.C.

According to Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherji the human races of the world can generally be divided into three categories in accordance with the colour of their skin. They are (1) white called Caucasians, (2) yellow called Mongoloids and (3) Black called Negritos. The Indian nation consists of all the three types of reaces.

However, the most authoritative view in this connection, shows as under :

1. Negrito
2. Proto-Australoid
3. Mongoloid
4. The Mediterraneans
5. Alphinoid
6. Nordic

Out of these six races, the Nigritos are believed to be the first human inhabitants of India. They belonged to the culture of Mesolithic Age.

However, decision of this question, based purely on anthropological studies, is not possible for arriving at the formulation of any definite theory, because, as pointed out by Shri D. K. Sen in his work "Ancient races of India and Pakistan- A study of methods", concepts of race without the application of scientific concept of population genetics, is always incomplete, and tentative.

As noted above Nigritos are believed to be the first human inhabitants of India. It is believed that these people came to India by the cost-line of Iran and Arabia via Africa. One branch of this race is believed to have migrated to Australia from India

passing through Indonesia, Polynesia and Malainesia leaving some migrating groups in these areas.

So far as India is concerned, Nigritos are practically wiped out. It can be reasonably inferred that they were wiped out by Proto-Austroids who followed them or were intergrated with them. Some ramannts of this race (Nigritos) are still noticed in some tribals of South India, Nagas of Nagaland and Andaman Islands, Cochin and Travancore Hills.

It appears that they were unsettled nomades and were at the first step of the ladder of civilization, not knowing the art of agriculture. They were roaming in jungles in search of food and were thriving on tree fruits and small creatures found in forests. They are, therefore, described as food gatherers rather than food producers.

Scholars believe that they were in India some seven thousand to ten thousand years ago in solithic Age.

*Q. What was the contribution of proto-Australoids to the primitive culture of India?*

*Among all the pre-historic races, which race had the most significant impact on the culture of India?*

*The fundamental basis of Indian civilization on material side, is the gift of Austric speaking Proto-Australoid people. Discuss.*

*To which family of languages do the Kola, Munda and non-Khmer species of India belong ?*

All these questions are inter-related and have reference to Proto-Australoid race which migrated to India. These people are believed to have come to India from the west after the Negritos. People of this race have spread over the vast area covered from Madagaskar, Vindhya mountains in India and Eastern Islands of Pacific Ocean. Before and after entering India they would have come in contact of various other races such as Negritos and Mongloids and Dravidians. Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji has expressed a view in April, 1954 AD in his article on "Indo-Asian Culture" that Mongoloids had established themselves in India during Indus Valley Culture which shows the signs of Kirats, the name by which this race of mongoloids was known to the later Aryans.

Some scholars such as Shri Ratnaswami of Annamalay University in his book "India from the Dawn" and Dr. Nilkanth Shastri in his book "A History

of South India" have expressed the view that Austric people were the descendants of Dravidians. Be that as it may, there is no dispute about the fact that Australoids have made great contribution to Indus Valley Civilization in India.

Languages of Kola Munda and Mon-Khmer Species of India belong to the languages of Austric family. People belonging to Kola and Munda races and Mon-khmer race of Assam, Burma and Indo China, Nicobaris of Nicobar Islands and many people of Malayesia and Polinesia belong to mixed Austric race. Languages of these people are of Austirc origin. When Aryans entered India Austric languages were in vogue, and there are many words in Aryan languages relating to forest Flora and Fatma which can be traced to Austric roots.

When Aryans came to India Austic people were inhabiting Indus Valley. Aryans called them "Nishads" and were scoffing at the black colour of their skin and flat noses.

Austrics of Proto-Australoid race out of all pre-historic races, had great impact on the subsequent development of civilization during Proto-Historic and

Aryan Periods. This will be clear from the following contribution made by them:

- (1) They introduced Pottery which was unknown to their predecessor Negritos.
- (2) In the field of cultivation, they are believed to have introduced digging stick cultivation and terraco.
- (3) Some religious rituals and use of vermilion marks, idea of transmigration which now forms the ideological basis of Indian culture owe much to Austric culture.
- (4) Many of the Myths and legends and Avatāras including zoomorphic deties such as Ganesh, Nāgas, tortoise which have found favour in Hindu mythology owe their origin to Austric culture.
- (5) Aryan species owe much to Austric phonetics
- (6) And last, but not the least the highly developed Indus Valley culture and civilization owes much to Austric culture because Proto-Australoids formed one of the four main races which contributed to that culture.

It may be mentioned here in the passing that Davidians cannot be considered as a "pre-historic" race. However, their impact on the culture of India is the greatest.

*Q. Which class of inhabitants did give us the Vedic culture ? How was this class classified originally?*

Aryans gave us Vedic culture. They were originally classified as Nordics.

*Q. What do you know about Alpinoids. Where are they generally found ?*

Alpinoids formed one of the four races of Indus Valley civilization. They are predominantly seen in Gujarat. But their contribution to Indian culture is not so pronounced.

### **INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION**

*Q. What was the first name given to Indus Valley Civilization. Who was the Indian Pioneer in the field of Archaeology and what were his findings?*

Indus Valley civilization was first labelled "Indo-Sumerian" civilization because the western thinkers initially believed that Sumerian civilization was the oldest one in the world and they found many

similarities between that civilization and the Indus Valley Civilization.

However, after the study of the finds of Mohan-jo-daro in Sind by Mr. R. D. Banerji the Indian pioneer in the field, it was found that Indus Valley civilization stood on its own, and grew independently of the contemporaneous Sumerian and other cultures. It was thereafter known as Indus Valley Civilization.

The findings showed that the inhabitants of Indus Valley possessed highly advanced methods of civilization such as Town Planning, Sanitation, workmen's quarters, public baths, elaborate drainage system, cultivation, weight measures, garment-making, ornaments, toilet, furniture-making, trade and commerce by land and water with foreign countries and some advanced methods of religious pursuits as will be noted hereinafter.

*Ruins found in Mohan-jo-daro can be easily compared with some present day working town of Lancashire. Discuss the art of Town Planning in Mohan-jo-daro.*

*Q. What was the Chief characteristic of Architecture*



*of Mohan-jo-daro ? In what way it differed from those of Sumer or the Nile?*

*What were the main classes of buildings nearthred in the Indus Valley?*

*What are the unique features of drainage system as found in the Indus Valley. How was it different from that found in Sumer.*

A perfect model Town Planning, almost according to modern notions, was known by the planners of Mohan-jo-daro. Streets were laid out rectangularly, properly aligned. Houses and public buildings had full correspondence with thoroughfares, streets were 9' to 34' in width and running sometimes half a mile. Each lane had a public well and houses also had private well and baths. There were no monumental buildings and temples as in Sumer or Nile because the aim was practical utility and comfort rather than refineness or art. This was the main difference in the Architecture of Mohan-jo-daro and Sumer or Nile.

There were no fortifications found, perhaps this was the reason why Indra, the war lord of Aryans, was able to destroy their towns successfully.

Buildings were of three main classes (1) Dwelling houses (2) larger buildings and (3) Public Baths.

The most unique feature of the finds was the elaborate drainage system, the like of which is not found in any other city of the same antiquity.

The main drain ran below the principal streets. The pucca drains were provided with inspection traps. There were individual house drains which opened in great culverts and emptied in the river.

The above was the notable point of difference with Sumer system because in the later system there was vertical pottery drainage shafts without any outlets.

There was a great public swimming Bath measuring 39 ft. x 23 ft. with the depth of 8 ft. They seem to be familiar even with hot air bath.

There were also lamp posts at intervals on streets.

Public store houses were also provided.

All this suggests a very careful and highly advanced Town Planning, and a developed methods.

*Q. Discuss in short the religion of Mohan-jo-daro people. What picture do we get about Gods and Goddesses of that time.*

People of Indus Valley Civilization were of mixed and cosmopolitan character consisting of Proto-Australoids, Mediterranean and Dravidians.

All of them do not seem to profess the same religious belief. But from the finds of small nude female figures wearing a girdle or band round her waist. With head dress, and males of three faced deities seated cross-legged on a throne with penis erectus, surrounded by animals, suggest the worship of Mother Goddess and Shiva depicted as "Trimukha" (three faced, and as "Pashupati" (Lord of animals). Find of large number cylindrical and ring stones suggests the worship of Linga and Yoni symbols of generation. Representation of Swastika and wheel as religious symbols was known to them.

What is generally missed by some scholars is the finds which suggest that the Indus Civilization was also having in its midst the "Shramana" system of thought which in its subsequent development posed a great challenge to Vedic rituals and attained

the heights of philosophical sophistication in times, of Mahavira and Buddha in sixth Century B.C. Both Jainism and Buddhism along with Ajivikas belong to Shramana of thought which is believed to have been known to the Indus Valley people much before the Aryans invaded India. This system of thought ran side by side with Vedic thoughts and each greatly influenced the other, ultimately culminating in the great synthesis achieved by the Great Shankara. It is therefore, very important to take notice of the finds which also suggest that the Indus people were very well aware of "Sharmana" system of thought.

Some "Mudras" which are found at Mohanjodaro show standing Gods with "Kāyotsarg" Asana of Dhyān Yoga, which is peculiar only to the Jains.

A table shows a seated deity with a worshipper on either side and a hooded cobra over the head is also found. Superficially looking, this may look to be some form of serpent worship. But that does not seem to be true. The idol of the 23rd Tirthankar of Jains named Pārshwanath's idol is depicted in the same fashion. The find may not be of Parshwanath as he is believed to have existed round about seventh

or Eighth Century B.C.

In this connection, it is also worthwhile to note that according to one scholar some sumerians were worshipping a God whose vehicle was a bullock. If this is true the God may be either Shiva or Rishabbdev the first Tirthankar of Jains whose reference is found even in Rigved, Yajurved and the Hindu Puranas (Ref.Preface of "Shadkhandāgam" of Shri Subaiyya Shastri).

So it would be safe to conclude that some Indus people were also following the "Shraman" system of thought which subsequently gave great impetus to the Indian philosophical thought.



## ***Chapter - 2***

### ***Outlines of Sankhya***

Sankhya is considered to be the earliest attempt at systematic philosophy in India. Richard Grabe, the foreign scholar, who has specialized in Sankhya system observes that Sankhya is the most significant system of philosophy that India has produced. It does not believe in the existence of any entity such as God as the creator and sustainer of this universe and explains the mechanism of cosmos as automatic. It belongs to the Shraman tradition. This was the earlier position of Sankhya as propounded by the Saint Kapila of over 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. If we can estimate the period of Mahabharata we can be sure of its existence in some period before that because Gita makes profuse references not only to its basic principles of Purush and Prakriti as well as three Gunas, but it also refers

to its working mechanism in life. Gita also refers to sage Kapila who was the principal propounder of this philosophy, as "Siddhanam Kapilo Munihi" meaning "Among the Siddhas the foremost is Muni Kapila." "Siddha" means a liberated soul. Even Svetashwara Upanishad makes reference to him. So, the belief of some scholars that when Gita refers to Sankhya, it is not the Sankhya propounded by Kapila, does not seem to be correct as there was no other philosopher in India who explained the mechanism of cosmos with reference to the duet of Purush and Prakriti and the working of three Gunas.

Subsequently in the second century B.C. Shri Patanjali, another great philosopher belonging to the theistic school, introduced the concept of God and accepting the theoretical basis of Kapila's system he introduced its practical working through his theory of Ashtanga Yoga.

Prof. Zimmer, the well known German theologist notes about Sankhya and Yoga as under:- "These two ideologies are of different origins. Sankhya and Yoga being related to the mechanical system of Jainas which can be traced back in a partly historical

and partly legendary way through long series of Tirthankaras to a remote aboriginal non - Vedic antiquity. The fundamental ideas of Sankhya and Yoga must be, therefore, immensely old."

### **Basic Conceptions :-**

The main and basic conceptions of Sankhya system are as under :-

(1) This universe is founded on the dichotomy of "Purusha"— a purely conscious and sentient principle, and "Prakriti - a lifeless matter possessing an inherent power of evolution."

(2) The vibratory motion and inter play of three Gunas, namely, Satwa, Rajas and Tammas which are the constituents of Prakriti causing the physical and psychological phenomena which we witness in life.

(3) Purusha and Prakriti are without beginning and without end.

(4) Purusha is all pervading and infinite, but without activity. All phenomenal changes are due to the interplay of Gunas affecting changes in Prakriti for the enjoyment of Purusha, which is associated



with it. However, the Purusha remains uninvolved as it is "Kutastha", which literally means "remaining at the top."

(5) Since Purusha is in association with Prakriti it thinks that he is involved in the changes caused to Prakriti. This thinking is bondage and is the result of "Avidya" i.e. ignorance resulting in its endless migration from one life to another.

(6) This Avidya can be removed by the training of mind, when ultimately on account of its dissociation from Prakriti, Purusha attains "Kaivalya"- pure knowledge.

(7) Sankhya prescribes a process by which mind's activity can be stilled and put to rest.

(8) After Patanjali's Yoga joined Sankhya a very systematic process is prescribed showing how to control mind's activities.

### **Gunās :**

(1) Satwa : It means that which exists in perfection causing bliss and happiness in the state of equilibrium.

(2) Rajas : When the mind is active, feverish and restless causing the loss of equilibrium

and unhappiness.

(3) Tamas : It is a state of darkness caused by ignorance and sloth resulting in unhappiness and apathy.

Human activity and mental disposition depends upon which of these three Gunas predominates and to what extent mental equilibrium is disturbed. These are the bare outlines of Sankhya and at this stage we need not go into the details of Sankhya ontology and philosophy. (For further discussion please refer to the author's book titled "The Path of Arhat" Appendix D.)

Sankhya has many points of similarities with the Jain system of philosophy. They are :-

(1) The Jains also classify cosmos into two elements namely Jiva and Ajiva, which are quite similar to Sankhya's Purusha and Prakriti in their characteristics.

(2) Sankhya's Gunas result in Prakriti's evolution, while Jain's theory of "Karma" results in the evolution of "Ajiva".

(3) The theory of cause and effect is practically the same in both the systems

(4) Belief in the plurality of souls is the same in both the systems.

(5) Both reject the idea of the existence of some outside authority such as "God" to settle the destiny of soul's evolution.

(6) Both treat Prakrit (which is Ajiva in Jain terminology) as real and not as "Maya" (Illusion) as believed by monists of Shankara school

(7) Even the later Yoga system which joined Sankhya is very close to Jain system.

Thus the only difference between Sankhya and Jaina systems is that while Sankhya believes that Purusha (Soul) is "Kutastha" and remains uninvolved with the changes in Prakriti (Ajiva), the Jains believe that though the original and true character of Jiva (Soul) is to remain unaffected, it does get affected when it is in association of with Ajiva (Prakriti) and suffers the effects which are the result of "Karma" (action).



# **Chapter - 3**

## **Jainism**

### **A Goddess Creativity**

#### **The Ultimate Reality**

*"It is only when we transcend the limits of ordinary biological man that we can come in contact with pure personality which Upanishadas call Ātman or the self. This pure self is one in all and is indetical with highest reality of the Universe. It is pure spirituality and pure experience (Jñāna) and, as such, the absolute concrete Truth. Self is the ultimate reality and all experiences are extraneous to it."*

- S. N. Dasgupta

Jainism sees the whole universe as a great cosmic mechanism "with its own self propelling force," and we being a part of that mechanism, our

"religion" consists of conducting ourselves in harmony with that mechanism. If this is so, we have got to understand what this mechanism is and how it works.

This brings to us many questions of metaphysical importance, viz. who created this universe and who sustains it? Are our destinies governed by some outside force or is there any other set of rules which govern our fate?

The man, in his search to seek answers to these questions seems to have evolved the concept of God. Some believe that "God" has created this universe and it is. He who sustains the same. It is further believed that the human being is punished for his sins-the origin of which commenced with Adam and Eve tasting the forbidden fruit. They do not believe in the theory of transmigration of soul but contend that a day of judgement will come when everyone will be alive from his grave to receive God's judgment for his good and bad deeds in this life. This is the occidental idea of an everlasting individual personality as conceived by Greeks and passed on

to Christianity. The redemption of every individual according to this view lies in offering sincere repentance and prayers to be relieved of sins.

There are other philosophers who are more sophisticated in their explanation about the existence of the Divine. There are two principal schools of thought. One is ontological and the other is cosmological. As will be seen hereafter both these schools come to the conclusion that the scheme of the universe is finally sustained and controlled by some outside divine force which is the ultimate cause and hence the ultimate truth.

The Jain approach is totally different. In Jainism there is no place for God as the creator or sustainer of this universe. It does not believe that there is any outside force which distributes prizes and punishment. A soul, liberated completely from the bondage of Karmas, is all-knowing, all-powerful, omniscient and possesses all the attributes of what we understand by the expression "God". Pleasures and pains of life are the result of one's own actions called "Karmas" and as a result of these Karmas every

soul takes rebirth and proceeds further in its journey towards liberation. In Jainism, as in other Indian religions systems, individual personality has always been regarded as a transitory mask as the whole Jain philosophy is based on the existence of the duality of Jiva and Ajiva- Spirit and matter. The spirit survives even after the matter appears to decay and dies. This leads Jains to the theory of re-incarnation and rebirth in accordance with the Karmas (actions) of the past births. Even your good actions bind you if they are done with a motive to gain rewards. Law of karma is inexorable but one can destroy his Karmas to be free from their bondage by one's own efforts. There is no outside element which can drag you out of this bondage. The great seers and prophets can guide you and point out to you the path of redemption but ultimately it is for you to find out the path suitable to you and to start walking on that path by conviction, courage and fortitude.

This approach of Jainism has earned for itself a comment that is a-theistic.

Is Jainism atheistic? Before answering this

question, it would be necessary to know what is "atheistic". If theism consists only in the belief in a personal or impersonal God as the creator and sustainer of this universe, then certainly Jainism is a-theistic as it does not believe that this universe is created and shaped by some personal or impersonal entity called God. Nor do the Jains believe that rendition of justice for the Good or bad deeds of human beings is at the mercy of some capricious will or whim of the Divine.

Approach of Jain philosophers to this question is purely rational, and while they flatly reject the notion of a supremely authoritative God, it does not reject God-hood itself. It studies the component elements of the whole Universe, scrutinises the true nature and character of each, analyses their effect on the evolution of life, tries to find out the ultimate goal of the pregression and by a very subtle and logical process of metaphysics, shows the way to achieve God-hood. It has innate faith in the capacity of the spirit- the creative force called "Ātman" to achieve God-hood and makes no distinction



between the potentiality of the creative force inherent in a blade of grass, and the one inherent in humanly frame of Māhāvīr, the last and the most distinguished Tirthankar (Prophet) of our times, to achieve the final God-hood. It emphasises that the achievement of God-hood does not depend upon the favours of any agency outside your own self, and each soul ("Ātman") can achieve the same by his own understanding and efforts. What is required is the will to exert.

"Encyclopaedia of Religion and ethics" edited by R. Garbe, makes distinction between naive and philosophical atheism. (Vol. II P.185). If this distinction is accepted, one can say that Jainism believes in philosophical atheism. This is obviously different from crass materialism. The difference consists in the Jain conviction, which is the result of a serious philosophical speculation and not a naive refusal to believe what cannot be visualized. Heinrich Zimmer rightly observes that Jainism is not atheistic but is transtheistic.

Indian tradition uses the word "Nāstika"

(नास्तिक) in three senses viz. (1) Disbelief in the theory of Karma and the life beyond, (2) Disbelief in God and (3) Disbelief in the ultimate authority of Vedas. It is the second and third sense in which some Hindu thinkers have labelled Jainism as atheistic. Strictly Speaking, it would be only in the third sense that the Jains may be called atheistic because Jains do not believe in the finality of Vedas. Mahāvīr's dialogue with his first disciples called "Gandharas" (गणधर) shows that the teacher has not totally disclaimed the Vedas, but has tried to explain some of their aspects by putting his own interpretation. So far as the second sense in concerned, it is the Chārṇwāk School which would fall within its category because the Chārṇwākas do not believe either in the theory of Karma, or rebirth; Theirs is the total denial of all that cannot be apprehended by senses.

It is pertinent to note that in the Indian system of philosophical thoughts, Jain thinkers were not the only ones who denied the existence of a Supreme God. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems were

originally atheistic and became theistic only after their fusion. Sāṅkhya also denied the existence of God and hence it is referred to as "Nirīswara" i.e. Godless. Thus the rejection of the idea of a supreme authority outside one's own-self as shaping the destiny of the whole universe is rejected by some of the most important schools of philosophers in the process of evolution of Indian metaphysics.

Then the question which naturally arises is how do the Jains explain the origin and governance of Universe? What is their "Raison detre" of this existence? Jain system maintains that the universe is without beginning or an end. It broadly classifies the universe into two categories viz. (1) Jīva (soul) (2) Ajīva (non-soul). Jīva is the creative spirit, the motivating force, the consciousness which pervades even in the things which are apparently immobile and inanimate. Ajīva is the matter - non-sentient, non motivating and non-conscious. This element of Ajīva is the world which is in existence outside the "I" element. Every living being has the consciousness of "I". This "I" exists inspite of the

fundamental changes in the shape and character of its body. This body undergoes many changes from birth to childhood, then to youth and to old age and finally to death but "I" consciousness remains the same. That consciousness is that of "Jiva". The rest is "Ajiva". If we analyse all the objects of this universe, we shall come across these two broad classifications of "Jiva" and "Ajiva".

According to Jain philosophers both these elements of the universe are eternal and ever existent. They are not created by anyone and they operate by their own force, action and inter-action. This interaction between these two ever existing and eternal elements of universe supplies motivating force, consciousness, and push of Jiva to Ajiva. The result is the large and amazing varieties and activities of objects in the universe.

Obviously, this line of reasoning rules out the necessity of a creator or a sustainer of the universe, because, according to it, the universe is an incomprehensible automation and the work of a philosopher is only to find out and understand the

secrets of this automation. Religion, according to Jainism does not consist of any ritual but is only an attempt to adjust your self properly in the mechanism of this automation. As Shri S. Radhakrishnan puts it, "the Jain view is that the whole universe of being, of mental and material factors has existed from all eternity, undergoing an infinite number of revolutions produced by the powers of nature without the intervention of any external deity."

The concept of the absolute master, creator and sustainer of the Universe is born out of human experience that everything tangible and intangible is the result of causation and creativity and therefore there must be some ultimate cause or a creator from whom everything else has resulted. This line of reasoning has led the human mind to various types of philosophical speculations, and approaches. It may not be some co-ordinating force which is transcending the material world and human understanding. But Belief in this transcendental co-ordinating energy has led metaphysics to the

discovery of an all powerful and all embracing Divine Soul to whose ordinance and will all the objects of universe are subject and who would be the ultimate and real cause of all things tangible and intangible experienced in life. Two well-known approaches of thinkers are: ontological and cosmo-logical. Ontology is metaphysics concerned with essence of things or being in the abstract. Cosmological approach accepts the law of causality or the principal of "sufficient reason" . The ontological approach assumes that GOD must be real as there is some force beyond our minds and ideas. He is "That than which nothing greater can be conceived" (St. Anslem). The cosmological approach however, does not start with any such assumption but starts with worldly objects and states that every existing thing or feature which we encounter in this universe must have a cause or reason to explain why it is so and must have something else which has brought it into existence. This something else is itself an effect or result of some prior cause. If, say the cosmologists, you go on tracing this link of effect and its cause, you must ultimately conclude that there is one final

reality which is the root cause of all effects, and which has sufficient reason within itself. This approach historically goes back to Aristotle's argument that there must be an "unmoved cause" of motion.

According to Jain thinkers both these views are true only partially because the conclusions drawn by them leave much to be desired from logical point of view. Granting that there is some force beyond our minds and ideas, there is no reason to grant further that this force is outside our own self, and to over-rule the proposition (as propounded by Jains) that this force is the same which can be released by cultivation and development of the spiritual power which your own soul potentially possesses.

तत् त्वमसि - "Thou art that" is as much the call of the Jains as that of the Upanishadas. Western ontologists have failed to recognise this. As for the cosmogoligal approach, the Jains would at once agree to the theory of causation as they are the most vocal advocates of the theory of Karma. They would, however, not agree to the final conclusion of the

cosmologists that root cause of all effects is some where outside your own self. Jainism says you are own cause and your own effect and it is by your own effort and exertion that you can reap results which are good or bad. If there is an ultimate cause, that is within you and not outside you. You are, therefore, your own master, your own God. You are not servile or subservient to any outside agency. Finality is your own potential. As Brihad-Aranyaka Upnishad puts it,

*"whoever worships God as other than the self, thinking he is one and I am another knows not."*

Even Bhagwadgita recognises this truth when the Lord says, "Iswarah Sarva Bhutānām Hrudeshe Arjuna tisthati" (ईश्वरः सर्व भूतानाम् हृदरोर्जुन तिष्ठति) "Oh, Arjuna, God resides in the heart of every being." Aristotal uttered a great truth when he said: "To be happy means to be self-sufficient". Salvation, according to Jain seers, is not a gift of capricious gods, but is to be won by earnest seeking and self discipline. Man, according to them is the sole and absolute master of his fate, but so long as his vision is clouded by ignorance resulting in



attachments, envy and arrogance he is not able to see the path of freedom. If he is found fattered by chains, these chains are of his own forging, and by proper efforts, only he can rend them.

The Indian philosophical system of "Nyāya" is very much similar to the thinking of Western ontological philosophers on this point. Jain reply to Nyāya philosophers is that if God, as an outside and over powering force, is taken as the creator and sustainer of the universe on the analogy of the effects having intelligent human causes, then even God, like human beings, must be presumed to be imperfect having all human desires of creation, fun and frolic. Moreover, many questions such as who created God and why God created universe and why God should take trouble of dispensing justice etc. remain unanswered.

Albert Einstein , the greatest physicist of our age rightly observes with reference to the idea of the existence of an omnipotent just and omniscient personal as under :

"If this Being is omnipotent, then every

occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also his work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before an almighty Being? In giving out punishments and rewards He would, to a certain extent, be passing judgement on Himself. How can this be conceived with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him? "

(Ideas and opinions - Albert Einstein)

Jains have, therefore, gone to the root of the whole universal existence and have concluded that each individual soul is responsible for his own fate and that everything in the universe is eternal. Science also tells us that the matter is indestructible. It may change form but essence remains the same. That is exactly what Jains say-

Soul, according to Jains, is clouded by Karmic action of matter on account of its association with the matter from time immemorial. But by proper efforts it can become free from the bondage of Karma and achieve its pristine purity when it itself

becomes all knowing and all powerful, sans aspirations and sans desire. It is then all bliss, peace and joy. सत् चित् आनन्द It is its own creation and it is the ultimate Reality.



# **Chapter - 4**

## **Brief Outlines of Jainism**

### **Sharman Tradition**

The Indian culture and philosophical outlook are deeply shaped by three traditions represented by Vedanta, Jainism and Buddhism. The last two are considered as representing "Shramana" tradition as distinguished from Aryan. It is believed that the Shramana tradition was followed by the original residents of Indus valley culture before the Aryans migrated to India with their Vedas. It is called Shramana because austerities involving serious physical disciplines were performed by forest-dweller - saints who had renounced worldly affairs. The Sanskrit word "Shram" means labour. Both

Jainism and Buddhism belong to Shramana tradition.

### **Vedic Rituals**

Shramana tradition is basically different from the Vedic one, which believed in propitiating deities representing different forces of nature such as rains, wind, fire etc. This propitiation began by performing Yajnas wherein many things including domestic animals were offered to fire. This practice resulted in Vedic scriptures called "Brahmanas", which prescribed in great details the ceremonial rituals for the performance of Yajnas with the help of priestly class of Brahmins.

### **Age of Upanishadas**

From the very initial stages, the Shramana traditions tried to put emphasis not on ceremonial practices but on personal efforts to obtain Divine dispensations. On account of this, there was a gradual intellectual renaissance in Vedic tradition giving rise to more rational interpretation to Vedic tradition giving rise to more rational interpretation to

Vedic injunctions through the literature, which known as Upanishads.

### **Sankhya's closeness with Jainism**

Sankhya system is considered as the earliest Indian attempt to systematize philosophy. The earliest propounder of this philosophy was saint Kapila. There is a good deal of similarity between Jainism and Sankhya.

### **Intermixture of traditions.**

While appreciating the ontological and philosophical aspects of different religious traditions which have their birth in the same national culture, it should be constantly born in mind that each of these traditions must have necessarily influenced the other in its individual development and therefore, it is futile to consider which tradition was principally responsible to influence the other.

### **Word Jain of later innovation**

Jainism is a subsequent innovation. In the times of Shri Mahavir and Shri Buddha it was known as "Path if Arhat" or "Path of Niganthas".

"Nigantha" means one who is free from Knots of Knowledge.

Having considered this background let us now refer to some basic features of Jain tradition.

### **Basic Fundamentals of Jainism**

The most important and basic feature of Jainism is that it sees the whole of his universe as a great Cosmic mechanism with its "Self - propelling force." This basic feature automatically dispenses with the notion that this universe is crated, conducted and controlled by any distinct authority called "God". We, human beings, being part of this self-propelling machanism, we should conduct ourselves in harmony with that mechanism and that is what we mean by "religion". All the well-known concepts of Jainism, such as, Ahimsa, Truth, Asteya (Nonstealing) Aparigraha (Non-Collectron of possessions) and Brahmacharya (Celebacy with chesity) flow from the fact that we humans should live in harmony with this cosmic mechanism.

"Thou Art That" (तत्त्वम् असि) is as much the call

of Jains as of the Upanishads. Jainism maintains that you are your own cause and your own effect and that is why by your own efforts and exertions you can reap good and had results. You are not subservient to any outside agency. Finality is your own potential. As Brahadranakya Upanishad puts it:- "Whoever worships God as other than the Self, thinking. He is one and I am another, knows not." Even Gita recognizes this truth when the Lord says:- "Ishwaraha Sarva Bhutanam Hradayerjuna Tishtati" (Oh Arjuna, God dwells in the heart of every being)(18/61)

Jainism would say : "Parikshina Sakala Karmaha Ishwaraha, "परिक्षिणा सफलकर्माः इश्वरः।"(when all Karmas are annihilated one becomes God). In one of the Upanishads God is described as "Tad Doore Tad Antike" (It appears to be far away but It is quite near to you). (तद् दूरे तदन्तिके)

## **Two Constituents of Universe.**

So the question is what is this mechanism and how it functions, because with this knowledge it would be easier to live in harmony. Our observation



reveals that this universe is constituted by two elements namely, one, which has dynamic force and the other to which this force is applied causing multiple and variegated phenomenal features, which we come across in life. We identify this dynamic element as "Jiva" (Soul) and non-dynamic element as "Ajiva" (non sentient and inert thing). These are the basic elements of this universe and all events and things we come across in this universe are the products of the interaction of these two basic elements.

### **Dynamic Force remains uncharged**

Who created these two basic elements? Answer is: "None". They are there together from time immemorial. They are eternal. The only difference in their functioning is that while the dynamic force called Jiva remains unchanged, the non dynamic one called Ajiva undergoes transformations. All these transformations whether good or bad are activated by the dynamic force or energy supplied by Jiva which is associated with it.

Jiva, in its pure state, that is, the state in which

its eternal association with Ajiva is broken, is omniscient and omnipotent. However, these qualities are blurred by its association with Ajiva. Therefore, the attempt of Jiva is to get liberated from the association with Ajiva. This liberation comes after great efforts and experience. As Jiva's association with Ajiva results in various types of activities, all these activities called "Karma" produce their own reactions with equal force. This process of action and reactions is the root cause of birth and death, peace and conflicts, good and bad things of life, which we experience constantly.

### **Proof of Jiva's Omnipotency and Omniscience**

What is the proof to support the assertion that Jiva, in its pure form when it is divorced from its association with Ajiva obtains its inherent and original power of omniscience and omnipotence? The obvious proof is its dynamic force. The very fact that a particular element is capable of supplying energy causing motion of every type, shows that the same element has some inherent power or potency. This power or potency is not expressed fully on account

of its association with Ajiva. It follows that the grater, closer and deeper this association is, the greater is the curtailment of its inherent potency. Again, the element, which is potent must necessarily possess the knowledge to work out its potency, This aspect does supply the proof of Jiva's omniscience. This dynamic force called Jiva pervades the whole universe. It is intangible in as much as it can not be perceived by the physical senses It can, however be perceived by reason and logic fortified by experience.

### **Ajivas and their Functions.**

Then the next question is what is Ajiva and how it functions? Jain Philosophers have prescribed five categories of Ajiva. They are (1) Pudgal, (2) Dharma, (3) Adharma, (4) Akash (space) and (5) Kala (time). Jiva functions through these five categories of Ajiva. Jain terminology does not possess connotations, which are commonly understood by us. It is therefore necessary to explain the meaning of each of these five categories of Ajiva, as all of them work as medium through which Jiva prefers to make it

movements.

(1) Pudgals consist mainly of human passion such as anger, avarice, attachment, love, hatred, selfishness as well as selflessness, violence and non violence. These are all transitory in nature and progress as well regress of Jiva depends upon the type of Pudgal, which it prefers for its movements.

(2) "Dharma" does not carry its usual meaning of religion. It signifies mechanism of motion. Jiva can make real progress only if it prefers as its medium that which is suitable to its intrinsic and inherent nature. The principle underlying this is expressed as "Vatthu Sahavo Dhammo" "वत्थु सहावो धम्मो ।" "Swa Bhava" that is, Nature of every object, is its "Dharma". In other words Dharma is that which is of intrinsic and inherent nature in every object. "Swabhava" means one's own nature. For example it is not the intrinsic nature of human soul to be angry and so when the Jiva acts through anger it is working through the alien nature called "Para bhava". When this happens it fails to make real progress.

(3) "Adharma" is contrary to Dharma. Hence when Jiva makes no movement or makes a movement in Para Dharma, it is said to be acting through Adharma.

(4 & 5) Akash and Kala i.e. Space and Time are inevitable categories because no movement is possible without space and time.

Thus the above analysis shows how and in what manner the Jiva makes its movements.

### **Importance of Bhav Karma.**

Action can not be avoided when Jiva is in association with Ajiva. But every action good or bad results in reaction with equal force, and every action binds the soul, which has to undergo pleasures and pains, which are the result thereof. Jiva's real liberty is in being free from every type of bondage - good or bad.

Therefore the problem is how to solve it. If one cannot avoid action while one is alive and in association with Ajiva, what is the procedure by which one can be free from the consequences of his

actions? This problem is solved by Jain philosophers by going to the root of every action. They say that every action starts just when it is conceived and not when it is actually put in operation. This principle is called "Kade Mane Kade" कडे माने कडे । meaning, "action begins just when it is thought of." It is therefore necessary to inquire with what intention the mind conceives to take action. This intention is known as "Bhava", and the action contemplated is called Bhava Karma. According to Jain theory even Bhava Karma binds the soul (Jiva). Strength of this bondage would be less than that which is earned by its actual operation. Bhava means intention. So, if an action is not intended to reap any fruit and if there is complete want of any kind of attachment, it logically follows that such a Bhava Karma would not bind the soul because it is as good as No-Karma. This is how one can avoid bondage resulting from actions, even during one's life time and in association with Ajiva. This is the condition of one who has achieved the status of an "Arhat" - the one who is fully liberated. Jainism has prescribed a ladder of spiritual

development which has in all 14 Steps. Arhat is the soul, which is at the 13<sup>th</sup>. Step which is called "Sayogi Kevali" which means that the liberated soul with human body. When such a soul leaves the human frame it achieves the status of a Siddha who has no more to undergo the cycle of births and deaths. When the soul reaches 13th stage it has reached the position of a "Sthitaprajna" of Gita. The above referred ladder is known as "Guna-Shthanaka" गुणस्थानक। . Each step of this ladder shows the stage of spiritual development so far achieved so that an aspirant can know where he or she stands in his or her march for the total freedom.

### **Mechanism of Bondage and Freedom.**

In view of what is stated above, Jainism has stated the mechanism of bondage and freedom of the soul in its formula of seven stages namely, Papa (sinful action), Punya (virtuous action), Asrava (inflow of Karmas), Bandha (bondage), Samvara (stoppage of all inflow), Nirjara (annihilation of accumulated Karmas) and Moksha (final liberation). Meanings shown against each step are self

explanatory to show how karmic bondage and freedom from that takes place.

### **Theory of Relativity & Doctrine of Syadvad.**

The most important and unique contribution, which Jainism has made to the world of thought is its theories of "Nayavad" and "Syadvad".

Syadvad is the synthesis of Nayavad. The word "Naya" means stand point. As Acharya Shri Siddhasen points out, 'Reality' is very complex as it has many aspects. He says, "Anekatamakam Vastu Gocharaha" अनेकात्मकम् वस्तु गोचरः। i.e. "A thing has many aspects." It has also many relations with other objects which influence it. Human knowledge being limited it is not always possible to comprehend all these aspects and relations for arriving at the final judgments. Many a times we do find that what is true from one stand point may not be true from a different stand point. Nayvad therefore teaches us not to be rigid or fanatic about any point of view. It thus teaches us to be tolerant of other and even contrary viewpoint.



Syad vad is the consequence of Nayavad. The grammatical meaning of the word Sayd is "perhaps" but in Jain terminology it is used to suggest a possibility. Moreover, Syadvad emphasizes the fact that truth about an object or an idea is related to many factors including the factors such as time, space, shape and intention. It is also related to education, culture and the special circumstances in which the person who is to judge is placed.

Thus the net effect of Nayavad and Syadvad is to increase understanding and power of tolerance. In other words it introduces an element of Ahimsa even at the thinking stage.

These are the basic features on which the whole edifice of Jain philosophy is constructed. There are many other important points such as the Jain theories of Knowledge, Leshyas, Meditation, Bhavana, Ratnatrayi etc. reference to which can be made if and when necessary during further discussion.



# **Chapter - 5A**

## ***Anekantvad and its importance in life Part-I***

### **What is Anekantvad**

Simple meaning of "Anekant" is judging a thing, event or idea from, various angles. The word Anekant suggests its own meaning. Sanskrit word: "अेकान्त" means one dimensional and hence Anekant maeans multi dimensional. It is the negation of dogmatism and develops synoptic outlook of life guided by objective and logical evaluation of problems.

The concept of Anekant embodies the dynamic and rational approach to the vicissitudes of life and all phenomenal changes of the empirical world,

which is to-day greatly obsessed by the forces of absolutism and rigidity. Tendency to cling to the finality of views leads to violent and many a times bloody conflicts.

### **Fundamentals of Evolution**

All phenomenal events of this changing world can be understood in their true nature if we bear in mind the dynamic mechanism of their coming into existence, persistence and final cessation, i.e. "*utpati, shthiti, and laya*." These are the unavoidable three stages of evolution of every sentient and non-sentient thing and event of this universe. All the variegated changes that we witness in daily life are subject to these three stages. What we notice as cessation is nothing but the causation of fresh existence in a different form, which undergoes the same cycle of persistence and cessation. However all through out this cycle of changes there is constancy of one essential element that is present through out all the changes and which supplies the element of persistence. This element is known

as "Dravya" while the other two namely existence and cessation are mere changing modes and are known as "Paryayas". Thus the reality consists of two characteristic - one of which is eternal and the other is temporary. This is known as "Dravyaparyatmakam". The theory of Anekant recognizes both these elements of "Dravya" and "Paryaya" to comprehend the true nature of reality.

### **Base of Anekant**

At the base of Anekant are the theories of "Nayavad" and "Syadvad". "Naya" means a standpoint or an aspect. Truth or reality is always complex and has many aspects all of which are not always known to humans. More over, the complex reality has not only infinite number of qualities and aspects, but also infinite number of relations. Therefore, in order to judge properly a particular phenomenon, one has to know not only as many aspects thereof as possible but also the quality and quantity of its relationships. As Acharya Siddhasen puts it, *"Anekantmakam Vastu Gocharah" i.e. a thing is*

*properly understood only by perceiving its various aspects. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes:- "Naya" is a stand point from which we make a statement about a thing. What is true from one standpoint may not be true from another. Particular aspects are never adequate to the whole reality. The relative solutions are abstractions under which reality may be regarded, but do not give us a full and sufficient account of it. Jainism makes basic and fundamental principle that truth is relative to our stand point".*

Anekant takes even contradictory aspects of reality into account and having thus considered the totality of all available aspects and relationships it evolves a synthesis, which is known as "Syadvad". The word "Syad" connotes a possibility. It is used to denote that a particular statement or event is possible in view of particular circumstances and therefore to reject it in absolute terms without taking into account the circumstances giving rise to it would be wrong.

Thus "Nayavad" and "Syadvad" to gather form

the very absis of Anekantvad -a multi -dimensional approach. One-dimensional approach fails to distinguish between appearance and reality and leads to fanaticism. It is rightly observed by Herbert Markas that genuine freedom and well-being depend on liberation from entire system of one-dimensional needs and satisfactions and require new modes of realisation.

### **Seven Classes of Naya**

Jain philosophers have given broad classification of different aspects (Naya) through which we can perceive a thing. These are :-

1. Naigama (Generic and specific or teleological view)
2. Sangraha (Class view)
3. Vyavahar (Empirical view)
4. Rujusutra (Momentary view)
5. Shabda (Verbalistic view)
6. Samabhirudha (Etymological view)
7. Evanbhuta (Specialized view)

First three of these are with reference to the identification of the main substance called Dravya while the rest identify the modes of the main substance called Paryaya.

- (1) Naigama is the end-product. When we describe an event by the result we want to achieve even though we have only started the work to that end, we assert Naigama Naya. Here the general purpose for which we work controls the total series of our activities. It is also Naigama when we lay stress on any one of the most special qualities and ignore the other ones. The fallacy created by Naigama Naya is called Naigamabhasa. According to Jains, the Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools suffer from this fallacy.
- (2) Sangraha Naya puts emphasis on some general and class characteristics ignoring others, thus not giving the idea of the whole. This is called Sangrahabhasa form which according to Jain Vedantists are suffering.
- (3) Rujusutra Naya ignores specific qualities of

past and future as is done by Buddhists

- (4) Shabda Naya occurs when an object has many synonyms each having different connotation but one uses only one thus obliterating the connotation of the rest. The fallacy is called Shabdanayabhasa.
- (5) Samabhirudha Naya happens when one concentrates on the etymological distinction between the synonyms.
- (6) Evambhut Naya happens when out of many synonyms only one which is appropriate to the action is selected.

This classification of Nayas shows how differently the same object can be viewed and how different aspects can be true only partially.

### **Utility of Naya Theory**

The utility of this theory lies in its analytical and rational approach in judging an object or an idea. These different approaches, if properly harmonized would give a complete or nearly complete picture of the object concerned. This harmonization



is done by the theory of Syadvad.

Acharya Siddhasen has properly observed that there are as many view points (Nayas) as there are statements and there are as many philosophies as there are statements. Acharya Jinbhadra makes it clear that there are all philosophies as there are statements. Acharya Jinbhadra makes it clear that all philosophies taken collectively constitute Jainism.

This brings us to the theory of Syadvad which is nothing but the theory of relativity.

### **Syadvad - Theory of Relativity**

*Schopenhauer, the renowned German philosopher, has unwittingly stated the concept of Syadvad in the following words:- "Of ten things that annoy us, nine would not be able to do so, if we understood them thoroughly in their own causes, and therefore, know their necessity and true nature".*

The point is practically covered while discussing the theory of Nayavad. While Nayavad points to the different aspects and teaches us why and under

what circumstances a particular statement or event has come into existence, Syadvad helps us in arriving at the synthesis of all apparently inconsistent statements. This increases our understanding and tolerance.

Etymological meaning of the word "Syad" is "if" or "perhaps". But here the Jains have used it to suggest a possibility because as noted above, everything, ieda or statement has relations with something else, and therefore, likely to be relatively true or false. Therefore absolute rejection or acceptance thereof without knowing its relativity would lead us to some fallacy. Bertrand Russell rightly observe :- "The distinctive feature of an unintelligent man is the hastiness and absoluteness of his opinion. The scientist is slow to believe and never speaks without modification - always ready to concede that it may be wrong."

If we analyze the process of human judgment , we find that it involves two important factors. They are (1) our limited knowledge about different

aspects and relationship which have given birth to the idea or event we are called upon to judge., and (2) our own subjectiveness of approach as each of us is conditioned differently by our education, environment and culture.

The first of these two factors relates to the object or idea to be judged while the second relates to the judge himself. Now with these two limitations when we arrive at a conclusion, that conclusion is only relatively true - relativity being traced to the above two factors. Therefore if someone else comes to a different conclusion with regard to the same object or idea, one should not feel disturbed if he follows the theory of Syadvad because he knows that the other person might have drawn his conclusion from different set of circumstances. This type of approach covers the whole gamut of life events and if followed scrupulously, it would surely make the whole society and us happy.

The plain and simple meaning of this theory of Syadvad is its recognition of the relativity

of the truth or reality which teaches us that all sentient beings and ideas of this universe are related to each other and hence every universal phenomenon is true from a particular view point and false from another view point. Revered saint Anandghanji refers to this principle in his Stavan on 14<sup>th</sup> Tirthankar as under:

વચન નિરપેક્ષ વ્યવહાર જુઠો કહ્યો, વચન સાપેક્ષ વ્યવહાર સાચો.

Meaning : "The conduct without any consideration of its relativity is considered wrong and only that conduct which is expressed after taking into account the relativity of its source is considered correct."

### **Scientific Justification of Relativity**

What Lord Manavir found in the theory of Relativity, Einstein, one of the greatest scientists of modern era, proved in his theory of Space and Time in the year 1905 A.D. Development of optics and electrodynamics led to the rejection of the concept of absolute time, absolute simultaneity and absolute space. If time and space are relative

to other factors, every thing which happens in time and space would necessarily be relative to other factors. Therefore Einstein was convinced that there is causal interdependence of all processes in Nature. As a result, the revelations made by him and other theorists of quantum mechanics, the field of relativity was enlarged so as to include the subjective reaction of the observer.

Now even the modern philosophers like Fritz of Capra support this view when he points to awareness of the unity and mutual inter relation of all things and events and the experience of all phenomena in the world as manifestation of basic oneness. "All things", he says "are seen as interdependent and inseparable parts of this cosmic whole as different manifestations of the same ultimate relativity".

### **Mechanism of Saptabhangi**

Jain Seers have evolved a mechanism to express the Anekant aspect of Nayavad and Syadvad by providing what is known as ASI-NASTI FORMULA.

Asti implies a positive aspect and its etymological meaning is "is". Nasti implies a negative aspect and means "is not". There is a third alternative called "Avaktavya" means indescribable. This implies the things which can not be either affirmed or negated. These are the three modes in which we generally react. To these prefix Syad is attached to suggest the possibility of the thing being true or false or such which could not be described. Permutations and combinations of these three would be four namely Asti-Nasti, Asi-Avaktavyam, Nasti-Avaktavyam and Asi-Nasti-Avaktavyam. All our statements can be classified in these seven categories after adding the prefix Syad on order to suggest the possibility of a thing beings true or false. Thus you can avoid absolutism in your attitude towards all problems of life and try to search the inner causes of these problems. This mechanism is called "Saptabhangi" which is a perfectly logical method of understanding and resolving all disputes.

### **Comprehensive Remedy**

Thus Anekant approach promises to be a

talisman for all evils of life - social as well as individual. Tolerance and understanding it generates is at the very root of thinking process. It is Ahimsa practiced in daily life.



# **Chapter - 5B**

## ***Anekantvad and its Importance in Life Part-II***

**Its importance in day to day affairs of life:**

Anekant is the bedrock of Jain philosophy of behaviorism and the panacea for every type of social or individual maladies followed. It teaches us to take into consideration all possible aspects of a thing or idea before arriving at a judgment about it. It therefore requires us to understand and appreciate the contrary view point to find out why and how of it, so that we can accept the same wholly or partially or find out grounds for its rejection.

Its utility for easing tensions in our day to day



existence is so great that if properly followed, it automatically develops in us other virtues such as tolerance, truth benevolence and friendliness with all who have to deal with us. If applied in the international relations it is bound to lead us to world peace.

Diversity of views, tastes, living styles and social values is inherent in a civilized society. One has to face this diversity in day-to-day living not only in his business or professional dealing, but also in his personal dealings with his family and friends. Conflicts arise in these dealings only when one insists on his own viewpoint to the exclusion of all other viewpoints. But if one practicing Anekant is able to comprehend the root cause and all other aspects of the phenomenon and tries to reconcile the apparent disparities he is bound to harmonize the situation and obtain a tangible and good result.

Thus Anekant is not merely an intellectual exercise nor is it merely a philosophical doctrine to develop spiritual values. It is much more than all these as it affects all day-today affairs of our

mundane existence.

Its importance is aptly stated by Sddhsen Divakarji as under :-

जेन विना लोगस्स वच्चहारो सच्चहा न निवदाई। तरस्स  
भुजनेक्कगुरुनो नमो अनेगान्त वयस्सा ॥

Meaning : I bow doen to Anekantvad, the great preceptor, without which it is not possible to conduct these worldly affairs.

**Gandhi's political success was mainly due to his belief in Anekant.**

Gandhiji's success in winning political freedom for India was largely due to his method of dealing with social and political problems by working out the theory of Anekant because his method of Satyagraha always required one to look to and to appreciate the view point of the opponent. Though the theory of Anekant has been evolved in depth by Jain philosophers, it has been always presumed to be applicable to individuals who aspire for spiritual upliftment.

However, Gandhi was the first thinker who

thought of applying and working out this theory on a mass scale to solve all social and political problems. In 1926 he observed as under :-

*"It has been my experience that I am always true (correct) from my point view, and often wrong from the point of my critic : I know that we are both right from our respective points"* Mr. Stephen Hay an American scholar and historian quotes Gandhiji saying as under:"

*"I very much like this doctrine of many-ness of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Muslim from his stand point and a Christian from his. From the platform of Jains I prove non creative aspect of God, and from that of Ramanuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact we are all thinking of the unthinkable, describing the indescribable, seeking to know the unknown, and that is why our speech falters, is inadequate and often contradictory. "*

History of all conflicts and confrontations in the world is the history of intolerance born out of ignorance. Difficulty with the man is his egocentric

existence. If only the man becomes conscious of his own limitations!! This consciousness is aroused by Anekant doctrine which points out to the many fold aspects of a thing and the narrow vision of the observer and asks him not to be hasty in forming absolute judgments before examining various other aspects - both positive and negative.

### **Two ways for search of Reality.**

The question is how Gandhi worked out this doctrine on a mass scale. In order to seek an answer to this question it is necessary to point out to the two ways for the search of Reality, which are: Through logic and reasoning This is not available to all in equal measure. Therefore, the other way is to make its search through experience. Indian philosophers call it "Darshan". Whatever is known by experience is more reliable than whatever is known by logic and reasoning because unless it comes out of yourself, no knowledge is really yours. Both these methods are subjective in character, but the element of subjectiveness in the method of logic and reasoning has its own limitations of

education and intelligence.

By these two methods the doctrine of Anekant functions as under :

(1) It logically scrutinizes the merits of all one-dimensional views, which it comes across.

(2) Then by this process it comes to know the relationship of each view with the facts and circumstances which purport to give justification to its existence.

(3) The inquiry of this relationship supplies clue to the explanation of the views under consideration.

(4) Then comes the process of synthesis of different relative views which may be even contradictory to each other.

This is in fact a process of logic, reasoning and analysis fortified by experience. This very process increases the element of understanding and necessity of synthesis. This understanding clarifies the whole situation and enables one to chalk out his plan of action to solve the problem faced by him.

## **Gandhi's method of Satyagraha.**

Consciously or unconsciously Gandhiji followed exactly this process to solve every national problem.

Satyagraha, which he offered, was never sporadic or emotional. Whether it was Champaran, Kheda or salt Satyagrah, his method was the same. He first studied the pros and cons of the problem taking into account all the aspects (Nayas) involved in the matter. He always made a special effort to understand the case of the other side, (Saptabhangi) its alleged justification and a possible remedy (Synthesis) which may induce the other side to come to terms. Before taking any concrete action he would bring to the notice of the other side what are the wrongs, which are required to be remedied. He would always be ready to talk and to arrive at a reasonable consensus by conceding just points of the other side. If he fails in such efforts and finds that the other side is not able to give in, he would resolutely offer non-cooperation or non-violent resistance to fight injustice, and this too, after giving notice to the other side. He would always blame

the system and not the person who works the system. He would always be ready to suffer and would advise his followers to suffer and would see that the fight is totally non-violent and based on principles.

One who does not understand and follow the technique of Anekantvad, which is synthesis of Nyavad and Syadvad, could effectively take none of these steps.

Gandhi could see the efficacy of Anekant technique principally because he had innate trust in human nature and believed that every human being has two sides - good and bad - in his nature. Such a belief stems from the doctrine of Anekant it self because Anekant is the denial of one-dimensional aspect. Therefore, as reasoned out by Gandhi, you can always invoke the good side of the opposite party by your own conduct of reasonableness, firmness and readiness to suffer. He further reasoned out that the element of suffering and sacrifice is present even in the methods which are violent but the state has always greater power

of violence and therefore if you can train the masses who suffer from injustice to adopt non-violent method of resistance, you are likely to succeed by invoking good side of the opponent and by making it difficult for him to function without the co-operation of the masses.

Gandhiji employed this method quite successfully in South Africa where he fought for the rights of Indians against the administration of Gen. Smuts for about two decade. It is quite interesting to know what Gen. Smuts, against whose rule Gandhi led his non violent struggle, has subsequently said about his movement on his 70<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. He said :-

*"It was my fate to be the antagonist of a man for whom even I had the highest respect. His activities at that time were trying to me. For him everything went according to plan. For me, the defender of law and order, there was the usual trying situation, the odium of carrying out a law, which had no public support, and finally the discomfiture when the law had to be repealed. For him it was a successful*



*coup. Nor was the personal touch wanting. in jail he had prepared for me a pair of sandals, which he presented to me when he was set free. I have worn the sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that i am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man".*

These observations of one who had to face the force of movement based on Anekant technique, need no further corroboration of the efficacy of Anekant.

### **Conflict Resolution Capacity of Anekant.**

Modern society is dominated by the values which are materialistic rather than theistic with the result that social conflicts are required to be resolved at every stage of day-to day events. There are group clashes emerging from economic and social imbalances and each conflict group has its own justification for taking a stand, which is in conflict with some other group. Thus to-day we have become helpless spectators of fierce drama of hatred, avarice and violence which seek to destroy

the very foundation of our social order and cultural ethos. Obvious remedy would be to improve the prevailing socio-economic structure responsible for the generation of the conflict. But the problem is how this can be done. Anekant here comes to our help with its multidimensional approach. It tries to study the background forces, which have been responsible to give birth to the conflicting stand points and its process of synthesis evolves the formula which is harmonious. For example, let us take the case of industrial unrest wherein the conflicts often arise between the employers and the employed. In a capitalist society, which is based purely on individual self-interest, such conflicts are usual and each side has a standpoint, which deserves consideration. If we consider the merits of both the sides objectively, it would be easy to arrive at a solution which may result in harmony as noted below:

Gandhiji left South Africa and came to India in 1915 and established his Ashram in Ahmedabad. Some of his financial supporters were mill owners

of Ahmedabad. Within two years of his arrival in India he was faced with a problem of industrial unrest as there arose a dispute between mill owners and labour for increase in wages. It was an admitted position that labour had a good case for increase in wages. Their demand was for the increase of 50 p.c. but the owners were not ready to give an increase of more than 20 p.c. Gandhiji studied the standpoints of both the sides, the standard of living both at Bombay and Ahmedabad as well as the wage structure and the paying capacity of the employers and concluded that the increase of 35 p.c. was justified. The mill owners were, however, not inclined to agree. Gandhiji advised labour to go on strike under strict conditions of remaining non violent and doing nothing to damage the property of the owners. The mill owners in their turn declared lockouts. The labour remained jobless for longer period than expected and some of them began to lose faith in strike. To tone up their morale Gandhiji went on fast for indefinite period. Within three days parties came to a settlement

by entrusting the problem to the arbitration of Shri Anandshankar Dhruv who decided in favour of labour by awarding the increase of 35 p.c. as proposed by Gandhiji.

The whole approach of Gandhiji for this conflict resolution was purely multi-dimensional. The same approach was adopted by him in Kheda Satyagraha against Government and in Champaran against the indigo factory owners. All these cases prove that Anekant approach and technique, if properly applied, are capable of resolving most of the social conflicts making socio-economic progress smooth.

What applies to group conflicts applies with equal force to the individual and personal conflicts also.

### **Ontological Justification of Anekant.**

This Jain doctrine of Anekantvad can be best utilized for developing realistic art of living and solving our day to day problems. According to Jainism, the basis of spiritual development is the doctrine of "Ratnatrayi" i.e. Samyak Darshan (instinctive

perception), Samyak Gnaan (knowledge) and Samyak Charitra (conduct). It is the last one - Character - which leads us to a successful life. But this last one should be Samyak i.e. 'Right' This right conduct cannot be developed without the first two being also 'Right', Right Darshan implies inherent and implied qualities, which generate inclinations, which are the result of inheritance and cultural education received from atmospheric environment, which necessarily differs from individual to individual. However, the fact remains that every individual is possessed of some sort of intuition, which guides him to acquire further knowledge. If this knowledge is the right one, it leads him to the next step of the right conduct.

Thus the whole problem is resolved to the acquisition of "Right" knowledge. It is here that the Anekant doctrine comes to our help. It teaches us to have a holistic view of a thing or event, which enables us to take into account different aspects of the matter under consideration.

Generally our worldly approach is to consider a particular event, which confronts us in its isolation. Such an approach is not correct because the world is empirical and the things are dynamic by nature and are, therefore, subject to constant changes. As Mr. Alan Watts rightly puts it, "we do not understand all the interconnections between things, because in reality what we call "things" are not really separate from each other; They all go with each other intereonneeted. In other words, everything in this world is subject to "Utpad" (creation) and "Vyaya" (destruction) and therefore, "Dhauvya" (constant) which is the Reality appears to be different even though its substantive nature reamins constant. Thus no event in life occurs in isolation as every event is the product of variety of other events and circumstances. 'Truth' observes Shri Krishnamurti, "is an awareness of totality of existance". Scientists like Einstein, Heidelberg and others prove this through laboratory experiments. Einstein's theory of relativity seeks to establish that everything in this scheme of universe is relative to other things and the Quantum

theorists prove that the item or the event to be judged is influenced by the subjectivity of one who tries to judge. These scientific explorations have thus proved the correctness of the Jain theory of Nayavad, which recognizes the existence of different aspects. The quantum theorists have supported the doctrine of Sptabhangi, which asks us to take into account different possibilities which are generated by the subjective element of the judge.

It is thus evident that to acquire 'Right' knowledge one has to take into account all the positive as well as the negative aspects of the thing or event he is confronted with.

This process of acquiring 'right knowledge' develops in us an attitude of understanding and tolerance of the opposite view. The habit of looking at a thing from different angles trains the human mind in the scientific analysis of causes and effects.

Objectively speaking, there is nothing "good" or "bad" in this world because it is the human mind, which, in the words of Shakespeare, makes a heaven of hell and hell of heaven. A Rishi has well said :

मनः अेव मनुष्याणाम् कारणम् बन्ध मोक्षयो । i.e. It is the mind which causes bondage and freedom of mankind. It is of great significance that the UNO Charter begins with the words "Wars begin in the minds of Men". So, to learn a good Art of Living it is always of great importance to train our mind to the scientific system of analysis and synthesis supplied by Anekant.

There were different and many a times conflicting schools of Philosophical thoughts in times of Mahavir to explain the universal scheme. It was therefore Mahavir's task to evolve a synthesis, which would recognize the element of truth in each of them. Mahavir did this by advocating the doctrine of Anekant and therefore there is no doctrine in Jain metaphysics, which speaks in absolute terms.

The importance of Anekant lies in the fact that it introduces the concept of non-violence even in the thinking process. This aspect should make the Jain society most liberal and cosmopolitan in its outlook. However, the most discouraging aspect of the matter is that we, the Jains ourselves have stopped practicing Anekant in our social as well



as individual attitudes. We have not been able to solve even our petty differences like calendar dates for observing Paryushanas and similar other problems. Our total population is very small and yet we have not been able to evolve any synthesis, which would permanently unit us and raise our ideological and socio-religious status in the world. It serves no purpose to take pride in ideological moorings if the said ideology is to remain static in the books of the learned and has no dynamism in actual life. Conventions like this do supply proper forum to consider such problems lest they may not turn out to be mere social gatherings.



# **Chapter - 6**

## ***Jainism and Democracy***

### **Cosmic Democracy :**

When in my book *Path of Arhat* I described Jainism as a "religious democracy," some of my friends told me that religion and the secular concept of democracy cannot go together. This view arise out of the belief that the concept of democracy is limited to the political field. That is not correct. The concept of democracy is comprehensive enough to cover all situations where all individual units covered by it are treated on equal footing and have the liberty to expand and progress in their own way.

Being a way of life, Jainism looks at the universe

as one integrated cosmic mechanism wherein the life of even a microscopic atom has a recognized role to play. Therefore, every sentient being, however small it may be, has a right to exist, to develop and attain the highest stage of salvation that the great Tirthankaras have achieved. In other words, the potentiality for the achievement of Siddhahood in the Jiva of a blade of grass is the same as in the Jiva of Lord Mahavir himself. Thus so far as potentiality to achieve the last step in the ladder of liberty is the same for every jiva, it means that one soul is equal to all souls.

It is for this reason that Mahavir stated, "One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence." When you kill others, you kill yourself as you are as much part and parcel of the universal scheme as those killed by you. Therefore, a true Jain would never derive devilish delight in destroying innocent lives. The German philosopher Nietzsche protested against such violence when he said, "Humans are the most inhuman of all animals."

Michael Tobias, former Professor of Ecology and Humanities, rightly notes in his book *Life Force*, "Most crucially, Mahavir adopted what Greeks would later term a 'hylozoistic' approach to the natural world, a view that all matter contains soul, soul which is in the state of permanent, living, breathing feeling flux. Thus the clay bound earth, water, air and fire — all are living organisms."

Mahavir told his disciple Gautam that the ultimate end of soul is "Samatva"- the concept which equalizes the potentiality of each soul - the very essence of democracy - a sort of kinship resulting from psychological reciprocity intrinsic to life-force.

*In the same book Tobias notes, "Mahavir even went so far as to analyze soul clusters such as coral, moss, algae, lichen and posited the existence of the living equivalent of atoms namely Nigodas. Jains knew about physical atoms long before 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C. Greek philosopher Democritus described them. Jains called them "Anu." Molecules were named "Skandha" and together they comprised the basis for all pudgala or matter (Ajiva)". He*

*further notes, "While the middle kingdom Egyptians were building pyramids to house a few immortal Pharaohs, the Jains were building pyramids of thoughts to house an immortal earth with billions of immortal souls... Each Nigoda had - has an individual soul and destiny".*

Thus, the democracy of Jainism is cosmic in nature"

### **Denial of God and Emphasis on self reliance.**

Jain denial of God does not lead us to atheism, as in a very telling sense Jainism emphasizes the power of the soul whose luminosity is blurred by the clouds of karma. The focus of Jainism is to liberate the soul from the karmic bondage and to attain its original self. When this bondage totally vanishes the soul becomes all-powerful - omnipotent and omniscient. This status can be obtained by every soul by its own efforts, and under the law of karma every soul gets its dues in accordance with the principle of cause and effect. There is no scope for any discrimination or nepotism as

the law of karmâ automatically works out evenly and justly without fear or favor. This is the essence of democracy. As Peter Richelieu puts it at P.18 of his book *A Soul's Journey*, when the law of karma works, "There is no reward, no punishment, but there is result, there is cause and effect, and the law acts just as with higher worlds as it acts down here on the physical plane."

In this connection it is important to remember that Jain theory of "Bhakti" (devotion) is not to seek favor, as those souls who have attained Siddhahood have been "Vitaraga" i.e. one who has shed all likes, dislikes and passions of every type and that is exactly why the most sacred "mantra" of Jains called "Navkar Mantra" offers obiscience not to any individual Jain prophet but generally to all those who have been able to transcend worldly desires and passions. Acharya Samantbhadra has beautifully expressed this idea while expressing his devotion to a "Vitrage" as under, "Oh Lord", he says, "You are really a Vitrage (one who has shed all passions) and so you are not pleased by prayers nor displeased

by adverse criticism because you have destroyed all types of adversary feelings. All the same the remembrance of your merits purifies one's mind from all sins."

Democratic values of Jainism are best expressed during the holy days of Paryushana when every Jain begs for forgiveness for any adverse feeling generated by him knowingly or unknowingly to all sentient beings however small or big. In these days, he asks for friendliness from all and enmity from none.

## **Realisation of Oneness**

According to Jainism, this universe is like a big machine whose each part - big, small, light or heavy - is equally important. True knowledge consists of the realization of oneness of all things. The apparent separateness experienced between oneself and the rest is an illusion. Alan Watts succinctly emphasizes this aspect in his book *Still the mind* asking, "Does the root of a flower influence the flower as something fundamentally different

from it?" and he himself provides the answer, "No, surely the root and the flower are one process and like your head and your feet it all goes together. In that sense then the Universe and what you or I do, all goes together, and the picture of this universe is really the picture of you."

### **Caste Distinctions and Sex Discrimination.**

Castism and sex discrimination are the bane of Indian society. Mahavir led a crusade against both the evils. He said repeatedly and emphatically that Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra are determined through their actions and not their birth (Uttaradhyan Sutra 25/33)

He also raised the status of women by giving them a social position equal to men. Unlike his great contemporary Buddha, he unhesitantly accepted females in his saintly order and amended Chaturyam (four fold) doctrine of his illustrious predecessor Parshvanath by making it five-fold (Pañchsheel) through the addition of the vow of Brahmacharya. According to Chaturyam theory, the vow of



Brahmacharya was implicit in the vow of Aparigraha (limitations of possession) because "possessing" more than one wife would be a breach of this vow of Aparigraha. This reduced a wife to an "object of possession." But by prescribing a separate vow of Brahmacharya for males as well as females, Mahavir subverted male domination of sex and empowered the females to observe the vow of Brahmacharya independently of her male husband.

### **Anekantvad - The Climax of Democratic Ideas**

The Jain premise of Anekantvad, a doctrine of many fold aspects, multiple view points and no absolute comprehension is the fusion of physics and philosophy introducing the element of nonviolence even at the primary stage of the thinking process. This is the most sophisticated introduction of democratic values.

Thus Jainism and democracy are inseparable.



## **Chapter - 7**

### **Jainism and Buddhism**

It is first necessary to explain how the expression Jainism came into existence and what it actually means. It has its origin in the Sankrit word "Ji-Jaya" which means "to conquer". But to conquer what? It says that one should conquer his enemies. But who are your real enemies? Answer is that your real enemies are not out side yourself as your passions such as anger, avarice, attachments, prejudices, hatred etc. are your real enemies and once you conquer these enemies you will not find any enemy outside yourself. There are two ways to conquer - one is by physical fight and the other is by mental or psychological process. Jainism discards the former and prefers the later one.

In order to comprehend properly the concept of Jainism it is necessary to state that the expression Jainism is a subsequent innovation because in times of Mahavira and Buddha this expression was never used but to indentify it, it was known as "The Path of Nigantha". Nigantha mesns absence of knots in your thinking process. Generally in our thinking there are various types of rigidities - the rigidity of beliefs, traditions and taboos. These rigidities work as knots, the Pakrit word for which is "ganthi". Such knots prevent free thinking, logic and reason. Therefore those philosophers who were insisting that those who wanted to understand their philosophy, should come with a mind which was free from any preformed prejudices and notions, were known as "Niganthas". The expression "Jainism" was subsequently adopted to emphasize victory over passions. In view of this, one can say that a true Jain is he who is a real Nigantha.

It should be noted at this stage that Jains pay their first obeisance to "Arihanta" as 'Namo Arihantanam' meaning, I bow doen to Arihanta. The

word "Ari" means enemy, and the verb "hun" means to kill. Therefore Arihantanam means one who has destroyed his enemies. Therefore the first salutation is offered to one who has destroyed all his base passions. This explains the first sentence of Navkar Mantra The whole Navkar Mantra is as under :-

Namo Arihantanam

Namo Siddhanam

Namo Ayarianam

Namo Uvajjayanam

Namo Lohe Savva Sahunnam.

I bow down to the Arihant, I bow down to a Siddha (one who is totally liberated), I bow down to the Ayarianam (Acharya, the preceptor), I bow down to Upadhyaya (one who preaches), I bow down to all the saints of the world.

These are five salutations. It is important to note that they are not addressed to any particular Prophet of Jains. They are addressed to anybody who possesses the qualities of Arihant, Siddha Acharya. Upadhyaya and Saint, irrespective of the religion to

which he or she belongs. This means that these salutations are to the merits and virtues which a person possesses. This concept is succinctly conveyed by Acharya Shri Hemchandra, the venerated Jain preceptor of emperor Siddharaj Solanki who, after the destruction of Somnath temple by Mohamad of Gazni, Composed the verse which is translated as under at the time of its renovation:- "I bow down to him whose all passions such attachment and malice have been destroyed. It matters not whether he is Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar or a Jina". Another thing to be noted in this Mantra is that it does not ask for any gain - not even for condonation of past sins, because according to Jain conception one has to shed his sins by his own efforts as nobody-not even a Tirthankar (Jain Prophet) can condone the consequences of our past actions.

One can legitimately ask what would be the process by which he can destroy these real enemies of mankind? The answer is contained in understanding and appreciating the Jain doctrine of

Panchsheel - five formations of good conduct. They are - Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya (non stealing), Aparigraha (non accumulation of material things) and Brahmacharya (celibacy with godliness). In these bare outlines it would not be possible to debate the deep and fine exposition of these basic concepts , but a short reference to the jain view of universal mechanism would be necessary because these five concepts are consequential to this understanding.

It is beyond dispute that all of us are in search of happiness and that all of our activities are directed to seek it... However, almost all of us fail in achieving permanent happiness, though we do get some time some temporary happiness in achieving some material success. However, this being temporary and transitory, we again feel unhappy and try some other avenue to be happy. Thus the chain of happiness and unhappiness goes on endlessly till the end of life. Is there any solution for this?

Jainism says that to seek the desired solution it is first necessary to understand how this universe

is functioning and what is its mechanism? If we know this we can find out a reasonable way out of our dilemma.

So, the basic question is who is responsible for the creation of this universe and who controls its mechanism? A simple and a straight answer is the concept of GOD- either personal or impersonal. The belief is that GOD has created this universe and that He monitors all variegated events in life. He is omnipotent and omniscient, yet merciful and if you offer your prayers to Him with sincerity He would condone your sins and would send you to Heavens, or otherwise to hell if you deserve the same. Such is the simple belief which does not bother to go into the complicated metaphysics of ontological speculations.

There is nothing wrong if one is truly satisfied with this explanation and honestly as well as whole heartedly follows the same.

However, so far as Jainism, Buddhism and Sankhya of Kapila are concerned, their thinking is different. They do not believe in any outside authority

as the creator of this universe or who is monitoring its working. They believe that it is not necessary that a thing can come into existence only if it is created by someone else because if that is so, we shall have to answer who created what you call GOD? In answer you shall have to say that nobody has created GOD, that He is unborn and everlasting. Another such uncomfortable question would be that if GOD has created all this, what was the fun in creating so many contradictions which require complicated solutions?

Jainism does not subscribe to this theory of GOD. It believes that if you examine how our universe functions you will find that it consists of two main categories of elements namely, a dynamic element and another a non dynamic element. We also find that the element which is dynamic supplies its dynamism to the non dynamic one, and it is this process which generates all actions and events in this universe. The element which is dynamic is identified by us as "Soul". In Jain terminology it is called "Jiva " and the element which is non dynamic



is called "Ajiva". All sentient beings of this universe are having their bodies which, by themselves are not able to function. To act and function properly they require energy which is supplied by their soul. This means that the mechanism of this universe is functioning only through the joint action of the two basic elements called Jiva and Ajiva. This analysis comes very close to the physical science which says that this universe has come into existence on account of a "Big Bang" which is a magnificent and huge explosion. Every explosion needs two types of elements to collide against each other. Jain belief is just similar to this process as it believes that all human actions are the result of the joint action of "Jiva" and "Ajiva". If jiva does not supply its energy to "Ajiva" there would be no action. Science further says that every action results in reaction with equal force. Hence the interaction between Jive and Ajiva finally results in a vast and variegated phenomena of human existence.

The point to be noted is that this process of action and reaction is quite automatic which does

not need any monitoring of outside authority called "GOD". Thus Jainism and modern science are in agreement that there is no need of any outside interference to remedy our problems of happiness and sorrow which are nothing but the result of our own actions and reactions. This process is identified by the Jains as the theory of "Karma", which is the Sanskrit word for action. It follows that if your actions are bad, their reaction would be equally bad and that the same works automatically, and can't be condoned through the mercy of any authority, and also that it is in your own hands to improve your fate. Jainism goes very deep into the varieties of Karmas, their qualities, their effects and their duration and various other things relating to this theory, but we need not go into all these details at this stage.

However, our problems still persist because so long as our life lasts we cannot avoid actions as well as their reactions. So the main problem is how to avoid the consequences of all these actions and reactions, which bind our soul. Jainism does provide

a scientific method how to demolish these consequences, but before touching that point, we may consider what happens if all the consequences of our actions are not exhausted during our life time? Jain answer to this question is that the thing which "dies" is "Ajiva" which in our case is our body but not our soul (Jiva) which has to suffer unconsumed consequences of the current life by taking a rebirth. This process of birth and rebirth goes on endlessly till all consequences of actions and reactions, whether good or bad, are exhausted. When they are exhausted Jiva gets free from the company of Ajiva and achieves its pure form which knows as "Siddhahood" and attains its original luster, its omnipotency and omniscience.

Now we may touch the question how to totally destroy or consume all the consequences of our Karmas because we cannot stop our Karmas so long as life goes on. Jain answer to this question is provided by its concept of what is known as "Bhava Karma". Bhava means intention. Jainism believes that the bondage of Karma starts the moment an

action is conceived in mind and not when actual action is taken. If this is so, we have to look at the intention with which a particular action is taken. An example would clarify this point. For instance, a surgeon while conducting his operation does injure you while cutting a part of your body but his intention is not to injure you. It is to cure you and therefore he is not considered liable for injuring you. Therefore if in our day to day life we perform our actions as part of our duty and without any attachment we do not earn any bondage. This is exactly what Shri Bhagavat Gita also teaches when it declares that "Your right extends to the performance of your duties and not to the reaping of their fruits" Jain Seers proclaim that if you scrupulously follow the five principles of Panchsheel you will stop the whole inflow of Karmas. They call this situation as "Samvar". The verb "Samvru" means to surround. If you surround all your actions with non attachment you totally stop the whole inflow of fresh karmas. Thereafter the question remains as to how the accumulation of past Karmas could be destroyed.

There are two ways to do this. One is to suffer calmly and patiently the consequences as and when they arise. But you do not know when they would arise. Therefore you should accept the course of hard penances and austerities which are not adopted with any ulterior motive of gaining any advantage – not even for getting Siddhahood. This process is called "Nirjara."

The corner stone of Jain metaphysics is Ahimsa. The root cause of human actions is our thinking process. Jains have introduced the process of Ahimsa even in our thinking process by their doctrine of Anekantvad which is also known as "Syadvad". It asks you to avoid absolutism and to consider all possible stand points, including the stand point of your opponent before arriving at the final conclusion. They have evolved seven formulas showing how to do this called "Sptabhangi".

These are the bare outlines of Jainism without touching other important details.

## **BUDDHISM:**

Both Jainism and Buddhism belong to what is known as "Shramana" tradition which was already prevalent in India when Aryans migrated to India with their Vedic literature. "Shramans" are so called because of their strictly religious discipline and rigorous austerities. Word "Shrama" means labour. When Shri Gautam Buddha Started his spiritual Journey, he also began by hard austerities and he also tried almost every path prevalent at that time in India, but he could not obtain solace. Ultimately he left the path of extreme and chalked out his own path known as "Middle Course."

His approach was absolutely straight and logical as he refused to indulge in metaphysical and mystical researches. In his view the whole debate about GOD, Heaven, Hell and about vicissitudes of the spiritual journey was useless because the only problem before the human race was how to face the reality of life. He said that this reality was that there was plenty of suffering in human life in every phase from the very birth to the death and if that is

so, our priority is to find out the means by which this suffering could be ended. He illustrated his contention by pointing out that if a person is injured by an arrow shot at him in his chest, would you prefer to waste time in the inquiry whether the arrow was posioned or not and whether the person who shot it had sufficient reasons for his assault or would prefer to take him at once to the nearest hospital to save his life? Thus his approach to the psychological ailment of human life was quite direct.

He pointed that there were four basic truths of human life. One has to face these basic truths by giving priority to them rather than wasting time in metaphysical researches. These basic truths are:-

(1) Thre is suffering - Dukha - at every stage of human existence.

(2) However every suffering has a cause which has given birth to it. – Dukkha Samudaya

(3) It is possible to overcome this suffering - Dikkha Nirodha.

(4) There is a method to overcome these

sufferings. Dukkha Nirodha Marg.

All these four are life's realities. They are known as four Arya Satyas. Unless we fully comprehend these Arya Satyas there would no peace and happiness in human life.

Some thinkers have criticized that this approach of Buddha is pessimistic and negative in character. This is not justified because like a good doctor he has diagnosed the ailment and has also provided the remedy. Thus the first Arya Satya is a statement of fact, the awareness of which is essential for a purposeful living.

The second Arya Satya takes you to the practical aspect. It hits at the unintelligent tendency to attribute a meaning of punishment to these sufferings, because some persons believe that our sufferings are in the nature of punishment inflicted by God for our sins. Such a belief is countered as this Arya Satya asks us to explore the causes of our ailments which are in our own selves. Like Shri Mahavira even Buddha did not believe in the existence



of any outside authority to monitor and shape our destiny. Buddhism like Jainism also believes in the theory of "Karma" which works out its results automatically. Therefore this Arya Satya exhorts us to increase our ethical earnestness and personal efforts. Buddhism also believes that total annihilation of all Karmas is necessary for attaining Nirvan.

What is the root cause of human sufferings? Buddha's reply is, "Desires" which are born out of "Ignorance". Buddhist scholars have developed the idea by pointing out to the chain of emotions finally leading to sufferings. It is not necessary to go into these details at this stage. But to state shortly, the root cause is "Avidya".

The third Arya Satya says that it is possible to overcome our sufferings. The Buddhists have prescribed a process by which non-attachement called "Nirveda" develops into detachment called "viraga" and how this finally results in "Nirodha" which is the third Arya Satya. This process is much like the Jain concept of "Samvara and Nirjara"

The fourth Arya Satya shows the way to overcome the sufferings. This way is eight fold, namely 1. Right view, which in Jain parlance is called "Samyag Darshan" 2. Right resolve, which is known by Jain as "Samyag" Jnana knowledge. 3. Right Speech 4. Right action, 5. Right livelihood, 6. Right effort. All these from 3 to 6 are covered by the Jain concept of "Samyag Charitra". These six would develop. 7. Right mindedness and last. 8. Right state of trance - Samadhi. All these eight steps are called "Ashtang Marg."

Buddhism believes in existence and power of soul and also in the theory of Karma. But its approach is different from that of Jains who believe that the soul (Jiva) being the driving force of all actions is bound by the consequences of such actions and since it never dies it takes rebirth along with these consequences. Buddhism however believes that like everything else, even soul is transitory and dies along with the death of the body. It may be noted that Buddhism does believe in recarnation i.e. rebirth but says that the soul in the

new life is different from the one which has already died. In view of this it would follow that the consequences of the Karmas of the previous life would terminate. Buddhist would say no, that is not so' because the new soul of the new life would come after being "Conditioned" (i.e. being affected) by the consequences of past actions and hence even in the new life the new soul will have to suffer the consequences of past karmas. Buddhists call this appraisal as "Conditional Orientation" which seems to have been evolved to accommodate its basic theory of transitoryness of soul.

According to Buddhism the soul merely appears to be immortal and continuing even in the new life, but this is only an appearance because life and death are nothing but the parts of a continuous process like the flow of the running water of a river. If we stand in such running water we feel that we are standing in the same water but this is not correct as the water touched at a given moment has already gone away yielding place to new one.

The Buddhist belief of soul's transitoryness is not shared by other Indian thinkers but the Jains have solved the problem by applying their theory of Anekantvad. They contend that purely from theoretic stand point the soul (Jiva) is permanent, but when it is in association of Ajiva (Pudgala) it assumes a body which is transitory and it appears that it dies along with its body which is transitory.

Buddhism has passed through three phases in its development as Mahayana, Hinayan and Vajrayana. And has lost its original fervour not only in the concept of Ahimsa but in various other philosophical aspects. Our present discussion is based on what Gautam Buddha preached during his life time.

Jainism and Buddhism have greatly influenced Indian culture. Some common points between them are as under :-

(1) Both are principally ascetic in nature which can be described as "Nivruti Dharma" as distinguished from "Pravruti Dharma" of Vedanta. Reason is that both follow Shramana tradition."

(2) Both have rejected the notion of any outside authority such as God shaping our course of action as both believe in the liberation of soul by self reliance and exertion.

(3) Both reject Shri Shankar's concept that non-souls are Maya because they believe that non souls are real at least till they exist.

(4) Both reject the notion that the Vedas are of Divine origin.

(5) Both believe in the equality of all souls and reject caste distinctions and their concept of Varnashram.

(6) Both reject the concept of Avatara taking birth, and assert that their Tirthankara and Buddhas were all human beings.

(7) In theory both subscribe to the principles of non violence and the impersonal as well as automatic operation of Karma theory.



# **Chapter - 8**

## **Some Eternal Values of Life- Vipashyana**

### **Some Eternal Values of Life**

Common sense must prevail over religious injunctions. We have two aspects of Dharma in our tradition: Sanatan Dharma or ever lasting religion and Yuga Dharma or man made religion-as per social needs. Yuga connotes that Dharma is only periodical and hence it is transitory in nature and must change with the cahnges in time and place. However Sanatan Dharma that has eternal values never changes with the change in time and place. With new thoughts, circumstances, and socio-economic values Yuga Dharma must change but even in the midst of these changes eternal values remain unchanged These

eternal values are based on our inner nature which constantly longs for inner peace, contentment and bliss which come only by the development of Truth, Non Violence, containment of worldly desires and universal love. These eternal values constitute real religion and so, Yuga Dharma can never supercede them.

Changing customs cannot threaten this real religion. So, the wise should educate others not to get hysterical or upset about customs. The Bhagvad Gita says : "You are that Sanatan Purusha, eternal person who protects this world, who protects spirituality of this world. You are the protector of the Eternal Religion, you are the protector of this Shashwat (Eternal) Dharma going on ages after ages" (11.18)

Every religion has different rules for different times but if they do not make the distinction between Eternal and Yuga dharma then religion becomes politicized. Yuga Dharmas are always in conflict with one other whereas Sanatan (Eternal) dharma is not contradictory to any religion-neither Islamic nor

Christian. Every religion has both Sanatan Dharma and Yuga Dharma but it is Sanatan that remains because it deals with Truth about living beings. It is unfortunate that most of us cling to outside observances believing that they constitute real Dharma. This is the real cause of disharmony.

### **Vipashyana - Meditation Technique**

#### *What is Vipashyana ?*

It is a Sanskrit word coined from the root "drush-pshya"= to see. "vi" is a prefix which is meant to emphasize the meaning of the word to which it is prefixed. So, the word means a special type of observation. This is the observation of your own self.

All systems of meditation in India aim at making the mind "thoughtless" so that it does not get polluted by tensions - bad as well as good.

**PATANJALI** (1<sup>st</sup>. Cent. B.C.) is considered final authority so far as Yoga and Meditation are concerned. His system is known as "Ashtang Yoga" (Eight system Yoga). It is admittedly very systematic and perfect but not so simple for laity to follow.



Vipashyana is much more simple and ancient. Some trace it to Rigved, the most ancient scripture in the world. However, some 2500 yrs. ago Lord Gautam Buddha is said to have revived it, and it was practiced in India for about 500 yrs. even after the death of Buddha; However, for some unknown reason it was subsequently forgotten in India but it is retained in Burma in its pristine form and is reintroduced in India extensively by Shri Satyanarayan Goenka. It has now spread internationally.

### **Personal Experience of Goenkaji.**

The story of Goenkaji's association with this system is interesting. When Burma (called Brahma Desh in India) was administered by the British jointly with India, many Indians migrated there, settled and prospered. Goenka family was one of them. Satyanarayan was born there and started earning from an early age of 20 yrs. amassing good wealth. As years passed by, he was caught by the severe disease of megrim (also spelled as migraine-headache on one side), which could not be relived

except by a daily doze of morphia. He visited all known doctors of Europe, Switzerland, Japan and USA but without any cure. Someone advised him to take lessons in Vipashyana which were given by Shri Uba Khin whom he now venerates as his Guru. Shri Uba Khin was a highly respected Burmese Saint who rose to become the Accountant General of independent Burma from a mere clerk in that department. He first refused to teach this system to Shri Goenka when he knew that Goenka wanted to learn in only for the cure of his disease. His contention was that the system was for the development of spiritual values and not for medical treatment and if the diseases are in fact cured, that result is merely a by-product when mind gets cleared of all negatives and tensions caused by anger, greed, avarice and hatred etc. After some persuasion Goenka was allowed to attend the tuition. He, however, left it finding it difficult and unfruitful. His second attempt was successful with the result that simplicity and direct approach of the technique made him an ardent student and follower of Uba Khin. He

has studied buddhist literature with the help of Uba Khin for a number of years, He tried this technique on his ailing mother and father and other relatives with success. His Guru Uba Khin asked him to popularize the system in India from where it originated. Goenkaji thereafter left his worldly commitments and is now devoting all his time and energy for popularizing it throughout the world. He is a very effective orator and it is a treat to hear his video and audio taped discourses. "Art of living" is an exhaustive and authoritative book containing his exposition on various aspects of the subject.

### **System of Self Observation**

Shortly stated Vipashyana is the process of self observation by concentrating your attention on your incoming and out going breath. It asks you to observe the points on your body which are painful or pleasing without being involved on the pain or pleasure which they generate. Simply know and observe them realizing that they are temporary phenomena. It should be mentioned here that the corner stone of the Buddhist philosophy is that everything in this

universe is temporary (Anitya) including the "Soul". Jains also believe in this theory, but not for Soul (atman) which is considered by them as eternal - unborn and ever existing. However, as far as Vipashyana is concerned we are not concerned with this debate as it works only on your body and mind-conscious as well as sub-conscious. The technique has no connection with any organized religion and system of philosophy. It is of universal application and is concerned only with the realities of human mind and body.

It does cure physical ailments as most of them are psychosomatic and the latest thinking about human ailments is that most of them are generated on account of mal-functioning of nervous system.

### **My Experience**

They have Vipashyana Kendra (center) called Dhammapith at village Ranoda near the township of Dholka - about 45 minutes run by car from our house in Ahmedabad. I attended the course for ten days (which is the minimum required) from 17th Oct. To 27th Oct.

Discipline to be observed is very rigid and absolute, as it should be, if you want to learn this almost novel technique. Shortly, it is as under:

- (1) You should live for ten days as if you have renounced the world and have become a self reliant Indian Saint. Hence,
- (2) You have to observe complete silence (Maun) for ten days, You can not speak even by jesters except when you require some instructions from the instructor.
- (3) You can not read or write (not even Goenka's books) or have any contact with the outside world-not even with your near relatives during the course days.
- (4) You have to observe five vows during these ten days as under :
  - (i) Abstention from killing, (ii) From stealing,
  - (iii) All sexual activities, (iv) From telling lies, and (v) From all sorts intoxicants.
- (5) Your Food : (i) Indian Vegetarian (ii) Simple breakfast with tea or milk in the

Morning (iii) Lunch at 11 a.m. bland but nutritious (iv) No dinner but fruit, Puffed rice and tea at 5 p.m.

- (6) Out of 24 hours of the day, 12 are devoted for meditation. 6 for night sleep and the remaining 6 for daily routine including after noon nap. You get up in the morning at 4 a.m. and go to sleep at 9.30 pm.
- (7) There is no servant or room service. Get the washer man on payment or have self service.
- (8) No mixture with any other meditation system. No rosary, no prayers or your usual rites and no religious taboos during these days.
- (9) Attend only if you have resolved to go through these ten days because you can not leave during these ten days once you enter the course.
- (10) You have to attend group meditations,


which cannot be left in the middle, though you are allowed 5 to 10 minutes every hour to ease.

- (11) Evening at 8 p.m. there is Shri Goenka's video lecture wherein he explains the process and its importance solving your difficulties. In his absence one trained Acharya conducts all sessions and attends to your questions.

Your silence ends on the last day which is called Maitri (Friendship) day. Last two day's lectures of Goenkaji are of life time value. I have heard many prominent speakers on spiritual values of life including the master orator Rajaneesh, but in sobriety and analysis Goenkaji surpasses them all. I would call him a Vivekanand of Buddhism though he does not identify himself with any religious organization. As he puts it, "Buddha" means one who is enlightened - much as Jains believe that "Arihant" means all those who have conquered base human passions-your real enemies.

At the end I felt that I have gained in my energy.

I had no disease to be cured and I did not experience any sensational feelings in any part of my body, which many claim to have experienced. However I do feel that yearly attendance of such camps would be very helpful to cleanse your sub-conscious complexities. It is just like hospitalization for curing physical ailments. This is to cure your mental ailments from which all of us are suffering to a degree. It does melt our attachments and egocentric attitude and cultivates a mind set which is positive and forward looking. The most important thing is to get the training as to how you have to live your life after ten days of the camp. I, therefore, do recommended this to all my children, grand children, relatives and friends. Bhai.





## **Chapter - 9**

### **Hindutva Concept and Relevance**

Hindutva means essence of Hinduism. But what is Hinduism? The word Hindu is not known to our scriptures. It is devised by foreigners who identified the residents of our mother land Bharat as the persons who lived in the region of the river Sindhu. Whatever it may be, the fact remains that the expression Hinduism is presently used as a synonym of Vedanta. Vedanta is the basic knowledge of Infinite Reality , pure Consciousness which pervades the whole universe and expresses itself in multifarious ways and forms in the universal scheme. Therefore whatever is visible and tangible called Vyakta is nothing but the projection of Avyakta,

which is not visible or tangible, so that all the components of the Universal Scheme could be understood in their proper perspective.

Thus Vedanta is not a narrow sectarian religious doctrine and catholicity as well as power to understand and appreciate all contrary views is at its base. Our vedic Rishis have therefore expressed very aptly that अेकम् सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति । Meaning : The wise and the learned express the same Ultimate Reality in different terms. It is worth noting that our polytheism (Sarveshwar vad) tends to adopt monotheism (Ekeshwar vad) when we repeat the following shloka: आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम्। सर्व देवे नमस्कारं तथा गच्छति केशवं ॥ Meaning : Even as water following from sky ultimately goes to the sea, the obeisance offered to different gods goest finally to the ultimate Reality called Keshava.

It follows that tolerance and understanding are the essential elements of real Hinduism and a chauvinistic as well as aggressive projection of our creed, tradition or religion, however noble and altruistic they may be., have no place in true

Hinduism. A conditional mind, which is a prisoner of dogma and a patterned thought is seriously lacking in freedom of thought and is an obvious negation of Rig Vedic prayer, which invites enlightenment from the noble thoughts emitting from any corner of the universe. It says : आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यान्तु विश्वतः ।

There is an interesting story narrated by Swami Poornanand Tirtha in his talks about Vedanta given at Indian Gymkhana grounds Bombay showing how Shri Vidyaranya, the Prime Minister of Vijayanagaram Empire of the past, tried to unite the various philosophical and religious trends prevalent at that time in India. He inscribed the following verse on a pillar for general public:

*Yam Shaiva Samupasate Shiva Iti,  
Brahmeti Vedantino, Bauddha Buddha Iti  
Pramanaptavah, Karteti Naiyayika, Araham  
Nityatha Jaina Shassanrata, Karmeti  
Minansaka, soyam Vidadhatu Vanchhita Falam,  
Trailokyanatjho Hari.*

Meaning : *Oh! Shaivatis ! You are fighting in the name of Shiva, vedantis in the name of Brahma, Buddhists in the name of Buddha, Naiyayiks in the name of Karta, Jains in the name of Arhant, Mimansakas in the name of Karma all these are the names of the same all pervading Reality (Trilokanath). May this Reality fullfill your aspirations.*

This is the real concept of Hindutva. This exhortation is not confined only to the different ideologies mentioned above. Its spirit is vibrant enough to encompass all Hindus and non-Hindus who constitute our nationhood and are part and parcel of our cosmopolitan culture. This is the only relevance of Hindutva in the present day India. If India wants to progress in every field of human activity and regenerate her past glory, our nation should learn how to forge unity by discarding communal conflicts. Our history shows that in the past our nation has been at the forefront of cultural, social and economic activities whenever there has been religious tolerance and communal amity. The true Hindutva, if practiced sincerely, can surely

take a lead to achieve such unity.

Our approach should be how to think and not what to think. We are however trained to think in a pattern. But if this pattern keeps you permanently bound by it, your mind becomes closed in a prison house without locks. Consequently when you are faced with an idea or challenge of a different thinking you react violently. Is that not what the organized religious and ideological organizations have exhibited throughout the history of mankind?

So it is only free and unconditioned mind capable of the reception of all noble thoughts from anywhere, which can uplift the human society. This means that mind must be open to reality and it must confront the givenness of outer and inner worlds without preconceptions and restrictions. Where there is competition, comparison and condemnation, there the openness of mind is absent and conflict becomes inevitable.

Hence the real problem is how to make my mind unconditioned. As the above quoted Vedic Rucha says, you should allow noble thoughts to

influence you. A key to allow them to influence you is supplied by the Jain doctrine of Anekantvad, which recognizes many sidedness and relativity of all things and thoughts and asks you to develop a practice of seeing and knowing (Jnata + Drasta) without being involved in any manner in what you see and know. This is what Shri Krishnamurti says when he refers to his famous doctrine of Choice less Awareness or Alert Passivity, and this is also what Geetaji describes as the main characteristic of a Sthitprajna.

This is Hindutva in action. Devoid of this action it is a mere pretence a pseudonym.



## **Chapter - 10**

### ***Is Buddhism A Religion which is Distinct and Apart from Hinduism?***

This is the question, which the learned author Shri Nandkishore has discussed with great ability and labor. It is undoubtedly true the article is not only interesting but is also learned.

However, the basic question is : Is this labor necessary when nobody can dispute the fact that the religious streams of Vedic and Buddhist traditions have been the product of the same cultural tradition of the same people who grew up to live under the same or similar geographic, ecological economical social and political conditions. If that is so, it is but natural that they have many common beliefs,

which are basic to their ethical existence. But does this mean that they should not have "distinct" religious beliefs ? If somebody believes that Jainism and Buddhism are "distinct and apart" from what is known as "Hinduism" what harm is caused to their "Indianness" (Bharatiyata)? On the contrary, if the belief that Jainism and Buddhism are "distinct from Hinduism is found correct it amounts to a great credit to the Indian culture that it has been capable to produce "distinct" philosophical aspects of reality to cater to the different categories of people. Even if we believe, for the sake of argument, that Buddhism and Jainism are not "distinct and apart" from Hinduism, what is the sequester thereof? does it help us for counting more heads for Hinduism? Or, does improve our economic, social or political status? If answer to these questions is in the negative, the whole discussion becomes purely academic which will never be concluded for want of reliable historical data.

This being the real position any learned discussion of this question appears to be rather



futile. However, when the question is in fact raised and discussed with great learning and labor, I am tempted to show that in some very basic aspects - ontological, epistemological and metaphysical - Jainism and Buddhism stand "distinct" and even "apart" from what is known as "Hinduism", or , as I would like to put it, "Vedic Tradition". For clarity I would like to note that I am in full agreement with the author that "Hinduism" is a misnomer unless it is taken in a geographical sense. However for the sake of convenience and exposition let me use the expression "Hinduism" to indicate coverage for different religious trends which have developed in India by the followers of Vedas.

Proceeding in this manner we find that Hinduism is an ocean wherein the waters of different and divergent rivers of thought have met and mixed with each other. They are Dwait, Adwait, Vishishtadwait, Mimansa, Naiyayika, Sankhya, Yoga, Shaivi, Vaishnavi, Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and even Agnosticism.. These different trends of Hinduism are some times complimentary and equal number

of times contradictory to each other... However, even when they are contradictory they form a variegated collection of beautiful bouquet. Thus Hinduism is not a singular thought process with amalgamated and unitary system of thought the like of which is found in Bible or Qurran. If this is so, every type of oriental thinking is found in any one of its branches, and pointing to that branch one can say that this is Hinduism which is followed in another name.

Jainism and Buddhism do not believe in the existence of any authority - personal or impersonal called God - which created and sustains this universe and its multifarious activities. Generally speaking almost all the branches of Hinduism do believe in the existence of some super power shaping the destiny of everything of this universe. Sankhya of Kapil's tradition did not believe in any such super power, and like Jainism which analyses this universe into "Jiva and Ajiva", it believes in "Purusha and Prakruti". But when Yoga was joined to Sanhkya, belief in super power was introduced. Adi Shankara

believed in Adwait, thus completely discarding the Karta Theory of God. But Shankara seems to have developed this idea being influenced by the doctrines of Jainism and Buddhism. This is why he was called a "Prachchhanna Buddha" by his critics. However subsequent Bhakti philosophers took a contrary view and introduced the principle of duality. All these developments do emphasize a distinct departure of Jainism and Buddhism on one of the most fundamental and basic thinking of Hinduism.

Idol worship is common in "practice" in all the three religions of India. However, in "theory" it is not so, and can not be so, because the emphasis of Jainism and Buddhism is on the cultivation and development of "Atma" which excludes the concept of any authority outside your own self. It is most important to note that it was the influence of Jainism and Buddhism that efforts of man to realize the reality were taken out of the control of any outside authority and man was asked to rely on his own efforts. This concept of the existence and importance of "Atma" was the matter of subsequent

development in the early Vedic times. Early Vedas gave importance to the propitiation of different gods representing different forces of nature by sacrificial Yagnas. This resulted in giving undue importance to rituals, which were supposed to please different gods. Minute details of these rituals were described in the literature called "Brahmanas". As time passed, those Rishis who were original in their thinking found that these rituals were taking people to a wrong path. Therefore an intellectual revolt as a result of which Upanishadas came into existence. Some time at this stage the concept of "Atma" gained ground. This fact gains support from the dialogue between Swetketu and his father Uddalaka Aruni who was a great thinker of his time. Swetketu had returned home after fully studying all the Vedas and was under the impression that he knew all that was worth knowing. Swetketu replied that he did not know any such thing and he was not taught any such a thing. Then his father explained to him how by acquiring the knowledge of Atma everything worth knowing is known. By demonstrating the

mixture of salt with water he explained how the dynamic force of Atman pervades the whole universe and informed him that his real self was that Atman. "Tat twam Asi, Swetketo" he said. This story suggest that the discovery of Atman was a post Vedic event. This fact gets further corroboration from other sources too. Jain scriptures say that Indrabhuti Gautam was a great scholar in the Vedas. Knowing that Lord Mahavira had visited his twon attracting many visitors he was curious to know who this saint was. When he approached Mahavir he was welcomed and told that he had a doubt in his mind whether there existed any thing like Atman. This resulted in a lengthy dialogue, which convinced Gautam that Atma did exist. Gautam thereafter become Mahavira's principle devotee. The Jainism and Buddhism thereafter buit up the whole of their metaphysics on how to develop the Atmic force so that your own Atam becomes Paramatma. Unlike Shankar's Adwait approach, both these streams of thought have an approach, which is purely dualistic. This is another eveidence to show how much "distinct and apart" they are from Hinduism.

So far as the caste question is concerned both Mahavira and Buddha revolted against castism based on birth. It needs no explanation to state that the feeling of superiority generated by caste based social structure is the principal source of inequality and want of fraternity in the Hindu society right from the times of Mahabharat when the preceptor like Drona went to the cruel extent of cutting the thumb of his ardent devotee Ekalavya and preventing Karna from challenging his pupil Arjuna only on the ground that Arjuna was a Kshatriya and the other two were of a lower caste. This evil of castism has gone so deep in the whole of Indian society that it has affected even the Mohamadans, Christians, Jains and Buddhists. And now a days our elections are fought on caste basis. Uttaradhyayan Sutra, a Jain scripture, which has recorded the last sermon of Lord Mahavira, records verses after verses against caste system as prevalent in his time, and asserts that it is the action (Karma) which determines who is a real Brahmin, Kashatriya and others. In times of Mahavir and Buddha the Vedic

society was so orthodox that they would not allow so called Shudras even to learn Sanskrit so that they may not avail of religious scriptures. It was for this reason that both these saints preached in the Prakrit language of the common man. It was Mahavira who introduced the concept of Brahmacharya as a separate foundation of religion and established the equal right of females to attain Moksha by giving them an equal place in the formation of Chatur Sangh of Shravaka, Shravakas, Sadhus and Sadhvis. All these things did give a distinct identity to Jainism and Buddhism.

It is true that Buddha did not dispute the existence of Atman, but his doctrine of transitoriness was applied even to Atma, which is basically contradictory to what Hindus and Jains believe. Buddha's doctrine of "Pratitya Samutpaada" (Dependent Origination) was quite novel and could not be accepted by those who believe that Atma is unborn and ever lasting. This is one more factor making Buddhism "distinct and apart" from Hinduism.

It can not be disputed that what is known as Hinduism is nothing but a history of a thought process which has resulted in collection of divergent views. You can choose any of these divergent views and say look, this is Hinduism. The learned author has done this even by pointing out to the practice of the followers which is not consistent with the theoretical aspects of their own religion.

Before leaving I should register my caveat to the following observations of the learned author:-

"Jainism has all but disappeared from its one time strongholds and survives only in tiny pockets mainly near its historical birth place in Northern India where *it is held to-gether more by clannish loyalties rather than by meaningful religious distinction with the sects of Hinduism.*" (emphasis supplied).

It is mistaken belief that it has survived "only in tiny pockets near its historical birth place in Northern India." Its birth place was Bihar and it has widely survived in Gujarat and Rajasthan and partly in Northern and central India, Bombay and Maharashtra also.



Apart from this, with great respect, I would like the author to revise his opinion on "clannish loyalites" after studying Jain doctrines, the logic and rationality of which are unparalleled in the history of all world religions. Its main contribution to the world of thoughts is its theory of Nayavad and Syadvad, better known as Anekantvad, which recognizes the relative truth contained in every religious thought. This approach is now corroborated by Einstein's theory of relativity and the subsequent discoveries of quantum mechanics like Ruthfor, Borh, Heisenburg and others. It was Jainism, which disclosed to the world that there is sentient life even in earth, water, air and fire without any help of any laboratory experiments. What is this if not "meaningful religious distinction" with the sects of Hinduism which were originally sacrificing innocent live animals in Yajna to propitiate their imaginary gods and which learnt their lessons of Ahimsa only from Jainism and Buddhism. It would surely profit the perception of the learned author if he investigates if there is any sect of Hinduism which is not "held to-gather by clannish loyalties".

I wish I am wrong in getting an impression that the great exercise so laboriously taken by the learned author is to prove that Buddhism is nothing but Hinduism. If this is true, it is counting of heads, which is politics and not religion.



# ***Chapter - 11***

## ***Sufism- The Essence of Islam***

A fundamental doctrine of Islam is total and absolute surrender to the Almighty. Sufis worked out this doctrine to its logical end and that is why unlike some traditionalists, they could think independently of clerical interpretations of Islamic scriptures.

### **Backdrop**

Though some Sufi thinkers believe that Sufi philosophy existed even before the advent of Islam, one would not be out of mark if it is taken for granted that the roots of Sufism, as it developed subsequently in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Cent., were in the thinking of "Mutazilis" who came into prominence after two centuries

from the Hijarat of the prophet to Madina. "Mutzilah" means protestants. They refused to doggedly adhere to the verbal meaning attached to the words of the Koran and Hadith, as was done by the religious clerics. They believed that since every product takes the qualities of the producer, man who as the product of the Almighty, possesses all the qualities of the Almighty. They also believed that the man is entitled to work out his own destiny. They further emphasised that it is not God who decides what is good or bad because it is the inherent quality of every thing which decides what is good or bad. This approach is very much similar to the Jain philosophy which defines "Dharma" as the inherent quality of every thing. ("Vastu Sahavo Dhammo" i.e. intrinsic nature of every object is its religion - this is the basic doctrine of Jainism).

(Vide: history of Muslim philosophy, Vol. 1, Chapt. X by M. N. Sharif)

This line of thinking was not in harmony with the interpretations accepted by the traditionalists.

In 985 A.D. another group of Islamic thinkers known as "Ikhwan-al Safa came into prominence. They believed that there is an all pervading universal Soul and this manifested world is nothing but the expression of that Universal Soul. According to them religion is a part of the Universal Truth and Reality, and hence every individual is entitled to choose his own path of religion. They were strongly opposed to forced proselytization, though they believed that Islam offers the best religion. These thinkers were known as "Batinia" and the traditionalists treated them as "Kufra" (non believers.)

These trends of independent thinking supplied a good backdrop for the development of Sufism in Islam.

### **Sufi Doctrines**

Sufis were so called as in their simple life style, they used to put on a gown of coarse wool. To put it simply, Sufism means undiluted love and devotion to God. Such love and devotion, according to Sufis, does not spring from the promises of

conforts and luxuries of Heaven, or from the fear of pains and perils of Hell. It springs from the total and perennial surrender to the Divine will. In the words of saint Rabia, "My Lord, if I love you for the fear of Hell, please see that I do go to Hell, and if I love you being lured by the pleasures of Heaven, please close its doors for me." Rabia's love for God can be compared only with Mira's love for Shri Krishna. Sufis so actually realized the oneness of Hakk (the Divine) and the Khalk (the mundane) that they took Ishq Majaji (earthly love) as a step towards Ishq Hakiki (Divine love). According to the Sufis all these multifarious varieties found in the universe are the creations of God and hence, they belong to Him. They being inseparable from Him, He is omnipresent and hence, He only exists. Thus the Sufis are one with great SHANKAR who declared "Brahma Satya, Jagat Mithya" i.e. only Brahma (God) is real and all that is material is unreal. This pantheistic approach of the Sufis was novel to the traditionalists because Islamic philosophy is based, like Jainism, on the doctrine

of dualism which is very ably explained by Prof. Mir Vali Uddin of Osmania University. The learned Prof. explains in his thesis given in "Philosophy Eastern and Western" (P.170) that before God made this material world, he first conceived its shape. So, God as the conceiver of the world was its knower and the world which He conceived was the object of His knowledge. A knower and the object of his knowledge have always separate identities and therefore, they cannot be one as claimed by the Sufis. The Id. prof. proceeds to emphasise that while the knower God is Eternal and Unending, the object of His knowledge is limited by time and space. This is another reason why both can not be one. This line of thinking comes very near to Jain doctrine of duality of Jiva and Ajiva (things sentient and non-sentient), without any belief in the authority known as "God". Sufis thus deviated from the doctrine of duality and advocated the doctrine of pantheism perhaps being influenced by Upanishadic thinking which had already influenced the early Greeks. As Prof. Humayu Kabir puts in his book

"Our Heritage", though the basis of Sufi thinking already existed in Koran, it was seriously influenced by Indian thinking which played a prominent role amongs all other influences which shaped its thinking. Sir Charlse Eliot has expressed in his book "Hinduism and Buddhism" that Bagdad and Bulkh had strong connections with India much before the birth of the Prophet Mohamad and hence that part of the world was greatly influfenced by Indian thinking. As Encyclopaedia of World Religions" puts it, "Sufism is the Islamic version of Vedantic philosophy and a thinking which is collateral with Buddhism, having some influence of early Christian saints."

The life of the Sufi saint RABIA who flourished in 713 or 717 A.D. supplies a glorious illustration of Sufi living. It is said that when once she lost her sewing needle in the darkness of her hut, she began to search it in the light outside her hut. People who passed by, asked her what she was searching; she said she lost her neele in her hut. When people asked her why she was searching outside if it was lost inside the hut, she said there was not sufficient



light in the hut; people began to laugh at her folly and asked her to search inside the hut. "Oh", wise Rabia retorted, "I thought that the real search should be out side the hut because I see everyone making the search of Reality outside one's own Self". Rabia, a great Sufi in her own right, was here speaking the language of Gita which asks us to seek peace and happiness in search of one's own soul.

Such was also the attitude of another great Sufi saint AL HALLAJ MANSUR who flourished in 922 A.D. and who like the Indian Rishis of old, declared "Anal Hakk" i.e. "I am Brahman (God)." Jains, who do not believe in any out side agency such as God, do believe that every soul is capable of achieving Godhood by his own efforts. AL HALLAJ MANSUR seems to be of the same opinion, but since his assertion was against the traditional views, he was tortured most cruelly, incarcerated for number of years, and finally brutally murdered. One who pleaded his cause met with the same fate.

Saint ABU AL ARA who flourished in the 11<sup>th</sup>. Cent. in 1057 A.D. was another great Sufi, who being influenced by Indian philosophy, gave a revolutionary interpretation to the Islamic doctrines. Henry Verali writes about him in his book "Abul Ara - the Syrian" that he was greatly impressed by Buddhist philosophy and was believing in the trans-migration of the soul. He was a complete vegetarian and was not, therefore using milk, honey or leather; He had great regard even for the lives of animals and birds; He observed celibacy and led the life of a hermit.

The Sufi idea of "Fana" was quite similar to the Indian concept of Nirwan or the attainment of Brahman.

Traditional Islam does not recognise music or dance, but many Sufis were renowned poets and Sufi devotional dances are very famous in the spiritual world.

Traditional Islam does not contemplate organised

saintly institutions of those who have renounced the world because Islam teaches that religious life should be practiced even while discharging worldly duties. However, the Sufis in India organised ashrams like Hindus at various places. They were called Khankahs (Hospice) where even non-Islamic saints were entertained.

Though the Prophet himself was often going in meditation in the caves of Mount Hira where he got Divine inspirations, his traditional followers seem to have left the practice of meditation. Sufis, however, continued to follow the prophet by practicing meditation.

Poverty, simplicity and celibacy were greatly adored by the Sufis and this endeared them even to the Hindu population. Famous Sufi saint IBRAHIM BIN ADAM used to preach that the real saint is he who, not only has no desire to obtain any worldly object, but who has also no worldly desire to get anything in the next world. It is said that once a poor man was describing to him the woes of his

poverty; The saint comforted him by pointing out that he was very fortunate that he could get his poverty "free of charge". The man was astonished by such response of the saint and asked whether even poverty could be purchased. The saint at once retorted "Why not ? Look at me; I have purchased poverty by sacrificing everything which the world could offer to me, and I am not willing to sell even a part of my poverty even for hundreds of such worlds". This reminds me of a Jain story about an event in the life of Lord Mahavir. Emperor Bimbisar of Magadh, better known as Shrenik was a staunch follower of Mahavir. He once asked the master what was the easiest way to attain peace of mind. The master told him that if he could get even a fraction of the "Samayik" (a Jain form of meditation) performed by one of his devotees named Puniya, he would be able to obtain the desired peace. The king thought that that was a very easy task as he could pay anything to the poor devotee to purchase the fruits of his Samayik. When he approached that devotee and asked him to name

his price, the later told him that peace of mind was not a purchasable commodity and for getting it one has to renounce all his worldly cravings. I see no difference between the attitude of saint Ibrahim and the attitude of this Jain devotee. This is proof enough of the fact that the real saints of every time and place and belonging to every religion or philosophy, think in the same terms for the simple reason that Reality is the one and the same.

Many Sufi thinkers asserted, like the Jains, that the knowledge of Soul is the real knowledge of God. Smith Margaret in her book "Sufi Path of Love" attributes to the renowned Sufi philosopher IBAN ARBI a proposition that everyone who knows his own self, knows God because only one who realizes that knowledge of Soul is the knowledge of God can live a Godly life. This is exactly what is taught by the Upanishadas teaching "Tat Twam Asi" i.e. "thou art That"; And this is exactly for which the traditionalists murdered Al Hallaj Mansur. The catholicity of this Sufi philosopher becomes evident from his pronouncement that one who has realized

the Truth is able to see the manifestation of God at every place where there is worship. So, whenever a thing is worshipped in whatsoever form, one approaches Allah. It matters not whether the thing worshipped is a stone, a tree, an animal, a man or a God. (Per Huseni M.S.A.Q. on Ibna Al Arbi - Published by Theosophical Publishing House, Madras). Our iconoclasts would surely feel embarrassed by such observations of a world renowned Islamic philosopher, but in the realm of thought, there is no scope for intolerance.

These are the general trends of Sufi philosophy which sought to catch the essence of Islam and not its outcome form and tradition.

### **Other Prominent Sufis**

We shall now briefly examine the individual thinking of some other eminent Sufis. We have already had cursory look at the views of eminent Sufis such as Rabia, Al Hallaj Mansur, Ibrahim and Arbi. In order to understand what Sufism stood for, it would be necessary to refer to other Islamic

philosophers who subscribed to Sufism.

### **Saint Bayzid Bistami**

He was born in Iran in the eight Cent. in a Zoroastrian family. He came in touch of Abu Ali, a renowned mystic of Sind. He moved in Syrian deserts for thirty years undergoing the pangs of hunger and thirst in search of Truth like a true hermit. He was knowing Indian practice of Pranayam (Yogic breathing) and like Mansur, he also declared "Anal Hakk". He said "I followed God but He told me" "thou art Myself". I then realized that Lover and the Beloved are one because in the realm of thought all become one". He further asked "What is Arsh? what is a chair?" and himself replied "I am that". He also asked "Who are the great prophets, Abraham, Moses and Mohamad? and himself replied" they are myself", and explained "one who absolutely surrenders to God does experience that whatever exists in this universe is God-oriented ". He said "One who enters onto total silence, does not require renunciation, insistence on any ideology, and, ceremonial worship. None is more fortunate in this

world than him who lives in thoughtless awareness". "Piety and sin are two sides of the material world. A true mystic is above both of them, he has preference for none".

If one does not know that these are the utterances of saint Bayzid one would think that they are spoken by a Jain philosopher who believes that piety and sin are both the elements which bind the soul to the Karmic bondage.

### **Suhravardi Maktul**

He was born in the 12<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D. in the year 1153 at the village called Suhravard in North Iran. He came in contact with Sufi saints and scholars and moved much in Turkastan and Syria and finally settled in Damascuss.

The murderers of Mansur, who declared "Anal Hakk", must have thought in their ignorance that by killing the martyr they would be killing his ideas also. They were sadly mistaken. Saint Suhravardi was spreading the ideas of Mansur and so the traditionalists thought that he was a danger to Islam.



Suhravadi had given a new orientation to the sayings of Koran and Hadith in light of the philosophy of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and the Prophet Zarthrustra. It is acknowledged that no history of Islamic philosophy would be complete without reference to his contribution. He, like Jain philosophers, classified the living things as vegetable life and animal life and gave recognition to metaphysical and mental powers of a human being and emphasised that the Supreme power that controls all these powers is power of "Soul", which is imprisoned in the body. However, every soul aspires to be free. It gets free by resorting to penances and death. When it gets freedom it gets light and obtains permanent bliss. This philosophy is called "Ishraki". The word "Ishrak" means light. Those who revelled in darkness could not tolerate this light and therefore put an end to the life of Suhravadi. Since then he is known as "Maktul" which means one who is murdered.

## **Gazali**

He was a bright star of Islamic philosophy. A learned man called Al Sbki goes to the extent of saying that had there been a prophet after Mahomad Saheb, it was Al Gazali who would have fitted for that post. He is variously described as "Hujjat al Islam" (Proof of Islam), "Zain al Din" (ornament of the Faith) , and "Mujadid" (One who re-established Faith) . A Sufi intellectual of fierce independence, he pleaded that the faculties of man is nothing but the reflection of the Divine and the knowledge of the Soul is the key to the knowledge of God. One who knows his own Self knows God. He went on to emphasise that God and Soul both are inseparable and unseen, unfettered by the limitations of time and space, formless and pure. His famous philosophical work is called "Tahftul" which started the tradition of the synthesis of the paths of knowledge and devotion. The traditionalists have not spared even Gazali untouched. Kazi Mohamad bin Hamdi of Fordowa (Spain) had issued a Fatwa (order) to set fire to all the books written by him and to sentence to death

all those who possessed his book. Sultan Usuf bin Tahifi of North Africa also issued such an order. They could not reach Gazali who was away from Spain.

### **Jalaludin Rumi**

A mystic Sufi who was a great poet, though initially he was like all traditionalists, against poetry. He was born in 1207 A.D. at Bulkh. When some one asked Rumi to give his identification, he said he belonged to neither Bulkh nor Khorasan nor to any other place in the East or the West. He was neither a Zoroastrian nor a Muslim in the sense in which the term was used. He claimed Heaven as his place of origin where he aspired to go. He moved with his father from Bulkh and went to Bagdad, Hizaz and Zinzan via Syria. His thoughts took a mystical turn when he came in contact with a mystic called Shams of Tabriz in 1247 A.D. His mysticism led him to the deep knowledge of the soul and belief in its transmigration. He says in his "Diwan Shams of Tabriz" at P. 212.

"First I had my birth in the mineral kingdom;  
Thence I passed into plant life. Later I was born a

beast and a bird; Now I am born a man with wisdom, discrimination and faith; From man I shall pass on and shall become a celestial being. I advise you therefore, to get out of this world and let the drop meet the ocean of consciousness. Never should you lament over this decaying body which ever changes. Revel in the glory of the Soul which is ever evolving and remaining young. " (Qouted from "Sufis, mystics and yogis of India" Bake Bihari, P. 74.)

That "mineral" possesses life called "Nigod" was the discovery of Jains in early India. One wonders from where Rumi got this idea of life in minerals and plants.

Once some traditionalist wanted to corner Rumi and asked him which of the then prevailing 72 religious beliefs he was subscribing. Rumi replied that he accepted all of them because each of them contained partial truth. One would like to ask whether he had come across the Syad Vad theory of the Jains which recognises truth from diferent aspects.

## **Omar Khayyam**

A Sufi poet whose name is written in golden letters in the literature of devotional Love. He composed love songs of the Divine - "Ishaq Hakiki". About three hundred years before poetry was composed in English in 14<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D. He was a great astologer and a mathametician. It was English poet Fritzirald who translated his poems evidencing intoxication by drinking the Divine wine of Love.

## **Indian Sufis**

Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria was the first Sufi who established "Khankah" in India at Multan. He belonged to Suhravadi sect.

Kwaja Mohiuddin Chisti was another prominent Sufi who settled at Ajmer in 1206 A.D. His Dargah at Ajmer is even at present attracting Hindu and Muslim devotees in thousands.

BABA FARID, another renowned Sufi of India had established his "Khankah" in Punjab. He was a great mystic and a poet. His devotional compositions

have been incorporated in Guru Granth Saheb By Gurudev Nanakji.

His successors NIZAMUDDIN OLIA is also revered by Hindus and Muslims alike. His Dargah at Delhi still attracts Hindus and Muslims alike.

All these Chestia Sufis voluntarily preferred poverty, adopted a simple life, were totally above sectarianism and transcended religious formalities. They learned "Pranayam" (Yogic breathing) which they called "Pas-e-Aufas" and were meditating like Hindu Yogis. Their popular activity was to sing devotional songs called "Sama". "Amrit-Kunda" a practice of Hindu Hatha Yog was very popular with these Sufis and so it was translated in Persian and Arabic languages. They left a permanent influence on Indian culture and as a result, in 15<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D. India got great poet devotees like Kabir, Nanak and Dadu, who followed their tradition and evolved the culture of synthesis of Hindu and Islamic philosophy.

Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan was a great Sufi and a pupil of Sufi saint Mulla Shah. He was entitled to the throne of Delhi but was treachously murdered by his brother Aurangzeb, who usurped the throne by imprisoning his father Shah Jahan. Dara knew Sanskrit and translated Hindu scriptures in the Persian language.

### **Sufi Saint Sarmad**

He migrated to India from Iran during the reign of Shah Jahan. Originally he was selling gold embroidered clothes but after he became a Sufi he discarded all clothes and moved naked which was not approved by the traditionalists as Islam, according to them, did not approve of this. However, Shah Jahan and his son Dara adored him. He taught Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita to Dara. This intimacy was responsible for Aurangzeb's enmity to this saint. After Aurangzeb came to power, being instigated by fanatic Maulwis, he called the saint and asked him the reason for going naked. His reply was :-

"He who has conferred on thee the crown of

kingship, on me hath conferred the madness of love; He offered thee dress to hide thy faults, but let me, the faultless one, pass naked."

He said "Sarmad passeth through the lane of Love, caring not if the world calls it disgraceful. From Jewish faith he passed into Islam, and then next he wandered further estranged from Islam passed to the garden of Shri Ram and Laxman. (Vide. P. 107 *ibid*).

A blind fanatic as Aurangzeb was, he could not tolerate such personal insult and blaspheme. The saint was executed and became a martyr. He composed poems in Persian. This collection is called "Rubayate Sarmad". He was buried at a place opposit Jamma Masjid at Delhi where every year Urs (congragation) is held. But those who cry for secularism know nothing about it.

Some Naxalbandi Sufis of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Cent. especially Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi, and Shah Wali Ullah were, of course, great fanatics but chistia



Sufis have contributed greatly to the integration of the Hindus and Muslims in our country. Traditionalists have always resisted them with the aid of wily politicians and rulers.

Future of India lies in Hindus and Muslims trying to live upto the standards of great Sufis; who were capable to transcend the ways of traditional clerics of Islam.



