



Gems of Jainism

Dr. Hemant shah

**GEMS
OF
JAINISM**

Dr. Hemant Shah

**ACADEMY OF PHILOSOPHY,
AHMEDABAD.**

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PREFACE

Being a Jain by birth, I had accepted and practiced Jainism under my parent's guidance and family traditions. Later on, as a part of my intellectual pursuit to understand the 'world and life' philosophically, Jainism in general and Jain Theism in particular was my main research area. This pursuit has been still going on with a wider enquiry into philosophical issues. During the period 1984 and 2007, a number of papers were written on different philosophical topics and were presented in seminars and conferences. This book, 'Gems of Jainism' is a collection of some of the papers exclusively reflecting the Jain religion and its philosophy and thought.

Neither I wish to establish the superiority of Jainism nor I wish to underestimate the other systems of Indian Philosophy. Being myself, a Jain house holder, knowingly or unknowingly through my thoughts, language or arguments, if I have hurt anybody's feelings please forgive me.

This book does not cover or clarify all that Jainism is. It can't. Jainism and Jain literature, its scriptures, principles and content is immensely vast. During the last two decades, a number of articles were written on Jainism and were read in seminars or conferences, even some talks - lectures were also delivered. This book is a collection of some of the selected articles, each one reflecting an important philosophic aspect of Jain philosophy and thought. These articles - research papers are all not written at a point of time.

They have been written at different time, for different people at different places. The reader might find some repetition, mainly in general introduction. I am sure reader will be generous enough to pardon me for this. Moreover, often, considering the august audience of learned professors and scholars, unnecessary explanation or the narration has been avoided. The quest to know more, however, could be satisfied by referring books as suggested at the end of each article as 'selected Bibliography'.

America's 'Philosopher for Everyman', Martimer J Adler says, "Titles of Books are often misleading; sometimes they are inaccurate." The title of this book is though not misleading, it needs clarification. As most commonly used, I have used the word 'gems' for invaluable precious ideas or thoughts. Jainism, being very rich in its literature, contains innumerable such gems. Reader will find here some of the gems (great ideas) out of many gems one finds in Jainism. A completely accurate title would have been "Some of the gems of Jainism". I trust the reader will understand the shorter title in the light of my clarification.

Considering learned readers who might not have sufficient knowledge of Indian Philosophy in general or Jain Philosophy in particular, I have included an article on "Jainism in Indian Philosophy" in the very beginning of the book. I am sure it will enlighten the reader about both: the Indian Philosophy and the Jain Philosophy. Of course, the said article is primarily an introductory one, however, it is sufficient to lead one's interest towards the deeper and the higher thoughts that prevail in Jainism.

I also wish to carry out a pleasant duty of thanking those who have proved to be the source of inspiration for this publication. First of all thanks to my professors and friends who were with me in my pursuit for philosophy. I also appreciate positive, constructive and encouraging comments and suggestions from the members of "Gujarat Tattvajnana Parishad" (Philosophical Congress of Gujrat) and "Tattva - Darshan". I am also grateful to my wife, Janki, and my daughter, Vaishali and my brothers and sisters for their theistic

love and support. I am also grateful to Mrs. Mahalakshmi Iyengar for her careful reading of the first draft; and grateful to Mr. C.P. Rajan for providing me with a computerised print of my research papers. I express my deep sense of gratitude to all mentioned above, and to a lot more who have directly or indirectly inspired me, encouraged me and have supported me.

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Dedicated
To the memory of my revered friend
Dr. Suresh Vakil,
Whose love for Knowledge has inspired me
and
To you, who are drawn to
possess the Gems of Jainism.

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JAINISM IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Traditionally, Indian Philosophy, means the nine systems or, as some say, the nine schools of Indian Philosophy. Indian Philosophy includes all the philosophical speculations of Indian thinkers and seers, ancient and modern. The different schools of Indian Philosophy are very much different in their views regarding the soul, the world and the God. Their metaphysical and epistemological theories and therefore even the ethical doctrines are different. Even then, each schools is marked by its 'unflinching devotion to the search of truth'.

Indian Philosophy is essentially spiritual. It is the practical realization of spiritual truth and philosophy is 'an insight into the nature of the reality'. In India Philosophy is called 'Darshan' - a vision; a vision of the reality as a whole. The main schools of Indian Philosophy are : Mimamasa, Vedanta, Sarikya, Yoga, Nyaya, and vaishesika; these six schools are the orthodox schools or Astik Darshan. These are called orthodox not because they believe in God but because they accept the authority of the Vedas. Under the second group of heterodox systems or Nastika Darshan, the chief three schools are Carvakas, the Buddhas and the Jains. Here we are going to talk about Jainism in Indian Philosophy, but it should be mentioned that each system has its own place in the Indian Philosophy for its contribution. And so is Jainism having its unique place in Indian Philosophy. Like all the systems Jainism has its gradual development and philosophical literature expressing its ontological,

epistemological and ethical dogmas with the instrument of reason. Before we go in detail about Jainism and its position in Indian Philosophy let us just, very briefly, go through some of the salient features or common characters of these systems. They are as follows:

- All the systems springs from 'spiritual disquiet' and move to speculation in order to have an answer to the miseries of life.
- Thus all the systems have a positive goal or motive. Philosophy, therefore, is a "practical necessity" to understand the mysteries of Life and Death. The aim of all the schools is happiness through an enlightened life
- Jadunath Sinha in his 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy' says, "All schools of Indian Philosophy recognize the reality of the world.... The world is a spatio temporal and casual order. It exists in time and space, and is governed by causality. There is a uniformity of causation."
- Because all schools accept causality, the Law of Karma "is the general moral law that governs not only the life and destiny of all individual beings, but even the order and arrangement of the physical world." All schools believe 'as we sow, so we reap.' "The law of karma is the inexorable law of moral causation.
- Except the Charvakas, who do not believe in soul, as distinct from body and no life after death, there is, in all the other schools, Metempsychosis or Transmigration of soul as a corollary of Law of Karma. Thus, the idea of transmigration is common to all systems of Indian Philosophy except the Charvaka school.
- All systems talk about the futility and the miseries of Samsara (Life). Life, is transitory and the death is a certainty. Buddhism says there is suffering. This makes

some scholars to conclude Indian Philosophy as pessimistic. But this is not correct. Even if there is pessimism, it is at the initial stage and not final. All schools, in fact, are the ways to Liberation from the pain and suffering. Thus Indian Philosophy, though initially may be pessimism, is ultimately optimism.

The concept of Moksa or Salvation or Liberation is common in all the schools of Indian Philosophy. Different systems lay down different means to attain the liberation. But they all believe Liberation as freedom from birth and death, freedom from pain and suffering -freedom from Samsara.

It should be cleared that there are many other common ideas which we find common in all the systems or common in majority of the systems. Since we want to concentrate on Jainism let us now talk about Jainism as an independent system of Indian Philosophy.

Understanding Jainism:

With a brief introductory note on Indian Philosophy, its different schools and their common ideas, let us understand Jainism in Indian Philosophy. Jainism, or the philosophy of Jains is not just one of the schools or one of the systems of Indian Philosophy but is one of the oldest living religions and thought. It has proved to be as significant as, even more in some aspects than, Buddhism and Vedanta. What is it that makes Jainism and Jain religion so special and so significant? The answer, we get when we see some of its doctrines and codes its canons and literature, its practice and social structure. I will try to highlight some of these with reference to philosophical point of view, in the following pages.

Jainism, is a complete system of philosophy and religion. It is complete in the sense that it has its own Metaphysics, its own theory of knowledge i.e. Epistemology (read 'Types of knowledge' in this book.) and, based on these two, its own rules of conduct

for the house holder as well as for the ascetic i.e. Ethics. Moreover, one of the unique contribution of Jain philosophy is its Nayavada - its Dialectics (Logic) explaining the Truth of an object which is always relative and never Absolute. The non absolutism or *anékantvada* is one of the profoundest approaches to reality and a sound solution to world peace. (Read 'Jain theory and practice of *anékantvada*' in this book). Again Jainism accepts the existence of Soul and its very rational, very scientific and very logical explanation of the soul in state of bondage and in state of liberation makes it very convincing to intellectuals. Here Jainism's explanation of Karma and Law of Karma, which is in great details and vividly precise, establishes the reincarnation theory on scientific arguments. Besides the Jain philosophy deals with astronomy and cosmology. Jainism has its own philosophy about the universe. Jainism does not believe in Creator- God i.e. the world, according to Jainism, is not created by God. It is since beginningless of time i.e. *anūdi*. It has its own concept of Time and the measurement of time into ages i.e. *yugas*. Thus in many ways the Jaina Philosophy is complete and is quite competent enough to give explanations and solutions to mysteries of life and problems of the world at large.

In India, unlike in the West, we have philosophy and religion always going together. Here in India Philosophy is not isolated from religion, from God, from ethics and morality. And so is the case of Jaina philosophy. The religion of Jainas or very popularly we say Jaina Religion is also a religion with its unique features. According to E.Kant the three basics postulates of any system of religion are Freedom of Will, Immortality of Soul and God. Jainism satisfies these norms perfectly. Here also both the philosophy of soul and the concept of God in Jainism are unique and independent (Read the author's 'Jain Theism' for details). Many scholars have misunderstood Jainism as Atheism in the sense that it does not believe in God. In reality Jainism believes in Godhood which is attained by the perfect practice of the religion. The soul in its total purity i.e. without any impurity of karma is in possession of infinite

power, infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite happiness which are the qualities of God. Thus we find God, of course a different concept of God, in Jainism which is worshiped by the Jainas most devotionally and that makes the religion of Jainas Theistic. I would like to say a few words here about Jain Theism. Jainism has its own ethics and a prescribed method of Sadhana or worshipping the God - the enlightened soul; Jainas call them *Tirthankaras* or *Siddhas*. The Theism of Jainism can be proved through its canonical literature as well as its actual practice. Like any religion Jainism is very rich in its theology as well as mythology just like its philosophy. A detailed proof and explanation of the concept and nature of Jain Theism (read Jain Theism in this book) is unique not only in Indian Philosophy but in the world Philosophy.

Jainism, in Indian philosophy, has touched every aspect of human activities, mental, physical and spiritual. In this context we should also consider Jainism as solutions to World Problems. The teachings of Lord Mahavira in particular and of Jaina religion in general are very relevant in today's world. The values in Jainism (read an article on values in Jainism for the Modern World in this book) are rooted in day to day practice i.e. in *āchāra*. These values can save the world and pave the life of peace and purity. What the unique contribution of Jainism to Indian Philosophy - to World philosophy is its concept of *ahimsā*. Ahimsa is not simply non-killing. It is complete non-hurting physically, mentally and vocally. The theory of non-absolutism i.e. *anékantvada* in one's thinking and the concept of Ahimsa in one's feeling generates Equanimity and Compassion. Anekanta in thought (in *vichār*) and Ahimsa in deeds (in *āchār*) make life peaceful, and loving. According to the author of this article, even if Jainism would not have any salient feature but these two, it would have been sufficient for it to hold an unique place in Indian Philosophy.

Let me end with a few words on "Jainism through sciences". Recent articles based on Jain Scriptures and researchers reveal Scientific secrets of Jainism. Albert Einstein, in his article entitled

'Science and religion' (1940) has expressed: "Science without religion is lame, Religion without science is blind." Jainism is Science with religion - neither lame nor blind. Jaina science encompasses every aspect of cosmos, including living and non-living entities. Thus Jaina way of life is a beautiful, harmonious combination of rational (scientific) approaches and moral (religious) attitudes. Jain philosophy in Indian philosophy, thus, is very rich and very proficient in so many ways.

Hear above we have seen some of the striking features of Jain philosophy. All of these are fairly well known to both, the Jainas as well as to the non-Jainas. Let me also quote somewhat less known but unique aspects of Jain Philosophy to which great scholars have drawn our attention:

- (1) "One of the curious features of Jainism is the belief in Variable size of the jiva (soul) in its empirical condition. It is capable of expansion and contraction according to the dimensions of the physical body with which it is associated for-the time being. In this respect it resembles, a lamp, - it is said, which though remaining the same illumines the whole of the space, enclosed in a small or big room, in which it happens to be placed. It means that like its other features, the jiva's non-spatial character also is affected by association with matter; The Jaina thus denies the unalterable nature of-the jiva which is commonly recognised by Indian thinkers.

The jiva's relation to matter explains also the somewhat peculiar Jaina view of knowledge, Knowledge is not something that characterizes the jiva. It constitutes its very essence. The jiva can therefore know unaided everything directly and exactly as it is; only there should be no impediment in its way. External conditions, such as the organ of sight and the presence of light, are useful only indirectly and *jnāna* results automatically

when the obstacles are removed through their aids. That the knowledge which a *jiva* actually has is fragmentary is due to the 'obscuration caused by *karma* which interferes with its power of perception. As some schools assume a principle of *avidyā* to explain-empirical thought, the Jains invoke the help of *karma* to do so"¹

(2) According to S. Gopalan it is the Jain doctrine of *Kevalajnāna* which is unique to Jainism. "It is unique because 'in all other schools of Indian philosophy the sense organs and the mind are not considered as obstruction in the sense in which Jainism holds them to be obstacles for perfect perfection" so that "The *Kevalajnāna* concept, from the point of view of Indian epistemology stands unique in that it is referred to as the consummation of all knowledge through the 'progressive removal of the obstructions caused by the sense organs and the mind."²

(3) "The Jaina philosophy, it has already been said, is realistic and pluralistic. There is a plurality of objects and *Jivas* (*atmans*) and all of them are real and the objects of our Knowledge also are real, but are not mere ideas. But the Jaina metaphysics is a metaphysics, of substance. Everything, including action, is a substance. One may find the idea of action being a substance to be very strange, but it is found in the modern theory that the stuff of the universe is only process. The Jainas conceive any existence as a substance. Action exists and is, therefore, a substance."³

(4) Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta draw attention to an aspect of the view of causation which seems to belong distinctly to the Jains.

"Regarding all the four substances — space, time, dharma and adharma — it should be noted that as causal conditions they all have a peculiar status. The causal conditions (*Kāranas*). may be distinguished into three chief kinds, agent (as potter is of the pot), instrument

(as the potter's wheel is of the pot). and material (as clay is of the pot). Space, time, etc., come under the category of instrumental conditions, but they should be distinguished from ordinary conditions of that kind, being more indirect and passive than ordinary instrumental conditions. Gunaratna gives them, therefore, a special name, *apekṣākāraṇa*. The stone on which the potter's wheel rests may be cited as a condition of this kind in relation to the pot. Space, time, etc., are similar conditions."⁴

(5) According to Hermann Jacobi, "That plants possess souls is an opinion shared by other Indian philosophers."

"But the Jains have developed this theory in a remarkable way. Plants in which only one soul is embodied are always gross; they exist in the habitable part of the world only. But those plants of which each is a colony of plant-lives may also be-subtle, i.e. invisible, and in that case, they are distributed all over the world. These subtle plants are called *nigoda*; they are composed of an infinite number of souls forming a very small cluster, have 'respiration and nutrition in common, and experience, the most exquisite pains. Innumerable *nigodas* form a globule, and with them, the whole space of the world is closely packed, like a box filled with powder. The *nigodas* furnish the supply of souls in place of those who have reached *nirvāna*. But an infinitesimally small fraction of one single *nigodā* has sufficed to replace the vacancy caused in the world by the *nirvāna* of all the souls that have been liberated from the beginningless past down to the present. Thus it is evident that the *samsāra* will never be empty of living beings."⁵

Conclusion:

The common as well as less common but unique aspects of Jaina Philosophy and thought, as identified by different scholars and mentioned here above prove the unique significance of Jaina Philosophy in context of Indian Philosophy. However this unique significance needs to be fully realized by being noted for further researches and due exposures in the literature of the comparative world religion and philosophy. These subtle and unique aspects of Jaina Philosophy strengthens itself as well the Indian Philosophy. In fact, these significant features are the gateways to enter into a deeper and higher understanding of Jainism - a great system of Indian Philosophy and religion.

Notes :

- 1 Prof M. Hiriyana, "Outlines of Indian Philosophy" (London : Gerge Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1932) P.158
- 2 S. Gopalan, "Outlines of Jainism" (New York: Hadsted Press, 1973) P.72.
- 3 P. T. Raju : "The Philosophical Traditions of India" (University of Pittsburgh press 1972) P-102
- 4 Prof S.C. Chatterjee and D.M. Datta, "An Introduction to Indian Philosophy" (University of Calcutta, 1968) P-99-100
- 5 James Hastings, ed. "The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics VII (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons) P.469

JAIN ABSOLUTE

Jain Darshan is usually supposed to be atheistic. Is that so ? Although learned Jains believe in Atheistic Philosophy of Jain Darshan, the Jain laity, by and large does not consider Jainism to be atheistic. A long tradition exists that Jainism is a Godless religion. But that tradition is confined to those who are learned in Jain Philosophical doctrines. Ordinary Jain is unaffected by this tradition. The question is, Is Jainism really atheistic ? Is Jain religion without God ? Before giving the answers to those questions one requires a cool consideration of the doctrines involved in Jain system of Philosophy. I can go to the extent of saying that even one doctrine, namely Syadwad if examined, one can come to the definite conclusion that Jainism is not Godless, can not be Godless. Let us examine this.

Syādwād is Jain Dialectics. It is a very powerful and important doctrine of Jainism. *Syādwād* is a sort of Logic In ordinary logic there are two types of Propositions; positive propositions and negative propositions. In ordinary logic either a thing is or is not. A thing cannot both be and not be. But in Jain logic this is not so. In Jain Logic, i.e. Syadwad, a thing can both be and not be at the same time. According to Jain Darshan anything of the world has infinite characteristic (*anantdharmakam vastu*) Now one cannot know all the characteristic of a thing. It is physically impossible to know the infinite characteristic of a thing. One can know; only certain aspects of a thing. Usually what is predicated of a thing is an aspect of a thing and aspect is never absolute; it is always relative. According to Syadwad what ever is, is under a particular circumstance. And

therefore a thing can both be and not be. When we say a thing is, it is always under certain conditions. If these conditions are not there, the thing will not be there. The thing is because of those conditions. Apart from those conditions, the thing is not. So any object according Jain darshan has a 'conditional existence'. In other words things have relative existence. To denote the relative existence of a thing the Jains use the word *Syād*. *Syād* in Sanskrit means probability. In ordinary logic we say the pot is (*ghat asti*). In - Jain Darshan one does not say the pot is but one says 'probably the pot is' (*syād ghat asti*)

The structure of human body is such that it is impossible for it to have absolute knowledge of anything. The senses can give only relative knowledge. Therefore absolute propositions are not recognised by Jain Logic. Jain Logic recognises seven relational propositions which are called *Naya*. It is also called *Saptabhangi Naya*. Now a pot is in the form of clay. So as a form the pot is but in fact pot is clay. And therefore when we look to form a pot is and when we look to clay a pot is not. And therefore Jain Logic would say probably a pot is and is not. This is how Jain Darshan expounds the relativism of knowledge.

The question is can there be any relativism without there being any Absolutism? Relative is always with reference to an absolute. There cannot be any "relative" without there being any "Absolute". This is very obvious. I for one do not understand how such an obvious thing could not be noticed by Jain philosophers. Jain logic does imply an Absolute. In other religions and philosophies such absolute is called God. For me a doctrine of relativism cannot be logically, sustained without absolutism. And when I view this position in this manner I have an unavoidable feeling and a sort of conviction that in relativism as expounded by *Syādwād*, Absolutism is implied. In other words *Syādwād* discloses an implied Absolutism.

Now we go to Jain Doctrine of souls in state of liberation. According to Jain Darshan all Jivas are intrinsically alike. And in the state of Liberation all Jivas possess infinite knowledge, infinite happiness, Infinite power and infinite bliss. These characteristics are

possessed by all the souls in the state of liberation. Although each soul exists separately all the souls share these characteristics. From this it is very obvious that all souls are alike. When all souls are alike their difference is indiscernible. There is no qualitative difference between them. According to Jain Darshan soul in the state of liberation possess quantitative difference but quantitative difference is no difference. If twenty pieces are made of a sugarcane, each piece is a sugarcane There is no qualitative difference between one and the other. Each separate piece of Sugarcane warrants unity. Same is the case with the souls. Although souls may have quantitative difference they have no qualitative difference. To put it in other words souls are qualitatively the same. This implies an ontological unity. The quantitative difference among the souls is not, and can not be real, and when difference is not real it is no difference at all. This means there is no difference between one soul and other soul in the state of Liberation. All are one. Can we not call this ONE, God ? Jainism has rejected qualitative differences among souls. I do not understand why should it inconsistently click to numerical differences which are only nominal and not real. In my humble view, Jain Philosophy does contain God. God of Jain darshan is not apparent but we have to bring Him out with effort. Jain darshan appears to be atheistic but in fact it is theistic. Jain darshan does contain a latent God. (*prchanna iswara*)

3

JAIN THEISM

(Concept of God in Jainism)

Jainism is the religion as well as one of the nine main systems of the Indian Philosophy. It is the religion of Jina, a path practised and preached by Jains. "Jaina" means the follower of 'Jina', which is a generic term applied to those persons (men and women) that have conquered the lower nature - passion, hatred, and the like - and brought into prominence the highest. "The Jaina philosophy, therefore bases its doctrines on the absolute necessity (for the realization of truth) of conquering the lower nature. To the underdeveloped or insufficiently developed observer, it is the conquering of the lower nature; to the developed, it is the realization of the perfect." Jainism is no more considered as one founded by Lord Mahavira. There lived many such Jains in the past, before even Lord Mahavira, and many will doubtless yet be born. Jainism "is an important, fully developed and well established religions and cultural system." As a religion Jainism is an original system "existing from beginningless time." I restrain myself in talking to you about Jain metaphysics, Jain ethics, Jain logic and its philosophy of non-absolutism as these topics are not directly related to our topic. What I would examine, here in this paper, is whether Jainism as a religion and as a system of Indian Philosophy believes in God ? Is it a religion without God ? If it believes in God, what is the concept and nature of God in Jainism ? In short, whether Jainism, as traditionally is believed to be so, is Atheistic or is Theistic ?

With this much introduction, at this point, I would like to say something about the terms Theism and Atheism, in Western and Indian Philosophy and the status of God in Theism.

Theism and Atheism :

Though it is not the aim of this paper to discuss and examine critically the term Theism and Atheism, it is essential that the general view about the meaning of these terms is noted in an utmost brevity. The term "Theism" has many meanings, each one in detail could be obtained in any good encyclopaedia. But the term "Theism" in its widest sense and liberal meaning means "belief in God". Atheism, on the other side means a system of belief which denies the existence of God. It is very necessary to note that the scholars and historians have observed that the term "Atheism" and "Atheist" have been used "in the most haphazard manner to describe even the most trivial divergence of opinion". In support to this observation we find Socrates who was charged with "not believing in the gods the city believes in;" we hear the cry in the Roman empire against Christians as: "Away with the Atheists" for the lack of idolatry in all Christian worship. In Indian Philosophy we find Jainism and Buddhism termed as atheist mainly for not accepting Vedic authorities. But then "Atheism" in its apparent sense means, "rejection of belief in God." Atheism, "in its most scientific and serious usage is applied to the state of mind which does not finds deity (either one or many) in or above the physical universe."

Theism, as we have seen, basically means belief in God, and where God is believed. It is also believed that upon God everything else depends, and thus the discussion of origin of universe, nature of soul etc. becomes justified alongwith the discussion of God. Theism has been, in the light of this broad consideration, approached differently by different thinkers and scholars. The concept of God in its traditional, religious or theological sense does not differ much between Indian and the Western concept. Even the worship or the role of God as accepted and practised by the devotees in their theistic way has a great deal of resemblance. Moreover, in view of the religious life, its asceticism, sacrifice, worship etc. though treated

differently by different people, God enjoys, more or less, the same status.

But then, Indian concept leads the meaning to a wider and deeper sense. The central force here is that of Spiritualism and Intuitionism. God is attached, here not to the critical intelligence but to the inner consciousness. Theism and even the place of God in it, is a logical pursuit in the Western Theology - God is proved and then accepted. On the otherside, in Indian Philosophy God is to be realised, and for that one has to accept Him by Faith. Not reason but faith, not intelligence but intuition, not concept but consciousness is the way to realise God in Indian Philosophy. God in the Western Theism enjoys the status of a Master or father or a great First Cause of a moral Law Giver or a Creator. In Indian philosophy God is totality of which you are a part, God is all-in-all, within and without. God is Supreme Spirit, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent. God is both personal and absolute. To love this Supreme Spirit, to believe Him, to be devoted to Him and to enter into Him is the message and mission of Indian Theism. Since "God, in the sense of an extra cosmic personal creator, has no places in the Jain philosophy"⁴, and since "it distinctly denies such creator as illogical and irrelevant in general scheme of the universe"⁵, it becomes more challenging and at the same time more interesting to find out the specific nature of Jain Theism. Infact, Jainism "lays down that there is a subtle essence underlying all substances, conscious as well as unconscious, which becomes an eternal cause of all modifications, and is termed God"⁶.

Jainism, in Indian Philosophy, is a theistic system. It believes in god and it has its own theories and interpretations. Before I show you the references and citations to prove God in Jainism and the concept and nature of Jaina God, let me also tell you about some of the root causes that led the scholars and thinkers to believe Jainism as Atheism.

Roots of Jain Atheism;

In our country religion is not different from philosophy and religion and philosophy do not differ from science. Jainism, as

practised and preached as a religion today, was known as *Nirgrantha Dharma*. It was also known as *Shramana Dharma* and it had many branches or schools. This *Shramana* tradition was different from the *Brahamana* tradition. Both these currents of ancient Indian thought have sufficiently interacted and have influenced each other to a great degree in the area of Theology, Philosophy, and even socio-cultural life. The insistence of *Ahinsā* i.e. non-violence and compassion towards all living beings—birds, insects and even animals, is *Shramana* influence over *Brahamana*; while on the other hand, the scriptures, ethics, prayers, rituals of Jainism and Buddhism is the *Brahamana* influence over the *Shramanas*. Both these systems have quite a good number of differences, the most basic and the fundamental one of them is the “approach” towards reality. With the Jainas “bliss consists not in dependence but in independence; the dependence is the life of the world; but the life which is the highest life is that in which we are personally independent so far as binding or disturbing influences are concerned”⁷ Jainism, in Indian philosophy, is one of the systems that does not accept the Vedic authorities. Disapproval of Vedic authorities by *Shramanas*, and particularly by Jainas, is not simply on issues related to religion and rituals like “*Yagna*” and sacrifices, but also on issues which are metaphysical and epistemological by nature. Jainism does not accept *Advait* or Monism but believes in the pluralism of souls. This disapproval of Vedic authority leads to the disapproval of *Advait*-philosophy, disapproval of Monism, and disapproval of many theistic elements. As a result Jainism was treated as Atheistic or as we say not believing in God (*nir-iswarvādi*). The second most important reason that led towards the misconception is Jainism’s strong emphasis on non-violence and therefore equally strong revolt against vedic ritualistic sacrifices. This led Jainism, if not towards pure atheism, it definitely led it towards anti-theism of Veda and other orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy.

There were other grounds too. In fact the above mentioned two are the negative roots of the so-called atheism of Jainism. The positive grounds or causes, to make people believe Jainism as atheism is equally worth noting. Jainism’s emphasis on self-efforts

for the emancipation or liberation is the third root cause. All Indian thinkers hold a common view that “ignorance of reality is the cause of our bondage; and liberation from this can not be achieved without the true knowledge of reality i.e. the real nature of the world and the self.”⁸ Moreover, Liberation or *Moksha* “has been regarded as the highest value and ultimate purpose of the life of the individual.”⁹ Jainism like other systems of Indian Philosophy accepts the concept of liberation or emancipation. But then Jainism believes in strong efforts to break the chains of *Karma* which is the cause of bondage. Jainism does not believe in a fruit-giver God, or God that will be pleased and will shower upon us all joy and power. The way to liberation is to make efforts for three-fold combination of Right-Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct.

As an off-shoot of this third cause, automatically follows the denial of God’s Grace. Jainism does not believe in Divine Grace as Christianity and Islam and other Theistic theosophies believe. In Jainism, there is no realisation of one’s unity with God, as it is in Vedanta philosophy. In Jainism, we find neither God, as an outside agency, nor God’s grace as inevitably required to attain the salvation. And the last, but certainly not the least, in the series of the root causes is Jainism’s Law of *Karma*. In Jainism, we find the extreme position of Law of *Karma*.

The term *Karma* in its most general and simple sense means “action”. The law or doctrine of *Karma* means that all deeds, good or bad, physical or mental “produce their proper consequences in the life of the individual who acts”.¹⁰ It is founded on the simple law of cause and effect. No effect is without a cause, and one has to bear the fruits of his deeds, sooner or later. There is no escape from this. The law of *Karma* occupies a distinct place both in Indian Philosophy and in Indian Theology. It is known as *Karma-Mārg* (*mārg* means path) or *Karma-vāda*. But then it is found at its highest degree of minuteness and in its best form of preciseness in Jainism. To Jainas, “in fact, the science of *Karma* is the real science of Spirituality, in so far as it tries to unfold the real nature of spirit or self.”¹¹ This extreme emphasis on *Karma*, its uncompromising

sincerity and unshakable faith in dealing with *Karma* through penance and austerities, has no place for God's grace or God as the dispenser of fruits of deeds. Jainism maintains that every soul in its pure form is God, having all the four Infinities: Infinite Knowledge, Infinite perception, Infinite Strength and Infinite Bliss.

Thus the emphasis not on God or God's grace but on spiritual development of soul, lifting it to a higher and higher level and thus attaining Godhood has also led many to consider Jainism as Atheism.

Jain Theism;

1. The God of the Jainas.
2. Theistic colours in Jaina Philosophy.
3. References and citations.

In the ancient period different phenomena of nature were considered to be the working of different Gods and Goddesses. "In the ancient times there was not rain but rainer, not thunder but a thunderer, and in that way personality is attributed, or leaving that consciousness and character, to those forces. There may be conscious entities in these forces as there may be living entities on a planets, but these forces themselves are not living entities. The Jainas discard this idea so far as the Godhead or Godlike character is concerned." In fact, with the development of science and with the better understanding of the science, these phenomena become simple and the idea of these beings as character of the highest spiritual power goes away. Actually, so far I have only told what God of the Jainas is not, what is important is to tell you what is the God of the Jainas. Jainism believes in soul. It believes that : "the- soul exists; it is eternal; it is the agent of all actions; it enjoys the Fruits of actions; the embodied soul's liberation is possible ; the means of liberation is also available."¹³

According to Jainism the embodied soul is a soul in bondage. The bondage is due to *Karma*. "The soul that is polluted and is having a veil of *Karma* on it due to subreption, passions etc."¹⁴ The soul in bondage is in the state of dependence - the complete dependence of the soul is its lowest stage while the complete

freedom 'or liberation is its highest spiritual stage. As the soul becomes purer and purer from the veil of impurities of Karma on it, it becomes brighter and brighter.

According to Jainism a soul, completely released from the bondage is a soul in state of *Siddhahood* or *Godhood*. In this state soul is free and enjoys four infinities: Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Preception, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. The released soul is a conquerer - a Jaina as is thus a hero. A released soul possesses all the attributes of God. Now if we interpret God as the manifestation of the highest values, highest virtues and highest morals then such released souls, are Jain gods.

Let me also show what jaina God is and what the theistic colours are in the of Jaina Philosophy, mainly in its logic, ethics and epistemology. First we talk Jain logic. "The Jainas admit that things are one in their universal aspect and many in their particular aspect."¹⁵ Thus alongwith the differences, the element of universal, which is in all, becomes the pure being or "*Sat*" from Jain's logical point of view. We may call this the Highest Universal or "*Mahā Sāmānya*"; and this universal is the Absolute. It becomes Absolute. "The whole gamut of reality, however, reveals its universal unitive nature as one existence when it is envisaged from the synthetic angle of vision."¹⁶

Moreover, one of the greatest contribution of the Jain Philosophy is its theory of non-absolutism. But-then the non-absolutism is relativism and there cannot be "relative" with absolute. Relative always pre-supposes the absolute, which could be clearly understood through its "*Mahā - Sāmānya*" or Universal." So the collective idea derived from observations of the divine characters inherent in all beings is by us called God".¹⁷

Jain ethics deals with certain definite codes both for the householder as well as for the monks. These codes are rigorous in insisting on spiritual development through Right Conduct. The "keynote of the system is "*Ahinsā*" i.e. not hurting, not killing anyone. The sanctity of life, including that of birds, beasts and insects, itself is holy and religious. The full recognition of this

sanctity, in any form turns out to be theistic. To a Jaina self-perfection or self-realization is the highest goal. Complete eradication of emotions and passions is indispensable for self-realization for they disturb the tranquility of soul. "The Jaina-ethics stresses meditation on love for all creatures, compassion for the distressed, delight at the virtuous and indifference to the vicious." It talks about the five Great vows and regards transcendental purity of the soul as the highest good. Like the philosophy of soul, the holy-panted, the Great Vows, Jaina's Law of *Karma* equally strengthens Jainism as religion having theistic altitudes towards higher moral purpose. One of the definitions of religion is "the belief in the conservation of values". Jainism and Jaina ethics from this point of view raises to the status of religion. Moreover, we find in all traditional theism that in devotion and the expression of devotion is through prayers, rites and rituals as well as faithful obedience towards the scriptural commandments. If we go into the Jain doctrines and Jaina way of life we find it satisfying all these. We are, thus, observing that the Jain-ethics, its codes, doctrine of *Karma* and its philosophy of soul, all this "is the rational conviction and profound faith in the intrinsic purity and perfection of the soul, and the capacity and capability to realise, recover and retain for Godhood through philosophical enlightenment and a rigorous course of moral and spiritual discipline"¹⁸ is the keynote of Jain Theism.

Scriptural And Other Arguments for Jain Theism;

When we go to Scriptural and personal arguments, it would be quite in fitness to talk about Jaina literature which is very rich in its value and volume both. Dr. S.Radhakrishnan has rightly said, "The faith was preserved in man's mind, as usual. The knowledge of the scriptures was slowly decaying, till in the Fourth Century B.C. the need for fixing the canon was keenly felt."¹⁹ Jainism being "the oldest living representative of that ancient *Sramana* current of Indian culture"²⁰, being one of the earliest home religions of India",²¹ being "shown to extend as far back as 3000 B.C."²², and being described as "a very original, independent and systematic doctrine"²³ it has, to its great credit proved to be "a complete system with all

the necessary branches”²⁴ of philosophy, theology, mythology, cosmology, each one rich in its dogmas and literature. This big bulk of literature is primarily and essentially religious in character. Leaving here all the discussions about the names and number of canonical and quasi-canonical literature and the indological issues related to each of these scripture, I would only concentrate to give few references from some of the high ranked, authentic and non-controvertial scriptures as well as authors to prove that Jainism has never discarded the belief in Supreme state of Spirituality or belief in Theism. Jaina believes the canons or scriptures or “*Āgam*” as they call it to be the ultimate source of knowledge. Let us have some scriputral arguments as supportive reference to the statement that Jainism believes in God :

(a) Argument from *Sri Ācaranga Sutra*:

This is one of the important scriptures of Jainas. It provides a number of instances where Mahavir has been addressed as God.²⁵ Moreover in its 24th Chapter, it describes Mahavir attaining Godhood. He is the Jaina God being worshipped by *Dévās*, Human beings and others. He is the Lord, the “*Arihanta*” (one who has destroyed all his weaknesses), *the Jaina* (the conqueror), *the Kevali* (Omniscient) and the *Sarvajna* (having all knowledge).

(b) Arguments from *Sri Upāsakadasāngsa Sutra* :

This scripture describes Right Conduct of a householder through a beautiful discourse and dialogues between Lord Mahavira and his disciples. Here we find aphorisms like “super human being (*Mahāmānava*), “progenitor of great religion”, or “great regulator” (*Mahā Dharmikathi*), “a mysterious” (*Maha Gopa*), etc.²⁶ This canon deals with many aspects related to theistic aspects of a religious life e.g. it tells how Lord Mahavira is praised and worshipped by others.

(C) Arguments from *Nandi Sutra* :

The Nandi Sutra is known as the “Balance-sheet of all the *Āgamas* (traditional canons).”²⁷ It contains the detailed description of the Worship of Lord, the characteristic of the Community, the

five types of Knowledge etc. Its very first verse is a Prayer (an eulogy) to the Jain God - "*Jinésvar Bhagwāna*". Here *Tirthankar* or god is addressed as the "knower of all generating states, grand and glorious, the savor of all beings, Father, and as ever victorious."²⁸ In all, as many as 50 verses of its beginning is full of theistic colour, reflecting the reverence and sense of worship towards *Thirthankara* who is the Jaina God, the Divine, the Pure, the Perfect and the Powerful.

(d) Arguments from *Anuyogadvāra Sutra* :

This is Known as the "key to all canons".²⁹ It contains a full discussions on Metaphysical as well as Theological issues. It is comparatively more technical and tougher to understand. But then one can clearly observe Theism peeping from the discussions. Its main thesis is based on a powerful conviction that one who follows this canon (sutra) will be able to attain infinite capacities of the Pure soul, will become God. It also contains phrases like *Dévās* (Gods) and *Namaskāra* (Worship).

(e) Argument from *Anupāpatika Sutra* :

This is the first amongst the quasi-canonical scriptures (*Upāngas*). It discusses the issues regarding penance, meditation, worship, nature of heaven, and at the end nature of *Siddhās* who are Jain Gods. The twentieth verse of this scripture is a famous Jaina hymn which is full of the attributes of God, some of the attributes are: "Divine and Pure God", "Self-eminent", "the master of the World", "the wellwisher of the world", "the path shower of the world", "the Omniscient", "the Good", "the absolute motionless", "the Pure and Perfect", "the unlimited and the changeless". This scripture also describes the *Upasanā* (method of worshipping) of Lord. It explains three types of worships viz. Physical worship, phonic worship and mental worship. It also describes how infinite -pure souls (*Siddhās*) form "Monism" as they all shine having their light merge into each other. Thus apart from establishing Theism, this scripture also solves the metaphysical problems arising out of plurality of infinite liberated souls. A touch of not only Theism but Monism is clearly found here in this scripture.

(f) Argument from *Uttarādhyāyana Sutra* :

This is also one of the four fundamental scriptures (*Mula-sutra*) of the Jaina canonical literature. It is very popular amongst the non-Jaina Scholars of Jainism. It contains the last sermons of Lord Mahavira, consituted in 36 chapters. It has a very big variety of subjects. In chapter 29 of this scripture Lord Mahavira explains the significance and benefits of such acts as “bowing (*Vandanā*), singing hymns or eulogy (*Stuti*), confession (*Prāyascitta*), forgiveness (*Ksamāpanā*), Concentration and meditation (*Anupreksā and Dhyāna*), penance (*Tapa*) etc.”³⁰ The entire teachings of Lord Mahavira becomes unconceivable if Jainism is Atheism. On the contrary, here also, at a number of places Mahavira has been addressed as God. At the end of this scripture there is an eulogy after Lord Mahavira composed by *Sudharmā Swāmi*, Lord Mahavira’s disciple. It is composed of twenty-nine verses expressing the attributes of Lord Mahavira. The entire eulogy is an example of the Jaina conception of God and its theistic approach towards life and reality.

(g) Arguments from Quasi-canonical literature :

The “*Yogasāra*”, having a control theme of soul emerging out as absolute in the pure form,” describes the nature of Jaina God, and says this God is worshiped mentally through the fullfilment of Vows and physically through “*Bhakti*” (Devotion) and “*Poojā*” (rituals)”³¹

The “*Adhyātmasāra*” also discusses the nature of soul, soul in its polluted state etc. But it also talks about prayer. Here through verse no. 714 to 774 the absolute has been described just as we find in *Sri Bhagwad Gita*. The *Adhyātmasāra* at the end defines God and says, “one who has attained absolute knowledge, detached from the worldly activities, annihilated all the Karmas and has attained *Siddhahood* is God.”³²

The “*Samana-Sutta*” is a sacred text of Jainas and Jain - religion. It opens with - a prayer to Jain God and to holy - panted. It says,”it is the commandment of the Jain God that one should

give up the soul's outer activities of the mind, of the speech and of the body; and should enter into the inner world of the soul and should thus concentrate on God"³³

The "*Syādavādamanjari*" is the commentary on Sri Hemcandrasuri's Mahavir-Stuti and was written by Sri Mallisenacārya in 1293 A. D. It reflects author's deep study of the other systems of Indian Philosophy. At the end of the work in the last five couplets it expresses God's capacity to know the reality in its pure form."³⁴

Acharya Hemchandra's "*Yogasastra*" has its own place in the history of Jaina religion. It tells how one who practices yoga "has to concentrate on his own soul as not different (*abbhinna*) from God."³⁵ It also tells how meditator becomes free from his sins & attains Godhood.

Sri Nemichandra's "*Dravyasagraha*" is one of the authentic treatises on Jaina metaphysics. It begins with a prayer which is out and out theistic in spirit. It also discusses, in its 3rd chapter "the path of salvation" (*Moksa-mārga*). The commentary on this treatise written by *Sri Brahmadeva* gives a detailed description of the nature of God.

We also find phrases, prayers, discussions of God, nature of God and of Jaina Theism in Siddhasena Diwakar's "*Nyāya Karnika*" and "*Sanmati-Prakarana*". In the same way, even in Sri Haribhadrāsuri's "*Sad-darsana samuccaya*" Jain God is described.³⁶

Excluding many scriptures and quasi-canonical works, I will now take some leading personalities - an authority as well as mystic in their achievements. "*Srimad Ānandghanji*" of eighteenth century was a great spiritualist. He was a great poet and a Jain monk. Similar *Srimad Rājchandra*, a contemporary and religious guru of Mahatma Gandhi, *Pandit Sukhalalji*, *Pandit Dalsukh Malvania* and so many authors of Jain Philosophy and Religion, including Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Dasgupta, Dr. J.P.Jain, Dr. Hari Satya Bhattacharya etc. have all shown Jainism to be highly theistic, believing in God and certainly not Atheism. Moreover, Jainism has its own popular beliefs, and Sadhana viz. A way to practice the

religion & rituals. All these canonical, quasi-canonical and other literature - all leading to some very important conclusions regarding Jain Theism. The most general concluding remarks could be summed up as:

- * that Jainism is not atheistic,
- * that Jainism does not believe in a creator God, but does believe in God, as the Supreme, Pure, Perfect and Powerful Spirit.
- * the Jainas have their own concept of God & Godhood. God to them is a liberated soul or souls.
- * In spite of emphasis on self-effort the scope of prayer & divine grace is there in Jainism - prayer in Jainism is more a source of inspiration & devotion. Divine Grace, though not directly from God, becomes part of Jain rituals.
- * In Jaina mode of worship, the relationship between "I and Them" or "Devotee and Divine" or "Soul (*Atmā*) and Super Soul (*Parāmatmā*)" is quite evident.
- * Jainism is quite rich in its Theology as well as mythology, based on principles which are Theistic in nature.
- * Jainism, as religion and thought, is theistic as it provides a unique variety of theism.

From the above discussed and referred citations from canons, literatures and authors, we could see Jainism has quite sufficient elements to be called a religion as well as Theism. We find the Jaina God all Powerful, having infinite apprehension, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. Besides He is pure in the sense, He is free from all the defilements and is worshipped by all. Such a Pure and Liberated soul - God is our saviour & protector. His grace, His teachings and His worship can lead us to transcend our ordinary empirical self to a higher spiritual level. William James says, "Theism, whenever has erected itself into a systematic philosophy of the universe, has shown a reluctance to let God be anything less than

All-in-All. In other words philosophic theism has always shown a tendency to become pantheistic and monistic, and to consider the world as one unit of absolute fact.”³⁷ Needless to say that the same is found in Jainism.

In Jain theism God is there. But then God in Jainism, inspite of all powerful and all blissful like the God of other religions, is a Soul that was once embodied, in a bondage, and has become God by self-effort. We do not find such a situation in the conventional Theism. Moreover, Jain God is not the Creator of the world or the fruit-giver. The world, according to Jainism is since the beginningless of time (*anādi*). In conventional theism we find God as the world-creator. Thus, though Jainism is Theistic in its colour, it very much differentiates from the conventional Theism. This brings the Jaina theism to a peculiar position where Jainism appears to be having its own type of theism : not Theism in Jainism but Jain Theism in Jainism.

Coming to our last conclusions, let me say that Jainism is more “a way of life” than a form of thought. One is bound to be unjustified to Jainism if one is not clear in the terms: “Theism” and “Absolutism”. Jainism as a religion, though finding room for devotion to God, decidedly regards the quest of absorption in the Absolute as a higher form of purity and piety. I would even say that any person who practices Theism purely metaphysically is bound to be a true Jaina. In other word Jainism is metaphysical theism.

Jainism in our final conclusion is Theism. There are thinkers and philosophers who have expressed this or such theism as “modified theism” (Prof. W.K.Wright) or “towards theism” (Dr. Radhakrishnan) or a “variety of theism” (Dr. J.A.Yajnik). In my final summing up I would like to say that with a distinct concept and nature of God in Jainism, Jainism is Theism. I have tried, through this, paper, to bring out this Theism which is latent or hidden, before the reader.

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TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE (*JNĀNA*) IN JAINISM

Introduction

Just like the concept of reality, Jainism has its own theory regarding the existence and nature of soul. What is important to note is the fact that Jainism accepts the existence of soul. It is *Atmavādi Darsana*; and the soul, according to Jainism, has an inherent capacity to know all things, if the “soul were in its perfection. Higher the degree of purity, higher the capacity to know. The main cause of obscured capacity being Karmic obstructions, on the total destruction of all possible karmic veils, pure perception - “*Ananta Jnāna* (infinite knowledge) occurs. “In our empirical lives, the purity of the soul is defiled by the absorption of the unconscious substance, matter. When the opposing energies are completely overthrown, the soul vibrates at its natural rhythm and exercises its function of unlimited knowing. Souls are substances characterised by intelligence, and their differences are due to the degree of their connexions with matter.”¹ The varieties of perception is nothing but the variation in degree of the karmic obstructions, or purity of Self. Thus like Jain ethics and religion, Jain epistemology is based upon the Jain doctrine of Karma. Knowledge (*Jnāna*), according to Jainas, “is the soul’s intrinsic, inherent / inseparable and inalienable attribute, without which no soul can exist. Knowledge plays an important part in the conception of soul and its emancipation.” Jain epistemology or Jain

theory of knowledge thus becomes vital in Jain philosophy. As such Jain epistemology would include the theory of knowledge along with various topics such as psychology; feelings emotions and passions, theory of causation, logic, philosophy of non absolutism and the conditional mode of predication. But I, here in this paper, propose to deal in brief with the types of knowledge in Jain epistemology only.

Theory of Knowledge

According to Jainism, the soul, as it is, exists and is consciousness (knowledge). The soul has power of understanding. Consciousness and power of understanding are the most prominent inherent qualities of the soul. Consciousness (*Cétanā*), according to Jainas, is the power of the knowledge, the soul has. It stands for the passive experience of the phenomena, the experience of psychical state leading to pure knowledge. "As conscious, the souls experience in the three following ways. Some experience merely the fruits of karma; some, their own activity; some again, knowledge"⁶. The Jaina thinkers and scholars were able to discover that *Cétanā* or consciousness culminates in pure and perfect knowledge and knowledge itself has grades and modes. Kunda-Kundacarya observes that "Upyoga or understanding is of two modes, Cognition and Sensation." Nemicandra says, "understanding is divided into two species Viz: Darsana or sensation and Jnana or Cognition". Uma Svati says "Understanding is the distinguishing characteristic of the soul. It is of two serts (viz: Jnana or Cognition and Darsana or Sensation). The first is of eight kinds and the second, of four⁷."

The further description and classification of Upyoga or Understanding, as it appears in Jaina scriptures, conclusively proves that the early Jain thinkers clearly grasped the basic principles of the theory of knowledge. As we have seen, the soul is essentially consciousness, Cetana or consciousness operates through upyoga or understanding. The two modes of upyoga is Darsanā and Jnana. "That perception of the generalities (*sāmānya*) of things without

particularities (*visesa*) in which there is no grasping of details is called darsana” “Darsana or sensation is of four kinds - Visual (*Cakshusa*) Non-visual (*acakshusa*), Clairvoyant (*avadhi darsana*) and Pure (*Kevala*)”.

“Darshana is said to consist in the sensation of the generality of objects in which the forms and particulars specification are not recognised¹⁰. The first two kinds of the four are sensuous and both consists in the consciousness that the eyes and other sense organs are affected. The last two kinds of sensation viz: Clairvoyant and Pure are of the super-normal type. Out of these two the Clairvoyant or Avadhi darsana is the sensation of the mysterious parts or aspects of material things. The Pure or Keval Darsana consists in sensing all things of the universe.

The process of understanding becomes more complicated and subtle when it is cognition or Jnana. The Jaina scholars divide cognition or Knowledge into two divisions viz:- Valid Knowledge and Fallacious knowledge. The valid knowledge is of five types viz:-Senseous (*mati* or *abhinibodhikā*), Authoritative (*Sruta*), Clairvoyant (*Avadhi*), Telepathic (*manah-paryāya*), and Pure (*kevals*). *Kumati*, *Kusruta* and *Vibhang* are the three fallacious forms of *Mati*, *Sruta* and *Avadhi Jnana* respectively.

Thus, according to Jaina theory of knowledge, cognition is of eight kinds, out of which five kinds are of the valid knowledge and three, of the fallacious knowledge. Since the destruction of karmic veils and the higher degree of purity of the soul is possible through the valid knowledge, the importance lies not in the fallacious species of knowledge but in the valid knowledge. Let us see each of these five species or types of valid knowledge, in brief.

Types of Knowledge

Cognition or knowledge is of five types:- *Mati*, *Sruta*, *Avadhi*, *Manah paryaya* and *Keval*.

Mati - *Jhana* or Sensuous knowledge: is ordinary cognition, obtained by normal functioning of sense perception. It is based on

senseous perception. According to the ancient texts, *mati jñāna* is described as synonymous with intelligence and it includes remembrance, recognition and inductive as well as deductive reasoning". "Mati jnana is sometimes further distinguished into three kinds viz. *upalabdhi* or perception, *bhavanā* or memory, and *upyoga* or understanding¹¹".

Sruta- Jñāna or Authoritative knowledge is knowledge derived through symbols / signs or words. All verbal knowledge is *Sruta jñāna*. It includes all canonical, scriptural or both knowledge. "*Sruta jñāna* is of four kinds, namely, *labdhi* or association, *bhavana* or attention, *upyoga* or understanding, and *naya* or aspects of the meaning of things¹²". *Sruta jñāna* is invariably preceded by *mati jnana*. As we saw, *mati jnana* cognises only what is present, the *Sruta jñāna* comprehends, all the three time dimensions (past, present and future) relating to the object. "While *mati jñāna* gives us knowledge by acquaintance, this (*Sruta*) gives us knowledge by description¹³".

Avadhi Jnana or Clairvoyant is a sort of clairvoyant knowledge or direct visual intuition which enables a person to know things or objects even at a distance of time or space, without their coming into contact with sense organs.

Manah-paryāya or Telepathic knowledge is a direct knowledge of the thoughts of the minds of others. It is without the help of any medium or agency. Just like *Avadhi jñāna*, *Manah paryāya jñāna* is an extra sensory perception. *Manah-paryaya* can not be attained by ordinary persons. Only a soul in its higher progression stage or at its higher *guna-sthāna* may acquire this type of knowledge.

Keval jñān or perfect knowledge "comprehends all substances and their modifications¹⁴." It is the pure, absolute, complete, whole and total knowledge unlimited by space, time or object. It is the very omniscience. Omniscience according to Jainism is possible. It is the highest type of perception which falls in the category of extra-sensory perception. It is the perception of the cognising faculty

of self. *Keval jnāna* is possible only when all the *jnāna* obscuring karmas have been totally annihilated. It is independent of senses, can be only felt and cannot be described. This supreme and unlimited knowledge is possessed only by purified souls free from bondage like *Arihants* and *Siddhas*.

Comments

1. Of the five types of knowledge the first two i.e. *Mati* & *Sruta* are knowledge through senses, symbols and signs, and therefore, according to Jainas, are indirect or mediate or *paroksa* knowledge. According to *Nyaya darsana* perception or sensuous—the soul does not get directly but through senses or words, and therefore they are indirect or mediate or *paroksa*. The other three i.e. *Avadhi*, *Manah-paryaiya* and *keval* are the direct or immediate or *Pratyaksa* knowledge.

2. “Again the first three types of knowledge i.e. *Mati*, *Sruta* and *Avadhi* are liable to error, while the last two can not be¹⁵ wrong.” In fact the last two can be acquired by purified souls and therefore, there is no scope of error. Erroneous knowledge is characterised by doubt (*samasyā*), mistake (*Viprayaya*) or the opposite of truth which is caused by carelessness or indifference. We, thus have five right and the three wrong ones totalling to eight kinds of knowledge.

3. In *Jaina* theory of knowledge we find that the Jainas have asserted the existence of an objective reality beyond and beside consciousness, apprehended by perception and understood by intelligence.”¹⁶ The analysis of types of knowledge reveals the fact that in *Jain* theory of knowledge the attributes and relations of things are directly given in experience and are not the product of thought or imagination.

4. According to *Jain* theory of knowledge/ the relations between *Pramā*” (knowledge) and *Praméya* (object of knowledge), in case of a physical object is an external one. But it is different in case of self consciousness. The object of knowledge (*jnéya*) includes both self and not self. “As light reveals itself and others¹⁷”

Thus we find that the Jainas reject the Nyaya Vaisesika theory that knowledge reveals only external relations but not itself.

5. *Keval jñāna* or “omniscience is not only the culmination of our cognitive faculties, it is also the final consummation of our moral, religious and spiritual life.”¹⁸ In Jainism we find an intimate relation between the state of salvation and omniscience. The perfect being is also the possessor of perfect knowledge. The state of kevali is reached through the progressive development of the self which leads to the annihilation of various obstructions of knowledge. Like almost all the systems of Indian philosophy, “Jainism also tries to link the concept of omniscience with the highest of religious and spiritual life.”¹⁹ The concept of omniscience, does involve difficulties. But then Jainism believes in and accepts the fact that omniscience is possible. The Jaina thinkers have discussed and proved the existence of omniscience through number of arguments. The chief one follows “from the necessity of the final consummation to the progressive development of cognition.”²⁰

“Omniscience in Jainism is not only the perfection of the cognitive faculty of the self but also its ultimate end. It is the spiritual state of eternal bliss and also the culmination of religious aspiration. This state can be compared with the *Jivan-mukti* of Samkhya and Vedanta, with the *Turiyavasthā*” of, Brahmananda.”²¹

6. No soul of living being can be totally devoid of or bereft of *mati jñāna* and *sruta jñāna*. Knowledge according to Jain theory is always appropriated by the self. Often a question has been put before the Jaina scholars: How consciousness can reveal the nature of unconscious object. This question has been dismissed as an absurd one because according to Jaina theory of knowledge it is the very nature of knowledge to reveal objects.

7. In case of self consciousness the subject of knowledge (*Jñānin*), the object of knowledge (*Jñéya*) and knowledge itself are different aspects of a single concrete unity. “In perfect condition, according to Jain theory of knowledge, the soul is pure *Jñāna* and *Darsana*.”²²

Conclusion

The Jain epistemology or theory of knowledge, we find it to be quite consistent with its metaphysics, ethics and philosophy of soul. The modes of understanding and the types of knowledge discussed in Jainism fosters a rational outlook and an appropriate attitude in understanding the scope and limitations of soul's capacity to know. The classification and descriptions of knowledge, given by the Jaina scholars, is convincing, minute and highly scientific. It is through out consistent to the doctrine of karma. Of course, types of knowledge, as discussed in this paper, does not cover the entire realm of Jain epistemology but it certainly paves the preliminary essential background about *Jnāna*, *Jnanin* and *Jnéya* without which the further complicated topics such as theory of causation, Jaina logic, the philosophy of non-absolutism and the conditional mode of predication can not be understood.

Notes :

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "Indian Philosophy" Vol I PP. 298.
2. Kund-Kundacarya / "Pancastikya" - "Samayasara" - 27.
3. Nemicandra, "Dravya-Samgraha" - 2.
4. Kund-Kundacarya - "Pancastikya - Samayasara" - 16.
5. "Tattvarthadhigama Sutra" ed. Pt. Sukhalalji PP. 89.
6. Kunda-Kundacarya / "Pancastikya Samayasara" - 33.
7. Unia-Svati, "Tattvarthadhigama Sutra" II 8/9.
8. Nemicandra, "Dravya Samgraha" 43.
9. Ibid 4.
10. Bhattacharya Hari Satya / "Reals in Jain Metaphysics" PP. 296.
11. Kunda-Kundacarya / "Pancastijaya" - Samayas'eora 42.
12. Ibid 43.
13. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan "India Philosophy" Vol. I P. 295.
14. Uma-Svati, "Tattvarthabhigam Sutra" I. 30.
15. Ibid I 31.
16. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "Indian Philosophy" Vol. I. P.297.
17. Ibid P. 297.
18. Dr. Ramji Singh, "The Jaina Concept of Omniscience", L.D. Indology, Ahmedabad 1974, PP. 225.
19. Ibid. PP. 225.
20. Mohan Lal Mehta, "Outlines of Jaina Philosophy", Jain Mission Society, Banglore, 1954, PP. 99.
21. Dr. Ramji Singh, "The Jaina Concept of Omniscience", 1974, PP. 221-222.
22. Nemicandra "Dravya Sangraha" 6.

JAIN THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ANEKANTA

Theory of Anékāntavāda:

Let us first understand the term literally and then what it means philosophically. The term *anékāntavāda* consists of three terms: 'anek', 'anta' and 'vada'. The term 'anék' means many, 'anta' means 'aspects' or 'attributes' and 'vada' means 'ism' or 'theory'. In its simple sense, to Jainas, it is a philosophy or a doctrine, it is a theory of manifold aspects. It has been described and translated by modern scholars variously. Prof. S.N. Dasgupta expresses it as 'Relative pluralism' against the 'Extreme absolutism' of Upanishads. Dr. Chandradhar Sharma translates it as "Doctrine of manyness of reality". Dr. Satkari Mookerjee expresses it as philosophy of doctrine of 'non absolutism'. Closely associated to '*anékāntavāda*'—*Syādvāda* which is also expressed as theory of 'Conditional predication' or "theory of relativity of propositions". Since the doctrine of 'anekantavada' is opposed to absolutism or monism (*ékāntavāda*) we would prefer "doctrine of non-absolutism" to convey the meaning of *anékāntavāda*.

Let us now understand the philosophy or the theory of non absolutism in the Jain theory or reality from its metaphysical point of view. The Jaina approach to ultimate reality can be expressed in two words: Realistic and Relativistic. The universe is full of innumerable material atoms and innumerable individual souls. They

are separately and independently real. Again each thing (*vastu*) and each soul possesses innumerable aspects of its own. "A thing has got an infinite number of characteristics of its own."¹ Thus according to the metaphysical presupposition of Jainism, a thing with infinite characters exists independently. The Jain term for 'existent' is "Sat". It designates an entity comprised of substance (*dravya*), attributes (*guna*) and mode (*paryaya*). The qualities are free from qualities of their own and they invariably and continuously undergo modifications or changes. The substance and attributes are inseparable and the attributes being the permanent essence of the substance can not remain without it. Modes, on the other side, are changing. There are modifications "in the form of acquiring (*utpāda*) new modes (*paryāya* or *bhāva*) and losing (*vyaya*) old modes at each moment."² Thus a thing or "the conception of being as the union of permanent and change brings us naturally ¹ to the doctrine of *anékāntavāda* or what we may call relative pluralism as against the extreme absolutism of the Upanishads and the pluralism of the Buddhists."³ In view of the fact, "Jainism points out that both the permanent (the one, the real of Brahmanism) and, 'the changing' (the many, the unreal of Buddhism), are the two sides of the same thing."⁴ "Considering on one side the human limitations to acquire the knowledge of a thing with all the infinite attributes and on the other side substance or the object of Knowledge possessing the three characteristics of production, destruction and permanence", nothing could be affirmed absolutely, as all affirmations could be relatively true under certain aspects or points of view only. "The affirmations are true of a thing only in a certain limited sense, and not absolutely"⁶

Dr. Y.J. Padmarajiah in his famous book "The Jaina theories of Reality and Knowledge" says that "the metaphysical presuppositions of *anékāntavāda*, animating all the spheres of Jaina philosophical thinking, recognises the objectivity of the material universe. The objectivity of the universe signifies the fact that the universe is independent of mind or consciousness. This independence, or the duality of consciousness and the material universe, necessarily presupposes the principle of distinction, which exerts a cumulative force until the logical goal of this principle is reached in the form of

the development of the Jaina concepts of reality and knowledge into the comprehensive scheme of *anékānta* realism..... The claim that *anékāntavāda* is the most consistent form of realism lies in the fact that Jainism has allowed the principle of distinction to run its full course until it reaches its logical terminus, the theory of manifoldness of reality and knowledge”⁷ The theory of non-absolutism clears that “reality, according to Jainism, is not merely multiple but each real in its turn, is manifold or complete to its core. Reality is thus complex web of manyness (*anék*) and manifoldness (*anékānta*)”⁸ The Jaina theory of non-absolutism or as it is also called the philosophy of — Anekanta, is the very foundation of the Jaina system of philosophy. In evaluating this philosophy let us first examine some of the main objection and comments as discussed by Dr. S.C. Chatterjee & D.M.Datta in their introduction to Indian Philosophy. Followed by this will be general appreciations by great personalities. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes, “Samkāra and Ramānuja criticised the Saptabhangi view on the ground of the impossibility, contradictory attributes coexisting in the same thing”⁹ This change is mainly due to misunderstanding. In fact the Jains admit that things cannot have self-contrary attributes at the same time and at the same place. What Jainism emphasizes is the manyness and manifoldness of a thing the complete nature of reality. Dr. Radhakrishna himself answers and says, “Since reality is multiform and ever changing, nothing can be considered to be existing everywhere and at all times and in all ways and places and it is impossible to pledge ourselves to an inflexible creed.”¹⁰ The late Dr. Ganga Nath Jha, a great Sanskrit and erudite vedantist, remarked, “when I read refutation of this *Syādavāda* by Samkarāchārya, I came to the conclusion that the doctrine of *Syādavād* was very sound and that the Acharyas of Vedant failed to understand it. I am sure if Samkara had taken the trouble to study the Jain Scriptures, he would not have taken the pains to criticise this doctrine.”

Prof. Chatterjee and Datta discuss Jain doctrine of Syadavada often falsely compared with the pragmatism of the West or with the theory of relativity or as agnosticism or scepticism. Prof.

Chatterjee says that inspite of some similirity between the pragmatism and Jainism, it should be noted that, "Jains are realists, but the pragmatists have distinct idealistic bias. According to the Jainas, the different judgement about object, are not simply different subjective ideas of the object, but they reveal the different real aspects of the object. The Jainas would accept, therefore, a realistic view of truth which is rejected by all thorough going pragmatists."¹² The Jain *Syādavāda* is sometimes compared to the Western theory of relativity : idealistic and realistic. The idealistic is represented by Protagoros, Berkeley, Schiller etc., and the realistic is represented by Whitehead or Boodin. " If at all, the Jaina is to be called relativist, he must be understood to be the realistic type." ¹³

There is also a great degree of misunderstanding due to the term 'Syāt' which means 'somehow', or 'perhaps', or 'may be' some thinkers form a sort of sceptic or agnostic view about the theory. It is not the uncertainty of a judgement, but its conditional or relative character, that is expressed by the addition of the qualifying participle 'Syāt'..... There is, therefore, no room for scepticism."¹⁴

Prof. M. L. Mehta also gives a detailed refutation to some objections against *Syādavāda* in his 'Outline of Jana Philosophy'. He discusses the objections regarding affirmation and negation, regarding locus and identity, regarding identitiy and difference etc. and says that "there is no logical justification for the emergence of doubt in a matter which has been definitely established."¹⁵

The positive and appreciative side of the theory of *Syādavāda* could be realised through the words of some of the great philosophers and thinkers, both of East and West. We find *Anékāntavād* even in Einstein's explanation as well as in Hegal : "All nature is a reconciliation of opposites" Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said, ... "but he who follows the Jaina concept adopt that kind of cultural regimentation". "Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have once said that he had a very high regard for the doctrine of *Syādavāda*, and that he practised it in his life." Jawaharlal Nehru said, "We have to realise that truth is many sided and it is not a monopoly of any group formation." Dr. Rajendraprasad, the first President of

India, observed, "The doctrine of *Syādavāda* is a valuable contribution of Jainism to Indian religions and world Philosophy." Prof. A.B. Dhruva puts as, "*Syādavāda* is not a doctrine of speculative interest, one intended to solve a mere ontological problem." Dr. H. S. Bhattacharya says, "*Syādavāda* is a theory presenting things as they really are, it is not a set of formal propositions, divorced from and unconnected with matters of experience." Dr. A.N. Upadhyaya writes, "It has supplied the philosopher with catholicity of thought, convincing him that truth is not anybody's monopoly with tariff walls of denominational religion, while furnishing the religious aspirant with the virtue of intellectual toleration which is the part of that *Ahimsā* which is one of the fundamental tenets of Jainism." Lastly, in the words of Dr. Y. J. Padmarajah "*Anékāntavāda* is the heart of Jaina metaphysics and *Nayavāda* and *Syādavādas* (or *Saptabhangī*) are its main arteries. Or, to use a happier metaphor, the bird of *anékāntavāda* files on its wings of *Nayavada* and *Syadavada*".

Syadavada and Omniscience:

The Jain metaphysics and epistemology with its logic or dialectic method has greatly contributed to Indian thought. It is more so, perhaps, due to its doctrine of Anekantavada, Syadavada and Nayavada. The very foundation of these theories is Jain maintain the reality to be dynamic and can consist only with relative or conditional predication. The theory of non-absolution is not simply a refutation or attack on absolutism. It is a solution to many problems due to Absolutism. Dr. S. Mookerjee in his "The Jaina Philosophy of non-Absolutism" says, "If things were real in an absolute sense there would be no causation, as it is possible if only an event which was non-existence is brought into existence." "Again if things were held to be existent in an absolute sense, and if non-existence were denied the result would be equally disastrous. There would be no distinction of one thing from another, there would be no beginning, no end, there would be nothing like individuality. In other words, things would be nothing, entity would be reduced to non-entity".⁷

Thus we find that in *Anékāntavāda* and *Syādvāda* Jains bring a solution to the age old controversy between the Absolutism and Nihilism or between the one and the many or the real and the unreal. The theory of non-absolutism, which is the foundation of Jain Philosophy, holds that every proposition or assertion could be true, but only under certain condition hypothetically, it thus suggests that every proposition or assertion could be false, under certain other conditions. This apparently leads us to a contradiction when we think with reference to the concept of omniscience or *Sarvajnatā*. *Sarvajnatā* or omniscience is the complete or perfect knowledge, knowledge of all (*Sarva*) the modes or attributes. Dr. Ramji Singh in his thesis on “The Jain concept of Omniscience “ observes that, “the jain theory of relativism does not go against the Jain theory of Omniscience”.¹⁸

What is of utmost importance to us and a worth noting point is the fact that inspite of the great value of the theory of *Anékāntavāda* and *Syavada*, the Jainas have not ended or wounded up all with it. Truth, as a truth, must be in its totality a whole truth. And it is here that we find a vital difference between the *Syadavada* and *Sarvajnata*. In spite of both revealing the truth. “In the case of *Keval Jnāna*”, the knowledge is simultaneous”. The Omniscience knowledge “ is regarded assimultaneous rather than successive”. Again we find that “ the immediate result of the absolute knowledge (*Kevalajnāna*) is bliss and equanimity (*sukha, upéksā*), while that of practical knowledge (i.e.*Syādvāda*) is the facility to select or reject what is conducive or not, to self realisation”.²¹ One more difference, between the two, though not a major one, is that one depends on sense perception the other i.e. *Kevala Jnāna*, “arises only after distraction of obstructions.”²² Such knowledge is directly acquired by the soul, without the intervention of sense or signs. But then the most fundamental difference as Dr. Ramji Singh tells us, is that *Syādvāda* “ leads us to relative and partial truth whereas omniscience to absolute truth.” In short, to sum up, we can say that “while *Syādvāda* illumines the reality indirectly, the *kevalajnāna* does it directly.”²⁴ besides one reveals the partial truth while the other reveals the whole truth.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's View

Pandit Dalsukh Malvania in his essay on *Anékāntavāda* in "Jain Dharma Chintan". has examined Dr. Radhakrishnan's view. He says that "Dr. Radhakrishnan is known for his comparative religion of East and West. It is quite possible that he may not have objection with non-absolutism of Jainism, but he has been highly impressed by the *Advaita Vedānta*. Dr. Radha Krishnan is criticising non-absolutism says that if at all there is any fault with non-absolutism it is only this that Absolute has no place in it. To this Pandit Dalsukh Malvania very humbly replies that to discard Absolute from non-absolutism, is not a fault but a feature. After all non-absolutism is meant to oppose absolute of so many different types and kinds. Moreover, one can not say that Absolute has no place in non-absolutism. The concept of Brahman as propagated by advaita-vedanta- the Absolute has been accepted by Jainas as partial truth in their *Sangraha Naya*. The theory of non-absolutism evolves only from such different imaginative Absolutes, and it determines their place in the whole Truth of absolute Truth. In fact, *anékāntvāda* does not evolve if such absolutes are not to be emphasized. Thus one can interpret Dr. Radhakrishnan's criticism only as his love for Brahman as explained by *Advaita Védānta*."²⁵

Pandit Dalsukh Malvania's View

Let us also take note of Pandit Malvania's view as reflected in the above referred essay. He says, "It is true that controversy is mainly due to the use of language, and in the higher state of *dhyāna* or meditation, where thought or logic has no scope, and where there is only self or only realised goal object, there is a realisation of 'whole' which is described as Absolute. But the same Absolute, when described, its alternatives (relatives) arise. Thus relative and absolute both are accepted in non-absolutism. In other words, non-absolutism accepts both effability as well as the ineffability of an object. From this point of view also, as per my (Pandit Malvania) humble opinion, it is worth considering before saying that absolute has no place in non-absolutism. In the theory of non-absolutism, absolute has its own place, but it is not so that only absolute has place. It becomes so only because of the nature

of the theory of non-absolutism. Not to reject the Reality of the object of Meditative state of mind or the object or Sensuous experience is the speciality of the theory of non-absolutism. To it the *Niscaya Naya* is true and so is the *Vyavahara Naya* also..... In Jainism *Parama Brahma* is accepted under *Niscaya Naya* and *Prapanca* is accepted under *Vyavahara Naya*. And both, *Niscaya* as well as *Vyahara* are accepted as true by the Jainism. Thus from *Niscaya Naya* point of view Absolute has a place in Jainism, but it is not absolute only that has a place. Non absolute has also a place in Jainism because it also accepts *Vyavahara Naya* as equally true”.²⁶

Conclusion:

The logical background of Jaina philosophy, as earlier said, is not simply dry dialectics and uninterested intellectual exercise. It leads to very happy solution between “the nihilism on one hand and absolute monism on the other, as well as between the shallow realism of materialism and the ludicrous stand of the idealists. It fosters a rational outlook and an appropriate attitude of looking at things, conditions and relations, gives a breadth of vision, and helps a right and proper evaluation of ultimate realities.”²⁷ Moreover, “Jain logic of *Anekanta* is based not on abstract intellectualism but on experience and realism.”²⁸ In fact the integrity of truth consists in this very variety of its aspects, within the rational unity of an all comprehensive and rectifying principle”²⁹ To Jain logic in general and *Syādvād* in particular, “a thing is neither an absolute unity nor split up into an irreconcilable pluralit. It is both unity and plurality all the time. There is no opposition between unity of being and plurality of aspects”

If we agree that we have to be kind and tolerant to counter points or counter views, *Syādvāda* takes away the dogmatic one sidedness and makes room for the view that theism may be perhaps more suitable view to understand and to make more effective Jainism as religion and ethics.

Practice of Anekantavada :

In order to inculcate this theory of non-absolute or *anékānta* into practice, Bhagavan Mahavira’s own example is worth noting.

He revealed the vision of non-absolutism by following these conditions in his own life and preached these conditions. They are as follows:

I. One should not submit himself to the psychic effects born of attachment and jealousy. This would mean the adoption of the lustrous feeling of being new-attached.

II. Let one keep one's self attentive on desire to know the truth and that only till this impartiality is not fully developed.

III. Let one not be frightened by any apparent opponent and respectfully ponder over the opponent like one's own self and become a strict critic of one's own views as of that of the opponent.

IV. One should practice liberty to bring about a discriminative co-ordination of all the elements that one finds to be true from one's own experience or those of others. It is necessary also to discard one's false pride, correct himself and progress on those lines when one finds that he was mistaken on a certain point."³¹ According to Jainism Soul is potentially infinite knowledge and infinite good, theoretical and practical. What is necessary to practice any great doctrine as non-violence or non-absolutism is the soul-culture which can be attained through a life of harmony through the practice of universal value i.e. Maitri, 'gladness at the riches of others i.e. *'Pramoda'*, compassion for the suffering of others i.e. *'Karunā'*, and overlooking and forgiving the faults of others i.e. *'Upeksā'*. These general rules to be practiced every-day as conditions to practice non absolutism.

Let us also note what Dr. Harisatya Bhattacharya, a great scholar of Jain Darshana says about the practice of non-absolutism or *'anékanta'*. Instead of suggesting the ways or keys to practice, in his conclusion, he explains why it should be practiced and says, "we must consider it in all its possible aspects, the utility of an undertaking may also be subjected to the same test. ... In all such matters the question which one is to put to himself is : What is the other aspect of it. ?"³² He further states that "the problems in social, political and religious domains - either in a nation or in an individual is sure to avoid conflicts and to lead to peaceful solutions."³³

Needless to say that the truth of *anékāntavāda* and its practice has also *anék* (many) ways. There are ways suggested in Jain scriptures as we have seen Lord Mahavira's suggestions, also are the ways discussed by many great scholars. Considering the conflicts of ideals and opinions of individuals, the moral conduct of the people and social, religious and political atmosphere of today ; in short, considering the complexity of life today, the following five ways to apply *anekantavada* can also be suggested. They are :

- (1) Knowledge of Truth and Reality
- (2) Clarity about the inter-relationships of the extremes or paradoxes.
- (3) Acceptance of *Ahinsā* in its Totality
- (4) Objectivity
- (5) Consciousness - awareness

Let us see each of the above ways in detail so as to be clear about it. (1). Leaving here all the big metaphysical or ontological discussions about Appearance and Reality or Facts & Truth, I wish one should know that our day-to-day routine is full of activities which could be broadly classified as Mental Activities, "Physical Activities, and Verbal or Speech Activities (Mansik, Kayik aur Vachik Karm). The substance of all these activities is material. According to Jainism even the Jiv is also a matter, or *dravya* i.e. matter has multi-faced characteristics. Matter has infinite attributes which, though matter is constant, change. The Truth or Reality, in our day-to-day life is with reference to a thing or person or event or idea. Such Truth when we describe can only be Absolute if our description covers all the infinite probable positions. This is not possible and therefore, we should know that what we consider to be true or real is so only with reference to one or some aspects and not wholly or absolutely true.

(2) From the above follows the clarity regarding the extremes or paradoxes. We have a wrong notion that extremes & opposites cannot be applicable to one and the same. We always think rich and poor cannot be applied to some one person, or short and long

etc. Since these attributes are relative a person in some respect or comparison may be rich and the same person from different points of views may also be poor. In order to practice anekantavada, the clarity of these extremes or opposites to be true for the same person or things is very necessary. One should get habituated to take as many examples as possible from daily life to strengthen the clarity.

(3) Acceptance of Ahimsa is the third and very important fundamental way to practice Anekantavada - Pt. Dalsukh Malvania says that the root of Anekantavada is Ahimsa. The very idea of not to hurt the others but to be kind and tolerant to others is the essence of Jainism. The frank, friendly and mutual co-existence is only possible if Ahimsa in our practice is accepted. How can you take note of others or other person's views if you are not kind to them. Ahimsa saves a person from cruel dogmatism, religious fanaticism and psychological egoism; and to save from these all is necessary to have objectivity in its true sense. The others or the opponent person may also be as true and correct in the light of his situation and circumstances as I feel myself. To attack on him with all arguments leading to charges is to hurt him, and hurting (physically, mentally or spiritually) is 'himsa' - hurting is killing. Where there is an atmosphere of fights, of such disputes and such arguments and counter-arguments there is no peace, no solution. Thus the acceptance of Ahimsa, creating an atmosphere of love and friendliness, developing the power of tolerance and favourable situation of mutual co-existence, all these pave for Anekantavadi approach. Ahimsa in this way proves to be a very fundamental way of applying Anekantavada.

(4) The next fundamental and equally significant way is the 'objectivity'. By objectivity I mean to be objective in our approach. Our life is full of events and happenings. There are a series of problems and issues we strive to solve or come out of them. The most painful fact about our problems and issues is that almost in all such cases our subjectivity, our prejudices, our partial and one-sided conclusion etc. make the problems much more complex than what they actually are. In fact objectivity is one of the ways that can be developed by a person by practicing it daily in all his fields of experiences and

can thus become habitual. Objectivity is objective-approach; in other words, to deal with a situation without being personally attached to it. Philosophically we may say that when we are in the situation, but not of the situation or for the situation, it is objectivity. Such objectivity opens the doors facing all the different direction, and such objectivity prevents us from being attached to or belonging to a particular directions, to practice 'anékānt' as to practice to respect others and consider them is no problem. Such objectivity, mainly to professionals and administrators, makes life smooth and blissful.

(5) Last but not the least, is an Awareness; a consciousness. Some one has said that majority of the battles in the world and quarrels in life are caused by senseless, irresponsible, stupid, statements or judgement uttered by man. If we want to be rewarded by *Anékāntavāda*, which has its moral and ethical implications, a conscious effort to look before we leap and to think before we speak is a must. To think before we speak means to remember the nature of Truth in its relative terms. This, again, is a way that can be mastered by constant and continuous practice leading one to become so habitual that such an approach with caution becomes a part of his life.

The above five ways are the fundamental ways of applying *anékāntvāda* in our to-days day-to-day life. These ways are not and can never be the only ways or universal ways. In the light of the time through which the humanity passes, in the light of the problems and situations arising before us, and in the light of the innumerable germs causing a gross misunderstanding resulting into a life full of stress and strain, the above mentioned five ways will certainly prove to be fundamental ways to put *Anékāntvāda* into practice.

When we have talked so much of *Anékāntvāda* and its application, let me also humbly end with a note that this is also one-side of the Reality; there can be so many other sides and they can be as real and as true, as fundamental and as fruitful as these ways are.

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REASON AND FAITH IN JAINISM

Introduction:

Whenever we talk or write about Religion or Indian Religion a lot come to our mind, mainly, concerning the meaning of religion, the need for religion and concerning the inter-religious understanding. Life has been seen as all suffering, all pain and all temporary, "To be free from all these is the goal of our efforts, for only in complete freedom can there be perfection. This effort to attain freedom underlies all forms of worship, whether we know it or not". In fact, We are all striving to reach the same goal: 'Freedom'. With the conception of a perfectly free being, the most essential and the most fundamental conception that comes out is the conception of God. "The embodiment of freedom, the Master of nature, is what we call God. Swami Vivekanand says, "You cannot deny Him. No, because you cannot move or live without the idea of freedom. Whenever there is life, there is this search for freedom and that freedom is the same as God. So, all have one purpose in life: to reach this freedom for perfection." The term 'Religion' could be understood in the etymological sense; which means to gather together. Religion, according to many eminent thinkers of the West is, "worship or adoration of God, "essentially a belief in God or Gods". Or "belief in spiritual beings", "a personal relation with God." etc. The popular religion in India consists of worship of God through prayer, devotion and dedication.

Let us also be clear about the need for Religion. Dr.S Radhakrishnan says, "The world has been shrinking at an increasing pace with the advance of communications and technology.... The need for religion, for a system of thought, for devotion to a cause, which will give our fragile, and fugitive existence significance and value does not require much elaborate argument"¹

Religion we need for more than one reason. Religion, even if not giving clarity to head, certainly gives warmth to the heart that 'love of God will make up for unkindness and that cruelty and failure will give place to love and victory. There are thinkers who see religion as social phenomenon. "For them truth is social unity. Religion is a part of social mechanism with a social purpose, social interest and social hope." This school also feels need for religion if not as worship to God or as path to perfection, at least, as a means to self-culture and social improvement. Every one needs religion because the true religious life, as Dr. S.Radhakrishnan says, "is spiritual certainty offering us strength and solace in the hour of need and sorrow. It is the conviction that love and justice are at heart of the universe, that spirit which gave rise to man will further his perfection."² We need religion for this very faith that cling to us even in our sadness and sorrows. The need for religion, for an individual, for the society as well as for the world, will be there for Everbody's welfare, for everybody's peace and for everybody's gain in spiritual power. Faith is an intrinsic element of human nature. The question is what kind of religion? Is it a religion of love and brotherhood or of power and hate? The question is therefore not, religion or no religion, but what kind of religion?³ Volumes can be written on meaning and need for religion. I just avoid the entire discussion because we want to examine the role of Reason and Faith in religion(s).

RELIGION; EAST AND WEST: Understanding Religion

A long review of history suggests us that there is not much difference about the basic or fundamental essence and nature of life, be it in east or west. It is difficult to define precisely what we

mean by east and west. Even then, keeping the thinkers and philosophers, and their thoughts and philosophy, we find two approaches to reality. The east lays emphasis on the development of the powers of intuition and the west on the faculty of intelligence. The eastern systems are mainly idealistic, spiritualistic, axiological and intuitive. The western systems are mainly rational, intellectual, realistic, scientific and existential. Besides noting these two basic approaches, one should also note that the human mind does not function in fractions or sections. Intellect, emotion and will all spring from the same spiritual fount. In order to understand religion one has to understand the spirit, which is at the core of religion. In other words, understanding spirit is understanding religion. We can say 'Sadhanā' is nothing but the process to understand and grasp the spirit. With this we find the use of reason or logic is not eliminated altogether; rather when the rational mind realizes its own limitations, it makes room for the spirit to reveal itself. Concluding the argument we can say understanding reason, intuition, intellect and faith will always help us to understand the religion.

Reason and Intuition :

Reason essentially is a human phenomenon that has a capacity to use universal concepts. Etymologically the word 'Reason' is derived from 'ratio' meaning relation. "In the most generalized sense of all, reason might be defined as the rational element of intelligence."⁴ The thinkers and philosophers use the word reason in a wider sense. Reason is not mere abstract or formal but it is higher and synthetic. It operates through the whole of mind. "It (reason) is the whole mind in action, the indivisible root from which all other faculties arise"⁵ One should also be clear about the difference between the reason and intellect. *Intellect* is abstract and partial. Reason, unlike intellect, is comprehensive and synthetic. Reason is superior to intellect. Reason is a sort of contemplation and is also a principle of the identity of opposites.

Intuition essentially is a subjective experience, and, like reason, is a source of knowledge. Intuition is a higher source of

knowledge than reason. Intuitive knowledge is knowledge by identity; it is the direct knowledge, which is final and supreme. Reason works under the limitations of senses and categories of mind and so fails to fathom the depth of Reality or to realize the Absolute. Intuition is free from all such limitations. It is experienced when one is free from egoistic existence, the ego should disappear and the individual becomes the instrument of the universal.' Intuitive-knowledge, is not non-rational; it is only non conceptual. Intuition is the very base of reason. Intuition is direct and immediate perception. Though there is a seeming opposition between intellect and intuition, and not between reason and intuition, the intuition always needs intellect for the expression, elaboration and justification of its result. Intuition in itself is dumb. Intuition needs intellect; and intellect, on the other hand, presupposes intuition. Intuition often is misunderstood as anti-intellectualism. "Intuition which ignores intellect is useless. The two are not only incompatible but vitally united. Intuition is beyond reason. though not against reason. As it is the response of the whole man to reality, it involves the activity of reason also"⁶

Compatibility of Reason and Faith :

Thinkers in the west held that "some things can be known through Divine Faith which cannot be discovered in any other way, and some things can be known by reason which are not revealed, and some things can be known in both ways,"⁷ Thinkers in East have never thought this way. However, it becomes very important to know the compatibility of Reason and Faith for a better understanding. We all know and accept that some things can be known only by revelation and they are called strict mysteries, "mysteria strict dicta"; they are truths for which no adequate evidence or reason would ever be available. The things which are objects both of reason and faith are those truths which are difficult for men to discover and which are necessary for a man's faith. Such objects common to both faith and reason (eg. The existence of God) are called the "Preambula Fidei" the prerequisites or

preambles of faith. "It is here that the faith is supported by reason, since such doctrines of faith are demonstrated to have rational grounds, and by extension, the whole of the faith is made more credible to one who does not possess."

Yet, both in East and West, there are traditions that held that there are some religious claims, the strict mysteries, which cannot in principle be discovered to be true by means of purely rational investigation. Such claims or such mysteries are unverifiable and unfalsifiable by any purely rational means. In Indian philosophy and also in Jainism both reason and faith are accepted as sources of knowledge. Reason, in fact, is considered essential for Faith. Though faith is considered higher and more important way of coming to knowledge of God, reason is also compatible with faith. In Indian Philosophy and Jainism reason is an important means to support what faith has revealed. This is what we call reason's service to faith. The greatest service reason can offer to divine faith is that of systematic analysis of religious belief and defense against error. This 'certainly does not means that the truth of faith depends upon rational arguments and analysis.

Swami Paramanand in his book titled "Faith is Power" says that faith and reason are not opposed to each other, they supplement each other. One should remember the difference between faith and belief. Belief is superficial and is easily shaken, but faith makes us strong and steadfast. What one requires knowing, in the present world of intellect and intelligence, is that the Faith is not an abstract indefinite sentiment to be put away on shelf. Faith is necessary for us all. Faith is always understood, and should be understood, in its three fold aspects: Faith in one's own self, in humanity, and in God. All these three aspects are interdependent and are not isolated.

Faith is always marvellous, one of the greatest spiritual gifts to mankind, because it gives us direct access to Divinity. Indian Philosophy holds that unflinching faith helps in attaining wisdom, which brings supreme peace. Jainism holds that unflinching faith

(*Shraddhā*) is a *sadhanā*, the devotion that helps attain right vision, which brings salvation. The Sanskrit term "*Shraddhā*" has more comprehensive meaning than English word faith. *Shraddhā* means sense of trust in one's higher self, in that which is more than body and which sustains body.'

But then Reason is also an exclusive gift to mankind, which distinguishes him from all the other living beings. What ever that is Real and has to be accepted as existent though not directly perceived, Reason helps us. The whole Life, the whole Science, the Laws of nature and state and on Reason—on Logic. Majority of the people consider Faith higher than Reason, some consider Faith to be the spiritual development of Reason, Jainism considers both Reason and Faith equally important.

Faith has often been associated to those who are uneducated, ignorant and who have no power to think and investigate. This is misunderstanding faith as a blind baseless belief. Faith, in fact, is never well founded until it is based on experience. Realization is the basis of all true faith."⁹

One cannot have faith without optimism. Faith and hope are inseparable. Actually all men have the elements of faith in them. Faith is absolutely necessary for spiritual growth.

The Tattreya Upanisad (chapter 3) says,"There has been a steady ascend from the inorganic to organic, from the organic to the sentient, from the sentient to the rational life. The rational has to grow into the Spiritual which is as far above the purely rational as the rational is above the purely sentient."

Both Faith and Reason are, as we have said earlier, supplementary to each other, strong pillars, in unity, to lead an enlightened state of soul.

REASON AND FAITH IN JAINISM :

The scholastic and neo-scholastic tradition in the west were always concerned with religion but not with "religion" in the abstract. The main tendencies (approaches) amongst the scholastic

thinkers were (i) the distaste for dialectical analysis, (ii) emphasis upon innate traces of God in the soul of man, and (iii) the claim that no one is really an atheist and that all moral experience is grounded in an inbred consciousness of the person of God. J. F. Ross, in discussing the salient characteristics of this approach to religion, discusses 'Faith and Reason' in great details and fundamentally. Its approach statement is "BOTH THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH AND THE ACTIVITY OF REASON ARE ALWAYS OF ARRIVING AT KNOWLEDGE. This has a substantial and important claim: Both faith and reason are ways of arriving at knowledge of God and God's will for men."¹⁰

When we consider Jain scriptures and its canonical works the question would be, do they consider faith to be a source of anything more than belief or opinion? In Jainism, it is not so. Let us see how. The term "belief, in general, and particularly in religion and religious texts functions in many ways. Belief in Jainism is often designating 'a state of adherence' to a preposition or to a way of life, to a state of opinion or a state of knowledge. Jainism has always tenaciously insisted that faith is not merely a source of knowledge but of vision too. In Jainism, though faith (*shraddhā*) is a state, it is also an activity. According to Jain scriptures, "friendliness (*Maitri*), activity (*Pramoda*), compassion (*Karunā*) and neutrality (*Madhyasma*) are four qualities basically required in the foundation of religion."¹¹ Shri Haribhadra Suri gives a great importance to equanimity or right faith (*Samyakkarma*). According to him, the right faith has five inevitable attributes.

These are (1) recitation of verses (*Sutrokti*), (2) Concentration of mind while worshiping (*Upayoga*), (3) doubtlessness (*Asanka Tyāga*), (4) equanimity (*SamyakDrsti*), and (5) devotion (*bhakti*)

So according to Jaina concept of *Sādhanā* (religious activity) right faith is the foundation.

In one of the canonical works of Jainism, *Bhaktirasam it abindu ? 1 & 2* the *Aradhanā* or *Sādhanā* consists of ten activities, of which the very first is 'faith' (*Sraddha*). Thus we find faith, both

as a state and as an activity, has its own place in the wider structure of *Aradhanā* or *Sādhanā*, in Jainism.

Faith, with reference to religion, is divided into human faith and divine faith. Since Jainism insists on earning or developing higher state of soul through austerities and thus purifying the soul from karma, there is no scope of Grace or faith in Grace of God. In this sense the faith, in Jainism, is an inevitable requirement to attain higher state of soul (higher *Gunsthāna*). In Jainism, perhaps the only religion, we find this activity of accepting authoritative testimony and canonical works as the activity or exercise of 'human faith'. If "Divine faith" is an activity which means the accepting of certain propositions upon the authority of God or as commitment to the truth of some proposition because it has been revealed by God (or *Tirthānkara*) then we can say we do have 'divine-faith' in Jainism.

Reason is a source of knowledge. "It is, on one hand, a denial of philosophical skepticism, and on the other, an adherence to the doctrine of moderate empiricism."¹³ More than knowing what is reason, it is important to know what is meant by "knowing by reason". Knowing by reason is a very broad concept closely akin to finding out for oneself¹⁴ Almost all religions agree and accept that reason is a way of coming to knowledge of God. Jainism gives equal importance to Vision (through faith), Reason and Conduct to attain the highest state of spirituality. The real and deep understanding of Jain Philosophy of non-absolutism, the theory of manifoldness and *Nayavāda*, and the entire science of karma (*Karmavāda*) bring us right into the inner core of Reason based Jainism which is also ethical, religious and theistic in colour.

Jainism, as philosophy and thought, is a realistic system. It accepts the outer world as a real and as since beginningless time (*anādi*). Even the deepest meanings; the noblest, and the most profound principles of Lord Mahavira are all based on reason. In fact, in Jainism one finds every 'morality' talk, full of 'rationality'.

According to Jainism knowledge is one of the attributes of soul. Jainism maintains that our knowledge of things and of their relations starts from experience and reason can at best serve to organize it. The Jain theory of knowledge admits two kinds of knowledge: mediate i.e. 'Paroksa' and immediate i.e. 'Aparoksa'. The mediate knowledge classified into *Mati* (ordinary - cognitivism) and *Sruti* (testimony) are Reason based while the immediate knowledge classified into *Avadi* (direct Knowledge of things) *Manahparyāya* (direct Knowledge of thought of others) and *Kevala* (perfect knowledge) are intuition based. The Jain epistemology includes induction based on observation and deductive reasoning. What is most remarkable to note is that a Jain does not believe in the a-priori validity of the laws of thought. To him the laws are "the laws of reality and therefore can be discovered by experience only".

Reason and Faith, in our final conclusion, with reference to Jainism, are both significant and important. Both Jaina canonical literature and Jaina scholars held (i) that faith is a source of *Sadhana*, an effective activity towards wider knowledge and in particular a source of knowledge about Soul and Matter, (ii) that reason, is also a source of knowledge in two ways - (a) in an experimental, personal and direct way and (b) in a scientific, impersonal and arguments based upon self evident reasoning.

Let us understand Jainism in a nut-shell. According to Jainism it is the human soul alone which can regain the highest degree of perfection. And that all souls are possessed of fullness and perfections. "The infinite is inherent in the finite. That is why the finite is ever struggling to break down its finiteness and reach out to the fullest freedom"¹⁵. Jainism, uniquely maintains that God is only the highest, noblest and fullest manifestation of the power which lie latent in each soul. What one requires is to put utmost self effort to defeat one's own enemies: passions and sense cravings, like, a true warrior. "Fight with yourself. Why fight with external foes ? He who conquers himself, through himself will obtain

happiness”¹⁶ The self effort is an effort to attain the unity of Right Reason (*Samyak Jnan*), Right Vision (*Samyak darsana*) and Right Conduct (*Samyak caritra*). It gives emphasis on Reason and Faith both, on *Anekanta* and *ahimsa* both. Jainism wants understanding and trusting both involved in practicing the religion, and that is self-effort. Jainism, philosophically (rationally) is realistic, in the sense it accepts the objects of the world as real; but by nature Jainism is *Acarpradhana*, in the sense that it is highly ethical and accepts Faith as inevitable in self-effort (in *Sadhana*). Jainism as an important, fully developed and well established religious and cultural system, possesses the elements of Reason and Faith both. The entire Jain religion and its theology and mythology is Faith, its metaphysics, its logic and doctrine of Karma is Reason; and yet Jainism is an unique unity of theology, mythology and philosophy; a unique unit of Reason and Faith.

In Jainism, the emphasis is on the unity of faith, knowledge and conduct. The Jain religion is certainly a rational religion and at the same time the ‘worship’, rituals, facts and festivals reveal the element of faith in it. Dr. J.P. Jain, says that, “the basic spirit of Jainism is ‘to live and let live’, to live a life of understanding, tolerance, sympathetic cooperation, and peaceful coexistence, may, the still fuller and nobler corealisation.”¹⁷ A student of Jain philosophy, after the study of its metaphysical doctrines and the presuppositions, its ethics and its philosophy of soul; its theory of knowledge and non-absolutism (*Sayādvāda & Nayavāda*), its logic and law of Karma; its theistic colour, and popular belief and *sadhana* - after a thorough study of these all, finds Jainism both, highly rational and at the same time, highly theistic with deep faith and high spirituality. In Jainism, as *Tattvarthasutra* says the right faith, right knowledge and right conduct is the way to liberation, we find the unity of reason, faith and conduct. At the same time, if we study the entire way to attain liberation we find, in Jainism, it is the rational that grows into the spiritual. It would not be proper to say that in Jainism the reason is considered lower and faith

higher or superior. In fact, in Jainism, both reason and faith enjoy equal importance and equal significance. It will not be wrong to say that the secular spirit of Jain religion and thought; and the concept of polluted soul to be purified to attain salvation through highly moral and ethical system poses before us a unique unity of reason and faith. Jainism brings about both the rational understanding and the spiritual realization.

CONCLUSION:

In our final conclusion we will say that both reason and faith are considered in Jainism as ways to attain the salvation, as both are required for spiritual progress. Again, unlike some schools, Jainism does not consider reason to be inferior and faith to be superior. According to Jainism both are fundamentally and inevitably, required for better understanding and higher spirituality. It will not be wrong to say that in Jainism we find the rational grows into the faith, which is far above everything. The reason and faith, thus in Jainism enjoy equal status and always remain as an intrinsic element of one who follows it. Moreover, the rationalism of Jainism does not close the doors to save knowledge by wisely accepting intuition as a source of valid knowledge. For such a highly rational system, scientific support to intuitively certain metaphysical truths, is nothing more than an additional confirmation. Jainism's 'Reason' is not "lower or uncritical rationality" because the development of critical rationality resulting in morality and spirituality -resulting into Faith, is at the core of Jain religion and philosophy.

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12. The Ten Activities are faith (*Shraddhā*), holy communion (*satsanga*), eulogy or religion song (*stavan or bhajan*), renunciation (*Nivriti*), Sincerity (*Nistā*), special interest (*Ruchi Visesa*), firmness (*Dradha Anuraga*), love (*Pramotpatti*), emotional stat (*Bhāvanubhuti*) and strong devotion (*Parā Bhakti*)
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VALUES IN JAINISM FOR THE MODERN WORLD

INTRODUCTION

Your institution every year conducts a short term course on religious beliefs. This year the short-term course is on “Religious Values For The Modern World” which will be an attempt to have a genuine understanding of religions specially with reference to their values. Values of Religions always aim at promoting human development, social progress and peaceful co-existence. The peace and understanding avoids alienation of man and thus makes him free from fear and stress. Religious values, thus become of great importance in today’s world when unity and integrity are lost and violence and distructions have become a day-to-day affair.

In this short-term course, I will deal with ‘Religious Values’ with special reference to Jainism, i.e. Values in Jainism. Jainism is both; a religion as well as one of the nine schools of Indian Philosophy. Jainism, in fact, is a way of life. I will deal this subject in three parts. First will be understanding Religion in general, but in-brief, and then specially we will see what is Religion according to Jainism. The second part will be understanding Jainism and the perennial values of Jainism. The Third and the last part will be throwing light on the Modern World, and will try to understand values in Jainism. What the Modern World has turned out to be !

What are its dangerous consequences and whether there is any way out to save the humanity and re-establish peace and humanity and unite all with cordial relations ? In short, we will see the relevance of 'Jain Values' for the Modern World, in this last lecture.

PART - I

UNDERSTANDING RELIGION

There are five vital questions about the creation of the universe. The first one is who created this universe ? Religion says that God created but science hasn't fully accepted it. The second question is, why has this universe been created ? No one can answer this question. The third one is, when was this universe created ? Again the answer is a big 'we don't know'. The fourth question is, out of what has this universe been created ? No answer again. The fifth and the final question is what is our role in the creation ? Four vital questions have remained unanswered till now. The fifth and the last vital question has a rational answer. We are unique beings and have a unique role to play in creation. That unique role is to know. We humans alone can know. How to know ? There are two methods : one of science and the other of religion. Science is the study of external; religion is the study of the internal. The first is objective, the second, subjective.

Religion is the study of man - an indepth study. This study leads to supreme knowledge of everything. Religion should also be understood as a bond between man and nature. Religion teaches us to love nature, and "it helps us to maintain a harmonious relationship between human beings, between the individuals and society, and between man and nature"² "More than the knowledge of modern science it is the deeper understanding that religion provides of the Truth of Oneness of all creation". Religion is inside of a civilization, the soul of social organization. It is not only "life transcending but also life transforming". Religion does not consist so much in dogmas, theories and rituals, as much as it consists in

its perennial values the practice of which brings happiness. Explaining the meaning of religion, Encyclopaedia says, "men were called religious because they reconsidered carefully and, as it were, went over again in thought all that appertained to the worship of God". The thinkers and philosophers have tried to explain religion as a personal relationship with God, essentially a belief in God or Gods, a belief in spiritual beings. Religion is 'a way of life, having worship and prayer as its expression.

One should also know that the main aim of Religion is establishment of unity of all existence. "It is proclaimed that the Reality which is to be realized through religion is the soul of truth, delight of life, the fullness of peace and immortality". Religion aims at unification, at being all-inclusive and coextensive with the whole of life. It means to intensify, vitalize, and enhance every human activity.

We should know that inspite of human beings everywhere, there are fundamental differences between the East and West which are "significant and are related to external, temporary, social conditions and are alterable with them"³. In his very famous book titled "East and West in Religion" Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes: "The Western mind is rationalistic and ethical, while the Eastern mind is more inclined to inward life and intuitive thinking"⁴ We may say that the dominant feature of Eastern thought is in its insistence in creative intuition while the Western systems are characterized by a great adherence to critical intelligence"⁵. Thus we see that the difference is in approach and emphasis, because of which we find in East, religion is more a matter of spiritual culture than scholastic learning. "We learn the truth not by criticism and discussion but by deepening life and changing the level of consciousness. God is not the highest form to be known but the highest being to be realized"⁶

Since I wish to talk more with reference to Jainism, leaving aside some important aspects about the religion and the religions of the world, let us see what has Jainism to say. Ofcourse, I do

not introduce, here, the Jaina-religion to you. We rather want to know what is religion according to Jainism. In other word, we want to understand what religion means to a Jain. Again, Jainism being a religion of the East, we will be seeing the whole issue in the light and emphasis of what religion means in East.

Jainism considers 'Religion' to be a way of life. Life and Religion can not be separated. They are not different, not separate and cannot be thought about one without the other. Religion to Jainas, as earlier said, is a way of life. Where there is life, where there is aim and goal of life, the methods or way to reach the goal, Religion is its ultimate path - a way that transforms soul into a higher soul.

Thus religion according to Jainism is not dogmas, philosophies, doctrines or discussions and critical evaluation of the principles. Religion though includes all these above mentioned aspects, is ultimately a matter of Practice and observance, something to be lived as per the doctrines and not to be discussed or to be intellectually understood. Religion is concerned, in Jainism, with day-to-day activity - the actual living of a human being. Activities by mind through its thoughts and thinking, activities of speech through its expression and utterances and activities of body through its deeds and doings - all these become expression of Religion. Thus religion in Jainism is *Achāra* i.e. the conduct or actual living. The essence of religion, in Jainism, is to experience and realize a state of mind which is equanimous (*Sāmai*) while dealing with others in course of daily activities and affairs with family and friends. According to Jain scriptures, "Friendliness (*Maitri*), Activity (*Pramoda*), Compassion (*Karuna*) and Neutrality (*Madhyastha*) are four qualities (*Bhavana*) required in the foundation of religion" ⁷ Jainism and almost all great scholars and *Achāryas* like Pt. Sukhlalji & Sri Haribhadrasuri, give a great importance to equanimity or right faith (*Samyakkarana*). Jain religion considers the following five, the practice of which obtains a right vision (*Smyakdarshana*) :

- (i) Recitation of Verses (*Sutrokti*)
- (ii) Concentration of mind while worshipping (*Upayoga*)
- (iii) Doubtlessness (*Asanka-tyaga*)
- (iv) Equanimity (*Samyak Dristi*), and
- (v) Devotion (*Bhakti*)⁸

This means, one who observes these is observing religion. What is most remarkable is here in above five practices is Jainism's secularism. Jain religiousness includes aspects like devotion and equanimity or recitation of verses, but not necessarily of God or Gods.

Again according to Jain scriptures "the Jain conception of religion as *Arādhana* consists in ten parts. They are :

- (i) faith (*Sraddhā*)
- (ii) holy communion (*Satsanga*)
- (iii) eulogy (*Stavana*)
- (iv) renunciation (*Nivriti*)
- (v) sincerity (*Nisthā*)
- (vi) special interest (*Ruchi Vishesa*)
- (vii) firmness (*Drdha Anuraga*)
- (viii) love (*Premotpatti*)
- (ix) emotional state (*Bhavanubhuti*)
- (x) strong devotion (*Parā Bhakti*)⁹

Thus we find a person who is doing activities keeping the above in mind or intentionally practicing these above mentioned things he is practicing religion. In Jain religion, *Sādhanā*, *Sevā* or *Upasānā*, all these three words convey almost similar meaning which very broadly mean a purposeful activity done with a definite purpose consistently, regularly something like what Patanjali has in his mind when he speaks of Tapas. According to Jainism "the three

modes of *Upāsana* or worship are *Mantras* (Hymns), *Murti* (image) and *Puja* (ritual and worship)¹⁰.

About religion, Jainism says that an extra ordinary worship could be through (i) soul, (ii) Guru or teacher and (iii) scripture.¹¹ It talks about three kinds of worship (i) discouraging sins (*Duskratāgarha*) (ii) encouraging good deeds (*Sukratanumodana*) and (iii) submission (*Sarana*)¹²

Thus we find religion, in Jain sense, is an activity, or as we earlier said, a way of life, which is devotional, purposeful and goal oriented. Religion, to Jainas, is a way and not the goal; it is a means to reach to the end but not an end, where the real goal is the liberation of the soul from its bondage with matter. Jain religion is highly theistic presenting a perfect theistic system having its popular belief as well as *Sadhana* leading to a very sound position.

Conclusion

We have seen what religion in its general term means, what is its aim and what is its role. How East and West differ in their emphasis. With reference to Jainism as a system of philosophy, and as one of the oldest living religions, we have seen what actually religion mean in Jainism. Jainism, because of its utmost emphasis on “emancipatory self-effort”, “the extreme position of Law of Karma” and “exclusion of Divine Grace” becomes a religion of actual practice - i.e. *Achāra*. What is to be practiced is in detail mentioned in scriptures but in short we can say all *Acharas* that lessen the Karmik-veil and uplifts the soul by purifying and leading to a higher stage (*Ganasthāna*) make a Marga - this is ‘Religion’ to Jainas.

Part-II

UNDERSTANDING JAINISM

In the previous lecture (Party I), we have tried to understand ‘religion’ as explained and advocated by Jaina School of thought. Now we will try to know Jainism. We will try to know Jainism as

both, as one of the nine systems of Indian Philosophy and as one of the oldest living religion. In Short, we want to understand Jainism as a system and as a religion practiced by Jains.

Origin and its Antiquity:

Jainism is the religion of Jains, a path practiced and preached by Jinas, which means by the conquerors of self. "It is an important, fully developed and well established religious and cultural system"¹³ Jainism is not founded by Lord Mahavira. Its antiquity goes back to pre-Aryan and may be even pre-vedic period. Dr. Harmon Jacob says "In conclusion let me assert my conviction that Jainism is an original system, quite distinct and independent from others"¹⁴. Major Gen. J.G.A. Forlong says "... It is impossible to know the beginning of Jainism"¹⁵ Amongst the Indian Scholars, Dr. S., Radhakrishnan says, "There is nothing wonderful in my saying that Jainism was in existence long before the Vedas were composed"¹⁶ According to Jains their religion is Anādi - i.e. since time immemorial, it is eternal and has been revealed again and again.

Jaina Darshan :

Fundamentally Jainism emphasis and discusses two great categories: Soul (*Jiva*), and Non-soul (*Ajiva*). "The whole universe falls under this division, which is logically perfect, it is division by dichotomy"¹⁷

According to Jainism the world is *anādi* or from the beginningless of time. It is real and is eternal. What Jain metaphysics mainly discusses are the following topics: (i) substance and attributes (*Dravyatva-Vichāra*) (ii) The Karmas and Law of Karma (Karma Vada) (iii) The Seven Principles (*Tattvas*) (iv) The Nine *Padārthas* (Categories) (v) The nature and stages of evolution of the soul. We also find the principle of non-absolutism and mansidedness of reality in Jain epistemology and logic. The *Nayavāda*, the soul in bondage and its liberation -all these we find being discussed in Jain philosophy. Jainism believes that the soul is essentially, in its pure state, infinitely blissful, powerful and

omniscient. These are the qualities of God. Soul, according to Jainism, in its pure form, attained after destroying all the layers of karma and karmic veil, is God. Jainism, perhaps, is the only religion which makes it possible for man to become God. What is most significant is to transform the polluted soul, the soul which is made filthy, into a pure soul. This is done by removing the impurities that have brought the soul into a bondage. Jain religion, with reference to its ultimate goal or aim liberation, is nothing but a way or *mārga* or method to transform the state of soul. This, in Jain terminology is uplifting or the ascent of the stages of the state of soul. In Jaina religion it is called '*Gunasthāna*'. When we understand this, in the background of the ultimate aim Jainism has, we clearly know how significantly the Law or Doctrine of Karma becomes important. The law of Karma in Jainism is very subtle and very minute. In fact the bondage is called Karma. It is material forming a subtle bond of extremely refined karmic matter which keeps the soul from flying up to its natural abode of full knowledge and everlasting peace"¹⁸. In Jainism one finds Karmavāda i.e. full discussion and description of all the aspects and issues related to karma. The nature and classification of different types of karma, the entire process of karma - the foreign element flowing into and infecting the natural faculties of the soul known as karma - bandha is explained in great details. Since our subject is not Law of karma, I sum up only by noting what Dr J. P. Jain says "one may call this doctrine of Jainism almost spiritual mathematics"¹⁹ The doctrine of karma in Jainism proves to be a very important moral doctrine.

The Jaina philosophy equally, in detail and most justifiably, discusses logic and gives *Anekāntavāda* and *Syādvāda*; it discusses ethics and gives the philosophy of soul: soul in state of bondage and soul in stage of release; its canonical, semi-canonical and popular literature explains the popular belief and *Sādhanā*. All these leading to only one goal i.e. liberation. In Jainism liberation means making the soul free from bondage. Again making the soul free means making it pure by removing impurities. To do this one needs to see

that there is a checking of the inflow of karma and there is an annihilation of accumulated karma known as *Nirjarā*. For this Jainism prescribes external and internal austerities and practice of penance.

Thus, in Jain philosophy, we find the deeds - deeds done through thinking, speaking and doing i.e. through mind, speech and body, become significantly important. It is here we will find how in Jainism the 'Values' and practice of the values carry a great importance. The five great vows of Jainism is nothing but the expression of Jain Axiology. They are five great values which if practiced with faith and sincerity, are sure to transform the life. These values are moral and eternal. It was, it is, and it will forever be important and relevant to mankind. We will see all about these values in our third and the last part (lecture). Besides, Jain religion has its own cosmology, theology, mythology and astrology. Each one is in great details making Jainism very rich in its literature. But at the heart, centrally, Jainism is a religion of *Achāra* i.e. religion to be practiced, to be observed. Practicing religion means practicing its principles, its values and teachings. Let us now concentrate on religious values of Jainism and their relevance for the modern world.

PART-III

VALUES IN JAINISM

Introduction:

Like any great religion, Jainism has its evolution and developed its various concepts, rituals, ethical codes and philosophy. Though, in modern times, less popular amongst the western scholars, Jainism has always, "exerted abiding influence not only on the minds of its devotees and admirers but also on their creations, thoughts, and ideas expressed through administration, art (including iconography), literature (in addition to canonical or other religious texts) and sciences (including pseudo - scientific ideas and practices)"²⁰ Prof. S. N. Dasgupta says "The Jain literature was written in Prakrit and from its general trend one would regard it as a sort of folk philosophy interested in overcoming the moral aspects without any

theistic bias. The folk philosophy had however elements in it which in the hands of later writers were connected into logical doctrines remarkable for their originality, acuteness and subtlety”²¹ Jainism has been wrongly understood as a revolt against Vedas.

It will also be wrong to state that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism. According to Jain tradition there are 24 Tirthankaras and Lord Mahavira was the last of them all. “Bihar is the cradle of Jainism, though its founder, *Rsabha*, was born at Ayodhya, 22 out of 24 *Tirthankaras*, including Bhagwan Mahavira, were born in Bihar and achieved *nirvāna* in that state”²² Not discussing much about Jainism’s meta-physics, epistemology, the dizzy height of *syādvāda* dialectics and extraordinary cult in *ashimsā* (non-violence), let us note that “such a religion, no doubt, is not for the majority; but it may not be without appeal for a selected few who are disillusioned of historic cults and are brought face to face with the eternal twins, Soul and Truth, the undeniable categories of human life and consciousness”²³ The great French Scholar Louis Renou in his 1953 lectures on the religions of India, observed that ‘the Jaina movement presents evidence that is of great interest, both for the historical and comparative study of religion in ancient India and for the history of religion in general. Based on profoundly Indian element it is at the same time highly original creation, containing very ancient material, more ancient than that of Buddhism, and yet highly refined and elaborated’²⁴

Such a great religion, the Jaina religion exists and shines today “as the only religion with an uncompromising faith in peace and non-violence in thought and deed” Jainism, is one of the oldest, as old as Vedas, religious traditions of the world.²⁵

Lord Mahavira is the twenty fourth Tirthankara of the present era. As earlier said, he was not the founder, but was a great propounder of this great religion. Though there are differences amongst the scholars about the date of Mahavira, there is a general acceptance that he lived in the 6th Century B.C. (599 BC to 527 BC). He preached Jainism 2500 years ago, and “his preachings are

relevant even today and bear special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self reliance, and self purification to develop inherent and infinite potentialities of human self"²⁶

About values:

In order to understand Jain values for Modern world, we need to understand all about 'value' - what is a value ? What are the types or kinds of value ? What is the role of values in our life ? Jaina values and their relevance and influence on our life. Ofcourse, we need to know the Modern world also. But first let us see what does value mean. To begin with, the term value means that which is intrinsically valuable in itself unlike things a product which gain value only through exchange. In Indian philosophy and religions, in tradition and culture, the value is expressed in terms of Truth (*Satyam*), Goodness or Love (*Shivam*) and Beauty (*Sundaram*). All the values are derived from these three basic values.

There is hardly any need to talk about the role of values in life. We are all aware of it. In fact "they provide a framework, a guide, the rails for purposeful, quick and efficient movement through life. They give a reason to live, if needed a reason to die"²⁷ Moreover values have their sources in culture and are rooted in it. Values are, thus, the constituent elements of life and living, and are the basic characteristics of human society.

Values have a very significant role. They do not merely govern or guide but provide a direction to go towards, a reason to strive to, a goal and purpose to be attained and to be fulfilled. The value determine the activity, which in result determine the character of a Nation, Society or an Individual. Values influence a person or people; values give meaning to life; values provide movement to life; values lead "from death to immortality" as it is said in Upanishad.

Values, such as we talked, could be National values, social values or Human values. The Report of the National (Indian) Commission on Teachers identifies as many as eighty different

values, all spring from Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Philosophically we may classify values into Eternal or Permanent Values and Relative or Changing Values.

Values in Jainism are embodied in the canonical texts. Since we are concerned about the values for Modern world we will talk not of all the values but only the most prominent and important ones which have direct relevance with the modern world.

Jaina religions' main concern is purification of human life and thus the upliftment of mankind. It gives five cardinal principles or five great vows : non-violence, non-falsehood, non-sex, non-theft and non-accumulation. Popularly these are known as truthfulness (*Satya*), non-violence (*ahimsā*), non-stealing or honesty (*asteya*), non-possession (*aparigraha*) and celibacy (*brahmac'arya*). Each of these vows is ultimately an eternal moral value, and amongst these all the Jaina religion and Lord Mahavira gave much importance to the vow or value of non-violence - *Ahimsā*. The Jaina religion insists on non-violence in action, in thought and in speech. Non-violence is not only against killing somebody but is against "mutual jealousies, hatred, conflicts and pride resulting from wealth and feeling of high and low". Dr. A.N. Upadhye notes Dr Saletore's observation "The principle (value) of *ahimsa* was partly responsible for the greatest contribution of the Jains to Hindu culture that relating to toleration"²⁸. "Of all the Darshanas, Jainism is the only one which has the principle of *Ahimsā* as its central doctrine. The other Darshanas also speak of *Ahimsā* whenever convenient but they never offer such loyalty to the principle of *Ahimsā* as is found in Jainism"²⁹.

According to Jainism Truth does not mean abstaining from falsehood only, but also to see the world in its natural and real form. Truth harmful to others is not permitted. Truth is always to be upheld through noble speech and peaceful mind; and the absence of artificiality in the observance of truth. Such truthfulness, according to Jainism, lies in the heart of non-violence, as untruthful speech is always hurting others.

The third value non-stealing (*asteya*) refers to all sorts of dishonesty and conceit which is to be avoided. The significance of this value lies in attaining social equality.

The non-possession (*aparigraha*) is highly ethical. Jainism says, craving never ends, and brings greed and lust and attachment. Non-possession i.e. *Aparigraha* is a value as the solution to harmony and peaceful co-existence. It refers to simplicity of life and is the foundation for spiritual and humanistic contemplation. "The lust for possession instigates several sins like injustice, fraud, hatred, bitterness and socio-economic inequality"³⁰. The value of non-possession is for peace and prosperity of the society which is required, very strictly and uncompromisingly, to be observed by the ascetics.

The fifth and the last value is celibacy (*Brahmac'arya*). Jainism shows the conditions under which celibacy could be realized. It is considered to be of prime importance for Right Character (*Samyak Caritra*) which is one of the requirements for liberation. Calibacy refers to co-ordination or equality of men and women and is regarded as the highest point of purification, where the sexual distinction vanishes and passions die.

Jainism talks about these five values as Five Great Vows (*Panch Mahā -Vrata*). It also talks at great length confession which for monks and his followers is compulsory-Confession brings purity of mind, body and soul.

The values in Jainism are religious and philosophical. All these values, (we have seen only the important ones), though highly subtle and highly difficult to understand, are made simpler by relating them to morality, purity, equality and mutual co-existence. Jainism strongly insist on values for "Live and let live". The beauty of values in Jainism lies in its direct appeal as they are all related to life and its liberation. Jainism takes an integral view of life and does not compartmentalize it. According to Jainism the values taught and preached are all important. Even then, the cardinal value on which the edifice of Jainism rests from time immemorial is *Ahimsā*

or non-violence. In *Prasna-Vyākran* it has been called “*Bhagwati Ahimsā* or Goddess Ahimsa”.

Jaina values and the Modern World :

All the values that we saw were then and are now very valuable, significant and relevant. The present age is an age of propaganda. and we all live in a world of social inequalities, economic disparities, moral crisis and political insecurities. The values have deteriorated and there is a mad rush after materialistic and sensual pleasures. Childhood is miles away from Godhood, youth is simply wasted and caught in frustration; and old age has become a curse. The discriminatory power to decide and choose between good and bad, between temporary and permanent, between material and spiritual, is almost neglected. Education system for children and youth is full of contradictions and narrow commercial motives. Nothing is Life or Value oriented; everything, everywhere, everybody is out to become rich and enjoy worldly pleasures. What man has done of man !

In the present times, at the dawn of the new millennium, instead of love and compassion, hatred and killing is seen. The perverted religiosity, the false patriotism and the narrow political considerations to grab power and money, all these have made our planet highly chaotic. There is pollution everywhere. The air, the water and the earth, the minds of individuals and traditions of the community, the strategies of the nations and the senseless egoistic swing (sway) of the internationally powerful agencies -all these need purification.

Present time, full of disorder and frustrative activities, greatly need reformation. What we need is, going towards Purity and clarity. What we need is building peaceful and cordial human societies. What we need is Love and not hatred; Compassion not killing, construction and not destruction. The religious fanaticism and fundamentalism, with violence as a weapon, exhibit an extreme senseless, meaningless and valueless act of killing and destruction. In short, today, we feel the time is not good. There are crisis in all

spheres of life. Morality and spirituality are thrown out, as outdated orthodox ideas; Love and Friendship have become calculative and pseudo. There is knowledge without wisdom, there is life without living. To conclude, we can say that the picture from nation, society, family and individual point of view, is dark and dizzy.

In the midst of such a dark and dizzy situation we have a ray of hope, we have a torch. **We have the Jain Values.** They can lead us from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light. In fact these values have a direct and blissful effect on Indian Social structure and they do help for the welfare and upliftment of the entire humanity, irrespective of sex, class, colour or nationality. The five values as vows show a path to economic equality through non-possession; to a total eradication of corruption and lust for sensual pleasure through the law of celibacy; a positive end to violent and terrorist's activities through Truth and non-violence. Jaina's philosophy of Soul and doctrine of Karma can bring equality and make everyone earn his future and be the master of his own destiny. Peace, unity and brotherhood for co-existence and social justice is possible if we seriously take note of these values and start practicing them. Today when we find religious and spiritual sentiments attacked by materialistic attitudes, when we find instead of peace, friendship and justice, bad effects of massacres, exploitations and selfishness, the only solution is the practice and observance of these values.

Ahimsā and *Anekānt* has provided a firm base to Jaina's spiritual heritage. Again *Ahimsā* is essential for peaceful co-existence while *Anekānt* helps better understanding and thus help promote tolerance. Peace, Love, Understanding, Tolerance are the highest values provided to us by Jaina religion and philosophy. These values are valid for all castes, creeds and communities and is relevant in every era.

Conclusion:

The values in Jainism are in the language of the common people and are relevant even in our own life and in the society at large.

When we find cruelty and killing everywhere *Ahimsā* (non-violence) becomes relevant, when we find lust for material gain and a blind rush for wealth and riches *Aparigraha* (non-possession) becomes relevant, when we find people lost in sensual pleasure *Brahmacārya* (celibacy) becomes relevant, when we find disturbed economy and animals as well as birds are killed for human luxury and comforts, Jaina's philosophy of Soul becomes relevant; when we find people or families or nations fighting with each other on superiority or inferiority grounds. Jainism's teaching : 'caste, not by birth but by deeds' becomes relevant, when we find women neglected by men and treated as inferior, we find Jaina's doctrine that all souls (male as well as female) are equal, becomes very relevant. When there is a disagreement, a conflict and differences Jaina's theory of *anekānta* (non-absolutism) becomes relevant. If we want people to live with peace, understanding and broadmindedness; people to live with Love, compassion and friendship, people to live like a hero fighting not with others but one's own vices and becomes a *Jina* (a conqueror), if we want people to live with tolerance, simplicity and humility - for all these we find the Jaina values soundly relevant. The Jaina religion, philosophy and values preached have remained, still remain and shall ever remain relevant to mankind.

Notes:

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2. 'Religion is a bond between Man and Nature' - an article by Mata Amritanandmayi.
3. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "The Present Crisis of Faith" (1987) P. 38
4. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "An Idealist View of Life" (1932) Ch. IV
5. Ibid -Ch. IV
6. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "East and West in Religion" (1933) P. 52-53.
7. "Lalit Vistara" Vol. I Sri Haribhadrasuri, Commentary by Sri Bhanuvijayaji P-20
8. Ibid - P. 30-36
9. "Bhaktirasamrtabindu" 1 & 2
10. Sri Bhadrakara Vijayaji: "Tatradohana" (1980) P. 155
11. Visvasasyaka - Bhasya - "Jain Theism" P. 138-139
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13. Dr J. P. Jain, Religion and Culture of the Jains (1977) P. 1
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15. Ibid-P. x
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24. Renou. 1953: 133 Quoted by P. S. Jaini: "The Jaina path of Purification" 1979 P. xi
25. Read J. P. Jain : "Jainism the Oldest Living Religion" Jain Cultural Research Society, Banaras, 1951.
26. Dulichand Jain : "Jain Journal" Vol. XXXIV 1999 Essay on Message of Lord Mahavira P. 84
27. Fr. T.V. KunnunkalS. J. "A Report-.Value Education"-CBSE, New Delhi (1995) P. 45.
28. Dr. A. N. Upadhye, "Lecture on Mahavira and His Philosophy of Life" - 1956, P. 19.
29. Prof. A. Chakravarti, his essay on "The Message of the Religion of Ahimsa" - in "Lord Mahavira and His Teachings" - Bombay 1983 - P. 45.
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JAINIASM, FUNDAMENTALISM AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY

Introduction:

Let me come to the subject through a story, I read in a book on Value Education. Here is the story of a little black boy who was watching a balloon man at the country fair. The balloon man was attracting customers by releasing a red balloon, a blue balloon, a yellow one and a white one. They all went soaring *up in* to the sky until they disappeared.

The little boy asked, “Sir, if you send the black one up, would it go as high as others?” The balloon man understanding the boy’s question, snapped the string that held the black balloon and as it soared upwards, he said, “It is not the colour, son. It’s what is inside that makes it rise.”

This story leads to a very fundamental understanding on which the entire day’s talks will depend, that it is not the worldly or material wealth surrounding us but the spiritual light that glows inside us which elevates us.

Today, my entire talk has three aspects. You may call each one, in-a-way independent topic. In the beginning I will introduce Jainism to you. We will know what is Jainism with special reference to Jain a way of life. The second talk deals with meaning and consequences of fundamentalism. This we will deal with reference

to to-days world and its crisis. The third and the last talk will be on peaceful society. I will conclude all the talks by asserting how Jainism and Jain a-way of life can lead towards peace of mankind. Let us go to what Jainism and Jaina way of life is.

PART-I

Jainism and Jaina Way of Life:

Points to Ponder :

1. **Understanding** of Jaina Religion & Jaina Way of Life - Two are different.
2. **On Religion** : (in general)
 - * Religion precisely means a belief in a personal God in whom our being or existence is roote. Religion is knowledge of God and an emotional and practical relation ship with Him.
 - * If the supreme purpose of human existence is to know, the Soul, the World and God (Super Soul) and to realize the divinity within him it can be sought through religion alone. It is religion which alone can assure us of everlasting joy and peace.
 - * “The ultimate purpose of religion is to establish knowledge of self realization and provide the way to attain freedom from suffering. This means becoming liberated from material entanglement by using this human form of life for reaching spiritual platform of existence” (Stephen Knapp: The Secret Teachings of Vedas - Eastern answers io the Mysteries of Life)
 - * The Main aim of Religion is establishment of unity’ of all existence. “It proclaims that the Reality which is to be realized through religion is the soul of Truth, delight of life, the fullness of peace and immortality.”

What is Religion according to Jainism? According to Jainism religion is a way of life. Life and religion can not be separated. They are not different, not separate and can not be thought about one without the other. Where there is life, where there is aim and goal of life, the methods or way to reach the goal, Religion is the ultimate path - away that transforms soul into a higher soul.

According to Jain Scriptures, "Friendliness (*Maitri*), Acitivity (*Pramoda*), Compassion (*Karunā*) and Neutrality (*Madhyas'tha*) are four qualities (*Bhavanā*) required in the foundation of religion".

3. On Jainism : The Philosophy.

● Jain Metaphysics:

i. Jain view of the creation of Universe and its constituents: Six reals-Six Substances (*dravya*)

1. Jiva : embodied soul with consciousness - with life (*Chetnā*)
2. Ajiva : Without consciousness : (five kinds)
 - a. Pudgala- matter
 - b. Dharmastikeya - Ether motion media
 - c. Adharmastikaya - Rest media
 - d. Akāsa - Space : (Limitless pure empty space and limited but vast Universe)
 - e. Kāla - time - (real apparent and absolute.)

They all have Three characteristics :
Utpāda; Vyaya, Dhrauvya

ii. Nine Elements — Fundamental Truths:

Jiva, Ajiva, . Punya, Pāpa, Asrava, Sanivara, Nirjara, Bandh, Moksha

- iii. Concept of Soul.
- iv. State of Existence (*Gati*) & class of being (*Jati*) as per karma

Gati : Deva, Naraki, Tiryancha, Manusya.

- Jaina Logic

Naya Logic - *Nayavāda*

Seven Nayas - Stand points

Anekāntavāda - Non - Absolutism

Syadāvāda - Manisidedness

- Jain Ethics:

- a. Theories of conduct in accordance with metaphysics & epistemology
- b. Law of karma - free from Karma: Salvation
- c. Ethical discipline for spiritual purification and social fitness
- d. Two forms of Righteous Conduct: Partial non-attachment and complete Non-attachment.
- c. Two sets of rules of conduct - for households and for monks. The code of rules :
 - 1. Panch Mahavrata or five great vows.
 - 2. Practice extreme carefulness (*Samiti*) in walking, speaking, receiving alms and other things, and answering call of nature so as to avoid any harm to tiny life.

3. Practice restraint (*Gupti*) of thought, speech and bodily movements.
4. Practice *dharma* of ten different kinds, namely, forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, truthfulness, cleanliness, self-restraint, austerity (internal and external), sacrifice, non-attachments and celibacy.
5. Meditate on the cardinal truth, taught regarding the self and the world.
6. Conquer, through fortitude, all pains and discomforts that arise, from hunger, thirst, heat, cold etc and....
7. Attain equanimity, purity, absolute greedlessness and for perfect conduct Jain ethics includes different *gunvratas* and *Siksavratas*. The five great vows aim at "virtue consists in five fold conduct of one who has knowledge and faith. These five vows are
 - i. *Ahimsa* or non-injury in thought, speech and deed.
 - ii. *Satya* or Truth
 - iii. *Asteya* or not to steal.
 - iv. *Brahmacharya* or chastity in words, thought and deed, and
 - v. *Aparigraha* or renunciation by thought, speech and action.

Ahimsā If Jainism has been described as an 'ethical system par excellence', *Ahimsa* is the keynote of the system.

Jain Philosophy of Soul. Soul - Anādi- since beginningless of time, immortal, eternal, indestructible and permanent

- 1 Pure soul- Four infinities - no layer of karma
- 2 Embodied soul - Impure Soul - As per karma; state of existence (Gati)
3. Pluralistic realism
4. Accepts the existence of Soul
5. Eight qualities of Soul- Infinities:
 - i. The faculty of omniscience (*Keval Jnāna*)
 - ii. The faculty of absolute undifferentiated cognition (*Kevala Darsana*)
 - iii. The Superiority over joy and grief (*Avyabādha*)
 - iv. The possession of complete religious truth (*Samyaktva*) and irreproachable moral conduct (*Caritra*)
 - v. The possession of eternal life (*Aksayasthiti*)
 - vi. Complete equality in rank with other Jivas (*Agurulaghutva*)
 - vii. Complete formlessness (*Amurtatva*)
 - viii. Unrestricted energy (*Virya*)
6. Five great soul: Holy pentad (*Panch Parmesthi*)
7. Soul in state of Bondage & in state of Release.
8. Stages of spiritual development : *Gunasthanas*'

Jain Literature:

1. Canonical Literature : Scriptures (Agama)
2. Quasi : canonical Lit. : Sacred texts of the Jains
3. Non Canonical Lit. : written by Jains & Non Jains.

* **Concept of God : Jain Theism:**

1. Jainism is religion & a Jain is a religious person
2. Jainism believes in the existence of soul
3. Jainism believes in God as super Soul or Absolutely Pure soul with all qualities in infinities
4. Jain believes in worship - *Sadhana* - and liberation or *Moksa* as the highest aim in life
5. Jain has its own ethics, prayers, principles of morality and practice of eternal vows and values.
6. Jain has a metaphysical theism- One who is a true Jaina is truly Theistic.

PART-II

Fundamentalism (Meaning and Nature)

Let us understand Fundamentalism and a fundamentalist.

Fundamentalism precisely means an attitude or insistence to stick to Texts-without any modification, or interpretation or change. 'What I say is the scripture and one has to believe or act accordingly, if one does not he will be punished.'

This clearly brings to us the element of "**Force**" and use of punishment through Violence in Fundamentalism.

In fact, a fundamentalist believes that it is his duty to force or to fight or even to kill those who do not act according to his understanding of scripture.

In fundamentalism there is a forcible submission to action of his (fundamentalist's) understanding. Force means no freedom, force means violence. Thus we find absence of freedom, peace and cordial relationship in fundamentalism.

What does a fundamentalist want? A fundamentalist always claims the absolute truth of knowledge; and his main work is to

establish his religion all over the world. He will die but will not leave it, will not give in. This is the essence of Crusade or Jihad in Christianity or Islam. It is an attempt to win back the control from those who belong to non-Christian or non-Islamic sect or religion.

I would also like to note one more aspect of fundamentalism. It is irrational or anti-rational in nature. No rationalist, in the right sense of the term, can be a fundamentalist. In fundamentalism reason has no place. Power of faith operates in fundamentalism and it propels the fundamentalist to fundamental acts. A fundamentalist is irrationally staunch in his fundamental action.

It is some time believed that a fundamentalist is an uneducated person. This is not correct. Even highly educated person can be highly fundamentalist. Education does not always inculcate rationality. History records even persons who have received modern education have become fundamentalist and terrorists. The myth of belief that modern education will prevent fundamentalism and terrorism is proved to be baseless and false.

Fundamentalism, thus is a big threat due to its forceful and irrational insistence on others, and adopting violence and killing for those who do not submit.

Fundamentalism and Jainism:

There is no fundamentalism in Jainism, There can never be fundamentalism in Jainism. Do you know why? Because, Jainism is in complete contrast to fundamentalism. The implementation of non absolutism leaves no scope for force. Besides, Jaina theory of knowledge says that an object has infinite forms and qualities. We can't know them all. No body can claim to know all. No body can claim to know absolute truth. One can know only a few of the infinite aspects of an object. And therefore, one's knowledge is necessarily partial and relative. No fundamentalism can be built on relative and partial knowledge.

There is one more fact, about Jainism, worth noting with reference to fundamentalism. There are no commandments in Jainism. Jain Gods have not given commandments. They have always

explained the reality. Freedom, in Jainism, lies with each soul to decide and act. Destiny is as per the choice, as per the freedom exercised, as per the karma.

There are no crusades, no Jehads in Jainism. The pillars of Jainism are Friendliness (*Maitri*), Activity (*Pramoda*), Compassion (*Karunā*) and Neutrality (*Madyastha*). How can there be fundamentalism or a fundamentalist in a religion like Jainism whose soul is non violence (*Ahimsā*) and non absolutism (*Anekāntavāda*).

PART III Peaceful society:

Peace and peaceful co-existence is not a new idea, it is not a new craving or quest of anykind. Peace and harmony have been sought ever since the dawn of civilization. All religions of the world preach peace and science is always expected to establish peace.

The meaning and nature of peace is very simple though bringing peace or peaceful state is very difficult, "Peace can be conceived of in two ways -negative and positive. Negative peace is understood as absence of organized violence amongst nations and also among racial and ethnic group. Positive peace on the other hand is understood as the state or spirit of co-operation and integration among men, among societies and among nations. Peace is understood in its most popular and precise way, as absence of war- absence of conflict and killing. Of course this is its negative meaning. Peace in its positive sense is inner silence. Leaving all the discussions about the causes of war and about the spiritual peace, we are going to talk about peace and peaceful society with reference to Jainisni and fundamentalism.

Let us first be clear that in a peaceful society fundamentalism has no place. Unless the fundamentalist's ideologies are mutilated peaceful society can not be established. Only in absence of fundamentalism peaceful society can exist. Peace of society is to be guarded against the unwholesome assault of fundamentalism.

Both fundamentalism and fundamentalists, directly as well as indirectly, use force and violence to control and insist upon others; and wish them to act according to their understanding of the scriptures. In such a situation the society loses its peace and experiences fear.

The essential condition for the emergence of a peaceful society is restraint. All other conditions, though sound and meaningful, have proved baseless in practice. The only solution to peace, universal peace or peaceful society is restraint. The restraint is capable of keeping the conflicts and quarrels away, and thus it brings mutual understanding and harmony.

When we talk about a peaceful society, we see the Jain community and see the Jain way of life. You will not find fights and killing. You will find the Jain community remaining away from dirty politics simply to be away from quarrels and fights. The Jain Sangh Jeevan and Sangh system leads to cultural unity. It is the best example of a peaceful life in a peaceful society. The world community should evolve the Jain way of social peaceful existence.

All religions have selfishness in them except Jainism. It has only pure religion in it and nothing but religion. Avoid disputes with others (others are also correct from their point of view) for your interest but adjust your interest with others with a friendly spirit; this is the Jain way of life. Disputes breed strife and violence. Adjustment breeds compromise and harmony. Jainism's insistence on friendliness, compassion and neutrality leaves no scope for disputes and violence, which in turn, establish peace and harmony for peace Maitri (Friendship) should be the bases of social life.

Conclusion:

If we see Jainism with special reference to the Jain way of life on one side and the threat of fundamentalism and terrorism on the other side, -we find the society could only be peaceful through the practice of compassion, *Ahimsa* and *Anekantavada*. The Jain way is the only way to world peace - for peaceful society.

FREEDOM, OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS: A JAINA PERSPECTIVE

In Western philosophy, the concepts of obligations and rights are very closely linked with that of freedom. This is not the case in Indian Philosophy, and certainly not in Jainism.

The Jaina Philosophy is a vast subject and is a complete system of thought, having its theories on each subject of discourse—in epistemology, psychology, logic, metaphysics, cosmology, ethics and theology—these theories being in some respects similar to and some respects different from those in other systems of Indian thought. A study of Indian Philosophy is incomplete without a study of the Jaina contribution to it.¹

Jainism, an important system of Indian Philosophy, on the one side, like Buddhism, “is indifferent, if not opposed to the authority of the Vedas,”² and at the same time, it is “an original system, quite distinct and independent from all others; and...therefore it is of great importance for the study of philosophical and religious life in ancient India.”³ It is spiritual in nature and does not regard man as a mind, a life or a body, but as a Jivatma: a soul incarnated for spiritual fulfillment upon earth. “The soul (Jiva) is essentially free and although it has been in bondage during the infinite past, it will be emancipated as soon as it extricates itself from the clutches of matter—Karma, as it is called. Jainism thus maintains that the final emancipation is possible for a soul (Jiva) and in this respect it differs from the Mimamsa school.” It is also different

from the Brahma of Vedanta, and not the same as Purusa of the Sankhya and the Yoga philosophy. Even the Jiva in Jainism and the Atma in the Nyaya-Vaishesika are not the same. "The Jiva of the Jainas is an active and dynamic real."⁴ The human person as Jivatma is an embodied soul, each one having its own identity, is different from others.

The governing factor of these individual differences is "Karma." The doctrine which gives explanation of our individual characteristics; i.e. some satisfactory answer to the factors of our individuality is known as the "Doctrine of Karma." The doctrine of Karma is the law that interprets our actions and reactions found in the form of introspection as well as behavior.⁵

In order to understand the position of freedom, obligation and rights in Jainism, and the path it suggests to attain them, what is required is to understand the process by which the soul comes into a state of bondage and unhappiness. According to Jainism there are two types of souls, "a liberated one and a worldly soul."⁶ A liberated soul or the soul in its pure form possesses four infinites (Ananta-catustaya). They are: infinite knowledge, infinite intuition, infinite power and infinite bliss. There is freedom for both the worldly soul as well as the liberated soul. Of course, one has limited freedom, the other has unlimited freedom. "According to the Jaina conception, Karma is an aggregate of material particles which are very fine and are imperceptible to the senses. It enters into soul and produces change in it."⁷ Moreover, "under the sway of the all-pervading law of causation, there is no room left for chance or accident."⁸ "The doctrine of Karma is the general moral law which governs not only the life and destiny of all individual beings, but even the order and arrangement of the physical world."⁹ Obviously, one is likely to think that the strong and uncompromising acceptance of the doctrine of Karma in Jainism will lead to hard and mechanistic determinism, but it is not so. Jainism accepts the freedom of the soul. Soul in both states, Sansara as well as Nirvana has freedom. It is true

that one has to face the effects or consequences of what one has done, but then at the same time, one is free to choose. The soul is inherently able to choose an act or a path that will bring a partial or complete freedom from karma. In fact, in Jainism “the real freedom (moksha) is the freedom from karma.”¹⁰ What is significant is the fact that according to Jainism the soul is able to increase or decrease the duration and intensity of karma. Moreover the soul can also restrict the influx of new karmas. In short, according to Jainism a soul is free to act or not to act. Thus in spite of the law of karma in operation we find in Jainism a room for freedom and scope to release the soul from the bondage of karma. It is true that life according to Jainism is karma-oriented. If karmas are good, life is good and there is happiness; if karmas are bad, life is bad and there is suffering. But here also we should remember that the soul has freedom of choice to do or not to do karma, be it good or bad. The intensity of karma restricts the soul in its exercise of the power of freedom and so to that extent freedom becomes limited. “The total destruction of all karmas, and the consequent installation of the soul in its state of essential purity is its moksha or final emancipation.”¹¹ There is freedom in Jainism. This freedom for a worldly soul is limited; and the degree of freedom in accordance with one’s own karmas differs from individual to individual.

As stated earlier, freedom, obligations and rights are interlinked and inseparable. In Jainism there seems to be no direct mention or a categorical statement for obligations and rights especially with reference to social or political freedom. But then Jainism prescribes a way or a path-to attain higher and higher degrees of freedom. It is a three-fold combination of (1) right faith (samyak darsan), (2) right knowledge (samyak jnana), and (3) right conduct (samyak charitra).¹² In Jainism some moral practices which are recognized to be of special merit are prescribed to attain the three-fold combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. The Jaina philosophy being spiritual in nature, the aim of such practices is to annihilate karma and thus to attain higher spiritual

development. "Absolute freedom is absolute spiritual development."¹³ The Jaina moral code prescribes various vows and sub-vows which are called 'Vratas.' "According to Jainas a vow (Vrata) is an act or omission which is done with an intelligent determination about its nature that it should be done... A vow (Vrata) or duty is thus essentially connected with one's self."¹⁴ These vows or obligations are considered as 'Cardinal Virtues' in Jainism. They are regarded as the great vows (Maha-Vrata) when they are absolutely faultless in their practice. At lesser stages of perfection, the vows are called limited vows (Anu-Vrata).¹⁵ Five great vows or cardinal virtues are: non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (Satya), non-stealing (asteya), possessionlessness (aparigraha) and celibacy (brahmacarya).

Non-violence or ahimsa is a social obligation. It is based on an understanding that a person cannot forcibly take anything that is not hers or his or anything that he cannot give. The vow of non-violence in the form of obligation is very important for society. Without it the peace, stability and prosperity of the society is not possible. "If Jainism has been described as an 'ethical system par excellence / ahimsa (non-violence) is the key-word of that system."¹⁶ Through this vow one is made to recognize the sanctity not only of human life but of all life, including birds and beasts, insects, fish, fowl and the smaller creatures. Non-violence is an obligation toward society and is also an obligation to oneself as part of society.

The second vow is 'satya' or truthfulness. Truth is an obligation to oneself as well as to society. Untruthfulness leads to sufferings. People in society live on trust or faith; and if truthfulness is now and again violated the trust would be broken and the basics of living would be lost.

Non-stealing (astekya) is the third great vow. It requires that we abstain from stealing, robbing, looting or misappropriating other's property. This vow again proves to be one's obligation to society.

Possessionlessness or non-attachment (*aparigraha*) is a vow not to hoard or accumulate things and create shortage. *Parigraha* or attachment creates inequality in society which leads to physical and mental suffering. The person who hoards is responsible for causing suffering and the vow is an obligation to society.

The fifth and last, but by no means the least important, is *brahmacharya* (literally, celibacy, but also chasteness or sexual restraint). Sexual activity by involving passions injures the soul and thus harms the potentials of the soul, but it also can harm the general morality of the society. The importance of loyalty to one's spouse has been strongly emphasized as an obligation toward society, the family and the children. *Brahmacharya* does not pertain to sexual desire only but desire in all its forms.

In Jainism, over and above these five great vows, there are many 'sub-vows / daily-duties' and 'rules' prescribed as one's obligation for himself as well as for society. These obligations are there only as long as limited freedom is there, i.e. before one has attained *moksha*. On attaining unlimited or absolute freedom the obligations drop out. In order to fulfill these obligations, freedom is necessary and Jainas have thus positioned a limited freedom for their discharge.

Obligations and rights are interlinked: two sides of the same coin. If rights are there, obligations will automatically arise and vice versa. Rights, according to Jainism, do arise out of *karma* as well as in relation to obligations. Jainism thus offers a full scope of obligations and rights and the freedom to fulfill them. These obligations and rights help an individual in his spiritual development and his effort to go higher and higher toward absolute freedom. They also help to restore certainty and security to the society. The obligations discharged by individuals keep the society peaceful and organized.

It is the uniqueness of Jaina philosophy that the soul has no obligations or rights in its state of liberation. They obtain only in

the empirical world (samsara) where the soul has limited freedom. A true Jaina has to rely on himself for his uplift, spiritual or social. He is not dependent on anybody's obligation for his spiritual progress. The ultimate obligation of Jivatma is toward its own complete spiritual development which would bring an end to obligations.

The efforts by a Jaina to strive for a higher and higher spiritual development is his real freedom. The complete spiritual development is the final, the fourteenth stage, of spiritual development known as 'Gunasthana wherein the soul is permanently liberated, and attains Siddha-hood. "This stage, in Jainism, is called the state of 'Ayogi-Kevallin' which is attained when one has completely annihilated his Karmas and is thus free from the Law of Karma, i.e. free from causation."¹⁷ He is free from the cycle of birth and death and "the soul goes to the end of the universe"¹⁸ which is called 'Siddha-Shila and dwells there without visible pace. The soul in this stage enjoys unlimited freedom. "It enjoys infinite, incomparable, indestructible supernatural happiness and salvation. The soul in this highest stage, the 'Ayogi-Kevalin' stage, is free from all the connections and is omniscient, and does not perform any activity."¹⁹ Thus, we have seen how Jainism accepts partial determinism and also makes a place for limited as well as unlimited freedom. This is how according to Jainism one is fully and morally responsible for what one is or is not. There is no fatalism or predestination in Jainism. A Jaina relies on his own strength which he himself has to develop. His strength comes not from any external source but from within, as a result of his own endeavor. "In his mammoth book, Being and Nothingness, the famous French philosopher and thinker, Jean Paul Sartre, argued that we are always absolutely free. We are 'condemned to be free' he says, in a phrase that has become famous."²⁰ One might argue that Sartre simply echoes the Jaina conception of freedom. On attaining absolute freedom, the soul possesses the infinite capacity to know, to do and to enjoy. The liberated soul has nothing to do, no question to choose or not to

choose, and no question of obligation or right. One might feel it is better to have limited freedom in the world rather than unlimited or absolute freedom in 'Siddha-Shila,' But for Jainism there is both, each at its appropriate stage.

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
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17. Karmagranth, 1-56. Also see Glasenapp, *The Doctrine of Karma in Jaina Philosophy* (1954), p. 152.
18. Umasvati, *Tattvarthasutra, I* (1).
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NATURE OF SALVATION

(a Jain Point - of - View)

Introduction

Before we talk about the “Nature of Liberation” in Jainism, let us be clear about Jainism as religion and its philosophy as a significantly important school of Indian Philosophy. Jainism - a religion of Jainas - is considered very ancient as old as Vedas or may be even before that. It possesses all the postulates required for any system to become a religion. Understanding religion is a wide topic and we would not enter into its full details. However, we must note that “of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of human race, none, certainly, is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion”¹ In the very distinction between the living and the dead we find in the living there is freedom, there is intelligence. This freedom is what we are all striving for. To be more free is our constant goal, for ‘in perfect freedom can there be perfection’. This longing for freedom leads to idea of ‘absolutely free’. The concept of God is thus a fundamental concept in human constitution. Both, the conception of bondage and the conception of God are the outcome of the idea of freedom. Religion shows the path, a way to gain freedom.

Jainism as religion of Jainas, is not different from the others in the above mentioned point of view. It certainly does not accept the authority of Vedas and is fundamentally different from the other systems of Indian Philosophy. We must note, the following fundamental principles of Jain religion and thought.

- i. Jainism believes in soul. Soul in Jainism is a substance.
- ii. Jainism believes in pluralism of Souls.
- iii. The Jiva or embodied Soul is a Soul in bondage.
- iv. According to Jainism Karma is the cause of bondage.
- v. Total annihilation of Karma is total freedom from bondage.
- vi. A soul totally free from bondage is a liberated soul.
- vii. Liberated Souls have all infinite bliss, power, knowledge and so are Gods.

Keeping these in mind, we will see the Jaina Philosophy of Soul first. Then we will talk about the doctrine of Karma - the cause of bondage. Unless we know the causes of bondage we will not be able to remove the causes and till the causes are not removed the bondage cannot be removed. When bondage is removed, liberation or *Moksa* is attained. Liberation or *Moksa* in Jainism is a state of Soul in its all the capacities in infinite degree. At this stage the soul is free - free from the cycle of birth - death. And towards the conclusion we will talk about the nature of liberation.

Philosophy of Soul in Jainism

Except the behaviourist school of psychology, the most important presupposition of all schools is consciousness. We can not deny the consciousness because the truth of consciousness is again based on consciousness. Jaina philosophy holds a close relation between the Soul and the consciousness. For almost all the '*Atmavādi*' (Believing in the existence of Soul) schools the consciousness is one of the qualities of the Soul. Soul (Jiva), in Jainism is a substance, and consciousness (*Chetanā*) is its differentiating characteristic. Where there is soul (Jiva) there is consciousness and vice versa. They are always found together.

Meaning :

Jainism recognises nine categories of the fundamental truth. They are (1) *Jiva*, (2) *Ajiva* (3) *Punya*, (4) *Pāpa* (5) *Asrava* (6)

Samvara (7) *Bandh*, (8) *Nirjara* and (9) *Moksa*. The whole universe is also analysed into two eternally independent categories of Jiva and Ajiva. The Jiva is 'chetan' and the 'Ajiva' is 'jada'. The Jive (Soul) has consciousness and the Ajive (matter / objects) has no consciousness. "Roughly speaking what is 'Purusa' in *Samkhya* and *Yoga* system of philosophy, *Atmā* in the 'Nyaya', the *Vaisesika* and the *Vedanta* thoughts, is *Jiva* in the Jain Philosophy. The essence of Soul is conceived in self consciousness absolutely devoid of any materiality.

Like most of the schools of Indian Philosophy, according to Jainism the knower is the soul. The knowledge is apprehended by the soul." The soul is not an exclusive possession of human beings, according to Jainism. It allows the soul principle to extend to all the living things of the universe"² "It is these souls in plasma that lie scattered in every nook and corner of the universe and each is the doer of good or bad deeds to reap the consequences of which each takes the repetition of births and deaths according to the merits of its own karma"³

The Jaina Scriptures in general and the *Ganadharvawada* (Lord Mahavira's last discourse with his chief disciples) in particular describes "this soul as traversing in this transitory world"⁴ It is called a great traveller who sails his ship (body) into the ocean (*samsāra*). "The life is the journey and the liberation is the destination."

Existence of Soul: 'Existence' is an ontological status of a substance or entity. It is of great importance because fundamentally all the discussions about the nature, the characteristic and classification of a thing becomes tenable only and only if it exists. This ontological status called 'existence' is proved directly by experience e.g we see and prove the existence of what we see. But then there are things that exist but we can not have direct sensuous experience, such existence is proved through Logic (inference etc) or through language etc. 'Soul' or Jiva is a very 'subtle substance' and its direct perception is not possible. Gautamswami, one of the chief disciples of Lord Mahavira, when doubted the

existence of soul, Lord Mahavira proved its existence logically and was at last convinced. The existence can be proved logically, empirically, operatively (effective operation), by negation, by opposites, by Utterer and Utterances (*Vacaka* and *Vacc'ya*) and ofcourse metaphysically. One more proof, is the words like I, 'my', 'mine', etc. The famous philosopher Descartes when says 'Cogito Ergo Sum': (I think therefore I am) the thinking quality of the soul proves the existence of soul. In spite of all these proofs, even if someone still doubts, the very doubt also proves the existence. Who doubts? And obviously we know it is the soul that doubts. The existence of soul can be logically inferred with the help of a metaphysical principle. An object is substance and qualities, both are inseparable. Substance is always in the form with the qualities. From qualities like knowledge, consciousness, happiness, unhappiness etc. we infer the substance. This substance is the Soul. Every action also presupposes the doer of the deed. The doer is the Soul. Senses or body are the tools, they can't do anything when the soul is not there. Lastly the existence of soul can be even proved by Testimony or *Sabda Pramāna*. In Jainism the testimony is *Agama - Pramāna*, which tells us "Souls Exist". Thus we find that the Jaina system recognises the existence of Soul or Jiva. The acceptance of the existence of soul is the very fundamental plank in the spiritual science or for the concept of liberation. What is very significantly important to note is that with regards to the nature of soul Jainism is quite distinct. Without the accurate picture of the nature of Jiva or Soul, its characteristics, classifications, qualities, status etc. the conception of soul can not be understood. Let us see all these in brief.

Nature of Soul : Vadi-Devsuri in his "Pramāna - nay - tattva - lokalankara" describes the soul as, "That (i.e. the soul) is essentially consciousness; undergoes modifications; is a doer (of acts); is the direct enjoyer (of the fruits of its acts); is of the same extent as its body; is different in each individual and being attached to material elements has birth and rebirth."⁵ "The most important quality of the soul is consciousness, it is the essence of the soul. The same consciousness in our daily affair we call "life" and "the sacred

scriptures have declared, soul is characterised by life”⁶ Consciousness is cognition of all things having forms or no forms. Without consciousness the soul can not know, can not discriminate, and can not will *Jnāna*, i.e. knowledge, though a very important characteristic of the soul, depends upon the particular state (of consciousness) in which the soul appears”⁷ Thus consciousness (*chaitanya*) is the natural and essential characteristic of Jiv. Prof. J L Jaini explaining the nature and characteristics, writes about the Jiva or Soul, “The soul is a *Dravya*, therefore, like every other *Dravya* it is eternal. Its peculiar attributes are perception and knowledge. It is different from Karma and matter and therefore immaterial. It has identified itself with matter, therefore it assumes a body, to which it must fit. It is responsible for its Karmas, because it has the power to get rid of them all. It must reap the harvest of the seeds that it has sown, and therefore, must remain in the field or *Samsāra*, or a cycle of existence. And still all these evils are self assumed, and in its pure condition the soul is siddha.”⁸ Lord Mahavira says, “This Jiva (or soul) is since the beginningless (*Anādi*) time, it is immortal, indestructible, eternal and permanent.”⁹ Every soul, in its essence; in its pure state, possesses infinite qualities (*Guna*) the following eight (according to Jainism) are the chief of them.

1. The faculty of Omniscience (*Keval Jnāna*)
2. The faculty of absolute undifferentiated cognition (*keval Darshan*)
3. The superiority over Joy and grief (*Avabadha*)
4. The possession of complete religious truth (*Samyaktva*) and irreproachable moral conduct (*caritra*)
5. The possession of eternal life (*aksayasthiti*)
6. Complete formlessness (*Amurtava*)
7. Complete equality in rank with other Jiva (*Agurulaghutva*)
8. Unrestricted energy (*Virya*)¹⁰

The above qualities are also described as : infinite faith, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss (Ananta Darshan, Ananta Jnana, Ananta Vrya, and Ananta Sukh: Ananta Catustaya) The soul in its impure stage possesses the following main nine properties:

1. The soul lived, is living and shall live for ever,
2. It has perception and knowledge,
3. It is immaterial, no touch, taste, smell, colour,
4. It is the only responsible agent of all its actions,
5. It completely fills the body which it occupies,
6. It enjoys the fruits of all its karmas,
7. It wanders in *Samsāra*,
8. It can become in its perfect condition Siddha,
9. It goes upward.

Classification of Souls :

With reference to number, Jainism believes in pluralism of souls. According to Jainism there are infinite Jivas or Souls. The souls are innumerable and all Jivas i.e. embodied souls, as per the degree of its pollutedness bear the consequences and status. Thus Jivas or Souls could be classified in different ways from different standpoint. The Jains make an exclusive classification of souls (Jivas) on the bases of various physical differences. The main classifications are as follows: "With reference to its common essence, the Jiva (Soul) is of one kind. It is of two kinds in as much as it may be in bondage or liberated (emancipated). The Jivas may be imperfect, nearly perfect or perfect and thus be of three modes. With respect to its state of existence, the Jiva may be divided into four classes : viz. central being, internal being, human being and sub-human being. In consideration of its five fold conditions viz. mitigation, annihilation, partial annihilation and partial mitigation, modification and genesis or rising, the Jivas are of five kinds. The six modes of cognition divide the Jivas into six classes."¹²

What is mainly to be noted is the main division of souls into *Mukta* (liberated / emancipated) and *Baddha* (in bondage) - all

samsari Jivas. Of course this classification is based on physical differences and is not metaphysical. On metaphysical level we can classify from the *Gunsthana* point of view i.e. Jivas divided into fourteen divisions or fourteen ranks -from utmost polluted (rank 1) to perfectly pure (rank 14). The Jaina literature tells the *Gunasthana* as the "Ladder of Spiritual Ascent". Soul, according to Jainism is inherently pure, conscious, blissful, omniscient and omnipotent; owing to its past karmas, its inherent perfection is concealed or diffused. At this stage we avoid going down deep into the steps of this Spiritual Ascent which in Jainism are called *Gunasthana*.

When we talk of classification of Souls in Jainism, let us note the "Holy Pentad" (*Panch - Parmesthin*) - five Holy Souls in the Jaina form of religiousness where the central theme is obeisance or adoration (*Namaskār*) to these holy souls. These souls are : (1) all the *arhats* (i.e. *Tirthankaras*), (ii) All the *Siddhas*, (iii) All the *Acharyas*, (iv) All the *Upādhyas* and (v) All the *Sadhus* (Good human beings). This classification is not of all the souls but only of the holy souls, souls having spiritually elevated - higher than we ordinary *Samsāris* (house holders).

In our concluding remark about the philosophy of soul in Jainism we saw the Jaina concept of Jiva or Soul, its meaning, nature and its types. The nature of souls, the properties and classification of souls, all this reflect the originality of Jaina system. At the same time the Jain concept is so simple in understanding and so sound in its logic that the soul in its essence is pure, is hindered by Karmic veil and its original purity is sullied, can regain its original pure status (form) by removing the veil or annihilating the karma. Thus in Jainism soul is always discussed and understood in its two stages: the state of bondage and the state of release. Of course our talk is about the second one, we talk something about both the states.

The Soul in State of Bondage:

We can not and will not give full justice to state of Bondage by discussing it into the full details. We have time limitation, and

besides we want to understand it only so far it is relevant to make us understand the state and nature of liberation. According to Jainism 'Soul in Bondage' is the soul that is embodied and is trapped into the cycle of birth and rebirth. Jainism does not say that the bondage is for ever and ever and is eternal. It has a solution too. Here Jainism proves to be quite optimistic, meaningful and aspiring.

The word bondage presupposes - duality or plurality. Here bondage is of Karma. Thus the soul in state of bondage is in opposition to soul in state of liberation. The soul in bondage is not the soul in liberation. The soul in liberation is immortal, eternal, indestructible and even indivisible; potentially all powerful and all knowledgeable. The liberated soul is pure and totally free. The soul in bondage is not this. The soul in bondage is not pure but polluted (or impure) not immortal but mortal, not free but in chains, not powerful but ineffective.

The root cause of bondage is due to soul's union with karma. The karma has polluted soul and has hindered soul's original essential qualities including its freedom and powers. Bondage means *Jivātmā* the embodied soul, liberated means *Paramātmā* or *Siddhas* - the Soul in its pure light. The veil of Karma as per the doctrine of karma, is the cause of births and rebirths. Thus bondage also means *Samsāra*, and in this sense release or liberation means *Moksa*.

Regarding 'Bondage state of soul', we should also note that according to Jainism, this state is not the natural state of soul, it is neither a desired state as nobody wants bondage. "The five causes of bondage, are as follows:

- i. Subreption or Unbelief (*Mithyātva*)
- ii. Non observation of the vows and commandments (*Avirati*)
- iii. Idleness or Inactiveness (*Pramāda*)
- iv. Passions (*Kasāya*), and
- v. Activities (*yoga*)¹³

Jainism discusses in full details the kinds of bondage, nature and duration (*Stḥiti*), intensity and quantity (*Rasa* and *Pradesa*) of

bondage. We have seen that the cause of *Samsara* or the suffering is the Karma. The soul being polluted due to Karma is in bondage of Karma. We have seen the reasons for the bondage of Karma. The reason behind all the different causes is ignorance or nescience.

With this much preliminary, informative and brief note of the Soul in state of Bondage we will try to understand: 'Soul in state of Release' (liberation), and 'the Nature of Liberation' in Jainism.

Soul in State of Liberation;

First let us talk about *Moksa* - liberation in general in Indian Philosophy. In Indian Philosophy all the schools talk about liberation (*Moksa*). Every school starts with *Jnāna* (Knowledge) and ends with *Moksa* (liberation of the soul). The ultimate goal of life is *Moksa* - Every system has its own philosophy (or Science) of liberation.

Indian philosophy talks about Four Purusharthas - Artha (wealth), Kama (Desire), Dharma (Duty - Responsibility) and Moksa (Liberation). In these four, the Moksa is considered to be the last & final one. Thus Moksa or liberation becomes the ultimate goal of life in Indian Philosophy. The moment we talk about liberation we have to talk about the bondage. To all, the bondage is due to ignorance or nescience. The suffering - the *Samsara* - the cycle of births and rebirths all these are due to Bondage of the soul -due to Karma. Every school talks about the absolute release from the bondage - the total freedom - emancipation or liberation. For the total freedom one has to transcend from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light and so from mortality to immortality. In short the freedom from suffering is through knowledge. All the schools of India Philosophy say that knowledge is the only way. But to them all, the meaning of knowledge that leads to liberation is different. Here they differ: The liberation is possible by attaining:

According to Jainism: Absolute knowledge (*Keval Jnāna*),

According to Buddhism: Metaphysics or Philosophical knowledge (*Tattvajnāna*)

According to Samkhya: Discriminatory knowledge (*Vivek Jnāna*)

According to Vedanta (Samkara): Self Realization (*Brahma - Jnāna*)

According to Vedanta (*Ramānujācharya, Vallabh, Madhva*): Differentiated Knowledge (*Bheda Jnana*)

According to Nyaya: Material knowledge (*Padārtha Jnāna*)

According to Jainism the absolute knowledge to the soul is liberation. Till the stage of shedding of the Karma (*i.e. Nirjara*) is going on there is no liberation. Till Nirjara, absolute knowledge is not possible. Remember karma, according to Jainism is matter and according to Jainism the matter can cover the spirit. Let us talk about the nature of liberation in Jainism.

Nature of Liberation:

In the 10th and the last chapter of Tattvarthasutra, its author Umaswati discusses the nature of liberation. Earlier to this he has discussed how good deeds and bad deeds: both types of deeds become the cause of bondage of the soul. He says that “the root cause is *Mithyātva* i.e. false knowledge which means nescience. *Mithyātva* means perversity of out look. It leads one to wrong perception. He perceives non soul as soul, irreligion as religion, wrong way as the right way etc.”¹⁴ The other causes are *avirati* (vowlessness), *pramād* (carelessness), *kasāya* (passions). He talks in this chapter about the extreme (or total) annihilation of Karma which is possible according to Jainism through double action: One, by not allowing any new karman to pollute the soul, and two, by shedding off (*nirjarā*) the karma which are bounded due to previous deeds. The *Nirjarā* i.e. shadding off the karma could be attained through Penance (*tapa*) and Meditation (*Dhyāna*). The karma when anihilated, absolute non -attachment (*Vitaragatva*) and Omniscience (*Sarvagnata*) shine out. Even at this stage karmas which determine the duration of life (*Ayus karma*) and such other karmas remain. They are, though less, being not yet annihilated the bondage remains, and so the liberation is not possible till they are also totally annihilated. When they are, in due course, annihilated, the soul

regains its pure form, its all infinite qualities and becomes free from suffering (*Dukha*) and free from birth and rebirth cycles. The soul liberated is liberated from bondage, from *samsara*. This is *Moksa*.

The liberated souls (*Siddha Jiva*) are devoid of motion, gender and wordly feelings, are identical and are not different from each other. Yet they may be differentiated from their past point of view. The liberated souls are souls that have attained *Moksa* which means souls absolutely pure and have regained the powers: infinite knowledge, perception, potency and bliss. "Jainism, thus, pictures the state of *Moksa* not as something which is created a new by human efforts; but it is something like the recovering or regaining of lost object. *Moksa* according to Jainism means self finding, it consists in recovering one a consciousness of soul which had been forgotten or had become obscure due to delusion or subreption (*Mithyātvā*). It consists in regaining one's lost self."

The Gunasthanas or Stages of Spiritual Development:

From the state of complete dependence upon the Karman to the state of complete detachment from it. 14 stages; the so called, Ganasthanas (state of virtues) can be distinguished. These fourteen stages are marked by the gradual subsidence of eight Karmas, "There are stages of development in which the soul gradually delivers itself, firstly from the worst, then from the less bad, and finally from all kinds of Karman, and manifests the innate faculties of knowledge, belief and conduct in a more and more perfect form."¹⁶ The following are the different stages:

1. *Mithyādrsti*: the unbeliever
2. *Sasvadanā Samyagdrsti*: the one who has only a taste of the true belief.
3. *Samyag mithyādrsti (Or Misra)*: the one who has a mixed belief
4. *Avirata Samyagdrsti*: the one who has true belief but has yet self control.
5. *Desvirata*: the one who has partial self control.

6. *Pramattā Samyata*: the one who has complete self control, sometimes, however brought into wavering through negligence.
7. *Apramatta Damyata*: the one who has self control without negligence.
8. *Apurva Kāraṇa* (or *Nivratti Badara Samparaya*) : the one who practices the process called *Apurva Karana* in whom, however, the passions are still occurring in a gross form.
9. *Anivrti Badara - Samparaya*: the one who practices the process called *Anivratti - Karana* in whom, however, the passions are still occurring in a gross form.
10. *Suksma Samparaya*: the one in whom the passions still only occur in a more subtle form.
11. *Upasanta Kasaya Vitaraga - Chadmastha* (or shortly *Upasanta Moha*): the one who has suppressed every passion, but who does not yet possess omniscience.
12. *Ksina Kasaya: Vitaraga - Chadmastha* (or *Ksina Moha*): the one who has annihilated every passion, but does not yet possess omniscience.
13. *Sayogi Kevalin*: the omniscient one who still practices an activity (Yoga) - At this stage *Mohniya* and the three other forms of *Ghattya Karmas* drop off from the soul completely.
14. *Ayogi Kevalin*: the omniscient without Yoga. It is in this final stage that the already pure, perfect and all knowledge self becomes free from the other non - destructive (*Aghati*). Karmas. It is immediately antecedent to the disembodied state of liberation.

These 14 gunasthanas could be classified into five groups

1. First Gunasthana where all the 4 causes of Karma are operating
2. In 2nd to 5th only 3 causes are operating: unbelief is absent

3. In 6th to 10th only 2 causes are in operation i.e. passions and activity. The unbelief and lack of self control are absent
4. In 11th to 13th only activity cause operates. The other three are absent.
5. In the last Ganasthana a bondage of Karma no longer takes place.

The state of the Release:

The soul when totally free from Karma, is a released soul and it does not need to be embodied. The released one, according to Jainism, goes to the end of the world. "Relieved of all matter, the soul ascends in a strait line during a *Samaya* to the summit of the world, as a gourd freed from all filth sinks no longer to the bottom but rises to the surface of the water"¹⁷ "Without visible shape, bodiless, but a dimension in space of 2/3 of that which they had during their last existence, they dwell there thence forward into all eternity and enjoy the infinite, incomparable, indestructible, supernatural happiness of salvation."¹⁸

According to Jainism the soul released is a soul in state of *Siddhahood*. In this state the soul is free and enjoys *Ananta catustaya* i.e. Four Infinities : knowledge, perception, energy and bliss. The released soul is a conqueror - a Jina and is thus a hero. He possesses all the attributes of God, such released souls have become the objects of worship. What is the state of Soul in or after Moksa? Here the philosophy ends and Theology begins. According to Jaina theology such liberated souls will go to Siddhashila, a mundane place, and will be there eternally.

The absolute purity of the soul is its liberation.

Conclusion :

The issue of nature of liberation' in Jainism, significantly, hints certain very important philosophical positions. Let us also note these positions.

- The Jaina philosophy of Soul begins with the assertive judgement: 'the soul exists'. Jainism is an *Atmavādi*

Darshan. The soul essentially in its natural state is pure and divine. Metaphysically, Jainism puts before us the theory of pluralism of Souls. The concept of Soul goes beyond human beings, and so in Jainism, it results into pan spiritualism i.e. all is soul.

- Logically, from the above we see the soul in bondage. Jainism has explained the mechanism of bondage and schematism of liberation. Bondage, according to Jainism, though beginning less is not endless. Here we are reminded of Srimad Bhagwat Gita expressing Jain theistic spirit: "With faith one attains knowledge, and with knowledge one attains self restraint and such a person attains bliss with self knowledge."¹⁹ Jainism, on the line with the acceptance of soul and the bondage being not endless, paves the path to liberation. In Jainism the path to perfection or path to annihilation of Karmas is the path to liberation.
- Modern age is also the age of moral crisis. Jaina's concept of soul and its salvation talks about the spiritual treasure. This very concept of spiritual treasure of the soul leads to a presupposition of a kind of perfection.
- For a Jain the perception, knowledge, energy and bliss of the soul can never be totally extinguished and the karmic influence is subject to complete elimination. This concept of Jaina is highly optimistic. "Each soul when completely immune from Karmic influences become itself *Svayambhu*, and is transformed into divinity."²⁰ The liberated souls are full and are perfectly divine in itself and by itself.

In our final conclusion we can say that Jainism while exploring the meaning, the nature and scope of Soul's salvation, gives entire stress on right perception, right knowledge and right conduct as path to complete liberation.

Notes:

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3. Prof. Nahar and Ghose, "An Epitome of Jainism" - p 279
4. Srimad Vijay Laxman Suri, "Philosophy of Soul" (1963) p. 1
5. Vadi Dev Suri's "Pramana - naya - tattvalokalankara" - VII-56
6. Srimad Vijay Laxman Suri, "Philosophy of Soul" (1963) -P -4
7. Dr. G N Joshi, "Atma and Moksa" (1 965) P - 23 1
8. Jaini J L, "Outlines of Jainism" (1979) p-18
9. "Bhagawati - Sutra" - D.S. 2
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11. Jaini J L, "Outlines of Jainism' (1979) P 17, 18 12.Umasvati's "Tattvarthasutra" (1977) II - 1 to 10
14. Dr. Ramjee Singh, "The Jain Concept of Omniscience" (1974) p -188
15. Dr. G N Joshi, "Atma and Moksa" (1965) P - 251
16. Dr Glasenapp, "The Doctrine of Karma in Jain Philosophy" (1948) P - 68
17. Ibid-P-93 18.Ibid-P93
19. Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta- IV- 39 20. Jain Jyoti Prasad, "Religion and Culture of the Jains (1977) P-46

Teaching of Mahavir

आयातुले पयासु ।

(Sutrakrutang, 1.11.3)

Look upon all living beings as you look upon yourself



मिर्त्ति भूएहिं कप्पए ।

(Sutrakrutang, 1.15.3)

One should be friendly towards all beings.



हिंसप्पसूयाइं दुहाइं ।

(Sutrakrutang, 1.10.21)

All miseries arise from violence.



अहिंसा निउणा दिट्ठा सव्वभूएसु संजमो ।

(Dashavaikaliksutra, 6.8)

Observance of mindfulness and self-control while behaving towards all living beings is non-violence rightly understood.



अयदाचारस्स णिच्छिदा हिंसा ।

(Pravachansar, 217)

One whose conduct is unmindful and uncontrolled definitely indulges in violence.



मित्ति मे सव्वभूएसु वेरं मज्झं न केणइ ।

(Vandittusutra, Gatha 46)

May I have a friendly relationship with all beings and unfriendly to none.

THE RELEVANCE OF TEACHINGS OF LORD MAHAVIRA

Introduction:

Like any great religion, Jainism has its evolution and developed its various concepts, rituals, ethical codes and philosophy. Though, in modern times, less popular amongst the western scholars, Jainism has always, “exerted abiding influence not only on the minds of its devotees and admirers but also on their creations, thoughts, and ideas expressed through administration, art (including iconography), literature (in addition to canonical or other religious texts) and sciences (including pseudo - scientific ideas and practices)”¹. Prof. S. N. Dasgupta says “The Jain literature was written in Prakrit and from its general trend one would regard it as a sort of folk philosophy interested in overcoming the moral aspects without any theistic bias. The folk philosophy had however elements in it which in the hands of later writers were connected into logical doctrines remarkable for their originality, acuteness and subtlety”² Jainism has been wrongly understood as a revolt against Vedas.

It is far from true and it is necessary to recognize that “neither Jainism nor Buddhism was a ‘reaction’ to the religion of Vedas, but both emerged and existed in their own rights”³

It will also be wrong to state that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism. According to Jain tradition there are 24 Tirthankaras and Lord Mahavira was the last of them all. “Bihar is the cradle of

Jainism, though its founder, Rsabha, was born at Ayodhya, 22 out of 24 Tirthankaras, including Bhagwan Mahavira, were born in Bihar and achieved *nirvāna* in that state"⁴. Not discussing much about Jainism's meta-physics, epistemology, the dizzy height of syadvada dialectics and extraordinary cult in *ashimsā* (non-violence) let us note that "such a religion, no doubt, is not for the majority; but it may not be without appeal for a selected few who are disillusioned of historic cults and are brought face to face with the eternal twins, Soul and Truth, the undeniable categories of human life and consciousness"⁵. The great French Scholar Louis Renou in his 1953 lectures on the religions of India, observed that 'the Jaina movement presents evidence that is of great interest both for the historical and comparative study of religion in ancient India and for the history of religion in general. Based on profoundly Indian element it is at the same time highly original creation, containing very ancient material, more ancient than that of Buddhism, and yet highly refined and elaborated"⁶.

Such a great religion, the Jaina religion exists and shines today "as the only religion with an uncompromising faith in peace and non-violence in thought and deed." Jainism, is one of the oldest, as old as Vedas, religious traditions of the world.⁷ Lord Mahavira is the twenty fourth *Tirthankara* of the present era. As earlier said, he was not the founder, but was a great propounder of this great religion. Though there are differences amongst the scholars about the date of Mahavira, there is a general acceptance that he lived in the 6th Century B.C. (599 BC to 527 BC). He preached Jainism 2500 years ago, and "his preachings are relevant even today and bear special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self reliance, and self purification to develop inherent and infinite potentialities of human self."⁸

Mahavira's Life:

According to the Jaina view, no one is God at birth as Gods are not born, they become God. Mahavira, at birth was not God

but was a Kshatriya prince. We find the biography of Mahavira in great details in Jain literature. To be brief and precise we may note that he was born in 599 B.C. in a royal family as a prince. He was named *Vardhamāna*. At the age of thirty with the consent of his elder brother and his relatives, Mahavira accepted renunciation. For twelve and a half years he spent as an ascetic, practicing rigorous austerities till he achieved omniscience (*Kevala jñāna*). In the thirteenth year he attained infinite intuition, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss. After attaining omniscience he began to preach his message of Truth and Non-violence. In Jain tradition the congregation before which he preached is called *Samavasharana*. He preached for thirty years i.e. till the age of seventy two when Mahavira passed away in perfect health and while delivering his last Sermon, at *Madhyama Pava*. Lord Mahavira preached Jain faith, its metaphysics, its ethics, its great principles emphasizing purity of thought and action. His preachings were in the language of the common people, in Prakrit and in Ardha maghadhi. His central theme was leading a life towards spirituality to attain Eternal Bliss and Freedom.

According to Jaina view many abuses had crept into the people of Mahavira's times in general, and into Jainism in particular. Mahavira did his utmost to remove them and to bring a spiritual awareness amongst the mass. He brought some changes even in the traditional religion coming from his predecessor *Parsva*. He added the vow of chastity (*Brahmacharya*) and made the system more systematic. Mahavir was a great reformer who also possessed a great organizing capacity.

Teachings of Mahavira:

As earlier mentioned, Mahavira was not the founder but a reformer of the existing Jainism and Jain community. He gave a sound philosophic justification of the rules and doctrines concerning human life, its bondage and its freedom. We find, in Jain literature a very detailed and exhaustively elaborate record of Mahavir's

teachings which he did for Thirty long years. "The preachings of Mahavira are embedded in the canonical texts, and they are interpreted by series of commentaries known as Niryuktis, Curnis, Bhashyas and Tikas. Individual topics are discussed in manuals and further illustrated by extensive narrative literature. The doctrines are logically defended by a number of authors in comparison with and in contrast to other Indian systems"⁹. Since we are concerned about the relevance let us see what Mahavira said about 2500 years ago, which becomes so relevant today.

Metaphysical:

Metaphysics is concerned with real or reals. In all religions we find God is the only real or ultimate reality. The Jainas have not seen reality in this way. To them whatever exists, ever existed and never to end, is real.

Mahavira has expressed this subtle doctrine in three words : *Utpada* (genesis), *Dhruvya* (permanence) and *Vyaya* (destruction). To regain the pristine purity of Souls which are in bondage, right religious endeavour is necessary. The sole object of the analysis of Soul and matter, in Jainism, is liberation of the soul.

Ethical:

Mahavira's main concern was purification of human life and thus the upliftment of mankind. He gave five cardinal principles or five vows : non-violence, non-falsehood, non-sex, non-theft and non-accumulation. In other words, Mahavira taught *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing or honesty), *aprigraha* (non-possession) and *brahmacharya* (celibacy). "Among the five vows he gave much importance to the first vow, non-violence or ahimsa, and that is why he has been called in the Jain world 'the apostle of non-violence'. Considering the socio-economic condition, the aggressive and violent practices in forms of various yajnas which prevailed in his time, Mahavira's non-violence was not only superfluous but was very subtle. Mahavira taught non-

violence in action, in thought and in speech. Nonviolence as taught by Mahavira was not only against killing somebody but 'was against mutual jealousies, hatred, conflicts and pride, resulting from wealth and the feeling of high and low". Dr. A. N. Upadhye notes Dr. Saletore who rightly observed : "The principle of Ahimsa was partly responsible for the greatest contribution of the Jainas to Hindu culture- that relating to Toleration"¹⁰

"Of all the Indian Darshanas, Jainism is the only one which has the principle of Ahimsa as its central doctrine. The other Darshanas also speak of Ahimsa whenever convenient but they never offer such loyalty to the principle of Ahimsa as is found in Jainism."¹¹

Mahavira explained Truth in a different way. To him truth does not mean abstaining from falsehood only, but also to see the world in its natural and real form. Truth harmful to others is not permitted. Truth is always to be upheld through noble speech and peaceful mind and one should practice it. To be exaggerative or harsh or fault finding in speech, is untruth. Mahavira says 'absence of artificiality is the observance of truth. Such truthfulness lies in the heart of non-violence, as untruthful speech is always hurting others.

The literal meaning of the word *asteya*(non-stealing), the third vow, is abstention from taking a thing of some one else which is not given. Lord Mahavira elaborated it to all sorts of dishonesty and conceit to be avoided. The significance of this vow lies in attaining social equality. Jainism regards stealing as a severe kind of violence.

The principle of *apirigraha* (non-possession) is highly ethical. Craving, as the Jain Texts say, never ends, and brings greed and lust and attachment. Mahavira insisted people to accept the vow of aparigraha as the solution to harmony and peaceful co-existence. Aparigraha also refers to simplicity of life and is an important

requirement to non-violent way of life. According to Mahavira the root of all sufferings was attachment towards the objects of worldly enjoyment. He advised that wiseman should not develop attachments even with his/her own body. He has preached that “it is only when attachment is vanished that the human mind becomes free from all tension and emotional disorder”.

Non-possession is the foundation for spiritual and humanistic contemplation. The lust for possession instigates several sins, like injustice, fraud, hatred, bitterness and socio-economic inequality”¹². Mahavira preached non-possession for peace and prosperity of the society. This vow, and also others, are very strictly and uncompromisingly, to be observed by the ascetics.

The fifth, and the last, vow is *Brahmacarya* (celibacy). Earlier till the time Parsvanath it was a part of *aparigraha*. Lord Mahavir separated the two and defined celibacy in the way it was needed then. To free the people from worldly and sensual pleasure, to free from several unethical and unsocial activities, he insisted on celibacy. He showed the conditions under which celibacy could be realized. Mahavira considered *Brahmacarya* (celibacy) of prime importance for Right Character (*Samyak Charitra*) which, is one of the requirements for liberation. Life without character would make a person weak, lazy and corrupt; would make the society chaotic and unjust. Mahavira’s vow of celibacy is “the self developed idea of co-ordination or equality of men and women. It is regarded as the highest point of purification, where the sexual distinction vanishes and passions die”.

Mahavira, along with these five vows also added confession compulsory for the monks and his followers. This idea of confession for monks is not much known. However, Mahavira as a reformer and a great spiritual teacher insisted on the purity of mind, body and soul for the ultimate liberation.

Philosophical:

Mahavira prescribed certain rules of conduct and changes in the social order. To him not the birth but the deeds or karma should decide the cast or 'varna'. This was a very revolutionary idea regarding one's cast or creed or status. He also believed in equality of men and women and so he allowed women also to enter into the *samgha*. He organized the Jain community into four groups: *Srāvakas*, *Srāvikas* (lay men and lay women), *Sādhu* and *Sādhavis* (monks and nuns). Thus women were considered equal to men in all regards including spiritual upliftment. Apart from metaphysical and ethical teachings, Mahavir's philosophical teachings also include the *Nayavāda*, *Syādavāda*, *Anekānta* and the doctrine of *Karma*. All these, though highly subtle and highly difficult in understanding, Mahavira made them simpler by relating them all to morality, purity, equality and mutual co-existence. He said "Live and Let Live".

The beauty of Mahavira's teachings lies in its direct appeal as it is related to life and its liberation. He takes an integral view of life and does not compartmentalize. According to him combination of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct is the path to liberation. Lord Mahavira says, "By knowledge one understands the nature of Substances, by faith one believes in them, by conduct one puts an end to the flow of Karmas and by austerity one attains purity" ¹³.

We know every teaching and every lesson taught by Mahavira was of great importance. But what was the most important to Mahavira himself? The cardinal doctrine on which the edifice of Jainism rests from times immemorial is *Ahimsā* or non-violence. In '*Prashna -Vyakarana*, it has been called *Bhagavati*. Mahavira called *Ahimsa*, *Bhagvati Ahimsa* or Goddess *Ahimsa*.

Mahavira's teachings brought great revolutionary, positive and commanding changes. Dr. S. B. Deo in evaluating Lord Mahavira, writes, "It is well over two and a half thousand years that the

personality of Lord Mahavir illuminated the religious horizon of India. And yet with the passage of several centuries, the influence of his teaching, instead of waning, as happened in the case of several others, is on the increase. His name still remains a revered memory and an encouraging spiritual force to thousands of people”¹⁴

Relevance of Mahavira’s Teachings:

The teachings of Lord Mahavira proved to be of a very high value and significance in his time. It brought not only spiritual upliftment and hope for individual’s progress and betterment, but also brought socio-economic changes. He could make everyone realize about morality through Truth, Non-violence, Non-possession and Celibacy, about equality of men and women and the status not by birth but by deeds. He could make the people tolerant and peace loving.

Lord Mahavira’s teachings, as it was then, so it is now, equally very valuable, very significant and very relevant. When we say now naturally, we mean in the present age. And how is the present times? Present age is an age of propaganda and we all live in a world of social inequalities, economic disparities, moral crisis and political insecurities. The values have deteriorated and there is a mad rush after materialistic and sensual pleasures. Childhood is miles away from Godhood, youth is simply wasted and caught in frustration; and old age has become a curse. The discriminatory power to decide and choose between Good and bad, between temporary and permanent, between material and spiritual, is almost neglected. Education system for children and youth is full of contradictions and narrow commercial motives. Nothing is Life or Value oriented; everything, everywhere, everybody is out to become rich and enjoy worldly pleasures. What man has done of man !

In the present times, at the dawn of the new millennium, instead of love and compassion, hatred and killing is seen. The perverted religiosity, the false patriotism and the narrow political

considerations to grab power and money, all these have made our planet highly chaotic. There is pollution everywhere. The air, the water and the earth, the minds of individuals and traditions of the community, the strategies of the nations and the senseless egoistic swing (sway) of the internationally powerful agencies -all these need purification.

Present time, full of disorder and frustrative activities, greatly need reformation. What we need is, going towards Purity and clarity. What we need is building peaceful and cordial human societies. What we need is Love and not hatred; Compassion not killing, construction and not destruction. The religious fanaticism and fundamentalism, with violence as a weapon, exhibit an extreme senseless, meaningless and valueless act of killing and destruction. In short, today, we feel the time is not good. There are crisis in all spheres of life. Morality and spirituality are thrown out, as outdated orthodox ideas; Love and Friendship have become calculative and pseudo. There is knowledge without wisdom, there is life without living. To conclude, we can say that the picture from nation, society, family and individual point of view, is dark and dizzy.

In the midst of such a dark and dizzy situation we have a ray of hope, we have a torch. We have the teachings of Mahavira. The teachings of Mahavira, today, can lead us from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light. In fact Mahavira's teachings have a direct and blissful effect on Indian Social structure and they do help for the welfare and upliftment of the entire humanity, irrespective of sex, class, colour or nationality. The five vows show a path to economic equality through non-possession; to a total eradication of corruption and lust for sensual pleasure through the law of celibacy; a positive end to violent and terrorist's activities through Truth and non-violence. Mahavira's philosophy of Soul and doctrine of Karma can bring equality and make everyone earn his future and be the master of his own destiny. Peace, unity and brotherhood for co-existence and social justice is possible if we

seriously take note of Mahavira's teachings and start practicing them. Today when we find religious and spiritual sentiments are attacked by materialistic attitudes, when we find instead of peace, friendship and justice, bad effects of massacres, exploitations and selfishness the only solution is Mahavira's teachings. The teachings of Mahavira are still relevant, and relevant to a great degree.

It will not be wrong to say that in the present condition we are fed up and tired of the tense life. There is a great need of such a society in which there would no fear, no exploitation, no discrimination and no malice. "To get rid of all evils, miseries and pain, we will have to abandon the materialistic attitude and develop the spiritual one. To obtain the real truth of life, we have no other option but to think of the solutions in the very background of the principles of Jainism and Mahavira which could be effective in providing us peace, happiness and prosperity" ¹⁵.

Conclusion:

Lord Mahavira's teachings are in the language of the common people. His teachings are relevant even in our own life and in the society at large. When we find cruelty and killing everywhere Mahavira's *Ahimsā* (non-violence) becomes relevant, when we find lust for material gain and a blind rush for wealth and riches Mahavira's *Aparigraha* (non-possession) becomes relevant, when we find people lost in sensual pleasure Mahavira's *Brahmacarya* (celibacy) becomes relevant, when we find ecology is disturbed and animals as well as birds are killed for human luxury and comforts, Mahavira's philosophy of Soul becomes relevant; when we find people or families or nations fighting with each other on superiority or inferiority grounds, Mahavira's teaching : 'caste not by birth but by deeds' becomes relevant, when we find women neglected by men and treated as inferior, we find Mahavira's teaching all souls (male as well as female) are equal, becomes very relevant. When there is a disagreement, a conflict and differences Mahavira's

philosophy of *anekānta* (non-absolutism) becomes relevant. If we want people to live with peace, understanding and broadmindedness; people to live with Love, compassion and friendship, people to live like a hero fighting not with others but one's own vices and becomes a Jina (a conqueror), if we want people to live with tolerance, simplicity and humility - for all these we find Mahavira's teachings soundly relevant.

Mahavira stressed the purity of means as well as the purity of ends. Through his teachings we see in 'him', an ideal reformer, an able organizer, and an upholder of the quality of all human beings. 'He remained, still remains and shall ever remain relevant to humanity at large'.

Notes:

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3. K. C. Lalwaji: "Jain Journal" Vol. XXXV 2001, essay on Bhagawan Mahavira : "His life and doctrine" P. 48
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5. Kalidas Nag : "Jain Journal" Vol. XXXV 2001, Essay on The Universal Message of Jainism P. 171
6. Renou. 1953:133 Quoted by P. S. Jaini : "The Jaina path of Purification" 1979 P. xi
7. Read J. P. Jain : "Jainism the Oldest Living Religion" Jain Cultural Research Society, Banaras, 1951.-
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10. Ibid P. 19.
11. Prof. A. Chakravarti: his essay on "The Message of the Religion of Ahimsa - in 'Lord Mahavira and His teachings" - Bombay 1983 P. 45
12. Dr. Binod Kumar Tiwari : "Relevance of Jain Principles of Mahavira in Modern Context" - see Jain Journal Vol. XXXVI 2001 P. 33
13. Uttaradyayana Sutra
14. Dr. S. B. Deo : Lord Mahavira - an evolution see "Lord Mahavira And his teachings" - Bombay 1983 P. 22
15. Dr. Binod Kumar Tiwari : "Relevance of Jain Principles of Mahavira in Modern Context" - see Jain Journal Vol. XXXVI 2001 P. 36

