

# **Glimpses of Jainism And Biography of Forgotten Hero: Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi**

*- Pannalal R. Shah*



- **Pravin C. Shah - Chairman - V.R.G. Scholarship Committee**  
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- **Gunvant Barvalia - Hon. Co-Ordinator**



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# **Glimpses Of Jainism And Biography Of Forgotten Hero: Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi**

***Written by - Pannalal R. Shah  
Translated by - Mrs. Kurangiben Desai***



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**Glimpses Of Jainism And  
Biography Of Forgotten Hero: Shri Virchand Raghavji  
Gandhi**

Written by - Pannalal R. Shah

Edited by - Gunvant Barvalia

Translated by - Mrs. Kurangi Desai

July - 2003

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*in loving memory of her parents*  
*Naginchand Shah, Chandanben Shah*  
*and Brother Rameshchandra Shah*

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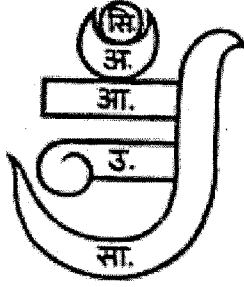
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# **DEDICATION**

## **To**

**Shri Pratapbhai Bechardas Sheth (Shah)**  
**&**  
**Smt. Muktaben Pratapbhai Sheth (Shah)**  
**Whose Family and Social relation is full of**  
**logical approach**

**Dr. Bhaskar P. Shah - M.D.,D.M. Cordiologist**  
**&**  
**Dr. Jasmin B. Shah - M.D. Pediatrician**  
**Who serves the society at large through their**  
**Profession with humanitarian approach**  
**- Pannalal R. Shah**



# *Namaskar Mahamantra*

## **NAMO ARIHANTANAM**

I bow to the arihantas - the ever-perfect spiritual victors

## **NAMO SIDDHANAM**

I bow to the siddhas - the liberated souls

## **NAMO AYRAIYANAM**

I bow to the acharyas - the leaders of the Jain order

## **NAMO UVAJJHAYANAM**

I bow to the upadhyayas - the learned preceptors

## **NAMO LOE SAVVA-SAHUNAM**

I bow to the saints and sages everywhere in the world

## **ESO PANCH NAMUKKARO**

This five obeisance

## **SAVVA-PAVAPPANASANO**

Erase all sins

## **MANGALANANCH SAVVESIM**

Amongst all that is auspicious

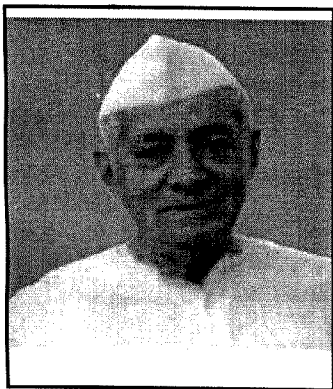
## **PADHAMAM HAVAI MANGALAM**

This is the formost.



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in loving memory of her parents  
Naginchand Shah, Chandanben Shah  
and  
Brother Rameshchandra Shah*



*Naginchand Shah*



*Chandanben Shah*





नमो अरिहंताणं  
नमो सिद्धाणं  
नमो आयरियाणं  
नमो उक्खजायाणं  
नमो लोएसवसाहूणं  
'एसो पंचनमुक्कारो,  
सव्वपावप्पणासणो  
मंगलाणं च सव्वोसिं,  
पढमं हवइ मंगलं'



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## **A Loving Tribute to Those Who Advanced The Shramana Culture**

We are happy to publish 'The Saga of an Inspiring Personality' under the aegis of Saurashtrakesari Pranaguru Jain Philosophical and Literary Research Society.

At the time of the birth - centenary of Saurashtrakesari Pranaguru, the balance of the funds after the celebration, was handed over by the Centenary Celebration Committee to Shri Pandit Ratnachandraji Jain Kanyashala Trust to establish Saurashtrakesari Pranaguru Jain Philosophical and Literary Society. As the trust accepted the gift, this centre came into being. The aims of this society are printed elsewhere in this book which may be persued by readers wishing to know about it.

Pravinchandra Gambhirchand Shah of Manavamitra Trust, being interested in the activities of the society, donated Rs. 1,25,000 to enable the society to take up upon a permanent basis the activity of publication of books. Named after his mother, respected Kamalaben, this series of publication was named Kamal Publication Series. We are obliged to Shri Pannalal R. Shah, who inspired the trustees of Manava - Mitra Trust to donate to our Society and to the trustees, Shri Kanubhai and to the entire family of Shri Gambhirchand Umechand Shah.

The centre has published Balavabodha Upadeshamala by Purvacharya Somasundarasuri. This Balvabodh, edited by Dr. Kantilal B. Shah awarded Second Prize by Gujrati Sahitya Academy. Conference of Jain Scholars which was organised by the Centre in the year 2000. The centre is also putting on separate websites the best works among the various Jain narratives of the ancient and middle ages of India. Many of these are also being researched, edited and published.

In February 2001, I hapened to meet Shri Pravjnchandra C. Shah, chairperson of Virchand Raghavji Gandhi Scholarship



Committee (JAINA) of New York. He suggested publishing a re-print of 'A Saga of an Inspiring Personality'. Shri Pannalal R. Shah, the author, suggested the inclusion of recent information obtained on Shri Virchand Gandhi and offered to prepare a revised edition. Thus, he added in Gujarati edition:

- 1) A letter written by V.R. Gandhi from Chicago in 1894.
- 2) The address given to Shri Virchand Gandhi at a meeting under chairmanship of Shri Premchand Raichand in 1896.
- 3) The address given at a meeting presided over by Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade in 1889.

We are obliged to the management of Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya for allowing us to include in this book, the photographs of the medals preserved at the Vidyalaya. We are also obliged to Pravinbhai Shah and the members of the committee of trustees of V.R.G.Scholarship Committee - JAINA. We also thank for to Dipika & Dilip Doctor, of New York, for sponsoring this book.

I hereby pay a loving tribute to the selfless actions of Shri Virchand Gandhi who, like a caravan-leader of the Universal Consciousness, spread the Shramana culture in different parts of the world, just as a bee transports the sweetness of the flower by flying from one flower to another and thereby enriches the beauty of the garden.

Gujarati revised edition of Shri Virchand Gandhi's biography was published in the centenary year of his death. On Occasion of Jaina convention 2003 we are publishing English version, we have made addition of number of photographs, articles and a letter Mr. Howard to VRG has been included in appendix-7. We also thank Mrs. Kurangiben Desai of Mumbai for the translation work.

*Mumbai*  
*Mahavir Jayanti (April 2003)*

**- Guvant Barvalia**  
*(Hon .Co-ordinator)*

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## **The Concrete Form of an Inspiring Incident**

In the late August or early September, 1963, Shri Ratilal Chimanlal Shah-Dharmapriya, who was editing the 'Jai Jinendra' column of 'Mumbai Samachar' in the penname 'Dharmapriya', made a pithy remark. He wrote that no one had taken note of the fact that the date of the birth centenary of Shri Virchand Gandhi of hallowed name had just passed - this, even though Virchandbhai had represented Jainism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

Virchand Gandhi was born on 25 th August, 1864; so his centenary year would commence in 1963. I drew the attention of Shri Kantilal Dahyabhai Kora, who was then the Registrar of Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya (and later its Director). Kantibhai said, 'You are right, but then we should start planning the centenary right now'.

As I belong to Mahuva, I corresponded with Shri Bachubhai Gandhi and Shri Rasikbhai Gandhi, the grandsons of Virchandbhai. I asked them if they could guide me to the unpublished writings of Virchandbhai and the medals with which he was awarded. In reply, the grandsons decided to donate all the literature and the medals, etc. to Shri Mahavira Vidyalaya. Shri Chandulal Vardhaman Shah, Shri Kantilal D. Kora and myself went to Mahuva. A notebook in the handwriting of Virchandbhai, some correspondence and the gold medals as well as a casket were officially donated to the Vidyalaya. In 1970, Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya published a book called 'The Systems of Indian Philosophy', based on an unpublished manuscript. In 1987, the first edition of this book, written by me was published.

The Jain Associations in North America had established a fund called Shri Virchand Gandhi Scholarship Fund. The association decided to celebrate the death-centenary of Virchand Gandhi. Its organiser Shri Pravinchandra C. Shah,

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decided to publish a special issue of 'Jaina'(a quaterly) and also to bring out a second edition of this book, because after the first edition of my book was published, we had discovered some important documents. They included :

- 1) An address to Shri Virchandbhai proffered on 20-8-1896 by the Mangrol Jain Sangit Mandali at a function chaired by Shri Premchand Raichand.
- 2) Another address conferred upon Shri Virchandbhai on 23 rd September, 1899 at a function where Justice Ranade presided.
- 3) Poems in praise of Virchandbhai composed by the well -known drama scholar Shri Dahyabhai Dholshaji Jhaveri and other friends of Shri Virchandbhai.
- 4) A letter (about his activities) written by Shri Virchand Gandhi from Chicago on 29-1-1894. This was found in the Diwali issue of Conference Herald, the then organ of Jain Shwetamber Conference.
- 5) A large sized poster of Virchandbhai's talks in the U.S. reproduced in Chaitra S.Y.1982 (1926 A.D.) issue of the Jain Yuga.
- 6) Group photographs of Virchandbhai's followers and of the delegates of various Indian religions who attended the Parliament of Religions.

All the above material has been included in this revised edition of my original book, 'The Saga Of An Inspired Personality' as per my suggestion to Pravinbhai Shah.

I am grateful to friends and the publishing organisation who were helpful in bringing out this revised edition - particularly Dr. Kantilal B. Shah, Ahmedabad and Shri Gunvant Barvalia, who is honorary organiser of Shri Pranguru Jain Research Centre Bombay.

**- PANNALAL R. SHAH**

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## **SHRI VIRCHAND RAGHAVJI GANDHI SCHOLARSHIP**

◆ To promote and encourage studies in Jainism and thereby to spread Bhagwan Mahavir's message of universal love, brotherhood and nonviolence, a lifetime goal of Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, to honor him and to commemorate his historical visit to the West in 1893, JAINA had established this scholarship in Fall, 1997. (Jain Digest winter edition pa.20.). This scholarship is being awarded to bright and needy students studying Jainism and/or pursuing doctorate and/or research studies in fields like Jain philosophy, Jain literature, Jain scriptures, Jain temple architectures at recognized Universities and Institutions.

◆ To help Jain Sadhus/Sadhavis in their studies at accredited institutions by giving the cost of their books, tuition fees and miscellaneous expenses. Research studies in work of VRG's unpublished literature.

◆ 'Brochures and scholarship application forms are available on our website [www.geocities.com/kenpet\\_1938/VRG\\_Scholarship.html](http://www.geocities.com/kenpet_1938/VRG_Scholarship.html). India based screening subcommittee is publishing this project in national news papers and in almost all Jain publications in India. Prescribed application forms are also mailed to institutions offering studies in Jainism. Subcommittee invites, scrutinizes and recommends applications for awarding scholarships. It was a matter of great pleasure that the award of this scholarship was started in year 2001, VRG's death centenary year and 2600th birth year of Bhagvan Mahavir. Nonrefundable 15 scholarships were awarded so far to students studying Jainism. We plan to prepare documentary on his life mission, arrange memorial lectures and explore all means/avenues to

convince Govt. of India as follow up of JAINA's action to issue commemorative postal stamps or so honoring him. We, the all committee members, are very much pleased to publish this book titled "Glimpses of Jainism and Biography of Forgotten Hero Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi". We plan to distribute at JAINA convention 2003 and there after.'

♦ To celebrate his death centenary in 2001, committee had published "Jyotirdharni Jivan Gatha" his life story in Gujarati by P.R. Shah, released after due ceremony at 2001 Chicago convention and " Jainism" by Herbert Warren, an English man and his follower, edited by Dr. Nagin J. Shah and "Selected Speeches of VRG" published by Shri Vallabhsuri Smarak Nidhi, were also distributed free at VRG booth at convention 2001 and thereafter Jain Digest Summer 2001 (Vol.18, No.2) issue and JAINA web site [www.jaina.org/education/education material /H10](http://www.jaina.org/education/education%20material/H10) give more description/details about VRG's lifetime mission.

♦ India based screening subcommittee under the chairpersonship of Dr. Jitendra Shah is publishing this project in national news papers like Times of India, Indian Express, Navbharat Times, in several English, Hindi & Gujarati dailies and in almost all Jain publications in India. Prescribed application forms are also mailed to institutions offering studies in Jainism. Subcommittee invites, scrutinizes and recommends applications for awarding scholarships.It was a matter of great pleasure that the award of this scholarship was started in year 2001,VRG's death centenary year and 2600th birth year of Bhagwan Mahavir. on refundable 8 scholarships from Rs. 6,000 to Rs.10,000 were awarded so far to students studying Jainism. Brochures about this scholarship are updated, printed and distributed from time to time.

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- ◆ Professorl Kanjibhai Patel (Ahmedabad) - Member
- ◆ V.P. Jain (Delhi) - Member

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## GLIMPSES OF JAINISM

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### **BACK GROUND:**

Jainism is an extremely ancient religion handed down from the remote past by a series of enlightened sages and teachers called Tirthankars. The first Tirthankar of this Chauvisi (era, series) is Bhagwan Rushabhdev or Adinath. According to Jain belief, in addition to establishing religious order, he pioneered and founded social and political structure, the institution of family, law, justice, arts and crafts, reading, writing, music, land cultivation, and the use of fire to cook. He is mentioned in many ancient books like Vedas and Puranas of Hindu religion.

The religion was not always known by the name Jainism as it is today. Earlier, it was known as Shramans (dependence upon self- endeavor for spiritual advancement) or Nirgranth (without any written scriptures). It acquired the name Jain at a much later date when the 23<sup>rd</sup> Tirthankar, Bhagwan Parshwanath (B.C. 877 - B.C. 777) and the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankar, Bhagwan Mahavir (B.C. 599 - B.C. 527) revitalized the religion and were called Jina, a Sanskrit word meaning conqueror. Jina has evolved to mean a person who has reached the status of "Supreme Being" culminating in the breaking of the cycle of birth and death. This state of Supreme Being is achieved by shedding oneself of all Karmas through conquering one's inner enemies such as passion, greed, hatred, anger, ego, deceit and the likes. The followers of Jina are known as Jains.

Bhagwan Mahavira (the last Tirthankar), son of king Siddharth and queen Trishala, was born 2600 years ago in (current day) Bihar India and was a contemporary of Buddha. Being a prince, he had all worldly amenities and luxuries at his disposal. However, he was detached from them. In order



not to grieve his parents, he decided not to take vow of a Sadhu (monk) while his parents were still alive. After his parents' death, he waited two more years at the request of his elder brother, and at the age of 30, he took the vow of a Sadhu. During the next 12 years, he had to endure unbearable hardships. He attributed all of the hardships he endured to his Karma (something he had done in his previous lives and resulting in Karmic particles attached to his soul). However, this did not deter him and he continued an ascetic life of fasting, doing penance, and practicing deep meditation in order to achieve self-realization. After 12 years, when he shed the Darshanavarniya, Gyanavarniya, Antray and Mohaniya Karmas, his spiritual powers were fully developed and he attained enlightenment (Keval Gyan), infinite perception, knowledge, power and bliss (anant-Darshan, anant-Gyan, anant-virya and anant-sukh).

Upon attaining Keval-Gyan, Mahavira became a Tirthankar and he re-established Sangh, a religious order in systematic form. This order consisted of Sadhus (monks), Sadhavis (nun), Shravaks (male lay followers) and Shravikas (female lay followers) with the responsibilities of each defined.

The Sangh is the overall supreme body and is not any one single entity. This basic structural organization is still in effect today.

Bhagwan Mahavir preached in the language of the common people and this resulted in a lasting influence on Indian culture. The messages he preached included independence from priestly domination, equal status of all people, religious emancipation of women, female education, weakening of a cast system, and tolerance of differing points of view. His doctrine included individual freedom and equality regardless of race, sex, color, and caste. Furthermore, when Mahavira said "Live and let live" he was

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referring, not only to human beings, but, to all forms of life in the universe including animals, earth, water, fire, air, and trees. He preached to love and help one another and to live a life that allows all elements of nature to remain in peace and harmony without fear. This is the central theme governing Jain philosophy. Mahavir continued to preach until he reached Nirvana (death with out rebirth) at the age of 72 and became Siddha (liberated soul).

There are about 10 million Jains worldwide today. Present estimates indicate that there are about 100,000 Jains in North America and a similar number in Europe.

## **MAJOR BELIEFS / PHILOSOPHIES:**

### **NON-VIOLENCE:**

Ahimsa (non-violence and non-injury towards all living beings) is the cornerstone of Jainism. "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" means non-violence is the supreme religion and refers to non-violence in all of its forms (mental, verbal and physical.) A strict vegetarian diet is the result of this belief.

### **GOD:**

The concept of God in the Jain religion is different from most other religions. God is neither a creator nor destroyer of the universe. The universe is eternal. God is merely a silent observer and omniscient. He does not punish or reward. Godhood is a state of liberated soul. Every individual soul is potentially a god and can attain Godhood by making supreme efforts to shed Karmic particles attached to the soul through a process called Nirjara. Once a soul sheds all of its Karma (good as well as bad) it becomes Sidhha. In this sense there are an infinite number of gods. Sidhhas do not have a name. Siddhas are prayed collectively for their qualities and not by any individual name.

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## **THEORY OF KARMA:**

Each soul is pure and possesses infinite knowledge, bliss and power. However, Karmik particles obscure the true nature of the soul and the only way to reveal the true nature is by shedding of the karmic particles. Once that occurs, the soul achieves Nirvan or liberation (Moksha). Until that happens however, the soul goes through cycles of death and birth in one of 8,400,000 species/lives. The path of this journey is dependent upon cumulative good and bad deeds. Jains believe in reincarnation based on cause and effect (law of karma). All souls are alike and none is superior or inferior. Every individual soul is potentially god and each individual is the master of his/her soul and its destiny. By regularly meditating, practicing strict austerity, and controlling passions, one can destroy his/her Karmas and reveal the basic attributes of the soul. This self-revelation will ultimately lead to liberation of the soul forever.

Karma can be shed only by one's own efforts. There is no supreme entity to do it or grant it. Only human beings have the capacity to make efforts to shed Karmas and get Nirvan. One can shed Karmas through three main routes or "jewels" (Ratna Trayi): These are right knowledge (Samyak Gyan), right faith (Samyak Darshan) and right conduct (Samyak Charitra). Gyan and Darshan include proper knowledge of the six Dravya (universal substances) and nine Tattva (fundamental truths) and the faith in this knowledge. Right conduct (Charitra) includes non-violence, self-purification, compassion, penance, austerity and meditation.

## **ANEKANTVAD:**

An important principle called "ANEKANTVADA" is at the heart of Jainism. According to Jain philosophy, knowledge is a huge complexity because (i) it is constituted of substances,

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qualities and modifications (ii) it extends over past, present and future times (iii) it extends over infinite space and (iv) it is simultaneously subjected to origination, destruction and permanence.

It is obvious that, as such, this can be fully comprehended only by omniscience. It cannot be fully manifested by worldly beings that perceive through organs and senses. These senses are indirect means of knowledge and what they comprehend is only partial. Reality possesses infinite variations and attributes of human interpretation. Our knowledge is always incomplete and hence our views are, at best, true only in parts. It is correct that Truth is one only, but the aspects of truth are many. One must be tolerant towards other viewpoints. In life, it is important to accept the theory of multidimensional approach. An illustration may explain this. Two blind men are near an elephant. A person near its foot very truthfully declares the elephant to be like a column. A person near its tail equally truthfully declares it to be like a rope. Who is right? Both of them are right from their vantage point and both are wrong from the other's vantage point. Now if you change the positions of each of the men so that the man who originally was at tail is now at the foot. The same person now declares the elephant to be a column. Thus the "reality" of the elephant is infinite (Aneka) resulting in infinite viewpoints (Anekant). The philosophy of multiplicity of truth is Anekantvand.

That is why Jainism points to the fact that reality may be comprehended from different angles. An attempt to comprehend anything from a particular viewpoint is called "Naya" (mode of expressing things). A system of describing reality from different points of view is called "Nayavada" (doctrine of Naya). Jain philosophers describe a system of classification and various Naya in those classes. Nayavada is a reminder to all those who assert that their system is

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absolute and all comprehensive. It shows that the way to reconcile conflicting viewpoints is by appreciating the relativity of different aspects of reality.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The basic code of conduct for Jains involves the practice of the following five vows:

- 1) Ahimsa (Nonviolence): Not to hurt any living being by action, deed, speech or by thought
- 2) Satya (Truth): To speak the truth, which may not hurt any living being
- 3) Asteya/Achaurya (Non-stealing)
- 4) Brahmacharya (Celibacy, Restraint, Chastity, purity of thoughts and deeds)
- 5) Aparigraha (Non-possession, detachment)

Sadhus/Sadhvis observe these five vows but to a much larger extent than the layperson. Since the Shravaks/Shravikas has to raise a family, earn a living, etc, the extent to which he/she can observe these vows is not as great as for Sadhu/Sadhavis. That is why they are called the five great vows (Maha-vrata) for Sadhus/Sadhavis and the five minor vows (Anu-vrata) for the layperson. Jain Sadhus are not permitted to have any worldly possessions. Jain laypersons are allowed to have worldly possessions as per their requirements for daily life. However, they should not have any attachments to the possessions and they should try to observe all five vows as much as possible. "Live and let live" is the foremost principle of Ahimsa and because of that, Jains have established a system of Panjarapol (sanctuary) to take care of cattle and prevent them from going to slaughterhouses.

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## **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES:**

### **NAVKAR MANTRA:**

Of all the prayers, Navkar Mantra, is the most important and sacred. In it, one bows to the characteristics of five different entities namely Arihant (enlightened sages like Mahavir), Siddha (liberated souls), Aacharya (head of congregation), Upadhyaya (Sadhu/Sadhvi teacher) and Sadhu/Sadhvi. It is important to note that it is not individuals that are worshiped. Instead, the characteristics and qualities of those particular entities are worshipped. Also, it is important to note that although Arihant had shed four types of Karma (while Siddha had shed all eight types of Karma), Arihant is first in the Navkar Mantra. This is because Arihant had a body in the human form and gave us the religion, as we now know it.

### **AAVASHYAK (Essentials):**

Six Aavashyaks are to be performed daily by all Jains. According to one tradition (Swetamber) they are:

- 1) Samayik (meditation)
- 2) Chauvisso (pray and appreciate qualities of the 24 Tirthankars)
- 3) Vandana (respect to Sadhu/Sadhvis)
- 4) Pratikraman (reflect, repent and confess past commissions of bad thoughts and deeds and omissions of things to be done)
- 5) Kayotsarg (non-attachment to the body)
- 6) Pachchhakhan (religious vows renouncing certain activities for a certain period of time to discipline one's self and increase will power)

### **SACRED TEXT:**

Jainism's beliefs, principles and philosophy expounded by Bhagwan Mahavira were preserved from generation to generation orally until they were compiled and written down

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in Agamas about 800 years after Lord Mahavira's attainment of Nirvana. Many of them are now preserved in India. Shwetamber Jains accept them as authentic but Digamber Jains do not. Swetamber tradition consists of 45 Agamas pertaining to Jain beliefs on mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and code of conduct, etc. Kalp Sutra and Tatvarth Sutra are among the sacred texts.

### **RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS (PRATIK):**

#### **JAIN UNIVERSE:**

The Jain religious symbol. It consists of a crescent (moon) on top with one dot inside of it and three dots underneath it, the Swastik or Om in the middle, and the palm of a hand with a chakra (wheel) with 24 spokes in it.

The dot inside the crescent signifies Siddhashila (abode of the liberated souls). The three dots underneath the crescent signify the three major paths to shed Karma (the three jewels as mentioned previously) to achieve liberation. The three paths are right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct (collectively called Ratna Trayi). Just below the three dots is the Swastik (see below for significance of Swastik). The palm underneath the Swastik signifies friendly reassurance and the ethical responsibility of every individual. It bears the word Ahimsa (non-violence). The 24 spokes inside the palm represent preaching of the 24 Tirthankars. The overall outline of the symbol represents the universe and shows the three locations of living beings - UrdhvaLok (or DevLok) the abode for celestial beings, MadhyaLok the abode for humans, animals and plants and AdhoLok the abode for hellish beings. The words written below the symbol, "Parasparopagraho Jivanam" call for the mutual assistance of all beings.

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## **SWASTIK:**

Swastik comes from the Sanskrit word Swastik meaning well-being. The design of the Swastik is intended to point out the aim of salvation. Drawing the Swastik in rice rather than in other grains is significant. The reason is that other grains grow when sown in the ground but rice does not. Like rice, we do not want to be reborn. We want to rid ourselves from the cycles of birth and death. Unfortunately this symbol was misappropriately used in some distorted form but Jains have nothing to do with its use in that form. The four hands of the Swastik indicate the four states of existence (Gatis). They are 1. Human being (Manushya) 2. Celestial being (Dev) 3. Sub-human (Tiryanch) and 4. Hellish being (Narak). After death, a soul may get born into any one of these four forms depending on its Karma. Only human beings however may get liberated from this cycle of life and death through the process of Nirjara by following the three paths of Ratna Trayi and ultimately becoming Siddha.

## **OM:**

Om, a Sanskrit word, represents the bowing to the five entities represented in Navkar Mantra. These entities are A (Arihant), A (Ashariry - Siddha), AA (Aacharya), U (Upadhyay) and M (Muni - Sadhu). When these five sounds (A A AA U M) are combined, it results in OM.

## **TRADITIONS:**

There are two main traditions of the Jain religion, Digamber and Shwetamber. Both these traditions differ slightly in rituals. However, basic concepts, beliefs, philosophy like principle of Anekantvad, theory of Karma, reincarnation, emphases on non-violence etc are same. 12 years of draught conditions resulted in North/South migration. Shwetambers migrated to North and Digamber migrated to South.



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## **RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS/OBSERVANCES:**

Bhagwan Mahavir's birthday, Diwali, Paryusan (which in Svetamber tradition is eight days) and Daslaxana (which in Digamber tradition is ten days) are among the most important observances. All observances are for mental preparation and spiritual uplifting. Paryusan and Daslaxana are days when Jains ask for forgiveness from all living beings for any harm done during the year (knowingly or unknowingly, mentally, verbally or physically). Diwali marks Mahavir's Nirvana (death without rebirth) day. It is also called the festival of lights because symbolic lamps are lit to honor the passing of the guiding light.

## **JAIN TEMPLES / TIRTHS:**

Jain temples are among the most magnificent temples in the world. They are considered masterpieces of architecture and are intricate in their sculptures and marble carving. Also referred to as Derasar, Mandir or Jinalaya, they provide the proper environment for the mind to reach tranquility and equanimity and help the soul seek harmony with nature. Worships are mainly to attain the qualities of Tirthankars. Niyanu (praying to obtain material gains) is prohibited in Jain religion.

Ancient and historically important temples are called Tirths. Jains typically go for pilgrimage to various Tirths during a year. Some of the wellknown Tirths are Palitana (city of temples), Pavapuri (Nirvana place of Mahavira), Sametshikhar is the peak mountain where 20 Tirthankars out of 24 Tirthankars Neminath attained Nirvan. Girnar (Nirvana place of the 22nd Tirthankar), Mount Abu, and Ranakpur (famous for its architecture, elaborate carvings and beautiful artwork). Jain temples of Ajanta and Ellora in western India, Khajuraho temples in central India, and a fifty-two foot high idol of Bahubaliji in southern India are masterpieces of art and carving. In some Jain traditions, idols (of Tirthankar) are worshiped, while in other traditions they are not. Those who do not worship idols meditate in-groups at a special place called Sthanak.

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## **JAIN DIET\*:**

Jain religion emphasizes very disciplined eating habits and a vegetarian diet. Meat, eggs, fish, honey, alcohol, etc. are not allowed at all in the Jain diet. The main bases of Jain diets are grains like wheat, rice, and barley. In America and the western world, Jains have adopted corn, oats, pizza, pasta and many other foods into Jain households as well.

A Jain diet may be either lacto vegetarian or vegan (no milk or milk products). Many Jains consume milk with the belief that it is not a direct animal product such as meat. It was often thought that a baby calf was allowed to suckle all the milk until his/her needs were satisfied without violence and that the cow did not undergo a tortuous life. However, in the modern world that may no longer be the case and upon learning of this, more and more Jains are now turning vegan. Some Jains also avoid taking roots, such as potatoes, onions, garlic and carrots. One reason for this is to make efforts to minimize the violence involved in obtaining food. For example, if you pluck hundreds of oranges from a tree, you are not destroying the whole tree. However, when you pluck one single carrot, you uproot the whole plant. A second reason for this is that all roots have countless souls (Anantkay) under one body (skin). Some Jains also avoid multi seed fruits and vegetables. They believe that each seed represents a potential life. Many Jains avoid sprouted beans. Sprouting is a process in which life is activated in a seed that had otherwise become inactive. This is viewed as violence by some Jains. So while individual diets may vary, it is always important to consume food, which causes or results in minimum violence to other beings.

Jains usually try to eat before sunset since many visible and invisible lives thrive at night and we are at danger of consuming them. Eating before sunset also allows plenty of time for the digestive system to function properly.

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Apart from its religious relevance, the Jain diet plays an important role in our day to day life from a medical standpoint by helping to control dangerous chronic diseases. Vegetarian food reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and cancer. The cornerstone of healthy blood and tissues, iron, is abundant in many plant foods including beans, tofu, whole grains, lentils, pulses, dried fruits, (pistachio, almonds, walnuts), cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, and spinach. Calcium is obtained through dark green leafy vegetables, orange juice, soymilk, almonds, beans, and sesame seeds.

Animal protein is high in saturated fat and cholesterol, both of which are detrimental to the health. Animal products also have a low fiber content. In addition, farm animals are kept alive with hormones, tranquilizers, antibiotics and other drugs and chemicals, some of which are carcinogenic (cancer causing substances). Animals slaughtered for food might also have harmful infections resulting in non-vegetarians becoming more prone to disease.

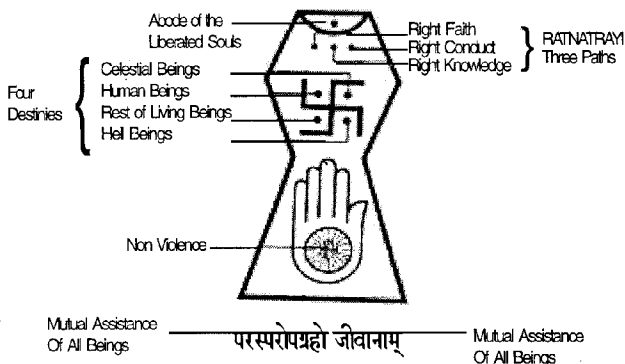
Some fasting practices followed by Jains include 'Ekasanu' (one meal), 'Besanu' (two meals), 'Chovihar' (not to eat and drink at night), and 'Ayambil' (to avoid, dairy products, oil, butter ghee). These, all accompanied with boiled water, can help control many disorders including obesity, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes mellitus, and stroke.

It can be concluded that the Jain diet requires adhering to certain restrictions and eating habits as laid down in the Jain religion. Following this type of diet has also shown to be beneficial from a medical standpoint in helping to fight against deadly diseases and living a longer life.

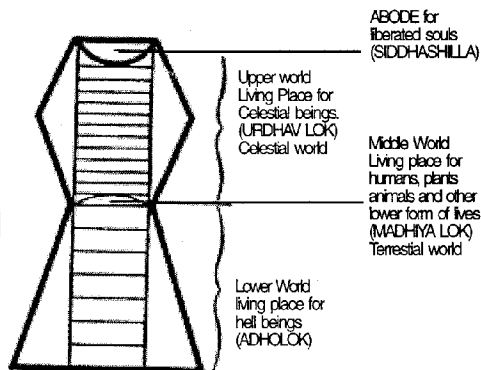
\* Private communication with Dr. Chandravadan C. Shah, New York and Mr. Narendra B. Sheth, California.

**\*\* Compiled from various Jain magazines and articles by: Pravin C. Shah, New York, and Chandrakant M. Shah, New York**

# Jain Universe



Jaina pratika: symbol of the Jaina faith, officially adopted during the 2500th anniversary of Mahavira's nirvana (1975). The palm of the hand bears the word ahimsa; the swastika topped by three dots and the descent represent the four destinies, the threefold path and the abode of the liberated souls, respectively; the slogan below the figure of lokarakasa calls for the mutual assistance of all beings.



परस्परपुण्यहो जीवानाम्

The shape of the universe resembles the man standing with the feet apart and the arms tucked on both hips.

NOTE: In Judio/Christian/Islamic Religions heaven means final "RESTING" Place. They do not have concept of DevLok. so "HEAVEN" is not proper word for "DEVLOK" choice is yours.

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## **The Saga of An Inspiring Personality**

To remember is life and to forget is death. On the wings of memory, men taste and rejoice the sweet moment of the past. The journey into the memory of a great man, who lived an inspiring life and left a brilliant legacy, might be a long one but it paves the path for the next generation. It could even change the shape and outline of someone's life, giving it a positive turn.

Today we shall resort to the excavation of the caves of time and get one such glimpse of an inspiring personality. His hallowed name was Virchand Gandhi. He represented the Jain Darshan at the famous Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year 1893. His fellow speakers representing various Indian Darshans were Prof. Gyanendranath Chakravarty of Allahabad, Miss Sorabji of Pune, Shri Nagarkar of the Brahma Samaj, Shri C. Dharampal from Ceylon, representing Buddhism and the stalwart of Hindu philosophy, Swami Vivekananda.

### **JAINISM AND THE SOCIETY A CENTURY AGO.**

The revolution of 1857 left a trail of awakening in the whole country. The time was approaching when society would begin to realize the possibility of steady progress in discarding its age-old narrowness and out-dated customs. The great reformers who were to guide the society in its transformation were still in their cradles - may be, some were yet to be born. The changes in the political field were the precursors of social, ethical, legal, religious and economic changes. People began to unite for the upliftment of the country, society and religion. Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arya Samaj in Kathiawar(today's Saurashtra) and Shri

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Ramakrishna Paramhansa, in Bengal were two bright beacons illumining true Hinduism. The birth of Swami Vivekananda was just round the corner.

The followers of Jainism, the Darshan capable of reconciling any idea from different viewpoints with its theory of Anekantvada, were unfortunately suffering from the malady of a narrow out-look. The basic supporting ideology of the Four-fold Sangha was steeped in supporting several 'gachchhas'. Time was not yet ripe to bring about a transformation. There was no one who could put his finger on the pulse of the Jain community and direct it towards a higher level, or propogate the true spirit of Jainism.

While the Jain community itself was in the grip of infights among its own factions, there were groups of non-Jains who believed that it was the Jains who were responsible for the degeneration of India. Jainism was considered a branch of Buddhism and the independent philosophy of this ancient faith was not accepted. That this idea was a mistaken one, could be proved only through scientific historical research. Then again several youngsters with Western education had started abusing religion as humbag. There were large groups who, in their zeal of reform, started attacking the drawbacks of the society and of religion. Thus, at that time the Jain religion had to fight on two fronts; the internal and the external.

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## Birth in the Land Of Heroes

About a 100 Kilometers from the city of Bhavnagar in the Gohilwad area of Saurashtra(at the western end of India) is the town of Mahuva. This town is ancient and historic. It has been dyed in the red hue of the hearts of heroes like Javadsha and Bhavadsha. These two men had restored the temples on the mount Shatrunjaya, one of the most important places of pilgrimage for the Jains. In the 'Dashakumara Chritra', the sixth chapter details the story of Nimbavati as told by Chitrugupta. In that story there is a mention of a town called Madhumati, which is most likely to be the original name of Mahuva. So is there a mention of Mahuva along with that of Una and Datha in Kanhadade Prabhandha(1-32). Jagdusha, a contemporary of Kumarapala in bidding for the mala ceremony at the Shatrunjaya temples. This incident is mentioned in the Kumarpala Prabandha. The Muslim Saint Vali, who penned Hindu bhajans, was also a respected son of this land. Probably one bye-lance in Mahura is known as valibhats chowk Several other literary figures including Pragji Bhagat of the Swaminarayan cult, Shri Tribhuvan Premshankar(known in Gujarati literary circles as 'Mastakavi') and his brother Harjgovind Premshankar, and 'Jatil', i.e., Jivaram Lakshmiram Dave, the well-known cirtic, also came from Mahuva.

Acharya Vijay Nemi Surishwarji, the lord of Jainism and the renovator of several places of pilgrimage (1872 to 1949) and the famous exponant of the Jain philosophy Shri Vijayadharma Surishwaraji (1867 to 1920) were yet to see the light of the world in this town when our hero was born in this the land of his birth.

About a hundred and twenty-five year ago, the people of

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this town were happy and contended. Of course, the society was then in the shackles of the then prevalent customs and superstitious beliefs. Shri Raghavjibhai Gandhi, the father of the hero of this biography was, however, a social reformer and a religious man at the same time. He had given up, for all his life 'Suchitta' items. He would drink only boiled water. However, he had given up the improper custom of weeping loudly and beating of breasts at a death. His business was in pearls, but he stuck to complete honesty in that business. His whole life was religion oriented. In the house of such a person of impeccable character Shri Virchandbhai was born on 25th August, 1864. His mother's name was Manbai.

## **EDUCATION**

Vinobaji once asked Pandit Sukhlalji, 'What is the greatest joy of your life?'

Sukhlalji replied, 'Teaching a deserving pupil'.

It is a matter of joy for a student to study under a competent teacher, deserving respect. It is equally a matter of joy for a teacher to get a deserving pupil. Such a pupil possesses a real thirst for knowledge. The intense thirst for knowledge together with his keen memory were instrumental in the success of Virchandbhai through the years of primary education. On one hand, he went to the regular school for practical knowledge and on the other hand he regularly attended the Pathshala for religious training. He also used to go to Upashraya to listen to religious discourses. In those days, primary education was considered adequate for most boys. As there was only a primary school in Mahuva, that was where education seemed to end. But this shortcoming of the town and of the era was not acceptable to Raghavjibhai. He could envisage the changing times and



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recognize the need for modern education

So he came to Bhavnagar with his family to enable Virchandbhai to attend the middle school. Virchandbhai became absorbed in studies and soon finished middle school. Not only that - in 1880, at the age of 16, he stood first in the state in the Matriculation examination and obtained the scholarship named after Shri Jashvantsinhji. He had also cultivated an interest in extra-curricular activities and in reading life-building literature. This stood him in good stead in the development of his character in later life.

### **THE FIRST JAIN GRADUATE**

Shri Virchandbhai had a good command over the English Language. Looking at his interest in his studies, his concentration and his intelligence, his father left no stone unturned to equip him with higher education. There was no college at Bhavnagar. So, Raghavjibhai and his family settled in Bombay. Virchandbhai joined the Elphinstone College and began his higher studies under the personal supervision of his father. Virchandbhai, an active young man, shaped his life that made his cultured father proud of him. In 1884, at the young age of 20, he obtained his B.A. degree with honours and had the distinction of becoming the first graduate of the Jain community.

### **THE BEGINNING OF PUBLIC - ACTIVITIES**

In those days there had been a difference of opinion between the Jain community and the Thakoresaheb of Palitana regarding the management of the temples at Shatrunjaya. The Jain community had lost its control over the temples. The Thakoresaheb, like most other Indian princes, had nearly lost his state to the British bosses. A need, therefore, arose to come together for that purpose.

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With this in view, the Jain Association of India was formed in 1882. Its main objectives were :

- 1) To knit closely the Jain community and bring about social and moral reforms.
- 2) To look after the religious trusts and religious funds of the Jains.
- 3) To move to stop the killing of animals.
- 4) To see that pilgrims had proper conveniences in places of pilgrimage - and such others.

Only two years after the formation, Shri Virchand Gandhi was unanimously appointed as the secretary of the organisation.

### **AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS AT CHICAGO**

In the history of India, kings like Ashoka and Akbar used to respect religious scholars belonging to religions other than their own.

Such scholars were felicitated and honoured at religions conferences. These conferences were like smaller editions of The Parliament of Religions that was convened at Chicago(in America) in the last years of the 19th century.

This conference was invaluable from the point of view of history and also because of the perfect order with which it was conducted. Representatives of various religions from different countries all over the world got together for the first time. The efficiency with which it was organised and managed made it a unique assembly in world history. More than three thousand delegates attended the conference. The aims of the conference included spreading the knowledge about various religions, bringing together the followers of different religions, enhancing this friendliness through healthy

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discussions, exchanging ideas regarding literature, art and commerce, and bringing people together for World Peace.

A Jain monk Rev. Atmanandji (later called Rev Acharya Vijyanandasuri) was invited in 1892 to attend this conference as a representative of Jainism. Atmanandaji was famous in Europe and America as a scholar over and above being known to be a public servant of the community. This was the background behind the invitation. A report published after the conference was held says :

“No man has so peculiarly identified himself with the interests of the Jain community as Muni Atmaramji. He is one of the noble bands sworn from the day of initiation to the end of life to work day and night for the high mission they have undertaken. He is the high priest of the Jain community and is recognized as the highest living ‘Authority’ on Jain religion and Literature.”

Atmaramji requested to be excused from attending the conference because by travelling by any vehicle, including a ship, he would violate the tenet of travelling on foot, mandatory for Jain monks. The organisers, therefore, suggested as an alternative, that he send a paper regarding the Jain philosophy to the conference so that the attending delegates could get an idea of the fundamentals of Jainism. A treatise called ‘Chicago Questions and Answers’ was prepared. When the book was sent to the organisers, they were so impressed that they requested Atmaramji to send another suitable scholar as the Jain representative. As a result of this enthusiasm, Shri Virchandbhai Gandhi was selected. Before going to Chicago, Virchandbhai stayed for six months with Atmaramji and equipped himself with deep knowledge of the Jain religion.

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Rev. Atmaramji Maharaj instructed Virchandbhai to stick to the Indian dress and to strictly follow the religious rules of daily life. The well-known magician from Mahuva, Prof. Nathu Manchhachand agreed to go with Virchandbhai as his cook. Virchandbhai obtained special permission to cook on board the ship (see Appendix 3). Thus equipped, Virchandbhai sailed for Chicago by S.S.'Assam'.

## **A REPRESENTATIVE OF JAINISM**

It is natural that a person expected to act as a representative of one's religion in a parliament of about 3000 representatives, would be selected by his co-religionists on the basis of his learnings, his oratory, his ability for comparative study, his broadmindedness and such other qualities. Virchandbhai had been selected by Rev. Atmaramji on this very basis. That such a person would succeed is not something surprising. But that he succeeded brilliantly in the face of certain difficulties regarding the presentation of Jainism makes his success doubly commendable.

The three branches of Indian Philosophy are Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism; their scriptures are written in Sanskrit, Ardhamagadhi and Pali respectively. A person who wishes to study these religions has to get conversant with the technical terms of each faith. Then again to impart the true essence of each of these to a new group of people is an equally if not more difficult job. Then again, the philosophy of Jainism touches various topics. For anyone to imbibe these metaphysical intricacies in depth, to digest its essence with the knowledge of its subtle terminology and then to present it in a lucid manner to savants at a conference and to create an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity for Jainism was no mean task. Only some rare personality like

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Virchandbhai could be gifted with such an ability, so that the vast ocean of Jainism can be contained in a few discourses.

While lecturing at the conference, Virchandbhai presented metaphysical points like the Nine Tatvas, Six types of souls, the comparison of the Jain beliefs of the creation and the dissolution of the world with those of other religions and certain technical terms of Jainism in great detail. We quote here from his interesting presentation of these subtle ideas :

‘Jainism has two ways of looking at things - one called the Dravyarthikanaya and the other the Paryayarthikanaya. I shall illustrate the same. The production of a law is the production of something not previously existing if we think it from the latter point of view i.e. as a Paryaya or modification; while it is not the production of something not previously existing, if we look at it from the former point of view, i.e. as a dravya or substance.....’.

‘..... The Jainism canon may be divided into two parts : first Sruta Dharma i.e. Philosophy and second Charitra Dharma i.e. ethics.

‘The Sruta Dharma inquires into the nature of nine principles, six kinds of living beings and four states of existence sentient beings, non-sentient things, merit, demerit of the nine principles, the first is Soul. According to Jaina view, Soul is that element which knows, thinks and feels.....’

‘The second principle is non-soul. It is not simply what we understand by matter, but is more than that. Matter is a term contrary to Soul. But non-soul is its contrary. Whatever is not soul is non-soul’.

‘The rest of the nine principles are but the different states produced by the combination and separation of soul and non-soul. The third principle is merit (Punya); that on

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account of which a being is happy. The fourth principle is demerit : that on account of which a being suffers from misery.....'

'.....Six kinds of living beings are divided into six classes, Earth-body beings(Pruthvikaay), Water-body beings(Apkaay), Fire-body beings(Teukaay), Wind-body beings(Vaaukaay), Vegetables(Vanaspatikaay) and all of them having one organ of sense, that of touch.....'

'.....The Jaina canonical book treats very elaborately of the minute divisions of the living beings and their prophets have long before the discovery of microscope, been able to tell how many organs of sense the minutest animalcule has. I would refer those, who are desirous of studying Jaina biology, zoology, botany, anatomy and philosophy to the many books published by our society....'

'What is the origin of the universe?'

'This involves the question of God Gautama, The Buddha, forbids inquiry into the beginning of things. In the Brahmanical literature bearing on the constitution of cosmos frequent reference is made to the days and nights of Brahma, the periods of Manvantara and the periods of Pralaya. But the Jainas, leaving all symbolic expressions aside, distinctly reaffirm the view previously promulgated by the previous heirophants, that matter and soul are eternal and cannot be created. You can affirm existence of a thing from one point of view, deny it from another and affirm both existence and non-existence with reference to it at different times...'

I have given this passage in detail to show how difficult it is to translate the Jain religious terminology into English. Through this lecture Virchandbhai laid the foundation of the English rendering of Jainism by putting his learning and

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comparitive study to good use.

His lecture on Jainism at the conference created such an amount of intellectual curiosity regarding that religion that he was invited to lecture at various places in America. People even started classes to study the Jain philosophy and the principles of yoga. The foreiegners were so impressed by his charming personality that his lectures were given the pride of place in the National Newspapers and they also praised Virchandbhai publicly. The following extract from the American newspapers will give an idea as to how Virchandbhai, so wisely selected by Rev. Atmaramji, created a place for himself in the hearts of the American people :

"Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, B.A., of Bombay, lectured Monday evening at 6558 Steward Boulevard. The subject was Jainism, the religion which Mr. Gandhi came to this country to represent at the Parliament of Religions, and which has been listened to by larger and more enthusiastic audiences than any other Oriental Religion which has been presented during or since the parliament by the many scholarly representatives from the various countries".

## **DEFENCE OF THE HINDU RELIGION**

India is the cradle of all cultures. She is the mother of philosophers. In the words of Swami Viveknand, she deserves, to be venerated by the whole world.

Yet it sometimes happens that people, not being able to stand the heat of the sun, childishly indulge in throwing dust at the sun. This happened at the Parliament of Religions. Rev. Pentecost, a representative from London talked about the fact that immoral woman musicians were asked to perform at certain festival in temples and said, 'One wonders whether they are prostitutes turned worshippers or worshippers turned prostitutes'.

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It is likely that foreigners make such statements because they depend upon third-hand information and tend to forget that such unseemly social customs are not a part of the true religion.

Virchanbhai, among the delegates, was furious at this quite unfair remark and felt that the remark needed a reply. This was indeed an extra feather in Virchandbhai's cap. As a representative of Jainism it was only right that he did not stick to his own religion in the narrow sense of the term—more so because he was a follower of the noble concept of Syadvaada which accepted the greatness of all other religions too. He behaved like a patriotic Indian and sought to dispel false beliefs about the social and religious practices in his country. This attitude is also seen in one of his lectures entitled, 'Some mistake, corrected', which he believed later while about to leave America. That remarkably touching defence of the Hindu religion was as given below :

'Some men in their ambition think that they are Pauls, and what they think they believe. these new pauls go to vent their platitudes upon India. They go to India to convert the heathens in a mass,' but when they find their dreams melting away, as dreams always do, they return to pass a whole life in abusing the Hindu. Abuses are not arguments against any religion, nor self-adulation the proof of the truth of one's own. For such I have greatest pity. There are a few Hindu temples in Southern India where women - singers are employed to sing on certain occasions. Some of them are of dubious character, and the Hindu society feels it and is trying its best to remove the evil, but to call these..... 'preistess because they are prostitutes' and 'prostitutes because they are preistesses' is a statement which differs as much truth as darkness from light. These women are



never allowed to enter the main body of the temple, and as for their being preistesses, there is not one woman preistess from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin'.

'If the present abuses in India have been produced by the Hindu religion, the same religion had the strength of producing a society which made the Greek historian say : 'No Hindu was ever known to tell an untruth, no Hindu woman ever known to be unchaste'. And even in the present day where is there a more chaste woman or a milder man than in India ? The Oriental bubbles may be pricked, but the very hysterical shrieks sent forth from this platform from time to time show to the world that sometimes bubbles may be heavier than the blated balloons of vanity and self-conceit'.

'I am very, very sorry for those who criticize the great ones of India, and my only consolation is that all their information about them has come from third-hand, fourth-hand sources, percolating through layers of superstition and bigotry. To those who think that in the refusal of the Hindu to criticize the character of Jesus is a tacit acceptance of the superiority of the fanatical nil admirari cult they represent, I am tempted to quote the old fable of Esope, and tell them : 'Not to you I bend the knee, but to the image you are carrying on your back', and point out to them one page from the life of the great Emperor Akbar'.

'A certain ship full of Mohammedan pilgrims was going to Mecca. On its way a Portuguese vessel captured it. Amongst the booty were some copies of the Koran. The Portuguese hanged these copies of the Koran(Kuran) around the necks of dogs, and paraded these dogs through the streets of Ormuz. It happened that this very Portuguese ship was captured by the Emperor's men, and in it were

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found copies of the Bible. The love of Akbar for his mother is well-known and his mother was a zealous Mohammedan, and it pained her very much to hear the treatment of the sacred book of the Mohammedans in the hands of the Christians, and she wanted Akbar to do the same with the bible. But this great man replied : 'Mother, these ignorant men do not know the value of the Koran, and they treated it in a manner which is the outcome of ignorance. But I know the glory of the Koran and the Bible both, and I cannot degenerate myself in the way they did'.

It is interesting to note that the American press was unanimous in declaring the remarks of Rev. Pentecost as derogatory to the dignity of the Parliament. They not only took note of Virchandbhai's dignified and broad-minded reply but printed the whole lecture verbatim. The reply was given on 25-9-1893. Here is the coverage in Chicago Times of 26-9-1893.

"Mr. Gandhi of India replies to some inhospitable criticisms, when Dr. George F. Pentecost, in his address before the Parliament of Religions last Sunday evening, assailed the character of Brahmin priests and priestesses, he not only committed a gross outrage upon the Parliament by overstepping the very first rules under which the Congress is conducted and succeeded as a guest in a wholesale libel upon other given in the Parliament, but he aroused alike the indignations of Christians, Buddhists and members of every sect in attendance. Here is the brief extract from Dr.'s unprecedented attack:

'We have listened to lectures from distinguished orientals on our political and social shortcomings for the last few days with as much as patience as we could command.

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They have been going through the slums as Chicago and New York and have been going dumping down buckets of mud upon us. But we deny that these are specimens of Christianity. But in India, among the High class Brahmins, there are atleast 600 priestesses and everyone of them is a prostitute. They are prostitutes because they are priestesses and they are priestesses because they are prostitutes. These men are criticising Christianity. There are two or three oriental bubbles floating over Chicago that need to be pricked'.

Such language under such circumstances is beyond criticism and stands out in unpleasant contrast to the dignified reply made yesterday afternoon by Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, who represents in the Parliament the Jaina sect of India.'

After these remarks, the newspaper had printed the complete text of the lecture. Other newspaper like 'Inter Ocean' also gave positive coverages.

### **GOOD-BYE TO THE PARLIAMENT**

Virchandbhai was an emotional person over and above being intellectual. He was among the delegates who proposed a vote of thanks at the last session. Virchandbhai gave voice to the feelings of most at the sad parting so soon after the commencement. He said,

'Are we not all sorry that we are parting so soon ? Do we not wish that this Parliament would last seventeen times seventeen days ? Have we not heard with pleasure and interest the speeches of the learned representatives on this platform ? Do we not see that the sublime dream of the organizers of this unique parliament has been more than realized ?'

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## A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARYAN CULTURE

During his travels abroad, Virchandbhai defended his culture in a way that behoved that culture and showed an acumen full of honesty and broadmindedness. His replies to arguments and criticisms used to be modest and of a high calibre.

Some titles of his lectures were: 'The Pre-historic Life of the Hindus', 'The Status of Marriage in India', 'The Condition of Women in India', 'The Social Customs of India', 'The Main Philosophies of Hindus, Jains and Buddhists', 'The Law of Ethical Causation and a solution of Life', 'Political India - Hindus, Muslims and the British', 'Indian Women - Past, Present and Future', etc. Some other topics that he covered in his speeches were : 'Occultism', 'The Science of Music', 'American Women should give up the feathers in their caps', 'The Connection between the Press and Theatre', 'The Influence of the Present Social Laws on American Politics', 'The Message of India to America', 'India's Gift to America', 'Buddhism', 'Three Unique Theories of Philosophy', 'The Position of Women in Hindu, Mislum and British Rule;', etc. This variety of topics indicated his intellectual genius.

Virchandbhai stayed in America for some time after the Parliament of Religions was over. Ha again travelled twice to that country, in 1896 and in 1899. During these trips, he gave about 650 talks. Some of these have been printed in book fom in a volume called Jain Philosophy, Karma Philosophy and Yoga Philosophy'.

Once while speaking to Americans, he said : What is that Christ in whose name you propose to conquer the world? Is there a Christ of oppression; is there a Christ of injustice; is there a Christ of misinterpretation; is there a

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Christ of denial of all rights; is there a Christ of destruction of all holy aims and human immemorial institutions; is there a Christ of injustice and exorbitant taxation for the support of a government, foreign to our knowledge, our thought, our religion and our consent? Which of these Christs has inscribed his name on the banner of your conquests ? If you seek to conquer us under such banners, and in the name of such Christs, we refuse to be conquered. But, if you come to us in the name and spirit the Christ of education, of brotherhood, universal love, or in the name of that Christ, who, in the valley of the Ganges, and on the shores of the sea of Tiberius, taught and said, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another' then I say, we will welcome you, for him we know, and of him we are not afraid.

### **MIXED REACTIONS IN BOMBAY**

There are always two kinds of people

One type collects censure and poison to spread them around, while the other type gathers sweetness from wherever they can get it and presents to the world, the essence of beauty.

A person of the first type is like a fly from whom clean people prefer to keep away.

One who belongs to the second type is like a bee, whom people approach to obtain the essence of goodness and virtue. When Virchandbhai returned to India from America, he came across both kinds of people.

One would imagine that when a person returns to the lap of his Motherland after so successfully representing his religion, he is sure to be received like a favourite son of the land. But some of own bretheren could not share his joy.

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As usual, the number of such fault finders was larger than those who appreciated him. The admirers though fewer in number, were of greater mettle. The whirlwind of opposition to the idea of an Aryan going to a Non-Aryan country to talk about religion had not died down till Virchandbhai returned.

In this atmosphere, the admirers of Virchandbhai organised a number of functions under the aegis of 'Buddhivardhak Sabha', 'Arya Samaj', etc. and asked Virchandbhai to speak at those meetings, the hostile groups broke the meetings with slogans like, 'Excommunicate Virchandbhai'. He also received personal threats.

Here is the text of the pamphlet that was issued when Virchandbhai went to the Parliament of Religions:

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Bombay  
9th July 1893

'All religious minded Jains are hereby informed that it has been decided by the Jain Association, without the consent of the Jain community, to send a representative, in the name of the (Jain) Sangha to the religious conference to be held in Chicago on the American continent. Some facts, against that decision have recently come to light, and so a number of people are unhappy. This story is now so well-known, that there is no need to discuss it further. And so we, the undersigned openly declare that we are not at all in favour of the decision to send a representative to Chicago and we hereby cancel the decision and that we disapprove of the decision'.

There were 137 signatures and a note saying, 'We have printed only a few signatures to avoid undue length of the notice'.

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I give all these details to indicate that the community - bonds were not loose in those days. One can understand that a part of the community was ready to punish even a person like Virchandbhai; but the conditions then were such that even those who kept up their relations with him would have to suffer from social boycott. All the same, when the Bombay Jain Sangh went against Virchandbhai's trip to Chicago, Shri Maganlal Dalpatram gave an amount he could not well afford as a financial help to fulfill the desire of his Guru (Rev. Atmaramji). He also negotiated with the Sangh and saw that the plan went ahead. During the difficult days after Virchandbhai's return, he did not break his relations with Virchandbhai but openly continued to dine with him, displaying great moral courage. He actually invited 200 guests for a public dinner with Virchandbhai and thus publicly kept up his relations with Virchandbhai.

The atmosphere becomes tenser. If a person doing his duty towards his religion and thus harassed, the true Dharma would be sullied and in future it might create an unhealthy precedent for others trying to sacrifice themselves for the true Dharma. To avoid this, some practically wise members of the community approached Rev. Atmaramji. and suggested that he should ask Virchandbhai to go through a penance or should suggest some other practical solution.

How could the revolutionary Acharya accept such a proposal? How could he punish the one who had performed his religious duty? A penance was supposed to be given to someone who was guilty of blemishes in character or in the knowledge of the darshana. That Virchandbhai had preserved all the rules the daily behaviour as a Jain (particularly regarding eating and drinking) was obvious from the contemporary newspapers of America.

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The Editor's Bureau writes : 'We have not enough words of praise for this great and noble individual who practises all the advice that he preaches'. In view of all this, Atmaramji felt that there was no question of a penance. He wrote in reply :

'It is written in Shri Nishitha Sutra that if one orders a penance to a person without any blemish on the part of the other person, he who orders the penance will have to offer penance himself and he will also be considered to have disobeyed the command of Jinraja'.

A penance can be given only to him, who confesses his sins in the presence of the Guru with his Inner conscience as witness. To emphasize this point, Atmaramji quoted this instance of Lakshmana Sadhvi :

'Then again, as long as the sinner does not confess his sin, even a Kevaljnani does not order a penance. This rule is mentioned in Shri Mahanishaya Sutra with reference to Lakshmana Sadhvi. When even a Kevaljnani cannot order a penance without a confession from the sinner, how can I, a chhadmastha with limited understanding, order a penance?'

Replying to every argument and every opinion of the Sangha, the revered Acharya refuted the belief that a penance was required for crossing the ocean and going to an Anarya country, in these words :

'I have not read anything like this in any Jain scripture. How can I, then, disobey the command of Lord Jina and order him a penance?'

But the storm of opposition was so severe that any further insistence from Acharyaji might have caused a division in the Sangha. So Shri Atmaramji said, 'If at the behest of the Sangha, Virchandbhai performs a yatra of Shatrunjaya



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tirtha, would the Sangha be happy? Virchand Raghavji would not loose anything by obeying this order of the Sangha'. He further suggested that Muni Shri Mohanlalji of Bombay should be consulted on this point.

Not being satisfied with Rev. Atmaramji's reply, the Sangha approached Muni Shri Mohanlalji for guidance.

Mohanlalji was in a quandary. On the one hand Virchandbhai used to come to him for intellectual conversation and for Satsanga, while, on the other hand, Shri Sangha was prepared to go to court even if Virchandbhai stepped into the Upashraya.

Presence of mind played a useful role in the situation.

Mohanlalji started a series of discourses in which he emphasised the idea 'Know Your Times'. He started a logical scrutiny on Utsarpini, Avasarpini and Apvaada. He kept on explaining, how a follower of Lord Jina should be above attachmnet and hatred. Mean-while he confidentially advised Virchandbhai to keep away from Bombay.

Society began forgetting the whole story as time went on. A time came when Virchandbhai was reinstated into society upon performing a snatra - puja of Lord Jinendra.

### **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA & SHRI VIRCHANDBHAI GANDHI**

When two great men are contemporaries and are in the same field, one naturally feels like comparing one with the other. Just as Virchandbhai deserves the credit for acquainting the world with Jainism, Swami Vivekananda was the one who made the Vedanta philosophy known to the world. They were both delegates at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, representing the Jain Darshan and the Vedanta Darshan respectively.

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Both these stalwarts had woven into their lives the three virtues indispensable to an effective personality - Commitment to duty, purity and truth. 'Swami Vivekananda declared : 'I shall work incessantly till I die and even after my death, I shall work for the good of the world'. These words are clearly indicative of the Indian culture. As far as Virchandbhai is concerned, it is a fact that his untimely death was the result of his devotion to work. So there is no doubt about his commitment to action. Swamiji, being a Sannyasi was pure (in body and mind). He considered as a real man only that person who possessed purity of the heart. Virchandbhai was a man of the world. In spite of being a Shravaka and not a Sannyasi, he looked upon the world with detachment. Even in America his ways were those of a devout Jain. He was always a strict vegetarian. This was a challenge to the then prevalent belief that one who goes abroad violated the norms of his religion. The Western scholars have freely praised his devoutness. Like Swami Vivekananda, Virchandbhai too, never hesitated to speak out what he felt to be the truth - no matter who attacked him for his outspokenness. In the face of caste - bonds, short sighted approach of the society and objections to a trip abroad, both these great men crossed the ocean in order to preach their Darshans. What better ideals of service can we find?

Both were deeply learned in philosophy, both possessed a capacity of comparative study, both had a clear vision that could see ahead of their times. Both were experts in yoga and both took great pains to teach the westerner, the process of yoga, through which they could enlighten them about the Aryan culture. While in the western countries, they were complimentary to each other. Swami Vivekananda had great faith in Virchandbhai's ability. He says in a letter :

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'Miss Sorabji a Christian lady from Poona and Mr. Gandhi, the representative of Jainism are staying for a long time in this country and are moving from town to town delivering speeches. I hope they will be successful'.

Both Swami Vivekananda and Virchandbhai were very compassionate. We know the way they exerted themselves during the drought of 1896-97. Swamiji moved from place to place, nursed the sick and helped the stricken. To him service of the people was service of God. He was so convinced about this truth that he was ready to sell the buildings of his ashram to help the rehabilitation programme.

Virchandbhai was in America at that time. When he received the news of the drought, he organised a committee for drought relief fund under the chairmanship of C.C.Bonney, the president of the Parliament of Religions. Appealing to the people of Chicago, he arranged a shipment of food-grains to India as an immediate relief step. When he asked them for more help, the people of Chicago helped generously and about Rs. 40000 were collected and sent to various parts of India as a relief measure. Virchandbhai has referred to this in his letter 19-7-1897. He says : 'After a lot of trouble, we have sent a shipload of corn from San-Fransisco to Calcutta. That will be distributed among the poor. We sent about Rs. 40000 to different parts of India. We shal send in a few days Rs. 2000(appr.) to the Jain Sangh of Bombay'.

Shri Mohanlal Dalichand Desai writes, as he compares these two great men : 'Both were jewels of India, popular orators who attracted the American audience and who impressed others with their idealogies.

At the time of Swami Vivekanda's demise, 'Banner of Light', a well known periodical in America, drew a comparison between the two and wrote :

‘Both spent a lot of their time in study. But a freshness in the style of writing that was found in the articles of Virchand Gandhi was missing in the writings of Vivekananda. Both these great men were badly needed on both the continents, and the world would indeed miss them’.

Regarding both the jewels of India, one can say that :

- 1) People still praise the papers both of them read at the Parliament of Religions, convened in Chicago in 1893 to discuss various religions.
- 2) Both were popular orators and words of praise were heard from people all over the country.
- 3) Those who heard the lectures were happy to accept the principles thereof, and those who could think constructively over these principles are still influenced by those principles.
- 4) Both died very young - Virchandbhai at 37 and Vivekananda at 40. I feel if they had lived longer, they would certainly have used their time to the advantage of the world.
- 5) Both died after very short lives in their motherland - Vivekananda in 1902 at the Belur Math and Virchandbhai, in Bombay in 1901’.
- 6) The influence of Vivekananda’s philosophy has been kept alive by his disciple Swami Abhedanda and others, by founding organisations like Ramakrishna Society, etc.

Whereas, it is the matter of great pity that no attempt has been made to keep Virchandbhai’s memory green. What is this if not ingratitude.....?

What attracts us most is the similarity in their thoughts.

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Though they propagated different religions, their ideas were remarkably similar. Let's look at one point: That all reformers have believed the caste system to be faulty is not the truth. Both these individuals have mentioned this fact in their own ways. Vivekananda says :

'From Buddha to Raja Ram Mohan Rai, each reformer has made the mistake of considering the caste-system as a religious set-up and has tried to break the bondage of the castes ----

Caste is not a religious organisation. In spite of the fanaticism of religious leaders, caste is a social organisation which is embedded in the Indian society. These organisations, after having offered their services to the country, have at present pervaded the Indian atmosphere with a rigidity. The only way to remove that rigidity is that the castes should return to the people, the social individuality which they - the people have lost'.

Shri Virchandbhai interprets this problem in a slightly different manner. In his learned forward to 'An unknown Life of Jesus Christ', while comparing the relationship of ancient India with other countries covering commerce, art, literature, religion, etc., he says about the caste system : 'I do not approve of the present standards by which the caste system has taken shape. But, like Dr. Leitner, (the Registrar of the University of Punjab) I am convinced that by preserving the caste - system in its original form, we shall be preserving the inimitable cultural background of Indian art, Indian industry, etc. which can compete with the modern requirements and aspirations'.

Just as Bhagini Nivedita became the follower of Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Howard was initiated by Virchandbhai.

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## THE ASIAN REPRESENTATIVE AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE CONFERENCE

In 1899, Shri Virchandbhai attended the International Commerce Conference as a representative of the whole of Asia. Here is a note about his speech at the conference from a newspaper :

'Mr. Virchand Raghavji Gandhi represented 350 million Indians. He suggested improvement in and expansion of our postal system which handed the parcels, so that all the countries in the world can be covered. He opened our eyes by emphasising this and reminded us that we need to impart detailed and complete education about commerce'.

### FOLLOWERS AND FORIEGN FRIENDS

**1. Mrs. Howard :** Just as sister Nivedita was a follower of Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Howard was intiated into the Jain religion by Virchandbhai. It was Virchandbhai's virtuous contact that turned Mrs. Howard into a pure vegetarian and a staunch Jain.

Shri Gulabchandji Dhaddha has made a few entries in his diary about Virchandbhai's activities in America. He writes : 'After Shri Gandhi returned from America, I met him at Ajmer. We were both there to deliver a speech. During this meeting, Shri Gandhi showed me a letter from a senior officer of the postal department in Chicago. The letter said, 'I had been cured of my headache by repeating the Navakar mantra, in a ritualistic manner as directed by Mr. Gandhi. Due to some mistake on my part, the headache has reappeared. Please give me proper guidance.' This is an excellent example for those who do not believe in the propensity of a mantra.

Shri Gulabchandji Dhaddha further writes : 'At that time

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Shri Gandhi showed me the photograph of an American lady(who was perhaps Mrs. Howard). She was performing the Samayika, dressed in the Indian attire, sitting on a mat (technical term 'Katasanu') with the 'Muhapatti'(a strip of cloth to cover the mouth) in her hand. The initiating Acharya was with her. She had a rosary in her hand. Shri Gandhi told me that when this lady chanted the Navakar mantra for a month, according to the special instructions of Shri Vijayanandsuri, she remembered her previous birth and told us about several incidents of her life during a previous birth in India'.

Virchandbhai had founded an organisation called 'The Society for the Education of Women of India'. The secretary of this society was Mrs. Howard. Some details of the activities of the society are included in this book under the heading 'Evaluating Virchandbhai as a Visionary of the Era of Education'.

**2. Herbert Warren :** This noble personality, initiated by Virchandbhai can be called an ideal Jain.

As Shri Mohanlal Dalichand Desai writes : To see an English gentleman giving up eating meat totally, heartily following the Jain rites, in a limited but truthful manner, having complete intellectual faith in the Jain philosophy getting steeped into religious study is a matter of great joy'.

Shri Virchandbhai had inaugurated an organisation in England called 'Philosophical Society', through this Society, he had run classes for impart comparative knowledge of Jainism, Hindu Yoga and Buddhist philosophy. Herbert Warren attended these classes. He had kept notes of Virchandbhai's lectures at these classes. Whatever he inbibed from those lectures was enough to keep his faith steady in the Jain

darshan. he published a book called 'Jainism' based on these notes. Pandit Fatehchand Lalan wrote the forward and blessed this book.

After the demise of Virchandbhai, this society closed down. Mr. Warren was, however a real seeker. So whenever he had a doubt on any religious question, he used to correspond with the Jain savants in India and get his doubts cleared. He thus came into contact with Pandit Lalan, Shri Hiralal Jhaveri, Shri Govindji Mulji Mahewani and Shri Makanji Juthabhai.

Mr. Warren was eager to see that Jainism was propagated on a large scale so that his countrymen would appreciate the ideals of Jainism. So he started in London a 'Jaina Literature Society'. Through that society, he took up the activity of getting researched books of appraisal of Jain Philosophy written by English scholars and publishing them. In order to practise the Jain way of life, he also started an organisation called 'Mahavira Brotherhood' or 'Universal Fraternity'.

These attempts invoke the memories of the intense attempts of Virchandbhai to propagate Jainism.

**3. President Charles C. Bonney :** The concept of the Parliament of Religions, its organisation and its success were all thanks to this gentleman. He had great feeling and sympathy for India. When there was a drought in India in 1896-97 and when Virchandbhai formed a committee to aid India, he asked for and obtained the co-operation of president C.C. Bonney as the chairman of the committee. The committee sent a shipload of foodgrains and about Rs. 40,000 for the victims of the drought in different parts of India.



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**4. Dr. John Henry Burrows :** He was the secretary of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. He was impressed by the way in which Virchandbhai defended Hinduism in a gentle but effective manner and added to the dignity of the conference. When Virchandbhai stayed on in America after the conference, Mr. Burrows temporarily vacated his own residence for Virchandbhai to stay there.

**5. William Pipe :** He was the joint secretary of the Parliament of Religions. He was an admirer of the activities of Virchandbhai and was helpful to him whenever possible.

It was under the guidance of William Pipe that Virchandbhai conducted the classes at the School of Oriental Philosophy and Esoteric Studies.

### **HYPNOTISM AND SHRI VIRCHAND GANDHI**

This incident is one about which no one would have known if Mahatma Bhagwandin had not mentioned it in his book 'Mere Sathi'. In that he writes :

Shri Virchand Gandhi was born in the 19th century. India had become a slave(of the British) only 37 years ago. At that time there were some individuals in this country whom the slavery had not touched. One among such individuals, Shri Virchand Gandhi had declared in America that India was the place where the system called hypnotism was born. Oh my ! What a number of people must have been awed by Shri Virchand Gandhi ! While giving a talk of hypnotism at the Masonic Temple, he got the light to be dimmed. As soon as the room was dark, a beautiful glow emitted from the body of the Indian dressed in white. His white turban was glowing so brightly that it seemed there was a bright sun shining behind Gandhi's face'.

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## COMPROMISE ON PROTECTIVE TAX

It is a well-known historic fact that the Shatrunjay hill was owned by Shwetambara Jains since the time of Akbar and Shri Shantidas Nagarsheth. However, since that emperor and his decendants Jehangir, Shahjahan and others did not ratify the gift on a tamrapatra, the ownership got transferred into the hands of the king of Palitana. This king, Shri Sursinhji decided to tax the pilgrims to Shatrunjaya saying that the tax was meant to arrange for the protection of the hill. Each pilgrim was to pay Rs. 2 as a protective tax. This caused a lot of inconvenience to the pilgrims.

At Surajkund near Shatrunjaya, there was a shrine with the 'paduka' of Shri Rishabhdev Bhagwan. Some mischief-makers dug out the shrine on 7-6-85 and on 19-6-85, the paduka was declared as lost. The Brahmins of Palitana complained that the Jains had dug out the Paduka because they were Guru Dattatreya's padukas (perhaps someone instigated the Brahmins to do so). So the attendants employed by the Jains at that place of pilgrimage were beaten and arrested.

Telegrams were sent about these incidents to the Governor and other officers. A representative group of the Jains met the Governor Lord Ray at Poona on 18-7-85. Then Asst. Political Agent looked into the matter. But that inquiry was objected to as one-sided. Then the government said, that regarding the matter of the harrasment of the Jain attendants by the ruler of Palitana, there will be an inquiry at Songadh and the case against the Jain attendants which was in the Palitana court, would be transferred to the court of the Asst. political agent. At that, Virchandbhai and other Jain leaders went to the governor at Mahableswhar. Around

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that time the ruler of Palitana, Shri Sursinhji died and so the case was dismissed.

The new Thakor Saheb Mansinhji succeeded Shri Sursinhji on the throne of Palitana. Virchandbhai took great pains and bought about the following compromise :

- 1) The protective tax of Rs. 2 per head be abolished and the ruler be given Rs. 15000 per annum by the Jain community.
- 2) This arrangement be in force for 40 years from April 1886.
- 3) After 40 years, both sides could think of a different arrangement. At that time it would be the right of the British government to take the decision after hearing the arguments of both sides.

Thus Virchandbhai proved his prowess as an arbitrator. At that time, the political agent (later called Agent to the Governor) was Col. Watson.

### **The Problem of a Factory for Extracting Animal Fat at Sametshikhar**

Sametshikhar is the peak of a mountain where the 20 Tirthankaras out of 24 Tirthankaras had attained Siddhi. For this reason, it has a special importance among Jains. Sametshikhar together with Madhuvan was in the kingdom of the king of Palganj in the Hazaribaug district of Bengal.

It was a custom that the king had the right to take away the rice grains and other offerings at Sametshikhar, just as at Shatrunjay that right belonged to the Bhaat community. As a part of that right, and also in return of protection of the hill, the Jain sangh gave Rs.1500 to the king. The hill, however, belonged to the Jains. But as there was some

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carelessness on the part of the Jains in implementing the property rules, the king extended his rights over the wood, grass and the herbal trees on the hill.

In 1886, the local ruler leased some land in the vicinity of the hill to an Englishman named Bedam for growing tea. After maintaining a tea garden for four or five years, the Englishman built a factory for extracting the fat of pigs. This factory was 2 to 3 miles away from Sametshikhar, but it was included in the circular route along which pilgrims performed the Pradakshina of the holy hill. Pilgrims could hear the screams of the pigs which were being slaughtered. How could the devotees of Lord Arishtanemi keep quiet at this animal slaughter?

This was the same Tirthankara who had become a sannyasi at the doorstep of his wedding - pandal!

The leaders of the Jain sangh complained to the commissioner of Hazaribaug. The commissioner, however, dismissed the complaint, saying, 'the government cannot interfere in any commercial matter'. Then a complaint was filed in the district court, and a stay obtained for the factory. The judgement of the court, however, went against the Jain community. The Jains appealed to the High Court. All the expenses of the case were borne by a rich Jain gentleman from Calcutta, Babusaheb Badriprasadji.

The community thought of obtaining the advice of Virchandbhai. There, however, was a hurdle. The primary evidence was not presented at the district court because it consisted of letters, inscriptions and tamrapatras in the local language Bengali. All the same, when Virchandbhai was approached, he stayed in Calcutta for some time, learnt the Bengali language, copied the required documentation,

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translated them into English and presented them at the High Court. He was able, to convince the court, about the ownership of the Jains over Sametshikhar. His clear and able presentation brought the verdict in favour of the Jain sangh. This was the second time our hero brought about a happy ending to a problem regarding a place of pilgrimage, and thus could be of tremendous use as the secretary of the Jain Association of India.

### **VIRCHANDBHAI'S CORRESPONDENCE**

Very few of the letters written by Virchandbhai are available. A few of them are in the collection at the Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya. In 1964, his cenetary year, his family donated his unpublished literature, caskets, medals, etc. to the Vidyalaya. His letters were a part of this donation. I remember to have read a couple of his letters which were published in 'Jain Yuga', the organ of Shri Jain Shwetambara Conference.

Literature constituted a bright facet of his life. His literature is, so to say, suggestive of his bright life ! He was a philosopher and also a romantic at the same time. He would complete verses on the basis of one (the last) line he would participate in literary criticism, guide his friends in writing poetry. All this is clearly seen in his letters to his friends. The dedicated service of literature found in his letters teaches us the advantage of letter - writing. Letters, too, can become pieces of literature, can be an indivisible part of literature.

Virchandbhai, together with Shri Bhagwandas Durlabhdas Parekh and Shri Mulchand Nathubhai, formed a friendly and literary minded trio. The three loved each other tremendously ! If one of the three would be a bit late in writing a letter, the

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others would be very much upset. The spirit of these letters bring to us a pleasant picture of love in friendship.

In a letter of 23-3-1887, when he did not receive a letter from another friend Shri Manilal Mohanlal, Virchandbhai sent him two verses of 'covert insinuation'(Anyokti). In one of these he blamed himself for behaving like a deer that goes after a mirage in the false hope of obtaining water. In a note to the verse he wrote : 'you may not realise at the moment to whom this insinuation applies, but your heart will tell you later'.

Bhagwandas Parekh used to write poems and send them to Virchandbhai, requesting him to guide him through criticism. Virchandbhai, in reply would discuss the poems according to his ability. In a letter of 30-1-1887. Bhagwandasbhai writes:

'Moreover, you have written about the sub - divisions of sentiment of love, (Shringara Rasa) and have told me that my poems depicts love in separation (Vipralamba Shringara) Now, you may know that I am completely ignorant of any sub-divisions of rasa, because I have not learnt poetics from anyone so that I can have any idea of anything like 'love is separation'. In the same letter he says : 'I have a slight idea of love in unity, though not very clearly. Just as you have explained to me the conditions in which love in separation can be depicted, please also explain those details about love in unity(Sambhoga Shringara). Virchandbhai, being himself thirsting for knowledge, was only too happy to oblige his friend. In reply he wrote a verse and added his remarks to it. He said, 'The mutual glances of the hero and the heroine, their conversation, their strolling together in the garden, picking flowers, enjoying a swim, drinking together,

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exchanging beetle - leaves (paan) and making love - all these constitute 'love in unity'.

This was a picture of his interest in literary criticism. We shall not raise a controversy as to whether he was a poet or not, but on the basis of his letters we can certainly say he was poetic-minded - a poet at heart. Once Bhagwandasbhai sent him a line of poetry, which was to be used as the last line of a verse, the first three lines to be composed by the reader. The given line said, 'I find that as sweet as sugar'. What 'that' was, would be described by the reader. Virchandbhai interpreted the 'that' in six ways. What 'that' was to a Jain Muni, to someone with reference to moonlight, in the eyes of an acquitted criminal, to one who receives a letter, to a devotee and to a poet. It was remarkable that at the young age of 23, Virchandbhai could instantaneously write such a variety of verses and put himself in the place of even a Jain Muni. This shows how deep the roots of religious impact were in his mind. Is it not more than likely that these very imprints played an important role in his later development?

Even in the western countries, he lived the life of a devout Jain. He was a strict vegetarian according to the special Jain tenets. In adhering to vegetarianism of the Jain variety, he had to undergo quite a few difficulties. He had to obtain a special permission to get his meal cooked on a separate stove on board the ship. He had to get a certificate from the captain of the ship regarding this special arrangement so that he may not find it difficult to make similar arrangements elsewhere. To get such certificates and such letters of recommendation must have been quite difficult, as any one in today's society can well appreciate (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the concerned letter). He has written these

details in his letter to Dayachandbhai in his letter of 29-1-1894. The artist of magic Shri Nathu Manchhachand was travelling with him as his cook.

Other passengers on board included Prof. Jnanendranath Chakravarti of Allahbad College, Shri Dharampal, the secretary of the Bauddha Dharma Sabha, Mrs. Annie Besant, the President of the London Theosophical Society and her secretary Miss Muler. When Virchandbhai explained to them the essence of the Jain Darshan, they were surprised and said, 'It is a pity, the Jains do not publish books on such wonderful philosophy in English'.

He saw to it that the dignity of the Jain community was preserved in countries abroad. He had to stop for a couple of days at New York en route to Chicago. At that time, the secretary of Parliament of Religions, Mr. William Pipe was also in New York. He told Virchandbhai that all special arrangement to enable him to follow the Jain tenets will be made for him at the expense of the conference.

Virchandbhai, however, felt that it would be demeaning for the well-to-do Jain community if the people of America bore the expenses of a representative who was there to propogate the Jain Darshan. So he thanked Mr. Pipe and told him that he would stay there at his own expense.

## **CONTACT WITH MAHATMA GANDHI**

When Gandhiji was not yet a Mahatma, and when he was experimenting with food-habits, Virchand Gandhi had joined him in one such experiment. Gandhiji has mentioned that in his autobiography - 'My experiments with Truth' (part 2, chapter 3 of the Gujarati edition). 'Had Mahatmaji not mentioned the fact, we would not have known anything about it' - this is what Pandit Sukhlalji has written in his



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article about Virchandbhai. Again in a letter to Late Mohanbhai, the son of Shri Virchandbhai, Gandhiji had written : 'I hope you are carrying forward the ideals of your respected father'. This letter was written 40 years after Virchandbhai's demise. I have seen this letter at Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya where the family has donated the letter.

### **A DREAMER ABOUT EDUCATION**

Virchandbhai always attempted to make education more widespread in India, especially among the Jain community. That was his dream. He also strove endlessly to see that education reached all classes of society. He had even started to collect a fund in America for educating Indian students, but the project didnot fructify because of his untimely death.

What is still more remarkable is the fact that in those days, he advocated women's education too and made active attempts in that direction. In an era which did not consider education necessary for women and when the women were imprisoned in the four walls of the home, it was no small matter to talk of women's education and to work for it. Due to his efforts, an organisation called 'International Society For the Education of Women in India' was established in America and he arranged to send, through this Society, three Indian women to America. The copy of the letter is received by me recently is reproduced in Appendix-7. The boarding as well as educational expenses were borne by the society. The aim of this society was to make Indian women not only literate, but to awaken them to their true place in society and elevate themselves once more to the rank of Savitri, Maitreyi, Gargi and Damayanti of ancient India.

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Virchandbhai left for his Heavenly Home on 7th August 1901 in Bombay.

## CONCLUSION

'Some people's actions are such that we naturally wish that Time should come to a stop while more persons of an equal calibre begin to work like them. But Time is no-body's friend nor is it anybody's enemy. Even Lord Mahavira has not been able to halt the progress of Time with its eternal, incomprehensible and mysterious motion.

Virchandbhai returned to his motherland in July 1901 from his third trip abroad. his health gave way and he could not recoup. He kept constantly busy in the 37 years of his life - probably busier than his health permitted. On 7th August of the same year(1901), his life came to an end in Bombay. The Mysterious Play of Time displayed itself.

Kakasaheb Kalekar has said in his 'Smaranayatra' that 'a good person doesnot live long'. This statement seems to have proved true in the case of Virchandbhai as well as in the cases of some of his contemporaries. Social reformer Karsandas Mulji(1832- 1872), Swami Vivekananda (1862 - 1902), Vadilal M. Shah(1878 - 1931), Shrimad Rajchandra (1868 - 1900) - all these great men had hardly crossed their fourties when they were beckoned by Lord Mahavira. As if they almost expected that call at an early age, they took up one activity after another and were uncommonly busy finishing their lives' activities fast.

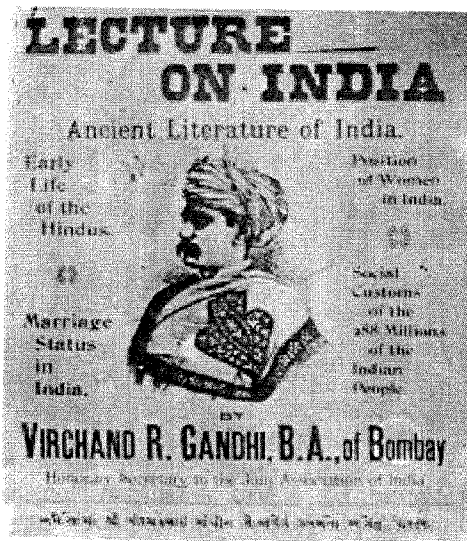
Today it has become necessary to evaluate their contribution. More and more Jains live in the western countries and most are worried about the cultural development of their children. The basic tenets of Jainism have to be taught in simple english. In India, too, education in English medium is

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on the rise. This puts a premium on the lectures on Jainism delivered in English by Virchandbhai, his being the pioneer work in this direction.

Then again, the disputes going on pilgrimage - sites among different denominations of the Jains also call for a person like Virchandbhai. The far-sightness, zeal and the readiness to learn the regional language that Virchandbhai showed in bringing about compromises of the problems at Shatrunjaya, the animal fat-factory at Sametshikhar and the problem of Makshiji Tirtha, indicates a unique ability, as necessary in to-day's atmosphere as it was then. His readiness to find solutions with the help of documentary - proof and a little tolerance as and when required can act as a lighthouse in the stormy condition of the society to-day.

Innumerable Salutations to this illustrious son of Mother India.



The Society for the Education of women of India's Chicago's Hon. Secretary Mrs. Howard & Virchand Gandhi



Mr. Herbert Warren, Mr. & Mrs. A Gordon Hon. Secretary & Eminent Members of Mahavir Brotherhood, London established by Virchand Gandhi





Photo Courtesy : Neely's History of World's Parliament of Religions, 1893



From left to right Virchand Gandhi, Mr. H.Dhamapal and Swami Vivekanand at world's Parliament of Religions.



### **DEDICATED TO**

The ennobling ideals and preachings of Pujoyapad Vijayanandsuri (Atmaramji) Maharaj, a versatile scholar saint, author of Chicago Prasnottar and other learned treatises, who deputed Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi to the Congress of World Religions in 1893 A.D. on his behalf.



**Virchand R. Ghandhi**  
 Photo Courtesy :  
 World's Parliament of  
 Religions by Dr. J. H. Barrows



**Virchand R. Ghandhi**



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## APPENDIX - 1

It will be interesting to find out how Virchandbhai's activities abroad were evaluated by prominent citizens of these countries and by the local newspapers. Here are some opinions :

### VIRCHAND R. GANDHI IN AMERICA

Mr. V. R. Gandhi, B.A., of the University of Bombay, India is a brilliant lawyer of unusual attainments, and is master of fourteen languages including English. He is the Honorary Secretary of the Jain Association of India, and enjoys the distinction of being the only gentleman from India, who was elected by the people at home as delegate to the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in September, 1893, where he most eloquently represented the 5,000,000 of Jains of India. Mr. Gandhi has remained in this country to study our customs, politics, educational and industrial institutions. He is a man of strong personality, filled with enthusiasm, sincere and earnest in purpose, a man of unflinching moral courage and the soul of honour. All this and more impresses you as you look into his calm, piercing eyes, and listen to his animated discussions on the customs and religions of India. But it is when dwelling upon the selfishness and injustice of mankind and the miseries of the ignorant poor that Mr. Gandhi grows most eloquent, and his soul shines through his eyes as he warms with his subject.

No one should fail to hear this eloquent native from India whenever opportunity occurs. One can gain more knowledge and truth in one evening than from any other source. He will be able to correct many prevalent and erroneous impressions concerning India and its people. He will answer all questions after the lecture that any one from the audience may

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choose to ask. There cannot be too much said in praise of this grand and noble man who daily lives up to the principles of purity which he advocates. Mr. Gandhi has already spoken in this country before clubs, lyceums, literary and church societies, theosophical branches and Spiritual associations , and has conducted large classes in Eastern Occultism. He has everywhere been accorded a warm reception and shown the highest appreciation.

-Editor's Bureau

**CHICAGO SUBARBAN STAR, NOV. 30, 1893**

The Universal Church, Sixty - fifth street and Stewart avenue was comfortably filled Sunday evening on the occasion of the third lecture in the Union Study Club course, which was given by Virchand R. Gandhi of Bombay, Honorary Secretary of the Jain Association of India. The lecture contained a geographical and historical review of India, a digest of the religions, philosophies, theosophies and literatures of the Aryan races, and a very interesting description of the social customs of the Hindus. The speaker very emphatically denied the popular story about the car of Juggernaut, under whose wheels the religious devotee has been supposed to cast himself and be immolated. He characterized the tale of Juggernaut and other recitals of Hindu self-torture as the falsifications of sensational missionaries.

**THE UNIVERSALIST MESSENGER, CHICAGO, FEBRUARY 10, 1894**

The series of lectures on Oriental Philosophy, given by Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi every Monday evening at the residence of Mr. Chas. Howard, 6558 Stewart Boulevard,

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are growing more and more interesting. The subject last Monday evening was the ethical side of the Yoga philosophy. The treatment given it was eminently scholarly, such as could emanate only from the metaphysical mind of a Hindu. These lectures are listened to by an already cultivated class of people, who concede the fact that these Hindus are the custodians of knowledge pure and simple, and are ever ready and willing to give the key which will unlock the treasury box containing all the mysterious truths that mind can grasp.

**CHICAGO DAILY SUN, APRIL 3, 1894**

Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, B.A., of Bombay, lectured Monday evening at 6558 Steward Boulevard. The subject was Jainism, the religion which Mr. Gandhi came to this country to represent at the Parliament of Religions, and which has been listened to by larger and more enthusiastic audiences than any other Oriental? Religion which has been presented during or since the parliament by the many scholarly representatives from the various countries.

**ST. JOSEPH GAZETTEE, MO., MAY 8, 1894**

The Parliament of Religions, which formed one of the most interesting features of the great World's Fair, opened the eyes of eminent Christians to the fact that the issues joined by modern Christianity and the religion and philosophy of heathendom leave debatable ground upon which the heathen may stand in defence of the faith of his fathers. Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, of Bombay, who was one of the most prominent representatives at the World's Parliament of Religions, writes a paper in the April Forum entitled, 'Why Christain Missions have failed in India'.

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**CHICAGO HERALD, AUGUST 4, 1894**

Virchand R. Gandhi, who was a prominent member at the Parliament of Religions, has just published a correct translation of the 'Unknown Life of Jesus Christ', and being a native of India, and having travelled much in that country, has been able to add in his book a fine picture of the Himis Monastery where Notovitch discovered the manuscript. Also, he has added many other illustrations, and a most scholarly and exhaustive introduction, altogether giving to his work a dignity that no other translation possesses. Every one should possess a copy of this most scholarly translation.

**BUFFALO TIMES, N.Y., AUGUST 8, 1894**

Virchand Gandhi is the guest of honour at Cassadaga. He has already won his way to the hearts of the people by the soft persuasiveness of his reasoning, oriental in its simplicity, strength and power of conviction. His musically modulated voice and physical repose distinguish him no less than his Oriental costume at any time and any place.

**LIGHT OF TRUTH, CINCINNATI, AUGUST 11, 1894**

Mr. Gandhi is a thorough student of the Vedic religion of India, thoroughly conversant with the Brahmanical tenets and the teachings of Buddha. He illumines them all with the spiritual halo and practical philosophy of his great teacher as well as his own luminous mind.

**THE ILLUSTRATED BUFFALO EXPRESS, AUG. 12, 1894**

On Saturday afternoon one of the most enthusiastic audiences ever known to the auditorium of Cassadaga listened to 'The Message of India to the People of America,' by Virchand R. Gandhi, B.A., of Bombay, India, who was elected by a vote of 5,000,000 Jains to represent them at the late world's Congress of Religions in Chicago.

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Mr. Gandhi was given a perfect ovation as he stepped forward in his Oriental costume of royal purple silk and yellow turban and sash, and said : 'Brothers and sisters of America : I greet you in the name of India and her three millions of sons and daughters. I greet you as brothers and sisters and bring you a message of peace, love, universal brotherhood and fellowship from the aged and well-preserved nation of India, which is proud to clasp the hand of the youngest child of the ages. Our country in all confidence places in your lap the key to its archives of ancient philosophy and attainments, because you are in a perfect intellectual condition to appreciate its mystical treasures of religious lore. India has been studied from the outside and from a limited point of view and consequently misunderstood'.

#### **THE JAMESTOWN ALL, NEW YORK, AUG. 13, 1894**

The Buffalo excursion brought six carloads of people, and the Jamestown and Titusville the same. It was a 'big day' and most of the people came to hear the learned Hindu, Virchand Gandhi. His subject Sunday afternoon was his impressions of our country and its various institutions. He complimented us, as a nation, on our hospitality, our common schools and universal education, thought our natural resources and industries marvellous, and made comparisons between us and his own Jainist people. In his lecture Saturday he gave, "India's Message to America", and the lecture took every one by storm. He is so full of kindness and brotherly love for the American people, and so clear in expressing his ideas to us that no one can help but feel, after listening to him, that the Jainist people did well in

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selecting Mr. Gandhi as their representative to this country.

**BUFFALO EVENING TIMES, AUG. 13, 1894**

Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, the East Indian, who represented 5,000,000 of his co-religionists at the Congress of Religions, preaches the universal brotherhood of man. He is much farther advanced in the Esoteric Philosophy than the western Theosophists, and gives far more lucid explanations of the Oriental teachings. The Hindu is decidedly the Lion of the season.

**BUFFALO EVENING TIMES, N.Y., AUG. 14, 1894**

Yesterday morning Virchand Gandhi, the Bombay B.A., delivered his lecture to women exclusively. It drew out a large crowd of the fair sex and caused something of a sensation by reason of its pointed directness.

**MORNING STAR, MEADVILLE, PENN. AUG. 14, 1894**

Virchand Gandhi, of Bombay, India, is the picturesque figure on the grounds now, in his Oriental costume. Mr. Gandhi represented the Jainist sect at the World's Parliament of religions at Chicago last year. he is a very intelligent man, and after hearing his lecture on 'The message of India to America', one is inclined to wonder if Indian missionaries to America are not in order.

**BUFFALO EXPRESS, AUG. 14, 1894**

Mr. Virchand Gandhi, of India, was the platform figure in this immense gathering of interested people. Looking over the audience, it was easy to perceive that the men and women from the outside world, as well as spiritists and Cassadagans themselves, followed every word that the Hindu said with the closest attention.

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## **LIGHT OF TRUTH, AUG. 18, 1894**

Virchand R. Gandhi, the Jainist, has opened a class for instruction in the ancient religions. The brightest minds of the camp, eager to hear this wonderful Hindu scholar expound his religious theories.

## **BUFFALO COURIER, AUG. 19, 1894**

Virchand R. Gandhi, the Jain Hindu of Bombay, has been accorded the greatest ovation ever granted to a speaker at Cassadaga. Saturday afternoon when he stepped forward in his silken robe of royal purple and golden-coloured turban and sash, the auditorium fairly rang with applause, and when he finished his speech, which was announced as 'Some Mistakes Corrected', he was recalled again and again.

## **THE EVANGELIST, NEW YORK, AUG. 23, 1894**

Recently Cassadaga, the trysting place of heterogeneous creeds, has blossomed out with a new attraction, striking to the eye as well as to the mind. This new card is Mr. Virchand Gandhi of Bombay, a gentleman of noble presence, a trained scholar, a lawyer versed in Sanskrit lore and in English literature as well. He came to this country by invitation of Dr. Barrows, as a representative of the Jain religion. Mr. Gandhi is an able exponent of all the religions of India.

## **EVENING POST, CLEVELAND, O., SEPT., 19, 1894**

Virchand R. Gandhi, representative of the Jain religion, the oldest of old India, lectured on the occult sciences and philosophies of that far-off country last evening, at Association Hall. His lecture was profusely illustrated by means of the

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stereopticon and the views presented, showing as they did scenes of interest and people of a most fascinating land, were warmly appreciated by the large number of persons in attendance.

**ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLER,  
SEPTEMBER 24, 1894**

Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, the Hindu philosopher and scholar, of Bombay, spoke in the First Universalist church last evening to a crowded house. He was introduced by the Rev. Dr. Saxe as one who had represented nobly one of the great religions of India. Mr. Gandhi is a man of extensive learning. He has spent his time since the close of the parliamnet travelling about, lecturing and studying the industrial progress of this country, and especially the public school system. He is greatly impressed with the fact that in this land the poorest child has educational facilities equal to the richest. There are many fine schools in India, but the fee is so high that the poor cannot take advantage of them.

**THE ROCHESTER HERALD, OCT. 3, 1894**

**ILLUSTRATED LECTURE ON INDIA**

Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi, of Bombay, India, delivered an interesting and instructive lecture before the public school pupils in Free Academy hall last evening. The speaker gave a clear description of the customs and habits of the people in India. He presented many very interesting stereopticon views of the principal cities, the Elephanta and other caves, occupied by monks. The pictures showed the excellent work executed in ancient times. Altogether, these lectures are instructive to both, old and young, and should be seen and heard all over America.



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**FROM REV. R.A. WHITE, CHICAGO,  
6550, LAFAYETTE AVE, CHICAGO, ILL.**

I consider Mr. Gandhi one of the best equipped of the many scholarly men who represented the various religions of India in the recent Parliament of Religions. A public lecture given by him in my church was, in my opinion, a most scholarly production, both in matter and form, and showed a thorough grasp of Oriental philosophy. Mr. Gandhi has a fine command of the English tongue, and is altogether a most interesting man in every way.

**R. A. White**

**FROM HON. E.B. SHERMAN,  
Master in Chancery of the United States  
Circuit Court**

'The Congress of Religions drew to Chicago several of the brightest and most interesting Oriental thinkers and scholars that it has ever been my pleasure to meet, among them is Mr. V.R. Gandhi, a lawyer of Bombay, India'.

'It has rarely, if ever, been my good fortune to meet a man whose reading and culture have been so wide and varied, and who, withal, has so sweet, sincere and teachable a spirit as Mr. Gandhi'.

**FROM REV. ADDISON PARKER**

**Pastor, Leading Baptist Church, Laporte, Ind.**

**PASTOR'S STUDY, LAPORTE, IND., DEC. 2, 1893**

During the meeting of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, I had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Gandhi's

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address upon the 'Jains' of India, and also a brief personal conversation with him. He impressed me as one of the brainiest and most stirring of the representatives of the Far East, I know one from whom I would prefer to hear concerning the life and thought of great people he represents.

### **ADDISON PARKER**

The Broad and Catholic spirit of the grand Hindu may be best understood by the following extract from his lecture, delivered at Cassadga, N.Y., August 12, 1894, where he was engaged for several lectures and classes

When missionaries sent from this continent to our country and to our people, shall have learned that we are children of the same family, that we inherit the same perceptions, the same rights, the same inspirations and the same relations to the Infinite, and seek to fraternise with us on that plane and with this recognition - then, and then only, antagonism and injustice will cease, and the bonds of common brotherhood will unite us in a mutual recognition of reasons for a perfect fellowship.

What is that Christ in whose name you propose to conquer the world? Is there a Christ of oppression; is there a Christ of injustice; is there a Christ of misinterpretation; is there a Christ of denial of all rights; is there a Christ of destruction of all holy aims and human immemorial institutions; is there a Christ of injustice and exorbitant taxation for the support of a government, foreign to our knowledge, our thought, our religion and our consent ? Which of these Christs has inscribed his name on the banner of your conquests? If you seek to conquer us under such banners, and in the name of such Christs, we refuse to be conquered. But, if you come to us in the name and spirit of the Christ

of education, of brotherhood, universal love, or in the name of that Christ, who, in the valley of the Ganges, and on the shores of the sea of Tiberius, taught and said, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another' then I say, we will welcome you, for him we know, and of him we are not afraid. But all this must be understood in the full freedom of it. We cannot recognize a creedal Christ, a limited Christ, an emasculated truth whether it is viewed from an educational or moral and spiritual point of view, but the universal idea, without limit, without fetters, free. We come gladly, at your invitation, for another reason. You are the most tolerant and liberal nation in the western world, and tolerance is the first article in the faith of every Hindu, Buddhist or Jainist. No man can point to any instance in the history of my people where any man was persecuted for religious opinion's sake. Our very language does not contain an equivalent word for the English word 'persecution'. We have words in our language, in the ancient Sanskrit, that cover the whole ground of justice, purity of goodness, of love and of all the sweet beatitudes of the soul's attainment, but not one word that means malice, persecution or tyranny for religious opinion's sake.

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## **APPENDIX - 2**

### **CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SHRI VIRCHAND GANDHI**

#### **25th Aug, 1864 - Born to Shri Raghavji Gandhi and Smt. Manbai.**

- 1872-73 - Family shifted to Bhavnagar for the schooling of Shri Virchandbhai, as suggested by the head master at Mahuva and the inspector of schools.
- 1876 - Got married
- 1880 - Passed Matriculation examination from Alfred High School, Bhavnagar.  
Stood first in Gohilwad district - obtained Sir Jashvant Sinhji Scholarship
- 1880 - Family shifted to Bombay for higher education of Virchandbhai  
Admitted to Elphinstone College.
- 1884 - Passed B.A. with Hons. First Graduate of the Jain Community.
- 1884 - Beginning of public life by appointment as secretary of The Jain Association of India.
- 1885 - Obtained an order of enquiry from the Governor of Bombay for the dispute in the Shatrunjaya case. To obtain this order, he got evidence from Bombay, Poona and other places.
- 1885-86 - Joined as an articled clerk in the firm of Govt. Solicitors Ms. Little, Smith, Friar and NicholSEN.
- 1886 - April - The tax per head for pilgrims to Shatrunjaya was removed. He got the verdict in favour of the Jains by convincing Col. Watson

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- and the Governor of Bombay Lord Ray.
- 1886 - December - Lord Ray received an address on Mt. Shatrunjaya.
- 1886-87 - Settled the dispute over Makshiji Tirtha.
- 1890 - Demise of father, Raghavjibahi. Father's instructions : No one should lament after me, don't remove my body to the floor, don't have bath in the cemetery, don't spend after me in the normal ceremonies.
- 1891 - Handled the case regarding the factory for extracting fat on the Sametshikhar. When the owner of the factory Mr. Bedam refused to close the factory, and the Jains appealed to the High court, Virchandbhai came to place, learnt Bengali and presented the translations of the historic documents to the high court. The court judgement was in the favour of the Jains.
- 1893 - The Jain sangh of Bombay decided to send Shri Virchandbhai to the parliament of Religions as the original invitee Rev. Atmaramji could not do so. Virchandbhai could take one assistant with him.
- 1893 - August - Departure to America by S.S. Assam.
- 1893 - September - lectures on Jainism at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago- Defence in polite language of attack on Hindu religion.
- 1893 - 95 (1) Lectures in various American cities on Jainism, Lectures on Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism under the aegis of 'School of Oriental Philosophy'.
- (2) Publication in Chicago on the book 'An unknown Life of Jesus Christ'.
- (3) Came to London - Lecture on Indian Philosophy in a meeting chaired by Lord Ray
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- 1895 - Return to the motherland, lectured under the aegis of Arya Samaj, Buddhiwardhak Sabha and other organisations. Founded the Hemchandracharya Varga
  - 1895 - September - Representative of Jainism at 'Dharma Mahotsava' in Ajmer.
  - 1896 - Second trip to America together with his wife upon an invitation, 21st August. A day prior to the departure (on 20th Aug), he was felicitated by, Shri Mangrol Jain Sangit Mandal. The meeting was pre-sided over by Shri Premchand Raichand.
  - 1896 - On hearing in America about the drought in India organised a Drought Relief Society and collected Rs. 40000 and arranged for a shipment of food-grain to India : Return to India.
  - 1897 - Went to England regarding the Shatrunjaya case.
  - 1899 - Representing the whole of Asia at the international Conference for Commerce. Was proffered an address at a meeting where Justice Mahadev Govind Rande was the president.
  - 1901 - July - Returned to India
  - 1901 - 7th August - Death at the age of 37.

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## APPENDIX 3

Shri Virchand Gandhi (of hallowed name) wrote this detailed letter from Chicago some time after he reached Chicago to attend the Parliament of Religions. It was published in 'Jain Yuga', the organ of Shri Jain Shwetambar Conference in 1931.

Chicago

26 January, 1894.

Respected Shethji Saheb,  
Dayachandbhai Malukchand,

I have not been able to write to you in detail after I left the Bombay harbour on 4th August, 1893. The only reason was I knew you would be happy to learn about some solid work which you may find praiseworthy done by me in this country. I am in this city for four months and during that time I have been able to do certain things that are likely to satisfy you.

Before boarding the boat on 4th August, I had obtained the following letter from the Bombay branch of M/s Thomas Cook and Sons. I send you a copy of the letter .

Bombay, 4th August, 1893

The Commanding Officers of the S.S.Assam  
and the S.S. Himalaya

Dear Sirs,

The bearer of this, Mr. Gandhi, a Hindu Gentleman of this city en-route to Chicago and going to observe Hindu rites and customs on board so as not to interfere with his caste. He will feel much obliged, if you will be so kind as to

give him a certificate on leaving your ships to the effect that he has not eaten food prepared by the ship's cook but by his own cook.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,  
Thos. Cook & Son.

I boarded the steamer with the above letter. I had arranged with the P & O Steam Navigation Co. that I would be allowed to have an iron stove of my own. I had paid an extra amount of Rs. 100 for that arrangement. When I changed boats at Aden, the stove was brought to the second steamer. The amount of Rs. 100 is a bit too high for just one stove. However, the P & O Co. gave an explanation which I send Herewith.

Nathu Manchhachand was with me. I needed him for cooking, etc. For the first two days Nathu \* was sea sick, so we could not cook for two days. We had some sweets which we used during these days. On the third day, we started cooking. The sea after Aden was smooth and we had no difficulty in cooking. At Aden, we boarded a second steamer. The captain of the first ship gave us a certificate about our food. I enclose it.

*\* Shri Nathu Manchhachand was from Mahuva. He went to America with Shri Virchand Gandhi to cook for him. He presented magic shows there. Shri Ravishankar Raval, the founder of a Gujarati Magazine 'Kumar' has mentioned in his autobiography, his magic show in Bhavnagar. For further details see 'Mahuva-ni-Asmita' edited by me.*

Bombay, 3rd August, 1893

M/s. Thos. Cook & Son,

Bombay.



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Dear Sirs,

In reply to your letter of date, I beg to inform you that a stove has been placed on board the 'ASSAM' for the use of Mr. Gandhi and friend and I have written to the commander of the connecting ship at Aden to see that it is kept for their exclusive use.

I note that they considered Rs. 100 a high charge but you will doubtless have explained to them that the stove at some inconvenience to the ship and has to be transhipped at Aden, carried to London and brought back again.

Yours faithfully,

Superintendent

Penninsular & Oriental Steam Navn. Co.

S.S.Assam, Aden, 11th August, 1893

I hereby certify that Mr. Gandhi, second saloon passenger on board this steamer has travelled from Bombay to Aden, during which time he has had no food prepared by any one on board but his own private cook.

T.F.Creery Commander

S.S. Himalaya, 18th August, 1893

This is to certify that Mr. Gandhi embarked on board this ship at Aden Ex Assam on the 11th August, 1893 and disembarked at Brindisi on the 18th August, 1893 during which he only had meals cooked by his own cook receiving nothing cooked by any of the ship's company.

Fred Buckland, Purser

On 18th, we reached. We went to the city after disembarking. In order to reach London by train, we have to be in the train for two days, so we bought fruits and dry fruits for the journey. We didnot halt anywhere except at Turin in Italy where we had to change trains. We had to

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wait there for 2 to 4 hours. We reached London on 20th August. I had wired from Brindisi to a friend and had asked him to hire a separate lodging for me. We felt very much at home in London. The boat to America was to sail six days later. So we had to wait in London during that time.

On 26th August, we left London for Southampton and boarded the ship 'Paris'. We had very good company on this ship. Mrs. Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society, London and her secretary Miss Muller, Prof. C. Gyandendranath Chakravarti the professor of Mathematics at Allahabad College and Mr. Dharampal, secretary of Bauddha Dharmasabha - all these were going to Chicago Parliament of Religions as representatives of their respective religions. We had very good conversation with them during our voyage. They did not know anything about Jainism, they were surprised that this religion comprised of a philosophy of such a high calibre.

They also said, it was great pity that such a philosophy had not been propagated in the English language. Between Southampton and New York. Mrs. Besant delivered two lectures on 'karma'. On 2nd September at 8 a.m. we reached the New York harbour. Huge steamers were plying in the harbour. On one side was the suburb called Brooklyn and on the other side another suburb, New Jersey. In the middle is the city of New York. The passengers do not have to carry their luggage, as they have to do in India, when disembarking. We have to put our name on each trunk and hand it over to the employees on the steamer and then they hand it over to us on the wharf as soon as they can. So we handed over all our luggage to the ship employees and we disembarked dressed in the Indian style. Mr. Hamilton, the New York representative of Thomas Cook and Sons, the firm well known in Bombay, was present there. He very politely told us that he was at our service. He looked through our

luggage. New York is the entrance of the United States and the regulations regarding customs duty are strict. About twenty inspectors were present and we could not go out till our luggage was examined. But the officers here do not insult or harass the people as our inspectors do on the Grant Road station of Bombay. They told us that if we had any dutiable items, we should declare them. We told them, we had no such items. So they examined our luggage cursorily and allowed us to go.

Mr. William Pipe, the secretary of the Parliament of Religions was at the wharf on behalf of the organisation. The committee had specially sent Mr. Pipe all the way to New York from Chicago. He met us. Mr. Pipe is an enthusiastic gentleman just 32 years old. He has taken great pains over organising the Parliament of Religions without worrying over his own health. We were planning to go on Chicago immediately without halting at New York. But Mr. Pipe said, 'You have travelled 12000 miles by the time you arrived at New York. So, please rest here for a couple of days.. It is Saturday today - we shall leave for Chicago on Monday evening'. He had already arranged for our residence. I told him, 'You probably don't know our rules regarding food. We do not eat anything prepared by any one other than a high caste Hindu or a Jain'. He promised to arrange, everything as per our requirements. We had to stay in New York only for two days, so we decided to live on fruits. Mr. Pipe was ready to arrange everything and offered that the Parliament would pay our expenses, I, however, thought, that since I was here for the advancement the Jain religion, it was not fair that the Americans should spend for me. It was certainly generous of them to make the offer, but it would diminish the dignity of my well-to-do Jain brothers. So I thanked Mr. Pipe for his generous suggestion, but said that I would bear all my expenses. Mr. Pipe went to the well-known Brunswick Hotel. I and Mr.

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Nathu went to the Broadway Central Hotel. We told the manager we were in New York for two days and would be obliged if he could give us a room. He allotted a separate room for us. After putting our luggage in our room we went to the market and bought apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, guavas and other fruits. On returning to the hotel we completed our fruit-dinner before 5 p.m. and then I went to the Brunswick Hotel to see Mr. Pipe. We talked a lot about the Parliament. Reporters to a few newspapers were also there. They asked me some questions about the Jain community and the Jain religion. This is what a well-known New York paper. 'The World' says about me:

'Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi said he believed he was the first member of the Jain Society that had been allowed to visit outside of India within two thousand years. 'It is a tenet of our order', he continued, 'that should a member break bread with Englishmen, he shall be excommunicated. The high priest and a gathering of the society selected me as a delegate to the religious congress at Chicago. Other meetings denounced me for coming here. I am here and glad to be here'. Gandhi is prohibited from touching meat of any kind. He does not know the taste of flesh. he is an exceedingly intelligent man and stands high in his order.

The next day was Sunday and we had not anything in particular to do, so we went out sight-seeing.

The capital of the United States of America is Washington, while New York enjoys the status of a top-ranking city because of its population, its industry, its adventurous people, its crafts and into progressive ways. The area of this city is 42 square miles and the population is 17,00,000. People from all over the world live here. More Irishmen live in New York than in Dublin of Ireland. With the exception of Berlin, there are more Germans in New York than in any one city of Germany. Since, the United States is a democratic

country, top officers are elected, 32 councillors run the administration of the Municipality of New York. These councillors are elected by the people. The annual income of the city is about Rs. 10,000,000. In this city of New York there are 26000 factories and 3,50,000 people earn their living from them. These factories produce annually goods worth Rs. 2300,00,0000. There are 43 newspapers being published in this city, 9 are bi-weeklies, 221 are weeklies, 462 come out once a fortnight, there are 394 monthlies, 14 are bi-monthlies and 21 are brought out every three months.

I donot think, I can write enough about New York in a letter. I think I shall send a long description of New York in a few days for Mumbai Samachar.

In the evening on Monday, 4th August, we commenced our journey by train to Chicago. We stopped for a day on the way, at a instance of Mr. Pipe to see the Nigara Falls.

From 6th September onwards, much has happened regarding the religions propaganda. I have lectured at several places and am lecturing still. I am planning to write about everything to you in great detail. Fearing that you would get bored reading such a long letter, I shall give you further news in my next letter. I am, however, sending you a separate packet by book-post, so that you may know what the local newspapers and the prominent people here think of me after my five months stay in Chicago. I shall be here for another month to give talks on the Jain religion. More in my next letter.

Yours obediently,  
Virchand Raghavji

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## APPENDIX 4

**Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, Esq., B.A.,**

Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Secretary to the Jain Associations of India, President of the Hemchandra - acharya Study Class.

**BOMBAY**

Dear Sir,

We the members of the Mangrol Jain Sangit Mandali, are assembled here to-day to give expression in public to the high esteem and ardent admiration with which we all regard you for the incalculable benefits you have conferred upon our assembly by useful services and timely suggestions, as well as on the whole community, on religious matters and many more important and intricate questions connected with the affairs of our Sacred Places.

We avail ourselves of this occasion, especially because only to-morrow you will be on your way to that Land where you went in 1893, as an accredited Delegate of the Jain Community, to represent the views on the Ethics and Philosophy of our religion in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. It was a matter of joy and satisfaction for us all that out of a few Indian Delegates of light and learning, who could compete with and hold their own against the foremost thinkers of Europe and America, you were the only person who was heard with rapt attention and accorded due praise.

Your real work may be said to have commenced with the termination of the sittings of that grand Assembly, for it was then that invitations from persons of diverse views and

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various positions, coupled with earnest solicitations of Associations, Unions and Clubs, began to pour in, which induced you to prolong your stay there. This brief sojourn you turned to the best account, by delivering many public lectures on the idea and aim of Jain Philosophy - nay, when on certain occasions the duty of representing the whole India devolved upon you, you discoursed on Indian. Philosophy in general, and succeeded to a great extent in dispelling doubts and misconceptions about History, Morality and Religion of the Hindus, and thus lifted up the veil which screened real thing from their gaze. Here, also, after your arrival you did not fail to embrace every opportunity to enlighten us on the manners, customs and the educational systems of America, and your unremitted exertions have resulted in creating a zealous study of our Religion and Philosophy and the formation of the Hemchandracharya Study Class.

Rejoicing as we do at your second visit, we cannot but feel profound sorrow at the idea of separation from a person of your knowledge, ability and simplicity. We however, console ourselves with the fact that what is loss to us is a substantial gain to our American brother.

Those of our Brethren on the other side of the Mississippi, who being far removed from the centres of your activity, could not share the pleasures of your company and addresses, will have now ample time to satisfy themselves. It will also be a boon and blessing to the enthusiastic students of Occult Philosophy, who paid you a well merited meed of honour by founding a Society of Philosophic Investigations in your name. We feel pride and pleasure to know that you will be accompanied by your devoted Wife, who will be a source of great help and comfort to you, and will be afford our American Sisters, a good opportunity to

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form a correct idea of the nature, virtues and responsibilities of an Aryan Lady.

In conclusion Sir, we heartily wish you a bon voyage and pray that blessings may be strewn across your path, and that your efforts in propounding and propogating the high principles of our noble Religion may be crowned with success, and hope that the revival of the glorious past of the noble Land of the East, which was hailed with fervour in a dim and prophetic by that illustrious French writer Victor Hugo, is destined to take place in the soil of America, and that India and America, which have been already brought into contact by material civilization, will through our spiritual thoughts be united in more enduring and permanent bonds of Fraternity.

As for ourselves, we shall be longingly looking forward for that day, when after mastering the great problem of the free education of the masses, you will return here and work for its introduction, for it is upon the solution of this problem alone that the future happiness of our country depends.

Bombay

20th August, 1896

We beg to remain,

DEAR SIR,

Your Friends and Well Wishers,

Amarchand Talakchand,

Honorary Secretary

Premchand Roychand,

President of the Meeting;

Motichand Devchand,

President,

for Members of the Mangrol Jain Sangit Mandal.



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## APPENDIX 5

### Some Special Traits Of Shri Virchand Gandhi

It is necessary to take notice of some important traits of Shri Virchand Gandhi.

Firstly, he was a good scholar of Sanskrit. That was why he could dip into the Indian Philosophies, and that was why he could confidently reply to Christain propagandist about the truth of Indian philosophy.

Secondly, he used to read carefully, writings about Indian philosophy of scholars of Germany and other European countries. He would also make use of such writings in his speeches. That was why his lectures were considered unbiased and authentic.

Thirdly, he came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji was then in Bombay, studying the Indian law on the one hand and experimenting on food-habits on the other. At that time, as Gandhiji mentions in his Autobiography (Pat 2, Chapter 3, P. 93), Virchandbhai had joined Gandhiji in some of the food-experiments. Had Gandhiji not mentioned this, we would never have known about the personal relationship of the two Gandhis of Saurashtra.

Lastly, we must mention the adventurous spirit of Shri Virchand Gandhi and his prophesy. In those days, he said in a meeting of the citizens of America:

‘Today, India is under the heel of a foreign ruler. She is free only in religious matters. However, when India becomes independent she would not attack any country with arms’. Can’t we say that an echo of this prophesy was heard in Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent movement?

Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghvi

24-12-69

(Gandhi centenary year)

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## APPENDIX - 6

When Virchandbhai went to America for the third time, various communities arranged a function, under the chairmanship of Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade and gave him the following address :

To,

Virchand Raghawji Gandhi, ESQ., B.A., M.R.A.S.

Dear Brother,

We, your friends and admirers, have assembled here to day to give expression to our sentiments of deep gratitude and high admiration, which we so sincerely cherish for you, in due appreciation of the invaluable and innumerable services, which you have so creditably rendered to the members of your Community and to the people of India in general, by fostering brotherly feelings in the hearts of the kind and courteous Americans for the people of our renowned India.

We feel much satisfaction and pride to repeat that we find in you, not only a representative of the Jain Religion, at the famous Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago, but at the same time, we find in you a most energetic and competent advocate of the cause of Indian Philosophy Disregarding the unavoidable inconveniences, which present themselves to an orthodox Hindu traveller scrupulously following the prescriptions of religion, while prosecuting noble work, which you have so cheerfully undertaken, you visited different parts of America and preached in lofty tones from public and private pulpits, the religious and philosophical

tenets of Hinduism, and we are extremely glad to endorse the opinion of the American public and the press, that you have succeeded with all the moral triumph of a conscientious preacher, in awakening American interest and sympathies for the religion and philosophy of India, which has been so gloriously hailed by foreigners from times immemorial, as the Mother of Religions and the Cradle of Civilization. This, in itself is a sign, prophesying good for the Orient and the Occident.

But your Mission did not end here, you next concentrated all your energies in a pitched battle the against lack of education among the women of this country, which is one of the saddest and most deplorable condition of Indian society, and leading the van of most of the sympathetic and humane sisters of America you succeeded in founding an 'International Society for the Education of Women in India', which society, we are much pleased to hear, has sent three of our Hindu sisters to America, with the offer to maintain and educate them, for three years at the expense of the society, so that they may be enabled to practically study, how to become proper help - mates to their husbands and pioneers in the work of reforming our society. We respectfully solicit your favour to convey to our American Sisters our feelings of the deepest gratitude for the noble help they have offered to our Indian Sisters, and also to convey our best sympathies and choicest blessings in their noble mission of pratronizing female education in India.

Equally precious are your services, during the recent famine of India, when you got enlisted, with your characteristic promptness, the sympathy of the kind - hearted Americans for the poorer masses, who were straving to death for want

of sufficient food, and sent a ship to india, laden with American maize for free distribution among the famine stricken people. These services and these touches of your philanthropic disposition, we assure you, our dear brother, have rightly earned for you our leasting admiration and gratitude.

The cause of vegetarianism is equally commanding our admiration - your numerous addresses so vividly portraying the excruciating pains and heart-rending agonies of the poor animals, writhing under the knives of the heartless butchers, have reclaimed many flesh-eaters to the pure Hindu vegetarian diet and have taught them to respect the feelings even of the lower creation -an object lesson of spiritual life which India has still to preach and teach to most of the civilized nations of the world.

Your strong protests against the misrepresentations by the American missionaries of the Indian life and morals, your valuable advice, for the introduction of the American system of practical education in Indian schools, your genuine desire to see our Indian students in England, paying particular attention of English arts and manufactures with the object of improving and promoting Indian industries, your contributions of the Indian press for drawing the attention of our educated youths to commercial fields that are open for them in England and America - these are some of the multifarious subjects that have held us in unspeakable wonder, and speak volumes for your sound judgement and comprehensive abilities.

This large and influential gathering rejoices to see that you are the first Hindu among the whole Hindu Community of India, to take your wife to America and to give a partial

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illustration of the life of an Hindu woman to our sisters of the Western hemisphere. A short stay of nearly two years of your son Master Mohan in America, and his training in an American Educational Institution, give us every hope that he will be a second Gandhi after you pick up, with the greatest zeal and interest, the work which you have commenced so successfully of implanting 'India in America'.

In conclusion, we wish you a hearty bon voyage to England and America and a happy return to our dear country after fulfilling your noble mission of preaching Oriental Philosophy.

On behalf of the Friends and admirers, assembled in a Public Meeting held at Novelty Theatre.

BOMBAY,

President

Dated 23rd September, 1899

M.G.Ranade

### **EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN TO SHRI PANNALAL SHAH**

I received you letter in beautiful handwriting.

I have no information about Shri Virchandbhai. When I first read in the newspaper of the time, or in the letters of Swami Vivekanda that Mr. Gandhi represented the Jains at the Chicago conference, I thought he was the same as Karmavir Gandhi of South Africa fame. Then, when in 1915 I met the entourage of Mahatmajai at Shantiniketan, I learnt that the Gandhi who attended the Parliament of Religions in 1893 was another Gandhi and that his name was 'Virchand Gandhi'.

Date: 22-4-1964

Kakasaheb Kalelkar

'Sannidhi' Rajghat, New Delhi - 1

I agree with you in your opinion about Shri Virchand Gandhiji. He was a great Gujrati and it would be desirable if something is done to perpetuate his memory.

On one point I differ from you. Whatever is to be done, at his birth centenary or to honour him should be done by the people of Gujrat. The government can help, but the elite of the society or well-known organisations should make the beginning. The government cannot take up such activities on its own. Even if other regional governments have taken a different stand in the case of Swami Vivekananda or Rabindranath Tagore, I think it is advisable that such activities should be taken up by the people. For this purposes, some organisations like the Gujrati Sahitya Parishad, Gujarati Sahitya Sabha, Gujarat Vidyasabha or the people of Mahuva, or the whole of Gujarat and Saurashtra can come together to felicitate the memory not only of Virchandbhai, but also of others like Karsandas Malji and other great Gujaratis. It is necessary that Gujarat should commemorate them. It is neither possible nor desirable that the state should take up such projects. It is certainly desirable that the State should aid such popular activities.

27-9-1964

Ahemdabad - 15

Balwantrai (Mehta).

Chief Minister,  
Gujarat State.

A lot of chaos prevails in our society regarding the lives of our great men. And so, anyone trying to write their biographies has to face a number of problems. Only those who have experienced this can know this. And yet, in order to complete the activity taken up, one has to find some way out. So please try to find out files of old periodicals and put them to use (for writing this biography of Virchandbhai).

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Vadilal M. Shah and Virchandbhai Gandhi did happen to be contemporaries. But one has to remember that while Virchandbhai flew the flag of the Victory of Jainism as early as 1893 at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Vadilal Shah had not even begun to write till 1898. Therefore, their being contemporaries is not of any particular significance.

I donot knew of anything written by V.M.Shah about Virchandbhai. There was hardly any correspondence between them either. All the same, I shall look up and let you know if I can find out something about 'Jain Hitechhu'.

14-5-1964  
2, Shrinagar Society,  
M. G. Rd, Goregaon  
Mumbai - 400 062

Tribhuvan Virjibhai Hemani  
Editor Publication of the  
Literary Works of V.M.Shah

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## APPENDIX - 7

### SOCIETY FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE WOMEN OF INDIA

Mrs. Marion Spencer, President.

Col. F.W. Parker, Vice-President,

Mrs. Chas. Howard, Secretary.

Mr. W. M. Schrempf, Treasurer.

Chicago Office  
6558 Stuart Boul

Mr. Virchand R. Gandhi,  
Bombay India.

My Dear Brother,

In your letter, which I have just received, you ask me for the news. The most interesting and perhaps the most important news (at least which appears so to me) is the announcement in this morning's paper of the resignation of Dr. Barrows (President of the Chicago Parliament of Religions) from his Church for the purpose of lecturing in India on Christianity. I presume it is the only thing he can do to save his reputation as a true orthodox minister, especially since so many so many old fogies, incarnations from the dark ages, and who are still five hundred years behind times, have found much fault with his liberal and unbiased way of conducting the proceedings of the Parliament. I have, in my travels through the Eastern States, heard him being accused by ministers who are not abreasts with the times, as not being a true Presbyterian. You may not be sufficiently



interested to read up on those matters; but it is a fact that the Presbyterian Church is tottering and crumbling us who have outgrown the dark ages. I believe, however, that Dr. Barrows is a broad liberal man at heart, but like hundreds of other Christian ministers of these times, he is a broad liberal man at heart, but like hundreds of other Dr. Barrows is a broad liberal man at heart, but like hundreds of other Christian ministers of these times, he dare not advocate openly what he believes especially since the Parliament. But I am more concerned for poor India. Why should Christianity, which is a failure here, be thrust upon India ? I may be asked how it is a failure. To be sure, we have many elegant Churches and hundreds of well-paid attaches, whom God calls to minister to the flock, who can pay the highest price that the minister by his ability, eloquence and oratical powers may be able to command. The failure, however, is to be seen in the records of crime and vice. Yesterday's (Sunday's) paper records over seventy crimes and twenty - seven murders. Is not Christianity a failure in the country in whose Capitol (Senate - House) are several rooms devoted solely to the sale of wines and liquors for the use of our Congressmen and Senators (many of them Church members), while they are engaged in making our laws, and this in a country that has never known any other than Christian religion. With all our numerous Churches and more numerous ministers, we have no true spirituality to offer India. The purity, simplicity of life, and teachings brought from India by the humble Jesus are neither understood nor practised. We, therefore, cannot offer spirituality to India. We are subsisting on the dry empty husks ourselves. Our Christianity is but a money - making machine, stealing the hearts and minds of millions of people, driving others to

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deception and infidelity.

To be sure, there are many grand people in this country who are earnestly seeking truth and true spirituality. But these are turning to the ancient literature of India to find it. The only kernal of truth contained in Christianity evidently came originally from India. Light must come to us from India again, but India must first find her lost gems and polish them that they may shine for the whole world, as they did in the distant past.

My brother, I could give my life for India - for the people who ever seemed my own people, if by doing so they could be brought to the standard of their former spiritual greatness : but to reach this, India must begin at the root. Learned Hindus must be less selfish and less indifferent to the requirements of the times. It is time your ancient scriptures abound, polish them and bring them clean, fresh and pure to the people. The very atmosphere of the present time demands that all educated Hindus, all Aryans, whether they are Hindus, Buddhists or Jains, should rise *en masse*, ignoring their differences of sect opinions, and unite as brothers for the uplifting of poor fallen India - I mean India spiritually fallen, and this can be done only through education. Why are Hindus indifferent to the needs of their ignorance ? Why permit foreigners to teach your ignorant masses a begoted creed? Surely, the Hindus are to blame. Should they rise and demand education for the masses, and offer true spiritual teaching to the masses, they could reverse the many wrongs that now exist.

My brother, you know my love for India. Will you not urge the men to seek the cause of India's fallen state ? Education must be given to the women who are to be future mothers

of the people and of the nation. There cannot be any true greatness of a nation while the woman are in ignorance. It is the mother who moulds the character. Is it not true that when India was a happy and a prosperous nation, the wife was the valued companion of the husband and intelligent mother of his children ? **Surely, the educated gentleman of India are not ashamed of the names of Gargi, Maitreyi, Damyanti, Lilavati and others, whose names and greatness have reached even to the Western world.** I would not advise Western education for the women of India, but a true education which elevates the heart and the soul, and which will fit them to perform the duties of wife and mother intelligently. Surely, this is the right beginning, the right way to bring round the right understanding of your beautiful philosophies. Education is the only thing that will bring out India's spiritual treasures - then, indeed, would India again blossom as of old and bear fruit, for which all nations are unconsciously yearning. Your beautiful and sublime philosophy must give light to the world afresh.

The whole world seems to be groping in darkness. The worship of the Golden Calf has blinded all men, none can see clearly, and the beautiful gems of your scriptures have been lost and forgotten and frequently replaced with common stone. O my soul cries out to the men of India, they who are the descendants of the once most noble enlightened people - arise look about with your soul's eyes open, work for humanity and for the education - non sectarian education - of the masses.

You may tell me that India is poor. But how is it, foreigners go to India and become immensely rich in a Even missionaries, who are not business-men, have often returned with a fortune. If you are so poor, is it not caused by lack of

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education? India is believed to be the richest country in the world, is it not caused by lack of education? India is believed to be the richest country in the world, and if foreigners can amass a fortune in a short time, Hindus can do much better if education is given to the masses.

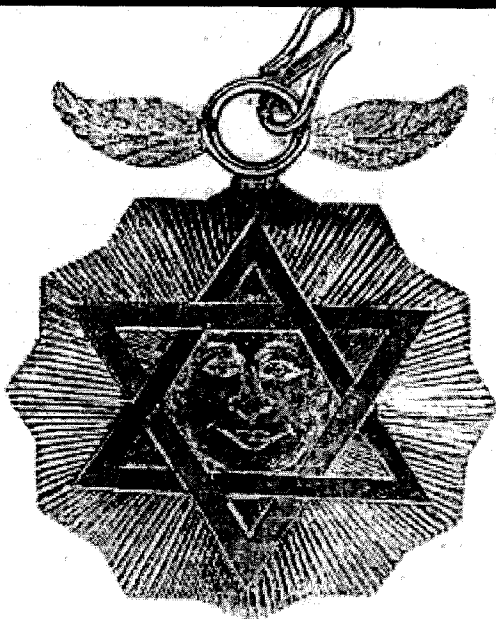
Would it not be well if all sects united in supporting a free school in every town? Our little Society (Society for the education of the Women of India) is doing all we can, hoping to be able to send Kindergarten teacher, when the Hindus are ready for her to teach women, children and especially widows to become teachers. Hindu widows should be trained as teachers for their younger sisters. This would make them helpful to humanity, besides giving them occupation for mind and soul. I don't know how much our society will be able to accomplish for the women of India, the Churches are all opposed, of course. Also a London Society for the Elevation of the Women of India, so Mrs. Warner Snoad writes me, is bitterly opposed, because our society objects to having any creed tacked on to us, or to working under the direction of any Church. We think, however there have been sufficient mistakes made in India by the would-be religionists, and we think the only way to help India will be through non-sectarian education of the women. The men have tried for hundreds of years to make the world better and have woefully failed, nor will they ever succeed until they take women to their aid. You know, my brother, that I do not advocate what is understood as woman's rights: (that is a great error), but I mean that Hindus must raise their women to their former level by education.

I hope you will excuse this long letter but my heart burns for India and India's women, and I sincerely hope you will

urge every Aryan to do all he can(and every one can do something) towards uniting all sects for true education for all people regardless of caste. Write me what you will do in the matter.

Most sincerely,  
Your sister,  
Mrs. Chas. Howard.

**MEDAL (CHANDRAK) RECEIVED BY SHREE  
VIRCHAND RAGHAVJI GANDHI**



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**MEDAL (CHANDRAK) RECEIVED BY SHREE  
VIRCHAND RAGHAVJI GANDHI**



**Saurashtra Kesari Pranguru Jain Philosophical  
& Literary Research Centre**

Saurashtra Kesari Poojya Shri Pranguru had a very distinguished wisdom and knowledge. He contributed greatly in the study of scriptures, in collecting and preserving tadpatriya manuscripts, in establishing libraries of scriptures and pathshalas.

Perceiving this unique contribution and inspired by "Saurashtra Kesari Poojya Pranguru Birth Century Committee" Mumbai, to immortalise the name of Gurudev on the occasion of his Birth Century, the above trust has founded "Saurashtra Kesari Pranguru Jain Philosophical and Literary Research Centre". The objectives of the Centre are as follows :

♦ To study, research, edit and publish Jain philosophy, Indian Darshan's civilization and literature. ♦ To present Jainism scientifically. ♦ To research ancient manuscripts and Tadpatriya scriptures and conduct library activities. ♦ Keeping Jainism at the core, to develop humanitarian activities. ♦ To offer scholarships to students studying and researching Jain literature. ♦ To arrange lectures by scholars and saints. ♦ To organise camps and such other programmes that cultivate religious and meritorious qualities. To publish culture oriented qualitative literature. ♦ To encourage research paper reading, script reading and reading of old Jain manuscripts. ♦ To extend co-operation, facilities and guidance to shravakas and saints and Mahasatijis to gain knowledge those who are working for M.A. Ph.D. or M.Phil and to publish the research work. ♦ To prepare CD'S on ancient Jain books, Paintings, Sculpture, architecture etc. ♦ To propagate Jainism in the country and abroad by arranging seminars lectures etc and by providing information about Jain philosophy and literature through a website on the Internet.

Wishing your co-operation

**Navneetbhai Sheth / Gunvant Barvalia**

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