

The Jaina Response to Terrorism

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History can be portrayed as a temporal line punctuated by key events, such as wars, that shape our lives. World War I served to shape my grandfather's life, World War II and the Korean War impacted my father's life, and the Cold War and Vietnam War influenced my own life. The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent reactions will no doubt directly influence my son's life. Normally, we learn to come to terms with these momentous events in our lives by approaching these from social, political, moral, and spiritual perspectives, and by often seeking guidance from established traditions. In this paper, I will focus on formulating a possible Jaina response to the terrorist acts such as those of September 11. In order to do this we must first understand what is meant by terrorism, and how terrorist acts are justified.

Understanding Terrorism and its Justification

The key tool of trade for the terrorist is violence—physical and psychological. Such violence is politically or religiously motivated and relies on publicity to bring about the desired effect (e.g., not only political change, consciousness-raising, an end of oppression, but also genocide, disruption of life, and so on). Terrorism arises out of a need either to respond to perceived oppression and injustice, or to establish a new regime based on a political, economic, or religious ideology. For the terrorist, such

acts are the only means to compete and fight against an economically and militarily superior foe.¹

There are two major arguments in justifying terrorism. The first is called the *Utilitarian Terrorist Argument*. Accordingly, terrorism is seen as a key tool for gaining greater good compared to harm it may inflict on some. Some terrorists may even be empathetic to those who they kill or harm, but see it as necessary for the cause they believe in; yet other terrorists argue that civilian casualties are not really *innocent* as they give implicit consent to their government's "oppressive" policies and benefit from them.

The second argument in defense of terrorism is called a *Relativist Argument: Terrorist vs. Freedom Fighter*. It is sometimes argued that all nations at one time or another in their history have conducted "terrorist" attacks and tactics in pursuing their nationalistic goals. According to the victors, individuals who bring about terrorist acts are seen as heroes and martyrs, while according to the vanquished, they are seen as evil villains and cowards who are despised and hated. Consider the Allied attitude toward the 1944 bomb plot against Hitler. To the Allies, it was seen as a great effort of heroic status and even today most would recognize its "positive" epoch-changing status should it have been successful—save 6 million Jews and hundreds of thousands of soldiers by the death of one person, Adolph Hitler, the leader of the Third Reich. However, the Third Reich and Hitler himself, viewed it negatively as an act of terrorism and treason.

Responses to Terrorism

There are three major defensive responses to terrorism: All-out-aggression, Just War, and Pacificism. The all-out-aggression response is based on an "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" mentality

1. For a recent compilation on current thinking on the nature and cause of terrorism in the 20th Century, see Rex A. Hudson et al., *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?* (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1999).

and employs a quick in-kind retaliation against a terrorist aggressor. Such a response is intended to demonstrate to the terrorists that the cost of their acts is too high to continue them. This expression of aggression, like terrorism itself, does not follow Just-War guidelines, even taking the *Political Realist* stand.² Retaliation is immediate and intensity of aggression is same or even higher as “pay-back” for terrorist acts.

The Just War response attempts to follow accepted protocol in a dedicated military campaign. Such a protocol is usually based on three major criteria: the principles of *self defence*, *proportionality*, and *discrimination*.³ Others employ a “looser” interpretation of Just War by focusing on the *doctrine of double effect*, i.e., allowing for some “bad effects” when striving for an overall good.⁴

2. The *Realist* position on war and international conflict presupposes the view that there are no binding moral obligations among nations (or a nation to a terrorist organization); rather, there are only relations of power between them, unconstrained by moral rules. Often associated with Thomas Hobbes, it identifies *war* as a state of affairs when humanity is operating outside the realm of social order, where innate human aggression take over. While a government is required to uphold its own internal law, there is no overarching international law that it must uphold; hence, war is an instrument of foreign policy and it is restricted only by prudential concerns not justice.

³ The *Principle of Self-defense* implies that any act of war must have its origins in a self-defensive reaction to an aggressor; a preemptive strike against an anticipated aggressor is also permissible. The *Principle of Proportionality* requires that the level of force employed must be in proportion to the good that the action is intended to achieve. The *Principle of Discrimination* requires that force should be used in a way that respects the distinction between combatants and noncombatants—one can use force against the combatant but not the noncombatant. Some interpret the principle of discrimination in a non-compromising way: it is *never* permissible to intentionally kill civilians in a war.

4. This doctrine of double effect has several restrictions: (1) the good but not the bad effect is intended; (2) the good effect is *commensurate* with the bad effect; (3) the bad effect is *not* the means to the good effect; (4) the end must bring about a great good or eradicate a great evil; (5) the act itself (apart from its bad effect) is not *impermissible* and must not be *self-defeating* or *escalate* out of control; (6) terrorism or “Total War” which involves the deliberate harming of the innocent, can only be the act of last resort. As noted in this section, differences abound within those who support this approach or justification to war; not only in regards to the principle of discrimination, but the very purpose of a Just War. For example, Thomas Aquinas contends that a just conflict is not a war of self-defense, but a war to redress wrongs committed by another state; its

Pacifism acknowledges the aggression but does not respond in-kind, rather it seeks a non-aggressive and nonviolent response. The pacifist responses must be distinguished from "no response"—e.g., denial of aggression, uncontested acquiescence to aggressor, "cowardly" fleeing from danger. Pacifism can arise on a personal or institutional level, and be applied universally or only to specific cases. However, all expressions of pacifism are driven by a spiritual and/or moral commitment and the character of reply is always nonviolent response: diplomatic, non-cooperation, demonstration, etc.

Jaina Response to Terrorism

The questions central to this paper are: How a tradition like Jainism is to cope with an unjust and vicious social phenomenon such as terrorism? What is the proper role of Jaina philosophy or theology in helping one to be faithful both to the ultimate goal of liberation and to the inherent themes of compassion and nonviolence that are the very basis of the Jaina tradition itself?

There are two ways that one can go about constructing a Jaina response to terrorism. One can model a response based on historical episodes where an aggressor has threatened a Jaina community and observe how the clergy and/or lay Jaina people sought a solution. Or, one can formulate a "theoretical" response based on Jaina philosophical and religious tenets. Given the space limitations of this paper, I will focus on the latter approach, giving only brief reference to historical facts when helpful.

Emphasis on the principle of ahimsā in the Jaina tradition is well known. However, the lay Jainas realize that it is impossible to live a life totally in accordance with the principle of nonviolence. Historically, the Jaina community cannot be always

purpose is to inflict punishment for wrongs committed by a state that inflicted damage on another state and refused to admit or compensate for the transgression. Perhaps the only principle that avoids scrutiny and disagreement is the Principle of Proportionality within the Just War camp.

identified as simply pacifist.⁵ There were a number of famous Jaina generals and soldiers, none of whom was condemned by Jaina leaders or followers.⁶ However, there does not seem to be a clear stance on how the lay Jaina followers are expected to respond to war and terrorism.

Of the three responses to aggression and terrorism identified above, the lay Jaina position might appear to align mainly with the Just War approach, with its emphasis on restraint and self-defense. Only a few texts (e.g., *Sāgaradharmamṛtaṭīkā*, *Yasastilakacampū*, *Nītivākyamṛta*) make reference to war. According to these texts, one may engage only in a defensive campaign, where one is to acquire *only* a less dangerous variety of karmic matter generated from *virodhī-himsā* or opposing/hindering-based violence.⁷ However, the intent is not to encourage such activity but acknowledge its inevitability in a layperson's life, and is considered best if avoided.⁸ The Jaina

5. See Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 102-103, 193; Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 280-281, 313.

6. One needs to distinguish between Jaina mendicants and Jaina lay followers with the former required to live a much more restrictive life than the latter lay followers. Monks are never to engage in any form of violence, let alone warfare; lay followers, however, are given much more latitude to make their own decisions regarding warfare and are not condemned for war, and in fact can be praised for valor in a just war. For example, the great image of Bāhubali at Shravaṇa-Belgola was commissioned by the greatly adored Jaina General Cāmuṇḍarāya in 948.

7. The goal of life, according to Jainism, is to reach liberation (*mokṣa*) from rebirth and suffering (*saṃsāra*). Accumulation of karmic matter in association with one's soul (*jīva*) "weighs down" the soul and causes it to be reborn. As pointed out here, certain types of violence, while still resulting in the accumulation of binding karma, results in karma that is easier to remove, less of an impediment to one's ultimate goal.

8. For a more detailed description of this case of allowance for war, especially for the warrior/king caste (*kṣatriya*), see Jaini, pp. 170ff. Jaini correctly points out that much of the discussion on *virodhī-himsā* and views on warfare appears in much later works and not in earliest canonical Jaina texts. Perhaps as social difficulties and the inevitable clashes with Hindus and Moslems arose over the centuries, Jaina authors felt compelled to address how one might deal with the need to engage in limited combat when the need

texts, in general, regard acts of slaying—even in the spirit of self defense—to be demeritous, as such acts inevitably lead to the accumulation of *papa* or bad karmic matter. If it is at all necessary to engage in violence or warfare it would be best not to do so on grounds of self-defense.⁹

Initially, then, we can see a marked difference in western and Jaina discussions of warfare and retaliatory violence. Just War discussions in the West focus on the social justification of warfare and take into consideration the impact of violence on society. In contrast, Jaina discussions focus on the effects of engaging in warfare on an individual's spiritual progress and pursuit of *mokṣa*. Yet, ironically, the choice to engage in a justifiable war such as against terrorist, will take one away from this ultimate goal.

Though Jaina lay-followers have engaged in warfare, there has never been any doubt that they were still responsible for their acts, i.e., take rebirth in hell.¹⁰ *Prima facie*, one must question the sanity of the soldier who voluntarily takes on a vocation that not only can likely bring about his untimely death, but also result in an immediate rebirth in hell. Obviously, there are factors that would prompt one to do such an ultimate expression of self-

arose to defend oneself from an unjust oppressor—particularly when the Jaina tradition was under attack.

9. *Sutrakṛtāṅga*, II.ii.5-8. "The first kind of committing sin is prompted by a motive...This is the case when a man for his own sake...does injury to movable or immovable beings, or has it done by another, or consents to another's doing it. Thereby the bad Karman accrues to him...We now treat of the third kind of committing sins, called slaying. This is the case when a man thinking that some one has hurt, hurts, or will hurt him, or one of his people...kills movable or immovable beings, has them killed by another, or consents to another's killing them. Thereby the bad Karman accrues to him." See Hermann Jacobi trans., *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 45 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964), pp. 357-358.

10. Compare with Jaini's work again (p. 314) where he contrasts the Jaina *Ramayana* hero Lakṣmaṇa who righteously slays the evil Rāvaṇa, yet both end up in the same hell after death; while Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana in the Hindu *Mahābhārata* go to heaven after engaging in war and slaying others in battle.

sacrifice (or self-destruction). In such an event, the individual strives to “minimize the harm.”

The way to “optimum violence”¹¹ whether engaging in war or responding to terrorism is by observing the following: (i) not kill for the sake of oneself; (ii) do not act with passion or emotion; and (iii) renounce the act or disassociate oneself from it as much as possible. These directives are based on the Jaina explanation of the mechanics of *kārmic* bondage. More intense the passions (*kaṣāyas*) one undergoes, the more intense are the vibrations (*yoga*) in the mind that bring about the influx (*āsrava*) of *karmas* that bind (*bandha*) to the soul. Take for instance the following that can serve to guide the Jaina in such situations.

Taking life away out of passion is violence. (*Tattvārtha sūtra*, 7.8)

One may deprive a creature of his life and not be touched by the act...[if] one has been following the moral code and meticulously observing the religious norm. (*Siddhasenadvatīrīṣika*, 3.16)

A person under the sway of passion kills himself at the outset even though another creature might or might not have been killed as a consequence. (*Pravacanasāra*, 3.16)¹²

Hence, according to Jainism, it is not only *what* actions we do but also *how* we do them that ultimately determines the nature of *karmas* we incur. Accordingly, acting too selfishly, boastfully, or out of self defense in the course of warfare further stirs one's emotions so as to intensify this influx of *karma* as well as attract a firmer-binding kind of *karma* that is harder to remove.

11. What is meant here by “optimum” is that if one has to engage in violence, one must take into considerations prudential interests—do that course of action that has the *minimum* negative effect both on one's own spiritual progress and on the surrounding living beings affected by one's actions; one should particularly direct one's attentions to avoid harming “innocent” beings that are not the cause of any threat or harm to another.

12. These three passages are taken from Umāsvatī's *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and summary of commentaries presented in Nathmal Tatia (trans.) *That Which Is* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 173-174.

In addition to optimizing one's violent activities done *during* the war or response to terrorism, one must also strive to shed the accumulated *pāpa* through good activities leading to *nirjara* (removal of *karmic* matter through austerities) and *saṃvara* (repelling or stopping the inward flow of *karma*). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that all of this "debt" could be removed in one's lifetime. While good deeds and austerities help remove some of the bad *karma* associated with one's soul due to the violence and may, therefore, decrease one's length in hell, one cannot avoid altogether the rebirth in hell that awaits one as a result of killing in war or terrorist actions. Textual passages within the Jaina literature express this ability to lessen the final debt without avoiding responsibility for demerit in a number of ways:

Sinners cannot annihilate their works by new works; the pious annihilate their works by abstention. (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga* I. xv.15)¹³

As a tortoise draws its limbs into its own body, so a wise man should cover, as it were, his sins with his own meditation. (*Sūtrakṛtāṅga* I. viii.16)¹⁴

From the discussion above, it is apparent that the Jaina view of life stresses care and amity in the interaction with all living beings. Jainism, in principle, naturally espouses to nonviolence and, therefore, to some form of pacificism. Yet, as with all traditions, it has to wrestle with the difficulty of what to do with injustice and violence toward others as found in acts such as terrorism. Do we stick firmly to our non-violent principles and simply sit back and watch others suffer unjustly without lending a helping-hand to them?

The Jaina tradition, as is apparent from the following analysis by a contemporary Jaina teacher Muni Shri Nyayavijayaji, has chosen to tip the scales in favor of the need to

13. Hermann Jacobi (trans.), *Jaina Sūtras*, *op. cit.*, Part. II, p. 318.

14. *Ibid.*, p.299.

act with compassion when it comes to preservation of social order and the lives of the innocent. In his work, *Jaina Darśana*, he attempts to give convincing justification for why one *must* help those in need, for to not do so, is itself an act of violence:

One commits violence by not contributing to the efforts of stopping violence or by simply remaining indifferent to violence, just as one commits violence by indulging in positive violent activity. If one who knows swimming does not rescue a drowning man and simply watches him drowning, it is an act of violence. Not to give food to the hungry in spite of one's ability to give them food is also a case of violence. Violence of such type is a result of callous carelessness of the form: "What concern have I? Why should I invite trouble? I cannot afford to give food, etc., to others" Hard-heartedness is opposed to religion and religious practice. Universal love is the foundation of religion. To remain indifferent to other's happiness, comforts, and benefits for the sake of one's own is also a case of violence.¹⁵

In the above passage, Nyāyavijayajī is bringing to our attention the fact that acts of *omission* (avoiding the stoppage of violence) are just as deadly and impious as acts of *commission* (to do violence). One can be viewed as complicit in the violence itself, if one does nothing to stop it. Continuing with the same passage, we see this contemporary exponent of Jainism integrate the Gandhian tactic of passive resistance (*satyāgraha*) as a means to stop violence.

Nonviolence is a spiritual power. Noble bravery or heroism demands self-sacrifice. To sacrifice one's self-interests and even one's life—if need be—while resisting violence and supporting and fostering non-violence is the bravery of high order. In spite of having his courage and strength to fight, the person who controls his passion and excitement on the passion-rousing and exciting occasions and does not yield to violence is the true practitioner of nonviolence....[Bodily strength]...is needed to save the innocent people from cruel attacks of

15. Muni Shri Nyāyavijayajī (trans. by Nagin J. Shah), *Jaina Philosophy and Religion* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), pp. 112-113.

tyrants, rioters and the wicked enemies through brave counterattack and confrontation. For the internal non-violence of the form of keeping the mind calm and unagitated, this strength is as much needed as for the external nonviolence of the form of protecting the people. ...It is the *kṣatriyas* (members of the warrior class/caste) who have taught nonviolence, and those who follow their teachings are the brave men of heroic character.... Where there is weakness and feeling of fear, the practice of non-violence is utterly impossible...¹⁶

In this moving passage we see expressed the kind of intense self-sacrifice that could explain why a Jaina lay-person would forgo or jeopardize his own immediate spiritual advancement so as to protect and serve those in distress. It is hard to envision a nobler act of courage and compassion, reflecting the same kind of unswerving love that leads a *Bodhisattva* to postpone his final liberation till all other sentient beings are brought to salvation. Truly this is the fullest expression of the Jaina ideal of *ahimsa*, where one respects and cares for other living beings so much that one is willing to delay one's own spiritual liberation in an effort to protect others from harm. Although Nyayavijayajī does not advocate violence in the above passage, his reference in this passage to the *kṣatriya* caste demonstrates his recognition of the predominance of the this caste within the Jaina community and leaders. For example, all the *Tirthaṅkaras* were drawn from *kṣatriya* (warrior) caste. The Jaina tradition, therefore, could hardly deny this obligation of the individual to defend society from aggression and helps explain the "ease" with which a tradition founded on the practice of extreme nonviolence, could readily allow participation in military campaigns. However, as is well noted in Jaina scholarship,¹⁷ there was a concerted effort as time progressed to "internalize" the elements of soldiering from a

16. *Ibid.* p.112.

17. See Dundas, *The Jainis*, op. cit., p. 102; Jaini, *The Jaina Path*, op. cit., p. 67ff; Nyayavijayajī, *Jaina Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 239.

“fight” against warriors on a battlefield, to a “fight” against ignorance and passions that impede liberation and cause bondage. The valor, courage, dedication, strength, bravery, forcefulness, hardships, and pain that once characterized the great “warrior” *kṣatriya*, now denotes the praised “mendicant” *kṣatriya* who conquerors the causes of suffering and transmigration through great fortitude, misery, and adversity on the part of the “spiritual warrior.” Consider the following passages which typify this shift in focus from the mundane and violent to the sublime and tranquil.

A man who conquers nobody but himself is the greater victor than one who conquers thousands and thousands of valiant enemies. (*Uttarādhyayna Sūtra*), IX.35¹⁸

Fight with your own self; why fight with external enemies? He who conquers himself through himself attains happiness. (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, II.iii.77)¹⁹

These passages emphasize not only that there has been a shift in the object of conquest for the warrior, but that the new way is significantly better and more praiseworthy, providing better “spoils” of the victory. One need only consider that Sanskrit verb root of the most revered and central Jaina title “*jina*,” is “*ji*,” (to conquer), to see the deep link between the former role of the *kṣatriya* and the new purpose and direction it has taken within Jainism, i.e., “victor over attachment, passions, etc.”

Jaina thinkers did not articulate a Just War theory as is found within the western tradition. However, many of the elements found in these western accounts are implicitly contained within Jaina thought in terms of general directives about war. As noted above, when war is to be engaged in, Jaina soldiers are never to be the aggressor and are to respond reactively in a self-defense, and to protect innocent life, the Jaina teachings, and the Jaina way of life. Jaina tradition also prohibits violence against

18. *Uttarādhyaynasūtra*, IX.35 in Nyāyavijayaṇī (trans.), p. 436.

19. *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, II.iii.77 in Nyāyavijayaṇī (trans.), p. 437.

non-combatants, because one's primary goal in life is to avoid doing harm to all living beings; only those viewed as evil and destructive (combatants) could be the recipients of violence. Anticipating the "doctrine of double effect," Jainism distinguishes between intentional, premeditated violence (*saṅkalpaja-himsā*) and unintentional, accidental violence (*ārambhaja-himsā*); thereby recognizing that some unintentional violence may occur in the process of carrying out one's daily activities, presumably including warfare if necessitated to do so. However, some of the stipulations of the western "looser" interpretation of double effect might not be palatable to the Jaina sensibilities: i.e., the allowance of terrorism or total war and the allowance of "minor infractions" to noncombatants to bring about a greater good and eradicate a great evil.

Looking at the overarching Jaina directive to avoid violence if at all possible, one could presume that the Jainas would support the western principle of proportionality as they advocate the least possible violence to ward off a terrorist threat. Going one point further, perhaps the *real* distinctive Jaina contribution to the philosophical dialogue over warfare and prevention against terrorism is the Jaina emphasis on the "internal" dimension of war. Under such circumstances where a Jaina must engage in war, he is required to remain calm and detached. This emphasis on a cool head will lead to more care in the military activity (hence less careless unintentional destruction of innocent noncombatants), a heightened sensitivity to when and where violence is warranted and when and where it can be avoided (hence, minimizing the use of violence), and a general reduction in the psychological and spiritual damage that the violence of war inflicts on the combatant.²⁰

20. Consider the focus of the criticism directed against U.S. anti-terrorism policies and attitudes after 9-11 and the co-current ultraconservative Israeli stance in regards to the status of the Palestinians. Some feel the highly emotional, nationalistic, and extremely patriotic attitudes that dominate both administrations at this time, blinded them to the real causes of the terrorism and bloodshed in the first place and prevent them from recognizing and implementing any plausible solutions to the upheaval in the Middle

It goes without saying that “ideally” any member of the Jaina community would prefer to resolve any conflict, including terrorism in a peaceful nonviolent fashion and by embracing a pacifist approach to the problem. Such an approach may incorporate the type of passive resistance methods employed by Gandhi and embraced by Muni Nyayavijayaji, who is quoted earlier in the paper. However, in confronting with a megalomaniac, pathological serial killer like Adolph Hitler of Nazi Germany, Osama bin Laden of al-Qaida, Shoko Asahara of Aum Shinrikyo, or Prabhakaran of the Liberation Tigers, the Jaina may seriously wonder if there is any nonviolent means to arrest such violent and destructive propensity.

Terrorist Arguments and Jaina Response: Conclusion

This paper initially offered two arguments – utilitarian and relativist -- intended to give moral and rational grounds for terrorist acts. We are now in a position to provide a probable response to these lines of argumentation. An analysis of Utilitarian argument from the Jaina perspective would result in finding fault with this line of thinking. Fundamentally, the Jaina would say that an injustice or wrong *cannot* be “fixed” by resorting to the killing of a large number of people, especially innocent noncombatants which are the usual recipient of terrorist attacks. A Jaina position would question whether violence is the only means to reverse injustices and oppression, especially given such world-wide global “overseers” as the United Nations that can be appealed to remedy a bad situation. Clearly, the slaying of thousands of innocent beings can never be the *means* to an end,

East. If these leaders had taken notice of the Jaina prioritization of calming the mind and removing the passions that distort and cause ignorance in their perspective on life, then there might arise a real long-range solution to the tension between the two states which ultimately will reduce if not remove the terrorist threat faced by the United States. No doubt this is easier said than done given the years of dedicated spiritual practices required to progress the mind to this stage, but some effort toward those ends would be a start toward addressing these issues with a cooler mind with a broader perspective on its problems. Even being aware of those distorting psychological influences could help one to be aware of them and try to reduce their dominance in the minds of administration officials.

regardless of what good it is perceived to bring about. Further, in the long history of terrorism it has seldom, if ever, brought about the ends that it was employed to achieve. The Utilitarian attempt to stack up the lives of living sentient beings in some sort of mathematical equation is the most atrocious perversion imaginable against the basic sanctity of all life. The scale of violence and suffering in terrorism is such an *immense evil* that no good consequences can outweigh it. Even if one were to generate a cost-benefit analysis, it is hard to see how the alleged benefits to the perceived "oppressed people" can be weighed in favor of terrorist activities, over the resulting suffering in rest of world. The collective misery, fear, costs, loss of general well-being and happiness of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people directly or indirectly victimized, outweighs the intended "newly gained" happiness of the "oppressed people." This sort of analysis fails to recognize the inherent value in each and every life, whereby no one life or group of lives can negate the value and sanctity of another life, let alone *justify* the deaths of thousands of innocent persons.

In response to the Relativist argument, a Jaina analysis would focus not on which side is right or wrong, who is hero or villain, but rather on the character, purpose, means, and goal of both the undertaker of violence (*himsaka*) and the act of violence itself (*himsa*). If the act intentionally brings about the suffering and/or death of one or more innocent (noncombatant) persons, then it is wrong regardless of the nationality or identity of the agent and the purpose and means used to bring about the action. As noted above, it is not obvious that previous acts of terror have exhausted all other means to resolve the "alleged injustice or oppression" before unleashing their heinous acts of mass destruction. If one has properly subdued one's passions and emotions, then a Jaina mediator could objectively determine what injustices (if any at all) have been committed or continue to be committed and propose appropriate remedies to resolve the tensions and return society back to a stable condition. If violent

activities persist, then a Jaina position would require that a policy of “optimum violence” be adopted so as to reduce the threat posed by the irrational aggressor.

While the Jaina lay population felt the need to occasionally engage in war to defend themselves and their fellow citizens, the monks were totally forbidden from such acts. The Jaina monk is instructed to remain passive even when under attack, to make no effort to fight back or later retaliate—instead to remain calm and detached. Take for instance the following passage from *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* which shows a clam and totally nonviolent Mahāvīra under extreme violent circumstances.

In his resting place...crawling or flying animals attacked him; bad people or lance bearers attacked him...foul smells and sounds...always well controlled, he bore the different sorts of feelings...persevered in his meditations, free from resentment.²¹

As a living model of total compassion and nonviolence Mahāvīra preached the same to his followers as is clear from the following passages.

As I feel every pain and agony from death down to the pulling of my hair; in the same way, be sure of this, all kinds of living beings feel the same pain and agony...For this reason all sorts of living beings should not be beaten, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor deprived of life.²²

All creatures who commit sins will, suffer, and tremble. Considering this, a wise monk who has ceased to sin...should abstain from violence with regard to moveable and immovable beings.²³

And yet the Jaina lay people cannot follow this total nonviolence. This apparent contradiction between mendicant and lay Jaina approach to terrorism and violence has generated some criticism among scholars. As a postscript to this paper, I wish to

21. Hermann Jacobi (trans.), *Jaina Sūtras, op. cit.*, Part I. viii.2, pp. 83-85.

22. *Sūtrakṛitāṅga* II.i.48. See Hermann Jacobi (trans.), *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II., p. 351.

23. *Sūtrakṛitāṅga* I.vii.20. See Hermann Jacobi (trans.), *Jaina Sūtras*, Part II, p. 295.

address such criticism. At the outset let us be clear that the lay Jaina followers do not complain about this difference. Nor do they see themselves as "used" by the mendicants as the "first line of defense" so that the monks can avoid accumulating bad *karma* or risk dying on the battlefield.

As a starting place, let us note that the *samsaric* world by definition is a world of suffering and there is little chance that one—in and of oneself—can bring an end to this terrible state of affairs. Second, by reaching liberation or climbing closer to it, one *does* make a significant improvement in the overall "spiritual atmosphere" around oneself. According to Jainism, being in the presence of a *Jina* (spiritual conqueror) is said to have an extremely positive influence on a person in terms of their overall attitudes, emotions, and preoccupations in life—hence reducing one's stress, anger, and hostility toward others in the world. Third, once one has taken the great vows of a mendicant (*mahāvratas*) he or she is placed in a special role in the Jaina community, that is, one of great reverence and support because this person has taken on a life of total renunciation (*sarvavirati*). This is an extremely difficult life of severe austerity and discipline, denying all the wants and desires that plague ordinary persons. The members of the Jaina community take it upon themselves freely to support this most precious undertaking even if it, at times, exerts demands on their own lives. Fourth, all laypersons believe that eventually they will enter upon this path (either later in this or a future lifetime); hence, they can hope that just as they support the monks now, later the Jaina community will support them when they have taken on the great vows.

So we see that in the Jaina community, the mendicants take on a special status that removes them from worldly obligations and duties so that they may dedicate themselves fully to the spiritual quest. It may be noted that this is not a unique phenomenon to the Jaina community as most, if not all, societies have recognized and supported certain individuals who have taken upon themselves to seek final truth or a reclusive lifestyle.

To expect that such individuals violate some of their vows and highly restrictive principles for a momentary threat or problem posed against a local community would be to break the trust between the lay and mendicant members of the community as well as undermine the greater good that is expected to be generated from the monks' efforts toward liberation.

Mahāvīra taught ahimsā to all. As more people reach the state of true vision (*samyak-darśana*) and move to higher *guṇasthānas* (stages of spiritual awakening), the chances of greater world peace will increase and overall sentiments of aggression and suffering will decrease. One might postulate that the mendicants work on a different, more fundamental level in dealing with aggression as expressed in terrorism. To reduce terrorism in the world, they operate at the spiritual level of purifying the general atmosphere, calming aggressive passions and changing selfish attitudes.

Finally, it should be noted as a point of clarification that Jaina mendicants are not oblivious to problems in the world nor do they turn their back on the changing needs of the lay community that supports them. The only real difference is that they cannot and will not intentionally hurt another living being, regardless of how evil and despicable a terrorist may be. Nevertheless, there is nothing that would prevent the mendicant from participating in nonviolent, passive-resistant demonstrations against tyranny or injustice; but, ultimately they have to stop just short of the option of violence in stopping aggression.