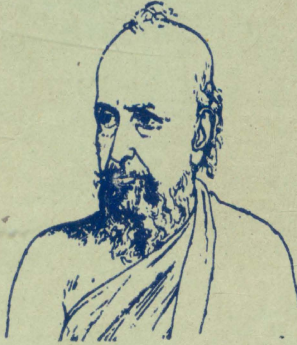


Shree Vallabhsuri Jaina Literature Series No. 8

# LORD MAHAVIRA AND HIS TEACHINGS



SHREE VALLABHSURI SMARAK NIDHI  
39/41 Dhanji Street, Bombay 400 003

## SHRI VALLABHSURI SMARAK NIDHI

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The Late Acharya Shri Vijaysamudrasurisarwarji  
Maharaj

The Late Agamprabhakar Shri Punyavijayji Maharaj

Acharya Shri Vijayindradinsurisarwarji Maharaj  
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# **LORD MAHAVIRA AND HIS TEACHINGS**



*Published By*

**SHREE VALLABHSURI SMARAK NIDHI**

**39/41 Dhanji Street, Bombay 400 003**





## **NAMASKARA MAHAMANTRA NAMO ARIHANTANAM**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to the Arthats (the worthy Omniscient and real Guides of the whole universe)

## **NAMO SIDDHANAM**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to those supreme souls who are liberated from the bondage of this perishable physical body.

## **NAMO AYARIYANAM**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to the Acharyas who are experts in the tenets expounded by the Arthats.

## **NAMO UVVAJIIHHAYANAM**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to the Upadhyayas who enlighten the masses about the hidden secrets (esoteric aspects) of the sacred scriptures.

## **NAMO LOYE SAVV SAHUNAM**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to the Sadhus, who have dedicated their lives to the fulfilment of the noble mission in accordance with the original instructions of the Arthats.

## **ESO PANCH NAMUKKARO SAVVA PAVAPPANASANO**

Prostrations (Namaskaras) to the above five is the destroyer of all sins.

## **MANGALANANCHA SAVVESIM PADDHAMAM HAVAI MANGALAM**

And is the first 'Mangal' amongst all the 'Mangals'



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**DEDICATED**  
**To**  
**the Late Gulabchandji Dhaddha,**  
**the founder of**  
**Shri Jain Swetamber Conference**  
**and a devout disciple of the Late**  
**Acharyaprarav Vijayavallabhsuriswarji**  
**Maharaj for the sterling services**  
**rendered for the uplift, betterment and**  
**unity amongst Jains as well as for**  
**better understanding of Jain religion.**



## **PUBLISHER'S NOTE**

To interpret, enlighten and explain the basic principles of Jain religion to the masses irrespective of caste or creed was one of the cherished desire of the illustrious divine, Acharya Shri Vijayavallabh-suriswarji Maharaj, whose name is associated with Nidhi. This resulted in initiating a scheme of publication of booklets, simple and easy to read.

“LORD MAHAVIRA AND HIS TEACHINGS” is a reprint of a collection of eight essays on different facets of Jainism. They have been earlier published either in journal or books. The late Dr. A. N. Upadhye, Dr. S. B. Deo Shri Dalsukhbhai Malvania, the late Prof. Prithviraj Jain, Shri C. S. Mallinath, Prof. A. Chakravarti, Prof. Kr. De. Karnataki and the late Shri B. P. Wadia are acknowledged scholars in different branches of study.

We have added one more paper on ‘The Place of Jainism in India Thought’, written by Dr. Felix Valyi. The original was in French which was broadcast to Europe by the All India Radio from Delhi on June 16th, 1955, as part of the series of talks on Indian Thought and its influence on the European mind.

Considering the demand, the Nidhi has decided to publish the second edition. This, in a way, shows the utility of such publications. On behalf of the Nidhi, we convey our sincere thanks to the scholars whose essays are included in this collection.

The services rendered by the Great Acharyapravar late Shri Vijayavallabhsuriswarji Maharaj in the field of religion, education and literature created a special niche in the hearts of all persons who came even in remote contact with him. We, have therefore decided to include an appreciation titled "A Dedicated Soul" which gives a bare glimpse of the unsurpassing popularity of this great inspiring personality.

The Nidhi welcomes essays and articles with a view to understand and popularise the basic principles of Jainism but it should not be assumed that the Nidhi associates entirely with views expressed therein. We invite suggestions to popularise our publication activities.

The utility of such a publication will be fully realized if some of the broad-based principles of Jainism—Non-violence, truth and universal brotherhood—the panacea of all ills are translated into reality.

We thank Bhagwat Brothers of Mouj Printing Bureau for excellent printing.

We thank our numerous donors and well-wishers for helping and furthering the cause which the Great Acharya espoused so dearly.

Jagjivandas Shivilal Shah  
 39/41 Dhanji Street  
 Bombay 400 003  
 25th July, 1983.

Umedmal Hajarimal  
 Honorary Secretaries  
 Shree Vallabhsuri Smarak Nidhi



## A DEDICATED SOUL

The wise dictum that 'The greatest saint is not the man who does extra-ordinary things, but does ordinary things extra-ordinarily' has been realized in the life of Acharya Shri Vijayavallabhasuri, whose services to the cause of education and Jainism has but few parallels in our history.

"Uplift through education" was the central message of the life of this illustrious saint, whose searching intelligence and ardent nature urged him to find out the panacea for the younger generation to keep off from the stifling atmosphere which would overpower them any day. Gifted with prophetic vision, he foresaw the shape of things to come at a time when education was regarded as a taboo and foreign travel led to excommunication. These views were labelled ideological by some and retrograde floundering by others specially when he propounded the gospel of education. This concept was not the rebellion of a solitary soul but the outcome of a social conflict and a future vision of the society. This was a drop in the sea of mankind but the people felt in it the roar of the sea and its heave and swell were realized many years later, as we do visualize now very clearly.

Acharya Shri Vijayavallabhasuri, who hailed from Baroda, became the disciple of Srimad Vijayanandasuri, popularly known as Atmaramji, and since then Acharyashri led the disciplined life of a Jaina sadhu, with an outlook which was in tune with the spirit

and demand of our age as well as in conformity with the established canons of Jaina Monastic Jurisprudence.

### ATMARAMJI—THE GURU

Atmaramji was an ardent student of Jainism in all its myriad manifestations and implications. The education and training which he imparted to the young Vallabhavijayaji stood the latter in good stead, when he was called upon to interpret and explain the tenets of Jainism. So great was the popularity of Atmaramji that he was invited to the World Faiths Conference in the United States to represent Jainism. He deputised Shri Virchand Gandhi, the crude scholar of Jainism, who persuasively propounded the ethical code of Jainism, which is based on non-violence, truthfulness, non-possession and penance, ideas very much similar to the Gandhian concept of a happy society. The success of Shri Virchand Gandhi was mainly due to the briefing he had from Atmaramji and Vallabhavijayaji.

### TO THE SHELTER OF FOOD

An unusual incident occurred in the early life of Acharya Shri Vijayavallabhasuri. Seeing his mother on death-bed, he asked her anxiously: "To whose shelter are you leaving me?" "I leave you to the shelter of the Lord" was his mother's apt reply. "His shelter is the best shelter; the rest is all illusion," she added. These words, touchingly told, sowed the seeds of religious faith that was to blossom forth in later years. At the age of sixteen, he renounced

worldly life at Radhanpur in V.S. 1943. This dedicated soul started his austere life with the seriousness which foreshadowed a great religious life. He strove to realise the ideal of his Guru, which expressed itself for the betterment of the society and removal of illiteracy. He started launching new educational institutions and the help of many social reformers readily overflowed.

### ORTHODOXY DISTURBED

Acharya Shri Vijayavallabhasuri travelled widely all over the country; and this urged him to concentrate his work on the projects which helped the masses to live a healthier and better life by the removal of social and religious evils and spread of the spirit of religious toleration. But how could a Jaina *Sadhu*, devoted to study and spread of religion, undertake social projects—was the parrot like echo from the doves of the orthodoxy. It became his unfortunate lot to be the most misunderstood individual in spite of his loftier ideals. This trend of thought attracted the attention of the people of all faiths in the country. Undaunted and unperturbed, he strove to build up more institutions, societies and educational organizations which helped to alleviate the burden of the masses and uplift the society in all respects.

His religious discourses carried always a message of enlightening the public with the gospel of swadeshi, non-violence, and education. His popularity in the Punjab grew proverbial, which earned for him the title of "Punjab Kesari". Time's winged chariot moved on for nearly a score of years during which period he

moved in many towns and cities. Intuition resulted in craving for *darshan* of Adishvara at Shatrunjaya and moving scenes greeted his departure from the Punjab, where it is said that his gesture or voice would touch even the birds and animals. He left some of his disciples to pacify the agonised feelings of the people, which comprised persons of different faiths. An untoward incident occurred, which hastened his return, before the scheduled date. Time factor and distance he had to cross placed him in a difficult predicament. However, a determined will, love for his Guru and faith in his followers helped him to cover a difficult terrain of 450 miles in fifteen days under the scorching heat. To move barefooted and bareheaded was an impossibility; however, a Jaina *Sadhu* is not free to act and behave as he pleases. He has to abide by rigid rules. He reached in time inspite of all privations.

### "JUSTIFY FURTHER STAY"

But he started back again on the tour of Gujarat and Saurashtra. After moving extensively in Gujarat, he reached Bombay at the pressing invitation of the Jaina *Samgha* in 1914 A.D. During his stay, he delivered religious discourses in different parts of the city and then prepared himself to leave for the Punjab, where his followers consisted of all sections of the society. His popularity knew no barriers of caste and creed. But the followers insisted that he should stay further in Bombay. He requested the Jaina *Samgha* to justify his further stay. Several constructive suggestions were put forward but he was full with the idea of his Guru, who always



thought of the uplift of people through education.

Acharyashri laid a great stress on the desirability of founding a central education institution in Bombay to meet the growing needs of a society, which, though foremost in trade and industry, was backward in educational and professional fields. The idea was welcomed by the rich and the educated sections of the Jainas. They offered their full co-operation and the untiring efforts of an enthusiastic band of workers resulted in giving a definite shape to the thoughtful idea of Acharyashri.

Thus Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya took shape in Bombay in 1915 A.D. Thousands of students have enlivened their lives by the yeomen services rendered by this institution. Even if Acharyashri had done nothing in the field of education except inspiring the foundation of Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, his name would have been a historic milestone for posterity as an outstanding pioneer of education among the Jainas. This institution, started in a very humble and noble way, has now attracted the appreciative attention of the people of other faiths also. This move, was a forerunner to starting a chain of many other social, cultural, religious and educational institutions in Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Punjab and many other parts of India. This was due to the great efforts of Acharyashri. This serves as a valuable landmark in the social and cultural history of India.

Inspite of his multifarious activities, literature did not escape his attention. His poems inspired by

original ideas are rich in meaning and deep with thought. He was well-versed in astrology and mathematics. Rich repositories of old manuscripts, rare coins and other antiquities providing links with the ancient history, always absorbed his mind. He believed that many problems, confronting loose links of Indian History and Culture, would remain unsolved in the absence of a systematic research of old Jaina literature. This erudite savant was, therefore, anxious to start a research institute to bring to light the valuable storehouses of knowledge, now literally trapped in the ancient repositories, and to marshall the existing data in the framework of moderate research. Such efforts, he stated, would result in fertilizing the barren field of Jaina research and bring to the forefront the message propounded by Lord Mahavira.

### A SILENT PATRIOT

Acharyashri Vijayavallabhasuri was a patriot without ostensible fanfare. He wore khaddar and was an ardent advocate of propagation of Hindi as national language. *Swadeshism* found an echo in his speeches. His illuminating address at a vast cosmopolitan gathering held some months before his death during the prohibition week in Bombay, provided a pointer to his growing popularity amongst all sections of the people. Lucidity and effective presentation of the ideal of prohibition prompted many persons not only to give up wine but forego all intoxicants.

His speeches were always a rip-roaring success, whether the occasion was an open air meetings or

cloistered halls for religious discourses. He was ready-witted and always open to answer all questions. Persons of all faiths used to call on him, hear his talks and invite him to address meetings. He solved the difficulties and problems confronting individuals and institutions. He was fearless and outspoken in his views. Behind this disciplined outlook, he was tender and soft to the distressed and unhappy. It did not matter to which strata of society his callers belonged. Direct contact helped him to know the pulse of the society. During his stay in Gujarat, he took active part in the Conference of Jaina Sadhus at Ahmedabad and gave an exemplary lead to establish unity and purity amongst the priestly class. He disliked theories, doctrines, dogmas and principles based on wrong notions and misguided aptitudes. His views were revolutionary to a great extent. This created misunderstandings, which were based on narrow outlook. He never liked to slacken the rules and regulations, governing the austere life of a person, who has renounced this worldly life. He was against all unnecessary expenses either in religious or marriage ceremonies. He was against some of the deeprooted evils, which corroded the sinews of society. He had an abhorrence for the custom of marriage dowry.

### THE SCHEME FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

His last visit to Bombay proved memorable. During his journey on foot through villages, towns and cities of the Punjab, Madhya Bharat, Gujarat and Saurashtra, he was deeply moved by the hard-stricken lot of the middle and the lower strata of the society. He was preoccupied during the last months of his

life in finding a solution of this unhappy state of affairs. The problem of plenty and poverty was uppermost in his mind. He urged generous minded persons to contribute large sums for the welfare and betterment of the aggrieved people. Response was not encouraging; but he was not disheartened. A target for collecting a token fund was fixed; and he decided to forgo milk, if the target was not reached within some days. This decision gingered up all activities. Men, women and children of all ranks and ages moved ceaselessly to collect funds. Acharya Shri Vijaya-vallabhasuri helped the campaign by delivering speeches in different wards of the city. Sincere and unified efforts created a magic influence of unloosening the purse strings and the target amount was collected ahead of the scheduled hour. This has been a unique incident from which the posterity and pessimistic workers will derive a great lesson of zeal and will. It provided a pointer to the immense potentialities of this great saint.

### UNITY OF ALL FAITHS

During the unsettled period in the undivided Punjab, officers and their families of all faiths held him in high respect. Wives of many military officers attended his lecture meetings and approached him for dispelling their doubts and solving their difficulties. His approach to all problems was based on eclectic, comprehensive and universal outlook which was a key to his popularity amongst people of all sects and faiths.

In latter stage of his life, he took keen interest in fostering unity amongst all sects of Jainas. He

stood for the removal of man-made divisions and subdivisions. To succeed in his erstwhile mission, he had started spade work years before. All his discourses touched one focal point—unity amongst all sections of the society. He believed in religious toleration. He translated abstract concept of humanism, freedom of life and religion into rational and practical service of social progress.

### **“DO NOT BE INDOLENT, O GAUTAMA”**

In Acharya's life, one found a puissant flow of spiritual practicability, decisiveness, resultant of natural power and vision, was a motivating force of his outlook on life and society. He accepted Jainism as a rule of inner existence and inspiration for humanitarian activities. “Do not be indolent, O Gautama, even for a moment”—this death-less message of Lord Mahavira found a touching echo in the daily life of Acharya Shri Vijayavallabhasuri Maharaj. He served humanity and religion in its struggle for lasting peace, friendship and unity not only amongst the people of his own faith but also amongst the general mass of humanity. He lived and died for the welfare of mankind. He worked ceaselessly for a better-ordered society, more just and freer mass of humanity. His death on the night of 22nd September, 1954 at the age of eighty-four cast a serious gloom in the vast ocean of mankind. Nature also felt the void which was illustrated in the form of a rare natural phenomenon of rainbow colours, circling in the blue firmament on a bright afternoon, when the mortal remains of this great devoted soul started on the last lap of its journey. The lustrous human body of this great

scholar, humanitarian, pioneer of educational and social reforms is no more; but the ennobling ideals he left behind will remain so long as humanity lives. He left a message and a mission. His divine soul serves as a beacon light to achieve success.

— K. D. Kora



## **MAHAVIRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE<sup>1</sup>**

The quest for the Higher on an intellectual or metaphysical plane has been all along, in India, the privilege or province of some outstanding individual or individuals, while the mass of the population, generally steeped in ignorance and poverty, was devoted to crude deification and ancestor-worship. The power of a religious leader lay in his ability to win over to his creed the people around him. In India there have been two types of religious leaders: the Priest, and the Ascetic.

The priest was a champion of ritualism. He "vigorously claimed that the welfare and indeed the very existence of the world, including even the gods, depended upon the maintenance of their systems of sacrifice, which grew to immense size and complexity." The cults popularised by him were polytheistic; the deities were very often forces of nature; and man was put at their utter mercy, the priest alone being capable of saving him by seeking the favour of the deities through sacrificial rites. This is the line of thought of the Vedic religion and its custodians. It

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<sup>1</sup> This lecture on "MAHAVIRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE" was delivered by Dr. A. N. Upadhye, M.A., D.Litt., Head of the Department of Ardhamagadhi in Rajaram College, Kolhapur, on the occasion of Mahavira Jayanti on 23rd April, 1956. The meeting was sponsored jointly by the Indian Institute of Culture and the Jain Mission Society, Bangalore.

came into India from outside, from the North-West. And, thanks to the mesmeric power exerted by elaborate ritual, it gradually spread towards the East and the South, catching handfuls of followers here and there.

As distinguished from this, in the East, along the fertile banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, there flourished in India a succession of ascetic teachers, who, hailing from rich families, had enough leisure for high thinking and religious meditation. For them, the spirit in man, and also in all animate beings, was the focus of religious meditation as well as an object of investigation in relation to all that is inanimate in the universe. This brought them face to face with the problem of life here and elsewhere, since both spirit and matter were real for them—real, and therefore essentially eternal, though passing through the flux of change. Life here and hereafter was the result of the beginningless connection between spirit and matter, which was the source of all the misery in this world; and the aim of religion was to separate matter from spirit, so that the latter might achieve a state of liberation in which it would exist in a plenitude of purity, bliss and knowledge. Man is his own master; his thoughts, words and acts have made him, and continue to make him, what he is; it is in his hands to make or mar his present or future; the great teachers of the past are his ideals to inspire him along the path of religion; and he has to struggle, with hope, on the well-trodden path of spiritual progress, following a code of moral and ascetic discipline, till he reaches the goal of spiritual Emancipation or perfection.



Thus it will be seen that here, in the Eastern stream of religious thought, there is no place either for a Deity who shapes the universe and meddles in its matters, or for a priest invested with mysterious powers to propitiate Him. This line of thought is well represented by Jaina Tirthankaras like Neminatha, Parsva and Mahavira, by Ajivika Teachers like Goshala, by Samkhya philosophers like Kapila and promulgators of Buddhism like Buddha.

With the political freedom of our land, there is great enthusiasm all over the country, particularly patent and eloquent among the educated classes who have started revaluing the ancient Indian heritage in a new perspective. It is in the fitness of things that great personalities like Mahavira and Buddha are remembered with reverence in this context. I have often wondered how these great teachers, whose preachings have such an abiding human appeal, could have been somewhat neglected for some time in the very land which they enriched and elevated in its moral stature. It is, however, a happy augury that their greatness is being appreciated to-day all the more. As usual, it is an irony with us, that Western scholarship has to make us aware of the greatness of our men and matters. Very valuable work in the fields of Jaina and Buddhist literatures was done by Western savants; and to-day, we are in a position to appreciate the greatness of Mahavira and Buddha, better than we could do in earlier days.

As a sign of the new spirit, the 2500th Parinirvana Day of Buddha is being celebrated this year; besides, the Jayanti days of Mahavira and Buddha are

celebrated all over the country every year now. To-day happens to be the Mahavira Jayanti day. And it is but natural that I should address you in detail on the personality of and principles preached by Mahavira.

Mahavira was a contemporary of Buddha, and he stands as the 24th Tirthankara whose preachings fully breathe the spirit of what I have called Eastern stream of thought in India. All that Mahavira and his predecessors have preached goes under the name of Jainism to-day, but that should not come in the way of our appreciating and putting into practice the great principles preached by Mahavira which stand to-day embedded and elaborately interpreted in Jaina literature in different languages.

Those of you who have visited Bihar can testify to the fertility of that part of India; but more than that, in the history of Indian thought and culture Bihar has played an important role. The great champions of Atma philosophy like Buddha, Janaka and Mahavira hail from this part. It is Mithila in Bihar that has made substantial contributions to Mimamsa, Nyaya and Vaisesika systems. Some 2500 years ago, Vaishali (modern Basarh, some 30 miles to the north of Patna) was a prosperous capital. A suburb of it was called Kundapura or Kshatriyakunda; and here in the palace of King Sidhartha of his queen Trishala or Priyakarini Mahavira was born: to emphasise his various outstanding traits, he was also known as Jnata-putra, Vaisaliya, Vardhamana, Sanmati, etc. His mother belonged to the family of Chetaka, the mighty Licchavi ruler of Vidaha at whose

call Licchavis and Mallas co-operated both for defence and offence. Tradition is not unanimous about his marriage : according to the one, he was a celibate throughout; while according to another, he married Yashoda and had a daughter called Priyadarshana. As a prince, having excellent connections with ruling dynasties of his times, it was expected of him to rule with authority and enjoy the pleasures of a prosperous carrier after his father. But that was not to be. Just at the age of 30, Mahavira decided like a hero to relinquish the comforts of a princely life and undertook the life of an ascetic with a view to attaining spiritual happiness, and thus place before the world the correct values of life and an example of his having solved its problems in a successful manner. Attachment and possessive instincts have been the greatest obstacles in the attainment of spiritual peace and purification; and he gave them up in an ideal manner. Physical comforts are not an end in themselves; and Mahavira became a Nirgrantha, and went about practising severe penances, even without any clothes on his body. We have graphic description of his hardships given in detail in the Acharanga, etc. : people abused him, boys pelted him with stones, and thus he was subjected to many calamities in the Eastern part of Bengal. After twelve years of rigorous penances, Mahavira had a triumph over physical weaknesses and limitations; and he attained pure and perfect knowledge which transcended the limits of space and time : he became a Kevalin, a Sarvajna. Shrenika Bimbisara was his contemporary and was ruling at Rajagrha : Mahavira delivered his first sermon on the hill Vipulakala in the vicinity of Rajagrha. For full thirty years he visited different parts of the country;

and it was his Vihara, or religious tour, as well as that of Buddha, that gave Magadhan territory the name of Bihar. Mahavira's parents belonged to the school of Parshva; during his Vihara, Mahavira explained to his society various problems of life and their solutions. He laid maximum stress on the sanctity and dignity of the spirit, and his preachings were meant for one and all who conformed to the religious discipline outlined by him. The organisation of his followers, including princes as well as poor peasants, conformed to the fourfold pattern consisting of Monks, Nuns, Householders and House-ladies: this nomenclature continues in Jainism even to this day. The influence of the great principles preached by Mahavira is seen in India even outside Jainism. He was a Tirthankara, who prepared a ford for the suffering humanity to achieve peace here and bliss elsewhere. In view of the all-embracing character of Mahavira's principles, Samantabhadra, as early as 2nd century A.D., called the Tirtha of Mahavira by the name Sarvodaya, which term is so commonly used now-a-days after Gandhiji. At the age of 72, Mahavira attained Nirvana at Pava in 527 B. C.; and this day is celebrated with lights all over India as the Diwali Day.

A large amount of literature, both ancient and modern, is available on the life and activities of Mahavira; and many myths, miracles and legends have grown about his personality, as usual with all religious dignitaries. Scientific and historical scrutiny unaffected by sectarian prejudice and religious bias is made difficult by the very nature of the sources from which the information has to be gleaned. What I have attempted above is a bare outline of Mahavira's

biography. If it is difficult, or beyond the means of historical study, to know all about Mahavira, in my humble opinion, it is more important to understand and put into practice the principles preached by Mahavira than to discuss this detail or that about his personal life.

In this connection, you will excuse me, if I make a little digression or introducing to you some aspects of Vaisali (spelt as Vaishali), the birthplace of Mahavira. The town was at its height of prosperity, and by its association with Mahavira it became far-famed in the religious world of India. Teachers from Vaishali preached great principles for the uplift of humanity and lived an austere life of fasts and penances; and Mahavira stood out as the most prominent of his contemporaries. According to the Mahavastu, Buddha sought his first teachers in Alara and Uddaka at Vaishali and "even started his life as a Jain under their teachings." After discovering his Middle Path, he became more and more honoured at Vaishali, receiving even royal reception; the city built for him a Kutagara-shala, a pinnacled rest house, in its suburban park known as the Mahavana. It is at Vaishali that the Second Buddhist Council was held; and it came to be looked upon as a holy spot where differences in the Sangha could be ironed out. His celebrated disciple Amrapali was a resident of Vaishali at which place she bequeathed her park to Buddha and the community. Vaishali had its political significance too. It had a Republican Government, and King Chetaka, the Licchavi Republican President, organized a Federation of Republics comprising Mallakis, and 18 Gana-rajyas of Kashikoshala, besides

the 9 Licchavi Republics.' The working of the Vajjian Confederation, so vividly described in the *Dighanikaya*, is an unique example of its kind and essentially contributed to the efficiency and solidarity of the Republic. Further Vaishali was a commercial capital where seals were issued by three classes of guilds, namely, Bankers, Traders and Artisans. When Fa-Hien visited India (A.D. 399-414), it was an important religious, political and commercial centre; but its fall began in the next three centuries, and what Hiuen-Tsang (A.D. 635) saw there was more or less in ruins. And to-day it is a neglected village.

The Indian Republic of to-day has inherited a great deal from the spirit of Vaishali, and the Vajjian concord is the pedestal of our democracy, apart from the fact that Ahimsa with its corollaries, viz., Panchasilas, is the bed-rock on which our policies are built. By adopting Hindi as the State Language, our Central Government is only carrying on the policy of Magadhan Governments which gave more importance to the language of the masses than to that of the classes. The inscriptions of Ashoka are all in Prakrit. Our Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who said the other day that he can find time to meet the humblest in the country even in preference to his big officials easily reminds me of Ashoka, the Priyadarshin, who had a similar dictum. Thus it is but natural that Vaishali can no more be neglected. Thanks to the vigilant eye of the Central Government, patronage of the Bihar Government, princely gifts enlightened industrialists like Shri Shantiprasad and the active efforts of the Vaishali Sangha with its able workers like Shri J. C. Mathur,

Vaishali is rising up again. The Bihar Government have started a Post-graduate Institute there for Prakrit and Jaina studies, and Dr. Hiralal Jain is the first worthy Director of this growing Institute. We have no doubt that the place will be a great centre of learning.

Through the ravages of time and tide, and due to political vicissitudes Vaishali fell into ruins; and we had nearly forgotten its identity. But you will be pleased to hear that Vaishali has not forgotten its worthy sons. Among the Jaina and Buddhist relics, the most important remnant is a plot of fertile land, owned by a local significant family of Simha or Natha Kshatriyas, which is never cultivated, as far as the family memory goes, because for generations it is believed in the family that on that spot Mahavira was born and hence it is too sacred to be cultivated. It is a remarkable event in the religious history of India that the memory of Mahavira is so concretely kept at his birthplace by his kinsmen though 2500 years have quietly elapsed.

The period in which Mahavira lived was undoubtedly an age of acute intellectual upheaval in the cultural history of India; and among his contemporaries there were such religious teachers as Kesha Kambalin, Makkhali Gosala, Pakudha Kaccayana, Purana Kassapa, Sanjaya Belatthiputta and Tathagata Buddha. Mahavira inherited a good deal from earlier Tirthankaras. He left behind not only a systematic religion and philosophy but also a well-knit social order of ascetics and lay followers who earnestly followed and practised what he and his

immediate disciples preached.

Buddha and Mahavira lived in the same age and moved about in the same area with the same dynasties and rulers in view. They stressed the dignity of man as man, and preached to the masses in their own language high moral ideals which advanced the individual on the spiritual plane and further contributed to social solidarity. To posterity, they are the best representatives of the Eastern or Magadhan religion, or what is generally called the Shramanic culture; the basic literature embodying their utterances, has luckily survived to us. A comparative study of the early Jain and Buddhist works presents a remarkable similarity and breathes verily the same religious and moral spirit which has not only stood the test of time for the last two thousand years and more but is also serving to-day as the master key to the solution of many a human problem. Truth and non-violence as preached and practised by the Mahatma can be better appreciated against the background of the moral code preached by Mahavira and Buddha. The references to the Nirgrantha tenets in the Pali canon are of great value for assessing the relation of Jainism and Buddhism.

Apparently there was so much in common between Buddha and Mahavira, that early European scholars mistook them for one individual. But to-day, with the progress of studies, they stand before us as two distinct personalities who have left an abiding influence on the history of Indian thought. Buddha, it has to be noted, experimented with many teachers prior to his enlightenment, and discovered the Middle



Path, after rejecting much of the religious thought current round about him. That was not the case with Mahavira. The religion preached by Vrishabha, Neminatha and his immediate predecessor Parshva (who flourished just a couple of centuries before Mahavira) was already inherited by him and he presented it for contemporary society. Buddha is less compromising with the creeds of his contemporaries, because he started with the conviction that he had personally discovered something new for humanity. But Mahavira was more accommodating and compromising and quite willing to understand the point of view of others, primarily because he was preaching an earlier religion, may be for a slightly different order of monks and laymen. "It is evident," as Jacobi has remarked, "that both Mahavira and Buddha have made use of the interest and support of their families to propagate their Order. Their prevalence over other rivals was certainly due in some degree to their connection with the chief families of the country." Buddha had a longer lease of life : he lived for full eighty years; while Mahavira lived only 72 years. The middle path of Buddha struck a note of novelty and inspired so much enthusiasm among his new followers that its influence spread far and wide. Mahavira, however, had to preach both to old and new followers, and obviously he must have been guided by a spirit of compromise : the question of new recruits was not with him as urgent as it was with Buddha. There is evidence, further confirmed by close similarity between Jaina and Buddhist monastic rules, that Buddha did try the Nirgrantha way of living for a while, obviously the one preached long before by Parshvanatha. As observed by Jacobi

"Niganthas (Nirgranthas), now better known under the name of Jainas or Arhatas, already existed as an important sect at the time when the Buddhist church was being founded." The Pali canon refers to Mahavira as Niggantha Nataputta. Both Mahavira and Buddha thus started their careers with the same capital of Shramanic ideology, but differed later on in details, and so also their followers with changing times and places. The subsequent history of Jainism and Buddhism, the former confining itself primarily to India but still surviving as a living institution and the latter spreading with remarkable zeal practically all over the Eastern hemisphere but losing its bearings in the very land of its birth, has its seeds to be sought in their earlier beginnings outlined above. It is absolutely necessary that the doctrines of Buddha and Mahavira be studied in more detail than is done ordinarily by the educated man.

The history of the Jaina Church has many a bright spot here and there. After Mahavira the Church was led by a series of eminent monks and received patronage from kings like Shrenika Bimbisara, Chandragupta Maurya, etc. Many religious monks, ruling dynasties, wealthy traders and pious families have contributed to the stability and continuity of the Jaina Church with the result that India can feel proud of the Jaina contributions both to its civilization and culture in matters of art, architecture, literature and moral code.

The preachings of Mahavira are embedded in the canonical texts, and they are interpreted by series of commentaries known as Niryuktis, Curnis, Bhashyas.

and Tikas. Individual topics are discussed in manuals and further illustrated by extensive narrative literatures. The doctrines are logically defended by a number of authors in comparison with and contrast to other Indian systems. Jaina contributions to Indian literature embrace various subjects, and they are spread in different languages like Prakrits (including Apabhramsha), Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, Old Hindi, Old Gujarati, etc. Jaina authors have considered language only as means to an end; they never invested any one language with religious sanctity. Thanks to their broad outlook, they could make salient contributions to Sanskrit and Prakrit; and how they have enriched Tamil and Kannada, at least, the learned audience here needs no further elaboration, from me. Buhler wrote many years back about Jaina literature in this manner: "In grammar, in astronomy as well as in all branches of belles-letters the achievements of Jainas have been so great that even their opponents have taken notice of them and that some of their works are of importance for European Science even to-day. In the South where they have worked among the Dravidian peoples, they have also promoted the development of these languages. The Kanarese, Tamil and Telugu literary languages rest on the foundations erected by the Jaina monks. Though this activity has led them far away from their own particular aims, yet it has secured for them an important place in the history of Indian literature and civilization." This prophetic observation of that great German scholar is not only fully borne out, but latter finds and researches have also shown that if Buhler had lived to-day, he would have been more eloquent on the Jaina contributions to Indian Literature. With such

meticulous care and perseverance the Jainas have preserved MS. collections in places like Jaisalmer, Jaipur, Pattan and Moodbidri that these are a part of our national wealth. They built these collections with such an academic and catholic outlook, that there was hardly any place for religious bias. It must be said to the credit of the builders of the great collections at Jaisalmer and Pattan that it is here that we could trace certain original Buddhist works which otherwise were known to us only from Tibetan translations.

• A dispassionate and critical study of Jaina literature enables one to get a fair idea of the Jaina outlook or view of life. By the Jaina view of life we mean the view of life sanctioned by Jainism as apparent from an objective and judicious interpretation of the fundamentals of Jaina metaphysics and ethics, and not the outlook on life which the followers of Jainism generally have to-day.

Metaphysically speaking, all souls, according to their stage of spiritual evolution or progress (in terms of Gunasthanas) have a legitimate place on the path of religion; everyone's position is determined by his Karmic limitations, and his progress depends on his potentialities. The Jaina God is neither a creator of the universe nor a dispenser of favours and frowns. He is a spiritual ideal, but also a being who has reached absolute perfection. If He is praised and worshipped, it is with a view to remembering His virtues, so that we may cultivate them in ourselves and attain the same status. Every soul must reap the fruits, pleasant or painful, of all it has done; for it is, in the last analysis, the architect of its own fortune.

The question of exchanging one's sins or merits with any other soul is irrelevant. Now, clearly such an attitude does not leave one at the mercy of an outside agency, divine or semi-divine and enables one to work with confidence and hope. The individual, however criminal under the stress of internal and external forces, need not despair because he is latently divine, and a day will come when he will realize himself.

Jainism lays down certain ethical standards, which are duly graded, for the uplift of the individual as a social being. As long as he lives as a member of society, besides what he owes to himself for his spiritual betterment, he owes a good deal to the society in which he is living; but if he relinquishes the world and leads the life of an ascetic, his ties with society and his responsibilities towards it are considerably reduced. In Jainism, the duties of a householder are in miniature those of a monk; and a householder, while duly carrying out his household duties, rises steadily to the status of a monk.

Ahimsa is the most important principle that permeates the Jaina outlook on life. In simple language it means the greatest possible kindness towards the animate world. Jainism has prepared a graded series of living beings; and a religious person has to strive his best to minimise harm to them. Every living being has a sanctity and a dignity of its own; and one has to respect it as one expects one's own dignity to be respected. A man of kindly temperament sheds around him an atmosphere of kindness. Jainism has firmly held that life is sacred

irrespective of species, caste, colour, creed or nationality. A resident of Hiroshima or Nagasaki is as sacred as one in New York or London: what his colour is, what he eats, and how he dresses—these are external adjuncts. Thus the practice of Ahimsa is both an individual and a collective virtue; and this kindly attitude, which requires that our hearts be free from baser impulses like anger, pride, hypocrisy, greed, envy and contempt, has a positive force and a universal appeal.

The second virtue which Jaina ethics lays stress on is good neighbourliness; one should speak the truth and respect the right of property. It is thus that one becomes trustworthy in society, and at the same time creates an atmosphere of security for others. One's thoughts, words and acts must be consistent with each other; and they must, further, create an atmosphere of confidence and a reciprocal sense of security must start with the immediate neighbour and then be gradually diffused in society at large, not only in theory but also in practice. These virtues can go to constitute coherent social and political groups of worthy citizens who yearn for peaceful co-existence with the well-being of the entire humanity in view.

The third virtue is a steady and progressive restraint on acquisitiveness which manifests itself either in the form of yearning for sensual or sex pleasure, or for acquisition of property. This virtue is to be practised in different degrees at different stages of one's spiritual or religious progress. An ideally religious man is entirely free from acquisitiveness in thought, word and deed; his last

vestige of property is his body alone, and his wants are the minimum required to sustain it; and this too he voluntarily relinquishes in the end when he finds that it gives him no more aid in the practice of religion. Pursuit of pleasure is an endless game; individual inclinations and passions must be duly trained and curbed; thus indeed does one get mental poise and spiritual balance. A voluntary limitation of property is a community virtue which results in social justice and fair distribution of utility commodities. The strong and the rich should not weed out the weak and the poor but put such voluntary restriction on their instincts and possessions that the underprivileged too have a fair chance in life. Any attempt to enforce these qualities by an external and legal authority, either on the individual or society, will lead to hypocrisy or secret criminal tendencies. It is for sensible individuals to practise these virtues, and thus set an example from which an enlightened society will gradually be developed.

There are many elements which go to constitute the intellectual make-up of an individual: his inheritance, environment, upbringing, studies and experiences. It is this intellectual make-up that shapes his convictions and opinions: if he lacks in intellectual honesty and integrity of expression, these latter may get perverted. All these, moreover, get a different colouring according to the motives and ambitions of individuals, singly or collectively. This is why one finds that unanimity of opinion or agreement in views is very scarce. For most of us, even presuming that all of us are sincere, it is easier, nay almost natural, to differ rather than agree on any

given topic. To meet this situation, Jainism has presented to the world two significant instruments of understanding and expression: one is the Nayavada and the other, Syadvada. The Nayavada enables one to analyse the various points of view and appraises their relative validity: it is a remarkable method for the analytical comprehension of a complex question. Naya is a particular approach. It reveals a partial or a particular view of the totality, and it should not be mistaken for the whole. A synthesis of these different viewpoints is an imperative necessity; therein every view point must retain its relative position; and this need is fulfilled by Syadvada. One can say 'yes,' or say 'no' or even express one's inability to state anything: these three basic statements, when combined, can give rise to seven predications which are qualified by the term 'syat' or 'may be,' indicating the limits of understanding and expression. Syadvada, in course of the process of assertion or denial curbs down and harmonises the absolute viewpoints of individual Nayas. "Syadvada," says Professor A. B. Dhruva, "is not a doctrine of speculative interest, one intended to solve a mere ontological problem, but has a bearing upon man's physiological and spiritual life." It has supplied the philosopher with catholicity of thought, convincing him that Truth is not anybody's monopoly with tariff walls of denominational religion, while furnishing the religious aspirant with the virtue of intellectual toleration which is a part of that Ahimsa which is one of the fundamental tenets of Jainism.

**Human beings have limited knowledge and inadequate expression. That is why different doctrines**



are inadequate; at the most they are one-sided views of the Truth which cannot be duly enclosed in words and concepts. Jainism has always held that it is wrong, if not dangerous to presume that one's own creed alone represents the truth. Toleration is, therefore, the characteristic of Jaina ideology. Even the Jaina monarchs and generals have a slean and commendable record to their credit in this regard. The political history of India knows no cases of persecution by Jaina kings, even when Jaina monks and laymen have suffered at the hands of other religionists of fanatical temper. Dr. Saletore has rightly observed: "The principle of Ahimsa was partly responsible for the greatest contribution of the Jainas to Hindu culture—that relating to toleration. Whatever may be said concerning the rigidity with which they maintained their religious tenets and the tenacity and skill with which they met and defeated their opponents in religious disputations, yet it cannot be denied that the Jainas fostered the principle of toleration more sincerely and at the same time more successfully than any other community in India."

Time was when man was at the mercy of nature; to-day, however, he has dived deep into the mysteries of nature and become her master instead of her slave. There is such rapid progress in the various branches of science; and the scientist's achievements in nuclear physics and atomic weapons are so astounding that, if he so intends, he can destroy the entire human race and change the face of the earth. Thus, to-day, the human race is standing on the verge of catastrophe; its mind is getting befogged and bewildered; and it is

rushing towards the very precipice which it wants to avoid. Obviously, we are required to revalue our values.

The progress of science is the corollary of an attempt to achieve greater happiness for man. But, unfortunately, man as man is not properly understood; and there is, too, a great deal of international misuse of language. By the term "man" many have only "the white man" in view; and such an attitude is subversive of all ethical standards. If some parts of the world are apparently more civilized, very often it is at the cost of the other parts. Co-operative and collective amelioration of the entire mankind has to take the place of colonial exploitation. The sanctity and dignity of mankind have to be recognised in preference to our separate affluence and supremacy. Scientific skill must be accompanied by a saint's wisdom. Thus man has to understand man as man. In this technically unified world, there is very little difference between oneself and others; if I wish well to myself, that is practicable, only if I wish well to others. The doctrine of Ahimsa, if rightly understood and sincerely practised, supplies the necessary basis for this humanitarian outlook of a world-citizen.

The organised atrocities of man need not make us despair. The doctrine of Karma tells us that we are the architects of our own fortune. It is for us to look into ourselves, analyse our motives, estimate our objectives, both individually and collectively, without slavishly prostrating ourselves before any power for fear or favour; and thus work on with confidence and hope that man must progress for his existence and

betterment. Every individual has the potentiality of the divine, and it is for him to realise this by following the path of religion. Physical science and technical skill have given us power, and it is for us now to choose whether we want to make forward progress for the betterment of man and his environment or just reduce ourselves to a heap of radio-active ashes.

Good neighbourliness and restraint on the acquisitive instinct are a contagious virtue: what is true of an individual is also true of a group, social or political. The man who does not know himself and refuses to know another man as man can never live at peace with himself or, obviously, at peace with others. A clear understanding of onself and of others can alone remove mutual suspicion and counter-balance the constant threat of war, thus leading us to a true condition of peaceful co-existence.

To-day, liberty of thought and speech is increasingly getting crippled in a subtle manner. Tendentious propaganda not only conceals but also perverts the apparent facts, and the world is put on a wrong track. This means that the thinking man has to keep himself vigilant, understand the limitations of his knowledge and thus learn to respect the viewpoint of others, as laid down by Nayavada and Syadvada. Let us not lose faith in man as man, and let us learn to respect each other as man. We must see that man lives under healthy and progressive conditions as a world-citizen. The basic principles of Jainism (such as Ahimsa, Vratas, Nayavada and Syadvada), if correctly understood and earnestly put into practice, can make one a worthy citizen of the world.

## LORD MAHAVIRA — An Evaluation

Dr. S. B. DEO, M.A., Ph.D.

IT is well over two and a half thousand years that the personality of Lord Mahavira illumined the religious horizon of India. And yet with the passage of several centuries, the influence of his teachings, instead of waning, as happened in the case of several others, is on the increase. His name still remains a revered memory and an invigorating-spiritual force to thousands of people. What then, is the secret of this everlasting popularity ?

The answer lies in the review of the work done by the Lord during his lifetime. With his towering personality, his struggles against various hardships and hence his wisdom arisen out of his own experiences coupled with the zeal of a reformer and the patience of a missionary, he could rise to the occasion.

The two hundred and fifty years which are supposed to have elapsed between Parshvanatha and Mahavira possibly saw, as evidenced by the *Sutrakritanga*, the rise of numerous sects and subsects loosely grouped into several monastic communities. The ritualistic practices in Brahmanism were again coming up to the forefront. The ideas about the superiority by birth and the privileged position of the priestly class were gaining ground. The commanding personality of Parshvanatha was no more on the scene. Against such a chaotic background Mahavira had to work.

He immediately grasped the situation and had the courage to declare—

न वि मुंडिण्ण समणो, न ओंकारेण बंभणो ।

न मुणी रण्णवासेणं, कुसचीरेण न तावसो ॥

The external appearances are no test. What is really required is the mental purity and the behaviour which would lead to such mental purity and the consequent equanimity. Therefore,

समयाए समणो होइ, बंभचेरेण बंभणो ।

नाणेण य मुणी होइ, तवेण होइ तावसो ॥

Otherwise fake ascetics would take the field. Hence the real brahmin should be—

तवस्सियं किंसं दंतं, अवच्चियमंससोणियं ।

सुव्वयं पत्तनिव्वणं तं वयं बूम माहणं ॥

It is the penance and celibacy that make a real brahmin. It is the ideal behaviour which implies non-attachment towards worldly matters that idealises a person.

जहां बोमं जले जायं नोवल्लिण्णइ वारिणा ।

एवं अलित्तं कामेहिं, तं वयं बूम माहणं ॥

Once this emphasis on actual behaviour, rather than mere sermons on it, was laid bare before the then somewhat demoralised society, Mahavira led this attack on the caste system. He had the courage to declare that—

कम्मणा बंभणो होइ, कम्मणा होइ खत्तिओ ।

कम्मणा वइसो होइ, सुदो हवइ कम्मणा ॥

It is the Karman and not the birth that determines the social status of a person. These ideas were revolutionary ideas indeed! And the receptive

intelligent ideological elements in Brahmanism welcomed these ideas. It is significant to note that the ganadharas of Lord Mahavira were brahmins !

And yet more significant reformist aspect of Mahavira's life is that he did not simply point the faults of others, and rest content. With the sweeping grasp of a real reformist, he expanded the chaujjama dhamma of Parshvanatha into the panchajama dhamma. The addition of the vow of celibacy to the fourfold dharma of Parshvanatha has been explained in the Uttaradhyayana as follows :

पुरिमा उज्जडा उ वंजडा य पच्छिमा ।

मज्झिमा उज्जुपन्ना उ तेण धम्मे दुहा कए ॥ २३.२६

पुरिमाणं दुव्विसोज्झो उ चरिमाणं दुरणुपालओ ॥

कप्पो मज्झिमगाणं तु सुविसोज्झो सुपालओ ॥ २३.२७

Whatever this explanation might mean, Dr. Jacobi rightly points out that there might have been decay in the morals of the monastic order during the period intervening Parshva and Mahavira. Therefore he thought it fit to put the Jaina church first in order and whatever was helpful for that he advocated boldly, for celibacy was essential to mental purity. Therefore he said—

दुपरिच्यया इमे कामा, नो मुज्झा अधीरपुरिसेहि ।

अहं संति सुव्वया साहू; जे तरंति अतरं वणिया वा ॥

For out of sex, attachment comes and attachment indeed is the worst possession which a nirgrantha shall never think of.

मुच्छा परिगहो वुत्तो...।

What is, however, still more important is that

Mahavira showed the timely courage to emphasise this most important aspect of monastic life.

So far we have seen how Lord Mahavira denounced the caste system and at the same time set right the Jaina monastic order. He kept the doors of his church open to all deserving persons and thus became pioneer in the field of spiritual democracy.

This spiritual democracy was applicable to all irrespective of caste or class. Therefore, besides persons belonging to the kshatriyas, brahmanas or vaishyas, even high dignitaries like kings, queens and princes, became the disciples of Mahavira. Kings like Seniya, Pajjoya, Udayana, queens like Pabhavai, Migavai and others became his devotees. Thus it goes to the credit of Mahavira that he channelled the political personalities of his times into the more ennobling field of spiritualism.

In conveying the principles of his system to the people, Lord Mahavira had a unique system. He always preferred to preach to the masses in their own language. To his disciples he never prevented them from asking difficulties. The whole of the Bhagavati Sutra is a remarkable embodiment of the remarkable relation between an inquisitive disciple and a guru who was ever willing to satisfy intelligently his pupils. Clear-cut in his thoughts, Lord Mahavira was also clear-cut in his expressions as well. Thus he was an ideal guru. With this essential quality of a spiritual leader, he could, as given in the *Kalpasutra*, organise around him an astounding number of followers.

It is therefore due to these rare qualities of an ideal reformer, an able organiser, a patronising guru, a convincing debator, a zealous missionary and an upholder of the equality of all human beings, that the name of Lord Mahavira still remains and shall ever remain a cherished inspiration to humanity at large.



## LORD MAHAVIRA'S ANUDHARMIKA CONDUCT

Shri DALSUKH MALVANIA

IT is an established fact that Mahavira's parents were the followers of Lord Parshva, the 23rd *Tirthankara* of the Jainas. It is also a fact that there were some of the followers of Parshva who did not accept Mahavira as their *tirthankara* in the beginning but later on accepted his authority. As regards Mahavira himself, we know from the tradition that he was the last *tirthankara* of this age. It means that he must have followed the tradition of Parshva. In this note, I propose to discuss some of the references to the effect that he followed the old tradition.

Acharanga, the oldest amongst the Jaina literature clearly refers to Mahavira's *anudhammiya* conduct in these words :—

णो चेविमेण वत्थेण पिहिस्सामि तंसि हेमंते ।

से पारए आवकहाए एयं खु अणुधम्मियं तस्स

१. ९. १. गाथा २

The word *anudhammiya* is explained in *churni as gatanugata*, meaning thereby the traditional law.

This meaning of the word अणुधम्मियं i.e. "traditional law" is supported by other textual references also :—

१. 'कासवस्स अणुधम्मचारिणो'

सूत्रकृ० १. २. २. २५

२ एसोऽणुधम्मो इह संजयाणं ।

सूत्रक० २. ६. ४१

३ एसोऽणुधम्मो इह संजयाणं ।'

सूत्रक० २. ६. ३५

In all these references the word अणुधम्म—अनुधर्म—means the “traditional Law.”

The meaning of the word अणुधम्मिय will be quite clear from the following discussion of Nisitha Churni :—

‘अणाइण्णा’ णाम अगासेवितं ति वुत्तं भवति । ते य सव्वेहिं तित्थयेहिं गोयमादिहिं य गणधरेहिं आदिसद्दातो जंबूणाममादिएहि आयरिएहि जाव संपदमवि अणाइण्णा तेण कारणेण ते वज्जणिज्जा ।

“आह—तो किं जं जिगेहिं अणाइण्णा तो एयाए च्चेव आणाए वज्जणिज्जा । ओमित्युच्यते । लोउत्तरे जे धम्मा ते अगधम्मा । किमुक्तं भवति ! जं तेहिं गुरुहिं चिण्णं चरियं आच्छेदियं तं पच्छिमेहिं वि अणुचरियव्वं । जम्हा य एवं तम्हा तेहिं पलंवा ण सेविया पच्छिमेहिं वि ण सेवियव्वा । अतो ते वज्जणिज्जा । एवं अणुधम्मिया भवति ।’

*gatha* 4855. See also *Brihatkalpa-gatha* 995.

The word *anudharmita* is not found in Sanskrit Dictionary but Pali Dictionary mentions अनुधम्मता (*Anguttara* Vol. 2, p. 46) and gives its meaning :—lawfulness, conformity to Dhamma. The word अनुधम्म is also found in Pali having its meaning :—confirmity or accordance with the law, consistency etc. The word धम्मनुधम्मता is also used in Pali. The meaning of it is the major and minor Dhamma. If we consider the meaning of all these words then we can say that

the word अनुधम्मिय of Acharanga means that Lord Mahavira acted according to law and so the Commentators are right in explaining it as the traditional conduct.

While explaining the word *anudhammiya* Silanka the commentator of Acharanga says:—

अनुपद्वाद्दार्मिकम् अनुधार्मिकम् अपरैरपि तीर्थकृद्भिः समाचीर्णमित्यर्थः । तथा चागमः—से बेमि—जे य अईया जे य पहुपन्ना जे य आगमेस्सा अरहंता भगवंता जे य पव्वयन्ति जे य पव्वइस्सन्ति सव्वे ते सोवहिधम्मो देसिअव्वोत्ति कइ तिथ्यधम्मयाए एसा अगुधम्मियत्ति एणं देवदूसमायाए पव्वइंसु वा पव्वयंति वा पव्वइस्सन्ति व त्ति । अपि च —

गरीयस्त्वात् सचेत्तस्य धर्मस्यान्यैस्तथागतैः ।

शिष्यस्य प्रत्ययाच्चैव वस्त्रं दध्रे न लजया ॥

Here it is clear that the word अनुधार्मिक means the traditional conduct. It is clearly said in the text that Mahavira had a cloth, but it was not used for the covering of his body. So the question is: then why did he keep the cloth with him? The answer is given by the word 'अनुधार्मिक' i.e. in keeping a cloth he only followed a tradition. And what was that tradition? The commentator has quoted an *Agama* which means that it is a tradition that every *tirthankara* keeps a *devadusa-devadushya* at the time of his *pravrajya*. It is clear that though it was of no use to him still he kept it only to follow a tradition.

We know from the Buddhist text Mahavagga (1.1.12) that it was customary for a novice to keep *uttariya* on his *skandha* at the time of *pravrajya*. It

seems that this was the custom which was followed by Mahavira by keeping *Devadushya* on his *skandha*. We know from the Buddhist texts that *nigganthas* were having only one *sataka*. This should be that one *Sataka* which was *customarily* kept by them at the time of *pravrajya*. They did not accept other than this, that is why they are called by the Buddhist एक साटका निगन्था । This tradition was explained later by Acharyas in such a way that it became almost unbelievable on the one hand when they said that *devadushya* was given by Indra at the time of *pravrajya*.<sup>1</sup> And on the other hand the Shvetāmbara Acharyas found in it the proof of their सचेलधर्म, though it is quite clear that it was not used by Lord Mahavira and that after 13 months he was without any cloth. So we can say that keeping a cloth at the time of *pravrajya* has nothing to do with सचेल or अचेल धर्म but only it was a custom which was followed by Mahavira. Though at heart he was not in favour of keeping any cloth whatsoever, he simply kept it in order to follow the tradition. So we see that when it was removed from his person, he did not care to ask for other.

The secondary meaning of the word अनुधम्म is अनुकालधम्म according to *Churni*, which means that this was done so that the others coming later may follow him. This meaning of the word is also possible because whenever a tradition is followed by a great

1. This was possible because of the word *Deva* in *Devadushya*. Really speaking it means only उत्तरीय, दुषाला in Hindi. Because of its high price it was called *devadushya*. It was called देवद also, see *Angavijja*. p. 160.

man it is to be taken as to be followed by others also in the time to come.

We know from other sources that Parshva and his followers were using clothes and were not naked. So it is possible that though Mahavira of his own accord wanted to be a naked monk, he had to keep a cloth at the time of his *pravrajya* to follow the tradition of the Parshva's *sangha*. This seems to be the reason why the word अनुधम्मिय is used for his conduct of keeping a cloth at the time of his *pravrajya*. Later when he became a powerful monk it was quite possible for him to leave that traditional cloth and innovate entire nakedness in his *sangha*.

Mahavira's *anudharmita* is not restricted to the traditional conduct only but is extended to the traditional preaching also. This is testified by the following reference :—

“अविहिंसामेव पक्खए अणुधम्मो मुणिणा पवेइओ”

सूत्रक० १. २. १. १४

“This is the traditional Law preached by the *Muni* that one should follow Non-violence.”

Here the commentator explains the word अनुधम्म as : मोक्ष प्रत्यनुकुलो धर्मोऽनुधर्मः But it should mean traditional law when we certainly know that the non-violence is the traditional law for the Jainas.

There are certain things and places which are prohibited for the Jaina monks because of their possessing life. And life is so subtle a thing that each

and everybody is not competent to know its existence or non-existence. In view of this fact one has to obey the rule of prohibition even though there may be no life in those things and places where there is possibility of life. In view of this fact Lord Mahavira, knowing fully well due to his omniscience that the *tilas* which were offered to him had no life, the water of a certain pond had no life and a certain place was fit for removing the refuse of the body, did not make use of those things. This was because he had to follow a tradition knowing fully well that if he would accept those things his followers would follow him and thereby he would be a cause to the break of that tradition. There was a danger of life of his followers in not accepting those things, still he was not ready to break the tradition. This incidence is narrated in Nishitha Bhashya Gathas 4855-4859 and also in Brihatkalpa Bhashya Gathas 995-1000.

So all these references show clearly that Lord Mahavira had sufficient regard for the old traditional laws which he inherited from Parshva's *sangha* and also establish the existence of the Jaina tradition prior to Mahavira himself.

## JAINISM AND WORLD PEACE

**Prof. PRITHVI RAJ JAIN, M.A. *Shastri***

IT is cruel irony of fate that we find the present world most complex and dangerous. Undoubtedly the modern science in its long life of one hundred and fifty years has been able to conquer the dreadful forces and many of the hidden secrets of nature. But it has at the same time terribly failed to overcome the passions and prejudices that human flesh is heir to and which work more havoc than the destructive arms ever invented so far. Material machinery has practically overpowered us and we have become aware of the absolute ruin and carnage which atomic warfare can bring in. The wolf in man is becoming evident in every sphere of life. The war-worn world is lacking in spiritual values, which are the most precious heritage of each and every great religion aiming at serving the humanity and uplifting the divine in man. The only ray of hope at this crucial period of atomic nuclear energy and even attempted conquest over space is that no one can publicly claim or sincerely believe the total extermination of humanity as a part of our culture and civilization. Fortunately the human society has been having amidst itself from time to time. Mahavira or Buddha, Krishna or Christ, Gandhi or Vinoba, the selfless divine souls who have left no pains to show us the path leading to peace, harmony and happiness. Our main duty as pacifists and representatives of various religious thoughts is to find out how to prevent war and contribute to world peace. Late Shri K. T. Shah

has rightly maintained: "The very conquests man has made by his intelligence over the brute forces of nature—his science and inventions—are employed to make man more savage than the beasts of jungle, more noxious than the most poisonous plant or vermin to his fellows."<sup>1</sup>

The cardinal doctrine on which the edifice of Jainism rests from times immemorial is *Ahimsa* or non-violence. In *Prashna-Vyakarana*, it has been called *Bhagavati*. Jainism believes that weapons are in no way effective answer to weapons. Lord Mahavira has emphatically declared in *Acharanga Sutra* that one weapon is stronger than and superior to the other, but the path of *Ahimsa* or peace remains unsurpassed. Real peace can only be established by creating good-will in an individual soul towards other fellow beings on the basis of equality and sanctity of life. Various Governments may create the atmosphere of absence of war but not of the existence of peace. Inviolability of the individual self in all the forms is basic contribution of Jainism. When we begin to believe that all life is sacred, our attitude towards living beings is changed and we then desire to live and let live. To injure or harm others is to harm or exploit oneself. Jaina Agamas say that one abhors those who give pain to these living bodies or we feel ashamed of seeing others doing sins. Fire cannot be out with fire. For this purpose it is our duty to stop adding fuel to the flames. Jaina scriptures say that blood-stained cloth cannot be washed off with blood, we need water for that. To achieve world peace, we

1. *Foundations of Peace*. p. 10.



have to stop the race of armaments and have unbiased faith *Samyag Darshna* in the effective force of *Ahimsa*. Greek philosopher Pythagoras once said : "Fix on the course of life which is the most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful." Jainism believes that force from above evokes fraud from below. Violence should be more terrible than that of opponent if it wants to succeed. Who can claim final and absolute victory in the race of armaments ? Like Arjuna the nations believing in violent means shall have to declare, "Nor do we know which for us is better whether we conquer them or they conquer us." *Ahimsa* teaches us that recourse to armed force is not only infallible sign of the brute in man, but that war neither profits victor nor vanishes.

Only a few nations can afford to compete in armament race, but all the nations can easily afford to arm themselves morally. The famous scholar, A. J. Toynbee writes in his "Study of History"—"The truth seems to be that the sword which has once drunk blood cannot be permanently restrained from drinking blood again any more than a tiger which has once tasted human flesh can be prevented from becoming a man-eater."

*Ahimsa* as preached by Jaina *Tirthankaras* is effectively helpful in establishing world peace in another way as well. One of the outcomes of Jaina *Ahimsa* is that it emphasises the intellectual aspect of non-injury. It expects us not to injure, disregard or abhor the views of others. The philosophy of *Syadvada* or non-Absolutism, a special feature of Jaina *Ahimsa*, tries to harmonise all conflicting interests,

sees unity in diversity, rejects absolute arbitrary claims and puts forward most important synthesis of all the divergent and seemingly contradictory doctrines. According to *Acharanga Niryukti* non-control or wrong use of the mind, speech and body is mental violence or Bhava—weapon. Jainism holds that we should endeavour to find out truth in whatever form and wherever it exists. Perhaps Broadley has explained Syadvada in his own way when he says that there is truth in every idea, however false, there is reality in every existence, however slight.

In the adoption of this philosophy of *Anekanta* in finding out solution of our day-to-day problems endangering world peace and creating ill-will and disharmony in our mutual relations, we can easily march forward towards our established goal. Invasions and battles, persecution and conquest either for political ends or fanatical theocracy have created hatred, greed, conflict and misunderstanding. To get rid of these passions which are major factors in disturbing the peaceful co-existence of various nations, philosophy of Non-Absolutism teaches us to be tolerant, charitable, unbiased, selfless, sympathetic and synthetic. Who can deny the importance of these qualities so essential for creating good-will and faith among all the nations of the world ?

If the causes of the wars, battles, and strifes are analysed, we come to conclude that our ever-increasing material wants, self interests, greed, mutual hatred, and individual as well as national selfishness are the main factors. We seldom find fault with ourselves and usually assume that shoe is on the other

leg we believe and criticize the society and state for our miseries and troubles. Jainism believes that individual reform is golden path leading to social reform. Our individual passions and evils have their reflection on society. Hence ethical code asks us to examine, reform and morally uplift ourselves without waiting others for lead. If we are individually peaceful within, peace without is certain and sure. Consequently the five famous main vows of *Ahimsa*, truth, non-stealing, celibacy or restrained married life and limited possession together with seven others mould the life of Jaina household. The fifth view of non-possession or limited possession needs special attention. It encourages non-attachment to worldly things and promotes the growth of equitable social order by voluntarily limiting one's own possessions. It also avoids unnecessary hoarding which has become menace in the present capitalistic age. In a book named *Atmanushasana*, it is stated that masses of wealth cannot be accumulated by honest means of livelihood. Has anyone ever seen rivers flooded with pure water ? Lord Mahavira says that greed goes on increasing as we go on gaining. Hence Jainism expects its followers to control and check their daily needs and lead pure, honest life.

Thus Jaina ethic trains good dutiful and morally conscious citizens who can help in maintaining world peace. If ethical code is followed, the heavy work of a state is facilitated and crores of rupees can be saved for other welfare activities. Jainism asks us to subdue our passions and always act with mindfulness and caution. The negligence of these ethical rules results in individual and national crimes. Does it

prove that by neglecting ethical rules of life men are let loose with the result that the demon of destruction stalks this land of human beings? By stressing on pure, simple and honest household life, Jainism paves the way for world peace.

It is an admitted fact these days that vegetarian diet is the first step towards world peace. Jainism has been preaching and practising vegetarianism from the hoary past. Jaina sages were the first to propagate vegetarian diet.

Besides these Jaina ascetics lead a life of purity, celibacy, simplicity, selfless service and perfect austerity. They have nothing to claim of their own and all the living beings are their friends par-excellence. Their high moral and pure character can appeal to the masses a great deal.

People of various religions and different countries should unite at this crucial juncture of world history and carry on ceaseless propaganda to save the humanity from its extinction. It is fundamentally essential that we try our best to revitalize religious and moral principles common to all the religious sects of the world. If pacifists all over the world stand up and unite together with an iron will to ensure peace and harmony, heaven can be established without fail on this very earth. Religious and moral disarmament need precede physical one. Jainism expects every individual to inculcate in him amity towards all beings, serene joy towards the good, compassion for the miserable and detachment towards the opponent.

# WHAT JAINISM OFFERS TO THE WORLD

**Shri C. S. Mallinath**

We live in a world of social inequalities, economic difficulties, multifarious diseases, over-population and atomic bombs. Can Jainism offer any solution for the above problems? Yes. It can and it does offer. But one has to follow and apply its teachings in actual practice as an earnest patient would follow the prescriptions of his doctor.

*Social inequalities*: It is really regrettable that even in the civilised countries of Europe, prejudice due to colour, race, or nationality still continues to exist and keep the people divided amongst themselves. Experience teaches that colour or racial arrogance cannot continue to exist long. Humanity has to be told again and again that the entire human race is but one family irrespective of differences due to colour, race or nationality. "All humanity is one", is one of the fundamental teachings that Jainism offers.

*Economic difficulties*: Whatever might be the economic conditions obtaining in other countries, the economic position in India is still far from satisfactory. Indians are still starving. Thousands of men, women and children are found suffering from heat and cold, completely exposed to changing conditions of weather without proper shelter and sufficient clothing. The Haves must come to the rescue and protection of the Havenots. Jainism enjoins that everyman must put a limit to the acquisition of property and then entirely

devote his time for public good. People engaged in independent professions such as lawyers, doctors, merchants, engineers, etc., must retire when they reach the limits fixed for them and thus give room for others to earn. *Dig-vrata* and *Desha-vrata*, limiting one's activities, within certain prescribed directions and within certain boundaries in a country and abstaining from the use of things got from beyond the limits or sending things to such places, also contribute in a way to mitigate economic difficulties. It is expected of every well-to-do person to give *abhaya-dana*, the gift of fearlessness to all those who are afflicted with fear as to, "What shall we eat, where shall we stay, and with what shall we cover ourselves?" The sacred books say that on the day when the Blessed Lord Bhagavan Mahavira renounced the world, He distributed His great wealth among the needy and the indigent. The Bhudana and the Sampattidana movements launched and conducted by Acharya Vinoba Bhave go a long way to solve the economic difficulties. "Live and let live", is the formula offered by Jainism. *Kshnemam sarvaprajanam*, "may all people be happy", is the daily prayer of the Jains.

*Diseases* : It is the opinion of the common people that in proportion to advancement of civilization and the new methods of living, the number of diseases also has increased. No doubt scientific research has eliminated the threat of death from infectious diseases. But still there are instances of cases which baffle even expert medical men. And the treatment of some of the diseases is so costly that it is beyond the reach of the common many. *Aushadha-dana*, gift of medi-

cine, is one of the charities, which a Jaina householder is asked to give in order to provide relief to the sick.

*Over population :* The rapid growth of population is a great problem for the leaders of all nations. In India, too, the population has considerably increased during the last decade. Several devices are suggested and advices given to check the growth. Birth-control clinics have been started in many places and the people are advised to use appliances. But any attempt to go against Nature is not only injurious to health but also sinful. Therefore, Jainism advises the practice of celibacy (*Brahmacharya*) as the only non-injurious method to control birth. It helps men and women to keep their bodies healthy and strong and makes them pure and edifying.

*Atom Bombs :* With the advancement of scientific research, many marvellous things have been invented for the convenience, comfort and enjoyment of man. The use of steam and electricity, telegraph and telephone and improved methods of printing have revolutionised modern life. Through radio and television, man sitting at his desk can hear the voices of people at distant places and see visions of events happening far away from him. Science has contributed to the development of industry and agriculture on a very large scale. Automobiles, steamships and aeroplanes enable the speedy movement of men and goods. Time and distance have been conquered. But side by side with the application of his scientific knowledge for beneficial purposes, man has discovered horrible weapons of destruction also.

Prof. M. Oliphant, Director of Physical Laboratories, Australian National University, in his lecture on "Science and Mankind", delivered at the University of Madras, said, "At the present time we face a crisis in the use of science which is of far greater immediate importance and which must be surmounted if our present civilization is to endure. This is the threat of war which has been for mankind a sort of undulant fever of increasing malevolence which now threatens his very existence. Man stands on the brink of a precipice of his own devising".

"If world war should come again it is certain that most that we value will be destroyed, hundreds of millions will die and the surface of the earth be so despoiled that a recovery may take a million years".

"The banning of weapons of mass destructions offers no solution, for any nation facing defeat abandons all scruples and uses every weapon which could decimate the enemy. Excuses can always be found for the use of any diabolical weapon in retaliation".

The world itself looks as though it is on the verge of complete destruction. Man with the help of his scientific knowledge has rolled the globe and placed it on the jaws of death. In the light of this situation, what is the solution that Jainism can offer to avoid war and establish permanent peace? Jainism has been teaching that soul or *atman* is the only precious thing in the whole world. Nothing is comparable to it. The scientist himself who has discovered so many wonderful things was able to do so only because of his own soul which is, in other words, his knowledge.



(The Jaina conception of soul and knowledge being identical is analogous to Einstein's theory of matter and energy being equivalent, which is again the teaching of Jaina metaphysics. Where there is knowledge there is soul; and where there is soul there is knowledge. The unique nature of soul and all its wonderful qualities have been taught to the world by the great teachers. Lord Mahavira emphasized the supreme value of soul as a thing which must be protected and developed at any cost. Man should not only care for the welfare and advancement of his soul but also help the souls of all sentient beings by giving them protection and by helping them to march on the path of salvation. He who loses his soul loses everything. Jesus Christ who came five centuries later than Mahavira also drew the attention of mankind to the value and importance of *atman* or soul. "What shall it profit a man", he asks, "if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" The pious Christians who live in America, Russia and other countries where the deadly weapons are being manufactured may as well ask their own countrymen, "What shall we gain if we get supremacy of the earth and lose our own souls?" Unfortunately there will be no getting the supremacy of the earth also, since the atom bombs will destroy everything.

In order to establish peace in the world the importance of soul and the necessity for the practice of *Ahimsa* should be taught throughout the world in every village and town. Man must be made to become conscious of the supreme value of his soul and the utter uselessness of the result of inventing and using of the atom bombs.

Nowadays people seem to think that religion is of no use in modern life, and that it cannot play any part in shaping the character of the people. In reply we can only say in the words of Joseph Gaer. "Those who have lived among the Jainas find them a very kindly people, and better men because of their religion."

# **THE MESSAGE OF THE RELIGION OF AHIMSA**

**Prof. A. Chakravarti, M.A., I.E.S. (Retd.)**

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

What is the message of Ahimsa to the modern world ?

Before answering this question, we have to remember the important aspects of modern thought. The most dominant factor of modern thought is Science. It is clear nowadays that no idea which does not satisfy the bar of scientific reason has any chance of being accepted by modern thinkers. Religious ideas mainly based upon irrational traditions and superstitions will all be brushed aside as of no great importance. In this respect Jainism is on a safer ground. Jaina thinkers from the very beginning emphasise the importance of reason in all matters connected with religion. In fact, they prescribe as the first and most important condition of religious development, complete freedom from popular superstition. Samyak Darshana or Right Faith according to Jaina thinkers requires freedom from three types of superstitious beliefs or three moodahs. These are described as Loka Moodah, Deva Moodah and Pasandi Moodah,—popular superstition, superstition about popular deities, and

faith in false ascetics. These three types of superstitious beliefs must be first got rid of by a person before he starts on his spiritual path. Unless he discards various superstitious beliefs he cannot begin his spiritual development freely unhampered. Belief that bathing in a particular river will wash off one's sins, going round a particular tree will promote one's virtue, or climbing up a particular hill will produce spiritual development are all avoidable impediments on the way of true belief in the nature of Reality. Whenever there is an epidemic in the society, people try to appease the deities by offering animal sacrifice. Such an attempt to propitiate certain deities is based upon the false belief that these deities are the real cause of the epidemic disease, such as cholera, or smallpox. Such practices are not only useless and ineffective but prevent men from discovering the true cause of such disease and preparing suitable and effective remedies. Hence this second type of false belief is extremely ruinous to society, if not completely eradicated. The third type of false belief is based upon superstitious faith in all sorts of Samnyasins. Very often undesirable crooks put on kashaya, the robe of a samnyasi, and trade upon the simplicity of unthinking people. These false ascetics very often mislead the people as to true form of religion. They cheat the people to secure their own benefits. Getting rid of all kinds of superstitious belief, a person gets firmly established on the foundation of Samyak Darshana, Right Faith. Getting firmly established in Right Faith or Samyak Darshana is the first step firmly established in Right Faith or Samyak Darshana is the first step in spiritual development. But that alone is not enough. Right Faith no doubt places a person on the correct path.

But that alone cannot lead to complete spiritual development. This right faith must lead to Right Knowledge or Samyak Jnana. Equipped with correct faith one must try to secure correct knowledge of things in reality. Unless one acquires an accurate knowledge of things and persons, unless one understands the true nature of oneself one cannot achieve anything.

Therefore, an accurate knowledge of the nature of Reality is a necessary condition to spiritual development. These two alone, right faith and right knowledge, would not be sufficient. Acquisition of correct knowledge must lead to correct action. What is the use of correct knowledge if it is not going to guide you in action? Hence correct action in the light of correct knowledge is a necessary condition for complete spiritual development. Hence Jainism maintains that all these three aspects must be present in a person if he is to reach his spiritual goal. This truth is expressed by the Jaina thinkers in the following statement :

सम्यक् दर्शनज्ञानचारित्राणि मोक्षमार्गः ।

“Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct together constitute the path of Salvation.”

In this respect Jainism differs from other Darshanas, some of which emphasise only faith, some emphasise knowledge and some emphasise conduct. Faith or Bhakti alone is considered enough to lead to salvation. Knowledge alone is supposed to be sufficient to achieve salvation. Conduct or activity alone

is considered to be enough to secure salvation. Such one-sided religious beliefs are dismissed by the Jaina thinkers. They maintain that all the three must be present together to achieve the purpose. Very often the following analogy is quoted.

Salvation implies escape from Samsara which is associated with birth, old age and death. Every person aims to reach a place which is free from birth and death. Such a desire is similar to the desire of a sick man to cure himself and attain normal health. Such a desire to be effective, the sick man must have implicit faith in his doctor, whom he consults. Next he must have a clear knowledge of the medicine prescribed by the doctor and thirdly he must take the medicine according to the instructions given by the doctor. Faith in the doctor, knowledge of the medicine, and taking the medicine as prescribed, all these three are necessary to eradicate the sickness and to secure normal health. Similar is the acquisition of spiritual health, which would be secured only by the co-operation of the three items of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct.

What is the conception of God in Jaina Religion ?  
What is the nature of God worshipped by the Jainas ?

Jaina Darshana, just as Sankhya Darshana and Mimamsa Darshana, does not believe in the doctrine of creation or a Creator, or an Ishvara, and yet believes in a Divine Being for whom the Jainas build temples and conduct religious worships. What is the nature of their God whom they worship ? He is worshipped because he is the Revealer of the path to

salvation. One who reveals the path to salvation and leads man along that path towards the ultimate goal must certainly be adored.

What is the qualification of such a Leader and Revealer of the path to salvation? He must first of all be pure and free from all spiritual defects. How does he acquire such freedom from spiritual defects? Such freedom he acquires by completely eradicating and destroying all such root causes by adopting a strenuous path of spiritual discipline or yoga. He is able to destroy all infirmities associated with the pure spiritual self. After destruction of all karmas by yogic dhyana and severe tapas he acquires, Omniscience. He becomes the Lord and the Revealer of Dharma. Being a sarvajna, an all-knowing Supreme Being, he qualifies himself to be the leader of Humanity. Directing man towards the goal of perfection, attaining omniscience and spiritual perfection for himself, he does not go self-satisfied. Since he is equipped with the supreme principle of Ahimsa, Universal Love, and unstinted reverence to life in general, the Lord, the Revealer of Truth, goes about the world preaching to people the spiritual truth that he achieved for himself. Such a divine person is interested in the welfare of all men irrespective of caste or race. Every person is entitled to learn truth. Therefore, the Jaina leaders of Thought permitted all people irrespective of social distinctions to approach them for the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. Such a great leader of thought perfectly pure in himself, endowed with infinite knowledge and unbounded sympathy and love for all living beings is worshipped as the saviour of mankind. His spiritual purity is so sublime and grand that in

his presence there is no evil or hatred. A tiger and a lamb move about in his presence without fear or ferocity. Such a divine person is worshipped by the Jainas as their God. He who is the leader on the path of the salvation, he who is completely free from all karmas, and he who is all-knowing, such a person is worshipped by all.

The rules of conduct prescribed for the Jainas are all based upon the fundamental principles of Ahimsa or Universal Love. These are five in number. Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. Universal Love, Truth, Non-stealing, Sexual Purity and Renunciation of all possessions. These five principles are prescribed for both the Ascetics as well as Laymen, the householders. In the case of the ascetics, these five are called Mahavratas, the five great vows which are to be observed absolutely without any limitation. In the case of the laymen or the householders, these are prescribed with qualifications and limitations. The first and the most important is Ahimsa or Universal Love. This positive principle implies expression of reverence for Life without any limitation. All living beings deserve love and sympathy from man. Some people confine these to human beings alone. But in Jainism there is no such limitation. No life should be injured and a living being in suffering must obtain relief and safety from man. The present day practice among the Jainas is marked by a sincere endeavour to avoid harm to all living beings including insects. But the importance of man as such is almost forgotten by the modern Jainas. They have not realised the exact significance of Dharma Prabhavana, propounding the dharma in



which the Tirthankaras engaged themselves after obtaining Kevala jnana or Omniscience. In preaching Dharma they did not confine themselves to a selected few. There were no chosen people for the Tirthankaras. All persons whether they were Suras or Asuras had equal opportunities of knowing the truth. Not only the Aryans but also the Rakshashas had the privilege of knowing Ahimsa Dharma. It is clear that their object was to create a casteless society and also a classless society. The object of the founders of Jaina Dharma was to avoid as far as possible the economic distinction between the rich and the poor and the social distinction between the high and the low. These ideals have to be achieved by following the fifth vow prescribed for mankind, the vow of Aparigraha. The Jaina Ascetic according to this principle will not own any property as his own. Himself without any possession as his own, the ascetic depends upon the layman or the householder for his sustenance. Sustained by the society, the ascetic devotes his time and energy for promoting the cultural and spiritual development of society as a whole. The layman or the householder is the main stay of social organisation. He maintains the economic stability of society. It is incumbent on him to see that wealth does not accumulate in a few hands. He must prevent poverty and misery in concentrated form. In order to secure such an economic harmony, he is expected to follow the main economic principle based upon the moral idea of setting apart a small portion of his wealth for himself and devoting the rest of his possessions for the benefit of the society at large. Such a principle when strictly followed as a moral ideal will successfully avoid accumulation of wealth on the one hand

and concentration of poverty on the other, and will promote a healthy social organisation based upon the principle of welfare of all human beings and the whole society. Such an ideal when sufficiently promoted and practised by all individuals will naturally lead to a social development, and there will be no possibility of a clash between Capitalism and Communism. In such a society there will be no clash between groups of people. Such a Society will create a condition of Universal Peace and general happiness.

but by right knowledge it can be made a necklace of opportunities. By repentance, by chasing away from the mind ill-begotten pleasures, by teaching others, one learns to follow the commandments and to walk the Inner Way. So instructs *Sūtrakṛtāṅga Sūtra*.

# **JAINISM: ITS DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND THEIR IMPACT ON OUR COMPOSITE CULTURE**

**Pof. Kr. De. Karnataki, M.A.**

The researches of many devoted savants, both Western and Eastern, have established beyond any doubt that Jainism is a very, very old tradition. It is now generally recognised that Mahavira is not the original founder, but only a great reformer who induced fresh blood into the already existing body of Jainism by his work of organising and renovating the Jaina institutions. Prior to him, there was the great Parashva; even he was not the founder of Jainism. Rishabha of the hoary past was the first promulgator and founder of the Jaina tradition. He is unanimously held by both the Jaina and the Brahmana traditions to have existed in very early times. Thus the roots of Jainism go very deep into our history and Jainism undoubtedly is an indigenous system which was prevalent in our country—at least in entire north India—even before the advent of the Vedic Aryans to the Punjab or Brahmavarta.

It is one of the most fascinating and inspiring tasks for a thinker to follow the majestic course of Vedic Aryanism coming into contact with the indigenous currents flowing in our country even before its rise here and mingling with them, being influenced by them and emerging, after ages of dynamic assimilation, as the wonderful composite culture, Bharatiya samskriti, which is even now a very much live and

day-to-day practised tradition amidst one-fifth of mankind inhabiting our country. If we take up the two most predominant currents in this stream of Bharatiya samskriti, the Brahmanical and the Jaina, they seem to be distinguishable even now (as Jainism has a very considerable following in our country) as Ganga and Yamuna mingling their different-hued water into one composite river. We shall try to sketch, necessarily in outline, how Jainism has influenced the Vedic-Brahmanic tradition and, thereby, contributed to our composite Bharatiya culture. Before we embark on this, we shall very briefly note the most salient features of Jainism.

Jainism is generally clubbed along with Buddhism under *shramanasampradaya*. This does not bring out its essential nature in entirety. From times immemorial, it is exclusively termed *nirgrantha sampradaya*. This appellation brings out the fundamentals of Jainism. Of all traditions, Jainism emphatically lays stress on the *nivrutti* attitude towards life in this world.

The basic *nivrutti* stand-point characterising Jainism is laid as the foundation on which the entire Jaina structure of its salient features is raised up systematically and homogeneously. *Tapas* or the sustained mortification and control over the body as related with the *Jiva* is elaborated and insisted on in the Jaina canons. Even the harsh and rigorous features of *tapas* are stressed *Upavasatha* and *Sallekhsna* and *Brahmacharya* have been the distinctive features of Jainism. Detailed instructions regarding the several steps to be gone through in these

processes are all neatly and thoroughly laid down in the Jaina canons. Even during the times of Alexander, the Macedonian king, we have very many instances of Jaina yatis or tapasvis. Probably the order of yatis or samnyasis is indigenous to Jaina tradition.

Ahimsa has been the sheet-anchor of Jainism. Nowhere else in the other traditions has this basic virtue so scientifically, scrupulously and thoroughly integrated with the main doctrine. Jainism is the only tradition which has consistently made this tenet soak into the very vitals of its teachings and practices. The strict vegetarianism that is enforced and the injunction to taking food before dusk in the evening show how elaborately and practically Ahimsa has been made to enter into the day-to-day lives of its votaries. The singular uncompromising insistence on Ahimsa is the special and exclusive feature of Jainism.

The ethical code of Jainism is a most beautiful blend of *achara* and *vichara* (conduct and reflection). Almost all the members of the usual group of virtues adumbrated regarding conduct or *achara* (like *satya*, *ahimsa*, *brahmacharya*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*) owe their immense importance mainly to Jaina tradition. Jainism tackles the inculcation of all these virtues in its votaries through a very wise and practical hierarchical scale of *anu-vratas*, *maha-vratas*, etc. On the side of reflection or *vichara*, it is Jainism which has stressed right from its very beginning *tattva-chintana*. Probably, it was Jainism which originally instituted the order of yati-munis wholly devoted to *tattva-chintana* to the exclusion of all other activities. It is due to this insistence on *vichara* or *tattva-*

*chintana* in Jainism that we find that it is Jainas who have been almost the sole originators in literary compositions in most of our languages. Especially is this so in Kannada, the language of Karnataka; invariably the history of Kannada literature starts with a Jaina-yuga or Jaina-period. Moreover, we have a very creditable and pleasing practice amidst the Jainas to encourage production and propagation of literature through liberal grants of land and money : this is solely due to the ever-insistent tone of Jainism on *tattva-chintana*. *Jaina-dharma*, a compendium or a fairly detailed manual on Jainism, (a pioneer and laudable publication in 1952) by Annaraya Miraji has seen the light of day owing to shastra-dana of very many Jaina men and women. There have been great luminaries amidst Jainism who have contributed ably and subtly to very many chapters in the history of Indian philosophy. Mention may be made here of the distinctive and able elaboration of the doctrine of Karma in Jaina metaphysics.

Such seem to be the salient features of Jainism as a distinct tradition stretching its roots into the dim past of our country's history. We shall now turn to note how Jainism, through its distinctive features, has contributed to the formation of Bharatiya samskriti through its influence and modification of the other elements equally and simultaneously present therein.

The typical Jaina nivrutti attitude to life, exemplified in *nirgrantha sampradaya*, has been very largely responsible for sobering down and modifying the Vedic-Brahmanic pravrutti attitude. Samsara or

the cycle of births and deaths, construed as essentially detestable and hence, to be got rid of, owes most probably its roots to Jaina influence. Pravrutti to be indulged in only with an eye to facilitate nivrutti was probably the first compromise effected by the impact of Jainism. Later, as the second and last stage, the *Gita* conception of nishkama-karma attitude was evolved out of the original naive, pravrutti attitude of the Vedic people. In both these stages, Jainism must have played a very significant part.

Attachment of Jainism to its tenet of Ahimsa and thorough practice and propagation thereof, must have had a tremendous influence on the Vedic-Brahmanic cult of animal sacrifices and practice of taking non-vegetarian food. By its immense faith, Jainism slowly and steadily corroded into the bloody practices of the Vedic people and changed them over triumphantly into the common prevailing vegetarianism and the almost complete abandonment of the animal sacrifice. This significant change in the Vedic-Brahmanic practices and reform thereby is the most telling testimonial to the role of Jainism in the evolution and development of Bharatiya samskriti.

Our people during the Vedic-Brahmanic period were mainly engrossed in rituals; they were not much attracted towards speculation about the perennial problems of life and the universe. The recurrent Atmavidya of later Upanishadic times was yet to be born and evolved, at least in its conspicuous singular aspect. Jainism seems to have turned the tide of the order of rituals into speculative channels of Atmavidya; it is undeniable that it must have played

a major part in this process of the shift of emphasis on speculation. This surmise is supported by the fact that it is persons like Janaka, etc.—who most probably belonged to or at least were influenced largely by *nirgrantha sampradaya*—who were the first initiators of the Vedic karmakanda people into the secret doctrines of the Atman. The very striking feature of Jainism in stressing *vichara* or *tattva-chintana* naturally was the very fitting instrument in forging the speculative slant in the Vedic people. This is the legacy that Jainism has left to all subsequent development of our culture.

The consistently and elaborately systematised code of ethics—comprising the *aantara* (the internal) and the *bahya* (the outer) aspects—built up by the Jaina tradition could not but percolate into the Vedic-Brahmanic core surely and subtly. Especially the Yoga system seems to have been greatly influenced by Jainism. It is no wonder that these strands have been woven over into the texture of Bharatiya samskriti that we have inherited. The distinct order of samnyasis or yati-munis, leading a rigorous and pure life based on celibacy and wholly devoting themselves to *tattva-chintana*, and thereby infusing an elevating tone into the body-politic of the society, has been an intermittent feature of Jainism since time immemorial. The Vedic people mostly had rishis who lived their ordinary lives of house-holders devoted to teaching Vedic lore. Necessarily, the Jaina order of samnyasis, with its elaborate and rigorous rules of conduct and organisation, strongly appealed to our people in the Vedic period by its thoroughness and usefulness. Hence, we find that the order of samnyasis, together



with definite religious institutions, became incorporated and thus was evolved and developed the definite functioning limb of our tradition. This also is one of the greatest contributions that must have been, to a great extent, made by Jainism to our composite culture.

We have pitched upon the essential features of Bharatiya samskriti and singling out the distinct elements of Jaina tradition, which admittedly stretches into the dimmest past of our country's history and, moreover, is undoubtedly indigenous, have tried to trace the patterns of influence and contribution to the common stream that has taken rise, being swollen to what it is by many tributaries flowing their waters into it over all the ages gone by. Naturally and necessarily, ours has been a line of exposition largely summary and suggestive. But, sufficient reflection, it is hoped, is offered to point to the unchallengeable and significant contribution of Jainism, along with other strands, in the evolution and development of our composite culture.

## “CHOOSE THE GREAT ROAD”

**Shri B. P. Wadia**

*The opinion of the Tirthankaras is that knowledge, faith and right conduct are the true causes of true liberation ; never the outward marks.”*

*“By praises and hymns one obtains the wisdom consisting in knowledge, faith and conduct.”*

*—Uttaradhyayana Sutra*

**T**HE mysteries of taking birth are as great as those which attend the death of the body. While it is clear to all that he who is born must one day die, it is not as clear to all that death is followed by birth in another body. Unless we learn to contemplate what *Nitya-prabhava* and *Nitya-pralaya* imply we cannot comprehend the emancipation of the soul into immortality; and the still more mysterious process of the raising of the body to be a temple of Light like that of the grand Tirthankara.

The Jainas celebrate Mahavira Jayanti every year. There is a difference between the compulsory birth of mortals whose Karma draws them to embodied existence and the Birth of an Emancipated Jina, the conqueror of mortality and of all limitations of body and of mind. By his *Vir*—the dauntless Energy that fights its way to the supernal truth—the Soul known as Mahavira reached perfection. As the last of the Tirthankaras he graciously took, voluntary Birth for helping the humanity.

What determines the voluntary incarnation of such divine men as Mahavira and his illustrious predecessors—the twenty-three earlier Tirthankaras, the first of whom, Rishabhadeva, was the founder of the Jaina School of philosophical discipline? This doctrine of a line of Divine Incarnations is to be met not only in Jainism; in other Traditions like that of “the Buddhas who have been and will be” or that referred to in the fourth chapter of *The Bhagavad Gita* we come upon the same teaching. It is a reasonable and convincing truth in the light of the teaching about cycles, yugas, manvantaras, and kalpas; the Greeks also had their *kuklos*, the Cycle of Necessity.

Now, is it not strange that the cycle which drew Mahavira to earth was also adorned by other Great Teachers—the Gautama Buddha in India, Lao-tse and Confucius in China, the last of the Zoroasters in Iran, Pythagoras in Greece, and others? The fifth and sixth centuries B.C. seem to be a very special period marked by the motion of the *Chakra*, the Wheel of Progress, of the ups and downs of the ever-lengthening spiral of evolution.

Can we find a definite underlying purpose of the cycle as it affected human history? It seems to us that the Age opened a new chapter, a new dispensation for those human souls who were becoming ready to tread the Path of Harmlessness, of the Tenderness, of the Inner Light.

Great Divine Men come *yuge-yuge*, cycle after cycle, to educate the mind of the race, to emancipate its heart from the thralldom of cruelty born of hatred,

which is but an expression of violence. Buddha's great statements are very well known. Lao-tse taught the Wisdom of Non-violence. "To the good I will be good; to the evil-doer I will also be good, in order to make him good." "Requite injury with kindness"; and so on. We can multiply quotations from other texts.

They all echo the *Dashavaikalika Niryukti* :

"Subdue wrath by forgiveness, conquer vanity by humbleness, fraud by straightforwardness, and vanquish greed through contentment."

What was the peculiar and particular contribution of Mahavira to the age to which he came? The principles He taught particularly touched the personal life so that His followers, even to-day, have rules for the conduct of life which bring them to the Path of the Inner Light, the Way to the Microcosm within the carapace of cruelty which the body is; thence to proceed to the Great Without, the Mighty Macrocosm.

To begin with, the daily prayer :

"I forgive all souls; let all souls forgive me. I am on friendly terms with all; I have no enmity towards anybody."

—*Avashyaka Niryukti*

This reminder at dawn and as we retire for sleep is a very salutary exercise. In the bustle of the market place we are apt to forget our prayer. Memory is at once the friend and the foe of man and we should seek the help of the following Jain text of the *Yoga-*

*shashtra* which, daily reflected upon after the dawn prayer, will prove helpful :

“In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves.”

But a philosophical principle is essential. How can one, even one born in a Jaina family, accept and practise these ideas if his heart's faith and his mind's inclinations are wrong? Every Jaina by birth and all who follow the Jaina Discipline should perceive this :

“Right belief is conviction in one's own self.  
Knowledge is a Knowledge of one's own self.  
Right conduct is by absorption in one's own self.

How can there be bondage then?”

This creates and confirms self-confidence and without self-confidence we are slaves. Mortals can be divided into two groups: those who are capable of acting with a sense of responsibility to the Self within and then those who rely on others; the former are masters, the latter, slaves of life. Says the Acharanga Sutra :

“Man! Thou art thine own friend.  
Why wish for a friend beyond?”

But mortals are weak; their past Karma hangs round their necks as a chain which eats into the flesh;

but by right knowledge it can be made a necklace of opportunities. By repentance, by chasing away from the mind ill-begotten pleasures, by teaching others, one learns to follow the commandments and to walk the Inner way. So instructs the *Sutrakrtanga Sutra*.

May Lord Mahavira's Jayanti bring the light of knowledge to all who are longing for peace in their own hearts and for the world at large! May we all prove worthy to receive the compassion which flows from the Lotus Feet of all Tirthankaras! May Their Sight of Love fall on many!

## THE PLACE OF JAINISM IN INDIAN THOUGHT<sup>1</sup>

The study of Jainism has been neglected for a long time. It was considered to be an insignificant offshoot of Hinduism. In France only Guerinot dedicated his life to the analysis of the original sources of Jaina Philosophy. The Indologists of France were absorbed by the study of orthodox Brahmanism with a few exceptions, such as the great Burnouf, whose "Introduction to the History of Buddhism" is a classic, and Emile Senart, who made a deep study of Aśoka's Inscriptions, while Sylvain Levi specialized in the Sanskrit sources of Buddhist Philosophy. Guerinot's monograph on Jainism is an outstanding work, a monument of erudition and philosophical appreciation.

In Germany, an important group of Indologists with Herman Jacobi at their head took up a scientific investigation of the Jaina Tradition, but in France the Sorbonne and the College de France neglected Jainism as a field of study, although Sylvain Levi repeatedly warned his disciples that the unexplored field of Jaina Studies deserves the attention of Indian scholars.

Undoubtedly the originality of Mahāvīra's philosophy which dominates the Jaina community appears of the highest importance from the point of view of

1. Reproduced from Acharya Vijayavallabh Suri Smarak Granth published by Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya in 1956.

Indian Culture. The fact that a small minority of Jainas, not exceeding one and a half million, is submerged among the hundreds of millions of Hindus, should not close our eyes to the significance of Jaina Philosophy for the origins of Indian Thought.

Mahāvīra, the 24th Tirthankara, is now recognized as one of the greatest thinkers of Ancient India, the equal of the Buddha in virtue of his profundity and his character. The contemporaneity of the two greatest sages of Ancient India is accepted as a historic fact: the two lived in the same 6th Century before Christ, in the same province of Magadha, preaching in the same towns and villages, at Rājagṛha and Vaiśālī. They must have met and exchanged ideas according to all psychological probabilities, although we do not possess textual evidence concerning their personal relations.

The objective analysis of Mahāvīra's and Buddha's Thought shows the many common points which characterize Jainism and Buddhism. *Ahimsā* and *Nirvāṇa* are concepts which belong to both systems. If we go deeply into the origins of these concepts, we are bound to accept the Jaina Tradition as the source of these specific aspects of Indian Thought. Jainism with its pre-historic background and its 24 Tirthankaras preceded Buddhism by several centuries, although we cannot accept Jaina mythology which obscured the history of the community. Nevertheless the historicity not only of Mahāvīra, but of Pārśva, the 23rd Tirthankara, who lived 250 years before Mahāvīra, in the 8th century before Christ, the very century which gave birth to the first authentic Upa-



niṣads, is now beyond doubt. Even the name of Neminātha, the 22nd Tirthaṅkara, was found on a copperplate, which authorizes the historians of Ancient India to accept the probability of the existence of pre-historic Tirthaṅkaras, however fantastic the chronology attributed by Jaina mythology seems to the scientific mind.

The historic existence of two Jaina Orders at the time of the Buddha has been verified; both had preceded Buddhism as monastic institutions. The Order founded by Mahāvīra was a simple organizational reform reorganizing the Order of Pārśva. The Jaina communities were long divided and still quarrel about the authenticity of their sects.

Both Mahāvīra and Buddha were princes of the kṣatriya tribes, in revolt against the privileges of the Brahmin priesthood. Jainism represents the first social revolution in Indian history, opening the gates of knowledge to the ordinary people, accepting in the *Sanḡha* whoever was willing to submit to the severe discipline of the Order. The Buddha himself must have experimented with the Jaina discipline of self-mortification during the years of meditation under the Bodhi Tree, before proclaiming the Middle Path as the way to Enlightenment between self-torture and pleasure-seeking.

The essential difference between Jainism and Buddhism is just this extreme severity which Mahāvīra has imposed upon the monks of his order, who must renounce all pleasures and live a life of total abstention from every point of view. They

were forbidden to eat even tomatoes, onions, potatoes as containing germs of living creatures, and the respect for All Life, for all that grows and lives on earth and in the air, became an orthodox dogma. The most severe form of *Ahimsā* is the principle which unites all the four sects of Jainism in their horror of war. Their division into “Digambaras” and “Śvetāmbaras”, into multi-pūjā sects and the two sects which reject all image-worship, Stānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs, should not hide their essential allegiance to the principle of non-violence as the common ground of all Jains.

Mahatma Gandhi's mother was a Jaina, his guru at Porbandar, in his native city, was an eminent Jaina sage, and his heart was since childhood impressed by the Jaina tradition of *Ahimsā* which became the guiding star of all his life. The historians of contemporary India should not forget this decisive influence in Gandhiji's career which determined the destiny of the nation.

Mediaeval Hinduism has proclaimed both Jainism and Buddhism “heresies” opposed to the Vedic culture. The Brahmin priesthood saw a danger to their privileges in the fact that both Jainism and Buddhism gave access to the lower castes to higher knowledge, and wanted to monopolize the wisdom of ancient India for themselves as a source of prestige and income. Recent research has dissipated the false pretenses of mediaeval orthodoxy as the sole custodians of Indian Wisdom. The reactionary paṇḍits are fighting a losing battle against the enlightened opinion of critical scholarship which

now recognizes that the original spirit of Ancient India is to be found in the teachings of Mahāvira and Buddha, who might differ in the way *Ahimsā* should be applied in daily life, but fully agree in rejecting the monopoly of Orthodox Brahmanism, as misinterpreted by the mediaeval commentators. Philosophical Brahmanism is an integral part of a common heritage of all the great sages of the Upaniṣadic Age, in which both Jainism and Buddhism share, accepting the ideal of universality and rejecting the excesses of ritualism. Both insist on the necessity for the individual to develop his mind through his own spiritual effort and to ascend to a higher level without any intermediary between himself and the Divine Powers.

The discipline of body and mind prescribed by Ancient Indian Thought constitutes the most original contribution of India to human psychology. Its basis is Yoga and Jainism is pure Yoga in its attempt to liberate the spirit from all earthly forces. There is Jaina Yoga, as there is Buddhist Yoga and Hindu Yoga, with this difference: Mediaeval Orthodoxy corrupted the original spirit of Yoga which became a tool of fakes, thousands of fakes who abuse religion for personal aggrandizement.

Both Mahāvira and Buddha must be understood as Masters of Yoga, who laid the foundations of Indian Psychology—showing the way towards spiritual perfection, raising human nature to a higher level and demonstrating the possibility of attaining Enlightenment which means cosmic consciousness, self-identification with all life, with the Universe in the service of the highest ideal ever attained in history :

### Selflessness.

The Jaina System of philosophy has developed a theory of Karma of immense interest: according to Jainism, the soul is originally pure, but it becomes contaminated by material particles through contact with the world. The task of the Jaina saint is to liberate his soul from all these particles through absolute renunciation and to recover the purity of his soul. Purity and perfection are the ideals which India borrowed from the Jaina tradition. Only the methods vary, but the ideal is the same.

Modern psychology refuses to assent to this contempt of all matter. Human nature is considered to-day as one single entity, divided into body and mind, but trying to integrate the two aspects of man into a harmonious whole. Like the Christian doctrine, Hindu thought separated body and mind as two incompatible entities and looked upon the soul as a slave of physiology to be liberated by religious training. The modern view of mankind does not accept this radical division of the material and the spiritual. Nevertheless the ideal of spiritual freedom, freedom from all the contingencies of the industrial civilization which have enslaved the Western world, makes the study of Indian thought very instructive for modern man eager to disentangle his inner life from the shackles of materialism. Ancient India has proved the potentiality of such perfect spiritual freedom, even if we concede that only exceptional individuals of immense will-power have ever attained the highest form of Liberation of the spirit.

The Jainas themselves recognize that the 24th Tirthankara was the last in this cycle of earthly existence and that it is impossible today to attain the highest spiritual level. The Jaina saints with all their rigorous discipline are still in bondage to physiology, although they demonstrate every day the possibility of reducing such bondage to the absolute minimum. Mahāvīra is essentially interesting from the psychological point of view as the incarnation of Will Power, Spiritual Will in its purest form.

*Ahimsā* is a principle of universal love, for the single purpose of transforming human nature from the animal plane into a spiritual sphere such as all historic religions tried to promote. Jainism served as a ferment in the history of India, fertilizing the noblest elements in Indian character. Although the Jaina communities have degenerated and share in the moral decay of mankind, Mahāvīra's personality shines high above the vulgarity of our age and deserves to be recognized as one of the greatest sages of all history.



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