

# MAHĀVĪRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani



**JAINA VIDYĀ SAMSTHĀNA**  
**DIGAMBARA JAINA ATISĀYA KṢETRA ŚRĪ MAHĀVĪRAJĪ**  
**RAJASTHĀN**

# **MAHĀVĪRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**

By  
**Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani**  
Formerly Professor of Philosophy



*Published by*

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**DIGAMBARA JAINA ATISAYA KSETRA SRĪ MAHĀVĪRAJĪ**  
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**Tīrthāṅkara Vardhamāna Mahāvīra**  
**Digambara Jaina Atiśaya Kṣetra Śrī Mahāvīraji**  
**Rajasthan**







Vardhamana Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara in a meditative posture, another illustration from the Calligraphed edition of the Constitution of India. Jainism is another stream of spiritual renaissance which seeks to refine and sublimate man's conduct and emphasises Ahimsa, non-violence, as the means to achieve it. This became a potent weapon in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi in his political struggle against the British Empire.

**Published in the Indian Constitution**





The Religion of Mahāvīra is styled  
'Sarvodaya'.

— Ācārya Samantabhadra  
(2nd cent. A.D.)

To the precept of the Gospel, "Love thy  
neighbour as thyself" Gandhi adds, "And every  
living being is thy neighbour."

Romain Rolland — Mahatma Gandhi



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## PRELUSIVE

We feel great pleasure in placing 'Mahāvīra and His Philosophy of Life' written by Prof. Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani in the hands of the readers.

The Jaina Vidyā Saṁsthāna (Institute of Jainology) established by Digambara Jaina Atiśaya Kṣetra, Śrī Mahāvīraji is actively engaged in presenting the multi-dimensional perspectives of Lord Mahāvīra to the general public and scholar alike. It was being felt for long that the pilgrims coming to Śrī Mahāvīraji should get a book in English on the life and philosophy of Mahāvīra which may be in consonance with the spirit of the Atiśaya Kṣetra.

We are happy to say that Prof. Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani who is the Saṁyojaka (Convener) of the Jaina Vidyā Saṁsthāna Samiti came to our help and wrote the present book, 'Mahāvīra and His Philosophy of Life' which goes a long way towards the fulfilment of a long-felt need of the Kṣetra. We are grateful to him.

We offer our thanks to the learned researchers of the Saṁsthāna (Institute) and to M/s Jaipur Printers for their assistance in publishing this book.

**Balbhadra Kumar Jain**  
*Joint Secretary*

**N.K. Sethi**  
*President*

*Managing Committee*  
**Digambara Jaina Atiśaya Kṣetra Śrī Mahāvīraji**

## PREFACE

In the tradition of Tīrthaṅkaras, Mahāvīra is the twenty-fourth Tīrthankara. His whole life illustrates the translation of the principle of Ahimsā into practice. The realisation of perfect Ahimsā is regarded by Mahāvīra as the ethical Summum Bonum of human life. In fact, Ahimsā is so central in Mahāvīra's philosophy of life that it may be incontrovertibly called the beginning and the end of his philosophy. This ideal of Ahimsā is realised progressively. He who is able to realise Ahimsā partially is called a householder, whereas he who is able to realise Ahimsā completely, though not perfectly, is called an ascetic or a Muni. It belies the allegation that ascetic flees from the world of action. Truly speaking, he recoils not from the world of action but from the world of Himśā. No doubt the ascetic life affords full ground for the realisation of Ahimsā, but its perfect realisation is possible only in the plenitude of mystical experience which is the Arhat state. Thus the householder and the ascetic are the two wheels on which the cart of Mahāvīra's preachings moves on quite smoothly. By developing the doctrine of Anuvrata for the householder, Mahāvīra has shown the way in which the householder should direct his course of life. There is no doubt that the doctrine of Anuvratas is the unique contribution of Mahāvīra to Indian thought.

It is not idle to point out that the metaphysical position upheld by Mahāvīra is known as Anekāntavāda or non-

absolutism. Mahāvīra does not subscribe to the absolutist approach to the unfoldment of the inner nature of reality. The preaching of Mahāvīra is that absolutism in philosophy is subversive of ethical speculation. In this regard the statement of Samantabhadra is that the concepts of bondage and liberation, Puṇya (virtue) and Pāpa (vice) lose all their relevancy if we exclusively recognise either permanence or momentariness as constituting the nature of substance.

The declaration of Mahāvīra that the whole Ācāra (conduct) whether of the householder or of the Muni is out and out sterile without having Samyagdarśana (spiritual awakening) as forming its background. Thus spiritualism pervades the entire Jaina Ācāra, since Mahāvīra lays persistent emphasis on the veritable achievement of Samyagdarśana (spiritual awakening). It should be borne in mind that in Mahāvīra's philosophy of life ethics (Ācāra) should lead to mystical realisation.

It may be pointed out that in Mahāvīra's philosophy of life, there is the theoretical possibility of devotion without any inconsistency. It is true to say that Mahāvīra does not uphold the idea of God who can respond to the aspirations of the devotee but he undoubtedly recognises the Arhat and the Siddha as the divinity-realised souls who may be the objects of devotion. By our devotion to the Arhat or the Siddha, our thoughts and emotions are purified, which accumulate in the self the Puṇya of the highest kind, which brings about as a natural consequence material and spiritual benefits. According to Ācārya Samantabhadra (2nd cent. A.D.), he who is devoted to Arhat or Siddha relishes prosperity and he who casts



aspersions sinks to perdition. Those who are devoted to him are automatically elevated.

It will not be idle to point out that in Mahāvīra's philosophy of life both individual and society are properly reconciled. He seems to be aware of the fact that the emphasis on merely individual progress without taking note of social responsibility is derogatory both to the individual and society. After attaining supreme knowledge, he himself revolted against the economic exploitation and social oppression of man and introduced vigorous innovations in the then existing social law and order.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Ācārya Vidyānanda Munīrāja, who inspired me to write a book in English on 'Mahāvīra and His Philosophy of Life' on the occasion of the Sahasrābdī Samāroha (millennial celebrations) at Śrī Mahāvīrājī from 1st Feb. to 8th Feb. 1998. It is by virtue of his holy blessings and guidance that I have been able to finish this work in time. Words are inadequate to express my gratefulness to Ācārya Śrī.

It is hoped that the present book will give authentic information to the readers regarding the life and philosophy of Mahāvīra. We offer our thanks to the learned researchers of the Jaina Vidyā Saṁsthāna (Institute) and to M/s Jaipur Printers for their assistance in publishing this book.

I should not forget to express my thanks to my wife, Srimati Kamla Devi Sogani, who has always helped me in my academic pursuits.

Vira Nirvana Samvat 2524  
01.01.98

**Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani**  
Samyojaka  
Jaina Vidya Samsthana Samiti

# DIACRITICAL MARKS

## Vowels

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ऋ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	
r	e	ai	o	au	

## Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
c	ch	j	jh	ṇ
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
t	th	d	dh	ṇ
त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n
प	फ	ब	भ	म
p	ph	b	bh	m
य	र	ल	व	
y	r	l	v	
श	स	ष	ह	
ś	s	ṣ	h	

(अनुस्वार)

m

: (विसर्ग)

ḥ

# **MAHĀVĪRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**



# MAHĀVĪRA

## AND

### HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

#### Pre-Mahāvīra Period

Jainism is one of the oldest living religions of the world. It represents the continuation of indigenous Śramaṇic culture which is at least as old as the Vedas themselves, so far as the literary evidence goes, though the archaeological evidence takes Śramaṇism far back to Harappan civilization, which is regarded as non-Vedic in origin and outlook. It should be borne in mind that according to the Jaina tradition Jainism owes its origin to Rṣabha, the first among the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras.\* The Hindu Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions certain facts about Rṣabha which agree in a great measure with those

\* The rest of the Tīrthaṅkaras are :

- |                   |                               |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 2. Ajitanātha     | 3. Sambhavanātha              | 4. Abhinandanānātha |
| 5. Sumatinātha    | 6. Padmaprabha                | 7. Suparśvanātha    |
| 8. Candraprabha   | 9. Puspadanta or Suvidhinātha | 10. Śītanātha       |
| 11. Śreyāṃsanātha | 12. Vāsupūjya                 | 13. Vimalanātha     |
| 14. Anantanātha   | 15. Dharmanātha               | 16. Śāntinātha      |
| 17. Kunthunātha   | 18. Aranātha                  | 19. Mallinātha      |
| 20. Munisuvratā   | 21. Naminātha                 | 22. Neminātha       |
| 23. Pārśvanātha   | 24. Mahāvīra or Vardhamāna.   |                     |

It may be mentioned that the five Tīrthaṅkaras, namely, Rṣabhadeva or Adinātha, Ajitanātha, Abhinandanānātha, Sumatinātha and Anantanātha were born in Ayodhyā.

Again, Rṣabhadeva attained Nirvāṇa at Mt. Kailāsa in Tibet, Vāsupūjya, at Campā in Bihar, Neminātha, at Mt. Giranāra in Gujarat and Mahāvīra, at Pavā in Bihar. The rest twenty Tīrthaṅkaras attained Nirvāṇa at Mt. Sammedaśīkhara in Bihar.

Five Tīrthaṅkaras, namely, Vāsupūjya, Mallinātha, Neminātha (Aristanemi), Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra did not marry.

mentioned in the Jaina scriptures. Dr. Radhakrishnan opines "There is evidence to show that so far back as the first century B.C. there were people who were worshipping Ṛṣabhadeva, the first Tīrthaṅkara. There is no doubt Jainism prevailed even before Vardhamāna or Pārśvanātha. The Yajurveda mentions the names of three Tīrthaṅkaras : Ṛṣabha, Ajitanātha and Ariṣṭanemi. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa endorses the view that Ṛṣabha was the founder of Jainism." Dr. Jacobi writes : "Jaina tradition is unanimous in making Ṛṣabha the first Tīrthaṅkara as its founder and there may be something historical in the tradition which makes him the first Tīrthaṅkara. "There is evidence to show that so far back as the first century B.C. there were people who were worshipping Ṛṣabhadeva. It has been recorded that King Khāravēla of Kālīṅga in his second invasion of Magadha in 161 B.C. brought back treasures from Magadha and in these treasures there was the statue of the first Jaina (Ṛṣabhadeva) which had been carried away from Kālīṅga three centuries earlier by King Nanda I. This means that in the 5th Century B.C. Ṛṣabhadeva was worshipped and his statue was highly valued by his followers." "We get in ancient inscriptions authentic historical references to the statues of Ṛṣabhadeva, so it can be asserted that he must have been the founder of Jainism."

Ṛṣabha or Adinātha was born in Ayodhyā. He attained Kevala Jñāna (supreme knowledge) at Prayāga (Allahabad) and embraced Nirvāṇa at Mount Kailāśa (in Tibet). His eldest son, Bhārata was the first Cakravartin, after whose name this country is known as Bhāratavarṣa. Ṛṣabha is the first preacher of Ahimsā Dharma. The rest of the Tīrthaṅkaras propagated the Ahimsā Dharma for



the welfare of the Jīvas and strengthened the Śramanic Dharma preached by Tīrthaṅkara Rṣabha.

It will not be idle to point out that the Tīrthaṅkara Nami, the 21st Tīrthaṅkara, who was born at Mithilā in Videha seems to have given rise to the spiritualistic thought of the Upaniṣads. The twenty-second Tīrthaṅkara Ariṣṭanemi (Neminātha), who was the first cousin of Lord Kṛṣṇa preached against killing animals not only for the sake of religion but also for food. "Kṛṣṇa himself had great respect for this apostle of Ahimsā." "Ariṣṭanemi and Kṛṣṇa, their contemporaries, the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, and the Mahābhārata War are generally assigned by modern scholars to about the 15th century B.C."

It may be noted here that according to Dr. G.C. Pandey "the anti-ritualistic tendency, within the Vedic fold, is itself due to the impact of an asceticism which antedates the Vedas. It is recognised that "some of the relics, recovered from the excavations at Mohen-jo-daro and Harappā, are related to Śramaṇa or Jaina tradition. "The nude images in Kāyotsarga, i.e., the standing posture lost in meditation, closely resemble the Jaina images of the Kuṣāṇa period. Kāyotsarga is generally supposed to belong to the Jaina tradition. There are some idols even in Padmāsana pose". "Even after the destruction of the Indus civilization, the straggling culture of the Śramaṇas, most probably going back to pre-Vedic times, continued even during the Vedic period as is indicated by some such terms as Vātarasana, Muni, Yati, Śramaṇa, Kesī, Vrātya, Arhan and Śiśnadeva". "There can hardly be any doubt that the Muni was to the Ṛgvedic culture an alien figure". "In the Ṛgveda, Arhan has been used for a Śramaṇa leader." "The mention of Śiśnadevas (naked gods) in the Ṛgveda is also

noteworthy." All this speaks of Jainism as a pre-Vedic religion and Ṛṣabhadeva as its founder.

It is significant to point out here that the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara Pārśvanātha who was born at Vārāṇasī in 877 B.C. attained Nirvāṇa at Mt. Sammedaśikharaṇī (Pārasanātha Hill in Bihar) "revived the teachings of the earlier Tīrthaṅkaras in a very forceful manner". His father was Viśvasena, who was the king of Vārāṇasī, and his mother was Vāmā. He spent 30 years of his life as a householder, and afterwards he led a life of a monk. After following a strenuous life of austerities he attained perfection, and after completing hundred years of his life, he embraced final emancipation on the summit of mount Sammedaśikhara (Pārasanātha Hill) in Bihar 250 years before Mahāvīra attained Nirvāṇa.

### **Mahāvīra**

Mahāvīra is the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara who attained Nirvāṇa at Pavā in Bihar at the age of 72 on Tuesday the 15th Oct. 527 B.C. This day is being celebrated as the Dīpāvalī festival (festival of lamps) throughout India. Besides, Mahāvīra's Nirvāṇa day marks the beginning of Vīra Nirvāṇa Saṃvat. This Saṃvat is the oldest Saṃvat rampant in India.

It should be borne in mind that Mahāvīra is one of those few towering personalities who fought for individual liberty in the context of social life. He revolted against the economic exploitation and social oppression of man and introduced vigorous innovations in the then existing social law and order. Mahāvīra regarded individual and his social responsibility as the key to the progress of both the individual and society. He seems to be aware of the fact that the emphasis on merely individual progress without

taking note of social responsibilities is derogatory both to the individual and society. Mahāvīra was neither merely individualistic nor merely socialistic. In his attitude both individual and society are properly reconciled.

In fact, Mahāvīra did not confine himself to individual upliftment, but he dedicated himself to the development of a new creative social order for the healthiest orientation of the individual. Though he was a man of contemplative values, yet social values got his fullest attention. It should be borne in mind that contemplative and social values are not opposed to each other. They are not contradictory but complementary. Mahāvīra seems to have believed that the urge for the creation of a healthy social order should come as a consequence of spiritual perfection. The evidence to this is that Mahāvīra did not preach during his twelve years period of spiritual pursuance. He seems to be convinced of the fact that without the basis of spiritual experience, the talk of social reconstruction is vain and does not result in the effective transformation of society. In consequence, it is quite misleading to say that Mahāvīra did not care for society and resorted to a place of seclusion. An unbiased eye will find that the greater portion of his life was devoted to having such solutions as may give sound basis to social reconstruction. It is no doubt true that he did not involve himself in superficial struggles of life. This is because of the fact that he wanted to struggle with the fundamental issues of life in order to find an everlasting solution, so that social progress may take place in a right direction. This type of endeavour adhered to by Mahāvīra is like that of a scientist who, in order to contribute something to society, pursues his researches in a laboratory after withdrawing himself from all sorts of

disturbances whatsoever. Thus Mahāvīra may be said to be socio-centric like a scientist. After his spiritual culmination he moved on to social dimensions of life till his Nirvāṇa. In this way he sought reconciliation between 'Individual' and 'Society', 'I' and 'Thou'. Those who regard Mahāvīra only as the apostle of spiritual message do great injustice to him. In fact, he serves as an illustration both of spiritual realisation and social reconstruction.

Mahāvīra was born at Kṣatriya Kuṇḍagrāma (Kuṇḍalapura) near Vaiśālī in Videha country on Monday the 27th March 598 B.C. Videha corresponds mostly to the modern Tirahuta Division of Bihar State. The capital of Videha was Vaiśālī, the modern Basāḍha in Hazipur sub-division of Muzaffarpur District. Kṣatriya Kuṇḍagrama, adjacent to Vaiśālī is now known as Vasukūṇḍa or Vāsukūṇḍa, 50 KM. to the North of Patna.

It should be borne in mind that in the age of Mahāvīra there were many Gaṇarājyas (republics), out of which the Gaṇarājya of Videha\* was very well-known. Vaiśālī was its capital. Ceṭaka was the Gaṇarājya Pramukha of Videha republic. He was known as the great Licchavī King of Vaiśālī. Trisālā was the daughter of Ceṭaka, the great Licchavī King of Vaiśālī. Besides, Kuṇḍalapura was an important centre of the Jñātrka Kṣatriyas and King Siddhāratha was the Gaṇarāj of Kuṇḍalapura. It may be noted here that Trisālā was married to King Siddhāratha. At one night Trisālā saw sixteen objects in a dream, some of which are : an elephant, a bull, a lion, the moon, the sun, an ocean, a throne, smokeless fire etc. King

\* "The Videha Gaṇarājya was constituted by eight Rājās representing eight major Kṣatriya clans, namely,

1. Licchavī 2. Vṛji 3. Jñātrka 4. Videha  
5. Ugra 6. Bhoga 7. Ikṣavāku and 8. Kaurava."

Siddhāratha on knowing these dreams predicted that Trīśalā will give birth to a Tīrthaṅkara and consequently after completing nine months, seven days and twelve hours, Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra was born on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Caitra, i.e. on Monday, the 27th March 598 B.C. at Kuṇḍalapura in Bihar, as has been mentioned above. Since with the birth of Mahāvīra, prosperity increased, King Siddhāratha called his son, 'Vardhamāna'. Because of his Jñātr clan he was known as Jñātrputra. Simply by seeing Vardhamāna, the philosophical doubts of Sañjaya and Vijaya Munis were resolved. So he was given the name 'Sanmati' by the Munis. Because of controlling and pacifying an amuck elephant, the people of Kuṇḍalapura addressed him by the name 'Ativīra'. By seeing the poisonous cobra, Vardhamāna fearlessly played with it so the Saṅgama deva who assumed the form of a cobra, bestowed on him the honour of being 'Mahāvīra'. In the Buddhist text, he is referred to as the Niggaṇṭha Nātaputta.

Gradually Mahāvīra attained adulthood. In spite of this, worldly pleasures did not attract him. But his parents were desirous of marrying him with Yaśodhā, the daughter of Jitaśatru, the King of Kalinga. Despite this, he exhibited aversion to mundane desires. His parents could not prevail upon him. In consequence, Mahāvīra led a celibate life. He became reflective. He finds that all the things of the world are transitory. Birth accompanies death. Youth is tied up with senility. Wealth and prosperity may disappear at any time and the body may fall victim to various kinds of ills and diseases. Thus impermanence of the state of things stares us in the face. Whatever form is born must necessarily perish. Attachment to ever transforming

modifications leads us astray and cloud the spiritual and veritable aspect of life. Friends, beauty, wife, children, wealth etc., - all these things which in general captivate man's mind and energy are fraught with transiency, these are not the eternal associates of the self. Beside, body, fame, pleasures of the senses and other things of Bhoga and Upabhoga are unstable in character like a bubble of water, or lump of ice, or rainbow, or lightening. Mahāvīra thinks that death behaves equally and indiscriminately with the young and old, the rich and poor, the brave and coward, and the like. Nothing mundane, whatsoever, is capable of resisting the challenge of death. Neither earthly powers nor heavenly gods can save us from the clutches of death. Besides, there is no place where death can not stretch its wings. Every stratagem and contrivance is impotent in rescuing a living being who is breathing his last. Again, Mahāvīra sees that under the constraint of Karmic bondage the mundane soul falls an easy prey to repeated births and deaths. The four forms of bodily existence human, celestial, hellish and sub-human are fraught with numberless sufferings. Besides, Mahāvīra feels that the soul is all alone without any companion to suffer the consequences of his own good and evil deeds. Neither Kinsmen nor friends nor sons nor daughters share one's sufferings, one alone has to bear them. Apart from this, Mahāvīra finds that the self is permanently distinct from the body. When one is alien even to this body so nearest to self, the question of its distinction with other objects of the world does not arise. Mahāvīra thinks that the body is full of impurities, and is the root cause of birth, death, mental and physical sufferings. He is aware of the fact that these are formidable obstacles to spiritual realisation. Mahāvīra reflects on the



ways of stoppage and the shedding of Karmas and on the real nature of Dharma.

At a result of the above types of reflections, Mahāvīra decided to lead a life of asceticism. After receiving the consent of his parents, he relinquished all mundane pleasures so as to attain Siddhahood and in consequence he assumed complete nudity and became a Nirgrantha. This is known as Mahāvīra's Abhinīṣkramaṇa, that is, the great Renunciation of Mahāvīra. This renunciation took place on Monday the 29th December 569 B.C. at the age of 30 and from that time Mahāvīra moved as a Nirgrantha Muni i.e. a naked ascetic.

It may be noted here that Mahāvīra gave utmost importance to the practice of Dhyāna, since it is directly related to the actualisation of the divine potentialities. For this Mahāvīra regarded the subjugation of Paṛiṣahas (afflictions) and practice of Tapas (austerities) as falling within the compass of his obligations. He allows no compromise with anything entangling him in the mire of Saṃsāra. His career is indicative of his complete detachment from mundane life and living. He holds the view that any thing which drags him down to breathe in the suffocating air of the profane world must needs be subdued, strangled and overthrown. He is convinced of the fact that if the Paṛiṣahas are not met with adequate attitude and disposition of mind, they would tend to mar the saintly life. On the contrary, if they are encountered with the inner conviction of truth, and invaded by the non-violent army of fortitude, meditation and devotion, they will confer jubilation, and yield the joy of victory. And if the austerities are spiritedly practised, they would bring about the inner rejection of desire, which would be helpful in the

practice of Dhyāna. It may be pointed out in passing that the difference between Pariṣahas and austerities consists in the fact that the former occur against the will of the saint, who endures them or rather turns them to good account by contemplating them to be the means for spiritual conquest, while the latter are in concordance with the will of the saint to have the spiritual triumph. Secondly, most of the Pariṣahas may be the creations of vicious man, cruel nature and jealous gods, viewed from the common man's point of view, but austerities are the enunciations and resolutions of the aspirant's soul. Again, if Pariṣahas have enduring value, austerities have pursuing value. Thirdly, Pariṣahas which are obstacles to spiritual life represent themselves as the passing phase in the career of the aspirant, whereas the austerities form the indispensable part and parcel of the discipline which is enjoined in order to escape from this distressed and sorrowful worldly life. Lastly, we may say that the performance of austerities subscribes to the endurance of Pariṣahas with equanimity and unruffled state of mind, and to the practice of Dhyāna.

As has been said above, Mahāvīra regarded Dhyāna as the clear and single road by which the aspirant can move straight to the supreme good. He, therefore, selected isolated and lonely places such as forest, cremation ground, caves, and mountain tops for performing Dhyāna (meditation). Besides, Mahāvīra conquered many Pariṣahas (afflictions). At one night Sthānu Rudra began to trouble Mahāvīra in many ways, but in vain. Thus Pariṣahas could not deviate Mahāvīra from the right path. He endured with the greatest equanimity all sorts of abuses, tortures inflicted on him by vicious persons. He

meditated day and night, undisturbed and unperturbed and at last under the Śāla tree on the banks of the river R̥jukūlā outside the town, J̥rmbhikā, he attained supreme knowledge known as Kevalajñāna and became Arhat on Sunday the 26th April 557 B.C. at the age of 42 years. It will not be amiss to point out that while undergoing a strenuous course of discipline for a period of 12 years, he observed complete silence i.e Mauna, thus he was styled Mahā Maunī i.e. the great observer of silence. Besides, he exhibited least concern for sleep during the period of twelve years.

After the attainment of omniscience (Kevalajñāna), Mahāvīra remained silent and did not deliver any sermon for sixty-six days. One day Mahāvīra arrived at Vipulācala mountain outside the city of Rājagṛha, the capital of Magadha. Here Samavasaraṇa (religious assembly) was organised on Saturday the 1st July 557 B.C. Owing to the presence of a renowned Brahmin Scholar named Indrabhūti Gautama in the Samavasaraṇa (who was regarded as having the capacity to record the truth revealed by Mahāvīra), Mahāvīra delivered his 1st Sermon at the Vipulācala mountain on Saturday the 1st July 557 B.C.. This day is celebrated as the Vīraśāsana day. Indrabhūti Gautama was designated as the first Gaṇadhara (chief disciple) by Mahāvīra.

Gradually Mahāvīra initiated more Gandharas into the ascetic order, so that the doctrine preached by him may be transmitted to the masses in an authentic manner in their own language which was Prākṛta at that time. For full thirty years Mahāvīra visited different parts of the country especially the important centres in Eastern and Northern India, and promulgated the doctrine of Ahimsā

and Anekānta throughout. Owing to the magnetic personality of Mahāvīra and his metaphysical, ethical and spiritual teachings, number of kings, queens, princes, princesses, ministers and merchants accepted him as their teacher. Thus males and females of all casts and classes became the ardent followers of Mahāvīra, and a fourfold order of Sādhus (male ascetics), Sādhvīs (female ascetics), Śrāvakas (male householders) and Śrāvikās (female householders) came into existence. In view of the all-embracing character of Mahāvīra's principles the Jaina Ācārya Samantabhadra, as early as second century A.D. called the religion of Mahāvīra a 'Sarvodaya' Tīrtha, which term is so commonly used now-a-days after Gandhiji. It should be borne in mind that the doctrines preached by Mahāvīra are fundamentally the doctrines of Jainism.

### **Metaphysics**

In metaphysics Mahāvīra holds that the substance (Dravya) is that which exists or that which is characterised by simultaneous origination, destruction and persistence, or that which is the substratum of qualities and modifications (modes). It may be noted here that every one of these definitions is inclusive of the rest, since existence implies change and permanence. To be more clear, permanence signifies persistence of substance along with qualities, and change refers to fluctuating modes along with the emergence of the new modes and disappearance of the old ones at one and the same time. To illustrate, gold as a substance exists with its modifications and qualities. Now after making an ornament, gold as a substance is existent with its qualities and what changes is the mode, Thus existence which is

inseparably bound up with substance (gold) accompanied by its qualities and modes necessitates the production of a new form, the cessation of the old one, and continuation of gold as such simultaneously. In other words, substance, as inherently and essentially associated with endless qualities and modifications, is out and out inconceivable without at the same time implying existence which in turn is endowed with the trio of simultaneous origination, destruction and persistence. Thus substance as different from qualities (Guṇa) and modifications (Paryāya) is not worthy of being so called. Origination and destruction are applicable to modifications and persistence to qualities along with substance.

Mahāvīra resolves the whole universe of being into two everlasting, uncreated, co-existing, but independent categories of Jīva and Ajīva. The Ajīva is further classified into Pudgala (matter), Dharma (principle of motion), Adharma (principle of rest), Ākāśa (space) and Kāla (time). All the substances except Pudgala are regarded as bereft of material qualities of touch, taste, smell and colour, and only Jīva is said to possess consciousness. Hence Dharma, Adharma, Ākāśa and Kāla are destitute of consciousness, and also of material qualities. Thus they should not be misapprehended as being comprised under the category of matter, but they come under a different category of non-sentiency-cum-non-materiality. As for Dharma, Adharma and Ākāśa, each of them is considered to be one, while Jīva and Pudgala are infinite and Kāla is innumerable. Besides, Dharma, Adharma, Ākāśa and Kāla are by nature non-active, and the remaining two are active.

## **Pudgala**

The principal forms in which Pudgala (matter) having the qualities of touch, taste, smell and colour exists, are Anu (atom) and Skandha (aggregate). Binary to infinite aggregates are included in Skandha. An atom consists of only one Pradeśa, is the terminus of divisibility of matter, is by itself without beginning, end or middle, is destitute of sound and is coupled with the qualities of taste, touch, smell and colour. Besides, it is indestructible and eternal. It possesses any one colour, any one taste, any one smell, but a pair of such touches as are not of contradictory nature, namely, cold and viscous, or cold and dry, or hot and viscous, or hot and dry. The remaining touches, namely, soft and hard, light and heavy are only manifested in the Skandha state of matter, and thus are not present in its atomic state. The qualities of viscousness and dryness are responsible for atomic linking. It may be mentioned here that the activity of Pudgala is due to the external agency of Kāla (time).

## **Ākāśa**

That extent of space which is replete with matter, souls, time, principle of motion and principle of rest is labelled Lokākāśa or world space. This distinguishes it from Alokākāśa or empty space wherein none of the five substances abides. Thus the former is recognised as being capable of providing accommodation to Jīvas, Pudgala and to the rest of the Dravyas. The principles of motion and rest are immanent in the entire physical space (Lokākāśa) like the permeation of oil in the seed.

## **Dharma And Adharma**

Dharma and Adharma are the indifferent conditions of movement and rest respectively. Dharma-dravya is itself



incapable of migration and of generating motion in other things, but is the sine qua non of the movement of Jīvas and Pudgala by its mere existence, just as water assists in the spontaneous movement of fish by its mere presence and not as the wind which had the capability to develop activity in certain things. Similarly, Adharma-dravya does not persuade Jīva and Pudgala in motion to stand still, but becomes the passive condition when they of their own accord discontinue to move, just as the shadow of a tree does not persuade a traveller to take rest under it. Thus neither Dharma-dravya originates motion, nor Adharma-dravya stops it. Both of them are non-active conditions. Besides, these two principles are also responsible for the demarcation of Lokākāśa and Alokākāśa, inasmuch as they make possible the existence of Jīva and Pudgala only in Lokākāśa.

### **Kāla**

Mahāvīra realistically confers an existential status on time, and calls it substance to answer for the experienced change, just as Dharma and Adharma and Ākāśa are calculated to throw light on what may be called motion, rest and the providing of room. Kāla may be classified into real time (Paramārtha Kāla) and conditioned time (Vyavahāra Kāla). The former is the substance proper, and Samaya, Āvalī are conditioned varieties of time. The function of Paramārtha Kāla is Vartanā, i.e., it passively helps the self-changing substances and the functions of conditioned time are change, motion and the feeling of one's being young and old. The Kāla exists in the form of Kāla Aṇus. These are innumerable, and exist separately on each Pradeśa of Lokākāśa without being mixed with one another. The unit of conditioned time is called

'Samaya', which may be defined as the period required by the primary material atom to traverse with slow pace from one Pradeśa of Ākāśa to the immediately next. It is practically inconceivable in life. It should be borne in mind that innumerable 'Samayas' lapse in the opening of an eyelid.

### **Jīva (Self)**

The self is one of the six substances subsisting independently of anything else. The experience of knowing, feeling and willing immediately proves the existence of self. According to Jainism, consciousness is its essential and distinguishing feature.

Jainism deals with the nature of self from two perspectives, transcendental (Nīścaya) and empirical (Vyavahāra). The transcendental perspective represents the self in its unadulterated state of existence, whereas the empirical view describes the self in its defiled form. The former state is known as Siddha, while the latter one is called Saṃsāri. It is to be borne in mind that these two states of self are metaphysically indistinguishable, though the Kārmic adjuncts create distinctions between them. In other words, the empirical self is potentially transcendental, though this noumenal state of existence is not actualized at present, hence the distinction is undeniable. In view of the metaphysical position upheld by the Jaina there are infinite selves, and thus every mundane self is potentially Siddha, and this Siddhahood need be actualized in the interest of arriving at the supreme summit of religious experience. It is not idle to point out that though we are in the defiled form of existence from the beginningless past, the Nīścaya-naya (transcendental view) reminds us of our spiritual magnificence and glory. It prompts the

sullied self to behold its spiritual heritage. When the self has ascended to the pinnacle of spiritual experience, the Vyavahāra-naya (empirical view) is of no significance for the aspirant. The Vyavahāra-naya which points to our slumbering state in the domain of spiritualism applies to our Saṁsāri state, while the Niścaya-naya which indicates our transcendental spiritual nature is applicable to Siddha state in us. To say that every empirical self is potentially divine (Siddha) is to say that it is basically possessing infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite energy. Thus spiritual realization consists in the full manifestation of the cognitive, affective and conative potencies inherent in the self.

First, the Vyavahāra-naya tells us that the empirical self owns at least four Prāṇas (one sense, one bala, life-limit and breathing) and at best ten Prāṇas (five senses, three balas, life-limit and breathing). The lowest in the grade of existence are the one-sensed souls. They possess four Prāṇas, namely, sense of touch, bala of body, life-limit and breathing, and they are of five kinds, namely, earth-bodied, water-bodied, fire-bodied, air-bodied and vegetable-bodied selves. As we move higher on the ladder of biological existence, we have two-sensed to five-sensed selves having six, seven, eight, nine and ten Pranas respectively. We may point out in passing that it is only the five-sensed human selves who are capable of unfolding their potential divinity. In contradistinction to Vyavahāra-naya, the Niścaya-naya points out that knowledge-consciousness (Jñāna-cetanā) is the real Prāṇa of self. It is by virtue of this that the self is distinguished from other substances. The transcendental view does not take any note of the ten Prāṇas, but keeps

its eyes fixed on the essential life of the self, namely, knowledge-consciousness.

Secondly, the Vyavahāra-naya recognizes empirical self as bound by material Karmas (Dravya-Karma) and psychical Karmas (Bhāva-Karma). Owing to the effects of Karma the self transmigrates from one body to another, from one state of existence to the other. With Kārmic associations from beginningless time, the self is affected by the material objects of the world and appears to possess material qualities of colour, touch, taste, and smell. But the Niścaya-naya which directs our attention to the real nature of the self proclaims that the self's intrinsic nature can not be destroyed by the Karmas and it is devoid of any of the material qualities.

Thirdly, according to the Vyavahāra-naya, the self extends up to the limits of bodily dimensions on account of its narrowing and dilating characteristics because of the effect of Karma, just as a lotus-hued ruby extends its lustre to the cup of milk, when placed in it, or just as a lamp throws its light to the extent of the space in which it is placed. The Niścaya-naya propounds that the self is capable of extending to the entire Lokākāśa.

Fourthly, the Vyavahāra-naya tells us that the empirical self is the doer of material and psychical Karmas. These two are so interconnected that one gives rise to the other. Śubha (auspicious) and Aśubha (inauspicious) actions occasioned by Śubha and Aśubha psychical states are done by the empirical self. But the Niścaya-naya expounds that in whatever deeds the self may get itself engaged in the world, they are not the representatives of the self in its pure, undefiled and transcendental nature. The self in its real nature is not the doer of material and psychical

Karmas, but it is the doer of transcendental states of knowledge and the like. When the empirical self rises to the transcendental plane of experience, it becomes the doer of pure actions devoid of attachment and aversion.

Fifthly, in the eyes of Vyavahāra-naya, the empirical self is the enjoyer of pleasure and pain. These are the results of Kārmic associations from beginningless time. But according to Nīścaya-naya, the self is capable of enjoying such happiness as is transcendental, born of the self, supersensuous, incomparable, infinite and indestructible.

Lastly, the Nīścaya-naya regards the self as its own lord (Prabhu). It is its own enemy and friend. It is not dependent on any other agency for its salvation. It is called Svayambhū. It is a state of self-sufficiency which requires no other foreign assistance to sustain itself. It is itself the subject, the object, the means of its achievement, it achieves for itself, destroys the extraneous elements and is the support of its infinite potencies. Hence the self manifests its original nature by transforming itself into six cases. It is at once the nominative, the accusative, the instrumental, the dative, the ablative, and the locative case.

### **Anekāntavāda, Nayavāda and Syādvāda**

According to Jainism, metaphysical reality embraces within its fold contradictions, but only in apparent fashion. It has been considered as existent and non-existent, one and many, permanent and changing etc. Thus all the objects of the world possess infinite characteristics which are apparently contradictory in nature. This is known as Anekāntavāda. The emphasis on the one characteristic and the cancellation of the other would irresistibly lead us to the biased estimation and Ekāntic view of reality. Of

the unfathomable characteristics, Naya chooses one at one moment but keeps in view the other characteristics also. Reality being the repository of infinite characteristics, the apprehension of it from a particular angle of vision i.e. Naya does not exhaust the whole of the multi-phased reality. So, in order to avoid possible misunderstanding that reality is exhausted by the employment of a particular Naya, every predication should be preceded by the word 'Syāt' in order to make us aware of the possibility of other alternative predications. Hence it is known as the doctrine of Syādvāda. Syādvāda is no doubt the logical outcome of Anekāntavāda, the doctrine of the multiple nature of reality. It is simply the mode of predication or communication envisaged by the Jaina to convey the knowledge of the multi-phased reality. Thus Syādvāda is the mode of expression, Anekāntavāda or Nayavāda is the mode of cognition. Syādvāda is the expression of Anekāntavāda in language. We can not do better than quote Prof. A.N. Upadhye for exposing the relation between Syādvāda and Nayavāda, "Syādvāda is a corollary of Nayavāda : the latter is analytical and primarily conceptual and the former is synthetical and mainly verbal. Syādvāda will certainly look lame in the absence of Naya doctrine. Naya doctrine without Syādvāda has no practical value. Syādvāda in course of the process of assertion curbs down and harmonises the absolute views of individual Nayas."

### **The Goal of Human Pursuance**

The goal is described as the attainment of Paramātmān after one's passing through the state of Antarātmān and renouncing the state of Bahirātmān. The Paramātmān is Parama Ātmān, the highest, infinite self. The Bahirātmān



has awareness only of the physical body and its various accompaniments, the Antarātman has developed spiritual awareness, but the Paramātman attains to the highest realization of spiritual experience that passes understanding. In the state of Paramātman the empirical self becomes universal self in the sense that it is capable of intuiting all the objects of the world owing to the emergence of omniscience. In view of the fact of possessing omniscience, it will not be contradictory to say that the omniscient being is all-pervading, and that all the objects are within him, since he is the embodiment of knowledge and all the objects are the objects of knowledge. The omniscient being neither accepts nor abandons, nor transforms the external objectivity, but only witnesses and apprehends the world of objects without entering into them, just as the eye sees the object of sight. The Paramātman not only manifests infinite intuitive knowledge, but also experiences unalloyed bliss which is self-originated, supersensuous, unique, infinite and interminable. The correlate of infinite knowledge and bliss is infinite energy without which the former two can not be sustained. Thus we may say that the cognitive, conative and affective tendencies of the self find supreme satisfaction in the state of Paramātman. It is of capital importance to point out that Jainism gives credence to the infinite plurality of Paramātmans just as there is ontological pluralism of empirical selves. Every empirical self can become universal and there are as many universal selves as there are empirical selves without any contradiction. In Jaina terminology, every Jiva is potentially a Siddha and in Siddhahood self-individuation is sustained.

## **Doctrine of Karma and Transmigration**

We have said above that the goal of human pursuance consists in realizing the state of Paramātmān. This means that the goal is not something situated in a distant land, but it is the self in its veritable, dignified and ontological nature. In spite of this basic oneness of nature, the empirical selves differ from one another in respect of knowledge, prosperity, status and bodily make up, etc. What is the cause of this difference ? How to account for these perceptible distinctions among empirical selves ? The answer of the Jaina is that it is the beginningless material subtle principle known as Karma that is responsible for the cause of differences in the empirical selves. This Karma has been exercising its limiting and crippling influence on the empirical conscious principles from the beginningless past. Thereby it has been obstructing the manifestation of their-inherent excellences. But it may be noted that however encumbered with Kārmic matter a self may be, it can not obstruct the manifestation of consciousness to the full, just as even the most dense cloud can not interrupt the light of the sun to its farthest extreme. This material subtle principle known as Dravya-karma, and its psychical counterpart in terms of Rāga and Dveṣa is called Bhāva-karma.

Karmas are of varied nature, but the fundamental kinds of Karma are eight in number — namely, knowledge-obscuring, intuition-obscuring, feeling-producing, delusion-producing, longevity-determining, body-making, status-determining and obstruction-generating Karma. (1) Just as the curtain obstructs the knowledge of things inside the room, so also the knowledge-obscuring Karma obstructs the expression of knowledge. (2) Just as a

door-keeper does not allow persons to meet the king, etc. so also the intuition-obscuring Karma does not allow apprehension of things. (3) Just as on licking honey from the sharp edge of a sword, the person enjoys honey as well as suffers pain, so also the feeling-producing Karma produces pleasure and pain in man. (4) Just as wine stupefies a person, so also the delusion-producing Karma perverts the person. (5) Just as wooden fetters stop the movement of a person, so also the longevity-determining Karma obliges the soul to stay in a particular body. (6) Just as the painter produces different pictures, so also the body-making Karma makes different bodies. (7) Just as a potter makes earthen pots of different sizes, so also the status-determining Karma determines status in society. (8) Just as a treasurer generates obstructions in giving money, etc. to others, so also the obstruction-generating Karma causes handicaps in charity, in gains and in self-power.

It is no doubt true that Karmas bind the self to mundane existence. Now the question that arises is this : How the self is bound by Karma ? What are the causes that create Kārmic bondage in the self ? The answer of the Jaina is that its actions (mental, bodily and vocal) polluted by passions cause empirical bondage to the self. The passion-free actions do not bring about any mundane bondage whatsoever. Actions with passion are known as Jñeyārtha-parinamana Kriyās, since they are consequent upon transmuting the inherent meanings of the objects of the world and actions without passions are Jñapati-kriyās, since they arise in consequence of having supersensuous knowledge which knows things without any distortion and predilections. Bondage of Karmas presupposes influx of

Karmas, i.e. Bandha presupposes Āsrava. Any action of mind, body and speech is the cause of Kārmic influx (Āsrava). This Āsrava becomes bondage in the presence of passion. When there are no passions, there is no bondage (Bandha) but, in the absence of passions, there is no doubt influx of Karma (Āsrava) owing to actions, but this Āsrava cannot adversely affect the self. Thus it is passions that mar the spiritual career of an aspirant.

Now the question that confronts us is : Is there any way to end Āsrava and Bandha ? The answer of the Jaina is that if the influx of Karmas is stopped and the accumulated Karmas are brushed aside, the self can be made free from all Kārmic filth. Thus Mokṣa (emancipation from Kārmic matter) is through Saṁvara (stoppage of Kārmic matter) and Nirjarā (shedding of Kārmic matter). All these three have their psychical counterparts i.e., there is Bhāva-saṁvara, Bhāva-nirjarā and Bhāva-mokṣa. This shows that without psychical transformation nothing worthwhile can be achieved. He who makes himself free from passions following right course of conduct stops the influx of Karmas. To make oneself completely free from auspicious and inauspicious psychical states is possible only gradually. Thus Saṁvara is gradual. The life of Aṇuvratas and that of Mahāvratas illustrate the gradual process of Saṁvara and consequently of Nirjarā. In other words, the Ācāra of the householder and that of the Muni pave the way for realizing Saṁvara, Nirjarā and Mokṣa. In the state of Mokṣa, the self experiencing infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and energy absolves itself from the perpetual rounds of birth and death, and it thus annuls the filth of Karmas in its entirety.

Jainism recognises that in the person who is really involved in the world, the impure psychical states occur

because of this involvement. From the impure psychical states the Karma (impure material particles) as such comes into being and from the Karma, his transmigration in the four grades of existence takes place. From the Jīva who has transmigrated to a grade of existence, the body arises and from the body senses come into being. By means of the senses, there is the seizing of the sense-objects. By reason of that attachment and aversion occur.

Thus, during the transmigration of Jīva, arise in him psychical states of attachment and aversion, which are beginningless and endless or they are beginningless but having an end because of his developing spiritual awakening (Samyagdarsāna), Right knowledge (Samyagjñāna) and ethico-spiritual conduct (Samyakcāritra).

### **Spiritual Awakening (Samyagdarsāna)**

Spiritual awakening is the beginning of spiritual pilgrimage, and it is the foundation of the magnificent edifice of liberation. Spiritual perversion acts as a barricade to soul's true life. It is at the root of all evils, the seed of the tree of Saṁsāra. The person experiencing spiritual perversion becomes perverted in his attitude. It poisons all our activities, so as to check the realisation of the Summum Bonum of life. Moreover, it is responsible for the perversity of knowledge and conduct alike. So long as spiritual perversion is operative, all our efforts to witness the sun of self's glory are bound to fail. Thus it is to be rooted out in the interest of rendering its unwholesome function null and void. In other words, spiritual awakening is to be attained, which in turn will make knowledge and conduct conducive to the attainment of Paramātmān. It is only after the acquisition of spiritual awakening that the person

attains the primary qualification for even marching towards emancipation from the wheel of misery. If spiritual perversion is at the root of worldly life and living, spiritual awakening is at the root of liberation. Even performing very severe austerities, persons devoid of spiritual awakening do not attain spiritual wisdom even in thousands and crores of years. Just as a leaf of the lotus plant because of its own nature and constitution is not defiled by water, so also an awakened person because of his spiritual nature is not sullied by passions and sensuous attractions. Rightness in knowledge and conduct is acquired through spiritual awakening. The spiritually awakened self considers his own self as his genuine abode and regards the outward dwelling places as artificial. He renounces all identification with the animate and inanimate objects of the world, and properly weighs them in the balance of his awakened spirit. Thus he develops a unique attitude towards himself and the world around him.

Jainism deals with the nature of spiritual awakening (Samyagdarśana) from two points of view, namely Niscaya (transcendental) and Vyavahāra (empirical). The former regards Samyagdarśana as awakening of the transcendental self, whereas the latter regards it as the belief in the seven Tattvas : (1) Jīva, (2) Ajīva, (3) Āsrava, (4) Bandha, (5) Saṁvara, (6) Nirjarā and (7) Mokṣa. Even in the belief in the seven Tattvas, the central principle is the self. So ultimately Vyavahāra-Samyagdarśana will give rise to Niscaya-Samyagdarśana.

The insight into the nature of these Tattvas is the sine qua non of the ethical and the spiritual life. The unambiguous and graphic apprehension of the Tattvas is

indispensable for the deliverance of the self. The march towards the spiritual goal presupposes the faith in the Tattvas and their clear consciousness. The two lines of thought relating to the Tattvas and the Dravyas need not be confused with each other, but the purport of each is to be borne in mind. The Jaina philosophers have two purposes –metaphysical interpretation of the universe and the salvation of the soul—in view. The six Dravyas are the expressions of the metaphysical curiosity of the human mind, while the seven Tattvas are the manifestation of its ethical and religious inquisitiveness. The latter deal with the spiritual disease and its cause, as also with the means to cure it and the cured state i.e., they deal with Saṁsāra and its cause, as also with Mokṣa and its cause. Thus the aspirant must know Bandha and its cause namely, Āsrava, as well as Mokṣa and its causes namely Saṁvara and Nirjarā. In addition to these five Tattvas it is necessary to have the knowledge of the self which is bound, but which is to be made free. The bound state of existence presupposes the recognition of non-conscious (Ajīva) principle, by which the self is bound from beginningless past. Thus the study of these seven Tattvas is of primary importance for a person longing for emancipation.

### **Samyagjñāna (Right Knowledge) and Samyakcāritra (Ethico-Spiritual Conduct)**

According to Jainism, that is right-knowledge by virtue of which spiritual principle is cognized, mind is curbed and soul is purified. Again, that is right-knowledge by which the person becomes free from attachment.

As regard ethico-spiritual conduct, Jainism recognises that withdrawals from the immoral conduct and devoting

one's self to the moral conduct is styled conduct from the empirical standpoint. But according to the transcendental standpoint when the self is absorbed in his own self, then that absorption in the highest self is certainly transcendental conduct. The person who is devoid of all attachments and who is engrossed in the self apprehends and experiences the self in its basic nature. Such a person certainly pursues spiritual conduct. The person who is not disposed to the spiritual way of life but performs austerity and adopts vows acts unwisely. Having experienced the real self when the person translates into life the renouncement of virtue and vice, he, then, attains supreme peace. To be more clear, the vicious acts should be restrained through virtuous acts and the virtuous acts should be restrained through spiritual experience. The person should meditate on his own virtuous and spiritual nature in this successive order. It may be pointed out here that the aspirant devotes his energies to meditation, devotion and Svādhyāya alongwith the performance of other spiritual exercises. Before taking up these spiritual practices, he resorts to moral discipline in the form of Aṇuvratas and Mahāvratas. Without moral observances, the spiritual practices can not be sustained. According to the Jaina faith, moral and spiritual discipline find their completion in the life of the Muni, since the life of the householder affords only partial ground for them. The moral and spiritual practices of the Muni culminate in the attainment of the religious goal of Arhathood and Siddhahood.

### **(i) Spiritual Exercises**

The Muni performs many types of spiritual exercises, such as (a) Guptis and Samitis, (b) control of the five senses, (c) sixfold essentials, and (d) Tapas (austerities).



(a) The ideal thing for a Muni is to control totally his physical, mental and vocal activities and to fix himself in the Ātmanic experience. Such a sublime endeavour is termed Gupti. Thus from the stand-point of the highest ascent, it signifies the withdrawal of mind, body and speech from virtue and vice, and from the auspicious and inauspicious activities, but from the stand-point of Subhopayogī Muni, it means the recoiling of the triple agencies merely from the inauspicious deeds. The observance of carefulness in moving, speaking, taking food, keeping and receiving things, evacuating bowels etc. is termed Samiti. It may be noted here that the Muni accepts food not for increasing strength, enhancing longevity, gratifying relish, and attaining bright look, but for performing spiritual study, pursuing self-control and meditation.

(b) It is an evident fact that attachment to senses and sensuous pleasures creates enormous difficulties in the spiritual path. Hence a Muni controls the five senses from their attachment to colour, sound, smell, taste and touch. In order that the senses may be curbed a Muni should neither be attracted by beauty nor repulsed by the ugliness of things, the sense of hearing should not be led away by any tune whatsoever, the sense of smell should not be seduced by the fragrance of things, the sense of taste should not be overcome by different kinds of juices, and lastly the sense of touch should not be led astray by different kinds of touch.

(c) A Muni performs six essentials. (i) Sāmāyika : He develops an equanimous state of mind in the midst of life and death, loss and gain, pleasant and unpleasant events, friends and foes, pleasure and pain. (ii) Vandana : He

offers salutations to Arahanta and Siddha Pratimās and to those who excell in spiritual attainments. (iii) Stuti : He contemplates on the divine characteristics of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. (iv) Pratikramaṇa : He purifies his own faults in spiritual living by resorting to self-criticism, and by confession in the presence of his Guru. (v) Pratyākhyāna : It implies the determination of the Muni to renounce in future all that is inconsistent with his spiritual pursuit. Pratikramaṇa has retrospective reference, while Pratyākhyāna has prospective one. (vi) Kāyotsarga : In it the Muni practises a formal non-attachment to the body for a prescribed period of time.

(d) Tapa : The Muni eradicates desire from the texture of self, since it is the real enemy of self. Consequently, its extirpation is of paramount importance. The Tapas are of two kinds, viz. (i) external and (ii) internal.

(i) External austerities (Tapas) are of six kinds. i. Anasāna: It means fasting for a limited period of time, such as for one day, two days etc. ii. Avamaudarya : It means to take less than the normal quantity of food each day. iii. Vrttiparisamkhyāna : It means the pre-determination of the Muni regarding the number of houses to be visited, the particular manner of taking food, the specific type of food, the giver of specific qualification, when he sets out to get food. If the things conform to his norm, he would accept food, otherwise he would go without it for that day, iv. Rasaparityāga : It implies the abstinence from one or more articles of food, namely, milk, curd, ghee, oil, sugar and salt and from one or more kinds of tastes, namely, pacrid, bitter, astringent, sour and sweet. v. Viviktaśayyāsana : It means that a Muni abandons the dwellings of depraved householders. He does not make

use of them for sitting, sleeping and standing.  
vi. Kāyakleśa : In it the body is put to certain discomforts through uneasy and stern postures.

These external austerities do not aim at the flagellation of the body, but contribute towards the inner advancement of a Muni.

(ii) The internal austerities are also of six kinds.

i. Prāyaścitta : When a Muni has committed certain transgressions, he resorts to repentance for the wrong done in order to purify himself. That is the real Prāyaścitta wherein the commission of fault in spiritual life is not repeated, ii. Vinaya : It means the expression of humbleness towards the spiritually superior. A Muni is not conceited in his attainments, and behaves modestly with all those who have attained to spiritual heights. iii. Vaiyāvṛtṭya : It means the rendering of service to other Munis through suitable means when they are overwhelmed by disease, affliction and any disturbance whatsoever, iv. Vyutsarga : It implies the relinquishment of internal and external Parigraha. v. Svādhyāya : The study of scriptures is Svādhyāya. Its purpose is to enrich the intellect, to refine moral and spiritual efforts, to infuse detachment and fear from mundane miseries, and to purify defects that may occur when one pursues the divine path. For those who are fickle-minded and intellectually unsteady, nothing is so potent to end such a state of mind as the pursuance of Svādhyāya. Without the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, there is always a danger of being led astray from the virtuous path, just as the tree full of flowers and leaves can not escape its deadening fate for want of the root. The man with Svādhyāya saves himself from being led astray, just as

the needle with thread is not lost. vi. Dhyāna : It represents the concentration of mind on a particular object. The object of concentration may be profane or holy in character. The mind may concentrate either on the debasing object or on the object which is elevating. The former is Apraśasta-Dhyāna and the latter is Praśasta. In dealing with Dhyāna as Tapa, we are concerned with the Praśasta type of Dhyāna, since it is only relevant to spiritual realization. It is the indispensable, integral constituent of right conduct, and consequently it is directly related to the actualization of the divine potentialities. It is the clear and single road by which the aspirant can move straight to the supreme good. All the disciplinary observances find their culmination in Dhyāna, and they form an essential background for the performance of Dhyāna. The practice of the fourfold virtue of Maitrī (friendship with all creatures), Pramoda (appreciation of the merits of others), Karuṇā, (compassion for those who are in trouble) and Madhyastha (indifference to those who are irrational), constitute the mental pre-requisite conditions of Dhyāna. The aspirant should avoid those places which are inhabited by the vicious, hypocrites, gamblers, drunkards, harlots and the like, and should choose a bank of river, an island, a cave, a summit of a mountain and other places of seclusion for practising spiritual concentration. For him, whose mind is immaculate, stable and detached, every posture, every place, and every time is fit for meditation. Many places in the body have been enumerated for mental concentration, namely, the two eyes, two ears, the foremost point of the nose, the forehead, the place between the two eye-brows etc. Praśasta-Dhyāna is of two types, namely, Dharma and Śukla. The best kind of Dharma-Dhyāna is to meditate

upon the self by fixing one's mind in it after renouncing all other thoughts. After Dharma-Dhyāna, Sukla-Dhyāna is practised. In it the mind shortens its field of concentration to the effect that the Muni meditates upon one substance, an atom, and the like. In consequence, the Muni experiences infinite knowledge, bliss and energy.

## **(ii) Devotion**

After dealing with these spiritual exercises, let us deal with devotion as one of the very important spiritual exercises for higher advancement of the self. Devotion implies sublime affection towards the perfected souls (Arhat and Siddha) or towards those who are much advanced on the path of divine realization. The Jaina devotional texts regard devotion as of great significance. Vādirāja says that in spite of deep intellectual attainments and great moral accomplishments, the aspirant can not achieve liberation without profound devotion. Samantabhadra points out that just as iron is turned into gold by a mere touch of the Pārāsa stone, so also the devotee is transformed into an effulgent personality, and what he speaks is regarded as of great importance. But here a question may be asked : Is devotion possible in Jainism ? Again, one may say that devotion in Jainism is a contradiction in terms, since devotion presupposes the existence of a being who can actively respond to the aspirations of the devotee, and in Jainism the conception of such a being is inadmissible. The reply is that in Jainism Arhat and Siddha are the objects of devotion. They are, no doubt, not affected by devotion, and remain quite indifferent to human weal and woe. They are beyond attachment and aversion. Why is, then, devotion directed to them ? The answer is that by our devotion to the Arhat or the Siddha our thoughts and emotions are purified. A

great heap of Puṇya is deposited in the self by devotion. By virtue of this there results spiritual advancement. This sort of change in the devotee can not result from worshipping a mere stone, hence the importance of devotion for Arhat or Siddha. Dr. A.N. Upadhye says, "neither Arhat nor Siddha has on him the responsibility of creating, supporting, and destroying the world. The aspirant receives no boons, no favours, and no curses from him by way of gifts from the divinity. The aspiring souls pray to him, worship him and meditate on him as an example, as a model, as an ideal that they too might reach the same status." But it should not be forgotten that unified, single-minded devotion to Arahantas (Arhats) or Siddhas accumulates in the self the Puṇya (auspicious Karma) of the highest kind, which, as a natural consequence, brings forth material and spiritual benefits. Thus the aspirant should not breathe in despondency for the aloofness of Arhat or Siddha. Those who are devoted to the Siddhas and Arhats are automatically elevated.

### **Arahanta and Siddha**

In the philosophy of Mahāvīra, Arahanta and Siddha are the supreme objects of devotion. They are subsumed under the category of Deva (divine beings). Considered from the perspective of mystical realisation, Arahanta and Siddha stand at par. The former enjoys embodied liberation and the latter, disembodied one. There are two kinds of Arahantas, namely, Tīrthaṅkara and non-Tīrthaṅkara. The distinction between the two is this that the former is capable of preaching and propagating religious doctrines in order to guide the mundane souls immersed in the life of illusion and his sermons are properly worded by the Gaṇadharas (chief disciples),

while the latter is not the propounder of religious faith or principles, but silently enjoys simply the sublimity of mystical experience. It should be borne in mind that Mahāvīra is the Tīrthaṅkara-Arahanta. Owing to the delivering of sermons for general beneficence, he is the perfect Guru and also the perfect Deva on account of the complete actualisation of the divinity potential in himself. It is through the medium of Tīrthaṅkara-Arahantas that mystical life has been possible on earth. In the Jaina texts though Arahanta and Siddha are styled 'God', yet the ultimate responsibility of emancipating oneself from the turmoils of the world falls upon one's own undivided efforts, upon the integral consecration of energies to the attainment of divine life. Thus every soul has the right to become Paramātman (supreme self) who has been conceived to be the consummate realisation of the divine potentialities.

Arahantas are consummate mystics. They lead a life of super-moralism, but not of a-moralism. It is inconceivable that the Arahantas who have attained supremacy on account of the realisation of perfect Ahimsā may in the least pursue an ignoble life of Himśā, a life of vice. He is no doubt beyond the category of virtue and vice, good and evil, Punya and Pāpa, auspicious and inauspicious psychological states, yet he may be pronounced to be the most virtuous soul, though the pursuit of virtuous life is incapable of binding him to the cycle of life and death. Samantabhadra ascribes inconceivability to the mental, vocal and physical actions of Arahanta, since they are neither impelled by desire nor born of ignorance. Whatever issues from him is potent enough to abrogate the miseries of the tormented humanity. Hundreds of souls get

spiritually converted by his mere sight, forsaking their perverted attitude towards life. His presence is supremely enlightening. Since he has transcended the limited human nature and is revered and worshipped even by celestial beings, he is the supreme Ātman. Thus he is the embodiment of mystical virtues, and is the spiritual leader of society. He is beyond attachment, aversion and infatuation, and consequently, he is absolutely dispassionate. By virtue of his intuitively apprehending the nature of reality, all his doubts have been resolved. By reason of his self-realisation, he has transcended the dualities of friends and enemies, pleasure and pain, praise and censure, life and death, sand and gold.

The Arahanta is the omniscient being. He, therefore, neither accepts nor abandons, nor transforms the external objectivity, but only witnesses and apprehends the world of objects without entering into them. just as the eyes see objects of sight. The knowledge which is independent, perfect, immaculate, intuitive and extended to infinite things of the universe may be identified with bliss on account of the absence of discomposure arising from the knowledge which is dependent, imperfect, maculate, mediate and extended to limited things. In other words, the consciousness of the Arahanta is not only omnipotent and intuitive but also blissful. Bliss is naturally consequent upon the destruction of the undesirable and accomplishment of the desirable. Thus the Arahanta experiences unprecedented bliss which originates from the innermost beings of self and which is supersensuous, unique, infinite and interminable. We may conclude by saying that the cognitive, conative and affective



tendencies of the Arahanta reveal their original manifestation in his supreme mystical experience, which is ineffable and transcends all the similies of the world.

## **(ii) Morals**

As we have said, the performance of spiritual exercises presupposes the practice of morals. Without moral observances spiritual progress is inconceivable. The conviction of the Jaina is that for the man who is spiritually awakened, morality serves as a means to spiritual living, but for the ordinary man, it is an end in itself. The realm of morality is auspicious psychical states resulting in auspicious activities. The obstacles to the achievement of morals are inauspicious activities emanating from inauspicious psychical states. Thus in order to stamp out the inauspicious psychical states from the texture of self, the individual must abstain himself root and branch from violence, falsehood, theft, unchastity and acquisitions. This negative process of purifying the self necessarily requires the pursuance of the positive process of non-violence (Ahimsā), truthfulness (Satya), non-thieving (Asteya), chastity (Brahmacarya) and non-acquisition (Aparigraha). These five virtues replace the five vices. It may be noted here that Ahimsā is the central and fundamental of these virtues. All the rest are regarded as the means for its proper sustenance, just as the field of corn requires adequate fencing for its protection. When the replacement of vices by virtues is total, we are said to observe complete (Sakala) morality and when it is partial, we have partial (Vikala) morality. He who observes complete morality is called a Muni, while he who observes partial morality is called a householder. The life of Aṇuvratas represents partial morality of the householder,

whereas the life of Mahāvratas represents complete morality of the Muni. The Aṇuvratas and the Mahāvratas are the ways of overcoming the vices of Himsā, Steya, Asatya, Abrahmacarya and Parigraha. Let us deal with the nature of these vices which will help us in deriving the scope of Aṇuvratas and Mahāvratas.

Himsā may be defined as the committing of injury to the physical and psychical aspects of oneself and others through the operation of passion-infected activities of mind, body and speech. This means that if, in spite of the dispassionate activities of mind, body and speech any living being is injured, it can not be called Himsā, since the infecting element of passion is missing. On the contrary, even if the activities of mind, body and speech are passion-infected, and no living being is oppressed, even then the actions are called Himsā. Here though the soul has not injured others, yet it has injured itself by defiling its own natural constitution. Thus we may say that it is only on the basis of the internal state of mind that the acts of Himsā and Ahimsā are to be judged. This should not be taken to understand that external behaviour is of no significance, since in human life the outward commission of Himsā without the pursuance of internal corruption can not be vindicated. He who exclusively emphasizes the internal at the expense of the external forgets the significance of outward behaviour. Thus both the internal and external aspects should occupy their due places.

Himsā is of two kinds : intentional and non-intentional. The latter has again been divided into Udyamī, Ārambhī and Virodhī. Intentional Himsā implies the voluntary commitment of Himsā by one's own self along with the

provocation and endorsement of the acts of Himsā. Besides, Himsā which is unavoidably committed by reason of one's own profession, by the performance of domestic activities, and by defending oneself, one's neighbour, one's country, one's belonging, and the like from one's foes is called Udyamī, Ārambhī and Virodhī Himsā respectively.

Ahimsā (Aṇuvrata-Mahāvratā) : Now the householder is incapable of turning away completely from Himsā, hence he should keep himself away from the intentional commission of Himsā of the two-sensed to five-sensed beings. Himsā owing to profession, domestic activities, and defensive measures can not be counteracted by him. Thus he commits non-intentional injury to one-sensed Jīvas, namely, the vegetable-bodied, the air-bodied, the fire-bodied, etc. Even in the realm of one-sensed Jīvas and in the realm of non-intentional injury he should so manage to confine his operations as may affect the life and existence of a very limited number of Jīvas. In these two provinces the point to note is that of reducing the amount of injury that is apt to be caused and not that of total relinquishment which is not possible without endangering the survival of man. If we reflect a little, we shall find that man is subject to Himsā by the very condition of his existence. Yet instead of aggravating the natural weight of Himsā by falling foul upon one another and by our cruel treatment with the animal and vegetable kingdoms we should endeavour to reduce this general curse to the extent it is possible. The observer of Ahimsāṇuvrata should avoid gambling, hunting, drinking, meat-eating, and the like.

The Muni extends active friendship to all living beings from the one-sensed to the five-sensed without any

exception, and consequently all forms of intentional Himsā are shunned and the question of Udyamī, Ārambhī, and Virodhī Himsā does not arise in his case. The Muni is a world citizen. He, therefore, draws the attention of men to the inefficacy of Himsā for solving social, national and international disputes. He himself is the embodiment of Ahimsā and exhorts others to develop reverence for life as such.

**Satya (Aṇuvrata-Mahāvratā) :** Let us begin with the meaning of falsehood (Asatya). It implies the making of wrong and improper statement by one who is overwhelmed by passions such as anger, greed, conceit, deceit and the like. Falsehood is of four kinds. The first kind of falsehood refers to the affirmation of the existent as non-existent, the second refers to the declaration of the non-existent as existent, the third refers to the representation of the existing nature of things as different from what they are, and the fourth is indicative of speech which is disagreeable to others. The Muni avoids all these four forms of falsehood, and therefore, he is said to observe Satya-Mahāvratā. But the householder has to speak harsh, unpleasant, violent words for defense, for running the household and doing professional management, therefore, he observes Satyāṇuvratā. The observer of Satyāṇuvratā does use words which are soothing, gentle and ennobling. If any speech causes Himsā, it should be withheld. Ultimately the criterion of Satya and Asatya is Ahimsā and Himsā respectively. Thus Satya speech should lead to Ahimsā.

**Asteya (Aṇuvrata-Mahāvratā) :** Steya means the taking of things under the constraint of passions without their being given by the owner. It may be noted here that things

constitute the external Prāṇas of a man and he who thieves and plunders them is said to deprive a man of his Prāṇas. This is not other than Himsā. The Muni who observes Mahāvratā does not take anything whatsoever without the permission of others, but the householder uses such things freely as are of common use without their being given, such as well-water, and the like. Thus he is observing Asteyāṇuvratā. It may be noted here that the Muni does not use even the common things without their being given by others. The householder does neither take those things which are forgotten and dropped by others nor give them to any one else. Purchasing of costly things at reduced prices is stealing, which is probably due to the fact that one may sell a thing after getting it by improper methods. Adulteration, abetment of theft, receiving stolen property, use of false weights and measures, smuggling, and the like come under stealing.

Brahmacarya (Aṇuvratā-Mahāvratā) : Sex-passion is Abrahma. He who frees himself completely from sexual inclination is observing Brahmacarya-Mahāvratā. But the householder who abstains himself from the sexual contacts with all other women except his nuptial partner is observing Brahmacaryāṇuvratā. Sex-passion is Himsā and Brahmacarya is Ahimsā. The householder keeps himself away from adultery, prostitution, unnatural methods of sexual enjoyment and the like.

Aparigraha (Aṇuvratā-Mahāvratā) : Attachment to things is Parigraha. Those who have a feeling of attachment to things in spite of their external renunciation are far from Aparigraha and those who have external things are not free from internal attachment. Thus if one is prone to remove internal attachment, one should correspondingly

throw aside external possessions also. Attachment is a form of Himśā and those who wish to practise Ahimsā should avoid attachment. The householder is incapable of renouncing all Parigraha, therefore, he should limit the Parigraha of wealth, cattle, corn, buildings etc. This is Parigraha-Parimāṇāṇuvrata. The Muni renounces all Parigraha of worldly things. Thus he follows Aparigraha-Mahāvratā.

Apart from the Aṇuvratas, the Śrāvaka (the householder) has to observe the three Guṇavratas and four Śikṣāvratas known as seven Śīlavratas. These Śīlavratas serve the useful purpose of guarding the Aṇuvratas. They effect a positive improvement in the observance of Aṇuvratas.

That which is refrainment from unlimited movement in any direction is Digvrata; that which is refrainment from going to some region is Deśavrata; that which is refrainment from wanton activity is Anarthadaṇḍavrata. All these three are styled Guṇavratas (vows of withdrawal).

The setting of limits in the upward, downward and horizontal directions has been proclaimed to be the first Guṇavrata (vow of withdrawal) known as Digvrata. In the region where there is present the cause of the breach of vows, when the refrainment from resorting to that region is practised as a rule, then, that (refrainment) has been proclaimed to be the second Guṇavrata (vow of withdrawal) known as Deśavrata. To refrain from wanton activity is the third Guṇavrata (vow of withdrawal) known as Anarthadaṇḍavrata. Wanton activities are : harboring ill-reflections, perpetrating random actions, delivering instruments of violence to others, imparting evil instructions etc. To refrain from these wanton activities and the like is the third Guṇavrata (vow of withdrawal).

Keeping limited things of use (Bhogopabhoga-parimāṇavrata); pursuing self-meditation (Sāmāyikavrata); observing fast in a specific way (Proṣadhōpavāsavrata) and offering food etc. (Atithisamvibhāgavrata) to a non-householder guest who observes self-restraint and propagates ethico-spiritual values — all these four have been proclaimed to be Śikṣāvratas (vows of pursuance).

From the perspective of things of use what has been said is this that one should keep clothes, ornaments etc. in a limited number and avoid the use of vegetables having infinite lives. Besides, other things of daily use should also be limited. And again, one should eschew work as is causing injury to many lives. In order to refrain from unethical actions Sāmāyika (self-meditation) alone is paramount. In this way having recognised Sāmāyika (self-meditation) as supreme among all the ethical activities of the householder, the wise person should remain occupied with his own ethico-spiritual unfoldment for realising the highest (state of life). That is Proṣadhōpavāsavrata in which the renouncement of food and bodily embellishment is effected partially or completely and in which the non-performance of householder's business and the study of spiritual values for comprehending the significance of equanimity are effected partially or completely. Besides, in the Proṣadhōpavāsavrata Sāmāyika (self-meditation) is performed as a rule. When the systematic offering of food which is pure, fit to be consumed and which is associated with region and season is made to saints, then, that systematic offering has been proclaimed to be householder's Śikṣāvrata (vow of pursuance) known as Atithisamvibhāgavrata. The gift is regarded as of four kinds. The division of which lies in food, medicine, books

(scriptures) and fearlessness. The gift of these should be offered.

### **Spiritual Welcome to Death (Sallekhanā)**

It implies the enervation of external body and internal passions in a legitimate way by the gradual removal of the causes of their nourishment, so that one may renounce the present body with a view to having a new bodily modification. To be more clear, the abandonment of the bodily frame on being confronted with the uneschewable calamity, famine, senility, and disease for the sustenance of spiritual practices has been regarded as Sallekhanā. This signifies that the process of Sallekhanā is to be adopted either in special circumstances when the religious observances are being endangered on account of unavoidable bodily infirmities and the like, or on the occasion when the time of natural death has been known in all probability. No doubt, the body which is the medium of the upliftment of the soul is to be properly nourished and cared for and the diseases are to be seriously met with without any retreat. But if the body refuses to respond to our earnest endeavours, we should not falter to forsake it like a villain in the interest of saving the peace of mind. Thus if one is encountered with the causes of the termination of duration of the present life one should resort to the performance of the process of Sallekhanā, which is not other than the spiritual welcome to death. This is not yielding to death, but a way of meeting the challenge of death undauntedly and adequately.

It is to be remembered that the mere loss of the strength of the body is of no consequence if it does not lead to the conquest of passions. The flagellation of the body must issue in the denial of passions. It is on account of this



insistence on the abnegation of passions that the process of Sallekhanā must needs be distinguished from suicide which is perpetrated by the cruel dominance of passions through the mal-agency of water, fire, poison, inhibition of breath and the like. Suicide is easy when compared with the adequate performance of Sallekhanā. The latter is undertaken only when the body fails to answer to the spiritual needs of the individual and when the inevitability of death is a matter of undisputed certainty, while suicide may be committed at any time in the life time under the spell of emotional disturbance or passionate attitude of mind.

### **Individual and Social Responsibility**

In Mahāvīra's philosophy of life, if individual liberty is to be sought, social responsibilities can not be dispensed with.

In order that an individual may acquire firm footing in life, Mahāvīra advised the individual to be without any doubt in the various spheres of thought and in its multiple approaches. Doubt kills decision and without an act of decision individual does not muster courage to go forward. Now the question is : How to acquire the state of doubtlessness ? The answer can be given by saying that either the individual should stop thinking and resort to a sort of mental slavery or he should employ himself in the task of vigorous thinking. Mental slavery is the path of blind faith, but vigorous thinking is the path of awakened mind. Mahāvīra must have subscribed to the latter view. In man many kinds of experiences find their place and reason should be freely allowed to play upon every aspect of experience, so as to arrive at rational decisions in every department of life. Mahāvīra never threatened the

critical faculty in man, inasmuch as he seems to be aware of the fact that by paralysing the critical faculty in man, he will be cut at its roots. Mahāvīra is convinced of the fact that in the philosophy of art, education, social science, history, religion, etc. no one point of view can be absolute. There will always be alternative possibilities open. Freedom in thinking can not be curtailed. No one philosophical view can be final. So long as man is alive and free to think, different philosophical views will continue to appear. Thus gradually faith in Anekānta will emerge. This faith is rational and not blind. It has emerged from the very process of rational thinking. When the very nature of thinking is understood, the individual will be free from doubt regarding the possibility of alternative points of view emerging in the sphere of thought. Thus Mahāvīra wishes an individual to be Niḥśāṅkita (doubtless). Besides, adherence to rational thinking may lead us in a different direction. When limitations of thinking are made intelligible, a state of frustration may set in. In certain individuals, there may be witnessed a tendency to transcend reason. There may be moments in life, when the transcendence of reason is very much satisfying. Here an individual comes across a new type of awakening which may be called supra-rational awakening. The individual thereby acquires faith in supra-rational existence. The emergence of faith in Anekānta and supra-rational existence makes an individual free from pride and fear and by virtue of this faith, he attains a sort of mental equilibrium, and consequently he does not fear death, pain, censure, insecurity etc. he becomes modest, forsakes all pride of learning, honour, family, affluence etc.

After the individual attains clarity in cognitive functioning, he is required to impose upon himself restraint in the realm of desire. Man is a bundle of desires. Desires may admit of two kinds, namely, possessive and creative corresponding to two kinds of goods, namely material and creative. The difference between the two kinds of goods is that the former admits of exclusive individual possession, while the latter can be shared by all alike. Thus the possessive impulses aim at acquiring private goods, whereas the creative ones aim at producing goods that can be enjoyed by all without any conflict. 'Material possessions can be taken by force', but "creative possessions can not be taken in this way". The desire for material goods makes man's personality ego-centric which is the cause of social tensions and frustration. Creative desires lead the individual towards self-satisfaction and social progress. When Mahāvīra advised men to be free from desires (Nihkāṃkṣita) he seems to be referring to possessive desires. Bertrand Russell rightly remarks, "The best life is one in which creative impulses play the largest part and the possessive impulses the smallest". If we reflect a little we shall find that it is the possessive impulses that give rise to Himsā. The society which encourages possessive individuals encourages the acts of Himsā. So Mahāvīra made it obligatory for the individual to make himself free from the desires for material possessions.

The history of social thought reveals that with the advancement of knowledge social beliefs of a particular age are replaced by new beliefs. Many religious superstitions, social paths of life and other forms of follies and falsities are derogatory to individual progress, therefore they are condemned in every age of history. But

the change is met with great resistance. The reason for this is that change is looked by individuals with doubt and uncertainty. Besides, love for conventionality and vested interests run counter to the acceptance of novelties in thought. All these obstacles mar individual dynamism. The individual who is a slave to customary beliefs, however false they have been declared to be, can not develop his own personality and his actions are just like machines. Mahāvīra, therefore, preaches that an individual should be free from follies (Amūḍhatās). It is only through such individuals that society progresses and a scientific outlook gains ground. Such individuals are forward looking, and are free from the pressures of narrow traditionalism. They are always open-minded and are ever eager to learn from history and experience.

It is no doubt true that cognitive and conative clarities are essential to individual progress. If man's mind is prejudiced and his actions are stereotyped and wrongly directed, nothing worthwhile can be achieved. In order that an individual becomes an embodiment of noble thought and actions, virtues, virtuous dispositions are to be cultivated. This prepares the individual to do certain kinds of actions in certain kinds of situations. This is not just to think or feel in certain ways. There may be individuals who can think clearly and not act virtuously when required to do so. Consequently, Mahāvīra preached that an individual should develop virtuous dispositions of honesty, gratitude, Ahimsā, forgiveness, modesty, straightforwardness etc. This individual characteristic is known as Upavṛṇaṇa. It can not be gainsaid that noble thoughts can be translated into action through the medium of character. No doubt, mere thought is important to bring about any individual

transformation. But it is only virtues in addition to thought that can effect transformation in the life of an individual and transmute existing state of affairs.

Mahāvīra, no doubt, greatly emphasized the development of the individuals, inasmuch as he was convinced of the fact that there is nothing over and above the good of the individuals who compose the world. But he did not lose sight of the fact that the individual develops not in isolation but among other individuals. The proper adjustment of 'I' and 'thou' leads to the healthiest development of both 'I' and 'thou'. 'Thou' may represent social and political institutions. Social and political institutions must exist for the good of the individuals. All individuals should live together in such a way that each individual may be able to acquire as much good as possible. Thus every individual, therefore, shall have certain responsibilities towards one another. This is the same as saying that an individual has certain social responsibilities. Therefore, social and individual morality are equally necessary to a good world.

Mahāvīra unequivocally says that the 'other' is like our own. This does not mean that there are no individual differences. Rather it means that an individual should be allowed freedom to develop his own individualities. There should not be any distinction between man and man on the basis of religion, race, nationality. To create differences between one individual and the other on these factors is derogatory, therefore, should be condemned ruthlessly. Consequently, Mahāvīra exhorted us not to hate individuals on these accounts (Nirvicikitsā). These are irrelevant inequalities.

These negative conditions of not hating others is not sufficient, but the positive condition of loving them (Vātsalya) is very much necessary. To love is to see that equal opportunities of education, earning and the like are received by every individual without any distinction of race, religion, sex and nationality. In his own times Mahāvīra fought for the equality of all men, and he revered individual dignity. Where there is love there is no exploitation. To treat other individuals as mere means is decried and denied. Where there is Vātsalya, all our dealings with others will be inspired by reverence and the role of force and domination will be minimised.

It is likely that individuals may deviate from the path of righteousness. In dealing with persons they may become so selfish as not to allow others their due share of liberty, they may become very possessive. Pride of power, use of force, and exploitation of the weak may look to them normal ways of life. Creative impulses in man may suffer owing to their destructive attitude. When individuals behave fanatically with one another, the real good will be served if they are convinced to deal with others rationally. To re-establish them on the path of righteousness is 'Sthitikaraṇa'. This is very much necessary in a society where the rule of creative impulses is to be established.

Lastly, the good ways of life, of thinking and doing things should be made widely known to people at large, so that they may feel obliged to mould their lives on that pattern. For this psychological methods of transmitting knowledge are required to be followed in all earnestness. The scientific techniques of radio, television and the like are to be utilised for propagating good ways of life. If the researches in the laboratories are not taken to and utilised

in the fields, they will serve no significant purpose. They will be like doing things in seclusion. Similarly, if the findings of the human laboratory in the realm of values are not taken to human beings in general, things will deteriorate and conditions will not change. Mahāvīra, therefore, advises us to propagate values of life (Prabhāvanā).

### **Social Values**

The social values which were regarded by Mahāvīra as basic are Ahimsā, Aparigraha and Anekānta. What this shows is that Mahāvīra did not neglect adherence to social values, being overwhelmed by spiritual realisation. Ahimsā begins with the awareness of the 'other'. Like one's own existence, it recognises the existence of other beings. In fact, to negate the existence of other beings is tantamount to negating one's own existence. Since one's own existence can not be negated, the existence of other beings also can not be negated. Thus there exists the universe of beings in general and that of human beings in particular. The basic characterisation of these beings is : life is dear to all and any kind of suffering is painful to all of them.

Now for the progress and development of these beings, Ahimsā ought to be the basic value guiding the behaviour of human beings. For a healthy living, it represents and includes all the values directed to the 'other' without over-emphasizing the values directed to one's own self. Thus it is the pervasive principle of all the values. Posit Ahimsā, all the values are posited. Negate Ahimsā, all the values are negated. Ahimsā purifies our action in relation to the self and other beings. This purification consists in our refraining from certain actions and also in our performing

certain actions by keeping in view the existence of human and sub-human beings. On the one hand, Mahāvīra advises us to refrain from killing, governing, enslaving, tormenting and provoking human and sub-human beings, while, on the other hand, he inspires us to promote mental equanimity, social and economic justice.

It is of capital importance to note that Ahimsā can be both an extrinsic and intrinsic value, i.e. both value as a means and value as an end. This means that both the means and the ends are to be tested by the criterion of Ahimsā. Thus the principle that "the end justifies the means" need not be rejected as immoral, if the means and ends are judged through the criterion of Ahimsā. In fact, there is no inconsistency in saying that Ahimsā is both an end as well as a means.

It may be asked what is in us on account of which we consciously lead a life of values based on Ahimsā ? The answer is : it is Karuṇā which makes one move in the direction of adopting Ahimsā-values. It may be noted that the degree of Karuṇā in a person is directly proportionate to the development of sensibility in him. The greatness of a person lies in the expression of sensibility beyond ordinary limits. This should be borne in mind that the emotional life of a person plays a decisive role in the development of healthy personality and Karuṇā is at the core of healthy emotions. Attachment and aversion bind the human personality to mundane existence, but Karuṇā liberates the individual from Kārmic enslavement. The Dhavalā, the celebrated commenary on the Śaṭkhaṇḍāgama, remarkably pronounces that Karuṇā is the nature of soul. To make it clear, just as infinite knowledge is the nature of soul, so also is Karuṇā. This



implies that Karuṇā is potentially present in every being although its full manifestation takes place in the life of the Arhat, the perfect being. Infinite Karuṇā goes with infinite knowledge. Finite Karuṇā goes with finite knowledge.

Thus if Karuṇā which is operative on the perception of the sufferings of the human and sub-human beings plunges into action in order to remove the sufferings of these beings, we regard that action as Sevā. Truly speaking, all Ahimsā-values are meant for the removal of varied sufferings in which the human and sub-human beings are involved. Sufferings may be physical and mental, individual and social, moral and spiritual. To alleviate, nay, to uproot these diverse sufferings is Sevā. In fact, the performance of Sevā is the verification of our holding Ahimsā-values. It is understandable that physical, mental and economic sufferings block all types of progress of the individual and make his life miserable. There are individuals who are deeply moved by these sufferings and consequently they dedicate themselves to putting an end to these sufferings. Thus their Karuṇā results in Seva. Thus Ahimsā, Karuṇā and Sevā are interrelated and are conducive both to individual and social progress. It is significant to point out that Mahāvīra's social mind exhorted that Ahimsā consists in recognising the dignity of man irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Man is man and should be recognised as such without any hesitation. The dignity of man is sacred and it is our duty to honour this dignity. Every individual, whether man or woman, should enjoy religious freedom without any distinction. A non-violent society can not subscribe to class exploitation and social oppression of man. Mahāvīra bestowed social prestige upon the down-trodden

individuals. This led to the development of self-respect in them. Thus he showed that no man or woman should be deprived of availing himself of the opportunities of advancement. It is not idle to point out that in the present state of affairs the significance of Ahimsā can not be dispensed with. The easing of tensions and cessation of conflicts among states, the maintenance of universal peace and the promotion of human welfare can only be effected by suffusing world's atmosphere with the spirit of Ahimsā. Mahāvīra's use of Ahimsā saw its culmination when he used Prākṛta, the language of the masses as the medium of expression for his religious preachings. This indicates his democratic spirit. He was well aware of the fact that language is as dear to man as own life. Therefore he preached in Prākṛta, the language used by the common man. This Ahimsī spirit of Mahāvīra extended itself even to the lowest scale of life and he promulgated that life as such is basically identical. Hence no living being should be hurt, enslaved and excited.

Mahāvīra was well aware of the fact that economic inequality and the hoarding of essential commodities very much disturb social life and living. These acts lead to the exploitation and enslavement of man. Owing to this, the life of society is endangered. Consequently, Mahāvīra pronounced that the remedy for the ill of economic inequality is Aparigraha. All the means of illegitimate Parigraha bring about social hatred, bitterness, and exploitation. The method of Aparigraha tells us that one should keep with oneself that which is necessary for one's living, and the rest should be returned to society for its well-being. Limit of wealth, limit of essential commodities – all these are indispensable for the

development of healthy social life. In a way, wealth is the basis of our social structure and if its flow is obstructed because of its accumulation in few hands, large portion of society will remain undeveloped. The hoarding of essential commodities creates a situation of social scarcity which perils social life. In order to resist such inhuman tendency, Mahāvīra incessantly endeavoured to establish the social value of Aparigraha.

It should be borne in mind that along with human and economic inequality, differences in outlook create a situation of conflict in society. The result is that constructive tendencies in man suffer a great deal. If we take things in right perspective, we shall find that differences in outlook appear as a result of the use of creative faculties inherent in man. If this fact is not adhered to, these differences become the cause of conflict between man and man, the consequence of which is that social unity is disrupted. Mahāvīra by his deep insight could see the waste of social energy on account of the wrong understanding of the nature of things. Consequently, he preached that differences in outlook are in fact differences in the nature of things. These are different aspects of things. In this way different outlooks are not to be condemned but are to be understood as the different aspects of truth. In fact, difference in outlook should be treated as difference in stand-points. Thus dissensions disappear and social solidarity sets in. Mahāvīra's doctrine of stand-points can be called Nayavāda which is a corollary of Anekāntavāda, the doctrine of multiple aspects of truth. By virtue of the promulgation of this social value, man started thinking that along with his own stand-point, the stand-point of the 'other' is also significant. This gave

rise to social adjustment and progress. This led to the conclusion that truth can not be monopolised and every man in society can subscribe to the discovery of a new aspect of truth. This Anekānta is the dynamic principle of social life, by virtue of which life is saved from being stagnant.

In conclusion, we may say that Mahāvīra after self-realisation dedicated himself to the creation of healthy social values. In this way he is regarded as one of the greatest leaders of mankind.

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**HOLY NAMOKĀRA MANTRA  
AND  
PĪOUS GĀTHĀS**

1. णमो अरिहंताणं। णमो सिद्धाणं। णमो आइरियाणं।  
णमो उवज्झायाणं। णमो लोए सव्वसाहूणं॥

Obeisance to Arihantas (embodied spiritually perfect personalities). Obeisance to Siddhas (disembodied spiritually perfect souls). Obeisance to Ācāryas (propagators of ethico-spiritual values). Obeisance to Upādhyāyas (teachers of ethico-spiritual values). Obeisance to all the Sādhus (pious personalities) in the world.

2. झायहि पंच वि गुरवे, मंगलचउसरणलोयपरियरिए।  
णर – सु – खेर – महिए, आरहणणायगे वीरे।

Meditate on the five holy teachers (spiritual pillars) who are permeated with spiritual energy, who are auspicious, who are the shelters in the four grades of existence, who have adorned the world, who are the supreme objects of devotion, and who have been adored by the human and celestial beings along with the Vidyādharas (human beings moving in the sky by means of supernormal powers).

3. घणघाइकम्ममहणा, तिहुवणवरभव्व-कमलमत्तंडा।  
अरिहा अणंतणाणी, अणुवमसोक्खा जयंतु जए॥

May the Arahantas who are the annihilators of the dense obscuring Karmas (psycho-physical impurities), who are like the sun for the lotus of releasable souls existent in the three worlds, who possess infinite knowledge and also experience unique bliss, be victorious in the world.

4. अट्टविहकम्मवियला, णिट्ठियकज्जा पणट्टसंसारा।  
दिट्ठसयलत्थसारा, सिद्धा सिद्धिं मम दिसंतु॥

May the Siddhas who are devoid of eight Karmas (psycho-physical impurities), by whom all the purposes

have been accomplished, by whom (their own) reincarnations in the world have been put to an end, by whom the essence of all the substances has been known, show me the path to liberation.

5. पंचमहव्वयतुंगा, तक्कालिय-सपरसमय-सुदधारा।

णाणागुणगणभरिया, आइरिया मम पसीदंतु॥

May the Ācāryas who have acquired exalted position by observing five Mahāvratas (complete vows), who possess contemporary knowledge of their own faith and that of others and who have been saturated with diverse clusters of virtues, do good to me.

6. अण्णाणघोरतिमिरे, दुरंततीरम्हि हिंडमाण्णाणं।

भविष्याणुज्जोयरा, उवज्झाया वरमदिं देंतु॥

May the Upādhyāyas who are the illuminators of the mundane souls wandering in the dense darkness of ignorance which is difficult to cross, impart supreme understanding (to me).

7. थिरधरियसीलमाला, ववगयराया जसोहपडिहत्था।

बहुविणयभूसियंगा, सुहाइं साहू पयच्छंतु॥

May the Sādhus who abound in glory, by whom the garland of virtues has been steadily sustained, by whom attachment has been cast aside and by whom the parts of the body have been adorned with immense modesty, bestow happiness on one.

8. अरहंतभासियत्थं गणहरदेवेहिं गंथियं सम्मं।

पणमामि भत्तिजुत्तो, सुदणाणमहोदहिं सिरसा॥

The meaning revealed by the Arahanta (embodied spiritually perfect personality) has been properly worded by the Gaṇadharas (chief disciples of the Arahanta). So by bowing my head with devotion, I

make obeisance to the ocean of (worded) scriptural knowledge.

9. धम्मो मंगलमुक्किट्ठं, अहिंसा संजमो तवो।

देवा वि तं नमंसंति जस्स धम्मे सया मणो॥

That which is Ahimsā (non-violence), self-restraint and austerity is Dharma (spiritual value). It is by virtue of the Dharma (spiritual value) that supreme spiritual beneficence results. To him whose mind is (absorbed) in the Dharma (spiritual values) even gods pay homage.

10. धम्मो वत्थुसहावो, खमादिभावो य दसविहो धम्मो।

रयणत्तयं च धम्मो, जीवाणं रक्खणं धम्मो॥

The basic nature of a (sentient) thing is known as Dharma (spiritual value); the mental states of forgiveness etc. are ten kinds of Dharma (spiritual values); the togetherness of three Jewels is also Dharma (spiritual value); and again the protection of Jīvas (beings) is Dharma (spiritual value).

11. जेण विणा लोगस्स वि, ववहरो सव्वह न निव्वहइ।

तस्स भुवणेक्कगुरुणो, णमो अणेगंतवायस्स॥

Salutation to the Anekāntavāda which is the singular teacher of mankind, without which even the transaction of the world does not at all go on.

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