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UNIVERSAL MESSAGE of LORD MAHĀVĪRA

DULICHAND JAIN B.Com., LLb., 'Sahitya Ratna'

Edited by Dr. Shriprakash Pandey

Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, Varanasi
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UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF LORD MAHAVIRA

The study of religious texts and canonical literatures paves the way for man's spiritual advancement. The history of our civilization is but a record of man's spiritual progress and religion is the vehicle which takes man from his baser instincts to higher instincts.

In this sharply polarized and volatile world, torn apart by violence and hatred, the study of Jaina canonical texts are more relevant as the underlying principle in them is non-violence, Ahimsa. They preach the eternalness of the soul and the universe and talks of transcending the karmic cycle.

In the 6th century B.C., Lord Mahávíra, the 24th Tirthankara of the Jaina tradition, revealed these truths to the world. Later, his revealations were recorded by scholars and the vast storehouse of Jaina Agamic literature was created.

This book will present before the reader a kaleidoscope of the Jaina tradition and philosophy. It will give a panoramic picture of the cardinal principles and values enshrined in Jainism. The book, though primarily designed keeping in mind the general public, is also intended to cater to the pursuits of the scholarly mind.

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DULICHAND JAIN

B. Com., L. L. B., Sahityaratna

Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, Varanasi INDIA

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Author Dulichand Jain Jain Industrial Corporation

70, Sembudoss Street, Chennai-600 001 Ph.: 044-25231714, 25227263, 25222044, Fax: 52164242

Email: karunainternational@ysnl.net

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Publisher's Note

Jainism is an old religion of India. It is one of the few ancient religions, which is still very much alive. Several salient features of Indian culture such as vegetarianism, non-violence, tolerance, brotherhood, non-aggression can be traced back to many Jaina sources. The preachings of Lord Mahāvīra (599 BC-527 BC), the 24th Tīrthankara of Jaina Religion has got much relevance in the present scenario of the world in order to maintain peace and harmony. The doctrines propounded by him bear special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind and to eradicate the hostility and hatred from the world.

Parshwanath Vidyapeeth has been regularly publishing such important books, which could be proved a tool for better understanding of Jaina Religion and spreading it across the boundaries of India.

The present title "The Universal Message of Lord Mahāvīra" authored by Shri Dulichand Jain is an important work of our publication series. We are pleased to publish the third book of Shri Dulichand Jain. The title is basically a compilation of his articles, notes and reviews published in different esteemed and reputed dailies like "The Indian Express', 'The Hindu', etc. It is rich in content and easy as well as articulate on the part of the language.

We are very thankful to Shri Dulichand Jain for entrusting this work to us for publication. Our thanks are also due to Dr. Shriprakash Pandey, Asst. Director at Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, for his careful proof reading and managing it through the press.

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Mahāvīra Nirvāņa Divasa 1st November, 2005

Sagarmal Jain
Secretary
Parshwanath Vidyapeeth

INTRODUCTION

Jainism, one of the world's oldest religious traditions, is a religion of values. Every year, the Jaina community celebrates "Paryūṣaṇa Parva", a festival for eight days, in which lectures and talks are delivered on the ten values of Dharma. Lord Mahāvīra said, "Supreme forgiveness, supreme humility, supreme straightforwardness, supreme truthfulness, supreme purity, supreme self-restraint, supreme austerity, supreme renunciation, supreme detachment, and supreme continence are the ten characteristics of Dharma." (Kārtikeyanuprekṣā, 70)

Despite great strides made by science and information technology, the world is suffering from discontent and disharmony, which has resulted in violence, hatred, conflict and destruction. Scientific progress has provided considerable comfort and conveniences and brought plenty within the reach of all, but it has neither assured peace and happiness for the individual nor has it rid the world of poverty, social conflicts, fundamentalism and dogmatism. Mahāvīra's teachings constitute a way of life and offer solutions to the manifold problems which mankind faces in the present day.

Lord Mahāvīra (599 B.C.-527 B.C.) was the 24th *Tīrthankara* of Jaina religion; he stressed on non-violence, equality, universal brotherhood and compassion. In 1993 when I published my first book "*Jinavānī Ke Motī*" in Hindi, I selected inspiring aphorisms from Jaina Āgamas on 71 subjects. In 1997, that book was translated to English under the title "*Pearls of Jaina Wisdom*".

Since then, I have been participating in several meetings, study circles, symposiums and seminars in the country and

abroad, and have given lectures and talks on Jainology. I have also prepared notes on these topics and they were published in the Chennai edition of esteemed national dailies and also in some journals. The present title "Universal Message of Lord Mahāvīra" is a collection of those articles and notes. It is perhaps, therefore, natural for the reader to face the repetitions in this book.

Lord Mahāvīra was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. His preachings are relevant even in present time and bear special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self-reliance, self-discipline and self-purification to develop inherent and infinite potentialities of mankind.

My young friend Mr. Probal Ray Choudhury has helped me in compiling this book and I am thankful to him for his valuable suggestions.

I hope this book will present the universal message of Lord Mahāvīra and will induce interest in understanding the values taught by the Great Master.

Mahāvīra Nirvāņa Divasa

Dulichand Jain

1st November, 2005

'Anugriha',

70 T.T.K. - 600 018.

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THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF JAINA WISDOM*

The stream of knowledge has been incessantly flowing in India since time immemorial and credit for this goes to the seers, saints and *Tīrthaṅkaras*, who have guided and inspired mankind to tread the sublime path of righteousness in order to realise the truth.

Jaina Tradition

Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. Jaina scholars trace its origin back through almost limitless time. The present historians, however, say that it is at least 5000 years old. A great generation of *Tīrthaṅkaras*, *Ācāryas*, saints and scholars belonged to this tradition. Lord Mahāvīra was the twenty-forth *Tīrthaṅkara* of the present era. He was not the founder of Jainism but he propounded this great religion. He realised his true self and attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities and penances. A glimpse into his life shows that he was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. Although Mahāvīra (599 B.C.- 527 B. C.) preached 2500 years

^{*}This paper was presented at 'Wisdom of India' seminar organised at the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Chennai on 17 January 2000.

ago, his teachings are relevant even today and bear special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self-reliance, self-discipline and self-purification to develop inherent and infinite potentialities of human self.

Contribution of Jaina Faith

The contribution of Jaina faith to Indian thought and life has been very significant. Actually, vegetarianism, as a habit prevailing throughout the Indian continent, practised by a large majority, is an evidence of Jaina influence. Indian art, literature, architecture, painting and sculpture as also every other aspect of life have been greatly influenced by Jaina thoughts. Jains are noted for the catholicity of their outlook and broad mindedness. The other significant contribution of Jainism is its harmonious and peaceful approach to life. The central themes of the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are non-violence, non-absolutism and non-possession.

Non-Violence

Non-violence is equality of all living creatures. If you feel that every soul is independent and autonomous, you will never trample on its right to live. This leads you to compassion and kindness towards all living beings and results in harmony and peace in the world. The principle of non-violence in Jainism embraces not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants, vegetables and creatures in earth, air and water. It is the holy law of compassion extended to body, mind and speech of a living being. Lord Mahāvīra says, "All living beings desire to live. They detest sorrow and death and desire a long and happy life. Hence, one should not inflict pain on any creature, nor have any feeling of antipathy or enmity. One should be friendly towards all creature. ""

Positive aspect of Non-violence

The positive side of non-violence is as important as the negative side, but it is sometimes not fully appreciated. The positive aspect implies forgiveness, kindness, charity and service. The renowned Ācārya Amitagati has beautifully explained this in a verse:

satveşu maitrī guņisu pramodam/ klişţeşu jīveşu kṛpāparatvam // mādhyasthabhāvam viparītavṛttou/ sadā mamātmā vidadhātu deva² //

i.e., friendship towards all beings, respect for the qualities of virtuous people, utmost compassion for the afflicted beings and equanimity towards those who are not well disposed towards me - may my soul have these dispositions for ever.

The other Vows

All the other vows preached in Jainism are only an extension of the vow of non-violence. Truthfulness is essential to keep order and harmony in society. There are moments in life when one has to work hard to keep up one's convictions. In business and in our day-to-day dealings our truthfulness is put to test. We have to practise it constantly to maintain our integrity. While observing the vow of non-stealing, one is required to earn his livelihood by honest means. We violate the vow of *Aparigraha* by accepting and holding what is not needed by us. What we possess in surplus has to go to those who need it badly. The principle of continence is significant in maintaining the morals in society.

Thus we see that these principles, preached by Lord Mahāvīra, are universal in character and are applicable to every individual in any society. Even an ordinary man can practise these simple rules without the least philosophical speculation.

Integral view of Life

Jainism takes an integral view of life. Neither faith nor knowledge by itself can take us to the path of salvation. We should have a combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct to tread the path of salvation. These constitute the three jewels of Jainism. Without right faith, there is no right knowledge and without right knowledge there is no virtuous conduct. Lord Mahāvīra says, "By knowledge one understands the nature of substances, by faith one believes in them, by conduct one puts an end to the flow of *karmas* and by austerity one attains purity.³",

Concept of Karma

The significant achievement of Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra's revolution in spiritual field was the upholding of the concept of *karma* in place of the Creator. He said that man is the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts and not by the grace of any external agency. God is devoid of attachment; hence, there is no need for him to create this universe, which is beginningless and endless.

Every inexplicable event in the life of an individual occurs due to the *karmas* accumulated in his previous birth. *Karma* is conceived as something essentially material, which gets interlined with immaterial soul. As particles of dust get attached to the body smeared with oil, so does *karma* with the soul. Lord Mahāvīra says. 'Attachment and aversion are the root causes of *karma* and

karma originates from infatuation; karma is the root cause of birth and death and these (birth and death) are said to be the source of misery.⁴ He further adds, "None can escape the effect of their own past karmas.⁵,"

Conquest of Passion

Lord Mahāvīra was a great believer in soul, godliness, karma and rebirth. According to him, a man should lift his soul by his own efforts. He says, "The soul is the begetter of both happiness and sorrow; it is its own friend when it treads the path of righteousness and is its own enemy when it treads the forbidden path. "The pre-requisite to the path of righteousness is to conquer the four passions, viz., anger, pride, deceit and greed, and the five sense organs. He says, "Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straight-forwardness and greed by contentment. "According to Mahāvīra, conquering one's own self is the most difficult thing. He never ignored this aspect in his preaching. He says, "Victory over one's own self is greater than conquering thousands and thousands of enemies on the battle-field. A true conqueror is one who conquers his own self. ""

Futility of Material Comforts

Lord Mahāvīra says that all material comforts and pleasures can never satiate anybody and give him true happiness. He preached the doctrine of non-possession to limit the desires for worldly pursuits. He says, "It is owing to attachment that a person commits violence, utters lies, commits theft, indulges in sex and develops a yearning for unlimited hoardings." Possessiveness and greed are the main causes, which create tension in the life of an individual and also in the society at large. Hence, an aspirant should limit his possessions and desires to the minimum extent.

Equality

Mahāvīra laid great stress on the equality of all human beings. Stressing action and not birth as a determining factor of superiority was a radical step in the teachings of Mahāvīra. He proclaimed, "A person does not become a monk by merely tonsuring, nor a Brahmin by reciting the *Orinkāra mantra*, nor a *Muni* by living in the forest, nor a hermit by wearing clothes woven out of *kuśa* grass. One becomes a monk by equanimity, a Brahmin by celibacy, a *Muni* by his knowledge and a hermit by his austerities. "He boldly condemned the caste system based on birth alone for the defects that had crept in it at that time.

Lord Mahāvīra had great regard for women. He said that both men and women were eligible to attain emancipation after destroying the passions and *karmas*. He declared, "There are many virtuous women who are famous for their purity and chastity. They are like the goddesses before whom even the celestials bow."

Importance of Human Effort

The importance of human effort is emphasised by Mahāvīra, which rules supreme in Jainism. He asserts in *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, ¹² "This life is most difficult to obtain. Just as the dry leaves of a tree wither away, so also when duration of life terminates human life too comes to an end." It is only the ignorant who do cruel acts and hence are tied to the cycle of birth and death. In *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*¹³ it is said, "One should endeavour on the path of righteousness before old age creeps up, the senses become feeble and man falls prey to all kinds of diseases."

Dharma preached by Mahāvīra is called Vītarāga Dharma. He himself practised it first and then preached the same to others.

In religion, internal purity is more important than external observance. Lord Mahāvīra says in Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, "The path of salvation really rests in insight, critical knowledge and pure conduct; cloths and other religious paraphernalia are just outside symbols." It has been repeatedly declared by both Śvetāmbaras and Digambara \overline{Agamas} that "Even if an ascetic walks about unclad, grows lean and eats only once after months of rigorous fasting, if filled with deceit, he will be born endless number of times.¹⁴"

Catholicity of Approach

There has been catholicity and absence of dogmatic approach in the Jaina belief. Lord Mahāvīra said that *Dharma* is of prime importance to everyone in life. In *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, ¹⁵ he says, "Righteousness (*Dharma*) is supremely auspicious. Its constituents are non-violence, self-restraint and austerity. Even the celestials revere him who is rooted in *Dharma*." Any person, irrespective of caste, creed and colour can follow this path of purification.

Ethical code of Conduct

Jaina scriptures describe the conduct elaborately, expected from a monk as well as a householder. The monks and nuns observe the five great vows (Mahāvratas) and the laity five primary vows (Anuvratas). The five Mahāvratas are total abstinence from violence, falsehood, stealing, sexual indulgence and possessions. This four-fold congregation of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen, known as Dharma Tīrtha (centre of worship) is still observed and proves that Jainism is a living religion. There are numerous monks and nuns and nearly ten million householders continuing the tradition, following virtually

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the same path as prescribed by the Jinas. Jaina monks and nuns move about in all parts of the country bare-footed, keeping minimum equipment required for their spiritual practice. There are some Digambara monks too who remain unclad. Jaina laity still practises complete vegetarianism and mostly leads a life free of vices and intoxicants. At the same time, the Jaina community is richly endowed with education and material comforts. They lead in the field of industry and business and have established a large number of charitable institutions for the cause of education, medical benefits and service to the downtrodden.

Heritage of Jaina Scriptures

The teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are preserved in the Jaina scriptures, which have come down to us through a very rich tradition. The Tirthankaras preached and the Ganadharas gave a structure to those preachings in the $\overline{A}gamas$. The $\overline{A}c\overline{a}ryas$ and the saints protected and preserved them. These Agamas serve as the source of understanding Jaina philosophy and culture and also of Indian thought and way of life at that time. Mahāvīra's preachings are like the innumerable pearls of wisdom that are found in abundance in the limitless and unfathomable ocean of knowledge. In the words of the Late Upadhyaya Amar Muni, "The Sūtra literature of Jainas is deeper than the deepest ocean in which innumerable divine pearls of wisdom are hidden. It is a great storehouse of golden words. It is important not only for the inspiration it gives to tread the path of righteousness and spirituality but also for the message it gives for the harmonious development of family and social life. The aphorisms on moral and ethical progress are scattered here and there in all the Agamas, which lay a strong foundation for a peaceful and humanitarian world. 16,7

References:

- Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.2.3.4.
- ² Sāmāyikapāṭha, 1
- ³ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 28.35
- ⁴ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 32.7
- ⁵ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 4.3
- ⁶ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 20.37
- ⁷ Daśavaikālika-sūtra, 8.39
- ⁸ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 9.34
- ⁹ Bhakta-parijñā 132
- 10 Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 25.31-32
- 11 Bhagavatī- ārādhanā, 995
- 12 Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 10.1
- ¹³ Daśavaikālika-sūtra, 8.36
- ¹⁴ Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, 1.2.1.9
- 15 Daśavaikālika-sutra, 1.1.
- 16 Sūkti-triveņī p.11

THE RELEVANCE OF THE TEACHINGS OF LORD MAHĀVĪRA IN THE MODERN AGE*

Problems encountering modern world

The present age is called the age of science and technology. There is a virtual explosion of information technology, which has brought nations and people closer to each other. New scientific thoughts have influenced every person's life and provide him more amenities and facilities. But the question arises whether science has made man's life happier and harmonious? The answer to this question is in the negative. Today man's life is full of tension, anxieties and disorders. In the race for progress and growth, man has forgotten the real purpose of his life. Today, man knows much more about the external world but very little about his own self. He is leading a life full of disharmony and conflicts.

On the international level we find that man has conquered all the agencies of nature and made ordinary person's life more comfortable than it was earlier. But on the other hand, we find alarming growth of the armament industry and production of powerful bombs and explosive materials. If unfortunately there is another nuclear war, it will be most dangerous and will result in the destruction of the whole humanity. Another problem mankind

^{*} This is reproduced from the *Jain Journal*, Calcutta, Volume XXXVI, July 2001.

facing is that inequality is increasing amongst the nations and peoples. The world is divided into 'haves' and 'have-nots'. The USA, which has just 6% of the world's population, consumes 30% of the world's resources whereas the majority of the people of the globe are suffering from scarcity, wants and impoverishment. Life in advanced countries is also not harmonious. Families are broken up and relationships snapped, individuals feel isolated and alienated with a sense of vacuum and boredom. The economic growth alone as the yardstick for measuring standard of life to the exclusion of all other values has verily led to the destruction of human personality.

Last year, a report titled 'Broken Family Life' appeared in *The Economist* which presents a grim picture of the so-called advanced western society: quite a large number of people are involved in the misuse of drugs and guns resulting in violent crimes and unbecoming behaviour in public, etc. It states:

- * The importance of marriage has become irrelevant in the management of family and growing up of children.
- * The rate of divorce has doubled between 1960 and 1996.
- * In 1960 the percentage of unmarried mothers was only 5 %, it has gone up to 32% in 1996.
- * In 1972, 28% children were living with either father or mother (one of them) of their married parents; in 1998 52% of the children live with either mother or father (one of them) of their married parents.
- * Even married couples do not want to beget children in America. In 1972, 45% married couples did not have any children; their percentage has gone up to 62% in 1996.

The question, therefore, arises whether religion can meet the need of our times and solve the problems of present day humanity. Jaina thinkers have stated clearly that religion does not mean mere rituals and dogmas. It has eternal values, which have validity for all times to come. Jainism is a living religion propounded by Lord Mahāvīra in the present era and it is practised by lacs of people even today.

The Essence of Religion

First of all, let us understand what is the meaning of religion. According to Jainism, the real nature of any substance is religion - dhammo vatthusahāvo. If it is so, the question arises what is the real nature of a human being? Lord Mahāvīra says, "The real nature of every soul is equanimity." It is said in Mūlācāra that the oneness of the soul with right faith, right knowledge, self-restraint and austerity is Samaya. Know this as Sāmāyika (equanimity). In Jainism, religion is not different from the practice for the realisation of our own essential nature of svasvabhāva. In this state, the consciousness is completely free from constant flickering, excitements, disharmony and disorders. In reality, the soul is different from the body and it should remain away from vibhāvas or impure state of mind. The object of religion is to achieve equanimity of mind and get real peace and blissfulness.

Integral view of life

Jainism takes an integral view of life. Either faith or knowledge by itself cannot take us to the path of salvation. We should have a combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct to tread the path of salvation.³ These three, Samyagdarśana (right faith), Samyagjñāna (right knowledge) and

Samyak-cāritra (right conduct) are the three jewels of Jainism. "Without right faith, there is no right knowledge and without right knowledge there is no virtuous conduct."4 Detachment from the objects of worldly pleasures, a balanced state of mind and the feeling of equanimity are considered as right faith or attitude. "A person having right faith knows what is to be relinquished and what is to be accomplished." Through right knowledge a person understands the true nature of the soul and the non-living substances. It is said by Lord Mahāvīra, "He who knows the self to be wholly different from the impure body and comprehends it to be the knower of all substances, is said to be a master of all scriptures". According to Mūlācāra right knowledge is that which helps one to understand the truth, controls the mind and purifies the soul. According to Jaina thinkers, equanimity of body, mind and soul should be a directive principal of religious life. The equanimity of mind is non-attachment (Aparigraha), equanimity of body is non-violence (Ahimsā) and the equanimity of thought is non-absolutism (Anekānta). These three are the pillars of Jainism and the observance of these results in peace and harmony in the life of the individual and the society.

Reverence for All Life

The cardinal principle of Jainism is non-violence. It means giving respect or reverence to all forms of life. All life formations, including human beings, animals, plants, trees, insects etc., have the same life source of energy. This energy is available even in invisible creatures in air, water, wind and ether. Lord Mahāvīra says, "Not to kill any living being is the quintessence of all wisdom. Certainly, one has to understand that non-violence and equality of all living beings are essentials of *Dharma*." In

Jainism, non-violence is the pivot on which its whole ethics revolves. Non-violence is not a single virtue but it is a combination of all virtues. Lord Mahāvīra says that non-violence is equated with sixty virtuous qualities like peace, harmony, welfare, trust, fearlessness, etc. Jainism believes in the principle, "Live and Let live."

Today, when we see cruelties on animals on a large scale in mechanical slaughter-houses and the use of animals for leather products, in food industries, in producing medicines, in cosmetics and so on, we can understand how important it is to adhere to non-violence so as to save the life on this planet. The extensive development of meat industries has brought environmental degradation on a large scale and today environmentalists are worried about how to stop it to make life of people healthy and happy.

Recognising that total adherence to the strictest form of non-violence is impractical for a householder; Jaina preachers have drawn a distinction between violent activities totally forbidden and those, which may be tolerated within strict guidelines. From this standpoint, violence has been classified into the following four categories:

- 1. Deliberate or aggressive violence i.e., intentional killing.
- 2. Protective violence resulting from opposing attack on one's life, property or country.
- 3. Occupational violence resulting from industrial or agricultural activity of the individuals for earning their livelihood.
- 4. Unintentional but indirect injury to living beings from acts necessary for normal life like cooking or cleaning etc.

The saints or nuns abjure all the four types but the layman can renounce only the first type, while he has to indulge in the other three categories, but after observing proper vigilance.

The positive side of non-violence is as important as the negative side but this is sometimes not fully appreciated. The positive side implies kindness, forgiveness, charity and service. This has been beautifully explained in a verse by the renowned Ācārya Amitagati of the 11th century AD as: "Friendship towards all beings, respect for the qualifies of virtuous people, utmost compassion for the afflicted beings and equanimity towards those who are not well disposed towards me -may my soul have these dispositions for ever."

A non-violent person should be full of benevolence towards all living beings. Also he should avoid food, clothing and other requirements, which involve the slaughter of animals. He should also not indulge in trades like brewing, fishing and butchering. Non-violence is the greatest need of the present times. Faced with the danger of ecological disaster and nuclear holocaust on the one hand and unrestrained materialistic pursuit on the other, humanity is groping in the dark for the ray of light, which can save its very existence. Such light is provided by shunning violence at all levels and by practising non-violence.

Equality

Mahāvīra laid great stress on the equality of all human beings. The stress on action and not birth as a determining factor of superiority was a radical step in the teachings of Mahāvīra. He proclaimed, "A person does not become a monk by merely tonsuring, nor a *Brahmin* by reciting *Oṁkāra Mantra*, nor a *Muni* by living in the forest, nor a hermit by wearing cloths woven out

of kuśa grass. One becomes a monk by equanimity, a Brahmin by celibacy, a *Muni* by his knowledge and a hermit by his austerities."

Lord Mahāvīra had great regard for women. He said that both men and women were eligible to attain emancipation after destroying the passions and *karmas*. He declared, "There are many virtuous women who are famous for their purity and chastity. They are like the goddesses before whom even the celestials bow." According to Jainism, all barriers of caste, creed and colour are artificial and must be removed. The principle of equality propounds that every one has a right to live. The directive principle of living is not "living on others" or "living by killing" but "living with and for others - *Parasparopagrahojīvānām*¹³.

So far as the welfare of human society is concerned, it depends on mutual co-operation, sacrifice of our own interest for the sake of our fellow beings and regard for other's life. If the above-mentioned elements are essential for our social life, then non-violence is absolutely necessary for human life. Society exists not on violence but on non-violence, not on fulfilment of self-interest but on sacrifice of self-interest, not on claiming for our own rights but accepting the rights of others too. Thus, we can say that non-violence is an inevitable principle of existence of human society.

Aparigraha: Limiting the desires and passions

Aparigraha is the fifth vow of monks and nuns in the Jaina code of ethics (Mahāvrata). For householders also it is the fifth vow in their code of ethics known as Anuvrata. This principle has great importance in the present world when we are going on increasing our requirements and desires to the maximum. Jaina preachers say that the source of happiness and peace lies within the human self

and not in the external things. The cause for mental worries and tensions are due to our attachment towards worldly objects. Lord Mahāvīra says that desires are endless like the sky and they will never satisfy any person fully. In his words, "If there were numberless mountains of gold and silver as big as Mount Kailāśa, they would not satisfy an avaricious man; for avarice is boundless like the sky." ¹⁴ He further says, "The more you get, the more you want, desire increases with every gain."15 If mankind is to be freed from mental tensions, the possessions have to be limited. Today, we find over-exploitation of natural resources, which are available in limited quantity only. Jainism believes that the lesser the attachment, the greater will be the mental peace. It is only when attachment vanishes, the human mind will be free from mental and emotional disorders. For this, Jainism preaches the vow of complete non-possession for the ascetics and the vow to limit one's possessions for the householders.

Types of Parigraha

According to Jainism, *Parigraha* is of two types: internal and external. These include all external objects of attachment, which hinder liberation, and also all inner attitudes in different forms and stages such as false faith (*mithyātva*), vowlessness (*avirati*), passions (*kaṣāya*) etc. All human passions such as anger, pride, deceit and greed, attachment and aversion have their roots in external objects or possessions, which create disturbance in the mind of the individual. The householder, according to Jainism, should limit his possessions, consequently curbing his limitless desires to consume and possess things. According to Dr. Kamala Jain, "*Aparigraha* is not merely an abstract philosophy, it is a vision of life with the solution to a number of problems that society is facing-economic, social, political, familial and personal.

For social reconstruction, in fact for the survival of the society, voluntary limitation of desires and personal possessions is the only solution. Environmental degeneration due to too much spread of consumerism can be checked only by the self-imposed discipline of limited desires and limited possessions. Amassing of wealth for the sake of accumulation will not help the individual nor the society; it is harmful for both, with increase in disparities leading to consequent evils of mental restlessness, jealousy, envy, corruption etc. The middle path of *Icchā-parimāṇa* (limiting of desires) would check both poverty and luxury with the motto that possessions are only a means and not the end in themselves." ¹⁶

Anekānta: Regard for other's Ideologies & Faiths

Today due to the progress of science and technology, the world has practically become a single family. Hence, we should have broadness of our thoughts also. We cannot solve world with parochial outlook and sectarian problems According to Dr. Ramji Singh, "Inter-existence is the positive option for mankind. Either there is organic growth of mankind or there is organic destruction of human civilisation. The growth of scientific knowledge and outlook has destroyed most of our false dogmas and superstitions but it has failed to provide us knowledge that could sublimate our animal and selfish nature. Animality has been dominating our individual as well as social behaviour. Hence, our life has become full of tensions, turmoil and disorders. Therefore, although we are outwardly pleading for world peace and non-violence, yet inwardly we have been preparing for war. Humanity is tottering today upon the brink of the principle of selfannihilation due to the lack of proper understanding which includes understanding ourselves and understanding the views of others "17

Jaina preachers say that the knowledge, which determines full meaning of an object through the employment of one-sided knowledge, is partial knowledge. Reality has got innumerable characteristics. A valid knowledge is defined as that which gives us knowledge of things in their various aspects. All objects have innumerable characters; hence, all things are multi-dimensional or *Anaikāntika*. Though every angle or viewpoint can claim that it gives a true picture of reality, yet it gives only a partial and relative picture of reality. One who knows only partial truth must not discard the views of others as totally false. We must accept that the views of others have also validity from some other angles. Jaina theory of *Anekāntavāda* emphasise that all the approaches to understand the reality give partial but true picture of reality and due to their truth-value from certain angle, we should treat other ideologies and faiths with equal regard.

The virtue of understanding is very much needed in the present day society. Jainism maintains regard for other's thoughts and ideologies from time immemorial. Lord Mahāvīra says, "Those who praise their own ideologies and faiths and blame that of their opponents and thus distort the truth will remain confined to the cycle of birth and death." Jaina saints tried to maintain the harmony in different religious thoughts thus avoiding religious conflicts. Anekānta can solve the problems of conflict in ideologies and faiths. Ācārya Hemacandra says: "I bow to all those who have overcome attachment and aversion, which are causes of worldly bondage, be they Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva or Jina."

Lastly, to quote Dr. Ramji Singh, who has nicely explained the importance of *Anekānta* in the modern context: "Jaina logic of *Anekānta* is based not on abstract intellectualism but on experience and realism leading to a non-absolutistic attitude of

mind. Multiplicity and unity, definability and non-definability etc., which apparently seem to be contradictory characteristics of reality are interpreted to co-exist in the same object from different points of view without any offence to logic. They seem to be contradictory characteristics of reality and are interpreted to co-exist in the same object from different points of view without any offence to logic. They seem to be contradictory of each other simply because one of them is mistaken to be the whole truth. In fact, integrity of truth consists in this very variety of its aspects, without the rational unity of an all-comprehensive and ramifying principle. The charge of contradiction against the co-presence of being and non-being in the real is a figment of apriori logic." ¹⁸

The Doctrine of Karma

The significant achievement of Tīrthankara Mahāvīra's revolution in the spiritual field was the upholding of the concept of karma in place of the Creator. He said that man is the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts and not by the grace of any external agency. God is devoid of attachment; hence there is no need for Him to create this universe, which is beginningless and endless. Every inexplicable event in the life of an individual occurs due to karmas accumulated in his previous birth. Karma is conceived as something essentially material, which gets interlinked with the immaterial soul. As particles of dust get attached to the body when smeared with oil, so does karma get attached with the soul? It is on account of karma that the soul has to suffer and undergo various births and rebirths in the diverse spheres of life as gods, men or animals. Lord Mahāvīra says, "Attachment and aversion are the root causes of karma and karma originates from infatuation, karma is the root cause of birth and death and these (birth and death) are said to be

the source of misery". He further aids, "None can escape the effect of their own past *karmas*." ¹⁹

Relevance of Jaina Ethics

Dr. Radhakrishnan has rightly observed that the name Jainism indicates the predominantly ethical character of the system. 20 Although Jainism is much more than a code of ethics but it is true to say here that ethics occupies the most important place. Some thinkers say that metaphysics has divided Indian philosophers but ethics has united them. Sometimes it is said that Jaina ethics is extremely ascetic in character but this is actually not true. The fact is that there is a clear-cut distinction between the code of the conduct of monks and the householders and there is a marked relaxation of virtues and vows meant for commoners. The present generation lacks proper moral guidance. Hence the five vows of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity and nonpossession are really of great significance today. That is why; Mahatma Gandhi practised the ideals of truth and non-violence in social and national life. Thus, these ethical values have great relevance in politics, economics and in international affairs. Nation can be peaceful and prosperous if it follows non-violence seriously and sincerely. The principle of non-violence can contribute a great deal in fostering relationship of peaceful coexistence among different warring nations. Similarly, nonpossession and other virtues practised by Jaina community are significant and relevant in the present era. The ideal of nonpossession and non-hoarding can be really useful today as we are very much concerned with the problem of economic inequality.

Mahāvīra delivered his message in the language of the common people. He established a simple code of conduct, which is practised by millions of people even today. Hence, we can say that

Mahāvīra's contribution was most significant and sizable. This is relevant even today and following his message we can realise harmony and peace in our own life and in the society at large.

References:

¹ Dvādaśānuprekṣā, 478.

² Mūlacāra, 519.

³ Tattvārtha-sūtra, 1.1

⁴ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 28.30.

⁵ Sutta Pāhuḍa, 5.

⁶ Kārtikeyānuprekṣā, 465.

⁷ Mūlācāra, 585.

⁸ Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, 1.11.10.

⁹ Praśnavyākaraṇa-sūtra, 2.1.21.

¹⁰ Sāmāyika Pātha, 1.

¹¹ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 25.31.32.

^{· &}lt;sup>12</sup> Bhagavatī-ārādhanā, 985.

¹³ Tattvārtha-sūtra, 5.21.

¹⁴ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 9.48.

¹⁵ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 8. 17.

¹⁶ Aparigraha - The Humane Solution, pp. 92.

¹⁷ Jaina Perspective in Philosophy and Religion, pp. 215.

¹⁸ Jaina Perspective in Philosophy and Religion, pp. 223.

¹⁹ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 32.7.

²⁰ Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, pp. 286.

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THE JAINA WAY OF LIFE*

Introduction

We are living in a scientifically and technically advanced world divided into "developed", "developing" and the "underdeveloped" regions. A keen competition is going on everywhere. Only a few are thriving and prospering while a majority of people lead a life of scarcity, want and impoverishment. There is tension, worry and unhappiness in the life of every one. Mr. F. L. Lucas, an English critic said, "Many a times, after pondering, I am amazed that some day the human civilisation would come to an end by man's own intellect and deterioration of self-control in the midst of the tension of the highly artificial civilisation."

Role of religion

Under these circumstances, we have to examine how Jaina religion can play a positive role in mitigating the sufferings of the common people. Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. A long generation of *Tīrthaṅkaras*, *Ācāryas*, saints and scholars belonged to this tradition. Lord Mahāvīra was the twenty-fourth *Tīrthaṅkara* of the present era. Mahāvīra, born with no supernatural powers, rose by the dint of his determination, self-

^{*} This was published in the *Vedanta Kesari*, a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Math, Chennai.

discipline, compassion, forbearance and other qualities of heart to the highest position among men and acquired the status of a *Tīrthankara* or omniscient.

Mahāvīra and His Teachings

Lord Mahāvīra observed rigorous austerities spread over for and a half years till he achieved Kevala-jñāna (omniscience), which was his aim behind initiation in the ascetic order. He faced many adversities and calamities brought upon by natural and supernatural forces during this period. In the thirteenth year of his ascetic order, he attained infinite knowledge, infinite intuition and infinite bliss. Only after obtaining omniscience, he began to preach and give discourses. He stressed the importance of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. He stated that a man could rise high only by humility, noble conduct and discipline. He established Caturvidha Sangha (the four-fold congregation) of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen so as to provide proper guidance to the monks and nuns and to inspire and stimulate the laymen and laywomen in their religious practices. In the Sangha established by Lord Mahāvīra there was no difference between men and women. Both were regarded as equal. The women were also initiated as nuns, which was revolutionary step at that time.

Now we have to examine how the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra can improve the life of ordinary people and bring peace and prosperity to them. Some critics say that the principles of Jainism are so difficult that ordinary people cannot practice them. This is a fallacy; teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are grouped into two parts: 1. Teachings to Śramaṇas (mendicants), and 2. teachings to Śrāvakas (householders). Śramaṇas have no doubt to follow very

rigorous and extensive restraints because they proceed on the path of Sarvavirati or total renunciation. Once they take Pravrajyā (renunciation), they have to observe the Pañca Mahāvratas or the five great vows of total abstinence from violence, untruth, stealing, sexual indulgence and possessions. They proceed on the path of liberation, which is the state of infinite consciousness, absolute freedom and eternal bliss. They devote their whole life to scriptural study, service to the Guru and dedicate themselves to preaching. But so far as the householders are concerned, the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are much simpler.

Thirty five Rules of Conduct

Jaina Ācāryas have described the duties and responsibilities of the laity elaborately. These are called 35 virtues of a Mārgānusārī (one who follows the path shown by Jinas). These rules prevent a laity from deviating the spiritual path and prompt him to rise higher. It is the means by which he gets the right attitude of living. Due to these virtues he begins to stop the karmic influx. From the sincere practise of these rules, his soul gets purified. Ācārya Shri Bhuvanbhanusurishwarji has nicely classified these rules into following four groups in his book, A Handbook of Jainology: eleven obligatory duties, eight derogations that ought to be discarded, eight virtues to be cultivated, and eight endeavours to be carried out with diligence.

I. The eleven duties:

A householder devotee should follow some kind of business, trade or profession, which is not of an ignoble or degrading nature. He should do so in a just and honest way and in proportion to his capital, or in case of employment under other people, in proportion to his strength. The business should not

harm any men, animals, fish, birds or insects. Therefore, the business must not be that of a butcher, brewer, wine merchant, gun-maker or anything, which involves destruction of life. When money is earned honestly the mind remains peaceful and the wealth is enjoyed without any disturbance.

The layman should not marry a person from the same lineage. He should marry a person of different Gotra but with similar character, taste, culture, and language etc. This will result in harmonious relationship thereby rendering discord and misunderstanding less likely. He should respect parents and elders. He should serve the ascetics who come to him for Bhikṣā (food) as well as the guests with due respect. He should also help the needy and the destitute and satisfy their needs. He should maintain his dependents and make them work for the well being of the family. He should live in a house, which is not accessible to thieves and rogues and cannot be entered by undesirable people. He should dress according to his means but the dress should be decent and not gaudy. His expenses should be in proportion to his income.

He should eat and drink at the proper time in conformity with his constitution. Excessive eating should be avoided. Food should be taken only at home. He should fast when he is suffering from indigestion.

II. Discarding eight derogations:

These include giving up (i) calumny, (ii) betraying the trust, deceiving and cheating, (iii) gambling, (iv) the six internal foes, viz., anger, pride, deceit, greed, attachment and aversion, (v) places of danger like battle field, places having epidemic or

famine etc. (vi) meat eating, intoxicants and (vii) crimes which might lead to imprisonment, and (viii) slavery of the senses.

He should properly perform his household duties but should not be careless in his religious duties.

III. The eight virtues to be cultivated:

A layman should acquire the habit of discretion between right and wrong acts and should keep away from ignoble sinful acts. He should be a far-sighted person and plan properly for the future needs of his family. In undertaking any responsibility, he should always consider his strength and weaknesses. He should always keep his temperament, voice and appearance gently and serene.

IV. The eight endeavours:

He should always keep the company of noble people and admire their virtues. He should have compassionate attitude towards all and help everyone without selfishness. He should express gratitude to all who help him with humility.

A layman should engage himself in *Svādhyāya* of holy texts everyday and he should listen to the discourses of monks and nuns. He should try to understand the *Tattvas* and meaning of the *Dharma-śāstras* to know the path of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct.

These virtues are prescribed so that a laity could gain material prosperity and also spiritual advancement in his life. Thus we find that Jaina $\overline{A}c\overline{a}ryas$ have given very deep thought to practical day-to-day life of the laities. All these qualities will

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make a laity spiritually conscious and make his life peaceful and harmonious.

Practice for higher advancement

Those who want to rise higher in spiritual life, must follow five Anuvratas (primary vows) prescribed for a householder which consists of partial observance of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity (to refrain from all illicit sexual relationships) and non-possession. A householder should devote part of his time in Dāna (charity), Śīla (virtuous life), Tapas (austerity) and Bhāvanā (purification of thoughts).

Non-violence

Non-violence is the sense of equality of all living creatures. If you feel that every soul is independent and autonomous, you will never trample on its right to live. This leads you to compassion and kindness towards all living beings and results in harmony and peace in the world. The principle of non-violence in Jainism embraces not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants, vegetables and creatures of earth, air and water. It is the holy law of compassion extended to body, mind and speech of a living being. Lord Mahāvīra says, "All living beings desire to live. They detest sorrow and death and desire a long and happy life. Hence, one should not inflict pain on any creature, nor have any feeling of antipathy or enmity. One should be friendly towards all creatures.¹"

The other vows

All the other vows preached in Jainism are only an extension of the vow of non-violence. Truthfulness is essential to keep order and harmony in society. There are moments in life

when one has to take hardships to keep up one's convictions. In business and in our day-to-day dealings our truthfulness is put to test. We have to practise it constantly to maintain our integrity. While observing the vow of non-stealing, one is required to earn his livelihood by honest means. We violate the vow of *Aparigraha* by accepting and holding what is not needed by us. What we possess in surplus has to go to those who need it badly. The principle of continence is significant in maintaining the morals in society.

Thus, we see that these principles preached by Lord Mahāvīra, are universal in character and are applicable to every individual in any society. Even ordinary people can practise these simple rules without the least philosophical speculation.

Integral view of Life

Jainism takes an integral view of life. Either faith or only knowledge by itself cannot take us to the path of salvation. We should have a combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct to tread the path of salvation. These constitute the three jewels of Jainism. Without right faith, there is no right knowledge and without right knowledge there is no virtuous conduct. Lord Mahāvīra says, "By knowledge one understands the nature of substances; by faith one believes in them; by conduct one puts an end to the flow of *karmas* and by austerity one attains purity.²"

Concept of Karma

The significant achievement of Tīrthankara Mahāvīra's revolution in spiritual field was the upholding of the concept of karma in place of God, the creator. He said that man is the

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architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts and not by the grace of any external agency. God is devoid of attachment; hence, there is no need for Him to create this universe, which is beginningless and endless.

Every inexplicable event in the life of an individual occurs due to the *karmas* accumulated in his previous birth. *Karma* is conceived as something essentially material, which gets interlinked with soul, which is conscious. As particles of dust get attached to the body smeared with oil, so does *karma* with the soul. Lord Mahāvīra says, "Attachment and aversion are the root causes of *karma* and *karma* originates from infatuation. *Karma* is the root cause of birth and death and these (birth and death) are said to be the source of misery. The further adds, "None can escape the effect of their own past *karmas*.

Religion in day-to-day Activities

A householder should lead his life in such a way that he continues religious practices faithfully everyday. There are six essentials, which a Śrāvakas (householder) is expected to practice everyday in his life. These are enumerated below:

1. Sāmāyika: It is defined as, "Sāmāyika is to be devoid of attachment and aversion and to be indifferent to life and death, gain and loss, fortune and misfortune, friend and foe, joy and sorrow. A householder should do at least one Sāmāyika a day for 48 minutes. In this period, he should remain aloof from his domestic and business activities. He should devote his time in self-contemplation, meditation and scriptural study.

- 2. Caturvimsatistava: Worship of twenty-four *Tīrthaṅkaras* by reciting their *stotras* and *bhajans*. *Tīrthaṅkaras* are the deities free from attachment and aversion and by their worship we try to adhere to at least some of their virtues in our life.
- 3. **Vandana:** A Śrāvaka should go everyday to the Sādhus (mendicants) and Sādhvīs (nuns) and offer his reverential salutation. Association with such holy people results in development of virtues in life.
- 4. **Pratikramaņa:** In this, self-contemplation and introspection should be done in the morning and in the evening. He should check up whether he is developing good qualities. If he has committed any mistake he should repent for the same so that such mistakes do not recur.
- 5. **Kāyotsarga:** This literary means abandonment of body. It is done in a standing or sitting posture of meditation. This helps in keeping the mind under control. It is said, "Just as fire fanned by powerful winds destroys heaps of firewood in no time, so also the fire of meditation destroys heaps of *karmas* in no time. ⁶"
- 6. **Pratyākhyāna:** A Śrāvaka should take some vows everyday to purify his life. The aim of life is to realise the distinction between body and soul. The soul is everlasting but the body is perishable. Through *Pratyākhyāna* we develop qualities of self and abandon the negative traits, which hamper our spiritual progress.

Jaina Art of Living

Jainism is a living religion. There are numerous monks and nuns and nearly ten million laities continuing the tradition, following virtually the same path prescribed by *Jinas*. Though the

path of monks and nuns is very difficult, the path prescribed for the householders is much simpler. Here the stress is laid on simplicity and nobility. They should lead a life full of virtues and should keep away from the six vices. This practise has resulted in harmony and peace in individual and family life. Due to this, even in the modern age, Jaina laity practise complete vegetarianism and do not take any intoxicants. They are also socially conscious and run a large number of charitable institutions for the cause of education, medical benefits and for service to the downtrodden.

References:

¹ Ācārāṅga- sūtra 1.2.3.4

² Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 28.35

³ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 32.7

⁴ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 4.3

⁵ Mūlācāra, 23

⁶ Dhyāna-Śataka, 101

EDUCATIONAL VALUES OF LORD MAHĀVĪRA*

In the year 2001, we celebrated the 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahāvīra, who was the 24th Jaina Tīrthankara. Among all the great personalities of the world, he is remembered with great respect and reverence. He realised his true self and attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities and penances. He was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. His preachings are relevant even today and have special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind.

The preachings of Lord Mahāvīra are preserved in Jaina Agamas. The Agamic literature of Jains mainly consists of thirty-two texts and is available in Prakrit language, which was the language of common people prevalent at that time. The Agamas cover the knowledge of a vast array of subjects including Philosophy, Ethics, Religion, Logic, Metaphysics, Cosmology and Astrology. In this article, we will deal with some of the educational values taught by Lord Mahāvīra, which are highly relevant for the modern society.

Lord Mahāvīra said that right faith; right knowledge and right conduct together will lead a man to the path of perfection.

^{*} This talk was delivered at a seminar on 'Value Education' organised by Vidya Bharati All India Educational Organisation, Tamil Nadu Branch, in Chennai on 7 July 2002.

He explained that by knowledge one understands the nature of substances, by faith one believes in them, by conduct one puts an end to the flow of *karmas* and by austerity one attains purity.

He laid great stress on right faith, which is the basis of getting spiritual knowledge. He said that the value of right faith is much greater than possessing all the treasures of the three worlds. He also said that the most important thing in life is knowledge but knowledge should be of right type. He defined right knowledge as that which helps to understand the truth, controls the mind and purifies the soul.

In educational values he laid great stress on character-building qualities. He said that even a little knowledge would yield great fruit if it were accompanied by virtuous conduct. Without character, human birth is futile. He gave a very comprehensive definition of noble conduct. He said that it comprises of self-control, compassion, truth, non-stealing, contentment, right faith, knowledge and austerity. Noble conduct is the leader, which leads man to liberation, which is the ultimate goal of human life.

Lord Mahāvīra gave great importance to $\overline{A}c\overline{a}ryas$ in imparting of knowledge. The $\overline{A}c\overline{a}rya$ should lead a life of austerity and penance. He said, "Just as a lamp lights hundreds of other lamps and yet remains lighted, so are the $\overline{A}c\overline{a}ryas$ who enlighten others and remain enlightened themselves."

A student should devote his life in acquiring the right type of knowledge. He said that a student should remain away from the following five obstacles, which are hindrances in the path of acquiring knowledge:

- 1. Pride,
- 2. Anger,
- 3. Carelessness,
- 4. Illness, and
- 5. Idleness.

He laid down eight conditions that define a person as worthy of acquiring knowledge:

- 1. Not to indulge in ridiculous gossip,
- 2. Not to lose control of mind and the senses,
- 3. Not to disclose secrets of others,
- 4. Not to be indisciplined,
- 5. Not to be blameworthy,
- 6. Not to be covetous,
- 7. Not to be short-tempered, and
- 8. Not to forsake truth.

He laid great emphasis on humility. He said, "He who is modest gains knowledge and he who is arrogant fails to gain it. Only he who knows these two axioms can be educated and enlightened." He further said, "Learning tempered with humility is beneficial in this world and the next. Just as a plant cannot grow without water, learning will not be fruitful without humility."

He also laid stress on vigilance. He said that a student should remain away from:

- 1. Intoxication,
- 2. Merriment,
- 3. Passions,

- 4. Inertia, and
- 5. Gossip.

He said that an indolent person can never be happy and a lethargic person can never acquire knowledge. He further said, "O man! Always be vigilant. He who is vigilant gains more and more knowledge. He who is unvigilant is not blessed. Blessed is he who is always vigilant."

He advised the students to use the present moment most purposefully. He said, "Follow the path of righteousness and waste not a single moment. Life is full of obstacles and so one should not postpone anything for tomorrow."

A student should always keep the company of virtuous people and avoid the company of the wicked. He said, "Just as water loses its inherent nature on contact with fire, so also the pious abandon their virtues when they associate themselves with the wickeds."

Lord Mahāvīra taught spiritual values as explained above, which are an essential part of quality education. Today these values are neglected with the result that we find violence, disorder and chaos in the modern society. Hence, there is a great need for the people to be of sterling character, to realise which of these noble values should be taught to the younger generation.

Chapter - V

NON-VIOLENCE IN TODAY'S WORLD*

Ahimsā is the essence of Dharma. It is what makes the functioning of the society possible. Much more, it is a virtue that nurtures reverence bringing within it the honour and dignity to all forms of life. Compassion and kindness are really expression of this basic value, which when practised and reciprocated results in peace and harmony in the world. Violence is deviation from Dharma and hence is the root cause of all evils in society.

The quintessence of Lord Mahāvīra's teachings is that *Dharma* is most auspicious and it sustains the universe. *Ahimsā* (non-violence), self-restraint and austerity are the basic expressions and constituents of *Dharma*. The principle of *Ahimsā* in Jainism embraces not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants, vegetables and creatures in earth, air and water. It is holy law of compassion extended to body, mind and speech of every living person.

In the words of Lord Mahāvīra, "Not to kill any living being is the foundation of all wisdom. Certainly, one has to understand that non-violence and equality of all living beings are essentials of *Dharma*." ² Lord Mahāvīra emphasised reverence to all forms of

^{*} Delivered at the International Jaina Convention, Chicago, organised by the Federation of Jaina Associations in North America, on 6 July 2001.

life and said, "All living beings desire to live, they wish to relish pleasure; loath misery, shun annihilation; enjoy life and like to live long." ³ In short, life is dear to all beings. He further said, "Knowing that all the evils and sorrows arise from injury to living beings, and (knowing further) that it leads to unending enmity and hatred, and is the (root) cause of great fear, a wise man, who has become awakened, should refrain from all violent (harmful) activities." ⁴

Today mankind has forgotten the above values of *Ahimsā*. The result is that it is suffering from the effects of violence, hatred, disharmony and degradation of all resources of nature. Let us try to take remedial steps so that mankind leads a life full of harmony and happiness.

Man: an Economic Machine?

The modern civilisation based entirely on the material i.e. the economic plane has resulted in the persona of man being cabined into an economic animal. Naturally, it has not helped him to attain any measure of real happiness. He has tried several '-isms', but they have not solved his problems. The latest striking example of Communism is before us. Born with a loud bang for ensuring welfare and dignity of man, and for equality and upliftment of the common masses, it has collapsed like a house of cards. The masses in Communist countries themselves have risen in revolt and thrown it into the dustbin of history -their dreams of a proletariat of heaven having turned into a nightmare of serfdom and starvation. The same is going to be the fate of the western society dominated by American Capitalism. Mr. E. F. Schumacher says that America having just 6 percent of world's population is

cornering 40 percent of the world's resources and yet the average level of happiness of the people there has not improved. ⁵ On the contrary, in that country families are broken up, the relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children are snapped. Individuals feel isolated and alienated with the sense of vacuum and boredom oppressing them - there is that growing inner feeling of futility and absurdity. Any number of remedies likes group therapy; drugs, sexual games and all the rest have failed. Educational experts say that children are more at home with drugs, television, games, etc., than with their parents or their brothers and sisters. In short, considering economic growth alone as the yardstick for measuring standard of life, has verily led to destruction of human personality. It has made man 'a clog in the wheel' and destroyed the natural rhythm of his life.

A Planet in Trouble

For centuries, the dominant attitude in the western world towards the nature was that it existed for the benefit of mankind. According to them man is the supreme animal and all agencies of nature are his subordinates. Man can exploit and use them according to his whims and fancies. Francis Bacon wrote 400 years ago that the world is made up for man, not man for the world. The result of this attitude is that the global economy is expanding amidst an all-round deterioration of the environment today. This deterioration has reached such a high level that it threatens the very existence of the planet earth. The very aim of man to control nature through science and technology speaks of his greed and exploitation. This is resulting in serious damages to nature and environment. Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1972 in the London Observer, "We are suffering from having sold out our

souls to the pursuit of maximising material wealth, a pursuit which is spiritually wrong and practically unattainable." ⁶ In the recent world we have seen disastrous consequences of degradation of nature and its agencies. We have experienced the chocking air pollution in Mexico, the deadly aftermath of the Chernobyl accident in Ukraine, the destruction of the rain forests in Brazil, the death of Swedish lake from acid rain, heavy pollution in the mighty rivers like the Ganges and the horror of the chemical disaster in Bhopal. Wherever we look, we see our planet as one in trouble.

Wild Life

Unrestricted hunting of animals for food, fur or fun is threatening the very existence of many species. The share of the birds, mammals, and fish vulnerable or in immediate danger of extinction is now estimated at 11 percent of the world's 8,615 bird species, 25 percent of the world's 4,355 mammal species, and 34 Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Hon'ble percent of all fish species. Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India expressed concern in her millennium message in the following words, "This past century has been the cruellest in Science was harnessed to business. Progress was measured by profits. We invented factory farming, battery cages, vivisection, mechanised slaughterhouses, marine parks, whaling and trawling. Billions of animals were slaughtered, mutilated, blinded, beaten and slaved." According to Greenpeace magazine, the population of African elephants came down drastically from 15 lacs to just 6 lacs within a period of 10 years from 1981 to 1990. In October 1989, in an effort to stop the killing of elephants, the convention of International Trade in Endangered Species voted to ban the trading of ivory.

Rain Forests

Rain forests are victims of timber and meat industries. Millions of acres are cleared and stripped annually to graze cattle for meat production and to grow billions of tons of soybean to feed cattle. If the United States, Canada, Sweden and Russia continue chopping down their forests, the results could be just as devastating for the global eco-system as the destruction of rain forests in Africa or tropical forests in New Guinea.

Industrial Accidents

Major accidents have been caused by chemical industries. As is well known, a valve broke out in 1985 at the Union Carbide Chemical Plant at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, allowing 30 tons of lethal methyl-isocyanate gas to escape. Over 2000 people living nearby were killed and another 17000 received permanent injuries.

Nuclear Waste

Toxic chemicals are the regular sources of danger but the most toxic is nuclear waste, and its safe disposal is a problem that has yet to be solved. Nuclear plants in the United States are holding over 15000 metric tons of high level waste, which will remain harmful to human beings for thousands of years. The worst nuclear disaster happened in 1986 at Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine. An estimated 20000 people died and 500000 persons received high radiation doses as a result of this explosion. The blast was equivalent to 500 atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

Meat and the Environment

Killing animals for food, fur, leather, ivory, cosmetics and other industrial uses is one of the most environmentally destructive practices taking place on the earth today. The meat industry is linked to deforestation, desertification, water pollution, water shortages, air pollution and soil erosion. Neal D. Barnard, President of Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (U.S.A.) says, "If you are a meat eater, you are contributing to the destruction of the environment, whether you know it or not." Jeremy Rifkin rightly warned in 1992, "Today, millions of Americans, Europeans, and Japanese are consuming countless hamburgers, steaks and roasts, oblivious to the impact their dietary habits are having on the biosphere and the very survivability of life on earth. Every pound of grain-fed flesh is secured at the expense of a burned forest, a barren field, a driedup river, and the release of millions of tons of carbon-dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane into the skies." 8 About 40 percent of the land in the western United States is used for grazing beef cattle. About half of the world's grain is consumed by animals that are later slaughtered for meat. It takes sixteen pounds of grain and soybeans to produce one pound of beef. About 20 vegetarians can be fed on the land that it takes to feed one meat eater.

Reducing or eliminating meat consumption would have substantial positive effects on environment. Fewer trees would be cut, less soil would be eroded, and desertification would be substantially reduced. Further, eliminating meat eating would release a vast quantity of food grain for human consumption, thus helping solve the world food problem. And on an ethical level,

stopping animal killing help to induce a greater respect for all kinds of life.

Consumerism

The spread of consumerism is rooted in the western thought that more and more production is the solution of all problems and that this will bring economic and social advancement to all people. To enrich one's own life, one should increase his possessions and accumulation of goods. Today, people in America own and consume twice as much as they did in 1950. The question arises whether they are twice as much happy as they were in 1950. This philosophy of consumerism is based purely on amoral principles, where self-interest is predominant and social welfare occupies secondary place. Environmental de-generation may be attributed to the population explosion, but an objective study will reveal that it is also because of the consumerist behaviour of the wealthy.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says in its "Living Planet Report 2000" that at today's level of economic activity, the human race is operating at 30 percent above what the earth can provide without suffering serious damage." It further says that if people in the developing world consumed as much as those living in the richest countries, the human race will need another two planets like earth to cope up with their demand. Chapter four of Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 points out: "The major cause of continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in developed countries."

Lord Mahāvīra said in *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*, "Where there is inner desire for material gain and possession of worldly objects of enjoyments, there is greed." ⁹ This greed results in possessing more and more material objects. There is a clear link between accumulation for its own sake and restlessness. The theory of self-interest for self-promotion lacks human values.

The modern world of consumer articles has become so overpowering that no average person can remain unaffected by it. In such a set up of indifference to the world of objects is only seen in the present scenario as a psychological abnormality. As a consequence, people with limited means are developing such traits that are inimical to the individuals in particular and to society in general. The crime rate is now becoming alarmingly high. Consumerism with its hypnotising characteristics makes people blindly imitate others, taking the shape of a kind of mass-hysteria in people. Economic growth thus leads to psychological and moral degeneration. Disturbance of mental peace, envy, exploitation of others, jealously etc., are the natural consequences of growing consumerism.

There is, therefore, a need to see the world and our very selves in a new light. Rampant materialistic desires are the natural result of a mechanistic scientific worldview that defines human as a biological machine, which has come by chance in a cosmos devoid of divine guidance and purpose.

Towards the Solution

Seeing that the world is leading towards environmental catastrophe, violence and hatred in different groups makes one wonder if it is possible to make the life of the people peaceful and

harmonious. This requires immediate attention and necessary action on war footing. The teachings of Lord Mahāvīra, though 2500 years old, are relevant even today and provide correct solution to the problems of mankind. The following corrective steps have to be taken:

- 1. Reduction of desires for material objects: Environmental and other problems cannot be solved unless people reduce their desires for material consumption. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Nature can fulfil all the needs of mankind but not its greed." Over-exploitation of natural resources by a small group of wealthy people deprives a large population of their basic needs of materials. Hence, man should make optimum use of the available resources.
- 2. Spiritual base of economic system: Lord Mahāvīra laid emphasis on having control over economic needs and advocated self-restraint in their use. Man is not an economic unit only but he is basically a spiritual personality. The mechanical worldview advocated by western thinkers has not solved the problems of humanity. Lord Mahāvīra emphasised self-realization as the goal of human life.

The Principle of Aparigraha

Aparigraha taught by Lord Mahāvīra is a realistic, practical and rational principle with a solid foundation for social upliftment. Lord Mahāvīra says that all material comforts and pleasures can never satiate anybody and give him true happiness. In his own words, "Even if this whole world full of wealth is given to a man, he will not be contented, for it is very difficult to satisfy the desires of an avaricious man." He preached the doctrine of non-possession to limit the desires for worldly pursuits. He says, "It is owing to attachment that a man commits

violence, utters lies, commits theft, indulges in sex and develops a yearning for unlimited hoardings." Possessiveness and greed are the main causes, which create tension in the life of an individual and also in the society at large. Hence, an aspirant should limit his possessions and desires to the minimum extent.

Lord Mahāvīra said that the source of happiness and peace lies in the individual himself and not in the outside world. Man should respect all agencies of nature and live in co-existence with them in a harmonious way. Man should limit his possessions to avoid wastage and maintain them carefully to last longer, so that the total stock of things is used by the vast population. This factor makes it all the more necessary to control consumerism. A shift from an economy of acquisition to an economy of needs is a necessity for a country like ours, which is suffering from overpopulation. Science, technology and economics have to orient themselves with ethics, without which the humanity cannot make the larger number of people happy.

Lord Mahāvīra laid great stress on the right attitude, self-discipline and carefulness. He said that a man should continuously watch his own behaviour so that it does not result in any injury to any living being. Jaina ethics give great attention to life-preservation, life-protection and kindness to all forms of life. His teachings of non-violence, restricting the desires and giving away in charity are very much needed to reduced violence, selfishness and degradation of life values.

Need for preserving Life-Values

Today life values are degrading. Man has become selfcentred and greedy. The problems faced by humanity are inequality, improper distribution of natural resources, racial discrimination, and economic hardships faced by a large population and the hazards of religious and cultural fundamentalism. These can be solved by understanding the true aim of life, which is to develop values and not merely enjoyment of more and more material and sensual objects. Today, there is an urgent need to understand and imbibe the life values of nonviolence, compassion, restraint of desires and equality taught by the Great Master more than 2500 years ago.

There is some awakening in the present world and many right-thinking people have started giving attention to life-values to make life of common people healthy, happy and harmonious. The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2000 as the 'International Year for the Culture of Peace'. Culture is about how we live our lives, how we think, speak and behave. On 9 December 2000, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then honourable Prime Minister of India signed the UNESCO Manifesto 2000 propagating six core values for a culture of peace and non-violence. The Manifesto, drafted by a group of Noble Peace Prize winners, solicits signature support from people across the globe to practise values like:

- Respect for life
- Reject violence
- > Share with others
- > Listen to understand
- Preserve the planet
- Re-discover solidarity

The above manifesto is based on the principles of non-violence (reverence for all forms of life), non-possession, and values of life. There is great need today to imbibe the above teachings so that they become a part of our day-to-day life. These teachings will inspire every person to lead a happy, peaceful and humanitarian life.

References:

- ¹ Daśavaikālika-sūtra, 1.1.
- ² Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, 1.11.10.
- ³ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.2.3.63.
- ⁴ Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, 1.1.13.
- ⁵ January-February issue, pp. 20.
- Divine Nature, Michael A. Cremo and Mukunda Goswami, pp. 9, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Mumbai 400 049.
- The Hindu, Chennai edition, 16 December 2000.
- Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture, Rifkin and Jeremy, pp. 226-227, Dutton, New York.
- ⁹ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, 8.16.
- ¹⁰ Bhāva Pāhuḍa, 132.
- ¹¹ The Hindu, Chennai edition, 10 December 2000.

MAHĀVĪRA: THE GREAT WANDERER*

Who is a wanderer: the spirit which travels and yet travels not, which is far and near as well, which resides within and without - says the *Īśāvāśyopaniṣad*. In the same vein, the Jaina dictum says - the medium of motion (*dharma*) provides movement to the spirit (and matter); otherwise the universe would come to a stand still, like water helping the motion of fish. Similarly, the medium of rest (*adharma*) provides steadiness; otherwise there would be no stability in this universe, like the shade of a tree providing rest to the weary travellers. ¹

The spirit wanders from one birth to the next, moving on and onwards, a seemingly endless search, searching for that which is in one's own being. Like the Kasturi deer, which is intoxicated by the fragrance and jumps about searching for it, not knowing that the fragrance is within its own being.

One can discuss this wandering at many levels, pondering over its geographical as well as metaphysical significance. Particularly motivating are the wanderings of the ancient seers, one of whom was Lord Mahāvīra whose wanderings were not just to sanctify the Earth, but a journey of the higher realms as well.

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His wanderings can be interpreted at so many dimensions and levels - because it satisfies the queries at all those levels.

It was an era dominated by the caste system, when the common man was in awe of the Brahmanical priests, accepting blindly their monopoly and superiority, when Vedic injunctions were followed fearfully, when animal sacrifices were justified for the fruition of the Yajñas, when the Śūdras and the women were treated as unequal and inferior, when religion was manipulated for the purpose of power and dominion. It was an era that saw the vision of the ancient seers and Rsīs being suppressed by the power grabbing leaders who were editing and presenting their own selfish interpretations of religion. In such a scenario of political unrest and religious disorder, there was a need for a code of conduct incorporated in a vision of peace and non-violence. Such a vision arose in the form of Lord Mahāvīra - a seer of truth, a fountain of compassion, a life of seeking and self-realizing.

This spiritual path, which he walked upon, had been sanctified by twenty-three *Tirthankaras* before him, the first of whom was Lord Rṣabhadeva and the twenty-third was Lord Pārśva.² This article will explore the social vision and religious insights of the great teacher through his geographical wanderings.

The journey begins at Kuṇḍgrāma, a splendid city in the heart of Vaishali kingdom near modern Patna in 599 B.C. Born to King Siddhārtha and Queen Triślā, this divine child was named Vardhamāna. At birth itself, he was endowed with Śruta-jñāna (knowledge of testimony), Mati-jñāna (knowledge derived through the sense organs and the mind) and Avadhi-jñāna (clairvoyance). The presence of these three kinds of knowledge at birth is a remarkable feature of a Tīrthańkara.

Strong and fearless, this extraordinary boy grew up to be kind and religious as well. Detached to the riches and luxuries around him, he remained engrossed in contemplation about the problems of life and the world. He was deeply troubled by the adverse situations prevalent in society. Superstitions, animal sacrifices, inhuman treatment of women and Śūdras - awakened a silent revolution in him.

At the age of thirty, he embraced the life of a monk. Seated in a golden palanquin, in a magnificent procession followed by thousands of citizens, he moved to the Jñātakhanda garden. There, under an Aśoka tree, after observing a two day fast, he removed his princely attire and wore white robes. He then pulled out his hair by his hands and bowing to the Siddhas, the liberated souls, he initiated himself into the holy order. A princely life was renounced for a life of bareness and tolerance. Pledging to abstain from sinful deeds and tolerating hardships with equanimity, he ventured on the path. Prince Vardhamana became Śramana Mahāvīra. He was now called Mahāvīra - the courageous one because of the great vows, which indicate his immense inner strength. He now gained the Manah-paryaya-jñāna (fourth degree of knowledge - telepathy) by which he knew the thoughts of all sentient beings in a particular space-time. This initiation was the end of one path and the beginning of another. The inner journey unfolded.

The first phase of his wanderings lasted for twelve and a half years. Engrossed in spiritual contemplation, he was silent most of the time. Determined to overcome the needs for bodily comforts, he subjected himself to all kinds of climatic and natural disturbances. Not discriminating between habitable and

inhabitable regions, between smooth and rough paths, between safe and dangerous pathways, Mahāvīra wandered on. Nor did he pay heed to any advice. Steadfast in his vows, engrossed in the contemplation of the self, unaffected by human, natural and supernatural sufferings and tortures, he moved on.

There was the Yakṣa in Asthigrāma who tortured him for an entire night by assuming demoniac and animal forms; there was the ferocious snake, Caṇḍakauśika, in Kanakakhal, who was a terror in the entire region till his meeting with Mahāvīra who remained unaffected by his hisses and deadly poison; there was the shepherd in Chamani village who was so angry with Mahāvīra for not taking care of his oxen, not understanding that Mahāvīra's silence arose from meditation, that he hammered nails into Mahāvīra's ears. At many places, the villagers were hostile and extremely violent. There are many such other tales during his wanderings, all of deadly tortures, but all borne patiently and unflinchingly. If ever he spoke, it was a language of compassion and wisdom, which transformed such cruel hearts.

Apart from these soul-stirring descriptions of adversities faced by Mahāvīra, we also have accounts of the rigorous austerities observed by him while he was engrossed in Sādhanā. During this period of twelve and a half years, he ate meagre food for three hundred and fifty days only. He observed fasts for fifteen, thirty and also for a hundred and twenty days at a stretch. Immense was his will power, immense was his equanimity and tolerance.

It was an inner peace undisturbed by external forces. It was a conquest over the demands of the body, mind and speech. The final and most painful of all tests was the hammering of the nails into the ears. With that period, the adversities were over. This spiritual hero had defeated the *karmic* shackles with his army of determination and stead-fastedness. He became a *Jina*, a conqueror.

This period of adversities and austerities reached its zenith at Jambhiyagrāma on the banks of the Rjubālukā river. It was the tenth day of the bright half of Vaiśākha month. Fasting for two and half days, meditating under a huge Sāla tree in the Godohika (milking) posture facing the sun, this ascetic attained Kevala-jñāna (the fifth degree of knowledge - omniscience) - a state of infinite knowledge, infinite intuition, infinite energy and infinite bliss.

"Now the venerable ascetic Mahāvīra became a *Jina* (conqueror), an *Arhat* (worthy of worship) and a *Kevalī* (omniscient). He became the twenty-fourth *Tīrthaṅkara* of the present era" ⁴ (*Kalpasūtra*, 121). Hereafter, Śramaṇa Mahāvīra came to be known as Bhagavāna Mahāvīra.

The inner journey unfolded further. The journey hereafter was that of the teacher, the guide, and the preacher. After attaining omniscience, Lord Mahāvīra began to give discourses. As before, he wandered from one place to another on foot. From Jambhiyagrāma he moved on to Madhyama Pāvāpurī. There, a Brahmin named Somila was organizing a large religious sacrifice. Several Vedic scholars along with their disciples were assembled there; chief among them was Indrabhūti Gautama. They had all heard of Lord Mahāvīra's enlightenment but were disbelieving of it.

As soon as Indrabhūti saw Mahāvīra, Mahāvīra addressed him, "Oh Indrabhūti! You have doubts about the self." How did Mahāvīra know? Indrabhūti had not uttered a word regarding this

doubt about the existence of the soul. So, it is true, thought Indrabhūti, this being is a *kevalī*, one who has complete knowledge about all things of all times. The universe has no secrets from such a being. All is known. All is transparent. Indrabhūti was completely humbled.

Equally humbled were ten other eminent Vedic scholars of that gathering who came forward to meet Mahāvīra, each of them with a different metaphysical doubt lingering in the mind. To each of them, Mahāvīra first revealed the doubt without their stating the same and then put forward convincing replies. No further proof was required, nothing more was needed to establish Mahāvīra as a true teacher. Fully satisfied and happy, all of them along with their 400 disciples each, surrendered at the feet of the Master. Thus, 4411 initiations took place in a single day.

This is the meaning of *Tīrthańkara* - one who establishes the *Tīrtha* or the religious order. Thus emerged the religious order of Mahāvīra - the *Caturvidha Saṅgha* - the four-fold congregation of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

Such a magnificent incident reached far and wide and thousands of men and women came to listen to the discourses of Mahāvīra wherever he went. It is said that not just humans, but animals and birds were also attracted to his discourses. Rich and poor, kings and their ministers, merchants, farmers, craftsmen and all classes of people were sanctified by his sermons. Many became his disciples and followers.

The Sangha evolved efficiently under the able administration of Mahāvīra. Indrabhūti became the first prime disciple of Mahāvīra. He, along with the ten Vedic scholars

became the eleven *Gaṇadharas*. They formed the nucleus of the new order and composed all the rules of conduct and the scriptural literature, which they later narrated to other disciples.

The Sangha was instrumental in providing proper guidance to the monks and nuns and in inspiring the laymen and laywomen to look after the monks and nuns. In the Sangha, no distinction was made between men and women, and Brahmins and Śūdras. All were inspired, all were embraced and all were transformed. Initiation of women as nuns was indeed a revolution in those times. For Mahāvīra, it was just a natural culmination of his respect for humanity.

The Sangha expanded very quickly. Soon, there were 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns, 1,59,000 laymen and 3,18,000 laywomen. Their code of conduct consisted of a five-fold spiritual discipline. These are five vratas or vows of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-possession. This scheme of vows was very strict and rigid for the ascetics called the Mahāvratas (great vows). They were advised not to stay in any place for more than a month except during Cāturmāsa (the rainy season) and to wander about only on foot.

The householders had to follow similar five vows, but their rules were modified and less strict known as the *Anuvratas* (small vows). Their duties extended to taking care of the ascetics, providing a temporary dwelling for them and propagating the cause of religion. This four-fold religious order was a self-governing and self-sufficient system.

For thirty long years, this great wanderer moved from place to place preaching the Jaina religion and its code of conduct as a way of life. He visited important places like Kāśī, Kośala, Vatsa,

Campā, Pāñcāla, Magadha, Rajagṛha, Aṅga, Baṅga, Kaliṅga and many others. The Jaina canonical literature ⁵ has detailed descriptions of the wanderings of Mahāvīra and the transformation of the people based on his noble teachings. Thousands of people from various cities and villages and from different walks of life joined the religious order of Mahāvīra.

Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha was a Buddhist but his Queen was a great devotee of Mahāvīra. We find a vivid description of the dialogue between Bimbisara and Anathimuni in the Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, which inspired the king to become a well. of Mahāvīra as His and disciple son minister. Abhayakumāra, was also an ardent disciple of Mahāvīra. Cetaka, the head of Vaiśālī republic and maternal uncle of Mahāvīra, greatly contributed in propagating the Jaina religion far and wide. Many kings such as Virangada, Virayasa, Sanjaya, Seya, Siva, Udrayana and Sankha Kasivardhana joined the religious order of Mahāvīra.

The last lap of the great wanderings of Mahāvīra was Pāvā. He came here at the age of seventy-two and stayed in the garden of Rājā Hastipāla. His discourses at Pāvā are recorded in the *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*. Here he sat for his last meditation on a slab of stone. It was in the early hours of the fifteenth day of the dark fortnight of Kārtika month in 527 B.C. that transcending the wandering cycle of birth and death this hero of the spirit attained the state of *Nirvāṇa* and became a *Siddha*.

"And on that night during which the venerable ascetic Mahāvīra attained Nirvāṇa, the eighteen confederate Kings of Kāśī and Kośala, the Mallas and the Lichhavis instituted an illumination with lighted lamps for they said, "Since the internal

(bhāva) light (of intelligence) is gone, let us make an illumination with the external (dravya) light (of matter)" (Kalpasūtra, 127).

References:

- According to Jainism, the whole universe is brought under the two eternal and co-existing categories of spirit ($J\bar{\imath}va$) and non-spirit ($Aj\bar{\imath}va$). $Aj\bar{\imath}va$ is of five kinds: Matter (Pudgala), medium of motion (Dharma), medium of rest (Adharma), space ($\bar{A}k\bar{a}sa$), and time ($K\bar{a}la$). Dharma and Adharma have a special meaning in Jainism as the conditions of motion and rest.
- ² C.D. Sharma in his book, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy writes: "The Jainas believe in 24 Tirthankaras or 'Founders of the Faith' through whom their faith has come down from fabulous antiquity. Mahāvīra, the last of the twenty-four Tirthankaras cannot be regarded as the founder of Jainism because even before him, Jaina teachings were existent. But Mahāvīra gave a new orientation to that faith and therefore modern Jainism may be rightly regarded as a result of his teachings."
- The Jaina theory of knowledge includes five degrees of knowledge that lead to omniscience. All the five are mentioned in this article as attained by Mahāvīra during specific contexts.
- ⁴ The universe is described in Jainism as an eternal cycle of *Yugas*, further sub-divided into 6 periods.
- ⁵ Bhagavatī, Aupapātika, Triśastiśalākāpuruṣa, and Harivamśa Purāṇa.



PART - II APPENDICES

These are extracts put together from talks on different aspects of Jainology in meetings and seminars. Some of these have been condensed, edited and published in the Chennai edition of esteemed national dailies. Here, they have been reproduced to provide a better understanding of the Jaina dictum to the reader.

Appendix I

Four powerful Enemies of Man*

Though a man has to fight against many enemies within, four among them are powerful. They are: anger, pride, deceit and greed. He can put an end to the first one, anger, by being straightforward and the last of them, greed, by developing detachment.

Desire being insatiable, even if a person possesses enormous wealth it will mean nothing for him. To curb the influence of the internal foes the mind should be filled with auspicious thoughts of non-violence, self-control and austerities. Hence, it is necessary for a man to train himself to give up attachment. As the consequences of actions pursue a doer, he should suffer the misery by himself and others cannot share it. The soul within behaves like a friend when righteous acts are performed and as an enemy when unethical deeds are resorted to.

The above statements form part of the teachings of Jainism. They are in the form of aphorisms. In a lecture when a book on

^{*} The Hindu, 22 March 1994

the life and teachings of Lord Mahāvīra was released, Shri Suman Muniji, Secretary of Shri Jaina Śramaṇa Saṅgha, said 'Religion should be reflected in conduct and not merely in speech.' Lord Mahāvīra has established a four-fold path for monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. When a person resorts to the path of purification (dharma), he can attain eternal bliss (mokṣa).

Even an ordinary man and woman can get liberation, in spite of their worldly and social commitments. How is this possible? It is possible when they adopt the path of ethical livelihood and follow the spiritual exercises. A man should not only function, as the head of a family but should also become a humble worker of society. Through a deep study of the methods of contemplation, he can become a successful aspirant gaining access to the path of liberation.

For spiritual development and for destruction of the different types of passions, knowledge of right type, deep faith and impeccable conduct are essential. They will lead a person to the goal of perpetual bliss.

Appendix II

Jainology*

"Salutations to the conquerors of the 'Self' - Namo Arihantāṇam; obeisance to those who have won eternal bliss-Namo Siddhāṇam; praṇāms to revered Ācāryas (heads of Sanghas) - Namo Āyariyāṇam; respects to preceptors (teachers)-Namo Uvajjhāyāṇam; reverential homage to all Sādhus - Namo Loye savvasāhūnam" - a well-known Jaina prayer.

Jaina scriptural wisdom are hailed as $\acute{S}ruta$ (transmitted scriptural wisdom: of $\acute{S}rutis$), $S\bar{u}tra$ (aphorisms) or, more popularly, as $\bar{A}gamas$. These embody the teachings of Tīrthankara (Lord) Mahāvīra conveying the message of universal love, compassion and brotherhood.

To the question asked to him by Indrabhūti Gautama, the first and foremost Gaṇadhara - "What is the essence of being?" Lord Mahāvīra replied succinctly: 'Everything is born; everything perishes inevitably; everything is also permanent' - *Uppannei vā, vigamei vā, dhuvei vā.* This celebrated answer is known as *Tripadī* (the 'three-fold wisdom') on the basis of which the principal scriptures of the Jaina religion have been unfolded to the followers. These are known as *Aṅgas* (limbs) -

- 1. Ācārāṅga, 2. Sūtrakṛtāṅga, 3. Sthānāṅga, 4. Samavāyāṅga,
- 5. Vyākhyāprajñapti (Bhagavatī), 6. Jñātādharmakathā,
- 7. Upāsakadaśānga, 8.Antakṛddaśānga, 9. Anuttaraupapātika,
- 10. Praśna-vyākaraņa, 11. Vipāka, and 12. Drstivāda (now extinct).

^{*} The Indian Express, 23 March 1994

These are essentially of the nature of sermons and gospels with the advisor or narrator commencing thus: "So I have heard!" Besides these angas there are other forms of scriptural wisdom classified as *Upāngas*, *Chedas*, *Mūla-sūtras* and *Prakīrṇakas*. The Ācārāṅga-sūtra is hailed as the most sacred and important of all these. The Jaina scriptures are composed, originally, in Prakrit the language of the common man in those times during the advent of Lord Mahāvīra. Translations of these scriptures and summarised versions in various Indian languages are widely available.

The essential feature of the Jaina philosophy is that it can be considered as monistic realism, dualistic realism, and also pluralistic realism. Jainism adopts the *Anekāntavāda* (multi-fold viewpoints) ultimately advocating *Samanvayavāda* that is reconciliation, unity in diversity and variety in unity.

The Research Foundation for Jainology, Madras, organised last week a one-day seminar on 'Jaina Philosophy' & 'Jaina Religion' at the Department of Jainology, University of Madras as also a function at C. U. Shah Bhavan, Vepery, Madras, where the book in Hindi *Jinavāṇī Ke Motī* (a collection of representative aphorisms from the Jaina canonical literature) authored by Shri Dulichand Jain was released by Madras High Court Judge Shri P. S. Mishra.

Appendix III

Pearls of Jaina Wisdom - I*

In the sixth century B.C. Lord Mahāvīra, the 24th Tīrthankara ('the liberated soul') preached that only one who cultivated the 'Right Faith' could acquire 'Right Knowledge' and thereby become capable of 'Right Conduct'. Action without knowledge and knowledge without action would be utterly meaningless. These three—the 'Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct 'are the three jewels of Jaina Wisdom. Lord Mahāvīra laid particular emphasis on the five great principles, namely, Non-violence, Truth, Non-possessiveness, Non-stealing and Celibacy.

Shri Dulichand Jain, in his book titled Jinavānī Ke Motī (Pearls of Jaina Wisdom) released the other day by Hon'ble Justice P. S. Mishra at a function in a city venue, has meticulously chosen especially inspiring sūtras ('Aphorism' pithy truths) from various Jaina canonical texts and compiled them in a meaningful order. The classification of the sūtras under various titles is fully in keeping with the Jaina tradition. The translations selected are pointedly appropriate and relevant for all times and climes. He has also devoted a few chapters to the life-history and teachings of Lord Mahāvīra.

The basic aim of the publication (it is in Hindi and in an easy understandable style) is to inculcate a positive awareness and understanding, in the minds of the objective reader-follower, of the essential tenets of Jainism.

^{*} The Indian Express, 24 March 1994

Shri Jain's style as commended by Justice Mishra and other dignitaries present at the function is simple, lucid and effective. It has taken him three solid years to prepare this comprehensive publication (about 300 pages, price Rs. 50/- only) that provides a solid foundation about the Jaina principles, theories and truths, fascinating our appreciative minds by its detached, objective and intellectual presentation. A few select aphorisms from this book are summarised below to wet the appetite of the *rasika*.

- (1) The soul is the begetter of both happiness & sorrow, it is its own friend when it treads the path of righteousness and is its own enemy when it treads the forbidden path ($G\bar{t}t\bar{a}$, VI. 5).
- (2) One may conquer countless enemies in the battlefield; but true, supreme victory consists in conquest of the 'self' (Kathopaniṣad).
- (3) One must conquer anger through calmness, pride by modesty, deceit by straightforwardness and greed by contentment (*Kural* verses on these points; chapters 4: 13, 14: 31, to name a few).
- (4) Delusion destroyed is misery destroyed. Craving eliminated is delusion worsted. Greed overcome means craving got rid of. He who owns nothing has greed destroyed (Īśāvāśyopaniṣad, Verse 1).

Appendix IV

Oneness of Religions*

Ācārya Amitagati, a renowned Jaina saint of 11th century A.D., summarised the philosophy of Jainism beautifully in the following verse; "May my soul ever find fulfilment in friendship towards all beings, in reverence to all the virtuous, in compassion towards all suffering creatures, and in remaining neutral even towards those hostile to me, this shall be my prayer ever!"

satveșu maitrī guņișu pramodam,

klisteşu jīveşu kṛpāparatvam /

mādhyastha bhāvam viparīta vṛittau

sadā mamātmā vidadhātu deva//

Compare this with select verses from chapter twelve (verses 13 to 20) of the *Bhagavadgītā* and you will marvel at the oneness of all religions despite their 'apparent' differences.

The Lords says: "He who hates none, he who is ever friendly and compassionate to all, who is devoid of attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain and forgiving such a one is most dear to me indeed". The other verses also detail qualities that are dear to the Lord, that enable man attain to Godhead.

("Adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām.....yaḥ ca me priyaḥ" - eight beautiful verses of Bhagavadgītā- XII.13-20)

^{*} The Indian Express, 23 April 1995

Bhagavāna Mahāvīra, whose 2594th birth anniversary was celebrated recently, was one of the three greatest apostles of non-violence and universal compassion, the other two being Buddha (Mahāvīra's contemporary) and Jesus Christ (born about six hundred years later).

Lord Mahāvīra was the twenty-fourth and the last of the *Tīrthankaras* ("perfect souls") - Rṣabhadeva being the first and Pārśvanātha being the twenty-third and immediate predecessor to Mahāvīra.

These Jaina preceptors, apart from being hailed as *Tīrthaṅkaras*, are also known as '*Jinas*' (conquerors of passions).

Jainism, however, is most prominently associated with Lord Mahāvīra who is revered as the propounder of the basic tenets of this religion.

There are a number of striking similarities between Mahāvīra (known as Vardhamāna in his childhood days), the elder contemporary of Gautama Buddha (known earlier as Siddhārtha), only very few years separating their respective advent.

Vardhamāna Mahāvīra's greatest contribution and revolution in the sphere of religion lies in the fact that he established the doctrine of *karma* in place of God! He stressed that one must improve his soul by his own efforts without resorting to any external agency! (*Bhagavadgītā*, VI. 5): 'Let each man raise the self by soul, not trample down his self, since soul that is self's friend may grow self's foe. Soul is self's friend when self doth rule over self, but self turns enemy if soul's own self hates self as not itself!" ("*Uddharedātmanātmānam.....ripurātmanaḥ*") Edwin Arnold's translation of *Bhagavadgītā*-VI.5.

Appendix V

Bhagavāna Mahāvīra's Teachings*

Following are the summarised points made by Shri Dulichand Jain, Secretary, Research Foundation for Jainology, Madras - 600 001, in the course of a study-circle discussion held recently.

- (1) Bhagavāna Mahāvīra's teachings are simple and explained in *Ardhamāgadhī* language (Buddha used the *Pāli* language: both are similar but not the same). Jaina literature is in *Ardhamāgadhī*, most popular with the common people during that period.
- (2) Bhagavāna Mahāvīra taught simple truths, universal in content and character. The stress was on moral and spiritual upliftment, continually so.
- (3) Jaina monks have no family: nor do they have any property. They practise severe austerities and utilise all their time in meditation, studying Holy Scriptures and giving discourses. They do not involve themselves in worldly ceremonies nor do they enthuse themselves in theological or metaphysical speculations.
- (4) The Jaina monks observe, scrupulously and zealously, the *Pañca Mahāvratas*, the five great vows (a) non-injury to any being, (b) truthfulness, (c) non-stealing, (d) non-possession and (e) non-indulgence in sex (total abstinence).
- (5) 'Non-violence' (Ahimsā) is of course, the central concept of Jaina ethics. Everybody like pleasures and abhor

^{*} The Indian Express, 24 April 1995

pains. Nobody wants to be harmed in any way. Nobody likes to be killed. Hence, one should not cause any harm to any being. One must be most compassionate and friendly towards all living beings.

- (6) According to Mahāvīra, all living beings are guided by their own *karmas*. Events in an individual's life are but the offshoot of *karmas* accumulated in previous births. The soul is thus defiled and will remain so unless it purifies itself by cessation of sinful activities.
- (7) As dust particles stick to a body smeared with oil so does *karma* get stuck to the soul, suffers consequently and undergoes the misery of the cycle of countless births and deaths in diverse forms.
- (8) The influx of *karma* can be restrained by practise of righteousness, control of body, mind and soul through prescribed austerities as advocated by the *Tīrthankaras*.
- (9) When all *karmas* get destroyed in due course the soul attains its highest spiritual potential and goal, enjoys eternal perception, knowledge, eternal bliss and energy.
- (10) Mahāvīra stipulates that there is no God as creator of the universe. The uncreated world naturally has neither beginning nor end.

Appendix VI

Live and Let Live*

Shri Dulichand Jain, Secretary, Research Foundation for Jainology, Madras, spoke on the 'Relevance of non-violence in modern life', under the auspices of 'Nirvāṇa', (a socio-cultural organisation) recently. A brief summary of this talk is given below.

Lord Mahāvīra (599 B.C. to 527 B.C.), the twenty-fourth and last of the *Tīrthankaras*, hailed non-violence as a goddess - 'Bhagavatī Ahimsā'.

Faced with the twin dangers of ecological disaster and nuclear holocaust on the one hand, and the unabashed, unrestrained and harmful pursuit of material and sense pleasures on the other, mankind is groping today for that vital spark of light that can guide its way out of this frightening darkness.

This ray of light, the hope for humanity, can best be provided only by non-violence in speech, manner and conduct at all levels, in all places.

Non-violence is basically an attitude of mind. The mind must be tuned to be ever vigilant, careful and considerate towards all beings. This principle is authoritatively enunciated in the Daśavaikālika-sūtra.

Practice of non-violence makes for better existence and ensures harmony between man and man and between man and nature.

^{*} The Indian Express, 1 November 1995

Lord Mahāvīra stressed that 'with vigilance one should walk, stand, sit, sleep, eat and talk so that sinful *karmic* bondage shall not accrue to the soul'.

Jainism takes an integral view of life. Right knowledge and right conduct are inter-related and man cannot achieve emancipation without any of these three.

The concept of non-violence is supreme *dharma* for every human being - *Ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ*, in simple terms, non-violence connotes non-injury to any being in any form or manner. The concept, in its positive aspect, has sublime and profound implications stressing the virtuous practice of love and compassion for all everywhere, all the time. *Ahimsā* is the sacred law of compassion in body, mind and spirit.

The foundation of Jainism rests basically on non-violence from which only all other vows of abstentions (from falsehood, theft, sensual pleasures, possessiveness etc.) follow.

The rationale behind the concept of non-violence is equality of all beings. Lord Mahāvīra said: 'Not to kill any living being is the quintessence of all wisdom. One has to understand that non-violence and equality of all living beings are the essentials of *Dharma'* - *Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra*, 1.11.10.

He adds (Ācārāṅga-sutra, 1.5.5.5): "O Man! Think that the person you want to kill, hurt, punish and harm is just like you. All living beings desire to live a long and happy life. Therefore, live and let live!"

Can there be a better cure for today's ills?



Appendix VII

Non-violence must be a Way of Life*

The aim of human life is to secure liberation from worldly bondage. This can be achieved through faith, right type of knowledge and pious conduct. Jaina scriptures deal with man's conduct elaborately. A vow is a self-imposed obligation as what one ought to do and what not to carry out. It should be practised in thought, word and deed with full commitment to its careful observance at all times.

A householder's conduct depends on five vows - abstinence from violence, refraining from uttering falsehood, not stealing, not yielding to carnality and averting the idea of possessiveness. Violence and telling lies deeply influence a householder. They are habits, which get entrenched in him, requiring vows to root them out.

Non-violence is mentioned first as it is the basis of all other vows. Just as a fence is meant to protect a field, the other four are intended to enable a person to observe the prime vow of non-violence. The rationale behind the principle of non-violence is equality of all living beings. "Not to kill anyone is the quintessence of all wisdom", says Lord Mahāvīra.

But, the concept of $Ahi\dot{m}s\bar{a}$ has not been properly understood. It is an attitude, which makes a person feel one with all creation. It stands for refraining from causing any harm to anyone at any time and for the practice of love towards all.

^{*} The Hindu, 23 November 1995

Mahāvīra has added that non-violence, self-restraint and penance are the essentials of righteousness. Even celestials bow down before one who is rooted in *dharma*.

The principle of non-violence embraces not only humans and animals, but also trees, vegetables, air and water. The latter will also feel the pain when injured. All souls render service to one another and cannot exist independently. They have to share their pleasure and pain with others. The agencies of nature have their own roles to play and hence man if he wants peace should live in co-existence with them.

Ahimsā is therefore a practical necessity in the world today, said Shri Dulichand Jain in a lecture. Violence is caused by passions and carelessness.

Anger, conceit, deceit and greed are the four powerful enemies, which stimulate sinful deeds. Jaina teachers have drawn a distinction (for householders) between injurious activities totally forbidden and those, which may be tolerated within strict guidelines. The positive aspect of *Ahimsā* implies forgiveness, kindness, compassion, charity, service, respect for the virtuous and neutrality. Control of speech and of thoughts, regulation of movement, care in planning and upkeep of things strengthen the practice of non-violence. No wonder Mahāvīra called it *Bhagavatī Ahimsā*.

Appendix VIII

Perfection of Man-Aim of Religion*

The main aim of all religions is to make man perfect to the extent possible and to ensure that he leads a disciplined life conforming his worldly activities to the moral law. Obedience to holy men, uttering truth and acquiring spiritual knowledge knowing the purpose of his birth, are common to one and all. There are differences only in the procedures for achieving the goal. But all of them warn man of the evil forces, which lurk within, ready to ruin him.

There are broadly four types of men - those who may not externally look pious but who never swerve from the path of righteousness, some put on the robes of a monk but their conduct may be questionable, some forsake both while a few renounce neither. Among the categories of children, some may turn out to be more virtuous than their parents, some evenly matched, some worthless, while a few may bring only disgrace to their families.

Likewise, meetings are of four kinds. With some, an encounter may be pleasant but their company may not be good, with some, the meeting may not be so palatable but their association may be enriching, in some both the company and meeting will be rewarding while in the last category are those whose very friendship and presence may be harmful.

Deception, fraud, falsehood and malpractices in trade are the four animal instincts, which drag the soul to sub-human existence. Simplicity, humility, compassion and serenity are the four virtues, which enable the soul to acquire human birth.

^{*} The Hindu, 6 December 1997

In his lecture on the selection of inspiring aphorisms from Jaina scriptures, Shri Dulichand Jain said, like the above-mentioned *sūtras* yet another one refers to four types of people who are not worthy of equipping themselves with spiritual knowledge—the vain, the greedy, the quarrelsome and the deceitful.

Philanthropists are also of four types. Some talk proudly of donating but do not give anything, some donate liberally but may not utter a word about it, some contribute as well as indulge in self-praise, while some others neither speak nor part with anything.

Like a cart man who intentionally leaves the highway preferring a rugged road repents when the axle breaks, so also, the ignorant person who transgresses the path of righteousness, will regret his defaults at the time of death. Just as a snake is unable to give up its poisonous nature, so too a characterless person who may study innumerable scriptures remains unable to shed his wicked nature. Right conduct is essence of scriptures and is the *Jinadharma*.

Appendix IX

Non-violence: Basis for Equality*

If a person realises that every soul (individual) is independent, he will never trample on its right. This will lead him next to show compassion towards all living beings, resulting in harmony and peace in the world. Non-violence is the recognition of equality of all beings. The principle of non-violence in Jainism embraces not only humans but also animals, birds, plants, vegetables and creatures on the earth, in air and in water.

"All living beings desire to live. They detest sorrow and death and wish a long, happy existence. Hence one should not inflict pain on any creature nor harbour any feeling of enmity. Not to kill any being is the essence of all wisdom", says Lord Mahāvīra. The positive aspect of non-violence is as important as the negative side, though this is not fully appreciated. The former implies forgiveness, kindness, charity and service. One should display friendship towards all, respect the virtuous, extend compassion to the afflicted and be magnanimous even towards those who are not favourably disposed towards oneself.

The soul is the begetter of both happiness and sorrow; it is its own friend when it follows the path of righteousness and its own enemy when it chooses to travel on the forbidden road. The pre-requisite to righteous life is to conquer the four evils—anger, pride, deceit, and greed. They can be won by forgiveness, humility, and straightforwardness and by contentment respectively. A real successful man is one who has conquered his own self, said Shri Dulichand Jain in his lecture explaining some

^{*} The Hindu, 5 February 1998

of valuable teachings of Mahāvīra. The doctrine of *Ahimsā* has been praised in the *Vanaparva* of *Mahābhārata* during a long conversation between Draupadī, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma. In another context, in the same epic, Tulādhara has proved the excellence of non-violence and its superiority.

People who lead an aimless life will never realise their goal. All philosophies declare that life is a journey and emancipation is the goal. The four guards of the palace of *Mokṣa* (emancipation) as stated in the work *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha*, are — self-restraint, contemplation, contentment and the company of the pious. The Jaina scriptures say that without right faith, there will be no virtuous conduct. There will be no release from bondage when there is no virtue and so such a person has no emancipation.

If a person wishes to cross the ocean of worldly existence, he should board the boat of austerity and self-restraint. The mind which can be compared to a furious elephant can be controlled only by the goad of right spiritual knowledge.

Appendix X

Teachings of Lord Mahāvīra*

Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. Many *Tīrthaṅkaras*, *Ācāryas*, saints and scholars belonged to this tradition. Lord Mahāvīra was the 24th Tīrthaṅkara of the present era. He was not the founder of Jainism but its propounder. He attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities and penances. A glimpse into his life shows that he was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. Although Mahāvīra (599-527 B.C.) preached 2500 years ago, his teaching continues to be relevant even today and has special significance for the spiritual advancement of mankind.

The contribution of Jaina faith to Indian thought and life has been very significant. The central themes of the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are non-violence, non-absolutism and non-possession.

Jainism takes an integral view of life. Either faith or only knowledge by itself cannot take one on the path of salvation. There should be a combination of right knowledge and right conduct to tread the path of salvation. These constitute the three jewels of Jainism. Without right faith, there is no right knowledge and without right knowledge there is no virtuous conduct.

The significant achievement of Mahāvīra's revolution in the spiritual field was the upholding of the concept of *karma* in place of a creator God. He said that man is the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his on efforts and not by the grace of an external agency. God is devoid of attachment; hence there is

^{*} The Hindu, 9 April 1998

no need for Him to create his universe, which is beginningless and endless.

Lord Mahāvīra says that all material comforts and pleasures can never satiate any body and give him true happiness. He preached the doctrine of non-possession to limit the desires for worldly pursuits. He laid great stress on the equality of all human beings.

In *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, he says that righteousness (*Dharma*) is supremely auspicious. Its constituents are non-violence, self-restraint and austerity. Any person, irrespective of caste, creed and colour can follow this path and will be considered a Jain.

The theory of many angles of truth of *Anekāntavāda* is comprehensive Jaina view, postulating that truth is manifold and any particular thing can be viewed form manifold aspects. Each point of view yields a different conclusion. Thus, non-absolutism (*Anekāntavāda*) strengthens the thought of every individual.

Appendix XI

Pearls of Jaina Wisdom - II*

Kim tattam - "What is the essence of all beings?" - was the question to Lord Mahāvīra by Indrabhūti Gautama, the first and foremost Gaṇadhara.

Uppannei vā, vigamei vā, dhuvei vā - 'All beings take birth, all perish, and yet, all are permanent!' - was Lord Mahāvīra's reply to the above question; and hailed as; Tripadī, the three-fold enunciation based on which the twelve essential scriptures of Jainism, the Angas have been formulated.

Jainism is one of the most ancient religious traditions of the world, possibly dating back to 5000 years. It cannot be denied by anyone that the contribution of Jainism to Indian thought and ways of life has been especially meaningful.

The Jaina philosophy centres on compassion and harmlessness (*ahimsā*). Lord Mahāvīra (6th century B.C.), the 24th *Tīrthankara* revealed countless truths to the world from which the vast Jaina canonical literature was founded.

Shri Dulichand Jain, a city based industrialist and Secretary, Research Foundation of Jainology, Madras, an acknowledged and much respected scholar of Jaina literature has written a book titled *Pearls of Jaina Wisdom*, which incorporates a well-chosen collection of inspiring *sūtras* (aphorisms) from the various Jaina canonical texts. The compilation has been grouped under various headings consistent with the spirit of the Jaina tradition. The translation (from Hindi to English) is also quite simple and lucid without sacrificing intellectual objectivity and the essence of the aphorisms.

^{*} The Indian Express, 10 April 1998

Given below are some of these aphorisms, which should be of especial significance in the context of the Mahāvīra Jayantī celebrated by the Jaina community yesterday (Thursday, April 9):

- 1) External soul is that which is led by the senses. Internal soul is that which knows itself to be different from the body, and supreme soul is that which has annihilated the *karmas* and attained liberation.
- 2) The pure soul is free from complexities, attachment, blemishes, desire, anger, pride, ego and all kinds of deficiencies.
- 3) The soul is neither the body nor the mind, neither the speech nor their cause. It is also neither the doer, not the cause of action, nor the 'approver of any action'.
- 4) It is very difficult to realise the soul. Only with suffering, the soul is realised.
- 5) When the soul becomes free from the *karmas*, it becomes the supreme soul.
- 6) Just as when the water becomes clearer one is able to view the reflection with greater clarity, so when the self becomes inspired to know the reality, one starts acquiring knowledge with greater consistency.

Note: It was 'Bakrid' on Wednesday (April 8), 'Mahāvīra Jayantī' on Thursday (April 9) and it is 'Good Friday' today (April 10) -a significant successive triad of festivals of three different important faiths - Islam, Jainism and Christianity. And, in just four days (April 14) we will be celebrating the Tamil New Year's day too!

Appendix XII

Thus spoke Lord Mahāvīra*

- Humility is the foundation of *Dharma*.
- Non-violence is eternal religion.
- Pride, anger, carelessness, illness and idleness are the five obstacles in the path of acquiring knowledge.
- Company of the wise enhances one's wisdom but the company of wicked distorts one's understanding.
- By service a person acquires the meritorious *karmas*, which bring about for him the form (name) and status (*Gotra*) of *Tīrthaṅkara*.
- Forgiveness, contentment, simplicity and modesty -these form the four gateways of righteousness.
- Lord *Jina* has said that knowledge; faith, conduct and austerity constitute the path of liberation.
- Anger spoils good relations, pride destroys modesty, deceit destroys amity (friendship) and greed destroys everything.
- Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straightforwardness and greed by contentment.
- Desires are boundless like the sky; it is impossible to fulfil all of them.
- An indolent person can never by happy and a lethargic person can never acquire knowledge. A person with attachments

^{*} Śramaņopāśaka, 10 April 1998

cannot acquire renunciation and one who has a violent attitude cannot be compassionate.

- A self-restrained aspirant eats, drinks and talks less.
- Truth is God.
- That speech is proper which is beneficial, measured and affable.

Appendix XIII

Saint who stressed Study of Scriptures*

Of what purpose are the scriptures and other sacred texts? This question has often been posed by some who are not aware of the rich dividends, which their study will fetch. Man does not live by bread alone and this human birth provides him with an opportunity to fix a goal before him. But listening to scriptures, a person will be able to distinguish between good and evil deeds and having known both, he will start practicing the rules which are conducive to reach the highest end viz., salvation.

Getting equipped with scriptural knowledge, a person becomes firm in his faith, in the observance of his vows, in his meditation and in his self-restraint which will ensure him a life of purity throughout, without any wavering. But as the light from millions of burning lamps will be of no avail to a blind man, so too the mastery of numerous scriptural texts will be of no use to one without character. Right conduct is really what constitutes religion, which in turn is synonymous with equanimity, a state in which the soul is free from delusion and agitation. A wise man should not conceal the correct meanings of the holy texts nor distort them. Faith, knowledge and conduct together constitute the path of liberation. If this golden rule is not followed in the right perspective, the result will be bondage.

Sensitive and aspiring man seeks to know the act, which will make him escape from suffering in this unstable and changing world, so full of misery. An illustrious saint said, owing to wrong faith, the attitude of a person becomes perverted. He develops a

^{*} The Hindu, 20 October 1998

dislike for religion. The strict adherence to the Law of Righteousness will provide him with the moral strength to withstand worldly impacts. The ten characteristics of this law are: supreme forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, truthfulness, purity, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation, detachment and continence.

Bhagavāna Mahāvīra, whose "Nirvāṇa anniversary" falls today, in his wise sayings, points out that one should not remain complacent even with a small debt, a slight wound, a spark of fire and an insignificant passion, because they may become uncontrollable. Service to the preceptors and elders, avoiding the company of ignorant people, scriptural study, solitude and contemplation on the contents of sacred texts and patience are the main constituents of the pathway to emancipation.

In a lecture, Shri Dulichand Jain said that the foundation of Jainism is mainly based on the conception that this world is eternal and vast, and it is beginningless and endless. The Jaina canonical literature lays great emphasis on the doctrine of *Ahimsā*.

Appendix XIV

Pearls of Jaina Wisdom - III*

- 1. All living beings desire to live. They detest sorrow and death and wish a long happy existence. Hence one should not inflict pain on any creature nor harbour any feeling of enmity. Not to kill any being is the essence of all wisdom.
- 2. The soul is the begetter of both happiness and sorrow; it is its own friend when it treads the path of righteousness and is its own enemy when it chooses to travel on the forbidden path.
- 3. Victory ever one's self is greater than conquering thousands and thousands of enemies in the battlefield. A true conqueror is one who conquers his own self.
- 4. Deception, fraud, telling lie and malpractices in trade are the four animal instincts which drag the soul to sub-human existence.
- 5. The more you get, the more you want; desire increases with every gain. What starts as two grams of gold, has a tendency to end as millions of grams.
- 6. Anger, pride, deceit and greed are the four powerful enemies, which stimulate sinful deeds. One who desires the welfare of his self should renounce these four flaws.
- 7. Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straight-forwardness and greed by contentment.
- 8. He who has got rid of delusion has his misery destroyed; he who has got rid of desire has his delusion destroyed; he who

^{*} *Śramaṇopāśaka*, 10 May 1999.

has got rid of greed has his desire destroyed and he who owns nothing has his greed destroyed;

- 9. Anger spoils good relations, pride destroys humility, deceit destroys amity and greed destroys everything.
- 10. Fight with your own self, what is the use in fighting the external foes? Difficult it is to conquer your own self.
- 11. As light from crores of burning lamps is of no avail to a blind person so also the study of numerous scriptures is of no use to a person who has no character.
- 12. Greater is he who restrains himself, though giving no alms, than he who gives thousands of cows every month but restrains not himself.
 - 13. Without character, human birth is futile.

Appendix XV

Essential Features of Righteousness*

Supreme forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, truthfulness, purity, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation, detachment and continence are the ten characteristics of those who opt to tread the path of righteousness. Proper utilisation of human birth, which enables the adherence to this royal road, will surely beget heavenly world.

The above-mentioned essential features of "righteousness" have been spelt out in Jainism, which is an integral part of India's rich religious and cultured heritage. The Jaina ethics embraces the notion of compassion and harmlessness. Right faith, right knowledge and right conduct are three jewels of Jaina wisdom, which lays equal emphasis on the practice of non-violence, truth, non-possessiveness, non-stealing and celibacy.

Beginning from today, for one week, the Jains will celebrate the festival 'Paryūśāṇa Parva' when they will conduct various rituals for self-purification. On the concluding day there will be emphasis on "forgiveness", according to Shri Dulichand Jain, who explaining in his lecture said, the study of the Jaina canonical texts paved the way to gain advance spiritual thoughts.

Righteousness is the first step on the ladder of liberation and one having right faith knows what is to be relinquished and what is to be accomplished. Just as a threaded needles does not get lost even when it falls in a heap of rubbish, so too a person endowed with sacred knowledge will not miss his way in the worldly

^{*} The Hindu, 7 September 1999

sojourn. Though the vitiated mind behaves like a furious elephant, it can be controlled by the "spear" or "the goad" of knowledge. Jaina scriptures point out that even as the light from crores of burning lamps will be of no avail to a blind man, the study of numerous authoritative texts will be purposeless to one who has no character. Just as a visionless man cannot enjoy the cool sight of moonlight, the knowledge of an ignoramus, who studies scriptures over and over but is unable to comprehend the truth, will be a waste.

Appendix XVI

The Jaina Wisdom*

Two great and very important Jaina festivals, the 'Paryūśāṇa Parva' and 'Samvatsarī' are to be celebrated between September 7th and 14th. The 'Paryūśāṇa Parva' is due for celebration till the September 14, whereas the 'Samvatsarī', the most important of all Jaina festivals — viewed as the day of forgiveness - is to be observed on the 14th September.

During this eight-day festive period, Jains will observe rigorous austerities and conduct rituals for meaningful selfpurification.

Discourses on Right Faith, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct, scriptural studies, conquest of passions, the ten characteristics of *Dharma*, non-violence and vegetarianism, and forgiveness by eminent saints and scholars will solemnly feature in these celebrations.

Sahityaratna Shri Dulichand Jain, an eminent scholar and a city-based industrialist, has in this context brought out an attractive booklet of 130 pages highlighting a number of Jaina aphorisms. The booklet titled *Springs of Jaina Wisdom* contain 240 thought provoking cryptic truths with translations in Hindi and English of the original *Agamic* texts. The author fervently hopes that these *Pearls of Jaina Wisdom* will serve to bring peace and solace to the suffering, tension ridden humanity everywhere.

Below are few selections from this booklet, which are relevant to all faiths:

^{*} The Indian Express, 8 September 1999

What is the use of fighting with external foes? One who conquers one's own self enjoys true happiness.

One who is free of deceit attains purity and becomes steadfast in *Dharma*. Such a person attains the highest emancipation like the lustre of fire sprinkled with ghee.

Just as a tortoise withdraws all its limbs into its own shell, in the same manner a wise man withdraws his senses from all evil by spiritual exertion.

How can one discipline others, when he is unable to discipline himself?

Just as a child speaks of his good and bad acts in an innocent manner, similarly, one ought to confess one's guilt with a mind free from deceit and pride.

Knowledge is of no use in the absence of right conduct, conduct is of no use in the absence of right knowledge. When a lame man and a blind man are caught in a conflagration, both get burnt because the lame cannot walk and the blind cannot see!

Knowledge and conduct together lead to success, just as in the forest fire. When a blind and a lame help each other, both manage to reach their destination. A chariot does not move by a wheel alone.

Appendix XVII

Essence of Jainism*

Jainism is a religion of strict physical, ethical disciplines that lays total stress on the qualities of purity, self-restraint (different from self-control), dispassion, detachment, humanity, chastity, universal love, compassion for all and unlimited kindness.

The religion is not without rituals, ceremonies, worship and prayer. The images of the 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras (Jinas)* found in almost all big Jaina temples in India. Lord Mahāvīra the last but foremost in the present era, is specially revered and worshipped. Study of Jaina scriptures is deemed an act of piety and is undertaken during the *Paryūśaṇa Parva*, which is now progressing.

Important Jaina temples serve as pilgrimage centres of special importance and the Jains visit these holy centres periodically. A saintly life of self-effacement and self-mortification and the virtuous attribute of non-possession (*Aparigraha*) are given importance in this religion even in today's context of 'possession is my point of the law'.

The Digambara sect ('Dig'- fie, contempt; 'Ambaras' - apparel; those who have scorned everything) of the Jains prefers total nudity. No one should own even a rag of cloth! The Śvetāmbaras ('Śveta' - white) the other sect prefer simple pure white cloth. The Digambaras are rigid diehards in the matter of observing rituals and ceremonies. In essence, however, both the sects subscribe wholeheartedly to the Jaina tenets and codes of conduct.

^{*} The Indian Express, 9 September 1999

Here are a few more 'Pearls from the Springs of Jaina Wisdom' culled by Shri Dulichand Jain from the Jaina Agamic texts.

"An ideal wife is one who helps the cause of *Dharma*, is absorbed in *Dharma* (*Saḥ dharma carī tava*, refe. 'Sīta Kalyāṇam' - *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bāla Kāṇḍa*), and shares her husband's pleasure and pain equally (refer contextual Quranic verses, *surah* IV.)

"May you prosper with the aid of knowledge, faith, conduct, austerity, forbearance and contentment." Hindu scriptures also advocate such ethical discipline. The Rgveda goes one step further. "Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides" - 'Aah no bhadrāh kratavo yantu viśvataḥ'.

"Human birth is capital: proper utilisation of this capital begets heavenly world, improper utilisation engenders sub-human existence." Compare Ādi Śaṃkarācārya's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse 2) and Jayadeva's *Bhaja-govinda* in this context.

Appendix XVIII

Jainism: An overview*

Jainism views the whole world eternally existing enforcing its own inherent laws. It is an aesthetic religion but it is not antitheistic. It does not believe in a God, but *Tīrthaṅkaras, Munis* and *Ācāryas* are all revered and even worshipped in temples.

The religion lays compelling stress on moral and spiritual purity that alone can elevate man to a state of absolute perfection leading to Godhead - a state of blemishless perfection, pure and total!

Jainism believes in the soul $(J\bar{\imath}va)$, life after death, transmigratory existence and Moksa, the final liberation from the cycle of birth and deaths. The karma and the bandha (bondage) theory also figures in Jainism as much as in Hinduism.

Apart from the main Digambara and Śvetāmbaras sects there are, among the Śvetāmbaras, there are three other sub-sects: the 'Mandira Mārgis' (the temple goers), the 'Sthānakavāsis' (the monk adherents) and the 'Terāpanthis' ('Tera' - your own, 'Pantha' - path), that is those who would prefer to subscribe to their own objective rationale without sacrificing the basic traditional norms and stipulation they believe in.

^{*} The Indian Express, 10 September 1999

Appendix XIX

Forgive me Please*

Jainism basically centres on a three-fold discipline known as *Tri-ratna*, the three jewels of Jainism. In the *Tattvārtha-sūtra*, Pūjyapāda propounds that it is only by pursuing the three fold path of Right Faith (*Samyagdarśana*), Right knowledge (*Samyagjñāna*) and Right Conduct (*Samyag-cāritra*) that one can hope to earn *Mokṣa*, the attainment of ultimate bliss. It is also stressed in this *Sūtra* that all these three *Ratnas* are interdependent and inseparable from the other (*Samyagdarśanajñānacāritrāṇi mokṣa mārgaḥ - Tattvārtha-sūtra-1:1*).

The modern and younger Jaina devotees subscribe to the view that Jainism, in no case stipulates blind faith in authority. There is scope for objective, introspective, personal thinking and correlated realisation.

Take 'Samvatsarī', the Day of Forgiveness, for example. This solemn festival falls on September 14, when every faithful Jaina is expected to seek forgiveness from others for improper conduct (by word, thought, manner, attitude and action) during the preceding months.

The rationale in human life is such that it is prone to commit imperfections all the time. No one can be free from such lapses.

A day in a year is therefore, set apart to atone, sincerely, for such lapses, seek forgiveness from all others (who knows, you may have offended him unknowingly in some context or other) and thus cleanse yourself of all these lapses and strive henceforth,

^{*} The Indian Express, 11 September 1999

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to be a better person. One is expected to keep on improving himself steadily and surely. It is here that Right Knowledge, Right Faith, and Right Conduct, the three *Ratnas* help you to seek and try to achieve a greater degree of personal improvement in the hope that you will be able to achieve perfection as a human being sooner than later. Of course, the other person from whom you seek forgiveness also seeks forgiveness from you!

Appendix XX

Tirthankara Mahavira Jayanti*

"Obeisance to the victors (over 'senses'): Arhats; obeisance to the Liberated Souls, the Siddhas; obeisance to the Preceptors, the Ācāryas; obeisance to the Spiritual Teachers, the Upādhyāyas; obeisance to all saints in the world, the Sādhus." This sublime five-fold obeisance: Namaskāra Mantra, destroys all sins and is supremely auspicious - Namo arihantāṇam..... paḍhamam havai mangalam (Āvaśyaka-sūtra, 1:2).

"Just as Airāvata (the celestial elephant of Indra, the chief of Gods, that arose out of the milky ocean) is supreme among elephants, the lion amongst animals, Ganga among rivers, Garuda -the son of Venudeva among birds, similarly was Jñātaputra supreme (Tīrthankara Mahāvīra) among those preaching emancipation. (Sūtrakṛtānga-sūtra, 1.6.21)

Tomorrow, Sunday, the sixteenth of April, 2000 AD, will mark the 2599th birth anniversary of Lord Mahāvīra, the last and 24th Tīrthaṅkara of the Jaina religion. He was born as Vardhamāna, to parents Siddhārtha and Triśalā, on the 13th day of the waxing lunar fortnight (Śukla Trayodaśī) of the month of Caitra in 599 BC.

The story of the mothers of all 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras* getting the divinely auspicious dream of fourteen or sixteen sacred objects at the time of conception is invariably recorded in the biographies of all *Tīrthaṅkaras*. In fact, this is mostly common in the life of all great souls in most religions. Māyā Devī, mother of Gautama, the

^{*} The Indian Express, 15 April 2000

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Buddha, had the dream of the divine celestial elephant (Airāvata) entering her womb. There are many such auspicious dreams experienced by mothers of great personalities. In some cases, the Lord Himself had appeared before the chosen parents blessing them with illustrious progeny. Nammalvar, Ādi Śamkara, Mārkandeya, Rāmānuja, Vedānta Deśika are all classic examples, to name just a few only. The birth of Jesus is also associated with such divine phenomenon.

'Jina' means 'conqueror'. 'Tīrthankara, means the 'perfect soul.' Therefore, Jainism is a religion of conquerors (of the senses, again not in the military sense!) propounded by the Perfect Souls, impeccable and the noblest of all, victors of base passions that afflict humanity everywhere. Lord Mahāvīra is revered as the propounder of the essential Jaina pearls of wisdom.

Appendix XXI

Teachings of Lord Mahāvīra*

Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. A great generation of *Tīrthaṅkaras*, *Ācāryas*, saints, and scholars belonged to this tradition. Lord Mahāvīra was the 24th Tīrthaṅkara of the present era. He was not the founder of Jainism but a propounder of this religion. He realised his self and attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities and penances. A glimpse into his life shows that he was an embodiment of non-violence and compassion. Although Mahāvīra (599-527 B.C.) preached 2500 years ago, his teachings are relevant even today. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self-reliance, self-discipline and self-purification to develop the inherent and infinite potential of the human Self.

The contribution of Jaina faith to Indian thought and life has been very significant. Vegetarianism, practised by a large majority, is an evidence of Jaina influence. Indian art, literature, architecture, painting and sculpture, as also every other aspect of life have been greatly influenced by Jainism. The other significant contribution of Jainism is its harmonious and peaceful approach to life. The central themes of the teachings of Lord Mahāvīra are non-violence, non-absolutism and non-possession.

Non-violence is equality of all living creatures. This leads to compassion towards all living beings and results in harmony and peace in the world. The principle of non-violence in Jainism embraces not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants, vegetables and creatures in earth, air and water.

^{*} *The Hindu*, 17 April 2000

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Jainism takes an integral view of life. Either faith or only knowledge by itself cannot take one to the path of salvation. We should have a combination of Right faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct to tread the path of salvation.

The significant achievement of Tīrthankara Mahāvīra's revolution was the upholding of the concept of *karma* in place of the creator God. He said that man is the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts and not by the grace of any external agency.

Lord Mahāvīra says that all material comforts and pleasures can never satiate anybody and give him true happiness. He preached the doctrine of non-possession to limit the desires for worldly pursuits. Mahāvīra laid great stress on the equality of all human beings.

The theory of *Anekāntavāda* is a comprehensive view, postulating that truth is manifold. This theory admits that there is an element of truth in all religions, which are but different approaches.

Appendix XXII

Two Great Contemporaries*

There are quite a few similarities in the lives of Mahāvīra - Vardhamāna and Buddha - Siddhārtha. Mahāvīra was the senior contemporary. Both were princes by birth. In both cases, it was prophesised that they would either become illustrious monarchs or great saints. Both married. Both had a child each. Siddhārtha had a son 'Rāhula' by name. Vardhamāna had a daughter 'Priyadarśanā'. Both had wives of almost similar names. 'Yaśodharā' was Siddhārtha's wife; 'Yaśodā' was Vardhamāna's wife. Buddha's childhood name was 'Siddhārtha', which was the name of Vardhamāna's father.

I am not able to get the names of Buddha's siblings, if he had any, whereas I gather that Vardhamāna had an elder brother by name 'Nandivardhana', and a sister 'Sudarśanā'. These details about Mahāvīra are in accordance with the Śvetāmbara tradition. The other Digambara tradition is of the uncompromising view that Mahāvīra was a celibate throughout his life.

Both had a strong sense of detachment and revolutionary thought processes right from their early years. Both renounced the world at around thirty years of age. While Siddhārtha left his wife and son one night, while they were sleeping, Vardhamāna gave up mundane attachment publicity, and after the death of his parents.

Jaina literature records that Vardhamāna took to ascetic order "at the age of 30, on the auspicious tenth of the dark half of

^{*} The New Indian Express, 17 April 2000

the month of Mārgaśīrṣa (Kṛṣṇa-Daśamī) seated in a golden palanquin, in a magnificent procession in full public view."

Even today, whenever there is a renunciation in a Jaina household, the renunciation is taken in a gorgeously - decorated coach, splendidly attired, and in a grand procession, in full public view!

Mahāvīra was the prince of Kundagrāma, whereas Buddha was the prince of Kapilavastu. The latter founded a new religion - Buddhism, whereas the former consolidated an existing one.

Appendix XXIII

Jina-Arhat- Kevali-Mahāvīra*

In his "sort of thesaurus of Jainism where the choicest and interesting passages from the treasure-house of Jaina Āgama texts are conglomerated" (Prof. Dr. Satyaranjan Banerjee of the Calcutta University) Sahityaratna Dulichand Jain details, lucidly and graphically, the enormous privations, austerities, and hardships undergone and experienced by Lord Mahāvīra during his twelve and half years of sādhanā.

One is awed to learn that during this period of 4,560 days, Mahāvīra took meagre, and coarse food at that for just three hundred and fifty days (not even a year) only! On one occasion, this *Tīrthańkara* underwent total fast for 180 days at a stretch!

In fact, as the Āvaśyaka Niryukti (sūtra-240) points out - Uggam ca tavokammam visesao vaḍḍhamāṇassa- "the austerities practised by Vardhamāna Mahāvīra were far more rigorous than those practised by all other Tīrthankaras". This is not to belittle the other 23 Tīrthankaras but only to stress that, in the entire history of mankind, it is difficult to find a parallel for such extraordinary sufferings over a very long period to achieve Kevala-jñāna - spiritual omniscience of the highest possible order. The total renunciation, flawless detachment and unbelievable self-control exercised by the ascetic for about 42 years (he attained Mahānirvāṇa, in 527 B.C., at the age of 72 and had taken to asceticism at 30) are most inspiring.

^{*} The New Indian Express, 18 April 2000

"With supreme knowledge, with supreme intuition, with supreme conduct, with supreme uprightness, with supreme valour and fortitude, with unmatched dexterity, patience and spirit of contentment, with most unique insight, the Most Venerable One (Lord Mahāvīra) meditated for twelve and a half years in self-contemplation and proceeded on the supreme path to that final liberation, the fruit of truthfulness, restraint and good conduct" - Kalpasūtra, 120.

"And, therefore, now the venerable ascetic Mahāvīra became a *Jina* (conqueror), an *Arhat* (worthy of reverential worship) and a *Kevalī* (omni-cient) comprehending anything and everything. He became the 24th Tīrthaṅkara of the present era" - *Kalpasūtra*, 121.

All this happened on the thirteenth year of his sādhanā, on the tenth day of the bright half of the Vaiśākha month, at 'Jambhiyagrāma', under a huge 'Śāla' tree (banyan), on the banks of the river 'Rjubālukā', while the Lord, facing the sun, in the 'Godohikā' (milking) posture, attained infinite knowledge, intuition, energy and bliss!

Appendix XXIV

You are your own Friend*

"Oh, man! You are your own friend, why do you seek the company of other friends? Control and conquer your own self. By doing so, you will gain liberation from mundane miseries and sorrows" - Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.3.3.64.

"The mind is the friend of him by whom the mind has been subdued. For him, who has not conquered his mind, it is his worst, hostile foe." - Bhagavadgītā, VI.6.

"None can help you: help yourself; work out your won salvation" -the Buddha's last words.

"What is the essence of beings?" - Kim Tattam - Gautama Indrabhūti Gaṇadhara's query to Lord Mahāvīra.

The Lord's reply: *Uppannei vā, vigamei vā, dhuvei vā*: "Everything takes birth, everything perishes, everything is permanent" - refer Holy Scriptures, Ramakrishna Math publications (p.150, article on *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* by Swami Brahmeshananda, Chennai)

Compare Nammalwar's reply to Madurakavi Alwar's (his birth anniversary was observed yesterday) query on almost identical lines (ref. Traditional hagiography of the 12 Alwars).

Yato mata, tato patha — "as many faiths so many paths!" - Bhagavāna Shri Ramakrishna.

The Union Government proposes to celebrate elaborately the 2600th birth - anniversary of Lord Mahāvīra, next year that is

^{*} The New Indian Express, 19 April 2000

in April 2001. The Jaina tradition accepts, without any difference of opinion, the Jayantī and Mahānirvāṇa years of Lord Mahāvīra as 599 BC and 527 BC), respectively, thereby implying a life-span of 72 years for this great *Tīrthaṅkara*.

Lord Mahāvīra and the Buddha, though they are contemporaries (Buddha was 39 years junior, 560 BC), the two never met each other.

The Jaina tradition believes there were lakhs of *Sūtras* voiced by the 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras*. But, all those of the 23 earlier *Tīrthaṅkaras* were irretrievably lost. The *Gaṇadharas* passed on to succeeding generations, by the system of rote, the *sūtras* on which the 24th Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra discoursed. These were duly codified and made available almost a thousand years after the *Mahānirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra.

Religions are many, the differences are superficial. The goal is the same!

Appendix XXV

Five Vows observed by Jains*

A stream of knowledge has been incessantly flowing in India since time immemorial and credit for this goes to saints and seers, who have guided and inspired mankind to tread the sublime path of righteousness in order to realise "Truth". Jainism is one of the oldest religious traditions of the world. Lord Mahāvīra, the 24th Tīrthankara was the propounder (not the founder) who attained omniscience by practising rigorous austerities, penance, non-violence and compassion. His preachings (2500 years ago) are relevant even today and have special significance for mankind's spiritual advancement. His message is full of pragmatic optimism, self-reliance, and self-discipline to develop the inherent and infinite potentialities of an individual.

Jaina society celebrates from today an annual "self-purification ceremony" called 'Paryūṣaṇa Parva' for eight days, during which programmes such as prayers, meditation, fasting, study of scriptures and lectures are conducted. The discourses, which Jains will attend, include one on "right faith". Belief in the existence of six factors (soul, non-soul, medium of motion, medium of rest, space and time) is reckoned as correct faith. By knowledge one can understand the nature of substances. Along with these two, practice of austerity fetches perfect conduct. The three constitute the pathway to liberation. Desired result is attained when there is harmony between right type of knowledge and right conduct, for a chariot does not move by one wheel alone.

^{*} The Hindu, 26 August 2000

Right type of spiritual knowledge is of five kinds: scriptural that which is derived through the five senses and the mind ($Mati-j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$); clairvoyance, telepathy and omniscience. The vitiated mind is like a furious elephant but can be controlled by the goad of right knowledge.

As the light from even millions of burning lamps is of no avail to a blind person, so too, the study of numerous scriptures is of no use to a person who has no character.

The monks and nuns always observe five vows; total abstinence from violence, from falsehood, stealing, sex and possessions. Any person, who deems wealth, belongings and relatives to be his protectors and believes that they belong to him and he to them, is unwise because in adversity, none of them can save him nor offer him shelter. Through austerities, one can get results of his past deeds destroyed and his soul purified. By practising several such exercises in their life, more so during these days, Jains attempt at a harmonious and peaceful approach to life.

Appendix XXVI

The Three-jewels of Jainism*

Every inexplicable event in the life of an individual occurs due to his actions in his previous birth. These past deeds of his whether good or bad -have their effect, the former fetching merits and the latter yielding punishments. This process of action and reaction is believed to be the source of prosperity and misery. Man is hence said to be the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts or remain fallen by his misdeeds. This theory has been accepted by almost all religions. A significant achievement of one of the greatest leaders of the revolution on the spiritual field was the upholding of this concept in place of God, the creator who, he said, was devoid of attachment and hence there was no need for Him to create this universe, which was beginningless and endless. That was Mahāvīra who propagated Jainism, which took an integral view of life.

Either faith or only knowledge, by itself, cannot take men to salvation. They should have the right type of faith, right knowledge and impeccable conduct to tread the path of salvation, Mahāvīra said. These constitute the three jewels of Jainism. According to him, by knowledge, one understands the nature of substances; by faith, one believes in them, by right conduct one puts an end to the flow of actions and by austerity, one develops purity. In this living religion, there are numerous monks and nuns and nearly ten million lay devotees, continuing its tradition. Some critics held the view that the principles of Jainism are so difficult that they cannot be practised by ordinary people. This is a fallacy,

^{*} The Hindu, 23 December 2000

said Shri Dulichand Jain, in a lecture explaining how Lord Mahāvīra's teachings are grouped into two parts - for mendicants and for householders.

Those who opted for the path of total renunciation have to practise very rigorous restraints and adopt the five vows of total abstinence from violence, falsehood, and stealing, immoral behaviour and of worldly possessions. For men amidst family life the instructions were simple. Jaina $\bar{A}c\bar{a}ryas$ have presented the duties and responsibilities of the laity, called the 35 virtues. These rules prevent a lay follower deviating from the spiritual path, prompting him to rise higher and by it, get the proper attitude of living. One of the $\bar{A}c\bar{a}ryas$ has classified the directives into four groups - obligatory duties, derogations which ought to be discarded; virtues to be cultivated and endeavours to be carried out with diligence.

In day-to-day life, a householder should maintain equanimity, pay obeisance to the 24 *Tīrthankaras*, offer salutations to monks, do contemplation and introspection and resort to meditation so as to keep the mind under control.

Appendix XXVII

Non-violence: Cardinal Principle of Jainism*

Today, in the race for progress and growth, man has forgotten the real purpose of his life. He knows much more about the external world but very little about his own Self. His existence is marked by conflicts. Even in advanced countries life is not harmonious. Economic growth alone, as the yardstick for measuring the standard of life to the exclusion of all other values, has verily led to the destruction of human personality. The question in this context therefore arises whether religion can meet the need of our times and solve the problems of the present-day humanity. Thinkers of one of the religions of India, Jainism, have stated clearly that religion does not mean mere rituals and dogmas. It has eternal values having validity for all times to come. Propounded by Mahāvīra in the present era, it is being practised by lacs of followers even today.

In Jainism, religion is not different from the practice for the realisation of our own essential nature. Its object is to achieve equanimity of mind and enjoy real peace and bliss. It takes an integral view of life. It states that man should have a combination of right faith, right type of spiritual knowledge and right conduct, to tread the path of salvation. These three are the jewels of Jainism and proper observance of these will result in enjoying peace within an individual and of the society. Detachment from the objects of worldly pleasures, a balanced state of mind and the feeling of equanimity are considered as right faith or attitude and one who possesses them will know what is to be accomplished

^{*} The Hindu, 19 October 2001

and what is to be relinquished. Through right knowledge, a person will understand the real nature of the soul and of non-living substances. The cardinal principle of Jainism is non-violence, said Shri Dulichand Jain in a lecture. It means giving respect to all forms of life. Non-violence is the pivot on which its whole ethics revolves and it is a combination of all virtues.

The positive side of non-violence implies kindness, forgiveness, charity and service, explained in a verse by one of the renowned Ācāryas, Amitagati as "friendship towards all, respect for the qualities of virtuous people, utmost compassion for the afflicted beings and equanimity towards those who are not well-disposed towards me." Mahāvīra had laid great stress on the equality of all human beings. He said that both men and women were eligible to attain emancipation after destroying the passions and *karmas*; all barriers of caste, creed and colour are artificial and should go.

Appendix- XXVIII

Cardinal Principles of Jainism*

Jainism propagated by Mahāvīra 2500 years ago continues to be a living religion and relevant to this age because of its eternal values. Mahāvīra stated clearly that religion does not mean mere rituals and dogmas. The real nature of every soul is equanimity of mind. The object of religion is to achieve equanimity of mind and realise peace and bliss. Jainism takes an integral view of life. Either faith or knowledge by itself cannot take man on the path of salvation. Therefore a combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct is necessary to tread the path to salvation.

According to Mūlācāra right knowledge is that which helps one to understand the truth, controls the mind and purifies the soul. Equanimity of mind is non-attachment (Aparigraha), equanimity of body is non-violence (Ahimsā) and equanimity of thought is non-absolutism (Anekānta). These three are the pillars of Jainism and their observance results in peace and harmony in the life of the individual and society. The cardinal principle of Jainism is non-violence, the pivot on which its entire ethics revolves. It involves reverence for all forms of life. Lord Mahāvīra says that non-violence is equated with 60 virtuous qualities like peace, harmony, welfare, trust, fearlessness and so on. He also stressed on equality of all human beings.

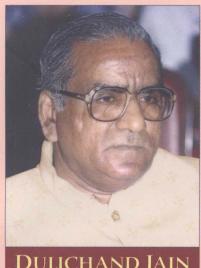
Aparigraha is the fifth vow of monks and nuns in the Jaina code of ethics (Mahāvratas). For householders also it is the fifth vow in their code of ethics known as Anuvratas (smaller vows).

^{*} The Hindu, 25 April 2002

The cause of mental worries and tensions is attachment to worldly objects. Jainism believes that lesser the attachment, greater will be mental peace. It preaches complete non-possession for ascetics and limit to one's possessions for householders. The doctrine of *Anekānta* in practice endows a broad perspective and promotes tolerance of other viewpoints.

The significant achievement of Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra in the spiritual field was the upholding of the concept of *karma* in place of the creator God. He taught that man was the architect of his own destiny and he can rise only by his own efforts. The five vows of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity and non-possession are really of great significance today when the present generation lacks proper moral guidance.





DULICHAND JAIN

Dulichand Jain, an educationist and social activist is the author of three widely circulated books of Jaina philosophy and dictum. Jinavani Ke Moti (Hindi), Pearls of Jaina Wisdom (English), and Springs of Jaina Wisdom are about Jainism and its humane values. His articles are regularly published in several magazines and newspapers. A recipient of the "Life- time Achievement Award" from the United Writer's Association in 1999, he is often invited by All India Radio and various organisations to speak on Jainism.

Dulichand Jain has been invited by the Federation of Jain Associations of North America to deliver lectures at the Jaina Convention held in July 2001 at Chicago U.S.A. He not only serves as the President of Karuna International and Vivekananda Educational Trust, Chennai, but is also a Vice-President of Vivekananda Educational Society and Treasurer of Vidya Bharati All India Educational Organisation, Tamil Nadu. He was a former Secretary of the Research Foundation for Jainology and Jain Vidyashram, Chennai.

Born on 1, November 1936, he lives with his family in Chennai, India. You can email him at karunainternational@vsnl.net or write to: 'Anugriha', 70, T.T.K Road, Alwarpet

Chennai 600 018.

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