

GLIMPSES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

(SARVA DHARMA DARSHAN)

Gunvant Barvalia



Sikh Religion



Hinduism



Buddhism



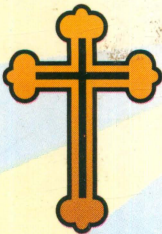
Tao Religion



Jainism



Islam Religion



Christianity



Zoroastrian



Judaism



Shinto Religion



Confucius Religion

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Written & Edited
Gunvant Barvalia

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Dedicated to :

*In the Spirit of Humility,
the holy remembrances of Mahatma Gandhiji,
Saint Vinobajee and Munishri Santbaaljee
all of whom were the great exponents of
worshipping all the religions, explaining their
mutual relations through
Equal Love and Respect
for all the Religions.*

World Religions

Religion	Establisher/Preacher	Religion	Book
Shikh Religion	Guru Nanak	Granthsaheb	
Hinduism	Sanatan	Bhagwad Geeta/ Veda	
Buddhism	Gautam Buddha	Tripitak	
Tao Religion	Laotze	—	
Jainism	Lord Mahavir	Kalpsutra	
Islam Religion	Prophet Mohammed	Kuran	
Christianity	Jesus Christ	Bible	
Zoroastrian	Asho Zarathrushttra	Zendavestha	
Shinto Religion	—	Ko-Ji-Ki & Nehongi	
Confucius Religion	Confucius	Classics	
Yahudi (Hebrew)	Moses	Old Testament	

- * Preachers of Sanatan Hindu Religion are Shri Rama, Shri Krishna, Shankaracharyaji. and many other great people.
- * Judaism : Amongtheir ancestors belong Abraham, Issac & Jacob and Moses, a Hebrew, was the preacher of Judaism. They believe in the “Old Testament”.

Religion — A Throbbing of Life

Religion is woven, like warp and woof, in human life. A religion is the throbbing of life. There will hardly be any area in the world, where religion in one form or other is not followed or obeyed. It is impossible to imagine a human life without a religion.

If one gets even a faint glimpse of the religions prevailing in the world, one can have a general knowledge regarding the traditions of other religions, the practices of theirs as well as their followers. Such a knowledge may certainly be useful in removing the false ideas or beliefs or prejudices regarding other religions.

Ignorance about the different religions is an important reason amongst the reasons instrumental in creating religious fanaticism. If we are familiar or have knowledge of various religions, the fanaticism or enmity of the followers of one religion towards those of other religions may decrease.

Hoping that the good familiarity with all religions will smoothen and facilitate the treading on the path of achieving composure for all religions or mutual relations among them all, efforts are made here for writing and publishing of this book “Glimpses of World Religions” (Sarva Dharma – Darshan).

Virtues like Truth, Forgiveness, Right Conduct and Compassion are found common in each religion. The fostering and growth of such humane qualities are well-nigh done in the Garden of Religions. Multifarious creeds, religious traditions and sects are the various flowers of this garden. The sects are meant

Glimpses of world Religions

for the purpose of organisation. In fact, religiousness is one. If, with the help of booklet 'Sarva Dharma Darshan' religions are introduced to us, it will be useful in the judicious interpretation of a religion.

Generally, after studying the philosophies of the various religions of the world, it will be realised that no particular religion considers the other one inferior; yet, the sentiment of composure or love and respect for all religions as found in the Indian systems of philosophy, has given the best understanding of the supreme generosity credited to it. There are many ways of realising vicinity to God. Hence this land of Bharat is construed to be an Aryan land which gives convenience to each for following his own religion. That is why, perhaps, the holy land of Bharat is regarded as the maternal family - home of religion and spiritualism.

Munishri Santbaaljee made experimental deeds to accelerate the work of "equal love and respect for all religions" through the Universal love - Prayogik Sangh at Mahavirnagar International Centre at Chinchani, through the efforts of Reverend Dr. Tarulatajee - the disciple of revered lady-saint Lalitabai Swami. And it became a source of inspiration for the publication of this booklet.

We are lucky to have the guidance of learned professor Dr. Rasikbhai Mehta. I am indebted to him. As to the work of writing. I have got the constant co-operation of my wife Dr. Madhubehn Barvalia, throughout.

I am also indebted to Sri Navneetbhai Sheth of the S.P.R. Jain Kanya Shala Trust, as also to Shramanee Vidyapith at Ghatkopar and to Mahavirnagar Chinchni Library sponsored by Munishri Santbaaljee, and also to Dr. Rasikbhai Mehta and Preetibehn Dedbiya, for facilitating availability of the reference volumes.

I also thank Murabbi Shree Dhanjibhai and Ashokbhai Shah of Navbharat Sahitya Mandir, Mumbai.

Glimpses of world Religions

With a heartfelt wish that, this booklet viz. 'Glimpses of World Religions' [Sarva Dharma Darshan] may serve to be a helping track of a general welfare and happiness, which can give a concrete shape to the actual practice.

March, 2003

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મહાભારત (હિંદુ દર્શન)

SHREE KRISHNA & ARJUN IN MAHABHARAT (HINDU DARSHAN)

Hinduism (The Religion of the Hindus)

The Background

The Hindu community and the Hindu culture and civilization have survived cross-currents of thousands of centuries. Many other castes and their manifold cultures have mixed with the Hindu civilization and have become one and identical with it; they have lost their separate identities. Just as many a river having confluenced with the Ganga (The Gangas) has assumed the form of it, so has the Hindu community and civilization absorbed in its belly, various communities and cultures. Only the Hindu community, Hindu civilization and Hinduism are as firm as rock.

In realistic terms, the Hindu religion is called a perennial Dharma or 'Sanatan Dharma'; the Shruti, the Smruti and the Puranas bear testimony to this. Maharshi Ved Vyas is such an epoch-maker as has a direct relation with all these three. The other genius is Shankaracharya.

The Ved Vyasji composed history and the Puranas in order to systematise tradition of the Vedic Religion.

Shree Krishna Dwaipayan achieved the task of classifying or compiling the systematised parts of the hitherto disorganised

Ved-Samhita. That is why he was called Ved Vyas – the compiler of the Vedas.

Great Bāḍrayana Vyas composed the ‘Brahmasutra’ with a view to sort out and to put into a system, the philosophical treatises and principles acquired from the spiritual realisations woven around the great Upanishadic sages; it can be called the first systematic volume of philosophy of the world.

Whether it is one Vyas or many Vyases, the ‘Vyasaji’ can very well be regarded as the father of Hindu religion.

In the tradition of the teacher and the taught, (Guru-Shishya) accepted by Shankaracharya for the purpose of attaining knowledge of the self, even God Narayan, Brahmā, Vashishtha, Shakti, Parāshar, Vyas, Shuk Gaudapāda, Govind Tirth and Sri Shankaracharya with his disciples Sureshāchārya, Padmapādāchārya, Hastamalkāchārya and Totakāchārya are included.

Hinduism (the Religion of the Hindus)

Hindu Dharma is one of the most significant dharmas of India. Nothing is possible to be asserted with surity as to when exactly this religion was originated. No human being has propounded or initiated this religion. It is, as well, not easy to answer the question – “to which we should give the name of ‘Hindu-Dharma’ ?” Because some persons put forward the ‘faith in the Vedas’ as the characteristics of Hindu religion. Some enumerate as essential the sixteen sanskāras, contained as intrinsic to the said religion; some again consider as unique characteristic – the Varnashrama Dharma. Not only that but there are also some people who claim as Hinduism the beliefs in Karma (action), Re-birth and Moksha or Liberation over and above the Varnashram. Some add to these, the faith in the gods of the clan, the worship of the five gods viz. Ganesh, the Goddess, the Sun, Lord Vishnu and Shiva as well as the belief in Avatārs

or Incarnations and the rites of Propitiation of the Pitrus. We come across such diverse beliefs regarding Hinduism. It is not easy to label down any characteristic or a definition of Hindu religion.

The Definition of Hinduism

Taking into consideration the fact and the outlook that all those can be included in Hindu Religion such as the religion which was observed and honoured by the ancient Aryans inhabited in Hindustan the three main definitions of Hindu religion are specially known :- (1) the Vedas (Brahman) religion, (2) Jainism, (3) Bauddha Dharma. All these three are as if three branches of one large tree. Let us look at these three in order.

(1) Hindu Dharma – Vedic Dharma

The Vedas mean knowledge = to know that. The four Vedas viz Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda, Atharvaveda. The Brahman books, the Aranyakas and the Upanishadas are included in this 'Veda'. The Vedas are the exclamations of God; the other name of the Vedas is Shruti. The Shruti means listening. The ancient sages and the ascetics had got this knowledge through listening. They were the seers, and not the authors.

Then, listening stopped and afterwards on the basis of memory, something was preserved. The many books compiled by the sages are called the 'Smruti'. The books composed, depending on this, are called the Smruti Granthas. The Dharma Sutras, The Gruhya Sutras, Vedang, the Scriptures, the History – the Puranas and the philosophical treatises are included in these Smruti-granthas. The four Samhitas of Vedas were written. The great sage Krishna Dwaipayana has arranged these Samhitas. He is more known as Vyāsa. There are two sections of the scriptures – the Shruti and the Smruti. The Shruti means the books like Samhitas, the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas as well

as the Upanishadas of the Vedic time. The very expression of God himself, in the form of the Vedas is Shruti. Many books were composed in order to make the knowledge easier and intelligible; those books are not independent; but they have been arisen from the memory of ancient Vedic knowledge and therefore all of them are known as the Smrutis. The Shrutis are considered more powerful than the Smrutis; but at present, the Hindu Dharma is very much indebted to the Smrutis.

Apart from all the above said books, the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata, Shrimad Bhagawad Gita and other Puranas, the Shaivite and the Vaishnav Tantras, or the Agama shrotas, the teachings of the sages and saints etc. are also considered the authorised literature and have important place as Scriptures of Hinduism.

With a view to make the Vedic scripts assuming pure pronunciations and to realise their meanings, some volumes have been compiled to systematise certain sacrificial rites specified therein and to do them at proper times; they are called 'Vedang'. Thus Vedang means the organs of the Vedas – the instruments. The number of Vedang is six. Most of the literature of this has been composed in the shape of the Sutras. The short and pithy sentences are called the 'Sutras'. The Sutra narrates all the meaning in a few words. The order which was established of the Vedic religion of this Sutra time is prevailing today also in the Hindu religion. Knowledge, Devotion and Action (Karma) are the three important elements of Hinduism.

As shown in the 'Kalpasutra' the ceremonies are observed in the Hindu religion. Three classes are formed of the Kalpasutra : (1) Shrautasutra (2) the Gruhyasutra (3) Dharmasutra. In the Shrautasutra, the sacrificial rites like Ashwamedha etc. are shown as mentioned in the Shruti. In the Gruhyasutra the religious rites,

which a householder has to perform at home as well as the sacred-thread ceremony and marriage rituals and other duties (samskāras) are found. The description of the four Varnashramas and religious duties thereof as well as the legal matters are prescribed in the Dharmasutras.

The five great Sacrifices

These are the supporting pillars of the Vaidic Dharma as a whole. They are popularly known as the 'Panch Mahayagnas'. These are –

- (1) Sacrifice in honour of the Deities viz. Devayagna. This propounds the worship of various gods, regarded as the manifold embodiments of God illuminating this universe.
- (2) **Bhootyagna** : This entails the rearing or nourishments of animals other than men, being kind to them.
- (3) **Pitruiyagna** : Keeping memory of the deceased parents, to keep enkindled the devotion to them in our hearts, as well as to observe the duties relating to the clan.
- (4) **Brahmayagna** : To be engaged in daily studies and to enliven the intellect thereby.
- (5) **Manushyayagna** : Cherishing love for human being to welcome them respectfully.

One should perform these duties everyday and faithfully believing that it is the only and the best worship of God Almighty. The householder must act accordingly – such is the commandment of the Hindu scriptures. Over and above this 'Panchyagna' or five-fold sacrifices, the Hindu scriptures have planned some actions which are termed as 'Samskaras'. Beginning from the child taking shape in the Embryo, these Samskaras are spread over until death. These Samskaras covering man's whole life with intellect teach us to remember

constantly the holiness contained in them. About the number of Samskaras, they differ from twelve, sixteen, forty, etc. – these are specially known as “Shodas Samskaras”.

Four Varnas and four Ashramas

Varna means colour, i.e. according to the colours of the jobs, four Varnas are enumerated in the society. The Hindu Pandits have mentioned (1) Brahman (2) Kshatriya (or the warrior class), (3) Vaishya and (4) Shudra. The jobs of the Brahmins are to get knowledge and to teach it, to do one's duty and to give sermons. The duty of the Kshatriya is to prevent the internal and external enemies of the society doing harm and to take the public on the path of happiness and welfare, as well as to protect the subject. At every step, money is required for the general happiness of the whole society. The creator and the provider of the money is Vaishya class. The Vaishyas help the king by doing agriculture etc. and by paying the taxes. The Shudra is the class which does physical labour. These four Varnas have been established in the times of the Rigveda Samhitas. There is no intention or aim to contempt other Varnas, considering a particular Varna either high or low. The main aim is the social organisation.

The four Ashramas

Keeping in view the welfare of the whole society, the authors of scriptures have decided the order of four Ashramas with a purpose that every man can achieve his 'good' in his life. They have propounded this order. The Ashramas means Rest. Just as a traveller, continuing to take rest on his way, reaches his ultimate target, a human being can reach his 'Param' aim by taking help of these four Ashramas. These are the best steps, phases for living a systematic life, a holy life even by remaining in the worldly life. Hoping for a span of hundred years of man's life, it is divided into four equal years in each Ashrama.

(1) Brahmacharyāshrama :- (Celibacy)

The first phase of life when one acquires knowledge staying at the teacher's (Guru's) house (ashrama), in extreme simplicity and holiness, this phase is called 'Brahmacharyāshrama'. Ordinarily, from 5 years of age to 25 years of age has been earmarked for this Ashrama. It is compulsory for everyone to acquire knowledge, to observe the rules of simplicity and of physical strains and to secure the best formation of body and mind culture. Be it a king or a poor, each had to take recourse to this Ashrama for his personal welfare as well as for the good of the society as a whole.

(2) Gruhasthashrama (or Family life) :-

To return to one's own residence, after acquiring proper knowledge to get married and to settle in the life of a householder is called 'Gruhasthashrama'. This phase is not simply meant for 'Eating, Sexual enjoyment and Sleep', but it is expected that one would not (and should not) enjoy the worldly pleasures, himself alone, living in the midst of worldly life, but one must cherish the philanthropic feeling for doing good to all others by sharing wealth and doing service to them. From the money procured by honest and just means, one should administer to the needs of his kith and kins – children and wife; not only that but a householder has to do his duties of spending that money for public welfare, and render hospitality, welcoming the guests, arriving without prior intimation as also for after-death rituals of the beloved ones. To utilise the earnings in these ways is his auspicious duty.

(3) Wanprasthashrama (or meaningful retired life) :-

This ashrama assumes its name for going to a forest (wanam). It enjoins the duty of retiring to a forest after satisfactorily enjoying the worldly life and pleasures, and at a

time when the hair turns grey, i.e. to say goodbye to the life full of activities and seek a life of retirement, and living in a forest to remember God Almighty and to lead a life full of peace and retirement. The chief functions and duties supposed to be done in this phase of life are the studies of and contemplation on the best types of religious books, the welcoming of the guests, observing of the religious vows or fasting, to give oblations to the sacrificial fire, the devotions to God and control over the senses and to have sympathy and mercy for all the animals.

(4) Sannyasashrama (the life of a Recluse) :-

Sannyasashrama is to live a life of renunciation, shedding of all worldly duties and actions as well as all the worldly relations. Moreover, to meditate on Brahma the ultimate truth, having meals only once and that too whatever is available by begging; the duty of such a Recluse or a Sannyasi is to keep strolling from one village or a town to another village or a town; and the principal duty is thus to do good to others with the help of imparting knowledge. This phase of Sannyasashrama is extremely significant for achieving the much-awaited salvation of the soul or Liberation, by renouncing everything.

The Four Purusharthas (or self-efforts)

The scholars of scriptures have also discussed about what can be the purpose of human life and what kind of activities a man should do to grace his entry on this earth, and what type of the values of life must be. *They have found out four objectives after examining different types of man's activities; these are called Purusharthas.* (1) Religious duty, (2) Wealth, (3) Sex, (4) Salvation (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha). The most emphasis is laid down on Dharma Purushartha from among these four. If Dharma Purushartha is driven out from human life, nothing good remains, and the life becomes meaningless.

(1) Dharma :

Dharma or duty being the chief aim of human life or the summum bonum of life, it stands first. Here, duty means morality and good conduct; duty also means faith in God. Both these meanings are worthy of acceptance. A person is supposed to take perfect interest in all the activities, keeping Dharma in the centre by leaving wealth purushartha and sex purushartha many difficult problems will arise. Wealth is needed in each activity of life and money is necessary even in donation. Therefore the contempt of wealth is not welcome in any condition. The religion means a command to do particular work and the rules by observing which it lasts. This Dharma purushartha is inevitable for each and every individual.

(2) Wealth (Artha) :

‘Artha’ means money, wealth. This is one of the means for getting happiness in the world; yet man runs here and there to secure it. Of course, man must do this Artha Purushartha (effort to gain wealth) in order to maintain samsar and to fulfil the needs of house-hold life. But the pining for wealth makes a man forget his Dharma. The relation of Artha with Dharma is very necessary. All of us know very well what terrible results are seen in today’s world. “Wealth is my Lord and I am the servant of Wealth.” This slogan has become the most lovable slogan of today to procure wealth by immoral means, adultery, corruption, bribery, hoarding, black marketing, not to pay taxes, artificial scarcity, forgery, breach of trust, cheating, how many such evils have blossomed. The demon in the form of lust is eating away humanity, because Dharma has gone away from its very root. That is why the greatest men have openly told us that the constant effort (purushartha) for Dharma should be there in every activity of life.

(3) Kāma (wishes) :

Kāma means wish or a desire – the desire for happiness, the desire of sensual pleasures. The object of all the wishes of ‘man’ is the enjoyment and experience of pleasures. In this world, every man or woman, without exception, longs for happiness. And this desire and lust for pleasures of the senses becomes instrumental in man’s downfall. Any people or ‘subject’ is subjected to its degradation because of its anti-religious activity of pursuing after luxurious rest and enjoyments or comforts and happiness. What is the use or significance of that happiness which is non-ethical or irreligious ? Such a happiness, really speaking, is not at all happiness; it is only a shadow of happiness. In short, Kama or wish devoid Dharma is harmful. If one wants to get happiness, plan out nicely for the savings of money and of earnings, be spendthrift, keep chief aim of the production of wealth; then we shall be able to protect our Dharma or Duty and happiness will be secured. With the compromise of Dharma, Artha and Moksha and with the wisest understanding, the human life on this planet earth will be graceful.

(4) Salvation (Moksha) :

Liberation of the soul or salvation is the fourth ‘Purushartha’. Moksha means to be free from the bondage. Ignorance, misery and sin are the bondages in worldly life; to be liberated from them is Moksha or salvation. Of all the Purusharthas, this is the most superb one. It is linked with Dharma. In the opinion of some people, Dharma and Moksha are one and the same. This Moksha *Purushartha is not possible for everyone; but the ultimate goal of everybody should be liberation of the soul.*

The Six systems of Philosophy or s’addarshan

After the Vedic Age, the six systems of philosophy were composed. ‘Darshan’ means an instrument of vision. The



શ્રીરામ (હિંદુ દર્શન)

SHREE RAM (HINDU DARSHAN)

Brahman scripture-writers have constructed six different philosophical systems in the form of pithy, short sentences; those are known as 's'ad-darshan' or the six systems of philosophy. If there might be in the 'Brahmanas' and upanishadic 'shastras' anything which are either self-contradictory or unintelligible teachings of 'knowledge' – to explain all these, 'Darshanas' or systems of philosophy have been written. There are 3 pairs of two systems each :-

- (1) Samkhya and Yoga
- (2) Nyaya and Vaisheshika
- (3) Poorva Mimāṃsā and Uttar Mimāṃsā.

All these six systems, because they accept the validity of the Vedas, are called the 'Āstika Darshanas'. The Samkhya Darshan has been framed or written by Kapil Muni (the Sage Kapila) and it is very old or ancient. The Yogasutra is composed by Patanjali.

Kanāda has composed the Vaisheshika Darshan as a systematic presentation. The Nyaya Darshan has been propagated by sage Gautama. 'Poorva Mimāṃsā has been written by Jaiminee and the Uttar Mimāṃsā propounded by Badrāyanā Vyāsa. The prime objective of all these systems or Darshanas is to introduce Hindu Dharma and philosophy in easy terms. These s'ad-darshanas have done a wonderful job of explaining in simplified terms the secrets and inner motives of religion and to make them, in this way, beneficiaries to mankind; and they have also provided the platform or ground for understanding Hinduism and have made as realise or see the 'Truth'.

The religion as made explicit in the 18 Puranas is the finalised form of that type of religious life which began in the period after the Vedas being made more elaborate. Recording

to the opinion of the Puranas, God is the cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, and in tune with these three functions. (1) Brahmā, (2) Vishnu (3) Mahesha – Shiva are the three divine forms. All the acts or plays of God are covered by and included in these three functions. Instead of the legendary divinities like Indra, Varuna etc., this Trinity initiated in the pauranic times is more capable of showing to us the full-fledged entire shaping of God. So, in the Hindu Faith of today the three Gods of this Trinity are regarded as chiefs amongst all the godheads.

The Incarnations (Avatāras) of Vishnu

As per the beliefs of Hindu religion Lord Vishnu is the protector of this world, and so, he is expected to do various tasks, by descending on earth or by (granting) incarnations for the protection (maintenance) and welfare of the world. To be incarnated is not like ordinary descending from some other place, but it is the manifestation of the arts or divine powers (vibhuti) of His Infinite Existence. Not only that, but to make the beings of earth realise or experience is what is called 'the Avtar'. There is a reference to the ten Avataras of Lord Vishnu, and if we look to the detailed list, it comes to 24 Avataras. Rama, Krishna, Buddha etc. are considered the Avataras of Vishnu.

In the Puranas, in addition to Bhakti or devotion, we find interesting characterisation of sentiments and duties like Yogic practices (Yoga Sadhana) fellow-feelings (Maitree) etc. The misery is to be removed by means of enlightening the wicks of knowledge and Renunciation. For lifting up this Renunciation-mood, many other means like morality, knowledge, meditation, love, etc. become very helpful. All of us have to do this 'good' act of making the life graceful by judicious use of any one of them.

The Specialities of Hinduism

- (1) The Hindu Religion or Philosophy is extremely broad-based and vast. This faith or religion has not any founder; and the followers of this 'Dharma' are innumerable. The most outstanding speciality of Hinduism is its spirit of non-violence. Chiefly because of love and kindness to animals, advocated by this religion, it is regarded as unique in the world. The Hindu Dharma teaches friendship and kindness to animals, nay, each and every living being. It is believed that the expected divine portions are seen in a cow. The feeling of sympathy and compassion are to be kept even towards birds and beasts as also towards living creatures of water-reservoirs. That is why the vegetarian diet or fruits are the chief foods of the Hindus, and if not, it must be.
- (2) **Polytheism (worship of many gods) :** The worship or propitiation of many gods and goddesses, prayers to them, observing of fasts, penance etc. are the chief attractions of this Dharma. Beginning from honouring the elements of nature like Indra, Varuna etc. gigantic beliefs in 33 crores of gods are a gorgeous imagination of Hindu Dharma. About the propitiation, pleasing or worshipping of a god-goddess, this religion gives complete liberty to an individual the worship of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Rama, Hanuman, powerful Goddesses, even worshipping of the Snake-God and propitiation of forefathers – these are main Poojas.
- (3) **Tolerance of other Faiths :** This virtue gives an unparalleled place of glory to Hindu Dharma. We should develop the spirit of tolerance. To a person inhabiting this earth or land is free to observe a religion of his or her choice. Tolerance of other 'faiths' to the extent that an individual can live happily and peacefully on this land by

following any religion whatsoever – be it Christianity, Islam Dharma or Zoroastrian (Parsi) Dharma. Such a mutual tolerance and love and equanimity for all religions is a characteristic of this Hinduism. Hatred or lack of peace in the name of religion was never to be imagined from this religion.

- (4) The sentiments of the Hindu Dharma have given the best introduction of its generosity regarding equality amongst all religions. There are many ways for getting union with God and the Hindu Dharma is to provide the convenience to follow his own religion. It is Hindu Dharma which has welcomed and protected foreign religions into this country. Perhaps, that is the reason why the land of Bhārat has been considered as maternal home of religion and spirituality.
- (5) Not regarding Bhakti, knowledge (gnan) and action (karma) quite enough and everything, renunciation, vows – penance, repetition of the names of gods (japa), meditation, yoga etc. are also accepted for the purpose of following this religion. They have given suggestion (to man) of inculcating Dharma in every activity by forming a relation of Dharma with Artha and Kāma.
- (6) It has also been suggested to make life more noble by service, doing good to others and human welfare instead of simply being selfish.
- (7) Each and every phase of human life is important, and one should face peacefully and with joy every situation of life; and we should do those activities which bring happiness to all. The ultimate goal of human life is to secure Moksha or liberation of the soul – we have to be free from the cycle of birth and death. For this, we have to do the

purushartha of achieving the condition of freedom in life (Jiwanmukta) by sacrificing ignorance or Māyā.

- (8) In order to achieve this state of freedom in life, the help of a worthy Guru, worship of God, the study, contemplation and hearing of the scriptures as well as holy journey, repetition of names of God (Japa), meditation etc. are very much helpful. So each worshipper must remain active in all the activities.
- (9) In the Hindu religion two contrary aims are found regarding a woman spouse. On one side, by saying that “O’ woman ! you are a goddess” and thus, she is given a place of pride; on the other side, ‘a woman is the mine of hell’ and in this way, she has been degraded. If we look to the tradition, a woman is expected to remain within the four walls of the family house, and she should do the chief duty of her family and service to them – this is believed in the Hindu society. Along with this many philosophers and saints have praised and glorified a woman as goddess or a ‘satee’ (a wife who burns herself lighting a holy fire, after the death of her husband).
- (10) The soul is immortal, so there is morality, there is ‘Dharma’ and the motivation for philosophy. The soul has to suffer the births and re-births, and just as a person throws off old garments and puts on new ones, so does Atma or Soul relinquishes one physical body and adopts a new body. Births and Deaths are for the body and not for the soul.
- (11) There are different varied paths (Panthas) or creeds like Vaishnav, Swaminarayan and Shaiva in Hindu religion. This religion which is sprouted in the form of the main ‘Sanatan’ (or original perennial) Dharma has different, multifarious branches and sub-branches spread over.

For the Hindus, holy pilgrimage-centres are Rhishikesh, Prayāga, Somnāth, Amarnāth, Badrināth, Kāshi or Benāras, Dwārīka, Mathurā, Vrundavan, Jagannathpuri, Rameshwar, Tirupati Balaji, Nathdwara etc. Places like Pawagadh, Ambāji, Vaishnodevi, etc. are the temples of Goddesses. The Swaminarayan temples are situated at many places like Gadhada, Vadtal etc.

The Festivals of Hindu Dharma

The festivals or celebrations play a very prominent part in a man's life. The festivals do a laudable, praiseworthy service of providing refreshed vitality, joy, enthusiasm, alacrity as well as freshness. Removing the monotony of an individual's life, a valuable service of filling it with new zest, new consciousness or spirit and infusing a new life, is rendered by the festivals.

The Indian civilization has very nicely planned of the festivals of each and every religion and this is true not only for India's religions, but also true for any religion of the world; a nice order is seen. Either Dharma or Devotion (Bhakti) is normally found occupying a central place in the festivals; but its more particular object or aim is to instil a new spirit, a new joy in the life of a person.

You will hardly find a month, from amongst the twelve months, in the Hindu religion which has no festival. In the case of some months, there might be even more than one festival and in the month of Aswin or 'Aaso' there is a chain of festivals. From the auspicious starting of the New Year, the festivals also make a beginning, as it were, and the festivals come to an end with the lights of the series of lamps ! Between these two extremes, each and everyone is full of joy and loves the joyous world of various festivals.

At a time, when the people had very few means whereby *they could have entertainment along with the spiritual bliss*, these

holy occasions (Parvas) and festivals served the purpose of being the best sources of pleasure. Some festivals which have their roots in the far-off ancient times, are celebrated even today, of course with due changes befitting the time and that is the surest sign of their being alive. However few such holy occasions or days there may be; they do a wonderful job of instilling sunshines of joy and enthusiasm into the lives of men.

There are a number of celebrations in the Hindu religion. Right from the beginning of situations prior to a child's birth, upto the post-death conditions of life, the festivals, 'Samskaras' and religious rituals are linked with them. The Hindu Dharma admonishes to fully enjoy the delights by attributing to every minute the dignified form of a holy celebration (Utsava). With some festivals are associated observance of vows etc., penance, fasts, repetition of God's names, special sacrifice Anushtan etc. No religion would advise to indulge in short-lived pleasures or 'enjoy one moment of pleasure in a momentary life'. Joining the qualities like alms, good behaviour, penance, repetition of God's names, straining of physical nerves and sufferings or controlling the senses' demands as well as sacrifices, yoga-sādhana and worship with the festivals, the saints and sages have done a lot of favour to people. There are many festivals of Hindu Dharma; it is not necessary to describe each in details. The material for this is so much that an independent volume can be written on this, but we have to have control on our pen and be satisfied by giving only a few details about the important festivals.

The details in brief about the festivals like the New Year according to brave Vikram, 'Bhaibeej' (the festival of brother), Labhpancham or Gyanpanchmi, Tulsivivah – Dev Diwali, the full moon day of Kartika, Makarsankranti, Mahashivaratree, the Holi, Gudipadavo, Gurupurnima, Janmashtami, Balev (sacred

thread ceremony), Ganesh Chaturthee, Navaratree, Dashera and Diwali.

The New Year

This is celebrated in some parts of our country with great enthusiasm and zest. The people greet one another by saying 'Nootan Varshabhinandan' or 'Sal Mubarak'. In all the temples of Hindu Dharma worshipping, Darshan, Aarati etc. are organised. In some creeds, the Annakut also (the dish having sweets and other menu) offered to God and by taking a little share of those eatables (Prasad) the devotees consider themselves most lucky and holy. The best wishes on the occasion of the New Year are sent to the friends and relatives staying far by telegrams or telephones or by post.

Bhaibeej

On this day, a brother goes for lunch to his sister's house, they exchange good feelings and wishes to each other and the sister gives blessings and good wishes for the all round happiness of the brother; the brother feels delighted by giving gifts to the sister.

Lābh Pāncham

On this day the businessman starts the auspicious beginning of New Year's trade, enters into new contracts and sends good wishes to one another. As the financial year begins from first April, the importance of this day is not as it was, yet so many merchants make a beginning of their New Year's work by offering salutations (vandan) remembering God, worship etc. to their main God.

14th January – Makarsankranti

This is a kind of scientific festival. On this day the rotation of the southern equinox round the sun – its journey is completed and it begins to move towards northern Hemisphere that is why it is also called 'Uttarayan'. As the sun enters into the zodiac sign

‘Makar’ in the month of Pos, this is called ‘Makar-sankranti’. Sankranti, etymologically, means balanced or proper revolution. In India, this festival is celebrated in various ways in different states or provinces. In Gujarat, it is by flying kites, in Tamilnadu (Southern India) they celebrate ‘Pongal’ i.e. celebrating the holy occasion of the harvest, in Kerala, they celebrate by making decorations of Rangoli of flowers, as well as by organising the boat-races and by lighting earthen lamps near the riverside and then offering the ‘Pooja’ to those lamps as well as by making them float in the rivers and by taking holy bath at the confluence of rivers; in Maharashtra by offering mutually the sweet-meal (Laddus) made from til or sesame and by applying kumkum to cows, by giving alms to the Brahmanas and by giving them money as Dakshina, the said festival is celebrated.

Mahā Shivaratri

The fourteenth day of the month of Magh is regarded as ‘Mahāshivratri’. This particularly is not a festival but a day of fasting or vows. This is, for the devotees of Lord Shiva, the best parva or holy day of worship of God Shiva. It still inspires us even today, and the story of the hunter of the deer does the same, and gives a new lesson or morale. Let us meditate on God effortlessly and may we be favoured with the blessing of Shiva and get welfare (Shiva). We are expected to celebrate Shivratri by achieving complete identity with each and every throbbing that may be in the world.

The ‘Holi’

The full moon day of the month of ‘Phalguna’ is celebrated as the Holi festival. This is in memory of that day when the flames of fire, originally meant for burning the famous boy-devotee ‘Prahlaḍ’, actually consumed and killed that demon of a woman named Holika and Prahlaḍ was intact and was unhurt. “The

Diwali of Gujarat and the Holi of Marwar, Rajasthan” is a well-known adage. The people prayed to God Agni (God of fire) to save Prahlad and so this child-devotee Prahlad was safe and sound, being unburnt and unhurt, even in the oven of fire (Agnikund). That is the reason why fire in the form and name of ‘Holi’ is worshipped; also, at that particular night, devotees give offerings like coconuts etc. The people, overjoyed with this amazing protection of Prahlad, celebrated the next day as Dhuleti festival. They played Holi, sprinkling colours like gulal and the coloured waters of Kesuda flowers. The sproutings of new flowers of Phalguna month are being played with. This festival is implied to mean burning of the indecent, immoral instincts lurking in man and it is not all the festival of gambling or uttering slangs, nor of throwing muds at one another.

Gudi Padvo

This is the first day (Padvo) of the Chaitra month. It is well-known as Chaitra Sud Pratipada in Maharashtra; or Gudi Padva is the popular name. On this day God Shree Rama had freed the land of South from the clutches of Vali. So the ‘subjects’ or the masses had expressed delight by hoisting their flags. The jars made of copper are known as Gudi. On this day, the silver jars, the jars of copper or bronze are tied and bound with a new cloth and the same are kept on a stick, in an inverted condition, near the window or a door. In the late evening, they try to locate the New Moon in the sky, because the lovely sight of the moon ‘Chandra-darshan’ is regarded as very ‘good-omen’. It is customary to relish sweetmeats on this day. In Malbar and Kerala, this festival is celebrated in quite a different fashion. In Malbar, the members of family, getting up very early, go to the space kept for God’s worship in their own houses, with closed eyes. The Sindhis call this day as “Cheti Chand”. But

in Maharashtra, this day is regarded as the first day of their year and they initiate many good activities from that day. People look to this day as very auspicious and celebrate with zest and zeal, because the memories of the victorious return of Sri Rama, Srimati Sitajee and Lakshman to Ayodhya by Pushpaka Plane, are linked with it.

Ram Navami

The ninth day of Chaitra Sud (brighter half) happens to be the Birth Day of Bhagwan Rama. People – devotees of Rama in this country as also staying in foreign countries celebrate this day with very much joy and enthusiasm. The birth day of Veer Hanuman which falls on the Full-Moon-Day of this month is also celebrated with great pomp.

Guru Purnima

The fifteenth day or the Full Moon Day of the month of Ashadh is known as Guru Purnima (Preceptor or Teacher) or Vyas Purnima. This is believed to be a very holy day when the Pooja is offered to the teacher and sense of devotion and respect to him is expressed. Moreover, this day is for developing those virtues in ourselves which are found in the teachers or Guru – an auspicious occasion or ‘ustav’ for trying to become a ‘Sadguru’ or a good teacher. The history of India is full of examples of many illustrious teachers. Guru Pooja is not to be taken as a devotion to teacher’s body, but it is the respect for his knowledge. Guru is capable of making us have a vision of Govind or Lord Krishna. Many good wishes on this day for everyone to get a good teacher !

Balev – Rakshabandhan (or tying of threads)

We can introduce this parva on Shravan Sud Poornima by mentioning 5 names of it :- (1) Rakshabandhan (2) Balev

(3) Shravani (4) Poornima of coconuts and (5) Sanskrit day.

Rakshabandhan means a holy 'parva' of culture – the parva of good wishes of a sister. The holy occasion or 'parva' symbolic of an undiminished trust of a sister in her brother will surely protect the brother and sister, and the sister also, tying the Raksha thread, expresses her sentiments saying :- "May this protection-thread give protection to you in the way of your life." The Rakhadi is not a mere thread but a bondage of heart, and a symbol of pure love between a brother and a sister.

On this day of 'Balev' the Brahmanas, the devotees of Brahmatattva put on 'the sacred thread' or yagnopavit. They perform poojas like 'sandhyas' after taking a holy bath. Another name of this day is Shravanee also. The name of this month is determined as 'Shrawan' because of the Shrawan Naxatra's prominence. The Yajurvedis and Rigvedis wear the yagnopavit (Janoi), the sacred thread on this day, because it is regarded as a good day. *Shrawanee means the day of listening to the teachings of the moral rules.*

The coconut purnima : On this holyday, the salers, the merchants etc. offer coconuts to the ocean and worship ceremoniously and pray to the sea to have favours on them for their complete protection.

This is a very nice, holy day to remember the best values of Sanskrit literature and culture. This is also the day to cultivate love, co-operation, brotherhood, etc. for the country.

Janmashtami

The eighth day of Shravan Vad is the birthday celebration of Lord Krishna. It is known as Janmashtami. This is a very well-known religious festival of the Hindus. Some people observe fast on this day, go to the temple at midnight for worship and sing

Bhajans and other songs and loudly repeat some lines of divine songs. They also present the play of Garba-Dance of Krishna and Radha. They tie up with a rope the earthen pots full of curds very high and then they make a pyramid of young men and after breaking the pot, they feel highest delight. In Maharashtra this particular day is known as “Dahikala Utsav”. On Janmashtami people look with love towards Krishna as a child, they have a darshan of god Krishna, they worship him and repeat holy names of Krishna. This is the holy parva of Bhakti, love and joy.

Ganesh Chaturthi

The Ganesh festival starts from the fourth day of Bhadrapad Sud. Among the Hindus, before beginning each and every good act, Ganapati, the destroyer of obstacles, is worshipped first. He is worshipped with the words “Shree Ganeshaya Namah” (salute to Lord Ganesh). This God Ganesh who has a big belly is worshipped not only in Maharashtra and India but all over the world. Crores of Hindus who have settled overseas – for them Ganesh is a great God to be worshipped. On the fourth day of Ganapati Chauth the idol of Ganesh is seated with honour in the house, and there are great worships and rejoicings either for thirty six hours, five days or seven days or nine days or upto “Anant Chaudash” i.e. for fourteen days, when devotional songs and other programmes are arranged. Both in the morning and in the evening Aarti is done, Prasad is distributed. In Maharashtra, this festival is celebrated with unique delight and enthusiasm. The idol meant for public view and worship (universal or sārvaajanik) is generally very big and in these types of presentation, the forms and designs are of various types. Lok Manyu Bal Gangadhar Tilak made this festival a national festival. Thence, it became a holy occasion of public vigilance. On the 14th day, i.e. Anant Chaturdashi day, the farewell to (visarjan

of) Lord Ganesh is done with great pomp and pleasure. People in countless number throng at the river-side, near the lake or at a beach of the sea and the idols of Ganesh are made to have dip in deep waters and thus a wonderful pompous farewell is accorded with great respect and glory.

To present obscene or romantic songs or dances is an insult to the God – a lack of worship. The prayer as to the descent of these virtues may take place in our life, is the only true worship.

Durga Pooja (or worship of the Goddess Durga) – Navaratri and Dashera

Navaratri :

The festival which is being celebrated from the first day to tenth of month Aswin is very much well-known in this country as well as in foreign countries. Each and every day of the first nine days is called 'Norta'. All the nine days of this, the men and women, clad in gorgeous, multi-coloured clothes dance around (garbas) taking multi-coloured earthen jars having holes all over, and having a lamp lit with ghee or oil; and they go on singing devotional songs, especially 'Aarati'. The first ever (Ādya) mother Goddess wielding awe-inspiring power and light is supposed to have nine names and nine 'figures' or forms. The great Power-Incarnate Nav-Durga the mother Goddess venquished the terrible demon Mahishasur, possessing great terror, after continuous fighting for nine days. The ferocious demon was killed by her and thus all the three worlds were freed and were bereft of fear. The divine power of the Goddess was victorious. Thus, we have bowed down and welcomed this victory of the Goddess power over the evil power, in the form of the 'Garabas'. Along with the worship of power-incarnate, the Goddess, female-dances and male-dances, (Garaba-Garabi) Dandiya-ras, dramas, etc. are planned.

This is not an occasion of pleasure (parva) like those dancing around in front of the mother Goddess singing film-songs or such other indecent songs in tune with the similar 'Dhoons' or songs and with non-decorous dresses.

The mother-Goddess representing the power of speech or learning viz Maa Saraswati, Mother Goddess Ambā of the first power, Goddess Butbhavani, Mahakali, Bahucharāji, etc. are to be prayed with devotion and worshipping during this parva. Since the great poet Dayaram composed 200 years ago devotional songs in praise and honour of Goddess and to be sung by ladies, the custom of singing 'Garabees' in these nine days began.

Dressed in the traditional clothes (of the occasion) young brothers and sisters, offer 'AARATIS' of lamps before the Goddess while playing the Garabas and Rās with tiny sticks.

Durga-pooja Proper : Durga Pooja is invariably linked with Navaratri in Bengal. By the Bengalis in Bengal as well as by the Bengalis staying elsewhere just as in the case of Ganapati, the idol of Durgamata also is given grand farewell on the tenth day.

Dashera : This day is significant as the holy day of Bhakti and Shakti. The solemn oath and great will power to set on a great fight on the grand battlefield, implemented, means the day of Dashera. Because on this day, many a brave and strong warrior had won his battle, or had selected this day as a good-omen to go on a war, this day is called 'Vijayā Dashmi'. During the Navaratra festivals, at many places, Ramlila programmes are organised and on the tenth day the towering effigy of Ravana is burnt to ashes. The Dashera day is regarded as the best auspicious day for beginning of good, noble activities. Let us nicely avail of this day of Dashera which is a confluence of bravery, boldness and valour.

Deepotsavi or Diwali

Diwali means a parva of light, the last day of Vikram Samvat – the no-moon day of Aswin month. This festival signifies meetings and dedication. When Rama, Laxman and Seetaji returned to Ayodhya after getting a grand victory over the king of Lanka viz Ravana or Lankesh, the citizens of Ayodhya had celebrated Diwali for the first time. They had expressed joy by lighting lamps. In the memory of Rama's victory over Ravana this festival is celebrated. By turning the dark night of Amas into lights this festival was celebrated. In fact, this parva is meant for the victory of knowledge and good conduct over bad conduct and ignorance.

This is a group of five festivals Dhanteras, Kalichaudas, Diwali, the New Year day, Bhaibeej. During the auspicious days of Diwali the swings of delight roll in the hearts of people. The worshippings of Goddess Lakshmi, of the account books and of Mahakali are performed in the best way and with full devotion. This kindles the lamp of faith in the heart of man which is afflicted with disappointment. This day of taking account of the balance sheet of the whole year, is memorable. Let us welcome the light after removing the darkness.



Charwak Darshan

It is believed that the propaganda of the Charwak philosophy must have been done thousand years ago. On the other side, according to another belief, this philosophy is as old as Rigveda. No independent books are available at present. This philosophy is not spritual but it is perfectly materialistic. Charwak Darshan, thus, does not believe in Atma, but it believes in matter.

As maintained by this school of thought there is no need for the imaginery stories connected with 'other worldliness'. The reasoning also does not require to be sub-servient to mysticism. Our senses alone are sufficient means of real knowledge and that knowledge which has been acquired by the assistance and help of their co-operation, is the only true knowledge. According to the materialistic school of thought, even consciousness is the product of the matter. This Darshan or system is atheistic – the atheism towards the rituals and rites (do's and don'ts) which are in vogue in a particular religion. (But) This sense of atheism tends to research for the soul of true religion.

Etymologically the word 'Charwak' is made of two words Chara + vak meaning, those who speak and are deeply drenched

in sweet attractive language. Another meaning is also there : ‘One who himself chews his own words. In other words, Charwak is a person who swallows down the distinction of good and evil. In Mahabharat, we come across a dialogue between Charwak and ‘Udhishthir’. Thereupon, some learned scholars infer that there might have been some historical human being named Charwak. Great western scholar Max Muller is led to believe that the name of the first pupil to whom the exponent of this Darshan gave teachings of his philosophy was Charwak. The Charwak Darshan is also known as Lokayat. This word is a combination of 2 words – Lok + Ayat. i.e. the school of thought which is drawn or attracted towards ‘Lok’ or physical world; in short, it means that what is Lokayat ?

The Charwak Ideology

According to this ideology, the name ‘body’ or the ‘senses’ (organs) is given to the product of the four physical elements like the earth, water, fire and air. The physical body having consciousness added to it, is the soul, nothing more. There is no world like ‘Parlok’ or the other world over there; and supposing perhaps there is something like that world, then, nobody inhabits or stays there. Death is the only Moksha or Liberation of the soul. The Vedas which talk loudly about the bliss or heaven, are mere vain talkings of the cheaters. Arth (or wealth) and Kama (or wishes) are the only two purusharthas or worthy endeavours. Politics is the only (real) learning, perception (by the physical senses) is the only valid knowledge. It is desirable to tread on that path only which the ordinary masses use. Extreme bitterness and contempt for what is going on in the name of religion are full to the brim in this Darshan. There is very much well known advice propagated by this system of thought viz. “Live with enjoyments and happiness so long as

you live, and relish sweets even by incurring debts. There is 'no return' of the body which is engulfed by fire. Happiness means only lustful pleasure (Bhog, Vilās). (Eat, Drink and be merry)."

This system of knowledge is not ready to accept the inference as a source of valid knowledge. This fully materialistic philosophy does not believe in anyone like God as the creator of this universe. It has no faith in any such inscrutable or miraculous other-worldly power. This is a pragmatic or naturalistic darshan. There is no motive or purpose behind the creation of this world. As this ideology or darshan believes that the progress or 'getting on' of this universe is just working on like a machine only, this darshan is also known or called as a mechanistic darshan. We do have a real experience of the existing objects of this world; because of this belief of theirs, this 'darshan' is also termed as a realistic one or realism.

The Late Pandit Sukhlalji gives the word matter-like-consciousness or "Bhoot chaitanyavad" for this sort of philosophical system. For, Charwak Darshan does not believe that 'conscience' (or consciousness) is a quality or characteristic of some non-physical or spiritual entity like soul. Thus, it is a 'darshan' which regards the body only as a soul. There is no need, moreover, of believing in God as a creator or a destroyer of the world. And if asked to believe in God, we will have to believe in such a God as is wicked and unjust. As per this way of thinking :

The soul or Atma dies along with the death of the body and so, there is no question of its getting happiness or misery in heaven or in the hell respectively; and there being no soul remaining after the death of a man, there is no question of its re-birth.

Man becomes happy when his or her desires are fulfilled and if not, he (or she) feels unhappy. Therefore, more prominence is given to the acquisition of pleasure by taking recourse to sex and other wishes or kāma. Happiness and misery come and go for ever in human life. And so, why to forego a 'present' pleasure in the fear of a 'would-be' future misery ?

The Indian mentality can hardly digest or accept these facts shown by Charwak. Hedonism is not a perfectly true principle. This ideology can seldom be welcomed as a moral ideal of life. Real happiness and tranquility can be had only by cultivating a sense of justice and philanthropy. Then only the spirit of 'world itself is the family' can be put into practice.

All the schools of thought in Indian philosophy oppose (and prove wrong) this Charwak philosophy with one voice. Man has not taken birth here on this earth only for enjoyment of luxuries. To accept an ideology which has an ideal of irreligious acts is like degrading man to the level of a beast.

This darshan did not survive for long. In spite of a powerful criticism of atheism, today, in this world, we find materialism or the Charwak Darshan.

Numerous people of this world have unknowingly started to lead a life with a self centred goal and enjoyment of worldly pleasures. They have sidetracked the key factors like Religion, Justice and Morality which clearly shows a reflection of 'Charwak Darshan' in their lives.





ભગવાન મહાવીર (જૈન દર્શન)

BHAGWAN MAHAVIR (JAIN DARSHAN)

Jainism

Jain Dharma

The Hindu religion or the Brahmana religion was mainly of yagna or of sacrificial rites and rituals. Two parallel currents of thought were engaged in making people follow the righteous path. At that time, even Shraman Dharma believing chiefly in the sacrificial yagna was in vogue. Jain Dharma is very very ancient religion. Bhagwan Mahavir has not founded this religion, but according to Jain tradition, there are two parts of the cycle of time viz Utsarpinee and Avsarpinee. (It means the period of progress and regress are the two sections.) The present times are Avsarpinee or of downfall. In this religion in all 24 Tirthankaras have been there, by phases. The first amongst them is Adinath or Rishibhdev. Today's Jain scriptures are on the lines earmarked by Mahavir Swami. Actually, the Jain Dharma is beginningless or very ancient.

Even the name Jainism was given to this religion afterwards. In the very beginning, this Dharma was known as 'Shraman Dharma' or 'Nirgrantha Dharma'. The word 'Jain' is coined from the word 'Jin'. The original Sanskrit elementary "Ji" means 'to

conquer' and from that, this word has been derived. 'Jin' means the conquerer or one who has got victory; he who has controlled and conquered his feelings of love and hatred and one who has got conquest over Kāma and Raga (or 'krodh') is called a 'Jin' and he who worships such a 'Jin' having full faith in him, is called a Jain. This Jain word has been explained in another way also by the learned men or scholars. They say that "One who keeps Jayana towards animals is called Jain"; i.e. Jain is a person who keeps constant vigilance and takes constant care not to make minutest living being unhappy by his mind, speech and action. The supporting pillar is non-violence, self-control and penance. (That is why Jain Dharma is called 'other than ordinary people's religion.') This religion expected from everybody to follow non-violence, self-control and penance of the maximum degree and that too without cherishing any hope of any reward whatsoever, in every activity of religion.

The Jain Dharma has renunciation of residence as the central principle of paramount importance. In this religion, one who has reached the highest pinnacle (of austerity) is worshipped. The Tirthankars are the selfless saints (who have sacrificed everything) who are free from all passions, are philosophers and they are the founders or constructors of the Teerthas, or pilgrim centres. In the whole world, there is none so great as man, such a declaration is done by Jain religion. This trust or strong belief tantamounts to the (unbelievable but true) conviction that even Gods like Indra worship such a great man !

Jainism does not believe in God (as others do); the creation of the cosmos or world is beginningless (Anādi) and infinite. If one wants to be free from the worldly life, self-effort (or Swapurusharth) is inevitable. An individual is not great by dint of his birth (in particular family) but by virtue of his or her conduct

or karmas. The Jain religion does not believe in the differences of caste, community, colour, or sex. This religion is not giving prominence to caste, but bows down to virtues. A person must always aim at reaching the peak of the holiest position by discarding his faults by self-effort, cultivating the virtues and by nullifying the eight Karmas.

From the point of view of the soul the Jain Dharma believes in the equal status of all beings; the souls of an ant and an elephant have the same importance. Nobody has a right to hurt or kill any living being of the world. Forgiveness and fellow-feeling (maitree) are two invaluable gifts to the world from the Jain religion.

A woman has as much right to liberation of the soul (Moksha) as a male person has. So, Bhagwan Mahavir introduced Deeksha to be given to women and in the establishment of four fold (Chaturvidh) congregation of Monks (Sangh) all the four categories i.e. Sadhu-Sadhvi, Shravak and Shravika, have been considered important and supporting pillars. By maintaining that even a female sex can aspire and secure Tirthankarhood, Bhagwan Mahavir has made a supreme contribution in the religious history of the world. It is quite proper even to assert that by glorifying the woman-folk, he has made a spiritual revolution.

Jainism is realism and is rational. Every worshipper or mendicant has to achieve equanimity of vision and true knowledge. The power of the soul is infinite and that is to be developed by himself. If every soul itself attains perfection, it can achieve the status of 'Param Pad'. The soul itself is God or Parmatma. The soul itself is the doer of deeds, is also an enjoyer and it has, itself, to get Liberation. There is no place to Determinism in the Jain religion and this religion puts special emphasis on personal spiritual progress.

The Jain Dharma emphasizes virtues like non-violence, non-hoarding, non-attachment and relativism (Anekantavad) or many-sidedness of truth. Anekantavad is a great gift from Jainism to the world. To a person following the path of truth, there is no place for dogmatism. Truth has many aspects whereas in dogmatism, there is psychological or intellectual violence and compulsion; in Anekanta, tolerance and equanimity of feelings are found. Jainism champions the cause of and appeals for, such a life-style as inculcates a mentality of cherishing equal treatment to each and every living being. Sacrifice, non-attachment, renunciation and indifference to worldly life : these have accorded a place of pride to this ideology, i.e. Jain Dharma. The welfare of the whole society, happiness of the general masses and a spirit of universal friendship are implied in the Jain religion.

The highly auspicious holy Mantra of Jain Dharma

The Navkar Maha Mantra

Namo Arihantanam

Namo Siddhanam

Namo Ayariyanam

Namo Uvajzayanam

Namo Loe Savvasahoonam

Eso Panch Namukkaro, Savvapavappanasano

Mangalanam cha savvesim Padham Havai Manglam

These five Namaskaras or salutations which are addressed to Panch Parameshthi (or five unity) destroy all the sins and are the best and first of all the auspicious Mantras.

In the first step of Navkar Mantra, we bow to that Arihant God who is constantly showing or directing us the path of the happiness of the soul after having acquired Keval or only perfect

knowledge, having abolished all the evils or sins (matter) lying within and by making the Karmas dried up. In the second line or step, one is asked to bow before the realised one who has destroyed all the Karmas and stabilised him in the 'state' of Moksha; in the third line, pranams are due to Acharya Bhagwant who motivates others. In the fourth step we have to salute the grand teacher who spreads light of knowledge of the supreme kind found in the Sutra principle. In the fifth step of Navkar we have to bow down to all the souls who have been devoted to saintlihood and to the whole world.

Jain Dharma is an ancient philosophical tradition of India. Mantra is a power. This has been accepted universally. The first and foremost great mantra of Jain Dharma is Siddhamantra. This mantra is universal, looking to the virtues only.

There is an Ashram called Vedanti Ashram (New Way) founded by Swami Vivekanand in Lonavala. The author of this book had visited that ashram. There are most modern machines in the ashram. These machines express and measure the power of the mantras which can be watched on a screen similar to the T.V. The best quality of the Navkar Mantra has been proved through the means of electronic mechanical instruments by demonstrating the measure to the eyes. There was not any meditator who might have adopted the Jain culture, clan or Jain Dharma. The incidents shown about the influence of the Navkar Mantra in Jain religious stories are not mere legendary stories or miracles. Behind them, lie scientific and psychological truths. The meditation on the good and the pure entities will move ahead speeding up the pious current towards purity and piousness. Constant contemplation of what is good and the positive thought-process remedies and removes the evil; and this has been accepted by modern psychologists.

The Tirthankaras in Jain religion

From time immemorial, there were Tirthankaras, who had expounded the Jain Dharma. At present the 24th Tirthankar Mahavir Swami reigns the religion. In future there will continue the chain of 24 Tirthankaras.

The first Tirthankar of this period of Avasarpinee's twenty four-series was Adinath-Rishabhdev Bhagwan, who had taught the arts and crafts of Asi-Masi and agriculture as well as swinging of swords for self-defence as well as the possession of a pen and the ink for writing and agriculture for maintenance of life and thus provided the ideals of marriage and family life through the daughters Bādri and Sundari.

Mahāvīr, born 26 years ago raised up the Jain Dharma. Seeing the violence prevailing that time, Bhagwan Mahāvīr restored the non-violence cult by Shraman culture.

The Present 24 Tirthankaras of Jain Dharma

(1) Rishabhdev Adinath (2) Ajitnath (3) Sambhavnath (4) Abhinandan Swami (5) Sumatinath (6) Padma-prabhu (7) Suparshwanath (8) Chandraprabhu Swami (9) Savidhinath (10) Sheetalnath (11) Shreyansanath (12) Vasupujya Swami (13) Vimalnath (14) Anantnath (15) Dharmanath (16) Shantinath (17) Kuntunath (18) Arnath (19) Mallinath (20) Muni Suvrata Swami (21) Naminath (22) Neminath (23) Parshwanath (24) Veer Wardhman Mahavir Swami.

Āgam :

Jain Dharma's authorised valid collection of Shastras are called Āgamas.

A = prescribed by Āpta purusha

G = knitted by Ganathar

M = put into practice by Muniraj

Āgama is that by which we get perfect knowledge of either a thing or the essence (Tattva) or complete perfect knowledge of the secret of an object. Those are Āgamas which are woven or knitted in various Sutras by Gandharas or chief disciples – the divine speeches of Shree Mahavir, heard from his own mouth.

Acharya Aryarakshita has classified the Āgamas into four parts :- (1) Dravyanuyoga (concerning the soul) (2) Charankarnanuyoga (relating to the duties or conduct of sages etc.) (3) Ganitanuyoga (concerning geography, astronomical arithmetics) and (4) Dharmakathanuyoga (explaining philosophy through the medium of religious stories.)

In the 32 Āgamas

Eleven Ang Sutras :- (1) Achrāṅg (2) Suyagadang (3) Thanang (4) Samvayang (5) Bhagwati (6) Gnata Dharmakatha (7) Upasak Dasanga (8) Antgad Dasanga (9) Anuttaro Vavai (10) Prashna Vyakaran (11) Vipak Sutra

12 Upang Sutra

(12) Uvavai (13) Rapapseni (14) Jivabhigham (15) Pragnāpanā (16) Jambudweep Pannati (17) Chandra Pannati (18) Surya Pannati (19) Nirayāvalika (20) Kappavadisiya (21) Putafiya (22) Pushkachuliya (23) Vahnidasha

In the 4 original Sutras (24) Dashvaikalik (25) Uttaradhyayan (26) Nandisutra (27) Anuyoga Dwar.

Four Sutras re. Metre (28) Anuyoga Dwar (29) Bruhadkalpa (30) Nishish Sutra (31) Dashashrut Skandh (32) Avashyak Sutra

The Terapanthi and Sthanakavasi creeds believe in these 32 sutras. From amongst 12 Angas the 12th one Drashtivad has been separated. Shwetambar believing in the worship of idols add 13 sutras to these 32 and believe in 45 Āgamas. Over and

above the three i.e. Pindniryukti, Oghaniryukti and Maha Niseeth, 10 Painna or chapter books $32 + 13 = 45$. The Digambar tradition of Jain believes that Mahvir's perfect Gyan was Vichcheda, or has been destroyed. They believe in Samayasar etc. Shastras written by Kund Kundacharya. All the offshoots of Jainism accept "Tatwarth Sutra" are composed by Acharya Umaswatijee.

Samayik Pratikraman etc. – Avashyaka Sutra

Just as we have to do all the actions like food for living, to keep the soul clean, these are six viz.

- (1) **Samayik** : To turn to purity of soul, being retired from Savadyayog.
- (2) **Yasovisantho** : Praising Tirthankaras and criticism of 99 types of faults.
- (3) **Vandana** : Politeness to the Gurus or teachers.
- (4) **Pratikraman** : Devaluation of the sins.
- (5) **Kausagg** : process of self-purification.
- (6) **Pratyakhyan** : To prevent future sins coming, observance of vows. Vrat Pachchakhan.

The main Principles of Jain Dharma

Non-violence, Non-hoarding and Anekant

The principle of Non-violence is founded on the basis of psychology. Non-violence is shown as the moral of the Arhat, speech and as the form of everlasting Dharma which is quite pure. By the adoption of Non-violence (Ahimsa) in life, the good feelings of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, celibacy and non-hoarding are created. In non-violence, there is the acception of the existence of each and every living being. Just as all the rivers get merged in the sea, all the religions are included in divine

non-violence. Renunciation of love and hatred is the mother of non-violence.

The Jain philosophy has done many subtle observations about hoarding. The hoarding becomes a crime only when it has strong sense of ownership, attachment and injudicious enjoyment. When non-hoarding is put into practice with faith, the ideal of socialism is respected. The teachers of Jainism put emphasis on sacrificing nine kinds of externals like gold, silver, etc. and sixteen types of internal hoardings like anger, honour, etc.

The opinion of the other person can also be true, and we should see any thought or opinion of others from all the sides. The Jain philosophy has explained one beautiful story through Anekantvad. If a man leaving aside his own point of view looks from the other man's point of view, half the world gets cool and pacified. If mother and son, husband and wife, the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, the master and the servant, the workers of two parties, the public and the leader, the government and the people, the officer and the staff, two provinces or two nations look to each and every event from the point of view of Anekantvad, the majority of problems will be solved. The Jain Dharma has explained the principles of being generous and tolerant to others by the principle of toleration to others. The implementation of Anekantvad is the root-base of world peace.

Forgiving :

The last day of the Paryushana Parva of the Jain religion is the holy occasion of 'Samvatsaric forgiving'. The attitude of forgiving implies the feeling of repentance. This is the occasion to ask to forgive after confessing our mistake and forgiving others by not caring for the mistakes of others.

The Jains ask for forgiveness by saying 'Michchhami Dukkadam' with folded hands. Michchhami Dukkadam means may the evil act of mine become fruitless. The feeling of forgiveness is the invaluable gift of the Jain Dharma.

The Digambar Creed

Digambar : All the directions are the clothes of those persons who are called Digambar. The saintliness in Digambar creed of Jain Dharma is extremely difficult. There are strict rules such as stark nakedness as an external act, secludedness, so far as possible, to move about in the forest to take food only once and that too by standing, to drink water only once and that too in the "Anjali" (palms of hands). Food is also taken according to strict standards of ceremonies, after cleaning it. They do not use any utensil or dish; moreover, if a particular monk is not familiar or has lack of knowledge about the Sadgāhan (donation of food) of the Shrawak householder, the Muni has to remain without food that day, and that too observing silence. The lady who has been consecrated is called Ārjeeka (Aryājee). She is allowed to put on only one white cloth.

Samyak Darshan or right seeing is the first step towards getting the liberation or Moksha. Once a person has achieved Samyaktva, the rounds and rounds of births of his are nearing the end (comes to an end). They have faith in the philosophical belief that 'Moksha' or Liberation is sure to be got. Visiting the temples, for bowing down to God (Dev Darshan) – worship – devotion – 'Aarati'.

In order to realise the real truth about the soul, much importance is given to Swadhyaya (self-study) and Satsang (company of good people). In spite of this, daily bowing to the idol of the Jin as well as listening to his sermons is not without significance. Pour daily pure water's showering over God

Jinendra (Abhishek), do perform the Pooja of eight violence free materials like water, sandalwood powder applying, rice, flowers, offering eatables as Naivedya, lamps, fragrant sticks or powder to be lit, and of course, the fruits, and while doing these, remembrances devotionally of all the Tirthankaras, all the pilgrim centres, the preceptor, religious teachers called upādhyāyas and the sages or Munis, should be mentally done; and then 'Arghyas' (palm-full water's offerings) are given, as well as Aartis of lamps are (offered round and round in semi-circlewise movements) done with emotions and respects.

The Performance of Pooja

In the Daslakshan Paryushan the ceremony of Das Lakshan (10 characteristics) Religious Mandal may be had. During the Astāhinka thrice a year, worship should be done of 'Panch Meru' and Nandeeshwardham. As to separate occasions, sixty four Ruddhimandal, Panchpameshthi vidhan, Panch Kalyanak Mandal, Indradhwaj Vidhan (ceremony) etc. are performed i.e. descriptive explanation – 'Vidhan' – is provided.

Pilgrim Centres

Amongst Digambar Jains, the pilgrimcentres are in addition to the Sammet Sikhar, Champapuri, Pavapuri, Girnar, Kumbhojgiri, Gajapantha, Mulbidree, Mangi tungi, Shrawan Belgoda, etc. are many centres.

The Speciality of Digambar Creed

Of the four destinies, the state of Moksha is possible only for the mankind. There is no 'Moksha' or liberation without the sanctification by Muni – i.e. Muni Diksha, and perfect Diksha can be had only by the males. In short, males alone are entitled to achievement of Moksha. There is a five year degree course recognised by the university under the auspices of and in

accordance with, Todarmal Memory Trust in Jaipur. This is in order to have a deep study of Jain philosophy. In this, knowledge of the Jain religion can be acquired. By this institution, learned, scholars, Pandits are trained. Digambar Scholars give lectures on Jainism in the various countries of the world.

The Digambar Jain Munis, chiefly, lay emphasis on the 'reaching out' towards the internal poise of the soul on the way to super-human way leaving completely the popular routes.



Deravasi Creed Believing in Idolatry

Not only in India, but in foreign countries also, the (Derasars) temples of this religious creed are spread over. Their way of devotion and pooja is unique. The Shrawakas (householders) perform the Astapratiharee Pooja everyday. They pray to God, bowing to the idols of Gods.

Snatra Pooja, Panchkalyani Pooja, Vastu Pooja, the (remedying) bowing with emotional feelings, the pooja as remedies for removing the obstacles, 108 Abhisekas (pouring pure waters from holy pots), 17 Bhedi Pooja, Poojas of Sages, Rishimandal Pooja, Pooja or respectfully bowing to the 'Siddhachakra' (a medium, 'yantra') and Arham Poojas – these are performed on certain occasions.

The Shrawakas do perform Japa (repetition of names of Gods), penance, observing of Vratas or fasting etc. rigid religious disciplines, vows, as shown or prescribed in the Jain Dharma. The penance known as the 'Upadhyan Tapa' requiring a saint-like life for 45 days is the unique characteristic. At night, the idols of Gods in the temples (Derāsaras) of the Jains, are specially adorned with ornaments. This is called Angi. At this time, a sort of chorus devotional song, in accompaniments with musical

instruments and the prayers of praise (Stavanans) are also sung. These are called Bhavana.

The Paryusana Parva, in accordance with Kalpasutra, on the occasion of readings of Mahavir's births, is celebrated in quite a unique way of noting down 14 dreams.

Asking for forgiveness, standing in front of God, this sort of salutation or 'Vandan' is called 'Chaitya Vandan'. Going to separate temples as a journey for Darshan is known as Chaitya Paripati. Generally, this is done on the holy days.

The religious creeds like Tappachcha, Achalgachcha, Payachalgachcha, (Parshwachandra), Khadtargachcha etc. are included in it.

As regards the sadhus or saints, the posts like Acharya, Upadhyaya, Panyas, Gani and Pravartak are allotted; and the post of Pravartinee can specially be given to the lady-saints or Sadhwijees. Sammetsikhar, Shatrunjaya (Palitana), Mount Girnar, Pavapuri, Champapuri, Kshatriyakund, Shankheshwar, Bhadreshwar, Nageshwar, Kesariyaji, Mahudi, etc. are their pilgrim centres, whereas Ranakpur and the Jain temples of Abu-Delwada temples, are the best types and excellent specimens of Jain sculpture.

Big stores of books can be seen in Cambay, Patan, Vallabhipur, Jesulmer, Palitana and Ahmedabad.



Sthanakvasi Creed

One Shrawak householder named Lonkashah in the 15th century of Vikram Samvat felt that the Jain Dharma which is chiefly in favour of attachment-free, retired life, gives prominence to non-violence, self-control and penance or hard meditations, and Anekantvad, relativism or syadvad are its known principles.

Noticing that in idolatry, the founding ceremonies (Pratishtha festivals) are done with great pomp and pleasure, there being less and less attention to concentration on the 'knowledge of the self'. He saw in these perverted chaitya-vad or consciousness in the initiations and celebrations a kind of showmanship or hypocrisy. Upto that time, Agamas were the possessions of the sadhus or saints. They used to say "the householders are not allowed to read the scriptures"; and they threatened to such an extent that they circulated or popularised a slogan to the effect that "one who reads a 'Sutra' sees the death of 'Putra' (son)..." Being nervous with fear, they were afraid to read the Sutras. The sadhus used to make the peoples' minds believe that the sadhus only have the right to read the Sutras, he felt such other stories as chains binding to the authoritarianism as also he found therein the passiveness of the Shramanclass.

Because of the very fine handwritings of Lonkashah, Hon. sage named Gyanji, entrusted to him the task of re-writing the Agamas. While doing this work of re-writing, and contemplating and meditating on these, he realised that lack of ethical values has intercepted the religion. So he enkindled the torch of revolution in religion, and he made tremendous efforts or Purushartha to make the people realise the concern of true Dharma.

Because of the inspiration of Lonkashah, 45 persons, accepting Deeksha, started the pioneering work of propagating true religion. After that, 152 Deekshas were enlisted from Patan only, and in the areas Shirohee, Arhatvada. Dikshas were declared from many towns. On the 5th day of Magsar month Samvat 1536 even Lonkashah was sanctified with Deeksha at the hands of Sohan Muni. He toured in each and every village for 10 years, exhibiting 'Dharma Prabhavana', stayed for a full monsoon in Delhi. Then, at Alwar when he broke the fasts of eight days and did 'Parna',

some unidentified opponents served poison along with the food, he (Lonkashah) breathed his last in 'Samadhi' and got conquest over death (Mrutyunjay) on the auspicious 11th (eleventh) day of the Chaitra month of Samvat 1546.

After the demise of Lonkashah, Muni Bhanjee, Muni Nannajee, Muni Jagmaljee and Sage Rooprushijee pushed ahead the religious work, which began to be recognised as 'Lonkagachcha' or 'Dayagachcha'.

After that, i.e. after two and half centuries, Shree Lavajee Rishi, Shri Dharmasinhjee Muni and Shri Dharmadasjee, tried hard to throw off the inactivities that had crept in the Jain religion again and made Purushartha and so he was introduced with honour as 'Kriyoddharaka' or Sublimator of the acts.

The Sthankwasis chiefly believe that there is no place of even subtle violence anywhere in the Jain Dharma.

From amongst the four Nikshepas, they accept the supremeness of Bhav Nikshep in the four viz. Nam Nikshep, Sthapna Nikshep, Dravya Nikshep and Bhav Nikshep. Bhav Nikshep includes inter alia, Abhyantara Pooja, Gun Pooja and remembrances of the virtues of Gods who are free from love and hatred, and then the worshipping of them. They believe in self-introspection.

There are spread, all over India, the religious centres of Sthanakvasi, which are named 'Upashryas', Paushadh Shalas, worship-palces, religious centres (Dharma Sthanakas), Jain Bhuvan etc. bearing various names. There are also mainly, what are known as Ayambil Shalas and Pathshalas (primary educational centres). Observing the days of fasting and vows (vratas) of Jain Dharma, as well as the repetition of God's names (Japa), penance and kindness to all living beings, religious and

spiritual rituals (Anusthanas) are daily done in the holy vicinity and care of the Sadhus and Saints. In the event of the non-availability of the Sadhus, the Shravikas and Shrawakas themselves engaged themselves in various activities like prayers, self-studies, samayikas, pratikraman – samvar – Posadh etc. The Shrawaks of this Sthanakvasi creed visit and touch the holy Shrines with warm affection, at those pilgrim centres wherever the Tirthankaras of this creed might have moved about and achieved Nirvana and where the Kevali saints might have got 'Moksha'.

The Terapanth Creed

Rev. Bhikkhanjee was a sadhu of Sthanakvasi creed. When he got himself separated from that creed, because of some differences of opinion, there were 13 (thirteen) sadhus with him. At that time, one Sadhu (saint) exclaimed "God ! this Terapanth" (meaning thy way). From that day onwards, they came to be known as Terapanthis. They accepted 13 main rules which include five Mahavrat, five Samitees and Three Guptis. These rules, they claim, are rules which the monks and nuns of Jain samaj have to obey and which have been obeyed since time immemorial.

The five 'Vratas' are non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-hoarding, Iryasamiti (meaning cautiously walking, seeing properly), language Samiti (meaning one should speak after thinking so as not to censure) and Eshna Samiti (to take pure food and water). Adan Nikshep Samiti (to put carefully the clothes and other ornaments), Parishthopatika Samiti (carefulness in doing away with useless things). These five samitis and 'Mun-Gupti' (meaning to control mental activities, to have control over mind), Vachan Gupti (to have control over speech) and Kay Gupti (to have control over physical body); five

mahavratas and Astappravachana – these thirteen forms of rules have been accepted by Terapanthi creed.

Thus Rev. Bhikkhanjee Maharaj (Acharya Bhikshu) became the chief founder of Terapanth. Over and above this, there is a unique series of saman and samanee who serve as connecting link of the shrawakas and sadhus, doing the work of propaganda and circulation of religion; and this hierarchy observes only 3 great disciplines of truth, non-stealing and celibacy of the five great vratas mentioned earlier and 85 samanees and 4 samanas do the work of propagating and spreading religion in various countries of the world. Acharya Mahapraganjee who is the heir-apparent so to say of Acharya Tulsijee, happens to be the Acharya of this creed at present. The one and only one head or Acharya, the one and only one type of conduct, and the one and only one constitution is the speciality of the said creed.

The holy time-passing (and sermons, meditations etc.) for all the four months of monsoon by saints-ladysaints are usually done at Jaipur, Kota, Jodhpur, Ladnu, Ajmer, Udaipur and Bikaner in Rajasthan, at Surat, Ahmedabad, Banaskantha, Gandhidham, Bhuj and in addition to these, the main cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Gauhati, Hyderabad, Chennai or Madras, Bangalore, Ludhiana, and at Kathmandu in Nepal. At Ladnu, there is Jain university and degrees of M.A.Phil curriculums are possible. There are as good as 30 universities including Brahmi Vidyapeeth. There are stores of books and libraries at Ladnu, Kolkata and Chooru (known as Sardarsaher).

There are about 350 'Anuvrat' samitees, in which the shrawakas are engaged in five Anuvratas, three Gunavratas and four Sikshavratas. They try to get them observed. There are seven centres including at London and America. They are doing the work

of publishing 'Anekant Bharati', 'Jain Life Science Academy' and other books of Jain philosophy. The Jain meditation method 'Prekshadhyān' camps are found all over the country.

Acharya Bhikshuswami gave a document entitled 'Maryadapatra' in order that idleness may not enter in the Sangh and that they can make it powerful. This can be called a holy constitution helping to tread on the path of religion. The Sangh gives 'Shrawakanishtapatra' to look into the studies of their own limitation and to know the defects and deficiencies as well as to contemplate on them by planning Shrawak assembly and Maryadā festival.

Other Traditions

Taking inspiration from the thought-process of great men and their contemplation, some temples and study centres are conducted by the Jains. The philosophy of the self, created by Shrimad Rajachandrajee and his activity of self-study are continued in various places in Shrimad Rajachandra temples. Studies are being made of 'Atmasiddhi Shastra' written by Srimadji and of his letters as well as of the poems composed by him and of other literature.

There are temples-centres of the same at Vavaniya, Sayla, Agas, Deolalee, Koba, Hampi, Dharampur, Rajkot, Mumbai etc. Even in foreign countries, there are study-centres.

Rev. Kanjee Swami, after being consecrated in the Sthankwasi Botad centre-creed, joined the Digambar Sampradaya or creed. Songadh in Saurashtra was the main field of work for him. He had given lectures, full of thoughts, on Samaysar, Pravachansar and such other very great Agam scriptures. His temple-centres are situated in Songadh, Deolalee and such other places.

The centres propagating the ideas of Akarm sciences of Dada Bhagwan, are there at Surat, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and at some places in foreign countries.

The Rules of Conduct for Shrawakas and Twelve (12) Vratas of Shrawakas

God Tirthankar founded four teerthas (holy accesses) viz. Sadhu, Lady Saints or Sadhvis, Shrawakas and Shrawikas. The final aim of Sadhu-Dharma and Shrawak-Dharma is, of course, only Moksha or liberation of the soul. Of these, Sadhu-Dharma is short but very hard, whereas the duties or Dharma of Shrawakas can be called easy but long, long way. The Gandhar great souls (Bhagwantas) made Sutra-principles and the Acharya Bhagwantas directed the codes of conduct. Thus the rules of conduct for the Shrawakas or 'Shrawakachar' means the codes of conduct to be observed by the Shrawakas.

The main constituents of Shrawakachar are 11 Padiya, observing 12 'Vratas', 22 non-eatables, 32 Anantkaya (tuberous roots or kandmool) complete renunciation of dinner at night, renunciation or leaving seven addictions, adoption or inculcation of 21 virtues of Shrawakas and 35 virtues of Marganusaris or 'followers' in life and undertaking of 14 rules, moreover, Shrawakas keep themselves afar from the habits of those 'Karmadāns' 15 in number which are likely to have the beginning and ends and imply violence, or killing. The following are the 12 vratas (5 Anuvrat, 3 Gunavratas and 4 Shikshavratas) :-

1. Forsaking of violence
2. The sacrificing of Mrushavad (not to tell a lie)
3. Not doing big thefts.
4. Renunciation of non-celibacy or unrestricted sex (vow to observe the celibacy or Brahmacharya)

5. The observance of the discipline of hoarding.
6. The 'Vrata' of limitations of places of excreta.
7. Limitations on enjoyments or pleasures of the senses.
8. Discarding of unjust fines.
9. Sāmāyika Vrat.
10. Observance of kindness.
11. Observance of Paushadh vrat.

(In the present dyas) Not to use cosmetics prepared from killings or injuring the insects, animals etc. or such medicines, as well as not to put on silken clothes, not to arrange night-dinner parties, not to watch or indulge in such C.D., internet, web or video films that may tempt us to moral degradation, as also to leave off firing of crackers, show of flowers or dances on the occasions of marriages and such other things, are parts of Shrawakas' codes of conduct. One who takes pious food, he who honours parents, one who respects his wife, those who keep affection to children and dependence, generous in the case of service, obedient to the teachers, as well as behaviours of politeness and carefulness are covered by Shrawakachar.

The duties of a Sadhu and of a person of good conduct

The duties of a Sadhu implies acception of five great vows [truth, non-violence, non-stealing, non-hoarding and celibacy] of leading a life of a Sahdu after taking on 'Deeksha' and the path of self-control having renunciated the worldly life. It is also called 'Anagar Dharma'. Jainism gives importance to equilibrium and forgiveness, and so a Jain Sadhu is also called 'Kshamashraman'. A person known as 'Samachari' who observes the peculiar rules to be observed by the Sadhus. They observe the difficult rules of going on foot, not taking night-dinners

and combing the hair at regular intervals etc. The acceptance of harmless food, water as 'Bhiksha' – begging, is called 'Gocharee'. Just as a cow takes or eats only the upper part of grass and does not do any harm to the roots thereof, similarly a Jain Sadhu takes very little food, water and medicine from the pitcher. If he does not get harmless food according to rules, he goes on fast.

Eight Karmas – Six substances and soul in Jain philosophy

The soul is bound by eight karmas, and eighteen types of sins as well as futility, laziness, kshaya and through bad times.

- (1) The covering on knowledge – prevents the good points of knowledge.
- (2) The covering on the sight – it blocks the power of vision.
- (3) Suffering – it comes in the way of the experience of happiness.
- (4) Illusion of infatuation – it gives us contradictory understanding or perverted thinking.
- (5) Longevity – the births and deaths are the results of Karma.
- (6) Caste – the family to which a person gives glory.
- (7) Gotra – family.
- (8) The infinite power of Atma – all these are covered by this Karma.

Nine elements :

- (1) Living being – this lives as per the timings of the Karma of life and it will live so; that is why it is called 'Jiva'.
- (2) Non-living being or in which there is no life or feelings.
- (3) Merits – good rise.
- (4) Sin – bad rise.

- (5) Ashrav – the currents of good and bad actions which envelop the soul.
- (6) Samwar – the opposition of Ashrav.
- (7) Nirjarā – abolition of earlier actions which had bound the soul by means of either penance (Tapashcharya) or through enjoyments of them.
- (8) Binding or 'Bandh' meaning the relation of matter generated by Karmas (Karma pudgal) with a living being – Jiva.
- (9) Moksha or liberation of the soul from bondage – all karmas being destroyed, Atma or soul becomes accomplished and enlightened one, resides in transcendental state or in the divine condition of Moksha.

Six substances (Dravyas)

- (1) Jivastikāya meaning Jiva or living being.
- (2) Dharmastikāya – matter assisting in progress.
- (3) Adharmastikāya – a thing which helps the Jiva or inanimate object is settling.
- (4) Ākāstikāya meaning giver of space.
- (5) Pudgalastikāya – meaning a thing which has its nature of being stale, fall or melting.
- (6) Atma or soul – the Jain religion is subjective or self centric. It believes that the soul is pure consciousness; but because of its attachments to activities or karmas, it has to take a lot of births (a cycle of various lives.)

Austerities (Tapa) in Jain Dharma

The Jain religion gives much importance to penance or hard austerities. There are, according to them, 12 (twelve) kinds of austerities : fasting, less eating etc. are the six kinds of external austerities, which are penances directly affecting or related to

the body; and six internal Tapas are enumerated, which are courtesy or politeness, repentance etc. and these directly affect the soul. The external penance is instrumental in external-internal purity and both are complementary to each other. Through the inspiration of austerities, Bhagwan Mahavir has extended the sphere of this remedy for internal purity. There is a scientific *approach in the Jain Dharma's sense of penance.*

Gunsthanak :

By equanimity of efforts, Samyak Purusharth, the living being (Jiva) acquires the supreme position of self-development, getting rid of deep ignorance. The living being has to pass through many many gradual states in order to reach the perfect state (Ayogi-Kevali) from the lowest degraded position. The Jain Dharma gives the name of 'Gurusthanak' to these various stages of self-development. Such 'stations' (thanans) of virtue are 14 in number.

Bhavanā or Anuprekshā

Anuprekshā means intuition or insight. Kartikeya Swami has shown 12 Bhavanas or feelings, by the meditation on and introspection of which the spiritualism gets a new direction. Fellow-feeling, joy, mercy and moderation are the four Prābhavanas or higher sympathies.

Six Leshyas :

Krishna, Neel and Kapot leshya or inclinations indicate the outcome of the activities pursued in non-religious inclination fields, whereas light, lotus and brighter types of leshyas indicate the fruits of good, holy conducts of the soul's good, better and the best types of purity.

Sangnā or mental instincts

As a result of indulgence in various actions, there arise in the soul, various types of psychological instincts, which are

named as Sangnā in Jain terminology. There are total 10 sangnās in which the following four are main :- (1) the instinct or thought of food – ‘Aharsangna’ (2) the feelings of fear – ‘Bhaysangna’ (3) Instinct of sex - copulation by thought – ‘Vicharmaithunsangna’ (4) the thought and attachment of ownership which is called ‘Parigrahasangna’.

Prabhavanā : The Jains call it prabhavanā in which a person remaining active either in lectures or in Pooja, the observance of penance or any religious function like anushtan is given gifts such as round sugar sweets (Patasa), cocoanut, laddu, cash, gold, silver, vessels, upper cloth or a book. This meaning of prabhavana has become coin word and deep rooted but equanimity of sight knowledge character in the form of ‘Ratnatraya’, under the influence of this, the Atma is purified – this is called ‘Nishayaprabhavana’ meaning strong will.

Samakit : The faith towards good God, good teacher and good religion – this is called Samakit.

Triratna : Knowledge, darshan of God and character – these are called Triratna and are the ways to Moksha.

Jivdaya (kindness to animals) : In the Jain religion, non-violence, mercy and compassion are quite inseparable from the religion. The contribution of the Jains to cow-sheds and in the field of Panjarapole, place for keeping animals beginning from the living beings, possessing one sense to five senses are to be protected and for this water, earth, vegetation, air and fire – all these should be used judiciously so that the balance of environment may have real help.

Alms : The donations of the Jains for the humanitarian works like construction of temples or pilgrim centres and in addition to that, education, medical aid, etc.

The wealth from honesh means :

Here, the holy idea of getting the livelihood by honest sources and the purity of means are also accepted.

The 'Parvas' of Jain Dharma (Religious occasions)

The parvas can be divided in 2 classes :- (1) ordinary, popular parvas (People's parvas) (2) Extra-ordinary parvas.

The ordinary or popular parvas are mainly celebrated for enjoyments and hilarious pleasantries. All the religious or other occasions are of extra-ordinary or higher motives, which are beyond the peoples' right understanding and which are aimed at worshipping with suffering (penance) and sacrificing for the upliftment of soul.

Paryushana Parva

Paryushan parva is the king of parvas and so it is honoured accordingly with the name of 'Parvadhiraaj'. Apart from rare distinction of a day or two, the swetambaras celebrate this parva from Shrawan Vad (latter half of the month) thirteenth (13th) day to Bhadrpad Sud (brighter half) fifth day and is the case with Sthanakvasis, Terapanthis and the Jains believing in Idolatry. After that, the Digambaras celebrate it as 'Das Lakshana Parva'. They celebrate the final day of Paryushan as a Samvatsari Day. During the nine days of this parva, the Shrawakas and Shrawikas are busy performing the highest types of actions such as prayers, sermons, readings, Pratikramanas and such other spiritual Anusthanas as well as repeating the names of Gods (Japas), penance, donations and what is more, the conduct of sexual restraints.

Ayambil Oli

In Jain Dharma, Ayambil Oli has associated or framed a chain of extra-ordinary parva's permanent features. Every year,

Ayambil oli begins from Chaitra month's 7th day of the first or brighter half (sud) and from Aswin month's seventh day of sud. It comes to an end on the full moon day of respective months, covering nine days. During or as a part of the Ayambil austerities, the Jains are supposed to take food only once in a day – and that too food which is dry, devoid of any juice in it, spiceless food, (having no) ghee (clarified butter) or oil, milk, curds, jaggery, sugarcubes, sweets, vegetables or fruits. During the remaining part of the day, one can take the boiled water, rendered cold and that also upto sunset. In this penance, one mysterious, implicit principle is implied – 'we have not to live to eat, but to eat in order to live.' This is the penance for the conquest over taste-sensation.

Holy, welfare memorable days of Tirthankaras

These are called Kalyanakas i.e. doing good to men. Among these, Chyavan Kalyānak means the gracing the womb of a woman by Tirthankar Bhagwan for the birth; Janmakalyanak means birth-day, Deeksha kalyanak means the Tirthankara Bhagwan's day of Deeksha; Kaivalya kalyanak means the anniversary day of Kaivalya secured by God and Nirwana Kalyanak shows that day on which after destroying the Karmas for the soul and achieving great 'Nirvana' is bliss got 'Realisation', having been safely seated on Siddh-sheela. These days are celebrated by the Jains as kalyanakas because such parvas give inspirations to men to do 'good'.

Akshayatruteeya :

Because he did not get the food because of not befitting the rise of Karmas of previous years, Adinath Rishabhdev accepted self-control on the eighth day of Falgunā'vad; since then after 400 days, on the third day of Vaishakh sud, people got the God to do 'Parna' by taking sugarcane juice. On this

Akshayatruteeya day the sages who had done penance for the whole year do parna and this occasion is celebrated as a festival of sympathetic support.

Diwali :

The Jains celebrate the Diwali as a festival of Bhagvana Mahavir's 'Nirvana'. During these days the promoting of Laxmiji to the position of Mahalaxmi by giving donations or alms with great joy – such a feeling is implied. Being freed from eight Karmas the torch of light of the soul of Bhagvana Mahavir got merged in the divine light of God. The Shrawakas celebrate that day as sixth paushadh, penance and Japa.

They welcome the New Year as a symbol of the memory of Kevalgyan of Gautam Swami. The 'Labhpanchami' is also called 'Gnanpanchami' – the worship of knowledge.

Parvatithis :

The Shrawakas who cannot observe complete code of conduct, for them Beej, Pancham, Atham, Agiaras are selected as parvatithis. During these days green vegetables, the roots of kund etc. are not to be used – to perform Japa, Tapa, celibacy etc. and they should make special efforts of worshipping. Generally during these days there is more possibility or probability of death; so the wise people have advised to do penance and sacrifice.



Bauddha Dharma

Having arisen from the holy soil of India and then spreading its wings of propaganda and extension Bauddha Dharma that settled nicely is a unique religion from many points of view. This religion was born, so to say, about 2600 years ago in Bharat. This religion that sprouted or arose in the 6th century B.C. has a place of importance and honour today not only in India but in many many countries of the world.

During those days, the Vedic 'yagna' rituals had flowered by leaps and bounds. With a view to securing *salvation* in heaven, they used to perform 'sacrifices' or yagnas, *and* poor beasts were killed for an offering in those yagnas. Spirituality in the real sense was nowhere to be seen. There were acute discriminations between man and man. By dint of birth only a man was recognised a Brahman or a Kshatriya, or a Vaishya or Shudra. The last, namely Shudra was not respected at all. They had no right to read or had an access to the Vedas. They had no place in religious rites either. The condition of women was also tragic or pitiable. In such an atmosphere, Mahavir and Gautam Buddha brought about new spirit and a revolution in thoughts.



ભગવાન બુદ્ધ (બૌદ્ધ દર્શન)

BHAGWAN BUDDHA (BAUDDH DARSHAN)

‘Buddha’ means one who has been properly guided or one who is an ‘Enlightened one’ or the Awakened one, the learned man. Those ignorant persons of this world are as good as “lying in slumber”; only the wise or the realised are awakened. Gautama Buddha is one of those spiritually great persons that have been known in the spiritual history of mankind. He has been regarded as the rare personality on this earth.

The life of Gautam Buddha

Buddha was born on the full moon day of the month of Vaishakh in 563 B.C. in a village named Lumbinee situated on Nepal-Bharat border. On the sad demise of the child’s mother Mayadevi just on the seventh day after that, Prajapati Gautami brought him up. The Ascetic (Rishi) had predicted that the son would be a great man – the saviour of mankind.

From the very adolescence, Gautam had a feeling of friendship or kinship to all the living beings; he used to sit in meditation in the cool shades under a tree. He did not allow any indescient thought in the mind.

His period of youth passed in enjoyments and pleasure. He was a very very delicate young man. His (king-father) father got three quite separate bungalows to be useful in three different seasons. In the monsoon, he was not to tread a bit outside the royal residence. He was married to a lady named Yashodhara and they had a son also whose name was Rahul.

But the miseries of worldly life (in general) were used to fill his tender heart with acute pity and compassion. The thoughts, especially of the three main miseries or mishaps that might fall on humanity viz old age, disease and death, always and constantly worried him. When he saw people quarrelling with one-another because of greed and dissatisfaction, he found it difficult to see a safe place in this worldly life. So there arose in his mind a

desire to search for a way of safety and bereft of fear as well as a way of freedom from miseries. On seeing the fearless and delightful faces of the touring ascetics who had renounced everything in life, he felt that those persons must have found out the remedy for the ills.

During his strolling here and there in the town, of course by chariot, he saw the scenes or occasions of renunciation viz. an old man, a diseased or sick man, a dead body being taken to the burial, and an ascetic, and realised that each and every Jiva or human being has to undergo all these conditions of life and he felt sure that one must find out the remedy for these. In order to search out the way of freedom from miseries, he decided to leave his house. He made it known to his father Suddhodan, mother Gautami. But (without notice) Gautam set out leaving his residence at a very young prime age of 29 years only.

Taking to the life of asceticism, he approached to the Ashram (hermitage) of Ālārkālām. The latter taught him very carefully seven grounds of meditation and Rudraka taught him the eighth step or ground; yet he did not have a complete and sure remedy for the miseries. His yearning for having absolute peace was not fructified.

Going to Rajgruhi, he saw the repentances rituals of the Shramanas. He resolved to secure absolute, undeterred peace (Param Shanti) by doing austerities of penance. While searching and searching for a proper place for repentance or penance, he reached Urwetā. He performed acute form of penance, but he could not get peace. As the obscenities of the 'Chitta' were not destroyed, he again turned to the path of meditation. Gautam began to do supreme efforts to abolish Kāma, Dwesh and Hinsā (wishes, jealousy & violence) as well as to cultivate and develop desireless tendencies, fellow feeling and non-violence. He also

started doing supreme effort for cultivating fearlessness. Remaining constantly vigilant and through meditation, he began to destroy all the evil-instincts of mind and bad passions.

On the full moon day of Vaishakh again, he got victory in this war of nerves. The mind became pure and clean. Gautam had the supreme knowledge or realisation (Sambodhi). He became Buddha or the Enlightened one. He got a reward of exquisite tranquility.

Because of securing the status of Sambodhi, Gautam felt that the path he searched out was in the reverse direction of peoples' path, is of a serious type and subtle. The ignorant and lustful persons will not be able to grasp, it is of no use to advise people regarding it and so, the emotions of compassion (Karunā), fellow-feeling (Maitree), encouragement (Mudita) and neglect (Upeksha) arose in his mind. On seeing the people reeling under pain, he was full of compassion and mercy, and he made a firm resolve to show them the way to make them free from miseries. He also decided to guide the people for the path of freedom from misery, for the welfare and good of the people. And thus, the revolving of the wheel of Dharma began.

Since the gain of Sambodhi and upto 80 years of his life, Buddha continued to propagate real religion amongst the people of Koshal, Magadh and their neighbouring republics. Right from the common masses to the King Bimbisar and Prasenajeet, King of Koshal, were greatly influenced by his teachings.

It is not that Buddha used to give religious teachings to the people of upper strata only. He had taught many a person of the lower class. His was the religion for all the people, because Buddha believed that all have equal right to learn real religion and to get entry to the 'Sangh' or religious association and to do meditations.

Buddha was a rationalist. He has proclaimed to the people to submit not to a particular person but to the tactfulness or to the intellect or reason.

On the last moment of 80 years, bidding farewell, he said to the mendicants, "Oh, you mendicants ! only Dharma is your Guru; no other person is your teacher. All things are subject to destruction. Be industrious and go ahead towards realising the goal of freedom from ills." With these deeply meaningful words, a great Divine Torch bearer left the perishable body on the full moon day (i.e. again the same day ! of Vaishakh's brighter half - sud). Buddha, the man full of compassion, has obliged humanity tremendously.

Buddhist Scriptures – Shastras like Tripitakas

In the Tripitak books, there is a collection of religious sermons given by Lord Buddha, right from the enlightenment of Sambodhini to the hour of death. After a long time since he took 'Nirvana', we get enough knowledge from the books compiled. Pitak means a box, a basket. Thus, Tripitakas means three baskets or three boxes of the rules. This Tripitakas or Agamas are of three types and are sometimes called the Bible of religious writings. (1) Vinay Pitak (2) Sutta (Sutra) Pitak (3) Abhidhamma (Dharma) Pitak. The details of all these three are, in brief, as follows :-

(1) Vinay Pitak :

The rules regarding good conduct according to Buddha are collected in this. In addition to the rules of Bauddha Dharma - mendicants' union, the nature of repentance, the remedies of small and big as well as the ways of being freed from the mistakes – all this discription is available.

(2) Sutta Pitak :

The legends of Bauddha Dharma and the stories are

included in it. It is believed that the teachings of Buddha himself have been collected here. We also get knowledge about the principles of Bauddha religion and philosophy. There are five main sections of this Pitak. We also get from them the narration of India's religious and social condition prevailing at that time.

(3) Abhidhamma Pitak :

The scholarly, philosophical and subtle detailed descriptions are in this volume which is divided into seven sub-sections.

Over and above these tripitakas great volumes regarding Mahavarta (Mahavagga), Saddharmapundarik, Lalitavistar, Milindapanho, Vishuddhamaga, Dhammapad, the life of Buddha etc. are there.

The Teachings of Tathagat Buddha

The entire store of teachings of Buddha is as vast as an ocean. The intension, here, is to introduce some significant drops of it.

Any individual of whatsoever community or religion that may be, if the following six rules are obeyed, is regarded as a devotee by me.

Here are those six rules :

- (1) **Trisharan (or Submission to three) :** The devotee should submit in all humility, to Buddha, Dharma (or Dhamma) and Sangha.
- (2) **Panchsheel :** A devotee should observe five acts of character i.e. (i) Not to hurt or kill, (ii) Non-stealing, (iii) Not to commit 'Adultery' of sex, (iv) Not to tell a lie and (v) Non-addiction.
- (3) **Shraddha or faith :** The devotee should have complete faith in Buddha as a philosopher, as the best ever teacher, as a guide and as right 'Sambuddha' or the Enlightened one.

- (4) **Alms or Donation :** The devotee, getting rid of miserliness should be generous and spend money liberally on religious deeds; and he should be always ready to give alms to the mendicants.
- (5) **Wisdom or Pragnā :** The devotee must understand, rationally, the rise and fall (birth and decay) of the physical objects, he must, as well, make efforts to know the remedies for the freedom from miseries. He should renunciate greed, jealousy, idleness, etc.
- (6) **Listening :** The devotee should listen carefully and attentively to the religious sermons and having listened to them, should meditate or contemplate on them.

The devotee who intends to go deep in his meditations or Sādhana, should observe 3 additional codes of character (sheels) to 5 already mentioned. These three additional ones are :- (1) not to dine at night (2) to avoid the use of garlands, scented things etc. and should lie down (for sleeping) on the ground, having spread an ordinary, simple bed.

Apart from this, a devotee is not supposed to do the business (or trade in) of weapons, animals' meat and poison. He should not make use of false balances or weights. Moreover, he should not earn a living by improper means like bribery or cheating.

Gautam Buddha's message is a revolutionary one. He has given to us a philosophy of life, but he had not tried to furnish a systematic philosophy. Buddha never bothered to enter into discussion as to 'whether this world is infinite or has an end ? Whether the world is beginningless or with a beginning ?' He neither entered into discussion, nor did he give any answer to such questions.

Four Aryasatyas :

Going beyond the bondages of space, time or creed, who does spiritual Sadhana is an 'Arya' and those things which he follows with honesty (or faith) are termed the 'Aryasatyas'. These are four viz. : (1) There is a misery. (2) The misery has a root (or a cause). (3) It is possible to prevent or oppose misery. (4) There are ways of prevention of miseries also.

The 'Bhikshu' should always meditate upon these four noble truths. Here are the details of each Ārya Satya :-

- (1) There is misery. All the objects of the world are temporary, and full of miseries. The illusory happiness which a person feels at the time of enjoying the objects of desire, is, in the end, painful unhappiness only. To be born, to grow old and to die as well as the disappearance of and separation from our dear ones and company of those whom we hate are miserable episodes in life. Misery also lurks in the acquisition and earnings of wealth, in its protection and even in spending or waste of it ! People are pained constantly with the burns of diverse miseries. There is no happiness (or mental peace) in this worldly life. The circle of coming and going is ceaselessly revolving and one should try to be free from it.
- (2) Misery does have a root. The roots of Misery lie in the greed or craving. Discontent or 'pining for' makes men plunge into a sacrificial pyre of worldly life. It is the greed, the craving that tempt the living beings for pleasures of the senses. Curiously, by having more doses of these pleasures, the more powerfully increase our wants or greed ! They are insatiable. The mind remains worried only because of the greed. Mental craving is the real bondage.
- (3) It is possible to prevent miseries. By destruction of greed

only the destruction of misery is possible. And with the destruction of greed, immediately the worried condition of mind vanishes.

- (4) There's a way of prevention of misery. If one wants to avoid misery, one should remove the greed. For removing or destorying greed, one should adopt (put into practice) the "Ārya Ashtangik Marg".

Ārya Ashtangik Marg – Madhyam Pratipad or the eight-fold path – The middle unit

In the opinion of Lord Buddha, the path of self-restraint leading a man to his cherished goal is eight-fold. It is the unfailing and appropriate path that roots out the misery completely. And it is this path alone which takes a man to supreme knowledge (Bodhi) and to Nirvana. This is the path of the good and welfare. It is, in fact, a road to Nectar or Immortality.

The path of sexual enjoyments or 'wish' and luxury is a rustic way, improper, discourteous and degraded or disgraceful. The way of rigid, stringent penance (Tapas) and giving pain to the body is full of misery and distressing; and so Buddha has carved out the middle way between them and has advocated it. This is the noble eight-fold path – the Middle way.

This comprises :

- (1) Right vision
- (2) Right Decision
- (3) Right speech
- (4) Right Action
- (5) Right livelihood
- (6) Right effort
- (7) Right memory
- (8) Right Samādhi (Prolonged meditation)

Out of these, the first two constitute Pragnā (higher intellect or wisdom), nos. 3, 4 and 5 make a character (sheel) and 6, 7 and 8 are called Samādhi. At Shrāwastee, addressing King Ugra, Lord Buddha said, “Shraddha (or faith), sheel, Samādhi, Lajja (Shame), listening, renunciation and Pragnā are the only riches really and this wealth is destroyed neither by fire nor by water. Nor can a king take it away, or a thief can’t steal nor can the relatives snatch it away.

In this way, good character or ‘sheel’ is the base of Bauddha Dharma. It is disinterestedness from all the sins, which is (known as) Virakti or non-attachment to the pleasures. To be engrossed mentally in positive feelings of humble devotion is Samādhi. Samādhi occupies a central place (Middle point) in Bauddha Dharma, and in Pragnā lies the finale or the winding up. Pragnā (higher intellect) creates an equal feeling (or strikes a balance) between good and evil. The wise and the realised one transcends the dualities like love-hatred, victory-defeat, attachments-jealousies, good-evil, etc. What is more, such a wise man (Pragnāvān) transcends even Dharma. Duty, religion or Dharma is like a raft; it is meant for swimming across the ocean of life and it is not to be borne a burden on shoulders after reaching ashore. These three are called Trinity of Education. The teachings of good character or sheel, teachings on Samadhi and the enlightenment due to Pragna are the paths of purification. This trinity is the remedy for eradication of greed. In addition to these mentioned above, there are 10 good conducts (sheel) for a mendicant. He or she has to constrain going astray or committing sins.

Ten sheels :

The mendicant has to shun committing sins. The 10 non-attachments or renunciations are as follows : (1) Not to kill or

hurt, (2) Not telling lies (3) Non-stealing, (4) Non-adultery, (5) Not to take intoxicating drugs, (6) Not to take meals at improper hours, (7) Not to use garlands of flowers or scents and fragrant sprays, (8) Not to see or to relish listening to songs and dances, (9) to reject gold or silver, and (10) Not to use luxurious, costly beds or seats.

These sheels or codes of conduct are not merely of negative commandments; they are positive too. Ahinsa or non-violence does not merely mean non-killing; but it speaks of the development of compassion, fellow-feeling or friendship, Muditā and Neglect and to put them into practice.

Four noble attempts to realise Brahma or Brahnavihari

Enlisting, in all, 40 means, there is a discussion of four Brahnavihārs also. The noble feelings or sentiments of fellow-feeling (Maitree), compassion, Mudita and Neglect – these four themselves alone constitute what is called ‘Brahnavihar’. These four, moreover, are the most superior and divine states of mind. These four are the best means of mind-purification. This effort for the realisation of Brahma (or Brahnavihar) also guides us as to what type of practical approach we should have towards living beings. Those who entertain the feelings of the said Brahnavihar always nourish in their minds the good wishes of the good and happiness of all creatures, and try to remove the ills of others. He feels delight on seeing a person of a superior status, and keeps equal love towards all the living beings; the devotees or providers of others’ happiness are these four Brahnavihars only. On one side, they lead a meditator to spiritual progress, and on other side, they help accomplishing a social good or welfare. These Brahnaviharas, in short, are capable of upbringing a society’s well-being along with an individual’s welfare.

Baudha Mendicants & Monks

In the reign of Bhagwan Buddha, the function of a Guru is that of a well-wisher friend. His principal duty is to guide on the right path. The disciples of Shakyamuni or Buddha have to move ahead, independently on their own strength and to stand or stay fast depending on nobody. And that is the reason why they are taught to be Atma-Deep or self-lamp or self-submissioned ones. In this holy journey or pilgrimage of 'Sādhana', only the religion is his assistant and a director. It is the reason why religion is called a "yan" or a way, a road. Religion is its real body or kaya of the Enlightened one. To visualise Dharma is as good as seeing Buddha. Buddha, therefore, did not entrust the leadership of 'Sangh' (or Association of Bauddha Dharma) to any individual in the event of his demise; but he established a sort of kingdom of Dharma or a republic in his Sangh itself. In the association of the mendicants (or monks) there was neglect of the distinctions of caste or colour; and the differences of community are looked with indifference i.e. no importance is attached. Thus, by establishing Karma (or acts) instead of birth as the deciding factor or demarcation, Lord Buddha has put forward a reformative idea. For the Bhikshus, or the mendicants, Buddha has earmarked or allowed acceptance of both contradictories viz. solitude and company of people, at the same time. For the organisation of 'Vihars' or centres the donations or gifts of viharas is the best donation, because thanks to it, no obstacles or impediments are to be faced by the mendicants in course of their samadhis. A life of socialised unification or residence made progress and even the rules were framed. The rules of tours of recluse, of staying or lodgings as well as the rules of Deekshas to be granted to children, the rules of prolonged stay in monsoon, day-to-day's codes of conduct

and the rules also of freedom from faults or failings, of touring lives as a recluse, for women etc. are noteworthy. With a view to maintaining the organisation of the 'Sangh' and with a view to get the masses influenced and impressed by it, some practically feasible proper rules were framed and in them, due attention was paid to give place of respect to punishment and repentance and because of that the association or the 'institution' of mendicants and the Sangh were strengthened.

The religious sects of Bauddha Dharma

The teachings of Lord Buddha were compiled into book form after about two centuries from the Nirvāna of Buddha, and many incongruities have crept therein. In order to rectify and compromise the various differences of views, the religious assemblies of Bauddha Sangh were also convened. In B.C. 250, at the town of Patliputra, Emperor Ashok had called the third congregation. At that time, as good as 18 Bauddha sects were in existence. Amongst these multifarious sects, two chief ones are (1) Heenyān (2) Mahāyān.

Heenyān :

The meaning of yan is a 'way' or means or a vehicle. Actually, in the Pali language, in the Tripitakas, the 'path' of religion shown, is known as Heena, alias 'a small yan'. The Baudhha followers do not accept books other than the 'Tripitakas'. The members of this sect regard Buddha as a 'SUPER MAN', but they do not worship him as God. They have erected structures called 'Stupas' and offer Pooja there. To achieve the Nirvana stage, man has himself to make efforts; this is the belief of the followers of Heenayan. In this more emphasis is laid on self-labour and observance of strict rules. They advocate self-reliance more and give the advice, "Atmadeepobhav" or "become thy own lamp". The highest status,

in their eyes, is 'Arhat-pada'. And meditation by self – individual salvation is insisted more, valued more. Believing in strict adherence to ancient Bauddha tradition, this sect which is an atheistic one, is dogmatic. It is concerned with the purity of ideals. It stresses upon the life of an Ashram or hermitage, linked with 'Matha and Vihar' i.e. monks' abode and religious centres. The majority of such followers of this sect can be seen chiefly in Cylon, Burma, and Siam. Heenayan is a road to Samādhi.

Mahāyān :

This means 'big means' or big instrument. The ideal of 'Bodhisatva' which happens to be the ideal of Bauddha religion is this Mahāyān. The aim of Mahāyān is liberation of all. It is interested in practices of Sāadhanā or Meditation by all. It is upliftment of all. Life is like a magis show, illusory. For this sect, Buddha is beyond the people, super-worldly; the place of Bhakti is significant. In the concentrated meditation of Mahā Māyā, or Goddess par excellence, there is prominence of super-sensories. It is a sort of transcendental meditation. For the perfection of virtues like Alms etc. Sāadhanā is of prime importance. There is no place for solitude in this sect. The followers of Mahāyāna pray to Lord Buddha for the welfare and the liberation. Buddha being helpful to them in attaining Nirvana, they believe that man does not need to strive for it. They lay more stress on Buddha's grace and blessings rather than self-reliance. They regard Ātmā as truth, consider Buddha as worthy of worship. They have generous ideals. It is a progressive sect. The followers of such a sect of liberal, healthy outlook are chiefly found to be inhabiting Nepal, Tibet, China and Japan.

At present, 4 branches of Buddhism are seen : (1) Vaibhasik (2) Sautantrik – from Heenyan (3) Idealistic (4) Madhyamik – these last two have the inheritance of Mahāyān sect.

The holy palces for Bauddhas

Each and every follower of Buddhism must go on pilgrimage, at least once in his or her span of life, to the important places connected with the life of Gautama Buddha. The total number of such pilgrim centres are eight :- (1) Lumbinee (2) Sāmāth (3) Bodhgayā (4) Kushinara (Kushinagar) (5) Rajgir (6) Nālandā (7) Shrāvastee (8) Vaishālee

Over and above these eight, from the point of view of historical, artistic and spiritual worthy to be visited places are the Stoop of Sanchi near Bhopal, the Ajanta and Ellora caves near Aurangabad, the Kanheriee and the Karlā caves near Lonawala and the Elephanta caves on the sea-shore near Mumbai are the chief ones. In foreign countries, many Pagoda – Buddhistic temples – are worth visiting.

The Festivals

The full-moon day of the month of Vaishakh is the most auspicious day – it being 3 types of anniversaries – viz. birthday anniversary, Bodhi Jayanti (enlightenment) and the Pari-Nirvāna (death) Anniversary. ‘Jayantee’ means victory. The victory is of Bodhi or super enlightenment and actually, in Bodhi-Jayantee only, the other two viz. birth anniversary and Pari-Nirvana Jayantee are rooted. In fact, it is that victory which has made the birth and death anniversaries meaningful. Because ‘Samyāk Sambodhi’ or right knowledge only was instrumental in rendering his birth a last one; even death was turned into the last death. This is Buddha’s last birth and now no re-birth would there be. He was able, naturally, to conquer both birth and death. The followers of Bauddha Dharma celebrate the full-moon day of Vaishakh with exquisite pomp and bliss.

Bauddha Dharma in foreign countries

After about 12th century A.D., Bauddha Dharma almost

waned, or bade farewell to India; but pretty good before that, it had saddled significantly in foreign countries. The credit of spreading Bauddha Dharma goes to emperor Ashoka. The outcome of third “Sangitee” held under the assistance of Ashoka, was that Bauddha Dharma crossed the border of India. It won the hearts of people in Shreelanka, Burma, Thailand, Kambodia etc. in the southern countries and Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan etc. of northern countries. Even today in all these countries, the cool, peaceful light of Bauddha Dharma is well spread, and it is doing a holy, merit-full work of guiding the people to the road of peace – par excellence to crores of people. This religion continues to explain the super-most ideal of peace, friendship, compassion, love, non-violence and equality to the mankind of this universe.

Ashok, the great emperor, first of all, sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitrā to Cylon (today’s Sri Lanka) for propagating Bauddha Dharma, and from Cylon, it spread to Burma, Thailand and Kambodia. After that, this religion achieved its place of pride and honour also in Tibet, China, Korea, Mongolia, Japan etc. The impact and the influence of this religion can be witnessed even in Malaydweep, Indonesia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Soviet Turkastan, Korea, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Babiloniya and such other countries. The scholars, the experienced ones who have studied, even point out that Bauddha Dharma has not influenced merely eastern countries, even the western countries also have been greatly influenced by it. If one studies the Bible minutely, it will be very much clear that there is very much resemblance between the teachings of Buddha and Christ.

The contribution of Buddhism to the world

In the philosophical ideas of the world, the Bauddha Dharma occupies an extremely glorious place. It inspired other

contemporary religions of that time to think deeply, and so, the Indian philosophy got more depth and subtlety.

Being the champion of an untarnished morality or moralism, Buddha has a unique status among the world-thinkers. By virtue of his humanitarian outlook, he has become the protector, a shelter of mankind. It was Lord Buddha who idolized the path of human welfare.

Buddha is a light-post in the history of contemplation. Bringing the end of the era of gods, he introduced the age of humanes. He freed men from the slavery of gods and he also showed the way of achieving freedom by self-help.

He was a real devotee or meditator. His ideas were of course original, his personality was also creative. His life full of Sādhana will give inspiration to man for ages to come.

This was the first Indian religion as such, which assumed the status of a world-religion. Moreover, there will hardly be any ancient language in Asia in which the translations of Buddhist religious books are not translated. The people of different countries and castes adopted this religion, as it suited to their individual dispositions.

The spread of this religion has been for the interest, welfare and happiness of the vast majority of the people. This religion is perfectly mass-oriented i.e. appealing to the masses. And it has found its expression in the popular dialect.

The world will always be indebted to the union of mendicants for the work they have done in the direction of the spread of education and the progress of knowledge in the history of the world. The universities like those of Nalanda, Vallabhi, Vikramsheela and so many centres of knowledge in foreign countries are the unparalleled gifts of this religion.

The centres for Bhikshukas could easily take the form of universities and education became the institutions of the service of sangh's knowledge of many teachers.

The art of sculpture, of painting and crafts has got wonderful inspiration from it; some best creations of Asia are related to this Dharma.

Bauddha Dharma gives the noble message of accepting nationality in the form of universal genetics, wide and large forever. In our country's national emblem National Flag as well as in the principle of Panchsheel and non-alignment of Jawaharlalji the sentiments of welfare of Buddhism are reflected.

Bauddha Dharma has been able to attract people of many periods and many countries. First of all, Buddha honoured intellect, told people to submit to reason, religion and one's own self.

This religion has rubbed off all distinctions between man and man, has accepted equality of all men, founded it and Buddha has also declared equality of males and females. Buddha has laid very much emphasis on good character and good conduct, as a result thereof there are universalities and comprehensiveness.

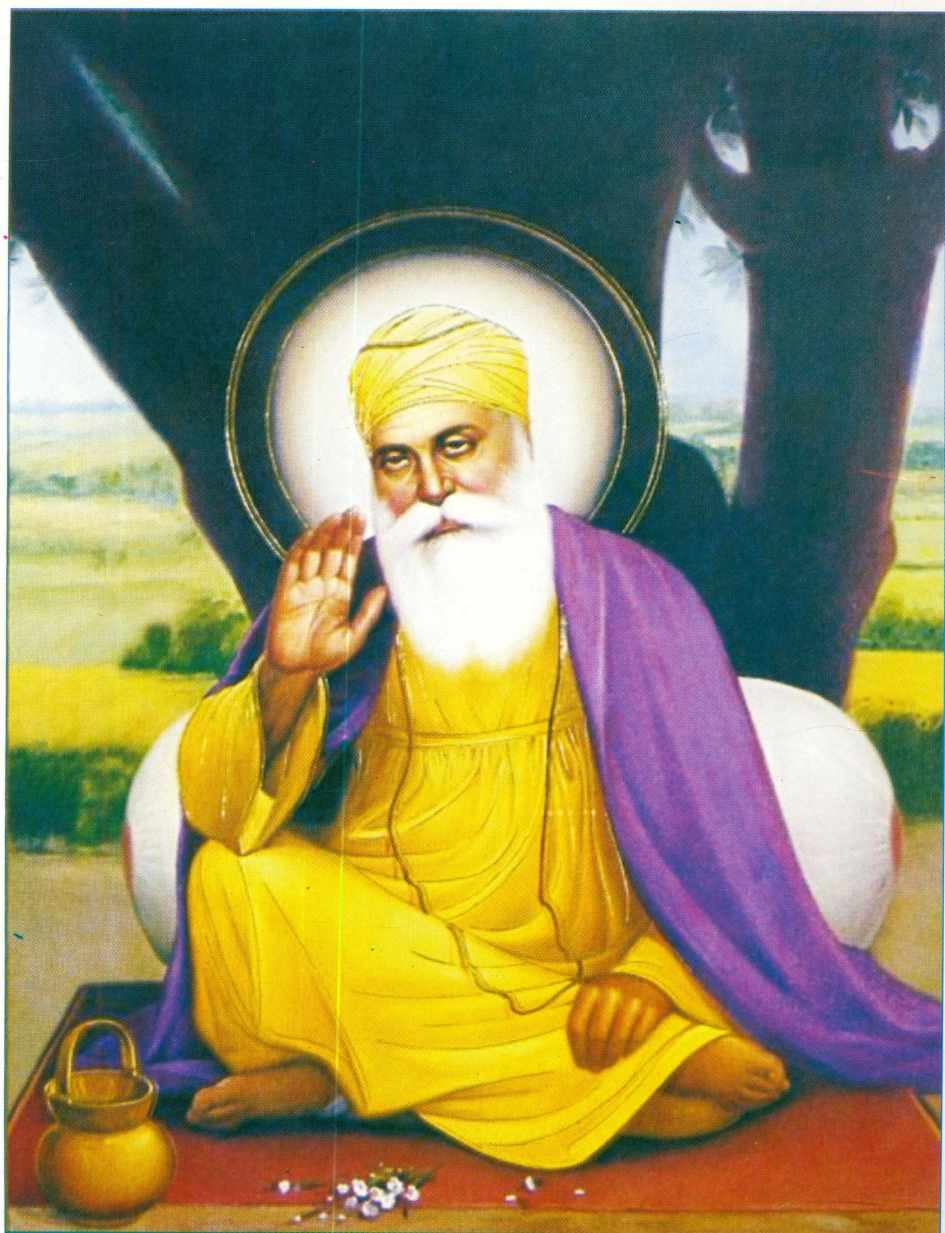
The middle path is its speciality – the crest-jewell crown. By allowing the way lying middle between the two extremities of extreme torture to the body and 'indulgence' of the senses in luxuries, he pointed out that the paths of meditation and Samadhi only are the means of the peace of mind.

There is catholicity of friendship and compassion in this religion and so, the suppressed, down-trodden, crushed and the tortured people loved this religion most. The commendable and good symbols of the outstanding characteristics of Bauddha

Dharma are rationalism, equality, freedom of thought, the importance of good conduct, the glorification of samadhi and fellow feeling with compassion.

May we offer our good wishes for all that may we for ever, continue to get from Bauddha Dharma the everlasting message of peace, compassion, good fortunes, friendship and love in this present-day nonpeaceful and tension-stricken world, and may we hear the good, auspicious sounds of world-peace.





ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ (ਸ਼ਿਖ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ)

GURU NANAK (SHIKH DARSHAN)

The Shikh Dharma

The birth of Guru Nanakdev, the founder of Sikh religion, took place at the village named 'Nankana Saheb' in 1469 A.D. From the very childhood, Nanakdev was very much bold, kind, a devotee and a philanthropist. He had no interest in the studies or curriculum of the school. He wanted to have such learning as would make him and others immortal.

Nanak had already acquired knowledge of the Vedas, Scriptures and the Kuran, studying deeply the religions of both the Hindus and the Musalmans. Not only that, but judging from the thoughts expressed in his "Adigrantha" it seems he had full familiarity with many, many contemporary religions, in addition to the two religions mentioned above.

He obeyed all the advices and orders of his father, but his mind and heart were really speaking, were absorbed in God. If anybody asked his name, he would immediately answer "Nanak Nirankar". Nanak of the formless God, does his job sincerely, marries and has children also. Just like other householders, he used to perform his duties and was willing to be called 'a householder'; but he was never mentally infatuated

with that. He carries on his life as “an indifferent householder” – his mind was never over-attracted or overpowered by worldly desires. His love for God began to be increased day by day.

Once, while going to the river for a bath, he had a divine vision and Guru Nanak states :- “Ha..oo dhadhi bekaru kare laia” – “I was a penniless flatterer (charan) or a praiser, but God gave me a job. That great and able master has commanded me to sing songs of praise (prayers) to him, everyday.” and Nanak sang prayers.

“Ek omkar (ॐ) Satinamu Karta purkha nirbhao, Nirvairoo Akāl Moorti, Ajoonee Saibham Guru Prasadi”. In other words, He is One, He is ॐ kar incarnate, truth is His name, He is the Creator of this world – first man, fearless, revenge-free, immortal, without being born from any womb (ayoni) and spontaneous. Only by the grace of Guru, we can have him. (In other words, Guru himself is like super God and by His grace and blessings only we get (a glimpse of) God. Guru Nanak’s teacher or Guru was God Himself.

The above speech is the Root-Mantra for the Sikhs. It contains the whole turth of Sikh Dharma. Each and every Sikh when partaking of these bliss, has to repeat this Mantra five times. This Root-Mantra or original Mantra’s repetitions are planned at the beginning of every Raga (musical notes) of “Guru Granthsaheb”. Its brief exposition is “Omkar Sati Guru Prasadi”.

“Japa” – Adi Sachu jugadi sachu, haiybhi sachu, Nanak hosi bhi sachu. In other words, it means he is truth in the beginning, truth in the beginning of the Epochs or Ages,.. is really truth and Nanak says, “in future also, he will be truth and only truth. And therefore the man who understands the commands of God, renunicates his ego.” Thus is said by Nanak “I have got the infinite, super Brahma, God in the form of Guru.”

Nanak left the job – gave away everything in alms to the poor, led the life of a non-attached person and started giving sermons to the people in impressive language.

“Neither Hindu nor Muslim is there, meditate on God and be a devotee. One cannot get heaven simply by fruitless talks. By earning (the money of) truth we secure salvation or freedom from births and deaths. By telling false stories, without good conduct, only lies are gained.”

At the prime youth of 27 years only, the obedient servant of God Nanak set out from his house to help people drink the nectar of sweet remembrances of God’s holy names (Nāmasmaran). He left his house. He propagated the names “Satnam and Satkartar” (truth is God) which was subsequently transformed into “Sant sri Akal”. He said, “Vahi Guru’s (wonderful parmatma) name is not to be repeated by tongue only, but by founding it deeply into the heart full of devotion and one should refrain from doing evil.

Guru Nanak had toured a lot in different countries, on so many pilgrimages. He made long journeys for 30 years – Assam in the east, Cylon or Lanka in the south, Tibet in the North, Dwarka, Macca-Madeena and Bagdad in the west etc. He gave inspiration to people to worship only one Satya Akal Purush Parmatma after freeing themselves from the superstitions. In those times no other saint would have done such journeys for the purpose of human welfare. He taught the ideals of Bhakti (Devotion) Namratā (Humility) Purusharth (efforts), Mānav-prem (love for men) Seva or service and Tyag (sacrifice or renunciation). Therefore, it is said, “Guru Nanak Shah Fakir (recluse) Guru of Hindus and Musalmans’ Peer.” Moreover, in Punjab, there was a proverb :- “Nanak Bābā, Sabkā Sānzā” which meant Baba Nanak, the relative of all. He spent last 15

years of his life at Katarpur. In 1539 A.D. Guru Nanak set out on the last journey of his life to heaven.

Guru Nanak sowed the seeds of laying the foundation of Sikh Dharma, and got decided for the people, the ideal of duty (Dharma) for the Sikhs. The word "Sikkh" has its origin in the Sanskrit word "Shishya" meaning 'a disciple', but some scholars believe that it has come down from the word 'Sikh' of Pali dialect, meaning 'the Chosen'. For the Sikh scholars, 'Sikkh' means chosen by God or elected by God. This implies it is a pure religion of God Himself. Guru Nanak sowed such spirited seeds as would sprout the humaneness or manhood to be blossomed in full colours. Man may not stop getting his own liberation or 'Moksha' only, but would also be ready to sacrifice or stake his own life at the altar of other men's worldly and other-worldly happiness and Moksha or liberation of the soul and that too, fearlessly and free from hatred, and in all humility. He must also struggle and fight against injustice, fraud, malice and falsehood.

The meaning of the word 'Khalsa' given by the tenth Guru Govindsinh, also is holy, pure and unadulterated. The Guru, describing Khalsa, explains :

"That type of holy person is Khalsa, who keeps enkindled for ever the lamp of truth, would worship one and only one God and no other, has full trust and full love in that one God only; who does not believe, by mistake even, in either fasting, Madhi or monastery of any kind and who is convinced and sure that in maliceless unfrauded love of God only all the centres of pilgrimage, alms or charity, penance and self-control are included and in whose heart, there is full luminous light of the perfect."

In the Sikh Dharma, the importance of the teacher or Guru is most important and hence it is that he is called "Guruttam" or the best teacher. Sikh Dharma is a collection of such religious

disciples as are continually learning something or other, throughout life. The first teacher – ‘Adiguru’ Nanak thus describes the importance of a Guru :

“I bow with supreme respect – not once, but one hundred times in a day – that Guru of mine who transformed men into gods from the men.”

There is an easy remedy for becoming free from the vices like ego or pride etc. and in order to make human life meaningful. This remedy is behaviour according to Guru’s teachings, repetition of God’s names, humility, company of saints, good teacher and blessings of God. Thus, we see that there are similarities between this and other religions :

The best duty in all Dharmas – Namjap and pure actions.

Best action of all – removing dirt of bad motives by having company of Saints.

Best effort of all – repeating names of God, daily.

Nectar-like words of all speeches – to sing songs in praise of Hari and to listen to them.

Best place of all places – the house in which God’s name is sung forever.

Guru Granthsaheb

This most holy book of Sikh Dharma is singular from many points of view. The Granthsaheb is compiled into 1430 pages – as if it is marvellous seminar of the Saints and Sages; and this marvellous book is not simply for reading but to be put into practice in life. The writings of no founder-preachers of the world are preserved and condensed in book form as this one. The speeches of Sikh Gurus are available to us in the same form, as they were uttered. It was the fifth Guru Arjunadev who had compiled this. He got from Mohan, the son of third Guru Amardas, the writings of the former Gurus; then, he invited all the saints – both Hindus

and Muslims, convened a meeting and having got from them the teaching and opinions of all the religious sects and whatever teachings that were in tune with, in conformity with the Sikh principles, and which were saturated with the personal experiences of visualising God, which were, moreover, full of life, which were beyond the blind fanaticism of religion, – those were condensed and in this way this great book was written.

In this book or scripture, there are writings of six Gurus, fifteen devotees, about 15 Bhāts and of 4 other musicians. No writings are available of sixth to eighth Gurus. And it was Guru Govindsinh who had introduced or familiarised the writings of the ninth Guru. Not a single creation or writing of Guru Govindsinh himself, is included or given a place in it.

All the Gurus wrote in the name of ‘Nanak’ only and so, Guru Arjuna, with the intension of making it intelligible as to which Guru has written it, accepted the tradition or mentioning the serial number of Mahala against each ‘work’ (writing) e.g. Mahala no. 1 means Guru Nanak’s writing, Mahala Dooja or second means Guru Angad’s writing. Mahala, actually means house i.e. the form. The underlying idea is that Guru Nanak is only one, his light or lustre went on assuming new forms. The other meaning of Mahala is the newly married wife of God Almighty. Each and every Guru used to consider himself as a spouse or newly married wife; such a meaning has been accepted. The original script of Guru Granth Saheb (Beed) is now in Kartarpur of Jalandhar district. So it is known as Beed of Kartarpur. The reason behind the inclusion of the teachings by Brahmanas, Kshatriya, Shudra and Muslim saints and devotees is that the spiritual generosity of India was to be included in it. In Sikh religion, there is no place for illusion, blind faith, distinctions of higher or lower caste and religious fanaticism. In it, one would, rather, find writings like Mantras, such as “Allah and Parbrahma are the same.”

Guru Granthsaheb is immortal book even today. The male and female devotees with full faith solicit early morning the orders from Granthsaheb regarding duties or karmas to be performed, everyday; the page that is opened that particular day, the 'word' or speech which is read on that day becomes an order or commandment for that day. In this book, the birth of a being as a man or woman is the best type of birth and very difficult to be born in mankind and so, it is clearly stated that after having attained a human body, man should make efforts to get salvation. Guru Govindsinh gave the status of a Guru to 'Adinath' – 'Granthsaheb'. The teacher or Guru of all men in the world is one i.e. God. Thus Guru has been honoured.

Dasam Granth

After the great departure of Guru Govindsinh, Guru's friend and disciple Manisinh compiled in the book Dasam Granth the writings of Guru Govindsinh. This book is in 4 languages – Vraj, Hindi, Persian and Punjabi. In the Sikh religion, the importance of this book is very great. Some portions of it are included in the prayers sung by Sikhs.

Religious principles

Guru Govindsinh says :- "Regard all acts as vain, believe all religions to be unsuccessful. Without the backing of a name of God, all actions are illusions. In the Sikh religion, hundreds of Gods' names are attempted in 'Adi Granth' and 'Dasam Granth'. Maybe, more than a thousand names have been experimented, but the real name - 'truth' is the best. Among the Sikhs, the name Vahi Guru is prevalent both in Japa and as repetition or remembrance. One explanation of this name is given that it is formed by combining the first letters of Vasudev, Hari, Govind and Rama. Bhai Gurudas considers 'Vahi Guru' as Guru-Mantra, and says that by repeating this name, the 'excreta of sins' is washed

away – the literal meaning of Vahiguru is that hail to wonderfully great God or great God ! So, a Sikh purified by the devotion of God, when he has the vision of, or the personal experience of awe inspiring beauty of Akal Purusha's play or direct realisation of his 'Sat, Chit, Anand' (or existence, consciousness and bliss) form, he becomes all successful and gratified, and being astonished speaks out quite naturally, exclaims :-

“Vahi Guru, Vahi Guru !!” But, repetition of God's names or Namjap is not merely repeating by tongue, it is repetition from the depth of the inner heart, it is love, yes, a dialogue with God. “The name of God purifies the whole of our life, our conduct and our thoughts.” By Namjap, and by acquiring the benefit of names, the meditator or the worshipper hears the sweet tinkling sounds of heavenly music (Anāhat Nad) and achieves the difficult state of 'Nirvikalp Samādhi'. His whole mind or 'Chitta' becomes very much pure and pious, and in the end, he becomes one with the perfect Atma – Parmātmā.

Sikh religion believes in the good-bad forms of 'karma and Sanskāras' of previous births; but they do not believe in the 'Avatāras'. It believes that man is free to act, but in the matter of enjoying or experiencing the fruits or results of acts, man is dependent. The aim of human life is freedom from the 'chronic disease' of pride. In the other world (Parlok) man earns the same as he earns here, in this world by honest means, and as much as he gives as alms from it....and they only are holy who have the abode in their hearts, the memory of God and His names.

In the Sikh religion, man is forbidden (i) to be addicted to tobacco and intoxicating drugs, (ii) to have illicit sexual relation with other's wife or so, (iii) to eat the meat of a slaughtered animal and (iv) to have one's hair cut. Similarly, man is not permitted to do “Doodhpatee” of his daughter or to kill her as well as to

follow the tradition of being a Sati or burn herself on the funeral pyre after the death of her husband. Not to beg alms from others, to give in charity the ten percent of his earnings, to earn livelihood by honest ways, not to steal, not to misuse or misappropriate money reserved for charity by an institution. Man is also expected to have lunch or dinner, sitting together with one-another, leaving aside distinctions of caste and creed, to speak and behave politely and respectfully with others, to regard men and women as equal, to speak sweet and truth, to begin doing all deeds with a remembrance of God's name etc. are the commands. We are also advised to abolish the vices like Kam, Krodh, Lobh, Moha and Ahankar (viz. wishes, anger, greed, infatuations and pride) by means of the development of virtues.

In Sikh Dharma, the feelings of devotion are expressed in the form of prayers of morning, evening and night, the darshan of Guru Granthsaheb (book), the holy company of Sikh Samaj, singing the devotional songs (Keertan) and repeating the names as remembering to God. There are no intricate and hard rituals in this religion. The Sikh religion regards a holy life of an householder more valuable than the life of a recluse.

'Sing' or 'Sinh' alias followers of Khalsa sect may have their hair long. They keep 5 'K's viz. Kesh (hair), Kachcha (loins), Kadun (thick, heavy, bangle like ring), Kanthā (comb), Kirpan (a dagger). It is customary to confess the guilt in the presence of sages and saints and to accept the punishments they declare for the purposes of repentance, in which, generally, one is asked to render services to the saints as an alternative to sing devotional songs praising the words of Gurus. To swing the fans to the saints (to remedy heat), to offer them water, to grind the grains for Guru's 'lunger' – these and such other services are considered as very holy acts. By rendering such services, it is believed, virtues of mind like humility develop.

Guruka Lungar

In each and every Gurudwaras, there are Guruka Lungers meaning storehouses of God, from which the poor and the pilgrims are served food free of charge.

Pilgrimages

People are ordered or asked to tour the pilgrimage to all the historical Gurudwaras or temples. The chief aim of doing a pilgrimage is to attend the group of sages and to achieve spiritual uplift through the good company of theirs. (1) Akāl Takht, Amritsar, (2) Takhtakeshgadh Saheb, Anandpur (3) Shree Takht Harimandir Saheb, Patna (4) Takht Hajoora Saheb, Nanded and (5) Takhta Damdama Saheb.

In a Gurudwara, when the saint in charge of Granthsaheb speaks in a loud voice "Bole re so Nihal...!" then in reply the men and women devotees in a free resounding tone say, in echo :- "Sat Shree Akāl...!" It means, God who is beyond space is Satya or true.

The Sikhs bow exchange greeting with one another with the words i.e. "Vah Gurujee ka Khalsa, Vah Gurujee ki Fateh". The holy temple at Amritsar and Gurudwara at Nanded are famous holy places of pilgrimage.

The Festivals of Sikh Dharma

The Kartik Poornima Day, (the full moon day of the month Kartik) being the birthday of Adi Guru (First Guru) Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion is celebrated with great respect and honour. The Sikh Dharma has shown much tolerance towards festivals and the customs. So, many festivals of Hindus like Holi and Dasera are celebrated by the Sikhs. Even the Pooja of Mother Goddess Durga is performed.

'Vaishakhee' – the first day of the month of Vaishakh is the greatest festival of the Sikhs. On the first day of Vaishakh

month of 1699 A.D. Guru Govindsinh had sanctified the Sikhs i.e. made Khalsa. It is compulsory for each and every Sikh to visit chief Gurudwaras on that day. If the circumstances are favourable one must pay a visit to the Golden Temple of Amritsar. *On the Vaishakhi day, the holy book Granthsaheb's reading is done right from its beginning to the end. It is called "Akhand Path" or non-stop reading. Five prominent individuals come forward, in front of Granthsaheb, with open, naked swords in their hands. This ceremony is performed in the memory of 'Panchpyara'. Community dinners are arranged and a cultural programme "Vaishakhi Fair" is planned.*

In the Sikh Religion, ten Gurus have important places; the birthdays of first Guru i.e. Nanak and of the tenth Guru Govindsinh are being celebrated as festivals. In the festivals of birthdays, they do non-stop readings (Akhand Path) of Granthsaheb and they move round, as if on a pilgrimage, along with Granthsaheb.



Prayer for all religions (at night)

*One who protected all and regarded each as himself,
Practised perfect Ahimsa, We bow that Mahavirshree.
Showing the Middle path, Fold to serve mankind,
Ennobled Sannyasi's duty, Bow with respect to Buddha.
Fully observed Monogamy, undeterred in good things of Life.
May that God Rama dwell in our hearts morally sound for ever.
In spite of all great works, remained who unattached,
May our minds be absorbed in Yogi Krishna Prabhu.
Love incarnate, son of God, Bow we to Christ, sea of Forgiveness,
And to Propagator, Prophet, heartily, Merciful Mohammad Ever, Anon.
Awake, in hearts holiness of Zoroaster we beg.*

– Munishri Santbaaljee

Islam Dharma

In our country, there is wrong and mis-understanding about Islam religion. The main reason behind this happening is that India had to have that type of contacts in which lootings, harassments, and fightings. The very first Muslim visitors to India were invaders. They spread the Islam religion by acts of torturing and killing; and so there arose an impression that Islam Dharma belongs to persons indulging in violence only. Kings are torturers and they are Musalmans; so Islam Dharma is also a religion of violence. The fact is not like this. Those who invaded India were completely quite different from those who came from Arabia of the middle Asia where Islam originated or arose. That is why the intension, here, is to present a realistic picture of Islam.

Birth and progress

The Islam Dharma came into existence in Arabia of Asia continent. The place of that prophet-founder of Islam Dharma viz. Hazrat Muhommad who propounded a simple truth that “God is one and only one and all men are equal” is a unique amongst the galaxy of divine personalities worthy to be saluted and bowed



કાબાનો પવિત્ર પથર (મક્કા મસ્જિદ - ઇસ્લામ દર્શન)

SACRED STONE OF CABBA (THE MUSLIM SHRINE OF MACCA) (ISLAM DARSHAN)

by the whole world. The meaning of Islam is 'peace' and 'security' as well as to take refuge of God Almighty, the Emperor of the universe. As mentioned in Kurane Shariff, a Muslim means one who has established peace between God and man. Thus, Islam Dharma has given the message of peace, security and brotherhood to the world. Islam means the path of peace. Man first acquired peace by accepting submission to God and in this kind of submission, there was not any kind of precondition. The way of attaining peace and bliss, as got from it was named and became the Islam Dharma.

The prophet or Paigambar literally means a Messenger. The great soul who brings and delivers the message of God is called a prophet. As per another interpretation or belief, the religion which began from the first man 'Adam' who violated the command of God, was called 'Islam Dharma'.

The political, social – religious situations at that time

At that time the whole Arabia was disintegrated into many Kabilas (tribes). The head of Kabila was called a 'Shaikh'. He was as good as a king, a priest and a Guru. For their particular Kabila, all the members were full of pride. Amongst themselves, vengeance and murders – killing used to continue for generations. An atmosphere of mutual fear, torture, and anarchy prevailed, as if it was a reign of evil customs, omens and ill-omens, ghosts etc. Religious 'sacrifices' (yagnas) entailing violences also were witnessed. The evils like drunkenness, gambling etc. were also on the increase. An inhuman mal-treatments were given out to the slaves and women. The Arabs used to regard the birth of a girl-child a curse; and so, a daughter was buried alive in the cemetery. The Arab masses were trapped in the evil acts, immorality and violences, superstitions, etc.

There was a polytheism – worship of many many Gods.

People used to offer, as oblations, man and animals on the altar of 'Yagnas'.

In the times of such distorted visions and foggy beliefs, Prophet Muhommad Paigamber taught the nectar like faith, knowledge and religiosity to the backward, blind-faithed and illiterate people. He accomplished and proved the creation of human culture and dignity. Islam religion created unity; by propagating the beliefs in one God, sense of one religion, one community and one sacred, religious book, he restored uniformity.

The life and functions of Muhammad Paigambar

Muhommad Paigambar was born in 571 A.D., in the city of Mecca. His father's name was Abdullah and mother's name was Amina. He was a posthumous child and at the age of six, he lost the shelter of the mother also. After the death of his grandfather, his uncle took charge of bringing him up. At a very early age, Muhommad had many occasions to accompany his uncle to foreign lands along with the caravans. In young age, he worked as agent of the businessmen. His honesty impressed the business community very much. And so, they used to call him "Al Amin" which meant 'A trust-worthy person'. Gradually, as years passed by, he got more and more popularity. He took leadership in giving a helping hand to the foreigners and to the weak, and he was also in the fore-front in the matter of helping the poor.

There was a wealthy business firm of one widow named Khadija. As an agent of that firm, he worked with so much honesty and integrity that the lady concerned (Khadija) proposed to him a marriage. Both were married. The age of Muhommad Saheb was 25 years at that time and Khadijabibi was 40 years old. In spite of this difference in age, the marriage proved to be a happy one for both of them. Two sons and three daughters were born of this marriage.

The life of Muhommad Saheb was very much simple. He used to do his own work himself only. As property, he had some date-trees or 'palm trees' and a few sheep and goats. His ideas and thoughts befitted a prophet's noble thoughts. Mostly, he lived bare-headed and bare-footed and covered up the body with a white, course cotton bed-sheet. One or two earthen vessels, a small hut, a roof made from the palms of dates – this was all and not even a leaf or stopper to the door of his house !

He was habituated, from his childhood, to sit in solitude and to meditate. He desired to know what was religion. Hence, many times, he meditated on God, going to a cave of a mountain, named 'Heera', far from the town, and remained without food and water for days together. Once, when he was sitting in that cave of Heera mountain, in the night of the month of Ramzaan, he heard a mysterious voice which said, "Speak out, Muhommad !"

Muhommad replied "What can I speak ? I am not educated, what should I speak ?" Again, the mysterious voice was heard. It said : "On oath to God, speak out that your creator master has made this world.... It is only the man who can worship God well. So guide and teach those human beings the lessons of worship."

The lessons for the prophet to teach are :- "La Illah Il Allah" which means that there is no other God worthy to be offered devotion. Giving this slogan, he commanded to worship one God (Monotheism). He was 40 years old at that time.

From the age of 40 years to 53 years, he made devotions, and efforts to teach people the secrets and truth of religion. During that time, he had to make exodus from Mecca and had to go to Madeena. He had to bid farewell to his family-members and to Kabila-relations. At Madeena, in order to prevent attacks on the person of Muhommad Saheb, battles had to be fought; attempts

were made to assassinate him; but he continued to give the message of God. He has laid emphasis mainly on 4 things (and these four duties, one who accepts whole heartedly and in speech is the Musalman) (1) Namāj, (2) Rojā, (3) Haj, (4) Jakāt.

Through Namāj a direct contact with God is rendered possible; in it, by declaring one's own inferiority, one makes the life humble and easy. Namāj is to be offered five times in a day. The prayer is to be worded "I am nothing, a trash animal before thee." In the Koran, there are seven 'Āyatas' (Slokas). At Namāj, those 7 Āyatas are to be uttered.

He won the hearts of all by liberal and non-violent policies. The Islam Dharma began to spread. Idolatry was completely wiped out from Mecca. It is a religion giving the message of peace. The religion Islam means a holy speech, and a wide influence began to prevail. Islam has not taught violence. Nor it has preached non-vegetarian food or mutton; at the same time, it has neither told "if you don't eat meat you will be charged of committing sin." It has shown a practical path of non-violence. The prophet has told the people to keep brotherly feeling with each and every living being and to live with them with love.

This prophet who lived a life of loyalty and honesty breathed his last at the age of 63 years at Madeena in 632 A.D. Before death, he had distributed whatever he had as property amongst the poor. As invaluable heritage, he has left to the people an immortal motto of life, full of humanism and believing in the equality of all.

"O' God, O' Allah ! forgive me and introduce me, get me, to the inhabitants of the other world...."

"for ever heaven" – "Pardon"

"Yes ! the welcome companion of the other world."

Scriptures – ‘Kurān’ and ‘Hadees’

Kuran = to proclaim, to read. Kuran is a very very useful holy book to understand the Kuran correctly. The message acquired from God is known as ‘Vahee’. All such vahees, combined together are called ‘the Kuran’. If you want to search for religious life, read the Kuran. Prophet Muhommad has clearly stated that “there should be no compulsion of any type in matters of religion.”

“Your duty or the duty of any Rasool (prophet) is to present your statement in clear words. Never mind if anybody, hearing it, wants to go away showing dislike.”

“We accept that book which God has entrusted to us and we also respect that book which He has given to you. Your Allah, as well as ours, is the same. And we bow our head in front of that Allah only.”

Muhommad Saheb has never used a sword to propagate his own religion. Nor had he invaded any Kabilā or a country. As for beliefs in religion, he had accepted everyone’s freedom. They used to tell clearly : “God is one, and keeping faith in kindness and doing good acts are the keys of heaven.”

The pilgrim of Haj should put on simple clothes and he may not kill even an ant, nor to pick even a leaf, nor he keeps any weapon in his possession; then only it would be called an honest or true pilgrimage.

The canto of the Kuran is called ‘Surā’ (brick). There are, in all, 114 surās. On the brick (Surā) of the Koran the edifice of Islam is erected. The Surās of the Koran are small or big. In the biggest Surā, there are 226 Āyats, whereas in the smallest one, there are only 3 Āyats. These Āyats are full of music of the poetry. Being composed in the greatest and the loveliest style from a literary point of view, the Koran is the best piece of art.

In this sacred book, emphasis is laid on faith in God, holy life, principles of morality and attitude full of love towards the slaves, children and women. The contribution of this book in the development of Muslim culture is extra-ordinary. The epithet or attribute 'Sharif' is suffixed to the word Koran is meant for showing respect and honour for this book, and so, it is called 'Koran-e-Sharif'.

"Allah is one. He never takes birth. He is omnipotent, omniscient and the just. He creates life and death, in whose hands, there are infinite powers and undeterred energy. He is full of auspicious things, full of compassion and merciful. You keep mercy on those who are here on earth and those who are above the skies, will keep mercy on you. Allah is the protector-nourisher of the world.

The relation between Allah and the man is that of a Master-slave or owner and the servant. Islam Dharma believes in the immortality of the soul – in the principle of Kayāmat or the Day of Deliverance.

"If, on one side, some men perform Namāj, observe Rojā and give alms, and on the other hand level false charge on somebody, or does dishonesty, or misappropriate someone's money, or will kill somebody or will torture somebody, (then) the Namāj, or Rojā or alms by such a man will be of no use, will bear no fruit. He who does good deeds, will reap good harvest, or results."

The ultimate aim of human life is to act in such a way as not to be degraded to hell and to secure heaven after 'Kayāmat'. There are 2 means to achieve these objectives viz. 1. 'Iman', 2. Deen. The meaning of Iman is trust – faith. Every Muslim has to keep faith in six things – Allah, Angels, Korān-e-Sherif, Prophets, Kayāmat and Kismet.

Deen = religious acts. The Muslims are commanded to do 5 holy acts. These five holy acts, in order, are : (1) Kalams, (2) Namāj, (3) Rojā, (4) Jakat, (5) Haj.

Islam lays special stress on good conduct. Jakat – Alms or charity. To spend away for himself, what is earned by himself is a sin. From the earnings, certain portion should be reserved for the poor, orphans and fakirs. Charity done in secrecy has been more valued. All living beings are members of God's family and he who acts for the welfare of those family members of God is the most loved one by God.

Kalams mean Mantra. Take for instance, "Allah is one and Hajrat Muhommad is his Paigambar." The act of reading this 'Kalam' is called as 'learning by heart of Kalamo'. In the Koran, there is a message given of (the virtue of) religious tolerance. "In the matter of religion, there must not be any kind of force or compulsion." Meccā-Madeenā are holy places of pilgrimages and one who does that pilgrimage – i.e. does Haj is called holy person – "Hajee".

Hadis :

The collections of materials describing the daily routine deeds of prophet Muhommad Saheb and his dialogues-talks are called "Hadis". As these collections afford the best explanations of the teachings of the Koran judged from the behaviours of Muhommad Saheb, the importance of them greatly increases. In all, there are 6 Hadises. In the Hadis, it is written as regards Namāj, "Namāj is a spring of quite pure water, which flows by your compound, and bathe five times in it in a day."

Islam Dharma which believes in the adage "to be infatuated with this world is the root of all sins" asks us again and again to perform good acts. Thus, Islam Dharma is beneficial from any point of view.

Islam Dharma

The chief festivals of Islam religion are : (1) The birth-day of Hajrat Muhommad Paigamber Saheb. (2) The death anniversary day of the Prophet. (3) The Ramzaan month. (4) Id-ul-phitra = the celebration marking the end of fasting days. (5) Id-ul-Jhua = the Id of renunciation and sacrifice.

The details of each, in brief, are as follows :-

- (1) In third Islami month, on the 12th Rabeeul Avval Hazrat Muhommad Paigambar Saheb was born. The celebration of this birth-day is done with great respect and honour. It is called, "Id-e-Milad" which means 'joys were born'.
- (2) As the Vafāt or demise of Paigambar (Prophet) Saheb also took place on the same date (12th), it is customary to read or recite Fatihā. They take out a procession on that day and the poor are given the alms. This day is popular as Bārā Vafāt or the festival of 12 days.
- (3) The ninth month of Islami calendar is called Ramzaan. It is regarded as the most holy month. Ramzaan literally means burning of sins, and sacrificing evil thoughts into the fire, to take life to truth and good behaviour. The activities comprise of fasting from sun-rise to sun-set, five times Namāj in a day and leading a holy, pious life. Much emphasis is laid on Alms and good acts also.
- (4) In the joy of the completion of Ramzaan month, celebrations are made. The Namāj of Id is performed. Id = Joy – giving alms to the poor – to pay 'Jakat' and to offer, then, Namāj.
- (5) Two months and nine days after Id-ul-Phitra, there comes Id-ul-Jhuā. It is the Id (or joy) of Renunciation and sacrifice and of giving up or killing (Kurbani). The holy day of Haj

is celebrated in Mecca also in this month. This is an ancient festival. It is also known as Bakri-Id. On this day, they kill a goat as an offering. The festival is not arranged because of any fondness for killing an animal, but is motivated by the desire to cultivate the training of being prepared for the surrendering to God what is extremely dear and an object of love to us.

- (6) **Muharram** : In this festival, the ability to tolerate of great Muslim Martyrs. Hussien became a Martyr for the cause of truth. The festival of Muharram is for the Muslims; is so to say a day of dedicating on the death anniversary of these martyrs remembering them. This is a festival of bold brave followers of Dharma. The Muslim new year begins from the month of Muharram. On the seventeenth of this month, Imam Hussein became a martyr, at Karbala, for the cause of religion. On the 10th day of the Muharram they organise a procession. In this procession, the Muslim brothers walk taking along the Tajiyas with them. The Tajiyas resemble the tombs in shape. One emperor, in India, had started this custom of moving about of Tajiyas.



The Christian Religion

The Christian religion or Chirstianity is spread in every nook and corner of the world. It seems that this religion has the greatest number of followers. In matters of education and health, this religion has done a tremendously great work. At the roots of this religion especially, the ideal of service to humanity lies. Granted that this religion might have uplifted the backward and the most hated, downtrodden people of the world with the intention and feelings of propagating Christianity, but this religion's followers have done a very great work of human service. Whether it is the dense forest of Africa or the inconvenient and far-off areas of the tribes like Adiwasis, or else it may be a caste of Harijans or some other community, the noble activities of doing the best type of the service of humanity of all these are rooted in the work of Christianity. The noblest and the best performances of serving, especially, the leprosy-stricken people, the blind people, the deaf and the dumb and the unhappy poor people suffering from various types of diseases has been instrumental in giving this religion the most worthy place of pride in the whole world and it has created immense good-will in the hearts of the people. By doing the noble work in the field of



ઈશુ ખ્રિસ્ત (ખ્રિસ્ત દર્શન)

JESUS CHRIST (KHRISTI DARSHAN)

service of the people, education and health, this religion has made humanity greatly indebted to it.

Jesus Christ – the founder of Christianity

Two attributes “The Son of Man” and “The Son of God” are applied to Jesus. The meaning, broadly speaking, of these two words is : one who worships God through the service of humanity.

In the year 4 B.C. in the village named Bethlehem, on 25th December, the God of Christian religion Jesus Christ was born. The father of Jesus, whose name was Yusuf, was an ordinary carpenter. Christ Jesus is born of a virgin Mariam. At that time, it was a popular belief that a child born to an unmarried girl is a God-gift.

A king named Herad ruled over Jerusalem which was the capital of Syria Province. He was having tremendous powers. He came to know that some enemy of his is born; so he ordered that all children above the age of 2 years, should be shot dead. All people were terribly sad to hear this. But the king did make all the children to be killed. To save Jesus, his parents ran away.

When Jesus was 12 years old, he visited one celebration at Jerusalem along with his parents. On the way, near one church, he was separated from the parents. They, the parents, went on searching for him. At last, when they made inquiries in the church, Jesus was found to be having some discussions with the priest on some serious subject. When such question as “What is God ? Where does he stay ? What is he doing ?” etc. were used to puzzle the peoples’ minds very much, Jesus, like a philosopher, could answer them. He was critical of, and opposed superstitions and hypocrisy.

In the times of Jesus, injustice and stark mis-rule prevailed in the name of the king. No one had the courage to express

opposition to him. On seeing the guts of Jesus, people were consoled to believe that the great superman is born in the physical form of Jesus Christ. At that time the two castes were the Jews and the Semarians. Jesus was a Jew, but he didn't believe in the distinction between man and man; or caste and caste. He liked very much to render service, irrespective of untouchability. He had worked a lot for removing the caste-distinctions between man and man.

Not more details are available to know about the period, beginning from 13 years' age of Jesus upto his age of 32 years. He had put in hard work or Purusharth to imbibe knowledge, in his search for knowledge. In addition to that, cruelties inflicted on the people as well as injustice and exploitation awakened him. He felt that to come to the front, developing courage, is inevitable. It was the period of self-introspection, familiarity with the masses, journeys and mental agonies (deep thinking).

Jesus did hard austerities of penance for 40 days. He challenged against the government aided religious customs or beliefs. The bells of revolution got tinkling. The large number of people who very much valued the gains of trash, trivial physical pleasures and the political authorities put forth the strongest opposition to Jesus. He began first of all, to explain in quite simple easy style, the difficult problems of religion with the help of common principles (or examples). It had been mentioned in the Gospel that Jesus cured many sick persons, gave vision to the blind and enabled the deaf to hear. He used to say, "I am the way of truth and the light. I have come hear only for the sinners and the ill..."

Making a deadly attack on the religious preachers, he said, "O' you hypocrites ! You observe the Moral Rules; but you put aside the matters more superior than the scripture viz. Justice, Mercy and the Trust !

“You love your enemies, and bless them who curse you. Pray for those who insult you. If anyone slaps you on the face, you present to him your other cheek. Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself; become as sinless, innocent as a child.”

Such revolutionary ideas of Jesus snatched away the peace of mind of the authorities, and they conspired to kill him. He was charged in a court of law, with the crimes of treason and insulting the Gods. Four suits were levelled against him, and he was sentenced to death. A cross was thrust into, on his shoulders smeared with blood due to excessive beatings and the procession started. This procession reached a small hill named “Golgatha” and there his hands and legs were nailed and he was hanged on the cross. At that time a thorned crown was placed on his head. Praying for those who killed him, he said “O’ father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !” The day of this crucifixion of Jesus is named as “Good Friday” = holy Friday. On this day Jesus died, but on that day only, the people realised the truth preached by Jesus and understood that duty (or Dharma) and so, it is called ‘Good Friday’. He was crucified on the cross and on that very day the burial took place; but as the friend most dear to Jesus was not present that day, Jesus resurrected 3 days after the burial, to give ‘darshan’ to his friend, as is believed by the Christians. They said that “Jesus will be returning to the earth and will do justice. The son of Mariam took upon him this death-sentence for the purpose of washing off our sins.”

The teaching of Jesus

‘Sermon on the Mount’ is the crown of his teachings. He declares :-

- (1) In this world, those who are meek, of good character, kind, holy and increasers of unity and peace are worthy to be

praised. Salute to them !

- (2) "When people censure you, criticise you, torture you, think yourself lucky then, because you are bound to be benefited by it."
- (3) "Money won't give you peace, do not regard it powerful. When you will be robbed of it, you will worry."
- (4) "Shower love on your enemies also; never envy anybody. Wish him well who harasses you."
- (5) "Don't consider yourself poor or pitiable; you are the lustre of this world, the soul of it."
- (6) "I have not come here to demolish the shastras, but have come to get them duly obeyed after finding out their real secret."
- (7) "Your deeds and speech reflect your heart."
- (8) "Earn your bread doing hard and honest work. Never worry for the next day, or to-morrow. Dedicate with faith your life to God."
- (9) "Every one should strive hard himself in order to earn his own livelihood and for that of the family, and should sing in praise of God. It is the only right way of getting God."

In the heart of a true Christian, the sentiments of service to humanity is filled to the brim. He is the true Christian whose heart melts on seeing the miseries of men.

In the Bible, special emphasis is laid on 3 things – Faith, Hope and Generosity. If you keep faith in God, you will accomplish your work; hope for the best and have right behaviour, be kind to others and give alms.

The rich and the poor are all equal. In order to demolish the demarcating wall between those two, he said that everyone should earn his livelihood by doing hard work.

By saying that "The kingdom of God is yours" he advised the poor to get rid of their inferiority complex and by saying that "One can push the camel through the eye of a needle, possibly; but it is impossible for the rich to get an entry into the heaven," he expressed the right of the poor over the heaven.

"Every one has equal right to livelihood."

"Trust in God, He wishes good of all."

"If mistake is committed, repent, confess it, sitting in the presence of God, in the church. Don't hate a sinner for committing a sin once only. All are equal, no one is either high or low."

"In the welfare of all, our welfare resides."

There are two classes : (1) Christian and (2) Jew. For the both, there are holy Testaments. The Jews believe in the Old Testament of Musa and they attach many miracles 'or myths' to it. Jesus dislikes or neglects such physical miracles.

The Ten Commandments of Musa's Old Testament are as follows :-

- (1) Respect your parents.
- (2) Do not kill any living being.
- (3) Thou shall not steal.
- (4) Don't adulterate or indulge in illicit copulation.
- (5) Don't give witness wrongly.
- (6) Don't crave for labourers or servants for your own field.
- (7) In work give one day as a holiday in a week; because the creator of the earth had also observed one day's holiday, while making the earth.
- (8) Don't make idols of God, the Creator of this world.
- (9) Trust in me only ! Believe only in that God, which I say.

If you believe in any other God, you will come to ruins.

- (10) Harass him who harasses you, break the tooth who breaks your teeth, but don't kill him !

Jesus put forward new ideals – principles by the New Testament which has already been discussed by us. He considered all as equal, raised feelings of brotherhood in the whole universe, augmented the faith in God, told them to secure peace by confessing the sins in submission to God. Be sure He told that God is the treasure-house of infinite, limitless love, forgiveness and compassion. He opened the doors of religion for all the people and gave the invaluable message of giving alms, offering prayers as well as of doing all-human welfare and happiness through the medium of education-service and health. Over and above the two main sects of the religion, we find a lot of sub-branches in the Christian religion. But chiefly, the methods of worshipping are equal or common; and so, the feelings of unity and brotherhood are being developed very much and will go on developing.

The festivals of Christian religion

Among the festivals of Christian religion, the Christmas is the birth-anniversary of Jesus Christ. In fact, the seven days right from the 25th December to 1st January are being celebrated with great pomp and pleasure, although 25th December or the festival of Christmas is the biggest festival for the Christians. This festival is celebrated throughout the world. The Christians go to the churches and offer prayers; programmes of music and dancing are also organised. An angel named Santa Claus gives such gifts to children as please them immensely. 'The Christmas Tree' is decorated; for, the Christmas tree is the tree shedding leaves of Charity.

In addition to Christmas, the festivals of Good Friday, Sunday of Resurrection (Easter) are the main festivals. The day on which Jesus was crucified, was Friday. On this day, Jesus died; so people felt a shock, but on the same day, the people realised the truth shown by Jesus, and understood what is true religion; so that Friday is called Good Friday. This day, known as 'Good Friday', is spent peacefully with observing of 'fasts'.

Jesus was killed on Friday, and on the same day he was buried. As his dearest was not present there at that time, Jesus was resurrected 3 days after the burial to let him 'see' him or to have a darshan. This is what the Christians believe. This day of resurrection is celebrated as 'Easter Sunday' by Christians with great rejoicing.

The month of 'January' is believed to have been named after 'Janus' – their God. And 'Janus' like 'Ganpatiji' of ours is regarded as the 'Destroyer of obstacles'. He was a God, whose worship should be done quite in the beginning of any good work. Hence 1st January was declared a celebration of Janus with enthusiasm; and it is celebrated as the first day of the New Year, throughout the world.



Zoroastrian Religion

Zarhustee Dharma (The Religion of the Parsis)

The religious catholicity and tolerance of the Indians are unparalleled. The three world religions – Zoroastrianism, the Christianity and Islam – and others have got a place on this land. These religions have also got an opportunity to spread and to propagate their respective religions in this country. In order to protect their religion, the people who migrated to India from the Perse province of Iran, have settled in India bearing the name Parsis. Observing quite a different religion, this subject has managed to mix easily with the Hindus, and lives in company with other subjects of India quite peacefully. The religion of these Parsis is what is called Zoroastrianism. In the days of Zoroaster, the prevalent Dharma was known as “Mazadyasni” (which means the religion which has knowledge of God). After Zoroaster made certain reforms in this religion it is famous as “Zoroastrain religion”.

Originally this dharma was monotheism – believing in one God; and yet, the people often drooped to polytheism. During those days, worship of the evil spirits was also in vogue. The



અશો જરથુષ્ટ્ર (પારસી દર્શન)

ASHO ZOROASTE (PARSI DARSHAN)

people believed in magic, superstition etc. Stealing, robbery, cruelties were a common feature. It becomes clear from this that with a view to destorying the reign of 'Adharma' or irreligion, saint Zoroaster founded the holy religion Zoroastrianism. Because of the arrival of Zoroaster, the dawn of divinity or holiness appeared on the horizon of Persia, removing the darkness of sins.

Asho Jarthustra – life and work :

It is difficult to determine the age (or time period) of Zoroaster. The means of supplying details about him are very few. The word 'Jarthustra' is of Avastā language. This Parsi prophet is called Spitam Jarthustra because the name of the head of his family was Spitam. Asho Jarthustra was born in the family of priests. One meaning of the word 'Jarthustra' is a golden star and the other meaning of the word is 'the owner of yellow-coloured camels'. He was born in the 'Raya' city of Persia. At the very moment of birth, this child had not wept, but laughed. Moreover, at the time of his birth, a shining halo was seen round the face of his mother. The king who ruled at that time and his four brothers came to know of this fact; they who possessed knowledge about occult sciences had the premonition that this child will become the most impressive king and then there will be an end of their sinful acts. Taking into confidence other astrologers, they conspired to murder this child. They strived to raise many impediments and charges against the child, but they were defeated in their evil designs. The child Jarthustra defeated and check-mated them all.

When Jarthustra became 7 years old, his father sent him for 'schooling' and he received the best type of education. His mind, however, pined for knowledge of God instead of knowledge of this worldly life. When he was fifteen years old

his father began to see to the distribution of wealth and property. At that time Jarthustra chose only one Kusti (sacred thread), one waist-belt only and refused to take all other things. He renounced and left the house at the age of twenty.

He was extremely kind, and in times of scarcity or famine, he used to help the poor and the old, visiting those areas. He loved the animals and he opposed the cruel custom of sacrificing the animals in order to propitiate gods. Going to one mountain, he meditated for 10 years (ten years) on God. And he had the divine vision (darshan) of Ahuramazad and six 'Ameshadpando' (God's great angels or powers incarnate). He realised that the true worship of God is not through leaving society, or resigning from life's functions, but by staying in the society and through social service.

He, therefore, leaving the stay in solitude on the mountain, returned to the society and he started doing the philanthropic work, befitting a prophet or 'Paigambar'. He initiated a campaign against the rigid orthodox ritualists of his times.

In the beginning from all sides, there were protest and opposition; but he faced firmly the opponents and propagated the religion of 'Jarthustee deen'.

Jarthustra was a compassionate, kind, loving, serviceable, loyal to God, a yogi or an ascetic. He was deadly against hypocrisy, falsehood and immorality. He made huge efforts (purusharth) to bring an end, completely, of corruptions and improper acts in order to make loyalty, integrity fully victorious. He possessed undaunted domitable will power to fight the forces of sins ceaselessly.

Nowhere else you will find the same honourable status as is imparted to Zoroaster (Jarthustra) in Jarthushti religion. In matters of spiritualism, none can compete Jarthustra, and his

status is regarded as good as an angel of God, and that position is inferior to Ahurmazad only. In short, Jarthushtra was a superman, the best of men in his age. In the scriptures of Parsis, he has not been ever introduced as a 'Son of God' or Avatār.

Jarthustra continued those superior things which were found in the ancient 'Mazdayasni Deen'. He in his religion, continued to propagate those three very holy, epitomized mantras; these are :- (1) Yathā Ahu Vairyo (holy mind and service to others) (2) Asem Vohu (3) Ye dhae hātām (both these have truth as a subject or idea). This 'us' is the root foundation of all virtues taught by Jarthustra. The religious minded Jarthustrians recite these mantra so many times in a day. The relation of Parsi to the worship of fire being very very ancient and solid, Jarthustra had kept its worship current and continually pursued.

The similar other ritual is of Navjot. In this ritual, the Parsi boy and girl is adorned with a spotless white shirt and a woollen kusti (Janoi) of 72 strings. Then only, that child can be regarded as being admitted ceremoniously into the Jarthosti religion. For the mistakes committed by children before this sacred ritual, the parents are held responsible, and after Navjot, the child himself or herself is held responsible. This ritual of Navjot was first introduced by a saint named 'Hom' and was in vogue in the amended Deen, and today also, it is in practice.

The initiation of monotheism is an important contribution of Jarthustra. He raised a tremendous protest against sacrificing or killing of beasts and had laid special emphasis on moral obligations. He was a realist, and so he did not accept the belief that the world is an illusion. He had a dislike for every kind of excess. He loved, of course, the upliftment of the soul, or spiritual progress, but he desired, at the same time, the wealthiness and prosperity of the physical world also. That is

why, he has championed the cause of marital status, a married life. In this religion, it is believed that marriage is an act of self-control and culture. At the ripe age of 77, Jarthustra (Zoroaster) bade farewell to this world permanently. He did his duty to the best towards humanity. He had, moreover, done a holy activity of bequeathing to the world a very good heritage of moral values.

The Principles of Zoroastrian Religion

Zoroastrian religion is more near to morality and good conduct rather than to philosophical speculation. His leanings are not so explicit for ideas or thoughts as are towards puzzling right behaviours. God is a treasure of moral goods and compassion, so this religion believes that morality means a purposeful imitation of God. Though this religion has considered the importance of luck or destiny, it emphasized efforts more i.e. purusharth. Nothing like good or evil would be possible to be availed from a person who does not put in labour. So purushartha must be accepted.

Zoroastrian religion believes in only one God (Monotheism). And this God is also known as Ahurmazad. Literally interpreted Mazad = one who possesses knowledge and Ahur = the giver of existence. Thus Ahurmazad means “very learned giver of life.” The most outstanding and characteristic virtue is his unlimited kindness and therefore, this Dharma is called “kind religion”. One who follows loyalty and keeps aloof from corruption, will get God. In this religion kindness is believed to be a synonym of happiness. But Zoroaster maintained that if those hard-hitting sinners do not improve themselves, nor do they intend to, must be vanquished with the help of even weapons, while opposing them.

One should strive for truth, purity and holiness. In ‘us’ ie. truth, all the good qualities are contained. The ideal of ‘us’ or truth is easy, simple and practical. The Zoroastrians give first

rank to Dharma or religion, next to this, they praise karma or action. They have faith in the trinity of good thoughts ('Manasni'), good speech (Gavasni) and good behaviour (Kunasni). Thoughts and speeches may be pure, but if they are not translated into practice or actions, they have no value. It is karma or action only which is the real test of a man's character. Man surely gets "good fruits of his good acts and bad results of his bad acts". Such is also the belief of Zoroastrian Dharma. A man has to do, of course, routine, daily duties, but he should specially perform holy deeds and acts of kindness. To transform an enemy into a friend, to show the pious way to some wicked person – these are best religious acts.

The chief commandments of Zoroastrian religion are – kindness, doing good to others, service to mankind and charity (Alms). One's true duty is to do selfless karma of 'the good' (duty for the sake of duty – karma) and to perform good acts. Life is a battle-ground for fighting against the sins, and to run away from it is a cowardice.

The Jarthustri religion is averse to renunciation of worldly life and life of recluse. No one has a right to leave worldly life (for Sannyāsa) and yet, this Dharma (religion) is not against the ascetics or saints. The way to approach God is surely the way of human welfare; because service to humanity is service to God. God is not someone aloof or different from the people. This religion teaches : "Be a recluse mentally, or in heart, lead a life of temperance or self-control and live a holy life – live in the world (lead a worldly life), perform the duties of a householder and lead a life full of love for God." Life is not a dream, it is a golden opportunity for doing mutual good.

This religion hates inactivity, regards laziness a foolishness. The industrious men consider idleness a disease, a sin. We have

to pray for a long temperate life not for enjoyments or 'indulgence', but for doing good deeds upto the end for rendering service to the people.

Zoroastrian life means a life full of devotion to God, in which we are told to give much more attention to what is 'good' rather than what is liked or loved, to the soul rather than to the body. One should spend the money acquired from the society for the welfare of the society, in the society only. The Parsis are more interested in universal welfare. This religion, thus, shows the way of going towards God through the medium of social service of the people.

The Zoroastrians are optimistic, have faith and are associated with joy and wit or humour, with optimism. The sense of humour is more distinctly found amongst the Parsis. They believe, of course, that humour should be ethical or religiously permissible. This religion is in favour of and advises material progress also. There is a desire to see that the people become more happy, more cultured and more prosperous.

Religious tolerance is quite natural to this religion. All religions are roads to the acquisition of God, and so the Zoroastrians welcome what is the best in other religions and culture. The Zoroastrians opine that we should not believe in the adage "what is mine, that much is fine", but "what is fine is mine". Many instances of their tolerance are handy.

From the very ancient times, this religion has given due freedom to the ladies. The status of ladies was, in some matters equal to that of the gentlemen. This Dharma also stands for the praising or worshipping of women in general and virtuous women in particular. The chief virtues of a woman are purity and chastity, they believe.

This religion insists on cleanliness. The cleanliness of house (home), street, the well etc. are strongly expected. Whatever things

we make use of should be kept neat and tidy, because this Dharma believes that the man who uses unclean things is not a holy man. Hence this religion gives the following commandments :-

- (1) Many perished objects are found on the ground, do not move about there.
- (2) Do not throw into the waters bones, hair, dead animals, meat, etc.
- (3) One should not use dirty water of a deep, dark well. Only because of this insistence on cleanliness, that the Parsis neither burn nor bury their dead bodies or corpses, and they allow the carnivorous birds to eat those corpses. Perhaps there also lies in this custom the ideal of doing good even after death.

The Holy Fire (Ātash) and Agni-temples

In the Zoroastrian religion Fire as a symbol of Ahurmazad has an extremely important place. "I invite, O' Atash (fire) thou and all other fires which sanctify all the things." The supreme top-most elements in nature have been accepted as symbols of God. Light and Fire are such elements, which can remind us of the exact images of God in beauty, purity and holiness. People request the acquisition of happiness, longevity, wisdom, energy, wealthiness etc. from God of Fire. The fire is not simply a physical object, but it represents divine power and man's highest spiritual power. Fire always remains pure, and it burns to ashes all impure things and destroy them. One who throws without reason, an unholy and dirty thing in it is worthy of punishment.

There are 3 kinds of 'Agiyaris' or temples of God of Fire :- (1) Ātash Behrām (2) Ātas Ādarān (3) Ātas Dādgāh – the best temple of these is Atash Behram. For lighting that divine fire, different kinds of Ātas or fire such as Ātas of one's own

house, Ātas at the king's palace, Ātas of the General commanders, that of a goldsmith, of a blacksmith, of a potter, of a wood-cutter and fire of electricity – all such make a total of 16 Ātases and having collected them for one long year, they are sanctified or made holy by performing long and subtle religious rites. The Fire, thus sanctified, is preserved in non-stop unpartitioned form in the temple. The priest-like persons known as Mobedos who might have come through successfully from hardest physical and mental or psychological tests, keep a continual watch over them. The number of such Ātas Behram that exists in India, comes to only 8. Of these, one which is the holiest, greatest and historical is at Ud-wādā. It is known as 'Iranshah'. Amongst the Parsis of India, the word 'Agiyari' is very much in vogue for Ātash Behrām. The etymological root of that, in Sanskrit, is 'Agni Āgār' or 'the residence of Fire'. The Zoroastrian religion is simple, straightforward and practical. There are no stories of inconceivable or impossible ideals. It believes in mercy, love and non-violence. There must be some place of honour for justice in the practical dealings of the world. Such is its message. Jarthust religion believes strongly in the adage "just as you sow, so you reap". It accepts religious optimism. The ultimate aim of this religion is to produce such good charactered individuals as have truth, non-violence, love, mercy and feelings of benevolence in them. This religion believes in 'Supermen'. They sacrifice greatly for the cause of the welfare of the country or the society. The whole Parsi community can surely feel proud of this fact. Thanks to them that Zoroastrianism has remained, and will always remain, untarnished.

The festivals of Parsis' religion

The birth-day of the founder of Zoroastrian religion viz. Jarthustra happens to be on the sixth day of the first month.

It has been celebrated as 'Khordad Sal'. The new year of the Parsis is called 'Pateti'. Pateti means asking for forgiveness. The first day of the new year is well-known as 'Navroz'. On this day of 21st March, of new year the Parsis put on new clothes after getting up early, taking bath, and they perform worship, going to the Agiyari (temple), they decorate their houses and give alms to the poor persons, and distributing sweets, they exchange greetings (Sal Mubarak). Going to the temple, Ātas Behrām, they ask for good blessings. They perform 'Pooja' of Fire. The Parsis, though believing in Monotheism, celebrate the festivals of various Gods of the Hindu Dharma.

'Navjot' is also celebrated very nicely. A son or a daughter, when comes to the age of seven, nine or eleven, is admitted to the Parsis' Dharma. On this day, the child concerned is made to wear a shirt of Dhacca's 'Malmal' cloth. The Kusti is woven from 72 threads made of a sheep's wool. This Kusti is wrapped round the waist 3 times. Wearing a 'malmal' cap on head, the child prays five times in a day.



Tao Dharma

The Chinese people believe that religion is a matter of our nature and is quite natural to man. Religion is an element linked with the human nature. The fundamental unity of the universe and the man is considered self-evident by it.

The Meaning of Tao

So many meanings are found of the word 'Tao' – Nature, God, Intellect, Brahman, the Ultimate Truth, etc. 'Tao' word is more popular, however, in the sense of 'Divine Path'. Tao religion is a way to realisation of one's own real self. It is a permanent path because of which all the things function well. And yet nothing of these has created it, because it is self-existent. The propagator of Tao religion was a great man LAOTZE the saint. This is not a proper noun, but its meaning is "old master" (Ancient). His real name was "Li". As an old child and an ancient master, he is known in Tao Dharma. He has stated clearly that "Before reforming a society, improve your own self only and lay stress on internal purity."

A book written by Laotze, – title of the book "Tao-Te-Ching" is the basic reliable sacred book of Tao religion. It is

composed of 81 small chapters. In it, self-contemplation in solitude is more emphasised. Amongst the philosophical systems of the world, this volume is the profoundest book; such is also one of the views. His thoughts are quite intelligible. The pearls of ideas which are shining therein are capable enough to give us guidance :- “One who knows does not speak; and one who speaks out, does not know. One who is right, does not adorn with words and one who is richly worded is not right. Truth and untruth give birth to each other. What is difficult and what is easy are complementary to each other.”

In consequence of the fact that in the two matters of divinity and reality of the Ultimate Truth and the acceptance thereof, it has very much similarity with the Upanishadic ideas. To show the top-most superiority of each and every object three things are mentioned in this religion – love, humility and leading a life of moral virtues. Because of these three segments, we secure gallantry through love, greatness by humility and the defence of our rights by means of good conduct. The principles of Tao religion were limited upto individual meditations or worship and so they had no long-term widespread influence on China.

The sky or heaven, the earth and the man – these three were the parallel grounds of Tao’s philosophy. All these three are mutually linked. In all the happenings of nature, this mutual relation resides. The fundamental aim of this religion is to search for the ultimate element and to procure it.

It is only by becoming humble and unassuming or devoid of pride that a man can be great – can achieve Tao.

Whatever happens in nature is always inscrutable – takes place spontaneously. Behaviour according to one’s nature is the ideal condition in nature. Only in this condition, the power of influencing of the sky and the earth can operate fully.

The factors disturbing nature are man's ego and his passions. Man should be entirely one with nature by getting rid of knowledge creating artificiality and desires.

By showing the possibilities of acquisition and the direct experience of it, through humility, contentment and ways of natural conduct, Tao Dharma has presented one very good example. In this religion also, some of the best codes of conduct for human welfare are narrated.



Shinto Dharma

Shinto is the ancient religion of the Japanese people. References are available as to its beginning from B.C. 660. The fundamental element of this religion is worship of the Sun. It has been inferred on account of this, that some or other branch of the Aryans must have stayed there, and the Aryans, being the supporters of the worshippers worshipping Gods of nature ought to have initiated worship of the Sun.

According to the scriptures of this religion, God has made the island of Japan and Micado, the first king of Japan, was the image incarnate (Avatar) of heaven's God of Sun on earth. In short, the Japanese believe that their king and their country are of divine origin. "Micado is enthroned on the incessantly prevailing throne from times immemorial."

We have 4 books of scriptures of this religion. There is no original scripture-book as such of this Dharma, but have been condensed afterwards. They are : (1) Ko-ji-ki (2) Nihongee (3) Yeng Shiki (4) Menio Shioo.

The Principles of Shinto Dharma

We do not find any subtle philosophical speculations in

Shinto Dharma, but clarifications on the following three matters will be beneficial :-

(1) The nature of 'Kami' :

The ultimate element or entity is called 'Kami' in Shinto religion. There are in all, 16 opinions available. They can be read in three sections : (1) Pure or holy. (2) The best or supermost. (3) Strange, mysterious or extra-sensory. 'Kami' is the ultimate or supreme element of the universe. "Not only men but all those for which and on account of which fear is generated – beast, bird, plant or stem, tree, ocean, breeze and some extra-sensory power – all of these objects are included in "Kami".

(2) Polytheism :

When all darkness disappeared, the earth and the sky were born; after that the Gods were born. In the beginning, there were two Gods only, and then, the number of Gods began to increase. Reference to 8 Ayut crore or 800 crore Gods is available. Thus, Shinto Dharma is polytheistic. The Sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the rain, the fog-goddess etc. are the most respected Gods for the Japanese people. Of these the importance of Sun-goddess is the most. We see the symbol of sun-goddess on the national flag of Japan.

The Divine origin of Japan

The people of Japan believe that God has created the country of Japan and the kings ruling over it also are representations of the Divine.

The king is believed to be the representative of Sun-God. And so, in the Shinto Dharma, loyalty to the kingdom and to the nation as well as worship of the Sun are the two important aspects. A small child of Japan also is taught that your parents are simply givers of your birth only; your real parents are your

country. Very much importance is given to devotion of the nation.

Moral principles :

No such philosophical or theoretical ideology regarding morality is seen in Shinto religion; but we do get therein rules regarding holiness and loyalty. "Relinquishing all things of this world, come daily to me with a clean body and a holy heart." This holiness is to be cultivated in both ways – external and internal holiness.

Deep respect for their king and nation and sincere loyalty are woven into the hearts of this subject (masses). Among the other moral or ethical principles, truth, calmness (non-wrath) and other virtues have their significance and are described, "He who speaks the truth is not hurt or injured. One who is a liar, has to bear pains, definitely. Moreover, encourage what is good, never envy anybody; let not your eyes glow red with anger." This religion advocates observance of the following 10 rules, specially :-

- (1) Do not violate the wishes of God.
- (2) Do not forget indebtedness to the forefathers.
- (3) Do not commit the crime of disobeying the state or king.
- (4) Do not forget the invaluable obligation and goodness of God.
- (5) Don't forget that the whole world is one family.
- (6) Don't forget your own individual limitations.
- (7) Don't be lazy in doing your work.
- (8) Even if others get angry, you should not lose temper.
- (9) Do not behave in such a way as would discredit your education.
- (10) Do not be led away or be influenced by others.

In Shinto Dharma, a mirror, a sword and a pearl-necklace are worshipped. The mirror is a symbol of holiness, morality, honesty and the virtues; the sword is suggestive of bravery, firmness and qualities of justice and the pearl-necklace symbolizes beneficence, gentlemanship and the virtue of obedience.

Over and above these, prayers are offered by the followers of this faith, asking for worldly comforts and happiness. In the worship of Gods oblations befitting the substances of the God are made into the sacrificial fire. We do not find concepts of heaven or hell in this religion, and matters such as otherworldly aims like realisation of the soul also have no place in this religion. The necessary insistence is laid on the happiness and welfare of the people and the nation. The high sentiments of complete non-attachment or retirement (*vairagya*) natural to selflessness has a place in this Dharma.

In this religion a happy confluence of religion and patriotism is seen. This religion has contributed to a great degree to the progress of the Japanese people. The insistence on the virtues like honesty and integrity which are found amongst the Japanese people should be credited to this Shinto Dharma. Today also, among the existing religions of the world, this religion has a place of pride.



Confucius Religion

Among the factors responsible for keeping alive till today China's ancient civilization, Confucius Dharma is chief. In China, 3 main religions are prevalent :- (1) Tao Dharma (2) Baudddha Dharma and (3) Confucius Dharma. No religious or cultural tradition of China is free from the influence of this religion. The great sage Confucius has founded this great religion of China, and he has been worshipped as a Divine or an incarnate person.

Five classics and four books are included in the books of scripture of this religion.

The principles of Confucius Religion

Amongst the principles of Confucius Dharma, God, the soul, the moral kingdom of the world and the fundamental love of morality are included. They believe in the physical form of God. God is the perfect and a loving person and because of his action-power of omniscience, the creation and development of the cosmos is made possible. He had accepted the principle of the immortality of soul, in addition to the existence of God (theism). And yet, the chief target of this religion is man's worldly practical dealings and a social order. In other words, it is a

humanitarian religion. This humanitarianism also is of a unique type. It does not deny the other-worldly elements as is done in the modern humanitarianism.

This religion lays special emphasis on the fundamental love of morality in man. Everywhere in this world, the moral rule prevails. In a world governed by moral law, man is not an exception. In man, there is natural and fundamental love for morals. Man, by nature, is the lover of goodness and good luck or happiness and he has the freedom of will for the moral development.

Moral principles

(1) Five great relations :

Of the relations of different types which determine the individual's place in a society, five relations are the most important and great. These are as follows :-

- (1) Father and Son : love in a father and respectability in a son.
- (2) Elder brother and the younger brother : Good sympathy in elder brother and in the younger brother, there should be humility and respect.
- (3) Husband-wife : In a husband there should be propriety of behaviour and obedience in a wife.
- (4) Old men and the youngsters : Humane-ness in old seniormost men and loving respectful limits in youngsters.
- (5) The king and the subjects : Benevolence in a king and loyalty in the subjects.

And of all these relations; Confucius religion lays special stress on the relation between father-son and between king-subjects because a family and kingdom are the most significant social institutions. Just as the father is the head of the family,

a king is the leader of all the subjects. The chief virtue in a king should be beneficence. An individual should give respect to both the father and the king and should serve them with fullest devotion.

“The kind of love which I expect from my son, the same kind of love and service I should have for my father. And the kind of loyal service which I expect from my subordinate officers, the same kind of service I should do to my king. The kind of service which I might be expecting from my younger brother, the same warmth of behavior I must show to my elder brother.”

In the behaviour of an intelligent person, generally, the following 5 virtues are being explicitly expressed : (1) self-respect, (2) generosity (3) frankness, (4) seriousness and (5) benevolence or doing good to others.

The noblest man acts before he speaks and he advises others to do only that much what he has done. Thus, there is perfect co-ordination or unity between his thought, speech and action, or behaviour. His sense of duty is extremely sharp. He expresses it selflessly.

The Ideal of the noblest man :

Confucius, describing the ideal of the best man, has written :-

Such a man...

- (1) Remains free from the prejudices of loving one side and hating the other.
- (2) He is calm and composed.
- (3) He does not have either sorrowfulness or fear.
- (4) He should not put more emphasis on the honour or pride of good virtues and on bad vices.

- (5) He tries to adjust to others but he does not flatter.
- (6) He is full of pride and glory, but he is never proud.
- (7) He searches from within for what he wants.
- (8) One should see with a holy sight, hear clearly, respectful feelings on face and in gestures, honesty, sincerity in words, steadfastness in practical life, readiness for a compromise, considering results of becoming angry, and not greed but enthusiasm for performing duties.
- (9) Make friends only with the virtuous.
- (10) The real fault is not to rectify faults though himself being guilty.
- (11) Refresh yourself from the Fine Arts which teach Samskāra or good habits. Let your character be moulded by poetry.

The process of morals and Dharma which is given in a systematic form by Confucius, accepts the belief in God and the worship of Him. The devotion becomes explicit by worshipping, praying, and sacrifice or Yagna. It must be remembered, however, that this religion gives more importance to the moral duties towards one's own self and towards the society than to all the ceremonies. To be loyal to one's own self and to love human beings (brethren) is the main command of this religion.

Some statements of this religion which expect feeling of renunciation are noteworthy.

No matter, a man has all the virtues pertaining to a good character if he is proud and greedy of money. These virtues are not worthy to be noted.

If a man gives prime consideration to his duties, and gives second consideration to the fruits or results thereof, he is bound to become great. Duty comes first, then only think of the benefits.

There is no happiness in physical enjoyment or passivity – happiness is not associated with prosperity. One can feel happy even in having enough, simple food, drinking water and a pillow of folded hands.

Confucius was a great teacher who taught virtues to the people. He had firm faith that “If men are good, the families would become good, the kingdoms (governments) would be good; and so, the whole world would be good.” The Confucius religion believes that if moral teaching is accorded, people can be virtuous. This religion which does activity of improving the mankind, is really great.



Judaism

One of the ancient religions of the world is Judaism. It is the religion of Israel and of the Jewish people. This religion is of a definite group which developed with the group over the course of millennia. It is this religion which nursed within itself the kernels of universalism which were adopted and it has a peculiar connection with the life and destiny of that people.

To grasp the meaning of Judaism, one has to survey the principle stages of its development and its gradual growth through the constant interaction between it and the life and destiny of the people. But this type of study is not possible at this stage.

In spite of its fundamental belief that Judaism is of a divinely revealed character in a more or less complete form, it is also a religion of life and of an essentially practical nature. Its purpose was to guide, shape and mould the life of a group in its various manifestations.

Monotheism is the very foundation of Judaism. This not only presents a systematized and well organised set of ideas, but it is very foundation of the life of the people, of its nationhood and the spirit and power of its existence through the ages.

Main Principles of Judaism :

- (1) Unique idea of universal God is well-known in Judaism. So they say that all nations are essentially alike in the eyes of God, for He is the Creator of man and Supervisor of nature and human activity. God is one and unique, simplicity itself.
- (2) All nations are essentially alike in the eyes of God, for He is the Creator of man. Yes He chose to reveal Himself only to a small group. This group is then elected by His will. Creation is one of the manifestations of divine activity.
- (3) The election could not be for power and material well being, but for a noble and moral purpose.
- (4) The ancestors of the nation were distinguished for their moral life, intense spirituality and religious conception.
- (5) This cannot be accomplished without a set of laws, precepts and regulations and hence the Law with its numerous particulars which embraces all phases of the life of the Jews.
- (6) If a Jew violates the rule then there is a punishment – exile. Prophet after prophet repeats this threat of exile, together with the promise of restoration.
- (7) Knowledge of God, justice, righteousness and consequently also peace, because when real justice dominates there is no cause for war. This is the best contribution of Judaism to the universe.
- (8) The sabbath (rest) is the most important gift of Judaism to the world. “With the arrival of the sabbath, there arrives rest to the body and the soul.” Moreover it is said, “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all of them is and resteth on the seventh day wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”

- (9) Judaism which emphasises the fatherhood of God places a high value upon prayer. Each Jew must perform three prayers – (1) morning, (2) afternoon, (3) evening. Moreover, on the sabbath and holidays additional morning service should be performed.
- (10) The fundamental thought of the Jewish religion is that to express gratitude frequently to God for His multifarious benefits. Such expression is required on many occasions and especially on those when joy or pleasure is experienced.
- (11) Judaism is a religion which embraces all phases of the life of the Jew. There are dietary laws. Life must be gentle and not violent, nature of the food determines a man's character.
- (12) Family occupies important place in Judaism. As per Jewish tradition the entire nation sprang and developed from a single family. It lays stress upon sanctity, purity and stability of the family. The laws relating to those subjects are numerous. Marriage is the basis and the source of all family life. There are 613 precepts obligatory upon Jews to obey.
- (13) Importance of man as described in Judaism is very interesting. "Man is beloved by God. For he was created in His image and this love is of great advantage to him." Every man without distinction bears the impress of the divine image. So it said, "God created man, in the likeness of God He created him." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
- (14) Doctrine of equality of man is described in this religion. "Why was only one man created by God and not several?" This was done in order that some people should not say my ancestor was greater or possessed nobler qualities than yours. All men have an equal elemental worth.
- (15) The people of Israel are selected by God as His people. "Now, therefore, if you will obey My word and keep My

- covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine. You shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.”
- (16) God is certainly Just. He rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, but neither the reward nor the punishment is always carried out in this world, but in the world after death.
- (17) ToRAH = (teaching). The term itself originally meant teaching and was applied to any kind of instruction whether religious, moral or merely practical. ToRAH = Law. Oral law is the second meaning. Torah is divine. Its value constantly rose higher and higher until it came to be considered a cosmic power. Such a conception is not paralleled in any other religion or in the culture of any other nation.
- (18) The Jews are usually called the “People of the Book”. Means the people who had a written book containing the principles of their religion. But the real title of the Jews should be “People of Study”. The place of study in Jewish life during the last two thousand years can hardly be estimated.
- (19) A distinct contribution of Judaism to civilized humanity is peace. Prophet after prophet emphasized the blessing of peace. Peace as an ideal state of social life. “Mercy and truth are meant together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” The realization of peace among nations will come when men will undergo a complete change of heart.
- (20) There is hardly a religion which has placed so high a value on labour as Judaism. Labour is highly praised. “For thou shalt eat the labor of thy hands, those shalt be happy and it shall be well with thee.” A man should not rely on the prestige of his ancestors and go idle, but should rather engage in useful labour and consider it of high merit.

- (21) In Judaism, life is considered a precious gift granted by the all powerful and unique God. Life is glorified. God himself is described as the living God. Judaism holds cheerfulness in life. One must live a life of morality and righteousness.
- (22) The Golden Rule of Judaism is, "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done unto thee." This contains the essence of the teachings of Judaism, the rest is commentary.
- (23) Pure character, the virtue of meekness, agreement between speech and thought, truthfulness, contentment, mercy, gratitude, charity, keeping promises, hospitality, visiting the sick, all such virtues affect the dignity of man. Jewish moral tradition gave important contribution to the moral rise of humanity.

Religious books of Judaism :

(1) The Bible :

The most important religious book of Judaism is the Bible. It is revealed by God and cannot be upset or discarded. Jews have complete trust in 'Old Testament' of the Bible. Bible becomes the pivot round which Judaism revolves. It contains undisputed facts which are to influence, mould and regulate the life of the Jew. It is the will of the God that we should lead a good and useful life and that it is God. "The Righteous shall be glad in the Lord."

"Ten Commandments" as per "Old Testament" is described in the chapter "Christianity" so it is not repeated again.

The ethical views, commandments and precepts that serve the Jews as the guideposts in their manifold actions are contained in the Bible, and it is there that we must look for the conception of morality and the principles of conduct.

The Bible is not merely a sacred or a compendium of laws and commandments but a book that sustained the life of people for millennia. There was, through the ages, a continuous mutual relation between it and life.

Men of spirit, sages and spiritual leaders from early times and through the ages devoted themselves to the explanation and interpretation of the ethical principles and precepts of the Bible and drew out their deeper meaning and hidden thoughts.

(2) Psalm of life :

This is a collection of many stanzas verses. It is well-known in the Jewish world. Man is frequently baffled as to how to follow the way of life, stressing thereby that it must be followed, and in despair often turns to God for help. The Psalmist cries out to God, "Make me know the way of life." To know the way of life in Judaism means to know how to follow a life of morality and righteousness.

The Festivals :

There are many religious festivals in Judaism.

(1) Sabbath :

It is the most important festival. It is one of the principal contributions of the Jews to humanity. One day a week to set aside as a day of rest, pleasure and meditation. "With the arrival of the Sabbath there arrives rest to the body and the soul." Man must rest in order to rise spiritually. Men may differ, through conditions, as far as labour is concerned but they are equal in regard to rest – this right belongs to all. Everybody has a right to rest; moreover the idea of human equality is described. The cessation from work, not to perform any labour on this day is at the bottom of this belief. Though the Sabbath is holy, matters involving human life take precedence over it. Sabbath day is

devoted partly to instruction and learning. This helped to preserve the Jews in their integrity as well as in the distinctness of their way of life.

(2) ROSH HA SAANAH (New Year) :

It falls on the first day of the month of Tishri, became the first day of the New Year. It was the beginning of the forming year. It is enjoined that trumpets should be blown on the day. It is also a day of judgement for religious Jew. A short prayer recited on the banks of body of water, "And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." It lasts for ten days.

(3) Day of Atonement :

On the tenth day of the seventh month there shall be a day of atonement. "It shall be an holy convocation unto you, and you shall afflict your souls and offer and offering made by fire unto the Lord. And you shall not do no work on that same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord, your God."

(4) Succot (The feast of Tabernacles) :

This is a nature festival. It was celebrated at the time when the grain and fruits are gathered in and thanks rendered to God. This festival lasts for nine days, yet only the first two and last two days are holy days, the intervening five days, being semi holidays. There is also other belief of seven days. Two principal ceremonies are observed on Succot – (1) Dwelling in booths, (2) 'Taking' of plants. As regards first the obligation consists primarily in spending much time as possible in the Succah (Hut). Second important ceremony in the "taking" of four plants and pronouncing an appropriate benediction over them. In the temple this ceremony is to last for seven days. The entire ceremony symbolizes the expression of thanks giving for God's blessings.

(5) Passover :

Principal features are – (1) Prohibition against eating or possessing leavened bread, (2) An affirmative precept, to eat Matzot i.e. unleavened cakes. At the time of Exodus, the Jews could not prepare leavened bread because of their hasty departure and ate Matzot. It is said that anyone who will eat leavened bread will be “cut-off” from the congregation of Israel. There are number of rules and regulations to observe this festival.

The most popular feature of Passover is the cluster of ceremonies which attend the meal on the first night of the festival. It is observed with special pomp.

(6) SHABUOT :

A day of rejoicing and praise to God, at a season of agricultural importance. The name ‘SHABUOT’ is given to it because it marks the end of seven week period between the beginning of the harvest in the fields, especially that of barley and its close with that of wheat. Owners of orchards all over Palestine brought their first fruit as an offering. The ceremony was performed with great pomp. People gathered in groups and marched together accompanied by songs and playing of fifes and beating of drums.

(7) Fasts and days of Mourning :

There are five public fast days in the Jewish religious calender. They all commemorate historical events, four in connection with the loss of independence and the destruction of the temple, and one in connection with purism. All these fasts last from sunrise to sunset, and only eating and drinking are prohibited but no other comforts.



Violence in the context of war, Religion and Morality

Not a single religious tradition of the world has favoured war. In the seventh contract of those holy Testaments which God Yahovah gave on Mount Sinoy, to the prophet Moses and which are regarded holy by the Jews, it has been stated : “Stop doing violence to any animal whatsoever.” The New Testament came into existence after the birth of Christ. In the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the elements of love, forgiveness and beneficence have blossomed. Refusing to exchange avenging for the revenge, he says that “if anybody slaps on your left cheek, show him the right cheek.”

The name of God of Kuran-e-Sharif is itself, “Rahiman”. In whose life, compassion for each and every living being is implied is Rahiman. The morale in brief of the teachings of Aso Jarthustra, is contained in the testaments of Ahurmazad. Pure, holy thought, pure and holy speech and pure, holy acts – these are the roots of that. The worship of the Sun, pooja of the sea and worshipping the God of Fire are meant for inculcating holiness in life. If the name of the God of Zoroastrian subjects is itself divine, how can’t mercy, holiness and beneficence be dear to him ?

All religions of India have dis-favoured war with a purpose of snatching away the 'right to live' of others. Yet if we have a glance at world history, we would find that innumerable battles have been fought in ancient times, medieval times also and even in modern times, we see that big battles are being fought. It is most surprising that majority of wars have been waged in the name of religions ! Thus, an inseparable knot has been knitted between religion and war.

The U.S.A. has blown the trumpet of war in order to crush for ever the terrorism. The Talibans have raised a crusade in the name of thwarting the attack on Islam Dharma. In India also, the war-trumpet is being blown against Pakistan for sovereignty and for abolishing the terrorism. As a result, many drums of world-war will be heard.

We get guidance from Indian philosophical systems the Ramayan and the Mahabharat as to what is prudence, what is morality and what is the religion of non-violence in war. Bhagwan Mahavir and Lord Buddha were called incarnations of non-violence and compassion. They have always talked of destroying the violence. In their times also, many battles had been fought. But how and what the kings and generals who were the followers of theirs, behaved at those times of war, will be very interesting topics for observations.

The wise persons have demarcated certain levels in order to understand non-violence. They have divided violence into four classes. These levels depend on their situations. The violence which is practiced deliberately with some special determination or with a definite resolve or intention, is planned or a 'willed' violence. This is aggressive violence. It is to be avoided by everybody. Willed violence or planned violence is in consequence to revenge, hatred or jealousy, the outcome of which is always

negative. To torture others to bring about the result as wished by himself and to spread terror and violence incurred to inflict pain on others or to keep them in a prolonged impatience – all these are willed violences.

The other type is of routine or inevitable violence of primary category, which one has to do for maintaining a livelihood e.g. food and drinks, household duties or to run the daily practical life are called primary violence which is essential for producing and protecting various types of physical means of welfare. In practical life to earn one's livelihood, various kinds of violences are perpetuated. Such type of violence can be either minimised or avoided by a little caution or awareness.

The violence which is done for the maintenance of the family, for the industry or business, for the purposes of agriculture, for trade and commerce is industrial violence and is of the third kind. The root of activities is human mind only, and so, non-violence is to be practised in worldly life; but the man who leads a life cautiously with justice and laws as well as with self-control can avoid or at least can minimise this violence. The fourth kind of violence is antagonistic violence.

The fight which is fought for the purposes of saving the life of one's own self or a country, city, clan or family at the time of aggression by the enemy, or in order to offer resistance to the injustice, to protect the freedom, for the cause of sovereignty, for the peace of the nation is called violence as opposition, or it may be called anti-aggression violence. In other words, for the defence of the security in reply to the aggression, that violence is called violence as opposition. Those who wish to continue the hold over material institutions, regard this as natural ordinary violence.

Violence as opposition cannot be totally removed. It is

everyone's primary duty to protect the chastity of the ladies and to protect one's own self. It is also a duty to defend one-self at the time of enemy's invasion and defence of the sovereignty and to defend country's borders. Therefore, this violence of violence as opposition cannot be totally abolished. When violence is attempted for self-defence, it is desirable to behave taking care not to allow sin, hatred and revenge in the mind. When violence is to be taken in hand, have to kill or either to die or to kill, then the main work might be to protect or as part of moral duty, at that it becomes difficult to regard it undesirable or avoid it. The only condition is that, this duty must be on religious path and moral.

The best illustrations of this kind of violence are best in men Sri Ramachandra who did not transgress certain limits, in freedom. When it is impossible to oppose injustice, it becomes inevitable to take the help of violence in opposition. In ordinary routine life it is believed to be necessary to offer resistance to injustice. Should not an individual who does not oppose injustice be stamped as an indirect supporter of injustice ? It was only to resist injustice that Gandhiji proclaimed the struggle for freedom. In the modern age, Mahatma Gandhiji made the country independent by means of non-violent 'Satyagrah', by agitation. Such a non-violence is not a business of cowards. It is nothing but a hypocrisy to hide one's weakness by holding Ahimsa as a shield under the cover of an ideal "Non-violence is the greatest Duty." Such an artificial face of Ahimsa weakens the people.

When we reflect upon the 'actors' of historical war-situations, we find that the feelings and mental agonies of great souls like Sateer Sitajee, Vibhishan, Udhisthir, Arjuna, Bhishma, Dronacharya, Vidurjee, Bimbisaar or Bhagwan Mahavir's time's Shrenik, Chedā Rājā, Chetak Rājā, Rājā Udayan, Ashok the

king of Kalinga and secretary of king Kumarpal viz. Udayan, great moralist-seer Chānakya etc. are guides worth observing. On one side, there is war in war-front, and on the other side, in the 'Kurukshetra' (battle-ground of Mahabharat) of the heart or mind the most aggressive battle of the deep mental crisis had reached to its climax.

Perturbed by the imagination of the tragic scenes of post-war destruction, one female demon approached Sitajee and foretelling with description said, "O' Sitajee, as a result of this great war, lakhs of ladies will become widows; you are a woman and so, having mercy and compassion on the womenfolk, please accept to be a maid-servant of Rāvana and put a halt to this horrible war." To this suggestion, Sitajee gave a very meaningful reply, "Whenever the ladies will be victims of the conditions similar to me (in that case) will quote my example and would think 'If great wife of Rama, though spiritually high, submitted to the king of Lanka, what to talk of our little ability?' ... Thinking thus, suppose those virgins and married ladies begin to surrender to the other males extra-maritally, what will happen? Think what is better – the tradition that might make in future crores of girls and spouses 'corrupt' or prostitutes or the possibility in the present tense of lakhs of women subjected to widowhood?" What reply can that demon-lady give to this?! In this case, violence in fighting becomes essential for the protection of the fidelity and chastity of women.

In history, there is quite similar situation as this – that of Lord Krishna and Arjuna. The latter had no interest in fighting against his own relatives standing in the opposite front; he was indifferent. Arjuna, entangled in the webs of sadness and gloom, was given inspiration of reflecting on soul, God, Dharma, duty and obligations; and he spurred Arjuna to war.

To get rid of war Krishna became a negotiator between both the sides and himself becoming a 'messenger for compromise' tried hard, with both the sides, to stop war. Not only that but he himself became a messenger from the Pandavas and convening a joint meeting, asked Duryodhan to hand over only five villages to the Pandavas. (Yet) Duryodhan did not submit. Thus, here, violence to oppose in war became a part of Krishna's duty for the noble cause of truth, justice and morality.

Sri Krishna, for re-establishing the religion of "Avtar for the defence of saints" had adopted 'Avtara'. The question is : Why did Lord Krishna, who, though a great supporting pillar for the spiritually minded persons, the protector as well as defender of the masses, got honourable personalities like Bhishma Pitamaha and Dronacharya killed ? – the former as good as the apex of devotions to God and the latter being fully virtuous and the doer of morally good acts ?

The wisdom of Shri Krishna – the absolute 'seer' of subtle human relations and practical dealings – was wonderful. He was fully attentive to the welfare of mankind. In his eyes, compared to truth, honesty and justice a person however big he may be, was secondary. The individual who takes sides of the irreligious and the unjust becomes the supporter of the same. Even the religious person who gives shelter to irreligious and the unjust ones, may himself become irreligious. From that point of view, Krishna inspired Arjuna to pick up the bow and arrows and consider fighting a war the only source of happiness.

However nice a person, a gentleman Dronacharya was, he, taking sides with the irreligious, became ready to kill thousands of innocent people, releasing Brahmastra. The step Sri Krishna took against them was for the 'good' of the party

for which he stood. The strategy of Lord Krishna was to fight for defending Dharma and justice.

A moraliser, if he shelters irreligion and immorality, he becomes an irreligious man. From this, we can conclude that, the world should declare that country as a 'Terrorist Country' which gives help and shelter to the terrorists and torturists, and regard that country as deserving the fines accepting its crime.

In the times of Bhagwan Mahavir, because of Destiny and the rise of 'Karmas', some battles were fought. The kings and some generals of the armies of those times used to observe Shrawakas' Dharma. And the battles to combat, to resist irreligion (Adharma) and injustice, also, were fought only as the last and final weapon of remedy. Even in the days of war, moreover, there was a place in thier lives for Dharma, morals and mercy as well as justice.

The king Udayan defeated the king Pradyot and the king was just returning to his kingdom. He put up for a short stay at the camp which lay just on the way. King Udayan was taking as much care as himself for the meals etc. of the king Pradyot, who was imprisoned after his defeat in the battle. When the holy occasion (Parva) of Paryushan started, that king Udayan observed 'fast'. The cook asked king Pradyot "What would you like to take as lunch ?" On hearing this, the king of Ujjain thought "No body has so far asked me such a question till today." He inferred, "Surely, this mockery or satire signals my bondage or my execution or death." Thinking thus, he asked the cook, in return, "What is the intention or reason to ask such a thing ?" The cook politely answered that "My master, along with his friends, has been 'uposhit' and so have observed 'fast' as today is Paryushan Parva; *what I mean, I am, therefore, to prepare food for your goodself only.*" Upon this, Pradyot exclaimed, "O' monk ! my parents were

shrawakas, and so I too will observe fast in honour of this great 'Parva'..." The cook appraised king Udayan of these words of king Pradyot. On learning this, king Udayan remarked "Pradyot, who, remaining behind the bars, observes Paryushan Parva, is my co-religious brother (Dharmabandhu). So, free him immediately from the jail." He begged pardon of Pradyot doing 'Pratikraman' as a mark of repentance for all the violences committed and that pure holy soul, who had left committing all sins, left the riches of a king and accepted pure saintliness. King Udayan became the last 'Rājarshi' or Master among saint-kings. The son of great devotee of Bhagwan Mahavir, named Shrenik's son Kunik had also had a fight with Hallvihāl. The elder brother, Kunik, wanted to snatch away divine ear-ring, the clothes, the necklace and the Sechanak elephant which were actually bequeathed to Halla and Vihāl. So, Halla and Vihāl sought refuge of king Chaitak. Chaitak Dharmi was a Shrawak gentleman. His mental deliberations and deep thinking about duties in war, as well as regarding violence-nonviolence were wonderful. The situation in which the violence which is not with the intention of killing but is inevitable, is materially a violence, but in the sentiments and feelings, it is non-violence. So, such a violence is not so sinful and not so cause of a bondage, as is not able to unmake the bondages of desires; because this sort of individual with understanding and wisdom neither takes pride of violence committed by him, nor does he give credit to violence for the victory secured, but on the contrary, he will surely repent for his being instrumental in the violence.

King Chaitak used to observe religious disciplines or sacred days (Vrata) and Chedārāj was even breathed the holy sentiments of Samayik and Pratikraman, even on the battlefield.

Varuna, the grandson of Nagarthi who fought from the side of Chetak, was observing Shrawakas' twelve religious days of

discipline including truth and was a believer of justice. The commander-in-chief of Kunik rushed in shouting the challenges like "Swing the sword, wound me to kill me !" In reply Varuna spoke :- "O' you brave one with long hands ! I am a Shrawak and I happen to observe such a 'Vrat' (religious observance) by which, I am forbidden to strike first; self-defence is my war-strategy and 'Dharma'." At the time of death, having done the 'santharo' of grass-leaves, and Sanlekhnā observance, accepted liberation by 'Samadhi' or deep meditation.

King Kumarpāl sent his minister Udayan to conquer king Samar of Sorath. This minister Udayan was on the death-bed, almost breathing last, being wounded seriously. The commander inquired of Udayan as to his last wish. He replied, "My last wish is to see (have a darshan of) a Sadhu, having vowed 5 religious observances. Now, how to catch hold of a Sadhu in the battle-ground ?" The commander played and brought one Bahuroopi (person who could assume many forms) man of Targālā caste in the guise of a Sadhu. The Bahuroopi made Udayan listen to the duty at death-bed sermon, exactly in the same fashion as a Jain Sadhu does. Udayan experienced a marvellous divine peace. On this side, that 'Bahuroopi' man thought, "If by my one day's acting only, Udayan could get peace, Samādhi and heavenly bliss (Sadgati), in fact, what powers could not a real saintliness achieve by grand and divine power ?" This mental musings changed altogether the direction of the life of that Bahuroopi Targālā. Submitting at the saintly feet of a good Guru (teacher) he lived like a saint of good conduct throughout his life.

Sudarshan who refused to submit to Abhayā queen's demand for breaking the vow of celibacy and to 'indulge', was a victim of her malicious play to hang him but in the end, when

the power of truth of Sudarshan made itself feel explicit, the same Sudarshan prevented the murder of that queen at the hands of the king. After getting a violent mouth swallow non-violence neatly and after being victorious, having put up an opposition with love, the strong antagonist, and then to honour the enemy with a garland of victory, spreading love should be construed as a grand success of non-violence.

Today, in the whole world, the trumpets of war are heard on all sides, because of the ardent desire for power and land, as well as terrorism and religious fundamentalism, deep thinking about truth, justice, morality and prudence is necessary. To substantiate truth and to resist injustice, the wise and thoughtful male persons accept battles only as the last and final step. To mankind which longs for peace and not wars, such intellectual and wise Buddhas who can prevent wars, are needed. Each and every human being must fight the 'Kali' snake of eightfold Karmas, defeat it and this sentiments be pure is the only thing which would bring the best and the ultimate happiness.



Religion and Religious Fanaticism – An Analysis

The terrorists are made to swallow the poison of Fanaticism

Religion is an art of living. It is meant for mental peace. Dharma is the process of drying up (Nirjarā) the acts (Karmas) clinging on the soils of soul, while strolling along in the worldly life (Samsāra). Etymologically, that which sustains us is Dharma. It is the preventer of a fall in miserable condition on an unhappy route after death. In fact, Dharma is the nature of self.

In the modern currents of time, fanaticism is associated with religion. Of course, from time immemorial, such a thing has been clinging to religion. Each side is obsessed with the belief that 'what I do is religion. The opposite side is behaving irreligiously.' Then fanaticism makes its entry into Dharma. If we regard Yudhishtir or Rama as symbols of religion, Duryodhan or Rāvana are the symbols of fanaticism.

The original nature of the soul or an object is 'Dharma'. Thus, Dharma is a disposition. Limiting one's own self to one's own religion, to observe real Dharma of non-violence and do good deeds is civilization and religious fanaticism is abnormality. Religion and religious fanaticism are two final ends on opposite

sides. In fact, religion is not concerned at all with fanaticism. No relation can it have with it. But, unfortunately religion and religious fanaticism have become so parallel moving matters nowadays, that it is difficult to disconnect or separate them.

Religion is as good as nectar, and fanaticism is a poison. If so, who, when and why mixes poison in it ? If fanaticism is associated with Dharma, be sure, Dharma will be annihilated from its very roots. The fanaticism has sprouted because of the prejudices. When one does not have the real understanding of religion, fanaticism creeps up. Some principal factors are sponsors of fanaticism and one of them is the religious priests. They, in order to make their selfish motives fruitful, raise special 'crowds' of different religious faiths, try to establish their superiority or authority. The vested interests of such religious leaders are the breeding grounds of fanaticism.

Another factor is Prejudice

There was a village known for the serpents. At every place in the village the serpents might be seen. The serpents would pass treading on one's toes and would even play with the children. A visitor or guest from outside towns, would be surprised and asked :- "Aren't you afraid of staying with such deadly snakes ?" The villager replied calmly, "This is a village of serpents. Here, serpents do not bite."

And in this village one mongoose was born. The parents of that mongoose told "We stay in the village of serpents, but the serpents are our enemies. The baby-mongoose asked "Why are they our enemies ?" The father replied "This enmity is in vogue traditionally. Centuries before, their grandfather had killed our grandfather. So whenever you happen to see a serpent, take chance to kill it shrewdly." The baby replied, "There is no enmity with me in particular; so, why should I kill them ? These serpents

have done no wrong to me, at least." The father thereupon called all the elders and complained that "this child doesn't obey me. This (child) is a blot on all the mongoose community as a whole." Thereupon, all the elders persuaded the child, and as it did not obey them, they, together, assembled and killed it.

In our mankind, hatred and revenge hold good even worse than this. Why should a birth in a different religious group be a cause of enmity ? Because of prejudices only, fanaticism creeps up and gets mixed with religion, and as a consequence blood-bath due to violence is witnessed. The colour of the blood of any person born in any religious family is red only; then, why this discrimination ?

The real reason for misunderstanding of other religions is the lack of knowledge of other religions, or the want of wisdom. Our thinking, in fact, does not reach so far. As a result we are prompted to drop to the enmity of other religions or to fanaticism.

Prejudices can be removed only when having tolerance for other peoples' viewpoints, we properly understand them. Rigid religious or narrow increase the distances and differences of ideas, even between those who live nearby.

If we look to one thing from different angles, and observing each and every portion of a thing, and by judging the same idea, an individual or a situation according to space-time considerations, we have the knowledge of that thing, individual or the idea from Anekant, or comprehensive, all-sided view-points, we will surely be free from the prejudices. The prejudices and fanaticism born of selfishness are the killers of 'Anekantvad'. The Anekant view point is the protector of the fundamental elements of Dharma. So long as that angle of vision persists, the abnormality or pervertedness will not dare to enter in Dharma.

It is only the so-called priests or teachers of Dharma who take undue advantages of the faith or blind-faith, meekness and ignorance of their followers. In politics, religion is helpful; but politics in religion gives birth to many an evil.

The teachers of religious principles, in order to expand the size of the 'crowd of followers' and to enlarge the amount of wealth-property and the power, are used to adopt so many strange methods to attract large crowds in the public programmes. In order to satisfy their ego, such so-called religious leaders go on saying continually to their followers that "Our religion or sect is the only true 'Dharma'." Moreover, due to the intellectual void and blind trend of imitation, the spiritual teachers, get what they want and what is convenient to them.

What is currently happening in the world in modern times, is in consequence of the fact that the terrorists are being intoxicated with the poisons of fanaticism. It is so said that, "This is the duty or 'moral' work in order to defend Dharma, and in the process of doing these, even if perhaps you die, you are fortunate; as such a death will surely reward you with a stay in heaven; and will give you luxuries and happiness either of 'liberation' (Moksha) or of a heaven." Self-immolation, self-dedication, human-bomb or cruel suicidal attacks are the products of religious fanaticism.

To confine religion to one particular circle and for drawing scattered lines and for religious fanaticism, the perverted interpretations of religion are also responsible; as for example, as it is said like this in the Geeta :

One's own religion, however unqualified, is better than well-practised foreign religion. It is far better to die doing one's own duties; but living in the realm of other's religion is terrible.

In this whole sloka, 'Swa' or one's own means the soul,

and “other’s” means inanimate body – such an interpretation is to be done. So far as its application to practical life is concerned, people will say one’s own business for earning a livelihood, though not so sound, we ought to be loyal to it; and being lured by the business or work which others do, we should not leave our own livelihood or profession as it would bring horrible results.

Surely, the interpretation of this holy stanza can be interpreted, solely on subjective grounds, but to serve one’s selfish purpose, one transforms the meaning of the real truth twisting or perverting like this :

“One’s own religion or sect is good, the rest are no good.”

The sectarian mentalities of the religious preachers have created demarcating walls, not only between two religions, even between various sects of the religion also. They have created differences. The religion which is the means of establishing peace, that holy medium has been made perverted by religious fanaticism, and by using it as a tool, it has made brothers fight tooth and nail. Only saints or good teachers can save the mankind from this.

For religious fanaticism, even religious conversions and government rules are responsible. History shows that many times, attacks for conversion are made on Indian civilization. Moreover, acts of spoiling temples have been done by followers of other religions. Muhommad Gazanvi had attacked Somnath Temple very often.

In 1498 A.D. Vasco-de-Gama entered India. In that background this activity began. In 1542 A.D. Saint Xavier came. At that time, the local fishermen were terribly afraid of the robbers at sea. In exchange for the security of theirs, they got 50 thousand fishermen converted to the Christian religion, and looted so many temples desanctifying them. In those days in Thana district people

thus converted to Christianity were made holy so as to be readmitted to the original Vedic Dharma after getting them to bathe in the mud-less and pure waters of a lake on the holy day of Janmashtami. The Portuguese people slaughtered cows in great numbers and thus filling the river with blood, killed the priests who sanctified the converts. Under the rein of terror and fear, seven lakh people in the whole wide area from Vasai to Goa were converted to Christianity.

A priest named Ravert D. Noveli who came to India from Italy introduced himself as a Brahmin Sannyasi from Rome, and composed "Yeshurveda". He called it as a fifth Veda and in a book titled 'Ishopanishad' praised Jesus Christ therein. On the banks of the Narmada, this priest used to distribute 'Prasad' (remainder of the offerings) of rice. He converted many people into rice-Christians.

In the days of the English people's rule, this sort of activity continued. In 1954, the Madhya Pradesh Government appointed Niyogi Tribunal to investigate into the activities of 'conversion' after Independence. In spite of the report of this committee being a startling one, it was neglected completely for some mysterious reasons.

It is a fact that the Christian preachers and propagandists have been doing the work of spreading their religion under the pretext of doing relief work, during natural or man-created calamities since centuries, and its goal is religious conversion.

Recently, when the Christian relief workers were arrested in Afghanistan, it was disclosed that the Protestant Christian missionaries, introducing themselves as non-sectarians, make the Christian religion's propagandists sneak into the countries following Muslim, Hindu and Bauddha Dharmas. Such an account has been published by the 'Washington Post' recently. It is not

difficult to find out the reasons for the flow of foreign assistance or help to thousands of Christian Missionaries of the whole world, including those of India.

Respected Mahatma had written in the May 31st, 1936 issue of 'Harijan' that Christianity is a capitalistic religion, and the history has proved the truth and reality of these words.

Because of the aggression of religious conversions, generally the religious fanaticism is generated with a malicious view of creating divisions in the Indian population, and as per the 'divide and rule policy', to please the Muslims, the English people kept inequalities between the Hindus and Muslims, and thus the Muslims were in the good books of the Britishers. Such a thing continues as if permanently to secure votes of the Muslims in the post-independence period. In order to secure votes of the Muslims, instead of taking care of the common man, they served the interests more of the Muslims. The government made an exception for the schools of the minorities and they were not subjected to the laws of the land; and so they were beyond inspection. The managements of such schools were given full freedom; others were not free.

Separate laws for Muslims were made regarding female education, rights of inheritance and protection in the services. Instead of equal civil rights, they were given special reliefs. For the Haj pilgrims, the government continued aids for a long period of time. No such facilities were declared for other pilgrims of India such as those of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Viashno Devi, Dwarka, Samet Sikhar, Sri Nathdwara or Benaras. In this way certain laws of government also become instrumental in creating religious fanaticism.

In the war against terrorism, launched by America, slowly and slowly, consciously or unconsciously, the shades of religious

sectarianism get mixed. When religious fanaticism is thus on the worse, the Muslim gentlemen (following Islam) of India must make their position clear. Not only that Talibans instigate the Muslims to join the Jihad of Laden in the name of religion; but time is now ripe for taking them away from such advices or teachings. The whole world has now come to know that Pakistan nourishes the terrorism. And now is the time for opening their eyes and ears by the leaders of Islam to see and hear. A religion free from politics, self-less religious teachers and values-committed politicians can prevent fanaticism from getting mixed in religion. If each and every country accepts other religions' inclusion in its national and international policy, then only religious fanaticism will stop.

There had been one Sadhu (Sage) named Rev. Santbaal in Gujarat. He set up certain centres of hermitage in Maharashtra and Gujarat between 1964 and 1970. In all his Ashramas, the slogans like "Confluence or equality of all religions and worshipping all religions" which the saint had given years before; and these slogans are worthy to be quoted as prayers, by all Indians even today :-

- * For world peace, let there be an increase of pure unity in India and may the elements opposing the unity be removed.
- * May the poison of communalism, which is expanding in the world, be eliminated, and the feeling of friendship be active – be active.
- * May the relations between India and Pakistan regarding the problem of Kashmir be full of love and strong. May all be of good mental attitudes, yes, of good wisdom.
- * May the land of Bharat become free from terrorism and

corruption and let there be unity between man and man and may they become honest.

- * May the means of discrimination of religious places be destroyed, and become the instrument of the unity of mankind.
- * May the Government of India be inspired to frame a law and get energy of prohibiting slaughter of cows and their progeny.
- * The ideal of universal love may spread in this country as well as foreign countries and to facilitate this, let there be a link of good forces of the world.
and...let us add :
- * May the fanaticism crept in the religion be cease to exist and may the yogic powers of the good humans do the welfare of the world, do the welfare of the world by means of pure religion !



Self-introspection in the philosophical systems or in the literature of the 'Darshanas'

The contribution of literature among the factors moulding the Indian culture has been quite valuable. Human life is enriched by literature, music and fine arts. It becomes sweet also. It is only when the aim of the creativeness of literature and arts is to realise or see the truth, it is meaningful.

Darshan means seeing – it tries to visualise philosophy from a unique angle of vision. Seeing or understanding of practical truth can be done by many people, but the vision of ultimate truth can be done only by a few.

The philosophical vision is the only invaluable store of the society, culture and civilization. For getting the real familiarity with any culture, it is necessary to have the knowledge of its philosophical thought-process or ideology. In the western philosophy, the confluence of the ideologies of many countries has been there. Chiefly amongst them, there is a triple confluence of the Greek, Christian and the modern thought-currents. The Greek philosophers, first of all, did deliberations on the world of inanimate objects, and then adopting the introvert vision, described the conscious soul; and finally made a synthesis of

these two in the ultimate entity (tattva). Freeing Europe from the religious blind faith, thus, the Greek philosophy has made (more) special contributions in doing scientific independent analysis of philosophy.

In the philosophical traditions of Europe, there was a tremendous impact, or influence, of Aristotle, Socrates and Plato on the medieval philosophical ideas.

The philosophy of the East gives prominence to 'knowledge of the self'. The Western philosophy gives more importance to logical and rational matters; it has an extrovert look-out. It is more interested in the discussions of the practical problems of the world rather than in the search for spiritual mysteries. In the opinion of Dr. Radhakrishnan the meaning of 'Dharma' in the East is mostly a life 'dedicated to the soul' and so here, there haven't been many quarrels nor has the blood-bath taken place.

All the philosophical traditions have already done contemplation and have undergone mental conflicts regarding the self. The Western civilization has put more emphasis on styles of thought (the manner). They gave to reasoning the name of philosophy. The philosophy of the East begins from the point where the Western philosophy ends. The Indian thinkers have experienced that some truths can't be apprehended merely by thoughts. But to comprehend any truth, one has to do churning of the ideas, deep contemplation, meditation and mental conflicts; then only the idea concerned can be a part of us. Truth can be understood after being put into action. In spiritual terminology, it can be called 'Self-realisation'. The philosophical thinking is produced only after the contemplation that is an aftermath of the direct experiencing of the soul and this sort of contemplation, becoming a permanent, perennial thought assumes the status of a scripture.

A philosophical self-introspection is everywhere manifested in the sacred books like the Vedas, the Shrutis, the Smrutis, the Upanishadas, the Puranas, the Geeta and in great epics like the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. The Upanishadas maintain that the Vedas are not written by the Rishis; but they are the exclamations or spontaneous words of God himself.

The system of philosophy (Darshanas) which accept the validity of the Vedas are those Vedic darshanas like Nyāya – Vaisheshik, Samkhya-Yoga, Purva-Mimansa and Uttar-Mimansa (Vedānta). These six systems of philosophy were called “Astik” Darshanas or “Vedik” Darshanas; whereas the Chārwak darshana, Jainism and Baudhdha darshanas were called non-Vedic darshanas, because they had faith in ideas other than those of the Vedas.

These darshanas having diverse kinds of ideas are not antagonistic to one another, but they are complementary to one another. The form of Indian philosophical system is spiritual and they are very akin to life. The ultimate goal of philosophical systems, mentioned above, is to achieve Moksha or salvation and they talk not of “knowledge for the sake of knowledge” but they talk here of knowledge for the purpose of getting Moksha. “That knowledge is real knowledge, which makes available to us liberation, or freedom from the bondages.” In other words, ignorance is the root of all our miseries and the cause of bondage of Karmas for Atma or soul. After securing such real knowledge man’s outlook on life gets changed. Only he becomes a true Vaishnav jan or a Shrawak.

In the path of spiritual meditation, renunciation, freedom from love-hate as well as the feelings of a recluse serve as base. Renunciation should not be construed as stoppage of activities (karmatyāg), nor does ‘Vairagya’ or non-attachment mean

inactivity. The real meaning of renunciation is the renunciation of the desire for fruits thereof. Lord Krishna has explained this in the Geeta through the knowledge of “Nishkam-Karmayoga” i.e. Desireless actions.

Gautama Muni is the exponent of Nyaya Darshan. In this philosophy detailed discussions about the pursuit of knowledge and the means of it have been done in order to know the truth. The soul is different from the body, the creator of the world is God – attempts have been made to prove on these matters through valid inferences. Desire, jealousy, efforts, misery, knowledge, etc. have been recognised as the characteristic qualities of the soul. Kanād Muni, the founder of the Vaisheshik darshan has stated in detail the knowledge of the natures of seven objects (padarthas) such as substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, permanent relation (Samvāya) and the lackness (Abhāva). And it is given the name Vaisheshic Darshan. To understand that the ‘Purusha’ (the soul) is quite distinct from the ‘Prakruti’ is the right knowledge or discretion and the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong (Vivek) or discretion only is the way to Moksha. The prakruti itself is undergoing change or modification and is manifest in the form of a world. As this is the belief of this darshan (viz. Samkhya) it does not need any acceptance of God. Through the Samkhya darshan, Kapil Muni has given to the psychological thought process of the Upanishadas the status of, an honour of, a philosophical credit. In the Yoga darshan, sage Patanjali has given the sutra of “Yoga is the thwarting of the instincts of mind.” The learned persons also explain Yoga as ‘the union of the individual self with God Almighty’. The Poorva-Mimansa, written by Jaiminee Muni gives those Sutras in which devotion and knowledge are explained simply to give cognizance to Karmas or actions. It has described

ceremoniously the Yagna Anushthan (sacrificial rites) considering action or Karma only as the central idea of the Vedas; as against this, Uttar-Mimansa, disproving the utility of Vedantic rituals, regards self-realisation and knowledge of the Brahman as the central idea of the Vedas.

In the Geeta, Lord Krishna has said that :-

*:Nainam Chhindanti Sastrani,
Nainam Dahati Pāvak;
Na Chainam kledayanti Āpah
Na Shoshayati Mārutah.*

Its meaning is :-

*The weapons cannot pierce it;
Nor can fire burn it;
waters can't drown it
nor can the wind dry it.*

(i.e. Ātma or soul)

If many a philosopher saint cum poet like sant Kabirjee and Gangāsati composed songs, scholars like Shankarāchārya, Ramānujāchārya, Nimbarka and Vallabhacharya wrote commentaries of the highest quality. In modern age, we have glimpses of philosophical self-introspection in the literary writings of Swami Vivekānanda, Ramteerth, Raman Maharshi, Mahayogi Arvind, Tagore, Anandshankar Dhruva, Pandit Sukhlalji, Munishree Santbal, Acharya Vinoba Bhāve and Gandhijee. On the other hand, Ausho and Krishnamurti have told us about Ātmā from a unique angle.

The Vedanta thought about self-reflection in the philosophical literature is discussed; now, from amongst the nonvedic Darshanas let us study the concept of soul as found in Chārṇāka Darshan. According to them, there is no conscious or self-

illuminated element like Atma or so. Not only that but our physical body, endowed with specific consciousness is the only truth; it only is real. They believe that a physical body characterised by consciousness sprouts from the inanimate elements of earth, water, fire and air. According to materialistic philosophy of 'body is the soul' ideology of Chārṇākas there is no such other worldly consensual existence – reality (sat-tattva) like God. Because of physical atheistic or materialistic 'darshan', we see here the negative approach of philosophical self-analysis.

Two main philosophical traditions of Indian culture are the Brahman and Shraman traditions. The Shraman tradition, the Bauddha and the Jain philosophical literature have specific contemplation regarding the soul or Atma. A varied, deep, thinking and exposition about the 'self' is in the vast literature of the Tripitakas, in Buddhism and in the commentaries and criticisms written on them.

Lord Buddha did not accept any invisible permanent substance or soul other than ever changing visible qualities. In his opinion, this worldly life is quite temporary, momentary. The entity which we name as a soul or an individual self is regarded here as only a current of ever-moving restless processes. He has compared the unitary cohesiveness of the individual self with a burning lamp. He accepted the existence of sensitivities like happiness and misery as the attributes of the soul. Different states of the mind have also been accepted; but did not accept the permanence or immortality of the conscious element. The object with which sensations like love-hatred or happiness and misery are linked or associated, that physical frame is itself the soul, and when the greed is put out, one can be led to the path of Nirvāna. Buddha believed like this. Not believing in the soul (Anātmavād) or Nirātmavād is the unique philosophy of Buddhism.

The Jain Darshan presented transparent self-reflection in the context of Actionism and Moksha. In their opinion, the vision of physical objects is the subject of physical senses – eyes, and the vision of a soul is the subject of divine eyes. By lapses of the karmas which lay coverings over the sights or by destroying and lessening of the physical eyes, we get the vision in the form of physical eye-sight and the power of vision for seeing the physical objects, and after that, either by the destruction or calming down or by the destruction-cum-slowness one gets the vision of the pure form of the soul. They have explained the stage of gradual development of the purifying process of the soul by means of and with reference to ‘Gunasthanak’. Out of the four joiners in the Dravyanuyoga, explanation is given. Six substances, nine elements and eight karmas through subtle discussions of these guidance is given for a journey from the individual self to the Absolute Self or God.

*Full of Bliss is the soul,
from it we get delight.
Do not pine for that in other place,
useless, it is vain.*

The soul is existence with consciousness and bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda). Sat means permanent, Chit means consciousness full of knowledge and Anand, joy or bliss is God incarnate. Being introvert to the soul within is the only thing that gives joy. However and how much we ‘look out’ and roam but one doesn’t get joy from the external objects. For, joy is not the product of action or ‘karma’; it is the direct experience of the soul itself.

In the Uttaradhyayan Sutra, Bhagwan Mahavir maintained that there is ignorance of the real nature of the ‘self’ and so all miseries are generated. In the ‘knowledge of the self (or Swa)’ removal of the miseries is implied.

Many books were compiled on the basis of the Jain 'Agam literature'. The great, honourable saints and seers like Acharya Umaswati, Kundkund Acharya, Acharya Haribhadra Suri, Siddhsen Diwakar, Hemchandracharya and Upadhyaya Yashovijayjee have clarified in their writings the concept of nature of the soul according to Jain Darshan. Great Jain poets like Avdhoot Anandmayji Benarasidas or Srimad Rajchandra have praised the immortality of soul in their divine poetry. The Jain darshan is Anekantvadi. And so it makes us visualise the soul in its diverse form. The individual self, wrapped up by the actions or Karma, when freed from the Karmas, becomes free and assumes the status of pure self. From the substantial point of view, Atma is everlasting and so there's never a destruction of the 'original' self. But judged from the alternative point of view, the soul is transitory, which means that the soul, because of the karmas, cannot remain only of one kind or with the same attributes. It can't stay in only one form. e.g. when the life-span of it is over in type of position or direction, as per its karmas, it has got to move to other direction or in other womb. Thus, from the Anekant point of view, prevalent view, the position of the soul is clarified by the point of view of truth or reality.

Jainacharya Haribhadrasuri has explained the soul by means of or through six angles :- (1) Atma (2) is immortal (3) Agent of actions (4) is the enjoyer of the fruits of actions (5) there is Moksha or salvation of the soul and the way leading to it is good acts or Sudharma.

The philosophical thoughts done by the other Indian darshanas can be accommodated within six steps. Moreover, Atma has been introduced as the master of infinite knowledge darshan and the power of sex. The soul that is bright, luminary existence-cum-consciousness and joyful has been called the

owner of happiness. The original attribute of the soul is knowledge. The primary state of the soul is the knowledge of the infinite'th part of the non-perishable word. That state is also called the state of Nigod. According to destruction of Karma (Karmakshaya), there is a gradual progress in the purity of the soul. The achievement to reach the state of 'Kevalgyan' is the final stage of this progress. After that, Atma – the soul having achieved the spiritual proficiency in meditation is honoured to reside in the absolute space.

Everliving Tirthankaras have been telling us that by winning over or relinquishing love and hatred, the original attributes of the soul get manifest and the covering of the Karmas thus breaking down the soul becomes beyond the feelings of infatuation, and becomes a free soul. The Jain Darshan has expressed the possibility of all future souls achieving the worthiness of Godhood.

These systems of philosophy or Shad-darshanas are the super invaluable fruits of the intelligentsia of all mankind which move on searching for the permanent truths. In the 'Darshan' literature of India, the ways and means of securing liberation through self-contemplation are shown. In these 'darshanas' which rely upon the psychological and scientific truths, there is a nice synthesis of religion and philosophy. We will put emphasis on reason and faith. If we pay attention to purusharth and honesty along with prudence, this tradition will serve as a cause of one's own and others' happiness.



Duty to Mankind is the only Duty or only Dharma

Swami Shrekant, lamenting upon the fact that the vested interests and the leaders have misused the ideal of “equal respectful love to all religions”, as a result of which, much harm has been done to the work of synthesising all religions (regretting this), has said that :

“Only a pilgrim like me can realise how many mental agonies have to be undergone by a person who searches for a track or a footpath in the midst of dark, dense forests full of strange beliefs of various religious sects. Touring widely through the forests of all religions, right from the homeland of one’s own religion, I have arrived here in the vast and well-lighted arena of “relinquishing all religions...” commandment of the Geeta. The more speedily the forests of beliefs began to crack, the more warmly I have been saluting to them and making further and further progress. At last, today, I have come to that decision, that “religions are not at all many; the customs and traditions are many.” “Purity is our duty (Dharma), but to take bath three times in a day or to wash hands and mouth three times, is a custom developed according to the situation. The final rites or Samskar are Dharma but to arrange funeral or a burial for the deceased is a custom. To pray to God

is Dharma, but whether to do it silently or eloquently beating drums is a custom. Worship of God is duty, Dharma; but whether to do it facing the east or the west is a custom. To bow before God is religion, but after or while doing that whether to take off the cap or to bow with cap on, is a (question of) custom. Customs can be many, but religions cannot be many" (the politicians have turned the holy concept of "loving all religions equally" into a strange 'covering of cotton-sheet'.)

"Now, this cotton-sheet covering or bed of 'love all religions equally' is not of much use. That carpet might now be spread on the occasion of some leader's death – to such a rotten condition has it been transformed. And when I felt that this bed-sheet or a carpet stitched up by joining scraps of those religious sects, does not serve the purpose of a full dress of religion as such, and it is simply a collection of strips (Al-Fatiha) it can be useful only as a mat in the prayer of the final farewell. When any leader dies, I watch this bed or 'Godadi' on T.V. The great, so great leaders give long speeches in big and bigger rallies, set down old dusts and sets up new dusts, and go back. In such bigger and bigger public meetings, of course, sparks of intelligence and wit can be had, but there are no contacts of heart, at all ! And this is impossible without personal contacts. There is need for contacts of the masses and that too, frequent ones."

"Someone has said, 'Mercy is the root of Dharma'...I would like to modify it a bit and add that compassion is the offshoot or branch of religion; friendships are the leaves of it, love is the flower of religion and God is the fruit of Dharma."

It is the religion which encourages, inspires so as to make the human life happy and develop the virtues of soul. The path of inspiration to mitigate the miseries of each and every living being is the path of religion.



Creeds, Sects are Bodies and Religion is the Soul

Imagine a place where there is only one tree, one leaf, even only one fruit and one flower on that tree with only one bird on it; well, you cannot call it a garden, because it doesn't have the richness of a garden.

The butterflies of various colours will augment the beauty of that garden which has in it thousands of plants, trees, creepers and thousands of flowers. The wasp will be humming. Thousands of birds will be attracted to go there from a great distance, and all the birds will be inclined to migrate there.

The trees may be different in the garden, but the tree-ness is only one; there may be different chirpings of the birds, but the sweetness is only one; the smells of different flowers may be varied, their beauty is only one. That is the real richness of the park.

Similarly, religions may be many, and the sects of those religions, their creeds, flags or 'gachcha' may also be many, but the inner core, or element of them is only one; and if we accept this, there will be unity even in diversity, and that unity only will be protecting and nurturing the religious traditions.

A sect or a belief or a creed is for stability or order. A sect is a body, religion is the soul; accepting this, it is the ideal of mankind to do religious acts, remaining in the sect symbol or a creed.

At different times, keeping in mind the contemporary situations of the respective space and time, different propagandists of religion, sages and saints, as well as monks, the main preachers and holy persons, either because of the prevalent languages or because of the differences of views inspired people to arrange or initiate different religious sects; and hence it is, thus, many sects and creeds came into existence. But the perennial and the perfect truth residing within them is the religiousness. One can't make the 'truth' dependent on the scriptures.

A question may arise whether many sects, creeds, 'gachcha' or views are tokens of pride, ego or of the progress? If, according to country or time, one sect agrees that there is in other religions, ceremonies or rituals thereof have some better principles than their own and if a judicious following or acceptance of that is welcomed or attempted by them, there is bound to be a progress of it.

The extra-ordinary tolerance, extra-sensory intuitic insight, as well as the noblest character and the transparent honesty in accounts of the firms, religious institutions and their trustees looking after the administration of the hermitages (Ashramas), holy centres of pilgrimage, temples – these things can redeem or remove any controversy whatsoever. If the sects or creeds express brotherly feelings for other religions or other sects, they can be symbols of progress.

Muni Vātsalyadeep call Dharma a water from the sky. So long as water emanating from the sky does not touch the earth,

its tastes and qualities are uniform. It is only after its falling on the earth that the qualities of water get changed. If it rains on the sea, it tastes salty, and if it falls on certain parts of the earth it is heavy or difficult to digest; whereas if it falls on certain other parts, it is light and easily digestible.

Thus, the waters of the earth show differences, whereas there are no varieties or differences in the water of the sky. There is one-ness. Dharma resembles water of the sky; there is no distinction anywhere. The vision of the religion, in the form of experience of spiritual joy, is one only; but after the touches of sects, there enters the pervertedness (or pollution) of 'Thine' and 'Mine'. So one should be careful against it.

Religion is not meant to be 'locked up' within the narrow walls, nor it is to be dumped in a pool. If we allow it to be flowed down freely as a river, the religion in the form of unpolluted water will be possible. It will, then, quench 'the thirst of religion' of the people of each and every sect and in this way, there will be welfare of countless people.

We give different names to the waters of ponds, wells, large well with steps or lakes, such as water of so-and-so particular well. But these are all easy arrangements done for the preservation of waters at different places and in a limited way. In the waters of all those places (reservoirs) the water-ness is the same. The water of the sky is independent and pours incessantly. What name can we give to it ? Similar is the case of religiousness. We have to catch it in the form of dew.

Muni Amar, journeying for a religious cause, reached one village. He was in search of a place worthy for a night-halt. One priest in charge of an Ashram said to him, "Go to the rest-house

for the Jains, nearby.” The monk reached that rest-house and asked the manager-in-charge about his staying for a night. He replied, “There is no room for a Sadhu belonging to the Sthanakwasi sect.” So the monk went on for another place. He saw one hut situated in a solitary, secluded place, the door of which was closed. Muni asked (loudly) from outside, “Wishing for a night-halt; is there any room ?” Opening the said door, one saint emerged and gave him a welcome. The monk says, “That saint opened the door not only of the hut, but the doors of mind also.”

The sectarian rigidity or narrowness closes the doors of magnanimity and friendly feelings. The Saint said, “Your Honour ! There is no other thing except a little milk, would you like to take it ?”

The Muni replied, “A Jain Sadhu might not take anything after sun-set; and I have already taken up the nectar of your love and affection.”

It is necessary to separate religion and sect. So far as there is a religion living in it, not one, but thousands of sects even are a boon to mankind. When a particular sect neglects real ‘religion’, it (the sect) begins to be stale like a pool of water. That is the reason why the seers and the wise men called the sect a ‘body’ and religion a ‘soul’. After the soul leaves the body, it (the body) begins to rot. So we bid farewell to it by lighting a fire on the pyre. A sect or a creed is not important; the soul is important.

If we get entangled in the quarrels and controversies inspired by the sects or creeds, we shall be led astray from the righteous path. And if we long for the spirit of the soul or soulness, no matter to which sect or creed, ‘gachcha’ or a

viewpoint we belong to, we shall be able to tread on the royal road of reaching the soul.

Keeping constantly in mind the humane religion our subjective thoughts, religious observance or Sadhanā, and having equal love for all religions, if the worships get merged in such equality, it will be instrumental in the welfare of the self as well as that of others.



Equal Respect for all Religions

Religion has got a very important place in human life. There would hardly be any country where one or other kind of religion might not be observed. Human life without religion is inconceivable. The freedom, which a man of present day of a scientific age, points out in justification of his being an atheist, is not really speaking a freedom or a novelty and the true support it has not procured. So he is used to speak out in helplessness :

As is rightly sung by the poet Sundaram :-

*“Even though all gardens of the world w’d dry,
And the lamps of Sun and Moon are put out,
But not the longings of our hearts for you,
could ever stop o’ Rama ! Thou, only Thou.”*

Thus, man’s search for Dharma or for God is a perennial search. As per the saying ‘Sadhana’s name multitudinous’, there are different ways to get God. From such half-baked, incomplete one-sided and rigid beliefs that any one particular religion is the best and all other religions in comparison to that are weak, conflicts between one religion and another religion, revenge-

opposition, terrible quarrels and in summation, lack of peace for mankind has arisen.

No religion of the world is opposed to perennial values of life, the supermost moral rules, truth and non-violence; yes, it cannot be. The ultimate goal of any religion is surely to remove the faults in men, and removing darkness, enhancing the glory of virtues, and to ensure development of virtues and the removal of darkness. By instigating inertness, blind faith, fanaticism and religious fanaticism or Jihad in the name of religion and thus by making human life on earth a miserable one, nobody would get happiness. Religion is, after all, a holy thing and since many ages, Dharma is busy doing the best activity of public welfare in different individualistic manner. It is Dharma which has provided support, maintenance and search for truth. At different times, the founders of religion and religious teachers have undergone unlimited sufferings for the cause of leading the mankind to the right path – they have sacrificed a lot of things.

The most essential need of the present age is equal respectful love for religions, tolerance of all religions, rather than synthesis of all religions and tolerance of other religions. The meaning of synthesis of religions is the synthesis of nice virtues. The chief aim of this synthesis is to see how men can be noble, and how can they be human in true sense. In the concept of tolerance of all religions, there lies the mentality to welcome all religions in the form of external tolerance as well as generosity, in their wide sense. But equal respectful love for all religions (Sarva Dharma Sambhav) does expect from us a special feeling for any particular religion and to have generosity and broadness of mind, even mentally. In order that this expectation may be fulfilled, we will have to make study of all religions liberally, with equal respect and with honour; and at the end of that study,

the butter in the sense of morale which will be available to us, will make our understanding of religions perfect and will make 'religious' in the real sense of the word. And what is more, sectarian narrowmindedness and the ideal of one world religion will see the 'light of the day'.

Nobody takes birth only after selecting particular religion, as if holding a Swayamvar (Assembly for choosing a husband) as it were; but after inheriting a particular religion of the family, one should not have a false egoistic pride that 'only my religion is the best and the religions of others are not so'. Only by teaching equal respect for all religions can one defeat or disqualify false pride referred to above. The root-cause of sectarian hatred and envious mentalities is lack of knowledge and pride. When a feeling of respect for other religions arises, the truth lying within will be known, revenge-opposition complexes will calm down and we will have the right vision.

Bhagwan Mahavir has stated in the epitome (Sutra) of 'Sootrakrutang Sutra' that, "Those who admire their own cherished beliefs only and either censure or condemn the true words of others, and envy others, (such people) they have to live and undergo the cycles of births and deaths." One meaning of Mahavir's Anekantvad is to be construed also as 'compromising or synthesising' or examining the other point-of-view, having a liberal outlook and accepting it. One will have broadmindedness as a result of giving 'equal respect for all religions' and it will be beneficial.

While doing 'darshan' of the idol of Lord Shiva at Somnath Patan, Acharya Hemchandracharya had said, "Worshipping by me doesn't have any connection or concern with any 'name' as such; but it is concerned with the great virtue of the renunciation of infatuation or love. Name of the object of worship

may be anything – it may be Shankar, Brahma, Vishnu or Jineshwar !”

Anandghanji also speaks in the same way. “There may be differences of vessels as many as you like ! but the material – the origin is only one – clay; in the same way, there may be as many names of God as you like – Rama–Raheem, Krishna–Kareem ! But really, all of them are incarnations of virtues.”

The religion or Mazhab teaches lessons of unity, peace and good deeds in the society. They propagate principles of truth, non-violence, justice and love; in the sectarian quarrels, or secularism, these virtues themselves are covered down. No religion tells us to fight. In Islam Dharma, it is said that each and every human being is the son of Khuda or God. You will not find, anywhere, such references that people of only some religions are the sons of Khuda and the rest are not. According to Islam religion, there are one lakh and twenty four thousand prophets (or messengers of God) and each of them has been deputed by God in each community and each country. Not only that, but the noble sentiment which tells that Muhommad Paigambar Saheb and these prophets are one and the same – this sentiment commands respect.

The seeds of synthesizing or compromising lie intact in all the religions; what is needed is only to visualize it by cultivating liberal outlook. Dharma should be always present to become an instrument of unity. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said, “All of us welcome the significance of all religions. In our sub-continent no persuasion or insistence of any kind is attempted. In fact, in all religions, the element of compromising is more, and that of opposing is less.” In the Vedas also, it is asserted that truth is one, but the learned exponents who know it, describe it in different names.

It is clearly expressed in the Bhagwad Geeta that “Everyone should follow his own religion; and should allow others to follow their own religions. For each, his own religion is beneficent.” If the truth of these words is realised, it will be the most obliging factor in cultivating equal respect for all religions.

Santbalji has said, “Allowing each religion to occupy its own scheduled place and we want to lay foundation of love and faith between them – not the uniformity in external form but unity in the respective forms of those religions. We desire to abolish the feelings of revenge-opposition consequent to the inequality and diversity between different religions – and this we want to do with the help of equal respect and love for all religions and by worshipping our own religions.

Gandhiji, by striving for generating the feelings of equal respect and love for all religions, has opened the way of becoming a preacher for world religion. To a person of whatsoever country, caste, garb or a religion, he used to give solutions after measuring them with the scale of ‘Dharma’. People of all religions came to Gandhiji. On one side of the site, prayers were being offered and on the other side of the same, there might be the Namaj being performed ! As a part of prayers, Gandhiji used to get even the ‘Āyatas of Kuran’ recited. He used to say that the moral stories of Kuran are different from those of the Geeta. In all, there is the same kind of teachings. Gandhiji used to tell everyone that, “Your religion is neither different from nor superior to, the other’s religion. If you cultivate respect for all religions, there will not arise any problem pertaining to, or in the name of, Dharma.

As a matter of fact, all religions are good, beneficial and for a nice support for the peace of every man in the world; and only because of the defects of its followers, one can’t label it as a bad religion. By inculcating the feeling of ‘equal respect

for all religions' a freindship amongst all religions will be forged. He will regard all religions as his own one. The emotions of anger, passion, or fanaticism were never considered as constituents of a religion. No religion has believed them as valid. If anyone gives free hand to wild beast-like, violent instincts, the responsibility for it cannot be laid on the shoulders of religion. If the realistic holy nature of Dharma is understood, how many difficulties will be removed !!

Dr. Radhakrishnan has said, "To be secular or non-sectarian can never be construed as being illiterate from the point of view of religion. To cultivate spiritualism, leaving aside the fundamentalistic, sectarian narrowmindedness is the real meaning of being secular." Deep, solid spiritualism and religious tolerance and 'equal respect and love for all religions' will be possible to exist. For other animals, it is not possible at all to lead a religious life; only for mankind, it is possible. The man who leads a religious life keeping in mind this speciality or uniqueness of human beings, (he) can be free from the instincts of fear and aggressiveness and can live the best possible kind of life. Religion makes man fearless.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave who put in non-stop activities to give real and idolized form to the thoughts and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, has put forward an all-pervading and simple contemplation in the subject of 'equal respect and love for all religions' (or what is called secularism). He has very rightly maintained that religion is not at all meant to create feelings of revenge and enmity or opposition and quarrelling between one person and another. Dharma means peace and tolerance, as well as liberal outlook towards other theorists, and the readiness to accept good and holy things available from whichever quarters. If we have such readiness, the bickerings between one individual

and another or between religions, get automatically calmed down, and a right direction to secure human happiness.

With a view to assembling and uniting all religions, Gandhiji had initiated prayers of all religions (to respect them) everyday. Picking up a little from all the religions, these prayers were conducted. A religious feeling is the special characteristic of man; and this religious feeling is always in the form of intuition, as it were arising from within. The word 'Dharma' is so vast and wide that I have not till today found any similar word in any language, entailing all shades of meaning, covered by this word. Dharma is our four-fold friend. It does the work of a friend with respect to our individual, social, material and 'other-worldly' life. In this context, a synthesis of all religions is a 'must', and for this purpose, there should be a synthetic study of the main scriptures of all religions. Truly speaking, the books which we regard as 'scriptures' are not found to consist of fully and purely religious ideals. Even the great sacred books have some such parts which, if we put them to a modern test would not be accepted as religious ideas or good thoughts. Hence our inclination should be to learn the morale of it."

The above thoughts are those of Saint Vinoba Bhave from the speeches given by him at the time of his "Bhudan movement" to east Pakistan and at the time of 'Kashmir Yatra'. It does not require proof to assert that St. Vinobaji was the exponent of synthesis of all religions and the feeling of equal respect.

Dharma is an everlasting friend and companion of mankind. Dharma makes human being "a man". In other words, if one wants to live like a man religion would be an inevitable thing. It is said in Manusmruti, "Dharma protects that man, who protects Dharma." In this way the humaneness in man is safeguarded by Dharma. Moreover, keeping in mind that religion has contributed

greatly to preserving the unity and stability of the nation, the author of Mahabharata has called Dharma "the supporting pillar of public life". A religious life should not be confined simply to either temple or a mosque, nor to religious rituals only. But it should be ingrained into man's total personality and practical dealings. Dr. Radhakrishnan has said, "Religion is not a particular belief, or a particular feeling or a ritual; but it is ever changing life. Man's religiousness is not tested by his intellectual beliefs, but by his character and his attitudes. We recognise a man not by seeing his views but by the fruits or results of his views."

Knowledge, devotion, non-attachment and morality are the four organs of a religious life, as declared by Sri Sahajanand Swami, of Swaminarayan Sect. In the words of Bhagwan Mahavir, Ahimsa (or non-violence), self-control and penance are the three base-pillars of Dharma. In fact, the ultimate aim of all religions is to make man better and more virtuous. Dharma should properly be a factor in maintaining the unity of human society. By means of the feelings of "equal respect and love for all religions", this task can be done in the best way.

Let the following well-known prayer as composed by respected Santbaalji be the medium of welfare, auspicious and the bliss-provider for mankind and it is the only correct religious feeling :-

*"May all be happy in all the way.
Let all the men behave balanced way
May the divinity everywhere spread
and let the peace extend far and wide."
Aum ! peace : peace : peace : !!*



Prayers for seven days for the devotees of 'all religions'

Note : In order that the devotees of all religions may have the memory of the founders of various religions, Muni Santbaaljee has composed some prayers, reminding them afresh of the respective founder on the day concerned :-

(1) Somvar (Monday) – Rama

Renounced power as holy duty, who gave nice ideals; and saved women, beasts, low castes, with knowledge and bravery. Observed perfectly the vow of Monogamy; firm in life. May we pray such Rama, who was known all over India.

(2) Mangalvar (Tuesday) – Mahāveer

Who bore poison of Chandakas and served them nector. When touched by young ladies, served 'love of children' holy from God.

Even though nails pierced ears, Mahaveer remained calm. Gajsukumar tried burns on head, didn't a bit, lose temper.

Pray God I be such firm, fearless, loving, cool yet brave and ask forgive humbly at the feet of God devoid of love-hatred.

(3) Budhvar (Wednesday) – Buddha

Renouncing revenge to all animals, and had compassionate heart,

Seeing the sights of disease, old age and death, left son, wealth and wife;

Leaving infatuation, illusion who adopted recluse life,

Lord Buddha of middle path, pray accept our salutations.

(4) Guruvar (Thursday) – Krishna

Cherished poise, efficiency, renouncing attachment to fruits
Challenging injustice, set glory of justice;
Recited the Geeta in Kurukshetra, beneficial to all beings
May I submit to Yogi Krishna, to sacrifice life, at his holy
feet.

(5) Shukravar (Friday) – Muhommad Saheb

Heaven resides in the feet of Motherland, free the slaves,
Forget money's interest, be quick to help in human miseries;
Having brotherly feeling, be trusted friend of all,
Bear in mind this advice of Hazrat Muhommad Paigambar.

(6) Shanivar (Saturday) – Asho Jarthrusta

Put off weapons on same stage, let all nations be one,
Learning lessons of Patriotism and goal be of world
peace !



गणेश वन्दना

* वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटिसमप्रभ ।
निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

Meaning :-

वक्रतुण्ड - curved trunk; महाकाय - large bodied; सूर्यकोटि - million suns; समप्रभ - with the brilliance of; निर्विघ्नं - free of obstacles; कुरु - make; मे - my; देव - Lord; सर्वकार्येषु - in all work; सर्वदा - always

O Lord Ganesha of large body, curved trunk, with the brilliance of a million suns, please make all my work free of obstacles - always.

लक्ष्मी स्तुति

* पद्मासने स्थिते देवि, परब्रह्मस्वरूपिणी ।
सर्वदुःख हरे देवि, महालक्ष्मी नमोऽस्तुते ॥

Meaning :-

My salutations to Devi Mahalaxmi who, sitting in the lotus posture, of the nature of Truth, is the destroyer of all sorrows.

सरस्वती वन्दना

* या कुन्देन्दु तुषारहार धवला या शुभ्र वस्त्रावृता ।
या वीणा वर दण्ड मण्डितकरा या श्वेत पद्मासना ॥
या ब्रह्माच्युत शङ्कर प्रभृतिभिः देवैः सदा वन्दिता ।
सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निःशेष जाड्यापहा ॥

Meaning :-

या - who; कुन्द - white jasmine flower; इन्दु - moon; तुषार - frost, dew; हार - garland; धवला - white and pure; शुभ्र - white and radiant; वस्त्रा - clothes; आवृता - adorned with; वीणा - Veena; वर - beautiful; दण्ड - arm; मण्डित - adorned; करा - palm; श्वेत - white; पद्मासना - lotus throne; ब्रह्मा - Brahma; अच्युत - Lord Vishnu; शंकर - Lord Sankara; प्रभृतिभिः - beginning from; देवैः - by the Lords; सदा - always; वन्दिता - respected; सा - she (That); मां - me; पातु - protect; सरस्वती - Saraswati; भगवती - Goddess; निःशेष - without any remnant; जाड्य - Lazy; आपहा - remove.

May Goddess Saraswati, who is fair like the Jasmine coloured moon and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops, who is adorned with radiant white clothes and on whose beautiful palm and arm rests the Veena, whose throne is a white lotus, and who is surrounded and respected by Gods beginning with Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahesh, protect me. I beseech her to totally remove my laziness and sluggishness.

गुरु स्तोत्रम्

* गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Meaning :-

Prostrations to the Teacher who is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha. He alone is the Supreme Reality.

* त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव,
त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव,
त्वमेव सर्वं मम देव देव ॥

Meaning :-

You alone are my mother, father, brother and companion. You alone are Knowledge and Prosperity. O Lord, you mean everything to me.

गायत्री मन्त्रम्

* ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Meaning :-

ॐ – Om. symbol of the Para Brahman; भू – Bhu-Lok (Physical Plane); भुवः – Antariksha-Lok (Astral Plane); स्वः – Svarga-Lok; तत् – That, Transcendent Reality i.e. Paramatman; सवितुः – Sun i.e. Pratyaksha Narayan, Isvara or Creator (as we cannot see God with our mortal eyes); वरेण्यम् – worthy of choosing for worship and adoration; भर्गः – remover of sins and ignorance; bestower of glory and effulgence; देवस्य – resplendent (Jnana-Svarupa) shining; धीमहि – we meditate (with intelligence); धियः – totality of Buddhi and understanding; यः – which (who); नः – our (to entire Universe); प्रचोदयात् – enlighten, guide, impel (forceful existence of darkness in its totality)

We meditate on that Isvara's (i.e. Pratyaksha Narayan's Symbol i.e. Sun) glory who has created the Universe; who is fit to be worshipped; who is the embodiment of Knowledge and Light, who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May He illuminate (enlighten) our (entire universe's) intellects.

प्रातः वन्दना

Early morning (on getting up)

* कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मीः करमूले सरस्वती ।
करमध्ये तु गोविन्दः प्रभाते करदर्शनम् ॥

Meaning :-

कर - palm (complete); अग्रे - at the tips (of all the fingers);
वसते - resides; लक्ष्मीः - Lakshmi - Goddess of Prosperity; कर
- palm; मूले - at the base of; सरस्वती - Saraswati - Goddess
of Knowledge; मध्ये - centre; तु - indeed; गोविन्दः - Govinda
- Lord Krishna, Controller of Senses; प्रभाते - in the morning;
कर - palm; दर्शनम् - see with reverence

On the tips of the fingers resides Goddess Lakshmi,
On the wrist resides goddess Saraswati,
In the centre of the palm resides Lord Govinda Himself,
Every morning one should look at the palm with reverence.

Sikh Prayers

* ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ
ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲਮੂਰਤਿ
ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਜਪ ॥

The Only Infinite One,
The Only Supreme Being (God),
The Eternal,
The Universal Spirit,
The Creator,
The All-Pervading,
The Sovereign,
The Harmonious,
The Immortal,
The Embodiment,
The Unincarnated,
The Self-Existent,
The Enlightener,
The Bountiful.

Mul Mantra

* आदि सचु जुगादि सत्तु ।
है भी सचु नानक होसी भी सत्तु ॥

He was Eternal before time was born, He was
Eternal when time began to run its course, He is
even now Eternal, and He will be Eternal for all
times to come.

- Japji Sahib

A Buddhist Prayer

When someone is wronged, he must put
aside all resentment and say,

“My mind shall not be disturbed;
no angry word shall escape my lips;
I will remain kind and friendly,
with loving thoughts
and no secret spite.”

A Muslim Prayer

The Daybreak
Revealed at Mecca
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficient,
The Merciful

Say : I seek refuge in the Lord on Daybreak from
the wrath of that which He created. From the evil
of darkness when it is intense. And from the evil
of malignant witchcraft. And from the evil of the
envier when he envieth.

A Zoroastrian Prayer

To think a good thought, to speak a good word, to
do a good deed is good. It is the best thing; it is
ever-lasting happiness; ever-lasting happiness comes
to him who is virtuous for the sake of virtue, which
is best.

– *Zend Avesta*

Baha'i Prayers

Thou seest, O Lord our
suppliant hands lifted up
towards the heaven of Thy
favour and bounty. Grant
that they may be filled with
the treasures of Thy
munificence and bountiful
favours. Forgive us, and our
fathers and our mothers, and
fulfil whatsoever we have
desired from the ocean of
Thy grace and Divine
generosity. Accept,
O Beloved of our hearts, all
our works in Thy path. Thou
art, verily, the Most Powerful,
the Most Exalted, the
Incomparable, the One, the
Forgiving, the Gracious.

— *Baha'u'llah*

Vishwavatsalya – Self-contemplation

*Dharma amaro ek matra e “Sarva Dharma Seva” Karvi,
Dhyey amarun chhe vatsalta vishwamahin ene bharvi;
“Sakal Jagatni bani janeta vatsalta sahuman redun”
e j bhavanana anuyayi banvanun sahune tedun. 1
Natjatna bhed amone lesh nathi kai abhadata,
Desh-veshna shishtacharo vikas mate nahi nadta;
Nirbhay banine janmalni parwa kadie nav karie,
Am malikini vastuno mudh swarth pan pariharie. 2
Brahmcharyani jyot jagavi satya prabhune mandiria,
Jagsevane anch n ave e vyavsayo acharie;
Sadgun stuti karie sahuni nindathi nyaran rahie,
Vyasano tajie sadgun sajie taptip khoti tajie. 3
Khavun, pivun, harvun, farvun, suvun, jagvun ne vadvun,
Sarva kriyao kartan pahelan pap vikarothi darvun,
Chhatan thay gafalat je kai te kshama magi halvan thaie,
Sarva kshetraman rahie to pan atmbhan nahi vismarie. 4*

– Munishri Santbaaljee

In this poem of prayer, the invincibility of a Mother's love is eulogised and is stated that the only religion of ours is “Service to all religions”. Let me act a mother to all the worldly beings, pour such love on all, and without having any distinctions of caste, creed or a country, leave all selfish desires, observe celibacy and pursue such professions as do not harm others. Let us be free from all vices and addictedness; and may we have cautions or fear while eating, drinking, moving about, etc. etc. If erred, ask for forgiveness and be unburdened. With all these, may we not forget to get the consciousness of the self !

Universal Prayer

*Om Tatsat Shri Narayan tun, Purushottam Guru tun,
Siddha buddha tun, Skand Vinayak, Savita Pavak tun.
Brahm Majad tun, Adhya Shakti tun, Eshu Pita Prabhu tun,
Rudra Vishnu tun, Ram Krishna tun, Rahim Tao tun.
Vir Prabhu tun, Atmatej tun, Sahjanandi tun,
Vasudev Go-vishwarup tun, Chidanand Hari tun.
Adwitiya tun, Akal Nirbhay Atmaling Shiv tun,
Om Tatsat, Shri Narayan tun, Purushottam Guru tun.*

This prayer contains sense of one-ness among all gods and prophets. Lord Narayan, Lord Buddha, Christ, Krishna, Rahim, Tao, Sahajanand, Vasudev, unparalleled Akal, Lord Shiva and of course the Guru are all same with their own individuality.

Thus, in this short poem, the 'essential unity of world religions' is brought forth.

REBAPTISM

(Christianity of Amish Population)

HISTORY :

A great reformer in Religion named Martin Luther rebelled against Roman Catholic Church in Europe in the year 1517 A.D. After some years, this rebellion turned into more vigorous form in the Zurich area of Switzerland. Here, Rebels formed an Association. Normally, in Christianity, "Baptism" (Educational Refinements of faith in Religion propagated by Jesus Christ), starts at the age of childhood. The newly formed Reformist Association of Zurich presented a strong opinion of their view that this process of Baptism should commence only at The Age of maturity of a person and that too with his/her full awareness (consciousness) and consent. Accordingly, they commenced REBAPTISM process, at the matured age. First such event of REBAPTISM took place in a small house of Zurich on 21st January 1525 AD. Therefore, this REBAPTISM prevailed extensively and increasingly over the years. These activities were on rise in Switzerland, Germany and certain areas of Netherland. The conservatives, holding Power and authority in Church (Religious Place) termed these reformists as ANABAPTISTS OR REBAPTIZERS. According to the then prevailing belief of Christianity of that Age, Ignoring (overlooking) of the FIRST BAPTISM by forces of REBAPTISM amounts to the CONTEMPT OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Thus, REBAPTISM becomes a CRIME AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. According to prevalent practice of that age/Era, this offence (Crime) attracted CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

As per this tradition, the first martyr of the Revolutionary faith was awarded punishment of Death by Drowning him into the water and it was implemented in the year 1527 AD.

Subsequently, Thenafter for few decades martyrs were subjected to the death punishment by way of Drowning, Poisoning, throwing them alive to flames or killing them with sword edge. Despite all these, the trend of Neo Baptism did not reduce, on the contrary, it was on rise. These REBAPTISTS were of The Belief that the super power of Christianity are not the Authorities of Church but BIBLE, and these Authorities have no right to interpret BIBLE Arbitrarily.

Even after violent attack of conservative Christians, reformers did not budged even an inch from their bonafied belief. They continued their protest with all their love & calmness. During the period from 1635 AD to 1645 AD, there was excessive increase of torture on them at Switzerland. Hence a group of REBAPTISTS migrated from Switzerland to "ALSAKE" region of France, and settled there. With passage of time, there was some sort of difference of opinion among two groups of REBAPTISTS, Those who migrated to France and settled there and the one who continued to stay at Switzerland. Thus, it resulted in two sections forming separation.

Those REBAPTISTS, who shifted to France and settled there, were under the leadership of one Mr. JACOB AMMANN and hence they were known as "AMEESH" and the others who continued to stay at Switzerland as REBAPTISTS were identified as "MONANITES". There is no major difference between these two groups of REBAPTISTS. MONONITES nationals, as compared to "AAMEESH" nationals, are to an extent more reformist.

Both these nationals were subjected to immense torture of high degree. Ultimately, they were left with no alternative but to leave their motherland just to retain their BAPTIST tradition. Both these nationals have settled in America. Shifting from Europe.

Mononites came to America in 1683 AD. And their first colony was formed in Philadelphia region of Pennsylvania state. AAMEESH nationals left their motherland in 1737 AD and had a voyage of 83 days in sea in a ship named "CHARMING NATSE" and reached AMERICA. They too had an initial stay at Philadelphia.

These AAMEESH people settled in Philadelphia, migrated, in different groups, during the period ranging from 1760 AD to 1880 AD to "LECESTER" region of Pennsylvania state. Their first permanent colony was established in this region. Even to day they have their big colony here. They have converted their land measuring 946 square miles into "FARM HEAVEN". The people of this region call this area "GARDEN OF EARTH". These Aameesh people are HARD LABOURERS nationals, and they have made this region Farm Heaven just with the Arm Strength.

AAMEESH COLONIES :

Among "Aameesh" population, there is a Live Legacy of Joint family system, which is continued in a nice way. There is never an event that occurs whereby old parents are driven out to take shelter in "Orphanage" for old & destitutes (Asylum). Aameesh people mostly stay in their own colonies only. Each Aameesh sect has their own field (farm) and asylum for cow and milch animals, and they stay (reside) in their own farm. A district is formed of many such families called "CHURCH DISTRICT". Generally each church District is Congregation of 25-35 families. When number of families increase, a district is bifurcated in two "CHURCH DISTRICTS". A colony consists of many such districts. This is also called settlement. In America, there are many such colonies of Aameesh People.

The population of Conservative Aameesh people is estimated at one lac and fifty thousand. These Aameesh population stays (is settled) in 22 different states of America as also in Ontario state of Canada. Of these, 70% of the population is settled in three states of America Viz "Indiana", "Pensylvania", and "Ohio". This entire Aameesh population is settled in total 900 Church District. The largest of their colony is the Aameesh colony of Ohio. In this colony, 110 Church District and about 7000 families are settled. Lancaster Region of Pensylvania also consist of a very large colony of Aameesh. There are about 100 Church Districts over there.

There is also a Loose Federation consisting 1,50,000 human population divided in 15000 families, 900 Church Districts and 200 colonies.

Living quite contrary to flow of present times, population of these Aameesh sect is increasing in leaps & bounds. In the last century their population has increased 13 times.

CENTRE OF AAMEESH LIFE STYLE :-

There is one very special centre of Aameesh Culture, Aameesh Life Style and Aameesh line of thinking. Entire Aameesh life style is set up around this centre. The centre is GE LASS EN HE IT !

"GE LASS EN HE IT" is a German word. This word has many reflectional meaning. Central and prime meaning is DEVOTIONAL OFFERING (SACRIFICE) TO GOD (ALMIGHTY) SUPER SOUL ! OBEDIENCE, DEVOTIONAL ATTACHMENT (INVOLVEMENT) WITH GOD. SELFLESSNESS, HUMILITY, SIMPLICITY, CALMNESS, BENEVOLENCE, SOCIAL LEANING and such other noble ideals are blossoming from this centralized substance.

Centre of Aameesh Public life is GOD & FAITH (RELIGION). They consider individual secondary to society, which is prime. Aameesh Children & Youth are obedient to seniors (parents & / or guardians) and elderly persons.

Aameesh children are trained from the very childhood (very young age) not to give importance to self but to Faith, Community (Society) and Family. Aameesh children and people seldom use. The term 'I' or "MINE". Even in the staunch individualistic country like America, Aameesh population is living a life that is known as "Mass centred and NOT the one of SELF-CENTERED. How all these could have become possible ? These are all a possible reality just because the Aameesh People have sincerely accepted the GE LASS EN HE IT as a Centre Point of their Life. (TOTAL DEVOTIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIVINITY) In other words, it may be called Acceptance of Sacrificial offering to the ALMIGHTY).

The Language, Style of talking, Dress Code, Occupation, Relationship with individual and society. Religious Rituals, Diet, Simple & Straight forward style of living - all these have at their central base, an element which is formed and known as, GE LASS EN HE IT.

Through this substantial element only, these handful of people, these great national public, could retain their own cultural heritage and lifestyle of their own unique ideology despite staying in totally different and adverse time, alien country and cross current of reverse direction.

Aameesh Children, from the very infancy, are fed with a valuable and precious word. The very word is being used as a "WATCHWORD" (MOTTO) in the schools. This unique precious

**J = means JESUS (GOD JESUS) IS PRIME
(SUPREME) (UPPER MOST)**

**0 = means OTHERS (ELSE) - ARE SECONDARY
(THEREAFTER)**

**Y = means YOU = are the Last One.
(REARMOST)**

Keeping Almighty GOD in fore front, immediately thereafter “Others” and to keep “Self” last of all is an unique technique of its kind, its own lifestyle. The word Joy is not merely a terminological unit - composition of letters but an woven substance of Aameesh Way of Life. Aameesh Schools would provide education coinciding with Aameesh faith, culture and life Style.

AAMEESH POPULATION OF AMERICA (2)

7. FAITH (RELIGION) :-

Aameesh people are basically Christians, and that too staunch and Real Christians. They consider BIBLE as their Basic Sacred Book and Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Nevertheless, Aameesh People do not follow Roman Catholic Church nor they accept the Pope as their Religious leader. Protestant tradition has many branches. Aameesh people are not connected with any of them. They have their own separate Aameesh Christian Tradition, and they live according to it.

Aameesh people, with a view to retain their faith (Religion), have left their motherland (native place) and arrived and settled

here in America. Therefore, their own Religious tradition is their life. Aameesh people can renounce anything but their own Religious Tradition, and life style based on it. They are in no way prepared to leave it under any circumstances.

Aameesh people firmly believe that faith (Religion) and Life are not different to each other i.e. they are inseparable. For them, entire life itself is part & parcel of Religion spread in it. For Aameesh people, Action (conduct), Regular Studies, Social life, Family Life, Daily lifestyle on Routine Pattern, Education, Rearing of Children, Occupation, Inter Action with outer world and relationship, etc. are having at their base Religion and exclusively Religion.

As already said and noticed earlier, Aameesh Religion & Life is having, as a substantial Centrepoin, GE LASS EN HE IT. Their similar other centre is "ORDNUNG". This is unwritten but Live Scripture of Practising the Life of Aameesh Population. This is a CODE OF CONDUCT for Aameesh People. This CODE OF CONDUCT Document, is having, at its base, for its preparation, only "Dedication to Almighty" which has its continuous existence throughout at all times.

According to Aameesh tradition, no one (person) is an Aameesh, in its real sense, right from his birth only. One becomes true Aameesh only after adoption of BAPTISM undergoing required process, as prescribed. According to Aameesh Tradition, BAPTISM cannot occur at young age (MINOR). When a child/minor attains majority and becomes Adult, and when he himself is desirous of adopting BAPTISM with proper understanding and accept to adopt Aameesh lifestyle / code of conduct and prepares himself by his choice for BAPTISM, then only one is considered to be BAPTIST in true and real sense of the term.

Generally, in normal course BAPTISM is set during the age span of 16-21 years. There is a tradition called "RUMSCHPRINGEN" IN Aameesh population. It means RUNNING AROUND i.e. Movement in all directions. According to this tradition, a Youngman of the age of 16, till the time, his BAPTISM materializes, can mix up with American Society outside, in the interim period, and know, see and experience the American life himself. During this period, he himself can make choice and decide whether he wants to accept or not Aameesh way of living and Religious tradition thereof. In case he opts to accept outside America life instead of Aameesh way of life, he is free to do so. But, once he decides otherwise (i.e. not accepting Aameesh way of life) he is deemed to have been outstaded from Aameesh society. But, if he willingly decides to adopt Aameesh way of life and Religious Tradition, in that case, his parents together with Priests jointly decide the date and time to adopt BAPTISM.

Before accepting and adopting BAPTISM, A Youngman or woman has to undergo Religious Training for a period preceding five months of acceptance/adoption. In course of their five months, Aameesh Priests explain to them intecracy of America Religion, Aameesh way of living and about BAPTISM at length. They also explain their importance.

Ultimately the day of Rituals for BAPTISM arises in the presence of Parents, relatives, neighbours and vast group of friends, Priests perform the ritual and get BAPTISM adopted by the person concerned. In course of procedure. A Youngman or woman solemnly swears in Three OATHS VIZ :

- (1) I shall be under the commands of GOD & CHURCH.
- (2) I shall remain faithful to Jesus Chbrist & his church throughout my life.
- (3) I accept JESUS CHRIST as a SON OF GOD.

After this BAPTISM the concerned Youngman or woman becomes Real Aameesh. In this way, after becoming in true sense, they become committed to lead life according to Aameesh way and Religious tradition of Aameesh. But if Aameesh man/woman violates Aameesh lifestyle & religious Tradition, then he/she is made resident for a period of six weeks temporarily. During this period of six weeks, if he realizes his mistake and accept it. then he is let out with Warning and his lapse is condoned and forgiven. But if improvement does not take place and serious lapses are committed frequently, they are viewed seriously and the person concerned is outsted from the group of Aameesh.

What, If any person from other society wish to become Aameesh ? Doors are not closed for such person. Nevertheless, admission is not that easy as well. Persons desirous to make entry into Aameesh family are required to stay among Aameesh Group for a long time. After that only if both the party agrees and find it proper, BAPTISM process is undergone and ultimately admitted to Aameesh group. Thus, doors of Entrance & Exit are not closed at Aameesh group but they are definitely difficult !

Aameesh church have their Bishops and priests (Ministers) of their own, But there is no separate Building for church. For Aameesh people, their home itself is church. All Aameesh people of church assemble at one particular family's home every alternate Sunday and there itself arrange mass prayers, Devotional Songs, and other rituals in presence of Priests. Their Day Lunch is being arranged by the family hosting them.

Holy Bible is a must in every Aameesh family and in fact it is there, and its daily reading, studies is a part of routine life.

In the event of any dispute or difference of opinion with Government or any other N.G.Os, with a view to help Aameesh people a NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AAMEESH RELIGIOUS FREEDOM has been formed.

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Gunvantbhai hails from the Khambha town in Amreli District of Gujarat. After a few years of practice, as a C.A., he is now owning a Textile processing industry.

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ARHAM SPIRITUAL CENTRE

Saurashtra Kesari Pranguru Jain Philosophical & Literary Research Centre

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

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

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


Wishing your co-operation : Gunvant Barvalia (Trustee)

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GLIMPSES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

(SARVA DHARMA DARSHAN)

- Hinduism
- Jainism
- Buddhism
- Islam Religion
- Shikh Religion
- Christianity
- Zoroastrian
- Tao Religion
- Judaism
- Shinto Religion
- Confucius Religion