

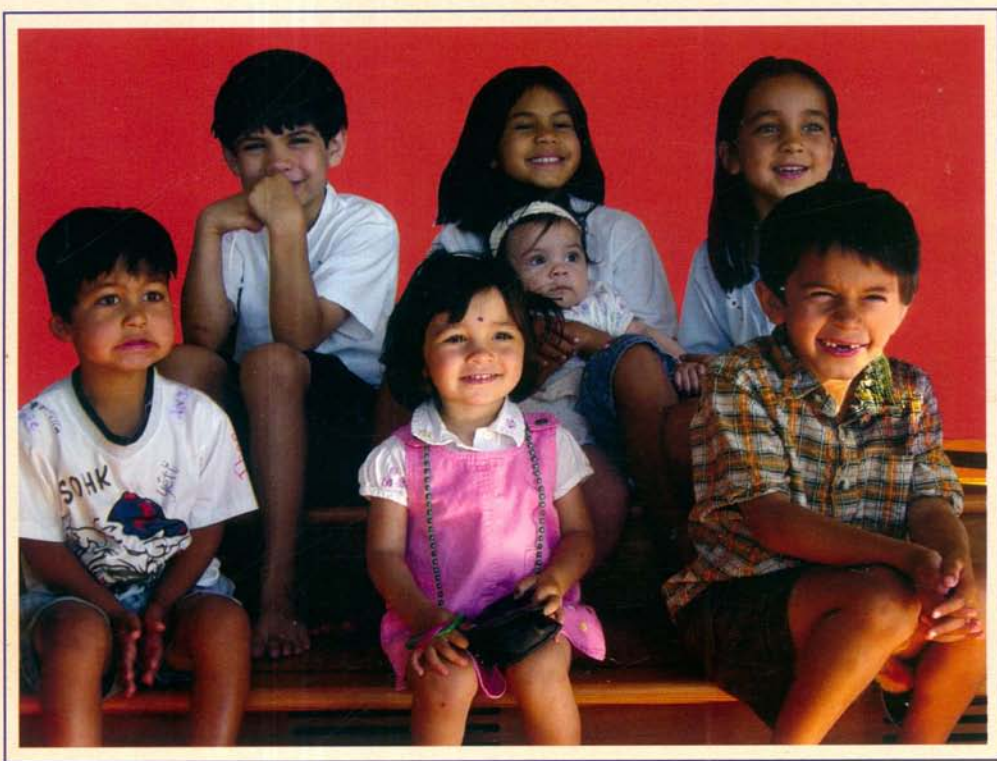
Jainism and the New Spirituality

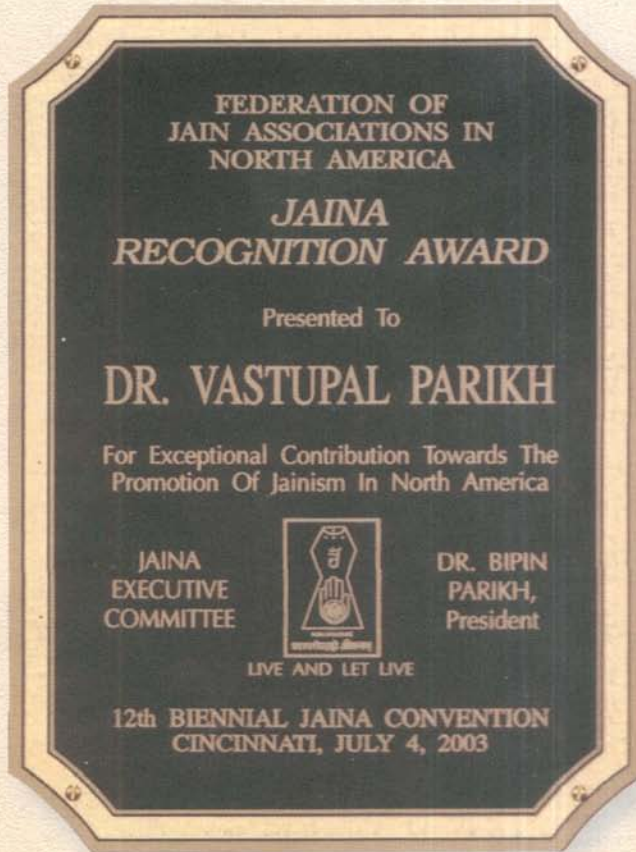


2nd Edition
Revised and Expanded

Vastupal Parikh, Ph.D.

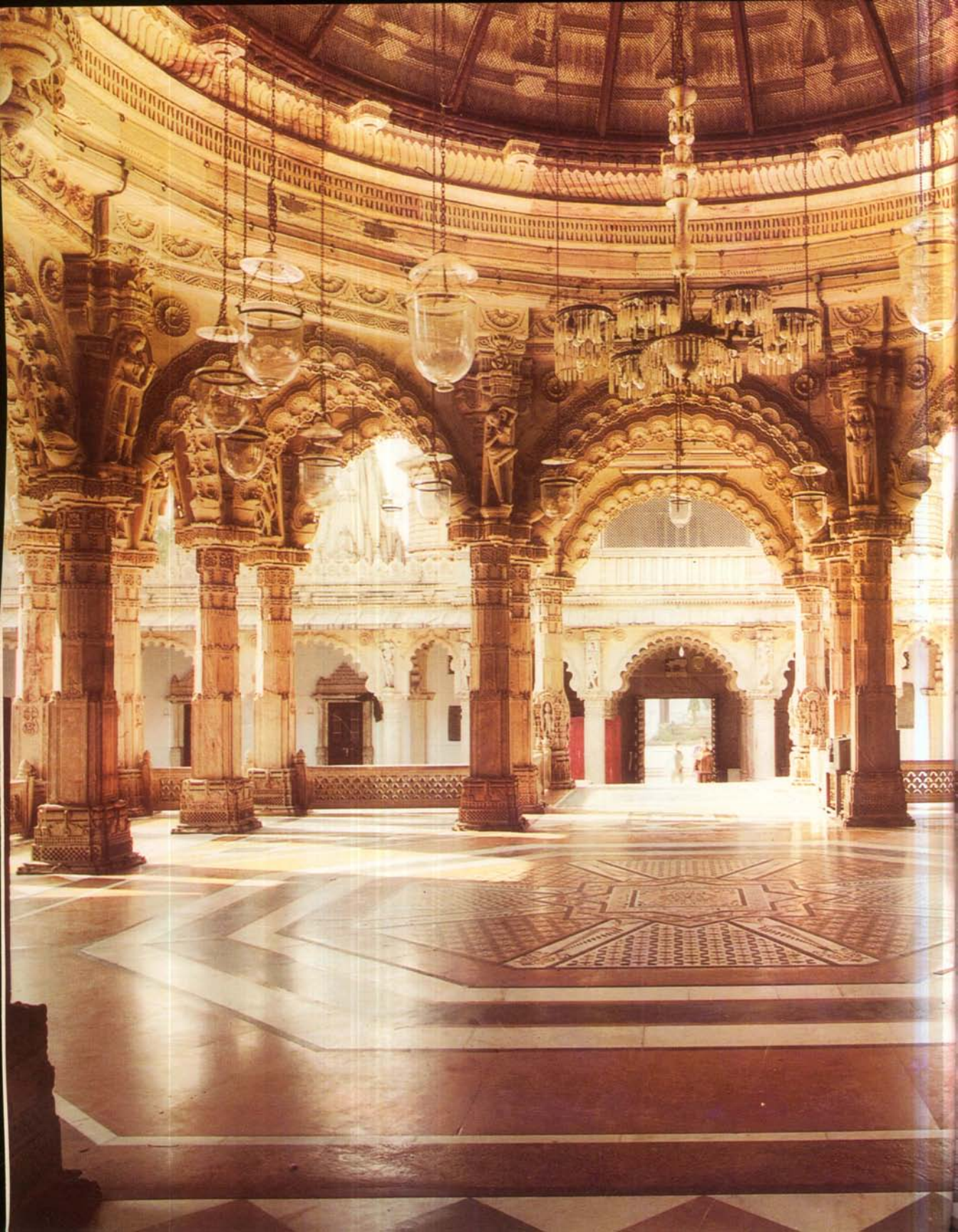
Dedicated to their future:





On 4th of July 2003, JAINA the leading Jain Association of North America honored Dr. Vastupal Parikh by their prestigious 'Recognition Award' for this book. We sincerely thank JAINA and are grateful for the Award.

- Publishers





JAINISM
AND THE
NEW
SPIRITUALITY
Second Edition

Vastupal Parikh, Ph. D.

Peace Publications
Toronto, Canada



Digambaras idols of Tirthankaras are unadorned and in the mediating position.



Svetambara idols of Tirthankara are adorned as kings, often with crowns

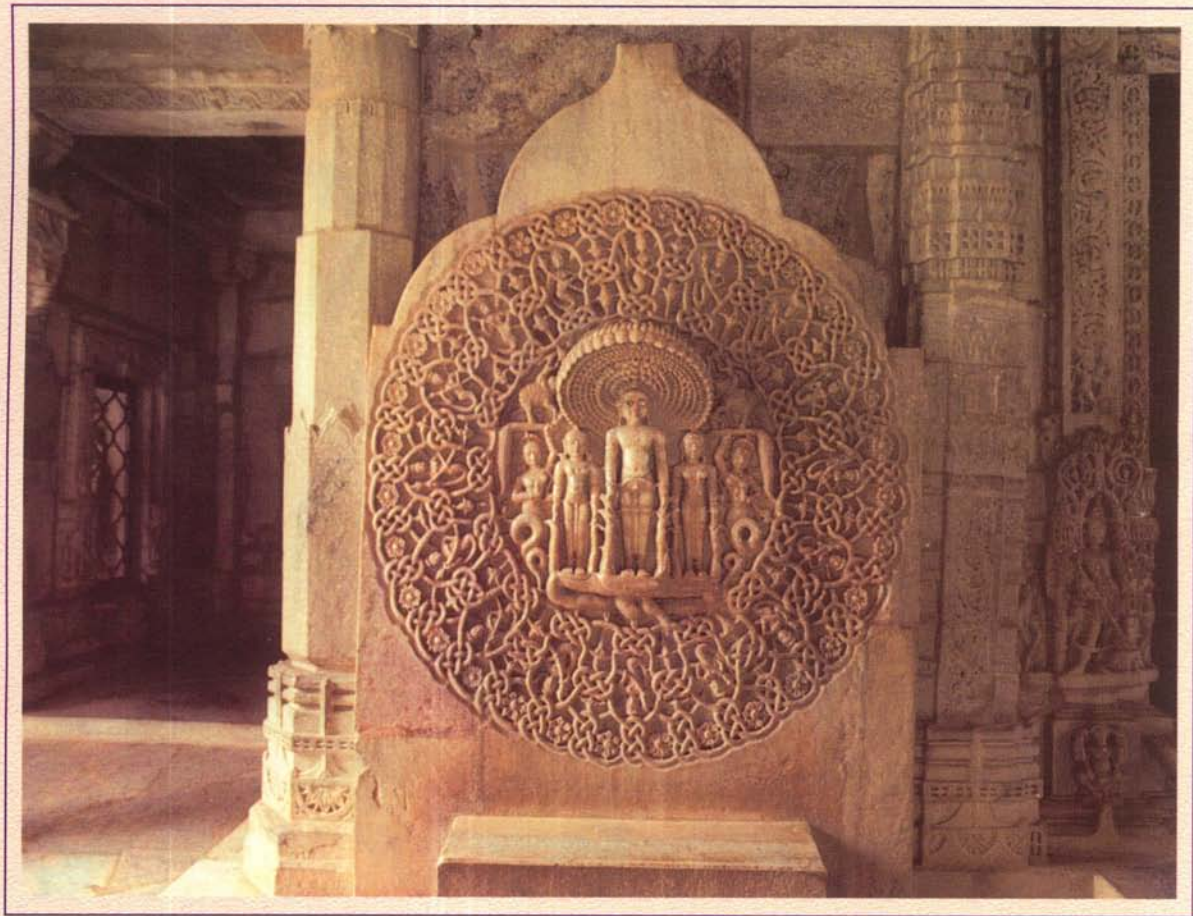


Table of Contents

Preface	3
1. Introduction: One Person's Journey	7
Section I. The Rational Lifestyle (samyak-charitra)	13
2. Awakening	15
3. To Be A Jain	23
4. The Jain Path	33
5. The Jain Lifestyle and Contemporary Life	39
Section II. Rational Worldview (samyak-darsana)	45
6. The Reality	47
7. The Roots of the Jain World-vision	61
8. Nine Operating Principles of the Spiritual Universe.	71
9. Karma	83
Section III. Rational Knowledge (samyak-jnana)	93
10. Rational Knowledge	95
11. The Avenues of Knowledge	101
Section IV. Contemporary Issues	109
12. The Contemporary Thinker	111
13. The New Spirituality	121
14. The Science	131
15. Global Peace.	137
16. Nonviolence and Vegetarianism	143
17. An Action Plan	151

JAINISM, AND THE NEW SPIRITUALITY

Section V. History and Literature	163
18. Jainism Before Mahavira	165
19. Post-Mahavira Jainism	177
20. The Sacred Literature	203
Bibliography	211
Glossary of Terms Used	215

Preface

Jainism is an ancient religion but also has a great deal of relevance for the modern societies. I find its emphasis on rationality, nonviolence, simple living, and openness to differing ideologies to be both appealing and contemporary. When I reflect on the 20th century's record of world wars, the Holocaust, unsustainable growth, environmental degradation, and nuclear weapons, I ask, "What does the new century hold? Is it going to be a repeat of the past? Will we ever have peace and serenity?" Will ecological issues continue to haunt us? Jainism offers me a rationale for optimism for a future - a future built on peace, mutuality, community, and trust.

For most people modernity represents an age of logic and reason, not of dogma and 'blind faith.' With the advent of modern educational systems, we tend to be reluctant to accept any statement that lacks logical support. We seek rational explanations for many of the concepts that past generations mostly accepted on mere faith. Such blind faith has been largely undermined through modern systems of inquiry. Jainism, on the other hand, offers a different perspective on these questions of faith in relationship to modernity. Jainism is a unique spiritual system, which insists that its practitioners must always question 'blind religious faith.' In other words, ancient Jain philosophers did not require a 'leap of faith.' On the contrary, they applied logic and rationality to satisfy their quest for spirituality. I would suggest within this context that Jainism's classical approach to spirituality is what the world could use to satisfy the spiritual needs of the 21st century. I think that the Jain system of personal commitment to peace and ecological stewardship and its emphasis on rationality holds out a promise for the construction of a more sustainable way of life rooted in justice, hope, and equity.

Many Western theologians and scholars view the modern trend - 'away from dogma or faith and towards reason and rationality' - with great concern. This alarm is evident in Houston Smith's *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*.¹

A defining feature of modernity is loss of transcendence. The sense of the sacred has declined. Phrases like "the death of God" and "eclipse of God" would have been inconceivable in early days... the chief assailant has been modern science.

¹ Smith, Houston, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, The Crossroads Publishing Company, New York, 1992, p. 145.

-Furthermore, as early as 1979 Edward Norman said in *Christianity and World Order*:²

There is no doubt that into developed societies education has contributed to the decline of religious belief.

I believe that such statements are simply the panic reactions to the current turmoil and confusion created by the crumbling of old power structures. They imply that the contemporary mind is no longer interested in spiritual values and that science and education somehow must be blamed for the loss of spirituality. In reality, the spiritual quest is well and alive, and a wonderful pattern of global spirituality is emerging. Its focus is shifting from the old spirituality, based on dogma and orthodoxy, to a new spirituality based on logic and reason. This new spirituality is not necessarily emanating out of the temples, mosques, and churches of the world. It is growing out of the grass-roots movements of the streets, cities, and forests, and is manifesting itself in the form of human rights, animal rights, pacifist movements, and environmental concerns. The high priests of the new spirituality are today's activists. Many organized religions are now responding to this shift by de-emphasizing the rituals and obedience to authority and are tending to highlight love, justice, mutuality, and human rights as a means to spirituality. While such a change in focus is desirable, the old power struggle between institutional religions and the sciences - a struggle that ushered in an era of human rights - is not easily forgotten. The late astro-physicist Carl Sagan³ suggested that:

A religion old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the universe as revealed by modern science, might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths.

In other words, modern spirituality is neither mere faith nor pure materialism. This revitalized spirituality draws forth the "reserves of reverence and awe," because it is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. It blends 'faith' with 'logic' and casts a critical eye on the relationship between humans and all other living beings. It not only stresses the magnificence of, but also the means of, preserving our universe. Above all, it addresses the nexus of individual behavior and global peace.

My spiritual journey began within this new spiritual framework - a framework that took me to Jainism. I found that a possible answer to the 21st century's quest for spirituality lies within the Jain philosophy. Jainism blends an experience-based worldview of the universe as reality with a soul-based spirituality. It incorporates a rational cause and effect-based theory of *karma* with a code of conduct that reveres

² Norman, Edward, *Christianity and the World Order*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979.

³ Sagan, Carl, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future*, Random House, Canada, 1994.

all life. It promotes peace by focusing on transforming personal behavior, and promotes living in harmony with mother nature by showing a practical path to simple, non-confrontational lifestyle.

Jainism, and the New Spirituality is an attempt to explain how Jainism has managed to root its faith in logic and how concepts formulated in an ancient tradition can be applied to a modern quest for spirituality. The format used in this book is that of personal narrative, rather than a heavy philosophical treatise. I hope that such a narrative will make interesting reading not only for scholars but also for those students who are interested in a religious spirituality that is particularly compatible with our modern 'era of logic.'

Chapter 1 begins with my personal quest for spirituality. This quest, combined with my concern for the social and ecological issues, and global injustices of the 20th century, took me to the Jain literature. The arguments provided in these texts drew me deeper into the rich Jain tradition. Frankly, this journey has been an amazing one filled with surprises, discoveries, and excitement, as well as with periods of internal peace. What follows is an attempt to share these experiences.

I have grouped the remaining chapters into five sections. The first three sections detail the Jain lifestyle, worldview, and knowledge (*samyak-charitra*, *samyak-darsana*, and *samyak-jnana*) respectively.*

Section I deals with the core principles of Jain conduct, the path Jains follow to live up to these principles, and their struggle for personal perfection and tangible rewards.

Section II explores the worldview and the philosophy that guides the Jain lifestyle. Logic and knowledge form the foundations of the Jain worldview. Therefore, Jain philosophers have written volumes that discuss the theory of knowledge and the mechanism through which we gain knowledge.

Section III offers a brief summary of the voluminous work by these scholar-monks and their discussions on the topic of 'knowledge.' These three sections provide an overview of the Jain principles and practices, and serve as the background information for the effective application of these principles to contemporary global issues. Anyone - whether a Jain or non-Jain - actively involved in attempting to resolve current issues such as violence, war, poverty, globalization, fundamentalism, etc. would benefit from this overview.

* I have intentionally changed the traditional order to make Jainism easily accessible to a novice.

Section IV is an attempt to reflect on the principles and practices of Jainism in light of the contemporary 21st century mindset. This section deals with topics such as the new spirituality, nonviolence, peace, vegetarianism, environment, and science. Jains inherit a magnificent philosophy of *Ahimsa*, *Anekantavada*, and *Aparigraha*. These doctrines have enormous potential to alleviate some of the pressing issues of the 21st century. In this section I urge Jains in all walks of life to become proactive in finding viable solutions to these issues. I believe that Jains owe this to the rest of the world, and in doing so, they could bring back the lost glory of Jainism.

Admittedly, some readers may find such reflections somewhat nontraditional and therefore controversial. Nevertheless, I offer these in the typical Jain spirit of *anekantavada* (multiple viewpoints) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence). My intention is simply to stimulate thinking and to promote activism in the Jain community. Should my comments offend you, I ask for your pardon in a traditional Jain style, “*michhami dukkadam*.”

Section V explores the history of Jainism and Jain sacred literature. Unfortunately, the written records of ancient Indian periods are scarce. As in many of our oldest civilizations, much of the varied and rich history of India has been captured in a detailed oral tradition. The history of Jainism is therefore a combination of Jain beliefs and extant texts, references cited in early Buddhist and Hindu literature, and the work done by the Westerners in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Conclusions drawn from such wide sources can be very confusing because of incomplete information and misinterpretations. Fortunately, recent archaeological research by Western scientists in Northwest India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan provides a more concise picture of early Jain history. In this section, I draw largely from this contemporary research. It contradicts much of the misinformation presented in earlier history books, and confirms parts of Jain tradition and scriptural information. I humbly request that this must not be construed in any way as an attempt to negate yet unproven Jain beliefs about their past or to undermine Jain-Hindu synergy. Rather, my intention is to encourage an active and ongoing inquiry into the Jain history.

Vastupal Parikh

November 2007

1. Introduction: One Person's Journey

My spiritual journey into Jainism began earnestly in Canada in early 1960s. At that time, I was teaching chemistry at a university in Canada. One day a professor from the Religious Studies department in my University asked me to speak to her class on Jainism. She had heard that I was a Jain and a vegetarian. She was also intrigued by my unusual sensitivity to the plight of plants and animals, and by my rather unusual reverence for the ecosystem around me. By the North American norms of the mid-1960s, this was an 'odd behavior.' To me however, this was simply the way I was raised.

The invitation to speak on Jainism gave me an opportunity to explore the philosophical and ethical basis of my own lifestyle. Until then I had never read anything on Jainism. In other words, I had very little understanding of the religious principles that had shaped my life. Indeed, with my scientific, logic-based education, I was a skeptic as far as any religion was concerned. Therefore, it was within a context of a scientist's curiosity, skepticism, and critical analysis that I tackled my first book on Jainism.⁴ To my great surprise however, this book was a treat for the logical and analytical mind of a scientist!

The book was an 11th century commentary on a 2nd century text on Jain principles and practices. Nowhere in the text was there a demand for blind faith, a promise of mercy for the faithful, or a threat to the infidel; nor was there any assertion of a singular truth. Instead, this text warned against accepting anything as a gospel. Its advice was to treat human understanding of Reality, regardless of its emotional appeal, as only a partial and relative truth.

⁴ *Dravya Sangraha* by Nemichandra Siddhantdeva, ca. 11th Century A.D., English translation by S.C. Ghoshal (1917), republished in 1956 by Delhi Jain Samaj, New Delhi, India.

It maintained that 'Absolute Truth' is beyond human comprehension. It was a reasoned, logical appeal to the intellect, insisting that readers should accept only those arguments that meet their highest intellectual and critical scrutiny. To me this sounded like a two thousand year-old affirmation of modern scientific thinking. This 2nd century philosophical treatise helped me to understand the basis for much of my behavior and world-view.

I learned that like all great religions, Jainism is also about liberation of the soul, and that many thousands of years ago *Tirthankara* Rikhava (later called Rishabha) showed us a path to liberation. Rikhava observed that every living being suffers; but when *jiva* (the soul) leaves the body, the dead body no longer experiences suffering. He concluded therefore, that it is not the body but something called *jiva* within the body that experiences pleasure and pain. All suffering results from the *jiva's* entrapment in the material body. Every activity (karma) of the entrapped *jiva* traps it even more in a cycle of repeated death and birth. However, every soul has the potential to liberate itself from this painful cycle, and attain a pure state (*moksha*) in which the soul establishes its omniscience, omnipotence, and enjoys eternal bliss. He taught that one could reach *moksha* by winning complete victory over oneself, i.e. over one's emotions, passions, desires, and weaknesses. One can gain such a victory by practicing self-discipline through meditation, inquiry, and austerity. Jains believe that Rikhava himself achieved *moksha*, and regard him as their first *Jina* -- one who achieved total victory over the self. He advised that *moksha* is the ultimate goal for every soul and that all humans should try to reach this goal.

Jains have absorbed his message and follow his code of conduct even today. The book explains how a set of principles form the basis for this code of conduct. The book begins by saluting the Jain masters for revealing that everything in the universe is either *jiva* (the soul, spirit) that embodies bliss, energy, and infinite consciousness - or *ajiva*, which refers to all that is non-living. In fact, *ajiva* is a group term referring to five non-living elements namely matter, space, time, the medium of motion, and the medium of rest. Thus, together with *jiva* there are these six fundamental and eternal elements of the universe. All living beings, for example, are souls (*jiva*) entrapped in a material (*ajiva*) body, a result of the interaction between these two. *Jiva* and *ajiva* can neither be created nor destroyed. They are eternal, but mutual interaction can change their forms. It is this understanding of the nature of the universe that underpins all Jain philosophy.

With terms like matter, energy, time, and space, and with discussions of motion, inertia and their interactions, this book reads more like a 20th century scientific treatise than an ancient religious scripture. It discusses the principles, which govern the interactions between the six fundamental elements. These principles, such as the *Principle of Karma* (the law of cause and effect), are the "operating principles" of the universe! According to the Jains, this then is how the universe works. I had to read the book repeatedly; and each time its scientific insights awed me.

The text goes on to summarize the central themes governing the Jain code of conduct as *nonviolence* (not hurting other souls), *non-absolutism* (exploring and respecting many-sided viewpoints), and, *non-possession* (limiting one's material possessions). In addition, it offers the philosophical supposition that life in any form, shape, or size has a soul that is essentially the same, whether it exists in a human being, animal, or plant. That soul unit not only sustains every life but also is eternal and potentially blissful, omniscient, and omnipotent. Since all living beings are potentially the same entrapped souls, every life - whether human, plant, or animal -- must be preserved, respected, and revered. This Jain concept that soul is the essential element of all forms of life has strengthened the autonomy of every living being and made nonviolence, or *ahimsa*, the central Jain doctrine. Here, finally, I found the basis for my own vegetarianism explained.

Beyond prescribing nonviolence, this Jain text also advocates practices of inquiry and asceticism. This Jain promotion

of inquiry through non-absolutism resonated most with my choice to become a scientist. Reading almost like a contemporary lesson in post-Modernism, the text states that according to the principles of non-absolutism or *anekantavada*, all knowledge (except omniscience) is only one viewpoint, and thus only a partial truth. The basis of this Jain doctrine is that only the liberated soul (omniscient) is capable of perceiving absolute truth, and in the entrapped state, all of us are affected by our own biases or perceptions. The doctrine of *anekantavada* does not suggest that we should accept every viewpoint as valid, nor does it allow outright rejection of differing viewpoints without exploring and examining them as holistically as possible. It encourages Jains to be patient and respectful of their adversaries. Upon careful examination, if we find a differing viewpoint unacceptable, the doctrine encourages us to explain why we find it so. Thus, non-absolutism strengthens the autonomy of thought of every individual and promotes investigation as a means of broadening one's knowledge, understanding, exploration of truth, and peaceful resolution of potential conflicts. Here, then, was a basis not only for understanding a scientific mind, but also for finding hope for some of the gravest issues plaguing our planet. Non-absolutism is a tool to ensure against dogmatism -- which, to my mind, is the root cause of many human conflicts.

The days that followed my professor friend's request launched me on the path of a personal spiritual quest. It awakened me to the issues of the day such as the

TERMS TO REMEMBER

📁 <i>Ahimsa</i>	Doctrine of non-hurting, non-killing
📁 <i>Ajiva</i>	Non-living
📁 <i>Anekantvada</i>	Doctrine of Multiple viewpoints
📁 <i>Aparigraha</i>	Doctrine of Limiting possession
📁 <i>Jina</i>	One who has achieved total victory over the self
📁 <i>Jiva</i>	Soul, infinite consciousness energy and bliss
📁 <i>Tirthankara</i>	Liberated one who shows path to liberation

environment, the conflict in Vietnam, flower power, and the dropping out of the 'rat-race.' It also helped to create in me an awareness that the world was warming up to the messages of peace, nonviolence, racial equality, and human dignity. The modern world was now questioning the morality of 'blind faith' in the name of nationalism, religion, or ideology, and I was finding these 'modern' issues addressed prophetically in the old Jain scriptures.

For example, the Jain doctrine of limiting one's possessions (*aparigraha*) helped me to understand the environmental consciousness I had observed within the Jain community. This doctrine asks Jains to limit their possessions and to live harmoniously in a state of interdependence with all in the ecosystem. As early as 600 BCE, Mahavira, one of the last liberated teachers (*Tirthankaras*) of Jainism, outlined the *aparigraha* doctrine as follows:

*One whose mind is at peace and who is free from passions does not desire to live at the expense of others. He who understands the nature of sin against earth, water, air, fire, plants, and animals is a true sage and understands karma. For, all these elements are truly alive (possess soul energy) and those who harm them, harm themselves by bonding their souls firmly with non-liberating karma.*⁵

By choosing to live humbly, we free our mind from the ever-nagging desire of wanting more, greed, and jealousy. It allows us to live in harmony with nature through nonviolence by limiting our impact on the environment and demand for material goods. In the consumerist atmosphere of the early 1960s, vegetarianism and living humbly in harmony with nature may have seemed odd, but it appears that now there is a greater appreciation of this lifestyle. Although the world still knows very little about Jainism, more people are encountering the Jain way of living. The West is realizing that Jains believe in nonviolence towards all beings, show unusual sensitivity towards the plight of plants and animals, and treat the ecosystem with reverence. They are beginning to understand that this is a philosophy of mutual respect and peace. It is no longer an odd belief to the Westerners!

Twenty-six hundred years ago, Mahavira, (the last of 24 *Tirthankaras*) preached that practicing Rikhava's principles of nonviolence, non-absolutism, and non-possession was the path to personal peace. In the years since I began my personal journey into Jainism, I have realized that this philosophy has an even greater and more inclusive relevance in that it can offer a path to global peace. The world has changed much since Mahavira's time. Technological innovations in travel, communications, trade, industry, and investment patterns have created a 'global village' and heightened an awareness of the interdependence of all world citizens.

⁵ Mahavira quoted in the *Acharang-sutra*, ca. 600 BCE

Nevertheless, deadly acts of war, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation are threatening to destroy our planet in the 21st century. There was a time when only soldiers fought wars, but now violence has come to every doorstep. Every citizen of almost every country is now living under some kind of threat because incidents such as genocides, brutal murders, suicide bombings, and violence on school and college campuses are reported in the newspapers almost daily. Our minds are increasingly becoming numb and insensitive to violence.

We consider ourselves to be a very intelligent species. Our ingenuity has conceived and built several systems constituting family, social, religious, political, economic and industrial networks. Our success in these endeavors has brought us tremendous material achievements. Humans have built homes and palaces to live in, towns and cities for shelter; and roads, cars, trains, ships, and airplanes for transportation. But along the way, development in the name of survival has changed to development as a way to “have” more -- to fulfill a seemingly insatiable greed.

Humans have exploited the oceans and streams for fish, land for nature's mineral resources, and forests for vast quantities of timber. The slaughter of fish and wildlife has become entertainment. No other species kills other living beings just for fun or the pleasure of the palate, and none soils its own nest. Our machines and factories have created still more wealth. So successful has been human inventive genius that soon he even invented an omnipotent God and started fantasizing God to be in his image.

Such fantasy might have been acceptable but for the terrible record of human species. No other species has developed weapons of mass murder and accepted genocide, religious and ideological wars, empire building, colonization, and subjugation. Yet, here too, human genius is at work! We invented even a devil to absolve ourselves of all our evil acts and to whom we can assign blame. Man is an intelligent genius indeed!

Little do we understand that no one else but our self is responsible for our acts... that the devil and the God are both within us! Our soul, if pure, is godly but we also harbor the devil in the form of our passions (*kashayas*) such as ego, greed, lust, anger, jealousy, self-righteousness, power hunger, etc. Tirthankaras tell us that if we eliminate our *kashayas* and liberate our mindset from this devil, our soul will be free and the godliness is ours! The *Tirthankaras* preached a set of principles to prepare us for a path to gradually eliminate the *kashayas*. Its theoretical construct is founded on liberating the human mind from its dependence on an external imaginary God or devil, and empowering it to shape its own destiny. It is our mindset that keeps the soul imprisoned, and we need a fundamental change in our mind-set to be able to free

JAINISM, AND THE NEW SPIRITUALITY

ourselves and our planet from the devil. Its basic message is “All living beings are, in essence, impure souls trapped in a continuous cycle of rebirth and death due to their own doing (karma), and have the potential to liberate themselves. Humans in particular have the ability to liberate their soul by their own actions if they so choose. We are the masters of our destiny and can expel the devil within us to achieve the divine state of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence.” In this sense, I believe that Jainism is more of a psychological system to overcome human weaknesses, than a religion.

I have realized that Jain principles and practices could bring about a massive change in our individual and collective mindsets. Such a global change could provide potential solutions to the bleak issues facing our planet. In such solutions, there is hope! This hope has made me pro-active - not to proselytize Jainism - but to promote its values for the betterment of our world. Jains have lived by these values for several millennia. Now, is the time to inform the rest of the world about these values! Death and destruction by wars, bigotry, and greed has taken a heavy toll on the humanity and on our planet during the 20th century. However, a new concept of spirituality, defined in terms of humanity and environmental awareness, is thankfully emerging around the world, and the Jains can help usher the new spirituality.

Jain values offer excellent tools for promoting the new spirituality. Jains need to work with other faiths, and use these tools to resolve the problems facing our world. In doing so they can truly live up to their principles, help the world, and regain the lost glory of their ancient religion.

Jains may not be actively seeking converts to their religion, but they certainly do hope that sooner than later, the world will adopt their principles of *Ahimsa*, *Anekatarada* and *Aparigraha* as a template for all human values. Jains should consider becoming proactive in promoting their values. In so doing, they will help all to realize the promise of a peaceful 21st century.

Section



**Section I. The Rational
Lifestyle**
(samyak-charitra)

SECTION PREVIEW

The Jain path to salvation depends essentially on our rational behavior aimed at purifying our soul. The key elements in rational behavior or rational conduct are respect for all living beings, respect for all viewpoints, and minimizing wants and possessions. These require self-control and discipline because our emotions tend to work against these three.

Jain masters have devised a code of conduct and have charted a path to help us achieve self-control. They suggest that this path would lead us to absolute self-control. Progress along the path is gradual and requires a goal-focused lifestyle and daily practice. In other words, one must find the goal, understand it, study it, and choose a rational lifestyle to help achieve the goal through disciplined, daily practice. Section 1 explains how this can be achieved through rational lifestyle or Rational Conduct (samyak-charitra)

Finding the goal means 'to awaken' to the Reality and to understand the rationality of it. Chapter 2 deals with these two issues. Once the goal is fixed, progress towards it depends upon our determination. Jain masters suggest that a series of pledges or vows would fortify our resolve to achieve the goal and remain focused on it. Practicing these vows, as a routine not only helps us gain self-control but also reduces the stress associated with it. Chapter 3 explains the introductory vows for the beginners to progress along the path to liberation. Chapter 4 explains the path. It illustrates that there are many steps to climb and many stages to pass through before we are able to reach the goal. The Jain path recommends an austere, ascetic, and demanding lifestyle but the ultimate goal is well worth it.

In chapter 5, we look at the practical benefits of this lifestyle. Not everyone would want to or be capable of living a rigorous life. Nevertheless, the practical benefits we can accrue in the terms of our mental and physical health by following Jain practices even in a less rigorous manner are well worth the attempt. Furthermore, the survival of this planet may well depend upon how seriously the world takes the Jain practices of minimizing violence and material possessions. I urge that, at least for this practical reason, the world needs to understand and adopt a rational lifestyle.

2. Awakening

I had just finished my talk on nonviolence at a peace conference when a young member of the audience asked, “How does one become a Jain? Do I go to some Jain priest and ask him to enlist me in to Jainism? Do I have to visit a Jain temple regularly? Do I attend regular religious services?”

So, how does one become a Jain? I had never given much thought to this question. Am I a Jain just because I am born one? Would I still be Jain even if I never went to a Jain temple? What would my status be if I never studied anything about Jainism or never attended a Jain sermon? What would it mean if I took up hunting and fishing as sport? If I ate meat, would I still be a Jain? Can we take a particular religion to be our birthright?

“Everyone here is interested in peace and nonviolence. Does that mean that they all are Jains?” the young person said, putting me on the spot. “Just being interested is not enough. Lifestyle, conduct, one’s goal, and the path one follows to achieve that goal are the key,” I replied. In effect, I was telling him that anyone could be Jain by adopting its lifestyle, regardless of culture or birth. However, simply adopting a particular lifestyle is not enough. We cannot achieve a rational lifestyle (*samyak-charitra*) in the Jain sense of the word without having faith in its philosophical system. Its philosophy is a rational world-vision (*samyak-darsana*) demanding the fortification of faith by rational knowledge (*samyak-jnana*). After all, any religion is a belief system, but Jainism stresses a belief system based on logical inquiry and knowledge.

Sociologists suggest that education weakens the dogmatic religious entrapments that keep us in a particular faith. Education encourages us to be rational and knowledgeable in choosing our faith. Jainism also has the same message. It states that the key elements in the Jain life style are respecting all living beings, respecting all

viewpoints, and minimizing wants and possessions. If these three resonate with our values, we can adopt the lay Jain lifestyle. However, we then must understand the Jain worldview and fortify our faith in it through critical and rational study. Formal baptism or enlisting into a Jain congregation is not required. Still, we all need some support system - particularly when changes in lifestyle and goals are involved. Jain places of worship, meeting-places, temples, Jain scholars, and monks can provide us with the moral support, inspiration, knowledge, and understanding needed to keep our newfound faith. Frequent visits to such places and congregations nurture a sense of belonging to the community and can encourage our progress along the spiritual path. Formal initiation comes only if we choose to be a monk or a nun. A formal welcome then awaits us - not only into Jainism - but also into the order of the ascetics that we may have chosen for guidance.

To be a Jain does not necessarily require a Jain birth or an induction into the Jain fold by a priest (unless one wants to be a monk or nun). Anyone who is awakened to *samyak-drsti* (rational understanding) and decides to follow its specified path to reach the goal is a Jain. What then is this goal and what path must one follow to reach it? The Jain goal, like that of all human beings, is simply to attain an ultimate state of everlasting happiness - perfect bliss. How does one define happiness?

Happiness

A gathering of young high school students asked me the same question but in a different context. In response, I asked, "What would make you most happy?" Here are some of their immediate answers:

<i>Power</i>	<i>Good Job</i>	<i>Millions of Dollars</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>Good health</i>	<i>Getting high on Drugs</i>
<i>Cars</i>	<i>Big House</i>	<i>Becoming Famous</i>

I countered by asking a few more questions: "Does that make the world's most powerful person, the president of the United States, the happiest person on earth?" "Are billionaires always happy?" "What happens when you are no longer 'high' on drugs or alcohol? How long would that happiness last?"

I think they got the point! They realized that permanent happiness is beyond these temporary physical pleasures, and the external things do not necessarily make one happy. They understood that there is something within the body, which experiences joy and happiness. Some call it spirit, soul, life force, or *atman*. Jains say it is *jiva*. Perhaps, the realization that there is a soul or *jiva* within everybody was the beginning of the 'awakening' for these students.

Jains believe that we may experience temporary joy and happiness but cannot be

permanently happy as long as our *jiva** remains trapped within the body. Does death release *jiva* from this imprisonment? Jains do not think so. They believe that at death the *jiva* simply transmigrates and takes rebirth. It remains bonded and entrapped in the cycle of rebirth and death until it is liberated. Infinite bliss is the basic quality of the liberated soul only. Therefore, every soul longs to be liberated to regain bliss. Until then, *samsara* (the cycle of birth and death) is an unhappy and painful state. Jains believe that liberation of their *jiva* should be the ultimate goal of human life. Such goal is achievable through the Jain path of self - purification.

Before Awakening

The Jain path to liberation is a fourteen-stage (*gunasthana*) spiritual development (page19). Jains believe that the awakening occurs at the fourth stage. The first stage is a state of delusion, misconceptions, and aimless drifting. We are unaware that there is a way out of our misery. Our mind has a definite dislike and repulsion to truth and Reality; we have absolutely no idea of the true reasons for our misery and suffering, and we are not even ready to seek out or listen to any advice in these matters. Therefore, we remain entrapped. When this attitude changes, the dislike turns into indifference towards Reality. Often, even after getting an opportunity to understand Reality, we fail to seize the opportunity. This is the second stage in our spiritual progress. At the third stage, the desire to know more about Reality is still not there, but for a few fleeting moments, we become curious about the nature of truth and Reality. In these fleeting moments, our intuition is mixed up with delusion and error, but we are curious about our spiritual progress.

At this point, if we do not sustain our curiosity with an effort to discover truth, we may slip back into the second stage, and 'awakening' escapes us. This third stage is similar to early dawn when one just wakes up, becomes barely aware of light, and slips back into the darkness of sleep. It is not a real awakening. Those at this stage are likely to refuse to acknowledge that they encountered a glimpse of Reality and of the path leading towards its realization. Unable to look critically upon their lives and behavior, people in this stage doubt their ability to control destiny, and thus continue to be in the cycle of eternal suffering in *samsara* (cycle of reincarnation).

The Awakening

The real awakening occurs at the fourth stage. Why and how does it happen? Jains have an explanation for this in their *Theory of Karma*. We will study it later. For now,

* Details in Chapter 6. The Western or even Hindu concept of soul is not the same as *jiva*. *Jiva* is not a part of some divine force that remerges with the whole. *Jiva* is an entity with its own unique qualities and characteristics. Consciousness and bliss are some of its characteristics. There are infinite numbers of individual *jivas*, each imprisoned in a body until liberated. Each retains its identity, both in liberated as well as in the non-liberated states. For the convenience of the reader, however, we will continue to use the words soul and *jiva* interchangeably.

let us see what happens when we reach the fourth stage. Are we suddenly different when we reach the fourth stage (*avirati gunasthana*)? The awakening certainly brings about changes in an individual but they are gradual and internal.

Our journey on the path to liberation begins at the very moment when we realize that life has an ultimate goal - that of liberation. We then emerge from the depths of delusion and entrapment (first stage of *mithya-drsti* - incorrect view of Reality) and are at the fourth stage (*avirati*) of our spiritual progress. Jains call this the stage of awakening, (*samyak-drsti*) or rational understanding. Awakening may occur through intuition, study, and contemplation, or simply through an accidental event in our life. We may then begin to wonder about questions such as who am I? What is life? Is this universe real? Who made it? What is the purpose of my life? Why am I happy or unhappy? Our sustained curiosity and faith in such an awakening then launches us on the path towards liberation. Progress from the fourth to the sixth stage is like climbing an eleven-step ladder (*pratima*, page 34). These steps lead us to an ascetic way of life essential for reaching the pinnacle of freedom for our soul.

The hallmark of this stage is 'awareness'. We become aware of the true Self. We realize that "*me*" is not this body; it is the soul within the body. We accept that soul is a real entity and that it interacts with other eternal entities (next section). With the recognition of our own soul and its interactions with other entities, we begin to realize that these entities are universal. They interact with one another strictly according to a set of natural operating principles (*navatattva*, Ch. 8). The mystery of the universe suddenly begins to unfold and we understand that there is nothing irrational or mysterious about it. No mystical or supernatural power is playing with our lives. We alone are responsible and we must take our fate in our hands. This realization, this trust in our own ability to better our future, marks our 'awakening'.









We now become aware of our soul, its true nature, its goal of liberation, and of other factors that affect and influence our soul. We change our focus from physical pleasures to happiness. This shift away from external objects brings about a change in our attitude whereby we realize that materialism is not the basis for our happiness. Disenchanted with such objects, we begin to control our passions. We experience peace of mind and tranquility. This experience has another wonderful effect on us. We begin to develop compassion and empathy for all souls that have been suffering because of their entrapment in this painful cycle of birth and death. We resolve to refrain from inflicting any pain on other living beings.

Fourteen Stages of Spiritual Progress (fourteen *gunasthanas*)

	Gunasthana	Behavioral and Psychological Characteristics at that Stage.	Level
1	Mithyatva	Lowest stage, ignorance, delusion, negative attitude towards Reality.	Ignorance
2	Sasadana	Indifference to Reality vague memory of spiritual insight	Confused
3	Misra	Fleeting moments of curiosity towards Reality	Mixed
4	Avirati	Awareness of Reality; positive attitude and trust in it combined with willingness to practice self-discipline. (Progressive <i>Samyak Darshan</i>)	Awakening
5	Desa-virati	Introductory vows, 11 - step climb of pratima ladder begins	Lay vows
6	Pramatta or Sarva-virati	Ascetic vows; renunciation of possessions and firm resolve to passions; may fail due to lack of full control over passions or due to carelessness (pramatta). (Progressive <i>Samyak Charitra</i>)	Starting ascetic life
7	Apramatta Virati	Intense practice of vows has increased self-control and virtually replaced carelessness with spiritual vigilance and vigor (apramatta); passions are under greater but not total control.	Determined effort for Self-control
8	Apurva-karana	Near total self-control over actions, higher control over mind, thought and passions ready for suppression or annihilation of the conduct-deluding karma.	Self-discipline
9	Anivritti-karana	Intense spiritual activity, higher control over passions; suppression and elimination of conduct-deluding karma begins.	Increased self-discipline
10	Suksma-sampanaya	Almost complete elimination of all four passions except for subtle degree of attachment (e.g. attachment for life;) conduct - deluding <i>karma</i> virtually eliminated. (i.e almost total <i>Samyak Charitra</i>)	
11	Upasanta-moha	Suppressed passions and lingering conduct-deluding <i>karma</i> may rise to drag the ascetic to lower stage; fleeting experience of equanimity.	
12	Kshina-moha	This is the point of no return. All passions as well as conduct-deluding <i>karma</i> are eliminated. Permanent internal peace achieved. No new bondage.	
13	Sayoga-kevalin	All residual knowledge and perception obscuring karma eliminated. Omniscience achieved, Arhat stage reached. Perfected soul but still trapped in the physical body. (Total <i>Samyak Jnana</i> achieved)	<i>Kevali</i>
14	Ayoga-kevalin	Liberation! Siddha stage reached. Purest soul, no physical body.	<i>Moksha</i>

These are the gradual changes occurring internally at the stage of awakening. We are now aware that we can gain control over our destiny and reach our goal of liberation by following the right path. We begin to search for the right path. How does one know which path to liberation is “right”? Is the Jain path the correct one? No answer, verbal or written, will convince us fully until we personally go through the experience. We have to touch ice, taste sugar, and listen to music to accept their qualities. However, we routinely accept certain statements because of the expertise and the authority of the people who may have direct experience of the event. Daily, we hear and accept news although we may be miles away from the event. We may try to verify it, but in the final analysis, we do accept the event as a fact without having direct experience of it. Such is the case also with the path to liberation.

TERMS TO REMEMBER

 <i>Charitra</i>	Conduct, behavior, lifestyle
 <i>Darsana</i>	Intuition, worldview
 <i>Gunasthana</i>	Stage of spiritual progress
 <i>Jnana</i>	Knowledge
 <i>Mithya-drsti</i>	Incorrect understanding
 <i>Ratnatraya</i>	Three jewels, threefold path
 <i>Samsara</i>	Cycle of transmigration, birth and death
 <i>Sanyak</i>	Rational, logical, correct, right

philosophy and science that these monks have discovered over the millennia is incompatible with the theories of 20th century science, I would suggest that it is hard to dispute their claims.* These omniscient ones are the experts in the art and science of liberation. Consequently, as we do in other fields, we may decide to follow the path suggested by these spiritual experts and verify if we too can actually experience the bliss promised by the *Tirthankaras*.

Reaching the fourteenth stage may take a lifetime or more, but by faithfully following their suggested path, we can certainly experience at least some degree of peace and tranquility as we progress through the fifth and the sixth *gunasthana*. A true Jain is one who trusts and follows this path and works for his/her liberation. Consequently, no one who does not trust such a path is really a Jain, even if born of Jain parents. In reality however, most Jains, though not strictly on the path to liberation, trust the Jain view of Reality and do try to follow the basic principles of the Jain code of conduct to the best of their ability.

* See Chapter 14.

Fourteen Gunasthana and the Modern Life

The fourteen stage path developed by the Jain seers is indeed a path for spiritual development. However, for those of us who are not yet ready for spiritual progress, does it offer any practical value? Can we, the ordinary *śravaka* and *śravikas*, mired in mundane daily living of managing our profession or business, our family responsibility, and our struggle to better our status in the society, draw any benefit from this '*Gunasthana*' system?

I have already mentioned that Jainism is more of a psychological system than a religion, to overcome the human weaknesses (Ch.1, page 12). Aimless wandering, or not being able to really focus on a goal and pursue it, is a common weakness in the lives of most of us. At some point in our life we suddenly decide upon some goal for ourselves. This goal could be only to become a successful businessman, a professional, an artist, an athlete, or a community leader. However, merely deciding a goal does not necessarily mean that we will succeed in that goal.

Success in any enterprise has at least four essential requirements, namely, (1) Clear identification of the goal and its outcome, (2) A step-wise plan or path to reach the goal, (3) A determination to stay on that path, and (4) Acquiring skills required to achieve the goal. For example, suppose my goal is to become an engineer, I must not only have a clear understanding of what an engineer does, but also must understand that the path to that goal is several years of training in schools, colleges, and even in the industry. Furthermore, once I decide to embark on that path, I must have the dedication to stay the course, and the determination to acquire the required skills.

The fourteen-stage *gunasthana* path provides us the model to design our own path to success. Its first three stages (*Mithyatva*, *Sasadana*, and *Misra*) describe our ignorant, aimless wandering, occasionally becoming aware of the goal but lacking the focus. At the fourth (*Avirati*) we are awakened but not yet dedicated to the goal. Partial dedication comes in the form of twelve basic vows (Ch. 3) at the fifth *gunasthana* (*desa-virati*). This stage is similar to our registration in a school, the acquisition of skills and the stepwise progress towards the goal now begins. The skills required for the spiritual goal of liberation are *samyak-charitra* (rational conduct or lifestyle), *samyak-darsana* (rational world-vision), and *samyak-jnana* (rational knowledge). These skills are gradually acquired as we climb the eleven steps, called *pratimas*, (Ch. 4) as we progress from stage 5 to stage 6. At stage six (*sarva-virati*) we reconfirm our dedication to the goal by taking more serious vows and entering the ascetic life. Compare this with our entrance in the graduate school. We are now fully dedicated to the goal and as we progress from sixth through to the fourteenth, we refine our skills and achieve our goal.

The Rational Understanding

Earlier we talked about our search for the right path to follow 'awakening'. We suggested that the Jain path is safe because the omniscient ones have taught it. Similarly, we also suggested that awakening marks our understanding that 'Reality' consists of soul and its liberation. We accept that five other fundamental entities exist and interact with one another according to the nine 'operating principles' of the universe. Accepting such a path or Reality simply because *Tirthankaras* taught it is not a blind faith. Faith, which results in spiritual progress, is positive faith, and that which results in dogmatism and orthodoxy is blind faith. *Tirthankaras* have warned us against blind faith and preached that we must know ourselves, try to understand Reality, analyze the path leading to it, examine it, test it, verify it, and then, if satisfied, if convinced of its efficacy, build our faith on the foundation of this correct understanding of Reality. If we awake and extricate ourselves from ignorance and delusion, we are the masters of our own destiny. This is *samyak-drsti* (rational understanding), which is essential as we embark on the journey to liberation.

The Journey

Awakened by *samyak-drsti*, Jains now continue their fourteen-stage journey to acquire three-fold skills, called "Three Jewels" (*Ratnatraya*) viz.: *samyak-charitra* (rational conduct or lifestyle), *samyak-darsana* (rational world-vision), and *samyak-jnana* (rational knowledge).

Most lay Jains believe that they are at the fourth stage of the fourteen-stage journey. Each subsequent stage has several intervening steps, but liberation requires progress along all three fronts. Progress transforms our outlook towards the surrounding world. It forces us to re-examine our short-term goals and relationships, and generates love, respect, appreciation, and compassion for others. A renewed respect for all life generates harmony with our eco-system. A feeling of indifference to physical pleasures, praise or criticism, and antipathy takes over. Living becomes a peaceful experience filled with self-confidence, inner bliss, and a purpose defined by the understanding of the Reality.

At peace with oneself, one begins a serene journey towards liberation. At the far end of the path lies freedom. This, at last, liberates the soul from the seemingly endless cycle of birth, suffering, and death. A true Jain is one who undertakes this journey and follows the path, regardless of where, when or how one is born! This journey begins only after true awakening.

3. To Be A Jain

To be a Jain does not necessarily require a Jain birth or an induction into the Jain fold by a priest or religious order (unless one wants to be initiated into an order of Jain monks or nuns). Anyone who is awakened to *samyak-drsti* (rational understanding) and decides to follow its rational path is a Jain. Our rational understanding at the fourth stage of the 14-stage spiritual progress involves the realization that the entire universe consists of only six fundamental and eternal entities, which are *jiva* and the five *ajivas* (matter, space, time, the principle of motion, and the principle of rest)*. We also become aware that for our soul to regain its innate state of permanent happiness, liberation from its entrapment in *samsara* - the cycle of rebirth and death - is required. We then begin our search for a path to liberation. What is liberation?

Most religious systems are concerned with the afterlife. They preach that our life today should be such that we attain permanent happiness after death. For some, permanent happiness is 'admission to heaven', for others it is 'the merging of the soul with a super consciousness'. For the Jains, it is the freeing of the soul from its bonded *karmic* material to regain its infinite consciousness, bliss, and energy. Different religions prescribe different paths to achieve permanent happiness. Religions, which believe that God created and governs this universe, preach that we must seek God's grace and His mercy and endear ourselves to God so that He will grant us an admission into heaven. The path they therefore recommend is to be good, accept Him in your life, and seek his mercy and grace.

Jains believe that the universe is eternal, made of the six eternal entities listed above, governs itself according to its own operating principles, and therefore, there is no creator or governing God. Thus, the idea of seeking the mercy and grace of God is not a part of their concept of liberation. They believe that God does not make us happy or unhappy, nor should one depend on His grace and mercy for permanent happiness. Our soul has somehow become impure or polluted and thus entrapped in this unhappy cycle of rebirth and death.** The Jain path to permanent happiness,

* Details in Chapter 6

** Details in Chapter 9

therefore, involves purifying the polluted soul so that it can liberate itself and regain its innate quality of infinite bliss. Jains call this liberated state *moksha*. We ourselves are responsible for our destiny, and we can achieve *moksha* only through our own efforts and actions.

Salvation, Nirvana and Moksha

We have been using the terms such as salvation, liberation, nirvana, bliss, and moksha somewhat loosely and interchangeably. These terms are religion-specific and differ in their finer understanding as well as in the ways to achieve these states. The dictionary meaning of the term bliss is simply the highest degree of happiness, gladness, exalted felicity, heavenly joy, etc. All the other terms mentioned above are supposedly able to deliver us that bliss.

Salvation - The Christian path to bliss is the deliverance from the shortcomings of the human condition. They believe that human weaknesses cause our misery and that evil forces dominate the world, to some extent. God is still ultimately in control, however, and will one day send the Messiah who will conquer the forces of evil, the dead would be resurrected and all would be judged -- salvation for the righteous and damnation for the rest. According to Christian doctrine, one must believe that Christ is both fully divine and fully human. One must believe in the doctrine of Trinity, which holds that God consists of three aspects -- God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- who are at the same time one God. The Jewish concept is to know God in his true form. They believe that this can be achieved either through correct practice from moment to moment, or, through rigorously following thirteen principles of Jewish theology (Maimondes), or with the heart through love (Kabbalah and Hasidism).

Nirvana - This Sanskrit term literally means blowing out or extinction. It is used by Hindus and Buddhists, as well as by Jains. *Nirvana* for Hindus is emancipation from ignorance and the extinction of all attachments except for God. In this state (*samadhi* or *sthitpragna*), one is believed to be truly in union with God. It is a state of transcendence in this life, which enables us to live fully in the human condition with an underlying state of joy and tranquility. According to Hinduism, there are three paths to achieve the state of *nirvana*.

(1). **The Path of *Dharma* (*karma marga*)** is to follow one's ethical duties, observe household rituals and conform to religious laws in personal and social life. "Following one's *dharma* without any attachment or expectations of the fruits of action leads one to the union with God," advises a Hindu Scripture.⁶

⁶ Bhagavad-Gita, 2.47

(2). **The Path of Devotion (*bhakti marga*)** is to offer unconditional love and reverence to one's chosen deity - a reincarnation of God. Total surrender to this deity takes one into a state of extreme joy and ecstasy. Ramanuja's (c. 1137 A.D.) interpretation of the Upanishads forms the basis of this path.

(3). **The Path of Knowledge (*jnana marga*)**. This path, based on Shankara's (c. 850 A.D.) interpretation of the Upanishads, emphasizes the attainment of the knowledge of the true nature of Reality through meditation and profound contemplation. True Reality, according to Hinduism is only *Brahman* - the indescribable, impersonal supernatural power. The rest of the universe is just a cosmic illusion. The realization of the true knowledge of *Brahman* liberates the soul and merges it with the supernatural. Hindus maintain that any one of these three paths could lead to *nirvana*.

For the Buddhists also, *nirvana* is a form of transcendence in this life. Like Jainism, Buddhism also has its roots in the ancient Shraman system. Therefore, they too do not believe in the existence of a creator God. Since Buddha remained silent about soul, Buddhists describe *nirvana* as the ineffable ultimate in which one has attained disinterested wisdom and compassion. It is an ideal condition of rest, harmony, stability, and joy. For a Buddhist, *nirvana* is simply the extinction of individuality in an undifferentiated final state.

Moksha: Jains do use the term *nirvana* but their use of this term is generally to describe the 'blowing out' or 'extinction' of all impurities from the soul. For the exalted state of liberation, the real Jain term is *moksha*. *Moksha* does not involve the union of soul with the supernatural or receiving any judgment for salvation or damnation by God. The worldview of Jains rests on the eternal existence of an infinite number of souls and their pure and impure states. For the Jains the pure, liberated soul has achieved bliss, but impurities in a defiled soul mar this bliss. Purifying the soul and liberating it from this entrapment is therefore the main goal of human life. How do we achieve this goal?

We learnt of the Hindu belief that their goal of *nirvana* can be achieved by any one of the three paths namely *dharm*a, devotion, or knowledge. The parallels in Jainism are rational conduct, rational worldview, and rational knowledge. The Jain unified path to *moksha* requires all three. The Hindu state of *nirvana* is a form of transcendence in this life, and union of the soul with Brahman. From time to time, the Brahman itself may take rebirth (*avatar*) on the surface of this earth. For the Jains on the other hand, *moksha* is complete liberation of the soul from the painful cycle of birth and death. The liberated soul regains its fundamental quality of eternal bliss, and of course, no more rebirths - not even as an *avatar*!

The Jain Path

What path do we follow for *Moksha*? At the fourth stage (*gunasthana*) of spiritual development (see spiritual progress chart in Chapter 2), we become just aware of the need to liberate our soul. However, the journey is yet to begin and life is still without any vows or self-restraint (*virati*). This is therefore the *avirati* (non-restraint) *gunasthana*. We now know the goal; the path is decided and the journey is to begin, but progress depends on our determination and self-discipline. Taking vows helps our determination and helps us develop self-discipline. A vow is the solemn pledge to do something very well after identifying and understanding the goal. It focuses our thoughts in the direction of the action required of the pledge. Therefore, Jainism advises and encourages laypersons to take introductory vows and practice self-restraint. One reaches the fifth *gunasthana* after achieving partial self-restraint (*desa virati*) and the sixth *gunasthana* after total self-restraint (*sarva virati*). Climbing eleven steps of the spiritual ladder (Chapter 4) through these two stages was hard. However, the even harder journey is yet to come as we enter the ascetic life. Understanding the vows will give us an insight into the daily lifestyle of a Jain layperson, or of an ascetic.

The Introductory Vows

Life is short, and the goal (liberation) lofty. We must be fully motivated and disciplined to reach the destination. The Jain teachers - *Tirthankaras* - have recommended the motivational tool of 'taking vows' (*vrata*) to launch oneself on a path to moksha. A casual attitude without vows, of course, would achieve very little progress. Beginners start with twelve introductory vows. Ascetics who are seriously pursuing the path must observe these vows rigidly. The beginner vows are to help people meet their obligations to the family and society and to overcome the emotional stresses of day-to-day living, passions, desire and greed. As we achieve a degree of self-restraint and equanimity, we take more vows to gain greater control over weaknesses. Normally, the laypersons take twelve introductory vows in three steps of increasing intensity. There are:

Five Basic Vows (*anuvratas*) - these are the basic vows

Three Reinforcing Vows (*gunavratas*) - designed to reinforce the five *anuvratas*,

Four Spiritual Exercises (*sikshavratas*) - to practice actual living the vows.

The Basic Vows (*anuvratas*)

The journey begins with five basic vows (*anuvratas*). These five are :

ahimsa vrata (nonviolence)

satya vrata (being truthful)

achurya vrata (non-stealing, or not gaining anything by illegitimate means)

shila vrata (keeping the mind and thoughts as pure as possible), and

parigraha-parimana vrata (limiting ones needs and possessions).

Usually, a layperson declares his/her vow in front of a monk (or nun). The first *anuvrata* - the vow of nonviolence - for example, would be:

*"I will refrain from injuring living beings having two or more senses (animals) with a deliberate act of my mind, speech, or body, and will avoid killing one sensed beings (plants) unless unavoidable."*⁷

This is a less intense vow than that required of the ascetics, which is as follows:

*"I renounce all killing of living beings, whether subtle or gross, whether movable or immovable. Nor shall I myself kill living beings nor cause others to do it, nor consent to it. As long as I live, I confess, blame, repent and exempt myself of these sins, in the threefold way, in mind, speech and action."*⁸

Note that this vow goes far beyond the Judeo-Christian concept of never hurting one's neighbor. It extends to all living creatures, even spiders and mosquitoes. It means that not only must one forego all meat (for which the animal had to be killed),

but also involves foregoing eggs which is an animal's way of reproducing life. It also means avoiding consumption of any plant whose harvesting involves killing the plant itself (potatoes, garlic, onions, etc.). Note also that the vow includes not just the action of hurting or killing but also harmful thoughts or will. In there lies the true Jain meaning of *ahimsa*. Although, a mere thought or ill will may not hurt or kill another being, it pollutes our soul. The vows emphasize these because our motive here is to achieve equanimity (inner peace), respect for all life, and self-restraint. One can achieve these only by disciplining one's own mind and thoughts. In fact, the Jain definition of *ahimsa* extends beyond actual killing or hurting, it also means refraining from any act - physical, verbal, or mental - that could possibly lead one to violate one's avowed path towards liberation. In this context, all other vows are but an extension of this fundamental code of *ahimsa*.

TERMS TO REMEMBER	
☞ <i>Nirvana</i>	Death of holy person, reaching ecstasy
☞ <i>Moksha</i>	Absolute purity of soul
☞ <i>Pratima</i>	Steps for spiritual progress for lay persons
☞ <i>Siddha</i>	One who has achieved omniscience
☞ <i>Sravaka</i>	A lay man
☞ <i>Sravika</i>	A lay woman
☞ <i>Vrata</i>	Vows

The second vow (*satya-vrata*) demands that one must not tell lies or resort to false speech, action, or thought. Note the focus on 'thought'. This focus enables lay Jains to resolve intellectually conflicting situations one might inevitably encounter. For example, to save someone's life one might conceivably tell a lie but may not suffer the same consequence as a lie instigated with malicious thought.

⁷ - Ratnakaranda Sravakachara. 3/53

⁸ - Acharang Sutra Book II, Lecture 15, i, 4

The third vow (*acharya-vrata*) demands that a Jain must not acquire anything by illicit means (e.g., dishonesty, stealing, cheating), nor should he misappropriate someone else's property or take goods which others may have lost or forgotten. The *shila-vrata* is to control passions and to abstain from pre and extra-marital sex. The fifth vow (*parigraha-parimana*) limits a person's desire for material needs, acquisitions and possessions, and encourages Jains to be generous, philanthropic and to share one's fortunes. The ecological implications of these vows are worth noting. We are better able to limit the impact on the environment, and to live in harmony with our surroundings if we are not continually trying to 'cut it down, dig it out, or shape it' into something to meet our supposed needs.

The Reinforcing Vows (*gunavratas*)

Dig-vrata, *desarakasika-vrata*, and *anartha-danda-vrata* are the three *gunavratas*. These three reinforce our resolve to strengthen and discipline our mind. The *dig-vrata* (directions-restraint) places voluntary spatial restraints on one's sphere of action. This vow is in essence self-imposed limits on travel. The intention is to check the unimpeded spread of desire, to save oneself from situations in which unfamiliar surroundings may compel one to undertake un-virtuous activities, and to guard against the loss of tranquility and inner peace. Strict observance of this vow by ascetics has limited their reach and influence beyond their immediate surroundings, which may include just their village, district, state, etc. This particular vow has largely impeded the spread of Jainism. Serious aspirants to ascetic life take this vow, but most laypersons only try to observe the spirit of the vows.

The *desarakasika-vrata* (time-restraint) encourages us to restrict our servitude to our habits by limiting the time we spend engaged in those habits. It suggests that we try, for example to refrain from eating one day a week or give up a favorite food (like chocolate, or deserts) for a certain period. Obviously, the purpose of this vow is to curb weaknesses and gain self-discipline.



Finally, the aim of *anartha-danda-vrata* (harmful activity restraint) is to ensure that Jains do not pursue livelihoods or activities, which are harmful to others. That is, Jains must refrain from engaging in the manufacturing or supplying of weapons or in violence-based professions like butchering. It should come as little surprise to readers then that one would not find a Jain leather tanner, shoemaker, or a chicken or potato farmer. This vow goes further, however, and includes refraining from boasting or talking and thinking ill of others.

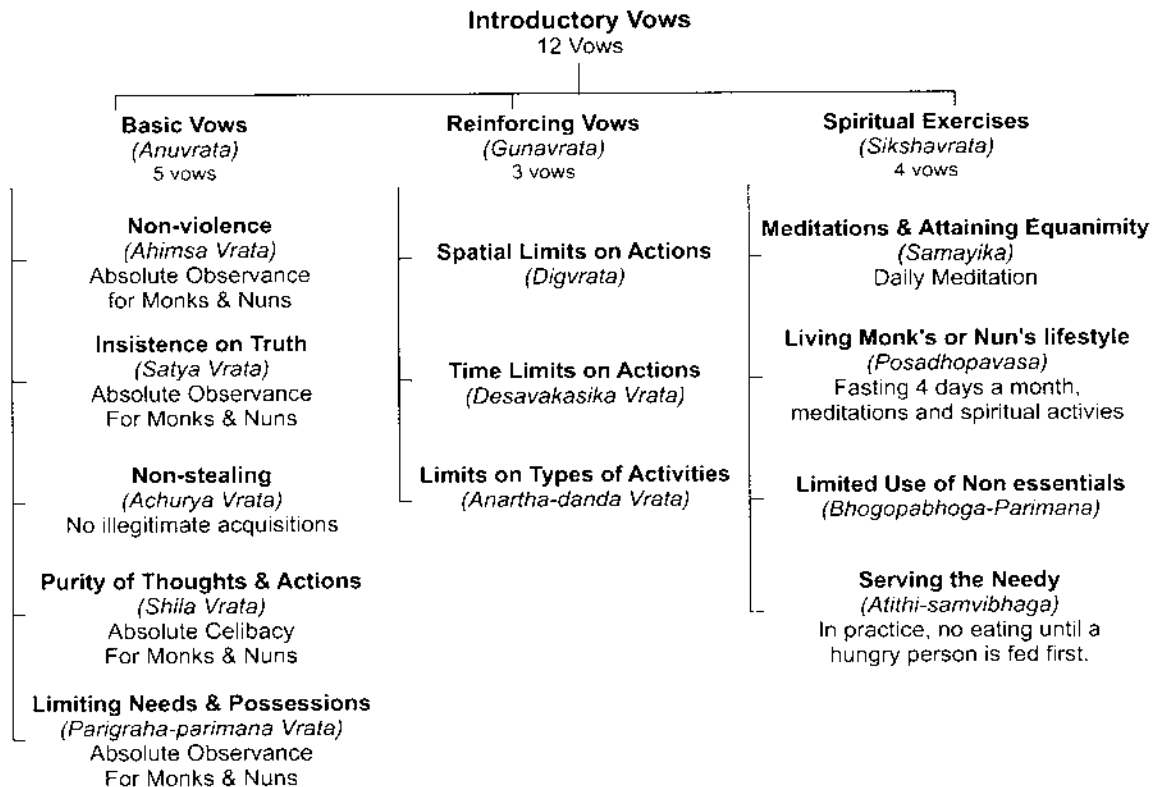
It is self-evident that the importance of practicing these vows is to gain self-restraint

and to remain focused on the goal of liberation. Most Jains do not take these vows formally (in the presence of a monk) but manage to live by them. They have sought occupations such as teachers, professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers, or traders. They build healthy, balanced diets of lentils, vegetables, rice, and fruits, and follow a specific lifestyle prescribed for physical and mental health. Although the goal of the introductory vows is to lead an aspirant towards the life of an ascetic, a very small minority of Jains goes on to become ascetics.

The Spiritual Exercises (*shiksha-vratas*)

A *saraka* (or *sarika* - a female layperson) who has gone through the first eight simpler introductory-vows may now want to get a glimpse of the next phase of the rather austere, self-disciplined life of monkhood. This is possible through the next set of four *shiksha vratas*, which in actuality are spiritual exercises. These are: (i) *samayika* - daily meditation and attainment of equanimity; (ii) *posadhopavasa* living the life of a monk for a given period, (iii) *bhogopabhoga-parimana* - putting limits on consumption of non-essentials and (iv) *atithi-samvibhaga* - taking food only after having served someone needy or hungry.

Layperson's Vows





The mastery of all the 12 vows takes a *sravaka* or *sravika* from the fourth *gunasthana* (*avirati*) through the fifth (*desa-virati*) to the sixth (*sarva-virati*) *gunasthana*. This two-stage spiritual progress requires climbing the 11 rungs (*pratimas*)* of the progress ladder. At the last of the eleven rungs of gradual progression, he/she is virtually a recluse, with sufficient self-control on emotions and senses, and necessary detachment. She is now ready to take the next step. Ready and prepared, she may now request an *acharya* (a guru) to ordain her into the ascetic order on her journey to the fourteenth stage required for liberation.

Newly ordained men or women join their order simply as a *sadhu* (monk) or *sadhvi* (nun). Jain ascetics cannot marry and must remain celibate. They live a simple life in temples or wandering the countryside, and survive off the generous offerings of Jain followers. They spend much of their time in meditation, the study of scriptures, and provide spiritual guidance to their followers. Both monks and nuns can expect to progress through



the ranks and can become the head (*acharya*) of the order. Mahavira, the last *Tirthankara*, has specifically authorized *acharyas* to issue official interpretation of the scriptures. Acharya Chandanaji, the head of an order of nuns in Bihar, India, has officially interpreted parts of the scriptures as a call for the Jains - ascetics as well as laity - to become involved in social justice issues. She runs a free 200-bed hospital and several schools, including one opened recently to serve the poor in the earthquake stricken area of Gujarat and another in Pavapuri in Bihar.

On the gradual climb to *moksha*, one reaches *sayoga-kevalin*, the thirteenth stage, where the soul is forever free from the last vestiges of earthly influence. It reaches the state of omniscience called *kevali*. From here to the fourteenth stage of total liberation (*moksha*), the climb is almost automatic. A *kevali* may continue to live because of the residual non-destructive *karma*, but attracts no more new karma because he/she has conquered all passions - the glue that bonds karmas to the soul. Therefore, the possibility of slipping back to the lower stages does not exist anymore. The residual non-destructive *karma* also fall-off at death, the soul attains *moksha* and reaches *siddhaloka*. No more rebirth and pain!

The path to *moksha* is indeed a long one, and practicing beginners' vows is only a

* Eleven *Pratimas* (steps or rungs of a ladder) are not to be confused with the 14 *gunasthana* (stages of spiritual progress.) Having awakened at the 4th *gunasthana* (stage), we begin our journey towards the 14th. However, we have to climb 11 *pratimas* (steps) between the 4th and the 6th *gunasthana* (stage). See Chapter 4, page 34.

humble beginning. Realization of the long path to *moksha* cultivates humility in a *sravaka*, just as the recognition of one's place in the cosmos can. Few Jains formally follow the actual path to liberation, but many embrace the spirit of the vows allowing them to lead simpler, more peaceful lives. They recognize that while *moksha* may not be their tangible reward, at the very least, a life free from the stresses of material desires and passions can be.





4. The Jain Path

Hopefully by now you have begun to understand the spirit of Jainism and its path from awakening to liberation. As I have stated previously, the 'awakening' of a person occurs at the fourth spiritual stage (*gunasthana*), a stage of becoming aware of the Reality and the path that lies ahead for the purification of the soul. Now that the *sravika* has become aware of the true nature of soul (*jina*) and of its ultimate goal of liberation (*moksha*), her journey begins with the beginner's vows and daily practice of spiritual exercises.

The 'first steps' are always difficult in every project. The twelve vows are particularly difficult because they involve training and disciplining a very crafty candidate - our mind. The novice may need years of practice just to gain a reasonable control over her own mind. However, that she is willing to take the vows is, in itself, an indication of the strength of her awakening. Depending upon the degree of her success with these vows, the least she may achieve is some self-discipline, equanimity, and a bit of relief from the stress of daily living, but for now, she is still at the fourth *gunasthana* and at the bottom of the eleven-step *pratima* ladder. This ladder will take her to the sixth stage. After reaching the sixth *gunasthana*, perhaps she may remain motivated to continue and enter the ascetic life to achieve the ultimate goal of *moksha*.

Although her goal is to reach the Himalayan heights of *moksha*, the journey is only just beginning. She has identified the goal, reviewed the path, and has conditioned herself mentally and physically to undertake the expedition. As she observes and practices her daily vows, she begins her climb on the rungs (*pratima*) of an eleven-step ladder to reach the sixth spiritual stage (*gunasthana*).

The Ladder

Let us review the eleven rungs of the ladder that will take her to the first base camp - the sixth *gunasthana*. These rungs are designed to instill more rigors in her practice. Let us start at the lowest rung.

1. **Darsana pratima** - 'This is the stage of awakening (*samyak-drsti*) to the Reality. Life was full of ignorance and delusion before the awakening. Nevertheless, the awakening has made her aware of the existence of her soul and its ultimate goal. This has set her off to the next stage.

2. **Vrata-pratima**- Here she took her vows to practice the basics of the code, and gain some self-control and equanimity. She practiced restraint through four 'spiritual exercises', described in the previous chapter. She undertakes these exercises with more frequency and rigor during the next two rungs

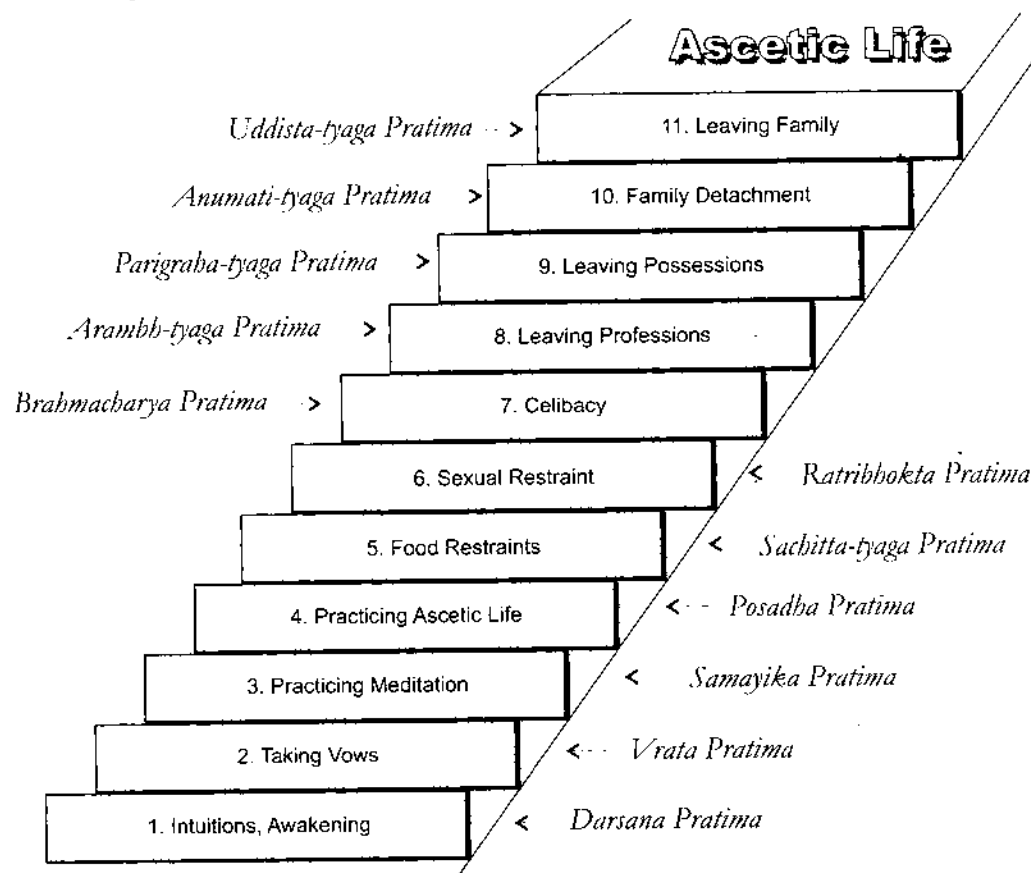


FIGURE 4.1: Eleven steps (*pratimas*) of a layperson's spiritual progress between the fourth and the sixth spiritual stages (*gunasthana*). Progress towards *Samyak Charitra*. **Note:** Eleven *Pratimas* (steps or rungs of a ladder) are not to be confused with the 14 *gunasthana* (stages of spiritual progress).

3. **Samayika Pratima** - Having taken the vows at the second rung, it is now a matter of practicing the vows. Daily meditation (*samayika*) is a religious activity integrating deep meditation and yoga. It is both a method of attaining peace of mind through self-restraint and a spiritual path aimed at searching for the true self. Daily practice

of *samayika* produces progressive detachment of one's consciousness from all external objects. Jain scriptures repeatedly commend this ritual as the highest form of spiritual discipline. At the third rung, she resolves to practice *samayika* three times a day (as required for the monks and nuns) and perform morning *puja* (worship). The Jain *puja* includes singing a hymn in praise of the *Tirthankara*, chanting a passage from the scripture and often anointing the idol with a paste made of saffron and sandalwood.*

4. *Posadha Pratima* - The next step is to practice living like a monk or a nun on certain days of the month. This involves virtually abandoning all social, business, or domestic activities normally required of a layperson and fasting on those days.

5. *Sachitta-tyaga-pratima* - This is the fifth rung of the ladder. Now her focus is on both the quantity and the quality of the food she consumes. Jain reverence for all living beings implies that vegetarianism alone is not enough. We must eat to survive, but this step challenges her to do so with a minimum of violence to or destruction of other life, including plants.

As mentioned earlier, the Jain diet avoids root-vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, and onions because their consumption requires uprooting, and thus killing the entire plant. A root vegetable, being under the soil, is both a living space for many microbes and insects, as well as a source of new life for the plant. A devout Jain would rather survive on non-root vegetables, fruits, and grains harvested when ripe without killing or hurting the plant. Furthermore, certain foods and drinks can affect body chemistry and likely cause a loss of self-control. Therefore, Jains avoid mind-affecting drugs and alcohol. Even foods like onions act as mild stimulants.

Gaining control over one's mind and emotions is a slow, difficult, and gradual process. Rungs 6 and 7 are therefore designed to help her achieve gradual control over the most basic of biological urges.

6. *Ratribhokta-pratima*- She is now encouraged to practice mental, vocal & physical self-restraint or control over sexual urges during the daytime.

7. *Brahmacharya-pratima*- This is the step for celibacy or self-restraint in sexual activities. Jain monks and nuns remain celibate.

8. *Arambh-tyaga-pratima* - Now, is the time to prepare for entering monastic life! This is indeed a very emotional and difficult step! She has to decide if she has the

* For details, see Chapter 6.

strength to cut all the family ties and be a nun. She must ask, "Is my spiritual calling strong enough?" She has to give up all her past, her family, and her neighborhoods, even her name. *Arambh* means 'the beginning', and *tyaga* means to 'sacrifice'. The self-sacrifice now begins! Until now, she has experienced the ascetic life only periodically without total commitment, but now is the time for total devotion. She begins to withdraw from her job, business, or other commitments. Her time is devoted mostly to the study of the scriptures and the spiritual activities.

9. *Parigraha-tyaga-pratima* - At this stage, she is emotionally detached from all her possessions and family. It is now the time for physical detachment and departure! Family members are already aware of her calling. Nevertheless, they all have to endure the trauma of her formal announcement to enter monastic life. In fact, Jains take pride in having someone in the family become a monk or nun. Therefore, her family greets the announcement, like that of a girl getting married, with mixed emotions. This is evident from the fact that the actual ordaining ceremony, like a wedding, is with great pomp and fanfare.

Formal announcement is also the time for her to give away all her wealth and possessions. She may still play a role in the household decisions, but having renounced all her possessions, she avoids participating in the decision-making process of the family. Her family too must get used to life without her! Once she enters this phase of the ascetic life, she is ready to climb the next rung of the ladder.

10. *Anumati-tyaga-pratima*- At this rung, she is almost completely detached from the family ties, and the family has fully accepted her decision. The idea here is to avoid even emotional involvement in the family affairs. No longer does she participate even as an advisor in the family matters!

11. *Uddista-tyaga-pratima*- In this final rung, she is to cut-off all family ties by leaving her family residence. She begins living in a monastery as an apprentice nun. The rest of her life will now be devoted to only spiritual activities.

These *anuvrata*-based eleven rungs have brought her to the first base camp of her expedition. The real journey is yet to begin! Her participation so far as a layperson has been like that of an amateur member of a mountaineering team. To reach the summit of *moksha* she needs to take the five great vows (*mahavrata*) of the ascetic life, which will allow her to scale even loftier heights.

Most *acharyas* (heads of the orders of monks and nuns) advise the aspirants to climb as many rungs of the *pratima* ladder as possible before asking for initiation into their

order. Those who are ordained without completing that climb are required to undertake rigorous self-disciplinary training and study scriptures.

The Ascetic Life

The initiation process involves the new monk or nun taking five major vows (*mahavratas*), which are similar to *anuvratas*, but involve much deeper commitment. An ascetic is expected to abide strictly by a number of clauses in each vow. We quote simplified forms of these clauses from *Acharang sutra* - The Code of Behavior for the Ascetics.

1. The first vow - the 'Ahimsa' vrata - has five clauses:

- a. "Be careful - not careless - in your walk so as not to displace, hurt, or kill living beings with your feet."
- b. "Examine critically your thoughts and intentions. If they are sinful, blamable, impulsive, divisive, or hurtful to others, do not employ such a mind in action. Act only with pure mind."
- c. "Be mindful of your speech. Do not utter sinful, blamable, impulsive, divisive, and quarrelsome or hurtful words."
- d. "Be careful in laying down your body (sleep) or possessions (e.g. begging utensils) so as not to displace, hurt or kill other living beings."
- e. "Carefully inspect your food/drink to be sure that no life is displaced, hurt, or killed during its production/preparation."

2. The second vow - the 'Satya' vrata - has five clauses.

- a. "Speak after deliberation to avoid falsehood."
- b. "Renounce anger, for you might utter falsehood when angry."
- c. "Renounce greed, for greed might induce falsehood."
- d. "Renounce fear. Only fearless words are truthful."
- e. "Renounce mirth. A gleeful mind may utter falsehood."

3. The third vow - the 'Acharya' vrata - has five clauses.

- a. "Evaluate your critical needs before you ask for food, for you might take that which is not absolutely essential (for survival)."
- b. "Consume food or drink only if permitted (by the superiors)."
- c. "Accept only a limited quantity of what is offered and possess it only for a limited time."
- d. "Have your grant constantly renewed, for you might possess something which is not given."
- e. "Seek permission from your colleagues before asking for food on their behalf, for you might possess that which is not given."

4. The fourth vow - the 'Shila' vrata - has five clauses.

- a. "Avoid discussions on topics related to the opposite sex."
- b. "Neither seek nor give information, neither contemplate nor have discussion on the physical forms of the opposite sex."
- c. "Neither recall old memories nor fantasize on the past pleasures - sexual or otherwise."
- d. "Avoid excessive eating or drinking, consuming intoxicating substances, sensual or highly seasoned foods. No liquor, drugs, or smoking!"
- e. "Do not occupy a bed or other resting gear in the vicinity of a member of the opposite sex."

5. The fifth vow - the 'Parigraha-parimana' vrata - has five clauses

- a. "Maintain equanimity upon hearing pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable words or sounds. Neither be attached to, nor delighted with, nor desiring of, nor infatuated by, nor covetous of, nor disturbed by, nor in love with, nor hateful of these sounds."
- b. "Maintain equanimity upon seeing pleasant.... these sights"
- c. "Maintain equanimity upon smelling pleasant.... these smells."
- d. "Maintain equanimity upon tasting pleasant.... these substances"
- e. "Maintain equanimity upon touching pleasant... these objects"

The life of a Jain monk or nun is demanding but exciting. It is full of the anticipation of achieving that lifelong goal of *moksha* and ultimate bliss. However, we must warn the novice that even anticipation itself means an attachment to emotion. As we will see later, emotional attachment blocks liberation! Therefore, and paradoxically, Jain monks or nuns must learn to stop craving *moksha* itself!

5. The Jain Lifestyle and Contemporary Life

We may rightfully conclude that the Jain code (*sanyak-charitra*) described in the previous two chapters, and the entire regimen of vows (*vrata*), rungs (*pratimas*) and stages of spiritual progress (*gunasthana*) are really designed to turn an individual into a monk or a nun seeking liberation. However, how many of us really want to become or are capable of entering a monastic life?

The lifestyle of eat, drink, and be merry now, or the street philosophy of live it up, do not worry about tomorrow, may be an ignorant (*mithya*) extreme of reckless living. At the other extreme is the rational (*sanyak*) and enlightened lifestyle of a recluse who has given up everything and has a singular focus on *moksha*. For most laypersons, both these extremes may be impractical. While the Jain path can lead some of us ultimately to the highest goal of *moksha*, in the short term it provides the average Jain with a guide to living a moral, healthy, and satisfying life in the contemporary society. It is a peaceful alternative to the hectic, stressful, and violent living choices of the 21st century.

The Jain lifestyle is a blend of the principles and the practice of the Jain code of conduct that can help us live a much better life. One who follows the code strictly, takes the vows, and follows the path may reach the *moksha* in this lifetime, or will increase his/her chances for *moksha* in the next life. Most Jains believe that they are at the fourth stage (*gunasthana*) of their spiritual progress (by virtue of their *karma* in previous lives), and will remain at the fourth or the fifth stage. Family responsibilities often preclude laypersons from taking even the introductory vows because they are afraid that these vows may force them to abdicate their obligations to their loved ones. Short of taking these vows, (either out of their sense of responsibilities or

because of perceived lack of self-confidence) many laypersons simply decide to follow Jain principles and practices to the best of their ability.

Such ambivalent attitude towards vows has given rise to an interesting rite known as *pratyakhyana* or *pachchhakhana* in which laypersons take limited, time-bound vows renouncing certain activities for a fixed period. For example, one may vow, publicly or privately, that she or he will fast for a fixed number of days, or will meditate for a fixed period each day for a finite number of days, etc. This way one can attempt to balance one's domestic role with a desire to live a more devout life.

By following the introductory vows or the simple *pratyakhyana*, one is certain to benefit from a well-organized, self-disciplined lifestyle full of peace and tranquility. The rewards of *moksha* are certainly worth the attempts, although a lifestyle that gives us a healthy, stress-free, peaceful life is no less an achievement on a personal level. Further, at the community level, Jains have produced a culture that is rich in arts, literature, and scholarship - a type of culture, which flourishes only during peaceful periods. Therefore, on a global level, the wider adoption of a peaceable Jain lifestyle could bring harmony and serenity to our contemporary world filled with wars, violence, and environmental degradation.

As we have seen, the Jain lifestyle is rooted in three central codes of conduct:

- The reverence for all forms of life (*ahimsa*)
- Respect for differing and varying opinions (*anekantavada*)
- Emphasis on minimizing one's wants and possessions (*aparigraha*).

Since the Indian words for these three phrases start with the letter 'A', let us call them the "Triple 'A's of Jain Conduct." Jain rituals and daily practice incorporate these triple 'A's. Add non-stealing, truthfulness, and sexual restraint to these, and we get a good picture of the Jain lifestyle. Whether Jains take formal vows or not, these in reality are their daily exercises for healthy body and healthy mind.

Healthy Body

The Jain emphasis on self-control has resulted in healthy practices such as:

Vegetarianism (*Shakahara*):

Vegetarianism is among the most important of Jain practices. Jain reverence for life has produced a compassionate, non-violent lifestyle. As a result, meat, poultry, fish, and eggs, (the food obtained by destroying or hurting animal life) are unacceptable foods. (Some modern Jains are abandoning milk and milk products in response to the cruelty to cattle in today's dairy industry. Vegetarians, who do not eat, drink or use

any animal products, including dairy products and eggs, are “vegans”). Jains obtain their protein from lentils and legumes. Decades of research suggest that a global shift away from meat and other animal foods toward plant foods would drastically reduce heart disease, cancer, obesity, and other chronic degenerative diseases which currently account for trillions of dollars in global health costs.

A recent report, entitled Livestock's Long Shadow, prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations states that an estimated 50 billion farm animals are currently raised for slaughter each year, and that animal farming and eating animal products significantly contribute to global warming. The animal-farming industry produces vast amounts of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, which are extremely dangerous to our health. Furthermore, this industry disproportionately depletes fresh water and arable land because of its high degree of inefficiency. Global vegetarianism would allow the world's limited arable land, fresh water and other agricultural resources to feed hundreds of millions more people.

Eating a vegetarian or vegan diet does not mean giving up the enjoyment of eating. In fact, vegetarian dishes are every bit as flavorful or more so than those you would find on a carnivorous diet.

Periodic Fasting (*Upavasa*):

Many Jains choose to fast for 2-4 days a month in an effort to control their desire for food. While this may be an effective exercise in the Jain pursuit of mind-control, the body also benefits from periodic fasting by allowing the digestive system to cleanse itself. The liver is also stimulated to release toxins, which then travel through the bloodstream and migrate south to exit the body.

Light Eating (*Unodarika*):

At every meal, Jains are expected to stop eating before they are full, and snacking in between the meals is prohibited. While this practice helps us gain self-control, it also promotes good health by enabling us to maintain a comfortable body weight, and reduces lethargy commonly experienced after heavy meals.

Boiled Water

Many Jains drink water only if it is pre-boiled. This practice renders drinking water safe by eliminating bacteria, parasites, and heat-sensitive chemicals. This seems like a paradox since their code of nonviolence forbids the active destruction of any life form. A plausible explanation for this practice is that it originated in the humid climate of India where most homes have to store potable water for at least twenty-four hours. Jains believe that a bacteria population will grow exponentially in un-

boiled, stored water. Consuming un-boiled water, therefore, will be in the end more harmful both in terms of our health and in the number of bacteria killed.

Eating Before Sunset (*Chouvihar*):

Jains normally do not eat after sunset. This practice aids digestion and contributes to a more satisfying sleep and healthy body weight.

Healthy Mind

Strengthening the influence of mind over healthy body has always been the cornerstone of Jain practice and rituals. In a recent study, Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard University's Mind/Body Medical Institute reported⁹ that 60-90% of

TERMS TO REMEMBER	
📁 <i>Chouvihar</i>	Eating before sunset
📁 <i>Ksama-yachana</i>	Asking for forgiveness
📁 <i>Pratikramana</i>	Confession
📁 <i>Shakabara</i>	Vegetarianism
📁 <i>Samayika</i>	Meditation
📁 <i>Unodarika</i>	Light eating, Semi-fasting
📁 <i>Upavasa</i>	Fasting for 36 hours or more

illnesses are related to stress and mind-body effects and therefore do not respond to medical intervention. Metabolism rates in 12 - 17 percent of his subjects decreased through the simple act of meditation. Within three to five minutes of beginning meditation, patient's brain waves altered significantly, their blood pressure decreased, and respiratory heart rates decreased. Similar changes occur in people who are in a deep sleep and fully relaxed. The ancient philosopher-monks designed Jain daily rituals with similar

observations. These rituals integrate four essential elements of well being viz., physical, spiritual, psychological, and social. Where as the rituals described above look after the physical health of the individual, those described below integrate both spiritual and psychological health. Most Jains perform these rituals regularly to develop healthy minds through self-control.

Prayers and Worship (*Deva- and Guru-vandana*):

As a part of their daily activity, Jains visit their temples or a shrine in their own home and pray. (Many Jain homes have pictures and small statues of the *Tirthankaras* or simply a dedicated place in their home for quiet meditation or contemplation.) These prayers are spiritual acts, simply to appreciate the tranquil qualities of *Tirthankaras* and to draw inspiration for the spiritual progress.

Asking for Forgiveness (*Ksama-yachana*):

Christians say grace to thank their God for the food they are about to eat. Similarly, many Jain families begin their meals by asking for forgiveness. This recognizes the destruction of other life forms as well as human transgressions towards earth and Mother Nature during the food preparation. Jains seek forgiveness from all beings

⁹ Benson, Herbert: *Timeless Healing Power and Biology of Belief*, Fireside Originals, 1997

that are hurt or killed during the production of the food they are about to consume.* *Ksama-yachana* reminds them of their duty towards the well-being of the entire universe. It is their daily practice in humility and environmental awareness.

Meditation (*Samayika*)

The Jain daily routine requires at least one session of *samayika*. Each such session is supposed to last for 48 minutes. Typically, a Jain would have a *samayika* session at dawn or dusk, sitting alone in a lotus position in a dark, quiet corner of the house, to avoid any disturbance. The word '*sama*' means 'balanced' or 'equanimous' state of mind free from attachment or hate, '*aaya*' means 'on the path of liberation' and '*ika*' means aspiration. '*Samayika*' therefore means 'aspiring for liberation through equanimity'. Another possible meaning of the word '*samayika*' is based on the Jain use of the word '*samay*'. Jains have traditionally used the word '*samay*' for 'time' as well as for 'soul' (e.g. as in Kundakunda's *Samaysara*). Consequently, '*samayika*' is the time devoted to be in touch with one's own Self or soul.

In any case, *samayika* is a religious activity integrating deep meditation and yoga in search for the Self. It is both a method of attaining peace of mind through self-restraint, and a spiritual path aimed at searching for the true self. In effect, the daily practice of *samayika* produces progressive detachment of one's consciousness from all external objects. Jain scriptures repeatedly commend this ritual as the highest form of spiritual discipline.

Confession (*Pratikramana*)



The word '*prati*' means 'towards', and '*kraman*' means 'to go' or 'revisit'. A daily, personal session of *pratikramana* is designed for introspection, while acknowledging and making ourselves aware of the offenses we commit during our day-to-day activity. These offenses may have been the direct or indirect result of our actions, or may result only from our thinking or uttering ill of others. Unlike other religious traditions, confession need not involve a priest, but must result in (i) repentance for transgressions, (ii) renunciation of evil thoughts or actions, and (iii) a resolve to gain strength to prevent such offenses in the future. *Pratikramana* serves to exercise control over one's mind by prodding it to overcome its weaknesses and encouraging it to strive for forgiveness, humility, and strength. This may also include *samayika* or meditation mentioned earlier.

* Khamemi savva jivanam, savve jiva khamamtu me

Mitti me savva bhuesu, vairam majjham na kena vi

I forgive all living beings and may all living beings forgive me (for all my transgressions).

I cherish friendship towards all and harbor enmity towards none.

These rituals form part of the Jain lifestyle. Not all Jains are necessarily on the active path to monkhood and *moksha*, but most do follow some, if not all, of these rituals. To the extent that they do, they experience serenity and calmness in their lives. The self-discipline and the principles they demonstrate through these rituals nurture an attitude of generosity, respect for others and non-aggressiveness. Collectively, such an attitude contributes to community peace, mutual help, and philanthropy, a point to which we return at greater length in Section IV. In the next section, we discuss the worldview that generated such peaceful and healthy practices and the philosophical basis of the Jain lifestyle.

Section



Section II. Rational Worldview *(samyak-darsana)*

SECTION PREVIEW

In section 1, we learned that the Jain lifestyle is simple, austere, respectful of all living beings, and non-confrontational. It is a lifestyle governed by the "Triple 'A's" of ahimsa, aparigraha, and anekantavada, known collectively as rational conduct.

Our conduct or our lifestyle really depends upon our set of beliefs, our worldview, and our confidence in accepting such beliefs. Therefore, in this section we will examine the Jain worldview (Jain darsana: the intuition of their philosopher founders) and the logic behind such a worldview. After all, conduct is 'rational' only if it is backed by a rational worldview. In this section, we will thus examine the rationality of the Jain worldview.

In Chapter 6, we examine the Jain worldview. The Jain understanding of 'Reality' is that the universe itself is eternal and self-governing. There is no need to believe that God exists, or that He created the universe and somehow operates it in an inexplicable, mystical way. We examine in Chapter 7 the logical arguments in support of the Jain worldview of Reality. Chapter 8 deals with the nine operating principles, which Jains use to explain how the universe governs itself. Contained within these principles is the Jain Theory of Karma. We discuss this in Chapter 9.

Chapter

6

6. The Reality

When I first started reading about Jainism in an encyclopedia, the statement that grabbed my attention was the cryptic and rather crude entry that said, "The Jains are atheists. They do not believe in God."

"There must be something wrong here," I thought... "Scientists believe that God does not exist, but this is religion! How could there be a religion without God?" That encyclopedia made me re-examine my own decades-old religious practices. "Just what was I doing every time I went into a Jain temple to pray? To whom was I praying?" I certainly did not consider myself an atheist and did believe that the idols in those temples represented God. Nevertheless, I decided to investigate by going to the source, the Jain scriptures.

Jainism has structured its worldview on the scientific methodology of observations, insight, experience, and analytical conclusions.

Soon I realized that Jainism has structured its world-view on the scientific methodology of observations, insight, and analysis. The founders of* this old religion did not have the tools and technology of modern science, but their intuition and reasoning ability must have been very sharp. They were in search of ultimate happiness. Based upon their experience and observations, they had a hunch that the key to happiness is not in the heavens but in their own minds and hearts. They had to confirm this idea. Like scientists, they asked of themselves, "If our mind is the source of all happiness and misery, what would happen if we managed to control our mind? Would we be able to control our misery and fate?" They then practiced rigorous self - discipline to achieve full control over their minds. These practices led them into deep spirituality and to a new understanding of Reality - an ultimate truth.

* According to Jain lore, Jainism is millions of years old. While this is not the place to justify or deny that claim, recent archeological evidence, as well as Hindu and Jain scriptures allow us to conclude that Rikhava was worshipped, and his philosophy of soul-purification through meditation was practiced as early as 6500 BCE or earlier. See Chapter 18.

Jain Understanding of Reality

What is the Jain understanding of Reality? These Jain philosophers found it hard to accept that a mystical force, far beyond the reaches of human senses, imagination and the limits of all logic, is the source of joy, misery, wars, destruction, quakes, floods, life, and death. Rational thinking convinced them that all these phenomena were natural. Such events are not the acts of some supreme being; they result from the interactions between the basic constituents of the universe. Furthermore, they reasoned that the concept of a supreme being is illogical, full of contradictions, unverifiable, and unnecessary to explain the workings of our universe. Instead of assuming that an imaginary external power has created this universe, they postulated that our universe is itself real and eternal. The Jain philosophers, in their search for Reality, concluded that there are only six fundamental elements* (*dravya*) in the universe. Nothing else exists. These six have existed forever and are eternal. No one has created them nor can anyone destroy them. This is Reality. The six elements can be organized into two groups namely, (1) soul or animate elements (*jiva*)*, and (2) non-soul or inanimate elements (*ajiva*).

This Jain worldview reconciles well even with the modern big bang theory. These six elements do interact and transform themselves. The big bang is just an event marking the sudden transformation of these eternal elements. "In fact," jains would argue, "the suggestion that God created all this out of nothing is illogical and difficult to reconcile with the modern science and the big-bang theory of the scientists." If called upon to prove the existence of the soul, Jains simply draw attention to our own experience of self-awareness. "Who am I?" they will ask and proceed to answer, "Am I this body? Will this body still have self-awareness if the 'I' in it leaves and the dead heap of matter is left behind?" Jains view the answers to these questions as providing an adequate, even self-evident, spiritual proof of the existence of souls in living beings.

The Animate Elements (*Jiva*)

According to Jainism, there is no single universal soul or *jiva*. Instead, there are an infinite number of distinct and independent *jivas* in the universe. Every living being is made up of *jiva* and matter (*ajiva*). Pure *jiva* has four intrinsic characteristics, namely, (i) infinite perception, (ii) infinite knowledge [perception + knowledge =

* The word *dravya* is generally translated to mean something tangible such as a substance or an object. This is confusing because the term *dravya* includes both tangible matter as well as non-tangible Time, Space, etc. We use the word Elements to convey a more accurate meaning of the word.

† The Western or even Hindu concept of the Soul is not the same as *Jiva*. *Jiva* is not a part of the divine force that re-merges with the whole. Each *jiva* is an eternal entity with its own unique qualities and characteristics. Consciousness is one of its main characteristics. There are infinite numbers of *Jivas*, each retaining its identity, both in the liberated as well as in the non-liberated states. However, we will continue to use the words Soul and *Jiva* interchangeably.

consciousness],* (iii) infinite energy and, (iv) infinite bliss. All *jivas* are equal in their potentialities, and intrinsic characteristics. Every living being is a single *jiva* entrapped in a material body. Fine material particles** pollute *jiva*. *Jiva* has always existed in the polluted state, but its purification is possible through human effort. As we purify our soul, we begin to understand Reality. The process may take us to eternal bliss without any external intervention or divine grace. Each *jiva* is eternal. Impure *Jiva* has limited energy, consciousness, and bliss because it is in the polluted and bonded state. A soul can fully realize its potential only if it manages to completely dissociate itself from matter and become pure. A pure soul will never again be defiled but until then it will continually be reborn, though not necessarily in human form.

Pure Soul

Infinite Bliss
Infinite Energy
Infinite Perception
Infinite Knowledge

All rebirths may not necessarily be on this earth. Destined by its *karma*, an impure soul may assume any one of four forms (*gati*), namely, (i) human being (*manushya*), (ii) celestial being (*deva*), (iii) plant, animal, or microbe (*tiryancha*), or (iv) hell* being (*naraki*). A swastika with a crescent with three dots illustrates this concept. The four squares represent four *gatis*, and the crescent represents the abode for the pure liberated souls.** During each life cycle, a soul may rid itself of some associated material particles but may also attract and bond itself with new ones. It is almost an endless cycle of birth and death. Only in the human form, can anyone knowingly and purposefully work towards the total purification of his soul and thus liberate it. Various terms such as *moksha/nirvana* or liberation are used to describe this liberated state.

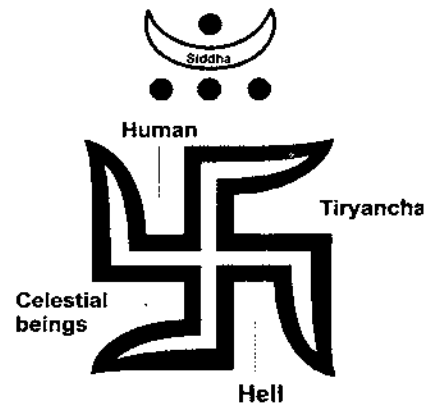


Figure 6.1: A graphical representation of four destinations for rebirth.

What about the other forms? Could they not also work towards the liberation of their souls? We will have to understand the *karma* theory to appreciate the answers to these questions. For now, let us accept the statement that only humans (not even celestial beings) are capable of purposefully working towards liberation. Central to the Jain worldview is this comprehensive concept of innumerable souls, their purity,

* 19th century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel introduced a similar concept in the Western world. "Spirit is none other than self-consciousness of one's own being. It involves an appreciation of its own nature and also an energy enabling it to realize itself; to make itself actually that which it is potentially." Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, Dover, New York 1956, pp 17-18.

** Details in Chapter 9

♦ Jain cosmology has concepts similar to heaven and hell. They are *deva-loka* and *narak* respectively. These are not permanent abodes. Souls take birth here, but when the karma responsible for their birth in these abodes come to fruition, souls leave this *gati* to be reborn in one of the other three *gatis*.

♦♦ In the 20th century, Adolph Hitler adopted a corrupted version of the ancient swastika to symbolize his misguided power and vanity.

the cycle of birth and rebirth, and human initiative to purify soul by a path laid down by the Jain spiritual masters.

The Inanimate Elements (*Ajiva*)

Jain philosophers have classified all inanimate elements (*ajivas*) into five types, each with its unique characteristic. The intrinsic and common property of all five however, is that they can never achieve consciousness. These five elements are:

1. Matter (*pudgala-astikaya*) - {*astikaya* means collection of spaces}
2. Space (*akasa-astikaya*)
3. The Principle of Motion or change (*dharm-astikaya*)
4. The Principle of Rest or resistance to change (*adharma-astikaya*) and
5. Time (*kala*).

Thus, together with *Jiva*, we now have six fundamental elements (*dravya*). These six comprise the 'Reality' in Jainism. All these exist and are real, eternal, and logically acceptable. They have their unique intrinsic qualities and are subject to perceptions and understanding. None is destructible; nor can any be created. Mutual interactions of these may change their forms but transformation of one element into another is not possible.

Matter (*Pudgala*)

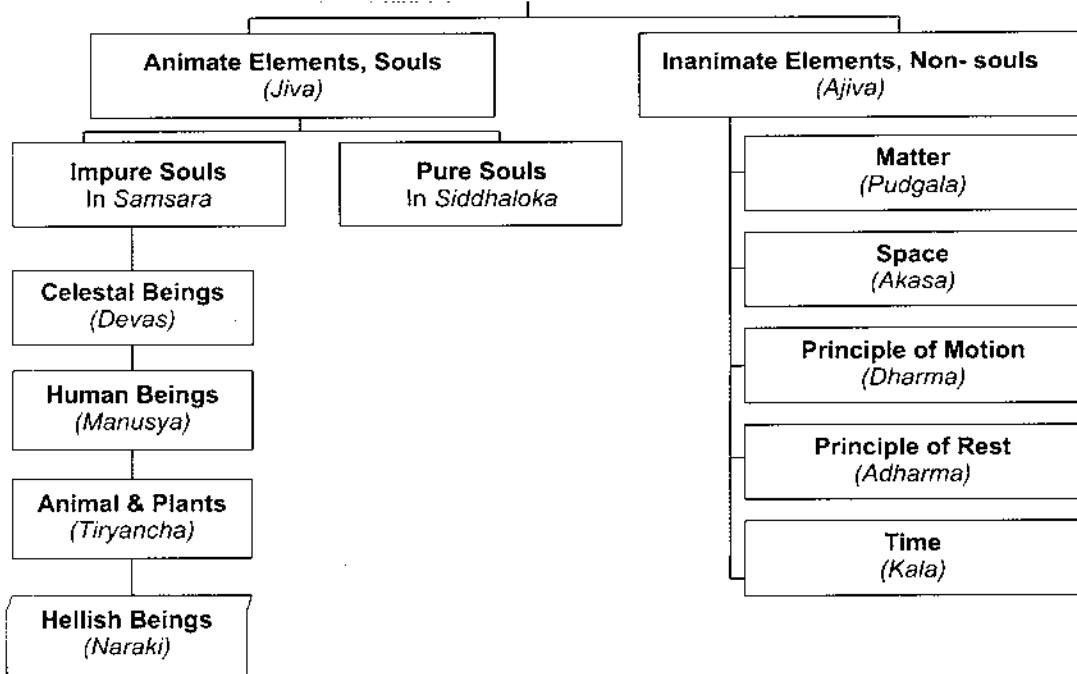
Like soul, there are an infinite number of small units of matter also. The smallest indivisible unit of matter is *anu*. These material particles exist in clusters or as single, non-continuous units. They occupy space (they have size and form), co-exist and possess qualities such as touch, taste, smell, and color depending upon their combined form. The matter that we conventionally see, feel, or touch is an aggregate of these small units, their different combinations producing different substances. The common meaning of the word *anu* is atom; however, in the Jain concept *anu* is much smaller. It is the smallest, indivisible, sub-sub-atomic particle of matter. Unlike atoms, all *anu* particles are identical.

Space (*Akasa*)

Space is an entity that holds other *dravyas* or elements. The specific characteristic of space is to accommodate other elements. Space too is made of infinite number of space units (*pradesa*), but unlike the units of *jiva* and matter, space units are in a continuum and are inseparable from one another. Space is divided into cosmic space (*lokakasa*) and trans-cosmic space (*alokakasa*). All elements are confined to cosmic space. Nothing exists in trans-cosmic space other than its own infinite space units. However, expansion of cosmic space (*lokakasa*) into trans-cosmic space (*alokakasa*) is theoretically possible by virtue of the characteristic of the space units (*pradesa*) to accommodate other elements.

Jain Understanding of Reality

Universal Elements



Media of Motion and Rest (*Dharma and Adharma*)

The function of the Media of Motion and Rest is to act as the supporting causes for the movement or rest of the individual units or aggregates of matter and soul. Like space, these two media are also made of infinite number of units, all of which are in a continuum and occupy the entire cosmic space.

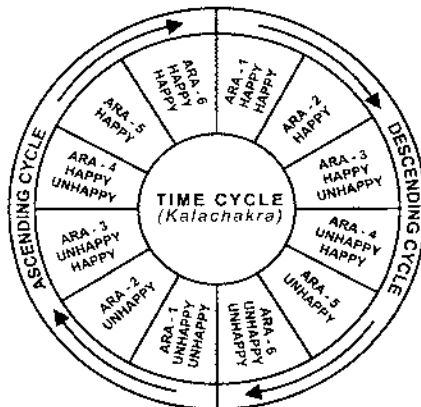


Figure 6.2 The Time Circle (*Kalachakra*)

Time

Time is instrumental for the changes in other substances. It is made of infinite number of non-continuous units. (Space and the media exist in a continuum). Seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc. are simply the conventional (not real) units of time. Western belief stresses the linear progression of time, but the Jain concept of time is cyclical. That is, time is eternal - there is neither a beginning nor an end to time. The universe undergoes the natural process of creation and

destruction through endless cycles of time. A full cycle of time consists of two halves. One of these semi-circles* is a period of ascent (*utsarpini*), and the other half marks a period of descent (*avasarpini*). During the ascent period, everything in the universe - happiness, knowledge, human, and animal nature, life spans, etc. - gradually improves. At the pinnacle, the other half of the cycle begins and the conditions begin to deteriorate gradually until the period of ascent begins.

Each period has six divisions (*Ara*). The general level of happiness, prosperity, health, life span, etc. changes from division to division. For example, the first division of the descending period is the most prosperous and paradisiacal time (happy-happy). The happiness decreases through each successive division until we reach the sixth one, which is the most miserable period (unhappy-unhappy) and then the ascending period begins. Prosperity, longevity, and happiness now improve through each of the six divisions in the ascending period until we once again reach the paradisiacal times. The cycle thus continues eternally.

The fourth division of either period, is supposed to be the best for the development of human civilization and culture. These times produce a number of great personalities including *Tirthankaras* who show us their path.

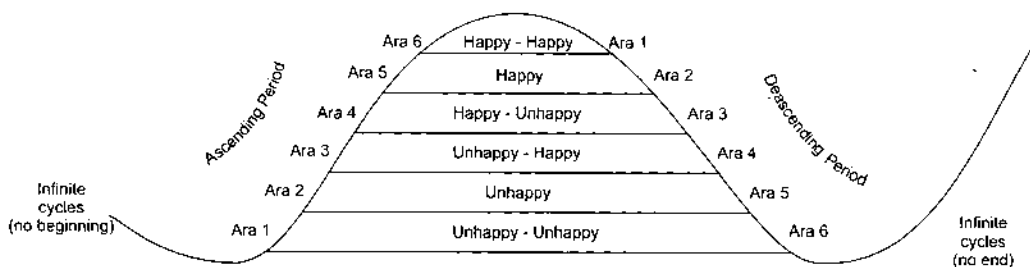


Figure 6.3: Time as a cyclical waveform with ascending and descending periods and aras

The cyclical concept of time is important for Jains because linearity would imply that there is a beginning and an end of time. It also implies that everything in the universe itself - must end when time ends, and be created at the beginning of time. This could not be so because the six elements of the universe, including time, are eternal and indestructible. We, our civilization and our planet, are just current modes of the elements, which constantly change their form (see below). The Jain scriptures describe the functions of time as:

* Most texts show time as a circle with two halves, one represents the ascent period and the other represents the descent. This author feels that such a picture implies that things eventually come back exactly to the same point, that is, there is no real progress in the universe. A more accurate representation of the cyclical nature of time might be the Waveform, with the crest representing the peak of the ascending period and the trough representing the end of the descending period, the waveform itself being eternal - without a beginning or an end.

Bringing about incessant, imperceptible, minute change, perceptible transformation, activity, anteriority, and posterity are the functions of time.

Umaswati: Tattvarth Sutra, V.22

Thus, without time, change would never occur, nor could soul be ever purified.

The Apparent Contradiction

Jains talk of the permanence of the six elements while maintaining that through mutual interactions they change their form. Does not the change destroy the original object? “Not so,” would be the Jain response. “In fact, these six elements are both ‘permanent’ and eternal (*nitya*) as well as ‘impermanent’ and changeable (*anitya*).” “Double-speak?” you might respond. “How could something be both ‘permanent’ as well as ‘impermanent’?”

Here comes a philosopher’s peculiarly commonsensical view. Inherent qualities (*gunas*) and modes or forms (*paryayas*) of an object define its fundamental identity. Whereas the quality distinguishes one object from another, modes describe different transformations of the same object. Both quality and mode are always in association with one another, no object is devoid of one or the other.

We are conditioned to believe that everything originates, exists for a period, and then is destroyed. Jain philosophers suggest that this is not so. What we really see are the different modes of the elements. The interactions between the elements may give us the impression that a specific element has changed, but in reality only its mode has changed, its inherent qualities have not. A *dravya* or an element maintains its permanence by not losing its inherent qualities. The modes of an entity, on the other hand, are continuously changing. Therefore, we may perceive that a new object is created, has remained permanent for a while, and is destroyed. In other words, the *six fundamental elements*, though permanent in terms of their intrinsic characteristics, appear to be impermanent in our perception in terms of their modes.











An example given to illustrate this point is that of a gold coin. When a goldsmith changes the coin into a necklace, the coin is destroyed and the necklace is created. Later, the necklace may be changed into rings. Thus, through all these transformations gold remains the same (albeit in different modes) with its unique qualities and hence is permanent. Similarly, the six *dravyas* of the Jain Reality are both permanent as well as impermanent depending upon our perspective and focus either on the intrinsic characteristics or on the modes.

The Gods, Monks and Temples

Our earlier statement that Jains have no Creator God gives the impression that Jains

are atheists. Yet, Jains have built an extraordinary number of magnificent temples in India. They continue to build these places of worship outside India also. In these temples, they have installed hundreds of idols. Made mostly of granite or marble, all

TERMS TO REMEMBER

 <i>Anitya</i>	Non-eternal, impermanent, transitory
 <i>Guna</i>	Quality, attribute, property
 <i>Naya</i>	Viewpoint, standpoint
 <i>Nitya</i>	Eternal, permanent, constant
 <i>Paryaya</i>	Mode, modification, format
 <i>Pramana</i>	Instrument of valid cognition,
 <i>Sapta-bhangi</i>	Seven-fold predication
 <i>Syad</i>	"In a certain sense, or viewpoint"
 <i>Syat</i>	Same as Syad, also "relatively"
 <i>Syadvada</i>	Doctrine of qualified assertions.











these images look almost alike - seated or standing erect, with their arms and hands held tightly at the side, and in deep meditation. Jains pray and worship these idols. If Jains are atheists, why do they build temples? Whose idols are these? Why do they pray? Whom do they worship?

For the Jains, God is an ideal, not an abstract supernatural entity controlling this universe. Since liberation of the soul is the goal of every Jain, those human beings who have achieved this goal are their ideals. Furthermore, after having achieved omniscience, those who taught

and demonstrated the path to liberation are their super-ideals. These are the twenty-four *Tirthankaras* - the Peaceful Liberators. It is to these *Tirthankaras* that Jains have built the temples and the monuments. The images in the temples are of them. Jains direct their prayers and worship towards the teachers who are believed to have built a ford across this vast ocean of 'samsara,' or cycle of rebirth and death, and thus have shown the world a path to ultimate bliss.

Through their prayers and meditation, Jains seek inspiration for their progress on the path to liberation. Who else but these Peaceful Liberators can provide such inspiration? In their prayers, Jains do not ask for mercy or relief from their bad *karma* because Jains know that they and they alone have to work out their *karma*. A Jain prayer is more a time for reflection, where a devotee desires the ability to model him/herself after the examples set by these great teachers. They do not seek the divine intervention of these *Tirthankaras* or of God. In fact, *Tirthankaras*, being fully liberated souls, cannot interfere or help a worshiper (except to inspire the worshiper) to overcome his problems. In actual practice, a layperson's intention in prayer may differ from that of a monk or a Jain scholar.

TERMS TO REMEMBER

 <i>Adharma</i>	Medium of stability or rest.
 <i>Akasa</i>	Universe, space
 <i>Aloka-akasa</i>	Space that is not inhabited
 <i>Anu</i>	Indivisible sub-atomic particle
 <i>Dharma</i>	Medium of motion
 <i>Dnaya</i>	The six 'Real Elements'
 <i>Kala</i>	Time
 <i>Loka-akasa</i>	Space inhabited by the elements
 <i>Pudgala</i>	Matter
 <i>Samsara</i>	Cycle of birth and death

Influenced by the surroundings, and overcome by the challenges of mere survival, a person's desire for miraculous intervention is understandable. Having recognized these human weaknesses, Jains later created a set of celestial beings (most drawn from among the Hindu pantheon) to satisfy this lay desire. People believe that some of these are helpful and protective. For example, they routinely worship numerous *Indras* and *Indrayanis* and play out their role as celestial attendants of *Tirthankaras* in the form of a drama during Jain ceremonies. Jain mythology speaks of the 'guardian' deities (*sasana devatas*) who supposedly attended to, protected, and helped potential *Tirthankaras* during their difficult journey to *moksha*. Some of the prominent ones are Chakreshwari, Padmavati, Dharnendra and Ganesha (called Parsva-yaksha). We often find their images in the less prominent parts of the Jain temples. Most Jains are aware that they alone are responsible for their *karmic* plight and cannot expect relief or intervention from any deities -



Tirthankaras or *sasana devatas* - and yet, hoping against hope, they seek relief by worshipping these idols.

A daily private visit to a nearby temple is routine for a lay, idol-worshipping Jain. There is no priest nor is there any sermon at this time. The visit simply involves sitting quietly in meditation in front of an idol, saying personal prayers and reminding oneself of the need to reduce *karmic* bondage, reach the ultimate goal, draw inspiration from the courage and determination of the



Tirthankaras, and to pledge continuation on the Path. Such visits often include veneration and singing a hymn in praise of the *Tirthankara*, chanting scriptures, or anointing the idol with a paste made of saffron and sandalwood.

The most sacred Jain prayer - chanted repeatedly by Jain devotees - is called the *Namokara Mantra* in which the devotee simply pays her respects, not to any particular individual or *Tirthankara*, but to all spiritual leaders. In so doing, she reminds herself that they inspire her to continue her progress toward total purification. The Mantra and its meaning is given below:

NAMO ARAHAMTANAM

(I bow and seek inspiration from those souls who having gained total victory over themselves and have shown us the path to moksha.)

NAMO SIDDHANAM

(I bow and seek inspiration from all the perfect, pure and liberated souls.)

NAMO AYARIYANAM

(I bow and seek inspiration from the heads of the religious orders.)

NAMO UVAJJHAYANAM

(I bow and seek inspiration from the teachers of the scriptures.)

NAMO LOE SAVVA SAHUNAM

(I bow and seek inspiration from all the ascetic monks and nuns in the world.)

ESO PANCHA NAMOKKARO SAVVA PAVA PANAASANO MANGALANAM CHA SAVVESIM PADHAMAM HAVAI MANGALAM

(Salutations to these five types of great souls will help diminish my inauspicious *karma*.
These salutations are so auspicious as to bring everyone happiness and peace.)

Five Revered Ones (*Pancha Paramesthis*)

The *Namokar Mantra* mentions five revered sources of inspiration. These are, Arahats, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas, and Sadhus. It is an inter-faith, universal prayer in the sense that Jains pray not to any particular person but to all holy souls.

After attaining absolute knowledge (*kevalgnana*) at the 13th stage of their spiritual progress (*gunasthana*), a few selected ones undertake to spread their knowledge (because of their special karma). These enlightened souls show the world the path to enlightenment. Such revered individuals are called *Arhat* or *Tirthankara* and are worshipped by the Jains. From the realistic point of view, an Arhat is without a body, but from the ordinary point of view, we speak of an Arhat to possess a perfect and brilliant body.











A **Siddha**, being free from all karmic bondages (Ch. 9), does not have a gross body. However, from the ordinary point of view, a Siddha is believed to have a translucent shape that resembles the figure of a human being. At this stage, the soul is absolutely pure, and thus has absolute knowledge, infinite energy, and bliss. Such souls permanently reside at the summit of the *lokakasha* in a place called the *siddha-sila*.

An **Acharya** is one who practices and teaches five kinds of conduct (*Acharas*). These are: (i) *Darsanachara* - trusts that soul is supreme consciousness (ii) *Jnanachara*-devotes himself to seeking the absolute knowledge of the Reality (iii) *Charitrachara*-seeks tranquility by freeing himself from all attachments (iv) *Tapachara* - practices penances to conquer passions and (v) *Vriyachara* - devotes all his energy to ensure that first four *Acharas* are not hindered.

An **Upadhyaya** is one who, possessed of perfect conduct and knowledge, teaches others the tenets of Jainism.

A **Sadhu (Sadhvi)** is a renunciate who is always active in attaining perfect conduct, faith, and knowledge. He/she practices penances, meditates upon the soul, and progresses along the path to liberation.

Temples serve another important function - that of building the community and creating a sense of identity for Jains. The philosophy and the code of conduct of Jainism would suggest that the religion is very much a personal and private matter. Indeed so, Jainism preaches that each individual is responsible for his/her *karma* and can eliminate them through self-discipline and asceticism. This, of course, is the personal and private side of the religion. However, religions often institutionalize themselves to serve the spiritual and community needs of a particular society. A profusion of Jain temples, therefore, may be looked upon as a necessary facet of the community demands on this very personal religion. For example, temples serve as a site for drawing a community together. While individuals may offer daily *pujas* privately, collective worship is also frequently arranged at the temples. There are no sermons at the collective worship, and no monk or nun officiates. The occasion usually involves devotional singing, music, and even dancing. It is mostly a social function with spiritual overtones, often accompanied by some fund-raising for temple maintenance and social causes.

TERMS TO REMEMBER	
 <i>Arabant</i>	Omniscient ones who show the path
 <i>Ayariya</i>	Head of the order of monks or nuns
 <i>Bhattaraka</i>	An administrator-cleric (who is not a monk)
 <i>Ghee-boli</i>	A fund-raising technique for the temples
 <i>Namo</i>	Reverent salutation
 <i>Namokara</i>	A holy litany of reverent salutation
 <i>Puja</i>	Worship
 <i>Pujari</i>	A care-taker of idols in a temple
 <i>Sahu</i>	Monk, nun, ascetic
 <i>Uvajjhaya</i>	Ascetics who teach scriptures.

Examples of the community-building role of the temples are evident in North America and U.K. where Jains have migrated relatively recently. These new immigrants probably would have remained socially and spiritually isolated and scattered but for the lead taken by a few individuals. Visionaries like Gurudev Chitrabhanu - a former monk - and late Sushil Kumarji - a reformist Jain monk who belonged to an order, which does not even believe in temple worship - traveled to North America in the 1970s and inspired Jains to build temples and to come together as a community.



As a result, several temples and more than sixty Jain organizations have sprung up throughout the major cities in Canada and the United States. At conventions every two years, as many as 10,000 Jains get together under the auspices of an umbrella organization called JAINA (Federation of Jain Associations of North America).

Jains are presumed to have borrowed the notion of temples, idols, and worships from Hinduism. However, textual evidence for the existence of an idol of a *Tirthankara* dates back to first century BCE inscriptions of Kharavela. Indeed rituals such as '*arati*' (waving a lamp in front of an idol), bathing and decorating idols, offering flowers and fruits to the idol and singing devotional songs are central to both religions. Most of these can be traced back to an eighth century Jain monk - Jinasena - who, having perceived the dangers inherent in interacting with the Hindu majority, co-opted some Hindu practices and rituals in order to appear less conspicuous. While these rituals do inspire a devotee to remain focused on his goal of liberation, some have become popularly and mistakenly identified with the idea of buying merits. These merits, many believe, will speed them on their path toward *moksha* or liberation of their soul.*

The temples, the rituals, and the ascetics all play an important role in community building. While monks and nuns do not regularly offer sermons or officiate at services, they do serve to deepen religious understanding in a community. Their *aparigraha* (non-possession) vow forbids them from staying at one place for any

* In Southern India, for example, Jain temples are managed by a special group of administrator-clerics known as *bhattarakas* who wield great power over the lay community and exercise their authority to raise funds for the temples. The temples in the Northwest are administered not by priests or monks but by management committees. Short of any authority and power over the community, these committees have developed a unique and quite successful technique for fund-raising. This, called '*ghee boli*', enables them to auction off the rights to perform some of the above rituals to the highest bidders. The bidders are happy under the impression that they have earned some merits, and the temple is happy for the funds received!

length of time. Except for the four rainy months in a year, when travel is difficult in India, these ascetics are constantly on the move. With bare feet, they walk miles visiting villages and cities where they take temporary shelter, often in a hall adjoining the temple. During their short stay, laypersons listen to their religious discourses and understand some philosophical intricacies of Jainism. The visit by a monk or a nun is often a great social occasion for the community. Laypersons revere these visitors and consider it a great honor if a monk or nun comes to their house and asks for food. This dependency of laypersons on wandering ascetics for spiritual guidance, and of ascetics on laity for sustenance, has enabled Jainism not only to survive for thousands of years but also to remain true to the basic teachings of the *Tirthankaras*.

Tirthankaras

Tirthankaras are the teachers who have reached the thirteenth *gunasthana* of *sayoga-kevalin* through rigorous ascetic practices, achieved omniscience, and preached their path before attaining *moksha*. Their images in Jain temples look alike except for those of the seventh *Tirthankara* Suparsva, and the twenty-third, Parsva. These two are depicted with a canopy of hooded snakes above their heads, Parsva with seven hooded canopy and Suparsva with five or nine (but never seven). However, each image has an identifying emblem carved on the pedestal. The names and identifying emblems for all the twenty-four *Tirthankaras* are given in the order of their birth in the table on the next page.

TIRTHANKARA	EMBLEM
1 Rik hava/Rishabha/Adi-natha	Bull
2 Ajita-natha	Elephant
3 Sambhava-natha	Horse
4 Abhinandana-natha	Ape
5 Sumati-natha	Bird - Partridge
6 Padmaprabhu	Lotus
7 Suparsva-natha	Swastika
8 Chandraprabhu	Moon
9 Suvidihi-natha/Pushpadanta	Crocodile/Dolphin
10 Sitala-natha	Four-cornered symbol
11 Sreyamsa-natha	Rhinoceros
12 Vasupujya-swami	Buffalo
13 Vimala-natha	Boar
14 Ananta-natha	Hawk or Bear
15 Dharma-natha	Thunderbolt
16 Shanti-natha	Deer
17 Kunthu-natha	Goat
18 Aranatha	Stylized Swastika
19 Malli-natha	Water Jar
20 Munisuvrata-swami	Tortoise
21 Nami-natha	Blue Lotus
22 Aristanemi-swami/Nemi-natha	Conch Shell
23 Parsava-natha	Cobra
24 Mahavira	Lion

7

7. The Roots of the Jain World-vision

Jains reject the concept of a creator God as unreal and illogical. To them, the universe with its six fundamental elements (soul, matter, time, space, and the principles of motion and rest) is real, eternal, and logical. It is possible to experience and logically accept these as real. These six elements and their mutual interactions can explain the operation of the entire spiritual universe. How did Jain philosophers develop such world-vision?

Jiva

Along with their theory of the 'Real Elements of the Universe', Jain philosophers deduced a whole set of logical doctrines to explain such basic questions as "Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What makes my life happy or miserable?"

According to Jainism, all living beings are made of matter and *jiva*, in varying proportions. The logic of this argument can be expressed in the form of a simple equation:

$$\text{Living Being} = \text{Body} + \text{Consciousness} \\ \text{matter} + \text{jiva (impure)}$$

At death, our consciousness leaves, and the body remains. Since the dead body has no consciousness, we can conclude that the *jiva* (consciousness, soul) has departed and the material body has remained behind. It is the *jiva* that makes the material body live, creates consciousness in it, and makes it energetic and happy or miserable.

If we accept the above conclusion, can we also assume that at death, all the matter remains behind, and pure *jiva* escapes? If so, does death liberate the soul? "Not so," says Jain metaphysics. What is left behind is only gross matter; what has departed is the *jiva* bonded with micro-matter (*karmic* particles). The gross matter forms the 'body' of a being, but the micro, sub-atomic, material particles, called *karman pudgala* - actually bond with *jiva*. Recent scientific discovery of 'Black Matter' has excited the

imagination of some Jains. They view it as a validation of *Karman Pudgala*. This bonding with *karmic* particles makes *jiva* impure, obscures *jiva's* intrinsic qualities, and is responsible for the entrapment of it in the cycle of birth and death.

Thus, there might be temporary pleasures in life but the entire process of living from birth to death for all living beings is full of suffering and limitations. Jain philosophers reasoned that a *jiva* experiences pain and limitations because of its entrapment in the body, and the impediments would continue as long as *jiva* remains entrapped through its numerous births and deaths. A free *jiva*, unencumbered by *karmic* particles would not experience any pain or limitations. In other words, "a free, liberated *jiva*," the Jain philosophers concluded, "must have infinite consciousness, infinite energy, and infinite happiness (bliss)." These, they decided are the intrinsic characteristics of a liberated or pure *jiva*.

Doctrine of Karma

The bonded *jiva* takes rebirth with all its baggage of *karmic particles* and enjoys (or

Bonding with karmic particles makes Jiva impure, obscures its intrinsic qualities, and is responsible for the entrapment of the soul in the cycle of birth And death.

suffers) the fruits of its *karma*, past and present. The bonded *jiva* goes through endless cycles of birth and death until it manages to free itself from all its *karmic* particles and achieve liberation. Different living beings (men, women, animals, or plants) are simply different modes of souls bonded with *karmic* particles and trapped in gross matter (body). Their mundane existence may take different forms, depending upon the degree and type of bondage, but all these souls are potentially equal. All are impure and trapped in the cycle of birth and death, their limitless bliss, knowledge, and energy obscured. Furthermore, they all are at various stages of liberation from their 'bonded' state.

The greater the association of *jiva* with knowledge-obscuring *karmic* particles, the lesser is its ability to perceive the absolute truth. Since all living beings are made of *jiva* and matter, and since *jiva* alone has the ability to acquire enlightenment (true knowledge), it follows that living beings whose *jivas* are bonded with fewer knowledge obscuring *karmic* particles will have better perception and knowledge than those whose *jivas* are weighted down with more *karma*. Jain philosophers then went on to investigate the reasons for the bonding of *jiva* with the *karmic* particles and the ways to free it from this bondage. Chapter 8 discusses the mechanism of bonding, and Chapter 9 discusses how bonding affects a living being.

Liberation (*Moksha*)

If a *jiva* ever manages to purge itself of all its *karma*, it will become a liberated, enlightened, or non-bonded soul (a state of pure consciousness attainable through the processes and practices described later). According to Jains, this is *moksha* (salvation, liberation, or nirvana). Such a non-bonded soul is in a state of permanent bliss. Every *jiva* longs for such a free state.

We can now examine how the Jain worldview of *jiva* and its corruption by *karmic* particles has given rise to three of the most important doctrines of the Jain code of conduct. In Section 1, we saw that the three 'A's of the Jain code are *ahimsa* (doctrine of nonviolence), *anekantavada* (doctrine of manifold truth) and *aparigraha* (the doctrine of minimizing one's needs and possessions). In this chapter, we take a closer look at these doctrines, all of which originate directly from the Jain view of the soul and its corruption.

Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*)

The Jain worldview that all life forms are bonded souls struggling to set themselves free, and that *karmic* particles are keeping them bonded, has made nonviolence perhaps the most important of all Jain doctrines. Jains maintain that all living beings - not just humans - have a soul, although impure to different degrees. The pure soul is the Jain ideal. Jains revere those who have attained that pure, liberated state. Though different in their bonded forms, all souls are potentially and intrinsically same. "Therefore," Jains say, "even an impure soul deserves our respect and reverence because of its potential to be free someday." Hence, humans, animals and even plants are equally worthy of our respect and reverence.

This Jain logic has generated a lifestyle of reverence for all living beings, and for the environment. If a person believes that his soul is potentially equal to that of another human being, he will not treat another human being - a person of another race, religion, nationality, or gender - with contempt and bigotry. Furthermore, Jains believe that harming another living being, in fact, is harming its sacred *jiva*. Such act only increases the *karmic* bonding of our own soul, and defiles it further. If we believe that ALL souls have the same potential, how could we carelessly destroy a plant or animal life? How could we dare to hurt or even think ill of another living being? How could we strive to be anything but non-violent? The Jain drive for minimizing hurting or killing another life form has evolved out of this view of the workings of the universe and has made Jains passionately vegetarian, non-aggressive, and stewards of the environment.

Jains do recognize that it is difficult to be completely non-violent. The air we breathe, the food we eat, our very acts of moving or walking, involve destroying many microbes and insects. Violence and harm to other living beings is thus inevitable. As humans, all we can really do is to examine our intent, inform ourselves, make intelligent choices based on that knowledge, and try to minimize harm to other living beings. Jains place great importance on the terms 'intelligent choice' and 'intent'. Later when we study *karmic* theory, we will see how effects of *karma* depend upon our intent and passions. Jains believe that the world would be a better, more peaceful, more compassionate, and environmentally sustainable place if everyone embraced

this concept of respect for all life.

Doctrine of Manifold Truth (*Anekantavada*)

One of the innate qualities of the soul is its infinite perception. This quality enables the soul to perceive absolute truth. However, *karmic* particles bonded to the soul mask this characteristic. Souls of all living beings are bonded and impure. Since impurities create impediments to full sensibility and experience, it follows that no living being has the ability to perceive or understand absolute truth. We humans are intrinsically incapable of understanding all facets of Reality!

The realization that living beings cannot perceive absolute truth has given rise to a uniquely Jain concept - *anekantavada* - or the Doctrine of Manifold Truth. This concept is now gaining increasing attention from the post-modern thinkers. Jains contend that we face two basic difficulties in trying to understand absolute Reality or absolute truth. The first of which is that we normally perceive truth through our faculties. Since our perceptions are subject to our own biases and conditioning by our very instruments of perception (our senses), there can be no single perception of truth. Everyone perceives truth differently. The famous Jain parable of “The Elephant and The Seven Blind Men” illustrates this point.

The second difficulty is with the very nature of Reality itself! Reality is identifiable both by the innate qualities (*gunas*) and the modes of existence (*pariyayas*) of the six basic elements (*dravyas*). Since a 'real' or basic element (*dravya*) has innumerable qualities and can exist in innumerable, constantly changing, transitory modes, it is impossible for an ordinary human being to comprehend a given reality in its entirety. All we can ever perceive is a mode or a facet of this reality. As we have seen earlier (Chapter 6, page 53, Jain philosophers describe the six elements of the universe, seemingly paradoxically, as being both eternal as well as impermanent. Soul, for example, from the point of its innate qualities (*gunas*) like infinite bliss, consciousness, and energy is permanent, but due to its interactions with other elements like matter and time, we perceive it in its ever-changing modes (*pariyayas*). From our perspective, soul appears impermanent because we experience and perceive only its weak, sad, or ignorant modes sometimes and strong, joyful, and brilliant modes at other times. We perceive only some modes or forms of the reality, and not the entire reality, only some facets of the truth, not the absolute truth. This is why Jains maintain that it is wrong for anyone to claim that he or she has the absolute truth. This commonsense philosophical argument establishing the manifold aspects of reality and our inherent inability to comprehend absolute truth is the doctrine of *anekantavada*.

The Elephant and the Seven Blind Men

Once upon a time seven blind men who had never been able to see, were taken near an elephant. One of them placed his hands on the elephant's ears, another on his legs, another on the tail of the elephant, and so on. When they were asked to describe the elephant, one person said: "Oh, to be sure, the elephant is a big flat fan-like animal". "No", said the other, "I touched the animal, and it is certainly like a thick round post all the way from the ground to as high as I could reach." The third person shouted, "You are both wrong. Let me tell you for sure. It is a long rope-like thing with lots of hair on it and it wiggles all the time. I tried to catch it but it always wiggled away." Each one claimed that he alone was right.

Finally, the owner of the elephant said, "all of you are correct in what you have described, but all are also wrong because each of you has touched only one part of the elephant. Had you been able to examine all the sides with all your senses, you would have realized that each of you is right from your individual viewpoint, but the truth is that the real elephant is something different altogether."

Doctrine of Syadvada (Acknowledging Multiple Viewpoints)

With the realization that truth is multi-faceted and that people perceive different facets from their own perspective, came the realization that people's perception could at once be right from their own perspective as well as wrong from the total perspective. Often, if people do not realize the manifold nature of truth, they erroneously start believing that they alone are right and other viewpoints are wrong. Conflicts arise out of such beliefs. The Jain philosophers have, therefore developed a method called *syadvada* for expressing the manifold nature of truth. The term *Syadvada* derives from two words, '*vada*' meaning a statement, and '*syad*' (or *syat*) meaning 'in a certain sense' or 'in some respects'. Whereas '*anekantavada*' is the recognition of manifold perspectives, '*syadvada*' is a practical technique of synthesizing the seemingly contradictory attributes of an entity in a coherent whole. For example, if we state that a given entity is permanent, we are in effect negating the impermanence of that entity. Our statement therefore is incomplete, wrong, or only partially true. *Syadvada* enables us to be more accurate.

The accuracy comes from the use of a qualifying clause in the statement such as "from a particular viewpoint," or "in some respect." A statement such as "the soul is permanent" is only partially accurate. It implies only a one-sided view and negates the possibility of its impermanence. However, using the qualifying *syad* clause (e.g. "With respect to its intrinsic characteristics, the soul is permanent.") makes the statement more accurate. It does not deny the possibility of the impermanent modes, such as an impure soul. It is important to note here that the technique of *syadvada* is not a doctrine of doubt or uncertainty. It demonstrates the wisdom of the speaker in explaining the perspective he/she has chosen.

Having recognized that reality is multi-faceted and that we are unable to grasp reality in all its facets, Jain philosophers became obsessed with the nature and accuracy of any statement. A statement could be intrinsically correct or incorrect. Even a simple one like, "I am your teacher." may be correct from the perspective of a student but incorrect from the perspective of others for whom I am a son, a father, or a brother. Jains took their pursuit of precision a step further.

Syadvada would introduce the framework for that statement; however, to be more precise, Jain philosophers developed a system of seven-fold (*sapta-bhangi*) application of 'yat'. Factors such as time, place, attitude of the observer, relative nature of the object observed, etc. would have bearing on the accuracy of this statement. They suggested that to be accurate, a statement must take into account a comprehensive, all-sided view. Such absolute statements are called *pramana* statements. A full understanding of *anekantavada*, *syadvada*, *sapta-bhangi*, *pramana*, *naya*, etc. is valuable particularly for those involved in events such as conflict resolutions, negotiations, and inter-faith dialogue. Readers can find interesting philosophical details of these in, *Studies in Jaina Philosophy* by Nathmal Tatia.¹⁰ However, such accuracy is for the philosophers who might be engaged in a debate over the finer points of Reality. For most of us, practical statements (*vyavahara naya*) are sufficient. Jainism would suggest that such statements are only partially true. Given that these are only partial truths, we need to assimilate or organize or respond to the information we receive and communicate differently.

Jainism appreciates the possibility of there being multiple valid viewpoints, and that we humans have a limited ability to comprehend fully the absolute truth. This teaching helps to foster a fundamental underlying respect for those who espouse alternate beliefs and paths and reduces the potential for dogmatism. This Jain doctrine of Manifold Truth (*anekantavada*) is ultimately a practical principle because it preaches respect for differing viewpoints and thus encourages us to avoid conflicts. Most conflicts in the world including religious wars, have originated because of a lack of understanding, appreciation, and respect for differing viewpoints. Contemporary thinkers would agree (and hope) that the practice of *anekantavada* on a wider scale would have avoided (and could yet avoid) all wars started in the name of righteousness. The doctrine of *anekantavada* and the practice of reconciling differing views through *syadvada* have enabled Jainism to follow a non-aggressive lifestyle and survive many religious upheavals throughout their history.

¹⁰ Tatia, Nathmal, *Studies in Jaina Philosophy*, P.V. Research Institute, Hindu University, Varanasi, India 1951

Doctrine of Minimizing Needs and Possessions (*Aparigraha*)

Aparigraha (the doctrine of minimizing personal needs) is the third of the triple 'A' principles on which Jainism's code of conduct is based. Like the other two, *ahimsa* and *anekantavada*, the principle and practice of minimizing one's needs and possessions is an outcome of the Jain concept of the soul and its corruption.

Jains have developed a complex but logical theory to explain how karmic particles bond with or separate from the soul. Our emotions play a significant role in attracting and bonding karmic particles to the soul. The stronger the emotional attachment to an object, the stronger is the bond between the soul and the karmic particles attracted by such emotions. Obviously then, the more we possess, the greater is our involvement or attachment to them and the greater is the defilement of our soul. If liberation by purifying our soul is our goal, we must become increasingly detached from such objects. In other words, our goal should be to give up possessions and minimize needs so that greed and attachment do not govern our lives. Living with few possessions, or *aparigraha*, should be our sought after lifestyle. Giving up possessions is not easy. The Jain path to liberation acknowledges this in recommending the *Pratima* ladder (Chapter 4) to achieve a gradual, stress-free spiritual progress and detachment.

The importance of this principle in our modern world is worth discussing here. The term "happiness" usually involves a response based on physical comforts dependant on more money, a bigger house, a luxurious car, and fancier clothes, etc. There is no doubt that these provide physical comforts and a (false) sense of security and happiness. One may even argue that a desire to acquire such comforts drives the engine of human ingenuity and economic, social, and scientific progress. However, such comfort-based happiness is:

- Dependent on external objects, we become unhappy even with the mere thought of the possibility of losing such objects
- transitory - no sooner do we acquire the desired object of comfort, we become unhappy with it and desire more, better or bigger comfort
- destructive - an individual or a society rooted in comfort-based happiness can and often does employ, directly or indirectly, violent and destructive means to acquire such objects of comfort. This is evident in the human history of wars to acquire land resources, riches and wealth, and in the depletion of resources and environmental degradation resulting from our ever-increasing desires for consumer goods
- unfair - because of the exploitation involved in wealth accumulation, as evidenced in the unequal distribution of wealth both within and between nations and,
- responsible for greater unhappiness because greed knows no limits.

By contrast, the principle of *aparigraha* generates a mindset which is genuinely satisfied with whatever we possess, unperturbed by the prospects of losing our possessions, and indifferent to the momentary joy of gaining or pain of losing. It is non-destructive, non-aggressive, fair, and gives everlasting happiness. Most of us are seeking this happiness, and the Jain path to liberation promises this bliss!

The Dilemma

We as ordinary householders and laypersons face a dilemma when confronted with the doctrine of *aparigraha*. *Aparigraha* makes sense particularly when it comes to the desire and love for material goods, but love and kindness are strong and meaningful emotions. Does this doctrine expect us to be apathetic to other humans and living creatures? Marriage and family are simply more attachment - should Jains avoid these responsibilities? Such questions haunt those who try to understand Jainism. The dilemma is real and there appears to be very little discussion on these issues in the Jain literature. I can only present a personal viewpoint.

As stated earlier, Jains focus on *moksha*, for which the basic requirement is an absolute commitment to the goal, and a total victory over oneself. Absolute victory over oneself means one must overcome passions such as desire and hatred. In earlier chapters, I have described a gradual process for achieving this victory, one possible only through years of rigorous practice of austerity. Such a practice would require giving up all possessions, eventually cutting all bonds with the surrounding world, including family and friends, and finally dedicating oneself to the path of an ascetic, where one's mind becomes indifferent to such passions. This indifference leads to the unbinding of karma and to the total purification of the soul. Jains are unequivocal about this belief. So, what does it say for the rest of us who enjoy our families and friends and are loath to give them up?

Mahavira, the 24th *Tirthankara*, recognized this dilemma and came up with a logical

While moksha is an ideal goal and monkhood is an ideal path, those who choose not to follow that path could make an intelligent choice to follow the Triple 'A' s to the best of their ability and conscience, and thus fulfill their obligations to their world.

solution. He divided the community into four groups of people: monks (*sadhu*), nuns (*sadhvi*), lay persons (*sravakas* and *sravikas*). For the monks and nuns, the absolute goal is *moksha*; therefore, the code of conduct they must adopt is the non-compromising, strict observance of all the vows they take at the initiation. The *sravakas* and *sravikas* may not strive for this final goal immediately. However, they too are expected to work towards their liberation in the best possible way, while fulfilling their obligation to their community, their society, and to all other suffering souls.

'Fulfilling obligations' is a very broad term, which includes a reasonable indulgence in passions such as love and kindness, as well as accumulating wealth to ensure the

well being of one's family and community. In this regard, the message of Jainism to lay persons could be, "While *moksha* is an ideal goal and monkhood is an ideal path, those who choose not to follow that path could make an intelligent choice to follow the Triple 'A's to the best of their ability and conscience, while fulfilling their obligations to their world." In other words, Jainism strongly recommends the path of the mendicants, but it also respects one's decision to pursue human attachments, and accepts these as 'normal' at a particular stage in human spiritual development. The guiding principle, however, is that a *sravaka* or *sravika*, even while accumulating possessions and wealth, must remain "emotionally detached" from these possessions and must always remember that the possessions are merely to fulfill their obligations.

The story given below is from Nayadhammakahao. Mahavira used it to illustrate the

The Story of The Man in the Well.

A man, seeking fortunes in other lands was passing through a thick jungle. Suddenly, a wild elephant with upraised trunk charged him fiercely. He tried to run fast, but his path was blocked by an evil demon. Surely, the only escape route now was to climb the huge, tall, banyan tree to the East. He ran and reached the tree but could not decide if he had the will and power to climb the mighty tree. Right below the mighty tree was a deep well, all covered with grass and reeds. "This well would save me", he thought, and jumped in it.

As he was falling through the grass and the reeds he looked below and was terrified. Right below him were many terrible snakes - enraged and hissing fearsomely. In addition, deep down below was a black and mighty python with angry red eyes. Afraid, he held on to a clump of reeds hanging from the top and clung on to it. He thought, "My life will only last as long as these reeds hold fast.", and he looked up.

There he saw two large mice, one white and one black, their sharp teeth ever gnawing at the roots of the reed-clump. Up above, the wild elephant was charging, repeatedly, at the banyan tree. This disturbed the beehive hanging from a branch right above him. The angry bees swarmed down on him and his whole body was stung. Just then, as he was looking up and cursing himself for not climbing the tree, a drop of honey fell on his face and somehow reached his lips. That was a moment of sweetness. He looked up again, forgot all the dangers around him and just craved and waited for more drops of honey to come down his way. In his excited craving for yet more drops of honey, he lost awareness of the reality - the python, the snakes, the mice, the elephant, or the bees.

importance of seeking permanent bliss instead of trivial pleasures. Haribhadra, a 7th century Jain monk has given the interpretation of this parable. In the table after the story, the left column names the characters from the story, and their interpretation is in the right column. After understanding the interpreted meanings, please read the story again for the clear message.

The Man	The Soul
His wanderings in the forest	Soul's rebirths in the four types of existence
The Wild Elephant	Death
The Demon	Old age
The Banyan Tree	Path to salvation. Fear (of elephant or demon) itself is conquered on this path.
Weakness to climb the tree	Lust for sensual and trivial pleasures
The Well	Human life
The snakes	Passions (<i>kashaya</i>) which impede human judgment
The Python	The hell if fallen here, the soul suffers excruciating pain.
The tuft of Reed	The man's pre-determined life-span
The Mice	The day and night the passage of time.
Bees	The diseases of life
The drops of Honey	Trivial pleasures. Lust for these spells the man's peril.

In this chapter, I have tried to outline some of the key Jain doctrines, which form the basis for the practice of Jainism. In the next chapter, we will discuss the operating principles, which the Jains believe, govern the universe.

8. Nine Operating Principles of the Spiritual Universe

Having outlined their perspectives on 'Reality', Jain philosophers wanted to explain how the entire spiritual universe operates. We will now review the concepts discussed earlier and try to understand how the six elements interact with one another to create and govern our spiritual universe by the nine operating principles. These principles are:

1. Existence of the Soul (*jiva*)
2. Existence of Non-Soul (*ajiva*)
3. Inflow of *Karmic* Matter (*asrava*)
4. Bondage of Soul (*bandha*)
5. Auspicious *Karmic* Bondage (*punya*)
6. Inauspicious *Karmic* Bondage (*papa*)
7. Stoppage of the Inflow of *Karma* (*samvara*)
8. Process of Partial Dissociation of *Karma* (*nirjara*)
9. Total Dissociation of *Karma* (*moksha*).

Umaswati's *Tattvarth Sutra* (1.4) treats numbers 5 and 6, auspicious and inauspicious bonds (*papa* and *punya*), as the integral part of the *Principle of Bondage (bandh)*. Accordingly, there are only seven operating principles. However, the idea of treating *papa* and *punya* as separate principles is popular perhaps because of the ease of explaining them. We will look at each of these principles in turn.

The Existence of the Soul (*Jiva*)

As seen earlier, Jainism recognizes the plurality of souls, both pure and impure, and believes that there are infinite individual souls. Soul exists in every living being. Impurities trap the soul in painful cycles of birth and death (*samsara*). Whether the impure soul takes birth in a celestial (*deva*), human (*manushya*), plant/animal (*tiryancha*), or in a hellish (*naraki*) form depends upon its impurities. Escaping from

this entrapment *in samsara* is the ultimate goal of all souls. The pure soul (free from karmic impurities) is free from the cycle of birth and death.

A soul can escape from the *samsara* if it manages to purge itself of all impurities. *Tirthankaras* have invented a path of purification and achieved liberation (*moksha*). They have also shown us their path. Anyone can purify his/her* soul and achieve freedom from rebirth by following that path. Many people have achieved *moksha* by following this path and even today, many are on this path.^{11, 12}

The Existence of Non-Soul (*Ajiva*)

Matter is one of the non-souls. Its tiniest sub-atomic particles are responsible for making the soul impure. These are the karmic particles. However, the particles by themselves do not pollute the soul. They are everywhere in the 'occupied universe' (*lokakasa*) and would not interfere with the souls had the souls not attracted them. All sub-atomic *karmic* particles are identical but their polluting effects on the soul vary depending upon the nature and mechanism of their attraction by the soul. We will learn more about this in the next chapter.

Inflow of Karmic Matter (*Asrava*)

There are an infinite number of polluted souls in the universe. An infinite number of tiny, sub-atomic, karmic particles of matter are also floating around throughout the occupied universe. Why then should only specific particles flow towards some souls

and pollute them? Jains theorize that the inflow of particles is the result of an individual's activities. Any activity - good or bad, physical, mental or verbal, intentional or unintentional - generates vibrations (aura) and triggers the inflow of the karmic particles towards that soul. What happens when the inflow begins? It does not necessarily pollute the soul. The result depends on several factors including:

TERMS TO REMEMBER

☞ <i>Asrava</i>	Inflow of <i>karmic</i> matter
☞ <i>Bandha</i>	Bondage of soul with karmic matter
☞ <i>Papa</i>	Inauspicious or unwholesome bondage
☞ <i>Punya</i>	Auspicious or wholesome bondage
☞ <i>Navatattva</i>	Nine operating principles of the universe
☞ <i>Nirjara</i>	Dissociation or shedding of <i>karmic</i> matter
☞ <i>Samvara</i>	The stoppage of <i>karmic</i> influx.

* Although a great majority of Jains believe that both men and women can achieve liberation in their life time, one group of Jains believes that females - not because their souls are any more inferior to those of men, but because of the limits on their ability to observe absolute non-possession - are not capable of reaching this goal. The logic behind this argument is that 'absolute *aparigraha*', which means giving up even clothing, is a non-compromising requirement for *moksha*. Since women, even if they become nuns, cannot move around naked, they cannot be considered as absolutely detached and hence cannot achieve *moksha*.

¹¹ *Saman Suttam*, 529; *Uttaradhyana Sutra*, 9.35;

¹² *Anatagaddasao Suttam* - The entire book is full of stories of monks who attained *moksha* by destroying their karma.

1. perverted world-view (*mithyattva*)
2. living without vows (i.e. condoning: violence (*pranatiptat*); falsehood (*mrishavada*); theft (*adattadan*); promiscuity (*maithun*) and possessions (*parigraha*)
3. carelessness (*pramada*)
4. lack of self-discipline (*avirati*)
5. passions (*kashaya*)
6. type of activity (*yoga*).

Every activity generates inflow. Karmic particles are attracted even if the activity is devoid of passion; however, such activities form weaker bonds with the soul and dissociate or 'fall off' almost immediately with fruition. The passion involved in an activity provides a powerful adhesive force and causes stronger bondage between the already polluted soul and the karmic particles.

The Principle of Bondage (*Bandha*)

A pure, soul does not and cannot attract polluting particles. Once liberated, the soul does not become re-polluted and is never reborn. The impure soul, on the other hand, is weak because of the material impurities in it. As we will see later, this weakness causes the soul's rebirth, its activities, the inflow of karmic matter, and further bondage of the soul. Actions motivated by passion not only cause bondage but also determine the following four types of results of the bondage.









1. The quantity of karmic particles bonded
2. The strength or weakness of the bonds formed i.e., their intensity
3. The predetermined duration for which the bondage remains, and
4. The nature of bondage, i.e., the effect of the bondage on the soul

The stronger the passions, the greater the number of particles bonded, and the stronger are the bonds that are formed. The intensity of the bondage and its duration is, in turn, greater as well. For example, let us examine an activity, such as killing another living being, performed under three different circumstances.

In one case, the killing is unintentional, accidental, and the killer is even unaware of the destruction. In the second case, the killer had no choice but to kill (e.g., for food, self-defense, etc.) but carefully tries to minimize the number of lives destroyed and the pain he is causing. The killer is remorseful and repentant. In the third case, the killing is deliberate, driven by passions such as greed, anger, or vengeance, and is performed cruelly without any regard for the pain and hurt that is caused. Although the activity is the same, the three acts differ in the intensity of the passion involved. All three will involve karmic bonding but the last case will result in the strongest bonding with longer-lasting intense consequences for the killer.

Auspicious and Inauspicious Bondage (*Punya and Papa*)

The Sanskrit word for activity is *karma*. Since activities inevitably cause bondage and result in good or bad consequences, good activities can be seen as 'auspicious' *karma*

TERMS TO REMEMBER	
 <i>Avirti</i>	Non-restraint
 <i>Deva</i>	Heavenly beings
 <i>Kasaya</i>	Passions
 <i>Manushya</i>	Human beings
 <i>Mithyattva</i>	Deluded viewpoint
 <i>Naraki</i>	Hellish beings
 <i>Pramada</i>	Carelessness, non-vigilance
 <i>Tiryancha</i>	Animals and plants.

and bad can be deemed 'inauspicious' *karma*. Whereas inauspicious bondage takes a soul away from the goal of liberation, the auspicious ones take the soul closer and into situations where the soul would have greater opportunities to shed its bondage. Thus, from the standpoint of making progress towards *moksha*, it is better to contribute several "good" acts during one's lifetime -- helping the poor, being charitable, educating the ignorant -- than to simply sit still and accumulate minimal karmic particles. Absence of good activities minimizes the opportunities to shed *karma* and thus the chance to reach the goal of *moksha*. After deep analysis,

the Jain philosophers have classified karma into eight primary groups based on the effects of karma on the soul. We discuss these in the next chapter.

The Stoppage of the Inflow (*Samvara*)

Activities are essential for the process of living. If every activity causes the inflow and bondage of karmic particles, and if it is better to have some good activity than no activity, is there any way to slow down or stop (if not reverse) the process of bondage?

The answer to this lies in understanding the influence of the six factors (page 73) that trigger the inflow of the karmic particles (*asrava*). We must also remember the key role that passions play in creating bondage. The Jain Path (described in Section I) is designed to gain progressive control over our passions. Self-control cannot be achieved overnight and requires years of dedicated practice in self-improvement. The self-discipline thus achieved enables us to control the bonding factors and slow down or eventually stop the inflow. Jain scriptures recommend 57 different techniques (classified into six groups) to control passions - some designed to influence our activities and other to mould our mindset.

I. Three-fold Self-Control (*gupti*)

1. Mind-control: Entertain only positive and pleasant thoughts; avoid negative thoughts and ill feelings.
2. Speech-control: Express only truth and nothing but truth.
3. Controlling Physical Activities: Undertake only those activities that will assist spiritual progress; avoid activities that might hinder progress.

II. Five-Fold Caution (*samiti*)

1. Cautious Movements : Exercise caution in physical movements, e.g. carefully observe the ground you walk on to avoid hurting even the smallest of insects.
2. Cautious Speech : Express only positive and pleasant words; avoid negative/harsh words that might hurt others. (This includes covering the mouth with a piece of cloth to avoid accidentally spraying spit.)
3. Cautious Eating : Eat only wholesome food produced by non-violent means; avoid food that might intoxicate, arouse passions or result in loss of self-control.
4. Cautious Uses of Essentials : Use essential clothing, utensils, etc. And keep them meticulously clean.
5. Cautious Discarding : If surplus food must be discarded, ensure that it is not just thrown out in the open to rot, pollute, or produce bacterial growth; bury it. Same caution for excretion and body-waste.

III. Ten-fold Ethical Observance (*muni-dharma*)

In your daily routine, carefully observe ten ethical principles, namely: being forgiving, humble, straightforward, unselfish, diligent in performing penances, self-disciplined, truthful, maintaining purity of mind and heart, minimizing possessions, and abstinence . (chart at the end of this chapter).

IV. Twelve-fold Mindfulness (*bhavana*)

Developing self-discipline to stem the inward flow of karmic particles requires being aware, mindful and contemplative of the true nature of the Reality and our presence in it. Constant contemplation of the following twelve aspects of Reality influences our behavior and helps achieve equanimity.

1. Who am I? : I am not this body; I am soul! Body and soul are two distinct entities. My soul takes different forms because of its association with karmic matter.
2. Impermanence : This house, property, wealth, friends, family, body, and even my life are temporarily mine; nothing is permanent.
3. No Refuge : No one, howsoever powerful, can provide me refuge from suffering or death. Liberation by means of nonviolence, self-discipline, and penances are my only refuge.
4. Bonded Existence : This bonded soul continues to drift between four forms (*gatis*) of existence (human, plant/animal/microbe, hellish, and celestial). My soul has experienced all *gatis*. I know and crave none.

5. Lone Traveler : No one can give me company in death or birth, nor can anyone truly share my pain or pleasure.
6. Impure Body : Impurities impregnate my skin, blood, flesh, bones, marrow, stomach, and my entire body. Therefore, I must not be infatuated by this body, and be ready to leave it.
7. Inflow of Karmic Particles : Soul attracts karmic particles because of perverted world-view, vow-less living, carelessness, passions, lack of self-discipline, and certain activities. How can I slow this inflow?
8. Stopping Inflow of Karmic Particles : I have drifted and suffered through countless rebirths and deaths but now I am lucky enough to be born as human being. This is my opportunity to take every possible step (57 recommended by the scriptures) to stop the inflow.
9. Dissociation of Karma : I must shed the bonded karmic particles. This I shall do by twelve types of penances prescribed in the scriptures.
10. The Material World : I have lived several lives in this material world in all four *gatis* and have experienced enough pain and pleasure. The only goal now is to rise above this material world and reach *siddha-loka* (the world of the liberated beings).
11. Rare Opportunity : My soul, which has ever been drifting through the cycles of rebirth and death, is opportune enough to have a rare human birth where I can understand and follow the path shown by the Tirthankaras. I must not squander this rare opportunity, because I may not get it again for countless lifetimes to come.
12. Spiritual Progress : I will remain focused and try my best to cultivate the strength similar to that of Tirthankaras, *kevalis* and *ganadharas*, and there by achieve spiritual progress.

V. Five Codes of Behavior (*charitra-niyam*)

1. Meditation (*samayika charitra*) : Daily session of *samayika* (religious activity integrating deep meditation and yoga) helps us to achieve a balanced or equanimous state of mind and produces progressive detachment of our consciousness from all external objects.
2. Introspection (*chedopa-sbhapaniya charitra*) : Introspection and analysis of the past may lead to a future of taking and observing more vows.
3. Critical Study of Ascetic Code of Living (*parihar-vishudhi charitra*) : This is a special penance performed by ascetics. They undertake detailed study of scriptures to gain complete understanding of the prescribed code of ascetic living. Thereby they gain strength and determination to go through the rigors of ascetic life.

4. Appropriate Behavior (*yathakhyat charitra*) : Penances and self-discipline enable us to progress through several stages of spiritual life (*gunasthana*). Every stage demands a certain degree of self-discipline. Negligence or carelessness may warrant tumbling back to lower stages.
5. Fine-tuning the Spiritual Progress (*sukshama-sampraya charitra*) : By the tenth stage of spiritual progress (*gunasthana*), we have suppressed or almost completely eliminated all passions. (Subtle degrees of attachment, e.g. attachment for life.) At this stage, we need to fine-tune carefully our behavior to ensure that the suppressed passions do not over-power our will. We must also eliminate subtle degrees of attachment.

VI. Enduring Twenty-Two Types of Hardships (*parishaba*)

Remaining steadfast and focused on the goal requires us to endure several difficult situations during our progress along the spiritual path. Getting used to and accepting these with equanimity is an essential part of the self-discipline process. Some of these 22 possible hardships are: remaining hungry or thirsty; tolerating extreme cold or hot weather; retaining equanimity in the face of criticism, praise, or punishment, personal attacks, ridicule, illness, and insect bites; traveling bare-feet; staying in caves; remaining celibate; living with minimum or no clothing or other possessions; etc.

Mastering these 57 techniques may appear to be a daunting and painful challenge in the beginning. However, as we achieve greater control over passions, we increasingly identify ourselves with our soul. We transcend our bodily pain and pleasure, and begin to experience peace, tranquility, and bliss. Bathed in this newfound happiness of being in touch with our true self, we become oblivious to the state of our physical body and acquire tremendous spiritual power and energy, which lay dormant in our soul. Thus, although a novice may think that the path to liberation is difficult and painful, one who actually travels the path finds it to be a source of limitless happiness, energy, and peace.

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Partial Dissociation of Karma (*Nirjara*)

While the inflow and the bondage of the karmic particles can be slowed down or stopped through self-discipline, how can the particles already bonded be purged? Fortunately, that too is possible. Earlier, we saw that the duration of bondage is already pre-determined at the time of bonding. All bonds, weak or strong, break off after the fruition of karma. The fruition may happen in one's own lifetime, or may even require several rebirths. However, once the soul enjoys or suffers, the responsible particles fall off immediately. This is the principle of natural dissociation. In fact, the processes of the natural dissociation of some particles and the bondage of new ones are ongoing in every living being.

If natural dissociation were the only way to eliminate karmic particles, a soul may never be free. Fortunately, through human effort, karmic matter can be forced to dissociate prematurely, often with much less painful consequences. The effort consists of making spiritual progress through the fourteen-stages (*gunasthana*) of the Jain path. The 57 techniques described above may slow down the inflow through self-discipline and control over passions. However, to remove the already bonded *karma*, regular practice of external and internal austerity is essential. Scriptures recommend two types (external for physical, and internal for mental) of 12 such austerities for self-control.

I. Six External (Physical) Austerities (*bahya tapasya*)

1. Limiting the Number of Meals (*anashan*) : Aspirant takes a vow to limit the number of meals to be eaten over a certain period e.g. only one meal per day, or one meal every alternate day, etc.
2. Limiting the choice and quantity of food (*vritisankshape*) : The aspirant progressively limits his choice of foods and gradually reduces the quantity consumed. For example, he/she may pledge to consume only one slice of bread, instead of normal two, at each meal. Similarly, he/she might limit his food choices by resolving never to eat say sweets or milk products, or rice, etc. These choices are progressively narrowed.
3. Light Eating (*unodarika*) : At every meal the aspirants stop eating just before they are full. No snacking between the meals.
4. Ban on certain types of Foods or Beverages (*rasatyaga*) : Total ban on meat, fowl, fish, eggs, honey, butter, root vegetables; and avoiding dairy products, fatty foods, sugar, sweets, etc.
5. Physical Hardships (*kayaklesh*) : Training the body to endure some physical hardships e.g. sitting or standing in certain difficult yogic positions for a long time, sleeping on hard floor, etc.
6. Pure Living (*sanlinta*) : Living in serene places to avoid temptations.

II. Six Internal (Mental) Austerities (*abhyantar tapasya*)

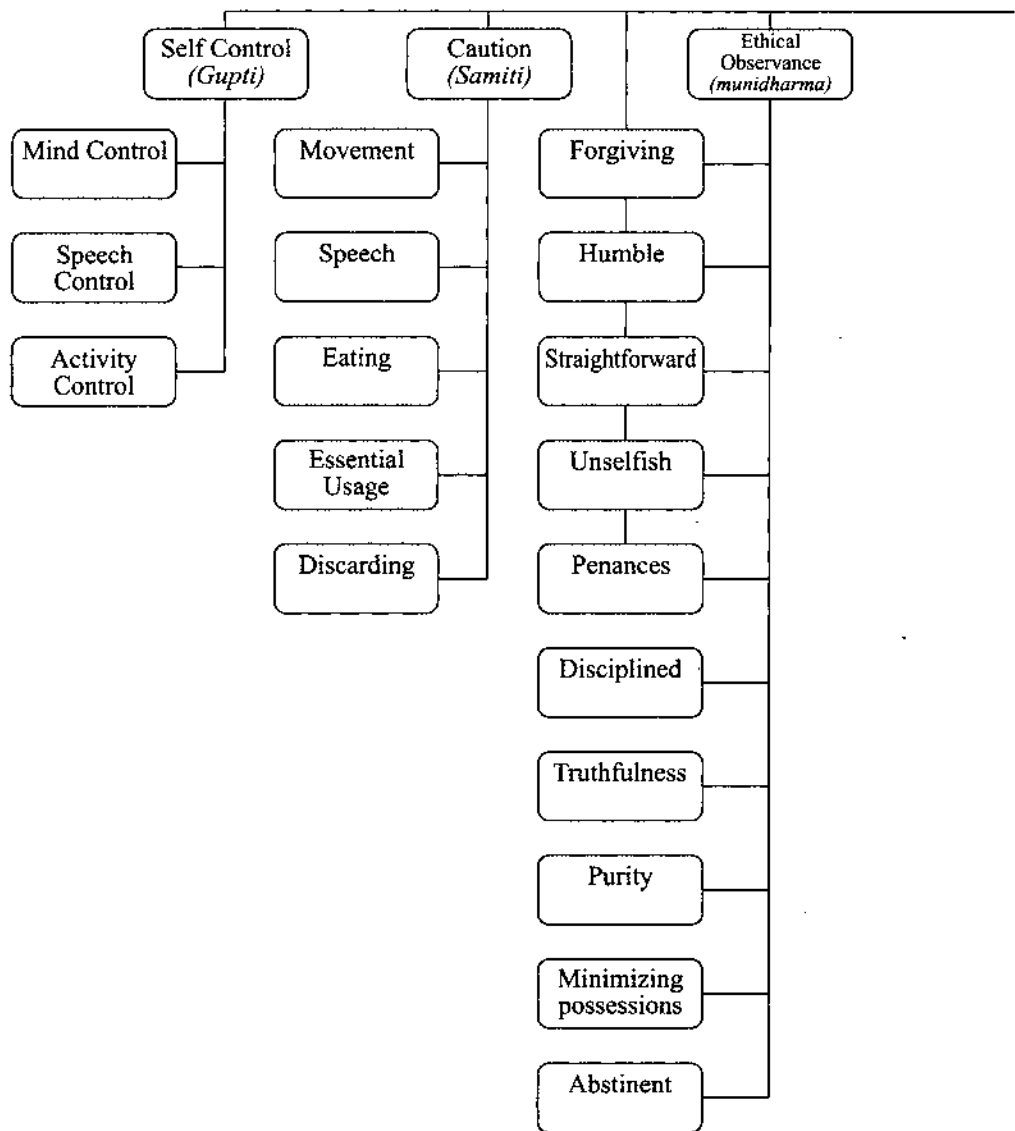
1. Atonement (*prayaschitta*): Introspection and repentance for transgressions and evil thoughts or actions; and consequent self-imposed punishments.
2. Humility (*vinay*): Genuine humility, respect and honor for those who are chaste, learned, and visionary.
3. Service (*vaiyavriya*): Rendering service to ascetics and the society.
4. Scriptural Knowledge (*swadhyay*): reading, contemplating, studying and teaching scriptures.
5. Meditation (*dhyan*): Total absorption in meditation focused on the realization of the self.
6. Pure Body and Mind (*kayotsarg*): Purifying body and mind through fasting, forsaking unholy food, suppressing passions, pure thinking, and eliminating doubts about the path of purification.

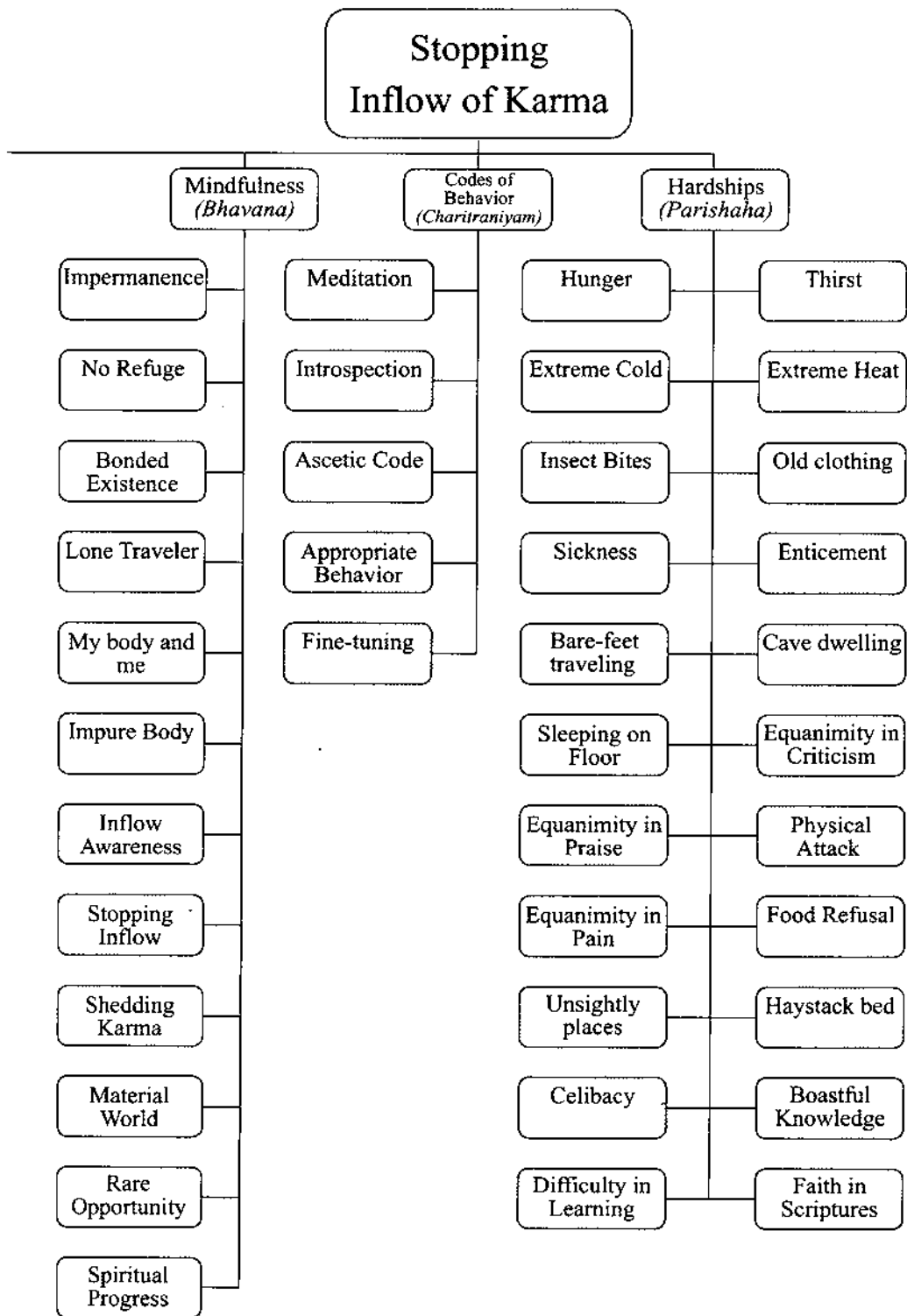
Although scriptures list 57 techniques for slowing down (*samvara*) and 12 for dissociation of (*nirjara*) karmic particles, there is nothing magical or sacred about these techniques or numbers. The secret is to understand that these techniques are designed to strengthen our will and physical endurance so that we will remain focused on our goal (*moksha*) and make steady spiritual progress. These are the common sense techniques useful in our daily lives if we were to strive for any worthwhile achievements, be it in sports, arts, business or professions.

Daily activities like meditation, atonement, and renouncement of possessions, also work towards this goal. As we progress along the path to liberation, the inflow of karmic particles slows down and the dissociation speeds up. The reduction of inflow and increase in dissociation ultimately produces a karmic balance sheet with zero *karma* balance. The soul is now free of all bondage. This is liberation!

Liberation (*Moksha*)

A liberated soul is now free from the debilitating influences of the material impurities. A liberated soul regains its innate characteristics of infinite perception, infinite knowledge, infinite energy, and infinite bliss. Achieving the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of the soul is the Jain ideal. To Jains this is a godly state! To achieve that state is the goal of every Jain. One who has achieved that state is their hero and worthy of respect and worship!







Chapter 9

9. Karma

We have seen that the ancient Jain philosophers used experience, experimentation, observations, logic, reasoning, and analysis, to formulate their theories. Today such approach is known as 'scientific methodology'. A 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes gets the credit for developing this methodology. "Doubt what isn't self-evident, and reduce every problem to its simplest component," was Descartes' advice to the would-be scientists.

It appears that Jain philosophers have used this method centuries earlier. They doubted and rejected the existence of a creator God and subjected the complex problem of suffering and misery to its simpler components and logical analysis. Their quests led them to the idea of the soul, its corruption, and to the discovery of the mechanism of pollution and liberation of the soul. A proper path for purification of the soul could not be designed unless the causes of the soul's pollution were accurately understood.

As will be evident soon, Jain philosophers explained the complex idea of the pure and impure soul by first reducing the problems to a set of questions: What is soul? What are its qualities? What happens when it becomes impure? What causes its defilement? What is the nature of the corrupting factors? Can we stop defilement? Can we reverse it? Is it possible to purify soul? How can we do it?

Based on their everyday experiences they concluded that it is the soul inside a living being, which learns, perceives, and knows. This led them to the next conclusion that a living being is the product of a dynamic interaction between the soul (which has the ability to perceive) and matter (which cannot perceive anything). If the soul is all consciousness, and if our polluted souls are incapable of perceiving absolute truth (Ch. 7), can we not conclude that the matter is obscuring our soul's consciousness? If so, they mused, how does matter manage to obscure soul's innate qualities?

The answer, they determined, lay in the particulate nature of matter. Since very tiny sub-atomic particles make up matter, these particles must be somehow attaching themselves to the soul.* At the time of death, the soul must leave with these tiny (*sukshma*) attached particles, and only the gross (*jada*) matter or body must be left behind. Such were the logical conclusions of their investigations.

The souls themselves are responsible, through their actions, for their bondage and suffering.

Through reduction (the scientific technique of reducing a larger problem to relatively simpler ones and tackling them first), these philosophers went deeper into further analysis. What are these tiny particles? What causes the soul to be bonded? The intrinsic characteristics of all matter are the same. Therefore, at the sub-atomic level all bonding particles must also be same. If so, how is it that the bondage of souls with identical particles results in the formation of different life forms and varying degrees of impure souls? Why are the results of bonding different in different beings? How and why do we experience pain and suffering?

After years of study, discussion, and debate, they arrived at the conclusion that the soul itself must somehow be responsible for its bonding. Human pain and suffering must result from the simple law of cause and effect. No effect is without a cause. Therefore, pain and suffering must be the effect of the acts committed by the bonded souls. In other words, the souls themselves must be somehow responsible, through their actions, for their bondage and suffering. (Such a conclusion appears too harsh because it implies that a person, who for example, is seriously ill with cancer, has brought the tragedy upon himself by his/her bad acts or negative *karma*). Regardless of how harsh this may sound, such is nature's law of cause and effect, and no other logical explanation is possible. If actions cause bondage, then different actions must produce different results. Furthermore, if all the bonding particles** are identical, but the results of bonding are different, it is reasonable to assume that the difference must be in the mechanism of bondage.

The Cycle of Birth & Death (*Samsara*)

The bondage of the soul with material particles has had no beginning. The soul has always been impure (this is identical to the Christian belief that "we are born

* This description of material particles somehow attaching themselves to the soul is merely for visualization. Since souls are formless and without any matter or mass, karmic particles cannot truly glue or attach to a soul. Ancient texts give various descriptions to help us understand the concept. Some such descriptions are: (i) matter defiles soul, just as pure water is muddied by tiny dust particles. Alternatively, (ii) the brilliance (limitless omniscience, energy, bliss, etc.) of soul is dulled by karmic particles just as clouds cover the brilliance of sun. Alternatively, (iii) as dust obscures the brilliance of a diamond. We will continue to use the "attachment" simile throughout our presentation with a warning that the actual concept is abstract.

** Jains classify aggregates of material particles into various groups (*vargana*) such as *audarika-vargana* (gross-body forming), *vaikriya* (subtle-body forming), *mano-vargana* (mind forming), *karman-vargana* (karma forming), etc. The karmic particles are from the *karman-vargana* group.

sinner's") and is likely to remain so almost indefinitely, unless purposeful human actions enable it to cut all bondage and liberate itself. A corrupted soul is trapped in the *samsara* (cycle of birth/death) in various states of embodiment. The very act of living is full of desires and passions (*kashayas*). Under the influence of these passions and activities (physical, vocal and mental vibrations of the body), the soul attracts and causes more *karmic* particles to bond with it. Since the bonding results from our actions (*karma*), the bonding particles are called '*karmic* particles'.

The greater the bondage, the deeper is the soul's entrapment in the *samsara*. Rebirth of the bonded souls is not confined to our planet only. The rebirth can occur anywhere in the universe. The four main destinies (*gatis*) of the bonded souls are:

1. **Humans** (*manusya*) - an existence which offers opportunities to act purposefully for cutting *karmic* bonds and progressing towards liberation.
2. **Celestial beings** (*devas*) - bonded souls whose past *karma* merit a relatively happy, pain-free, enjoyable existence.
3. **Hell-beings** (*naraki*) - an existence in which souls are bonded heavily with pain producing *karma*, and are made to suffer the consequences of their evil actions.
4. **Animals and plants** (*tiryancha*) - an existence where souls passively enjoy or suffer the consequences of their past *karma*. They are unable to either perceive or work actively towards self-liberation.

Only humans, thanks to our suffering and our thinking capacities, can awake to the Reality (*samyak dristi*), become aware of the goal, and purposefully act to control desire, cut bondage, and liberate the imprisoned soul. Animals and plants also suffer the consequences of their *karma* but are unable to understand or follow any path out of their sufferings and hence cannot achieve *moksha*.* All they can do is to suffer quietly the fruits of their past *karma*. Since *karma* fall-off after fruition, their load of *karmic* bondage lightens automatically. Their soul may take human form in some future life. Celestial beings are apparently too happy to worry or perform austerities for achieving *moksha*. Hell-beings, on the other hand, have no choice but to suffer their intense pain and agony. Their souls experience a quick shakedown cycle of their *karma* and emerge with a lighter *karmic* load to be reborn in other realms.

The Mechanism of Bondage (*bandha*)

The Jain philosophers believed that material particles, called '*amu*,' are floating freely in every part of occupied space. They grouped these particles into eight categories. One such group is called *karman-vargan* because only these particles are involved in

* However, Jain literature contains stories about how certain animals were able to achieve *moksha*. Invariably, this is attributed to the past lives of the said animal during which many activities had taken its soul almost (but not quite) near liberation. Some residual *karma* had to be worked out and hence the present birth in the animal form. During this lifetime however, their residual *karma* came to fruition (chance listening to Tirthankara's sermons helped) and dropped off, thus liberating their soul.

karmic bondage. Our bonded souls govern our actions. Such actions may be psychic (*mana*), vocal (*vachana*), or physical (*kaya*). They, in turn, produce vibrations, which attract *karmic* particles. Although the *karmic* particles attracted are all identical, the resultant *karma* effects may vary depending upon the nature of vibrations and the passions involved. Vibrations may draw the *karmic* particles towards the soul but the resultant bondage may be momentary unless passions are also involved in the process. The greater the intensity of the passions, the stronger is the bond, making it difficult for the soul to purge itself of the *karmic* particles.

The actual bonding process is interesting. The *karmic* particles already bonded to the soul initiate our activities. These activities, in turn, generate *karma*-causing vibrations. The vibrations are of two types. First, there are simple vibrations generated by neutral actions. The bondages caused by these vibrations are called '*dravya karma*' and are only weak. However, because of this bondage, further vibrations arise. If or when psychic activities including passion, emotion, and intention (*bhava*) drive one's actions, complex vibrations are created. The bondages caused by these more complex set of vibrations are stronger, and are called '*bhava karma*' or intentions based *karma*.

The interesting point to note is that the already bonded particles generate activities and attract more particles to the soul. The new particles in turn generate more vibrations and attract even more particles and the cycle continues. Fortunately, if no intentions or passions are involved in the activities, the weaker bonds formed by the newly attracted particles simply break off almost immediately, preventing more corruption of the soul. This explains why our action (such as killing an insect), if accompanied by passions, harms our soul, whereas the same action without any intention does not. Thus, material *karma* and its spiritual counterpart are mutually related as cause and effect, each of the other. Alternatively, the *dravya* and *bhava karma* feed each other and the cycle continues until the soul in its human existence consciously and purposefully acts to extricate itself from this cycle.

Types of Karma

Bhava-karma are classified into two types (destructive and non-destructive) and eight primary classes (and 93 sub-classes). The root cause of both the influx and bondage of *karmic* particles is activity. Therefore, this classification is based on the activity involved. Furthermore, based on the effects they have on the soul, they are also grouped into two types - destructive (*Ghatiya*) and non-destructive (*Aghatiya*).

Eight Primary Classes of Karma Destructive (*Ghatiya*) Karma

'Destructive' or '*Ghatiya*' *karma* obstruct the soul from achieving its full potential. They obscure the four inherent properties of the soul, namely infinite vision, infinite

knowledge, infinite bliss, and infinite vigor. Thus, they are mainly responsible for keeping soul entrapped in the *samsara*, and therefore are destructive. Consequently, total annihilation of *ghatiya karma* ensures liberation and enables soul to achieve its full potential of infinite knowledge, perception, bliss, and energy.

1. Knowledge-Obstructing (*jnanavaraniya*)

Activities such as neglecting or ridiculing learning or knowledge; insulting, disrespecting, harassing or hating the learned; remaining idle, obstructing others in scholarship activities, and spreading incorrect information can cause the soul to accrue knowledge-obstructing *karma*. These *karma* impair or obscure the soul's capacity for cognition, comprehension, and knowing. There are five sub classes of knowledge-obscuring *karma*.

2. Intuition-Obstructing (*darsanavaraniya*)

If the above-mentioned activities are directed towards a visionary or his/her vision, the soul is bonded with intuition-obstructing *karma*. The soul so bonded lacks intuition and vision. There are nine sub-classes of this type of *karma*.

3. Energy-Obstructing (*antaraya*)

These *karma* obstruct the infinite energy of the soul, and our ability to obtain or enjoy wealth, power, and spiritual activities. Obstructing those who are engaged in social and spiritual activities, charitable giving, helping, or serving the needy and providing happiness to others produce these *karma*. The soul so bonded lacks the ability to enjoy life and resources; lacks capacity to make an effort, or to contribute and be generous with one's time, energy, or money. One suffers a lack of recognition, respect, and honor within one's community and society.

4. Deluding *Karma* (*mohaniya*)

Although these *karma* are further sub-divided into twenty-eight different classes, there are two basic types of deluding *karma* - world vision-deluding *karma* (*darsana mohaniya*) and character-deluding *karma* (*charitra mohaniya*). Believing in or propagating false ideas about absolute truth, advocating values disrespectful of difference and diversity, and neglecting the spiritual welfare of the soul causes such bonds. Influenced by vision-deluding *karma*, a person lives a confused life, unable to realize true insight into his soul's nature. Such a person is:

- an extremist and is unable to even consider another viewpoint
 - a skeptic, lacking conviction about the validity of the truths learned
 - ignorant and unwilling to learn new concepts, ideas and truths, and
 - deluded in the belief that all spiritual paths are the same.
- Such a deluded person does not reach the 'awakening' stage (Chapter 2) and thus cannot even begin the journey on the path to liberation.

Character-deluding *karma* generate dangerous passions like greed, anger, deceit, ego, and lust. Since passion-driven activities generate stronger karmic bonds, such a person's soul keeps on sinking deeper into more bondage. The greatest obstacles in our spiritual progress result from deluding karma. Deluding (*mohaniya*) karma are difficult to be completely eliminated. The aspirants often eliminate some and suppress some. However, suppressed karma resurface repeatedly. Therefore, we must attenuate, overcome through self-discipline, and strive to eradicate them completely.

Non-Destructive (*Aghatiya*) Karma

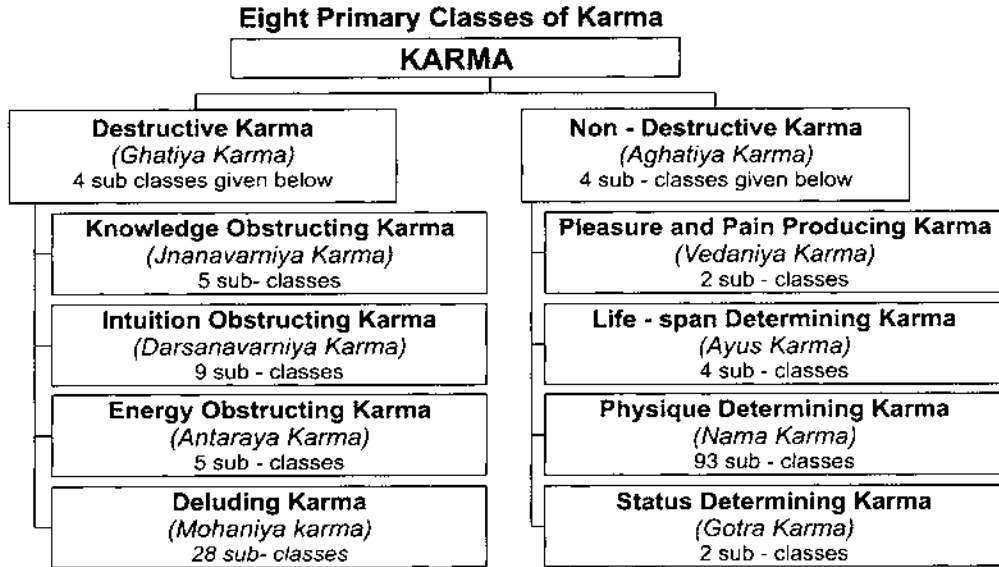
The four types of *karma* described so far obstruct, obscure, distort, pervert, hide, or prevent the full expression of the intrinsic qualities of the soul. Therefore, they are 'destructive' karma. The next four, on the other hand, merely affect the quality of life of a being but do not impede soul's ability to liberate itself. They are non-consequential to the process of liberation, and therefore called 'Non-destructive' or '*Aghatiya*' karma. The point to remember, however, is that this classification as '*Ghatiya*' or '*Aghatiya*' is based purely on the ability of the *karma* to obstruct liberation. *Aghatiya karma* may make us suffer in many ways during our worldly existence but are not destructive and they do not affect a soul's innate qualities.

5. Pleasure and Pain-Causing (*vedaniya*)

Straight and simple! Activity generates *karmic* bondage. If our actions such as love, compassion, forgiveness, help, service, charitable giving, etc. bring pleasure and comfort to other living beings, we have generated pleasure-producing (*sata-vedaniya*) *karma*. On the other hand, killing, hurting, causing pain or sorrow, and destruction - caused to someone else - directly or indirectly, mental, verbal, or physical will generate pain-producing (*asata-vedaniya*) *karma*. The influence of such *karma* on us is clear. We shall pay or receive in kind, if not in this lifetime, then surely in the future. However, *vedaniya karma* will not obstruct a soul's liberation and are therefore not regarded as destructive.

6. Life-Span Determining (*ayus*)

The effects of this *karma* determine both the form (as human, celestial beings, hell beings, and animals or plants) and the span of our next lives. *Ayus* karma determines the form of our next life, and correspondingly, the opportunities we might have to work towards the liberation of our soul. For example, a lifestyle filled with violence, cruelty, or unjustly gained wealth, generates intense karmic bondage. With little chance of the soul's liberation, such soul passes on to another form. In this case, it may take rebirth even as a hell being. The soul may spend an infinite amount of time trapped in that form. Similarly, if we respect human and animals but wantonly destroy lower forms of life, such as insects, plants and microbes, we may be reborn as



one of those lower forms and suffer a fate similar to that which we have just destroyed.

The intensity of the *karmic* attachment determines just how long a soul will remain in any of the forms and thus the life span in its next birth. The primacy of *ayus-karma* is because its bondage determines all the other factors governing our next embodiment. For example, if our next lifespan is to be only a few moments, we may take rebirth as a simple microbe, a life span of a few years may mean an embodiment as a particular animal, between 70 and 100 years would suggest rebirth as a human, or even as a tree.

However, if we are living a simple life under the influence of the triple 'A's (*abimsa*, *aparigraha* and *anekantavada*), we may warrant another chance of rebirth as human beings to make progress on the path toward liberation. If we meticulously observe the triple 'A's, make a concerted effort to progress towards liberation and collect appropriate non-destructive *karma*, we may be rewarded a celestial rebirth to enjoy the rewards of our earthly efforts or may take birth again as humans to complete our progress. At some point, we expect that these *karma* will come to fruition and purge from the soul.

7. Physique Determining (*nama*), *karma*

These *karma* also account for various forms of embodied existence such as existence in hell, plant and animal world, human world, or in celestial region. *Nama karma* determine birth also in the various classes of living organisms. For example, if

rebirth is to be in plant or animal world, *Nama karma* determines the actual species of that birth.

8. Status Determining (*gotra*) *Karma*

The rise of status-determining *karma* is responsible for the high or low status of an individual. It determines family, class, social status, place of birth, etc.

Commentary

To the extent that all religious doctrines are words of the wise for the betterment of the society, the Jain doctrine of *karma* is a powerful and effective social document.

Living beings, by their nature, can never be without activities—verbal, mental, and physical. The activities have consequences—good, bad, or indifferent. In the case of humans, these consequences affect the society in which they live. A simple, peaceful life, full of love, kindness, and respect for other living beings could have a positive social influence resulting in the formation of a similarly kind and caring society. Religions usually formulate doctrines with this in mind. However, the true worth of these doctrines depends upon how effective they are in influencing the social behavior of their followers.

A self-righteous doctrine that refuses to acknowledge differing viewpoints or urges its followers to push and spread its message as the 'only truth' may influence a society to be aggressive, militant, and prone to conflicts and wars. A doctrine that preaches that we have the right to kill and destroy other living beings (even other human beings in the name of religion) may promote (however indirectly) arrogance, cruelty, ecological disaster, and eventually, the destruction of our planet. The cruelty of humans towards other humans will never end as long as we continue to believe that we have the right to kill or hurt other living beings.

The Jain doctrine of *karma* emphasizes the cause and effect principle of “as ye sow, therefore shall ye reap.” In addition, by logical analysis and scientific reductionism, it makes the idea effective and intellectually acceptable to the modern thinker. Its dynamism preaches that an individual's destiny is in his/her own hands. It is up to the individual to understand the true source of happiness and to pursue it actively. The *Tirthankaras* have already shown a well-trodden path. All we need is the courage and commitment to undertake the journey. The fact that Jainism has not found it necessary to establish a hierarchy to police and enforce the observance of its 'code of conduct' enables us to judge the effectiveness of this doctrine. The Jain code is left entirely to the logical freethinking conscience of its followers. Jainism is a philosophy that advocates ultimate freedom of the soul and has seen it fit to leave the human spirit free to act on its own.

Pascal's Wager

Religious philosophies can be classified into two broad groups: (1) a group of systems that posits God as a supernatural power controlling the universe and (2) others that do not accept that our existence or fortunes are governed by a supernatural being. Jainism, Buddhism, Humanism, and modern sciences come under this later group. Given the centuries-old debate between the two camps, a modern mind wonders about the choice it may have between the paths advocated by the two camps.

Unable to come up with any tangible proof of God's existence, the advocates of the first camp often resort to the reasons of the heart theory. "Ours is the path of absolute faith and surrender", they preach. "Believe in Him. Surrender your life to Him. Lead a good life in His shadow", they promise, "and you will be granted an eternity of happiness and bliss in heaven." This line of reasoning asks the individual to suspend usual logical thinking patterns and take a leap of faith. It plays on beliefs and fears of missing salvation or heaven.

The advocates of the second group, on the other hand, claim that their path promises happiness and bliss too. Modern science promises physical ecstasy in this life and Buddhists promise transcendental bliss in *nirvana*. Jains downplay the physical pleasures but promise internal peace in this life and absolute bliss in the after life. Which claim is right? Which path should one follow?

The Jain path may be slow and difficult but at the least it is rationally plausible, allows for here-and-now peace of mind and happiness, and hence less risky.

To convince the confused, the advocates of the first group use a gambler's wager to help sway the skeptics. Years ago, a French philosopher Blaise Pascal came up with a wager for proceeding in the face of uncertainty. "When choosing between two uncertain proposals, place your bets on the least riskier." Invoking this wager, they invite us to choose their camp and live a good life. They ask, "The consequence of not making that choice is bringing eternal doom, therefore, why take risk? Even if God doesn't exist, what have you got to lose by living a good life?" The argument is convincing - at least on the surface.

Anekantavada doctrine would encourage Jains to examine, if not accept, the validity of this wager. For them, 'good life' is a lifestyle in which our own mind (not some external object) controls our happiness. They say, "A good life that depends on external objects like wealth, fame, etc. is only 'temporary comfort', and not true happiness. Take away such objects and our good life is gone. True happiness is in being at peace with oneself. So, we have no argument with at least part of your

philosophy if you agree that a good life is the austere lifestyle in which our mind is always in charge of our happiness.”

The other phrase in the wager is “risk.” Jains would argue, “If less risk is our real concern, should we not be choosing the logical and intellectual path of Jainism? After all, if the very existence of God cannot be rationally supported, where is the safety in accepting an irrational uncertainty?” They claim, “The Jain path may be slow and difficult but at the least it is rationally plausible because it is based on natural theology (universal laws of nature as superpower). Furthermore, it allows for here-and-now, peace of mind and happiness, and hence less risky.”

Section



Section III. Rational Knowledge (*samyak-jnana*)

SECTION PREVIEW

Jainism's insistence on rationality and intelligent choice is highly appealing for the contemporary mind. Jains call their way of life "Rational Living (Samyak-charitra)" and their worldview "Rational Worldview (Samyak-darsana)". What makes their worldview 'rational'?

That begs another question. What makes a faith 'blind', an idea simply a 'hunch', and an action merely a reckless 'gamble'? The obvious answer is 'lack of knowledge and analysis'! Knowledge gives rational support to a faith without which it is simply a 'blind faith', a 'hunch' or a 'gamble'. Knowledge is thus an all-important criterion of rationality and has been a subject of great interest and study for Jain philosophers.

In the next two chapters, we explore the results of this study. Ancient Jain scriptures give minute details of the very phenomenon of 'gaining knowledge'. It is a fascinating study, both for its details as well as the methodology used. An understanding of knowledge was of supreme importance to the Jain philosophers because their entire claims to rationality rest on it. In the final analysis, the validity of their lifestyle and world-view rests on the teachings of Tirthankaras who, they claim, gained absolute knowledge - omniscience - and then showed us their path to omniscience and liberation. After reading the scriptural account of the theory of knowledge, the Jain claims that their Tirthankaras were omniscient are easy to appreciate and accept.

Chapter 10

10. Rational Knowledge

You may have encountered, as I often do, people who say, “God exists”. If you ask them, “How do you know?” they would simply say, “My heart tells me so.” They may even cite some mysterious event in their life, which they would say is proof enough for them. Such a response is based on emotions, not knowledge. Nevertheless, that happens to be their belief system. They are ready to base their faith on it and are not prepared to analyze it any further. For the modern mind, it is a response without any rational support, hence difficult to accept.

A set of beliefs and the world-view of an individual govern his/her conduct or the lifestyle. Factors such as culture, religion, upbringing, and the surroundings, shape these beliefs. Powerful individuals - the prophets, the sages, and the political, social, and religious leaders - in turn, strongly influence these factors from time to time. Such influential leaders can thus build a culture of peace and understanding, or can turn their followers into suicidal terrorists. Their messages, as interpreted by those who bring them to the masses, become the cultural, political, and religious foundations of a people. What is the foundation of Jain thought and conduct?

An important message to Jains from their *Tirthankaras* is that the path to liberation is a three-fold path requiring rational conduct, rational belief, and rational knowledge. This is interesting because the message does not emphasize just the right conduct and belief, but stresses that knowledge must fortify the belief and conduct to make the path to liberation truly rational.

Devotion and faith are no doubt important ingredients of religious conduct. If there is no faith or belief in the goal and in the efficacy of the chosen path, progress along the spiritual path is difficult. However, as noted earlier, mere blind faith may produce only dogmatism and orthodoxy. Jainism insists that real spiritual progress requires rational faith. One may not even try a path as rigorous and difficult as the one prescribed by the *Tirthankaras* unless there is a rational understanding of the goal and of the means to achieve it. Thus, rational understanding or true knowledge of

Reality became a cornerstone of Jainism, and knowledge became an important field of enquiry for the Jain philosophers

The Jain thinkers have defined knowledge as the essence of soul. "There can be no knowledge without soul and no soul without knowledge."¹³ The soul has other intrinsic characteristics also, but the Jain philosophers always emphasized knowledge as the main characteristic possessed by the soul. Consciousness is intrinsically natural

Only the enlightened soul that has reached the stage of omniscience or perfection, (*kevala*, 13th *gunasthana*) can cognize the real nature of all things, i.e. Absolute reality.

to each soul, but our impure souls cannot perceive real knowledge. Only the enlightened soul that has reached the stage of omniscience or perfection, (*kevala*, 13th *gunasthana*) can cognize the real nature of all things, and can accept everything relatively and conditionally in the remaining step of its salvation. Jains claim that the *Tirthankaras* - the omniscient ones who have perceived, experienced, and lived Reality - have discovered Jain

worldview and the path. Therefore, it is rational. It is important to note here that Jain epistemologists did not fall in the trap of abstract logic, but have stressed experience-based knowledge - hence 'rational'. Moreover, *Tirthankaras* were enlightened (omniscient), and had no attachments, hatred or other motivations to preach anything but truth. A critic might ask, "Is omniscience of *Tirthankaras* a myth - an article of blind faith?" Our exploration of the Theory of Knowledge, developed thousands of years ago by the *Tirthankaras*, provides convincing proofs. Here is what they have preached about knowledge.

The Limited and the Detailed Understanding

The Jain theory of knowledge is closely related to their karma theory. According to Jainism, intuition itself is knowledge. Our soul has infinite perception and knowledge but the *karmic* particles obscure our perception. Thus, the so-called 'receiving knowledge' is really the 'falling off of the perception-deluding and knowledge-obscuring *karmic* particles'. Some events may trigger the removal of these *karma* and give us the understanding or knowledge of an object, event, etc. Knowledge can emerge with or without the help of the sense organs. The emerged understanding could be 'just general' or 'in detail'. Either it could be limited to simply being aware of the object in its existential generality, or we may fully comprehend the object with all its individual characteristics. Jain philosophers have classified knowledge based on whether it is limited or detailed. Limited understanding is called the undifferentiated knowledge, the indistinct understanding, the indeterminate cognition, perception, or just intuition (*darsana*). The detailed knowledge, on the other hand, is the differentiated or the distinct understanding, the determinate cognition, or comprehension (*jnana*).

¹³ Umaswati: *Tattvarth Sutra*, 2.8

The difference between the two terms is really in the details. The perception or intuition (*darsana*) is the knowledge without the understanding of the details, which when perceived, becomes comprehension (*jnana*). Jain philosophers emphasize both *samyak-darsana* as well as *samyak-jnana* because unless one becomes aware or perceives Reality (*darsana*), one may not be motivated to seek comprehensive knowledge of that Reality (*jnana*). Therefore, *darsana* is the start-up part of the process of getting detailed knowledge. When we critically analyze and back it up by rational knowledge, *darsana* (perception) truly becomes *samyak-darsana*. Faith in a *darsana* without this rational support could be mere blind faith.

Perceptive Knowledge (*darsana*)

Perception is a preliminary stage, i.e. the first stage of knowledge where we have only a general awareness of the object. When we become just aware of the existence of an object, we often enter the next stage almost automatically. We begin in our mind the process of establishing its identity by comparing the new information with the one in our memory. We may 'know' a number of things, that is, we may be aware of those things - but if we do not critically analyze our new knowledge, and do not understand its relationship with the characteristics of the objects we already know, our new knowledge will remain at the sensation or perception level only. However, critical analysis of the new data and its comparison and classification with the already existing data provides the needed rational support and makes the same new data, i.e. the perceptive knowledge, the comprehensive knowledge.

There is a subtle difference between the Jain and Buddhist understanding of comprehensive knowledge. Buddhists maintain that the perceptive knowledge is so indeterminate that the mind does not at all notice any qualifications, e.g. generality, quality, substantiality, type, etc. at that stage. According to them, all these qualifications of the object are the forms of thought, which are always determinate. The difference between the two is that while Buddha (and Upanishads) use abstract logic, Mahavira did not condemn common sense interpretation of experience.

Jains view perception as 'becoming aware' of the mere existence of an object. Accordingly, perception includes only that qualification which defines the existence of the object. Without this qualification, they argue, the mind will not become aware of the existence of the object and will not proceed to the comprehension stage. At this stage, we do not notice other qualifications, which provide distinction and identification of the object. Receiving those qualifications and processing that information to identify, classify, or determine the nature of the object belongs to the comprehension or determinate stage.

Jain scholars are also not unanimous in their views on perception. Scholars like

Mere introspection of the nature of the Self is perception (*darsana*), whereas that which cognizes the nature of both generic and specific qualities of the Self is comprehension (*jnana*). The faculty of cognition is perception (*darsana*) when it senses the Self and comprehension (*jnana*) when it knows the Self.

Virasena¹⁴ and Brahmadeva¹⁵ believed that the early Jain philosophers accepted the above position (of perception as the knowledge of the general and comprehension as the cognition of the particular) merely to accommodate the contemporary non-Jain philosophers. This observation by Virasena and Brahmadeva may be valid because they, like many other first-rate Jain thinkers such as Haribhadra, Akalanka, Siddhasena, Samantabhadra and others

were converts from learned Brahmins and had first-hand knowledge of the non-Jain theory of knowledge. These scholars pointed out that the position stated above is not in keeping with the Jain scriptural teachings on 'consciousness as the inherent characteristic of soul' and 'bonding or shedding of knowledge-obstructing *karma*'.

In keeping with the scriptural teaching, they define perception as mere awareness or cognition of one's own Self. This awareness must take the individual on a path in search of the more detailed knowledge of the Self. On the other hand, they define comprehension as "knowing the Self." In other words, according to the scriptures, mere introspection of the nature of the Self is perception (*darsana*), whereas that which cognizes the nature of both generic and specific qualities of the Self is comprehension (*jnana*). Thus, the faculty of cognition is perception when it senses the Self and comprehension when it knows the Self. This definition explains why scriptures emphasize both: *samyak-darsana* or rational intuition or rational perception at the awakening stage, and *samyak-jnana* or rational knowledge during the progression on the path to liberation.

The important point made in these debates between different schools is that for cognition (indeterminate or determinate) the object must have its unique characteristics or qualities. An object, which has absolutely no qualities, is never cognized because discrimination between qualities is the fundamental character of consciousness.

Comprehensive Knowledge (*Jnana*)

Comprehensive knowledge is definite and determinate but may or may not be total, absolute, and perfect. Except in the case of the omniscient (perfect-*kevala*), comprehension by any living being cannot be absolute but only relative because:

¹⁴ Jain, Hiralal, *Satkhandagama of Puspadanta and Bhutabali with Virasena's Dhaval-tika*, 1.1. Hindi translation, Jaina Sahityoddharaka Fund Publication, Amaravati, 1939-1959.

¹⁵ *Tarkabhiprayena Sattvalokanadarsanam*, 44, by Brahmadeva.

1. Each Real element is objective. Each fundamental element is both permanent and impermanent (Ch. 6) depending upon our perspective and focus on its inherent qualities (*gunas*) or its modes (*paryayas*), and the modes of an element are continuously changing.
2. Our comprehension of the Reality is also relative to us the knower who cannot perceive all facets of the Reality because our soul is associated with the knowledge obstructing karma.

According to the Jain philosophers, we can secure cognition through any one or all three means namely, physical senses, mind, and directly by means of soul. In other words, comprehension could be sensory, i.e. conditioned by the senses and mind, or extra-sensory, i.e. derived from the sources of consciousness (soul itself) without any assistance of the senses and mind. Comprehension of an object begins with the perception of the object through either object awareness or contact-awareness.

Except in the case of the omniscient, (perfect-kevala), comprehension by any one of us cannot be absolute but only relative

Object awareness is really a start of the relation between the sense organ and the object in the form of sense-specific data supplied by the object. It is momentary and always confined to the mere occurrence of cognition, which is indistinct and indeterminate. Hence, it does not provide comprehension, which is distinct and definite. The contact-awareness, on the other hand, is an awakening of consciousness by the direct contact between the object and the senses. Only four (excluding sight) sense organs are capable of establishing a close contact with their object. These four-types of contact-awareness are longer lasting and could lead to comprehensive (but not absolute) understanding of the object.

The cognition follows next in the wake of perception, and the sensory comprehension could be either non-verbal (*mati-jnana*) or verbal (*sruta-jnana*). The contact awareness of the non-verbal type initiates the perceptive knowledge, which could lead our mind through the following seven steps:

1. enquiry to acquire more facts
2. speculation to advance towards a distinct awareness by examining specific features of the object
3. increased perception to ascertain the specific features of an object by excluding the non-existent qualities and ascertaining the right ones
4. retention which is the final determination of the object, retention of the cognition, and recognition of the object in the future
5. recollection which stimulates the emergence of our past experience to the surface of consciousness

6. recognition which helps us to make a judgment by combining perception (i.e. the freshly received data about the existence of an object) and recollection which is a latent mental trace of the data previously received about the same or similar object
7. and reasoning which is the mental process of comparing possibilities and finalizing the judgment about the identity of the object.

The above steps together with all other avenues of cognition are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 11

11. The Avenues of Knowledge

Jains give so much importance to knowledge that a much revered second century Jain scripture - *Tattavartha Sutra* - states in its very first sentence:

Rational world-view, knowledge and conduct are the three elements essential for liberation.

This text devotes the first chapter, almost entirely, to the Jain theory of knowledge. The Jain theory of knowledge begins with a simple assumption that the 'knowledge', the 'knower', and the 'known' are the three essential elements of knowing. A simple statement like "the grass is green" involves:

the **knower** - the person who learnt

the **known** - the object, e.g. grass, about which the knowledge is obtained, and

the **knowledge** - that it is green.

The Knower

We just stated that the person who learnt is the knower. According to Jainism, this statement is not quite accurate. To be accurate, the soul, not the person himself, is the knower. A person is a combination of his material body which, by itself, has no ability to 'know' - and his *Jiva* the soul. The soul is the consciousness (*chetana*), the one with the ability to know. Thus, soul is the only knower.

Consciousness is such an intrinsic, inherent, inseparable, and inalienable attribute of the soul that the soul cannot exist without it. Thus, more precisely, "soul and consciousness being inseparable, soul itself must be omniscient, i.e. all-knowing, and all-perceiving. In other words the knowledge and the knower are the same."

The Jain epistemology maintains that a living being already possess all the knowledge by virtue of him having a potentially omniscient soul. Knowledge does not come from outside, it is already with the soul. This fact is not always obvious because of the individual's *karma*.

A soul, unless it is liberated, is always associated with its *karma*. The soul-contaminating *karmic* particles, which are material in nature, manage to cloud a soul's inherent qualities. Destructive (*ghatiya*) *karmic* particles - specifically the perception-obscuring (*darsanavarṇiya*) and knowledge-obscuring (*jñānavarṇiya*) *karmic* particles - obscure soul's qualities such as infinite perception and knowledge. Total removal, or annihilation of these particles (when one reaches the 13th stage of spiritual development - *gūṇasthāna*) enables the soul to manifest itself and reveal its true characteristic - its omniscience. This idea is similar to that of polishing off layers of dirt from the surface of a diamond to release its brilliance.

The Known

According to the Jain world-view, the cosmos is made of only six fundamental elements, viz. soul, matter, space, time, and mediums of motion and rest. These six are, therefore, the only objects of knowledge (i.e. the 'known'). Note that soul is both the 'knower' as well as the 'known'. No other object has consciousness and cannot be a 'knower'. When a soul knows itself, the knowledge is subjective; knowledge about every thing else is objective.

The Knowledge

The scientific or the analytical genius of early Jain philosophers becomes evident when we examine their analysis of this whole process of so-called 'gaining knowledge'. How does one get knowledge? What happens when we 'gain knowledge'? What interactions take place between the knower and the known?

Since knowledge and the 'knower' are the same, the process of 'gaining' knowledge does not really involve any 'flow' of information from the 'known' to the 'knower'. The whole process is therefore that of consciousness - the 'knower' becoming conscious of the 'known'.

How does that happen? How does the knower become conscious of the known? Remember the '*karmic* particles' that bond and obscure consciousness? There are several kinds of *karmic* bondage, and becoming conscious of something, (i.e. gaining knowledge of something) is merely the shedding of the *karmic* particles, which were obscuring that particular knowledge. This shedding may happen either naturally (because of the predetermined duration of bonding) or through one's initiative and concerted efforts (reading, writing, listening, experiencing, etc. through self-discipline/penance). The more one manages to shed one's knowledge-obscuring *karma*, the more enlightened one becomes.

Avenues of Consciousness

For the purpose of simplicity, we shall now use the terms 'consciousness' and

'gaining knowledge' interchangeably. In the last chapter, we classified knowledge as apprehensive (*darsana*) and comprehensive (*jnana*) knowledge. The criterion for this classification was the degree of consciousness achieved by the knower. Jains have used 'avenues of gaining knowledge' as one more criterion for classifying knowledge. The Jain theory states that, according to the avenues of gaining knowledge, there are five main types of knowledge as follows:

1. **Empirical knowledge** (sensuous cognition) - *mati-jnana*
2. **Articulate knowledge** (conceptualized through languages) - *shruti-jnana*
3. **Clairvoyant knowledge** (extra-sensory perception) - *avadhi-jnana*
4. **Mind-reading knowledge** - *mana-paryayjnana*, and
5. **Omniscience** - *kevali-jnana*.

Of these, the first two types involve our senses. A combination of shedding appropriate knowledge-obscuring *karma* and stimulating of our senses by external sources (the object of study) results in our becoming conscious of the object (the known). Such knowledge, gained through the medium of senses, is called 'indirect' or 'acquired' knowledge, e.g. *mati-jnana*, and *shruti-jnana*. Several factors such as our senses, the state of the object, and the state of the knower (soul) could easily corrupt or distort this acquired knowledge. On the other hand, knowledge through the last three avenues (*avadhi-jnana*, *mana-paryayjnana*, and *kevali-jnana*), being extra-sensory, is 'innate' and is likely to be less distorted, or perfect as in the case of omniscience.

Since the acquired knowledge could readily be distorted, Jain philosophers have devoted considerable energy to analyzing the avenues of Empirical and Articulate knowledge. In fact, they have classified empirical knowledge into as many as 336 different sub-categories based on the sources of distortion.

Empirical Knowledge








Empirical knowledge is based on sensual perception and the analytical capacity of the mind. The five senses, viz., sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste are organ (*indriya*) based. (Some regard mind - the intermediary - as a non-organ based (*anendriya*) quasi-sense.) Space limitations do not permit full discussion of each of the 336 sub-categories of empirical knowledge, but the following illustration gives an idea of the logical and scientific framework used by the Jain thinkers.

For example, let us consider the knowledge obtained through just one sense - hearing. Let us imagine that we just heard a faint sound in a very dark room. Our perception of the event goes through a four-stage process:

1. **Initial perception** - sensing the existential characteristics of the object

2. **Specific inquiry** - conclusions derived from data received in stage one
3. **Cognitive comprehension** - cognition or definite identification
4. **Imprint** - retention of knowledge as memory.

'Initial perception' is the very first step of sensing the general characteristics of an object without knowing any details about it. (The faint, indistinct sound makes us aware of the object that made the sound.) Subsequent stages of 'specific inquiry' and 'cognitive comprehension' immediately follow the initial perception.

TERMS TO REMEMBER		
	<i>Anendriya</i>	Non-sensuous
	<i>Avadhi</i>	Clairvoyant knowledge
	<i>Indriya</i>	Senses
	<i>Kevali</i>	Omniscience
	<i>Mana-paryaya</i>	Mind-reading
	<i>Mati</i>	Empirical
	<i>Sruti</i>	Articulate

During the stage of 'specific inquiry', the mind analyzes the sound in terms of some similarities and differences. (e. g. footsteps, or whispering, or scratching.) This is followed by a determination of the existent qualities in the object to the exclusion of the non-existent ones ("It is a human voice, definitely not that of walking."). The initial perception progresses to identification and conclusion (e.g., "it is a whispering sound, therefore, another person is in the room."). Cognitive comprehension of the object is almost complete when we identify the person.

In the final stage, an imprint, or the retention of the knowledge in the memory of the knower for a length of time, follows the articulate comprehension. This retained empirical knowledge is called a variety of names, such as intelligence, remembrance, reasoning power, recognition, etc.

Empirical knowledge gained through other senses also follows the same four stages. At any stage, the senses, the state of the knower, the condition of the known, and the medium of learning may distort it. In other words, both the objects under study, as well as the mental ability of the learner, affect the acquisition of empirical knowledge. This is the effect of the learner's *karma*. The same data received by two different learners is cognized and interpreted differently depending upon the *karmic* influences on the learner's soul. The *karma* that obscure or impede a soul's manifestation of the empirical knowledge are known as 'empirical knowledge-obscuring' *karma*.

The knowledge thus gained acquires opposing duality (e.g., it may be either true or false) subject to the state of the knower. Scriptures describe six pairs of such opposing dualities. Thus, the empirical knowledge, at each of its four stages of acquisition, through each of the six senses, passes through each of these six opposing pairs, i.e. twelve types of comprehensions on its way to imprinting,

intelligence, memory, etc. This gives rise to 288 (six senses X four stages X 12 comprehensions = 288) sub-categories of empirical knowledge. This number increases to 336 because of other considerations, which we cannot discuss here.

The Articulate Knowledge

Reading, listening, and interpreting signs, are the normal means of receiving articulate knowledge. This knowledge is also subject to errors and distortions at several stages. Firstly, unless the original preceptor or receiver is omniscient, he/she may have initially received it empirically (through senses) in the distorted form (due to the receiver's knowledge-obscuring *karma*). Then, there is a possibility of distortions and errors in the second stage when this receiver attempts to put it in an imperfect medium of words or pictures. Obviously, the reader or the listener could be receiving a doubly distorted version of the original knowledge.

Absolute knowledge/truth is really beyond our reach until we manage to shed all our destructive karmic particles, become omniscient, and can perceive the absolute truth.

Having recognized the distortion inherent in the articulate knowledge, Jain philosophers have warned against accepting any word, written or spoken, be it from the scholars, priests or pundits, mullahs or rabbis, as absolute truth. Absolute knowledge/truth is really beyond our reach until we manage to shed all our destructive *karmic* particles, become omniscient, and can perceive the absolute truth. If all articulate knowledge is distorted, what about the scriptures? Do they not state the absolute truth?

Every scripture is written by some mortal beings. These mortal beings may claim that their works are directly from an incarnation of God, a son-of-God, a prophet, an *acharya*, a scholar, or a priest. They may even claim that the truth they profess is the 'revealed truth' and therefore 'absolute'. However, all such works are likely to be distorted, unless the souls of the original receiver (the knower) as well as of the one who scripted that knowledge, have eliminated all their destructive *karma* and become omniscient. Otherwise, the knowledge-obscuring *karma* play their role in distorting the truth. Furthermore, farther the author is from the original message, the more distorted is likely to be the version of the scripture. Obviously, those who cite their scriptures as "absolute truth" need to understand that the so-called truth is really the reflection of their own understanding of the written statement, which itself might be distorted by the author's misunderstanding of the original message.

The Jain scriptures (the *Agamas*) are not the 'revelations from above'. They stem from the liberated souls of the *Tirthankaras* - the omniscient ones. Omniscience being their source, the knowledge in the *agamas* could be almost absolute if not the absolute. A small degree of uncertainty theoretically arises because the disciples,

who themselves may not be omniscient, may have recorded the knowledge of the omniscient ones. Jains do recognize this possibility and have therefore grouped their sacred literature into (1) *Anga*-Agamas (Primary or Main texts based on the knowledge received by the omniscient - *kevali* - direct disciples of Mahavira), and (2) *Anga-bahya* Agama (subsidiary texts written by the learned ascetics who were not the direct disciples). (Chapter 20)

The next three categories of knowledge are the “innate” or “direct” types, i.e. this knowledge is independent of our senses but is directly from the soul itself. Such knowledge is therefore not subject to sensual distortion and limitation. Awareness of this knowledge, which is already within us, comes with the elimination of specific knowledge-obscuring *karma*.

The Clairvoyant Knowledge

Clairvoyance enables a person to know an object without being in direct contact with it. This knowledge is not subject to the limitations of time, space, senses or mind. Clairvoyance could be innate (inborn) or acquired. Souls born in heaven or hell (celestial and hellish beings) are born in those realms with innate clairvoyance. We humans acquire clairvoyance by destroying our 'clairvoyance-obscuring *karma*' through meditation, penance, and self-control. Depending upon the extent of annihilation of such *karma*, one can know of things, persons, and events of the past and future, and of those happening at far-off places.

The Mind-reading Knowledge

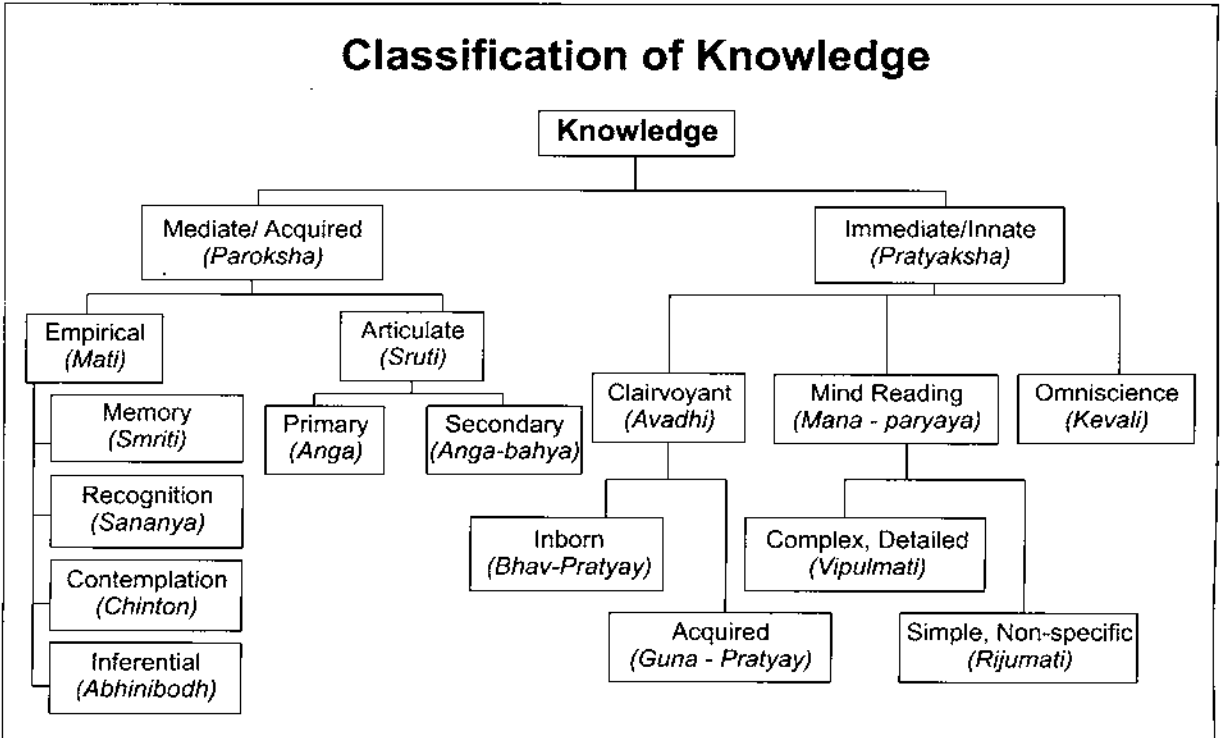
This may sound spooky, but through self-discipline and austerities, we can manage to shed our *karma*, which obscure our 'mind-reading' ability. We can then read the mind, the ideas, and the thoughts of other persons without the help of any medium or outside agency. Mind-reading knowledge could be simple or complex. Simple mind-reading knowledge is non-specific, fallible, shallow, and rather limited in scope. In comparison, complex-mind-readers read many different complex modes of the mind, and penetrate more deeply into the minds of others. The complex mind-reading ability lasts until one attains omniscience. Simple mind reading relates only to the thoughts about an object or action, whereas those capable of complex mind reading can penetrate deeper and can read the motivations and beliefs that lie behind a person's thoughts.

Persons with this faculty are rare because one reaches this stage (just few stages before omniscience) only after annihilation of almost all knowledge-obscuring *karma*. Only those who carry a light *karmic* bundle from the past lives and follow a strict, self-disciplined ascetic path can hope to reach this stage.

Omniscience

One reaches this stage when one's soul manages to purge itself of the four 'destructive' (*ghatiya*) *karma*. This is the stage when a person is free from all passions, all the causes of *karma*-bondage have disappeared, and no new bondage is possible. The remaining non-destructive (*aghatiya*) *karma* can break off by the natural process. An individual achieves omniscience as soon as the *ghatiya karma* are purged. This is the '*Arhant*' stage. Some individuals and *Tirthankaras* continue to live thereafter (because of the continued bondage with the 'life-span' - *ayus karma*), but do not bond new *karma*, and do achieve liberation upon death.

Only the omniscient ones could access distortion-free, unlimited knowledge, because they are free from all destructive *karmic* particles including the knowledge-obstructing *karma*. Only they can grasp all the facets of the manifold Reality. Theirs is the pure, absolute, complete, and total knowledge. *Siddhas*, *Arihantas*, and *Tirthankaras* have reached this supreme stage. *Tirthankaras* have reached omniscience by shedding their '*ghatiya*' *karma*. However, their '*aghatiya*' *karma* have allowed them to continue living in this '*Arhant*' stage to give us their knowledge of reality and to show us the path to liberation. Finally, their *aghatiya karma* also come to fruition, causing their Nirvana and fully liberating their souls. This is the '*Siddha*' stage.







Section

IV

**Section IV. Contemporary
Issues**

SECTION PREVIEW

Issues such as eroding spiritual values, wars, poverty, cruelty to animals, environmental degradation, fundamentalism, and terrorism are becoming increasingly worrisome for our civilization. Finding rational solutions to these varied problems is a major concern for the contemporary thinker. Our continuously evolving spiritual values reflect this concern. These values shape the spirituality of the modern generations. In fact, we can now define the new spirituality as one that:

“Promotes faith without restricting rationality and freedom of human thought, recognizes the rights of all living beings, acknowledges the universe as a self-sustaining entity whose magnificence must be preserved, and prepares a mindset for personal and global peace.”

The doctrines of ahimsa, anekantavada, and aparigraha, govern the Jain lifestyle (samyak-charitra). This life-style could ease some of the problems facing our world today. Furthermore, Jains have a long history of philanthropy, kindness to all living beings, environmental issues concerns, and non-confrontational, non-threatening, multi-faith dialogue. Therefore, we invite contemporary Jains to use their historical experience and expertise to become “the catalysts and leaders in a global dialogue on nonviolent stewardship of this endangered planet.” They could actively participate in the process of resolving issues surrounding global peace, human and animal rights, social and economic justice, environmental issues religious conflicts, etc. Thereby they can demonstrate that this ancient religion is perfectly in tune with the demands of the new spirituality. This will help Jainism regain its vitality and glory.

12. The Contemporary Thinker

The Contemporary World

Preference for rational thinking, and concern for the future of our civilization are the two important attributes that define a modern, 21st century thinker. Both these attributes are due to the phenomenal success modern science has achieved in the past four hundred years. The unprecedented physical comfort we enjoy today is an eloquent proof of the effectiveness of free and rational thinking of science. Ironically, our unprecedented ability to produce weapons of mass destruction, to dominate nature, and to destroy our ecology is also a graphic proof of the success of science. There is a danger that, if left unchecked, our preoccupation with science and technology might permanently damage our planet and our future.

We cannot deny that science is now as much of a force in our lives as religion once was. How can this incredible scientific force be controlled and channeled? Can governments control science? Can religions guide galloping advances of science? I believe that any attempt to 'control' science - be it by governments, religions, or other agencies - is bound to fail. Human history is a witness to this observation. Imposed controls - whether on individuals, societies, or institutions - have never worked. Such attempts fail miserably particularly when those imposed upon are on a winning streak, and modern science is now on such a course!

The Science-Religion Dichotomy

Once upon a time, religions reined supreme over the affairs of human beings. Religious authorities managed to establish absolute control over their flocks by proclaiming laws of behavior, devising elaborate systems to police, and punishing the lawbreakers. They kept humans subdued by gaining control over the state, through favoritism, and by promising heaven or the fear of hell. Liberty, rights, and the free will of human beings became secondary to that of the church. The religious authorities even punished or condemned to death those who favored logic or

rationality over faith. However, in Europe the process of human empowerment started about four hundred years ago when science and technology began delivering physical comforts, financial freedom, and direct access to printed bible. Some scientists even challenged faith and authority - the two main pillars of the church - and advocated the use of logic, experience, and experimentation. With this, a dichotomy between the church and science began to develop in Europe.

Church's tight grip on the society began eroding at this point. 'State' was the first to emerge from under the church's control. Soon, the scientific advances and the printing of Bible empowered the masses and highlighted the importance of free, logical thinking. The Church's message of "absolute, unquestioned faith in God for a ticket to heaven after death" became secondary to the "absolute mastery over nature for a ticket to better and comfortable living right now" message of science. The unfortunate outcome of this development, however, was that the spiritual values advocated by the church eroded, and base instincts such as greed, power, and materialism gripped the humanity. This dichotomy polarized Western society into two extreme camps - one remaining focused on an afterlife and blaming science for the woes of modern society and the other seeking instant gratification and blaming religions for suppressing human free will. Neither camp was much concerned about the tomorrow on our planet earth.

Unfortunately, this mutual blaming has only increased human misery and further burdened our planet with contemporary issues such as deteriorating ecosystem, increased crime, racial and religious hatred, threats of nuclear war, and economic exploitation. These global issues can be better resolved, not by continued confrontation, but by cooperation between science and religion. Unfortunately, in the Western world, any attempt to reconcile the 'scientific' with the 'spiritual' and encouraging the two to cooperate has been a struggle. Zealots on either side are not yet ready to be forgiving and generous.

Religion concerns itself mostly with the afterlife, and science deals with the material needs and life today. However, the very survival of our planet crucially depends upon our ability to blend the spiritual values of religion with the intellectual and logical philosophy of science. The Church's attempt to regain control by blaming science for all the woes of the planet, or science's attempt to demonstrate absolute control over material nature without any regard for the ethical cautions, are both doomed to failure and the consequences for us could be devastating!

On the one hand, scientific materialism denies or ignores the existence of soul in its scientific exploration of Reality, while on the other; religious fervor can turn too sharply toward the spiritual varieties and disregard the physical ones. This leads to an oscillating world-view in which we become unable to conceive of spiritual and material Reality at once, and as a whole.

Nathmal Tatia in That Which Is - Tatvartha Sutra, Harper Collins Publishers, San Francisco, 1994

Contemporary Issues

The contemporary world has some contemporary problems. Some are global, some locality-specific and some intensely personal. Some problems have been with us for a long time, but even these have been exacerbated in recent years.

There are no easy solutions and certainly no Jain panaceas. However, Jainism is uniquely equipped to deal with many of them because of its rich philosophy, long history and experience. Contemporary Jains and those concerned with these issues could draw much from these historical lessons and make a difference. Let us have a quick review of the problems facing us in the 21st century.

The survival of our planet crucially depends upon our ability to blend the spiritual values of religion with the intellectual and logical philosophy of science.

Spiritual Values: A universal complaint - be it from priests, pundits, rabbi, mullahs or monks - is: "Society today has no interest in the spiritual matters. Kids don't want to attend Sunday school, *pathshala* or *madarassa* and the parents don't care." Religious establishments are facing a severe decline in public confidence and allegiance.* This may be a matter of grave consequences for the priests and pundits. However, should a modern man care about whether or not anyone attends churches, temples, mosques, etc., and whether the children attend Sunday school? Is this a problem for the contemporary thinker? Does it matter? Does it signify the loss of spirituality? Should we worry about this loss? (See next Chapter.)

Wars: We humans have waged wars and killed each other throughout our history! In fact we have been good at it. With our crude weapons like axes, spears and swords we fought crusades, invaded continents, and managed to wipe out civilizations. In the 20th century, our technological prowess enabled us to invent efficient killing machines - machine guns and bombs! The 20th century even managed to produce the personification of megalomania, bigotry, greed and evil in the form of Hitler. Had this man access to the weapons of mass destruction we have available today, he could have blown our planet to pieces. Let us not be complacent! There is no guarantee that the 21st century will not produce its own version of Hitler. As this book is being written, there are no less than thirty major conflicts and wars being played out in different parts of the world (the U.S. army refers to these war zones as 'theaters of engagement'). The events in Iraq and Afghanistan that followed the

* Inevitably, the sudden breakdown of the rigid attitudes of the past ages, and the greed generated by modern science and technology are producing chaotic and negative reactions. Many see the old power structures collapsing and have no vision of the structure of the future. They take refuge in various forms of rage, escapism, fantasy, terrorism, and fundamentalism. Some organized religions have even launched aggressive campaigns to pull the masses back into their fold. Perhaps this explains the current paradoxical rise in attendance at the churches, mosques, etc., as well as the rise in fundamentalist terrorism. Nevertheless, out of this turmoil and confusion a wonderful pattern - that of new spirituality and human rights - is emerging. See Chapter 13.

tragic bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 have captured the world-attention.

Poverty: Science and technology has given us the ability and means to produce an abundance of wealth. More food, more goods, and more wealth are being produced now than ever before. Human ingenuity has made possible a lifestyle that is supposed to be more comfortable than ever. But, can we tell this to the starving children and their anguished mothers in Africa, Asia and South America? Can we talk about it to the street people in the wealthiest nations and dazzling cities like New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Mumbai, and Honk Kong? Their misery continues in spite of our scientific achievements. Why?

Environmental Degradation: In the contemporary world, the rich nations talk about global warming and about the hole in the ozone layer; the newly industrializing nations talk about the lack of potable water and breatheable air; while the poor nations are worried about their quickly depleting natural resources.

Fundamentalism: Religious, Political and Ideological: As contemporary thinkers turn to secular thought in increasing numbers, the 'old-guards' of the traditional religions are resorting to fundamentalist violence. Coincidentally, as this was being typed (for the 1st edition), the following news flashed on my computer.

Mulla Mohammad Omar has issued a decree to destroy every statue in Afghanistan, including two giant statues of Buddha hewn into cliffs and more than 16 centuries old. "The order was given based on Islamic law," said the Taliban, the fundamentalist Moslem group, that currently controls 90 percent of the Afghan territory.

----- CBC News Online Staff.

Cruelty to Animals: This issue is rapidly emerging on the radar screens of contemporary thinkers. In many parts of the world, hunting a startled wild animal with a high-powered gun from a helicopter is euphemistically called 'sports.' Raising millions of cows and chickens in conditions where these animals are confined to tiny little cages for all of their stressful short lives is called 'farming'. Catching thousands of fish by the sweep of a giant dragnet or clubbing to death thousands of seal-pups as they emerge from the sea within a few days of their birth is called 'harvesting'. A visit to these 'sports-grounds' and 'farms' shockingly exposes the cruelty hidden behind these euphemestic terms. You will witness how thousands of chicks - just two days old - are tossed alive into a meat grinder to produce animal feed, or how beaks of fifteen-day old chicks are chopped off so that they will not peck each other during the rest of their frustrated lives in a fourteen inch by fourteen inch cage. You would no longer wonder about the cruelty and arrogance of the human species.

Globalization: This is a two-pronged issue. Migration and exchange of people between nations and continents is happening with ever increasing frequency, and the world has truly become a global village. Such globalization is good in spite of the majority/minority issues arising out of fear, racism and bigotry. Such issues could be resolved with education, cultural exchange, and changes in attitudes. However, a new form of globalization is rapidly emerging with the spread of multinational corporations, which exploit the natural and human resources of poor countries in the name of 'fair-trade practices.' The problem of exploitation is a complex one and results in permanent damage to a nation or group of people. However, tribalism as a reaction to globalization forces could also have negative effects.

Family Breakdown: Although this problem is becoming a serious issue in the Western countries, Eastern cultures are no longer immune to it. Furthermore, Jains themselves are migrating to countries in Europe, North America, and Australia where the local stresses are straining their families also. The consequences of the gradual shift from 'joint-family' to 'nuclear family,' to 'no family' has become a subject of detailed study and research by social scientists.

Ethical Issues: Every now and then societies find themselves face-to-face with new ethical issues. Some religions believe that these issues are exclusively under their domain and often rush to come up with new edicts, encyclicals and *fatwas*. Their new directives are often sheepishly or grudgingly accepted by the congregation but sometimes cause an emotional crisis forcing the dissenters to leave the congregation. Some of the issues confronting the contemporary thinker are gender equality, same-sex marriages, gay/lesbian rights, euthanasia, capital punishment, the use of animals in medical research, genetic modification, cloning, nuclear weapons, the dominance of religion in the affairs of the state, etc. Furthermore, young people today are struggling with the issues that are of intensely personal nature. Peer pressure and parent's culture pull young people in opposite directions on issues such as drugs and drinking, pre-marital sex, abortion, etc. The intensity of these concerns may vary by place and by culture, but sooner or later all areas and all cultures will have to confront these matters squarely. Should religious authorities deal with these issues by issuing directives? Does Jainism have any special technique to handle such problems of a personal nature?

Analysis

The foregoing is only a partial list of the issues facing our civilization. The issues may all look different, but an analysis will reveal that passion is the common thread connecting them. Passionate forces of anger, pride, deceit, and greed (Jains call these the four *kashayas*) create these issues. Greed for power or wealth feeds diverse

If we can transform our strong emotions into wisdom, and manage to keep our passions under control instead of the passions controlling our mind, we should be able to resolve most of the issues facing our planet.

problems such as wars, economic dominance, poverty, animal cruelty, and environmental degradation. False pride in religion, political views, race, culture, colour of the skin, etc. either excites our anxieties or encourages us to look down upon something different than that which is familiar. Consequently, we tend to react with fear, rage, or anger. Even the ethical issues, in the final analysis, are governed by these passions. Theoretically at least, if we can transform our strong emotions into wisdom and manage to keep our passions under control instead of allowing them to control our minds, we should be able to resolve most of these concerns.

Do Jains have special insights in these matters? How would Jains handle, and how do they handle these issues? Can Jainism offer any help?

Activism

Many individuals and organizations around the world are trying to tackle contemporary global issues in their own way. Their actions take different forms such as: issue-based publications, conferences, rallies, demonstration on the streets, and sometimes even violent tactics to vent their frustration. Such efforts are often labeled as 'activism'. Those with vested interest in maintaining the *status quo* often paint a negative picture of activists as young, radical, violent, and undisciplined anarchists. It is easy to understand why.

We cannot deny the fact that our planet is in grave danger and needs our proactive intervention.

People express their anger and unhappiness at the state of their world. Often, they feel disenfranchised. Their activism is then limited by their incapacity to do anything but kick down fences, burn effigies, buses, and flags or symbols of authority. The well-meaning efforts of many have thus resulted in unfortunate confrontations and frustrations. Nevertheless, their concerns may be genuine and the issues facing our civilizations are real. We cannot deny that our planet is in grave danger and needs our 'proactive intervention'.

Let us first understand what we mean by the term 'proactive intervention.' Techniques such as protests, rallies and street demonstrations produce both positive as well as negative effects. On the one hand, such techniques bring the issues into focus, widen awareness, and unless turned violent and ugly, they attract more and more people to the cause. This is the positive side of activism. However, these techniques do very little for the cause because they send a negative message and create a sense of guilt among those whose immediate interests lie in the *status quo*.

Their instant response would be to neglect the long-term 'common good' solution and instead concentrate on building a protective mask to hide the guilt and then launch a counter attack. Often, as is the case with the arms industry (peace movement), the meat industry (vegetarianism movement), economic superpowers (poverty eradication movement), or major religions (multifaith movements), the opponents of the change wield great power with which they can frustrate (if not crush) the activist movements.

The success of any activist movement would thus depend upon the ability of its leaders to shift their strategy from a negative 'shaming or making others feel guilty' to a positive, 'can-do together' approach. Mahatma Gandhi employed this 'gear-shifting' technique very successfully. His was the freedom movement and his adversary was the powerful British Raj with its vested interest in the economic exploitation of India. Every now and then the Mahatma would encourage his followers to take to the streets and organize peaceful marches, protest rallies and so on. Each such event served to awaken Indians to the cause and attracted more and more people to the freedom movement. Each such rally embarrassed the rulers who countered with the use of force. The people's movement would therefore turn ugly.

Modern-day activists who try 'proactive intervention' to better our world could achieve results much faster by learning from Gandhi.

Much to the frustration of his followers Gandhi would then abruptly issue a call to stop all street action, stage appeals to the decent-minded Britons, and invite the Raj to engage in a dialogue. Such goal-focused activism is true proactive intervention. Modern-day activists who try proactive intervention to better our world could achieve results much faster by learning this gear-shifting technique from Gandhi.

The Multifaith Movement

As an example, let us take one of the issues namely, religious intolerance and fundamentalism. This issue has been a source of many conflicts and wars in human history. A number of current conflicts around the globe, including the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, or the Parliament building in New Delhi, have this issue at their roots. In recent decades, the migration of people from the Orient into Western Christendom has brought different religions in each other's neighborhoods, and to some extent, excited anxiety leading to hostility among conservative Christians in the Western world.

In the Judaeo-Christian traditions, the process of accepting a different belief system as a valid religion began several centuries ago but has seen very little advance until recently. Traditionally Christianity, with its claim of universality, has proclaimed itself to be the only true religion for all mankind, and Judaism, claiming exclusivity, was not open to anyone who was not an ethnic Jew. Consequently, both these traditions were not open for respectful dialogue with anyone outside their own faiths. For centuries, the main mission of the Christian church, therefore, was to convert

those of all other faiths to the 'true faith' and to excommunicate or exterminate by death those, already in the 'faith', who challenged the Church's fundamentalist teaching.

This hardline attitude of Christianity began to ease a little during the European Reformation period at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 when a prince's subjects were allowed to follow his faith (*cuius regio, eius religio* - in a prince's country, a prince's religion-Catholic or Lutheran). Other Christian sects (e.g., Calvinists, Hutterites) continued to be persecuted, and even enlightened philosophers like John Locke

A historically interesting note is that all three major religions of the Middle East - Christianity, Islam and Judaism - claim to be the true religion and have a long history of conflicts. It is strange that the Middle East should turn out to be a cradle of violence and continues to be engaged in violence even today.

advocated total intolerance towards atheists, but the hardline attitude continued to steadily erode (e.g. William and Mary legislation, 1689). While Europe was slow in recognising religious plurality, the fact that most early immigrants to the United States were the refugees from religious persecutions in Europe should have made the recognition process somewhat faster in America. However, when confronted with Native Peoples - whom they called 'Godless savages' - the new immigrants began to systematically persecute and appropriate native lands. This

continues even today, albeit under many subtle disguises. In short, they too committed mass genocide in the name of Christianity!

The third major religion of Middle Eastern origin - Islam - is also undergoing this transformation after centuries of religious conflicts. However, its progress is very slow. Hardliner *mullhas* are still engaged in armed conflicts in many parts of the world. Although enlightened Moslems are participating increasingly in multifaith dialogues, the effects of colonialism are still contributing to Moslem conservatism and communal atrocities in a number of countries in North Africa and in such countries as Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc. A historically interesting note, however, is that all three major religions of the Middle East, viz. Christianity, Islam and Judaism, claim to be the "true religion" and have a long history of religious conflicts. It is strange that the Middle East should turn out to be a cradle of violence and continues to be engaged in violence even today.

By contrast, the Indian subcontinent, the cradle of three other great religions - Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism - has seen relatively less religious violence. The conflict between the *Brahmanic* (Hinduism) and *Sramanic* (Buddhism and Jainism) has occasionally turned violent during the last 3500 years (since the birth of the *Brahmanic* religion), but often the conflict has taken the shape of religious dialogue and philosophical debates between the scholars of the various schools. Unfortunately, in

the relatively recent past the advances of Islam in the subcontinent has given rise to violent conflicts and India's long-established tradition of the multi-faith dialogue has suffered some serious setbacks.

Nevertheless, most of the world has now come to terms with religious pluralism. Open dialogue not only with other sects but also with other religious traditions is on the rise. All modern urban centers from New Delhi to New York, Tokyo to Toronto

and London to Los Angeles are fast becoming religiously pluralistic. Different communities in these centers are discovering that their religious differences do not have to produce conflicts; instead the differences can be celebrated as opportunities for intimate dialogue, increased

Our different worldviews do not have to bring violence to our lives, instead they can be excellent resources to widen our horizons of understanding.

appreciation of one's own spiritual heritage, and awareness of global diversity. Our different world-views do not have to bring violence to our lives; instead they can be excellent resources to widen our horizons of understanding.

This transition from violent religious conflicts to peaceful dialogue has already boosted the cause of the 'common good.' Those who desire 'proactive intervention' would readily recognize the effectiveness of shifting gears from violence to dialogue or from shaming others to respecting their view points. Our understanding of the root cause of contemporary issues as 'passions' (*kashayas*), and an appreciation of the effectiveness of shifting from violent conflicts to peaceful dialogues, enables us to suggest that Jains could play an important role in the global effort to resolve the contemporary issues. The Jain tradition of nonviolence and recognition of multiplicity of viewpoints has endowed them with skills in nonconfrontational multifaceted dialogue. Their recent migration to the Western countries is giving them an excellent opportunity to showcase their philosophy and lifestyle of peace and nonviolence. They can actively engage their neighbours, colleagues and co-workers in a peaceful dialogue to explain why it is time for all of us to re-examine our human roles and responsibilities.

Environmental Issues

Another major issue confronting our planet is environmental degradation. Cars, power generators, and factories do generate significant amounts of polluting gases, and cause global warming. However, the so-called 'Animal Farms' are also major polluters. Farm factories currently raise over 50 billion animals for slaughter each year. This contributes significantly to the destruction of forests, extinction of plant and animal species, soil erosion, pollution of ground water, and depletion of fresh water and arable land. Animal farms generate greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide (9%, 37%, and 65% of world totals, respectively) - of which methane and nitrous oxide are 23 and 296 times more detrimental to global

warming than carbon dioxide. To make the matters worse, we are rapidly stripping our rain forests to acquire more land for providing animal feed for these animal farms. Forests provide habitat for several species of birds, animals and insects, With the forest depleted, global warming accelerates. Scientists predict that a two-degree increase in global temperature will raise sea levels enough in few short years to submerge many costal areas and cities. Car owners, factories and energy producers are asked to reduce emissions, but any suggestion to curb animal farming is scoffed at, the **most inconvenient truth** is that we urgently need a global shift away from meat and other animal products, as well as from self-righteousness, and from a lifestyle of increasing needs and possessions, to save the planet. Without such a massive shift in human mindset, we will continue on our destructive path with the 'intelligent ingenuity' of our *kashayas*.

As many as 2600 hundred years ago, Mahavir issued a warning urging us to respect the environment. He preached that air, water, and soil are all living systems, and man will abuse them only at his own peril. Although ten million Jains worldwide try to live by Mahavir's message, the rest of the world continues to give it, cold-shoulder.

Mahavir perfected and preached a practical, workable technique to control, and even to rid ourselves of our devilish *kashayas*. His basic message is, "It is our mindset that keeps us imprisoned, and we need a fundamental change in our mindset to be able to free ourselves and our planet from the devil. We are the masters of our destiny and can expel the devil within us to achieve the divine state." The path to achieve this is the fourteen-stage spiritual progress (*gunasthana*) based on three doctrines - *Ahimsa*, *Anekantavada* and *Aparigraha*. It is not too hard to imagine how these doctrines, if applied globally, can alleviate most of the problems facing our planet such as violence, wars, fundamentalism, terrorism, and environmental decay. The practicality of these doctrines is evident in the fact that their impact on the psyche of the Jain community has resulted in the formation of a peaceful community, which has adhered to these three doctrines for thousands of years. The history of Jain community suggests that their three 'A's have been effective in bringing about massive change in the human mindset. It is still not too late for the rest of the world to take a serious look at these triple 'A'.

13. The New Spirituality

In the previous chapter we mentioned that the loss of 'traditional spiritual values' is one of the problems confronting our modern society, and we questioned if contemporary thinkers should worry about this loss. Such a rhetorical question is difficult to answer until we understand (i) the term spirituality, (ii) how it has changed over the years, (iii) how the present generation views spirituality, and (iv) how spirituality is likely to continue evolving further.

Spirituality

Many religious ideas originated with some exceptional individuals who were seeking sources of happiness and self-identity. These individuals designed ethical 'codes of conduct' to help fellow humans find happiness and achieve their full potential through good social behavior. Such codes, designed for the full development of human personality, represented true spirituality. Likewise, observance of such codes for the benefit of human beings largely defined people's spiritual behavior. People seeking happiness gathered around these exceptional individuals and organized themselves into different religions. However, the concept of spirituality has been changing throughout human history, and it will continue to do so in the future.

Soon a new class of people sprang up to help people observe the codes of behavior and lead a spiritual life. These were the new leaders of society - the holy men - the priests, monks, *mullahs*, and rabbis. They assumed the responsibility to lead their flock on their path of spirituality, and thus to keep the society happy. Unfortunately, people sometimes did not follow the codes laid down by their leaders and at times even challenged their authority. Such challenges were, of course, unacceptable to the leaders who then reacted by issuing a series of pronouncements. The so-called 'codes of conduct' thus gradually changed into the 'laws of behavior.' These laws were often full of contradictions. They contained insights beneficial for full human

development, but also tried to control human behavior according to class, caste, function, sex, and so on. The 'laws' needed to be enforced. Therefore, enforcement mechanisms and grim sanctions, such as excommunication, physical punishment, torture, and execution, and of course, the threat of eternal hell, soon followed. Spirituality now took on a new meaning - 'observance of the religious laws and their authority'. The net effect of this gradual change from code to law was to restrict the full development of human personality. The rights of human beings, and even those of the state, thereby became secondary to those of religious authority.

Human Rights

In the West, religious authorities continued to enjoy this power until about four hundred years ago when science and technology began challenging their 'absolute and revealed authority'. These challenges helped redefine spirituality. The faith-based religious authority gradually weakened with science's push for logical freethinking, and with the printing presses making the Bible readily accessible to the masses. The term spirituality started regaining its original meaning, namely, 'helping humans to achieve their fullest potential'. The princely states were the first beneficiaries of this weakening. They managed to free themselves from the control of the church. By the 20th century, 'complete freedom from any interference from religious authority' became the hallmark of a modern state. As we enter the new millennium, the long-established controlling mechanism of religions has eroded - either weakened or been declared illegal - in most modern states. The human spirit is now freer and assertive, and the threat of 'eternal hell' is being lifted from the human heart. Nevertheless, religious authorities continue to wield their power and interference in the affairs of the state in a number of countries. For example, the Islamic fundamentalists insist on '*shariat* laws' and churches continue to pressure legislators to stop recognition of non-sanctioned activities such as same-sex marriages, abortions, homosexuality and equality legislation for women. A legal system based on Judeo-Christian ethics prevails in several Western countries, and a push for power by the Hindu fundamentalists threatens the minority freedom in India.

The modern trend is towards personal responsibility to formulate and live according to one's own ethical principles and individual conscience. People are becoming aware of their rights and are wresting control from their community, their religions, and their governments. Human rights are gaining primacy. There is a general recognition now that people have a right to follow the religion of their choice, act according to their own conscience, and worship according to their own beliefs. Spirituality has now become secular. Full realization of human potential has become a widely endorsed goal with this reformed spirituality. The signs of this change - the emerging global spirituality of human rights - are everywhere:

- Various international bodies including United Nations, The Council of Europe and the Helsinki Accord, have proclaimed the right of human beings to freedom of religion. Governments are charged not only to abandon any formal policies of religious persecution, but also to act proactively to protect human rights.

The peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women

Preamble to Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations General Assembly,

December 10, 1948.

- Societies and governments are becoming secular but the religious fundamentalists are turning to desperate terrorist acts. One must view recent series of publications by the Southern Baptist Church in the United States, denigrating non-Christian faiths, the blowing up of sixteenth century Buddhist statues by the members of Taliban in Afghanistan, and the attacks on World Trade Center towers and Indian Parliament by Islamic fundamentalists, as desperate acts of misguided terrorists.
- There is a growing dialogue between the religions, and an interfaith movement has begun, which appears to be gaining momentum.
- Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Shinto, Taoist - all scriptures are being translated, and made available through electronic media. Different religious groups are exploring each other's scriptures.
- Religious leaders are getting worldwide audiences. A few examples include the convening of Parliaments of Religions in 1893, and 1993 in Chicago, and "*Sarva-Dharma-Sammelan*" held in Bangalore, India, in August 1993. At the 1893 Chicago parliament, each of other speakers spoke of his God and his sect. However, Vivekananda the Hindu representative spoke of "all their Gods and embraced them all in the Universal Being,"¹⁶ and Virchand Gandhi, the Jain representative, spoke of each one in the audience as a sacred soul capable of liberation to the godly state.¹⁷
- During the second Vatican Council of 1962-65, the Catholic Church finally withdrew their charge of 'deicide' (killing of God) against the Jews. It conceded also that other Christian denominations may have some Truth. (It has still a long way to go before it is able to recognize the validity of other faiths.) However, the 'Doctrine of Papal Infallibility' (first Vatican, 1870) was not revoked. Unfortunately, in the year 2000 Vatican seems to have reversed some of the progressive gains made in the 2nd Vatican Council.

¹⁶ Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, Advaita Ashram, 1965, pp. 36-8.

¹⁷ Gandhi V.R., *Religion and Philosophy of the Jains*, edited by Nagin Shah, Jain International, Ahmedabad, 1993.

All scriptures are increasingly coming under critical scrutiny. This makes religious claims to 'divine revelation' increasingly indefensible. The Catholic Church, which was opposed to any scrutiny of their 'Divine Revelation', finally authorized it in 1943. Reformed schools of Judaism are similarly scrutinizing Jewish canon. Islamic theologians are still holding back, either asserting that all the ideas of modernity are embedded in the Quar'an, or else rejecting modernity as Western decadence. Buddhists, Hindus, and Jains have never claimed divine revelation for their canon.

In the early 20th century a Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chadrin (1881- 1953), and a Hindu mystic, Sri Aurobindo (1872 - 1950) both suggested that the general level of human consciousness changes from time to time and therefore God takes rebirth on Earth in the form of prophets and *avatars* to take care of human beings. Krishna, believed to be an *avatar* of Lord Vishnu, says

To protect men of virtue and to destroy men who do evil, to set the standard of sacred duty, I appear on this earth, in age after age.
- (Bhagavad-Gita 4:8)

Tielhard and Aurobindo's concept is too anthropocentric and implies that God does not care for the plight of his other creations. It ignores even the rights of survival for other living forms e.g. animals and plants. Furthermore, this concept still allows us to pass human lapses in responsibility on to God and leaves religious authority in control of human spirit. Nevertheless, though not a full recognition of a reformed spirituality, Aurobindo and Teilhard's concept is a step away from the religious claims to absolute truth and towards human rights.

New Spirituality

Restoration of human rights is only one facet of the new spirituality. The emerging global spirituality is multidimensional. It encompasses the care and well-being of our immediate universe and recognizes the interdependence of humans and their surroundings. Human interests cannot be served without caring for all living beings, our ecosystem, and our planet. An ethic of personal responsibility, concern for social justice, personal fulfillment, and human empowerment has now become the important dimensions of human spirit. The modern thinkers want major social institutions like religions and governments to recognize these aspects of the human spirit. They do not want to return to the dark ages of unquestioned obedience, nor do they seek total freedom to pursue unconscionable instant gratification. They feel that the traditional religious focus on the afterlife only is as unacceptable as science's focus on living life for today and now. Instead, they want a balanced blend of concerns for worldly life here and now, as well as for the afterlife. The spirituality that draws forth their reserves of reverence promotes faith without restricting rationality and freedom of human mind. It recognizes the rights of all living beings,

acknowledges the universe as a self-sustaining entity, appreciates efforts to preserve the magnificence of our universe, and prepares a mindset for personal and global peace. These dimensions define new spirituality.

Coming back to whether or not a contemporary thinker should worry about the loss of spirituality, we can now ask, "Which spirituality are you talking about?" I believe that the spirituality is well and alive. In fact, for the contemporary thinkers and the youth around the world, it is thriving and more focused. Those who complain about the falling attendance at the churches, mosques, and temples need to realize that the spirituality no longer resides in these buildings. The high priests of the new spirituality are busy working with the poor and homeless, with the ecologists who want to preserve our forests and ecosystems, with the peace activists who are trying to save our planet, and with those who are putting their lives on the line to save Mother earth and all its living beings.

The new spirituality that draws forth reserves of reverence from the modern thinker, promotes faith without restricting rationality and freedom of human thought, recognizes the rights of all living beings, acknowledges universe as a self-sustaining entity, appreciates efforts to preserve the magnificence of our universe, and prepares a mindset for personal and global peace.

The saints of the 21st century are the nuns who tend to the dying in the streets of Kolkata (Calcutta), to the blind and sick in Rajgir, and the earthquake afflicted in India. They are the 'Doctors Without Borders' who rush from crisis to crisis to bring relief to disaster stricken individuals around the globe, and the hundreds of martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the Tiananmen Square in China. Volunteers who put their lives on line to save the street children in Brazil and those who face the teargas and plastic bullets so that millions of dispossessed and disfranchised around the globe can be spared from the ravages of corrupt politicians and greedy multinationals. These are the high priests of the new spirituality. We may or may not approve their methods, but their spirituality is dynamic, well, and alive! The 21st century thinkers have not only gone back to the original roots of spirituality but are also expanding its scope to include all other living beings, our ecosystem and our planet. The new kind of spiritual action demands a commitment to emulate Buddha, Christ, Mahavira, or Mohamed, who cared so deeply for the poor and the afflicted. Just believing in them and seeking personal liberation is not enough.

Major religions have already started responding to this new spirituality by de-emphasizing doctrines concerning God, creation, sin, incarnation, redemption, or damnation, and by laying greater stress on concerns of humanity. For example, since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Christianity (and to some extent Islam) has started offering humanitarian services such as chaplaincy services in

hospitals and prisons, marriage and family guidance, drug and alcohol addiction rehabilitation, sexual abuse counseling, and ecumenism and interfaith affairs, etc. (Although in the 1980s Pope John Paul II and the leading Vatican theologians, perhaps for political reasons, condemned the humanitarian oriented Worker-Priest Movement and Liberation Theology Movement initiated by the progressive Catholic priests in South America.)

Jain Spirituality

Right from its inception, and certainly since its revival in 600 BCE by Mahavira, Jainism has championed an all-inclusive spirituality. Development of human potential has been its main concern, but the welfare and happiness of all living forms has been equally important. Like other religions, Jains too have a code of conduct

The Jain spirituality blends an experience-based worldview of the universe as a reality, and a rational cause-and-effect based theory of karma. It is a soul-based spirituality. Its code of conduct and lifestyle reveres all life and preserves our ecosystems. By respecting differing viewpoints, it promotes personal and global peace.

(*samyak-charitra*), but they have never changed it to the laws of comportment. Consequently, Jains never found it necessary to institute any debilitating enforcement mechanism for their code of conduct. Mahavira's code of conduct still defines Jain spirituality. While Jainism certainly teaches ethical values, it also grants the individual considerable freedom in his moral comportment. Jains are subject to neither the moral censure nor the threats with which morality is reinforced in other religions. Taking vows and observing the code without the fear of external sanctions is Jain spirituality. Enabling human

spirit to become free and blissful is Jain spirituality. To critically examine the core principles of conduct viz.: *ahimsa*, *aparigraha*, and *anekantavada*, and then to act according to one's own free will and conscience is Jain spirituality.

In practical terms the Triple 'A's are the highest criteria for judging relationships between living beings and for reconciling extreme alternatives. They are the parameters of universal peace, which shaped Mahavira's movement. The observance of these parameters is entirely up to the conscience of the individual. The Jain spirituality blends an experience-based world-view of the universe as a reality, and a rational cause-and-effect based theory of *karma*. It is a soul-based spirituality. Its code of conduct and lifestyle reveres all life, preserves ecosystems. By respecting differing viewpoints, it promotes personal and global peace. The old concepts of Jain philosophy thus meet all the spiritual demands of the modern mind.

Ahimsa in the Jain tradition is a much more sophisticated and intellectual concept than the ordinary term 'nonviolence' would imply. *Ahimsa* is a spiritual term because it concerns the sanctity and liberation of souls. Since all living beings have souls that

are potentially equal, hurting or killing any living being is damaging, not only to the lives we hurt but also spiritually to us who commit violence. This is so because such acts violate the spiritual sanctity of our soul and we the offenders thereby reduce our chances for the liberation. This kind of reasoning is used by the *Tirthankaras* in their advice that we must refrain not only from the physical act of killing or hurting, but also from verbal and mental act of talking ill or even thinking ill of any other living being. The Jain focus on *ahimsa* is really a focus on the soul, and thus spiritual. In modern terminology, it defines spirituality not only as human rights, but also as the rights of all living beings, including plants and animals, and recommends profound care of our environment and the universe.

The Jain focus on ahimsa is really a focus on the soul, and thus spiritual. It defines spirituality not only as human rights, but also as the rights of all living beings, including plants and animal

A dialogue between Mahavir and one of his new disciples illustrates this point.

Disciple: "Tell me Oh Master, where is the violence if I killed another living being? I killed neither its soul nor its body, because soul is eternal and immortal, and body, being material in nature, has no Jiva (consciousness)."

Mahavir: "How can a soul that disrespects another soul ever attain moksha? The very act of killing or hurting another living being violates the spiritual sanctity of the killer's soul and ruins its possibilities of being liberated. Any such violation of one's own soul is the real violence."

With the current multi-faith movement, a non-confrontational interfaith dialogue has become important because it acknowledges the right of another human being to express his spiritual beliefs. The doctrine of *anekantavada* is a Jain tool for such dialogue. Jains have used it for centuries to promote peace and harmony between different ideologies. It has been hailed as a very tolerant intellectual orientation. *Syadvada* (the doctrine of qualified assertion) is a related tool used for practical orientation. Jains use this to demonstrate that they have understood the opposing ideology, have critically examined it, and could accept it as only valid 'from a certain perspective'. Such non-confrontational, qualified assertion of the opponent's ideas avoids conflicts and promotes further dialogue. *Ahimsa*, *anekantavada*, and *syadvada* are among the many Jain doctrines that meet the demands of the new spirituality.

The modern concept of spirituality will continue to evolve. It took nearly four hundred years for human rights to emerge from under the old authority structure. Now as we enter the new millennium the increased interfaith dialogue will help define the new spirituality to include not only human rights and the right to life for plants

and animals, but also all the other dimensions mentioned above. The fast growing global movements, such as 'animal rights,' 'environmental,' peace, etc., are the welcome indicators of this evolving concept of spirituality

The New Spirituality and Contemporary Jains

Jains are justifiably proud of their basic doctrines of *ahimsa*, *anekantavada*, *syadvada*, etc., and are quick to point out that the new spirituality is the vindication of these doctrines. At a time when other religions are bemoaning the loss of traditional spirituality and struggling to respond to the demands of the modern thinkers, Jain intellectuals may take comfort in their own philosophical heritage. They could claim, rather smugly, that theirs is a philosophy that has stood firmly for everyone's rights, for ecology, for social justice, for peace and happiness. However, regardless of how beautiful the philosophy may be, its effectiveness can be judged only by evaluating how contemporary Jains have responded to the changing demands of our planet, and how they have put it into practice for the betterment of humanity.

Many Jains - lay as well as ascetics - interpret *karma* theory and the ascetic's vows to justify their passivity concerning 'social justice and human welfare' issues. They argue that Jainism is a world-renouncing religion and Jain monks or nuns have renounced the world in favor of personal liberation. Therefore, ascetics must abandon worldly concerns such as wars, poverty, human rights and environmental degradation. They claim that getting involved with service to humanity, physical and material well-being of fellow human beings, etc., would only increase their 'attachment' to the worldly things. Attachment being one of the major causes of karmic bondage, passive detachment from such issues is what they prefer.

Such interpretation of Jain principles, if taken literally, would require all Jain ascetics to abandon their involvement with the lay society and be fully focused on personal salvation. Otherwise, it would be seen as 'simply the logic of convenience' to justify one's apathy. Such interpretation goes against the true message of the very *Tirthankaras* whose teachings Jains are supposed to be following! After all, instead of withdrawing from the society after achieving their personal omniscience, the *Tirthankaras* returned to society and spent their lifetime preaching the message of love and compassion for all living beings. Similarly, the Jain concept of auspicious (*punya*) and inauspicious (*papa*) *karma* also promotes social justice. Shouldn't Jains be at the forefront of the current social justice movement?

Jains must try to develop a new understanding of Mahavir's message. They have lived Mahavir's message as they understood it. However, is it possible that their understanding may be incomplete, or perhaps the message itself needs to be re-

examined in the light of the present circumstances? Wisdom must expand to take into account humanity's expanded possibilities of self-destruction. If fossilized, wisdom itself becomes self-destructive. Has Mahavir's omniscience been fossilized in the very hands of its proponents? I hope that the contemporary Jains would seriously examine their own involvement or apathy towards social justice!

Falling attendance at temples is a Jain phenomenon too! Jains who complain about it should ask themselves whether they, their societies, their ascetics, and their temples are in tune with the new spirituality. There is a beautiful philosophy whose focus is on the human mind. The new spirituality requires self-discipline to bring about a shift in the human mindset - a shift to non-dogmatism and to non-materialism. The entire Jain lifestyle is designed to train the mind in self-discipline. *Anekantavada* and *ahimsa* are useful tools for conflict resolution. Jainism encourages rational thinking and rejects blind faith. Its rational cause and effect philosophy is in keeping with the contemporary thought. Cooperation, not confrontation has been a major part of the Jain tradition.

However, could such a tradition provide any inspiration to the contemporary rational mindset? Jains have a rich endowment and responsibility to be at the forefront of the new spirituality. Are contemporary Jains aware of the enormous power of social change they have inherited in *ahimsa*, *anekantavada* and *aparigraha*? We Jains will not be able to utilize this power for the betterment of our world unless we first live Mahavir's true message. We must live it in a practical way, not merely in a conceptual way. We must allow the triple 'A's to seep into our being at the deepest level. *Ahimsa*, *anekantavada* and *aparigraha* must become a part of our subconscious and immediate response to every life encounter.* Only then will we be able to share Jainism's message with the rest of the world. Living Mahavir's message is to share it with the world.

Fortunately, Jains in North America and the worldwide Jain youth organizations are becoming increasingly aware of the acute need for 'Socially Engaged Jainism'. JAINA is taking some lead in North America, and several Jain organizations and individuals are also attempting to steer their efforts in that direction. However, in the absence of a collective and organized drive toward social engagement, such efforts are less likely to make any impact on the image of Jainism as a socially aloof religion. Perhaps, this speaks for the creation of a "Global Organization for Socially Engaged Jains. (GOSEJ)" Such an organization, dedicated to social issues along the lines of the Jain triple 'A's of *Ahimsa*, *Anekantavada*, and *Aparigraha* could provide much needed revolutionary impetus to Jainism.

* A fresh attempt in this direction is a recently published book - Jain Way of Life - Edited by Yogendra Jain and published by JAINA, (July 2007). Please visit www.JWOL.org

As in every religion, Jainism too has those who would stick to the letter not the spirit of the scriptural wisdom, and those who would seek to expand the old wisdom. Both these groups are essential for the preservation and progress of Jainism. Jains need to have several internal debates on these issues in the true spirit of *Anekantavada*. Such debates can help bring their insights in right focus and enable Jains to live Mahavira's message in a more meaningful way. This will empower Jains to bring Mahavira's message to the attention of the modern scientific world, help alleviate some contemporary issues, and help Jainism to regain its lost glory.

We will now examine how Jains have handled social issues, and how they can become effective in contributing to the solution of the issues related to the new spirituality.

14. The Science

The Debate

This is how it all begins! Someone at a party casually claims, “Jainism is the most scientific religion.”

“Poppycock,” responds an antagonist. “Just look at your model of the universe - a man standing with his hands on his hips! Does universe really look like that? Ha!” (Please see the Jain Cosmology section at the end of this chapter.)

“Yeah...,” another critic jumps in, “and you guys claim that your *Tirthankaras* had *keval-jnana* they knew absolutely every thing! How could they have even dreamt up something like that?”

Sometimes such arguments turn into a heated debate. Both sides often skirt the real issue! Let us take a close look at the debate. The claim is this: “*Jainism is the most scientific religion.*” There are two key terms in this statement, ‘science,’ and ‘religion.’ Let us first understand these two terms.

The bulk of knowledge that we humans have accumulated over the millennia is acquired essentially through two faculties, namely, **Reason** and **Vision**

Science: The Faculty of Reason

The Faculty of Reason rests on observations, rational thinking, deductive logic, repeatable experimentation and verifiable facts. Modern science gives primacy to the faculty of reason. In the scientific methodology, vision alone is of a secondary significance because an imaginative vision may or may not reveal truth. The so-called ‘scientific fact’ must meet all the criteria listed above.

The process of arriving at a scientific truth usually goes through Descartes' reduction steps (page 83) of experience, experimentation, observation, logic, reasoning, and analysis. Each of the conclusions arrived at also goes through a three-step process -hypothesis, theory, and principle (scientific truth). At each step, it has to meet all the criteria of the faculty of reason. Even after its acceptance as a truth, if ever any new observation challenges the validity of that truth, the scientific community immediately downgrades it to a mere hypothesis and goes after a new theory. Science does not accept any statement as ultimate truth, no matter how distinguished an authority its author may be. Science accepts neither faith nor authority.

Religion: The Faculty of Vision

The faculty of vision rests on personal experience, imagination, intuition, revelation, mysticism, etc. Faith and authority have been the primary sources of knowledge in traditional civilizations. Someone would make a claim to a vision, a revelation, or a direct link to God. He would then ask the listeners to have faith in him and would set up an effective organization to promote his vision or claim. Periodically, in an attempt to augment this vision, the followers pretend to use the faculty of reason in the form of a miracle or two. They then promote such miracles as 'reason enough' to convince the masses that the performer is blessed with some supernatural power.

Most religions started that way. Once the message of the visionary is claimed to be a revelation, challenging that vision would amount to questioning the authority of God and would be immediately labeled as blaspheme! Unquestioned faith and allegiance become the cornerstones of almost every religion. Soon, religions frame codes of behavior for the followers. They turn these codes into rules and condone grim sanctions such as excommunication, physical punishment, torture, flogging, and even execution to enforce these rules. The history of many religions is replete with clashes between logical free thinkers and religious authorities demanding blind faith. Such power struggles have resulted in many religious trials, inquisitions, and wars against the 'infidels!'

Jainism and Science

By contrast, Jainism started and evolved along an entirely different route. The first Jain *Tirthankara*, Rikhyava, began his quest for human happiness, and quickly concluded that our own mind, not some external power, is the root cause of all misery and happiness. "How can I bring my mind (and thus my misery) under control?" he must have wondered. Like a modern day scientist, he then began experimenting. Years of experimentation helped him develop a technique of self-control through rigorous discipline, meditation, and ascetic practices.

Similar to today's scientists, he then publicized his findings through his sermons and asked people to experiment with his new technique for achieving personal happiness and peace. Thus began Jainism - the science of personal happiness and peace. Over the years it evolved and was refined by twenty-three other scientists of peace and happiness - the other twenty-three *Tirthankaras* - who never performed any miracles, claimed divine revelation, or demanded blind allegiance. Some 2,600 years ago Mahavira, the last *Tirthankara*, reformed and preached this wealth of knowledge to his disciples, who then organized it into the *Agamas*, the Jain canon - the spiritual and scientific literature of Jainism.

Since the technique shown by the *Tirthankaras* required personal experimentation through ascetic practices, those wanting to explore the technique became monks and nuns. In their tradition of critical analysis, these ascetics too explored several new fields of human knowledge. Over the years, they accumulated a wealth of data in such diverse fields as astronomy, biology, medicine, psychology, ecology, sociology, and even particle physics. Although judged as "scientific" because of their use of free-enquiry, logic and rationality, their driving force for these explorations was spiritual, not material well being. They pursued spiritual bliss, not the physical comforts. They encouraged logical freethinking and experimentation, instead of unquestioned faith and loyalty. Instead of being hostile to the scientific methodology, they developed Jain philosophy in the true spirit of free enquiry, which is akin to the modern scientific investigative technique of reductionism.

Obsession with logic has enabled Jain monks to develop ideas and concepts comparable to those evolved much later by modern science. Admittedly, without the experimental tools of modern science, some of their conclusions may lack the required details, or may be judged as 'inaccurate' by modern scientific standards. However, the validity of Jain claims to 'being the most scientific religion' must be judged not on the basis of the accuracy of its model of the universe, but on the basis of the fact that no other religion has tolerated, let alone accepted, the most important principles of science. These are: the openness to new ideas that stand or fall based on validity and evidence rather than on dogmatism. In fact, Rene Descartes' 17th century 'reductionism technique', which forms the very basis of modern scientific methodology, has been employed by Jain ascetics to formulate their understanding of reality since Mahavir's time some 2600 years ago, if not earlier!

In many cases Jain monks and nuns have moved close to or beyond the frontiers of contemporary human knowledge, not unlike the modern scientists pushing the limits of knowledge. They made gains in spiritual areas such as soul, life, bliss and suffering, areas which are still beyond the scope of conventional science. *Tirthankaras* articulated properties, qualities, and inter-relationships of animate and

inanimate substances, which make up the cosmos. It is surprising that very little in this ancient Jain science and philosophy is incompatible with the theories of 21st century science. Jain theories of cognition, perception and the nature of the cosmos are quite accurate in the context of the modern scientific criteria. Jain dimensions of the universe are comparable to those theorized by Einstein. Ancient Jain works include ideas and details such as:¹⁸

- atomic make up of matter
- nature of elementary particles
- cause and effect concept
- existence of microorganisms
- plants too have life
- meditation and mental peace
- complex mathematics
- link between mental and physical health
- existence of non-spherical universe and extra-terrestrial life
- dimensions of universe comparable with those theorized by Einstein
- biological classification of plants and animals
- ecological principles for the preservation of nature

We think of these as modern ideas, yet Jains have taught these for millennia. Jain practices such as yoga, vegetarianism, meditation, fasting, and reverence for nature are already gaining approval by modern scientists. Jain literature could inspire even more discoveries in modern science, particularly in mathematics, psychology, ecology, astrophysics, and medicine. However, Jain scientific achievements, in contrast to modern science, are not motivated by a desire to conquer and dominate nature. The theater of their search for happiness is the human mind - not the exploitation of Mother Nature.

Scientific explorations into space and the deep sea, its promises of a long, healthy life, and its offer of material comfort are exciting. However, the world bemoans the moral degradation, the pollution, the crime, the violence, and the urge to dominate and destroy. The Jain focus is on understanding, instead of dominating nature to

¹⁸ Several works based on ancient Jain scientific treatises have recently appeared:

- (1) Padmavathamma, "The Mathematics of Nemichandra Siddhanat Chakravarti", in *Jinamanjari*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 68-76, Brahmi Society Publication, Toronto 1997.
- (2) Hayashi, Takao, "Geometric Formulas in Dhavala of Virasena", in *Jinamanjari*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp 53-76, Brahmi Society Publication, Toronto 1996.
- (3) Bhattacharya, H.S., *Reals in the Jain Metaphysics*, S.S.K. Trust, Bombay, 1950.
- (4) Divyakirti Muni, *Visva Vijnana: Prachin Ane Navin* (Universal Science: Old and New) Ch. 5 of *Tattvarthsutra* (Gujarati), Sanmarg Prakashan Ahmedabad 1994.
- (5) Jain, B.C., *Jaina Logic*, University of Madras Press, 1992.
- (6) Jain, N.L., *Scientific Contents in Prakrit Canons*, Parsvanath Vidyalaya, Varanasi 1996.
- (7) Jain, N. L., *Biology in Jaina Treatise on Reals*, (translation of *Tattvatika Rajvartika* by Akalanka), P.V. Institute, Varanasi 1999.
- (8) Lal, R.B., *Religion in the Light of Reason and Science*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1978.
- (9) Mehta, Mohalal, *Jaina Psychology*, Sohanlal Jaindharma Pracharak Samiti, Amritsar 1955.
- (10) Mardia, K.V., *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism*, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi 1990.
- (11) Zaveri, J.S., *Microcosmology: Atom in Jain Philosophy and Modern Science*, Jain Viswabharati University, Ladnum, 2nd edition 1991.

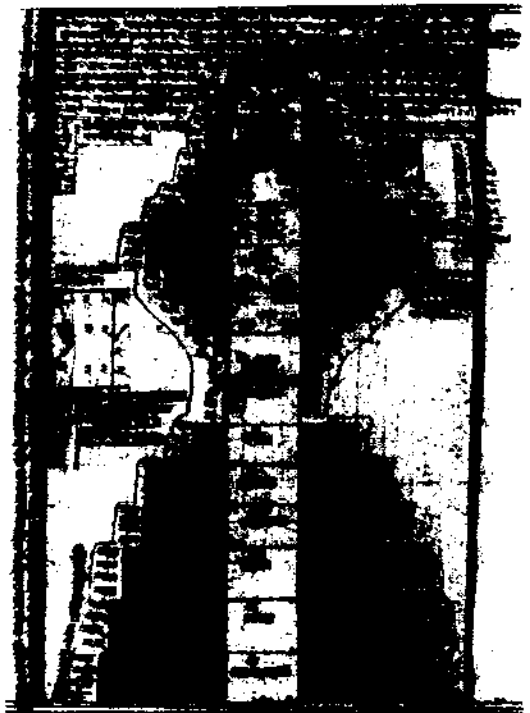
promote self-discipline. The modern thinker rejects science's materialism, but he is also unwilling to return to the absolute obedience and faith demanded by the spirituality of the dark ages. In rejecting both these extremes, he is looking for a spiritually scientific or a scientifically spiritual philosophy. The history of the development of Jain philosophy offers him hope.

The Jain Promise

Imagine a world where science and religion work hand in hand to promote peace, happiness and complete harmony with nature - a world where we respect and revere every life - a Jain world indeed! Scientific developments are not going to stop, nor should they! They need to be tempered by some moral and ethical values. Religions still have the power to reintroduce these values, but they must learn to work hand in hand with science instead of blaming it for all the woes and fighting of the world. Being on the winning streak, modern science is not likely to reconcile readily with the very religions with which it has battled for centuries. However, Jainism, which has a history of harmony between the scientific and the spiritual, could blend the two. The contemporary world could do well to explore and accept elements of Jainism as a possible solution to its woes.

Jain Cosmology

Jain scriptures divide space (*akasa*) into two parts: the cosmic space (*lokakasa*) and the trans-cosmic or empty space (*alokakasa*). Surrounded by the trans-cosmic space, *lokakasa* is in the oldest texts postulated to be finite and made of three parts. It is stretched out lengthwise, but is constricted in the middle. The upper part (*urdhva-loka*) resembles a two-ended drum, bulging at the middle; the middle cosmos (*madhya-loka*) is like a horizontal disk; and the lower cosmos (*adho-loka*) has the shape of a stubby tower built by placing progressively smaller boxes stacked one over the other. Later texts have stylized this picture in the form of a bugle standing up, or a 'cosmic man' (*loka-purusha*) with a pinched-in waist. In spiritual terms, the upper cosmos is supposed to be the abode of the celestial beings with a special moon-shaped uppermost area (*siddha-loka*) reserved for the liberated souls. The seven-tiered lower area is for the hellish beings. The middle cosmos is where our planet, among



many others, is located. These spiritual scientists have even calculated the distances between various planets and other objects in the topography of the middle cosmos by mind-bafflingly complex calculations.

Until now, the scientists, using the Big-Bang theory, believed the cosmos to be infinite in all directions, i.e. spherical in shape. However, recent (2003-2004) data from NASA's Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy probe has prompted astrophysicists to abandon the infinite cosmos model. According to the mathematical calculations based on this data, Frank Steiner at the University of Ulm (Einstein's hometown), Germany, suggests that the cosmos is stretched out into a long funnel, with a tube at one end flaring out into a bell (New Scientist April 2004). The stylized image of this new scientific model is that of a trumpet bell or Eiffel tower and is much closer to the three-part model suggested by the ancient Jain scriptures.

Jainism is a spiritually scientific or scientifically spiritual philosophy. Its message of the Triple 'A's *ahimsa*, *aparigraha* and *anekantavada* - is the need of the hour! However, the Jains themselves must first undertake dedicated research and scholarship to understand and interpret their scriptures in the light of the modern science. Only then would they be able to convince the rest of the world that Jainism holds a promise.

Chapter 15

15. Global Peace

We humans have waged more wars and killed more fellow beings in the 20th century than ever before. The 20th century has seen two world wars, a war in Korea, Vietnam, Chechnya, Bosnia, Ireland, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Argentina, Columbia, and in almost every other part of the world. This was the century in which Moslems, Jews, Christians, Tutsis, Hutus, Serbs, and Croatians all killed their neighbors and friends in the name of race, religion, or skin color. Six million Jews went to gas chambers, and three million Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs were knifed or hacked to death during South Asia's struggle for independence.

In the 20th Century, the so-called civilized nations spent billions of dollars for building military academies to turn decent young minds into killing machines, and one nation dropped atomic bombs on another, annihilating tens of thousands of men, women, and children in a fraction of a second. This was the century of human lust for power, greed, arrogance, bigotry, self-righteousness, and savagery. How can anyone be proud of the 20th century?

Now we are into a new century and a new millennium! Will the new century be any different? Will global peace have any chance in this century? There are some hopeful signs, but the burden of our history is very heavy. The entire history of the human race is full of wars, savagery, and unthinkable cruelty towards all other living beings. In the 20th century, we have further improved our ability to kill each other more rapidly and efficiently. We have employed our genius in inventing and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. Our wisdom has reached the depths of using passenger jetliners as weapons to destroy people and property. How then can we make the 21st century any different?

Global peace is the top priority for every contemporary thinker. However, will peace-festivals, street-demonstrations, anti-nuclear protests, and political pressures bring peace? Will speeches at the United Nations bring peace? Will sanctions, coercions, and military pressures create permanent peace? Chances are that people and nations will continue to fight - and more savagely now than ever before - as long as human beings continue to be driven by bigotry, greed, lust, and ego. How then can we hope for global peace?

Root Causes of War

Wars have been with us ever since humans learnt to walk upright, and it is unrealistic and naïve to believe that analyzing the causes of war will stop us from fighting wars, nor am I suggesting that Jainism, or any other religion, has a magic wand to freeze the soldiers or the terrorists in their tracks. Nevertheless, a close analysis of the causes would make us realize that a long-term solution is possible, that such solutions have been successfully tried in the past, and if applied widely, can hopefully succeed in saving the world. Such a hope may appear optimistic, but giving up hope would be irresponsible.

There never was a good war, or a bad peace

Benjamin Franklin, Letter to Quincy, 11 Sept. 1783.

Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!

He makes a solitude, And calls it - peace!

Lord Byron, The Bride of Abydos, St. 20

They make a wilderness And call it peace.

Titus 55 A.D.

Every war has its own special cause. In old days, kings looked for a nearby weaker kingdom and pounced on it. Religious zealots organized military campaigns to forcibly convert 'unbelievers' to their own religion, and politicians built up worldwide alliances to look down upon the antagonists through the barrel of a gun. Regardless of the reason for

starting a war, eventually the war stops when one party accepts defeat - not because it no longer believes in its original cause - but because it no longer has the strength and power to continue fighting. The temporary peace thus achieved leads everyone to believe that the use of power stopped the war therefore peace lies in the balance of power - balance of terror! A build up of arms soon follows, and peace lasts only until one party or the other starts believing that its killing machines are now better than those of its enemy are.

Analyses of the causes of wars, indeed of all conflicts, reveal that the immediate, precipitating causes for starting wars may differ from event to event, but the root causes are the same. Every party to the war treats its own action as 'just' or in 'self-defense' and the enemy as 'unjust' or the 'aggressor.' Certainly, senseless acts such as the terrorist attacks on New York's twin towers, killing more than 3,000 innocent

people, or an attack on a nation's parliament would generate rage and grief in any sensible human being. However, we must ask, "Is revenge the sensible response?" Did Mahatma Gandhi, the modern apostle of peace, not say, "An eye for eye leaves the whole world blind?" Was that the word of the wise, or the idiocy of an idealist?

Rage is a natural animal instinct, but human intellect lies in transforming rage into wisdom instead of allowing it to grip and overpower our mind. We must not allow the adrenaline and energy generated by that rage to turn into revenge and further violence. A feeling of grief and loss when such events happen is inevitable, but we must allow ourselves to transcend rage and step into wisdom. This may be easier said than done, but I believe that it is possible to cultivate such equanimity at personal as well as community and national levels. It is possible to train our mind to control all our emotions through self-discipline. In fact, the age-old Jain path teaches us the technique of achieving self-control, equanimity, and internal peace. It teaches how to transcend our emotions and transform them into wisdom. Without such wisdom, conflicts will multiply, and we will destroy each other and our world. On the other hand, the ancient wisdom will enable us to truly understand and revere our fellow human beings and the entire living world around us. Is this ever possible? If so, how can this be achieved?

First Peace Movement

Some eight thousand five hundred years ago a man called Rikhava (known also as Rishabhadeva) pondered upon this very problem. Moved by man's cruelty to man, he started what may have been the world's first peace movement. He recognized that regardless of its immediate cause, *war really originates in the human psyche, and peace requires a massive change in that psyche.* He believed that bringing about such a change in human behavior may be a slow and arduous task, but it is not impossible. He believed that it is possible to train and discipline the human mind, to etch into the human psyche, respect and reverence for life, not just human life but all life, and to develop a culture of peace through self-discipline. With this belief, 'King Rikhava' turned himself into a hermit and devoted the rest of his life in the pursuit of self-discipline and peace. Emerging from years of seclusion he, in effect, started a peace movement preaching that it is possible to achieve internal and global peace through meditation, contemplation, and self-discipline.

War really originates in the human psyche, and peace requires a massive change in that psyche.

Rikhava's peace movement survives today in the form of Jainism, which is now a world community of about ten million people. Throughout their history, Jains have maintained their focus on self-discipline governed by a core code of conduct, namely: (1) minimizing hurting a living being (*ahimsa*), (2) minimizing one's personal

wants, and possessions (*aparigraha*), and (3) minimizing chances of conflict by respecting different viewpoints as facets of the same reality (*anekantavada*). These Triple 'A's were developed by Rikhava, refined by Mahavira in the 6th century BCE, and have enabled Jainism to survive the turbulent history of India without ever going to war in the name of religion.

Peace Now

Jains have learnt that global peace is possible only through our own internal peace. Their triple 'A's constitute a rigorously tested and refined formula for internal peace.

It is possible to etch into human psyche respect and reverence for life - not just human life but all life - and to develop a culture of peace through self discipline.

They have succeeded in the formation of peaceful communities. Is it possible to apply their formula universally for global peace? If applicable, it could be the planet's best hope for survival. Jains owe it to the world to investigate it, refine it if necessary, and bring it to the attention of the world. Global peace is a great responsibility, which the tiny Jain community may not be able to bear all alone. Jains owe it to

themselves to conduct an audit of the community strengths and weaknesses in this regard and build interfaith alliances to revive Rikhava's peace initiatives. They have a very illustrious and inspiring recent example! The example set by Mahatma Gandhi in applying Rikhava's concepts of nonviolence and love to the political struggle in India has had a worldwide effect. Leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela have drawn inspiration from the Mahatma and have successfully applied his techniques to their movements

All too often, someone asks, "Would Gandhi's *Satyagraha* and peace techniques of 1930s and 40s work in the violent world of the twenty-first century?" The answer really lies in the question itself. If it worked then, why not now? What has changed in the last fifty years? Obviously, the real change has been in our mindsets. There has been a collective conditioning of our minds to accept more violence. In other words, the mass transformation of the mindset is possible. Given this fact, let us imagine the state of our world today if fifty years ago we had consciously opted for true peace instead of building war machines, nuclear stockpiles, and military academies! Similarly, let us also imagine what would happen to our civilization in the next fifty years if we continued with our present course of violence and self-destruction, instead of embarking on a true peace mission! In questioning the effectiveness of Rikhava and Gandhi's techniques, we end up realizing the weakness of our own collective psyche and mindset.

Since the peace initiative involves transforming the very psyche of the masses, our focus should be on interfaith alliances. These could be very effective. Religions have

great influence on the human mind and emotions. They also have the means to explain the base dynamics of war and peace to their followers. However, can we persuade the faith leaders to take the peace message to their congregations? Jains have a great tool in *anekantavada* with which they could patiently and peacefully participate in interfaith dialogues. Through such dialogues, Jains could convince other religions to review their priorities. Will the Jains demonstrate the effectiveness of their Triple 'A' formula, and team up with major religions to generate momentum for peace?

Global peace is one of the major concerns for the contemporary thinker. It is also a component of the new spirituality. Our youth are desperately searching for peace. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons, increase in fundamentalism, and terrorism are making them desperate. This desperation is evident in street protests, peace rallies, and the number of peace organizations springing up all over the world. Even the United Nations organized a New Millennium Multi-faith Peace Conference at its headquarters in New York in August 2000. These protests, rallies and conferences have focused on the arms buildup and stockpiling of nuclear arsenals, but have had very little effect on world belligerency.

Multi-faith Peace Academy

Such a focus and agitation may be somewhat useful in drawing the world's attention but does very little for real peace. Since peace requires a fundamental change in the psyche of the masses, the real focus of our peace effort should be on training and conditioning our minds to be receptive to peace. Governments spend billions of dollars annually on military academies to turn our fine young minds into efficient killing machines. We, including the peace activists, quietly pay for them through our taxes. How can we expect global peace unless this trend is reversed?

War is a symptom; greed, lust, ego, and pride are its causes; and our weak mind is the source of all the violent emotions.

If Jains themselves are convinced of the possible application of their Triple 'A's to the issue of global peace, perhaps the first step for the Jain organizations would be to explore the possibility of developing a worldwide network of **Multi-faith Peace Academies**. They could use their expertise in non-confrontational dialogue (*anekantavada*) and explain to their partners-in-peace that nonviolence begins with training and disciplining one's own mind. It is not too hard to understand Rikhava's message that "War is a symptom; greed, lust, ego, and pride are its causes; and our weak mind is the source of all the violent emotions." Other faiths too have similar concepts. A genuine seeker of peace would readily blend these concepts and grasp the importance of the message of "training our minds to get full control over our emotions instead of being controlled by them."

Can we train the human mind to control itself and be strong? I believe that we can. After all, if our military academies can train and discipline the minds of our young men to turn them into fine killing machines and crusaders for war, could a 'Peace Academy' not turn fine young minds into graceful ambassadors for peace? These academies could seek out peace initiatives in each faith and train people to become true messengers of peace by blending the Triple 'A's with multi-faith wisdom. One of the strengths of the Jain communities worldwide is their exceptional ability to raise funds for building temples. In the 21st century, Jains could regard Peace Academies as their new temples to honor Rikhava and Mahavira. Such academies would usher in Peace to the entire humanity. Therefore, if contemporary Jains would take the initiative, they will soon be able to attract alliances with the major organized religions to build a worldwide network of peace academies. I sincerely hope that Jains will take on the task of building the worldwide network of peace ambassadors as a true dedication to Mahavir's work.

Jains already know and follow Rikhava's path. Confined to the borders of India, they have so far kept this path to themselves. Now they are in North America and Europe - the mightiest military regions on the earth. This region acutely needs the Jain expertise for personal and universal peace. It is here that the ordinary Jains need to become peace activists. By working proactively in co-operation with the mainstream religions, these heirs of Rikhava's path can make the "Multi-faith Peace Academies" a reality and renew the world's hope for survival. By being proactive, can Jains not help to build a culture of peace?

Chapter 16

16. Nonviolence and Vegetarianism

A Common Heritage

Almost every major religion preaches nonviolence. According to Jews and Christians, God says in The Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not kill." These are simple and direct orders to the faithful! The Holy Quar'an of Islam preaches love, goodwill, and kindness. Every one of its 114 *suras* or chapters starts with the phrase "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, and the Merciful." It reaches the believers to be affectionate to God's all the creatures.

Upper caste Hindus, at some point in their history, abandoned sacrificing animals in the name of God, and adopted rituals of nonviolence. Hindu sages and seers denounced the killing of animals. Buddha - a contemporary of Mahavira, taught that desirable acts included those that abstained from stealing, lechery, and taking life.

Nonviolence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself. For thereby one's own self is saved from various kinds of sins and resultant sufferings and is able to secure one's own welfare. - Mahavira, Saman Suttam 151.

Many religions advocate total or partial vegetarianism. For example, Christians are advised to abstain from eating meat during lent. According to their legend, Adam and Eve were vegetarian but were condemned to eating meat because of their sin. Some Hindus follow a strict vegetarian diet, as do some Buddhist monks. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain scriptures repeatedly stress that virtuous individuals practice self-control, do not eat meat, or consume liquor.

A disciple of Buddha shall not himself kill, encourage others to kill, kill by expedient means, praise killing, rejoice at witnessing killing, or kill through incantation or deviant mantras. He must not create the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of killing, and shall not intentionally kill any living being.
First Major Vow of Buddhism.

All scriptures seem to be essentially unanimous in denouncing violence. Scriptures form the basis for the ethical codes of every religion. If the message on violence is the same in all scriptures, should the ethical code of nonviolence in all religions also essentially not be the same? Why then do they differ? Why are Jains so committed to nonviolence that they will not kill even the tiniest of insects or even dangerous creatures like snakes and wild animals, yet on the other hand, some religions accept the killing of animals not only for food, but also for fun and games? Why, according to some religions, is it all right to go to war and kill men, women, and children in the name of defending the faith - in the name of God?

Interpreting Scriptures

I think that the difference is because the scriptures often are inconsistent and contain diametrically opposite moral injunctions. Take Bible for example, "All who take sword will perish by the sword" said Jesus (Mathew 25:52); but Paul - one of his Apostles - argues (Romans 13:4) that the "Ruler does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrong doer." Furthermore, Thomas Aquinas preached the doctrine of just war "Just causes, just means, and just ends" only to emphasize that wars and killing fellow human beings are justifiable in the name of God and His religion. Interpretations of scriptures often differ widely. Even if we accept that the scriptures are the words of the 'perfect' God, prophets, or of the Omniscient Ones, the fact is that imperfect individuals receive these words. These words are then written and interpreted by even more imperfect human beings. For example, different versions of Ten Commandments in Bible (Exodus, and Deuteronomy), and different interpretations in Jewish, Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran scriptures are currently available. Such interpretations shape the worldview and code of ethics for each religion. The practice of nonviolence and vegetarianism differs among different religious groups either because those who interpret scriptures lack understanding of true nonviolence or because they misinterpret their particular scriptures. Here are some examples.

I have profound respect for Christian priests and nuns who provide selfless service, kindness and care to millions of poor, sick, and dying people around the world. Some even run animal shelters or follow in the footsteps of such compassionate Christian saints as Francis of Assisi! Almost every religion has such compassionate followers. However, I am dismayed that some of these individuals lose their sense of empathy when they sit down at the table for a dinner of turkey, lamb chops, or veal. How could these compassionate people 'enjoy' feasting on animals, or approve of killing animals in the name of sports? How could people justify, even to their own conscience, events like the crusades, the inquisitions, the jihads, the animal sacrifices, and wars in the name of God?

I raised the question about this apparent contradiction with a close friend - a Catholic priest. The occasion may not have been the most appropriate one. We were having a dinner at a restaurant. I had ordered a cold bowl of fruit salad and the priest had ordered veal.

"Dr. Parikh, you don't know what you are missing!" The priest was the one who opened the topic.

"Missing? How can I miss something which I have never had before?"

"That's the point! You don't even know what a pleasure it is to have a nice sizzling steak. It is heavenly!"

"Father, I am just an ordinary lay person brought up in the Jain tradition of self-restraint and respect for ALL life. I really do not understand how anyone - let alone a priest - can derive pleasure in having an innocent little calf killed for his food. Isn't that calf your God's beautiful creation, just like you?"

"Yes, Dr. Parikh. God's creation indeed! So is the rest of this universe. God created it all for our pleasure, and God has given us the domain over it!" This interpretation of 'domain' or 'thou shall not kill,' did not appeal to me. The word 'domain' is in the Bible. However, does it mean 'the responsibility to care for', or 'the right to kill'? I lost contact with the priest for several years after that incident. However, during an accidental meeting at a pro-life rally he told me that he had become a vegan (a vegetarian who avoids ALL animal products, including milk, cheese, butter, ghee, etc.) One up-man-ship was beaming through his chuckle.

Likewise, Buddha advised "Abstain from taking life." However, many Buddhists interpret it as, "A Buddhist cannot slaughter animals but can eat meat." They even claim that Buddha himself was a meat eater and the last repast, which the Master partook in the house of a metalworker, Chunda, was dried boar's flesh. (In the scripture, which describes the Master's death, the Pali word used can be interpreted as 'boar's flesh' or 'boar's wart' - a kind of edible mushroom common in Northern India and Nepal. However, Buddha's 'Shraman' past suggests, 'edible mushroom'.)

In Islam and Judaism also God's commands such as "thou shall not kill," and "be affectionate to all the Gods creatures," is interpreted as "our only obligation to animals is to give them a happy life and a painless death." Such interpretation may have given rise to the practices such as '*kosher*' and '*halal*'.

Cruelty to Animals

How does one define cruelty? Slaughterhouses often claim that they use 'humane' practices in killing animals. What could be 'humane' about killing? Could we, just for fun, painlessly kill a human being and justify it as a 'humane' act? Why then toss thousands of two-day old chicks in a meat grinder, or cook lobsters by throwing them alive in boiling water, or take away a few days-old calf from its mother to

produce tender veal for someone's table -- are these not cruel acts? Where does one draw the line? In the United States alone, nearly 25 million animals are killed in slaughterhouses on an average day. (Source: J. Peder Zane: *It Ain't Just For Meat; It's for Lotion*, New York Times, May 12, 1996, Reproduced in The Book of Compassion, Compiled by P. Chitrabhanu and P.K. Shah, Oct.2000)

Cattle	130,000;	Calves	7000
Hogs	360,000	Chickens	24,000,000

If we consume the products from this slaughter, could we really be absolved of the responsibility just because someone else - not us - killed the animals?

Jain Code

How do Jains interpret their scriptures in this respect? The quotes below, from Jain scriptures, state very explicitly the consequences of violence.

Violence is always harmful and injurious to the perpetrator because it is a violation of his soul's path to liberation.
- *Ayaranga Suttam*, I.1.2

All living beings wish to live and not to die; that is why the wise are advised to desist from the terrible sin of injuring a living being.
- *Dasavaikalika Sutra*, 6/11

Knowing that all the evils and sorrows arise from injury to living beings, and knowing further that it leads to endless enmity and hatred, and is the root cause of great fear, a wise man, who is awakened and knows the reality, should refrain from such sinful activities.
- *Suyagadang Suttam* I.10.21

Even an intention of killing is the cause of the bondage of karma, whether you actually kill or not; from the real point of view, this is the nature of the bondage of karma.
- *Saman Suttam*, 154

As we can see from these quotes, the Jain concept of Reality shapes their code of ethics. According to this concept, there are innumerable individual souls in the universe. In its purest form, each soul is omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal. However, all worldly souls are impure and undergo painful cycles of birth and rebirth because of their *karma* of the present and the past lives. The ultimate goal of each worldly soul is liberation (*moksha*) from this cycle.

Like us, plants and animals also go through this worldly existence and suffering. Regardless of their present form, their souls are potentially identical to ours and capable of achieving liberation. Therefore, they all deserve to be respected and revered. We humans are a species of animals with the special ability to think, reason, choose, calculate, and plan our course of actions. Unlike other life forms, we can progress towards liberation through rationalism - a combination of a rational worldview, rational knowledge, and rational conduct. Nonviolence is our rational conduct. We have a moral obligation to protect all life because we can make a rational choice.

What do Jains mean by 'violence' or '*himsa*'? Violence is essentially of two types:

(i) the unavoidable violence motivated by the essential survival needs of our body (*dravya himsa*), and

(ii) that which is motivated by insatiable passions of our mind (*bhava himsa*). Both are motivated, but we must understand the difference between the two. We do kill and destroy many lives when we eat, drink, breath, and walk. Though violent, such activities are essential and unavoidable for our survival. Jains believe that even during such inevitable *dravya himsa*, we must guard against excesses, and must seek pardon daily from the souls we hurt. In other words, even our inevitable violence must have our pure, non-violent conscience always associated with it.

The second type of violence is *bhava himsa* (mental violence). The important operative here is our intent. Our passions (undesirable thoughts and feelings) motivate such violence. Our ego, lust, greed, and anger perpetrate most violence in the world. Every war has its origin in human passions such as ego and greed. Killing animals for food, fishing, hunting, and all similar violent acts are to satisfy the ugly lust of the human mind. Jains consider *bhava himsa* to be more serious and potentially more damaging type of violence because killing is not natural to the soul, kindness and compassion is!

Physical violence is invariably accompanied by mental violence (one's undesirable thoughts and feelings.)

Jain concepts of violence even include wishing ill of another living being. This too is *bhava himsa*. Our mental violence may or may not hurt another living being but the very emotions or passions involved in it do attract and bond karmic particles to our soul. If our ultimate goal is to free our soul from all *karma*, our mental violence works against it, sinks our soul deeper into karmic bondage, and in effect, harms us.

Any action – mental, verbal, or physical – that knowingly or unknowingly hurts another living being, or violates our own chosen path to liberation, is violence. Yet another classification of violence is pragmatic violence (*vyavahara himsa*) and definitive violence (*nischaya himsa*). Pragmatic considerations apply to *dravya himsa*, whereas *bhava himsa* is more serious, real, or definitive violence. We can see this difference in the following quotes from the scriptures (next page):

Any action – mental, verbal, or physical – that knowingly or unknowingly hurts another living being, or violates our own chosen path to liberation, is violence

Jains recognize that the very process of living involves killing. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the ground we walk on – everything is full of microorganisms. Violence is inevitable. The central determinant, however, is that we, unlike animals, can make a self-conscious, rational choice! Given the choice,

could we not at least minimize, if not avoid hurting and killing? Breathe we must, but can we minimize inhaling the microbes? Hence, some Jain monks and nuns wear nose masks. We must drink water; can we reduce the number of water-borne lives in our drinking water? Jains filter and boil their drinking water.*

A tiny insect may be trampled to death under the foot of an ascetic of restrained and careful movement. However, according to vyavahar, because there is no attachment or hatred (i.e. passion), no bondage whatsoever is created. Just as the sense of clinging to things, not the actual ownership has been declared in the scriptures as possessiveness; even so, it is only the passion that is said to be the cause of bondage and not the act itself if it is free of passion and laxity.

-Pravacanasara, 3.16

Taking life away out of passion is violence.

-Tattvarthasutra, 7.8 or 7.13

A creature may die or not (from an action), but it is a definite act of violence if the perpetrator has acted without restraint. Mere injury does not produce bondage in a self-restrained person acting with care and caution.

-Pravacanasara, 3.17

Recognizing the inevitability of physical violence (*dravya himsa*), Jains classify violence in yet another way. Ancient Jain philosophers classified living beings on the biological basis of the number of senses they possess. Humans and some animals possess five sense organs (*panchendriya*); some animals possess only four, some three etc. until we reach the lowest microbiological form with only one sense. While *bhava himsa* or intentional violence against any life forms is a strict no-no, *dravya himsa*, with due restraint and care, against the lowest form is condoned as unavoidable. Such violence against one-sensed organisms (*ekendriya*) is *sukshma himsa*, and two or a higher sensed living being is *sthula himsa* or major violence.









Vegetarianism and the Environment

Our very act of eating food involves unavoidable acts of violence. However, we can choose to minimize it. By choosing to be a vegetarian, we choose not to hurt or kill animals. We choose empathy with another life, which also experiences fear, pleasure, courage, love, dislike, and anger just like us human beings. Like us, animals also learn and acquire knowledge through their five senses. If we cannot be compassionate to such a highly evolved but helpless living being, can we really be empathetic with a less fortunate human being?

In this context, Jains are often asked to justify eating even vegetables. Here again, the issue is conscious choice. The guiding principle is to minimize hurting and killing. Given a choice, we could carefully select foods with this principle in focus. For

* Water borne microbes die when water is boiled. This is pragmatic (*dravya*) violence committed with the intention (*bhava*) of minimizing the killing of microbes, which would otherwise continue to multiply in water or

example, Jains avoid root vegetables because uprooting them likely involves killing the entire plant. The rainy season in India is the period when the plant kingdom suddenly comes to life after nine months of drought. Every plant tries to complete its life cycle in the four rainy months. Hurting a plant during this growing stage is like hurting a growing child. Sensitive to the plant's natural cycle, Jains would avoid eating green vegetables during this season. Similarly, Jains would rather pluck ripe fruits instead of the raw ones so as not to hurt the plant, and rather eat a single seeded fruit (thus destroying only one potential life).

TERMS TO REMEMBER	
 <i>Bhava Himsa</i>	Intentional violence
 <i>Dravya Himsa</i>	Physical/verbal violence
 <i>Ekendriya</i>	One-sensed organism
 <i>Nischaya Himsa</i>	Definitive violence
 <i>Panchendriya</i>	Five-sensed organisms
 <i>Stbula Himsa</i>	Major violence
 <i>Sukshma Himsa</i>	Minor violence
 <i>Vyavahara</i>	Pragmatic

The Jain scriptural definition of violence, its sub-classification, and the preaching that the intention of violence (*bhava himsa*) is the most serious act of violence has had a great impact on the psyche of the Jain community. This impact has resulted in the formation of a peaceful community, which has adhered to the strict principles of *ahimsa* for thousands of years. The Jain doctrine of *ahimsa* has even influenced a large number of Hindus (particularly upper cast learned Hindus) to abandon their practice of animal sacrifices and become vegetarians.

Apart from the issues such as 'Cruelty to the Animals' and 'Effect of carnivorous habits on human health', vegetarianism has gained crucial importance in the 21st century. A 2006 United Nations report* concludes that animal-farming (raising animals for food) and animal consumption has the devastating effect on our environment. The world is currently raising over 50 billion farmed animals for slaughter each year. This contributes significantly to the destruction of forests, extinction of plant and animal species, soil erosion, pollution of ground water, and depletion of fresh water, and land. Furthermore, animal farming contributes significantly to the global warming gases - carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide (9%, 37%, and 65% of world totals, respectively) - of which methane and nitrous oxide are 23 and 296 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

The **most inconvenient truth** is that a global shift away from animal products (understand *Ahimsa*), so also from self-righteousness (understand *Anekantavada*), and from a lifestyle of increasing needs and possessions (understand *Aparigraha*) is urgently needed to save our planet from rapidly growing greenhouse gases. Jains

* *Livestock's Long Shadow*, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization report, <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000448>

The most inconvenient truth is that a global shift away from animal products, so also from self-righteousness, and from a lifestyle of increasing needs and possessions is urgently needed to save the planet from rapidly growing greenhouse gases.

could actively help with their long-standing know-how in vegetarianism. Jains would thereby benefit both physically and spiritually. Physically by drastically reducing heart diseases, cancer, obesity, and other chronic degenerative diseases, and spiritually by accumulating more auspicious karma (*punya*). For example, an average American is said to be responsible for killing 18,000 fish, fowl and fauna during his life time. If I, as an average American choose to be vegetarian, I will have *punya* points equivalent to 18,00 lives saved, but if by being proactive I manage to help ten other people shift away from meat and animal products, my *punya* points would be more than ten-fold.

Finally, readers will find it interesting to read about an alleged conversation on the topic of nonviolence between Lord Mahavira and one of his new disciples.

Disciple: I now understand, my Swami, that minimizing hurting and killing is the supreme principle. I must therefore not kill animals and eat their flesh. However, if I should find a freshly killed animal, can I partake of its meat?

Mahavira: Thou shall neither kill nor cause them to be killed by others.

Disciple: What if the animal has died in an accident?

Mahavira: That too is a forbidden food, my dear *sravaka*.

Disciple: Why so, dear Swami? I have not hurt it. It was a mere accident!

Mahavira: No, my dear *sravaka*. For man's lust makes him too clever for his own good. (That is, his desire would cause many more 'accidents'.)

In the next Chapter, we will see how we can use this ancient concept of *ahimsa*, together with its associate concepts of *anekantavada* and *aparigraha*, to promote the much-needed social and economic justice, and our environmental responsibilities.

17. An Action Plan

The modern thinker is defining new spirituality in terms of a lifestyle that cares for the future of our planet, our ecology, and for the rights, freedom and welfare of all living beings. To him a rational lifestyle (*samyak-charitra*) is to be active in the efforts to resolve the problems facing our civilization. Since most of our current problems arise from passions such as anger, pride, deceit, and greed, we suggested that the Jain system of dealing with these passions (*kashayas*) - through *ahimsa*, *anekantavada*, and *aparigraha* - could provide effective tools in dealing with some contemporary problems (Chapter 12). We focused our attention particularly on nonviolence - *ahimsa* - (Chapter 16) because most of our problems stem directly or indirectly from our violent mindset. Let us take a stock of the ground realities about violence.

1. Nonviolence has become an important element of the new spirituality. As a result, many contemporary thinkers and social activists in various parts of the world have taken up the cause of nonviolence. Several organizations promoting vegetarianism and animal welfare (similar to 'pinjarapoles' or animal shelters in India) are springing up in Europe, North America, and other parts of the world.
 2. Transition from a violent to a nonviolent individual or society requires self-discipline and massive shifts in attitudes. The Jain spiritual path for self-discipline is an age-old tool effective in inspiring entire communities to adopt a nonviolent way of life.
 3. Skills in inter-personal or inter-group dialogue are essential for effecting social change. Diverse interest groups could work together for social change
-

if the arguments for change are non-aggressive, non-absolutistic, and made in a genuinely non-threatening and nonviolent manner. With a heritage of non-absolutistic philosophy (*anekantavada*), nonviolence, and self-discipline, Jains are eminently equipped with the skills needed for such inter-group dialogue.

The Challenge

In relatively recent times, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King have successfully used nonviolence as a tool to resist evil and violence, and to bring about

The world is asking the fourfold Jain community a simple question. "Your long standing experience with *ahimsa*, *anekantavada* and *aparigraha* could provide some solutions to the global issues. When you talk of these doctrines, are you willing to help the world with these tools, or is that talk only in the abstract, whatever that might mean in practice?"

social and political changes. Mahatma Gandhi took inspiration and guidance from a Jain guru - Srimad Rajachandra Mchta. However, as Joseph O'Connell points out,¹⁹ "When we hear Jains and others speak of the Jain influence on Gandhi, we may well ask if there has been reciprocal Gandhian influence on the Jains. In particular, is there any evidence that, through Mahatma Gandhi's influence, nonviolent resistance to evil (to violence overt or disguised) - and not just

passive nonviolence - has become a factor in a lay Jain ethics relating to public issues of major human import?" In effect, O'Connell's challenge to the Jain Community is this: "You commit yourselves - individually and collectively - to become the catalysts and leaders in a global dialogue on nonviolent stewardship of this endangered planet."²⁰

Stewardship of this endangered planet is a challenge facing almost all religions today. Given the realities listed above, the challenge is more pertinent to the Jain community. Simply stated, the world is asking the fourfold Jain community of the *sadhus*, *sadhvis*, *sravakas*, and *sravikas* a simple question. "Your longstanding experience with *ahimsa*, *anekantavada* and *aparigraha* could provide some solutions to the global issues. When you talk of these doctrines, are you willing - both individually and collectively - to help the world with these tools, or do you talk only in the abstract, whatever that might mean in practice?"

The Jain concept of *bhava himsa* (mental violence) is important for our contemporary concerns. Our mental attitude, our sense of empathy, and sensitivity to violence influence current issues such as global peace, terrorism, community violence, animal cruelty, ecology, etc.. Resolving these issues would require a shift in the mindset of a

¹⁹ Joseph T. O'Connell, "Jain Contributions to Current Ethical Discourse", in *Jain Doctrine and Practice: Academic Perspectives* (Toronto Center For South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 2000), p.215.

²⁰ Joseph T. O'Connell, in an address to the 9th Biennial Convention of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA), July 1997.

whole generation of people. It would involve sensitizing the masses to the effects on their own lives when they hurt another life. Jain *karma* theory does that by emphasizing 'bhava' or mental attitude as more important in determining the seriousness of a violent act. Such emphasis has guided the entire Jain community to an empathetic nonviolent way of life. Jains now have a mammoth task of bringing this technique to the attention of the world. If they should succeed, they would have rendered the greatest service to humanity and to our planet.

An Action Plan

As stated, O'Connell's challenge gives an impression that the Jains are oblivious to, or have not been involved in, social issues. This is not so. Jain scriptures, for example, have repeatedly emphasized the positive aspect of nonviolence as helping others, or donating (*dana*) for social causes. For example,

The donor benefits (spiritually) by giving charity to the qualified persons (and causes). - *Vatthvartha Sutra* 7-33

Even a small donation to a suitable person, or cause bears much desirable (spiritual) fruit for souls in due course, just as a tiny seed, sown in good soil, eventually gives magnificent cooling shade..
- *Sravakachara* 116

The scriptures describe four kinds of *karuna-dana* (compassionate donations), thus demonstrating concern not only for the humanitarian causes but also for the welfare of all living beings. These are: (1) gift of food, (2) gift of medicines, (3) gift of shelter, protection from danger, attack, intimidation, threat, etc., and (4) gift of books and/or useful knowledge. Jains believe that extending these gifts to all living beings contributes to their own spiritual progress and is the part of their vows of *ahimsa* and *aparigraha*. This message has considerable influence on the community, and Jains are among the most generous philanthropists. This is evident not only in the thousands of beautifully carved Jain temples throughout India, but also in the many educational institutions, charitable hospitals and clinics, animal shelters and hospitals, bird sanctuaries, pilgrim rest-houses and free food centers for the poor - all built and run by charitable donations.

Jains certainly are serious with their compassionate donations: giving food to the hungry and poor, saving the lives of creatures in danger, distributing free medicines, and spreading knowledge. However, the real motivation behind all this charitable giving is often a suspect. Just as non-Christians often criticize the charitable work of Christian missionaries in developing countries as "proselytizing - not charity", non-Jains often criticize Jain motivation in giving also as "donations - not to alleviate the miseries of others but selfishly either to boost donor's ego, or to liberate his own soul." Jains leave themselves open to such criticism because, historically Jains have rarely participated actively in social justice causes, except by giving generous

donations. The new spirituality requires proactive physical participation in efforts to solve the social problems instead of just donating money. Volunteerism at the personal level and active projects in tune with the current global concerns would truly demonstrate Jain involvement with new spirituality.

Jain organizations, particularly those outside India, are fast becoming aware of this new spirituality. A number of Jains are getting personally involved as volunteers with organizations actively working to solve global problems. For those who are wondering where to begin, given below is a partial list showing various fields of concerns in which individuals and organizations are trying to make a difference. Regardless of your age, economic status, the country in which you live or the community to which you belong, such a list could help you find a niche where you could make a difference. Chances are that an organization dedicated to the topic of your interest may already exist in your area and you could begin to participate in it as a volunteer. Alternatively, if the field you have selected is important to you but no suitable organization - Jain or non-Jain - is present in your locality, you could start a new organization and motivate your community to be active. For those who really want to be involved with these issues but are unable to find any support, I have given *An Individual Action Plan* to illustrate how you can still make a difference. You can design your own plan of action along these lines to bring about meaningful changes to the issues that concern you the most.

In any case, with the powerful tools of social change they have inherited in the Triple 'A's, Jains could certainly take on the challenge mentioned above, work actively on these issues, and demonstrate to the world that Jainism - the world's oldest living religion - is compatible with the most contemporary concepts of new spirituality. You may select an activity from the list or think of other activities suitable in your community. Dedicating yourself to any of these activities and thus working for the betterment of another living being would amount to living the message of Mahavira in its true essence. You may also be able to inspire your friends, family and community to join you. If not, simply express yourself in your unique way. Let your life be your message, your gift, and your hope to humanity!

ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

FIELD	ACTIVITY (Areas of concern in which I can obtain more information and become active)	MY CONCERN	
		HIGH	LOW
Cruelty to Animals			
Farm Animals	Factory farms, living conditions, ecological degradation, and ground water pollution		
Dairy Industry	Milking machines, animal feed, calves, male animals		
Chicken Industry	Living conditions, using male chicks for animal feed, debeaking		
Transportation	Cruelty involved in Transportation of animals to slaughterhouses		
Slaughter Houses	Slaughtering technology, use of animal by-products and economics of meat industry		
Working Animals	Farm animals; transportation animals - horses, camels, cattle, elephants, dogs, circus animals in entertainment - racing		
Hunting, Fishing and Trapping	Poaching, wildlife, endangered species, leg-traps, clubbing seal puppies, fur industry, trawling, whale hunting, fish-factories		
Lab. Animals	Animals in drug research, space, animal dissection in laboratories		
Animal rescue shelters/sanctuaries	<i>Pinjarapoles, Goshalas</i> , building hospitals for sick animals, birds, etc.,		
Habitat	Forests, lakes, pesticides, ecosystems		
Environmental			
Agriculture	Soil conservation, leaching of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc. in ground water, genetically altered seeds, agriculture policy		
Air Pollution	Internal combustion engines pollutants, industrial pollutants, alternate energy, sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide levels, global warming, greenhouse effect, environmental legislation and policy		
Corporate Accountability	Industrial emissions, chemicals in effluents, safe environment for factory workers and community, ethical practices, environmental economics, ethical investing, industrial waste		
Energy	Energy conservation, solar / wind/geothermal energy, legislation		
Education	Environmental education, neighborhood cleanliness projects, Raising environmental ethics, discipline among children		
Forests	Rain forest, ecosystems, wild life habitat, reforestation, human encroachment, clear cutting, biodiversity, and sustainable forestry		
Genetic Engineering	Health issues, effects on farmers in poor countries, legislation		
Green Design	Urban developments, city parks and playgrounds, planting and preserving, trees		
Ground Pollution	Chemical spills, industrial pollutants, PCB, domestic waste, dumps		

JAINISM, AND THE NEW SPIRITUALITY

Environmental Laws	Legislation and policies, enforcement of environmental laws, justice, international issues		
Water Pollution	Potable water, effects on aquatic life, water conservation, harvesting of oceans, leaching of chemicals in underground water, Water tables, ground water protection		
Human Issues			
Child Welfare	Orphanages, child labor, pornography, child-abuse, children's' rights, run-away children		
Human Health	Medicate, free/affordable hospital care, affordable medicines, air/water quality, cleanliness issues, tobacco, alcoholism and narcotic drugs, childcare, mother's health, physically and mentally handicapped , long-term care, disabilities, old-age homes		
Human Rights	Human dignity, racism, discrimination, freedom of political, religious beliefs, justice systems, rights of the poor and dispossessed, capital punishment, exploitation of people and nations, fundamental rights		
Natural Disasters	Disaster preparedness, immediate/long term relief, fund-raising, volunteerism		
Globalization	Economic domination of nations, power of multinationals, unethical trade practices, flow of wealth from poor nations to the rich nations, and labor exploitation		
Inter-faith Dialogue	Fundamentalism, terrorism, religious riots, <i>anekantavada</i> , understanding different faiths, co-operative projects		
Urban/Rural Life	Habitat, poverty, soup kitchens/food banks, literacy, appropriate technology, urban pollution, waste management, city parks and recreation areas, school systems, agricultural advances		
Vegetarianism	Educating public, focus on cruelty to animals, sacrificial and ritualistic killing of animals, health, animal rights, vegetarian recipes and menus, organizing and promoting vegetarian restaurants and caring-places		
Violence	Violence due to : - living conditions, media, uneven income distribution, political situation, fundamentalism, gun-control legislation, culture of hunting/fishing, Sensitization of public to violence. Violence counseling, meditation, stress control, <i>ahimsa</i>		
Wars	Arms race, nuclear issues, arms trade, exposing the underworld of arms dealers, national and international policies, promoting political debates, defence budgets and tax-revolts, inter-faith dialogue, multi-faith/multi-party peace projects, Peace academy		
World-cultures	Preservation and diversity of cultures, racism, tribal wars, ethnic cleansing, aboriginal-rights and protection		

The foregoing list gives us an idea of the scope of activities we can get involved in if we are truly spiritual in the modern sense. In some cases, Jain associations and organizations could initiate and run projects. In fact, JAINA (the Federation of Jain Associations of North America) has already undertaken some humanitarian projects. Unfortunately, except for a few committed individuals, public involvement in these projects is limited only to financial donation. Participation by way of volunteerism and dedication of personal labor, time, and efforts needs to be improved.

Jain organizations worldwide can make a considerable difference by nurturing and promoting the spirit of volunteerism. A prominent Jain layperson - Late Dr. L.M. Singhvi - former High Commissioner for India in the U.K. - brought this issue to the surface by issuing a call at the JAINA convention in Toronto, Canada in 1997. His appeal to Jains was to establish a youth volunteer organization called "Ecology Scouts" dedicated to preserving the environment.

Setup a new movement of Ecology Scouts in which boys and girls may establish an environmental program of education, outdoor activity, building up ecology trails, promoting tree planting, and preserving forests, wildlife and bio-diversity. I would like Jains to be in the forefront of this new worldwide movement, which will not be limited to Jains, but would advance the ecological and environment-friendly ways and perspective of Jains.

*His Excellency Dr. L.M. Singhvi, High Commissioner for India in U.K.
in keynote address at the 1997 JAINA Convention at Toronto, Canada*

Similarly, GOSFJ (page 129) branches would hopefully soon spring up all over the world. This call is perhaps the beginning of the Jain awareness of their connection to the New Spirituality. It may have inspired some individual response, but for a collective action by Jain organizations and communities, a critical mass of awareness has yet to be reached. This could happen and Jains can truly be 'in the forefront' of the new spirituality movement if such messages are carried, beyond the conventions, to the Jain masses. Fortunately, Jains do have the tools, such as *abimsa* and *aparigraha*, and a highly efficient mechanism (Sadhu and Sadhvi Sangh) to carry these messages to the public.

When Mahavira reformed Jainism in 600 BCE, he organized the Jain community into a four-fold *sangh* of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen (*sadhu*, *sadhvi*, *sravaka* and *sravika*) and mandated ascetics to be always on the move helping the laity in their spiritual pursuits. He also endowed the *acharyas* - the heads of the ascetic orders - with the exclusive authority to interpret the scriptures from time to time. There is a close relationship and mutual dependency between the Jain ascetics and the laity. Whereas the laity depends heavily on the ascetics for spiritual guidance, the dependency of the ascetic orders on laity for survival is equally heavy. This

arrangement is a highly effective mechanism not only of adopting scriptural interpretations to meet the demands of the evolving universe but also to carry the message of change to the masses. Consequently, Jain *acharyas* and their ascetic orders could become harbingers of the new spirituality, generate the critical mass of awareness needed for activism in ecological, social and economic justice issues, and thus help Jainism recapture its lost vitality.

Individual Action Plan

We have seen in Chapter 2 that compassion and empathy for all souls is one of the characteristics of an awakened soul. Your urge to be compassionate and helpful to others is a sure sign of your spiritual progress to the fourth *gunasthana*. You may be dreaming of changing the world and making it a beautiful and happy place for all living beings. Perhaps such a dream may be unrealistic and utopian, and no one around you is ready to share it with you. Nevertheless, you need not be frustrated because you can still begin to make a difference - if not to the entire planet, then at least in the lives of a few individuals in the neighborhood. A project described below gives the guidelines. This project -- let us call it a “**Compassionate Connection**” - is simple. It requires very little funds and anyone - young or old, rich or not so rich, living in a city, town or a small village - can start it anywhere, anytime. You do not have to depend on anyone else!

Regardless of where you live, you are certain to come across a lonely, desperate elderly person who is in need of some help. He may be a beggar or a homeless person. You may be walking by him everyday on your way to work, temple, or anywhere else. Next time you encounter him, try to think about your response. You could be responding in one of the four ways.

- Your lazy response, based upon a very narrow (and wrong) understanding of the *karma* theory could be: “This person is suffering the consequences of his bad *karma*. So he has to suffer, and I need not do anything about it.”
- Your apathetic response could be: “The world is full of such wretched and miserable people, and anything I do is not going to change the world. So let me walk by.”
- Your generous response would be to throw a penny or two in his begging bowl and wash your conscience away in the hope that your ‘*dana*’ (donation) has helped generate some auspicious *karma* (*punya*) on your way to personal liberation (or to a temple). OR
- Your spiritual activist response could be: “My good *karma* have given me an opportunity to make a real difference in the life of this suffering individual, and in so doing I will not only alleviate his suffering but would also shed some of my bad *karma* and accumulate some good ones.”

If your response is truly spiritual, what can you do next? How can you really make a difference in this unfortunate person's life? The compassionate connection project shows the way.* *It is a five-step project for making a connection with an unfortunate fellow human being to make a real-difference in his/her as well as your own life. You can choose the level of it according to your own comfort level. You can decide to stop at any level. In all circumstances, you should be cautious and careful.*

1. The Greetings Connection: The lowest level of your activist response would be just to stop by this homeless/elderly/lonely person and greet him warmly. Do this daily, find out his name, and greet him by name every day, looking straight into his eyes. You may or may not offer any financial help, and at first, there will be very awkward moments because it is a new experience for both of you. The homeless person may have encountered several persons daily who simply walk past him or throw a penny or two at him, but the experience of someone actually stopping and showing concern may be new and unexpected. Perhaps the person you are trying to help may not appreciate this kind of intrusion or may be suspicious of your intentions. On the other hand, for any personal reason, you may decide not to continue with this particular person, and may want to try with another homeless person. It is best to be open-minded and cautious about your approach at every step of the way.

2. The *Chai* Connection: When you feel comfortable with this person, you may want to move to the next level. It is now time to bring this person a warm cup of tea and something to eat. His accepting this is a sign of his trust in you, and now you can proceed to pry a little deeper into finding out more about him so that you may help him overcome his impediments. Perhaps he has no marketable skills, no self-confidence, or no education at all; maybe he has family problems, or problems with his health, or mental problems. There could be as many problems as there are homeless people. Always remember that you are luckier and have less severe problems than he has. That is why he is there on the street, and you are not. Make a note of his difficulties and take your time to decide how you can help. If possible, talk to some of your friends who may have means and skills to help.

3. The Lunch Connection: By now, you may have some ideas about the possible steps you can take to make a difference in the life of this homeless person. However, nothing will succeed unless your new friend has developed full trust in you and is willing to put some efforts into his own reform. Perhaps you have decided to teach him reading and writing, or to pay for his medical treatment, or help him find a simple job. Whatever your solution may be, it is now time to discuss it with your new friend

* Idea conceived by Mr. Ahmed Motiar of Toronto, Canada, and developed in cooperation with the "Interfaith in Action Group"

on a one on one basis as true friends. Treat him with full human dignity. Decide on a day when you can take him to a nearby restaurant for lunch, if necessary, get him some decent well-fitting cloths, ask him to clean up and be ready, and personally escort him - shoulder to shoulder - to a nearby restaurant for a sumptuous meal. This may be the first decent meal he has ever eaten, but make sure that he feels himself to be important. Now it is time to talk about his future, making sure that he understands your plans and is willing to take its ownership. Listen carefully to his apprehensions, fears, concerns, and reservations regarding your plan. These may be trivial to you but they are very much real for him. Ask him how he thinks you can work jointly to overcome these fears, and follow - do not belittle - his suggestions.

4. Emergency and Stormy Day Connection: It is now important to monitor his progress along the plan you both agreed on in the Lunch Connection. While a smooth uninterrupted progress may be too much to expect, lack of effort or commitment on his part should not be too difficult to detect. Be prepared to provide occasional support to perk up his spirit. However, if you detect absolute lack of will and dedication to self-improvement on his part, you must take comfort in the thought that you have brought a few moments of joy to a fellow human being, and abandon the project. If you notice reasonable reciprocation and genuine progress, you can offer him, with full caution, further assistance by telling him where and how he can see you or contact you in case of a real emergency. Explain to him why you had kept this information unavailable to him until now. If, in your opinion, he has progressed as planned, you both are now ready to enter the final level of connection.

CAUTION IN INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN

- Not everyone wants to be helped.
- Always be cautious, never place yourself at risk.
- Whenever possible, be in the company of a friend.
- Abide by your comfort level.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Exercise compassion, not sympathy.
- Understand the boundaries of your involvement.
- Make no effort to convert ones religious or political convictions.
- Giving money is not always the best response.
- Do not give your address or telephone number.
- Realize that not everyone wants to change his or her circumstances.
- Keep a personal diary of your connecting experience.
- Try to involve your friends, group, or organization in this project.
- Be prepared to encounter disinterest on the part of others.
- Be mindful of the spiritual strength you gain from this experience.

5. Highest Level Connection: By now, your new friend has acquired the skill level and has the self-confidence to attain the means of decent, self-respecting lifestyle. Now you can tell his story to your friends and colleagues, find him a job, raise funds to help him start a small business, find a decent shelter, or reconnect him with his family.

This was a small, individual project in the area of economic justice. You might feel that the project has not made even the slightest dent in the global problem, but in reality you have changed the entire world - the world of the person whose life you have rescued! You may have also sparked the imagination of those who watched you struggle through this project. Who knows to what heights the spirit you helped revive may soar because of the upward push you gave!

These details demonstrate how you can design similar projects in any field of your interest. Is there any area in the list above that concerns you? Is it important enough for you to do something about it? Then you do not have to wait for someone else to come and help you start the project. If you feel strongly about it, and if you believe in yourself, go ahead and design a similar one-person action plan. At the initial stages, you may face some ridicule, opposition, and obstacles that might frustrate you. However, if your act is kind, honest, or sincere enough, others will soon join you, funding will flow, and you may have started a quiet revolution. Always remember that only a few tiny bubbles have to break the surface, and the whole water starts boiling. Of course, your energy would be much better utilized if you could find an organization that is already working in the field and you just join it. Alternatively, you could explain your concerns to your own organization, society, or friend's circle, and motivate others to participate.

Jains have not only the obligation and responsibility to act, but also the tools and the effective mechanisms to resolve successfully the issues facing the 21st century. It is also an opportunity for them to plan, prepare and recapture their past glory. The question, of course is this: Does the four-fold Jain *Sangh* have the needed vitality for this project?





Section

V

**Section V. History and
Literature**

SECTION PREVIEW

The written records of ancient Indian periods are scarce. The history of ancient India therefore draws heavily upon secondary sources such as traditional lore, religious literature, and both archaeological and anthropological work. The conclusions drawn from such wide sources can be very confusing. This has been the case with the early history of Jainism. Erroneous conclusions, mostly by non-Jains, have varied from, "Jainism and Buddhism being the same religion, to both being an offshoot of Hinduism, to both being a primitive animistic system." The most widespread misconception, however, is that Mahavira founded Jainism in 600 BCE.

Fortunately, recent archaeological research in Afghanistan, Northwest India, and Pakistan provides a much clearer picture of early Jain history. Integrating this research with Jain lore, references cited in early Hindu and Buddhist literature, and earlier archaeological and anthropological work now enables us to construct a much more definitive picture of Jain history. Chapter 18 is such a picture of Jainism before Mahavira. It attempts to deconstruct some of the misinformation presented as 'absolute fact' in many history books, confirms the Jain belief that Mahavira was the 24th reformer and twenty-three of his predecessors have preached and propagated Jain principles and practices. Although historical data to establish the exact period of the origin of Jainism may never be available, the data presented here proves that Jain world-view and practices were followed as early as 5000 years ago during the Mohenjo Daro period. More research may push that date even further into antiquity.

Like every other religion, Jainism has gone through several reform efforts and has formed several sects. We record this in Chapter 19 -- not as acrimonious schisms -- but as healthy developments resulting from repeated attempts to keep Jainism true to its roots.

Unlike the Bible or Qur'an, Jain Sacred literature consists of many volumes. We present a short survey of it in Chapter 20.

18. Jainism Before Mahavira

A general belief that Jainism did not exist before Mahavira is both true and false. It is true because the word “JINA,” from which the term “JAINISM” originates, came into use only after Mahavira. However, the tradition and the philosophy that the Jains follow today and that Mahavira followed in his days are far more ancient than Mahavira himself.

Jain Belief

Jains believe that Jainism is an eternal religion. This belief is in keeping with their fundamental assumption that time is eternal and cyclical, with an ascending and a descending period in each cycle (Page 52). The fourth division (unhappy-happy time) of either period produces twenty-four *Tirthankaras* who preach the Jain path of self-purification and liberation. Since there have been innumerable such cycles throughout eternal time, Jains argue that their religion is at the heart of this eternal cycle. They believe that we are currently in the fifth division of the descending period and that the situation for humans will continue downhill until our world ends catastrophically in the sixth division, an occurrence thousands of years from now, and marking the period of the ascending part of a new cycle.

Recorded history and archaeology are our only tools to verify these Jain claims. Unfortunately, these tools prove to be deficient in denying or accepting claims. Further complicating this issue is, that Jainism, being a minority religion, has received very little attention from historians. When Western Indologists started studying Jainism in the early 19th century, they first believed that both Jainism and Buddhism were offshoots of Hinduism. Further study changed this notion; however, some parallels between the life-stories of Buddha and Mahavira led them to a hasty

conclusion that the two stories were of the same person, and therefore, Jainism was only a variation of Buddhism. This error was also rectified in time, but left them with another incorrect assumption that Mahavira, like the Buddha, was the 'founder' of a 'new religion' called Jainism.

It is only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Western scholars took the study of Jain history seriously. Largely because of the pioneering work of Hermann Jacobi,²¹ an impressive array of Western Jainologists have pieced together archaeological, historical, literary, and religious information to develop, what now appears to be a plausible history of Jainism. Among these Indologists are Jainologists such as J.G. Bühler, Jas Burgess, Carpentier, James Ferguson, A. Guérinot, N.R. Guseva, Hertel, Hurnle, Kuhne, B.C. Law, E. Leumann, J.E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Louis Renou, Edward P. Rice, B.A. Saletore, Walther Schubring, Vincent Smith, F.W. Thomas, Albrecht Weber, Wilson, Maurice Winternitz, and Heinrich Zimmer. Indian scholars have also made significant contributions to our understanding of Jain history. Notable among these are: B.C. Bhattacharya, A.M. Ghatge, Banarasidas Jain, Kamta Prasad Jain, Jagmanderlal Jaini, H.R. Kapadia, P.C. Nahar, H.D. Sankalia, Chimanlal J. Shah, and A.N. Upadhye. Studies by these scholars support the claim that Mahavira, Parsva, and Nemi - the twenty-fourth, twenty-third, and twenty-second *Tirthankaras* respectively - did walk this earth and preach a path to liberation that the Jains follow today. Nemi seems to have preached in Gujarat and to have been a cousin of Kṛṣṇa. Parsva and Mahavira have been verified as spiritual leaders in Bihar. Parsva was born in 850 BCE and Mahavira in 599 BCE. These three are the last of the present series of twenty-four *Tirthankaras*; the first according to the Jain tradition is Rikhava (or Rishabha).

Jain scriptures give the details about Rikhava - his times,²² birth, parents, achievements, and his reaching the state of *moksha*. According to the scriptures, Rikhava was the pioneer of civilization, the first to practice agriculture, and help a nomadic culture settle. He founded a social order, the institution of marriage and family, and the system of law, order, and justice. He abdicated his kingdom, renounced all worldly possessions, and as an ascetic, lived a life of penance and austerity through which he attained omniscience. This ascetic-king preached that the root cause of happiness and misery is our own karmic bondage and that liberation from this bondage is possible through a path of self-purification by means of meditation, penance, and austerity. Jains follow this path even today. They consider it to be the legacy of Rikhava - their first *Tirthankara* or spiritual leader of

²¹ Jacobi, H.: (1) *Bhadrabahu's Kalpasutra*, Leipzig, 1879.

(2) "Mahavira and his Predecessors," *Indian Antiquary*, 1880.

(3) *Jaina Sutras Part I* (1884); Part II (1895).

²² *Jambudvīpa-Prajñāpatī* a *Upaṅga* text forming the Jain subsidiary canon.

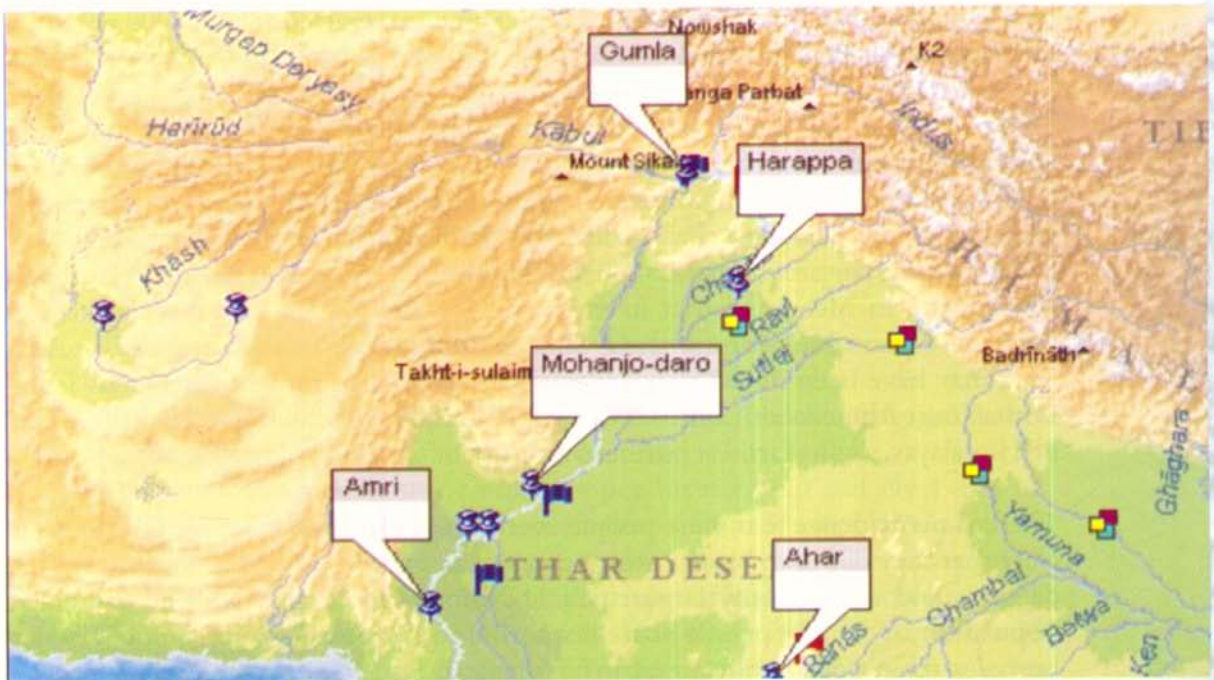


Figure 18.1: Some important cities in the 5000 years-old, pre-Aryan, Indus valley civilization.

the present time cycle. The units of time used in Jain literature being different from the ones used today (e.g. years, months, days, etc.), it is difficult to ascertain the period when Rikhava preached, and therefore, Jains use the inexact term, “Rikhava lived millions of years ago, and Jainism is an eternal religion.”

The Indus Valley Civilization

Recent archaeological excavations may provide some clues to the historicity of Jainism. The food grains found recently in excavations in Afghanistan and along the Northern reaches of the Indus valley in Pakistan are carbon-dated to ca. 6500 BCE, leading to the conclusion that, “In southern Asia, the cultivation of grain started ca. 7000 BCE.”²³ This date may be pushed back by several thousand years through more research, but the present data confirms that agriculture in the Indian subcontinent was well advanced even eight to nine thousand years ago. Excavations of the well-planned cities of Harappa, and Mohenjo Daro, in Northwestern Indian subcontinent have yielded many seals and statues. These statues and figurines are in naked meditative poses - sitting in a lotus position or meditating in a standing *kayastarga* position. Such poses are unique to the Jain tradition and are used in both the earliest and the modern *Tirthankaras* iconography. Based on these seals, some historians have suggested that a philosophy (similar to that of Jainism) of the

²³ Kulke, H. and Rothermund, D., *A History of India*, Rupa & Co., Delhi 1993, page 5.

purification of soul by ascetic and meditation practices existed at least 5000 years ago during the Indus Valley period.²⁴

The people of the Indus built cities, developed agriculture and commerce in conjunction with maritime navigation, formulated a script, and lived in a state of relative peace for at least 3000 years. Intensive archaeological excavations in recent years have shown that this civilization had as many as 1800 settlements encompassing an area of over 280,000 sq. miles (larger than Western Europe). Alamgirpur, in Meerut district in the center of the Ganga-Yamuna confluence, marks its eastern boundary, whereas Sutkagen-Dor, close to the border of present Iran, may have been its western out-post. Its southern borders reached as far as Lothal (near Ahmedabad) and Malwan (near Surat) in Gujarat. Rupar, in the foothills of Himalayas, was its farthest northern outpost.

There is no evidence that these people ever engaged in aggressive warfare, but it is clear that they did have bronze weapons such as swords, bows and arrows, spears, daggers, and axes. Many large cities, like those at Harappa with an estimated population of 80,000 people at its height of occupation, had surrounding walls; however, these walls do not appear to be fortifications to protect themselves from an aggressive enemy and may have served as possible entry checkpoints for commerce and taxation purposes only. Interestingly, some seals found in excavating these cities bear the mark of priests in remarkable detail, but no deities as we would recognize them today were found. However, there are many clay figurines of 'goddess-like' images suggesting a culture that has room for both a household deity religion, and a religion that had a focus on a purification of the soul through process of meditation and ascetic austerities.

The fact that the Indus civilization had seals with images of meditating persons suggests that the religious philosophy of the Indus valley civilization was similar to that of present day Jainism. Furthermore, remarkably detailed statues and seals of an ascetic with distinctly non-Aryan - Dravidian - features (Western archeologists have named this one 'Ascetic-king') and his iconic bull, supports the Jain claim that this represents someone akin to a historical Rikhava or some monk in his tradition.

Those who believe in the misconception of Mahavir as the founder of Jainism may have difficulty in discussing or accepting this historical scrutiny. They may continue to cling to the Hindu revisionist's claim that the Harappan or Indus Valley culture was a 'proto-Shiva' culture. However, the Jains feel vindicated that in just one century historians have come a long way - from not even accepting Jainism as a distinct religion to proving Harappan era to be that of Rikhav worship. Jains claim that their

²⁴ *ibid.* page 20.

religion is 'eternal' and thus beyond the capabilities of historian's craft. Here is what we do know of the Indus Valley culture:

1. Their civilization development included a social order, a system of marriage and family, law and order, justice and government.
2. They had adopted an urban lifestyle with a well-designed public sanitation system. They used bricks to build large homes and well-planned cities as well as towns and villages.
3. They had the ability to read and write. Their script is a mix of phonetic symbols and pictographs and reads right to left.*
4. They knew land cultivation. They had artistic talent in drawing, sculpture, figurines, jewelry, pottery, and arts and crafts.
5. They knew the metallurgy of gold, copper, bronze, lead and silver (not of iron). They exported finely crafted articles as far as Mesopotamia, Iran, and Central Asia.
6. Archaeological evidence shows that they used offensive weapons made of stone and wood but had no defensive shields, coats, helmets, etc. This indicates a non-aggressive, peaceful lifestyle in which people did not have to go to wars. They were without a standing army. Not a single depiction of a military act, of conquest, of taking prisoners, or of a human killing another human is found. Human remains from the early period show no signs of violence.
7. Their domesticated animals included bulls, cows, and elephants but no horses. Their seals bore images of these animals and were probably emblems of different clans.
8. Intensive artisanship and trade enabled Indus valley culture to spread over a region twice the size of Mesopotamia without a trace of military domination.
9. They were of Dravidian origin and could have possibly been a matriarchal society.
10. The excavated figurines in lotus and standing (*kayotsarg*) positions suggest that their spirituality included purification of soul through meditation. They believed in transmigration of soul.

This information provides some new insights into those cultural images that a particular culture projects of itself to others. From a Jain perspective of the Harappan data, the people of the Indus Valley civilization followed a path to liberation based on self-control through meditation, yoga, nonviolence, and other

* According to Prof. Dr. Sneha Rani Jain, the Harappan script could also be from left to right depending upon the orientation of the associated picture on the seal. Please see her Hindi publication: *Saindhava Puralipi me Dishabodh* published by International Digambara Jain Cultural Society, Bhopal, India, 2005

ascetic practices. From some of the 'seal' evidence, we could possibly conclude that these people worshiped images of Rikhava.[♦] The statues unearthed at Harappa are remarkably detailed and show facial features that are distinctly non-Aryan but appear to be similar to those of the indigenous peoples of India - the Dravidians.* In this context, the evidence demonstrates that these peoples had some reverence for an ascetic figure (the seal evidence). Merging this evidence with the Jain oral tradition that describes Rikhava as being the first to introduce both meditation as a spiritual practice, and such things as agriculture and a distinctively different social order to South Asia, enables us to conclude that people of the Indus Valley culture were 'Rikhavites'.

Aryan Arrival

Historians have unequivocally established the original homeland of Aryan tribes to be around the Caspian Sea (a salt-water lake land-locked by Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. The word Iran actually means the Land of the Aryans.) Around 1500 BCE, they migrated to the Indus valley from Central Asia. Although the 'Rikhavites' tried to live peacefully with their new neighbors (this is supported by the lack of evidence for any sustained battles or wars), the nonviolent 'Rikhavites' had no chance against the waves of migrating, arms-bearing Aryan tribes. Most 'Rikhavites' retreated Eastward and settled in several small kingdoms (*janapadas*) along the Ganges. Those who stayed in the Indus region were enslaved by the Aryans, and according to their texts, were called '*dasyus*' (slaves). In due course, the 'Rikhavites' re-established themselves in the East - in the present state of Bihar.

A cultural picture of the Aryan lifestyle in 1500 BCE and for a few centuries after that emerges from the *Vedas* - the earliest literature they composed. This picture provides us with some data about their nomadic lifestyle, weapons, arts, animals, and religious practices. This is in distinct contrast to the urban lifestyle of the aboriginals of the earlier Harappan period. Here is what we know about the 1500 BCE period:

1. Theirs was a rural, nomadic, pastoral lifestyle.
2. They settled mostly in forests creating smaller new communities of bamboo huts with thatched roofs.
3. They used gold, copper, bronze, and iron but not of silver and lead.

♦ The meditative figurines of Harappa could not be of the Hindu god Shiva because Hinduism started after Aryan arrival in 1500 BCE. Furthermore, the concept of soul, meditation, etc., did not appear in Hindu sacred literature until much later. (700 to 500 BCE)

* Aryans arrived in India much later in 1500 BCE. They subjugated the local people. Vedas, the Aryan literature, refers to the indigenous people by such derogatory terms as '*dasyus*' (slaves), *asuras*, *rakshasas* (demons), etc. We use the term 'Rikhavites' because of their spiritual practices. The term 'Dravidians' was coined much later and is in use today for the people in Southern India. The features of the human figures on the Harappa seals, being similar to those of the present-day Dravidians, suggest that they are possibly the indigenous peoples of India.

4. Their weapons were both aggressive as well as defensive and were made of wood, stone, and iron. They used chariots, defensive shields, helmets, and coats of nails.
5. The horse was their most domesticated animal and was used in warfare. Other domesticated animals included cows and sheep.
6. They had virtually no achievements in the arts and no writing skills. However, once they settled in the Indus valley, they developed verbal poetry.
7. Their spiritual development was limited to the invocation of powers of nature to bestow favors and worship involving the use of fire and an exhilarating drink called *soma*.
8. Their pantheon of naturalistic and functional gods had mythological counterparts in Iran, Greece, and Rome.
9. Their religious concepts included neither soul nor one God. However, they quickly assimilated religious ideas encountered in the Indian subcontinent.
10. To prevent assimilation with the dark-skinned indigenous people, they limited their religion to persons of Aryan birth and fully observed the traditions of genealogical count, transferring the names of their own ancestors from generation to generation. This practice resulted in dynasties such as Solar and Lunar (*Surya-vanshi* and *Chadra-vanshi*).

One logical conclusion from the comparison of the Indus Valley and Aryan culture of 1500 BCE is that the *Rig Veda* culture (an evolution out of the Aryan civilization) was not related to the Indus culture and had an independent origin outside India. Furthermore, the cultural and racial characteristics of the urban dwelling 'Rikhavites' are different from those of the light-colored, rural, nomadic, and cow-herding Aryans. The religious practices of Rikhavites appear to be closer to the present Jain beliefs and practices. These facts give more credence to the Jain claim. Jains believe that the indigenous people that flourished in the Indus Valley in Northwestern India and built cities like Mohenjo Daro, Lothal, and Harappa²⁵ in the pre-Aryan period were the Rikhavites.

Brahmanic Religion

We have traced the origin of 'Rikhavites' to the years of the Indus Valley culture based on the archeological evidence and Jain tradition. We can learn the history of the Rikhavites during the 800 years after the Aryan arrival mostly through the references to them in the Vedic literature, and through the Jain tradition. The Aryan immigrants composed hymns, which formed the basis for the new Aryan religion called Brahmanic religion. We can divide their entire literature into three groups:

²⁵ Kulke, Hermann and Rothermund, Dietmar, A History of India, Rupa & Co., New Delhi 1993.

(1) **The Vedas:** The process of accumulation of Vedic hymns was gradual and proceeded in the course of many centuries after the arrival of Aryan settlers in India. The four *Vedas* or (*Sambitas*) are (i) *Rig Veda*, (ii) *Yajur Veda*, (iii) *Sama Veda*, and (iv) *Atharva Veda*. They were composed during a period of ca. 1300 to ca. 1150 BCE. The *Rig Veda*, which is the earliest collection of hymns in praise of the Aryan functional gods, refers to 'Rikhavites' as *vrata dharmi* (ascetics who live by vows) or *yogins*. It does not seem to be concerned with the basic philosophical curiosity about the 'meaning of life'. There is no evidence yet of the caste system, although the indigenous dark-skinned people are referred to as '*dasyus*'.²⁶

(2) **The Brahmanas and Aranyakas:** These are the expository ritual texts attached to each of the *Vedas*. These texts were composed between 1000 BCE and 700 BCE. In these texts, we witness some insecurity and skepticism of the mythical powers of Aryan gods. The *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas* also mark the transition from the metrical hymns of the *Vedas* to elaborate prose stressing the need for sacrificial ritualistic offerings. "These magical rites must be performed exactly as prescribed, any mistakes would invite the wrath of the gods," we are told. This transition from mythical gods to magical rituals and the need for the expertise to perform rituals as prescribed gave birth to the caste (*Varna*) system in which the ritual experts - the *Brahmin* priests - occupied the top social position.

Although meditation, yoga, and penances were not yet prescribed for the common Aryan, some wise men of the Brahmanic faith had begun adopting the 'Rikhavite' practice of dropping out of the society and heading into the forests. Unlike the 'Rikhavites', however, their motivation was to seek magical powers from their gods through extreme penances. It is possible that these sages, in their attempt to practice penances may have adopted Rikhava as their ideal, and in the process may have started worshipping Rikhava as Mahadeva (Great god), Shankara (source of auspicious and beneficial *karma*), and Shiva (Pure).^{*} Nevertheless, these sages seem to have initiated a fundamental transition in the Brahmanic religion, from the mythical gods of nature (*Rig Veda*) to the magical sacrificial rituals (*Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*), and ultimately to the mystical philosophy of salvation as seen in the later Vedic literature. The worldview in the late Vedic age was very different from that in the early period of migration. There was also doubt about the almighty power of the

²⁶ Dandekar, R.N., "The Brahmanical Tradition: The Vedic Period", in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Volume 1, Embree, A.T. ed., Columbia University Press, New York 1988.

^{*} There are uncanny similarities between the Jain image of Rikhava and the Hindu image of Shiva. For example, Rikhava practiced meditation, penances, and austerities; Shiva is the only god in Hindu pantheon that practiced these techniques. Jains believe that Rikhava invented agriculture and used the bull as a farm animal, and therefore they use the bull as a symbol of Rikhava; the bull is also the symbol for Shiva. In the end, Rikhava left society, went into the Himalayas for his intense meditation, and achieved *moksha* on the top of the Kailash Mountain (*Ashtapada*); Hindus regard Kailash to be the home of Shiva. Shiva and Krasna are the only Hindu Gods with the dark skin. (Dravidian origin?)

gods. In its place grew an increasing awareness of an immutable law according to which everybody was accountable for his deeds (*karma*) not only here and now but also in subsequent births (*samsara*). These two ideas of *karma* and *samsara* became the key elements of Indian religious life. They may have evolved from the religion of the indigenous people with whom the Aryans became more and more involved.²⁷

It is remarkable that in the V'edas and in the earlier Brahmana literature, the doctrine of transmigration is nowhere clearly mentioned, and there is no good reason to believe that the Aryans of the V'edic time accepted it. It first appears, in a rather primitive form, in the early Upanishads as a rare and new doctrine, to be imparted as a great mystery of master-hermits [Rikhavite monks] to their more promising pupils... The rapid spread of belief in transmigration throughout the whole of Northern India is hard to account for; it may be that the humbler ['Rikhavites'] strata of society had always believed in some form of transmigration.

-R.N. Dandekar, in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Edited by A.T. Fambree, 2nd Edition, Volume 1, Columbia University Press, New York 1988.

It is interesting to note that in the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, which is set in about 1000 BCE, the banished Aryan king Rama lives in the forests south of the Vindhya mountain range in central India. When Ravana - the mighty Dravidian king of Sri Lanka - kidnaps Rama's wife, Rama invades Sri Lanka with the help of an army of monkeys (*vanara*) and defeats Ravana. The use of "an army of monkeys led by a monkey chief Hanumana" in this story appears to be illogical. A logical explanation could be that Rama was able to get help from the local forest dwelling Dravidians. The Sanskrit word *vana* means forest, and *nara* means men, the forest dwelling men are thus *vana-nara*. The Aryan author of the *Ramayana*, unwilling to acknowledge the Dravidian help, conveniently joined the two words (as is the common grammatical practice in Sanskrit) to read *Vanara* - the monkeys. Similarly, the author states that Ravana was the worshipper of Shiva, and possessed magical powers resulting from years of his practicing austerities and penance.

As we have seen earlier, the original people of India followed the 'Rikhavite' practices of meditation, penances, etc., and since the Aryan sages had renamed Rikhava as Mahadeva or Shiva, the author of *Ramayana* may have identified Ravana as a Shivaite and demonized him as a *rakhasa* (devil). Rama, the Aryan hero of *Ramayana*, and Munisuvrata, the 20th *Tirthankara* of the Jains, appear to be from the same period. Reconciliation between the *Brahmana* (Vedic) and *Sramana* (ascetic) systems was attempted during their time.

(3) The Upanishads: The Upanishads (800 to 500 BCE) refer to the 'Rikhavites' as Arhant Dharmi (followers of the liberated one). These texts mention about an arhant dharmi named Parsva (877 to 777 BCE) as the son of the King of Kashi, and

²⁷ Kulke, Hermann and Rothermund, Dietmar, *A History of India*, Rupa & Co., New Delhi 1993 page 48.

another one called Nemi as the cousin of the dark-colored Hindu god Krshna. The Upanishads also question the glorification of the ritualistic sacrifice. Its Brahmanic authors now seem to be paying greater attention to Shramana philosophy of karma and samsara. During this period, the mystico-spiritualistic thoughts such as identity of the individual soul (Atman) with the soul of the universe (Brahman),²⁸ the concepts of rebirth, transmigration, and purification of soul through yoga, penances, and austerities begin to appear officially as valid Brahmanic practices in the Upanishads. For example, the Mundaka Upanishad states,²⁹

"The fools who delight in the sacrificial rituals as the highest spiritual good go again and again through the cycle of old age and death. Those who practice penance (tapas) and faith in the forest, the tranquil ones, the 'knower' of truth, living the life of wandering mendicancy - they depart, freed from passion, through the door of the sun, to where dwells, verily, the immortal Purusha, the imperishable soul."

The Eastward March

The birth, development, and stratification of modern Hinduism, which developed out of the Brahmanic religion, happened during the 800 years between 1500 BC and 700 BCE. Their stratification was mainly due to the hierarchy of the caste system, which made one caste inferior to the other. This stratification became a serious problem when the Aryans were on the move again.

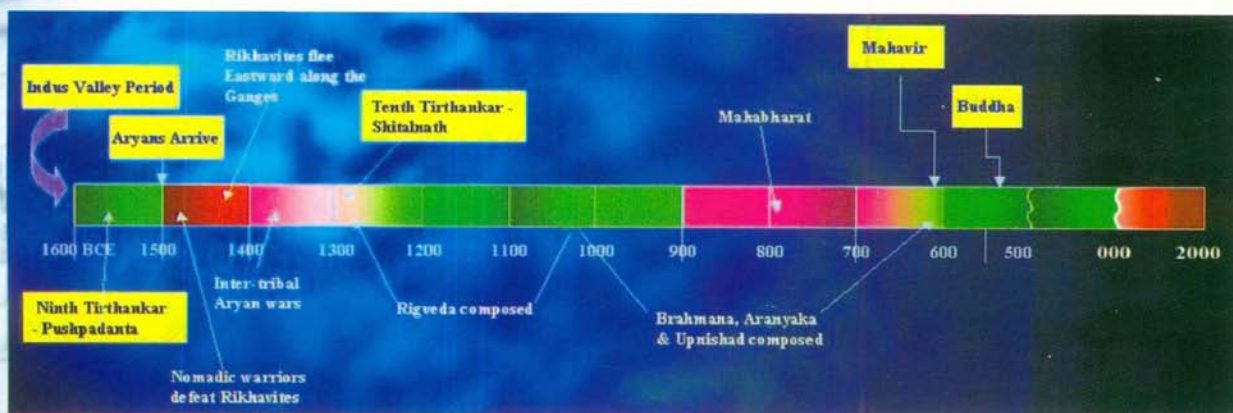


Figure 18.2: A time chart showing some major developments between 1600 BCE and 500 BCE.

This time the move was eastward along the plains of the Ganges River. The kings and the republics of the indigenous settlements along the Ganges tried to stop Aryan advances, but they could not stop the powerful war machine of the Aryans with their horses and chariots. The Aryans readily destroyed the wooden walls and the fortifications built around the towns (*purab*) of the Gangetic nations. Vedic hymns

²⁸ Chandogya Upanishad, 6.1-3, 12-14.

²⁹ Mundaka Upanishad, 1.2-7.11.

describe this march and praise Indra (*Purandara*) as the god who could break fortifications. By the eighth century BCE, the Aryans had reached River Sadanira (now Gandak) to the Northeast of Patna with the help of their god Agni-Vishvanara (Fire-god) who burnt everything to prepare for the advances of the Aryans. A Hindu scripture - The *Satapatha Brahmana* - records Aryan march eastward along the river Ganges (towards the present-day Bihar) and the founding of Videha to the northeast of Patna by prince Videha-Madhava. Videha led the Aryan forces eastward, burning Dravidian (Rikhavite) kingdoms.

"Agni thence went burning along this earth towards the East... and Videha Madhava followed after him. He (Agni) burnt over (dried up) all these rivers. Now that river, which is called Sadanira (modern Gandak), flows from the Northern mountains: that one he did not burn over. That one the Brahmins did not cross, thinking, 'It has not been burnt over by Agni-Vishvanara.' Videha said to Agni, 'Where am I to abide?' 'To the East of this river be thy abode!' said he.

"Nowadays, however, there are many Brahmins in the East of Sadanira. Brahmins have caused Agni to taste (purify) it through sacrifices. Oh Lord Vishvanara, purify thy now the land of Niganthis to the South."

-Satpatah Brahmana, Translation by J. Eggeling - Sacred Books of the East (1882-1900).

The kingdom of Magadha - to the East of the river Sadanira - was yet to be conquered, and was therefore considered impure by the contemporary (8th century) *Brahmins*. This is where the 'Rikhavites,' by now referred to by the Aryans as *Niganthis* (unattached), were settled.

Sramana Revival

The Aryan threat to the kingdom of Magadha was obvious, but this time, the *Shramana's* religion was also threatened. Many scholars believe that this danger was responsible for the sudden revival of *Shramana* religion by Mahavira and the founding of Buddhism by Gautama Buddha within a few years of each other.

With the Aryan forces concentrated to their Northwest, the Niganthis may have realized that an armed conflict with the Aryans was not a choice for them. Their conviction of the moral superiority of their nonviolent, ascetic way of life was a great morale booster. Furthermore, the Niganthis may have sensed that the Aryan fighting force, which was mainly of the *Kshatriya* caste, was unhappy with their secondary position in the caste setup. In spite of their might, *Kshatriyas* were relegated to a secondary position to the *Brahmins* (priestly caste).

The *Shramanas* therefore may have launched a two-fold counter attack. On the one hand, they rejuvenated their religion through Mahavira, Buddha and many other *sramana* religious leaders and tried to re-establish their moral superiority by re-emphasizing that salvation and eternal bliss is attainable through their system. On the other hand, they might have encouraged mass defections of *Kshatriyas* from Aryan

ranks by emphasizing that *Shramanas* revere all life. "ALL are equal, and anyone - even a *Kshtriya* - can reach *moksha* by following the *Shramana* path." This was a very powerful message. It appears that even the *Brahmins* recognized the moral threat of the principles of the equality of life and nonviolence. *Brahmins*, who until now were carnivorous and consumed the animals slaughtered in their sacrificial rituals, now attempted to take the wind out of the *sramana* argument by adopting nonviolence and vegetarianism as their own creed. Hindu Gods, nevertheless, continued to carry weapons, and animal sacrifices continued to receive Brahmin blessings.

'Arhant- Praise in' The Vedas

O Arhant! You are equipped with the arrow of
Vastuswarupa, the law of teaching, and the ornaments of
the four infinite qualities.

O Arhant! In your omniscient knowledge, the universe is
reflected.

O Arhant! You are the protector of all souls in the
universe.

O Arhant! The destroyer of karma! There is no one equal
to you.

- Yajurveda, Chapter 19, Mantra 14

I am not Rama.

I have no desire for material things.

Like Jina, I want to establish peace within myself.

**- Yogavashishtha, The Sayings of Rama,
Chapter 15, Sloka 8**

19. Post-Mahavira Jainism

In the previous chapter we learnt of the circumstances which generated a flurry of activities to revive the 'Rikhavite's' Sramana religion. Within some 800 years after their arrival, Aryans were well settled in the Indus Valley and had composed a large collection of hymns of Nature Worship. Their new Brahmanic religion had evolved into a more sophisticated philosophy, and the 'Rikhavite' ideas of soul, its transmigration and its purification by ascetic practice were incorporated into the latest Brahmanic literature the *Upanishads*. Brahmanism had developed a rigid caste system and a system of sacrificial rituals in which animals and even humans were sacrificed to please the gods.³⁰ 'Rikhavites' had retreated to the plains along the Ganges river where they had organized themselves in small kingdoms and built cities, but by 700 BCE, Aryans had destroyed these cities. Bihar, in the Eastern region, was now the spiritual centre for the Sramana religion.

Early Reforms

The social and historical background of the Sramana reform efforts cannot be traced with great accuracy because of the small amount of 'concrete evidence;' however, the event that seems to have precipitated the reforms is the eastward march of the Aryans into the mostly Sramana territory in Eastern India. The Sramana tradition was a religion of strict asceticism founded (according to the Jain tradition) by Rikhava the first *Tirthankara*. Parsva, the twenty-third *Tirthankara*, seems to have made some

³⁰ The practice of sacrificial killings of the Dravidian tribes of Nagas and Rakshasas by Aryans was called *purushmedh*. Cases of this are repeatedly described in the *Vedas*, e.g. *Atharva Veda* 6.56, and *Mahabharata* a Hindu epic. Reference: N.R. Guseva, *Jainism*, Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences, Moscow 1970; English translation by Y.S. Redkar, *Jainism*, Sindhu Publications, Bombay 1971, page 28.

effort, in about 850 BCE, to bring back strict self-discipline by formalizing a code of ascetic behavior. He organized the community and prescribed four basic vows (namely, non-violence, truthfulness, not taking what is not given, and minimizing worldly possessions). However, not until the eastward march of the Aryans in late 700 BCE was there an urgency and intellectual fervour to reform the Sramana philosophy. The extant Buddhist scriptures³¹ give details of least seven attempts to reform Sramana philosophy of that period.

One of these seven attempts is by **Kassapa**, who preached that conduct, virtuous or otherwise, had no effect on a soul's transmigration, and all *karmas* must come to fruition. Kassapa's faith in the rigidity of the *karma* theory was such that he questioned the efficacy of any human act to escape its consequences.

The second was **Mikkhali Gosala**, founder of the 'Ajivika' sect. He preached the same doctrine of *karma* as did Kassapa and coined the word *niyati* (fate) for the principle which controlled the rigid pattern of transmigration. His was a totally fatalistic approach. He preached that a soul's destiny is completely controlled by the rigid laws of *karma* and that there is nothing one can do about it.

The third reform school mentioned in the Buddhist literature is that of **Ajita Kesakambala** who was a complete materialist. He did not believe in soul or in any cosmic power. To him, a living being was formed of four elements namely, (i) earth-returns to the aggregate of earth, (ii) water to water, (iii) fire to fire, and (iv) air to air, upon death. No soul, no transmigration! Enjoy life as you go along, for there is no afterlife. However, such a totally materialistic outlook, similar to that of the modern science, could not explain life's ups and downs or inequalities and injustices and was promptly rejected by his contemporary intellectuals.

The fourth reformist was **Pakudha Kacchayana**, whose teachings were later absorbed by what was to become the Hindu tradition and were to give rise to the Hindu Vaisheshika school. He preached the doctrine of seven fundamental elements. According to him, life, earth, water, fire, air, joy and sorrow are the fundamental universal elements which are neither made nor governed, neither caused nor constructed, neither originated nor destroyed, and one element has no effect on the fundamental qualities of another.

The fifth was **Sanjaya Belathiputta** whose main thesis was that no one is capable of knowing the absolute truth. Truth is beyond human comprehension. Therefore, all theories ranging from the existence or non-existence of God to any 'Reality' are just that - theories. Consequently, he surmised, "Let us not even debate the existence of God or of any other perceived Reality."

³¹ *Digha Nikaya*, 1.47 ff

The sixth reformer was **Vardhaman Mahavira**, who is called Nigantha Nataputta in the Buddhist literature. Typical of his '*anekantavada*' approach, he examined all the arguments of the contemporary reformers, and incorporated most of the valid ones into his reformed version of Sramana philosophy. One can see some commonality between his teachings and those of the five mentioned above. Mahavira's reforms have survived in the form of Jainism.

The last reformist, some 60 years after Mahavir, was **Gautama Buddha** who, like others, rejected the existence of God, tried an ascetic life in search of liberation, but gave it up claiming that it was too extreme a path, and adopted a middle-of the road approach. He even rejected the permanence of soul.

Several other reform attempts were made but only Jainism and Buddhism have survived to date. Whereas Mahavira acknowledged and maintained his connections with the past and thus became a 'reformer', Buddha severed the links with his Sramana roots and became the 'founder' of a new religion.

Mahavira

Mahavira was born on March 30, 599 BCE (*Caitra Sukla 13*) in Kundalgram, Bihar, which was then the centre of Sramana religion. His parents, Siddhartha and Trishala belonged to the royal family, followed the Sramana religion, and named their son Vardhamana. Prince Vardhamana left his kingdom on Nov. 11, 570 BCE (*Margasirsa Krasna 10*) at the age of thirty to seek salvation through self-purification by retreating into a nearby forest and living a rigorous ascetic life. He achieved full enlightenment (omniscience) twelve years later on April 26, 557 BCE (*Vaisakha Sukla 10*), at forty-two years of age. Jains believe that omniscience results when one manages to get rid of all destructive and deluding *karma* through total control over one's own mind. Since gaining total control over the self is the greatest victory one can achieve, Vardhamana was given the title Mahavira (Great Victor) by the community when he returned to tell about his experience. He was also called the '*Jina*' (conqueror), a title from which his followers derive the name Jains.



Mahavira modified Parshva's ascetic code of conduct by adding the vow of celibacy to the four of his predecessor, and until his Nirvana on Tuesday Oct.15, 527 BCE (*Kartika Krsna 15*), preached the 'Jaina path of purification of the soul.' During Mahavira's life, his teachings became widely known throughout the eastern region, and the rulers of many eastern Gangetic kingdoms supported Jainism. He had eleven direct disciples (*ganadhara*) who propagated his teachings. He attracted

527,000 followers - 159,000 *śrāvakas*, 318,000 *śrāvikas* and ordained 14,000 monks with *Acharya* Indrabhuti Gautama as a head monk, and 36,000 nuns with *Acharya* Chandanbala as a head nun.³² Many in this congregation made great spiritual strides by following the path preached by Mahavira. For example, 314 achieved absolute mastery over the language, 400 monks achieved complete mastery over Jina's philosophy, 1300 achieved clairvoyance, 700 attained omniscience, 700 attained peace and happiness similar to those in heaven (*deva-loka*), 500 gained the mind-reading ability, and 700 monks and 1400 nuns achieved total liberation (*moksha*).³³

Antiquity and Perceptions

It is a tribute to the organizational skill of Mahavira that his four-fold Jain community became a powerful force in the religious history of India. With Mahavira's achievements in focus, we can now revisit the controversy over the antiquity of Jainism. In the true spirit of *anekantavada*, we can assess various claims. The Hindus claim that Mahavira started Jainism. That claim may be valid from Hindu perspectives because, the word Jain was really coined only after Mahavira's great enlightenment. Thus, Jainism cannot be older than Mahavira. However, from the Jain perspective, it is not the word but the basic religious philosophy associated with it, that is important. Mahavira - the 24th *Tirthankara* - simply reformed and refined the Shramana philosophy of purification of soul - a philosophy, which goes back not only to Parsva but also all the way to Rikhava. From this perspective, the Jain claim is also valid.

Spread of Jainism

Only two of the eleven *ganadharas* - Indrabhuti Gautama and Sudharman - survived their teacher. Indrabhuti achieved omniscience immediately upon Mahavira's death and Sudharman twelve years later. Both continued to preach the Mahavira's message until they died at the age of 92 and 100 years respectively. Sudharman's student - Jambuswami - mastered the canon and achieved omniscience. Jambuswami is considered to be the last of the omniscient teachers (*Arhat kevali*). The canon was then passed on to four successive generations of ascetics, the last among them, 116 years after the passing of Mahavira, was Bhadrabahu-I.

The spread of religion in ancient India depended mostly on the royal patronage. Of the sixteen major kingdoms (*Mahajanapadas*) in northern India, those in the eastern region followed the non-vedic Sramana religion and the royal families in four of them (Kasi, Magadha, Vajji, Malla) were the devotees of Parshva. Mahavira, the Jina from Vajji, being their own, had immediate following in these four kingdoms. In other

³² *Kalpasutram* 133-135.

³³ *Ibid*: 138-144.

Sramana-type kingdoms, Mahavira may not have been as successful because of the simultaneous rival attempts by other Sramanas, viz. Ajivikas, and Buddhists. However, the Sramanas had to be again on the move by 150 BCE, just as had happened with the Aryan arrival in the Indus Valley in 1500 BCE. This time, it was the victory of Brahmanical kings of the Sung dynasty over the Sramana kingdoms in the eastern regions. Life had become difficult for the Jains in this region. Therefore, some Jains moved to the Southeast and others followed the trade routes to the Northwest along the Ganges. The Southeastern group was well received. The Jain community grew there with royal patronage and attained dominance in the present-day states of Andhra, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

The Split

Perhaps the most serious blow to Mahavira's efforts was from two of his own followers several centuries later. Northeastern India, particularly the Maghada region, which was the stronghold of Jainism, was hit by a severe drought and famine in 360 BCE. A group of Jain monks led by Bhadrabahu-I therefore decided to migrate southwards to what is now Karnataka state, while others led by Sthulabhadra stayed back in Patliputra (modern Patana in the state of Bihar).^{*} With the spread of the religion into new regions, its preachers incorporated their own versions of the unwritten Jain canon and made changes in ritualistic practices. Alarmed, Sthulabhadra called a 'Council of Monks' in Patliputra in 327 BCE, and invited Bhadrabahu to participate. However, Bhadrabahu could not attend the meeting. Serious differences thus arose amongst the monks, some accepting the scriptures organized by Sthulabhadra, and others rejecting its authority, each claiming that the other had deviated from Mahavira's original words.

This was the beginning of a split in the Jain community. By the first century CE, the Jain migration and dispersal of monks into various parts of the country resulted in major differences in rituals between the two groups. It appears that in 82 CE, Shrivakoti established a separate order of naked monks, thereby increasing the rift between the two groups.³⁴ However, the final falling apart of the two sects may have happened in Valabhi in Gujarat as a result of King Lokpala's decree for all monks to be fully clothed. Those unwilling to comply with the decree migrated South along the West coast to meet with the group that had migrated along the East coast. Jainism thus split into two major sects viz. the Digambara and Svetambara, led respectively by the two monks, Bhadrabahu and Sthulabhadra - a division which persists even today.

^{*} According to another version, Bhadrabahu-I, who knew all the *Agamas* - was in Nepal and Sthulabhadra was sent from Patliputra to learn *Agamas* from him. However, he was able to learn only a part of the scriptures. Later Sthulabhadra called the Council of Monks to prepare a unified version of the scriptures, but Bhadrabahu could not attend.

³⁴ Schubring, Walther, *The Doctrine of the Jainas*, tr. from German by Wolfgang Beurlen, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1962, § 26,27.

Both sects continued to subdivide further, almost independent of each other, into subsects, each differing from the other in minor details. Yet, there are no major philosophical differences between the two sects. An independent student of Jainism could easily conclude that the minor differences that have persisted so long between the two sects are petty and reflect on the ego of the monks and the ignorance of their followers. On the other hand, one may also conclude that the split demonstrate '*anekantavada*' in action, where different interpretations of Mahavira's path are encouraged, respected, and honestly followed by all sects.

The central point of difference between the two sects is in the practice of '*aparigraha*' or minimization of possessions. The Digambara sect, which stands for the ritualistic nudity for its monks, maintains that a monk can become truly free of shame and sexuality and thus hope to attain *moksha* if his *aparigraha* means "possessing nothing", including clothes. "Total nudity demonstrates absolute non-attachment required for *moksha*," they maintain. The Svetambara sect permits its monks and nuns to cover themselves with two pieces of simple, white, unstitched cloth but do not consider that as *parigraha*. They point to the peacock feather brooms and water gourds, which the naked Digambara monks carry, and suggest that these too must not be viewed as *parigraha*. A seventeenth century monk - Yashovijayji - clarified the situation by saying, "Attachment is a state of mind (*bhava*), and draping ones body with a simple functional piece of cloth or carrying a peacock-feather broom does not necessarily mean that the monk is emotionally attached to it."³⁵

Different interpretations of '*aparigraha*' affected the position of women in the two sects. Digambaras believe that women, being incapable of going about nude in public, cannot observe fully the vow of '*aparigraha*,' and hence cannot achieve *moksha*. Apparently, this attitude towards women may be a much later development. Third and fourth century important Digambara texts clearly state that both men and women can achieve *moksha*.³⁶ Svetambaras state that men and women are equally capable of the same spiritual accomplishment. In fact, they point to Malli, who was a woman, and became the nineteenth *Tirthankara*.

Other evidence of this difference in interpretation of '*aparigraha*' is seen in the Jain temples. Digambara idols of *Tirthankaras* are unadorned and in the form of an ascetic in the serene, meditating position, whereas the Svetambara idols are adorned as kings, often with crowns.

The '*aparigraha*' debate is extended even further into the nature of the omniscient Jina. According to Jain *karma* theory, the state of omniscience is reached when a soul

³⁵ Muni Yashovijayji, *Dharmasangraha-tika*, a Seventeenth Century work.

³⁶ See (1) Schubring, W., *Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 344-61, and (2) Malvania, Dalsukh, *Jainism: Some Essays*, Jaipur, 1986, pp.81.

has shed all its destructive (*ghatiya*) *karma*. The soul is then free from all passions and does not attract any karmic particles. If the non-destructive *karma* are also eliminated immediately, the soul thus freed from all *karma*, leaves the body and reaches *siddha-loka*. The souls of omniscient Jinās however, continue to remain in the present body because their nondestructive *Tirthankara karma* are not immediately eliminated. According to the Digambara, such omniscient beings, though still in their human form, do not engage in any kind of bodily function such as eating, talking, etc. Unaware of their physical form, they remain seated in detached meditation and a 'magical divine sound' (*divya-dhvani*) emanating from their soul carries their message to the receptive minds. Svetambaras reject the notion of magical divine sounds and maintain that all *Tirthankaras* indeed talked, walked and preached their creed. Jinās being omniscient and free of *kashayas*, their infinite energy prevents any destructive *karma* from touching their soul ever again.

By insisting on their own interpretation of the doctrine of '*aparigraha*,' both sects seem to overlook '*anekantavada*,' a doctrine which is a great tool of reconciliation. Digambara and Svetambara versions of the scriptures differ only slightly, but the hardliners in both the sects continue to reject the authenticity of each other's scriptures. There is some disagreement over whether or not Mahavira was married before leaving everything in search of *moksha*. Such a purely academic debate should not affect lay Jains, but they too often get carried away by the influence of their monks. Nevertheless, a cordial and cooperative relationship does exist between the two sects, and a much publicized dispute over the ownership of shrines and holy places in a few communities in India must not be viewed in purely adversarial terms. Furthermore, Jains outside India are steadily growing in number without much interaction with their orthodox ascetics. They don't see much sense in maintaining sectarian boundaries in an extra-Indian context; however, it may be too early to predict if they will be able to erode and break down these boundaries.

Digambara Developments

The process of dividing into subsects continued among both the Digambaras in the South and the Svetambaras in the Northwest. Monks of both sects claimed to have an authentic and only link to the 'original community' (*mula sangha*) through a lengthy lineage of gurus dating back to Mahavira's time. The *mula sangha* was so called because it was seen as the basis of the true path to deliverance as established by Mahavira, and those who did not belong to it were looked upon as pseudo-Jains.³⁷ For example, a tenth century Digambara text by Devasena calls Buddhists (described as followers of Parshva), Svetambaras, and Yapaniyas³⁸ (a Jain sect trying to reconcile the differences

³⁷ Soni, Pannalal (ed.): *Shrutasaṅgāra's Shatprabharit Adisamgraham* A Sixteenth Century text, Bombay 920.

³⁸ Upadhye, A.N. "Yapaniya Sangha: A Jaina Sect," *Journal of the Uni. Of Bombay*, 1, 4, 224-231.

Upadhye, A.N. "More Light on the Yapaniya Sangha," in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, LV, 9-22, Pune.

between Digambaras and Svetambaras) as 'sectarian miscreants.' He strongly criticized even Digambara subjects such as the Mathura *sangha* founded in the second century by Ramasena, the Dravida *sangha* founded in the fifth century by Vajranandin, and Kashtra *sangha* founded in the seventh century by Kumarsena. The reason for his wrath was that the monks of these subjects did not carry peacock-feather brooms. Devasena insisted that a peacock-feather broom was mandatory for true (*mula*) Digambara monks.

The Bhattarakas

As Jainism flourished in the South with royal patronage, the influence of its monks on the royalty and the land endowments to the religion increased substantially. Many forest-dwelling monks gradually started accommodating themselves to a quasi-householder mode, apparently to provide spiritual guidance to the laity. Some senior monks even took to being carried in palanquins attended by escorts of soldiers in a



show of authority. Such practices, unworthy of a Jain monk, were no doubt periodically stigmatised as a sign of decadence and drew bitter criticism. Unfortunately, such hardline criticism discouraged contacts between the monks and the lay community and deprived the community of spiritual guidance.

This situation created a need for some respectable authority who could guide the community in spiritual matters and administer the gifts of funds, buildings and endowed lands. A new religious authority, in the institution of *bhattarakas*, soon emerged to fill this need. For all practical purposes, a *bhattaraka* was supposed

to be like a monk, learned and celibate, but not having taken the vows of monkhood or been formally ordained, was free to live among the laity as an administrative authority. A *bhattaraka* thus became a lay authority conducting rituals, administering monasteries and other properties, preserving scriptures and libraries, representing Jainism at king's courts, negotiating with kings and other religious authorities on behalf of his Jain constituents, supervising religious education, and generally adjudicating the affairs and conduct of his sect.

With such a role and authority, it was inevitable that this office also succumbed to the trappings of having a throne and enjoying a great deal of pomp and ceremony. Such *granduer* did not initially attract much criticism from the community because of the fact that a *bhattaraka* was not a cleric but only a lay authority. Nevertheless, the pomp and the laxity of this office eventually proved to be too much for the simplicity-minded Jains, and a challenge to their authority was mounted from northern India. Banarasidas was a sixteenth century Jain poet in Agra who was convinced that

bhatattarakas, like Hindu Brahmins, had monopolised rituals and thus exercised powerful control over the masses.³⁹ Furthermore, he believed that ritual offerings of flowers, fruits and sweets during Jain temple worship involved large-scale violence against plants and was similar to the sacrificial rituals of Hinduism. His reformist efforts resulted in de-emphasizing the importance of the *bhattarakas*, causing their numbers to dwindle from about thirty-six in the medieval period to only four now. Attempts are afoot to revive this institution, and six more *bhattaraka* seats are under consideration.

Marginalization

Jainism once attained a position of dominance in the Southern states of Andhra, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. However, Jains in this area are now a marginalized community. Several factors can be attributed to this decline, among which 'secterian infighting' and 'lack of effective leadership' could be the internal factors and a 'militant Hindu Renaissance' and 'Muslim invasions' the external factors. From the eighth century onwards Jains often met with violent reprisals, mass conversions to Hinduism, and the destruction or takeover of their shrines and temples in the South. Some Hindu temples, including the great Minakshi temple in Madurai and a shrine to Murugan in Kalugamalai (Dist. Tirunelveli), even today display vivid murals of the massacre of Jains. Destruction of three hundred fifty-two Jain temples by Muslim invaders is noticable in the ramparts of Belgaum Fort (Karnataka), which is built with pieces of carved stones from these destroyed temples. Further, graphic proof of conversion of the Jain temples to Hindu shrines is visible in the walls, plastered-over steeples, and the courtyards of the famous Mahalakshmi temple in Kolhapur (Maharashtra) and in the Murugan and Aiyanar shrines in Kalugamalai. Systematic destruction of Jain rock carvings on the mountains continues for quarries in Tamilnadu even today while the authorities look the other way. The fact that Jains cannot seek legal redress for such obvious cases, even in the secular and human-rights culture of the 21st century, is eloquent proof of the marginalization of Jainism that has occurred in the South.

One of the reasons for such marginalization is presumably the prevalence of orthodoxy, conservatism, and dependence on rituals instead of scriptures by the community. We have seen earlier that Devasena ridiculed some Digambara subjects for such minor attempts as to reform the external trapping of carrying a peacock broom. Such orthodoxy not only discouraged reform but deprived the community of effective leadership because monks gradually chose to stay away from the community. The institution of *bhattaraka* also did not prove to be much help.

Two fortunate developments during the last century, however, may help the

³⁹ Jain, Ravindra Kumar, *Kavivara Banarasidas* (in Hindi), Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publication Varanasi.

community regain its vitality. One such development is the foundation and leadership role of an organization called *Dakshin Bharat Jain Sabha* (South Indian Jain Society). Through this organization, eminent Digambara Jain lay persons voluntarily took over almost all the responsibilities which were formerly in the domain of the *bhattarakas*. This Society has already achieved commendable progress in book publications, education, temple managements, community representation, and even in bringing about social reforms.

Digambara Subjects

KANJI SWAMI PANTH

Another major development took place not in the South, but rather in the Svetambara stronghold of West Gujarat. Kanji, a powerful, learned Svetambara monk who had a significant following in the reform-minded Sthanakvasi subject (Page 190) embraced the Digambara philosophical perspective of Kundakunda. Born into a Sthanakvasi family, he was ordained as a Sthanakvasi monk at the age of twenty-four and rapidly rose to prominence because of his scholarship and charismatic preaching. At the age of forty-five, however, at a public ceremony in Songadh near Palitana, Gujarat, Kanji Swami, as he was already being called, announced that he had found the true spirit of Jainism in the teachings of Kundakunda - a second century teacher of mystical tradition in the Digambara sect, and as a result was leaving the order to become a Digambara layman.⁴⁰

Kanji Swami de-emphasized rituals, dietary codes and the merit-making practices of Jainism and preached that the soul is an eternal reality, therefore, we should strive to fully understand the nature of the soul without any emphasis on rituals. Whether his reformist preaching will have a long-lasting effect on the orthodox and conservative attitudes in the South is yet too early to judge. However, the fact that he is merely restating the views of Kundakunda, whose book *Samayasara* (Essence of Soul) holds a quasi-scriptural place within the Jain tradition⁴¹ and that Kanji Swami's message received a warm welcome from Shanti Sagar, the most venerated Digambar guru of the 20th century, has caused the greatest stir among the Digambaras.

For the present, he and his followers, which include some 300 families in Songadh, are looked upon as another subject - called "Kanji Swami Panth" - that is spearheading the Digambara reform movement. Until his death in 1980, Kanji Swami refused to accept any sectarian label claiming that he was merely advocating the true path of Jainism as preached by the *Tirthankaras*. However, his devotees have

⁴⁰ Bharill, H., *Yugapurusha Shri Kanji Swami*, Jaipur, 1981.

⁴¹ Kundakunda, *Samayasara*, *Ardhamaghadhi* text with translation by A. Chakravarti, Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publication, Varanasi, 1925.

built a massive structure called the '*Digambara Svadhyaya Mandir*' (Digambara Study Centre) in Songadh, and unlike his early 'Sthanakavasi' belief of not worshipping any idols, the Digambara images of *Tirthankaras* are worshiped here. His critics, however, ridicule Kanji's claims that he, in a previous existence, had met Kundakunda, and that he - Kanji - would be reborn as a *Tirthankara*.

Svetambara Developments

Mathura - the ancient city of the Parsva time - was the first major stop for the Jain group moving Northwest from Bihar. An inscription on a recently excavated funerary monument (Kankali *stupa*) in Mathura, dating from 157 CE, suggests that the monument was built in Parshva's time by a laywoman.⁴² Mathura then was already a vigorous city. Here Jain monks had organized themselves into several groups (*gana*) on the basis of their lineage - a system which continues today - with Svetambara monks. Another influence of that era - Jains becoming traders and businessmen - continues to date. Mathura was located at the junction of trades routes to the West, East and South, and the Jains migrating to the Northwest took to trading in the absence of any royal patronage.

Mathura, a land-locked city, remained a great Jain holy place for centuries but trade took Jains westward to the coastal areas of Gujarat where ship-building and overseas trade had developed. By the fifth century, Jains were well settled in Gujarat, Rajasthan and as far north as Punjab. It is in Valabhi, of the fifth century Gujarat, that the Jain monks now felt stable enough to call a conference to reconcile various versions of their scriptures and to produce written copies of the Jain canon. For the following few centuries, the Jains continued to thrive, established themselves into influential positions such as big business owners, bankers, scholars and ministers or advisors to the kings. A twelfth century Jain *acharya*, Hemachandra, was even able to engineer the succession of King Kumarpal to the throne.⁴³ The reign of Kumarpal and his Jain minister Vastupal is considered to be the golden-age of Jainism in Western India. The duo built many temples, including the famous temple complex at Mount Abu and at Taranga Hill.

Meanwhile, Islam had arrived in India with Mahmud Ghazni's raids during the period of 999 - 1026 and Ghor's invasion in 1151. Kumarpala's rule succumbed to Islam in 1165, and during the next three and half centuries, the Turkish sultanates caused havoc in the countryside by forcing the local population to convert to Islam, destroying idols and temples, taking Jain monks as slaves, and establishing provincial sultanates. Though a minority religion, Jainism survived and was even able to blunt Islam's sword by its nonaggressive and peaceful message. Jains, being traders,

⁴² Srinivasan, D.M., *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, Delhi, 1989.

⁴³ Buhler, G., *The Life of Hemchandra Acharya*, Shantiniketan, Varanasi, 1936.

merchants, bankers, and expert managers, were also able to wield considerable influence over the sultans. For example, in 1313 the Turks (Moghuls) severely damaged the great "Adinath" temple on Mount Shatrunjaya (Palitana), but by 1330 the Jains had managed to wield enough influence over the Turkish governor of Gujarat who ordered his minister Samara Shah to restore the temple and granted financial assistance for the project. A memorial built to honor a Moslem clergy who cooperated in this restoration still stands among the Jain temples on the mount.

A major source of early Svetambara history is *Prabhavaka Charitra* (Lives of the Jain Masters) by Prabhachandra.⁴⁴ This text gives biographies of twenty-two Jain *acharyas*, starting from Vajrasvamin (fourth century), who was supposedly the last *acharya* to have memorized the ancient *Purva* scriptures, to Hemchandra (1089-1172) whose knowledge of Jain scriptures was unsurpassed. Others listed in this text are: Siddhasena Divakara (fifth century), Haribhadra (sixth century) who has written hundreds of volumes on Jain philosophy and has been a pivotal figure in the Svetambara monk lineage, Kalka (seventh century), Mahadeva of Taxila (ca. 980 CE), and Abhayadeva Suri (eleventh century). This work sheds some light on the lives of the *acharyas* and their contemporary Jain community, and provides important information on the old *gana* system and the lineages of *acharyas*.

Svetambara Subects

TAPA AND KHARTARA GACCHA

In the fourth century, Vajrasvamin's four pupils - Chandra, Nagendra, Nirvriti, and Vidyadhara - may have replaced the term *gana* (group) with *kula* (family). Prabhachandra claims his lineage to be with Chandra, whereas that of Haribhadra is with the Vidyadhara family. This classification was soon replaced by another term, *gaccha* (subsect), used even today by the two groups of Svetambara monks, namely, the Kharatara *gaccha* and Tapa *gaccha*. Although the exact origin of the Kharatara subsect cannot be traced, it seems somehow to be linked to Abhyadeva Suri because many monks of the later period use the term 'Suri' as an appendix to their name e.g., Jinavallabha Suri (eleventh century), Jinadatta Suri (1075-1154), Jinachandra Suri I (1139-1165), and Jinachandra Suri II (1537-1612).

The Tapa *gaccha* also links its roots with Abhayadeva Suri. It was started by Jagachandra Suri in 1228, who believed in greater austerities (*tapa*) than those followed by his contemporary monks.⁴⁵ Over the centuries, Tapa ascetics have been successful in exercising great influence not only on Jain laypersons but even on the Moslem rulers. For example, Jain principles were first introduced and explained to the Moghul

⁴⁴ Jinavijayji Maharaj, *Prabhachandra's Prabhavaka Charitra*, Ahmedabad, 1940.

⁴⁵ Klatt, J., "Extracts from the Historical Records of the Jains." *Indian Antiquary*, 1882.

emperor Akbar (1556-1605) by a monk called Padmasundara who also gave him a gift of a large number of Jain manuscripts. Later, Akbar invited Hiravijaya Suri (1527-1595) - head of the Tapa *gaccha* - to be one of his religious advisors. So influenced was Akbar by Hiravijaya and his disciple Shantichandra's message of nonviolence that Akbar ordered the freeing of caged birds, banned killing animals, and lifted the tax on non-Moslems. Later, in 1591, a Kharatara monk, Jinachandra Suri, was able to persuade Akbar to protect Jain temples from Moslem rampage.⁴⁶ Akbar's successor emperor Jahangir, who was also prevailed upon by a Jain monk of the Tapa *gaccha*, had taken a vow of nonviolence and appointed a Jain monk to teach his son. There has been considerable rivalry between the two subsects, and the Kharatara *gaccha*, which is mostly located in Rajasthan, seems to be in decline with less than 20 monks and 200 nuns remaining in the order today. The Tapa *gaccha*, by contrast, now claims to have nearly 2,000 monks and 4,000 nuns.

Like their southern counterparts, the Svetambara monks faced an intense debate about their role in the community. Should monks live in the towns and villages and interact with the lay society, or should they be relatively isolated and stay in the forests? In ninth century *Acharya* Silanka had strongly defended the interaction by citing that Mahavira did not confine himself to one abode. Instead he had travelled, stayed in the towns and villages, and preached to the masses.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, two groups of monks - forest-dwelling (*vanavasin*) and temple-dwelling (*chaityavasin*) - had emerged in the fourth century, and the issue seems to have bubbled up in the eleventh century in the form of an intense debate. Whereas the group opposed to social-interaction emerged victorious and gave birth to the institution of *bhattarakas* in the Digambara tradition, the temple-dwelling group prevailed in the Svetambaras. By the eleventh century however, the reformist movement, led by Jinashvara Suri, had reduced the influence of the temple-dwelling monks. A compromise has prevailed to date whereby Svetambara monks are neither required to retreat to the forests nor are they allowed to stay at one place.⁴⁸ Instead, they are to maintain contact and preach to a maximum number of people by being constantly on the move on foot from community to community. Except in the four months of the rainy season, a Svetambara monk is expected to be criss-crossing the country.

LONKA GACCHA

The first major reform effort in Svetambara tradition was to take place in the

⁴⁶ Desai, M.D., *Bhanuchandra Charitra*, Ahmedabad, 1941.

⁴⁷ Muni Jambuvijayji, *Acharangsutram Aur Srutkritangasutram*, (Acharangsutra with Shilanka's Commentary), Agamodhaya Samiti Edition, Delhi, 1978.

⁴⁸ A new trend challenging this requirement has emerged in the 20th century. Acharya Amarendra Muni and his disciples, led by Acharya Chandanaji, have started Western Missionary-style humanitarian work by building hospitals, schools, and residences for the poor, aged and sick. This, according to them, is the true message of Mahavira's nonviolence. However, their critics have decried this move as "unsuitable for a Jain ascetic." See section on Acharya Chandanaji later in this chapter.

fifteenth century, ironically because of Moslem rule in Gujarat. Lonka (1418-1475), while working as a scribe to copy manuscripts in Ahmedabad, was saddened by the destruction of Jain shrines in Gujarat by Muslim iconoclasts. He was also disturbed by the highly ritualistic and temple-oriented behaviour of the ascetic community. He felt that such behaviour was contrary to that described in *Ayāranga Suttam* and *Dashavikalika*, the two scriptures dealing with monastic law that he was copying at the time. Furthermore, he found statements in the scriptures pointing to the destruction of life-forms entailed in the construction of any building.⁴⁸ Lonka therefore denounced image-worship. Lonka never took ascetic initiation but became a wandering preacher. His followers formed a separate group called the Lonka *gaccha* but continued using the meeting halls (*upasraya*) attached to the temples, without paying their respects to the temple deities. Monks of the Lonka *gaccha* also rejected the authority of thirteen scriptures on the grounds that these prescribed image-worship. All this had enraged the other subsects. The Lonka *gaccha* suffered a great setback a century after Lonka's death when a prominent Lonka monk, *Acharya* Meghji, and hundreds of his pupils joined the idol-worship sect.

STHANAKVASIS

Lonka's ideas were revived in 1730 by two merchants, Lavaji and Dharmasimha in Surat (Gujarat). They re-emphasized the monastic behaviour found in the *Dashavikalika* and suggested that monks should use old abandoned buildings (*sthanaka*) for lodgings. This new subsect, called Sthanakavasis, started permanently wearing a strip of cloth across the mouth (*muhapatti*) as an identifying device. Like the Lonka *gaccha*, the Sthanakavasis also suffered some serious setbacks. Within a few decades Bhikanji - a Sthanakvasi monk - broke away and formed a separate subsect called Terapanth (see below). A major setback however, was to come a century later when several Sthanakvasi monks, Atmaramji and Buterayaji being prominent among them, declared that they found the image-worship justified in the scriptures and joined the image-worshipping Tapa *gaccha*. Atmaramji, who was re-initiated in the Tapa *gaccha* as Vijayananda Suri, attained eminence as a great Jain scholar. In spite of such setbacks, the Sthanakvasis survive to date as a vibrant Svetambara subsect. Mental-worship (*bhava-puja*), instead of image-worship (*murti-puja*), is their basic thrust, and several of their monks have also achieved wide recognition. Muni Sushil Kumarji, a Sthanakvasi monk who immigrated to the United States in 1975, along with Chitrabhanuji, a former image-worshipping monk, are credited with the establishment of several Jain temples and a place of pilgrimage in North America.

TERAPANTHIS

Another setback to the Sthanakvasis was in Rajasthan in the form of Bhikanji (1726-

⁴⁸ Mahaprajna, Yuvacharya, *Ahimsa Tattva Darshan*, Jain Viswabharati Press, Ladnum, 1988.

1803), a Sthanakvasi monk. Disgusted by the lax practices of his contemporary monks, he and his six colleagues formally broke away from the Sthankvasis and started a new subsect. This new subsect came to be known as Svetambara Terapanth⁴⁹ to distinguish itself from the similar sounding name of the Digambara Terapanth, which was formed earlier as a protest to the authority of the *bhattarakas*. Though the new subsect denied any link to the Sthanakvasis, Terapanthis continued to follow certain Sthanakvasi practices, such as the rejection of image-worship, the denial of the authority of thirteen scriptural texts, and permanently wearing the *muhapatti*.[♦]

Initially, Bhikanji's Terapanth did not make much headway, perhaps because of his extreme views. He refused to initiate those who he felt to be unfit to stand the rigor of his exacting standards, and insisted that, "Ascetics should be concerned only with their spiritual development through austerities, meditation and penances. Monks and nuns should not get involved with compassionate activities."⁵⁰ Such extreme views were unacceptable to the majority of Jains, who believed that compassion and meritorious activities (*punya*) furthered spiritual progress. So profound was his concern for the ascetic behavior that he prepared a list of 'Limits of Behavior' (*maryada*) and required that all monks and nuns in his order recite it daily. This list grew bigger with each succeeding *acharya* in his order. The fourth *acharya*, Jitmalji, produced a condensed version of all these *maryadas* and required every ascetic to read and sign a copy daily to pledge his/her allegiance.

MODERN REFORMS

ACHARYA TULSI

Tulsi's predecessor, Acharya Jitmalji, was a consolidator and professional organizer and is credited with the survival of the Terapanth movement. However, Tulsi, initiated as the ninth *acharya* in 1936, reformed the subsect and put it on the world map. Tulsi must have studied Jain history well, for he knew that moderating Bhikanji's strictures may encourage laxity in ascetic behavior, but not doing so would amount to the continued marginalization of his subsect. He had to find a solution that would retain an ascetic's ideal code of behavior and increase his sect's involvement in social activities. He must have learnt from the Digambara experiment of creating an institution of *bhattarakas* to serve the social needs, and the subsequent revolt of Banarasidas. He conceived a brilliant idea.

Mahavira had recommended two sets of vows, a introductory set called '*anuvrata*' for laypersons and the stricter set, '*mahavratas*' for the ascetics (Chapter 3). While ascetics

⁴⁹ Rampuriya, S., *Acharya Bhikshu: Jivan Katha Aur Vyaktitva*, Jain Vishva Bharati Press, Ladnum.

♦ Whereas, the Sthankvasi *muhapatti* is a square piece of cloth, that worn by Terapanthis is an elongated strip.

⁵⁰ Mahaprajna, Yuvacharya, *Ahimsa Tattva Darshan*, JVB Press, Ladnum, 1988.



do take '*mahavratas*' and are subject to a very strict code of behavior, the laity generally follow a somewhat relaxed lifestyle in the spirit of *anuvratas* without ever taking any vows. Tulsi created a new class of ascetics --*samans* and *samanis* - who

would be bound by a new set of vows (*Virman vows*). This new order of ascetics is looked upon as a bridge between the laity and the traditionally ordained ascetics (*mahavrat*). Unlike the ordained ascetics, the *samans* and *samanis* can travel out of the country to provide spiritual guidance to the laity, accept food that is specially prepared for them, and participate in social activities designed for the moral and ethical reform. *Samans* and *samanis* have travelled the world, have established centers in several countries to promote Jain values, and teach a special kind of meditation called '*prekshadhyana*'. This is the revival of a practice which Mahavira started but had been almost forgotten.

Prekshadhyana, is designed to 'engage the mind fully in the perception of subtle, internal and innate phenomenon of consciousness.'

In 1949, Tulasi started the '*anuvrata*' movement and took it beyond the normal sphere of Jainism. He opened the movement to the people of all religions, color, creed, nationality and language. His stated goal was to bring about a global moral reformation by rekindling the Jain values of kindness, justice, peace, friendship, morality, and ethical behavior.⁵¹ Those joining the movement are advised to practice ten vows, which he called *anuvrata*. The '*anuvrata*' movement has flourished, is gaining world-wide recognition, and is helping restore the glory of Jainism.

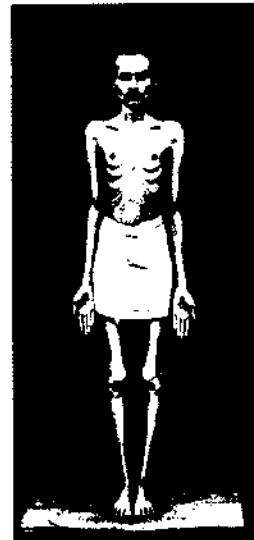
Acharya Tulsi's efforts will be viewed as a reform to bring Jain values to the attention of the world, to revive *prekshadhyana*, and to help us live according to Mahavira's basic message of justice and kindness towards all living beings. After Tulsi's death, the movement is now headed by his successor Acharya Mahaprajayji, who is also a distinguished philosopher and spiritualist.

SRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

The essence of Jain philosophy lies in the path leading to *moksha*. In Mahavir's time, Sanskrit was the language of the scholars, but Mahavir preached in Ardhamaghadhi - the local language of the masses. The Jain canon - the *Agamas* - were also composed in Ardhamaghadhi and used by successive generations of monks to bring Mahavira's message to the masses. Although ancient Ardhamaghadhi evolved into more contemporary languages, none of the *Agamas* were translated into any of the modern Indian languages until recently, and the Jain laity had to depend on the ascetics to understand the essence of Jainism.

⁵¹ Bhatnagar, R.P., (ed.), *Acharya Tulsi: Fifty Years of Selfless Dedication*. Jain Vishwabharati Press, Ladnum, 1985, also, Acharya Tulsi, *Anuvrata: A code of Conduct for Moral Development*, New Delhi, 1988.

In 1883, a sixteen year old boy from Gujarat - Lakshminandan Mehta (who later became known as Shrimad Rajchandra) - changed all that by publishing a book called "*Mokshamala*." This small composition of 108 couplets in simple Gujarati language tries to "explain the philosophy of Jainism to young people and to prevent them from being corrupted by false ideals" (preface). By reading it and contemplating its contents, "faith will be established in the essence of Jain philosophy," states the author in its preface. The book is neither a translation of nor a commentary on any canon, instead it emphasizes the actual spiritual experience of self-realization - a message more commonly found in Hindu mysticism than in Jain ascetic tradition. A second century Digambara Jain monk - Kundakunda - was the only major Jain ascetic to recommend similar mystical experience.



Rajchandra's prolific letter writing (about 800 letters to his friends and followers on spiritual matters)⁵² and his later book *Atmasiddhi* (Self-Realization of the Soul)⁵³ recommend this mysticism again and again. For him, there was no difference between 'the experience of the soul or self-realization' and 'liberation of the soul' (*moksha*). In the *Atmasiddhi* and in an elaborate letter sent to his long-time friend Sobhagbhai, he has stressed that the soul has eternal existence, it is the agent of its actions, and experiences its consequences; the state of *moksha* exists and the means of gaining it are through self-realization with the help of a guru. Jain tradition, on the other hand, distinguishes between the realization of the soul (awakening or *samyak-darsana*), and liberation of soul (annihilation of all *karma* or *moksha*). Rajchandra regarded self-realization to be central to a true religion and viewed idol worship, rituals, monkshood, sectarianism, etc. as unnecessary.

The Jain path to *moksha* is essentially the ascetic path, which one follows after gaining *samyak-darsana* at the 4th *gunasthana*. The path lays equal emphasis on both internal purity of soul and its external manifestation in ascetic's self-discipline. The Svetambara tradition believes that while asceticism is critically important for *moksha*, a layperson also may, as an exception, attain *moksha* on the basis of mere internal purity. The Digambara tradition however, considers nudity and asceticism as absolutely essential for liberation and rejects any possibility for a house holder to ever attain *moksha*. This is in spite of the fact that the most revered Digambara Acharya Kundakunda has stated in *Samayasara*:

⁵² Shrimad Rajchandra, Shrimad Rajchanra Asram, Agas, India, 1985.

⁵³ *Self-Realisation* (An English translation), Mehta, D.C., Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1978.

"The ignorant persons say that the adoption of the external marks of asceticism... is the only way to liberation. The mark is never the way to liberation, because the arhats who have given up an attachment to the body and ignored the mark, have realized right belief, knowledge and conduct which is the path to liberation."
 Kundakunda

The Hindu Vedic system does not consider asceticism as a must for liberation. Rajchandra too has discounted the requirement of asceticism although in reality, after gaining self-realization or *samyak darsana* (4th *gunasthana*) at an early stage in his life, he was already well on his way along the path to asceticism and appears to have reached the 6th or almost the 7th *gunasthana*. Rajchandra maintained that the religion of the self (*atma dharma*) is the root of all philosophies, and that even today we can realize the self through the mere acquisition of knowledge under the guidance of a worthy teacher. He claimed to have attained memory of his former births at the age of seven and made a grand claim that he - a layman - achieved a state of self-realization (his concept of *moksha* or *siddhi*) in 1890. In the last days of his life, he openly declared to his few monk disciples such as, Lalluji and Devakaranaji, that they should not distinguish between himself and Mahavira. In a letter addressed to Mr. Chaturbhuj Becara, he writes:

*I am the second Mahavira. This I have realized through the power of my soul. ... I am omniscient, full of detachment. I am going to establish the supreme religion by following Mahavira. ... I have prepared disciples and a moral code of conduct for them. ... For propagating this religion I would renounce the world and make my disciples omniscient. ... I am distinct from everything in all respects. I am only most pure consciousness, most exalted and unthinkable and an unadulterated pure experience self.*⁵⁴

Born of a Hindu-Vaishnava father and a Jain mother, Lakshminandan was a child prodigy studying and absorbing both Hindu and Jain philosophies at very young age. He was renamed Raichand at age four and later became known as Shrimad Rajchandra. The Hindu Vedic influence of his childhood is evident from his early writings (*Pushpamala*, *Bodbavachana*, *Anupreksha*), in which he emphasizes the importance of good religious assembly (*sat-sanga*), a good mentor (*sat-guru* or *sat-purusha*), and his right teachings (*sat-sruta*) in achieving self-realization.

He continued to emphasize the importance of these three things for the rest of his short life. By the age of twenty-two he introduced another Hindu concept, *bhakti* or devotion, and raised the status of a guru almost to that of a deity. In an exchange of nine letters between himself and his Hindu devotee, Mansukhram Suryaram, Shrimad states, "Scriptures describe only the pathways leading to *moksha*, but the secret of the same rests in the heart of a *sat-guru*. For realizing God one should look upon the guru as God himself! There is no distinction between God (*purusottama*), a

⁵⁴ Mehta S.R. and Seth B.G., *Shrimad Rajchandra: a Great Seer*, Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas, 1971.

Sat-guru, and a saint.” Similarly, in a letter addressed to Muni Lalluji, Shrimad advises: “Be absorbed in devotion to the *sat-purusas*. Reflect upon the biographies of the *sat-purusas*. Ponder over the characteristics of the *sat-purusas*. Concentrate on the faces of the *sat-purusas* and perceive them through your inward eye. Brood upon their each and every mental, verbal and physical act repeatedly and accept whatever they hold ... This is ..the pathway to the abode of God.” In the *Atmasiddhi* his most revered book - Shrimad has devoted 31 out of 142 verses to describing the importance of having and devoting oneself to a *sat-guru*.

Jain tradition, while acknowledging the role of a guru in seeking spiritual progress, does not accord similar importance to a guru as did Shrimad Rajchandra. Shrimad's '*guru-bhakti* or devotion to a guru' stems from the Vedantic, Vaishnava influence on him. He asserts repeatedly that Jainism is the supreme religion. However, his consistent emphasis on devotion to a guru, his use of Vedantic terminology such as *hari*, *brahman*, *sat*, *chitta*, *anand*, etc., display the extent of the Hindu influence on him. His statements such as, “consciousness is the substratum (*adhisthana*) of this universe”, a Vedantic monist concept, are diametrically opposite to the Jain dualistic viewpoint of both jiva (consciousness) and ajiva as real constituents of the universe. This was natural not only because of his upbringing in a Hindu/Jain family, but also because of Shrimad's voracious reading of non-Jain religious literature such as the *Dashodha*, *Bhagvat Gita*, *Guru Gita*, *Yogavasistha*.

In summary, Rajchandra's greatest contribution to Jainism appears to be his compositions - letters and books, poetry and prose - explaining Jainism in a simple, understandable modern Indian language. His deep understanding of both Jain and non-Jain philosophies and his consistent emphasis on devotion to a *sat-guru* earned him (and ultimately Jainism) a large number of Jain as well as non-Jain followers. Even Mahatma Gandhi, in his early years, declared himself to be one of Shrimad's followers. Shrimad's admirers believe that he was a liberal reformer attempting to blend Vedic and Jain philosophies. However, his detractors see this as a confused vacillation between the two philosophies from which Shrimad could not truly emerge. To them, it was also a failed attempt to challenge and reform the traditional Jain dogma of ascetic path.

In reality, Shrimad seems to have started a “devotion to Guru” (*Guru-bhakti*) movement in Jainism. His declaration that he achieved omniscience and self-realization (implying *moksha*) even as a layperson, and that he is the “Second Mahavira” has fanned this movement. Since his premature death in 1901, many of his disciples have declared themselves as having achieved self-realization through absolute devotion to a *sat-guru*. Shrimad's closest disciple Lallu and Lallu's appointed successor Brahmachari Govardhandas have claimed this, and the consequent authority, on the basis of direct (*pratyaksha*) guru lineage.

However, others have also made similar claims based on verse eleven in the *Atmasiddhi*, in which Shrimad classifies *sat-gurus* as both presently-living (*pratyaksha*), and non-living (*paroksha*). For example, Ladakchand Vora (1903-1997) declared himself to be an independent guru based on his devotion to his *paroksha guru* - Shrimad and established '*Raj Saubhag Satsang Mandal*' in Sayla, Gujarat. Dr. Mukund Soneji (Atmanand Maharaj) claimed self-realization in 1969 and established an *ashram* called '*Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhan Kendra*,' currently located in Koba, Gujarat. Similarly, Dr. Rakesh Jhaveri, who was recognized as a guru in 1980 by his followers, established '*Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Satsang Sadhana Kendra*' in Mumbai (now moved to Dharampur in Gujarat).

Rajchandra may have tried to ensure the continuation of his tradition by preaching *guru-bhakti* and suggesting that lay persons can also achieve *siddhi*, but he may also have opened doors to internal conflicts and power struggles within the movement by enabling too many followers to independently declare themselves to be *gurus*. It is too early to predict the outcome. Meanwhile, by declaring himself to be "Second Mahavir" Shrimad may have given reasons for his conservative Jain critics to be skeptical.

GURUDEV CHITRABHANU AND ACHARYA SUSHIL KUMAR

The 20th century has been marked by two global conflicts (World War I and II), more than a few regional wars, several genocides and the Holocaust. Intellectuals around the world have agonized over these horrible events and have sought different avenues of peace. One such avenue has been the interfaith dialogue through spiritual conferences. In 1970, a Spiritual Summit Conference was being organized in Geneva, Switzerland, by the U.S.-based Temple of Understanding, and a Jain monk in India was invited. The monk - Muni Chandra Prabha Sagar (later to be known as Gurudev Chitrabhanu) - was torn between his strong urge to take Mahavira's peace message to this conference, and equally strong travel-restrictions placed on him by the tradition.

Tradition dictated that Jain monks do not undertake vehicular travel, and for 28 years, Muni Chandra Prabha Sagar had covered nearly 30,000 miles walking bare foot to bring Mahavira's message to the villages, towns and cities in India. However, now he felt that it was important to participate in an international dialogue involving all the religions so that Mahavira's message of universal peace, fraternity, compassion, nonviolence, and reverence for life in all its forms can be explained to the rest of the world. He also felt that travel restrictions on monks were depriving thousands of overseas Jains from spiritual guidance. Jains were migrating to Africa, Europe and North America in increasing numbers each year, but in the absence of Jain monks they were fast losing their spiritual identity. Muni Chandra Prabha Sagar decided to travel to Geneva.

His travel abroad as a monk created a storm of protests in the Jain community in India, but his visit to Geneva had now given him a new vision of a universal mission. In response, the *mini* decided to renounce his monkhood and travel again as a lay-Jain under the name Chitrabhanu – a pen-name he had already been using to write books and poems. His 1971 travels took him to Kenya, England, The Hague, and then to the United States where he gave a series of lectures. New York was to be his new arena of activity. With the intellectual fortitude of a monk, the dogged determination of a maverick, and the zeal of a missionary, he opened America's first Jain Meditation International Centre near the United Nations building in New York. No longer a monk, he soon became popular as a spiritual leader, equally loved and admired by Jains and non-Jains. He is affectionately called “Gurudev Chitrabhanuji”.



Gurudev's bold decision to travel abroad proved to be an important and timely step towards Jain reform efforts.⁵⁵ With his sponsorship in 1975, another Jain monk, Acharya Sushil Kumar, followed his lead, arrived in the United States, and joined Chitrabhanuji in his efforts to bring Mahavir's message to the West. Acharya Sushil Kumarji established “The Mahavir Jain Mission” and a pilgrimage center, Siddhachalam, in North America. In 1981, these two mavericks inspired nearly 80,000 Jains living in North America to come together to form an umbrella organization - JAINA (Federation of Jain Associations of North America). Together, they have presided over the establishment of 57 Jain Centers and 16 Jain temples. Chitrabhanuji travels extensively each year to Europe, Africa and India, bringing Mahavira's message to the ever-increasing number of participants. His global mission is for the young Jains to disregard sectarian differences and continue the heritage of *ahimsa* and *anekantavada*.

ACHARYA CHANDANAJI

Perhaps the most controversial ascetic of the modern reform movement in Jainism is Acharya Chandanaji. Born in 1937, her parents Manek and Prem named her Shakuntala. She was ordained at a very young age of 14 by Acharya Anandrishi. She was impressed by the fact that Mahavir did not confine himself to personal spiritual perfection but dedicated his life to the cause of social reconstruction through *ahimsa*, *aparigraha* and *anekantavada*. Convinced that Mahavira's central message of *ahimsa* is

⁵⁵ Jain, D.P., *The Wave of Bliss: Impact of Chitrabhanu On The Western World*, Swadhyay Mandir Charitable Trust, Ahmedabad. Also, Rosenfield, Clare, *Gurdev Shree Chitrabhanu: A Man of Vision*, Jain Meditation International Centre, New York, 1981.

in reality a call for the service to humanity and all living beings, in 1972 she decided to join a group of nuns under the guidance of a reform minded guru Amar Muniji. True to the spirit of *anekantavada*, she studied Jain as well as non-Jain scriptures rapidly. In 1986, at the age of 49, her spiritual progress was recognized in the form of a promotion to the monestic rank of "*Darshan-Acharya*."

Another fact which impressed her is Mahavira's message of equality. Mahavira's four-fold *sangha* was a community of equals where there were no barriers of caste or sex. Mahavira readily admitted high or low caste Hindus - men or women - into his *sangha* and promoted them through the ascetic hierarchy purely on the basis of their scholarship and spiritual progress. He chose men as well women to head the ascetic



orders, and the head of all nuns during his time was, significantly, a nun called Acharya Chandanbala.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, as it has also happened in other faiths,* with the male dominance in the society, the hierarchical positions of Jain nuns later became secondary to those of the monks. A Digambara author - Prabhachandra⁵⁷ - went as far as stating that women cannot be truly Jain. Although a contemporary Svetambara author, Shakatayana strongly attacked this position, claiming that women are equal members of humanity with men, and therefore capable of enlightenment⁵⁸

Svetambaras had also yielded to the patriarchal attitudes. According to their monastic hierarchy, a junior monk pays homage (*vandana*) to a senior monk, a newly initiated monk (regardless of his age) to all those initiated before him, and laypersons pay homage to all monks. However, a medieval Svetambara *acharya*, Jinadattasuri, tried to ban women from worshipping the main *Tirthankara* image in temples.⁵⁹ The Svetambara too adopted a new monastic law according to which a nun, regardless of how long she has been in the order, and regardless of her title of seniority, must pay

⁵⁶ Jacobi, H., "The leader of the nuns (in Mahavira's *Sangh*) was Acharya Chandana,"

Jaina Sutras, Part 1, Oxford.

* For example, note the contempt for women in early Christian literature:

(i) Women should keep silence... for it is shameful for a woman to speak in churches

- Apostale Paul (1 Corinthians 14:34-5)

(ii) Who would wish to embrace '*ipsum stercoris saccum*?' (a stinking bag of manure)

- Odem of Cluny

- St. Jerome

(iii) Woman is the root of all evil

⁵⁷ Prabhachandra, *Nyayakumudacarita*, Jain, M.K., ed., Bombay, 1941 pp. 865-70.

⁵⁸ Shakatayana, *Strinirvanakevalibhaktiprakarane*, Jambuvijayji Muni, ed., Bhavnagar, 1974.

⁵⁹ Dundas, Paul, *The Jains*, Routledge, London, 1992 page 52.

homage to even a newly initiated monk.⁶⁰ Their new set of monastic titles are:

The ranks for the monks:

- (i) *Sadhu/Muni*,
- (ii) *Ganivarya*
- (iii) *Pannyasa/ Pravartaka*,
- (iv) *Upadhyaya*,
- (v) *Acharya*

The ranks for the nuns:

- (i) *Sadhvi* or *Ganini*,
- (ii) *Pravartani*, and
- (iii) *Mahattara*.

Consequently, only the “*Acharyas*” came to be recognised as “heads of the order.” The fact that, for a long time in Jain history, only men were allowed to head the order was not lost on the young *sadhvi* Chandanaji.

In assuming the title “*Acharya*” (instead of “*Mahattara*” almost a non-title) both Chandanaji and her grantor Amar Muniji broke the tradition. They were, in effect, inviting the *sangha* to re-examine Mahavira's message of equality. With Mahavira's true message and history on her side, becoming an *acharya* was Chandanaji's act of self-assertion and defiance - a character trait evident in almost all her later activities.

Mahavira's message of compassion (*jiva-daya*) was another issue on which she felt compelled to act. Jain *karma* theory and the ascetic path, she felt, were being misinterpreted. A Jain ascetic takes five great vows (*naha-vrata*) as a personal commitment to dedicate the rest of his/her life to liberating his/her soul from all *karmas*. Since good as well as bad activities are all likely to bond a soul deeper with *karma*, many ascetics interpreted their vows as “remaining aloof from all non-essential activities.” They may advise their lay followers to take up compassionate causes, but ascetics would remain personally uninvolved in order to avoid “attachment to the cause and its resulting karmic bondage.” Such interpretations have a serious negative effect on social-justice causes in a poor country like India. Jain laypersons generously donate to temples and support hospitals, animal shelters, schools and places of pilgrimage. However, a culture of physical and personal involvement as volunteers in humanitarian causes has not adequately evolved in the Jain communities, especially in the absence of direct involvement of their ascetics.

Chandanaji was quick to recognize the seriousness of the lack of direct involvement by the Jain ascetics. She was aware of the globally evolving new concept of spirituality in terms of social justice, human rights and the rights of all the living beings, a concept which Mahvira preached nearly 2500 years ago. She reportedly started pressuring her *guru* to take on the social justice causes. Her *guru*, Upadhyaya Amar Muniji, in turn ordered her to undertake a very difficult and dangerous

⁶⁰ *ibid*, page 27.
















humanitarian mission. In 1973, Chandanaji and four other nuns were asked to go to the remote areas of Bihar and help the poor. Bihar was then, and still is, the poorest, most underdeveloped, and most dangerous province in India. Bihar was once the hub of Jainism. Twenty-two out of twenty-four *Tirthankaras* once roamed this land and achieved *moksha* in this region. Mahavira meditated for fourteen years in this land at a place called Rajgir and preached nonviolence, love and compassion. Now however, there were hardly any Jain families in Bihar, and these nuns were to establish here a humanitarian mission called 'Veerayatan.'

*Personal salvation as well as upliftment of an ordinary person's mundane life is the mission of my initiation. In it, I am drawing inspiration from Bhagwan Mahavira's basic sutras.*⁶¹

- Acharya Chandanaji at her initiation

Initial attempts to build Veerayatan met with very little support and considerable hostility from the locals. The mission, operating out of a small hut, was vandalized, ransacked and looted several times in its early days, often endangering the lives of the nuns. Now, some 30 years later, the dedication and perseverance of Chandanaji and

TERMS TO REMEMBER

 <i>Gaccha</i>	Ascetic lineage
 <i>Maryada</i>	Limits of behavior
 <i>Muhapatti</i>	Cloth for covering mouth
 <i>Paroksha</i>	Indirect, non-living guru
 <i>Pratyaksha</i>	Direct, Living guru
 <i>Prekshadhyana</i>	A type of Jain meditation
 <i>Saman</i>	A quasi-ascetic male
 <i>Samani</i>	Aquasi-ascetic - female
 <i>Sat-Guru</i>	Right guru
 <i>Sat-Sangha</i>	Religious assembly
 <i>Sat-Sruta</i>	Right teaching
 <i>Sthanaka</i>	A hall for religious assembly
 <i>Tapa</i>	Penance
 <i>Upashraya</i>	A hall in a temple complex
 <i>Vipakshana</i>	A type of Buddhist meditation

her 10 Jain *sadhvis* has transformed Veerayatan into a leading Jain socio-religious organization operating a 200-bed free hospital, clinics, relief centres, and schools in Rajgir, Pavapuri, Lacchavad, Palitana, and Kutch. When the earthquake struck Gujarat in 2001, Chandanaji and her nuns arrived on the scene within weeks and opened a school at which 6000 children receive free education and meals. In five short years they have managed to open a pharmacy college in Gujarat and a brand new university - Veerayatan University - is in the making.

Chandanaji manages and supervises Veerayatan. Not only does she personally get involved in its activities, she also asks her nun disciples to get professional training in such fields as medicine, philosophy, and business management, and to get more involved in humanitarian work. Ordained nuns are sent to universities overseas

to study comparative religion and to establish Jain educational centres. Chandanaji is also constantly on the move, bringing her message of humanitarian service, social justice, education, and spiritual fulfillment to the growing number of her followers in

⁶¹ *Amar Bharati* A Veerayatan Publication, Volume 4, January 1988, page 6

Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and encouraging them to get involved in the social justice issues.

An active management role involves many trappings of the mundane lay life such as raising and managing funds; interacting with government officials, professionals and workers; and traveling abroad. Chandanaji's decisions enraged conservative elements in the community who saw her activities as the betrayal of the five great vows of ascetic life. They believed that ascetics must fully engage themselves in spiritual activities such as study, meditation, and penances for freedom from the karmic bondage. Any other activity is a deviation from the vows to follow the prescribed Jain path of purification, and therefore not befitting ascetic behavior.

Chandanaji's daily routine does include meditation and studying scriptures, but she maintains that bringing Mahavira's message of *ahimsa*, *aparigraha*, and *anekantavada* into action is the true spirituality. "All Tirthankaras have given this message through personal examples," she contends, "they did not turn away from the society upon enlightenment, instead they dedicated themselves to the creation of healthy social values." Her reform efforts are in keeping with the current global movement to rediscover true spirituality and redefine it in the terms of human rights and the rights of all living beings (Chapter 13). Her reform movement has attracted worldwide attention from progressive thinkers, activists, and youth. Nevertheless, she also continues to attract strong criticism, opposition, and heat from conservative Jains.

Several large yellow signs on Gaya railway station near Rajgir warn travellers, to be aware of the dangers of lawlessness in Bihar. Chandanaji and her nuns have been involved in the humanitarian work in such a violent climate.

DANGER!

Because of the rampant lawlessness in the surrounding areas, travelers are warned NOT to leave the perimeter of the railway station before dawn and after dusk.

Station Master

When I asked Chandanaji about the risk of working in such a dangerous area, and the bitter criticism she often faces from other Jains, a gentle smile appeared on her face and she recited a line from a poem written by her guru,

“Path-darshak bananare balavoo pade che”
(“A candle must burn to show the path.”)

Chapter 20

20. The Sacred Literature

Although the archaeological research, Vedic literature, and the Jain scriptural data suggests that the people of the Indus valley practiced meditation and austerities like the present day Jains, there is no written literature from that time. In fact, the Jain scriptures were written several centuries after Mahavira.

The Oral Tradition

Ancient Indians had a great system of memorizing verbatim the teachings of their masters and passing these on to the next generation, who then would transfer it orally to the next generation. The first written words in a script understandable today appeared in India approximately in 1300 BCE.[♦] In the absence of paper, these were written on dried palm leaves. However, the *Shramana* monks (predecessors of the present-day Jains) of this period did not accept the method of using palm leaves because of two major reasons.

Firstly, because of their vows of minimizing hurting, and reverence for every living being, the idea of cutting and drying palm leaves for writing was not acceptable. Furthermore, the infestation of dried leaves with millions of tiny insects in the hot and humid weather of India, posed additional problems for the *Shramana* monks who practiced nonviolence. Secondly, even if the books were so written, the monks who were always on the move could not carry the books with them because of their vows of non-possession (*aparigraha*)

The concepts and ideas developed by Rikhava were memorized, improvised, and orally passed on to successive generations by *Shramana* monks and *Tirthankaras* and

[♦]The seals and carvings from the Mohenjo-Daro period 3500 BCE do have writings. However, scientists have not been able to decipher these until recently. A first success in deciphering some characters has been reported in February 2000. A Hindi book published in 2005 claims to decipher the entire script and establish the link between the Harappan and the present day Jain practices. (see page 169)

were finally organized by the last *Tirthankara*, Mahavira, in about 600 BCE. His chief disciple, Indrabhuti Gautama, then codified and classified the teachings of his master into twelve parts, called *Dvadasanga Suttam*. This is the Jain canon; it was still only in the oral format and was to remain so for centuries to come.

The Written Texts

The first written scriptures of Jainism therefore did not appear until 453 CE - 980 years after the death of Mahavira. Until then, Mahavira's words were transmitted orally by a succession of monks. Bihar was the center of learning in the fourth century BCE, but when Bhadrabahu passed away, and his disciples returned from southern India, their version of 'Mahavira's Words' (*Agama*) did not quite agree with that of Sthulabhadra's group, which had stayed back in Bihar.

Sthulabhadra called a nationwide 'Council of Monks' in Patliputra, Bihar, in 327 BCE to reconcile the differences and to come up with an official version. The monks were now aware of the danger of losing Mahavira's words if they continued with the tradition of transmitting their knowledge by oral means only. A decision was perhaps taken here to commit the sacred words to writing and to exclude the scriptures from the vows of non-possession. However, very little, if any, was committed to writing at this time. Meanwhile, debates continued about the authenticity of 'Mahavira's Words' as remembered by different groups of monks. A major debate in 82 CE on the issue of whether or not scriptures allow ascetics to wear clothes widened the split between the two camps. Although *Agamas* were yet to be redacted, several monks started writing independent treatises on various topics based on the knowledge they had orally received. The major works of that era are by *Acharya* Kundakunda (2nd century) whose texts such as *Samayasara*, *Pachastikayasara*, and *Pravachansara* have attained quasi-scriptural status among the Digambara sect.

The second and third 'Councils of Monks' (Mathura in 340 CE, and Valabhi 453 CE) finally produced an official version of the *Dvadasanga Suttam*. They wrote it under the leadership of a monk, Ksamasramana, and called it the *Agamas*. Since this version resulted from a conference at which hundreds of monks recited each *sutra* and the version recited by a large number of monks was written down, Svetambaras believe that the texts produced at this Council are almost the exact words of Mahavira. Most of the pre-Mahavira teachings - called '*Purvas*' - from the time of the twenty-third *Tirthankara*, Parshva, were lost by this period. This first wave of books is called, the "*Anga-Agama*" literature (*Anga* means Original or Main and *Agama* means sacred canon). Svetambaras claim its contents to be the authentic teaching of 'Lord Mahavira.' The Digambaras however, did not accept these as Mahavira's authentic words. Nevertheless, all agree that Mahavira's essential message, if not actual words, have now been preserved.

The Main Canon

Unlike the Bible or Qur'an, Jain sacred literature consists of many volumes. The Svetambara community accepts 45 volumes as Agama, including 11 volumes of the main canon (Volume 12 was a collection of 14 books of *Purva* but is lost) and 34 subsidiary canon texts. The Digambaras maintain that all of Mahavira's authentic work is lost and accept only two later works (2nd century CE) as their canon.

At the time of Mahavira, Ardhamaghadhi was the language of the masses in the region of the Ganga Plain, whereas the lingua franca of the contemporary scholars (mostly Brahmins) was Sanskrit. Mahavira preached in Ardhamaghadhi - the people's language. Therefore, later the *Anga-Agamas* were also written in the same language. Much of the information on Jain metaphysics, epistemology, etc. given in earlier chapters can be traced back to these volumes. These 12 volumes can be roughly classified into 4 groups based on their content. For example, volumes 1, 7 and 10 are on Rational Conduct (*śamyak-charitra*). Volume 2 compares Jain world-view with those of other contemporary philosophies. Rational worldview and Rational Knowledge (*śamyak-darsana* and *śamyak-jnana*) are discussed in volumes 3, 4 and 5. Volumes 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 are narratives either to explain the philosophy or to induce followers to continue making progress on the path to moksha. Volume 12 is lost, but all others except volumes 3 and 4 have now been translated into either German or English, and all have been translated in Gujarati.

A brief introduction of each volume is given below. Sanskrit names of the original Ardhamaghadhi titles are given in the parenthesis.

Vol. 1 Aayaramg Suttam (Acharanga Sutra)

By describing Mahavira's ascetic life, this volume serves as a model of behavior or conduct for Jain monks and nuns. It contains the minutest details of the three core principles of Jain conduct (Triple 'A's).

Volume 2 Suyagadamg Suttam (Sutrakrtanga Sutra)

This volume is essentially a debate over Jain philosophical ideas in contrast to other contemporary worldviews such as fatalism, *Sankhya* externalism, agnosticism, etc. All other philosophies, being one-sided, are considered inadequate or incomplete and judged inferior by the *anekantavada* standards of Jain philosophy.

Vol. 3 Thanamg Suttam (Sthananga Sutra)

This volume is like a learning manual on Jain principles and worldview for the newly ordained monks and nuns.

Vol. 4 Samavayamg Suttam (Samanvayanga Sutra)

Volumes 3 and 4 are written in a bulleted/tabular form. Its main purpose, it appears,

is to help learners to memorize the details of Jain principles. Chronologically these volumes may be the last ones because they describe the detailed contents of all the 12 volumes.

Vol. 5 Viyah Pannati Suttam (Vyakhya Prajnapti Sutra, Bhagavati Sutra)

This volume is the largest of all the *Anga-Agamas*. The format used in this volume is that of questions, asked by the chief disciple Indrabhuti Gautama, and the answers given by Mahavira. Over 36,000 questions and answers explain the minutest details and subtleties of topics such as: soul, matter, *karma*, *syadvada*, and others. These detailed discussions are so valuable in understanding Jainism that this volume is also called 'Bhagavati the Most Revered One'.

Vol. 6 Nayadhammakahao Suttam (Jnatra Dharma Kathanga Sutra)

This is a volume of narratives. Mahavira extensively used examples and stories to illustrate his point during his sermons. The importance of this style of telling stories to explain a subtle point can be readily appreciated from the fact that the Jain monks use it even today. Stories like "The Elephant and the Seven Blind Persons" (to illustrate *anekantavada*), or "The Man in the Well" (to illustrate the importance of seeking permanence) come from this repertoire.

Vol. 7 Uvasagdasao Suttam (Upasaka-das-anga Sutra)

Whereas the first volume sets a code of conduct for the monks by describing Mahavira's ascetic life, this volume does the same thing for the laity. Stories of the conduct of ten of Mahavira's lay followers, their trials and tribulations, and their steadfastness are given.

Vol. 8 Anatagaddasao Suttam (Antahkrida-das-anga Sutra)

This volume is essentially a storybook for the *sravaka* and *sravikas*. Jain literature is rich in stories and narratives used for the purpose of explaining the intricacies of Jain concepts to lay persons. Jain ascetics even today use many of the stories from this volume in their public sermons.

Vol. 9 Anuttarov Vaiya Dasao (Anuttaropa-patika-Dasanga Sutra)

These two (8 and 9) volumes are designed to induce the laypersons to make progress through all the vows and *pratimas*, to become monks, and achieve the goal of liberation. To this end, these two volumes narrate stories about how ten venerable monks, from the time of Nemi (the twenty-second *Tirthankara*), achieved total liberation and how ten other monks did not achieve their goal but nevertheless attained rebirth in the top-most heaven.

Vol. 10 Panha Vagarana Suttam (Prasna Vyakarana Sutra)

Whereas a layperson takes twelve minor vows (*anuvratas*) to begin his/her journey on the path to liberation, initiation into monkhood requires taking five major vows

(*mahavratas*). This volume discusses these major vows, lays down a code of conduct for the ascetics, and warns the followers of the five worst sins.

Vol. 11 Vivagsuyam Suttam (Vipaka Sutra)

This is a narrative on the Jain Theory of *karma*. It contains stories describing how, eventually, one reaps the good or bad rewards of his/her *karma*. By describing how some people received benefits of their *karma* and some are paying dearly in this life for their past bad *karma*, this volume serves as a powerful deterrent to wrong doings.

Vol. 12 Ditthivaya Suttam (Drstivada Sutra)

Although this volume is supposed to be totally lost, enough references to it exist in a subsidiary canon called *Prajnapana* to give us an idea of its contents. It was supposed to be divided into five parts and part 3 was believed to consist of 14 'Purvas' containing information and stories about the period before Mahavira.

Digambara tradition believes that part of this has survived and was written down by Bhutabali, in the 2nd century CE, in a work known as *Satkehand-agama*. Another work based on the same information was soon composed by Gunabhadra and is called *Kashaya Prabhrta*. Digambaras, while respecting all the literature, accept only these last two works, and *Prabharatatraya* (three works by Kundkunda mentioned above) as valid scriptures.

The Subsidiary Canon

Svetambaras generally accept the main canon, the *Anga-Agama*, as Mahavira's authentic teachings compiled by his direct disciples. Later, other monks wrote many supplements to *Anga-Agama* to provide detailed explanations. These books too are considered sacred or 'Agama' but are given subsidiary - *Anga-bahya* (outside the main group) status. There are 34 *Anga-bahya agama* texts, classified as:

Upanga (12 texts.) These texts are written for the laypersons to understand important Jain concepts. For example, The *Uvavaiya (Aupapatika)* emphasizes the importance of adherence to vows. The *Raya Pasenaijja (Rajaprasniya)* compares Jain ideas about soul with those of other schools in the form of a dialogue between Jain and non-Jain proponents. Whereas non-Jain schools maintain that the soul, being non-material, is limitless and all pervasive, Jains believe it to be, though non-material, confined to the shape and size of the body when it is in its bonded state. The *Jivajivabbigama* presents Jain ontology in a dialogue form. *Pannavana (Prajnapana)*, besides giving a summary of the contents of the 14 lost *Purvas*, discusses various aspects of bonded soul. Jain cosmology is discussed in the *Suya-pannatti (Surya-prajnapati)*, *Cand-pannatti (Chadra-prajnapati)*, and *Jambudvipa-pannatti (Jambudvipa-prajnapati)*. Furthermore, the *Jambudvipa-panatti* also explains the Jain concept of time cycle and how Rikhava started civilization. The Jain claim of Hindu icons Krshna

and Balarama being related to Neminaṭh - the 22nd *Tīrthankara* - is based on the accounts given in *Vanbidasao* (*Vrsnidasha*).

Chedsutra (6 texts). These are the texts on Jain monastic laws describing the discipline, conduct, and behavior of monks and nuns and rules for the atonement of their mistakes. The six texts are: *Ayaradasao* (*Achardasab*), *Bihakappa* (*Brhatkalpa*), *Vavahara* (*Vyavahara*), *Nisiha* (*Nisitha*), *Mahanisiha* (*Mahanisitha*), and *Jiyakappa* (*Jitakalpa*).

Mulasutra (4 texts). These texts are the required reading for all ascetics in the earlier stages of their monastic life. They describe the strict conditions under which the monks and nuns are to live. The four texts are: the *Dasaveyaliya* (*Dasavaikalika*), *Uttarajjayana* (*Uttaradhyayana*), *Avassaya* (*Avasyaka*), and *Pimdaniijutti* (*Pindniryukti*). These texts describe, in minute details, permitted and restricted activities for ascetics under various conditions in daily living. The *Uttarajjayana* is believed to be the last thirty-six lectures of Mahavira.

Prakirnasutra (10 texts). These ten short texts describe the rituals for holy death (*santhara*). Topics include taking refuge, renunciation by the sick, preparing the deathbed, renouncing food, retaining consciousness at the moment of death, praise of Mahavira and other Jinas, etc.

Culikasutra (2 texts). The *Namdi-sutta* (*Nandi-sutra*) explains five types of knowledge - *mati*, *sruti*, *avadhi*, *manhaparyaya*, and *kevala-jnana*. It also gives an elaborate description of *Tīrthankaras* and *Ganadharas*. The other text - *Anuogaddaraim* (*Anuyogadvara-sutra*) contains section-by-section summaries of the topics discussed in most of the other canonical texts.

Expositions (*Anuyoga*)

Jain literature is equally rich in post-canonical compositions by monk-scholars. Several topics ranging from biographies of Jinas, hymns in praise of Jinas, logical and scientific work exploring not only the spiritual and philosophical topics but the material universe as well, and ascetic discipline are covered in this literature over the past 2,000 years. Given below is a small sample of works by well-known monk-scholars. Traditionally, Jain temples and *mathas* (religious places administered by *bhattacharyas*) have preserved a large number of manuscripts in their basement libraries called '*Bhandars*'.

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Divakara, Siddhasena (5th Century)	<i>Nyayavatara</i> <i>Sanmatitarka</i>	Upadhye A. N., Jaina Sahitya Vikas Mandala, Bombay 1971 Sanghvi, Sukhlalji and Doshi, Bechardasji, Jaina Mahavira Jain Vidyalaya, 1939
Gunabhadra (9th Century)	<i>Uttarapurana</i>	Pannalal Jain Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publications, Varanasi 1954
Haribhadra (8th Century)	<i>Sambodhaprakarana</i> <i>Saddarsana -</i> <i>Samucchaya</i> <i>Yogabindu</i> <i>Yoga-dristi-</i> <i>samucchaya</i> <i>Yogasataka</i>	Jaina Grantha Prakashak Sabha, Ahmedabad 1915 Jain M. K., Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publications 1969 Dixit K. K., L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad 1968
Hemchandra (12th Century)	<i>Trisastisalaka</i> <i>-purushacharitra</i> <i>Yogasastra</i> <i>Pramanmimasa</i> <i>Anyayogavyava-</i> <i>cchedika</i> <i>Parisistaparva</i> <i>Sabdanusasana</i>	1. Helen M. Johnson, Lives of Sixty-three Illustrious Persons, (6 volumes), Oriental Institute, Vadodara, 1962 2. Charanvijaya Muni (ed.), Jain Atmananda Sabha, Bhavnagar, 1933. Bharil, Shobhachandra, Delhi, 1963 1. Mukarjee, Satkari and Tatia, Nathmal, Tara Publications, Varanasi 1970 2. Sanghvi, Sukhlalji, Singhi Jaina Series, Calcutta 1939 1. Thomas F. W., The Flower Spray of the Quodammodo Doctrine, Akademie-Verlag, 1960 2. Jain J. C., Rajchandra Jaina Sastramala, Agas 1970 Jacobi, H., Bibliotheca Indica no. 96, Calcutta, 1932 Himamsu Vijay Muni, Ahmedabad 1934
Jinasena (8th Century)	<i>Adipurana</i> <i>Harivanshapurana</i>	Pannalal Jain, Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publications, Varanasi 1963, 1965 (2 volumes) Pannalal Jain, Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publications, Varanasi

Kundakunda (2nd Century)	<i>Niyamsara</i> <i>Pravachansara</i> <i>Samayasara</i>	Maganlal Jain, Digambara Jain Svadhyaya Mandir, Sonagadh, 1965 Upadhye A. N., Rajchandra Jain Sastramala, Agas, 1934 Chakravarti, A., Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publications, Varanasi, 1925, Reissued in 1971 Bhore, D. G., Mahavira Jnanopasana Samiti, Karanja, 1968
Somadeva (10th Century)	<i>Nitivakyaamrita</i> <i>Yasatilaka-campu</i>	Malaviya, R. Chowkhambha Vidyabhavan, 1972 Shivadatta Mahamahopadhyaya, Kavyamala no. 70, Bombay 1901-1903
Umasvati (2nd Century)	<i>Tattvartha-sutra</i>	Tatia, Nathmal, That Which Is, Harper Collins Publishers, The Sacred Literature Series, San Francisco 1994 Siddhantsastri, Phoolchand, Varni Granthmala, Varanasi 1949 Sanghvi, Sukhlalji, Jaina Samskriti Samsodhana Mandala, Varanasi, 1952 (2nd edition) Vohora, Sunanda, <i>Tattvamimasa</i> , (Gujarati)
Yasovijaya (17th Century)	<i>Jaintarkabbasha</i> <i>Jnanabindu</i> <i>Nyayaloka</i>	Bhargava, D. Motilal Banarasidas 1973

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 MB: **Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi**

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JAINISM, AND THE NEW SPIRITUALITY

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Glossary of Terms Used

<i>Acharya</i>	Leader of an ascetic order	<i>Dravya Himsa</i>	Physical/verbal violence
<i>Adharma</i>	Medium of stability or rest	<i>Dravya</i>	The six 'Real Elements'
<i>Agama</i>	Sacred canon, scriptures, Mahavira's words	<i>Ekendriya</i>	One-sensed organism
<i>Abimsa</i>	Doctrine of non-hurting, non-killing	<i>Gracba</i>	Ascetic lineage
<i>Ajira</i>	Non-living	<i>Canadbara</i>	Mahavira's eleven direct disciples
<i>Akasa</i>	Universe, space	<i>Chee-boli</i>	A fund-raising technique for the temples
<i>Aloka-akasa</i>	Space that is not inhabited	<i>Cuna</i>	Quality, attribute,
<i>Anekantarada</i>	Doctrine of Multiple viewpoints	<i>Cunasthana</i>	Stage of spiritual progress
<i>Anendriya</i>	Non-sensuous	<i>Indriya</i>	Senses
<i>Anga</i>	Original, main	<i>Jina</i>	One who has achieved total victory over the self
<i>Anitya</i>	Non-eternal, impermanent, transitory	<i>Jiva</i>	Soul, consciousness energy and bliss
<i>Am</i>	Indivisible, sub-atomic particle	<i>Jnana</i>	Knowledge
<i>Aparigraha</i>	Doctrine of Limiting possessions	<i>Kala</i>	Time
<i>Arahant</i>	Omniscient ones	<i>Karman-vargana</i>	Karma-forming
<i>Arabat</i>	Omniscient ones	<i>Kasaya</i>	Passions
<i>Asrava</i>	Inflow of <i>karmic</i> matter	<i>Kayotsarga</i>	Standing posture for meditation, relaxation
<i>Avadhi</i>	Clairvoyant knowledge	<i>Kerali</i>	One who has attained omniscience
<i>Anurniya</i>	Obstructing	<i>Kuma-yachana</i>	Asking for forgiveness
<i>Avriti</i>	Non-restraint	<i>Loka-akasa</i>	Space inhabited by the Existents
<i>Anasarpini</i>	Declining period of cyclical time	<i>Mula-sutra</i>	A group of texts belonging to the subsidiary canon
<i>Ayariya</i>	Head of the religious order of monks or nuns	<i>Muni</i>	An ascetic
<i>Bandha</i>	Bondage of soul with <i>karmic</i> matter	<i>Namo</i>	Reverent salutation
<i>Bhattaraka</i>	An administrator-cleric	<i>Namokara</i>	A holy litany of reverent salutation
<i>Bhava</i>	Mental, psychological, feeling	<i>Naraki</i>	Hellish beings
<i>Bhava Himsa</i>	Intentional violence	<i>Naratattva</i>	Nine operating principles of the universe
<i>Bhava Puja</i>	Mental worship, psychical worship	<i>Naya</i>	Logical viewpoint, logical standpoint
<i>Charitra</i>	Conduct, behavior, lifestyle	<i>Nirjara</i>	Dissociation or shedding of <i>karmic</i> matter
<i>Chedasutra</i>	Scriptures prescribing ascetic behavior	<i>Nirvana</i>	Death of holy person, reaching ecstasy
<i>Chonrihar</i>	Eating before sunset	<i>Nischaya Himsa</i>	Definitive violence
<i>Dana</i>	Donation	<i>Nitya</i>	Eternal, permanent, constant
<i>Darsana</i>	Intuition, worldview, viewing with reverential feelings	<i>Panchendriya</i>	Five-sensed organisms
<i>Deva</i>	Heavenly beings	<i>Papa</i>	Inauspicious or unwholesome bondage
<i>Dharma</i>	Medium of motion		

<i>Paryaya</i>	Mode, modification, format	<i>Terapanti</i>	A sub-sect in Digambara and Svetambara sects
<i>Pramada</i>	Carelessness, non-vigilance	<i>Tirthankara</i>	Liberated one who shows path to liberation
<i>Pramana</i>	Instrument of valid cognition,	<i>Tiryancha</i>	Animals and plants
<i>Pratikramana</i>	Confession	<i>Unodarika</i>	Light eating, Semi-fasting
<i>Pratima</i>	Steps for spiritual progress for laypersons	<i>Upanga</i>	A group of texts in subsidiary canon
<i>Padgala</i>	Matter	<i>Upavasa</i>	Fasting for 36 hours or more
<i>Puja</i>	Worship	<i>Urajibaya</i>	Those monks who teach scriptures
<i>Pujari</i>	Usually a caretaker of idols in a temple	<i>Vrata</i>	Vows
<i>Punya</i>	Auspicious or wholesome bondage	<i>Vjarabara</i>	Pragmatic
<i>Porra</i>	An early canon text (now lost)	<i>Yapaniya</i>	An extinct sub-sect trying to unite Digambara and Svetambara sects
<i>Ratnatraya</i>	Three jewels, threefold path		
<i>Sahu</i>	Monk, nun, ascetic		
<i>Sakabara</i>	Vegetarianism		
<i>Saman</i>	A quasi ascetic male follower of Acharya Tulsi		
<i>Samani</i>	A quasi ascetic female follower of Acharya Tulsi		
<i>Samayika</i>	Equanimous meditation		
<i>Samsara</i>	Cycle of transmigration, birth and death		
<i>Samvara</i>	The stoppage of <i>karmic</i> influx		
<i>Samyak</i>	Rational, logical, correct, right		
<i>Sapta-bhagi</i>	Seven-fold predication		
<i>Siddhu</i>	One who has achieved omniscience		
<i>Sravaka</i>	A lay man		
<i>Sravika</i>	A lay woman		
<i>Sruti</i>	Articulate		
<i>Sthanak</i>	Lodging hall for Shrankvasi ascetics		
<i>Sthanakvasi</i>	A Svetambara sub-sect		
<i>Sthula Himsa</i>	Major violence		
<i>Sukshma Himsa</i>	Minor violence		
<i>Suri</i>	A prominent acharya		
<i>Sutra</i>	Short mnemonic rule, scriptural text		
<i>Syad</i>	In a certain sense or viewpoint		
<i>Syadvada</i>	Doctrine of qualified assertions		
<i>Syat</i>	Same as Syad, also Relatively		



Courtesy: Jain Aradhana Kendra, Koba, Gandhinagar, India



Born in India into a Jain family, Vastupal Parikh migrated to Canada and obtained his Doctorate in Chemistry at Queen's University, Kingston. As a professor and scientist in Canada, he wrote several chemistry texts and earned a reputation as an author who could explain the most complex topics in a simple and easily understandable style.

Dr. Parikh's interest in the modern philosophy of science and the ancient philosophy of religions prompted him to explore various religious systems. He found an interesting blend of the two philosophies in Jain literature, which he later studied, in-depth for over 25 years. The present project is an outcome of such study where Dr. Parikh examines Jain principles and practices through the critical eyes of a scientist. Such critical analysis of an ancient philosophy together with Dr. Parikh's skill in lucid writing, and his perception of the emerging concepts of spirituality makes this a highly readable and interesting book.

Now retired, Dr. Parikh lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife Nalini.

The contemporary world is beset with increasing fundamentalism, terrorism, violence, wars, and environmental degradation. The universality of Jainism's message of non-violence (*ahimsa*), respect for diverse viewpoints (*anekantvada*), and minimizing material wants and possessions (*aparigraha*) has, therefore, struck a chord with the modern thinker. Such timely message is now encouraging schools, colleges, and universities to offer educational programs on Jainism. The enthusiastic response to the first edition has established this book as a valuable text in Jainism.

Jainism and the New Spirituality offers a much needed balance between the devoted emotionalism and inscrutable academic obscurantism in religious literature. It presents the basic, sometimes intricate, teachings of Jainism with a sure foundation of familiarity, and the practical applications of Jain principles in our modern living. It reconciles Jainism with current issues and the emerging "New Spirituality", which is expressing itself in the form of the widespread attempts to reassert human rights, struggle for global peace, recognition of the interdependence of human and the environment, social justice, and achieving personal fulfillment. I hope that its study will spark philosophical enquiry and bring focus on the affairs of our endangered world.

Readers Reviews

- Professor Parikh's lucidity, clarity, and simplicity of language connect issues of ecology and global interdependence with logic and reasoning as reflected in Jain Dharma. Dr. Parikh puts Jain Dharma among the world religions of this 21st century with its scientific and spiritual approaches for solutions.
Gurudev Chitrabhanu
- I was astounded when I started reading this book and was unable to put it down until finished. Author needs to be congratulated for this wonderful and concise book on Jainism for both Jains and non-Jains and needs to be commended for bringing the essence of new spirituality for the rest of the world. Planet earth will be a better place for all her inhabitants if we were to follow the suggested path.
Dr. Chandrakant P. Shah, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto
- A sumptuous, 224 page exploration of an ancient and relatively little known faith that is surprisingly relevant for the 21st century.
Ron Csillag, Toronto Star
- It is written in a scholarly style, well suited for the university students but valuable to anyone with an enquiring mind.
Aiden Rankin, Jain Spirit
- "most books have not succeeded in bringing to the subject the high degree of readability, as also the extraordinarily attractive and reader friendly structure, that you have achieved.
Abhay Firodia, Chairman, Bajaj Tempo, India
- While comparing this publication with two recent ones, Dr. Parikh's book comes in handy for young Jains who need a simple book to understand their faith.
Ajit Jain, India Abroad

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