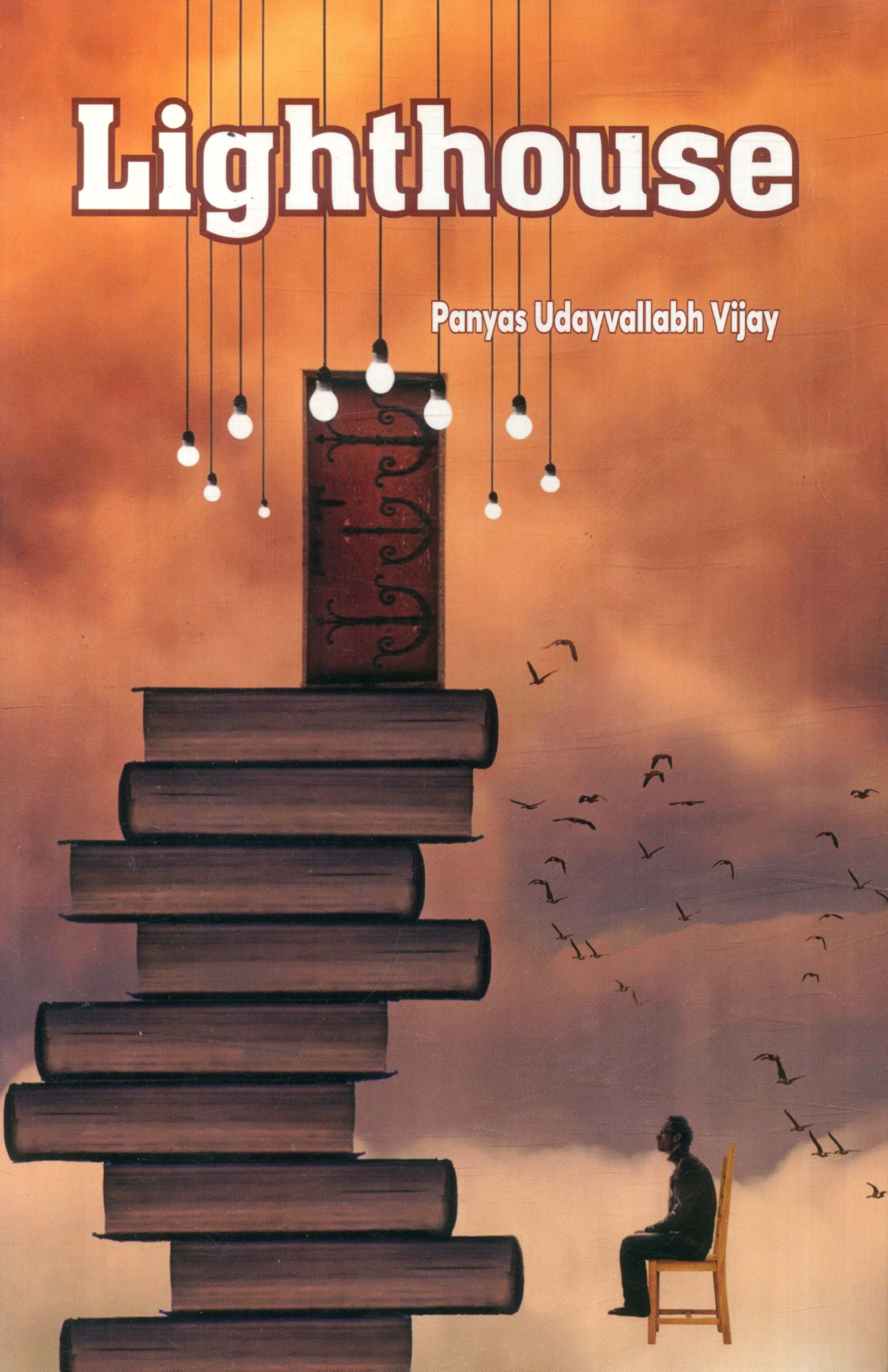


Lighthouse

Panyas Udayvallabh Vijay






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FOREWORD

Shree Sthanang Sutra – one of the Jain agams, refers to six types of questions. One of them is a question which is asked only to prove the other person wrong. Such questions do not arise out of curiosity; they are asked only to ridicule the other person.

In today's world we come across several questions. These questions arise from our own circle, from our friends, from our children or even from within. Sometimes we regret our inability to give a proper reply, regret that we could not satisfy the questioner and regret that somebody ridiculed our religion and we could not say anything about it!

These days many questions are raised by intellectuals. If such questions have arisen out of curiosity, then they would possibly get satisfactory answers in following pages. Barring a few, whose only object is to ridicule and dent the belief system, the rest of the intellectuals will definitely feel satisfied. If one does not take head on the persons who ridicule the belief, religion and dedication, it would be an offence.

शस्त्रे ऽ पि शास्त्रे ऽ पि कृतश्रमो ऽ स्तु
भवत्वशेषासु कलासु विज्ञः
विज्ञान भेदांश्च विदां करोतु
काव्यप्रबन्धं य परं तनोतु ।
चेत्कार्यकाले समुपस्थितानां
प्रावादुकानां कृतमत्सराणां
गर्वं न खर्वं क्षमते विधातुं
तदा स विज्ञो ऽ पि जडत्वमेति ॥
(पू. देव भद्र सूरिकृत कहारयणकोस)

If a scholar, who has scaled the peaks in Shastras, poetry and even armory is unable to demolish the false pride of a jealous person there is no difference between scholarliness and foolishness.

Mahopadhyay Shri Yashovijayji Maharaj Saheb has said about this position in a beautiful way in his treatise "*Adhyatmasar*".

आज्ञया ऽऽ गमिकार्थानाम् यौक्तिकानां च युक्तिः ।
न स्थाने योजकत्वं चेत्, न तदा ज्ञानगर्भता ॥

The elements which are to be accepted with true belief must be accepted with such belief. However, if elements which are to be accepted based on logic are not properly explained, then it is the fault of the person responsible for such explanation (it is another thing that not all elements need logical explanation).

The principles of our religions, our sacred *paramparas*, their observance, the virtues of donation, dedication and

observance of *ahimsa* which have been flowing in the Society for centuries have become a subject matter of controversial debates and questions for some time now. In these circumstances the social media turns itself into a virtual battle field. Most of the posts which lack understanding or knowledge do the rounds on social media and the naive get confused, the believers feel willowed and some people even have feeling of guilt and shame.

The questions raised by intellectuals ridiculing *Dharma Shasana* sometimes await befitting replies. The modern education is famous for creating intellectuals who lack belief (*shraddha*). Everybody would agree that "Jains should be educated". However, a very few would appreciate that the educated Jains should remain 'Jains'. This book is an answer to questions raised by such persons and hence the answers are not based on mere reference to the shastras but also with logical contents. It is also felt that sometimes the best way to answer intellectuals whose only aim is controversial debates, is to contemptuously neglect them.

Instead of giving short and to the point answers, I have attempted to give detailed answers so that all things connected with that subject get clarified.

I will feel happy if the book gives satisfactory explanation to the reader, strengthens the lamp of *shraddha*, strengthens the commitment to *shasana*, infuses pride for being born in

this *shasan* and religion and also strengthens the ability and convincing power of the readers to in turn convince others.

There may be several other questions besides those which are discussed here. However, the main questions are selected and attempt is made to give answers to them.

These days it has become highly fashionable to ridicule *dharma* and *sanskriti*. In such a situation the thoughts expressed herein should become a light house to guide on the right path. If the attempt falls short of perfection I seek MICHHAMIDUKKADAM.

I am indebted to *Param Pujya Acharya Shree Vijay Mukti Vallabh Surishwarji Maharaj Saheb* and my younger brother *Panyas Shri Hriday Vallabh Vijayji* who have helped me in my effort. I wish repeated reading of the book will strengthen the regards for Jin Shasan.

Uday Vallabh Vijay

17th Nov. 2015

Byculla, Mumbai.

DEDICATION

**Dedicated to Parampujya Acharyadev
Shri Vijay Mukti Vallabh Surishwarji Maharaj Saheb**

- Whose pen is blessed with the boon that literature of the highest quality will flow from it endlessly;
- Whose intellect is blessed with exponential flourish;
- Who is a Teerth of sanyam and who is the blessed son of Devi Saraswati;
- Who has been showering his blessings on me for the past three decades.

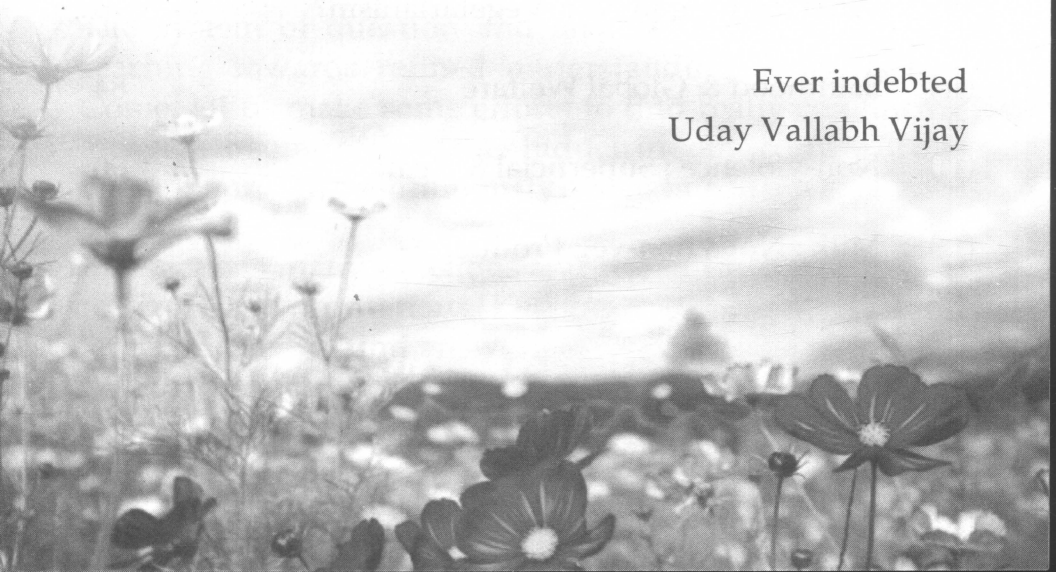
On the occasion of

Near completion of his 21 days Suri mantra aradhana.

With

My absolute indebtedness and overflowing joy

**Ever indebted
Uday Vallabh Vijay**



INDEX

	QUERY CONTENT	PAGE
①	Does God Suit in Temples?	02
②	What's the Social output of a Temple?	10
③	What's the use of offerings to God?	26
④	What's the logic behind Idol Worship?	36
⑤	Valuation & Evalution through Money	42
⑥	Why can't the temple money be utilised for Humanity?	50
⑦	The Propagation of Non-violence & Tolerance	58
⑧	Is religion opposed to enjoyment?	66
⑨	What's wrong in Non-Vegetarianism?	76
⑩	Sainthood & Global Welfare	84
⑪	Non-violence : Superficial & Real	90
⑫	Milk : Not a non-veg Product	94

□ PLATFORM

The *tripadi* which was enunciated by the Lord himself is the password or key to our *shrut gnan*. *Tripadi* is the base of entire *dwadashangi* (a group of twelve shastras originally created by the *gandharas* of the Lord. The Lord gave *tripadi* to the *gandharas* in response to their question, "O' Lord, what is *tatva*?". In reply, the mankind was blessed with undescrivable wisdom.

Jain *Shasana* has a system of fivefold *swadhyay* (learning by one's ownself). One of them is *pruchhana swadhyay* i.e. wisdom gained as a result of asking questions. In the fifth *Aagam sutra* called *Shree Bhagwatiji*, a lot of wisdom has flourished in response to the questions asked by one of the *ganadhar* Shri Gautam Swamiji to Lord Mahavira. *Tapagachhiya Acharya Bhagwant Shri Vijay Heer Surishwarji* and *Parampujya Shri Vijaysen Surishwarji* in their treatise titled "**Heer Prashna**" and "**Sen Prashna**" respectively have replied to several queries put to them by their disciples, supporting their answers with quotes from shastras.

The system of question and answer is very helpful in reaching towards refined understanding of the issues. Come, let us make some efforts to find really convincing answers to some of the issues hidden in some corners of our heart or mind and continuously resonating in our ears.

Intellect has many functions and one of the function is to realize its own limitations ! Keeping that limitation in mind let us proceed to find answers posed by intellect with the help of intellect so that we move towards *sadbuddhi*.

1

India is a country of temples

*Even today crores of rupees are wasted after
construction of temples.*

The idea is not to oppose anyone's belief or faith

However, when God resides within us,

For Him why this colossal waste ?

*God, who abandoned His kingdom and His immense
wealth, does not need pompous, artistic or grand
temples to place his deity inside.*

This is utter mismatch.

*When a deity is consecrated in a temple which
resembles a palace, it appears as though He who has
abandoned his palace is forced again to stay in a
palace.*

God appears better clad in simplicity.

How would Gandhiji look in branded outfits ?

Does the Lord of simplicity need palatial temples ?

Birds build nests.

Rats build rat holes.

A lion finds its own den.

Ants have their own colonies.

Monkeys swing on tree branches.

Is there anyone who doesn't worry about its abode?

Is there anyone who doesn't make arrangements for its abode?

All living beings do this.

However, along with his / her own residence, human beings alone build the house of God.

Someone builds a temple, someone builds a mosque.

Someone builds a church and someone builds Gurudwara.

Someone builds an Agiary and someone erects a haveli.

Someone builds a temple and someone builds a religious place like Upashraya etc.

It is common amongst the followers of all religions to build a temple. There are several reasons behind this tradition.

To take care of one's health needs, human beings have created health clubs and gymnasiums. To take care of one's financial needs, human beings have created a small table space to large commercial complexes. For social needs humans have created small schools to large universities, small clinics to gigantic hospitals. Then there are sports complexes and large stadiums and grounds.

Human race means a permanent address of gigantic needs !

Some needs are physical, some are social, some are financial and some others are psychological. Deep within, there are spiritual needs too.

In response to various needs and as an answer to such needs, humans have always been creating something or the other. Similarly, to meet the spiritual needs and fulfill desires in that field, he creates religious places. Thus, the tradition of construction of temples is always with a purpose and reflects human feelings.

- ❖ **A temple means God's place.**
- ❖ **A temple is the place where God is believed to have His abode.**
- ❖ **A temple means a place to meet God.**
- ❖ **A temple means a place to assimilate oneself with God.**
- ❖ **A temple means a place where one absorbs God.**

Some arrangement is necessary for the descending of an element and its reception. A radio receives sound waves and relays it further. The architecture and vastu of a temple is closely connected with sound. The dome created in the middle of the temple structure plays an important part. The architecture of a temple is totally different from the architecture of other structures. The basic difference is the reflection of human feelings. A human being may be living in any area or any period, he always contains the seed of an element which is Godly – by whatever name called.

Construction of a temple is not an ordinary erection of a structure. The labourers involved in construction of high

rise towers are of no use in construction of a temple. Temple construction needs a differently skilled labourers. The experts of this field are different from other experts. When a temple weighing thousands of tons is constructed, it does not contain even a gram of iron. (wow!)

The architecture of a temple gives shape to several ideas of spiritual gain and the whole construction is guided by this concept. A tower may be many times taller than a temple. However, it is difficult to surpass a temple from artistic angle.

This point focuses on the difference between simple construction and artistic architecture. There is difference between tailoring (stitching) and designing an outfit. Dress designers describe their vocation as an art form and even claim to be in exempted category for 100 per cent tax deduction ! Possibly, those who make their living out of sculpturing have not struck this idea ! In any case, art is art.

When any species of birds or animals becomes endangered specie, government makes all the efforts to preserve such rare specie. Similarly, if an art form is found to be nearing extinction, the human society spends crores to save it from extinction. Construction of a temple is a unique art. This art has been kept alive by the tradition of construction of temples or *jeernoddhar* (renovation) of temples. Preservation of art by itself is a huge benefit. Thus, the intellectuals will appreciate that the money spent on construction of temples is not a waste.

When a tall tower is being constructed and its 32nd slab is being cast, latest machinery do that job. The construction material is carried to the 32nd floor with the help of machinery. As against this, if someone would view a long

series of temples on the *Shatrunjay* hillock at Palitana, one will wonder how lakhs of tons of material was ferried to the construction sites when even stairs were not there on the hillock. It was human labour which carried the stones at hill tops.

It may be called a unique feat for India. The stones which are generally used in construction of temples are easily available in India. In other parts of the world such stones are difficult to find. Whether it is Makrana marble or stones from Dhrangadhra or Dholpur, whether it is the pink stone from Jaipur or Ambaji or the yellow stone of Jesalmer. All these are easily available in India. Engraving is not possible on Italian marble or granite and hence they are not as useful in temple construction.

God has endowed this country of temples with generous availability of appropriate temple construction material. Temple construction is not merely a sculpture in stone. It is an artistic expression of faith towards God which resides in human heart. Temple is faith and belief (*shraddha*) personified. Temple is an artistic document of spirituality and dedication to God, which is deeply engraved in human heart. A temple is personification of one's love for God. A temple structure becomes like a live object due to dedication of the followers of God.

Some people who try to put the expenses of temple construction to the test of reasonableness question – “does God need such an artistic abode?” God may not need such an artistic abode, but it is an expression of the feelings of love of those who worship the God.

The industry of frenzy greeting cards, hand bands and gift items to express human feelings is many times more

monetarily, compared to the amount spent on construction of temples. Feelings can be expressed by spoken words also. Still if such costly presentation in the form of cards etc. of human feelings is not questioned, then construction of temples should also be considered in the same way as a way of expression of *Bhakti*.

If love towards a person or a thing can be measured on the yardstick of money, then it is only fair that the construction of temple is evaluated on the yardstick of love. If you are comfortable with the idea of a wealthy industrialist presenting his wife, as a birthday gift, a luxury yacht costing crores, you should also be comfortable with the idea of construction of a temple.

Once, the occasion was the entry of the deity of *Bhagwan Adhiswhar* being brought from the village Una into Vallabhipur (the first foothill of Palitana) for being installed in a temple at Vallabhipur which was to take place after about 2/3 days. The deity was to be placed into the "Madhuvilla" bungalow of the famous philanthropist Shri Harshadbhai for those 2/3 days. For this purpose Harshadbhai got constructed a very artistic seat of marble on which the deity was placed. Someone told him – "a *shamiana* made of colourful cloth could have served the purpose ! After all, it was only a question of 48 hours". To this, Harshadbhai responded beautifully – **"you are guided by the thought – for how long this seat will be used – whereas I am guided by the thought – for whom this seat is made!"**

And there is substance in this thought. We often find that in a grand programme, a VIP guest may come only for five minutes. Still the decoration of the stage, sitting

arrangements etc. are made in a way befitting such VIP guest and it is considered reasonable also.

It is true that the Lord has abandoned His kingdom, His wealth. Still the temple where His deity is to be installed is built in the most artistic and pompous way because the followers of the Lord want to present their Lord in the best possible way. The spectacle frame of Mahatma Gandhi was very very simple and hardly cost anything. However, the photograph of Gandhiji has been kept in golden frame by lakhs of people across the world. True, Gandhiji will not appear presentable in branded outfits, still the quality of presentation of Gandhiji has to be branded. Presenting him can never be simple.

The stage decoration expenses on the occasion of marriages in wealthy families runs into lakhs of rupees. Lakhs are spent on devising novel ways of entry of the bride and bridegroom on to the stage. If a programme of about three hours could be so costly, then there is nothing wrong in spending huge sum for construction of temple, which is a onetime expense for all times to come and which is an expression of love, faith and dedication of the devotees. The Lord may have abandoned pompousness. However, the follower of the Lord wants to glorify the Lord and this finds expression in construction of a temple housing the Lord.

The Statue of Unity is proposed to be constructed in the memory of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at a cost of crores of rupees. This would be thousands of times more than what Sardar may have spent in his entire life time on his own self. Sardar Patel was also an epitome of simplicity. However, when the question is to present Sardar Patel before the

world, the presentation cannot be simple. It is a subject matter of the feelings of those who love and respect Sardar.

There is another question raised in this connection – “agreed, that construction of temple is a onetime expense. However, on some occasions which is a one day affair, thousands of rupees are spent on decoration which will be dismantled the next day. Is this justified?”

In answer it can be said that when intellect tries to override feelings, such questions arise. Every year on 15th August, lakhs of national flags are hoisted throughout the country. On the next day all these flags are taken down. Can it be said that lakhs of metres of cloth used for making these flags was a wastage ? If someone argues that these lakhs of metres of cloth could be used in making clothes for children going naked; this suggestion is nothing less than the utterances of an insane person.

About 250 crores of rupees (at present day cost) are spent in a single day parade on 26th January, every year. What will you say about this? Will you favour simplicity and cost cutting? The feeling of patriotism which rises on witnessing such parade justifies the amount spent on flags or on parade. All things cannot be evaluated on the weighing scale of material output. Fulfillment of feelings and sensitivity is also a form of 'output'.



②

*A Temple means constructing a religious place
consuming crores of rupees and millions of man hours*

*Can't the money spent after construction of a temple
be given some constructive direction?*

*If a school, a college, a university or a hospital is
constructed using these funds, they can serve
a great social cause.*

*No doubt, temple is a place to satisfy religious thirst
of the Society.*

*However, what is the social output of a temple ?
Not really any.*

*Today, when a large number of new temples are being
constructed, how can the amount spent
be called 'well spent'*

*Can it not be said that while we are progressing in the
field of belief, we are drawing a zero in the field of
social welfare.*

A notion is gaining ground that temple construction means wastage of money and labour.

The intellectual class today raises its objection against the tradition of construction of temples and asks whether projects of service to mankind would not be better? They ask – instead of wasting money in stones, if the same money is used towards wellbeing of humans, would it not be better. They also ask – when people face problems of poverty, unemployment and inflation; how can construction of temples be justified? What is the social output of temples?

Even if we were not to consider the gains on spiritual front or the feeling of inner contentment (which are non-material gains) and were to consider this issue from pure intellectual point of view, even then the tradition of construction of temples can be proved to be useful or profitable for the society in many ways.

Normally, in construction of any temple, the labour cost far exceeds the cost of material. Because of the artistic talent required in engraving and other aspects of temple construction, almost 75% of the total cost goes for payment of labour charges. This means that of the total amount spent only 25% goes for purchase of stones. Rest of the money goes to human beings.

25% money spent on material generates 75% as wages for labour and the main beneficiary are human beings and that too from the poor labour class. If you get a poor man's cycle repaired, it cannot be called cycle seva, it is manav seva only.

Servicing a cycle, is serving a human. Similarly constructing temples is creating employment opportunities.

Some years ago we were camping at the ancient Teerth of Pansar in the Mehsana District of Gujarat. The work of polishing and other repairs and maintenance work was going on in the temple. Trained artisans of Orissa were at work. These artisans who appeared to be absolutely illiterate were getting by way of wages (approximately Rs.9,000/- to 12,000/- per month), more than what a graduate employee would get these days. This was in 2008.

The then Chief Minister of Orissa Shri Biju Patnaik had declared special incentives for the people to get trained into the art of construction of temples.

The main person who designs and oversees the construction of a religious temple is called a sompura in Gujarat. The number of such sompuras and labourers specializing in temple construction work runs into lakhs. A handful of people who love temples have been instrumental in providing livelihood to lakhs of such labourers.

If we look at the issue in this manner, temple construction is an enterprise. It is difficult to find elsewhere a job creator like the temple construction activity. A whole community consisting of lakhs of persons remains well employed. In this situation, who would hesitate to call construction of temple a human or social cause?

There are several other things associated with temple construction. Sculpting the deity, making the eyes, tikka,

the process of lep - oop (polishing of the deity), the flag, the flag post, the material for performing pooja, the special pooja clothes, the pooja box, the purses (batwas) to keep the pooja material, the donation boxes kept in temples, trigada, the cloth fans, the pots for dhoop, aarti, the plate for keeping pooja article, bowls, water pots, huge bells hung in the temple, jhalar, vinjana, the silver moulds for aangi, the material used for aangi (decoration of the deity) etc. are associated with the activities in a temple. The production and business in all these things keep thousands of traders and upkaran Bhandars busy. A temple is backbone of all these economic activities. If a temple is there, there would be pooja. Now consider the people involved with activities of various poojans – the vidhikar, the person who makes mandlu, the musicians, the singers etc. – these also can be added to the list of beneficiaries. If a temple disappears, all these economic activities also would disappear.

Whenever a new temple is taken up for construction, a common question is flung across – what is the need for so many temples? Instead, would it not be better if a new school was constructed?

In reality, a reverse question is worth asking. Today, scores of schools have closed down. Dozens of management institutions stand locked. At many places there is shortage of students. At many places there is shortage of teachers and at many places the teaching staff is useless.

A person throwing the question – what is the need for so many temples, seems to be unaware of the fact that a temple does not remain deserted. In a contrary situation, there are

more than 1,25,00,000 flats lying unoccupied in India. And a paradox would make you laugh – according to the latest economic survey, there is shortage of 2,00,00,000 houses in India. Is this a magic of black money investment? Is the position due to unaffordable price of houses?

Be that as it may, however, despite crores of flats lying vacant, when the builders undertake new projects every day, why is it not asked – what is the need for so many houses? Is it not a crime to misutilise resources? Those who favour priority for construction of new schools and hospitals should find out the number of hospitals remaining vacant. When land at concessional rates are given to hospitals with condition of keeping free beds for the poor and one finds these free beds lying vacant, what does it indicate?

If this is the situation, is it justified to establish new schools and hospitals?

As against this situation, the temples are never empty. Barring a few places where there are temples dating back several centuries and from where people have migrated to other cities or areas, at all other temples hundreds of people visit them for darshan and pooja everyday.

Many constructions have taken place out of the physical needs of people.

Many constructions have taken place out of economic needs of people.

Temples are similarly constructed out of the religious /

spiritual needs of people.

Strengthening of belief and satisfaction of dedication to the Lord is the main fruit of temple construction.

Still, if the social output is the criteria, let us proceed on the same track. Ever since the foundation of a temple is laid, hundreds of people get their livelihood till the construction is complete. After the temple is constructed, several persons' livelihood such as those of poojari, security guard, flower vendors, servants doing cleaning and maintenance work in temple, guards, staff in the offices of temples etc. depend on the day-to-day activities in the temple.

According to a rough estimate, the number of employees in Jain temples across just Mumbai would exceed 8,000 (the suppliers of various material to the temples are not included in this count).

It is important to realize one significant issue. Even if we agree that in the present scenario, earning livelihood is not possible without education, no cause would appear greater than the cause of providing education. However, the situation is just the reverse. Today, the problem of unemployment is more prevalent amongst the educated rather than the uneducated. Higher the level of education, greater the instance of unemployment.

The following statistics would prove this fact. The intention is not to say that education is not necessary. However, these figures challenge the top priority thrust regarding education as means of livelihood.

Education and Unemployment			
Level	Cities	Villages	Total
Illiterate	1.3%	1.1%	2.4%
Primary	2.1%	1.6%	3.7%
Secondary	4.4%	5.8%	10.2%
Higher Secondary	7.3%	7.8%	15.1%
Graduates	8.2%	11.1%	19.3%
Post Graduates	7.7%	13.9%	21.6%

The above figures show that there is least unemployment amongst the illiterates and maximum unemployment amongst the most educated. One should not forget that thousands and lakhs of illiterate persons earn their livelihood based on their skilled labour rather than formal education.

When the whole world is in the clutch of uncontrolled unemployment, one cannot ignore the employment figures which are temple centric and run into lakhs.

An industrial empire comes into existence after snatching away the employment of thousands of persons dependent on cottage industries. The employment generation by such industrial empires is secondary, one must consider their contribution in pollution of air and water.

For the believers a religious temple is something which enlightens their heart. However, those who view everything intellectually, can also not deny the fact that temple, which provides livelihood to lakhs of people is a non-polluting industrial unit.

Another interesting thing about temple oriented employment is that it caters more to the illiterates. The reason is that this sector is not education based but skill based. It is difficult to find a parallel phenomenon in the modern world.

When the Prime Minister of India Shri Modi addressed thousands of Indians at Madison square in USA he stressed that his administration is paying more attention to create skilled labour. One should not forget that the tradition of temple construction is doing the same thing for the past several centuries.

When such extra-ordinary vision is opening up in connection with the activity of temple construction, it would be fair to include the activity of jeernoddhar of old temples. In fact, the activity of jeernoddhar extends to much wider area rather than construction of new temples. Naturally, its social output is also much greater.

According to one estimate, at any given point of time in Mumbai, lakhs of people are occupied in "temple group of companies". One estimate puts the figure of people employed in Derasar related activities in seven digits. If Jains, whose population is in eight digits are providing livelihood connected with temples to people whose number runs in seven digits, one cannot ignore the social output of this sector.

Let us understand this with a significant example.

Country : India
State : Gujarat
Region : Saurashtra
Village : Palitana
Teerth : Shatrunjay

Let us view the Teerth of Shree Aadinath Dada, whose temple is on a small hillock at Shatrunjay. Because this temple exists and because there are several temples in the vicinity and thousands of deities, they support thousands of people;

Four hundred *poojaris* in all temples put together.

Two hundred security staff

One thousand eight hundred doliwalas

More than one thousand two hundred labourers ferrying pilgrims.

Hundreds of families carrying various merchandise to the hilltop.

A huge staff taking care of water huts on the way to the shrine.

Several other persons such as those vending coconuts, flowers etc.; many employees up to the manager level - all these would add up to thousands. These are figures exclusively related to the hillock and the shrines.

Aadinath Dada on the Giriraj attracts lakhs of pilgrims every year. There are more than 150 *Dharamshalas*,

Bhojanshalas, Bhataghar and other conveniences on the Taleti Road. All these conveniences have staff totaling to thousands of people.

Palitana means land of devotion (*Bhakti*)

Palitana means land of *utsavas*

Palitana is host to *chaturmas, updhan tap, navvanu yatra.*

These anusthanas (holy events) keep happening throughout the year and several bands, charioteers, owners of elephants and horses, bullock carts etc. are always occupied. One could add those providing transportation to the pilgrims such as horse carriages, rickshaws etc. If we expand, those involved in transport and tour industry, rental cars, buses etc. can also be added to those who earn livelihood because of Palitana. Then there are street food vendors and other small traders lining both the sides of Taleti road. (Though from the angle of religion, eating at the road side joints is not permitted, we are including them as we are considering the issue only intellectually). All this can be attributed indirectly to the existence of Shree Aadinath Bhagwan at Palitana. If the hillock did not have the temple of Dada all these also would not be there!

Several places around Palitana such as the Shatrunjay Dam, the Teerth of Talaja, Ghoga, Hastgiri, Kadambgiri also attracts pilgrims. However, ninety percent of pilgrims visiting these places are those who have primarily come to Palitana. Thus, the direct employment at these Teerthas have the indirect holding of the adhipati of Shatrunjay. In

addition, pilgrim yatras in large groups sponsored by generous sangh patis, charipalit sangh etc. also keep coming to Palitana to pay obeisance to Bhagwan Aadinath. If the employment connected with these sanghas is taken into account one can easily say that the staff strength of 'Aadinath' group is far greater than the staff strength of Ambani group or Adani group.

We have only talked about **"Aadinath group"**! The **"Shree Neminath group"** of Girnar is also quite progressive these days. Similarly **"Shree Parshwanath Group"** of Sankheshwar is also widespread. In Eastern India there are teerthas of Shikharji and Pavapuri. In South India there are teerthas of Kulpakji etc. In Northern India there are teerthas of Hastinapur, Ayodhya etc. There are several such teerthas and the intellectuals cannot ignore the social output of all these teerthas.

If I may say something from the depth of my heart, I find that as against the obligations, compassion, mercy and overall support of God, the aforesaid discussion centering around economic issues appears to be something very trivial. The statistical analysis and arguments are absolutely nothing when compared with the strength which the devotees' hearts get, the fulfillment of life attained and the satisfaction achieved by the inner feelings. However, when the so-called intellectualism tries to show its unjustified crookedness, it becomes a duty to match it in the same language and same tenor.

In the year 2007-08 the diamond industry had faced a major

depression. Very large firms who had deep roots in the industry were also affected and they were retrenching their work force in large numbers. This affected the labourers i.e. diamond polishers also and hundreds of them had to go back to their native place. Many of them had to engage themselves as coolies to ferry the belongings of pilgrims at the Palitana teerth.

When somebody from the Diamond market used to go on pilgrimage to Palitana and saw such labourer working as coolie, they used to recognize each other instantly and naturally they asked, “you, and here?” In this situation, the famous lines of a bhajan came to the mind – “Jab koi nahi aata mere Dada aate hai, Mere dukh ke dino me woh, bade kaam aate hai”.

When I was a child, I used to go for performing pooja at Shree Abhinandan Swami Derasar at Sion in Mumbai. One lady used to sit in front of the Derasar with a cow. That lady – her name was Ramabai – has been earning her livelihood for the last 35 years sitting at this one place. **Have you ever seen a woman with a cow outside any restaurant or any theatre? Have you seen any paanipuriwala outside a temple ? Everyone knows where a consumer would be and where a feeder would be !**

It would be interesting to conduct a survey to find out how many people sitting outside the temple would be taking benefit of the footfalls in a temple. Possibly, the figure would cross lakhs. This figure is also dedicated to those who talk of social output of a temple.

- ❖ A place where God is present in the form of a deity...
- ❖ A place where emotions of devotion flow continuously from the hearts of devotees...
- ❖ A place where the Ganga of heartfelt prayers flows continuously...
- ❖ A place where the atmosphere is filled with nothing but pious thoughts...

Such place has its own treasure of positive energy.

Any visitor coming to such place experiences the pious and positive vibration. The heart of a visitor to such place gets filled with the feeling of compassion and mercy. One would observe a row of beggars sitting outside a temple or roaming around in the vicinity. The visitors to a mall or a multiplex may outnumber the visitors of a temple. However, the beggars are confident that the number of donors would be maximum around a temple. Naturally, everyone evaluates the market potential!

Query: If a religious place or a temple has so many benefits, there must be some reasons for people to have negative approach towards temples.

Explanation : Normally, a person or a place would be abhorred by the others if such person or the place harms others. It gets down rated in the minds of people. However, here the problem is that modern education is totally secular. It does not advocate the need for religion anywhere amongst various other needs of life. On the contrary, it develops abhorrence in young minds against religious places, temples etc. and plants a belief that all the conflicts in the world owe their origin in religion.

However, the modern management Gurus have now realized that the spiritual quotient is far more important than intelligence quotient and emotional quotient. Religious places are a vehicle for spiritual quotient. But modern education and media do not focus on this aspect. Some people educated in the modern system and some writers enjoy criticizing religion and religious places and hurting the religious sentiments of some tolerant people. They however have no courage to touch the sentiments of a certain religion and its followers.

It would appear that such persons have taken a vow to discredit religion by calling it unscientific, calling the religious rituals as matters of show off and calling the spiritual gurus as the agent of God. A particular columnist who is notorious for writing against religion, dharma gurus and religious places went to the extent of writing in one of his article – “If my writings today has hurt the religious sentiments of the so-called followers of religion, I will consider that my writing has been successful”. This exhibits nothing but the cheap and perverse mentality of the author.

A person can be helped with vision by donating an eye. However, a person who does not want to see cannot be helped even with donation of an eye (vision). There is no alternate but to ignore them.

True, there may be negativity in any field. However, at the same time there may be hundreds of positive aspects which such people do not want to see.

Decades ago when Bhakra Nangal Dam was constructed, the then Prime Minister Shri Nehru had described it as the *teerthas* of modern India. If someone's mind is obsessed with modernity he would equate a giant dam with a temple. When someone is obsessed with cleanliness, he would term a lavatory as necessity and a temple unnecessary!

One thing is certain. The modern education certainly dents the old values and ethos in people's mind and that gives birth to such utterances.

Devotees are tolerant, they are not cowards. There were strong reactions against the above stated statement of Nehru. He was aptly replied by Darryl de' Monte. His reply was later on published in the book form also titled – **Temples or Tombs?** (place of pilgrimage or a burial ground ?) One cannot oppose development provided it benefits all and has relativity. In the mad obsession for development, if environment, natural resources etc. are destroyed, one should not sing laurels of development.

One can definitely describe a temple as a non-polluting industrial unit which takes care of people without disturbing environment and natural resources. It is the best platform to satisfy mankind's belief, dedication etc. Ignoring this aspect, the modern education, various writers and media strive their best to aggressively create abhorrence in the minds of people against religious places.

It is an irony that things which create conveniences to encourage and satisfy the pervert feelings of human mind

are called 'development'. The arrangements which nurture the civilized feelings of a human mind are being demolished. The combination of political power and secularism has driven out temple and religious devotion from education and gradually diminished the importance of these elements from the minds of people as well. This has been going on for decades as part of a well thought out plan. As a result, people are drawn away from temple to Temple Run (for the readers' information - Temple Run is a 2011 3D endless running video game developed and published by the Raleigh-based Imangi Studios. It is produced, designed and programmed by husband and wife team Keith Shepherd and Natalia Luckyanova, and with art by Kiril Tchangov).

Human beings have heart in their bodies. However, the heart misses the human who is appropriated by the so-called mind. Unfortunately that has necessitated explaining the matters of heart in the language of mind. This is a small attempt in that direction.

Otherwise, the environment which is created by profound devotion does not call for justifying need for temples. The non-materialistic evaluation of importance of a temple is beyond the capacity and means of materialistic world.



If one talks of a temple, one talks of dedication also.

While giving bath to a deity in temples or derasars, the milk used is nothing but flowing of a non-living substance on a lifeless thing. Is this not wastage?

When a large number of poor living beings do not get a drop of water or a fistful of grains, how can one justify the milk baths to the deities or drawing of auspicious figures using rice on a wooden plank?

God craves nothing but your dedication.

How is it justifiable to offer to the deity pot-full of milk or any amount of grains when it does not demand a drop of milk or a single grain?

Isn't it more justifiable to offer these things to the needy?

One cannot take exception to the concern for the poor or the need to care for them. However, one needs to go to the root of the unfortunate fact as to why the poor are unable to get milk at cheap price. Milk product industries such as chocolate manufacturers, cheese manufacturers, butter manufacturers, milk powder and baby food manufacturers etc. unjustifiably corner milk which can feed lakhs of children. Milk is an item of daily necessity. This milk is appropriated or rather misappropriated by the above industries for their own personal profits. **To meet the luxurious requirements of the affluent, the primary necessities of the weaker section of the society are snatched away. These necessities go beyond the reach of the poor.**

In order to maintain the high rates of milk, thousands of litres of milk is flown away into the sea. But it is not allowed to reach the poor at cheaper rates.

If a country just throws away 3,60,000 tons of fresh milk every year, then according to scientific conclusions it amounts to damage to environment equivalent to creating 1,00,000 tons of carbon dioxide. If you talk in term of equivalent, this amounts to emission by 20,000 vehicles in a year. Instead of targeting such avoidable waste in the country or around the globe, if one talks about anointing the deity with a very small pot of milk, it is more of prejudice rather than impartial observation.

When people question about offering rice grains, fruits or sweets to the deity, citing the shortage of food for the poor, that argument can also be met on the same lines. Presently,

the world is suffering from a high profile wastage culture. Leave alone the global scenario, in India alone the food wastage in a year crosses Rs. 3,57,000/- crores. In the city of Mumbai alone daily (yes, daily) 9.2 lakh kg. of vegetables and fruits are wasted and they do not go to feed anyone.

According to a report of the University of Agricultural Science (UAS) at Bangalore, the wastage figures for the city of Bangalore (which boasts of a posh city culture) are mind blowing. Bangalore has 531 marriage halls. These halls hosted 84,960 marriages in a year. High quality rich food which was just thrown away after the marriage festivities was 943 tons. This annual royal wastage was valued at Rs. 339/- crores. If one would consider Rs. 40/- as the cost of one thali for the poor man's food, it amounts to throwing away food in gutters that would have fed about 2½ crore people.

Nobody frowns on such colossal waste, nobody even comments about it, nobody takes any stern action, nobody takes any steps to remedy this situation. However, everybody is ready to pounce on the fistful of rice grains or a small piece of sweet offered on a wooden plank to the deity (which of course are subsequently consumed by somebody or the other). People with such mentality are of course not believers, they are not atheist either; they are simply pervert atheist.

If you survey the scene in the Western countries (from where the wastage culture has been imported into our country), there are special festival for wastage. At some

places in the 'tomatina' festivals, thousands of tons of tomatoes are wasted in throwing them at each other. In some festivals, tons of chocolates made from lakhs of tons of milk are wasted in rubbing the chocolates on each other's bodies. If one is aware of the hungry stomachs of lakhs of people, what inhumane mentality or a devilish urge of enjoyment would be behind such festivity ?

In the game of ice-buckets, people pour buckets of ice-cold water on each other. Can this be called anointing ? Can this be called a bath or Can it be called pouring cold water on civilization ? If people who are out to club religious rituals or traditions with their so-called intellectualism, the true platform for flexing their muscle against wastage is such festivals and not religion.

Let us leave the world alone ! What happens to the food grains grown in this country for which crores of farmers have toiled hard throughout the year? Every year lakhs of tons of foodgrains get wasted for want of proper storage arrangements. And this has been happening for decades. What should be the topmost priority for the development programme of the country ? If the intellectuals apply their mind, that would be enough.

When I am writing this, the prices of turdal in the country are flaring up like wild fire, hovering around Rs.225/- per kg. On the other hand there are news in newspapers that in raids on 2-3-4 places thousands of tons of turdal stocks valuing crores of rupees have been seized. On reading these news one exclaims, **Oh My God !!**

The trilogy of wastage, black marketing and exploitation is very thick. It is a long pending need that someone penetrates this trilogy and think about the poor.

Our traditional culture does not brook any wastage. We are wedded to a resource respecting culture where the extra chappatis are converted into khakhra which is an item of breakfast or the extra unconsumed rice of afternoon become spiced rice in the evening palate. Jains are a step ahead. They wash their food plates and drink that water ensuring that not even a smallest grain of food is wasted. This is a unique combination of consumption, restraint and thoughtfulness. The practice of feeding the skin of a banana to a cow or a goat may be vanishing (simply because cows or goats are not to be seen where we live !). However, this practice was testimony of a fact that our consumption was laced with humanism. In this background how can our bhakti be accused of being inhumane? One cannot deny that the culture of wastage has seeped deep into our social functions. This definitely needs correction.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation has expressed its grave concern about the growing wastage of food across the world. Some of its findings are;

- ❖ 1/3rd of food produced annually is wasted globally.
- ❖ This annual food wastage can feed crores of hungry stomachs and that too without any additional burden on resources.

- ❖ Cooked but unconsumed food which is wasted adds to 330 crore tons of disastrous green house gases.
- ❖ Food grains produced but which are not consumed by anyone uses 30% of agricultural land (140 crore hectare) the world over.
- ❖ The water used for cooking of such food which is not consumed by anyone and gets wasted is equivalent to the total water reserves of Volga river in Russia or three times the water reserves of Geneva lake.
- ❖ Those who criticize a small amount of food grains offering on the wooden plank in temples would hardly be aware of the above facts. The Chief of FAO explains the main reason behind this world wide wastage, saying it is due to the vicious consumerism of the rich and the neo-rich in the world.

The UPA government hurriedly passed the food security bill just before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections with the object of ensuring food security for the poor.

A country where 17,546 tons of food grains are wasted, needs **food security** and not **food security bill**. If we consider the average daily food grain requirements to be 250 gm. per person, this wastage could feed seven crore empty stomachs.

This is India. The earlier governments spent Rs. 75,366/- crores after food subsidy over the years. (Whose money this was any way? Of course of the people who were forced to buy enormously costly food grains). However, no

effective steps were taken for proper preservation and distribution of food.

Have a look at the modern day grand wedding receptions where between 250 to 300 items are served on scores of counters. Who has got the time and digestion capacity even to taste all the items? Such receptions start with exhibitionism and result in exploitation. Would anyone raise a voice against this ? Mind well, the facts presented here are not figments of imagination. They are based on published reports.

An Indian who went visiting Germany had a very strange experience. His German host had arranged a welcome party for him in a restaurant. This man rose after finishing his dinner, leaving a good amount of unconsumed food in his plate. His attention was drawn to the wasted food. This man arrogantly said, **“we have paid for what we ordered, that's it!”**

The matter did not end here. Suddenly an officer from the social security department arrived on the scene. He fined this gentleman 50 Marks and also gave a stern advice, **“order only what you can consume. Money may be yours but resources belong to all”**. While parting he had another comment to make, **“remember, waste is violence”**. If this incident can touch us, waste would not exist. **Wasted food is not mere waste of foodgrains; it is also proportionate waste of other natural resources, time and labour.**

For example production of one litre of milk requires one thousand litres of water (consider the water required for

growing grass, giving wash to the milch animal, cleaning the floors of the stable, cleaning the utensils and keeping the place hygienic). If one would realize this he would think twice before leaving even half a cup of unconsumed milk.

Let us thank that fistful of rice grain seen on the wooden plank in a derasar. As a result of someone's comment seeing waste in that offering, this whole analysis was made with the aim to remind about real waste and one hopes that it would become a strong hurricane of thoughts bringing some meaningful result to curb the waste which we have talked above.

Agreed, God does not need the offering of fruit, sweets, milk or other articles. However, all give and take in this world cannot be measured on the scale of need.

Presenting a new dress on the wedding anniversary day by the husband to the wife is not out of a need but is an expression of feelings. The words 'friendship' and 'valentine' results in give and take of crores of cards and hand bands. Who bothers about the fact of 'need' in these matters. Under the umbrella of 'sharing, caring, loving' things happen at colossal levels. There is not an iota of what is called 'need'.

In wedding receptions crores are spent on feeding one's own relatives and dear ones, not for the needy and poor. If one would keep in mind, the factor of need and needy, what would the picture be. All these facts lead to one conclusion – need is not the only background or reason for

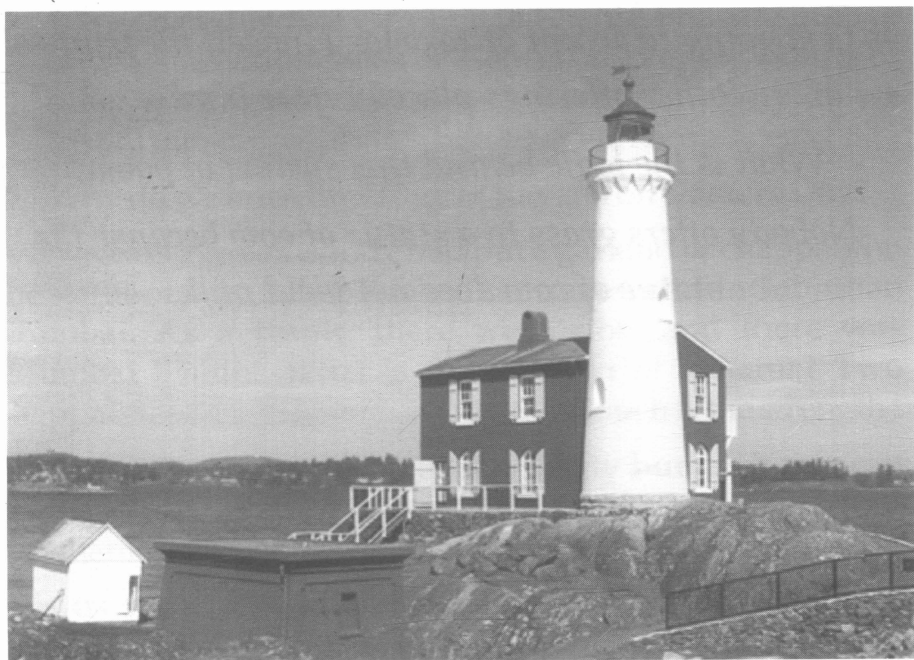
giving. Feelings also play a very major role in giving.

One should not mix Act of devotion and Act of compassion. As overflowing love towards one's relations, friends or loved ones can result in lots of give and take, similarly, bhakti also is a special type of emotion. If a person has bhakti towards God his act of offerings should not be viewed from a third person's perspective but from his own perspective.

If the above explanations satisfy the question raised, let us not stop at that. Let us take some concrete steps against wastage. Let us consider the following five point programme.

1. Take steps: to avoid unwanted showing off.
2. Do not waste food on your plate, if possible wash your plate after finishing your food and drink that water.
3. Use everything to its fullest potential.
4. Do not waste the surplus if there is anything surplus, see that it reaches a proper place where it can be used. A Gentleman living in Kandivli is doing something worth emulating. If there is surplus or unconsumed cooked food on the occasion of a social or religious function somewhere, he along with his team and vehicle (tempo) goes to such place, collects the unconsumed food and ensures that it reaches the poor people. In this process he would be feeding fifteen to twenty thousand poor people with a single meal. This process may be kept in mind for every occasion and someone may take responsibility for it.

5. Abandon the 'disposable' : Use the 'durable' as far as possible and not the 'disposable'. Durable is being replaced by disposable. This disposable culture itself is disposable.



God is God.

*Agreed, somebody feels like dedicating whatever one
has to the God..*

But look at the madness prevailing today.

*This madness is not after God but after a stone deity.
Is God going to accept or take for Himself the fruits or
other offerings placed before him?*

What is the logic behind this system of pooja?

*Nobody offers grass to a statue of cow because the
statue of cow does not yield milk.*

Human being is a sensitive creature. He understands feelings and he expresses feelings. He expresses his feelings by personally meeting another person or getting in touch with such person by means of communication or sometimes only by remembering such person.

If one wants to express his feelings – good or bad, towards anyone and suppose that person is not physically present before him, reliance is placed on the picture, statue or any other thing which represents such person.

- ❖ Why do we garland the photographs of our departed parents and other elders? Why do we bow before the photographs?
- ❖ Why do we pin up our favourite cricketer's photograph / poster on our bed-room wall?
- ❖ Why do pictures of Gandhiji or Shahid Bhagat Singh or Subhash Chandra Bose or Nehruji are kept in Courts or other government offices or schools etc.? Why do we install the statues of such heroes at various places?
- ❖ Why do we burn the effigy of Ravana on Dassera Day?

A few years ago somebody had put a garland of chappals on the statue of Baba Saheb Ambedkar somewhere in Suburban Mumbai. As a result, there were riots and there was 'Mumbai Bandh'. What is the strength of a statue? Two chappals leading to Mumbai Bandh-so much is the strength!

If desecration of the statue of a worldly human being can erupt into such a chaos, why can the pooja of a supernatural teerthankar's deity not result in some very special blessing.

It is true that nobody offers grass to a statue of cow or nobody milks such cow. However, a person dedicated to the cow will bow against even a statue of a cow. A person

feels happy and contented by the picture displayed on the wall paper of his mobile phone. He captures the pictures of his loved ones, occasions and scenes on his mobile camera. Certainly, all this is not without any meaning or is not madness.

During one of our vihara, we were camping in a school building. A scene witnessed at that place is still fresh in the memory. In a chart hung in the corridors of the school there was a picture of some beautiful and colourful flowers, which of course had no fragrance. However, I saw a number of black-bees hovering around this picture (possibly these black bees were not intellectuals!).

Ask the value of a photograph of her son to a mother who has lost her only son at a very young age. What else does she have to express her boundless love and feeling for her departed son? What does she get by continuously looking at the picture of her son? What happens to her if she loses that picture?

The text book of science contains diagram of a heart. The text book of geography contains locations of cities, towns, roads etc. None of these are real heart or real city / town / road. Still these diagrams help us in getting to know the real heart or the real roads etc. Everyone knows how useful is GPS on a computer or a mobile.

The perfume bottles depicted in attractive and colourful advertisements in the electronic media attract feelings of the viewers. The delicacies seen in T.V. programmes like Master Chef or Khana Khajana etc. are not real. Still they evoke mouthwatering feelings.

- ❖ Horror films showing ghosts etc. do not have real ghosts. Still they can generate fear.

- ❖ Romantic scenes do not have real life lovers. Still they can generate feeling of love.
- ❖ Action scenes, though not real, can evoke anger and passion.
- ❖ If vulgar poster of a movie can attract the viewers to a movie and after seeing the movie if the viewer longs to meet the actor/actress in person, then it is futile to raise questions against the effectiveness of deity of a God.

In fact, Murti Pooja is a process or a journey from form to formlessness. Once this is realized, all the questions would become silent. All our senses are constantly occupied somewhere or the other. If our senses get connected to a deity, they will be free from other weaker attractions. A sadhak looking intimately towards the face of the deity losses himself into that darshan. He drowns himself in the eyes of the deity. In the retina of the eyes of the deity he finds vitaragata. Thus, starting from a deity which has a form, he travels to the other end which is formless vitaragata. A common man cannot travel directly to the formlessness. He needs a medium which has a form. The sense of sweetness has no form, however to reach that sense one has to rely on something which has a form and that is sugar. If one has to reach the sense of fragrance, he has to definitely rely on a flower which has a form.

One can compare a deity in a temple with a window in the house. Window of a house has a form because the house has a form. However, from this window which has a form, if one looks into the skies he enters into formlessness. The window becomes a medium for this. If someone would say that formlessness is visible in the window it would be considered madness. The simple argument could be how

can one view formlessness from such a small window. What is visible through a small window cannot be larger than the window.

One who does not look beyond the window will never understand that a small window can also open into a formless sky. The scene outside a window is not bound by the window. Similarly, the formless God is not bound by the form of deity. Deity is just a window to view the formless God. In other words the deity is a bridge. On one end of the bridge is form and on the other end formlessness. If one understands this it would be clear that worshipping a deity is not a mere ritual. It is a psychologically tested and logical process to travel from form to formlessness through the medium of deity.

If one can realize this importance of deity and its worship then one would also realize that lighting of incense, lighting of lamp, saying of prayer or decorating the deity is not meaningless ritual or appeasement of God but a process to stabilize our conscience. In modern times, the science of psychology has played an important part in establishing idol worship as a necessity and a truth.

Like blood has various components, like a bone has a various components, similarly an active mind also has various components. Shraddha is one such component. One who lacks in this component sees only a stone in the deity.

People who are in love enjoy as if they have met their loved one merely by viewing the photographs of the loved one in the photo gallery of their mobile phone. This is Piyumilan. Similarly, if a person sees God in the deity while doing bhakti, it can be called Prabhumilan. Once a person sees a living object and not stone in a deity, then whatever he offers is offered to a living person.

An atheist sees stone in a deity. In the movie OMG a character calls the deity putla and khilauna. This actor has moved ahead from the silver screen to become a Member of Parliament. He should be publicly asked a question – would he dare to call the statue of Late Shri Vallabhbhai Patel (statue of unity) weighing several tons, which is taking shape with the wish and inspiration of Shri Narendrabhai Modi, a putla or khilauna ? **For one who has real vision, deity is not just a statue but inspiration. It may not be a living object and yet you can express your feelings in front of him. A deity may not be living thing but feelings are always living and such living feelings (shraddha) is far more effective than the living God.**

- ❖ Manthara and Kaikeyi had met live Rama, but there being together in flesh and bones had no effect on them.
- ❖ TulSIDas and Kabeer only had the name of Rama and it had immense effect in their lives.
- ❖ Kans had met live Shree Krishna, but it had no effect on him.
- ❖ Meera had just a statuette of Shree Krishna and that changed her entire life.

Faith is a priceless virtue and may be beyond the reach of some intellectuals. However, a deity or a form is no less than a live person (specially in his absence). Hence in the absence of that person his statue or photographs or any other similar thing alone becomes the medium of expressing feelings towards him. A person may be devoid of faith but he can never be devoid of sensitivity. This is eternal truth.



5

It appears that the importance of money has enormously increased in the religious places.

People announce larger and larger contribution for various types of dedications and it appears as if religion is commercialized.

If we go to the root, it can be asked where is the need for such contributions ?

Why should we have such uchhamani or chadava like rituals ?

With the concept of commercialization three words are associated; cost, price and value. More often than not, people use price and value as synonyms. However, all these three words have different meanings. If they were to be defined in simple terms;

- ❖ **Cost** is decided based on the material cost and labour cost.
- ❖ **Price** is decided based on the demand and supply.
- ❖ **Value** is decided based on feelings.

Let us understand this with an example. A ball point pen – say manufactured by Uni-ball Company involves material and labour cost totaling to Rs.8/-. This Rs. 8/- is the **cost** of the pen. The same pen is sold in the market and is priced between Rs.15/- to Rs.25/- based on supply and demand. This is the **price** of the pen. A student is sentimental about one such pen because he considers that pen as lucky for him. He happens to leave behind this pen in some rickshaw. He spends two hours to search for that rickshaw and gets his pen back. He gives a gift of Rs.50/- to the rickshaw driver. This is called **value** of the pen.

In the statue market of Jaipur, a beautiful statue of God is sculpted. The **cost** of this sculpture is Rs.10,000/- (cost of the marble stone and the labour involved). This statue is sold for Rs. 25,000/- to some individual or to a temple of a sangh. That is the **price** of the statue. Upon seeing this statue, the believers in the sangha had feeling of awe towards what they perceive as their prabhuji and

somebody offered to pay Rs.10/- lakhs for anointing that statue as God. This is the **value** of the statue.

The spectacle frame of Gandhiji (which would have negligible cost or price) would sell for crores of rupees if put to auction. This is the value of that frame. The bat with which Sachin Tendulkar scored his 100th century can fetch crores. This is the value of that bat.

Antiquity, heredity etc. also evoke human feelings and determine the value of a particular thing. That is why if somebody acquires something which is close to his/her heart paying a sizeable amount for it, it is often said that he correctly valued it.

The tradition of uchhamani is also guided by placing true value for a thing or a process/ritual. If a person offering huge money for uchhamani does so, out of ego or to show off or any such reason, it is a shortcoming of that person and not of the process.

Query : Agreed, uchhamani has something to do with value. But why valuation by money alone ? Is there no other way of putting value? In this process, a poor person can never participate.

Explanation: Those who advocate putting value through some other means instead of money, argue that in this way a poor person may also benefit. However, whatever be the medium of putting value, somebody or other will be denied the benefit.

For example, if the medium of money is replaced by the medium of tapa, then the persons who have no capability of doing tapa will be denied the benefit. If samayik or japa is considered as a medium, then those who have shortage of time for doing samayik or japa will be denied the benefit and only old and retired persons will take the benefit. Whichever medium is chosen, someone or the other will be denied the benefit.

If this is going to be the situation, then why not adopt the conventional medium? Further, the medium of money is an accepted medium in the society. Moreover, there are some other advantages also by making money as the medium of uchhamani. The amount so collected can be used for various projects of the sangh, for proper management of derasar, its maintenance, jeernoddhar etc. The uchhamani may be raised at some place and the money raised may be used at some other place which is short of resources for projects like jeernoddhar etc. This tradition is very popularly practiced in Jain religion.

Further, when uchhamani is in terms of money, there is transparency, as it can be verified whether the money is deposited or not. If the medium were to be tapa or samayik or japa, there is no way to verify whether the committed tapa was performed.

Query : A person not having enough money to participate in an uchhamani may suffer from inferiority complex and may feel embarrassed sometimes.

Explanation: At the end of uchhamani, only one person gets the final nod. All others are excluded and these include relatively wealthy persons also who participated up to a certain (Say, runner's up) level. Thus, it is not that the poor alone are excluded. And the argument regarding so-called or misconceived inferiority complex is visible in several fields;

- ❖ When school examination results with percentage and rank of students are declared, what would happen to the students except the first rank holder?
- ❖ A student getting 96% secures admission in a medical college and his other peer who have been studying with him for the past ten years but not scoring high marks, have to choose commerce or arts, how would they feel?
- ❖ If there is a huge gap in the salary level of two friends, how would the lower salary earner feel?
- ❖ In many instances, in case of working couples the wife may be having a higher salary than the husband. How would the husband feel?
- ❖ Upon seeing a very lavish marriage ceremony of an affluent person, how would hundreds other witnessing this extravaganza, feel?
- ❖ If somebody sees your very costly dress worn on some occasion, how would those, who cannot afford such a dress, feel?
- ❖ How would people who can hardly afford a cycle feel on seeing your luxury car?

- ❖ You can buy the first arrival of mango and the neighbour is unable to afford mangoes even for two more months; how would such a neighbour feel?

There are many such things. This disparity will always remain and the possibility of complexes will also remain. However, at all places it is the merit which keeps a person ahead and others behind. This is an accepted situation. Money also is a medium. If a person with merits is able to grab opportunity, a person with money is also able to grab an uchhamani. There is no reason to feel bad about it. If value is to be put to something then a person who can put such value, does so. Others who cannot do so need not feel bad about it.

Somebody with a very sweet voice may sing a stavan in a derasar. A wealthy person may not be able to sing in the same manner. How would he feel? These days you see very young children using computers like an expert and the older people are unable to do the same. How would they feel?

Art, ability, skill and strength make a person special and the others are just commoners. This principle applies everywhere. Money is also a strength. Using this strength somebody is able to perform the pooja ahead of others. The others also do pooja taking their own turn. However, pratishtha is a one time occasion and hence the privilege can be given to only one person. On such occasion some conventional, practical and acceptable to all medium has to be used.

Further, there are many other things which do not need money. For example observing deeksha dharma or many rituals which are performed at home.

Query : Still is there any other way whereby one can take benefit of donation ?

Explanation: Those who cannot do tapa can appreciate the tapa performed by others. Those who cannot donate can appreciate the contribution given by others. When a person lacks convenience or capacity to do something on his own, he can always appreciate the others who are doing such things. Sometimes, a wealthy person may offer his uchhamani and then allow others to join him in performing the ritual. This is done with full respect to the person invited to join.

Query : As a result of all this, isn't it true that the dominance of wealthy persons is increasing ?

Explanation: One should understand an important difference here. Dominance of wealthy person means dominance of a person who is willing to give away his wealth, and not dominance of a wealthy person who does not want to share his wealth for such objects. Giving away money is not a small thing. In present times when people are not willing to sacrifice money for the sake of a brother or a partner, it is worth-praising if someone is prepared to use his money for noble objects. This should be clearly borne in mind when applying our mind to this issue.

Yes, discretion is always necessary. Excess of anything should always be avoided. Like money; knowledge and

good qualities etc. are also important virtues. Scholars, persons with high qualities, virtuous persons, persons who have high standards of practice – these are all persons deserving utmost respect.



6

Huge sums are collected through the medium of uchhamani. Instead of keeping these funds deposited in Devdravya account or using them in the derasars, why can't it be used for welfare of poor and suffering people?

Isn't it Dharma to alleviate the sufferings of others? Then why not use the Dharmadravya in other activity which also is dharma.

We Jains see God even though He is not present and we are unable to see so many people – weak and suffering, who are present around us.

Can't we do something special for such weaker section?

There is a definite purpose or object behind every donation which is specified by the donor. It would be a crime to use money of a donor for a purpose which he has not wished. Doing so would be betrayal of the donor.

If a donor wanted to do something for the poor, he did have that option. Why didn't he use the money for that purpose? If he has the feeling of special bhakti and has wished his money to be used for that purpose, that money has to be used as per his wish.

There is one more thing. Some so-called educated persons also extend such arguments in the name of welfare of the poor. Some time ago in the social media of whatsapp such thoughts were circulated. However, nothing came out of it because people have both – their intelligence and their faith.

Those who wish to do something for the poor, should start doing something on their own instead of making suggestions in the financial management of a religious place. Charity, after all, begins at home. Further, such persons are not aware of important relief activities which are conducted under the aegis of the derasar or the sangh or some other organization.

According to one estimate, in Mumbai alone Jain Sanghas use crores of rupees every year for supporting the poor. One should visit and see the work done by several Jain foundations in the city.

A donor, not to be named here, spends an amount which is far in excess of the amount raised by all the derasars put together in Mumbai or in Ahmedabad and that too for supporting about 5000 weak families within a span of few months.

Inspired by such deeds of philanthropy even others undertake such relief activities spending crores. All this is done without any publicity and hence people do not come to know about it.

Query: If this is happening, why doesn't it come to light?

Explanation: Most of the donors do not seek publicity or for various other reasons they avoid publicity. If publicity is done, there would be people to criticize this also saying that the donors are doing such things for the sake of publicity. No one can stop a person from criticizing whatever he comes across.

The wealthy Jains spend a lot for the purposes of derasars and it becomes known also. However, money spent for humane causes doesn't come to public knowledge and it is desirable also that such things are done discretely. However, it is not fair if we do not give credit to such deeds.

There are hundreds of Jain families who do not have their own house. Houses are arranged for them at nominal deposits. Assistance is given for higher education fees, even for studies abroad. Care is taken for sustenance of families and while doing this care is taken for maintaining self-respect and morale of such families. These activities

have been done in past, are being done in present and will continue to be done in future. The only object of such philanthropic activities is that a person born into human specie and in Jain Dharma should not let the life go waste. Even for observing Dharma the heart and mind need to be healthy and free from worries. All efforts are made to achieve this.

The canvass of the followers of Jain religion extends from God to human beings and further up to the dumb creature. Hundreds of Panjrapoles managed and funded by Jains exist in almost all villages. Thousands of disabled animals are taken care of in panjrapoles with collective spending of crores of rupees every day and for years together.

When a natural calamity strikes, relief funds of crores of rupees are collected in Jain Sanghas and Jain youth and volunteers engage themselves in relief activities for days together and extend assistance without discrimination based on caste, religion etc.

This writer, as a child, was a personal witness to the relief activities in the aftermath of the calamity of bursting of Machu Dam of Morbi in Gujarat which was a major disaster. Thereafter also, in the unfortunate events of earthquakes, floods and devastating droughts, as also financial depressions; I have seen that Jains have stood steadfastly on all occasions to provide succor to the needy. Such activity is hardly witnessed elsewhere.

At times of calamities newspapers also launch relief funds and I have seen the long list of donors to the Mumbai

Samachar Relief Fund or the Chief Minister's relief fund and names of several Jains are prominent in such lists.

Not with proud but with pride, I can say that Jains need not be taught humanity – they are born with this quality. No doubt there would be exceptions, but they cannot negate the rule.

There is another important aspect. Whenever anyone with a good project approaches the donors, it is everyone's experience that if the name of God is involved, executing the project, howsoever big, becomes easy. The task of constructing a derasar gets done very easily, whereas for other projects like construction of an upashray etc. a lot of efforts are needed. This is experienced by many (in the lighter vein – we hear the beggars saying, Bhagwan Ke Naam par Kuch De do Baba!").

When the reality is such, one should not lose sight of the boundless punya of teerthankar parmatma. One can never think of using the money donated in the name of and as a result of the punya of teerthankara anywhere else. Not only the shastras forbids this, it is not correct otherwise also.

While dealing with the subject, I wish to draw attention to an allied issue. On occasions of anjan shalaka or pratishtha when uchhamanis are invited, it is not fair to say that a good amount got collected due to persuasion by certain person or performance of some musician / singer etc. No doubt the effective presence of a Mahatma or soul stirring music and singing of some persons play a good role in

creating a good atmosphere. However, the main reason is the punya of teerthankar Dev. Other factors are just supportive.

The ease with which huge funds get raised on the occasions of pratishtha etc. is not seen when funds are to be raised for panjrapoles or for the sadharan khatha of a sangh. This also should make us realize that we should accept the influence of punya of teerthankaras rather than challenge it.

No doubt, objects of compassion are also important and they are carried out also. There are many who involve themselves in compassion for the poor. A few years ago a family in Mumbai had given food (a full-fledged lunch) to all the Jains in the entire city of Mumbai on the occasion of 200th anniversary of Shree Godiji Parshwanath Bhagwan Derasar which is a pride for Mumbai. There were many who criticize this also. Such people were unaware that the same family was also providing medicines worth thousands of rupees everyday for years together to the poor cancer patients in Tata Hospital. One should not be so obsessed to favour compassion activities alone and consider all other activities unimportant.

Let us have a look at some of the examples of compassionate activities by Jains:

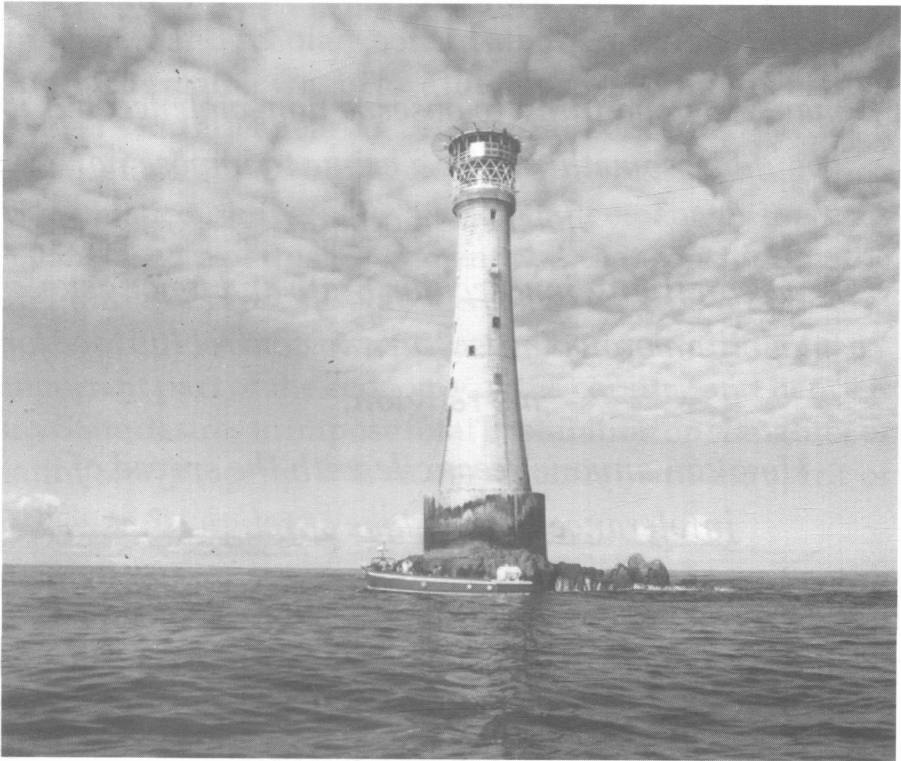
- ❖ During the last two years (S.Y. 2070 and 2071) several deekshas were taken in the areas of Malad, Kandivli and Goregaon (Suburbs of Mumbai). On these occasions all the deeksharthi himself donated one month's grocery and other necessary articles to 300 to

600 house maids in their area.

- ❖ When we were in vihara in Saurashtra, we came across the compassionate activities for the poor families in the Jhalawad (District Surendranagar) area. We also came to know of the horrible conditions of hundreds of labourers working in the salt pans, women becoming widows at young age, labourers suffering from serious ailments etc. and we also came to know of the relief activities undertaken by Jains. Those who saw such suffering people and also witnessed the compassion extended to them had tearful eyes.
- ❖ In Bhavnagar, Jains are involved through their various organizations in providing necessities of life every month to hundreds of poor families. In addition, there is Vadva Jain Bhojanshala, which even today provides full meal for just Rs.4/- and hundreds of poor and middle class Jains regularly have food at this place. It is rare that such arrangements are put in place and maintained. The philanthropy of Jains is behind such activity.
- ❖ Persons who advocate diversion of Devdravya for humanitarian activities will not give such advice once they come to know of the compassionate activities of Jains for alleviating the sufferings of the poor and the needy.

Disregarding all such benevolent activities if somebody still sticks with his stand that instead of using money in religious fields every rupee should be diverted to

humanitarian cause, it is nothing but intellectual extremism and lack of proper understanding.



Whenever the words `devotees of ahinsa' are heard or read one would invariably think of Jains.

Really the non-violence of Jains is worth appreciating.

However, for some time now it appears that Jains want to spread the empire of non-violence using their influence.

It may be a good thing to observe non-violence, but it would be something like a crime to impose non-violence on others.

A person living in a secular State and amongst a cosmopolitan crowd must learn to control his love for his religion.

How can anyone reconcile with the spread of intolerance in the name of religion?

Violence towards dumb creatures has always been a sensitive subject. Before delving on the subject, let there be some clarification. There is prohibition on slaughter of cow throughout the country (excepting two or three States) and this prohibition is not enforced by Jains but it is pre-existing and has been imposed in deference to the sentiments of people at large and observing the Constitutional mandates. This prohibition is in force for the past sixty years. It is not something new.

Can any State impose total prohibition on slaughter of entire cow progeny (cows, bulls, bullocks and calves?)

This issue was debated amongst the panels of legal luminaries and scholars both in High Courts and Supreme Court. The matter was before the Supreme Court for almost a decade and after hearing the say of all concerned parties, a constitution bench of seven judges headed by the then Chief Justice delivered a historic judgement in the year 2005. The core of this Judgement was that considering the usefulness of cattle, usefulness of its dung in agricultural fields, utility of cattle as draught animals etc., cattle are an important part of the economy of the country and hence if any State desires to impose total prohibition on slaughter of entire cow progeny, it is in consonance with the spirit of Article 48 of the Constitution.

Presently, there is total prohibition on slaughter of entire cow progeny in thirteen States of the country. One must remember that it is not the government of Jains in all these States or the courts upholding the ban are also not under the sway of Jains. In this background, if and when there is

any talk of prohibition on slaughter, it is either foolishness or prejudice or mere lack of proper knowledge to associate Jains exclusively with the subject.

It is another thing that Jains are the happiest lot whenever any prohibition or restriction is imposed on animal slaughter. However, if Jains had the power (which some people mistakenly believe that Jains have) lakhs of animals which are slaughtered today in the country would not have been slaughtered nor would any new licences be issued for slaughter houses.

There is one more issue currently agitating the Society. There is a lot of angry noise about what is described as 'beef'. Let us understand the technical terminology. Flesh of a cow progeny animal is called 'beef', flesh of buffalo is called 'meat' and flesh of sheep and goat is called 'mutton'. As is the situation, practically all over the country there is a ban on slaughter of cow and if beef is found anywhere and it is obtained by illegal slaughter, naturally the law will take its own course. It is true that no one is allowed to take law and order in his hands. However, if someone illegally slaughters cows and trades in beef in violation of relevant laws, is it permissible?

One must keep in mind that the anger and agitation which is seen amongst people about illegal slaughter of cows is due to violation of law and not because of hurt sentiments of Jains.

It would be interesting to go a little deeper into the subject. The Supreme Court of India had delivered an important judgement about 18 years ago. This case was before the

Supreme Court for almost 15 years before being decided and it became famous by the name of Calcutta Bakri-Id case. The facts of the case in brief were as under:

In the State of West Bengal, their State law titled “The West Bengal Animal Slaughter Control Act, 1950” regulated slaughter of animals (remember, there is no prohibition on slaughter of even cows in that State). Certain conditions were prescribed for such slaughter based on age, utility etc. However, there was an exemption permitting slaughter for religious purposes and using this exemption lakhs of healthy cows were slaughtered on the occasion of Bakri-Id. Some persons challenged this provision and the Calcutta High Court held that such exemption was illegal. The State appealed before the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court upheld the Calcutta High Court's judgement. The State and the Muslim Community could not produce any religious text before the Supreme Court to establish that slaughter of cow on Bakri-Id was a religious necessity for Muslims. The judgement was delivered in strong terms by Justice Kuldeep Singh (mind well, he was not a Jain !) and ever since the slaughter of cows on Bakri-Id day is legally not permitted in West Bengal.

Not only this, advertisements are released before Bakri-Id in prominent news papers all over the State informing people that cows cannot be slaughtered on Bakri-Id. Are Jains behind all these facts, judgements, laws etc. ? (it is another thing that they feel happy about such judgements and welcome them as they further the cause of non-violence).

One more thing needs serious consideration. It is unfortunate that there is no effective law in the country which values animal life. The irony is that if somebody hits an animal or drags the animal, it becomes an offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. However, if someone slaughters an animal (which is the extreme cruelty) it is not an offence ! On the contrary, it is protected as a Fundamental Right of one's business. **Beating is an offence, killing is not. This legal puzzle awaits solution !**

However, whatever restrictions are put on slaughter of animals under various State Laws, it is because such animals are useful for the society or they support the nation's economy, and not because Jains believe in non-violence. Nobody seems to be concerned with the fact that animals also have life like human beings. Nobody is concerned that some people have compassion for other living creatures.

Animals can be saved from slaughter only if people can be made to understand their economic importance. Various judgements which curbed violence against animals were delivered not on the grounds of compassion but on economic ground or reasons of environment etc.

Article 51A(g) in the Constitution of India has imposed a fundamental duty on all citizens to have compassion towards all living creatures. If someone seriously attempts to perform this duty, he is accused of imposing his thoughts on others or interfering with the life of others. Isn't it strange ? If one is not allowed to observe the fundamental duty, what is the point of having such duties prescribed in

the Constitution?

True, Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties are not justiciable. However, at the same time, it is also not obligatory not to observe the fundamental duties.

Query: Some people believing in non-violence become 'intolerant and aggressive' on the issue of 'beef ban' or on the issue of opposing slaughter of animals. So much so that hurt by this intolerance, many recipients of national literary awards have returned their awards.

Explanation: If any one takes law into his hands, it cannot be supported. However, when certain things are done in violation of prevalent laws and somebody tries to ensure that proper laws are followed, such person is branded intolerant. Everybody fights for one's own rights. However, if someone becomes active for the rights of animals, what is the personal interest involved?

When animals are transported in a truck, the space requirement is 2 x 1 sq. mtr. for a large animal. Animals beyond this space requirement cannot be loaded as per provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and rules thereunder. Various certificates are required to be carried along with the consignment. There are various other Rules. However, there is gross violation of these rules and corruption is rampant. In this situation, if animal welfare volunteers seek to enforce law, even at the cost of threat to their life, just to ensure that no illegal slaughter takes place, can it be termed intolerance?

Almost two and half decades ago one such animal welfare

volunteer from Ahmedabad, Smt. Geeta Rambhia was brutally murdered by the butchers. Similarly, a 30 year young lawyer named Lalit Jain from Bhiwandi was shot dead in broad day light at 11.00 O' clock in the morning in a crowded market place. Lalit was involved in fighting cases against butchers indulging in illegal transportation and slaughter of animals. Recently, a Police Inspector who tried to prevent illegal transportation and slaughter was killed. This is real intolerance. Nobody thought of returning their awards in protest against these killings! Is the protest of the so-called intellectuals against intolerance or against compassion?

Some time ago in Kerala, the provision of midday meal in all government schools was suspended during Ramzan. These schools did not have only Muslim students. Students of all communities were studying in these schools. Still, even the non-muslim students were subjected to this suspension of midday meal.

Not only this, even the school timings were changed. School hours got over more than 1½ to 2 hours earlier than the scheduled timings. The reason given was that when Muslim students are observing their roza, they cannot study for long hours with empty stomachs. Even students of other communities who were not observing the roza also suffered the reduction in their study hours. How can this be described?

The country is suffering from terrorism for decades now and lakhs of innocent people have fallen prey to it. How would you describe this? How is that no one thought of

returning their awards in protest against acts of terrorism which created upheaval throughout the country?

The plain fact is that everybody, whichever religion he or she may be following, has sentiments and respect for the religious belief. Any hurt to such sentiments is difficult to endure. Everyone must learn to respect each others' religious sentiments. Most of the time, the whole issue takes a political colour. The frictions which emanate due to politicization should be called political intolerance and not religious intolerance.



*There seems to be an overdose of ahinsa these days.
Children are persuaded not to light crackers during
Diwali.*

*They are given the lure of prizes if they keep away
from crackers and thus their innocent enjoyment is
snatched away.*

*Possibly, except for Jains almost no one else is against
crackers.*

Is religion opposed to innocent enjoyment?

Recently, a Public Interest Litigation was filed in the Supreme Court by three children (mind you, not Jains !) aged between 6 to 14 years, requesting the court to prohibit bursting of crackers during Diwali. All these three children were suffering from Asthma and hence their plea is understandable. They had claimed their Fundamental Right to Life under the Constitution, which includes right of breathing in clean air. Topnotch lawyers such as Dr. Abhishek Singhvi, K.K. Venugopal and Harish Salve appeared in the case without charging any fee.

Though the Supreme Court did not issue any direction as requested, they did direct the Government to undertake a campaign in various media about the pollution created by bursting of crackers and to sensitize people about the issue.

One thing is clear from this instance that even the Supreme Court agreed that bursting of crackers is harmful. Earlier also the Supreme Court had issued guidelines in a case in the year 2001. The Court considered the right to peaceful sleep as a Fundamental Right and had forbidden bursting of crackers between 10.00 pm. and 6.00 a.m. It is another thing that these guidelines are flouted. It is the responsibility of people as well as government that these guidelines are observed.

We need to understand seriously the harmful effect of bursting crackers. The smoke that emanates after bursting any cracker contains sulphur dioxide and other poisonous chemicals. This smoke is extremely harmful for asthma patients, pregnant women and heart patients. For bursting of crackers as part of public display, there are specified places which are near lakes or river banks. This is to ensure against the possibility of accidental fires. However, the perchlorate particles which are used in manufacture of

crackers get mixed with water making it non-potable. These particles reach the subsoil water also and contaminate it.

Mostly, crackers are burst on public roads. These roads are meant for movement of pedestrians and vehicles. When crackers are burst on roads the attention gets diverted due to the loud noise, the smoke and sometimes even fear and these result in accidents also.

Sometimes, the noise of a fire cracker is so loud that it may lead to permanent deafness also. The guidelines issued by the Central Pollution Control Board of India restricts the noise volume up to 125 decibel at the distance of 4 feet from the place of bursting of the cracker. However, people standing away at three times this distance i.e. 12 feet or more, experience much louder decibel than the prescribed one.

The loud noise, the sparks, the colourful explosion may give momentary enjoyment to the person bursting a cracker. However, these things create tremors of fear in the minds of thousands of birds and small animals/creatures. The message that 'humans are not the only occupants of this universe' needs to be spread repeatedly.

Bursting of crackers many a times results in bizarre accidents. There are thousands of cases of accidental burns and fires. Every diwali we read news of devastating fires in cracker factories or in cracker shops taking toll of quite a few lives. Sometimes crackers like rockets etc. land on heaps of grass or cotton and large fires break out which take hours or even days to douse. The recent horrible instance of crackers related fire in a Kerala Temple precincts claiming about 120 lives is fresh in the memory.

Cracker factories employ young children for production of crackers (despite knowing that this is both illegal and

inhuman). People who come out vehemently against a child taking deeksha, conveniently ignore the fact of young children being employed in cracker factories and even losing their lives in fires.

On one hand people talk of global warming, environment, animal welfare, promoting eco-friendly and child labour free products, having compassion towards others etc. etc. and on the other hand have no compunction to blow all these up with fire crackers for momentary enjoyment. If this is not hypocrisy what else is it?

One cannot be against innocent enjoyment. However, a thing which (i) while being manufactured (ii) after being manufactured (in the process of being sold), (iii) while bursting and (iv) after bursting is harmful for human beings, animals and environment, deserves to be abandoned. It is not a sacrifice but a duty.

If it is alleged that except for Jains practically no one else opposes crackers, then one should feel like honouring the more than average stature of Jainism rather than criticizing it. Dharma is definitely not against happiness. However, if such momentary happiness is sought by inflicting disproportionate sufferings on others, no human being would support such happiness and Dharma would definitely will not support it.

Whether bursting of crackers is an enjoyment or an act of creating extreme fear – this needs to be examined before talking of innocent enjoyment.

No celebration should be harmful for any human being, any animal or environment. The reasons behind opposition to burst crackers spread from safety of living beings to the higher pedestal of its effects on one's spiritual emancipation.

For the time being we may restrict ourselves only to the aspect of safety of living beings. Even from this angle, this subject needs serious deliberation.

Whether it is Diwali, a marriage ceremony, winning of a cricket match or tournament or election results or any such other event or reason, the ill-effects of crackers apply to all of them in similar manner.

If a child from his / her very tender age is persuaded not to burst crackers even by offering incentives, one can avoid the above ill-effects of crackers. A child may be young today and may need incentives to be convinced. However, when he grows up in understanding he will keep away from crackers without any persuasion or incentive. Thus dharma is not opposed to anyone's happiness. On the contrary, it is supplementary and protective for the happiness of all.

Query: The issue is not limited to fire crackers. The whole issue is about the overall constitution of Dharma. Dharma prohibits fire crackers, balloons, celebration of Holi, kite flying, dance parties, celebrating navratri, celebrating 31st Night etc. etc. Dharma and culture hold red signal against all these. Is it an offence to seek enjoyment in life?

Explanation: Dharma is never anti-happiness. On the contrary, it is an object of happiness and a bridge towards happiness. However, the restrictions that are mentioned about Holi celebration etc. need to be understood with an open mind.

Holi : Talking of Holi, let us understand this from the angle of humanism rather than the angle of religion. Holi revelries circle around playing with colours and playing with water. Colour used in Holi is very minute in quantity. However, people use up huge quantity of water that would normally

last a month, in just few hours. Lot of water is wasted in washing the walls of the house, compounds, vehicles and bath after playing Holi. Even water supply by tankers falls short on that day.

If we talk of the last 2/3 years, Holi festival falls sometime around beginning of summer and in the face of looming water cuts. It is important to understand the water problem before enjoying revelries involving water. The wastage of foodgrain is worrisome. However, the wastage of water is much more worrisome. That is why, to create awareness on the subject 22nd March every year is observed as 'World Water Day'.

75% of the surface of our planet is covered by water. However, potable water is just 2.5% of this water body. Of this 2.5% also, a large volume consists of glaciers, ice clad mountain tops and also sub-soil water reserves. Of the potable water just 0.3% is stored in rivers and lakes. Possibly, in the coming years water problem would be the most serious problem before the whole world.

To understand this problem in better perspective, let us consider here an allied subject. Water is wasted in many ways. More water is wasted when we use drinking water bottles. Today, bottled drinking water has become an enormous industry.

To fill one litre of water in a bottle two litres of water is wasted. Besides this, the wastage of water is beyond normal comprehension. Though the world is awakening to the ill-effects of bottled water (some of the Western countries have even banned it !), hardly any remedial measures are being taken.

Even otherwise, though the awareness and information in various fields are overflowing, they do not travel beyond

this level (hardly any remedial measures being taken). On one hand, we have crores of people going thirsty and on the other hand we have rain dance, water parks, water theme enjoyment joints. All these need to be questioned.

Possibly, it is a matter of belief that each drop of water contains millions of living creatures. However, nobody will disagree that each single drop of water is life-sustaining. No wonder, some people would predict world war on the issue of water.

While there are international summits on the subject of water, we need to know some instances of enormous wastage of water. The golf course of Tigerwoods in Dubai needs 1.8 crore litres of water every day to keep it lush green. This is just an example.

The Deonar abattoir in Mumbai uses 90 lakh litres of water every day ! We also find that the overhead water tanks in our residential building practically everywhere overflow, wasting hundreds of litres of water.

When in some rural areas of the country women have to track 4 to 10 kilometres everyday just to fetch two small pots of water, how should human civilization respond in the matter of colossal waste of water elsewhere?

22nd March is observed every year as '**World Water Day**'. Motivational messages are released on this day with the object of avoiding wastage of water. Holi festival this year will be around the same day. There will be flow of advice to save water and there will be flow (wastage) of water also at the same time.

According to a statement by Investment King Warren Buffet, the next decade will be a decade of investment in water sector. Taking cue from this statement, it will not be surprising if large reservoirs of water are transferred in the

control of private companies. The National Water Policy already contains suggestions to this effect.

Water is an easily flowing element, however the problem of water is hard enough to break someone's head. The intention is not to obstruct anyone's enjoyment; but basic human values would demand that enormous wastage of water is stopped. This is not to oppose happiness, but to oppose the imminent (that too in near future) problem.

These thoughts will definitely set a thought process in the minds of Holi revelers but that would be at the superficial level. When even a single drop of water is spilled, countless single cell creatures in that drop get killed. The water spilled during Holi is unfiltered water and thus the possibility of billions of nano living creatures in that water getting destroyed, is certain. If thought from this angle, the opposition to playing Holi with water reaches a much higher pedestal. At the higher level of spiritualism, all worldly enjoyments become prohibited. Use or consumption of a material object is not a sources of enjoyment, real enjoyment comes from attaining the qualities of atma. To move towards that object, the lower level of enjoyment need to be curtailed or sacrificed. However, as the discussion here is at intellectual level, the issue is dealt with intellectually.

Here is something important. We are living our life. However, what is the aim of our life? Being born as a human being is something extraordinary, and hence the object of this life also has to be extraordinary.

There are two important days in our life.

i. The day we are born.

ii. The day we realize, why we are born.

The aim of our life is to attain higher and higher level of human and spiritual qualities. Once we understand this, the aim of enjoyment will be replaced by the aim of enlightenment.

Celebration of Makar Sankranti by kite flying :

Any game, which seriously interferes with or endangers the life of other creatures definitely deserves serious consideration. Kite flying also is worth serious consideration for the same reason. During the kite flying festival and even subsequently, the throats and wings of thousands of birds are cut. The thread used for kite flying which is entangled in trees, overhead wires, the overhead water tanks in buildings etc. is as sharp as a blade.

Thousands of bird lovers in cities like Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad etc. organize bird camps to treat injured birds during this festival. Helpline numbers are set up so that people can bring injured animals to such camps. Sometimes hanging thread coated with sharp glass powder accidentally cuts the jugular vein of a small child going on a scooter with his mother. Many a times, young children chasing a kite on the road fall prey to fatal accidents on roads. Sometimes, people fall off building terraces or overhead water tanks while flying the kite, in the fit of excitement. Like a kite which is joined with the thread, all these undesirable happenings also are tied with kite flying.

After giving a serious thought to all this, if someone decides to give up kite flying, that would be real civilization. From a narrow point of view or thinking un-relatively, this would appear to be an opposition to happiness. However, thinking impartially, it would definitely appear to be siding with happiness.

Basic gentleness can never be devoid of two facts:

i. Thinking of one's own qualities and

ii. Thinking of well being of others.

The modern ways of celebrating festivals sometimes damage the first aspect and sometimes the second one.

Song and dance parties extending to the wee hours are not only against the Dharma and culture of our society, even the parents who value our culture also would not welcome this. It is the duty of parents to be always cautious and active about providing sanskaras to their children. They will never agree that their children visit a place where their sanskara and civil behavior would be dented. Many a celebrations start with drinks and then slowly graduate to uncivilized behavior and crossing of all limits. If such celebrations are forbidden either by parents or by the teachings of Dharma and culture, it is just natural.

Of course nothing can be done about behavior of people who are bent on indulging in objectionable behaviour in the name of their personal liberty. However, for those who are conscious about their sanskaras and good behavior, such restrictions are not a bondage but a part of the formula of higher evolution of life. Any arrangement which seeks to protect sanskaras should not be considered as an obstruction in happiness. If one is unable to truly evaluate such a safety arrangement for sanskaras & culture, he would find this arrangement as an obstruction against his liberty and so-called happiness.

All those having guns in their hands are not murderers, many of them are Policemen too! All rules and restrictions are not bondages, many of them are protection also.



9

Non-vegetarianism !

This word itself creates a nauseating feeling.

What one should eat is his/her personal issue.

How can one justify the objection to

Non-Vegetarianism?

However, if one wants to avoid blind opposition to

non vegetarianism

and wants to make people understand

intellectually, how can it be done?

Food habits are a private part of one's life and hence it is a private subject matter for everyone. However, when some private subjects lead to harm to health, nature or environment, it certainly calls for some restrictions. The opposition to tobacco, cigarettes, intoxicating drinks and such other vices comes from these considerations even from people who do not have a religious outlook.

Let us grant that whether to be a non-vegetarian or not is a personal matter for people. However, it should not be difficult even to convince such people against non-vegetarianism by tactful explanation, careful and compassionate persuasion etc. It is always possible to make such persons understand and give up non-vegetarianism. These days many celebrities are propagating and promoting vegetarianism. Let someone be a non-vegetarian, but if he is simple, open minded and willing to accept the other point of view, he can be persuaded in favour of vegetarianism by the following arguments.

A human being was created to be a herbivore (vegetarian) only. For a human being non-vegetarian food is opposed to nature. None of the aspect of a human life should be opposed to nature. There is a lot of difference between the body structure of a vegetarian and non-vegetarian being. Bodies of vegetarian beings and bodies of non-vegetarian beings are created differently. The structure of a human body is similar to the bodies of other vegetarian creatures. What does this indicate? If a comparison is made it would be clear that a human being is by nature vegetarian.

1. The teeth of carnivores are very sharp. Their paws have sharp nails. The chewing teeth of herbivores are flat and they do not have sharp nails in their claws.
2. The jaws of carnivores move only up and down whereas the jaws of herbivores move in all four directions i.e. up and down and sideways.
3. The carnivores have rough tongue and they drink water with their tongue. The tongue of herbivores is smooth and they drink water with their lips.
4. The intestines of carnivores are as long as their body length. However, the intestines of herbivores are almost four times the height of their body.
5. Carnivores have very large liver and kidney. Herbivores have comparatively smaller liver and kidney.
6. The quantum of hydrochloric acid in the digestive system of carnivores is almost ten times that of herbivores.
7. The saliva of carnivores is highly acidic. The saliva of herbivores contains a chemical called tylin which helps in digestion of carbohydrates.
8. Carnivores have a low level of P.H. in their blood and it is acidic. Herbivores have a higher level of P.H. and their blood is alkaline.
9. The sense of smell of carnivores is very much strong compared to that of herbivores.
10. The eyes of carnivores flash during night and they have strong night vision whereas the herbivores are able to see only during day light.

11. The voice of carnivores is very rough and frightening. The herbivores have sweet and smooth voice.

12. The carnivores are blind for seven days after they are born. They gain vision only after a week. The herbivores are able to see from the moment they are born.

The above comparison makes it clear that the bodies of human beings resemble the bodies of herbivores. It also proves that human beings, by nature, are vegetarians. Non-vegetarianism does not suit their body.

The teeth, claws, nails and jaws of carnivores are suitable for non-vegetarianism. If non-vegetarian food remains in the intestine for a long time it putrefies and gives birth to fatal diseases. Hence it needs to be thrown out of the body immediately. That is why the intestine of carnivores are short. If human beings with long intestines consume non-vegetarian foods such foods putrefies in the intestine and leads to many incurable diseases.

Animals never flout natural rules. A cow or a buffalo will go hungry even for days together but will not eat meat. Human beings need to learn the respect for nature's rule from animals. A human heart, throbbing with fine emotions and feelings, can persuade a person not to eat non-vegetarian food. However, even on intellectual level it is unscientific to consume a food which is not suited to the constitution of one's body.

Dr. Allen of Johns Hopkins University has proved with microscopic analysis of a human teeth that human beings are basically herbivores. No one would express distaste

upon seeing fruits or vegetables or groceries stacked in shops. However, when he sees the hanging carcasses of slaughtered animals in a non-vegetarian shop, he would feel hatred at such a scene. This feeling of hatred is a strong proof of the vegetarian nature of humans.

Nobody would feel hatred upon the sight of one's food. If one sees the heap of chappatis or the pot of vegetables, or rice, sweets or farsan, he would not have any negative feeling.

Query: These days crores of people eat non-vegetarian food, eggs, sea food etc. Crores of people go hungry or are half fed. Despite this, the vegetarians get foodgrain at very costly rates. If everybody turns vegetarian, from where sufficient foodgrain would come to feed all ?

Explanation: Supposing the daily average foodgrain intake of an individual is 250 gms., then the monthly requirement will be 7.5 to 8 kg. and yearly requirement will be 96 kgs. Let us round it off to 100 kg. If one individual needs 100 kg. foodgrains in a year, 125 crore individuals (irrespective of their age – though infants and young children will not need 250 gms. every day) comprising the population of the entire country would need 12.5 crore tons of foodgrains. This calculation presumes that no one relies on non-vegetarian food, no one goes hungry or no one undertakes fast for religious or other purposes. 12.5 crore tons of foodgrains would be enough to fully feed the entire population. The annual foodgrain production of the country is approx. 30 crore tons. Thus, we produce more than double of our requirement of foodgrains annually.

Due to improper and insufficient arrangements for storage and distribution of foodgrains, thousands and lakhs of tons of foodgrains go waste. A large chunk of foodgrains gets diverted as poultry feed. In Western countries animals are reared for slaughter to obtain meat. An animal needs to be fed 7 to 15 kg. of foodgrain to generate one kg. of meat in its body mass.

Feeding grass to a milch animal produces milk in its body, whereas for obtaining meat, mutton or beef foodgrains are required to be fed to an animal. Lured by huge profits in meat export trade, the meat exporters rear and slaughter more and more animals and foodgrains find their way to such animals. This makes foodgrains out of the reach of common man.

Let us have another analysis. From 16 kg. of foodgrains which are fed to animals to obtain one kg. of meat, 64 vegetarians can be fed (based on average requirement of 250 gms.) On the other hand, one kg. of meat can feed just four persons.

Thus, the ratio of foodgrain utilization between a vegetarian and a non-vegetarian works out to 1 : 16. In other words, one non-vegetarian snatches away the foodgrains of 16 vegetarians.

An in-depth analysis for finding out real reasons of foodgrain shortage is required. Let us consider some more factual information. To grow one kg. of wheat approx. 210 litres of water is required. On the other hand, for one kg. of meat more than 20000 litres of water is required (for obtaining one kg. of meat an animal is required to be fed 8

to 16 kg. of foodgrain. Consider the water requirement for growing this quantity of foodgrain. Add to this the drinking water required to be provided for the animal. Add further the water requirement for washing animals' body and the slaughter house machinery, floor, drainages in slaughter houses etc. etc.).

If a person realizes how exploitative is non-vegetarianism and how dangerous it is for health and environment, any sensitive person will not go for non-vegetarianism.

A book titled '**A Diet for New America**' written by an American author John Robbins may be recommended to an educated but unprejudiced non-vegetarian person who is prepared to consider arguments with an open mind. After publication of this book there was a virtual wave against non-vegetarianism in America.

A person cannot be a non-vegetarian unless he is totally insensitive. If there is a small cut on a finger from a knife while mending vegetables for cooking and a person cries in pain, he should definitely be able to understand what an animal undergoes when its throat is slit under a sharp knife. A sensitive person will never be able to swallow even a single morsel of non-vegetarian food. **One fact which is visible is that an animal is dead and then only its meat is consumed by someone. The invisible fact is that a person becomes like lifeless (devoid of all humane and fine feelings) and then only consumes meat.**

A famous Gujarati litterateur, Shri Gunwant Shah has written somewhere that if slaughter houses were to have transparent walls, hardly anyone would eat meat.

The famous British philosopher George Bernard Shaw reacted rather tersely against non-vegetarianism, saying, "Is the human stomach a graveyard for dead animals?"

The above thoughts are enough for people with simple hearts. In fact, compassion can flourish only if non-vegetarianism decreases. Somebody has very correctly said, "As long as the blood of animals will continue to be served on the food plates, human blood will continue to flow on this planet".

The arguments against non-vegetarianism are possibly more easily palatable than meat!



Many of our Jains take Deeksha.

They spend their entire life as sadhus/sadhvis.

Is not possible to do social service or activities for wellbeing of the world without taking Deeksha?

It is claimed that Deeksha is for one's own emancipation.

Is emancipation not possible by leading worldly life and doing welfare activities?

If one were to effectively describe the life of a Jain sadhu – it means abandoning materialistic pursuit and physical pleasures : particularly of married life. Yet another wonderful description would be lifelong abandoning of vehicles and electricity. Let us try and understand the immense wellbeing of the world achieved by leading the life of a sadhu or a sadhvi who are on this path basically for their own spiritual emancipation.

The current century is a century of problems. Whenever the world leaders meet, two issues are invariably discussed :

I. Terrorism

ii. Global warming.

The main reason behind global warming and climate change is carbon emission. The growing quantum of carbon in the atmosphere is leading to this situation. Vehicles and use of electricity are two major contributors to ever growing carbon in the environment.

Some years ago, a world level conference was held in Copenhagen to discuss global warming. About 400 intellectuals from about 175 countries of the world had gathered there. Hundreds of journalists were also there. Emphasis was laid on controlling the un-frittered use of vehicles and electricity. However, none of the developed nation was ready to take any initiative towards this object. In the end, it was a mere celebration at the conference, lot of good food and drinks and everybody dispersed.

A baby step like effort is underway at Sydney in Australia. The programme called '**Earth Hour**' involves switching off unnecessary lights during 7 to 8 p.m. on the last Saturday of every March. For one hour even tall towers also are enveloped in darkness.

Many countries in the world have joined this drive. However, this is too small an effort like taking a crocin tablet to treat cancer. Still this effort has received praise everywhere as a supporter of environment.

Before we discuss some aspects of the life of a Jain sadhu, let us evaluate the ritual of samayik from a new angle. What is samayik? Even a foreigner who has no inkling of religious rituals can be made to understand samayik by an intellectual definition, which is – a total stoppage of use of vehicle and electricity for one hour. This can be considered as a stricter observance of Earth Hour in a new version.

Earth Hour does not restrict use of vehicles and electricity. It is only abstaining for one hour in a year from unnecessary lights. A Jain shravak who does two samayiks every day (each one lasting 48 minutes) abstains for 2½ days in a month and an entire month in one year, from vehicles and electricity. Compare this with just one hour in one year in the Earth Hour programme!

Those intellectuals who experience great satisfaction of contributing to the world's wellbeing by abstaining from electricity only for just one hour in a year would no doubt bow to the ritual of samayik.

Just one minute! Samayik is not just an effort towards mitigating climate change. It is a great religious ritual aimed at attaining stability for the soul and also a vow not to indulge in any sin. Thus, the spiritual gain of this ritual is beyond any value being put to it. A young child asked his father, "what happens if the Sun does not rise?" Father replied, "the electricity bill will rise". Though partly correct, this answer doesn't put true value to the contribution of the Sun. However, a child is incapable of

appreciating the Sun beyond this and hence it can be said that even this answer indicates the importance of Sun.

Mere intellectualism will fall short to understand the vow, the definition and the impact of samayik. Still weighed on the scale of intellectualism also, samayik is a weighty element. Let's move forward. According to the findings of experts, an average human being adds to two tons (2000 kg.) of carbon to the atmosphere every year as a result of his lifestyle. Viewed from this angle, supposing at some place 500 sadhakas undertake a collective updhan tap (which lasts for 45 days), it results in stopping carbon emission equivalent to 125 tons !

Extend this example to thousands of Jain sadhus and sadhvis on this planet. Can an intellectual evaluate their effortless and very natural contribution towards world's wellbeing due to their lifestyle ?

A handful of Jain sadhus and sadhvis traversing this vast country contribute in stopping carbon emission of 40000 tons in a year.

No doubt, the object of samayik or the overall life as a sadhu or a sadhvi is not with the object of stopping carbon emission. Nonetheless like grass grows alongside the foodgrains in an agricultural farm, along with the crop of spiritual emancipation of a sadhu or a sadhvi the weed-like growth of world wellbeing simply due to their lifestyle would make even the intellectuals' hearts filled with awe, appreciation and an urge to follow.

Even if a western scholar will minutely study the lifestyle associated with samayik, he will forget tall-talking about eco-friendly lifestyle.

- ❖ **The lifestyle of a Jain Saint is woven with wellbeing of others.**
- ❖ **The preachings of a Jain Saint is woven with wellbeing of others.**
- ❖ **The intentions of a Jain Saint are woven with wellbeing of others.**

In the worldly life a person is faced with many responsibilities, compulsions and hindrances. No doubt some exceptionally great persons have contributed in the field of service to humanity and their work deserves to be recorded in golden words. Still the field of one's own welfare and others' welfare attained by a Jain saint is far far greater.

This contribution to the world's welfare is just incidental. People inspired by the worthy lifestyle of Jain Monks take their own life to a much higher pedestal and are like reborn beings.

The inspiring preachings of sadhus and sadhvis have changed the life maps of thousands of followers of Jain religion. They do not go from bed to bed in a hospital to preach. Still their preachings for due restraint on food, abstinence from vices and a controlled lifestyle lead to a situation where the reasons for getting into a hospital are avoided.

The preachings of Jain sadhus to promote fraternity and forgiving results in permanent departure of conflicts from lives of thousands of people. Lakhs of cases are pending in Indian courts. In this situation, the obligation of persons (sadhus and sadhvis) for preventing new cases and disputes coming up is far greater than the assistance rendered by the advocates fighting such cases.

Isn't it a more valuable contribution than the contribution of Policemen (who nab the culprits and punish them) when the sadhus and sadhvis eradicate crimes and criminal mind sets from the their followers by their preachings of good behavior and gentlemanliness?

There is always an inspiration from sadhus/sadhvis at the back of almost all good deeds in various fields, the enormously large deeds of jeevdaya, the deeds of compassion towards the needy and less fortunate brethren in the society etc.

Isn't it a greater obligation on the Society, if the preachings of Jain sadhus and sadhvis to their followers lead to showing respect and extending support to the older members in the family which results in stopping the setting up of a few old age homes?

Mere rising of the Sun results in the world's welfare. Similarly, mere embracing the life of a sadhu and living it for his/her own spiritual emancipation incidentally results in the wellbeing of the entire world.



11

*On one hand we talk of non-violence and compassion,
and on the other, we use bullocks to pull chariots in
our processions, ride horses etc.*

Is this not cruelty to animals?

Isn't this contrary to the spirit of Jeevdaya?

*Is it humane to make the animals pull weight in this
fashion?*

If you engage somebody as a servant to sweep, mop and clean your house, what would it be called?

If you engage a maid servant to clean your utensils used in cooking and eating food, what would it be called?

If you engage someone to wash your dirty clothes or clean your car or other vehicles, what would it be called?

If porters are used for unloading grain sacks from a tempo or truck, what would it be called?

If you hire a coolie at a railway station to carry your luggage, what would it be called?

Of course, if you load the above categories of workers with undue or excessive burden, it is certainly inhuman. However, if you think in terms of not engaging the services of these people, how many men and women would be jobless? Which is greater in-humanity? While caring for superficial humanity, one is likely to lose sight of true humanity.

In our predominantly agricultural economy even today more than 2.75 crore families earn their livelihood by plying bullock carts. To make an animal pull excessive weight is certainly inhuman. There is a line in a tichar sutra – “adhiko bhar ghalyo” (meaning - excessively overloaded). By using the word ‘overloaded’, it is presumed that loading within limit is not something wrong. Unfortunately, animals are driven away from the centre of our economy and they have become the centre of our food (non-vegetarian) arrangement.

Like India is primarily an agricultural country, it is also primarily an animal husbandry dependent country. Human beings and animals complement each other in its economy. Animal is the main constituent of agricultural,

draught and transport activities. A horse-cart owner puts his horse to work and also gives it rest. He caresses the horse with love and himself feeds it.

If this entire process is analyzed psychologically, it would definitely come out as a compassionate activity. A person moving around in an automobile will never feel compassion towards his vehicle because he knows that the vehicle does not get tired. He is fully aware of the lifelessness of his vehicle.

There is only one way animals can be saved and that is to make them a useful part of the life of human society and consider them as an important constituent of the economic strength of the country. For better understanding of the concept of violence and non-violence, the Jain agams speak about three types of violence.

- A. Hetu Hinsā** : Carelessness which can lead to violence.
- B. Swaroop Hinsā** : Acts which superficially appear to be violent but are not violent if you see the result. For example, the violence of plucking the flowers for the purpose of offering to the deity during a pooja. This is not hinsa.
- C. Anubandh Hinsā** : Here the violence is not visible but subtle. For example a bird catcher offers grains to the bird so that they get entangled in the net spread by him. Offering grains is visibly jeevdaya. However, it leads to hinsa (as the birds get caught, either for killing or for caging).

Thus the activity of offering grains by a bird catcher is anubandh hinsa.

In simple language, if we consider two divisions of violence i.e. superficial and real, one has to abjure the real violence. If an animal is worked within reasonable limits, it is not real violence. This is so because an animal not to put any use, will become a liability and would definitely find its way to the slaughter house.

Some people try to prove the utility of an animal (as food) by slaughtering it. As against this, those who wish to save the animals from slaughter, rely on this main argument that animals are useful for agriculture and draught activities. Now, if the animals are not put to any use, their usefulness cannot be proved and as a result they would be headed for slaughter.

Animal Welfare Activists opposing animal labour (e.g. in bullock cart, horse cart, camel cart etc.) out of their feeling of compassion, in fact become instrumental in slaughter of the animals. For decades, beautifully decorated and royal looking buggies pulled by horses in Nariman point area of Mumbai have been a major attraction for people. Some NGO took objection to this and filed a case in Bombay High Court which compassionately (!) ordered that such horse-carts should be stopped from plying within a year. What would happen to those horses? Will they still be maintained by their owners, housed in their stables and doing nothing?

If compassion towards animals leads to not putting the animals to work, it is not real compassion. It is true that animals should not be overworked or treated cruelly.



12

If consumption of flesh and organs obtained from animals' body is called non-vegetarianism, then why not call consumption of milk also as non-vegetarianism, as milk also is obtained from the body of an animal?

After all both are animal source products !

Ever since the British era, different tactics have been adopted for propagation of non-vegetarianism in this country. One such deep-rooted tactic is propagating consumption of milk as non-vegetarianism.

Let us fathom as to from where this concept originated. In the last few decades, European countries have been swept by the idea of vegetarianism. In the process, large groups of "more than thy" vegetarians have cropped up. They call themselves 'VEGANS'. These vegans consider themselves to be on a much higher pedestal compared to the ordinary vegetarians. They strongly propagated the idea that those who have given up non-vegetarianism but consume milk are still non-vegetarians, as milk is obtained from the body of an animal just like the animal's flesh. This campaign appealed very strongly even to the hardcore vegetarianism converts.

As a result of spread of mechanization, animals started becoming useless. Yet due to yielding of milk and milk products, the milch animals are still economically useful. If milk is propagated as a non-vegetarian substance, on one hand it will create an abhorrence in the minds of vegetarians and on the other, as a result of decline in demand for milk even the milch animals will become useless.

There is another facet to this. The dislike for non-vegetarian food amongst vegetarians will decline. They may tend to think that by consuming milk till now, they have in fact been non-vegetarians. Then what is the harm in becoming non-vegetarians consuming animal flesh? (In fact the word 'vegetarianism' itself is a misnomer and it has been circulated tacitly in support of non-vegetarianism. The

correct word is annahar. Shakahar word is coined to create confusion. However, we may deal with this on some other occasion).

The important thing is that there is no logic behind considering milk as a non-vegetarian product. True, milk is procured from the body of an animal. However, milk is available only from the body of the female of an animal. On the other hand flesh is procured from the body of both male and female animals. This is one natural difference between milk and flesh.

Food consumed by a living being gets converted into rasa (body chemicals), rakta (blood), med (fat), mans (flesh), majja (marrow), veerya (semen) and ojas (vigour). The whole process takes 30 days with each stage taking four to five days. On the other hand, part of the food fed to a cow or any other milch animal gets converted into milk on the same day and comes to its udders. From the remaining food the above stated elements get created. Thus, it is baseless to say that milk is created out of blood and flesh of the animal.

To obtain flesh of an animal, it has to be slaughtered and it undergoes great cruelty. The animal fiercely resists its killing. However, the situation is totally opposite in case of milk. The animal does not undergo any pain, it does not resist milking. On the contrary it co-operates in milking. If the animal is not milked, the animal feels pained.

Milk is produced in an animal's body for being used as food for its young one and other creatures. Milking an animal is in its own interest. Nature has created small holes in the udders of the female animals to facilitate milking so that its milk can be put to several uses.

Cow is an absolute vegetarian animal. If a pot of milk is placed before it, it will consume the milk. But if a pot of blood is placed before it, the cow will not even put its mouth to this pot. Thus cow itself proves the difference between milk and blood-flesh.

If milk was made of animal flesh, why would the non-vegetarians need milk for their nutrition and health? Why can't they do with blood and flesh alone? Because there are no similar qualities in milk and flesh, the non-vegetarians have to consume milk for nutrition. On the other hand, the vegetarians who consume milk do not need flesh for their nutrition. Those who consume milk but not non-vegetarian food do not become malnourished. However, if non-vegetarians do not consume milk, they may become victims of diseases emanating from malnutrition. The protein in animal flesh does not prevent sickness in non-vegetarians. On the contrary, they fall prey to various diseases which can be attributed to non-vegetarianism. This also clearly distinguishes milk and flesh.

It is common amongst the human specie that the new born sustains only on mother's milk after its birth for quite a few months. The infant gets all necessary nutrition from mother's milk. Nobody describes this situation as the 'infant surviving on the blood/flesh of its mother'.

Jainacharya Shri Haribhadra Suri Maharaj Saheb has written a granth titled "**Ashtak Prakaran**". It is a compilation of eight stanzas on each selected subject. In the 17th chapter of this granth, the author has discussed the vice of non-vegetarianism. The concept floated by the vegans – 'animal blood and flesh and animal's milk are both same as they are animal source, then how milk can be

consumed' – is beautifully answered by Maharaj Saheb. He has said – “one's own mother and one's own wife, both are women. Still both are not treated equally. Wife is bhogya (i.e. one who is to be enjoyed), while mother is poojya (i.e. one who is to be respected and obeyed). Though both are women, they are basically different. Similarly, though flesh and milk both are sourced from an animal, there is difference between flesh and milk.

Thus, it is proved beyond doubt that consumption of milk is not non-vegetarianism.



PROLOGUE

आग्रही बत निनीषति युक्तिं, तत्र यत्र मतिरस्य निविष्टा ।

पक्षपातरहितस्य तु युक्तिर्यत्र तत्र मतिरेति निवेशम्॥

Truth is like a cow. Instead of following this cow, some people try to pull the cow towards them. This is nothing but obstinacy. It is not a sincere urge to uphold truth, but to damage truth.

A gentleman was once trying to fit an antique picture into a beautiful frame. However, he does not succeed. What could be the reason? There are two possibilities; either the frame was small for the picture or the picture was bigger than the frame. To fit the picture in the frame that person would arrange for a new frame of fitting size. He will not cut the picture to make it fit in his original frame.

The elements of religion and culture are like this antique picture. The 'frame' in the above example is the intellect which has grown on feeding of dairy milk and under the modern secular education. Some eternal truths are not understood on the touch stone of logic and they are foolishly challenged. In such a situation, instead of cutting the antique picture, one must create a fitting frame. When buddhi follows truth it becomes sadbuddhi. Truth should not be compelled to follow buddhi.

A person settled with great hopes and aspirations in America. After his stay of two and half decades, he decided to come back to India.

After returning to his native country and settling down in his old original house, he wrote a book sharing his experience of

staying in America. He described both the positive and negative aspects of life in America. The book was titled "America – tej ane timir" (America – the dark and bright sides). In this book he wrote a couplet which was the sum and substance of his experience.

Sarhadon ke us Paar, Ja kar kar diya Basera

Hui aisi Shaam, Jiska kabhi na tha Savera ||

When the so-called intellectuals who have migrated into the naked and useless, but glamorous, field of intellectualism, leaving behind their motherland of religion and culture, crossing the borders of faith; would return again to the confines of faith, possibly they would also recite the above couplet to describe their own experience.

And this is why somebody has said :

"Faith begins where reason ends"



A **Thought**

As strong as a **hurricane**.

A **Thought**

A tiny seed capable of
growing into
a **giant tree**.

To guide through
the turbulent waves of
Thought

Presenting herewith ...

