

RAMBLES
IN
JAINISM

ADEESWARA BHAVANAM
POLAL
TAMILNADU

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Edited by

V. G. NAIR

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AN INTRODUCTION TO JAINA CULTURE

By Swami Rishabhadas

A deep study of Jainism will inspire a truth seeker to become a firm believer in the metaphysical concept that the Soul has been struggling hard from birth to birth in this vicious circle of mudane life experiencing pains and sorrows. Jainism has provided the right path to achieve victory from this struggle. Jainism is the science of self conquest and freedom from birth and death ; and its propounder is called 'Jina' which means a conqueror. During this cycle of time, there had been Rishabha, Vardhamana and other twenty-two Thirthankaras or self-conquerors. The grammatical context of the word "Jainism" is to "Conquer"—a word rooted in Sanskrit-Ji-Jaya to Conquer.

Birth and death in reality is not pain, but the product of our evil deed of hurting other living creatures. If we desire to attain freedom from this pain and sorrow, we must stop injuring others and causing them pain. As long as we live a self-centred life, we cannot achieve emancipation from pain and suffering. To gain this end, selfish motive should be substituted by service motive. The moment we start thinking good to all living beings as we would like to think about our own self ; then, we would certainly experience the feeling of bliss. Jainism provides in an exemplary manner the plank of freedom like Universal Brotherhood towards one and all whether he be rich or poor, a tiller or a ruler, a man of property or poverty in accordance with their available

resources. Almost all religions have given credence to non-violence, self-control and austerity but how these ethical laws we could practice in our daily life, has been well explained in Jaina scriptures in a most methodical way. The practical life of a Jaina layman and an ascetic could be well ascertained by anyone by personally coming into close contact with them.

Jaina laymen are called Sravakas and they generously contribute their wealth for the welfare of mankind and other subhuman creatures. Their generosity is rarely seen elsewhere. They have been liberally donating to each and every charitable institution and never approach others for donation to their own institutions. There will be hardly any charitable institution which would not have received donations from the Jain community. There is authentic historic evidence to prove the contribution made by the Jain community from days of yore for humanitarian and public welfare institutions like societies for social service, cattle welfare, promotion of all benevolent causes like giving relief from natural calamities—flood, fire, famine, earthquakes, epidemics and also for the defence of the country in all possible ways from foreign aggression. The Jains have always been rendering yeoman service to every living being—human or sub-human like animals, birds and other sentient life.

We can write a big volume to describe all about their meritorious services. Jains are always strict vegetarians, sympathetic in their outlook and simple in food. This can be testified throughout the length and breadth of the country. Hence, some Europeans wrote that so far as criminal offences are concerned they are seldom found

in the Jain community. It will be no exaggeration to say that the Jain community as a whole from heredity has-kept generally aloof from criminal acts and are therefore called Mahajana, (Great people) Shresta (supreme) and Shah, (honourable people) and they are modest, polite and loyal to the country.

There have been many benevolent Jaina personalities befitting to the time and need of the nation in all walks of life. There have been great rulers like Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya, Emperor Samprati of Malva, Chakravarti Kharvel of Kalinga, Raja Kumarpala, the ruler of Gujerat and other kingdoms, Amogvarsha and several other rulers in the North and South belonging to different dynasties and there were Chera, Chola, Pandya, Pallava and Rastrakutas besides Ganga, Chalukya and Hoyasalas. Among prominent ministers and statesmen are Vastupala, Udayana, Abhad Pedhal, Munjal, Chamundaraya and several others. There have been great and heroic commanders like Vimalashah, Samarshah, Bhama Shah, Veer Tejpal and others. Among notable philanthropists are Jagadooshah, Khema Dedarni, Javadshah, Pethad Shah, and Dhorna Shah who are praiseworthy personalities. As for poets, we must mention Dhanapala, Pampa, Ranna Panna, Ratnaker, Banarsidas, Rishabhadas and several others, who were at the court of Bhojaraja and other rulers. Sidhasena, Samanta Bhadra, Haribhadra, Akalanka Bhatt and others are a few who rank among versatile and dynamic philosophers and logicians. The literature of Tamil and Canarese speaks of the genuine quality of Jaina authors. Similar monumental works are also found in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Ardhamaghadi and other vernacular languages. Therefore, however much we speak of them it is too

little to evaluate their magnetic personalities. The Jainas have always been promoting from remote days higher Arts and Architecture, Commerce and Industry. Their contribution to the development of Art and Architecture could easily be judged from the beautiful temples of Dilwara-Mount Abu, Satrunjaya (Palitana), Ranakpur, Bhadreswar, Kumbhariya, Sravana Belgola, Belur, Mudbhadr, Karakal and Palghat Jain temple in Kerala.

The Jain Gurus are called 'Nigranthas' which mean ascetics of non-attachment to all worldly possessions and also to relations and property both moveable and immoveable. From olden times, illustrious Emperors, distinguished Ministers, Industrialists, traders and leaders have renounced their entire wealth, and had come forward to embrace the ascetic order to live the life of sanctity and serenity. This is evident from the history of each and every State in India. Even to-day, such saints are seen walking on foot from one corner to another preaching the message of mercy, humanism and humanitarianism and adhering to the strict rules of the Monastic Order. Among these Saints many are from rich as well as from middle class families. They are found throughout the length and breadth of the country undergoing hardships by practising monastic rules and travelling from one corner of the country to another. They live the peaceful life of sanctity and maintain themselves on alms and they even remove their hair by their own hands and strictly keep aloof from touching even a copper coin. After sunset, they do not consume even a single drop of water even to quench their unbearable thirst and remain confined to the monastic quarters performing meditation and contemplation in the night. They always use a soft Rajoharan-

made of wool with which they keep aloof all tiny creatures which might be destroyed by their bodily movements while sleeping, sitting and walking. They often undertake complete fast and for many days they live on tasteless and simple food which is called Ayambil. They wander all around the country, propagating the royal path of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. They study with keen interest the language of each and every province, enrich the literature of those States by producing literary works in simple and lucid way enlightening the masses of the people. This is why Jain literary works are found in every language of the country. In corroboration of the above facts an apt illustration could be found in Tamil literature in which we find great works like Silappathikaram, Naladiyar, Jeevaka Chintamani, Yasodhara Kavyam, Meru Mandira Puranam and many other masterpieces. It is an established fact that even the oldest grammar like Tolkappiyam is held as the work of a Jaina scholar. In view of all these facts, the late Sir Shanmugam Chetty observed that Tamil literature would lose all its lustre if Jaina works were removed from them and similar high praising views also were expressed by the late Maharaja of Mysore about Canarése Jain literature. It is now recognised by many scholars that Tiruvalluvar, author of Thirukural was a Jaina by faith because he has paid homage to Rishabha, the Supreme, in the Kural. He (Rishabha) is only scripturally and historically known as Adeeswara, Adi Nath, Adi Jina and Adi Bhagawan. Besides there is much authentic evidence in the Vedas, Puranas, Samhitas and Smrithis to prove the antiquity of Jainism. There are also Rishabha relics scattered in different parts of the world-Arabia, South America, Greece, Russia, and Europe upto Alaska to Mongolia.

It is an acknowledged fact that without the observation of non-violence, self control and penance we cannot achieve freedom from sufferings in this life as well as in the life beyond in rebirths and the whole structure of Jaina culture stands mainly on the above sublime doctrines and the Jain teachers have produced a praiseworthy literature to put the above doctrines in practical life systematically for the ordinary layman to the ideal monk according to their gradations and environments ; hence it is impartially recommended to the truth seekers to peep into the precious Jaina literature with an unbiased mind and they will be certainly convinced by its genuinity.

A few publications dealing with this subject in precised manner are available free of cost from the Jain Mission Sacriety, Mint Street, Madras.

MY GRATITUDE TO THE GREAT MERCIFUL MAHAVIRA

By SWAMI RLSHABHADAS

**O Most merciful Bhagawan Mahavira
Thou art real universal light,
Who illuminated the world on
What is wrong and right.**

**Dogmatism in those days created delusion
Fanaticism made the human to forget to be kind,
Selfish rulers and leaders with passions
Bent to make the peace into piece in the mind.**

**Innocent beasts, birds and the poor were
Brutally treated and have no safety choice,
Supreme Saviour! what earnestly expected for
Such voiceless beings to make virtuous voice!**

**Cruelty, jealousy, enmity, and violence
Caused unbearable sorrow and pang,
Without bridge of unity and fraternity
No hope to reform this selfish gang.**

His holy movement made marvellous metamorphosis,
Gave solace and sudden lift,
Really it was unique fortune for masses,
For having such bountiful nature's gift.

**With hearty gratitude I pay my homage,
To thy soul and thine noble deed,
Because thou proved thyself gracious guide,
Mighty conqueror and saviour in time of need.**

TEACHINGS OF LORD MAHAVIRA

By

N. K. ANOPCHAND B. Com.,

The teachings of Lord Mahavira are "as modern as they are ancient". They suggest themselves as sovereign solution for all problems of mankind, at any period of time, whether, past, present or future. They were enunciated by Lord Mahavira, the last Jain Thirthankara of this cycle of period, about 2500 years ago, at a time, when animal sacrifice was at its climax, confusion and chaos was the rule of the day, class conflicts were common among different clans, opinions were diversified upon principles of philosophy and salvation, ritualism and superstitions were rampant in the minds of the masses and exploitation was the popular principle of the people. Though he was born and brought up in princely luxuries, he was not satisfied with worldly pleasures. So, he renounced the world and followed the path of perfection. He did severe penance, an important weapon to destroy past karmas for about 12 years and attained perfect knowledge (kevala jnana). The attainment of omniscience made his teachings so scientific and flexible that mankind could adopt them at all times for freeing themselves from the bondage of karmic shackles and gain salvation, the highest goal of life.

The ultimate object of all his teachings is the realisation of the true nature of the Soul which consists of Infinite Faith, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss,

This could be achieved by following the triple formula of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct.

The term Right Faith connotes the having of a strong conviction about the existence and nature of Sudeva, Suguru and Sudharma. Sudeva, the ultimate aim of all human efforts is that Soul which has liberated itself from Matter and achieved the fullest freedom and the true nature of the Self. Suguru means the living human personality who not only practices the path of perfection but also guides others who are desirous of walking on that path. Sudharma stands for the right path directed by the all knowing Teacher which will lead to Nirvana, The Abode of Bliss and Beauty. Right conviction makes us perceive the reality of life and the seriousness of our object in life. In brief "it is the realisation of one self as a pure soul as something not distinct from the attributes, which are peculiar to a perfect soul namely perfect knowledge, power and bliss".

Right knowledge makes us examine in detail the different aspects of a single whole truth. Such an examination not only removes our ignorance, clears our doubts, destroys our superstitions but also enlarges our vision and fills in us a spirit to direct our efforts for achieving what is really our own. It will strengthen our conviction upon the ideals inspired by Right Faith so that the right path adopted could be adhered to till the object is materialised. It may relate to knowledge acquired by means of five senses (Mati-Jnana), about things other than those to which Mati-Jnana relates (Sruta-Jnana), knowledge of the remote or past (Avadhi-Jnana), knowledge of the thoughts and feelings of others (Manahaparayaya Jnana) and full or perfect knowledge (Kevala-Jnana).

“Faith and knowledge leading to Right Conduct are at once the process and the goal; for Right Faith dispel weak doubts, Right Knowledge preserves us from ignorance, to create the best life of which we are capable.” The fundamental basis on which the rules of Right Conduct are enunciated is to provide the individuals with maximum facilities possible for attaining Moksha i. e. perfect peace and bliss of the soul. The five famous principles of Right Conduct as taught by Lord Mahavira and others are non-injury, truth, non-stealing, chastity and non-attachment.

The doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence is the greatest and noblest of all his teachings. In strict sense it means non-injury to any living creature by thought, word and deed. Practically speaking it will be suffice to say that it aims at avoiding any violence which is deliberate and not unavoidable. It does not generally prohibit injury for purposes of defending oneself or performing his domestic duties. What it actually prohibits is killing for the sake of killing. It is based on the fact that all living creatures have souls and are therefore alike. Further no one likes pain because happiness is an intrinsic attribute of the soul. Even according to the Universal Law of Cause and Effect those who want happiness should not inflict pain upon others. How can we get a rose flower when we sow the seed of a futile shrub?

The significane of the phrase “non-injury by thought, word and deed ” must be clearly understood. Himsa does not merely mean physical injury. Even the genesis of the idea of injuring others or the utterance of such words as would harm others are deemed to be acts of Himsa for the final physical action is the cumulative effect of the first

two stages. Further intention plays a prominent part in determining whether our action is good or bad. Even the Indian Penal Code shows that a criminal offence rests upon the intention of the party committing the act. Thus it is thought that sows the seeds, words that support it and deed that actually inflicts pain upon others. Therefore a control over the heart, head and hand has been advocated for its practical observation.

Ahimsa embraces in itself all other principles of conduct and is therefore rightly called the "Supreme Religion of Man". It cannot be observed practically without truthful expression, security of one's belongings, satisfaction with one's own wife and limiting one's own material possessions. This is necessary "to live and let live" which is the main motto of this noble principle. When stated positively it means "Universal love or Brotherhood" i.e. compasston towards all living creatures. Therefore in the reign of Ahimsa there can be no domination by one nation over another, no exploitation of the weak by the strong and no distinction between one race and another. Ahimsa is the one and only panacea for saving the bleeding humanity from total annihilation made possible by the discovery of atomic, nuclear and other diabolical weapons.

The principle of 'Aparigraha' of Lord Mahavira means non-attachment or non-possession but as applied to laymen it is called *parimita parigraha*, i.e. limited possession. According to this principle every individual must voluntarily put a ceiling on his material possessions and any excess over and above this limit should be placed at the disposal of the society. It is based on the fact that since the material resources of the Nature are limited in supply

it is not possible to satisfy the unlimited wants of all human beings in their crude form. It therefore becomes essential to sacrifice the less important wants of a few people in order to satisfy the elementary requirements of the others. Another point in favour of this doctrine is that satisfaction is a mental state. Material objects cause mental distress and arouse several worries whereby the mind cannot enjoy tranquility and peace. Thus this teaching is of dual significance. As regards its spiritual importance it has been said that "as a bird equipped with two feathers soars higher and higher in the sky, so also a soul equipped with Ahimsa and Aparigraha will rise in the spiritual sphere and attain Divinity". Economically it aims at wider and more equitable distribution of wealth which the modern governments try to achieve by various 'isms' like Socialism, Capitalism, Communism etc. The result of this has been the division of the world into two hostile groups with a conflict of ideologies. The measures adopted by them are the massacre of men, putting them to several hardships and subjecting them to several direct and indirect taxes, But the success and solidarity of such measures is open to doubt because they are forced down the throats of people who will always try to avoid or evade them as far as possible. Under such circumstances the principle of voluntary limited possession can work wonders in putting an end to the economic unrest, ideological conflicts and financial difficulties. Since its object is to provide maximum welfare to all people with the limited natural resources it can contribute a great deal in organising society on sound footings.

The Philosophy of Anekanantavada, another great teaching of Lord Mahavira, means description of manifold

attributes. It states that all seemingly contradictory statements are necessarily not hostile to one another. It is quite likely that they may represent the several different aspects of the same phenomena based on different experiences. Taking a comprehensive view of entire reality an impartial thinker will agree that truth a prism which presents various seemingly contradictory phases, but in fact all notions of reality are complementary. This principle of "it may be" and not "it is" advocates an attitude of toleration and intellectual co-existence. On account of the lack of such qualities the modern world is characterised by the presence of mutual hatred and controversies over issues of small or no significance which have created an atmosphere of tension or paved the way for a war of words. The adoption of this principle would root off hatred, evolve all controversies by acting as an arbitrator and will put an end to the cold war.

The Theory of Karma is yet another glorious teaching of Lord Mahavira. Karma is a substantive force, a sort of infra atomic particles which have the peculiar property of developing the effects of merit and demerit. "As heat unites with iron, and water with milk, so karma unites with the soul" Life is a struggle between matter and spirit. This doctrine is in confirmity with the Natures Law "as you sow, so you reap" The existence of God as creator of world is therefore denied and man is held responsible for all his fortunes as well as misfortunes, freedom as well as bondage. Jainism looks upon man himself as God when his inherent powers are in blossom. Every liberated soul is divine, God in Man Theory being another word for the soul at its best. Salvation was preached as the birth right of man, and it was assured to all without any

distinction of caste, creed or sex. This great principle that man is the architect of his own destiny will always act as an active inducement for mankind to continue their walk on the road of the Realisation of the Self.

“The teachings of Lord Mahavira sound like the triumphal song of a victorious soul that has at last found in this world its own deliverance and freedom”. They have got a great message for mankind. They have given three gems for peace and bliss—Ahimsa—Univesal Brotherhood, Anekantavada—Universal Outlook and Aparigraha Vada—Abandonment of all material objects and self-realisation. In them lies the greatest hopes of humanity whose very existence is threatened by the discoveries of mass destructive weapons. Therefore, if the teachings of Lord Mahavira are preached and propagated over the entire length and breadth of the world and put in practice in their day-to-day affairs to solve problems of internal as well as international importance they would establish an era of peace, plenty and prosperity on this earth.

BHAGAWAN MAHAVIRA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

By

V. G. Nair

If we study the ancient history and culture of India, it will be evident that the social and religious conditions prevalent in our country some six centuries before Christ were in urgent need of reform for the purification, unity and elevation of man. The original culture prevalent in India from time immemorial had deteriorated to such a low level that selfish and greedy men dominated society and also human thought in all spheres of worldly life. Superstition, blind faith, bigotry, inertia and intellectual slavery were the order of the day. There are references in our religious scriptures about the miserable social conditions of the people prevalent in those remote days.

In the midst of currents and cross currents rising in social and religious life of the people which threatened to submerge the original Bharat culture creating chaos and confusion throughout the country, a beacon light appeared in the horizon in the magnetic personality of Vardhamana Mahavira, the prince of Vaisali in Magadha or modern Bihar. Vardhamana was the accredited representative of the Cosmic Government who descended in this mundane world for the redemption of all sentient life from sufferings. In his previous lives, Vardhamana had acquired all the noble qualities of a super-man, an ideal person or

Thirthankara, the Arhant, the Omniscient Teacher who was entitled to occupy the exalted position of a world Teacher for reviving the ancient path of mercy, compassion, righteousness and self-purification. In his previous births, Vardhamana had practised penance and austerities, charity, equanimity and compassion towards all sentient life. He had been born in his previous births in the names of Nayasara, Manichikumar, Tripusha Vasudeva, Chakravarthi Priyamitra and King Nandan Kumar and in his next birth he entered the sanctimonious womb of queen Trisaladevi, the consort of King Siddhartha. This most auspicious event in the history of mankind which ushered a new era of intellectual awakening, peaceful progress in society, the promotion of universal welfare occurred on the thirteenth night of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. At the time of Vardhamana's birth, the spring was in full swing, the radiating moon illuminated the earth with its sparkling light, enthusing vigour and giving strength to all sentient life like humans, plants, trees and creepers, animals and birds, and all visible and invisible creatures of this universe. A cosmic tremor occurred on the earth intensified with powerful vibrations which ran through the hearts of every living being raising in them unbounded feelings of joy, hilarity, contentment, happiness and peace. According to the law of the Cosmic Government, Indra, the Lord of the heavenly world descended to the palace of King Siddhartha accompanied by his retinue of celestials and with the permission of Trisaladevi carried prince Vardhamana to the invisible region of Mount Meru for performing his birth ceremony befitting to the exalted position of an Arhat, the emancipated Soul, the accredited representative of the Cosmic Government, the World Teacher,

who had descended on this earth for preaching the right path of life and to revive the ancient culture of India for the promotion of universal welfare. Indra anointed Vardhamana with the holy water of the Ganges and all the holy rivers and oceans. After the conclusion of the anointing ceremony, Indra escorted back the holy child Vardhamana to his mother Queen Trisaladevi. In the early morning, Siddhartha celebrated the birth of his son with all pomp and grandeur. He decorated the city with multi-coloured flags and flowers. Devotional songs were sung in all houses of worship, trumpets were blown, sweets were distributed among children, the poor were sumptuously fed, alms were given to the ascetics, charity in money and materials were distributed among the needy, scholars were honoured and dramatic performances held in the city. It was a gala day in the life of the people in Magadha. Prince Vardhamana from his early childhood had the inborn instincts of courage, sobriety, humility and nobility. He displayed the traits of the most intelligent child prodigy in the whole country of Magadha. He grew to manhood and according to one version in the scriptures married Princess Yesoda and had a daughter called Priyadarsana. But according to another version, Prince Siddhartha never married and remained a celibate throughout his life. Vardhamana was of a contemplative temperament, merciful and charitable to all suffering life. He lived in the palace enjoying all the princely luxuries till the attainment of his twenty-eighth year. At this age, he resolved to renounce the world and lead the homeless life of an ascetic for self realisation practising penance and austerities. His elder brother Nandivardhana accosted him to lead the worldly life for some more years to condole the death of their parents and in response to

his desire Vardhamana continued his home life for two more years. But during this period, he lived like an ascetic practising meditation, undertaking fasts and observing austerities. After the completion of two years, Vardhamana renounced the world and embraced asceticism. He was at his thirtieth year when he turned to a homeless life of a recluse. Vardhamana retired to Gyakhanda Udyan and began his penance seated under an Asoka tree. He practised penance contemplating on the Soul and the Cosmic Order. After some years, he left Udyan and traversed on foot through Bengal to the frontiers of Baluchistan or Gandhara. He crossed dense jungles and formidable hills, impenetrable rivers and mountains trekking through dangerous regions where ferocious beasts and venomous reptiles wandered in search of prey. He was immersed in deep meditation observing long fasts for self-purification in his search of the Inner Self. The holy scriptures declare that during Vardhamana's hard penance for more than twelve years, he partook only morsels of food or *paranas* 349 times for sustaining his life so as to enable him to reach the ultimate state of omniscience. During this period of asceticism, he was persecuted, harassed and brutally treated by savages and demons, but he remained unperturbed without rousing the slightest feelings of revenge towards his oppressors. After twelve years of asceticism unrivalled in the history of the world, Vardhamana attained the supreme state of *Keval Jnan* or self-illumination while practising penance on the bank of the river Rijuvalika. According to the *Kalpasutra*, Vardhamana on the attainment of omniscience came to know the past, the present and future of all living beings, the gradations of every life, the secrets of the universe, its composition and all the

hidden truths of nature. He elevated himself to the supreme state of *Sarvajna*, the All-Knowing Master of Infinite Compassion. It is recorded in the scriptures that Indra and all the devas came to pay homage to the Omniscient Teacher of truth and to hear the master's sermons on *Dharma*, the righteous way of life for the attainment of salvation and freedom from all mundane sufferings. Vardhamana conquered his Self and became a Jina, the emancipated soul or the Arhat and came to be popularly known in the venerable name of Mahavira, the Conqueror of the Self. Indra erected a golden shamiana ornamented with precious gems for facilitating Mahavira to deliver his sermons and revive the ancient culture of India. Mahavira occupied the *Samavasarana* and delivered his first sermon on Dharma. The holy scriptures contain the following declarations of Mahavira :

“Every soul is potentially divine with its latent qualities of infinite knowledge, cognition, and bliss. But the soul is veiled by the karmic body created from attachments and desires. When this karmic body is removed by penance and non-attachment to worldly possessions man is freed from bondage. As we sow ; so we reap. So long as thou shalt not refrain thyself from causing pains and troubles to thy fellow creatures thou needs not ever dream to be emancipated from the appalling dangers of the same. Whatever sufferings and enjoyments are experienced in our life are the results of our own good and bad action. Nothing could happen against the law of cause and effect or the Law of Karma. The shadow of a tree is not real, but the tree is real. When the tree is uprooted, the shadow could disappear. Our bitter experiences are the inevitable outcome of our own actions and its reactions”.

The sermons of Bhagawan Mahavira captivated the hearts of the most learned persons of his time. The most distinguished scholars like Indrabhuti, Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti together with their 4400 disciples accepted Mahavira as their religious teacher and became the first disciples of the Master. There were eleven Ganadharas or Heads of the Monastic Order, the Samgha founded by Mahavira. The chief Ganadhara was Indrabhuti Gautama who was the most learned Brahmin of the day. Many rulers of Northern India became Mahavira's lay disciples and patrons of his Samgha. These rulers were King Srenika of Magadha, King Chetaka of Vaishali, King Shatanika of Kausambi, King Udayi of Sindhu Savira and King Chandapradhyat of Avanti. Several other kings numbering about thirty eight became Mahavira's staunch lay disciples. Leading traders, and commercial magnates like Ananda, Kamadeva and Maha Shataka who were the richest sheths or saits of the day took asylum at the feet of Mahavira. Having fulfilled his mission of mercy, Mahavira while delivering a long sermon, on Karma Philosophy passed away to the world beyond attaining the supreme State of Nirvana at the age of seventy two. Pavapuri in modern Bihar was the sacred site of Mahavira's Nirvana. To commemorate this memorable event in the history of India, the people of Magadha, Kasi-Kosala and many other parts of Northern and Central India lighted thousands and lakhs of lamps on the night of the great passing away of Mahavira and this sacred day in later centuries came to be known as the Festival of Lights or Dipawali observed today by both the Hindus and the Jains of India.

Jainism is a religion of Ahimsa or Universal love. Bhagawan Mahavira has declared :

‘ The learned should refrain from violence and must have full faith in non-violence. Fight with yourself ; why fight with foes external ? Happy is he who conquereth his self by his own self. When the Self is conquered, the five senses and anger, deceit, conceit and lust are conquered.’

GEMS FROM JAINISM

- 1. Every living being has a soul.**
- 2. Every soul is potentially divine having the innate qualities of infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss.**
- 3. The natural qualities of the soul are not manifest because of its association with karmas.**
- 4. When all the karmas are removed, the soul becomes pure and perfect, and attains liberation.**
- 5. The path to liberation consists of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct,**
- 6. Right faith is absolute faith in the nature of realities as they are ; Right knowledge is true knowledge of the characteristics of realities; Right conduct is pure and harmless way of life.**
- 7. Ahimsa is the basis of right conduct.**
- 8. Life is dear to all and every living-being desires to live happily its span of life. Therefore harm no living being.**
- 9. Every man is the architect of his own life. He is the cause of his own happiness and misery ; He is his own friend or foe.**
- 10. Every soul, because of its own actions is born as a celestial, human, sub-human, or hellish being.**

11. A soul that is not restrained is like the river Vaitami or the thorny Salmali Tree in Hell; but a well restrained soul is like khamadhenu, or Nandana Park.
12. If the self is well subdued a man becomes happy in this world as well as the next.
13. One who wants real happiness should fight against the enemies that are in his own self. What is the use of fighting against external things?
14. Body is like a ship; The Soul is the sailor; Mundane existence is the great Ocean which has to be crossed.
15. Neither his kinsman nor his friends nor his sons, nor his relatives are prepared to share a man's pain. He has to bear it himself.
16. Karma follows invariably the doer and the doer alone as the shadow accompanies the man.
17. Just as the crane is produced from the egg, and the egg is produced from the crane, so also delusion comes out of desire and desire comes out of delusion.
18. Love and hatred are the seeds of Karma; Karma takes its rise from delusion. Karma is the root cause of birth and death which are full of misery.
19. Misery is destroyed in the case of a man who has no delusion; delusion is gone in the case of him who has no desire; Desire is gone in the case of him who has no greed and greed is gone in the case of him, who has renounced everything.

20. Religion (Dharma) is the highest bliss ; It consists of noninjury, self-restraint and penance.
21. From the root grows up the trunk of the tree ; From the trunk shoot up the branches ; From them the twigs and the leaves grow ; And then are produced flowers and fruits. Similarly obedience is the root of the tree of Religion and liberation is the highest benefit.
22. Even Gods bow down to him who has his mind always firmly fixed in dharma.
23. Before old age commences to give trouble, or diseases begin to attack, or senses fail, one should practice Religion (Dharma)
24. For living beings carried away by the rapid current of old age and death, it is religion that serves as an island, firm ground, refuge as well as the best shelter.
25. In the same way as a gourd coated all round with mud sinks down in water, similarly, a soul attached to more and more Karmas goes down and down.
26. When the mud covering of the gourd is washed off gradually it gets lighter and goes up to the surface of the water ; So also a soul that is freed from Karmas rises up to the summit of the universe and there rests enjoying eternal beatitude.
27. Penance is fire ; Religious exertions are the ladders. Body is the dried cow dung ; Karma is the fuel ; Self-control, self-exertion and tranquility are the

oblations to be offered and Soul is the doer of the Yagna.

28. Persons who are ignorant of the truth are always miserable !
29. There is no right knowledge without right faith ; without right knowledge there can be no merit in right conduct ; without meritorious conduct, there can be no freedom from bondage and one who is not free from bondage can have no perfection.
30. Enlightenment is easy for those who have devotion to true faith, entertain no results of their actions and abstain completely from injury to living-beings.
31. When a man dies and goes to lower forms of life it will be very difficult for him to be born as a human being. Therefore he must use every moment of his life righteously for the sake of himself as well as for others.
32. Householders who have self control are superior to saints who have no self restraint.
33. If a monk is ill behaved neither his garments made of bark or hide or pieces of cloth nor his nakedness nor his matted hair nor his shaven head can save him.
34. He is brahmana who has no love or hatred, who practises penance and who has absolute mental peace.
35. In the same way as a lotus is unattached to water though it lives and grows in a pond, a righteous man is always free from all forms of attachment though living in the family surrounded by relatives.

36. One is not a Sramana by simply having clean shaven head; One is not a brahmana by merely reciting sacred texts; one is not a muni by merely residing in a forest, and one is not a hermit by using sacred grass, and garment made of bars.
37. One becomes a brahmana by his action, a Kshatriya by his action, a Vaisya by his action and Sudra by his action and not by his birth.
38. In the same way as a pale leaf of the tree falls down at the end of its days so does the life of a man comes to an end at the expiry of his age.
39. Life is transient like a dew drop at the tip of a blade of grass.
40. Four things are difficult to attain. Human birth. knowledge of the law, belief in it and strength to, put the law into practice.
41. A wise man will search for the true dharma (law), try to know it and strive to practise it.
42. Try to avoid any sinful act out of anger, greed, fear or even in joke.
43. Iron weapons give us pain only for a short time, but injurious words torment us always.
44. Ignorant persons without any knowledge of what is to come, think highly of themselves, their wealth, their influence and their surrounding.
45. Death is an inevitable and common door through which the young and old; the rich and the poor as also children in the womb have to pass.

46. Equanimity of mind lifts a man to the region of gods.
47. If you really want happiness, then do not injure any living being in any of the three ways (in mind by word and deed).
48. Just as a tortoise draws all his limbs into his body so also a righteous person should withdraw himself from all actions (which will keep him down in the mudane existence).
49. When the inflow of water into a tank is stopped, the tank gradually gets dried up by reason of its water being taken out for use or by being evaporated. In the same way when the inflow of fresh karmas is prevented, a person becomes free by gradually destroying the already accumulated karmas by penance.
50. The bliss of a liberated soul is like an ocean while the pleasure of even a human being in exalted position is like a dew drop on the blade of a grass.
51. By merely adoring great people you cannot become great. You should study their lives and walk the same path which they have trodden.
52. Proper religious training cannot be had due to five reasons ; Egoism, anger, carelessness, illness, and laziness.
53. Superstition is the greatest hindrance to the realisation of truth.
54. What is said to be a family is only like group of persons living in a rest house. As persons in a rest house have come from different places so also the

members in a family have come from different births. In the same way as the persons leaving at rest house go in different directions similarly the members of a family go to different births after death.

55. One who conquers his own self is mightier than one who has conquered thousands of warriors in battle field.
56. Try to be patient as the earth, calm and cool like water, without attachment, like air, regular as the sun, firm as a mountain and deep and profound as the ocean.
57. He who injures any life injures first his own self.
58. Desire is veritably limitless like space. A greedy man has no satisfaction even though mountains of gold and silver as big as kailas are offered to him.
59. Anger destroys love ; pride puts an end to modesty; Conceit takes away friends while greed destroys everything.
60. Life cannot be prolonged. Therefore make use of it as best you can for your betterment and for the good of others.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL TENETS OF JAINISM

Jainism is a practical science illustrating in a most rationalistic way the phenomena of Nature constituting the whole universe and the laws governing the same.

Jainism is based on Right Faith, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct and does not subscribe to any form of temptation, persuasion, coercion and superstition.

Jainism throws light on all substances (sentient and non-sentient) and their modifications composing this universe with the attendant qualities of Existence, Destruction and Permanence.

Jainism never defines in any loose and indefinite way the term Dharma, but gives it a scientific and etymological interpretation meaning the essential Nature of the substance; hence it does not give privilege to human being to act as he likes with selfish motive.

The natural characteristics of the soul are Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Cognition, Infinite Power and Infinite Bliss. These four infinite qualities could be realised from the practice of non-violence, self-control and penance which emancipate the Soul and elevate it to the supreme divine stage of eternal peace and perfection.

Jainism defines Ahimsa as not mere compassion for living beings, but emphasises on keeping free the Soul energy from getting itself degraded to immorality, passion or such other adulterations caused by the domination of the material energy (Karmic matter) and which are contrary to the natural characteristics of soul as Infinite

Knowledge, Infinite Cognition, Infinite Bliss and Infinite Self Control.

Jainism considers " Attachment " as the root cause of all sins. Hence, without practising non-attachment and try to get rid of all sins will be similar to expecting nectar from the mouth of a venomous cobra.

Jainism teaches the easiest way of ending all miseries and troubles and try to reduce oneself successfully from hurting in thought, word and deed all the living beings because all our experiences are nothing but the reactions of our actions of our present and past births.

Jainism alone teaches what real independence is because even the supreme status of divinity is not the sole property of any God or any Agency ; but it is the commonwealth which is open for all spiritually advanced souls.

Jainism emphasises the worship of man by virtue of him merit. Hence, it does not make any distinction between the high and the low, but is broad enough to welcome into its fold all the deserving and meritorious personalities without any prejudice favour or partiality.

Jainism does not degrade the sanctity of the divine power by conceiving a single (Iswara) and throw all the responsibilities and sufferings of the World on H I M : but it lays down that the universe is self controlled and self-governed by its own natural laws scientifically based on mathematical grounds.

Jainism believes Supreme Divinity as an uninterrupted and sanctified stage which can be achieved by the Perfect Souls who by their own proper actions and individual responsibilities and without indulging in false conceptions elevate themselves to the pinnacle of purity.

ANTIQUITY OF JAINISM

VIEWS OF RENOWNED SCHOLARS

In conclusion let me assert my conviction that Jainism is an original system quite distinct and independent from all others and that, therefore, it is of great importance for the study of philosophical thought and religious life in ancient India. "

Dr. Herman Jacobi

" Jainism is of very high order. Its important teachings are based upon science. The more the scientific knowledge advances the more the Jaina teachings will be proved. "

Dr. L.P. Tessitori

Jainism is really neither Hinduism or Vedic dharma. It contributes to the advancement of Indian culture and study of Indian philosophy. "

Jawabarlal Nehru

" George Bernard Shaw in his conversation with Mr. Devadas Gandhi expressed his view that the Jaina teachings were appealing to him much and that he wished to be born in a Jaina family. Due to the influence of Jainism he was always taking pure food free from meat diet and liquor. "

"Jainism has contributed to the world the sublime doctrine of Ahimsa. No other religion has emphasised the importance of Ahimsa and carried its practise to the extent that Jainism has done. Jainism deserves to become the universal religion because of its Ahimsa doctrine. "

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

There is nothing wonderful in my saying that Jainism was in existence long before the Vedas were composed. "

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

" We learn from Sashttras and commentaries that Jainism is existing from beginningless time. This fact is indisputable and free from difference of opinion. There is much historical evidence in this point. "

Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak.

" I say with conviction that the doctrine for which the name of Lord Mahavira is glorified nowadays is the doctrine of Ahimsa. If anyone has practised to the fullest extent and propagated most of the doctrines of Ahimsa, it was Lord Mahavira. "

Mahatma Gandhi

“ Mahavira proclaimed in India that religion is reality and not a mere social convention. It is really truth. Salvation can not be had by merely observing external ceremonies. Religion cannot make any difference between man and man. ”

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore

NYAYABINDHU, the Buddhist work on Logic

“Yataha Sarvajna Aptova Sa Jyothinanathika—
Mupathisatva Yatha Rishabha Vardhamanaridhi. ”

HINDU SCRIPTURES

YAJUR VEDA, Cha. 19. Mantra 14.

“ O Arhan ! You are equipped with the arrow of Vastuswarupa, the law of teaching and the ornaments of the four infinite qualities, O Arhan ! you have attained the omniscient knowledge in which the entire universe is reflected. O Arhan ! You are protecting all the Jivas in the world. O The Destroyer of Kama (lust). There is no strong person equal to you. ”

YOGA VASISHTA, Ch. 15, sloka 8

(the saying of Sri Rama)

“I am not Rama. I have no desire for material things. Like Jina I want to establish peace within myself. ”

TIRUKURAL, the Tamil Veda of South India.

“ Akaramuthal eluthellam Adibhagavan (Lord Rishabha) Mutharke Ulaku. ”

BRAHMANDA PURANAM

“ Marudevi gave birth to a divine baby, named, Rishabha, who was the highest as well as the most notable person among the Kshattriyas. ”

NAGA PURANAM

“ Whatever divine benefits could be acquired by and undertaking a pilgrimage to all the sixty-eight Tirthas, the same benefits could be acquired by a momentary meditation on Adinath (Lord Rishabha). ”

SRIMAD BHAGAVD PURANA

“ To establish the Dharma (righteousness) Iswara was born as Rishabha, the world Teacher. During the reign of Lord Rishabha, the people enjoyed all the blessings of life. ”

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