

Religious Harmony and Fellowship of Faiths : A Jaina Perspective

Among the most burning problems, the world is facing today, religious fundamentalism and intolerance is the most crucial. The miraculous advancement in science and technology provided us light-legged means of transportation and communication. As a result physical distances have no bars to meet the peoples of different nations, cultures and religions. Our world is shrinking but disdainfully the distances of our hearts are widening day by day. Instead of developing mutual love, cooperation and faith, we are spreading hatred and hostility and thus ignoring the values of harmonious living and co-existence. The blind and mad race of nuclear weapons is a clear indication that the human race is proceeding towards its formidable funeral procession. Rabindranath Tagore rightly observed "For man to come near to one another and yet to ignore the claims of humanity is the sure process of suicide."¹ In the present circumstances, the only way out left for the survival of mankind is to develop a firm belief in mutual co-operation and co-existence. Religious harmony and fellowship of faiths is the first and foremost need of our age.

Humanity as a Binding Force

Undoubtedly we belong to different faiths, religions and cultures. Our modes of worship as well as way of living also differ to some extent. There is also no denying the fact that our philosophical approaches and viewpoints are divergent but among these diversities there is a common thread of unity which binds all of us, and it is nothing except humanity. We all belong to the same human race. Unfortunately, at present, humanity as such is largely shoved into the background and differences of caste, colour and creed have become more important for us. We have forgotten our essential unity and are conflicting on the basis of these apparent diversities. But we must bear in our mind that it is only humanity which can conjoin the people of different faiths, cultures and nationalities. Jaina *ācāryas* declared the human race as one (*egā maṇussa jāi*)². The difference of caste, culture and creed are not only superficial but mostly the creation of man.

What is True Religion

The ultimate end in view of all religions is to ensure

peace and happiness for the individual and to establish harmony within human society. However, as is known from history, countless wars have been fought in the name of the religion. The religion thus remains accused for the inestimable amount of bloodshed of mankind. Of course, it is not of the so-called men of religion responsible for this horrible consequences. At present religion as such is largely shoved into the background or at best used in the service of political ideologies. If one believes that only his faith, his mode of worship and his political ideologies are the right means for securing peace and happiness for mankind, he cannot be tolerant to the view-points of his opponents. The immediacy, therefore, is to develop tolerance to and friendship for others. It is the only approach by which we can generate peace and harmony inside human society.

Can religion as a category, of which Jainism is a part, meet with this challenge of our times? Before this question can be answered we must make a distinction between a true and a false religion. Because a true religion never supports violence, intolerance and fanatical outlook and it cannot *per se* be made responsible for the ignominious acts committed in the name of religion by such religious leaders who want to serve their vested interest. The barbarity committed in the past and perpetrated in the present in the name of religion is due very largely to the intolerance and fanaticism of the so-called religious leaders and their ignorant followers.

The only way of freeing oneself from this sordid situation is to comprehend the true nature, indeed, to grasp the "essence" of religion and to develop tolerance toward and respect for other's ideologies and faiths.

For the Jainas, a true religion consists in the practice of equanimity and its foundation is the observance of non-violence. In the *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, the earliest Jaina text (c. late 4th cent. B.C.), we come across these two definitions of religion : Equanimity is the essence of religion, while the observance of non-violence is its external exposition or a social aspect of religion. The *Ācārāṅga* mentions that practising of non-violence is the true and eternal religion.

Jainism, since its inception, believes in and preaches for peace, harmony and tolerance. It has been tolerant and respectful toward, other faiths and religious ideologies throughout its history of existence. In Jainism one hardly

comes across instances of religious conflicts involving violence and bloodshed. At most one meets with instance; of disputations and strongly worded debates concerning ideological disagreements. The Jaina men of learning while opposing the different ideologies and religious standpoints, fully paid regard to them and accepted that the opponents' convictions may also be valid from a certain standpoint.

Humanity as a true form of religion

First of all we are human being and then anything else i.e. Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains and the like. To be a real human being is a pre-condition for being a real Hindu etc. Our prime duty is to be a human in its real sense. This spirit is echoed in one of the earlier Jaina text *Uttarādhyayana* wherein Lord Mahāvira has laid down four conditions for a true religious being. viz-1. Humanity 2. true faith 3. control over senses and 4. efforts for self-purification³. Thus, we see that among these four conditions of a religious being, humanity occupies the first and the foremost position.

In Jainism religion is defined as a true nature of thing (*Vatthu Sahāvo Dhammo*⁴) and in the light of the above definition it can be said that humanity is the true religion of mankind. For, it is its essential nature. As a human being if we fail to behave like a human being, we have no right to call ourselves a religious being or even a human being. Bertrand Russell, the eminent philosopher and scientist of our age, suggests "I appeal as a human being to the human beings that remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so the way lies open to a new paradise. If you cannot, nothing lies before you but universal death"⁵. And thus, I want to emphasize that humanity is our first and the foremost religion.

What is Humanity ?

The question may be raised what we mean by the term humanity? The simple answer is, humanity is nothing but the presence of self-awareness reasonableness and self-control. These three qualities are accepted as distinguishing features between a human being and animal being by all the humanist thinkers of our age. These three basic qualities are comprehended in Jaina concept of three jewels, i.e. *Samyak-Darśana* (right vision), *Samyak-Jñāna* (right knowledge) and *Samyak-cāritra* (right conduct), respectively which also constitute the path of liberation.⁶ The presence of these three makes a being a perfect human being.

Fellowship means Unity in Diversity

Jaina thinkers assert that unity implies diversity. For them unity and diversity are the two facets of the same reality. Reality itself is unity in diversity. Absolute unity i.e. monism and absolute diversity i.e. pluralism, both of the theories are not agreeable to Jainas. According to them from the generic view point reality is one, but when viewed from modal view-point, it is many. Once a question was asked to Lord Mahāvira, O' Lord! whether you are one or many. To this Mahāvira replied, "From substantial view point I am one, but if viewed from changing conditions of mind and body I am different each moment and thus many." This view is further elaborated by Ācārya Malliṣeṇa. He says "whatsoever is one, is also many⁷." Really, unity in diversity is the law of nature. Nature everywhere is one, but there is diversity in it, as the natural phenomena differ from each other, so is the case with human beings also. Though all the human beings have some common characteristics and features yet every individual-being differs from others and has some specific qualities. It is also true about religions. All the religions have some common characteristics sharing with others as well as specific qualities of their own. Universal virtues such as non-violence, friendliness, service to the needy, truthfulness, honesty, control over senses, etc. are commonly shared by all the religions of the world. Unfortunately, at present, these common universal virtues which are the essence of religious practices have been shoved into the background and external rituals, which are divergent in their nature, have become more important. Thus, we have forgotten the essential unity of all the religions and are stressing their diversities.

I am emphasizing the essential unity of all the religions, this does not mean that I am the supporter of one world religion or undermining the specialities and diversities of them. What I intend to say is that the absolute unity and absolute diversity, both are illusory concepts and fellowship of faith means unity in diversity.

Co-operation as Essential Nature of Living Beings

For Jainas co-operation and co-existence are the essential nature of living beings. Darwin's dictum- 'struggle for existence' and the Indian saying- *Jivajīvasya bhojanam*, that is 'life thrives on life' are not acceptable to them.

They maintain that it is not the struggle but the mutual co-operation is the law of life. Umāsvāti (4th century A.D.) in his work *Tattvārthasūtra* clearly maintains that mutual

co-operation is the nature of living beings (*parasparopagraho Jīvānām*)⁸. Living beings originate, develop and exist with the co-operation of other living beings. So is the case with the human society also, its existence also depends on mutual co-operation, sacrifice of one's own interest in the interest of other fellow beings and regard for other's life, ideology, faith and necessities. If we think that other's services are essential for our existence and living, then we should also co-operate in others living.

If we consider taking the help of others in our living as our right, then on the same ground of logic it is our honest duty to help others in their living. The principle of equality of all beings means that every one has a right to live just as myself and therefore one should not have any right to take other's life.

Thus, for Jainas the directive principle of living is not 'living on other's or 'living by killing', but 'living with others' or 'living for others'. They proclaim that co-operation and co-existence are the essential nature of living beings. If it is so, then we must accept that religious tolerance and fellowship of faiths are such principles as should be followed at the bottom of our hearts.

One World-Religion : A Myth

In order to eradicate the conflicts and stop violence in the name of religion from the world some may give a slogan of one world religion but it is neither feasible nor practicable. So far as the diversities in thoughts and habits, in cultural background and intellectual levels, of the human beings are in existence, the varieties in religious ideologies and practices are essential. Jaina pontiff Haribhadra rightly maintains that the diversity in the teachings of the Sages is due to diversity in the levels of their disciples or the diversity in the standpoints adopted by the Sages themselves or the diversities in place and time i.e. ethnic circumstances in which they preached or it is only apparent diversity. Just as a physician prescribes different medicines according to the condition of patients, his illness and the climatic conditions, so is the case with the diversity in religious preachings also⁹. Therefore, unity, as well as diversity both are equally essential for the fellowship of faiths and we should not undermine any one of them. Just as the beauty of a garden consists in the variety of flowers, fruits and plants, in the same way the beauty of the garden of religions depends of the variety of thoughts, ideals and modes of worship.

Equal Regard to all Religions

According to Jainas equal regard to different faiths and religions should be the base of religious harmony and fellowship of faiths. Jaina thinker Ācārya Siddhasena Divākara remarks "just as emerald and other jewels of rare quality and of excellent kind do not acquire the designation of a necklace of jewels and find their position on the chest of human beings so is the case with different religions and faiths. Whatever excellent qualities and virtues they possess unless they are catenated in the common thread of fellowship and have equal regard for others, they can not find their due place in human hearts and can be charged for spreading hostility and hatred in mankind¹⁰."

Therefore, one thing we must bear in our mind that if we consider other religions or faiths as inferior to ours or false, real harmony will not be possible. We have to give equal regard to all the faiths and religions. Every religion or mode of worship has its origination in a particular social and cultural background and has its utility and truth value accordingly. As the different parts of body have their own position and utility in their organic whole and work for its common good, so is the case with different religions. Their common goal is to resolve the tensions and conflicts and make life on earth peaceful. For this common goal each and every one has to proceed in his own way according to his own position. Every faith, if working for that particular common goal has equal right to exist and work, and should be given equal regard.

According to Jainācārya Siddhasena Divākara (4th Century A.D.) the divergent view points/faiths may be charged as false only when they negate the truth value of others and claim themselves exclusively true. But if they accept the truth value of others also, they attain righteousness. He further says, 'Every view-point or faith in its own sphere is right but if all of them arrogate to themselves the whole truth and disregard the views of their rivals, they do not attain right-view, for all the viewpoints are right in their own respective spheres but if they encroach upon the province of other view points and try to refute them, they are wrong¹¹'. For Jainas rightness of particular faith or viewpoint depends on the acceptance of rightness of other. Siddhasena further maintains that one who advocates the view of synoptic character of truth never discriminates the different faith as right or wrong and thus pays all of them equal regard¹². Today, when fundamentalism is posing a serious threat to communal harmony and equilibrium, unity

of world religions is not only essential but the only way out to protect the human race.

Jainas, too believe in the unity of world religions but unity according to them does not imply omnivorous unity in which all lose their entity and identity. They believe in that type of unity where in all the alien faiths will conjoin each other to form an organic whole without losing their own independent existence and given equal regard. In other words they believe in a harmonious existence and work for a common goal i.e. the welfare of mankind. The only way to remove the religious conflicts and violence from the earth is to develop a tolerant outlook and to establish harmony among various religions.

Now we shall discuss the causes of intolerance and devices suggested for the development of a tolerant outlook and religious harmony by the Jainas.

True Meaning of Religion

So far as the leading causes responsible for the growth of fundamentalism and intolerant outlook are concerned, in my humble opinion, the lack of the true knowledge and understanding of the real nature and purpose of religion is prime. By religion generally we mean to have some uncritical beliefs in supernatural powers and performance of certain rituals as prescribed in our religious texts, but it is not the true and whole purpose of religion. Haribhadra in his work '*Sambodha Prakaraṇa*' (1/1) clearly remarks that the people talk about the path i.e. religion but they do not know that what is the path or religion in its true sense. In the famous Jaina text, *Kārtikeyānuprekṣā* (478), dharma (religion) is defined as the real nature of the things. If it is so, then question arises what is the real nature of human being? In a Jaina text known as *Bhagavatīsūtra* (1/9), it is clearly mentioned that the nature and ultimate end of the soul is equanimity. Lord Mahāvira has given two definitions of religion. In *Ācārāṅgasūtra* (1/8/4) he says "worthy people preach that the religion is mental equanimity" Equanimity is considered as the core or essence of religion, because it is the real nature or essence of all the living beings, including human beings also. Equanimity is the state in which consciousness is completely free from constant flickering, excitements and emotional disorders and mind becomes pacific. Haribhadra says whether a person is a Śvetāmbara or a Digambara or a Bauddha or belongs to any other religion, whosoever attains equanimity of mind, will attain the liberation (*Sambodha Prakaraṇa*, 1/2).

Thus, the attainment as equanimity or relaxation from

tensions is the essence of religions. Secondly, when we talk of social or behavioural aspect of religion, it is nothing but the observance of non-violence. In *Ācārāṅga*, (1/4/1) Lord Mahāvira propounds, "The worthy men of the past, present and the future will say thus, speak thus, declare thus, explain thus, all breathing, existing, living and sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented" This is the pure, eternal and unchangeable law or the tenet of religion.

Ācārya Haribhadra maintains that performance of rituals is only the external form of religion. In its real sense religion means the eradication of passions and lust for material enjoyments as well as the realization of one's own real nature. Thus, for Jainas the true nature and purpose of religion is to attain equanimity and peace in individual as well as in social life. Whatsoever disturbs equanimity and social peace and spreads hostility and violence is not a true form of religion, instead it is *Saitana* in the cloak of religion. But now-a-days, the essence of religion has been shoved into background and dogmatism, uncritical faith and performance of certain rituals have got precedence. Thus, we have forgotten the end or essence of religion and stuck to the means only. For us it has become more crucial point that while performing prayer, our face should be in the east or in the west, but we have forgotten the purpose of prayer itself. The religion aims at having control over our passions, but unfortunately we are nourishing our passions in the name of religion. Actually, we are fighting for the decoration of the corpse of religion and not caring for its soul. If we want to maintain religious harmony and ensure peace on the earth, we must always remain aware of the end and essence of the religion, instead of external practices and rituals.

The English word religion is derived from the root 'religio' which means 'to unite'. On the basis of its etymological meaning we can say that whatsoever divides the mankind, instead of uniting it, cannot be a true form of religion. We must be aware of the fact that a religion in its true sense never supports violence, intolerance and fanatical outlook. A true form of religion is one which establishes harmony instead of hostility, affection and kindness instead of hatred.

Blind Faith - the Root of Intolerance

Among the causes that generate fanaticism and intolerance, blind faith is the principal; it results from passionate attachment hence uncritical or "unexamining"

outlook. Attachment (Mūrchā) according to the Jainas is the cause of bondage. It causes perverse attitude. In Jainism various types of Attachments are enumerated. Among them *darśana-moha/dr̥ṣṭirāga* (blind faith), due to its very nature has been reckoned "paramount". In point of fact, it is considered as a central element in religious intolerance. It leads one's attitude towards a strong bias for one's own and against other's religion. Non-attachment is, therefore, considered as precondition for the right attitude or perception. A perverse, hence defiled attitude renders it impossible to view the things rightly just as a person wearing coloured glasses or suffering from jaundice is unable to see the true colour of objects as they are. Attachment and aversion are the two great enemies of philosophical thinking. Truth can reveal itself to an impartial thinker"¹³. Non-attachment, as Jainas hold, is not only essential it is imperative in the search of truth. One who is unbiased and impartial can perceive the truth of his opponents's ideologies and faiths and thus can possess deference to them. Intense attachment unfailingly generates blind faith in religious leaders, dogmas, doctrines and rituals and consequently religious intolerance and fanaticism come into existence. The religions which lay more emphasis on faith than reason are narrower and fundamentalist. While the religions according due importance to reason also are more conciliatory and harmonious. It is the reason or critical outlook which acts as check-post in religious faiths and rituals.

Jainism holds that the uncritical outlook and even pious attachment towards the prophet, the path and the scripture is also an hindrance to a seeker of truth and aspirant of perfection. Attachment results in blind faith and superstition and repulsion consequences into intolerant conduct. The real bondage, as Jainas confirm, is the bondage due to attachment. A person who is in the grip of attachment cannot get rid of imperfection. Gautam, a chief disciple of Lord Mahāvira, failed to attain omniscience in the life time of Mahāvira on account of his pious attachment towards Mahāvira. Same was the case with Ānanda, the chief disciple of Lord Buddha, who could not attain arhathood in the life-time of his "Śāstā". Once Gautam asked Mahāvira : "Why am I not able to attain the perfect knowledge, while my pupils have reached the goal. "Lord answered : "Oh, Gautam, it is your pious attachment towards me which obstructs you in getting perfect knowledge and emancipation"¹⁴. The Jainas therefore laid stress on the elimination of attachment, the root cause of bias and intolerance.

Reason - The Check-Post of Blind Faith

In Jainism right faith, one of its three 'Jewels', plays an important role in emancipation of the soul. On the contrary, the blind faith causes intolerance. Jainism therefore does not support blind faith. Jaina thinkers maintain that the right faith should be followed by right knowledge. The faith followed by right knowledge or truthful reason cannot be blind one. According to Jaina thinkers, reason and faith are complementary and actually there is no contention between the two. Faith without reason, as the Jaina thinkers aver, is blind and reason without faith is unsteady or vacillating. They hold that the religious codes and rituals should be critically analysed¹⁵. In the *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra*, Gautam, the chief disciple of Mahāvira, strongly supports this view before Keśī, the pontiff of the church of Jaina Pārśva. He said : "the difference in the Law must be critically evaluated through the faculty of reasoning. It is the reason which can ascertain the truth of Law"¹⁶.

If one maintains that religion has to be solely based on faith and there is no place for reason in it, then he will unfailingly develop an outlook that only his prophet, religion and scriptures are true and other's prophets, religions and scriptures are false. He will also firmly believe that his prophet is only savior of mankind; his mode of worship is the only way of experiencing the bliss and the laws or commands of his scripture are the only right ones and thus he remains unable to make critical estimate of his religious prescriptions. While one who maintains that reason also plays an important role in the religious life, will critically evaluate the pros and cons of religious prescriptions, rituals and dogmas. An "attached" or biased person believes in the dictum 'Mine is true'. while the "detached" or unbiased person believes in the dictum 'Truth is mine.'

Guṇaratnasūri (early 15th cent. A.D.) in his commentary on the *śaḍdarśanasamuccaya* of Haribhadrasūri (c. 3rd quarter of the 8th cent. A.D.) has quoted a verse, which explains : "a biased person tries to justify whatever he has already accepted, while an unprejudiced person accepts what he feels logically justified"¹⁷. Jainism supports 'rational thinking'. Supporting the rational outlook in religious matters Ācārya Haribhadra syas : "I possess no bias for Lord Mahāvira and no prejudice against Kapila and other saints and thinkers. Whosoever is rational and logical ought to be accepted"¹⁸. While describing the right faith Amṛtacanda (c.early 10th cent. A.D.) condemns three types of idols namely superstitions relating deities, path and

scriptures¹⁹. Thus when religion tends to be rational there will hardly be any room for intolerance. One who is thoroughly rational in religious matters, certainly would not be rigid and intolerant.

Non-Absolutism - the Philosophical Basis of Tolerance

Dogmatism and fanaticism are the born children of absolutism. An extremist or absolutist holds that whatsoever he propounds is correct and what others say is false, while a relativist is of the view that he and his opponent both may be correct, if viewed from two different angles and thus a relativist adopts a tolerant outlook towards other faiths and ideologies. It is the doctrine of '*Anekāntavāda*' or non-absolutism of the Jainas on which the concept of religious tolerance is based. For the Jainas non-violence is the essence of religion from which the concept of non-absolutism emanates. Absolutism represents 'violence of thought', for, it negates the truth-value of its opponent's view and thus hurts the feeling of others. A non-violent search for truth finds non-absolutism.

Jaina thinkers are of the view that reality is a complex one.²⁰ It has many facets, various attributes and various modes. It can be viewed and understood from different angles and thus various judgments may be made about it. Even two contradictory statements about an object may hold true. Since we are finite beings, we can know or experience only a few facets of reality at one time. The reality in its completeness cannot be grasped by us. Only a universal-observer-*Sarvajña* can comprehend it completely. Yet even for an Omniscient it is impossible to know is and to explain it without a standpoint or viewpoint²¹. This premise can be understood from the following example. -- Take it for granted that every one of us has a camera to clic a snap of a tree. We can have hundreds of photographs but still we find most portion of the tree photographically remains uncovered, and what is more, the photographs differ from each other unless they are taken from the same angle. So is the case with diversified human understanding and knowledge. We only can have a partial and relative view of reality. It is impossible for us to know and describe reality without an angle or viewpoint. While every angle or viewpoint can claim that it gives a true picture of reality but each one only gives a partial and relative picture of reality. On the basis of partial and relative knowledge of reality one can claim no right to discard the views of his opponents as totally false. According to Jaina thinkers the truth-value of opponents must be accepted and respected.

Non-absolutism of the Jainas refuse to allow the individual to be dogmatic and one-sided in approach. It pleads for a broader outlook and open mindedness, which alone can resolve the conflicts that emerge from differences in ideologies and faiths. Satkari Mookerjee rightly observes that Jainas do not believe in the extremist a priori logic of the absolutists. Pragmatically considered, this logical attitude breeds dogmatism and if carried a step further, engenders fanaticism, the worst passion of human heart²². For non-absolutism the views of the opponent are also true. As Siddhasena Divākara (5th Cent . A.D.) remarks "All schools of thought are valid when they are understood from their own standpoint and so far as they do not discard the truth-value of others. Hemcandra was a Jaina saint; he composed his works in the praise of Śiva. This liberalism is also maintained by later saints who composed their works in Hindi or Gujarati like Ānandaghana and many other, till these days. In a Hindi couplet J.K. Mukhtar says :

buddha Vīra jina Harihara Brahmā yā usako svādhīna kaho/

bhakti bhāva se prerita ho, yaha citta usī me līna raho //

Door of Liberation - Open to All

Jainism holds that the followers of other sects can also achieve emancipation or perfection, if they are able to destroy attachment and aversion. The gateway of salvation is open to all. They do not believe in the narrow outlook that "only the follower of Jainism can achieve emancipation, others will not". In *Uttarādhyayana* there is a reference to *anyalīga-siddhas* i.e. the emancipated souls of other sects²³. The only reason for the attainment of perfection or emancipation, according to Jainas, is to shun the vectors of attachment and aversion. Haribhadra, staunch advocate of religious tolerance remarks : "One, who maintains equanimity of mind will certainly get emancipation whether he may be a Śvetāmbara or Digambara or Buddhist or any one else. It is this broad outlook of the Jainas which makes them tolerant to the non-violence of thought.

About the means of liberation, the Jainas are also broadminded. They do not believe that their mode of worship or their religious practice is the only one that represents the way to reach the goal of emancipation. For them, not the external modes of worship, but the right attitude and mentality are the things that makes religious practices fruitful. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* mentions that the practices which are considered to be the cause of bondage

may be the cause of liberation also.²⁵ It is the intrinsic purity not the external practices which makes the person religious. Haribhadra propounds that neither one who remains without clothes nor one who is white clad, neither a logician nor a metaphysician, nor a devotee of personal cult will get liberation unless he overcomes his passions²⁶. If we accept the existence of the diversity of modes of worship according to the time, place and level of aspirants and lay stress on the intrinsic purity in religious matters then certainly we cannot condemn religious practices of a non-absolutist. They become false only when they reject the truth-value of others²⁷. It was this broader outlook of non-absolutism which made Jainas tolerant.

While expounding this tolerant outlook of the Jainas, Upādhyāya Yaśovijaya (17th cent. A.D.) maintains a true non-absolutist does not disdain any faith but treats all the faiths equally as a father does to his sons. For, a non-absolutist does not have any prejudiced and biased outlook. A true believer of 'Syādvāda' (non-absolutism) is one who pays equal regard to all the faiths. To remain impartial to the various faiths is the essence of being religious. A little knowledge which induces a person to be impartial is more worth while than the unilateral vast knowledge of scriptures²⁸.

Non-personalism - A Keystone for Tolerance

Jainism opposes the person-cult (person-worship) for it makes the mind biased and intolerant. For the Jainas, the object of veneration and worship is not a person but perfectness i.e. the eradication of attachment and aversion. The Jainas worship the quality or merit of the person not the person. In the sacred *namaskāra-mantra* of the Jainas veneration is paid to the spiritual-posts such as *arhat*, *siddha*, *ācārya* and not the individuals like Mahāvīra, Rṣabha or anybody else. In the fifth *pada* we find that the veneration is paid to all the saints of the world. The words 'loye' and 'Savva' demonstrate the geneosity and broader outlook of the Jainas²⁹. It is not person but his spiritual attitude which is to be worshipped. Difference in name, according to the Jainas, is immaterial since every name at its best connotes the same spiritual perfection. Haribhadra in the *Yogaḍṛṣṭi-samuccaya* remarks that 'the ultimate truth transcends all states of worldly existence, called *nirvāṇa* and is essentially and necessarily 'single' even if it be designated by different names like *Sadāśiva*, *Parabrahman*, *Siddhātma*, *Tathāgata*, etc.³⁰ Not only in the general sense but etymologically also they convey the same meaning. In the *Lokatattva-nirṇaya*

he says, "I venerate all those who are free from all vices and filled with all virtues, be they Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva or Jaina"³¹. This is further supported by various Jaina thinkers of medieval period as Akalaṅka, Yogīndu, Mānatunga, Hemcandra and many others. While worshiping Lord Śiva the Jaina pontiff Hemcandra says : "I worship those who have destroyed attachment and aversion, the seeds of birth and death, be they Brahma, Viṣṇu Śiva of Jina"³². This liberalism of the Jainas on the methods of worship can be supported by the legends of the previous lives of Mahāvīra. It is said that Mahāvīra in his previous existences was many times ordained as a monk of other sects where he practised austerities and attained heaven.

As for scriptures, the Jainas outlook is liberal. They firmly believe that a false scripture (*Mithyā-Śruta*) may be a true scripture (*Samyak-Śruta*) for a person of right attitude; and true scripture may turn false for a person of perverse attitude. It is not the scripture but the attitude of the follower which makes it true or false. It is the vision of the interpreter and practitioners that counts. In the *Nandisūtra* this standpoint is clearly explained³³. Thus we can say that the Jainas are neither rigid nor narrowminded in this regard.

References of Religious Tolerance in Jaina Works

References to religious tolerance are abundant in Jaina history. Jaina thinkers have consistently shown deference to other ideologies and faiths. In the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* the second earliest Jaina work (c. 2nd cent. B.C.), it is observed that those who praise their own faith and views and discarded those of their opponents, possess malice against them hence remain confined to the cycle of birth and death³⁴. In another famous Jaina work of the same period, the *Isibhāṣiyāṁ*, the teaching of the forty five renowned saints of Śramanic and Brahmanic, schools of thought such as Nārda, Bhāradvāja, Maṅkhali-Gośāla and many others have been presented with due regards³⁵. They are remembered as Arhatṛṣi and their teachings are regarded as an Āgama. In the history of world religions there is hardly any example in which the teachings of the religious teachers of the opponent sects were included in one's own scriptures with due esteem and honour. Evidently, it indicates the latitudinarian and unprejudiced outlook of the earliest Jaina thinkers. We also have a reference to religious tolerance in the *Vyākhyāprajñapti*, one of the early works of the Jainas, when an old friend of Gautama, who was initiated in some other religious sect, came to visit him. Mahāvīra commanded Gautama to welcome him and Gautama did so³⁶. According

to *Uttarādhyayana*, when Gautama, the chief disciple of Mahāvira and Keśi, a prominent pontiff of Pārśvanātha's sect met at Kośāmbī, both paid due regard to each other and discussed the various problems dispassionately and in gentle and friendly manner about the differences of both the sects³⁷.

Haribhadra has not only maintained this latitudinarian outlook of earlier Jainācāryas, but lent new dimension to it. He was born in the age when the intellectuals of the India were engaged in hair-splitting philosophical discussions and in relentless criticism of one other. Though he also critically evaluated the other philosophical and religious systems, his outlook was fully liberal and attempted to see the truth of his opponent's logic also.

In the *Śāstravārtā-samuccaya* which is one of the foremost works illustrating Haribhadra's liberal outlook, it is mentioned that the great saint, venerable Lord Buddha preached the doctrine of Momentariness (*Kṣaṇikavāda*), Non-existence of soul (*Anātmavāda*), Idealism (*Vijñānavāda*) and Nothingness (*Śūnyavāda*) with a particular intention to vanish the mineness and desire for worldly objects and keeping in view the different levels of mental development of his followers, like a good physician who prescribes the medicine according to the disease and nature of the patient³⁸. He has the same liberal and regardful attitude towards Sāṃkhya and Nyāya schools of Bhrahmanical philosophy. He maintains that naturalism (*Prakṛtivāda*) of Sāṃkhya and Īśvara kārṭtvavāda of the Nyāya school is also true and justified, if viewed from certain standpoint³⁹. Further, the epithets such as the great saint (*mahāmuni*), the venerable (*arhat*), the good physician (*Suvaidya*) used by him for Buddha and for Kapila shows his generosity and deference to other religious leaders. Haribhadra's crusade against sectarianism is unique and admirable in the history of world-religions.

Alongwith these literary evidences there are some epigraphical evidences of religious tolerance of the Jainas also. Some Jaina ācāryās such as Rāmkiṛti and Jaymaṅgala-sūri wrote the hymns in the praise of Tokalji and goddess Cāmundā.⁴⁰ Jaina kings such as Kumārpāla, Viṣṇuvardhan and others constructed the temples of Śiva and Viṣṇu along with the temple of Jina⁴¹.

Finally, I would like to mention that Jainism has a sound philosophical foundation for religious tolerance and throughout the age, it practically never indulged in aggressive wars in the name of religion nor did they invoke divine sanction for cruelties against the people of alien

faiths. They have always believed in religious harmony and fellowship of faiths.

Though generally Jainas do classify religions in the heretic (*mithyā-dṛṣṭi*) and non-heretic (*samyak-dṛṣṭi*) yet, *mithyā-dṛṣṭi*, according to them, is one who possesses one-sided view and considers others as totally false, while *samyak-dṛṣṭi* is the one who is unprejudiced and sees the truth in his opponents views also. It is interesting to note here that Jainism calls itself a union of heretic views (*micchādamsana-samūh*). Siddhasena (5th cent. A.D.) mentions "Be glorious the teachings of Jina which are the union of all the heretic views i.e. the organic synthesis of one-sided and partial views, essence of spiritual nectar and easily graspable to the aspirants of emancipation."⁴²

Ānandaghana, a mystic Jaina saint of the 17th cent. A.D. remarks that just as ocean includes all the rivers so does Jainism all other faiths. Further, he beautifully expounds that all the six heretic schools are the organs of Jina and one who worships Jina also worships them.⁴³ Historically we also find that various deities of other sects are adopted in Jainism and worshipped by the Jainas. Ācārya Somadeva in his work *Yaśastilak-campū* remarks that where there is no distortion from right faith and accepted vows, one follow the tradition prevailing in the country.⁴⁴

As we have already said that Jainas believe in the unity of world religions, but unity, according to them, does not imply omnivorous unity in which all the alien faiths will conjoin each other to form an organic whole without losing their own independent existence. In other words it believes in a harmonious co-existence or a liberal synthesis in which all the organs have their individual existence, but work for a common goal i.e. the peace of mankind. To eradicate the religious conflicts and violence from the world, some may give a slogan of "one world religion" but it is neither possible nor practicable so far as the diversities in human thoughts are in existence. In the *Niyamasāra* it is said that there are different persons, their different activities or *karmas* and different levels or capacities, so one should not engage himself in hot discussions neither with other sects nor one's own sect.⁴⁵

Haribhadra remarks that the diversity in the teachings of the sages is due to the diversity in the levels of their disciples or the diversity in standpoints adopted by the Sages or the diversity in the period of time when they preached, or it is only an apparent diversity. Just as a physician prescribes medicine according to the nature of patient, its illness and the climate so is the case of diversity

of religious teachings.⁴⁶ So far as diversity in time, place, levels and understanding of disciples is inevitable, variety in religious conflicts is to develop a tolerant outlook and to establish harmony among them.

At last I would like to conclude my paper by quoting a beautiful verse of religious tolerance of Ācārya Amitagati--
Sattveṣu maitrīm guṇīṣu pramodaṃ

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14. (a) *Bhagavatī-Abhayadeva's Vṛtti*, Rishabhadeva Kesari-mal, Ratlam, 1937, 14/7. p. 1188.
(b) *Mukkhamaṅga pavannanam siṅheho vajjasimkhalā vīre jivantaḥ jāo Goyamaṇi jama na kevali*-Quoted in *Abhidhāna Rajendra*, vol. II p. 959 and *Kalpasūtra Tikā*-Vinayavijay, 127, p. 120.
15. *paṇṇā samikkhaḥ dhammaṃ / tattaṃ tatta vinicchayaṃ //*
-- *Uttarādhyayana*, 23/25, Sanmati Jñānapitha, Agra, 1972.
16. Aṅgahibata ninisati yuktīm yatra tatra matirasya nivista / paksapatarahitasya tu yuktiryatra tatra matireti nivesam //
--Quoted in '*Saddarśanasamuccaya*' - Guṇaratna kṛta tika, ed. Mahendra Kumar Jain, Bhartiya Jnanapitha, Delhi, 2nd ed., 1981, p. 461.
17. *Paksapāto na me vīre, na dvesaḥ kapilādiṣu Yuktima-dvacanaṃ yasya, tasya kṛya parigrahaḥ-Lokatattvanirnaya*-Haribhadra, Jain Granth Prakasaka Sabha, Ahmedabad, Vikram, 1964, verse 38.
18. *Loke śāstrabhāse samayabhase ca devatabhase / nityamaṇi tattvarucina kaitavya-mamudhadrstivam / 26*
-- *Purusārtha-Siddhyupāya-Amartacandra*, The Central Jaina

Kliṣṭeṣu jiveṣu kṛpāparatvam

Mādhyasthyabhāvaṃ viparita vṛtttau

Sadā mamātmā vidahātudeva.⁴⁷

Oh Lord ! I should be friendly to all the creatures of world and feel delight in meeting the virtuous people. I should always be helpful to those who are in miserable conditions and tolerant to my opponents.

Publishing House, Ajitasram, Lucknow, 1933.

19. *Anantadharmātmakameva tattvam.. /22*
Anyayogavyavacchedadvātrīṃsīkā, Hemacandra.
20. Natthi nayahimviihumam suttam attho ya Jinavayekimci -
Āvaśyaka Niryukti, 544.
-- *Viśeśāvaśyaka Bhāṣya*, L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1968, 2748.
21. Prof. Satkari Mookerjee, *Foundation of World Peace, Ahimsa and Anekanta*, Vaisali Institute Research Bulletin No. 1, p. 229.
22. *Niyayavayanijjasacca, savvanaya paraviyalane moha/ Te una na ditthasamao vidhayai sacca va aliye va //*
-- *Sanmati Prakarana*, Siddhasena, Jñānodaya Trust, Ahmedabad 1963.
23. Yasya sarvatra samata nayeṣu tanayesviva /
Tasyanekāntavādasya kva nyunādhikasemusi //
Ten a syādvādāmālambya sarvadarsanatulyatam /
Moksoddesavi (dvi) sesena yah pasyati sa śāstravit //70//
Mādhyasthyameva sastrartho yena taccāru siddhyati /
Sa eva dharmavādah syadanyadbalisavalganam //71//
Mādhyasthyasahitam hyekapadajnanamapi pramā /
Sastrakotiḥ vṛthāivanya tathā cōktam mahātamanā //73//
--*Adhyātmopaniṣat*-Yoṣovijaya, Sri Jainadharmarprasaraka Sabha Bhavanagara, 1st Ed., Vikram, 1965.
24. Namō Arahantānaṃ/namo siddhānaṃ/namo Āyariyānaṃ/
Namō Uvajjhāyanaṃ/namo loye savva sāhūnaṃ /
Vyākhyā prajñāpti, Mahavira Jaina Vidhyalaya, Bombay.
Samachim coiya samana kei sapakkhaditthio vamenti, settam Micchasuyam.
Vṛti-etani bharatadini sastrani mithyadrsteh
Mithyātvaparigrhitāni bhavanti, tato
Viparitabhiniṣeṣavṛddhihetutvaṃ mithyāśrutam etānyeva
Ca bharatadini śāstrani samyagdr̥ṣṭeh
Samyakivaparigrhitāni bhavanti-Nandisutra, 72, p. 30, Sri Mahavira, Jaina Vidhyalaya, Bombay, 1st ed. 1968.
25. Sayam sayam passamsamitā garahanta param vayan/
Je utatthd visusamti, samasaram te viussiyā //
-- *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, 1/1/2/23.
26. Devandradena Arahata isina buiyam/ --*Isibhāsiyāim*, 1/1,
See also the names of its various chapters, edited by Dr. Walther Schubring, L.D. Instt. of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1974.

36. He khamdaya! sagayam, Khamdaya! Susagayam - *Bhagavati*, 2/1.
37. Kesikumāra samāṇe goyamāṇaṁ dissama gayam /
Padirūvaṁ padivattim sammam sampadivajjai //
-- *Uttarādhyayana sūtra*, Sanmati Jñānpitha, Agra, 1st ed. 23/16.
38. Śāstravārtāsamuccya, L.D. Instt. Ahmedabad, 1969. 6/464, 65, 67.
39. *Ibid.* 3/207 and 3/237.
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