

EPITOME OF JAINISM



परस्परोपग्रहो जीवानाम्

Agammanishi Muni Dulaharaj

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PREFACE

New sprout of inquisitiveness has arisen to know more about Jain philosophy and religion. The whole atmosphere is charged with generosity of thoughts and isms. The scope for the studies of different literary works has widened. The scholars are enthusiastic in bringing forth the old literature in limelight, with all the phases, covering the new and developed science of editing. All these factors have been instrumental in escalating the momentum of new studies in different fields, and as such the inquisitiveness, to know more and more, has increased with spell and bound.

This small booklet is an outcome of that very inquisitiveness. Acharya Tulsi wished that the new seedlings should be watered properly, so that they might mature to be shady, flowery trees with full of Fruits. As such, small booklets, dealing with the subject matter should be brought to light to make the readers get an

outline of that very subject. Muni Dulaharaj has attempted to fulfil this lacuna and I feel, his attempt has been facundated. His style is simple, lucid and readable in the extreme. That the work has the advantage of English medium, is yet another proof that he has made his work more useful to a wide circle of readers. I wish him all success in future attempts.

A.D. 1971
Raipur

Muni Nathmal
(Acharya Mahapragya)

WISHES

Among several existing philosophies of India jain philosophy is one of the important fragment of the philosophical world.

AGAMMANISHI MUNI SHREE DULAHRAJ JI was an eminent scholar of Terapanth, who had gone through the Jain philosophy in depth. I hope through this very booklet "EPITOME OF JAINISM" may be highly benefiting to all knowing about Jainism in brief.

16 March 2011 ACHARYA MAHASHRAMAN

MY WORDS

Jainism, an applied philosophy is absolutely scientific in nature because its facts stand nearby the science. Those facts proclaimed by lord mahaveer had been mostly experimented in a scientifically responsible way. Although, Still some facts are in the list of Hypothesis for scientists.

H.H. Acharya Tulsi had set out for his long journey, First time, towards South India in 1967 A.D. There's belonging litterated people used to communicate their ideas either through their own mother language or by medium of English. A small booklet in english came into demand necessary to provide overall basic knowledge about Jainism. I was highly motivated by H.H. Acharya Tulsi and Muni Nathmal (Acharya Mahapragya) to fullfil the demand. That booklet was introduced, namely - **"Epitome of Jainism"** had played the good role between the recognized person. Hence, Its new eddition is

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again appearing before the scholars. I hope this very booklet would be more advantageous for present new Learners.

**Terapanth Bhawan
Sri Dungargarg
5 dec. 2010**

**AGAM MANISHI
MUNI DULAHRAJ**

JAIN TRADITION

The first Tirthankara (prophet) Lord Rishabha, was the first monarch who ruled the country for a very long period of time and renovated the whole structure of the society and the Government.

He was born in the royal family of Kasyapas. One day, when he was sitting in his palace, the citizens approached him and requested him to be their leader because they were harassed and handicapped by various nefarious activities of some people who were bent upon disturbing their peace and harmony. Rishabha acceded to their request and exhorted them in the right direction. The people, then, did not know the use of fire. They ate raw food and whole grains. Cooking was unknown. Raw food and whole grains caused indigestion and ill health. Rishabha produced fire from different means

and made the people understand its use. Food was cooked. Fire led to various inventions. Thus industry began and people engaged themselves in many vocations and jobs. They became happy. This was the dawn of early civilization. As time rolled on, it progressed and many sciences were developed.

After Rishabha, came his eldest son Bharat, perhaps after whom our country is named. He was a great monarch who put into system various government rules and formulated forms of punishment for the evil doers. It was in his time that crimes decreased and the people began to lead a life of self content and self restraint.

Rishabh had 98 sons. Bharat was the eldest and Bahubali the youngest. He had two daughters – Brahmi and Sundari. He taught them 74 different sciences which covered all the fields of knowledge. Brahmi was thought the script, which later on came to be known as Brahmi script. It was the first script and the mother of all others which followed it. And even today hundreds of stone inscriptions scattered all over India are found in this script.

JAINISM AS AN INDEPENDENT RELIGION

Jainism has long been erroneously considered as an offshoot of Hinduism. To establish this fact many articles and books have been written. Some semblance in ethical code of both the religions led the scholars to think deep in these terms. But it was Mr. Jacobi, a great German scholar and an ardent lover of Jainism who worked hard and brought the facts into limelight. His strenuous research and tireless efforts manifested and established that Jainism has its own independent existence and is much older than Hinduism. This fact is now accepted by one and all.

Secondly, Dr. Jacobi has removed many doubts, suspicions and superstitions pertaining to Jainism. Scholars doubt as to whether the Jains or the Budhists were of earlier origin. This doubt had resulted from some similarities in doctrines and rituals of these two great religions.

Jainism came into existence long before Buddha's time. Lord Mahavir was the 24th Tirthankara of the Jains and Rishabh was the first. In between these two Tirthankaras Several

Centuries had passed and as such it can easily be gathered that Jainism had an ancient past. Mahavir was not the founder of Jainism, but a great revolutionary and radical figure who brought about various changes in accordance with the time. Lord Parshva was the 23rd Tirthankara, who flourished 250 years before Mahavir. Buddha was a contemporary of Mahavir.

Let us confine our study to the historical person age of Lord Parshva and Mahavira.

Parshva was born in the age which was replete with the barbarous penances in which bodily tortures were explicit. Thousands of hermits dwelt in forests, engaged in severe penances and austerities. They had a pervading spell over the masses who frequently visited them to get the blessings. Bodily tortures were held in high esteem and the hermits undergoing such tortures were considered next to God. Hypocrisy ruled the minds of the masses.

Parshva too visited these places and was stirred to the extreme. He revolted against it and declared—"These severe penances can never

lead to emancipation. These practices are void as they are based on ignorance. Knowledge is light. 'Light emanates from light. Any ritual, which accrues from right knowledge, is endorsable. The polymorphous personality of these hermits lead to the labyrinth of inextricable difficulties. They are groping in darkness. One who is in dark can neither know the truth nor can lead others to light. Ignorance breeds ignorance, darkness engenders darkness”.

These thoughts brought about a great revolution in the sphere of philosophy Parshva gained celebrity status. People heard him patiently.

Parshva resolved to renounce the world. He became an ascetic in Jain creed. He abandoned his vast empire of Kashi, which was a flourishing state in India. He survived for 100 years and established a systematic organization for monks and nuns. He was a great apostle of peace and compassion. He travelled to different part of India and influenced the people in thought and deed. He brought about a great reformation and thus a new culture was established in Kashi Kingdom and

its surrounding regions which came under his spell.

THREE MAIN FEATURES OF PARSHVA'S RELIGION

Parshva preached a very simple religion. His religion was four fold – Non-violence, Truth, Non-stealing and Non-possession. He stressed on the principle of non-violence and made it the pivot of his religious doctrine. He said, 'Non-violence is the pivot around which all other principles and norms revolve.'

'One who is non-violent reaches the highest truth. One who is truthful knows non-stealing and thus non possession follows on its own.' Thus in the annals of history it was the first instance which was witness to the systematization of the principle of non violence.

Secondly, in those days the principle of non violence was confined only to the practices of the monks and nuns. Ordinary people did not know its application. Parshva made it applicable in day-to-day life. He said, 'The religion of non-violence is not confined to Rishis and Saints. It is meant for the common people

as well. Non violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. Human beings should abide by this higher law and subdue their lower instincts so that the virtues lying latent may manifest eventually.' People imbibed its essence and felt at home in its practice. Violence which was in abundance began to lessen and the whole atmosphere was energized by the vital vigour of non-violence. It gained momentum, and in due course, the principle of Ahimsa which was considered to be individualistic became social.

Thirdly, the fundamental thing which Parshva did was to formulate regular associations for the propagation of the principles. From Buddhist literature we can safely conclude that in the 8th century B.C. the associations formed by Parshva had a firm grip on the spiritual atmosphere of the country.

MAHAVIRA

He was a prince of extraordinary valour and courage. Time had changed. His mind was disturbed when he witnessed violence being

practiced in the name of religion. Animal sacrifice was in vogue. Social evils too, like slave trade were rampant. Many learned people favored these violent activities and did their best to enhance it. They had a firm grip on the general masses and a way out was blurred by arousing in them a fear of hell in case they did not abide by the dictum of the Holy Scriptures. Slave -trade was never considered immoral. It also gained the recommendation of the so-called great and religious people. Casteism gained ground in the society. No-body was bold enough to raise his voice against it. It was established to be a gospel truth. anybody opposing it the Considered an out-caste and ostracised from the society.

Mahavira did not work to eradicate these evils, but he was bent upon practicing the principle of non-violence to the highest point and thus became perfect in self. Self perfection goes ahead in purifying others. He thought that when non -violence manifests itself, all the evils are automatically rooted. The ever burning fire of passion and a strong desire to possess things which others had extinguishes itself. Nothing ignoble raises its head in the wake of

non-violence. To attain this end he went from place to place and exhorted the people to follow the righteous path of Ahimsa.

Mahavira rebelled against the complete dominance of the Brahmins and attacked the established priesthood. He underwent severe penances. His meditation and concentration were unequalled.

One day when he was seated in meditation. His eyes half closed. His mind was completely tranquil, hence immune to external perception, a marvellous light transcended all that had never been seen or experienced before. His Self was filled with radiant splendor that emanated from the inner consciousness. He became enlightened with hundreds of thousands of sunbeams scintillating within and beyond his body. His face gleaming with light filled the whole atmosphere with the light of spirituality. Now the duality disappeared. Knowledge and the knowledgable became one. The things of perception were explicit. There was no hindrance of time or space. *The Karmas which obstruct the manifestation of complete perfection were dissolved. He became omniscient and omnipotent. Now he*

was free from the passions and attachments which represented the intoxicating forces of the external world. His realization was perfect. The entire world was the object of his perception and he saw it all as clearly as one sees an Amla fruit lying in one's palm. In this state of enlightenment his knowledge and perception were way beyond what the ordinary human beings could even dream of. It was the thirteenth year of his Sadhana. After attaining this perfection he began to preach.

Once on his way to Pavapuri he reached a small village. There he came to know that a big Yagna was being performed by a Brahmin called Somila. Great scholars from far and wide had come to participate in that Yagna. When they came to know about the arrival of Mahavira, their minds became filled with the arrogance of academic knowledge. They were determined to drag Mahavira into philosophical discussions so as to defeat him and make him a disciple of their creed. First of all, 'Indrabhuti' went to Mahavira with great pomp and grandeur. Mahavira was a great psychologist. He read Indrabhuti's mind and hit out at his arrogance by putting forth a question regarding

the existence of self – an issue which had been baffling him right from the beginning. Indrabhuti was flabbergasted to hear this question from Mahavira – the answer to which was altogether unknown to anyone but himself. Indrabhuti accepted his defeat and became the disciple of Mahavira. Later on, he became the foremost disciple and head of Mahavira's Tirtha.

The Mahavira's Tirtha consisted of seven units. Each unit had its head, who worked within his own jurisdiction. The units were:

ACHARYA – He was the whole and sole of the Sangha. His main duty was to interpret the Shastras preached by the Lord.

UPADHYAYA – He was in-charge of the education of the whole gana. His main duty was to teach the scriptures and make the students recite them correctly.

STHAVIRA – Monks disturbed by physical or mental afflictions and intending to sever their connection with the Sangha were well looked after by Sthavira and were exhorted and inspired by him to be obedient and sincere in practising the law of renunciation.

PRAVARTAKA – He had to work under the

guidance of the Acharya in engaging the monks in service wherever needed. He had to work for the propagation of the religion and accelerate its growth by properly assisting the monks who worked for it.

GANI – He was a group leader of monks who directed them in regular practices of religion.

GANDHARA – He had to look after the routine work of the monks to ensure that all the activities were in accordance with the rules enunciated.

GANAVACHEDAKA – He had many duties to perform. The foremost duty was to regulate the activities of the Dharma-Sangha and give momentum to its propagation and thus make it more influential. He had to move frequently from one place to another in search of a proper place for the Acharya. He also had to look after the well-being of the whole gana and arrange for all the requirements at the proper time. As far as the whole organization was concerned, he played an important role in its working.

All these seven posts required special personalities possessing extra-ordinary

qualities to discharge their duties. All of them were nominated by the Acharya with the consent of the Sthavira.

Thus the entire Sangha of Mahavira was well organized. It lit the path of emancipation for hundreds of thousands of aspirants and raised its voice against immorality which was adhered to by so called 'religious' people in the name of religion. It gave a clarion call to rouse one's self from the slumber, indolence and thoughtlessness; and made one conscious of one's own infinite strength that lies latent. It also awakened in common people an indomitable will to achieve the greatest of all conquests - the conquest of self, so as to escape from the real snares of passion, lust, rancour, anger, pride, deceit and sensual gratification.

Those aspirants who followed the admonitions of the Sangha went ahead like a racer leaving behind the track. They learnt the art of self-sacrifice and were the awakened among the sleepers, the earnest among the thoughtless.

Mahavira had 14,000 monks and 36,000 nuns in his order. Chandanbala headed the nuns and looked after their welfare.

It was a unique feature of Mahavira to initiate womenfolk in the Holy Order and give them equal right to work out and achieve their own emancipation. He made no distinction, whatsoever, between man and women as far as the practice of religion was concerned. This thought awakened a feeling of self-respect among the women and made them conscious of their value and strength to come out of laziness and eradicate all the evils and tore apart all the snares which bound them and made them a puppet in the hands of men. They realized their duties and thought that their first and last duty is the conquest of Self. One who conquers Self is a greater conqueror than the one who conquers in battle a thousand times a thousand warriors. Many women ventured to tread the thorny path of renunciation. They went from place to place, like monks, and exhorted the masses in religion without any distinction. Thus a revolution was witnessed in the whole society and many people were galvanized into action.

The religion of non-violence was manifested in different forms, which influenced the activities of the people restoring them to the real

practice of self-restraint. Violence - the law of the brute - was hit hard. Its intensity was lessened and slowly and gradually it died on its own accord.

Mahavira became a monk at the age of thirty. For twelve and a half years he lived a life of severe penance and austerity. He attained enlightenment and preached for 30 long years. He gained a legion of followers who were from all races and walks of life. His life was full of adventure and forbearance. He visited many places. His itinerary speaks of his unending zeal and enthusiasm played a vital role in the propagation of religion.

He breathed his last in B.C. 527 at Pavapuri in Bihar, where a shrine has been erected and is maintained even to this day.

SECTS IN JAIN CREED

At the time of Mahavira, the whole Sangha was integrated and was known as Nirgrantha Sangha. There were no divisions whatsoever. Though, in his time, his own son-in-law Jamali, a prominent monk in the Sangha, left the Sangha because of philosophical differences

and never returned. But Jamali was not able to establish a new creed as the influence of Mahavira ruled the whole atmosphere.

Mahavira was a Jina. He remained naked. But he never stressed exclusively on the practice of nakedness. He always said, "Those who wish to take up the path of 'Jinakalpi' (nakedness), can do so if their physical strength and mental determination permits them. But if they want to tread the path of 'Sthavirakalpi' (monkhood with clothes), they can also go ahead and work out their own emancipation." Thus he did not differentiate between the two. As such, his Sangha consisted of both kinds of ascetics – naked as well as clothed. They lived together doing Sadhana according to the advice of Mahavira. During his life-time there were no dissensions within the Sangha. But after his Nirvana, the Sangha, in the first half of the first century A.D., was split into two major parts – Digamber and Svetamber. Digambers were so called because they went naked while the Svetambers wore white clothes. After a few centuries the differences intensified and bitterness arose which caused an impossible

chasm between the two. A huge tree which though had its roots in the common soil was split up into two major parts.

Later on many sub-sects were formed in both of these major divisions. The formation of these sects were due to some internal differences in the practice of codes of conduct of the monks and nuns, and sometimes the philosophical divergences also helped separation.

In the 15th century A.D., the Svetambar sect was split up into two divisions, one believing in idol worship and the other opposing it.

Among non-idol worshippers, there are two main sects – Sthanakvasi and Terapantha. The Sthanakvasi sect originated in the 16th century. Lokashah opposed idol-worship and laid great emphasis on strictness of code of conduct. The followers of Lokashah established the Sthanakvasi sect and in due course it gained strength and popularity.

Terapanth is the last sect which originated in the second half of the 18th century. The first Acharya of this sect was Bhikshu who was revolutionary and radical. His sole aim was to

dedicate his whole life in the search of Truth and its application to all the aspects of life.

FUNDAMENTAL TENETS OF JAINISM

The concept of self-realization is the base and apex of Jainism. All the tenets, rules and principles revolve around this central point. Self-realization is the aim of all Jain devotees. They direct their soul force exertfully towards it to accomplish it.

This principle has given birth to two vitals thoughts, which in their respective spheres form an integral part in the evolution of the soul.

The first thought is of self-exertion. Jainism says, 'It is a folly to entrust our future in the hands of a third party. World is eternal. It has no beginning and no end. Hence it is not any body's.'

Jainism believes in god, not as the creator, protector or destroyer of the world; but as an ideal who has attained that state which is free from any external or internal bondage.

Those who believe God as the creator and controller of the world run the risk of being

drowned in the stream of lethargy. They have no faith in their own infinite strength and wisdom. Thus, they become devoid of enthusiasm, their valour sleeps and corrodes the mind which in turn loses its ability to function and fails in a moment. The whole machinery of self-evolution comes to a standstill and disastrous consequences follow in succession.

Self-exertion accelerates the momentum of one's own activity. Jainism says, 'Good or bad, all are the fruits of our actions. Soul is dynamic. It is not static. It will always be in action. Every activity of the soul draws material particles from the atmosphere, according to its merit. These particles cover the soul and make it revolve in the cycle of death and birth for our infinite period of time. If the soul exerts to achieve spirituality and adheres to its own dictum, it gets purified gradually and the evolution begins. *Karmas which entangle the soul are of two types – bad Karmas bind the soul and give bad fruits whereas the good Karmas free the soul and put forth before it precious opportunities for material prosperity and spiritual progress.*

It is clear that *Karmas play an important role*

in shaping the personality of an individual and there fore the conception of the third agent to direct the life of an individual comes to naught.

God is an emblem of purity and sanctity. He is free from all bondages. He is in a state of Bliss. He stays in self-nature. The self-nature is nothing but the constant awareness of self-consciousness. It is devoid of all attributes other than self-existing qualities.

They are eight in number :-

Omniscience

Omni perception

Eternal happiness

Fully developed vision

Static Existence

Formlessness

Unaffected entity

Unhindered grace

These are the fundamental attributes of the soul. They unfold themselves as soon as the soul annihilates all the bondages (*Karmas*). *When all the causes are rooted out, the soul sores high and enjoys emancipation from the*

worldly existence. It becomes free from all causes. As such, the soul never falls in the clutches of incarnation. Once a soul is emancipated, it never returns to this world because the causes for rebirth are annihilated. Cause and effect go together. The effect follows the cause.

The belief in the existence of God is not merely a metaphysical theory but a real philosophy of action which leads to ultimate reality. To attain the state of God is the ultimate aim of man. If this belief is shaken, the whole aim dwindles down. Without an aim, the soul goes nowhere but wanders in the woods of existence forever. Mahavira said, 'Have firm belief in God. Have belief in self.'

Mere belief in divine existence is not enough. It should be associated with right action in right direction. The contemplation of the attributes of God never leads one to perfection. But the constant exertion to manifest those attributes, lying latent within, leads one to eternal light. Only through his constant practice, a man can unfold his strength and prove that the state of God is attainable by proper exertion by all, without any distinction. We must lead a life of

active virtue. Mere passive submission to God never works out emancipation or purity in totality.

Hence, exert yourself in the right direction. You will reach the goal.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Religion is one, thoughts are many. Religion is truth, but its definitions are numerous. Each and every philosopher has defined truth in his own way. Even though Truth cannot be split, it assumes numerous forms according to its realization. Even among these numerous forms, there is identity, which binds all in its fold.

Jainism aims at unity in diversity. Religion is not what we think, but what we practice.

All the religions of the world have been explained in detail with regard to the truth, experienced by their sages from a particular angle. These angles have been the cause for the generation of different philosophies and sects. It can be said that all the religions have expounded truth from one particular standpoint.

Jainism, as a whole imbibes all the different

truths and lists them in totality. It says, 'Any truth expressed with an absolute view, is a part thereof and not the whole. If we desire to arrive at the whole truth, all the parts should receive due consideration and be explained clearly with regard to the respective states and basis on which they stand.'

Jainism is a synthesis of all these half-truths. This approach is scientific, as well as rational. No religion in this world is capable of claiming to have imbibed and explained truth in totality. We must respect all the religions so far as the manifestation of truth is concerned.

This university of thought is the pivot of Jain Ethics. Under its panoply all the tenets have been listed and so they all retain their universal application.

Truth cannot be monopolized. It is one and the whole. To assert that we alone have truth and all others are in the bewilderment of arguments is just like saying, 'We alone have light, all others are groping in darkness.' Light makes no distinction whatsoever. It manifests itself in the deserving. One who owns light is enlightened to the intensity and velocity of the

power generated by that light. In accordance with it, wisdom and intellect enhance and are able to comprehend truth and realize it face to face.

Tolerance of difference in religions can only be created by considering them as truths, revealed from particular angles. If this truth is imbibed and adhered to, all the diversities will disappear. This will lead to the appreciation of the others' views which will result in the unity of thoughts and sects. When the temptation or desire of slandering each other is abandoned, all will be able to expound the others' views with greater clarity, charity and force. This will create a harmonious atmosphere and a common platform where all the religions can get their due share of respect.

Religious people today are indulging in sniping and toppling each other by claiming their creed and thought to be the one and only who has realized truth and has manifested it. History is replete with awful events, which occurred in the name of religion. We are mindful of the fact that the religious creeds were formed for the propagation of peace and tranquility. But due to the Stubornness, spite

and ill-will of the so called religious teachers, sanguinary wars were fought, resulting in the carnage of millions in the hands of the so called religious people. Under the panoply of law and order, kings who were agnostic to particular religious sects, indulged in extreme forms of cruelty leading to the massacre of human beings in the same way as beasts are put to death in charnel houses. This cruelty speaks of their intolerance towards other religions.

The happiness and peace of mind mainly depends upon the equanimity of disposition, patience, forbearance and sympathy towards others. Plato has well said that in seeking the good of others, we find our own. If we desire to be religious in reality, we must have adaptability of nature and thought. The obstinate people can never attain truth. They circumambulate the truth but never reach it.

Religious tolerance is an outcome of self-control.

Intolerance is a master-vice because it is a product of so many other vices – hatred, jealousy, melancholy and spite.

Jainism is opposed to religious intolerance.

It pays due heed to each and every thought and considers it in a befitting manner.

NON- ABSOLUTISM

According to Jain philosophy, unity and diversity both are real. Both are co-related. Unity without diversity and diversity without unity is unreal.

Each and every object in this world has infinite properties. They have relative significance. All these properties can be comprehended only with reference to context. No property, whatsoever, can be delineated absolutely.

The whole truth about a particular object can be comprehended, but it cannot be communicated. At a time, we can only describe one of the properties of a substance. As such this utterance is only justified in relation to other properties. It is wrong to assert a thing with certainty, because every utterance of ours is from a particular point of view. If this point of view is neglected, we cannot come to the truth. With a certain standpoint, we can comprehend only one aspect of a thing, and not all the infinite

aspects, which each and every object has by nature. Let us take an example of a person. He is a writer, orator, poet, professor, and so on. All these qualities abide in one and the same person. But they are all relative truths. When we say that he is a writer, we comprehend his writing capacity (and) designate him as a prolific writer. But when we say that he is a poet, his writing capacity is not comprehended, but his poetic talent is taken into consideration. Likewise all the qualities of a person, when expressed in words, are relative expressions.

A person is father to his son, son to his father. He is brother to his sister and nephew to his uncle. He is a pupil to his teacher and teacher to his pupils. He is of multitude relations and qualities. But they all depend upon different viewpoints.

Truth is infinite. It can only be approached through infinite standpoints. Theoretically, this theory has helped a lot in coming to the conclusion of truth of certain substances. Jain thinkers adhered to this theory, which is technically called 'Syadvada', in expressing their attitude towards the fundamental realities of the world.

Lord Mahavira said, 'Comprehend all the aspects of an element with different viewpoints. Truth is relative; it cannot be comprehended absolutely. One who desires to comprehend one aspect of an element by neglecting all the other infinite aspects of it, can never know that particular aspect in reality. Such comprehension will only be a half way to truth.'

All our day-to-day activities abide by this law of nature. Nobody can transgress its boundary and claim to be a votary of truth. This relatedness of view-points has paved way for co-existence and reconciliation of all contradictory attributes. It has created an atmosphere of tolerance, and therefore obstinacy is automatically eradicated. Lord Mahavira said, 'Do not distort the thought of others. Try to understand them in their due perspective. No utterance is untrue when it is considered in the context in which it is uttered. This will lead to light. Tug-of-war between divergent views will come to an end and the way to reconciliation will be enlightened.'

The poisonous bite of a serpent never disturbed the poise and tranquility of Lord Mahavira, nor the praise of millions generated

arrogance or self-pride in him. He thought, 'This serpent is groping in darkness. He is ignorant of true virtues of life. His ignorance has led him to do evil to others. I am enlightened. I should not foster ill-will against the evil-doer.' Thus he was pacified.

It is certain that this theory of 'Anekantavada' or 'Syadavada' has its application in day to day life. Had it been only a theory of philosophical importance, it would have lost its practical utility. The principles, which are not applicable in our day-to-day life, have no significance whatsoever.

In brief 'Syadavada' is the method of understanding another's views, in their correct perspectives. This, at its initial stage, rids one of misconceptions and thus the flood-gates of truth become ajar.

This attitude of understanding another man's views paves way for tolerance and thus overt or covert sniping and topplings are stopped for ever. This ultimately leads to the reconciliation of opposite views and creates an atmosphere of harmony and peace.

TRINITY

Jainism believes in the fourfold path of emancipation – knowledge, perception, character and penance. All the four may be right or perverted. When they are right, they lead to emancipation and when they are perverted, they make the soul revolve in the unending cycle of birth and death.

The trinity – right knowledge, right perception and right character – is the pivot for self-realization. Jainism believes that neither of the three alone can lead to perfection. When all the three get clubbed, the desired goal is achieved.

Perception precedes knowledge and knowledge influences character. Character leads to the complete annihilation of *Karmas*, which results in the freedom of the soul.

First of all, our vision must be clear and unaffected by pre-occupations. It should be able to comprehend realities in their true forms and must rely on their true existence. Obstinacy never touches the fringes of the abode of right perception. A man of right vision takes the things as they are and realizes them

in their reality. He gets right perception of the end, the means and the door of Sadhana. *The true understanding and perception of these three leads one to right knowledge. Knowledge which is bereft of perception is not true. It is the right perception, which leads to right knowledge.*

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

All the actions are determined by the knowledge, from which they accrue. If knowledge is right, the action will be correct, and if the knowledge is wrong, the action will also be wrong.

One can galvanize a person into action for the attainment of ultimate bliss, only when one knows *Atma, Loka, transmigration of the soul, eternal and non-eternal, birth and death, inflow and death, inflow and outflow of Karmas and ultimately know sufferings and the way to their annihilation.*

This right knowledge lifts one out of the swamp of ignorance and enlightens his path. But this alone never works out emancipation. When this knowledge becomes practical, the whole personality is affected, giving it a new

dimension of life and making ajar the flood gates of divinity.

RIGHT CHARACTER

Character is an outcome of the two predecessors – right perception and right knowledge. When character is congruous with the two, *sadhaka will tread the path of conscience, which is always true and complete.*

When the soul, once, attains this state, it gradually goes ahead and passes through five different stages. First if all, right perception makes a person firm in his own convictions and his will-power increases to a great extent. This in due course results in generating in him a sense of renunciation of all external elements.

Secondly, renunciation inundates his whole life and he desires to become independent of all the passions and vices. Thus he reaches the third stage which is all awakening. He remains awakened all the time. He realizes the constant flow of Bliss in Self and becomes engrossed in its effulgent nature.

The fourth stage is of passionlessness. There are 4 Passions – Anger, Pride, Deceit and Avarice. These four are the Instrumental

causes of our death and birth, in fact the whole existence. When these four are rooted out completely along with the deluding *Karma*, *the omniscognition emerges, and the soul shines in its nature.*

The fifth stage is of non action. When the soul frees itself from all the internal and external hindrances, all the qualities lying latent become manifest and the soul becomes inactive (*Akriya*). *This leads to 'Nirvana', the goal aspired by one and all.*

Thus this trinity leads the soul to the sphere of eternity and makes it free.

Exclusive adherence to one of the three never leads to perfection. Some believe in *Gnana-Yoga*, some in *Bhakti-yoga* and some in *Karma-yoga*. *But Jainism believes in the three and gives equal importance to all of them for the annihilation of Karmas.*

The exclusive dedication to this trinity not only leads to freedom, but makes day-to-day life happy and peaceful.

Purity of vision is the first ingredient in peaceful existence. We cannot lead a life of seclusion. We live in society. As such, it

becomes essential that one should know the view of others. If the angle of vision is understood correctly, there will be no clash. This will make our knowledge correct and thus our activity will be in the right direction. This will, in its turn, annihilate all the possibilities of misunderstandings, the root cause of conflicts' and clashes.

LAW OF CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION

Jainism believes in two fundamental elements – animate and inanimate. It does not believe that it is from inanimate that the animate world has developed or vice versa. These two elements have their independent entity and are eternal.

Man is a highly developed conscious being. In the practical aspect of his progress, nine element work concomitantly. Nine elements are:

Jiva – Soul conscious entity.

Ajiva – Unconscious entity.

Punya – The karmic matter attracted by the auspicious actions of the soul and which bears

good fruits.

Papa – Karmic matter attracted by the inauspicious action of the soul, which results in bad fruits.

Asrava – The causes of the inflow of Karmas. They are five:

Perverted attitude (*Mithyatva*)

Non-renunciation (*Avirati*)

Negligence (*Pramada*)

Passions (*Kashaya*)

Physical activities (*Yoga*)

Samvara— Stoppage of inflow of Karma.

Nirjara— Annihilation of Karma through penance, meditation, studies, gustatory restrictions etc.

Bandha—Accumulation of Karmas binding the soul.

Moksha— Natural state of the soul; separation of alien matter from the soul.

Among the nine, the first two are the main factors and the rest are the instrumental and non-instrumental elements in the working of final emancipation.

Punya and Papa are afflictions. Moksha is the complete cessation of affliction and Samvara and Nirjara are the means of complete cessation.

UNITY OF MANKIND

'All human being are one—is the clarion call raised by Jain Acharyas when humanity was divided under several heads and as such the whole society was under an inextricable catastrophe, whining with pain of casteism. Jain prophets tried to make the law of oneness practical and thus they established the human in a high pedestal.

They proclaimed, 'All the human beings are equal. All the external divisions are unnatural. All the human beings are endowed with infinite strength. The divisions which are caused, by name, form, circumstances, ignorance etc. are unreal.' On this very basis, Jain tradition gave equal opportunity to one and all without any discrimination, to march towards Sadhana and gave them equal right in this direction. Lord Mahavira said, 'In the field of dedication there is no discrimination between big or small, rich or

poor, white or black, civilized or uncivilized, ignorant or intellectual. Path of Sadhana is for one and all. One whose mind is engrossed in Vairagya can march towards one's goal without any restriction. There is no place, whatsoever, for unnatural divisions which disintegrate the whole constitution.'

This clarion call paved the way for the eradication of casteism.

UNIVERSALITY OF JAIN RELIGION

Once Lord Mahavira was sojourning in Champa. He was absorbed in profound meditation. The serenity and tranquility of his posture was scintillating sparks of awakened consciousness. The whole atmosphere was spell-bound by its profound silence and mystery.

A disciple approached the Lord and sat there gazing at the mysterious face of the Lord. After a while, the Lord opened His eyes. The aspirant touched the feet of the Lord and asked—'Lord! Can one break the shackles of worldly fetters and reach the city of emancipation even without treading the path of

traditional religion?’

Then Lord Mahavira spoke to the disciple, ‘Vatsa! Remember, when the soul becomes pure by annihilating the bondage of *Karmas* and when the religion becomes one with the soul, a person’s final emancipation is certain, even though he does not follow the rigmarole of rituals and does not adhere to the traditional religious norms.’

‘Vatsa! One who forsakes all the worldly pleasures and cuts asunder the sexual cravings and influences one’s whole personality with spontaneous religion, reaches the abode of perfection.’

‘Lord! Is it necessary to become a monk to attain emancipation?’ The Lord replied smilingly, ‘Vatsa! The acquisition of Nirvana is not bound by the form or name, time or clime. Monkhood is not found in any particular form or name. It abides in a person whose solemnity and tranquility is manifested. One who is pure in word and deed, and is unattached to worldly affair's but equally attached to renunciation is a monk. One who is composed and pure, emancipate's even in the dress of a householder. Form and name are secondary in

the realm of Nirvana.'

'My Lord! Can one become free and independent even though he does not believe in your commandment?'

Lord replied, 'Vatsa! One who is endowed with the trinity of right perception and right knowledge, and right conduct is a real monk and he can work out his emancipation without any hindrance, whatsoever. Naturally from this trinity there originates an aureole of golden brightness which is the sign of enlightenment. Be assured, my beloved Vatsa! That the sentient beings cut asunder the chain of succession of deaths and births and realise the self purifying brightness of the soul.'

'Vatsa! Monkhood is not centralised in any one association. It is there where purity abides. Do not foster ill-will towards others. It is good to have firm faith towards one's own religion and tradition. But to have hatred and spite towards others to a mean consideration leads one to fall low in the abyss of ignorance. One should subdue one's own worldly attachments and contaminations.'

This makes it crystal clear that Jainism is a

universal religion, the boundary of which extends far and wide. It is free from narrow consideration based on form and name, dress and caste etc. It expounded its norms of religion having the catholicity of religion as its viewpoint.

It never stressed that only Jains can reach the abode of God and non-Jains will lag behind. It gives equal opportunities to one and all to be pure and sacrosanct. It said—‘Serenity leads to perfection. Rituals are secondary. They should be framed in such a way that they inspire an aspirant in the direction of purification and high dedication. If the whole personality of a person is scintillated with the sparks of awareness, emancipation is at hand’s length.

All these speak of the universality of Jain religion.

DISCIPLINE OF LIFE

MONKS :--

Every Jain monk has to follow five Mahavrata's (Great Vows)

NONVIOLENCE – Complete avoidance of physical, mental and vocal violence and

equanimity of mind.

TRUTH – To achieve equanimity of precept and practice.

NON-STEALING – Not to take any thing without permission of its owner.

CELIBACY – To practice purity of body, mind and speech in all matters including sex.

NON-POSSESSION – To practice freedom of attachment to worldly possessions.

Along with these, a monk has

* To observe caution and care in movements.

* Not to use any means of transport but to walk barefoot throughout his life.

* To carry luggage on his own shoulder.

* Not to be negligent in the utilization of his few articles of daily use.

* To have restraint of speech.

* Not to indulge in political affairs.

* Not to entice people for sartorial bias.

* Not to accept anything specially prepared, purchased, brought and meant for him.

* To meet all the meagre necessities of life through bhiksha.

* For food he goes from house to house without any distinction of rich or poor, high or low, acquainted or unacquainted, Jain or non Jain. But he should be a pure vegetarian.

* To practice concentration, contemplation, meditation and penance according to his physical strength and mental faculty.

* To keep himself constantly engaged in religious discussions, discourses and studies.

* To work for the well-being of general masses according to his prowess.

* To exhort people in spiritual directions and Endeavour to make their day to day life moral.

* Not to accept or take any thing after sunset.

* Not to travel between sunset and sunrise.

Jain laity has also to observe Anuvratas (small vows).

These may be summarized as follows:

- To refrain from cruel activities.

- Not to exploit labour of others.
- Not to take undue advantage of others' weakness.
- Not to deprive subordinates of their means of livelihood.
- Not to disclose the secrets of others which may entangle them in inextricable difficulties.
- Not to indulge in forgeries.
- Not to give false evidence.
- Not to engage in activities detrimental to national interests.
- Not to indulge in false weights and measure.
- To practice celibacy and be honest to one's own spouse.
- To practice restraint on senses.
- Not to accumulate much.

From the above it follows that conduct of life according to Jain traditions does not depend upon rituals but on the purity of mutual behavior. A person, whose life is influenced by the principles of restraint and morality, lives a pious

life. One whose conduct is not pure can never be religious. The first criterion of a pious life is purity of conduct. The religious morals which are not reflected in day -to- day life can never influence the personality of a person and he will be devoid of real benefits accruing from religion.

JAIN MAHAMANTRA

Namo Aarhantanam

(Obeisance to one who has attained passion-less stage)

Namo Siddhanam

(Obeisance to the emancipated)

Namo Ayariyanam

(Obeisance to the preceptor)

Namo Uvajjayanam

(Obeisance to the Teacher)

Namo Loye Savya Sahunam

(Obeisance to all the monks)

Eso Pancha Namokkaro,

Savva Pav Panasano.

Mangalanam Cha Savve Sim,
Padhamam Havai Mangalam.

This five-fold namaskar mahamantra destroys all the sins. It is the foremost amongst all the benefactions.

MY RESOLVE

I seek refuge in Arhats.

I seek refuge in the liberated.

I seek refuge in the saints.

I seek refuge in religion taught by the omniscient.

TEACHINGS OF JAINISM

* Keep aflame, Keep awake, to stay extinct, to lie in torpor is a sin. Keep burning so that the sparks may scintillate the whole atmosphere and turn darkness into light.

* Non-violence is the source of spiritual strength. One who knows not to endure trials and tribulations is a coward. Non-violence despises cowardice.

* Truth knows no barriers of asceticism or

godliness, of nobility or serfdom, of intelligence or rusticism. It dawns on the deserving.

* Body is mortal. Soul is Immortal. Pain is inflicted on the body, not on the soul. Forbearance leads to beatitude.

* Our senses never lead us to reality. They are faulty. Try to search the truth beyond senses. Truth will be infallible then.

* Those who entangle themselves in the rigmarole of rituals can never realize the truth. Rituals are like rough rind which covers the sweet fruit. They are the means and not the end.

* Religion is the nature of the soul. It should be practiced for the spiritual betterment of life. Purity of life is the pre-requisite of spiritual development.

* Truth can not be depicted in totality, though it can be realized totally.

* Obstinacy leads to destruction. Enlightenment comes to the open-minded.

* One who dedicates truly and solely to one's aim can do Sadhana at home. Anywhere, even amidst a huge congregation.

* If the present is lived piously one's future will never be in darkness.

* Do not resign yourself in the hands of fate. You are your own creator. Act and You will reach the goal. Self exertion leads to purification.

* Truth is one. The modes of expression are infinite.

* Seek the unity of religion or thought, not in a common creed but in a common quest.

* Religion resides in pure heart.

* Man reaps as he sows.

* All are equal. Casteism is unreal. High and low, mean and great, rich and poor is the outcome of our mental misapprehension.

* Humanity is one whole.

* Untouchability is a blot on the face of so-called civilized society.

