



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
JAINISM
PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE
SOMATIYA VIDYAVIHAR, MUMBAI

JAINISM: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

(A Proceeding of International Symposium)

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Foreword

I have pleasure in writing a foreword to the proceedings of Research papers of the International symposium on “Jainism: Past-Present-Future” organized by K. J. Somaiya Center for Studies in Jainism in collaboration with “Shree Mumbai Jain Yuvak Sangh, Prabuddha Jivan” which was partly sponsored by JIO (Jain International Organisation) on 27th October 2018 at Vidyavihar campus. Indeed, this vast and intricate subject needs to be explored. The proceedings of the papers provide articles presented by eminent scholars in the symposium. The key note speaker was Shri Vallabh Bhansali, (Chairman of Enam Group) of the symposium.

Jainism has had a glorious past. Historically, Jainism exerted considerable influence over the cultural life of India through its precepts and practices. It has been rightly said that “Jainism, the religion of non-violence had to pass through many storms from time to time, from its birth and yet it could survive and did not disappear from the soil of India”. The chief cause of this seems to be the scientific character of Jain doctrines with emphasis on knowledge and logic. In fact, Jainism has played an important role in social life of India.

In the present scenario, when there is loss of values of life, Jainism propounds the universal values of non-violence

and non-absolutism which can establish peace and harmony across the globe. The traditional value system of Jainism needs to be retained.

It is to be noted that Jains were the real apostles of culture and learning, having skill in trade business and management. Hopefully, the volume would provide an overall view of Jain philosophy giving an insight into the subject generating awareness in general public about the relevance of Jainism in modern times. The publication would help the scholars to think over the future of Jainism, relatively, an unexplored area of Jainism.

Samir Somaiya

President

Somaiya Vidyavihar

From the Provost's Desk

The international symposium on the topic of 'Jainism: Past, Present & future' on 27th October 2018 at Vidyavihar, Mumbai was a landmark in the history of Jainism. In accordance with its objective to promote Jainism and encourage research in Jainism, the event provided a platform to start a serious, rational discussion on the status of Jainism and its future. Eminent scholars were invited from all over the world. In their papers a great deal of light had been thrown on various aspects of Jainism.

K. J. Somaiya Centre for Studies in Jainism is established to promote studies in Jain religion, philosophy, art, literature and culture. It conducts various courses on Jainology. It is expected that this symposium would lead into a movement to have constructive action in promoting and safeguarding the core knowledge of Jainism.

I appreciate and congratulate the organizers of the symposium.

Prof. Rajsekhran Pillai

Provost

Somaiya Vidyavihar

Mahavira's Path is Samyaktva and not Jainatva

(Key Note Address by Shri Vallabh Bhansali)

Bhagwan Mahavir enunciated a Sadhana path primarily focused on Mukti or Nirvaan. The benefit to the world was incidental and inevitable. Lokmangal is ingrained in AtmaMangal. Thus, for Mukti he prescribed a life which was beneficial to the Sadhak and was in harmony with the society as well.

We have forgotten the path of Sadhana. At best it has become hazy or unavailable. This seems to have happened mainly because of instead of focusing on researching and discovering the subtleties of the Sadhana Path the later pupils made own interpretation of the Path led by their conceit and convenience. This led to the splintering of his teaching on flimsy grounds (various sects and sub sects) . These have proven to be highly deleterious as the respective Gurus emphasise the grounds of their innovation, (it is natural if they have to create a following) as more important than the core teaching and practice. When a path is not walked on it is bound to be occupied by wild bushes and creatures, becoming inaccessible to the lay man. It is only a rare

Anandghanji or Srimadji who will anyways search and pursue that path.

The direct result of this dereliction has been that the 'subtle path has been abandoned and what we see is purely a gross path, full of Kriya and Aadambar! As a result, there is greater emphasis on Bahya or visible effort and minimal on inner transformation (Abhyantar Tap).

One sees that the initial steps of the path like, Anashan, learning Sutra by rote, temple building and worship, pilgrimage, are glamourised and celebrated as the Ultimate goals. There is no discussion on Antar-Shuddhi (inner purity), Samyak Drishti (right vision), Tattva charcha, philosophy, etc..

Some of the Vyavaharik and not Adhyatmik aspects such as Ahimsa, Anekaant and Aparigrah have come to be known as Bhagwan's core teaching. Panaptipaata is only the first Paap Gunsthanak the highest being Mithyatva. Upwas, a rather deterred effort to remain hungry is the lowest Tap and Undoari, Ras Tyag as being of much high order. Most of the Jains are not just aware of these subtleties.

Bhagwan's highest principle Uppanai va- Vigamai va, Dhuvai va; Parasparopagraho Jeevanam; Samayam Goyam

ma pamai ye, Kashaymukti kil muktiraiv, Samvar and Nirjara, etc. are taught in a cursory manner, if at all. No wonder, one hardly hears about respect for each dravya, the need to be alert, or the importance of the karma of the mind as being significant and not those of body or word. Nor does one hear about the importance and the correct way to practice atonement- Prayashchitt, Self study - Swadhyay, and meditation - Dhyan etc.

Most importantly, we have completely forgotten the correct technique of Kayotsarg. While the Kayotsarg Sutra is indicative of more profound outcome than any other Kriya or austerity - Tap in the whole tradition. What the Jains do instead is completely unrelated and as a result ineffective. They do Jaap instead of Dhyan! The understanding that the duration of Kayotsarg is to be measured in Breaths is well known and talked about. But the fact is that the breath holds many secrets observing which can be very beneficial for a Mukti Panth Saadhak is hardly known. Instead of researching this core practice of Kayotsarg, used and prescribed by Bhagwan the Jains are mighty excited by the modern science converging on Bhagwan's observations about life and life forms, What is there to get excited by the validation or acceptance of the teaching / pronouncement of a Teerthankar!

Most ludicrous is the current intoxication to sermonise the world to apply Jainism in countering the global issues. Indeed, some of our Vyavhaarik principles seem to be very useful but artial and non - contextual application of these will be sketchy and plagiarised as some Western precept faster than the naive leaders think. We better wake up to Bhagwan's teaching that first be kind to yourself and then to others!

The travesty is that this sermonising to the others is occurring while they are crying hoarse that they can't impress their own children!

To summarise,

1. We need to create a consensus on the core path and emphasise and practice the same. Mahavir's path was a Sadhana and experience path and not of kriya and blind faith.
2. The noble practices for living, viz. related to food, fasting, sensitivty towards all creatures, avoiding grossly harsh acts, are very beneficial and accrue Punya and comforts. However, they are only the means and not the end. Understanding Karm Bardhan and practising Samvar to come out of the cycle of births has to be the focus of our teaching.

3. The path has to move from gross beliefs and practices to deeper and subtler understanding and practices.
4. We need to research Kayotsarg and meditation - Dhyan practices and popularise the correct way on a war footing. This is the age of Dhyan and it is tragic that Jains are not bothered about what their Bhagwan did for 12 1/2 years!
5. We should popularise Saman Suttam as a core book to teach and learn Mahavir's message to bring the various sects closer.
6. Bring Sadhana into the life of the seniors, so that the younger generation will look up to them. This is the only way to get them to follow the tradition,

JAINISM: F.A.

जैन धर्म का अतीत, वर्तमान और भविष्य

पानाचंद जैन,

पूर्व न्यायाधीष राजस्थान हाईकोर्ट

जैन धर्म का अतीत गरिमामय था। वर्तमान अस्पष्ट है, जैन सदपथ से भटक रहे हैं, धर्म अपनी प्रभावना खो रहा है, जैनियों की संख्या बढ़ रही है, किन्तु साधु व साधवियों की संख्या बढ़ रही है और आष्यर्च है साधवियों की संख्या का प्रतिषत साधु की संख्या की तुलना से अधिक है लगभग दुगुनी है ऐसा क्यों हो रहा है, यह विचारणीय प्रश्न है। देश में राजस्थान में सबसे अधिक साधकों को दीक्षा दी जाती है। यह चिंता का विषय है, इस पर चिन्तन आवश्यक है। जैन धर्म में वे सब बुराईयां आ गई हैं जो यापनीय काल में व्याप्त थी जैसे चमत्कार, जादू टोना, पूजाओं में भव्यता वे आज जीवन्त हो गई हैं और धर्म कहीं खो गया है। हमारा दर्शन कहीं खो गया है। हमारे आचार्य जनता को सुधारने में असहाय नजर आ रहे हैं। साधुओं व श्रावकों की सोच में सुधार की आवश्यकता है। जहां तक जैन धर्म के भविष्य का प्रश्न है, जैन धर्म के सिद्धान्तों के आधार ही पर मानव को जलवायु परिवर्तन के प्रकोप से बचाया जा सकेगा। प्राणी मात्र के प्रति करुणा का भाव जागृत होगा और मानव को ही नहीं अपितु धरती मां को बचाया जा सकेगा। जैनों के अपरिग्रह वाद, अनेकान्त व अहिंसा की बहुत बड़ी भूमिका रहेगी। जैन धर्म मानव धर्म हो जावेगा, किन्तु यह तभी संभव होगा जब हम सब सुधारने का प्रयत्न करेंगे, हमारे आचार्य

सही दिशा में समाज को ले जावेंगे और हम सभी अपने दायित्व को समझेंगे।

जैन धर्म श्रमण संस्कृति का धर्म है। भगवान ऋषभ देव जैन धर्म के प्रवर्तक थे। ऋषभ देव संस्कार के प्रथम देव थे। हिन्दू धर्म तो, बहुत बाद में आया है। हिन्दू धर्म को सिन्धु नदी के नाम पर हिन्दू धर्म बना। सिन्धु नदी का दूसरी ओर रहने वाले हिन्दू थे। इससे पूर्व वैदिक धर्म था। वेदों में ऋषभ देव का वर्णन विस्तार से मिलता है। श्रीमदभागवत, शिव पुराण, अग्नि पुराण व वायु पुराण में ऋषभ देव का उल्लेख है। हिन्दू शिव को आदि देव कहते हैं। शिव व ऋषभ का मूल स्थान हिमालय की गोद है ऋषभ व शिव दोनों का चिन्ह बैल है। ऋषभ पहले पैदा हुये और शिव पुराणों की देन है। वस्तुतः सच यह है कि ऋषभ का बिगड़ा शब्द ही "शिव" है और कालान्तर में वैदिक काल के बाद शिव को ही आदि देव माना जाने लगा। हमारे साधु इस बात को समझ नहीं पाये और ऋषभ की तुलना शिव से करने लगे। वे ऋषभ को शिव का आठवां अवतार कहने लगे; जबकि ऋषभ के समय वैदिक धर्म ही नहीं था। जैन धर्म स्वतंत्र धर्म है। वैदिक धर्म में भगवान सृष्टि का नियन्ता है, सर्व शक्तिमान है। जैन धर्म में विष्णु नियन्ता ईश्वर नहीं है। सृष्टि तो सनातन है इसका न आरम्भ है और न अन्त। जैन आत्मवादी धर्म है। आत्मा स्वयं परमात्मा हो सकती है। जैन धर्म निवृत्ति की ओर ले जाने वाला धर्म है। जैन धर्म मानता है, संसार के सब पदार्थों का स्वतंत्र परिणमन होता है। संसारी आत्मा अपने निज शुद्ध स्वभाव की प्रतीति कर विभावों का अभाव करने का पुरुषार्थ करे

तथा पूर्ण वीतरागता प्राप्त करले तो सर्वज्ञ परमात्मा (परम आत्मा) हो जावे।

जैन धर्म का आधार है, अनेकान्त, अपरिग्रह व अहिंसा यदि हम संविधान के मूल कर्तव्यों को पढ़ें तो स्पष्ट होगा इन तीनों का समावेश इसमें है। संविधान में स्पष्ट शब्दों में नागरिकों के कर्तव्यों में कहा गया है “हिंसा से दूर रहे” प्राकृतिक पर्यावरण का संवर्धन करें तथा प्राणी मात्र के प्रति करुणा भाव रखें।

अब प्रश्न उठता है धर्म क्या है ?

सबसे आसान धर्म की व्याख्या होगी जो मनुष्य के लिये आवश्यक है वह उसके लिये धर्म है। जैनों के अनुसार वस्तु का स्वभाव ही धर्म है। (वस्तु स्वभावों धम्म) रजनीश ने धर्म की व्याख्या महावीर के कथन पर निर्भर कर की है। महावीर ने कहा “आनन्द चाहिये तो खोजलो उसे तुम्हारे भीतर जो कभी दुखी नहीं हुआ। अगर चाहते हो अमृत तो खोजलो उसे अपने भीतर जिसका कभी जन्म ही नहीं हुआ।

ईसाई धर्म में आस्था व विश्वास को धर्म का आधार माना है इस्लाम धर्म के अनुसार जिस दिन मानव कोई भी अपराध न करे वह दिन ईद का दिन है। पारसी धर्म हुमता, हुबल हुमरस्त (नेक विचार, नेक वचन और नेक कर्म) पर आधारित है। सूफी साधना पर जोर देते हैं। सिख आचार को सत्य से भी ऊंचा मानते हैं। जैन मत में सदाचार के बिना धर्म प्राण रहित है। स्पष्ट है सदाचार मय जीवन बनाना ही धर्म का मुख्य कार्य है। दर्शन की भाषा में धर्म की परिभाषा है आत्मा की शुद्धि ही धर्म है। साहित्य की भाषा में धर्म की परिभाषा है—जिसके

द्वारा ज्ञान, आनन्द और शक्ति का विकास हो। मनोविज्ञान की भाषा में धर्म की परिभाषा है समता। भारतीय आचार शास्त्र का आधार है कर्म सिद्धान्त। कर्म और आत्मा का सम्बन्ध अनादि है—तुलसी ने सच कहा है—करम प्रधान विश्व करि राखा, जो जस करई सो चस फल चाखा।

अनेकान्त का अर्थ है, अनेक + अन्त, अर्थात् अनेक धर्म, यानि अनेक दृष्टिकोण, अनेक विचार जो एक ही भाव व मार्ग को प्रषस्त करते हैं। सबके विचार समझो, सभी विचार वंदनीय हैं। अहिंसा का अर्थ है जहां सहिष्णुता है, सदभाव है, राग रहित व्यवहार है, स्नेह है। अपरिग्रह में त्याग है, अपनी आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के बाद, शेष धन को दूसरों में वितरित कर दो। प्रकृति ने जो दिया है, वह सबके हेतु है, उस पर सबका अधिकार है। आज प्राकृतिक सम्पदा का अविवेकपूर्ण दोहन, उपयोग व उपभोग हो रहा है और उसका परिणाम जलवायु परिवर्तन के रूप में हम सृष्टि को विनाश की ओर ले जा रहे हैं।

भगवान महावीर ने मानवीय एकता का समर्थन किया था। उनका संदेश “एगो मनुष जायो ना हीणो ना अदुहीणो” अर्थात् मनुष्य जाति में पैदा हुआ न कोई छोटा है और न बड़ा। सभी मानव हैं, फिर भेदभाव क्यों? भगवान महावीर का दूसरा मानवीय एकता का सूत्र था, प्राणी मात्र एक दूसरे के सहयोगी है, “परस्परो ग्रहो जीवानाम”। इसका अर्थ स्पष्ट है सभी मनुष्य समान है, जन्म से जाति से रंग से व लिंग भेद से कोई छोटा बड़ा नहीं है। जात-पात, वर्ग भेद, वंशानुगात अस्पृश्यता, मानव सृजित है इसलिये हमें मनुष्यता, मानवता की दृष्टि से सोचना चाहिये; किन्तु आज का समाज रंग भेद, जाति भेद, धर्म भेद,

लिंग भेद, राष्ट्र भेद में इतना जकड़ चुका है कि आहार भेद ने भी विष्व को शाकाहारी व मांसाहारी में बांट दिया है। धर्म के नाम पर ऊँची-2 दीवारें खड़ी कर दी गई हैं। जातिगत व्यवस्था का बोल बाला है। धर्म के नाम पर समाज बंट चुका है, जबकि धर्म तो एक ही, मानव धर्म है। धर्म के अनेक अर्थ हैं; किन्तु धर्म का सही अर्थ है जो मानव के हेतु हितकारी हो।

यदि हम संविधान में दर्शाये गये मूल कर्तव्यों की ओर जाते हैं तो वहां भी धर्म की पालना की बात कही है। संविधान के पालन करने का उल्लेख कर मूल अधिकारों की ओर इंगित किया गया है जिसमें अनुच्छेद 25 धर्म की स्वतंत्रता का अधिकार अनुच्छेद 26 में धार्मिक कार्यों के प्रबन्ध की स्वतंत्रता का अधिकार अनुच्छेद 29 में, संस्कृति के संरक्षण के अधिकार व अनुच्छेद 30 में अल्पसंख्यकों द्वारा शिक्षण संस्थाओं की स्थापना का अधिकार बता दिये गये हैं।

मूल कर्तव्य में मानवीय मूल्यों के प्रति कर्तव्यों की प्रतिस्थापित करते हुये सभी लोगों में समरसता और समान भ्रातृत्व भावना का निर्माण करने जहां धर्म, भाषा व प्रदेश या वर्ग आधारित कोई भेदभाव न हो।

संविधान के अनुच्छेद 25 के द्वितीय स्पष्टीकरण में यह व्यवस्था दी गई है कि सामाजिक कल्याण व सुधार के लिये या सार्वजनिक प्रकार की हिन्दुओं की धार्मिक संस्थाओं को हिन्दुओं के सभी वर्गों और अनुभागों के लिये खोलने का उपबन्ध करने वाली विधि व्यवस्था के लिये हिन्दुओं की धार्मिक संस्थाओं के प्रति निर्देशन का

अर्थ सिख, जैन व बौद्ध धर्म के मानने वाले व्यक्तियों के प्रति निर्देश माना जावेगा। मंदिर प्रवेश अधिनियम 1947 की व्याख्या करते हुये बम्बई उच्च न्यायालय ने अपने 24 जुलाई 1951 में यह निर्देशन दिया कि हरिजन जैन मंदिर में उस समय प्रवेश करने का अधिकारी होगा जब किसी हिन्दू को रीति रिवाज के अनुसार जैन मंदिर में पूजा का अधिकार प्राप्त हो, अन्यथा नहीं। इस अधिनियम में "हिन्दू" शब्द को परिभाषित करते हुये कहा गया है कि इसमें जैन भी शामिल हैं।

जैन चाहे वे दिगम्बर अथवा श्वेताम्बर मत के मानने वाले हों, उनकी अपनी अपनी धार्मिक क्रियाये हैं, रीति रिवाज अनुष्ठान पूजा पद्धति, साधुओं की मर्यादाएं व विशिष्ट संस्कृति तथा ग्रन्थ हैं व जैन धर्म का अपना स्वतंत्र दर्शन, चिन्तन व सिद्धान्त हैं ये सब हिन्दुओं से भिन्न है और इनके बाबत् जैनों को भारतीय संविधान के अनुच्छेद 26, 29 व 30 के अन्तर्गत संवैधानिक अधिकार दिये गये हैं। इन अधिकारों के आधार पर जैन उनके विरुद्ध बहुतसंख्यक समाज द्वारा जो हमले किये जा रहे हैं, उनसे संरक्षण प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

संथारा जैन धर्म की संस्कृति का प्रतीक है। जैन धर्म में संथारा (संलेखना) एक रीति के रूप में प्राचीन काल से चला आ रहा है। जब वैराग्य का तीव्र उदय होता है, साधक को जीवन शुद्धि व मरण शुद्धि की आध्यात्मिक प्रक्रिया अपनाकर समाधि मरण लेना चाहता है, यही संथारा है इसे आत्म हत्या कैसे कहा जा सकता है। आत्म हत्या आवेश में उठाया हुआ कायरतापूर्ण कृत्य है जबकि संथारा एक उत्सव के रूप में है यह लोक व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध नहीं है। यह प्रक्रिया समाधिमरण है, व्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता के अधिकार का पोषण करती है

और संवैधानिक है। संथारा साधुओं और श्रावकों के हेतु भिन्न है। संथारा कुछ समय के लिये भी हो सकता है, इतने ही समय में वह कर्म के बंधन से आत्मा को कुछ तो परिष्कृत कर ही सकता है।

बाल दीक्षा की प्रक्रिया भी इसी प्रकार संवैधानिक प्रक्रिया है। स्वेच्छा मरण इसी उपरोक्त आधार पर संवैधानिक है। हमारी अल्प संख्यक की मांग आरक्षण की नहीं अपितु धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यक घोषित करने की है, ताकि बहुसंख्यक समाज के उत्पीड़न पर, अपने संवैधानिक अधिकारों में व्यवधान होने पर इसकी शिकायत कमीशन के समक्ष कर निराकरण करा सके। जब जब जैन समाज द्वारा अर्थात् धार्मिक इकाइयों द्वारा संचालित स्कूलों में सरकार ने हस्तक्षेप करना चाहा है न्यायालय ने अपने निर्णय उनके पक्ष में दिये हैं। कलकत्ता उच्च न्यायालय ने 1982 में, मद्रास हाईकोर्ट ने 1993 में दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट ने 1976 में तथा मुम्बई हाईकोर्ट ने 2002 में ऐसे निर्णय दिये हैं और 2006 में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने इनकी पुष्टि कर दी है।

भगवान महावीर ने घोषणा की थी कि प्रत्येक मानव समान है, न कोई श्रेष्ठ है और न कोई हीन। अनुच्छेद 44 की अवधारणा इस आधार पर की गई कि धर्म व व्यक्तिगत कानून का कोई सम्बन्ध समाज में नहीं है। नागरिकों के लिए एक समान सिविल संहिता होनी चाहिए। संविधान में अंतःकरण और धर्म को अबाध रूप से मानने व आचरण करने व प्रचार करने की स्वतंत्रता की गारंटी दी गई है। जैन संस्कृति को अक्षुण्ण बनाये रखने के लिए यह व्यवस्था दी है कि इस देश के नागरिकों का कोई एक वर्ग यदि अपनी भाषा लिपि व संस्कृति रखता है तो उसकी अक्षुण्णता को बनाये रखने का उसे पूर्ण अधिकार

है। जैन अल्पसंख्यक हैं और उनका यह अधिकार अनुच्छेद 29 व 30 में दिया गया है। इस प्रावधान को विशिष्टता को अनेकान्त व अपरिग्रह के सिद्धान्तों पर ही खरा पाएंगे। इन्हीं प्रावधानों के अनुसार संलेखना को विधि सम्मत व बाल दीक्षा को उचित समझा गया है।

हम भारत के लोगों ने भारत को एक सम्पूर्ण प्रभुत्व सम्पन्न समाजवादी धर्मनिरपेक्ष लोकतंत्रात्मक गणराज्य की स्थापना के हेतु दृढ संकल्प लिया कि इस देश के नागरिकों को सामाजिक आर्थिक और राजनैतिक न्याय मिलेगा, जहां विचार अभिव्यक्ति, विश्वास, धर्म और उपसाना की स्वतंत्रता होगी। हमने संविधान में नागरिकों के मूल कर्तव्य भी परिभाषित किए, जिसके द्वारा अपेक्षा की कि प्रत्येक नागरिक हिंसा से दूर रहेगा, प्राकृतिक पर्यावरण की रक्षा करेगा और प्राणी मात्र के प्रति करुणाभाव रखेगा।

हमने सभी को अंतःकरण की ओर धर्म को अबाध रूप से मानने व आचरण और प्रचार करने की स्वतंत्रता दी और देश का नाम भारत रखा, जिसका अर्थ है भा + रत अर्थात् जो धर्म में रत है। धर्म का अभिप्राय है वस्तु का स्वभाव। धर्म को आचरण की शुद्धता के रूप में समझा जाता है। अहिंसा का ही लक्षण है सहिष्णुता, समता, समानता, समरसता और इसमें समाहित होते हैं सत्य, अस्तेय और अपरिग्रह। अहिंसक व्यक्ति ही जीवन की आवश्यकताओं को अल्पतम कर सकता है।

हमारा अपना संविधान है हम एक लोक गणतंत्रात्मक गणराज्य है। जहां उन्हें तीन प्रकार के न्याय दिलाने का अभिकथन दिया है।

राजनैतिक, आर्थिक व सामाजिक तथा संविधान के प्रियम्बल में व्यक्ति को विचार अभिव्यक्ति, विष्वास, धर्म और उपासना की स्वतंत्रता, असवसर की समता, व्यक्ति की गरिमा व बन्धुत्व भावना नागरिकों में बढ़ाने की प्रेरणा दी गई है। हमें समानता का अधिकार अनुच्छेद 14 और गरिमा के साथ जीने का अधिकार (अनुच्छेद 21), अनुच्छेद 51क में नागरिकों के कर्त्तव्य दिये हैं कि वो हिंसा से दूर रहेंगे, प्राणीमात्र के प्रति करुणा का भाव रखेंगे। प्रकृति की पूजा करेंगे उसे नुकसान नहीं पहुंचाये तथा प्रकृति का स्वार्थ के हेतु अविवेक दोहन नहीं करेंगे। अनुच्छेद 38 में समानता का अधिकार सुरक्षित रखने, सम्पत्ति का वितरण न्याय संगत करने तथा पर्यावरण की रक्षा, नषा मुक्त देश, वन्य पशुओं की रक्षा, भौतिक संसाधनों के स्वामित्व को समाज में नियंत्रित बांटने की लोक कल्याण की नीति से शासन चलाने की बात अनुच्छेद 39, 47, 48ए के माध्यम से की है। यदि हम जैन धर्म के सिद्धान्तों की बात करें तो संविधान में प्रत्येक स्थान पर उन्हीं का प्रभाव आप पायेंगे। जैसे समानता की बात की है तो भगवान महावीर की वाणी में यही ध्वनि थी संदेश था कि संसार में पैदा हुये सभी मानव समान है, कोई छोटा बड़ा नहीं है लिंग भेद जातिभेद दूर किये हैं। सम्पत्ति की विकेन्द्रीकरण की बात की है। भारतीय संविधान के अनुच्छेद 25, 26, 29 व 30 में धार्मिक संस्थाओं को संरक्षण दिया है और उपासना की स्वतंत्रता। हमारी प्रथाओं को संरक्षण दिया है और अहिंसक समाज की बात की है। सभी प्राणियों को अपने स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व का मान कराया है और प्राणी मात्र के प्रति करुणा का भाव रखने के भाव अभिव्यक्त किये हैं। जैसे सिद्धान्तों, अहिंसा, अपरिग्रह व अनेकान्त का पुट संविधान में स्थान स्थान पर आप पायेंगे।

चूंकि संविधान के अधिकार राजनैतिक, आर्थिक, सामाजिक पक्षों के साथ उल्लेखित किये हैं, और कर्तव्य पालना पर जोर दिया है, साथ ही इन्हें मानव अधिकार देकर, उन्हें प्रवृत्तीय बना दिया है। हमारे धर्म को संविधान का संरक्षण दिया गया है। संविधान की मूल प्रति में केवल महावीर स्वामी का चित्र दिया है। स्पष्ट है जैन धर्म सनातन है, मानवीय है और इन्हीं के सहारे यदि देश को संचालित किया तो हम प्रकृति के प्रकोप से अचारण की शुद्धता से न अपने देश को बचा सकें अपितु संसार को बचाने में ही सहयोगी बन सकेंगे। जैन दर्शन पुकार रहा है “धरती को बचाना है तो शाकाहारी बनो” प्राकृतिक सम्पदा को बचाना है तो प्राणी मात्र के प्रति करुणा भाव रखो। देश में समता, समानता व समरसता अपेक्षित है तो सबके साथ समानता का व्यवहार करो। भगवान महावीर की वाणी को चरितार्थ करो “मानव का पुत्र न कोई छोटा है न बड़ा है”। अनेकान्त से सब विवाद समाप्त करो, अपरिग्रह की भावना से सुख-दुःख में सभी को भागीदार बनायें। दूसरों की आवश्यकताओं की इज्जत करो और अपनी इच्छाओं को सीमित रखो।

जैन धर्म में आचरण की शुद्धता पर व सम्यक चरित्र पर अधिक बल दिया है। जैन धर्म में पर्यावरण से छेड़छाड़ को पाप माना है। श्रावकाचार ग्रन्थ में विषद विवेचन है। पर्यावरण का संबंध प्राणी मात्र से है। वर्तमान में भिमला हाईकोर्ट ने नदी का भी मानव की संज्ञा दी है। पाष्चात्य देश में जानवरों के अधिकारों की बात की है। कम्बोडिया में नदियों और पहाड़ों तक में आत्मा मानी जाती है। वहां कभी जैन संस्कृति व जैन दर्शन विस्तार से फैले हुये थे। अर्धमागधी में

लिखे षिलालेख और जैन तीर्थकरों की सैकड़ों की खण्डित मूर्तियां प्राप्त हुई हैं। तीन तीर्थकरों में जन्म स्थान के नाम के नगर वहां कभी थे। चम्पा व अयोध्या कम्बोडिया भाषा से शब्द नहीं है, वहां की भाषा चीन भाषा जैसी है। वहां जैन तीर्थकरों की खण्डित मूर्तियां इंगित कर रही हैं कि जैनियों सावधान रहो कहीं कम्बोडिया की तरह यहां भी जैन धर्म समाप्त न हो जावे। विचारों में बदलाव लायें। समय की पुकार है। जैन धर्म का उज्ज्वल भविष्य आपके हाथ में है।

JAINISM: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Antiquity of Jainism

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What is Jainism:

Jainism is one of the three most important ancient religions which came into existence as a result of most non-violent approach and humanitarian viewpoint towards all creatures. It is an Indian religion originated and developed on Indian soil with a profound progressive attitude and judicious understanding of special requirements and philosophical indispensable necessities of the time. The Tirthankaras, Kulakaras, and their loyal followers and believers have been contributing much to the evolution of Indian culture in all significant fields of literature since its inception. Its traditionally history goes to over two and half million years. The other two religious systems are Hinduism or Vedic concept and Buddhism.

The term Jain or Jainism is derived from “Jina” meaning conqueror, the Honorific, similar to Buddha in later period, by which its multiple founders are known. Adherents called Jainas or Jains number over five million of the total Population that comes to near about twelve million. Jainas

live in all parts of India. But Jainism could not be propagated much outside the Indian sub-continent.

For the whole of their shared history in India, Jainism coexisted with Hinduism and Buddhism and interaction between them finds ample references in the literature of both religions.

Jainism is claimed to be one of the most ancient religious systems in that as many as twenty-three Jinas or Tirthankaras are recognized as having preached the doctrine prior to Vardhamana Mahavira or Nigantha Nataputta, the contemporary of the Buddha. These Jinas or Tirthankaras are so designated as they had conquered themselves through perfect knowledge and gained absolute freedom from the bondage of all Karmas and as they had founded the four Tirthas or orders of monks and nuns and male and female devotees.

The Nature of Shramana and Brahmana Culture:

Two types of Indian cultural systems are found in India, Brahmanic and Shramanic or Non-Vedic. The early Brahmanic system is the civilization of those who subjugated

the senses and materialistic empire. The Kshatriya class developed this system of Shramanology in early days. During the Upanishadic period even the well-versed Brahmanic sages went to Kshatriyas to acquire the spiritual knowledge. The Shramana tradition was based on equality and equanimity and self-efforts leading to salvation. According to Shramans, a being is himself is responsible for his/her own deeds. Salvation, therefore, can be attained by anyone. Jainism is a very democratic religion. Ritual in its opinion is not a means of escaping from the misery of Samsara, the cycle of birth and death, is the path of moral, mental and spiritual development based on complete non-violence and truth.

Characteristics of Shramana Jain Culture :

These characteristics of Shramana (Samana in Prakrit) culture can be understood by the word Shramana itself which is derived from Shram to exert, effort, and labour or to perform austerity, but is mixed in meaning with Sama to emancipate from Karma with observing Sama equality and equanimity 1. One who performs acts of mortification or austerity is called Shramana (Shramati tapasyatiti), which is very popular in both the Shramana traditions, Jainism and Buddhism 2. According to the definition, a being is he

responsible for his / her own deeds. Salvation, therefore, can be achieved by anybody with irrespective of caste, creed, colour and culture. The cycle of rebirth to which every individual was subjected was viewed as the cause and substratum of misery. The goal of every person was to evolve a way to escape from the cycle of rebirth. Each school of Shramanas preached the own way of salvation. But they all agreed in one respect, namely in discounting ritual as a means of emancipation from the misery of Samsara through pious religious activities.

Contrary to this, the Brahmanas evolved a system of every elaborate animal sacrifices. Their rites and rituals were performed both to gain worldly enjoyment and to injure one's enemies. The social outlook and the goal of life of Vedic system were based on the caste system. The so called Shudras, the lower community was considered ineligible to perform spiritual rites. Brahmanic ritualism was represented by the priests who were the custodians of prayers, assumed a very progeny of Prajapati, the creator God.

Since both these classes were leaders in the societies, clashes between them ought to have taken place. Hence

considering the contravention, divergence and antipathy, some of the scholars are of the view that Shramana cultural system is a sequel to protest the Brahmanic philosophy. But the conclusion cannot be accepted since the Vedic literature itself contains several important references to the Shramanas under the names of Vratyas, Vatarasanas, Asuras, etc. Its existence can even be proved earlier.

Jainism is said to be a primitive religion which believes that all the particles of earth, water, fir, wind and plants are possessed of life. The universe is eternal and indestructible and was not created by God. The theory of six Dravyas (six types of substance) and the worship of the nude form, compel us to recognize its traditional views which indicate the pre-historic period and the cultural evolution of creation.

Nature of Universe and Jainism:

According to Jain tradition, the universe and its creation are eternal and infinite and are divided into two eras (Kalpas), viz. 1) Avasarpini or descending era sub-divided into six eras (Kalpas) , viz. i) Sushma-Sushma(hapy-hapy) , ii) Sushma (hapy), iii) Sushma-Dushma (hapy-unhapy), iv)

Dushma-Sushma (unhappy-hapy), v) Dushma (unhappy), vi) Dushma-Dushma (unhappy-unhapy), and 2) Utsarpini or ascending era sub-divided into six having the same names in reverse order. In the Apsarpini era, people attain all the pleasures and happiness at the starting point which reduces gradually up to the last era. The Utsarpini era commences with utmost sorrowful condition and ends with most pleasant age. The first three of the Avasarpini and the last three of the Utsarpini era are collectively called the Bhogabhumi (age of enjoyment and contentment) where the people achieve and fulfill their requirements from Kalpavrikshas (wish-fulfilling trees). Art and industries were also not known to them. From historic viewpoint this may be called the early and later stone age.

During the Karmabhumi (age of action), the people learn to work, toil, write, trade, educate and express art etc. The inventors of this age are called Kulakaras (legislators and founders of civilization) who are said to have appeared in the first of these last three ages or in the fourth age of the era, the transitional period of the age. The result of the phenomenal change compelled the Kulakaras to create the revolutionary Karmabhumi period for welfare of the society. The number of Kulakaras varies in ancient Jain literature, but ordinarily the number is fourteen. Nabhiraya, the father of Rshabhadeva

is said to be the last one. These Kulakaras changed the old order and invented a number of new methods for evolving a civilization and educating the people in various ways. In those days the life was very easy and simple. It changed gradually and as a result, the Kulakaras are said to have adopted three types of Dandaniti (punishment), viz. Admonition (Hakara), warning (Makara), and reprimand (Dhikkara). The first five Kulakaras found it enough to rebuke the wrong-doer with “Ha”. The next five Kulakaras had the need of “Ma” to reinforce the effect of disapproved. “Ha” expressed the exclamation towards the misdoing while “Ma” signified regret, as if to say “I regret that you should have done such a thing as this”. This was enough to curb the offences to set right the way for the future. The remaining Kulakaras added “Dhik” (abhorrence) to the existing code of penalties. The regular laws were laid down by Tirthankara Rshabhadeva and his son Bharata after whose name India is called Bharata.⁴

The human civilization has been divided into three parts, viz. Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic. Human beings got real entry into civilization in the third Neolithic age which may be named Kulakara or Utsarpini period in the light of Jain tradition. Accordingly, the fourth age is supposed to be the best in which the Tirthankaras and other

great personages take birth and enlightened the human beings for their spiritual development. We, are at present living in the fifth age or the Avasarpini, which commenced a few years after Mahavira's pari-nirvana (527 B.C.), and it is of 21000 years duration. The teachings of precursors cause to degenerate the spirituality in those who came after them. It may be mentioned here that the Kulakaras are also called Manu in the Adipurana (3.211-12). The fourteen Manvantaras in Vedic tradition are also carrying out the same activities⁵. The Vishnupurana (3.2.45-47) describes the main functions of the Manvantaras.

After Kulakaras, the sixty-three Great Personalities or men of mark (Shalakupurushas) appeared in the current Avasarpini period, viz. (i) 24 Tirthankaras, (ii) 12 Cakravartis, (iii) 9 Balabhadras, (iv) 9 Vasudevas or Narayanas, (v) 9 Prativasudevas or Prainarayanas, (vi). Purushottama Rama, the hero of the Ramayana and Padmapurana of Jainas flourished in the age of Tirthankara Munisubrata. The impact of Tirthankara Neminatha's philosophical conceptions can be perceived on the Upanishdic mysticism. Bhagawan Shrikrishna the apostle of non-violence was the cousin of Tirthankara Neminatha, the twenty-second Tirthankara. Jacobi rightly pointed out that

out of 63 Shalakupurishas, 37 are related to Krishna legend. It amounts to come to the conclusion that an attempt for reconciliation between Brahmana and Shramana systems was made during this period.

The problem of Aryans was a very controversial one. Taking into consideration of all views, it may be said, as Ramachandran opined the Aryans began their historic migration. 25000 B.C. from their original habitat in the South of the Circumpolar region and to the North of the Caspian and Aral seas covering the Northern parts of the mountainous Eurasian Steppes and Southern part of the thick Siberian forests extending up to the eastern sea-coast. This region was known to the post Aryan ancients as Uttarakuru. They reached west Asia in about c. 2000 B.C. Greece c. 1500 B.C. and Bharata (India) c. 1200 B.C. The Aryan hegemony in this region was firmly established by c. 1000 B.C. and in Egypt by circa 500 B.C. It has generally been held by prime scholars that the culture and civilization of the Aryans annihilated was definitely far superior, both materially and spiritually to their own 6 Jain culture would have been spread over this region during this period.

Aryan and Dravidian Culture and Jainism:

There were three types of cultural groups in India: 1) the Northern group which was spiritual, non-violent, and who were idol worshippers is known as Aryans, 2) the Southern group which was well-versed in arts and industries is called the Dravidas or Vidyadharas, and 3) the North-western group which spread over Asia, Europe, Iran etc. It is known as the Indo-Aryan. On the basis of new researches, the scholars are of the view that the Aryan and Dravidian cultures originally belonged to the Jainas. Dravidas were definitely not the Vedic Aryans and they are, therefore, called Anaryas, Dasas (slaves), Dasyus (thieves), Vratyas and Asuras (demons). They are referred to in Vedic literature as opponents of the Vedas. Jain culture has been refuting the idea that the Vedas were composed by man and not the God (Apaurusheya) since inception. Therefore the references must be connected with the Jainas.

The Aryan invasion may be symbolized with the group clashes between two ideologies represented by Vedic group and Shramana Jain group. Vedic group was indulged in violent sacrifices for appeasing the so called God while the other group was a follower of non-violence and antagonistic of such sacrifices. They were called Ayajna, Anindriya,

Avrata, Dasyu, Anyavrata, Shishnadevapujaka etc. and defeated by the Vedic group and driven out towards South across the Vindhya-chala. Such group was centered in Punjab and Ganga Valley. In fact, the concept of Aryan invasion has been outdated. It is now against the historical fact.

The Nature of Sindhu-Hadappa Culture and Jainism:

The Sindhu-Hadappa culture appears to be a culture belonging to Shramana Jain group, the followers of non-violence. It was not a result of Kshatriya invasion. They were invaded by the Vedic group and made slaves by them. Its period may be fixed about 3000 B.C. The recent researches are of the view that the Sindhu-Hadappa culture was spread over all the parts of India including even Afganistan, Baluchistan, Iran, Soviet Middle Asia, Sumeriya, Mesopotamia, Babilonia, Akkat etc. The ancient Indian languages like Prakrit and Sanskrit were spoken in these areas. The Swastika, Dharmachakra and other such symbols are found thereon which are related to Jainism. The script of the inscriptions found in Sindhu-Hadappa area could not be read out so far. But the human and cattle forms found on the seals are bound to state that it was a Jain site. Dr. Karunesh Shukla tried to reveal the matter of the inscriptions having 26 symbols. The first line of the inscription accordingly has nine

symbols which may represent to nine types of Padarthas of Jainism. Likewise, the second line keeps seven symbols representing seven categories of Tattvas (elements) or Saptabhangis of Syadvada conception. The three lines may be symbolized with Ratnatraya and so on. It may be mentioned here that the Kharoshthi script was originated by Sundari, the daughter of the first Tirthankara Rshabhadeva. The scholars are also of the view that the Dravida group was the originator of Sindhu-Hadappa culture. It may be mentioned here that Dravida was the name of one of the sons of Tirthankara Rshabhadeva. The script of Sindhu-Hadappa appears to have an impact of Tamil script. The well-reputed scholar Ashne Parpola tried to establish the theory that the script of the Sindhu -Hadappa culture was related to early Tamil language and literature which is over flowed with Jainism.

Indus Civilization and Jainism:

Indus civilization is related with pre-Aryan or pre-Vedic culture of Jainas. The people were there polytheistic. The stone nude figures found in Haddappa and Sindhu excavations may be identified with Jain statues of Tirthankaras, most possibly of Rshabhadeva. They are in

Yogic postures. Dr. Joshi's view may be mentioned here who classified and interpreted the statues as follows:

1) The stone in the form of male organ of generation indicates the Ling worship of Arhat Jain tradition. 2) In one seal the Yogi is sitting with horned crown. Tirthankara Rshabhadeva and Kalpavraksha are also figured therein.

3) On one seal some laymen are sitting around the Yogi and the expanded hood of a snake can also be observed there.

4) On another three seals Tirthankara Rshabhadeva is sitting beneath the tree in naked posture and close to him Bharata can also be seen. There is no Vedic symbol observed here. Marshal accepted that this is undoubtedly a Jain idol.

5) Swastika and Dharmachakra can also be observed on the seal.

Arhat, Varhat and Vratya tradition:

The Rgveda refers to Anarya culture which is nothing but a culture which originally belongs to Jainas. We find there the two types of culture, Varhat and Arhat or Vratya. Varhat represents to Vedic culture and the Arhat and Vratya represent to Jain culture:

*Arhan vibharshi Sayakani dhanvarhannishkam yajatam
vishvarupam.*

*Arhannidam dayase vishvamamvam na va ojiyo rudra
tvadasti.*

- Rgveda, 2.33.10

The Nature of Vratyas:

The *Vratyas* were the followers of Vratas or vows. They used to stay in a group form and were against the Brahmanas. The Vratyakanda of the Atharvaveda describes the characteristics of Vratyas, the Non-Vedic Aryans who used to practice austerities. Acarya Sayana has appreciated the Vratyas by calling them Vidattama, Mahadhikara, Punyashila, Vishvasamananiya and Brahmanavishishta in the Sayanabhashya. The Rgveda refers to them as Vratasaha (5.53.11) which is interpreted as Utsedhajivi. They were initiated by using the Vratyastoma for making them Aryans. They are also called Anrayas and Magadhas.

Vratyas are also called Rudra and Mahadeva and therefore the Vratyas are honourable (Arha pratyad vratyo ratrya prad namo vratya). They are called Vidvan Atithi, etc. Papalad Shakha refers to Vratyas as Ahimsaka and Tapasvi (Rg. 4.30.20; 2.11.4; 4.28.4; 6.25.2). The Shanti Parva of Mahabharata is also of the view that the Vratyas were

Dharmanishtha. The Vratyas are appreciated in the Atharvaveda as follows:

*Tad asyaiva vidvanvratyo atithigrahana gacchet.
Svaayamenambhyudetya bruyat vratya kva'vatsih.
Vratyodaka vratya tarpayantu vratya yathate priyam
tathastu.*

*Vratya yatha te vashastathastu vratya yathate nikamastatha
sviti.*

Atharvaveda , 15.211. 1-2

The subject matter of the Vratyakanda may be compared with the life of Rishabhadeva, the first Tirhankara who have been honoured by the Vedic Rishis in several verses. The Vratyas were definitely against the Vedic ideology. According to the Panca-vimsha Brahmana, they were divided into two classes, i.e.Arhatas and Yaudhas. As we know, the Arhathood is very popular in the Shramana culture in the sense of Vitaragatva which clearly indicvates that there was another group of ideology called Shramans; The Buddhist monks were also called Arhat. The word is used in the Rgveda in the sense of a leader of Shramanas, Dharmanishtha and Tapasvi (Rg. 4.30.20; 2.11.4; 4.28.4; 6.25.2.)

Rshi, Muni and Yati tradition:

The Munis of the Rgveda were the followers of Tirthankara Rshabhadeva tradition. The famous Kesi Sukta (Rg. 10.136) describes a Muni who bears long hair, clad in dirty tawny coloured garments, walks in the air or files. He is delirious with the state of being a Muni. He enjoys with Vayu and drank poison and with Rudra. He follows the moving wind and attained the status of God. Mortal men could only see the body and no more. He treats the path of sylvan beasts, Gandharvas, and Apsaras.

Keshyagnim keshi visham keshi vibharti rodasi.

Keshi vishvam swardishe keshidam jyotirucyate.

Rg. 10.136.1

Kakardave vrashabho yukasidavavacitsarathirasya keci.

Dudheryuktasya davatah sahanasa

ruchantishmanishpadomrdgalanim.

Corresponding to these references, the references to Vatarashanah Shramana rishis and their leader Tirthankara Rshabhadeva occurred in the Bhagawat Purana may be compared and said that Rshabhadeva, the first Tirthankara of

Jainas is well-recognized by the Vedic sages. He was accepted as the incarnation of God, even earlier to the incarnation of Rama and Krishna.

Dr. Vasudeva Sharana Agrawal considers the Vrata and Vratya identical. The Rgveda refers to Arya warriors as Vratasaha (Rg. 5.3.113). Panini gave them the adjective Utsedhajivi. According to Kashikara, Utsedhajivi means who adopted the psychical labour as the means of livelihood (*Utsedhah shariram tadayesena ye jivanti te Utsedhajivi*). They were the habitants of Magadha, the main centre of Jainism. The Vaishali Ganatantra was also called Vratya which was totally follower of Non-Vedic Jainism.

It may be mentioned here that the Rshi and Muni traditions were quite different to each other. Rish tradition was centered to Pravrttimarga while the Muni tradition was the follower of Nivrttimarga called Vratyah. The Muni tradition can be observed in the Vayupurna (16.3), Skandapurana (2.5.19), Bhagawat Purana (2.5.519; 7.15.7). The Padma Purana (1.3.157) mentions their number as eighty thousand those days (Ashtashiti sahasranam muninamurdhvaretasam). Sayanacharya is of view that the Vratyas were the Shramana Rshis.

***Ketu aruna-vatarashana shabda rshisanacaksate.
Te sarve api rshisanghah samahitaso aprmattah santah
upadadhatuh.***

Here Ketu, Aruna, Vatarashana M/Rshi are related to Jin Sangha . The Shatpatha Brahamana mentions the name of one Aruni who was the teacher of Yajnyavalkya . Auni's son Shvetaketu travelled from North to South. He was the trader and the leader of Panis. These Panis were the opponents of Indra (*Vaishvastu vyavaharta, vita vastikah paniko vanik*) and were followers of Jain tradition. Some one prayed the destruction of Panis in Rgveda (6.46.1-3) The Panis were ultimately defeated and killed and then were made Dasas and Adevapujaka s (Nirukta , 2.17; 6.26).

It appears, the Aryas, Dasas, Dasyus, Rakshasas, panis were united in the South under the leadership of Agastya Rshi. Cyavana, Jamasagnya, and other Rshis were the followers of Agstya Rshi who was counted as one of the Saptarshis. The Kamba Ramayana mentions that Shiva had learnt the Tamil language from Agastya Rshi. It indicates that Shiva was treated as Anaryadeva and then Agastya Rishi becomes the follower of Muni tradition, the tradition of Jainism.

Like Munis, Yati tradition was also prevalent in the Vedic period. It was a group of meditators belonged to Non-Aryan group called Asuras. According to the Sayanabhashya, Asuras and Dasyus were killed by Indra. The war between Devas and Danavas was held, in fact, between Vedic Aryans and Pre-Vedic Aryans (Jain Samanas). Asuras were not defected at once. The Vedic Aryans could conquer them only after the moment they became slack in following the right conduct as revealed by the dialogue held between Laxmi and Indra. The leadership went to the hands of Indra who ruled over the Northern India and the Asuras centered in Southern India. The Shantiparva of the Mahabharata speaks of the Asuras who were the followers of Shramana ideology.

Likewise, as stated earlier, the Panis were also the followers of Shramana tradition. They are called Dasus (7.6.2), Krpanas (1.124.10; 4.51.3) who do not donate anything to the Purohitas or Devas (1.33.3; 1.83.2; 6.13.3 etc.). In the Rgveda, Naga clans may also have been somehow connected with the Shramanism. The Asuras, Vratyas, Yatis, Munis were also called Brahmacharis who used to control over sexual passions and followed Shramanology (Atharvaveda, 11.5). They were also worshippers of nude figures which were not recognized by the Vedic Rsis who clearly prayed “Let not Shishnadevah

enter our sacrificial Pandala”. This Muni tradition was very much popular in those days. The Padmapurana mentions their numbers as eighty thousand (**Ashtashiti sahasranam muninam murdhva-cetasam, 1.3.157**). In later period, both these traditions appear to be united one and the same. The names of Parashara, Vyasa, and Shukra Rishis are found in both the traditions. Amongst them, Shukra had more leaning with Nivrtti tradition as he criticized Janaka expressing doubt in his Videhata and laymanship stating “**Grhastho’yam vidambana**”. The Venu and Marichi stories mentioned in the Puranas are also sufficient to prove the antiquity of Jainism even prior to Vedic religion.

These references compel us to be of view that Shramana system was prevalent during Vedic period. The Vedic Aryas were their opponent and therefore their antiquity goes definitely back to Indus Valley Civilization and even earlier to that it was in existence. The cult of Rudra or Shiva may be closely associated with Shramana culture laid by Jainas. The Buddhists joined this Shramana tradition afterwards in sixth century B.C. This fact can be understood through peeping into the history of Jainism and Buddhism and their traditions in connection with creation of universe and conception of soul and God.

Rshabhadeva and Hiranyagarbha:

The first Tirthankara Adinatha or Rshabhadeva of the Jainas has also been referred to in Vedic literature as Keshi and Hiranyagarbha along with other names like Prajapati Shiv, Bhutanaha, Hrshikesh, Brhma by Acarya Jainasena in his Jinasharanama following the Rgveda tradition. For instance, the Rgveda clearly refers to Rshabhadeva of the Jainas as follows:

Hiranyagarbhah Shrigarbhah, prabhutavibhavo 'bhavah. 2.8

Stavanarho hrshikesho jitajeyah krtakriya. 4.2

Vedango vedavidvedyo jatarupo vidamvarah. 5.3

Digvashah vatarahano nirgranthesho nirambarah. 10.1

Prajapatih yah prathamajjivishuh .

Vrhatsvayambhu Stotra, 1

Keshyagnim keshi visham keshi vibharti rodasi,

Rg. 10.136.1

According to the Rgveda (10.121.1), Hiranyagarbha took the birth first and then became Prajapati:

***Hiranyagarbhah samavartatagre Bhutasya jatah patireka
asita.***

***Sa dadhare prthivim dhyamutema kasmai devaya havisha
vidhema.***

Tirthankara Rshabhadeva is recognized as the Vishishthadevata in the Rgveda. For instance, Namovrshabhaya (Rg. 1.10.52.15), Vrashabhnyarjayate (Rg. 121.40.10), Bhurikarman Vrashabhaya (Rg.1.24.190. 8) etc. The tenth Mandala of the Rgveda even says that Rshabhadeva was not taking bath which is prescribed for the Jain monk. He was worshipped by the great men. It is also said in the Rgved:

***Kucjjayate sanayasu navyo vane tasthau palito
dhumaketuh.***

***Asnatapo Vrshabho na ca veti sacetaso yam pranayanta
martah.***

Rg. 10.1.4.5

The Vatarashanas people surviving on air and not eating must be related to Digambara Jainas. They are also referred to in the Taitiriya Aranyakas (1.23.2.1; 24.4.2.71). Keshi and Rshabhadeva mentioned in the Rgveda (10.9.102; 6.1.36) are one and the same personalities. The Bhagavat Purana submits his life in details followed by Vishnupurana, Agnipurana, Kurma, Markandeya, Vishnu and other

Puranas. The Shiva Purana (7.2.) refers to Ihim as one of the twenty-eight incarnations, even prior to Rama and Krishna. The earliest Vedic hymn Text Rgveda praises Keshi highly prior to the Vatarashanas (10.136.1) which indicates that Keshi was their leader. On the basis of comparative study of the Rgveda and Bhagavat Purana, one may come to the conclusion that Shiva and Rshabha are identical personalities (10.9.102.6).

The Rgveda uses Vrashabhadeva gradually in the sense of Vrashabha, powerful, and then Devata. For instance, *Svahakrtam Vrashabha vakshi havyam* (1.17.88), *Vrashabhaya vrashne prathvi viryavan* (1.15.25; 121.1.37), *Sahasrashrango vrashabho jatavedo dhrtahutasomaprashtha suvirah* (13.1.1.12), *Mahaparam Vrashabham su vajrm* (2.3.3.5), *Hiranyashangah Vrashabhah* (19.5.36.5) etc. In the Upanishad period, Vrashabhadeva is called as Bhagawan by Satyakamain the Vrahadaranyaka Upanishad (*Atha he nam Rashabho'bhyudaya Satyakama iti bhagawa itiha pratisushrava prapta* (5.1), The Mahabharata does not include Rshabhadeva into the list of ten incarnations, but the Shrimadbhagawat recognized him as the thirteenth incarnation. The entire Rgveda tradition is of the opinion that

Hiranyagarbha and Vrashabhadeva were identical personalities:

*Asutaparvo vrashabho jyayanima asyu shrudhah
santipurvi.*

*Divo na pata vidadhasya dhibhik kshatram rajana pradivo
dadhandhe.*

Rg. 3.38.5

The Atharvaveda recognized Rshabhadeva as Pujyadevata and Ikshvaku Hiranyashranga Rshabho (19.5.36.5). He was Mahanagni (209.136.11), Parameshthi (10.4.7.17), Dhratavrata raja (7.8.83.1), Vrash (20.5.47.1; 5.4.16.1-11) and so on.

In the Rgveda, Naga clans may have been somehow connected with Shramanism. The Asuras, Vratyas, Yatis and Muniswara called Brahmacarīs who used to control over sexual passions and followed Shramanology (Atharvaveda, (11.5). They were also worshipers of nude figures (Digambarah) which were not recognized by the Vedic Rshis who clearly prayed “Let not shishnadevah enter our sacrificial Pandala.¹⁹ In this regard, , the references to Jainism can also be observed in the Yajurveda (1.7.36-38; 1.10.27; 1.17.88; 1.15.25; 2.2.9) and Samaveda (2.125.142-3; 2.23.5).

Arhat and Jain tradition:

The Vedic literature also refers to Jainism as an Arhat tradition. The following citations can be particularly mentioned from the Rgveda:

1) *Arhan vibharshi sayakani dhanvartham nishkam yajatam vishvarupa.*

*Arhannidam dayase vishvamambam na va ojiyo rudratvadasti.*Rg.2.6.30

2) *Arhanta ye sudanavo naro asmabhashavamsah.*

Prayajnam yajniyebhyo divo archa marudbhayah.
Rg. 5.4.52

3) *Dve naptu devavatah shate gordva ratha vadhu gnat sudasah.*

*Arhannagne pai javanasya danam hoteva sadya marye mirebhan.*Rg.7.2.18

4) *Arhan devan...*Rg. 2.1.3.3

5) *Arhanto ye kshudanavo.....*5.4.52.5

6) *Brahmadvisho jahi parapanim*

*raradhaso...*Rg.8.7.641-2

7) *Pancavrata ayamsyava....*Rg. 9.1.14.2

8) *Vatarashana keshi muni...* Rg. 10.11.136.1-7

The Yajurveda (19.14) refers to Tirthankara Mahavira as Nagna, Mahavira, Suvira, Vira. Parameshthi (2.29).Likewise, the Upanishadas and Puranas mention a

large number of citations regarding different position of Jain Shramanas as Paramahamsa, Vitaraga, and Digambara etc. Some of them may be referred as follows:

- 1) *Yathajatarupadharo nirgrantho nishparigrahas tattadbrahmamarge samyaksampannah...sa paramahamso-* Javalopanishad, Su. 6, p.260
- 2) *Nagnarupo mahakaysitamundo mahaprabhuh. Marjinim shikhipatranam kakshayam sa hi dharayat.* Padmapurna, Bhumikanda, Adhyaya 65
- 3) *Padmasanah samasinah shyamamurti digambarah. Neminathah shivo caivam nama candrasya vamanah.* Skanda Purana, Prabhasa Khanda, Adhyaya 6
- 4) *Dehamatravashishto digambarah.. Sanyasopanishad,* 28
- 5) *Vitaraga vimatsarah ... Vishnu Purana, ...7.9.;3.42*
- 6) *Tato digambaro mundo bahirpicchdharo dvija.. Vishnu Purana, 2.2*
- 7) *Nabhiraya Rshabhadeva---*Linga Purana, 35.6.24; Vayu Purana, 31.50.57
- 8) *Jitendriaya---*Vayu Purana, 17.4
- 9) *Devasura Sangrama---*Vayu Purana, 59.67
- 10) *Arhat Darshan,* Vayu Purana, 66.65

Jainism as appeared in Pali and Buddhist Literature:

There was a time when European scholars regarded as a religion of medieval advent or off-shoot of Buddhism. Jacobi was the first scholar to establish in 1884 the antiquity of Jainism as an independent and pre-Buddhist religion on the basis of the date available from the Pali Canon. He regarded Parshvanatha as a historical personage and Tirthankara Rshabhadeva as the founder of Jainism. The Pali Canon refers to Nigantha Nataputta as an elder heretical teacher and his philosophical notions. He is also familiar with some characteristics of Parshvanatha tradition. Besides, Buddhist literature mentions Rshabhadeva, Padma, Chandra, Pushpadanta, Vimala, Dharma and Arishtanemi, the Jain Tirthankaras. In fact, it is Pali literature which could establish the antiquity of Jainism in a right perspective prior to Mahavira.

The historicity of Neminatha or Arishtanemi can also be proved through Pali literature where he is mentioned very clearly. Dr. Prannath Vidyalkar tried to establish the historicity of Tirthankara Neminath on the basis of a copper-plate of Nebuchadujar (about 1140 B.C.), the king of Revnagar (Kathiyavad) who donated the amount to worship Tirthankara Neminath who did penance on the Rewat Mountain. This is the period of Ramayana. Jain Ramayana is

somewhat different with that of Vedic Ramayana. Jain Ramayana is definite more practical and natural. Accordingly the Rakshsas and Vanaas were not Rakshsa and Vanaras in true sense but they were realcultured human beings having the clan name of Rakshasas and Vanaras, called Vidyadharas, the worshippers of Jina deity. In 1999, the excavation was held in Anuradhapur (Sri Lanka) where the remains of Jain stupa of tenth century of B.C. are found. Its bricks are kept in the museum of Anuradhapur with the name of “Jain Bricks”. These points are sufficient to prove that at least in tenth century there was an existence of Jainism even in Sri Lanka.

Jainism in Ancient Greece :

In the context of antiquity of Jainism, I should mention the ancient civilization of Greece where the Jain culture was flourished long back. The Greeks appear to have been first Europeans who came to contact with Jainism. They had come to India during the period of Alexander the Great and Diadochi. It is said that before Alexander was returning back from India after a near revolt in his army, he met some Digambara Jain monks called Gymnosophists in Greek language. Of these, he used to discuss some philosophical concepts, gained knowledge and became his follower. Alexander asked the Acharya if he liked to go to Athens

with him. The Acharya refused and gave permission to Muni Kalyana of his Sangha to go with him. In the city of Athens a temple was constructed and the foot prints of Kalyana Muni were installed as the Great teacher of Alexander. Even now it is said that the temple through in ruins still exist with the foot prints of Kalyana Muni were installed as the Great teacher of Alexander. Even now it is said that the temple through in ruins still exist with foot prints of Kalyana Muni. About sixty KMs, There is one site named ELESUIS where I have personally seen a structure of a ruined temple with a Samadhi. There is also a Greek inscription which mentions the pious name of Shramana Kalyana Muni who got his death by way of observing Sallekhana. This is called a temple of Faustina Marcus Aurdius situated in the East Triumphal Arch Roman Courtyard belonging to first c. B.C. It's nearby is an ancient well called the well of the Maidens and also there is a door of the temple. The entire monument is protected by the name of SILODS of Perikles. It was reconstructed in 170 A.D. Pythagoras, There is a tribe named Kalum which may have been a follower of a Jain sage kalyanasagara. Pyrrho and Plotinus were the chief exponents of the Indian Philosophy having gained knowledge from Kalyana Muni.

Ancient Greece philosophy is influenced by Jain philosophy. The Macedonians or the Greeks were the followers of Egyptians who were influenced by the teachings of the Jain, Gymnosophists. The religious History of the Greek too shows signs of the prevalence of Jain doctrines in their Country. Pythagoras visited India in the sixth century B.C. and was initiated by the Shramanas in the temples of Ellora and Elephanta and was given the initial title of Yamanacharya or the Ionian teacher. He proclaimed the immortality of soul and doctrine of transmigration in the manner of Jainas. He advocated and passed a simple life, punctuated with the rules of asceticism and the vow of silence. He condemned meat diet and also use of sensual pleasures.

Likewise, Pyrrho also seems to have propagated Jain doctrines in Greece. Lactantius refers to the Gymnosophists and asserts that Pyrrho of Elis, the founder of pure skepticism came under their influence and on his return to Elis, imitated their habits of life, Pyrrho's skepticism seems to be a corrupt form of the Jain doctrine of Syadvada, and even the ancient Dionysian's cult of Greece betrays signs of Jain influence, Divine, while the body is merely its prison house, and that it gains unsuspected powers once it is free from the trammels of the body. The

ancient Greeks worshiped nude image like the Jains and their mythology also advocates the self teachings of soul's potential immortality flesh.

Another visible feature of the spread of Jainism in Greece is the shrine of Shramanacharya, the naked saint at Athens. Professor Ram Swamy Ayangar rightly remarks that the Buddhists and Jain Shramanas went so far as Greece, Rumania and Norway approach their respective religions.

Thus so many such references can be cited in this regard from Vedic and Pali –Buddhist literature and abroad which prove the existence of Jainism even prior to Vedic religion. On the basis of these references, in fact, Dr. Jacobi rightly proved that the Buddha himself was initiated in Parshvanatha's tradition. Rhys Davids, Max Muller, Oldenburg, Sir Monier Willion, K.P. Jayaswal, R.G. Bhandarkar, B.G.Tilak, Carpentiar, Harmswarth, Ram Prasad Chanda, B.C. Gokhle, and other renowned scholars accepted this theory and recognized the antiquity of Jainism even prior to Vedic civilization. Its impact can also be observed on the Upanishadas and other Vedic literature and culture.

Jainism: Evolving Sociological Trends, Future Predicaments

Dr. Suganchand Jain

Background:

As a concerned Jain who has travelled and lived abroad for quite some time and involved in societal and educational activities in India, I have seen significant changes taking place in Jain community which if not corrected, shall bring early eclipse of Jain community like Parsis. The disturbing changes are mostly self-inflicted by Jains. To back such hunches of mine and other concerned community leaders, ISJS sponsored a major Jain population and community study of India in September 2017. The main questions asked were:

1. Total number of Jains in India and their concentration. Also address the growth rate and reasons thereof
2. Emerging trends: education and occupation, overemphasis on rituals, temple building, asceticism, emergence of innumerable subsects (monk oriented)
3. Jain Way of life? Trends Issues and Solutions
4. Drift away from Jainism in youth, if any

5. Indication of Jain religiosity i.e. adherence to Moksamarga or general well being
6. Inter-sect relationships
7. Definition of Jain identity i.e. who is a Jain? To be redefined or not? AAA
8. State intervention in Jain practices santhara, child renunciation, nudity, research on values, fasting and other similar practices.
9. Renaissance of Jainism emerging trends

Methodology:

In August 2017, ISJS planned an extensive field survey to

- a. Enumerate Jains and compare with the figures as per Census 2011 (ISJS published a book on this item with district level and state level data).
- b. Use this opportunity to also collect data about sociological and anthropological characteristics of Jains

However, our analysis showed that all India survey is almost impossible unless we have a work force similar to Bureau of Census. So we decided to do a complete survey of two tehsils, two districts and few villages and extend the findings at a national level. ISJS started the survey with Hauz Khas

(being home of ISJS) and Preet Vihar (home of Dheeraj Jain, an active officer of Census bureau and author of the book) tehsils and Faridabad district (home of one of ISJS advisers),

Census data and Voters lists were collected for Hauzkhas Tehsil but could not be collected for Preet Vihar. Faridabad being geographically widely spread became an issue. So we focused on Hauz Khas where we could get government data as well as of the highly structured Jain community. We added New Delhi district, being small in size and very familiar with ISJS.

ISJS designed a very detailed survey form for data collection. ISJS used its own staff to collect as much data as possible during Paryushan Parva at temples. ISJS also hired contract specialist field staff to undertake door to door survey, using various Jain directories and voters list.

The data collected was analyzed by specialist staff using statistical techniques to estimate the number of Jains in these two areas.

The sociological data collected in these areas was revealing and needed further substantiation to answer questions 2 through 9 on all India basis. So ISJS selected the following areas (based on the large number of Jains, economic, urban

rural divide etc) to have as statistically representative data as possible for Jain community on an all India basis.

Maharashtra: Pune, Kolhapur, Sholapur, *Ahmednagar* and *Mumbai*

Madhya Pradesh: Indore, *Bhopal*, *Sagar*, Jabalpur

Gujarat: *Ahmadabad*, *Surat*

Rajasthan: *Jaipur*, *Udaipur*

Karnataka: Belgaum, *Bangaluru*

Tamil Nadu: *Chennai*

Note: Italics mean survey yet to be completed.

Findings

1. Enumeration

Survey estimates Confidence level 2011	Voters list	Census	Difference
Hauz Khas tehsil (10998 to 11600)	11299 10444*	5448	>100% 95%
New Delhi District 95%	1082 1127**	669	>60%

*Lists **6629** adult Jains who use Jain as their surname.

** Lists 805 adult Jains who use Jain as their surname.

This leads us to estimate that Census data (4. Million) of Jains is grossly understated

2. Sociological analysis (now complete for eight cities/districts and attached)

Indicators	New Delhi District	Hauz Khas tehsil	Belgaum General	Belgaum Youth
Education				
Graduate +	82.10%	58.4%	65.41%	65.4%
Illiterate	5.64%	8.4%	1.08%	1%
Occupation				
Own Business	21.98%	25.4%	11.48%	11.35%
Professional	0.39	5.0%	1.56%	9.46%
Services	13.89	6.4	10.57%	15.4%
Students	37.94	23.5%	24.74%	40.2%
Income				
Rs. 50,000+	23.15%	20.6%	15%	-
Major Cause of Interfaith Marriage				
Co-education & Co-working	51.45%	50.4%	56.12%	50.5%
Support for Widow and Divorcee re-marriage				
	99.28%	80.8%	68.88%	-
Temple Visit				
Daily/Regular Visit	34.6%	5.07%	50.27%	42.9%
Visit occasionally	50.72%	61.8%	23.94%	29.2%
Eating before Sunset				
Not relevant in	35.51%	15.5%	84.04%	85.1%

present times				
Diet				
Take Non-Veg	2.6%	1.45%	2.93%	2.16%
Liquor				
Take Liquor	19.7%	2.17%	7.98%	16.49%
Opinion about drifting of youth	NA	NA	71%	67.5%
Reason of drifting				
Lack of exposure to Jainism	-	NA	48.40%	62.70%
Too many rituals	-	NA	22.61%	20.54%
Not in tune with modern culture	-	NA	19.95%	15.95%
Need for mandatory religious education	-	-	86.4%	-

* - Item/question not asked

Conclusions emerging from study

1. ENUMERATION:

Total population 2011 census:

4.47 million. The survey reveals that the figure is under stated by 60 to 100% i.e. the population is likely to be **7.12 to 8.9** million. Reasons can be

- Jains not indicating themselves as Jains (even those with surname as Jain) in the religion column.
- Enumerators are not asking people properly about their religion.
- Enumerators not conducting 100% field survey.

We reviewed data available for Jain sadhus and sadhvis and Jain temples which give the following enumeration

Sadhus/Sadhvis. Approx. 17000. Or one sadhu/sadhvi for 270 Jains
Temples Approx. 10000. One temple for 400 Jains

This Jain communities are either temple centric or sadhu/sadhvi centric. These figures also indicated the strong influence these two institutions paly in Jain community. Approximately 90% sadhus and sadhvis belong to Shewtambar sect.

Growth rate:

Declining and is indicated as 5.57% for the decade ending 2011. Significantly lower than the same for Hindus (16.7%) and Muslims (24.6%). 2.1 % annual growth rate needed as against 1.4% for Jains, to justify even the replacement or constant population in long term. Higher education and economic progress world over results in smaller families than normal, a feature of Jain community as well. Marriages

outside Jains, growing number of nuclear families seem to be the main reasons for decline our survey shows some other alarming indicators in this regard as well Jain Population age wise.

Age group	HK (F 990 / K) 2011 census (F 950 / K)	ND	(F 980 /K)
0-14 years	15.5% (51.5% F)	2.17%	20.7%
15-59	64% (49.5% F) 66.5%	80.7%	
60+	17.5% (48.3% F)	16.6%	12.7%

The above figures show a maturing Jain community with very fast declining newly born Jain children

2. Emerging trends

Education / occupation

Education is a strong point of Jain community. However, there is a strong shift in preferences for the type of education they seek. This is seen in the occupation followed where more and more Jains are opting for profession or service as compared to be in their business earlier. This has the following fallout:

- More and more Jains are now living in nuclear families and spread in wider geographic areas. Thus, getting Jain education and following Jain way of life becomes more difficult.
- This drift also results in Jain youth moving away from traditional arranged marriages and now marrying with persons from other communities whom they met either in school or at work place. Eating and life style habits also are affected accordingly.

Jain rituals, religion and their impact

We see a tremendous growth in elaborate religious rituals such as pujas with material offerings, gatherings for festivities and saints (particularly chaturmas), elaborate temples and over emphasis on food at all religious rituals, life style of saints and their engagement more in worldly activities than spiritual, veneration of money at religious functions including pujas rather than adherence to Jain way of life. Such activities are creating a clear divide in already small Jain community:

- Jains who are just becoming ritualists and adherence to practices with blind faith. These are mostly in trade or own business.

- Educated Jains who see large discrepancies in actual practices and the doctrine. So, they drift away from the religion. In fact, a number of them made the statement, 'I do not feel proud to be called a Jain'. Taking non-veg food and alcohol are becoming the norm and at times openly displayed as well at social functions.
- The worst outcomes of these activities are: the big sect divide and the one with more money tend to destroy the other, be in the form of fighting for places of worship, changing history and even downgrading the other.

The above analysis is supported by the incidences like:

1. Jain heritages places like Udaygri-Khandgiri, Udaipur (Kesariyaji), temples /engravings in Tamilnadu, Girnar and now even Sammet Shikhar and other places being converted to either Hindu or others as the inter sect divide do not let these issues be resolved and returned to Jain fold.
2. Jains themselves are deserting more and more heritage temples as they drift from rural areas to metros for making good money.

3. Jains are drastically changing their ritual practices, like having servants do the religious rituals and even preparing and offering food to sadhus and sadhvis rather than themselves. Similarly, gochari and life style of sadhus sadhvis and fasts, less emphasis on non-possession and bramcharya by them are changing fast.
4. Sadhus and Sadhvis venerated more on their financial power rather than spiritual attainments.
5. Few Jain leaders left and they are also pursuing social causes for personal glorification rather than of Jain community or religion.

3. Jain Way of life? Trends Issues :

Our survey showed that more and more Jains, particularly the educated and young do not subscribe to the practices such as daily temple or sthanak visit, eating before sunset and abstinence from alcohol. Non-vegetarian food is also entering the community particularly the young Jains who frequent the posh hotels and restaurants and social mixed community's get-togethers. Surprisingly even in traditional and stricter adherents of Jain values also, lesser concern on

abstinence from root vegetables, observing No-Greens days during fortnight and frequent eating out are observed.

On the other hand, concern for environment and climate change amongst educated people, be they Jains or not, is bringing the young people around to abstain from meat eating, alcohol, tobacco etc by choice. Jain sadhus and sadhis, religious texts need to emphasize such facts more to encourage Jains to logically choose eating habits and life style supported by Jain doctrine. Similarly, temple visit can be promoted as a good habit for promoting health and punctuality as well.

4. Drift away from Jainism in youth, if any :

This is observed in different ways as follows:

- Poor Jains, like in Belgaum district, are drifting away due to lack of education and opportunities to make a decent living. In Bundelkhand, Jains are migrating to big cities like Delhi (more than 1000 in Sangam Vihar Delhi), Mumbai, Ahmadabad for employment, trade etc and live in substandard conditions or becoming Jain pandits/monks.
- Well to do educated Jains, like in metros and overseas, are drifting away due to the influence of

larger communities they live in and lack of education of Jain doctrine and community/religious place-gatherings.

- We see young Jains in business drifting away due to deemed modern way of life and necessity to do business (AS)
- Even the elders openly say that their youngsters are not as religious and socially oriented as they are.
- Impact of mixed marriage

5. Indication of Jain religiosity i.e. adherence to Moksamarga or general well-being

Orthodox, mainly Digambar Jains, still value/venerate the adherence to doctrine and supported lifestyle i.e. Moksamarga (e.g. observe eleven stages (pratimas for advancement followed by monkhood). However here also, one sees the growing trend for rituals, devotion and indifferent observance of stricter life style (daily temple visits, eating before sunset, abstinence from meat and alcohol, honey etc).

Shwetambar Jains, on the other hand, talk of general wellness of the self and community, implying observance of

avashyakas to some extent by laity and householders. Idol bathing and their cleaning invariably is done by servants in Shwetambar temples while Digambars still do it themselves. Similarly, Shwetambar sadhus/sadhvis are involved more in social work (Veerayatan, Jio) than spiritual or similar works.

Important Jain laity are involved in non-Jain social works (TOI, SGM, JIS)





6. Inter-sect relationships:

Legal disputes for ownership and management of Sammedshikhar, Kesariaji, Bhagwan Mahavira Memorial Trust Delhi, (to name a few big ones) and general construction of Shwetambar temples at earlier Digamabar pilgrimage places, pushing Digambaras out of Parshwanath temple Indore and elevation of sadhus of the sect of organizers in main combines functions. These were earlier disputes between Shwetambar and Digambaras. Now even within a sect, the number of *ganas* is almost synonymous with the number of sadhus, each trying to establish a separate identity as Jains. Kanjipanth, New Terapanth, Sushilmuni panth, Shraman sangh in Sthankvasi etc. are emerging

separatist movements seen in already small Jain community. On the other hand, we see a growing trend amongst householder to accept girls, boys as suitors from different sects as a common phenomenon.

7. State intervention in Jain practices santhara, child renunciation, nudity, research on values, fasting and other similar practices.

There are growing incidences of Government intervention due to general public uproar about some of the religious cum social practices of Jains. For example:

- The government of the say is trying hard to emerge Jainism as a part of Hindu identity.
- Practice of Sallekhana /santhara is under consideration of Supreme court of India to declare it as illegal practice, similar to suicide.
- Child renunciation and monkhood, nudity in public places, use of peacock feathers for *picchis*, open defecation by monks, and now sex related conduct of monks, ownership of huge sums of money by monks are emerging as the growing anti-Jain sentiments in public and government agencies.
- On the other hand, there are growing interest in the practice of fasting, *Ahimsa*, *Anekant* and *Aparigraha*

as values of Jains for social wellness. Even the government and overseas scholars are getting more and more interested to understand these practices for application in common man's life to enhance wellness.

8. Definition of Jain identity i.e. who is a Jain? To be redefined or not?

There is a general feeling that the Jain identity needs to be redefined? I.e. should observance of Moksamarga strictly by sadhus/sadhvi and laity as per the doctrine be adhered to or should it be updated to meet the growing demographic changes in the community. This implies enforcing daily temple visits and visits to sadhus/sadhvis, being vegetarian and day-diner, abstinence from alcohol and other stimulants, marriages as per old system of arranged one within the caste-based status-oriented system.

Our survey indicates strong drift from such religiosity. Most of the Jains surveyed focused on adopting Jain values like *Shram*, *Ahimsa*, *Anekant* and *Aparigraha* and observance of avashyakas and to some extent minor vows as Jain identity. Better education of Jain doctrine, based on logic and scientific researches should be taught to youngsters of

all ages at special classes conducted by Jain professionals with good background of Jain doctrine. Emphasis should be laid on avoiding unnecessary emphasis of sect orientation in such education.

It may not be out of place to keep *sadhus/sadhvis* away from constant contact of laity so that they can spend time in study of scriptures, their spiritual uplift and preparing newer ways of interpreting Jain doctrine as indicated earlier.

9. Renaissance of Jainism emerging trends:

There are three clear ways being adopted by Jains for renaissance of Jainism :

- a Building/upgrading temples which are very luxurious, lavish rituals /pujas, *jagrans*, *chaturmas* of *sadhus/sadhvis*, popularizing sect oriented social groups (Jain Social Group, Jain Milan etc) and philanthropic activities, like scholarships to needy Jains, organizing large groups of pilgrimages and events like Mahavir Jayanti, Paryushan Parva. The basic objective of such activities is to show financial muscle of individual Jains/sub-sects/sects/*sadhus/sadhvis*.

- b Efforts to propagate Jain education, values like *Shram, Ahimsa, Anekanta, Aparigraha*, institution of vows and their applicability to resolve social and environmental issues. In this direction, Jain Vishwa Bharti Institute Ladnun, International School for Jain Studies, Gyan Sagar foundation, and a host of Jain education research institutes like BLII, KKG, LDII, Sravanbelgola Math, Prakrat Bharti, Smd Rajcahandra Mission Dharampur and universities like Madras, JITO providing training to IAS aspirants, are indeed trying to propagate the new wave of Jainism.
- c Social work for national wellness, like BMVK-Jaipur foot by Sh D R Mehta, TOI Foundation, Shantilal Muttha foundation for education and disaster management, Veerayatan for education and neighborhood development are massive initiatives by Jains for Indians at large. Works of Sh Sugalchand Jain of Chennai and Dr Firodia of Pune are notable for the benefit of Jain community.

Conclusion

(Draft to be finalized after all surveys are complete)

Jain community was known as nonviolent, religious, vegetarian, educated, financially well off and socially

conscious community. It had glorious past in Southern and western India particularly. However, its stature had been on the decline and is now focused more as trading and lately as professional's community. Due to these traits, Jains are migrating en-mass from small tons villages to bigger cities and overseas. There are also extreme social and political pressures to dissipate Jain identity as being a part of Hindus.

Such migrations are causing drastic rethink and changes in the religiosity and way of life of Jains. We feel the following urgent actions are needed to be considered for early implementation for the survival of diminishing Jain community.

The most important activity for urgent action is to promote the idea of every Jain to be enumerated in census 2021 and ensuring that their religion as Jain is duly indicated. Efforts need to be made to minimize inter-sect and intra sect disputes and simplify rituals as these causes faster depletion of Jain community and hence identity.

Provide education of Jainism with minimal Sectarian emphasis using IT and mobile technologies.

Engaging Jainism with Modern Issues; a Reflection and a Dialogue

Dr. Sulekh C. Jain

Note; I wrote the following lengthy paper (most of it) for a conference at JVB Ladnun, in Rajasthan, India in February, 2017. Subsequently I have revised and expanded that original paper a little more.

In this very lengthy paper here, I will express my views honestly and plainly as I see them and have observed them during my more than 50 years in USA and prior to that in India. My intention in writing this paper is to start a meaningful, rational, critical and constructive dialogue and discussion within the Jain community; both leaders and scholars. My paper will list down many problems and trends but I will not offer their solutions. That will require lots of seminars, dialogues and agreements to come to right solutions.

Please note that in writing this paper, I have used the following approach and methodology;

- I talked to and sought views and concerns from a few visionary Jain leaders in USA and India.
- As mentioned earlier I will only provide a list of issues, concerns and trends and not the suggestions and solutions

to those issues. The reasons for this kind of a very different approach is the following real story that I read sometimes ago.

One very large manufacturing plant in USA invited a very famous Quality Control Guru for a visit to the plant. The Visitor noticed hundreds of banners and posters (hung on the walls) saying “Reduce Waste”. Seeing this, the visitor told his host to tear down all those posters and replace them with new posters saying “Find Waste”. The host was very surprised at this comment. He asked why. The visitor mentioned that the first signs are an insult to human intelligence. How can you reduce waste without finding or identifying waste? Once the causes of waste are identified and agreed up on, all right thinking people will then find solutions to reduce waste.

Hon. Tony Blaire (former Prime Minister of U.K) says, “Concentrate on defining right problems rather than on right answers which will follow any way”

This is the same approach here in this paper. My paper will list down many problems, concerns, issues and trends and very little of their solutions. That will require lots of seminars, dialogues and agreements to come to right solutions. Within the Jain community, let us first agree on the

issues, down select a few most pressing ones and then proceed to solutions to mitigate those issues.

Please do not feel offended at my plain speaking and a laundry list of issues. Still if you feel offended, I sincerely say michchhami Dukhadam.

About Jainism

Jainism, an ancient religion originating in India- along with Hinduism and Buddhism- is an integral part of India. According to late Dr. L. M. Singhvi, the Jain tradition, which enthroned the philosophy of ecological harmony and unconditional non-violence or ahimsa as its Center-pole, flourished for centuries side-by-side with other schools of thought in ancient India. It formed a vital part of the mainstream of ancient Indian life, contributing greatly to its philosophical, artistic and political heritage. During certain periods of Indian history, many ruling elites as well as large sections of the population were Jains.

Jainism probably is the 6th largest religion (similar in numbers to the Jews) in the world and we should be proud of our heritage and contribution.

The concept of unconditional ahimsa towards all life forms is the most profound contribution of Jains to India and to the world. In India, the ahimsa of the Jains has played a significant role in

shaping many customs and traditions, one of them being vegetarianism. *For Jains, Ahimsa is an everyday word and practice. However, for many other people, violence is an everyday experience.*

Throughout our history, Jains have never compromised with and walked away from ahimsa; even during the most trying and cruel time during the partition of India in 1947 when there was so much murdering, killing, raping, torture and looting all around.

The 3 most beautiful jewels of Jainism known as 3As of Jainism i.e. *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Anekant* (Pluralism or non-absolutism) and *Aparigraha* (non-accumulation) can be an enormous force for enhancing the wellbeing of human society world-wide.

Dr. Tim Helton who frequently teaches Jainism at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles wrote in one paper; “what is common between 3 Ms and 3As”? He argued that “the 3 Ms he referred to are Mahavir, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King who all three had the same three As of Ahimsa, Aprigraha and Anekant”.

The Jain community and Jain traditions can be seen as a microcosm of Indian society and ways of thought. Jainism

has unquestionably made significant contributions to Indian heritage and culture. Its message and its principles could provide the answer to many of the ills of our civilization mired in discord, violence and bloodshed.

Out of a total of about 250,000 Jains outside India, more than 125,000 Jains, now live in USA and Canada. Here, we have put in our strong roots in the form of many places of worship (more than 75), a sizeable number of institutions and organizations (more than 100) and a central or apex organization JAINA. A significant number of our Jain youth is now studying in some of the top universities of USA and Canada.

Jains throughout history have never been a part of any national or international problem. Rather they have been part of many solutions.

It is a New and Fast Changing World Now

Today, the world is already a global village. This is the age of instant communication, trade, commerce, connectivity, flow of ideas, traditions and cultures. Pluralism, Ecology, Terrorism, Democracy, Nationalism, Human Rights, Rapid transmission of diseases and knowledge are posing new challenges and opportunities. Developments in law, business,

medicine, organ transplant, cloning, environment, ecology, DNA, stem cell, and genome research, issues of bioethics and abortion, the spread of new diseases, food production, transportation, space initiatives, and local and global conflicts have created new environments and needs...

Jainism has a lot to offer as solution to the world problems of hunger, poverty, violence and environmental degradation. Sadly, Jain philosophy remains prisoner within the temple walls and the Jain community. After Bhagwan Mahavir in 2600 years it was a non-Jain; Mahatma Gandhi (but with very strong Jainism in him) who made ahimsa a household and practical name not only in India but abroad too. Jains should share their doctrines of nonviolence and ethics to address some of these challenges and realize opportunities. Jainism must research, debate, and seek to offer new, practical, and timely solutions to these urgent and vexing challenges. It is also essentials that we educate and train Global persons (sadhus and lay people) to live in this Global village in this 21st century. If we don't, we will just turn into a population rather a strong, living and dynamic community.

What are the Modern Issues /Factors affecting Jain Community?

There are many factors but for simplicity sake I break them down into 2 major factors; these are;

Global or external factors and Jain Community related or internal factors

Global Factors: These factors are affecting all religions and human race (in varying degrees) including Jains too. Most of them are not necessarily a creation of the Jain Sangh but unfortunately we are in them. Like everyone else, Jains too are affected directly and indirectly. Some of the global factors are; increasing Population, Immigration and Emigration, changes in ethnic diversity, Hunger, Terrorism, Drugs and Drug lords, Drug trafficking, Environment and Ecology, Human Rights, Animal Rights, Human Trafficking, Pluralism, Democracy, Nationalism, Rapid Transmission of Diseases and their knowledge, Global Trade and Commerce, Money Laundering, Unaccounted Money, and increasing uneven distribution of wealth and many more.

In this paper here I will talk about the environment and ecology only.

Environment & Ecology:

In a recent paper titled “*Jains should not turn their back to Ecology*” I wrote

Every living being has a strong desire to live and we must respect this in our thoughts and actions.... Lord Mahavir

Jain ontology states that the soul can be found not only in humans but in gusts of wind, sparks of fire, in flowing waters, in plants, in microbes, and in rocks and stones and soil, as well as in insects, reptiles, birds, marine life, and mammals .

The ancient Jain aphorism “*Parasparopa graho Jivanam* (interdependence)” means that all life is bound together by mutual support and inter-dependence. This defines the scope of modern ecology while extending it further to a more spacious home. It means that all aspects of nature belong together and are bound in a physical as well as metaphysical relationship. All living things are connected in nature, dependent on each other for continued survival. Life is viewed as a gift of togetherness, accommodation and assistance in a universe teeming with interdependent constituents.

In the words of the celebrated scientist James Lovelock '*The earth is critically ill.*' "Most of the species vitally important for our survival have disappeared. Mountains are denuded. Rivers are drying up. Forests have shrunk at a terrible level. Drinking water has become a scarce commodity. Frequent famines, droughts, floods, tsunamis in all parts of the world are adding to our misery every day. Climate change seems to threaten our survival into the third millennium. In less than two hundred years all natural resources have depleted and very little is left for the coming generation. It is a manmade disaster that owes its origin to our unrestrained activities and wantonness".

Survival of the planet, and in fact of the entire human and non-human race, depends on the planet we live on (we Jains call it Jambu Dweep). There is much discussion about greenhouse gases, ozone layer, and shortage of water, the warming up of the environment, pollution, and ecology. As a result a new movement called **environmentalism** is in vogue. We Jains rightly believe that several thousand years ago, we talked, preached, practiced, and developed the whole concept of environmentalism. Yet the fact is that I find little actual environmentalism in the Jain community. Yes, there are several pockets of environmentalism that do exist. For example, the lifestyle of our monks and nuns and also of

some shravaks and shravikas (lay men and women) are good and model examples of environmentalism. Outside this, in general, I have not seen or known of any Jain leaders to inspire the community and draw their attention to this essential issue. Environmentalism has a direct connection with ahimsa (nonviolence). If we pollute, we create suffering and most probably the death and extinction of many species. Beyond that we endanger our own survival.

I have seen Jains wasting food, water, electricity, using and discarding paper plates, polythene bags, and many other resources as if there is no tomorrow. Jains are as much polluters (maybe sometimes more due to their affluence) as anybody else. Jain surroundings are no cleaner than other surroundings. There is very little consideration or observance of cleanliness. Since Jains are in small, medium, and large businesses, they contribute to the pollution, too.

Even in USA where I live, Jains behave no differently. They own big houses with many air-conditioning units, drive big gas guzzling cars, use and throw paper plates, napkins, plastic spoons, water bottles, polythene bags, glass bottles and aluminum cans without any regard to the protection of the environment. I as a habit

don't like to drink water from a pre-packaged water bottle but many a times I find no other choice when I go to some events in Jain homes and places of worship.

Just recently Jains celebrated Diwali (festival of lights) commemorating the Nirvaan day of Lord Mahavir. Diwali is the largest festival celebrated all over India. On this day, (in fact for a week) use of firecrackers is very prevalent. Firecrackers are hazardous to the workers who make them, cause fires, result in many bodily accidents and injuries to humans and birds and create so much smoke and pollution that for one week after Diwali in 2016, all schools in Delhi were closed because of dangerous level of smog and pollutants in the air. In spite of many warnings by the Government authorities and some concerned citizens, Jains equally joined with others in the show.

In my book *An Ahimsa Crisis: You Decide* , I write “If one is striving to be an ahimsak (practitioner of nonviolence as a way of life) , he need to be aware of whether, in satisfying his personal needs, he is involved in actions that lead to the suffering of any humans, animals, birds, fish, or insects... he must find out whether his home furnishings and flooring materials were made using child

labor, sweatshops, or animal products (skins, fur, tusks, horns, antlers or bones from animals, or feathers from birds.

I also posed several considered questions:

How many miles per gallon does his car get?

How much pollution does his company discharge into the air, land, and water?

Does he use chemicals on his lawn?

Does he buy organic produce?

How much paper does he use?

How often does he use trains, airplanes, and other fuel-guzzling forms of transport?

This self-examination extends from the personal to the social. Each year, during the end of August and the beginning of September (during Paryushan and Das Lakshan) Jains worldwide engage in several days of penance and reflection. I suggest that this is the best time to take full account of one's past behavior and set the course for the coming year.

Despite the nobility of the monks and nuns, Jains' daily practice in the aggregate has done little to advance the cause of environmentalism. Here I make a strong appeal for

change. *Nonviolence is the Web of Life and Care for the environment is practice of ahimsa*

“One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them” ... Lord Mahavir

Jain Community Related Internal Issues and Factors;

In this category I will include a long list of issues which affect (directly and indirectly) and concern or should concern the Jain Community only. There are two major issues that concern me the most. These are;

- ***Practice of Ahimsa in Jain Community is slipping and as a result there is an Ahimsa Crisis***
- ***Trends are pointing that Jainism many not survive in 21st Century.***

There are hundreds of causes, issues and trends that lead me to come to the above mentioned 2 conclusions. This paper will not allow me to touch upon all of them (It needs a separate book on this subject which I and a few other scholars are thinking together to write and I invite others to join us too) but at least for the readers let me list down here my concerns. Please note that by no means these are the only

issues. I am sure many other thinkers can add several dozen more issues to this list.

1. An Ahimsa Crisis in Jainism:

Ahimsa is becoming a slogan. Ahimsa is the Mool (root) mantra and foundation of Jainism. We can also say that ahimsa and Jainism are two names for the same thing; they are inseparable. In my recently published 328 page book “*An Ahimsa Crisis : You Decide*” (one can download free at www.isjs.in) I have mentioned at length (with hundreds of actual daily life examples) how this very foundation has started becoming cracked, and thus the stability and survival of the whole building is endangered.

Some may not believe it, but even at this stage, ahimsa is truly in crisis. Practice by its followers is slowly slipping away and based on individuals’ personal wishes, desires, and conveniences, daily compromises are made. If this trend continues (and my feeling is that it may even accelerate), Jain philosophy will be found only in scriptures and books, and the Jain community will no longer be identified as followers and practitioners of ahimsa—we will have lost the recognition and reputation which we Jains have enjoyed for many thousands of years. I consider decline of the practice of ahimsa to be like a growing cancer.

Before we try to cure the patient, we have to first diagnose the causes and only then administer the proper medicines and treatments. So what happened, and why we have come to this precarious place?

In my opinion there are many causes for this malaise which we must explore. People all over the world today admire (and many follow) ahimsa. Some equate the unconditional ahimsa of the Jains to the true or real democracy of existence of all living beings in this universe.

In the twentieth century, the most vibrant and illustrious example of Jain influence was that of Mahatma Gandhi who in turn inspired millions--including many Nobel Peace Laureates--to the philosophy of non-violence. It was Jainism who made a Mohan into Mahatma and this non-Jain (Gandhi-ji) made the ahimsa of the Jains a household and respectable word, not just in India, but throughout the world. He took the Ahimsa of Jains from textbooks, from the Sadhus and his spiritual mentor Shrimad Raj Chandra, and gave it to the most common men and women. This Practical Ahimsa made Gandhi-ji a role model for millions of people around the world. In 2007, the United Nations designated October 2 as an International Day of Non-Violence in honor of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

And yet, we have no Jain Gandhi and no Jain Nobel Peace Laureate. What does this tell us? To me, it appears that although we Jains inherited ahimsa as a rich gift, we seem not to care enough for this treasure. We have allowed ahimsa to become merely a slogan instead of shaping it into wider and broader practice.

We see many Jains engaging in businesses full of violence. Here in North America, we often see Jains owning fast food franchises selling meat that disregards our fundamental identity. Our Jain centers even depend on their financial contributions for their Temples. This needs to be discussed openly in our community.

Today, some Jains have started becoming non vegetarian. Even those who are ahimsak, their ahimsa is generally limited to Thali only (one sensed and not beyond). I feel day is not far off when we will happen to meet a Jain, we will ask him “Bhai are you a vegetarian Jain or a non-vegetarian Jain”? What a pity and shame!

1.1 Lack of Teaching, Training, Grounding and Discussion on Ahimsa:

Experience shows that experiments in the use of himsa (violence) do not succeed without training. Today, there are

many centers in the world that impart training in himsa/violence. Some of them are being run in the name of national defense and security, while others are being operated with a specific purpose of gaining some benefits or advantages. Violence cannot take an aggravated and barbaric form without intensive training.

It is also absolutely true that without training, one's consciousness of non-violence can neither be awakened nor developed. Life today is full of problems that need solutions. Non-violence is a solution. What we need is its systematic training. Training in non-violence is essential for all.

Knowingly, unknowingly, directly, and indirectly, today's lifestyle involves hundreds of big and tiny, daily examples of himsa, mostly hidden from our views, in our own lives. Certainly, our lives today are more himsa-filled than was perhaps even one hundred years ago. Every day society and corporations are inventing newer and more intensive and sophisticated ways to commit larger scale and more barbaric himsak actions and products.

How will anyone know and understand ahimsa when there is a lack of any organized and formal discussion, teaching, training, and grounding in ahimsa? How do we begin to consider this undertaking when we recognize that

many youngsters, and let alone adults don't have this knowledge? Some adults may have advanced academic and scriptural knowledge but very little understanding about the application of ahimsa in daily life outside the temple.

Observant Jains mostly concern themselves with the rituals, temple going, building bigger and even bigger new temples. Yet unable to instill true Jain education to their offspring because they have themselves studied very little and the kids have no interest in the rituals etc. their parents are following

In the temples, Jains mostly learn the rituals. From the environment in which Jains grow and live, mostly they learn about Thali (the food plate) and how to avoid or minimize himsa for Thali. In most Jain temples, derasars, sthanaks, and places of worship, there are not sufficient (especially in India) arrangements for Jain pathshalas (teaching schools/classes). Even if there are, there is very little interest and effort in imparting realistic, critical, practical and rational education about ahimsa. Yes, in some places, we do teach kids the basic Jain stotras (hymns) and mantras, but seldom do we go much beyond.

Let me share with you the importance of early education and role models. About twenty five years ago,

when we were living in Cincinnati, Ohio, one Jain couple (both raised in highly religious families in India) came to visit us for dinner with their two teenage boys. As is the custom with us, before sitting down for dinner, I asked the couple and their kids to do the darshan (visit) of the small Jain household temple that we had built in our home. Inside this household temple (chaityalya), we had on one wall a photo of a Jain Sathankvasi sadhu with a mukhvastrika (mouth covering cloth) and against another wall we had a nine-inch pratima (idol) of Bhagwan Mahavir in pure white marble.

As soon as I opened the doors of the temple, and put the lights on, the parents bowed down but the kids did not and said to their parents, “The guy in mukhvastrika looks funny with his face covering,” and asked why a stone was there [referring to the pratima]. This was very embarrassing for all of us and parents kept on telling their children to keep their mouths shut and not say such bad words.

At this stage, I told the parents that the fault lies with them, the parents and not with the children as they had no grounding, in any shape or form, about Jainism and items of worship and reverence and hence the pratima was just a piece of stone and the picture of a Jain Sadhu looked funny.

Here is another real story to illustrate this point. Recently one High School teacher from Fort Worth, Texas, USA who had attended the Teachers for Ahimsa Program in 2013 in India (www.isjs.in) called and told me that one day while teaching the 4th grade class, one cockroach came in the classroom. Instead of killing the helpless creature, she picked up the poor fellow in a glass jar and very gently discharged him outside in the bushes. Seeing this, the students asked why she (the teacher) not killed the cockroach as this is what they all normally do in their homes. Now the teacher started a long discussion on ahimsa, compassion and respect for all lives. The kids were so impressed that next day some of them decided not to eat meat any more. Wow, what a great example of Practice before preaching!

This is where proper and early grounding comes in. I believe that if a proper, practical, and early grounding in ahimsa can be provided during the important developmental years, when young people become adults, they will not easily go astray. I have heard of and seen several Jain youths who grew up in strict Jain families in India, and as soon as they boarded a flight to come to the US from India, ordered non-veg foods at the very first opportunity, far away from the watchful eyes of their parents in India. The clear reason for this transgression is that these young people never received

any real grounding in ahimsa from their parents, sadhus, temples, or from the environment in which they grew up.

Quite often, I meet Jain boys and girls in their twenties who are in US as temporary IT professionals. When I ask them about their grounding in Jainism and Ahimsa, they look at me as if I was speaking a foreign language.

In the West, Veganism/plant based life style (no use of any product derived from animals, mostly from 5 sensed) is spreading very fast. One estimate is that the total population of vegans in the world is equal to or may be more than the total population of Jains in the world. Some of us talk of veganism and cruelty-free products. And yet, one will be hard pressed to find even a dozen sadhus who do not use wool and dairy products such as milk and milk products. Each sadhu and Sadhavi Ji takes a vow of long mahavrat of Ahimsa yet, in my opinion, either they don't believe that there is himsa in wool and milk production or they don't want to know about it. Imagine if sadhus become vegan (abstain from dairy products), how big a change that will bring within the Jain community. I am of the opinion that once you start with giving up dairy products, slowly the community will listen to other issues affecting ahimsa.

Jain way of life is Ahimsak way of life and can be best defined as compassion in action - compassion for all living beings. It is a religion to live by in every moment of our existence. It is said that no one is Jain by birth but is Jain by becoming a Jain in his/her action, thoughts and speech. Jains the “victors” are VEER – and are armed by Forgiveness as their inner strength.

We practice what we see. We all are products of our environment. We learn from what we see. If we see greed, deceit, unlimited affluence, uncontrolled waste, and recognition in the community, that is what we try to emulate and become. If we see and hear about some notorious Dalal Street swindlers like some infamous Mehtas, Parekhs, and Bhansalis, then that is what we emulate and try to become.

1.2 Current Tradition without Significant and Visible Activism:

Jains should be passionate about Ahimsa. They should be activists and instruments of change. Bhagawan Mahavir was. But we don't find many Jain activists for any major societal causes which are many. All the activists that I know of mostly happen to be non-Jains.

Nearly all Jains preach and practice vegetarianism, but the credit for spreading not only vegetarianism, but also veganism and animal rights in the last 50 years, does not go to Jains but goes generally to non-Jains, mostly from the western world. There are hardly any (or may be a just a few) Jain-inspired or established (that I know of) organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), PCRM (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicines), or AVS (Anti-Vivisection Societies). A few years ago, a few of us participated in a “*March for Animal Rights in Washington D.C.*” Out of the 30,000 plus persons taking part in the march, there were hardly any Jains (only about five to seven, at the most). In the West, non-Jains such as Hare Krishnas and followers of Swami Narayan (not Jains) have been in the forefront in making vegetarianism acceptable.

The unconditional respect for all forms of life implies that Jains should be in the forefront in the practice of ahimsa in all its shapes and forms. The scope and landscape of ahimsa is vast. Jains should be the preeminent role models for others. Unfortunately, during the last hundred years, movements in support of human and civil rights, animal rights, eradication of child labor and sweat shops, support of women’s rights and cessation of abuse, ethical and environmentally friendly investing, promotion of laws against animal torture and

hunting, restriction of the use of animals in sports and entertainment, regulations to ensure worker safety and occupational and health safety, civil disabilities acts, the eradication of capital punishment, ethical bioethics, medical ethics, business ethics and legal ethics and work towards all of these are based on and related to the practice of ahimsa, but these projects have generally been started by non-Jains. Jains have been the beneficiaries but not the torch-bearers for such movements and protests.

2. Will Jainism survive in 21st Century? :

In July 2011, Drs. Yashwant Malaiya and Sulekh Jain wrote a lengthy article “Can Jainism Survive in 21st Century” which was circulated widely within the Jain world and was also published in the 2011 JAINA convention souvenir. In this article the authors listed and pointed out many trends and felt that this is a very serious ailment which will require serious discussion and major surgery to revive the patient i.e. Jainism and the Jain community. Here too in this paper, Prof. Yashwant Malaiya has provided significant input and I am grateful to him for his insight and vision.

In this current paper it is not possible to elaborate on many of the issues. Still here I offer a list.

2.1 Jain POPULATION is declining and this is very alarming:

Professor Yashwant Malaiya (a Jain thinker in USA) and Dr. Prakash Jain of JNU in India who have been looking at the 2011 census data state;

- The population of Jains in the last few centuries has been declining steadily “Many Jains today discount the 2011 census count (4,451,753) and claim that the actual number of Jains is much higher, although without any supporting data. The only reason given is that during the census, many Jains either do not identify themselves as Jains or the census takers on their own put them in the Hindu category.
- The Jains had the lowest growth rate for the decade 2001-2011, which is one third the rate for Hindus and one fifth the rate for Muslims. Also
- The Jain fertility rate is so low Jain population will actually start declining soon, just like the Parsi population since 1941. The Jain fertility rate is now significantly below the replacement rate and we should soon start seeing Jain population declining.
- Even if we assume that there is a significant undercount of the Jains, trends show that actual

number of Jains is going down as a percentage of total India's population, and this decline will accelerate. Survival of Jainism overseas is also threatened.

- The census data is quite disturbing. It seems that the Jains society have entered a phase in which the Parsis have been in the past (see <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Alarming-18-decline-in-Parsi-population-since-2001-census-has-community-worried/articleshow/53387279.cms>)
- Even if we forget the number of Jains drifting into Hinduism (a process that should accelerate with breakdown of traditional barriers), it seems whatever the Parsis have been doing is wrong, and perhaps the Jains should look at the Jews in USA and the Swaminarayan faith globally as examples to follow.
- Jains, who live in areas with significant Jain populations, tend to grossly overestimate the Jain population. We are afraid that they will think our feeling and concern is alarmist. We are not sure how to address that.

- Up to the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar, it is believed that majority of the Aggarwals were Jains. Today that is probably only 10% or less.
- The number of Jains in North America has been going up because of the continuous arrivals of Jains from India. However the number of practicing Jains in the second generation is going down. If this trend continues then we will see its dramatic result in next 1-2 generations.
- Other factors leading to this malaise is Skewed ratio of male to female.
- There are many descendants of Jains in various parts of India and particularly in Bihar and the south who have in their names Jain lineage but they do not identify themselves as Jain and similarly many Jains don't consider or recognize them as Jains either
- About half of Jain youths in USA are marrying non-Indians, and another 30% marry non-Jain Indians. Thus only about 20% are marrying fellow Jains. The same is true in Europe. Once this happens, the bonds to Jainism in the new family gets diluted or lost, depending upon the upbringing of the Jain partner, who generally tend to be less aggressive. The Jain

identity as is then likely to be lost over a period of time.

- In India, the rates of inter marriage is not that high but the trend is certainly on the rise. Of greater concern is the fact that there is no interest among youngsters to study the basics of the religion.

Here are some more factors contributing to the continual decline of Jain population in India.

- Gender Selection and Female Feticide/Abortion is a new trend. The recent Indian Census data shows that in Jain community there are only 74 girls for 100 boys between the ages of 1-6 years. This will cause a disintegration of the Jain society. A few Jain monks have now started speaking out against this.
- Most Jain couples today have 2 or fewer children. This is below the number needed for maintaining the same population.
- Demands of dowry by young men and their parents. Because of this either many a girls (especially from poor Jain families) remain unmarried, have bad marriage, marry outside the Jain community or end up

in messy divorce. Some girls become a victim of extortion.

- As to adherence to vegetarianism, we are better off not even inquiring with the younger generation but we can certainly look at the postings they themselves put on Jain Matrimonial sites – “Mostly vegetarians but occasionally....”
- Professors Yashwant Malaiya and Prakash Jain are working to analyze the census data of last 100 years more thoroughly and then share the findings.
- There have long been predictions that religion would fade from relevancy as the world modernizes, but all the recent surveys are finding that it’s happening startlingly fast. France will have a majority secular population soon. So will the Netherlands and New Zealand. The United Kingdom and Australia will soon lose Christian majorities. Religion is rapidly becoming less important than it’s ever been.”
- Now, at this juncture, we need to think about how many minority religions will survive the current century. Is Jainism facing extinction? At what point in our numbers should we worry about survivability of our precious Jain Dharma?

2.2 Decline in the Belief and Practice of Jain values and Way of Life- many strong headwinds Issues of Jains Youths in North America and in other countries too

- Most of the Jain Organizations have not recognized the needs of the Jain youths and as a result they feel alienated sometimes even allergic toward the Jain tradition. The Jain Centers often cater to the older generation. Sometimes they become highly ritualistic and dominated by a regional or sectarian affiliations. Jain youths and young Jain professionals are losing bonding with the Jain SANGH.
- Many of our religious speakers are unaware of the needs of the young Jains, having never been exposed to the Western society and their discourses consist of other worldliness, and academic intellectualism.
- There is no appreciation of activism in Jain Community unlike the Americans groups. The Jain youths who are highly motivated feel no connectivity with the Jain organizations.
- Often there is a lack of pride of being a Jain and the practice of Ahimsa and vegetarianism. What used to

distinguish Jains from rest of the pack is very quickly getting lost.

- Many Jain families are regularly visiting non-Jain institutions such as Chinmaya Mission, Swami Narayan and even Christian organizations. This causes them to gradually drift away.

Lack of knowledge about Jainism. Since there is no organized (there is some like Jain Pathshala and Gyanshala programs but not pervasive enough within the entire Jain community) formal teaching programs about Jainism, as a result very weak grounding and foundation in Jainism and Jain values. I find it odd. Many religions have that (example Christianity, Judaism and Islam etc.)

- **Rising percentage of ignorant believers and practitioners of Jain poojas and rituals.** These people with very scant/rudimentary or no knowledge of Jain philosophy, visit Jain places of worship only for asking or begging for instant gratification and rewards by doing rituals and poojas only. This is a very alarming trend.

- I have come to know that some Jain Poojas and rituals were written and composed by non-Jains and they introduced many non-Jain concepts in them such as begging, instant gratification and chamatkars/miracles etc.

❖ **LAKSHMI (Money) is the new Arihantas and Siddhas**

- Increasing levels of Greed, show off and Prigraha within the Jain community.
- Money rules and the guys with the money make the golden rules.
- Increasing role or power of money to buy name, fame, honor, recognition, heaven and may be even Moksha. Since money /Laxmi is the Bhagwan, one can buy anything and that means Swarg (स्वर्ग) or heaven. We all know that many religions have been selling heaven for a long time but now unfortunately Jains have perfected this business too.
- I think only in Jain Institutions, a moneyed person can **buy** ego very easily (even though we preach ego as the worst kashayas) as it is readily available for sale there. What a shame!

- Ill-gotten/black and non satvik (tamsik) money in religious activities playing a big role and its use is rampant.
- A large numbers of vidhikars (ritual performers) have started coming to North America from India. These people come fully prepared in marketing techniques to sell their wares and instant gratification of moksha etc. to the gullible and ignorant (but affluent) Jains . Many of these vidhikars take away lots of money (dollar converted into rupees) to India without paying a single penny of tax here in the USA; another illegal act.
- Even heard that only a very few sadhus are vowing or willing to make a pledge not to accept #2 (black) and ill-gotten wealth donations. For the rest everything is ok.
- Even the Chaturmas of a sadhu and acharya has become a very very costly affair. The success of a chaturmas is now measured not in how much spiritual transformation took place but in how many Crores of rupees (in some cases Rs.100 crores) were spent and how many busloads of followers came for darshan. Can it go on and for how far and how long?

- Just like in political elections everywhere, Jain leaders have started fighting elections with huge amounts of money and bad mouthing the opponent.
- Recently I read that one affluent Jain in India bid 31 Crore rupees to be the first one to lit the funeral pyre of a famous Jain monk who had just died . I hope that that much money was spent wisely on constructive projects within the community.

Note: please see at the end some feedback on this subject from some concerned Jains:

❖ **Hold of Fourfold (चतुर्विद्घ) Sangh appears to be Crumbling.**

Bhagwan Mahavir with a vision and foresight established the four fold SANGH consisting of sadhus, sadhavis, shravaks (male householders) and shravikas (female house holders). This fourfold SANGH is like the 4 wheels in a cart. The cart runs smoothly only when all the four wheels are equal and run smoothly. Duties and responsibilities of each component of the SANGH were clearly defined. Each component is a support to the other 3 components, and each component not only provides support but also provides checks, balances, guidance and controls.

This organizational structure worked very well for nearly 2500 years and because of this not only Jainism remained a surviving living, dynamic and vibrant religion but also prospered several times in Indian history. Unfortunately now there are significant cracks in the fourfold SANGH and its very foundation is becoming weak every day. Today, each component of the SANGH feels completely free and independent to do whatever it wants and **everything goes**. The concept and mechanism of checks and balances is very fast disappearing. This is a very very serious and dangerous development and if remained unchecked can lead to bad outcomes.

❖ **Hindu-ization of Jainism is increasing.**

- While respecting other religions is proper, many Jains are unable to overcome pressure to assimilate. The distinct lines of difference between Jainism and Hinduism are becoming increasingly blurred. In some Jain homes, worship of Hindu gods is becoming common. Many Jains visit Hindu places of worship, gurus, devis (Nainadevi, Mansadevi, Vaishnodevi etc.) And faqirs seeking miracles.

- Marketing of, miracles, krishma and Chamatkars. Bhagwan Parshwanath and Padmavatidevi are being marketed as symbol of bestowing Chamatkars, miracles and fulfilling ones worldly wants and desires.
- Mahavir Swami hardly exists in reality and is mostly sidelined. In one temple I actually saw the ratio of 1 : 20 (1 of Mahavir to 20 of Parshwanath) pratimas. I asked a prominent Jain leader why so and with a pain he said that Bhagwan Parshwanath is the only route to Lakshmi and one can raise funds by and thru Bhagwan Parshwanath pratimas only. I am told that in India (this is also happening in USA too) maximum numbers of pratimas are of Bhagwan Parshwanath and not of Bhagwan Mahavir.
- For Hindus, Diwali signifies Lord Rama's coming to Ayodhya. For Jains, Diwali is for the observance of Tirthankar Mahavir attaining Nirvaan. Hardly any prominent leader and politician acknowledge this part of history. We see this happening more and more and the boundaries between Jainism and Hinduism in daily practices of the householders are disappearing. Credit goes to President Obama in paying tribute to

Bhagwan Mahavir during Diwali celebrations in the White House.

- Many Jains believe that all religions are the same except rituals. In fact Jainism and Hinduism are vastly different in philosophy and core beliefs.
- Jains celebrate many Hindu holidays without considering its impact on their Jain identity but seldom Hindus celebrate Jain Holidays.
- It is a core belief that Jainism does not accept the existence of GOD (Ishwar) and being the decider of one's fate /destiny, benefactor, punisher and the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe. Yet, if we listen and observe carefully, Jains act and speak as if GOD exists just like believers of other GOD Centric faiths. Words like divine grace and divine interventions, god willing, god's grace by Jains have started appearing in print as well as in verbal forms.
- New Rituals are invented every day; example; since the laanchhan/ लान्छन (symbol on the pratima) for Mahavir Swami is Lion, I am told that at one place Mahavir pratima has been shown to be sitting on a lion (just like Durga in Hindus). In another case, the entire chauvissee is shown consisting of all 24 Tirthankar Symbols only.

- Presence and worship of many Hindu goddesses (devis) in Jain temples has already crept in and is increasing.

2.3 Significant Euphoria, push and focus on building more and more temples. Temple building is the present norm

The Jain community is affluent, dynamic, and educated. The recent census of the Government of India mentioned that Jains have the highest literacy rate (97%). Because of their affluence, Jains have always been building temples. Some of the most beautiful and magnificent temples in India are the Jain temples. We are building temples for poojas (worship) but not for teaching and training in Jainism, ahimsa **and** preservation of Jain knowledge and traditions. Even while the actual Jain population is going down and number of Jain temples in India in poor conditions abounds, every day the world over, newer, bigger and ornate temples are being built quite frequently. Temples do serve the very important needs for pooja, worship, community gatherings, unity, and observance of rituals and festivals. Yet many of these places of worship generally do not offer, on a regular basis, the teachings and training in Jain doctrines, in the practice of practical and applied Jainism, and in 3 As of Jainism;

ahimsa, anekantavada (non-one-sidedness) and aprigraha (non attachment and limits on possessions) that can be used in our daily lives and professions. We need classes, workshops, seminars, and academic organizations to provide teaching and training in Jainism and lots of them now.

2.4 Lack of Visionary and Committed leaders:

- At present, there is nearly a vacuum of non-sectarian, broadminded, visionary, dynamic, influential, dedicated, committed, educated, unifying and anuvarati leaders within the Jain community. Because of changing demographics and new and ever-changing environments, we need visionary leadership and organizations who can understand the societal issues. We get lost in awards, honors and other recognition. We have to find solutions to today's issues using today's tools. We are in need of leaders who can inspire and prepare the Jain community to respond to these changes rightly and in a timely manner. If we don't do that, we will suffer the fate described in the following adage: ***“If we always do what we always did, we will always get what we always got.”*** This is a sure formula for perishing.

- Most of the Jain institutions are headed by old guards; new younger generations are not allowed/encouraged or willing to come forward.
- There exists hardly any **Think Tank** in the Jain community who will meet, discuss and look at the future trends affecting the community.
- We need involvement of leading professionals in the Jain community. Jains are the most educated community in India with a large number of Supreme Court and High Court Justices, Vice Chancellors, officers, educationists etc. They have skills to contribute to the urgent issues and debates affecting the society. While many of these are aloof, we see some awareness now and some of them are coming forward to contribute.
- Youth movements. The youth bring life into a moribund society. For a long time, a strong Jain youth movement had been missing. In India fortunately there are now Young Jains of India and Jain Medical Doctors Association. We should all support and encourage this trend.

2.5 Strong Disunity in various sects of Jainism:

- Various traditions and sects of Jainism know little about each other's traditions and behave as if they are all different religions.
- There is little dialog between various established Jain sects. Each sect has its own think tanks (if any), leaders, organizations, monks, nuns and places of worship. Only in North America some of these walls have been broken but differences have started surfacing from time to time in North America also.
- Many a time it appears that all the sects in Jainism behave like Shias and Sunnis of Islam. Unfortunately, this poison has also come to North America as well in spite of the fact that nearly 70 % of the spouses of second generation Jains are either non Jains or Jain from 2 different traditions and that makes it impossible to define the sect of those couples and their children.
- Recently I attended the pratishtha ceremony of a new Jain temple in North America. As generally is the established custom here (which we established some 40 years ago), there were shwetambar and Digmabr pratimas on the same vedi (platform). During the consecration ceremony, whenever there were

digambar rituals and poojas, shwetambaras did not attend and the same vice versa. Unity in various sects is becoming a facade. After a few months of this Pratishtha, one very senior Jain leader from that center called me to tell that whatever unity was there in the community prior to the pratishtha is all gone now after the pratishtha.

- While Hindus are victims of Caste system, Jains suffer from caste disputes, and in addition disputes amongst various Jain sects.
- Several prominent Jain leaders in India told me that it is easier to cooperate and work with leaders of other religions (such as Hindus, Sikhs etc.) but not with the leaders of another Jain sect.
- I have seen very clearly that many leaders and sadhus will promote and talk of their sect only and not of the other sect.
- I see a very strong trend to establish more and more sectarian and individual based Sanghs within the Jain community. Recently one prominent Jain leader commented that Bhagwan Mahavir has been completely forgotten and individual based newer Sanghs are flourishing

- It will be rare to find just a Jain or a non -sectarian Jain in the Jain world. Most of the others will carry a label such as Deravasi, Digambar or Sthanakvasi etc.etc.
- We tend to identify with a region or a specific sect rather than as Jains who follow Lord Mahavira. Identifying us as Jains, for example using Jai Jinendera as a salutation unites us all with a common heritage.
- We must remember that “ united we are strong and divided we proceed towards extinction”

2.6 Jainism is least known and most Misunderstood; many call it a Footnote Tradition:

Amongst a total Jain population of nearly 5-7 million, we have more than 15,000 renunciates (munis, acharyas, sadhus, sadhvis, samans, samanis, ailak, kshullaks, aryika ji, pundits and scholars) in all the traditions, sects, and sub-sects of Jainism. Compared to any other non-Jain religious tradition in India, Jain sadhus are educated, they observe the five mahavratas (great vows), most of them practice what they preach, they command a very high degree of respect and reverence within the Jain community, are always on the

move (they travel the length and breadth of India on foot), are in constant touch with their followers, and since the Jain community provides food, shelter and clothing, the sadhus do not have to worry about any such basic needs. Their main duty and goal is to study, practice self-purification, and to guide and preach to their followers about Jain philosophy and its rich culture.

Similarly, the Jain community (lay people) is educated, affluent, dynamic, progressive, and philanthropically minded. Since there is no GOD or creator in Jainism, there are hardly any major fights and disputes on that basis within the community. As a result, the community enjoys a reasonable level of harmony, peace, and prosperity.

In spite of all these treasures, resources, manpower, brain and richness, the sad reality is that Jainism is the least known and most misunderstood tradition, not only outside India but within India as well.

If one looks at Google, Amazon.com and other internet search engines, one will find hardly a miniscule number of books on Jainism as opposed to probably many thousands on Buddhism. If this is the case, how will people know about Jainism?

What some authors (especially from the West) write about Jainism, some of the viewpoints are distorted, wrong, and sometimes just slanderous. Once this happens—and it happens every day--then the misperception is repeated and perpetuated and this is what people come to believe.

The general perception in academia and general public in the West is that Jains live an unreachable life of other-worldliness, practice self-mortification, and do not contribute much to the welfare of the society. As a result, Jainism is not relevant in today's environment.

When one looks at the Jain literature today, most of it deals with the lifestyles of sadhus and kings but little is said of the householders. So the perception grows that Jainism is only about other-worldliness. The further pity is that one will find only a few books about ahimsa and its practice within the community.

Thirty years ago, Dr. Michael Tobias in USA produced a one-hour long video on ahimsa, and also wrote a book entitled Life Force of Jainism, in which he deals with the practice of ahimsa. Jains in general have shied away from such projects.

Prof. Jeffrey Long at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, who has been teaching world religions for a long time, observed that only a very few of his graduate or undergraduate students were actually interested in the study of Jainism. Prof. Long discovered that most of the students he encountered were turned off by Jainism because it seems unrelated to the real world, as it generally teaches only about other-worldliness.

Similarly, in a graduate class of world religions at the University of Hawaii, Prof. Cromwell Crawford asked his students what they knew about Jainism. The responses he got included, “Jains are those who make the biggest nudist colony in the world.” Another response was “Jains are those who wrap themselves with white bed sheets, with cloth masks on their faces and brooms in their hands and clean the streets of India.” If these accounts do not bring one pain, what will?

Many non-Jain scholars in India as well as in the West treat Jainism as a footnote (not a mainstream) tradition. In a keynote address to the 2017 JAINA convention in Edison, New Jersey (USA) Dr. Abhey Firodia of Pune mentioned that daughter of Dr. Manmohan Singh (former Prime Minister of India) recently wrote a more than

300 page book on religions of India in which she devoted only just a little more than one paragraph about Jainism. Similarly I personally have seen several voluminous books on religions where Jainism is covered in a few sentences only. When confronted, some of these authors mentioned about the lack of availability of relevant, rational and authenticated information about Jainism.

The Jain community has abdicated many of their duties and responsibilities to respond to the constant changes and challenges facing the community, and to help shape it.

Jain sadhus and sadhavis, with their lifestyle of austerity, their vow of five Mahavratas, and their scholarly knowledge of Jain agamas, provide a great service to the community in terms of imparting knowledge and keeping the Jain community and traditions alive. But Jain sadhus, because of the limitations of their code of conduct, cannot be expected to be experts in all aspects of the day to day practice of ahimsa as they themselves don't experience the daily challenges and pressures of householders' lives.

For example, sadhus cannot be experts about professions such as business, accounting, law, engineering, medicine, sciences (many branches) new and developing technologies, the ecology and environment, sustainability,

public administration, police, military, trade, investing, accounting, and on issues such as abortion, end of life situations and decisions, and bioethics. Just a simple talk or discourse on the basics of ahimsa is not enough to help ordinary people find suitable and practical answers for day-to-day practitioners of such professions.

Even if some of the sadhus are dynamic and social reformers, they too often shy away from discussing such topics in public. Most are content in delivering the daily or weekly pravachan purely as a ritual and that too is only given on non-ahimsak topics. Additionally, many religious speakers are either ignorant themselves or do not want to talk about anything beyond the most basic issues. They say only those things that will please their listeners and financial contributors.

The Jain community likes to attend lectures that are entertaining rather than perceptive, critical, visionary, and rational. In general, they (householders) also lack the interest and patience for discussing and hearing such lectures about ahimsa.

During the last few years, I sought to organize Ahimsa Vichaar Manch (ahimsa discussion forums) and seminars on ahimsa. I called several Jain centers in North

America hoping to build the programs. I am sorry to say, I found no interest at all. At one place, I was lucky to get it started but after just two sessions, it had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. Instead, the popularity, frequency, and intensity of poojas, rituals, and money collections are increasing; many times individual interest in these is directly proportional to the level of affluence in the community.

A Jain sadhu/muni has tremendous influence on a householder. Because of this inherent power that a sadhu/muni has, he/she can be a very powerful instrument for change, especially in teaching the community about ahimsa. Unfortunately, they too miss the boat most of the time.

Many Jains currently display both a lack of understanding of Jain philosophy and also a pride in being Jain. This strange combination creates the mindset of “everything goes,” and the false belief that all choices are equally okay and acceptable.

In US, there are several million Buddhists, Sikhs and Hare Krishnas (many American converts) but hardly any non-Jain embraced (may be not more than a dozen) Jainism.

Jains are not interested in sharing and spreading their religion, and even if some non-Jain people want to become Jains, established Jains say no to them.

In spite of nearly 250,000 Jains living outside India (in USA, Canada, U.K, Europe, Kenya, Africa, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia etc.) very few non-Jain (lay people and academics) became Jains or adopted Jain way of life. Add to this that for the last 35 plus years many Jain scholars, sadhus and samans and samani jis (several of them now live permanently in USA), hardly any non-Jain adopted a Jain way of life. In fact in many cases, the situation is reverse where quite a few Jains are no longer following Jain way of life.

What used to distinguish Jains from the majority is very quickly disappearing; a time is approaching when Jains will be no different than the rest in terms of their behaviors and lifestyle.

To me it appears that we have a great philosophy, rich heritage, a very good and right message but still don't know how to present and share it with others. At the same time it is even more important that we keep Jains as Jains otherwise the trend points to a different direction.

2.7 We have Many Mothers but not Many Moms:

One Sanskrit shloka reminds us, “One picture is equal to thousand words, one teacher is equal to thousand books, and one mother is equal to thousand teachers.”

A mom (maata) is the one who generally forms the personality of a child. She is not only the boss of the house but also a role model that can make a house into a living heaven. In today’s world, many women become mothers (this is simply a natural phenomenon) but very few become moms.

A very high percentage of girls achieve high educations and eventually become mothers as well, but there are very few schools or training centers within the Jain community to impart training to develop them into good shravikas and moms. If the raw materials or ingredients are less than perfect, so will be the products.

2.8 Jain Sangh; a Male dominated Community:

Nearly 50% of the population of Jains is female and many of them are highly educated and high achievers in their professions. They occupy high position in commerce, business, education, administration, politics and justice yet their (mothers and sisters) presence and influence in the highly male dominated, Jain community is rare or

insignificant. This is a topic of serious and thoughtful discussion and reflection.

2.9 Absence of Jains from Social Issues and Causes:

Jains are educated, affluent, smart, dynamic and good businessmen. Jains should be passionate, activists and instrument of change as Lord Mahavir or Rishbha Dev were. We seldom find any Jain activists for any major societal causes. The unconditional respect for all forms of life implies that Jains should be in the forefront in the practice of ahimsa in all its shapes and forms; both micro and macro level. Human Rights, Animal Rights, Child Labor, Women's Rights , Ethical and Environmentally Friendly Investing, Capital Punishment, Environmental protection, Ecology, wars, nukes, clothing and furnishings such as leather, fur, killing of Whales, human trafficking, race relations, bioethics, medical ethics, business ethics and legal ethics (all based on and related to the practice of Ahimsa) etc. have generally been led by Non Jains. Only recently we have started seeing a few world class institutions like Veerayatan, Vikalank and Jaipur Foot etc. started by Jains.

3.0 Prakrit; the language of our canonical agmas may face extinction:

Recent news story on a Google supported initiative deserves our attention. A consortium of Universities around the world are collaborating on a project titled “Endangered Languages” out of concern that by the end of this century, 50 to 90% of 7,000 languages spoken today are likely to disappear. India has 53 languages on that endangered list. Loss of a language signals end of that culture. That treasure trove of wisdom, knowledge, craftsmanship and heritage loss is not just to the narrow base of that language. It is a loss to the humanity as a whole. Now imagine the loss of culture with the loss of 5,000 languages over the next 90 years. Power be with people who are trying to stop this cultural erosion. Is Prakrit facing extinction that needs to be looked at critically?

3.1 Perception about Jain Literature:

Most of the Jain sacred literature is in Sanskrit and Prakrit. Outside these two ancient languages, there is significant literature in Hindi, Gujarati and Kannad but not much beyond that. Very little good quality literature is available in non-Indian languages such as in English, French etc. . . . In fact if one does a web search, one will find nearly thousands of titles on Buddhism but very few on Jainism; what a pity!

Today, there is no simple, easy to understand, good and quality literature on Jain teachings available for use in colleges and universities (for any level of students; undergraduates or post-graduates), for advance research or for an ordinary man (Jain and non-Jain alike) to learn about Jainism. Many a times we visit large bookstores in USA (such as Barnes and Nobles and others) where quite easily we can find hundreds of books on all Indian religions on their bookshelves except on Jainism. What little literature is available has many factual errors like informing the readers that Jainism started 2,500 years ago by Mahavir or fundamental misunderstanding of Sallekhna. Just recently two non-Jain Professors (one a scholar at Harvard University and another in Prague, Czech Republic in Europe) who want to teach Jainism wrote to us needing help in locating appropriate literature on Jainism. Let us share their emails here:

a) The Harvard Scholar wrote “I would like to prepare a reader for the undergraduate students on Jain studies, and I would like to have the original texts in translation [in English]. There will be six to eight classes devoted to Jainism/Jain Literature, and we need to have plenty of wonderful materials, to begin with. This is for the students of Illinois Wesleyan University. Could you kindly refer me a

very good collection of Jain texts in English translation? As much as possible, we also need to have excellent scholarly essays (let us say about eight). Could you kindly send me the names and bibliographical information on this? We need to have an excellent collection of [the translation of] Jain materials [religious texts, hagiographic materials, poems/stories by nuns/monks, ritual texts, yoga/meditation and so on]. They have for Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and other studies, but why cannot we have of our own tradition. I would therefore like to begin collecting [and whenever necessary translating] the Jain materials and prepare a reader [of select materials] for anyone to read in English. I need prompt support from our friends and institutions. This will be one of my tasks.”

b) One Professor in Prague, Czech Republic wrote “I would like to inform you about Jainism in Czech Republic. Last semester I had lectures on Jainism in Hussit faculty of Charles University in Prague. There were about 20 people there and they seemed quite interested. Most of them have already sat in exams and I was very happy with their knowledge. The result of my effort is that I was asked to lecture an advanced course of Jainism in winter semester, starting October 2012. And this is why I write. Could you please recommend me what you would consider useful for an

advanced course of Jainism? (About 12 lectures, each 1.5 hours). I attach the schedule of last semester lectures. And there is another thing I would like you to give me a piece of advice. I would need some books on/by Lonka Shah. Could you recommend me some titles (in English, French, and German)? There is one in E-library but it is in Gujarati.”

c) It is a fact that most of the libraries (college, university, public) in the world do not carry books on Jainism in their stock.

d) In our encounter and meetings with many clergies. Priests, religious pastors, ministers, imams, we are constantly asked for good books on Jainism. So far we have not been able to satisfy their demands.

e) In 2012, we had a 2-day International Jain conference on Bioethics at Claremont Lincoln University in California. There are several very comprehensive books on Bioethics and Hinduism but none on Jainism.

f) Very scant literature on Applied Jainism such as medical practice, business, law, justice, jurisprudence, environment, administration, politics, modern issues and concerns of the society.

g) Not much literature on relationship between Science and Jainism. Many Jains will claim that Jainism is highly scientific religion but those who make these claims are not scientists themselves and quite often ridicule science itself. In June 2012, one Western Scholar and author of several books on Jainism went to India. There he met a very prominent Jain ascetic scholar who told him that according to Jainism, sun is closer to earth than moon and that there is a Jain temple on the moon. Now you decide!

g) H.H. Dalai Lama is on a crusade to modernize the teachings and practice of Buddhism in light of today's environment of science, globalism interconnectedness, instant communication, reasons and rationality. Do we know of any Jain doing the same in Jainism?

h) Kathanuvaad/literature consisting of stories is an integral part of Jain literature but we find too much exaggeration in Jain stories. However the Jains do not need to dwell on old legends, rather develop modern literature that reflect the modern perspectives. For example Atmanandji's (1988) Arvachin Jain Jyotirdharo is a good example of a book containing modern stories.

I mention below some more observations about Jain stories and history which are not in consonance of the teachings of Jainism:

Casteism and extra ordinary emphasis on Kshatriya gotra whereas Bhagwan Mahavir said that caste is not to be defined by the birth of any one. Here is a direct conflict or may be tacitly Jainism supports casteism.

Status of women in the society and in the observance of religious duties and rituals are not shown equal to that of men. In some prayers, women are depicted as poison and cause of bad karmas and thus their company needs to be avoided.

Lots of stories tell rebirths of male as male and female as female. This again does not correlate with karma theory.

Polygamy is depicted as a sign of wealth and prosperity. Example; Bharat Chakravartin had 52,000 or 16,000 wives. Jambu Kumar had 8 wives and so on. Many non-Jains consider this as human slavery, pure himsa and too much sensual pleasure. There is nothing spiritual here. Too many stories are there of rulers and Rajas and very few of ordinary people and sharavaks. In fact it is quite common to hear in a

Jain lecture the speaker saying “once upon a time there was a Raja who had so many wives”

In Jainism there is no GOD but lots of prayers, poojas, and stavans are full of begging from some super natural powers and even from Siddhas.

WHAT KIND OF JAIN LITERATURE IS NEEDED TODAY?

In this samsara, nothing is constant or permanent. Everything changes all the time; matter (pudgal), environment, people, community, beliefs, knowledge, technology, geography, topography, food, habits, customs, traditions, demographics...With these changes people’s needs for spiritual knowledge also change. They want spiritual and religious knowledge to address the changing demographics of kaal (time), dravya (environment), kshetra (place), bhava (expectations) etc. The society of 2600 years (during Bhagwan Mahavir’s time) was much different than that of today. Our religious literature as to how, when and to whom it is presented, must meet the needs of dravya, kaal, kshetra and bhava. Here we are not saying that the most fundamental/basic principles should change (unless they come in direct conflict with science and proven, measurable

and quantifiable knowledge) but how that knowledge is presented must change.

Jainism lacks good and convincing literature on correlation between Science and Jain teachings. We need to produce literature to show the significant contribution of Jains and Jainism in the field of physics, chemistry, mysteries of nature and matter, biology, astronomy, mathematics, geography and many other such topics.

The current technology is pointing towards Online, distant learning, digital books and library (rather than printed books) and making knowledge available all over the world and 24/7.

3.2. Lack of Jain Institutions of higher learning (Gnan Mandirs)

Philosophy, Art, History Culture etc. are backbone of any religion. No religion can survive on temples (for Pooja and rituals etc.) alone which we Jains have plenty world class temples. Equally we also need world class gnan mandir (gurukuls, schools, centers, colleges and universities) for studying, teaching, research and training scholars in Jainism. In spite of Jains being a very affluent community, we have not paid much attention to this area. There are thousands of Jain supported Intuitions in India but they don't teach or do

research in Jain philosophy. As a result, we Jains don't even have any good what to speak of world class Jain institutions such as universities, colleges, research centers, news media, recognized Jain history museum and hospitals in India or anywhere in the world. There is no such thing as equal or similar to Harvard in Jainism anywhere.

Very few in Academia know about Jainism, it is mostly not in their conscientious and do not find it attractive enough to teach. Sun had set on western scholarship on Jainism (it has just started rising again) and very little is noticed on teaching of Jainism in the Indian universities also.

Many Jain research institutes are in a dire state. Jain studies are offered at just a few universities. There are not many scholars of Jainism who can teach in English. Not much research work is being done on Jainism either.

In India, except a few Institutes such as JVB Ladnun, Centers for Jain studies or Dept. of Jainology at Universities of Bombay, Rajasthan, and Madras etc., there is not much else to talk about. However in the West, some visionary Jain Philanthropists are building gnan mandirs at Florida International University , Miami, University of California Irvine, University of California at Riverside, University of California at Davis, Loyola Marymount University, Los

Angeles, GTU in Berkeley California, Rice University in Houston Texas, Emory University in Atlanta, University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas at Dallas, San Diego State University, San Diego, University of London – SOAS in London, U.K , Ghent University in Belgium and a university in Germany. These are very good and encouraging steps but we need a lot more. Just look at Jews how many they established.

I share below a news from University of California, Irvine California (we are soon going to have a chaired Professor there in Jainism) which I just read. Purpose of sharing this news is to call upon Jains to do similar things anywhere.

Dalai Lama Scholar:

University of California at Irvine attracts the best students who want to use their education to solve big problems and compassionately help people. Andrew Hallak, international studies major and UCI's current XIV Dalai Lama Scholar, is doing just that through his Global Partners for Sustainability project. By leveraging the UCI Sustainability Initiative and Global Sustainability Resource Center, he aims to teach others how economic, ecological and cultural factors influence environmental challenges and to encourage

personal practices that combat climate change. In addition to hosting events on campus, Andrew plans to encourage students to study these challenges in other countries with renowned UCI experts.

3.3 The need for Applied Jainism and Jeevan Vigyaan (The Art & Science of Living).

Our education must also concern itself with Jeevan Vigyaan (the art and science of living). Beyond philosophy, understanding pooja, worship, and rituals, we must also teach and learn how to practice the teachings, doctrines, and Jain way of life in our daily, active life such as in business and many other professions. This is Applied Jainism. This is walking the talk. This is what Gandhi-ji (by his own practice and example) showed and offered to the world.

Today, the areas and developments in law, business, medicine, organ transplant, cloning, environment, ecology, DNA, stem cell, and genome research, issues of bioethics and abortion, the spread of new diseases, food production, transportation, space initiatives, and local and global conflicts have created new environments and needs and Jainism must research, debate, and seek to offer new, practical, and timely solutions to these urgent and vexing challenges.

Business leaders not only have to make profits for their corporations, but they also have societal responsibilities. When making decisions, a business person must be aware of the impact on society, the environment and ecology, the creation or prevention of pollution, human relations, employees, fellow workers, and a regard for openness, honesty in transactions, good job creations, and many other issues and concerns of the society as a whole. A business leader is part of the society in which he lives and his overarching role is to make that society better. Similarly, a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a certified public accountant, or a financial securities broker must weigh his decisions using the yardstick of ethics, ahimsa and responsibility to the society.

We need to train Jain scholars, pracharaks and Sadhus to address 21st Century issues rather than about other worldliness.

3.4 Where Should One Go for Practical Training in Ahimsa

This is a real question that was posed to me in Houston. In late November 2010, I was invited to listen to a talk by a visiting scholar from Costa Rica. She was going to speak about practical application of non-violence, which she

teaches there, and how she has been successful in reducing violence and the school dropout rate in Costa Rica.

I have been to Costa Rica three times, on vacation. It is a beautiful country. In the early 1940s, Costa Rica abolished their Department of Defense and the military. I think Costa Rica is the only country of its size in the world that does not have any Army. In the 1980s, the United Nations opened a Peace University there--again, the first of its kind. In 2010, due to this culture of peace, Costa Rica established a full-fledged Department of Peace. How impressive—again, the first in the world.

Now, Costa Rica is facing a new challenge. Since there is peace and tranquility there and Costa Ricans enjoy a comparatively higher standard of living, many drug lords from neighboring countries (including Guatemala, Colombia and Mexico) are now moving in and threatening the peace and stability of that country; this brings a new problem for the government.

The government is at a loss regarding how to deal with this situation in a peaceful way. This speaker (from Costa Rica) and I had a long private chat. She knew very little about Jainism and its ahimsa. I took the opportunity to give her a much bigger and detailed picture of Jainism and its

philosophy. She got very curious. She asked me “are there teaching and training centers run by Jains in India where I can get practical training in how to apply ahimsa?” She also wondered aloud about the possibility of arranging for many government officials, including the Minister of the Department of Peace—to come to India and get practical training how to apply ahimsa in this kind of situation. You all probably can imagine the reaction on my face. I had to say, “Sorry.” Is this not a pity?

3.5 We Need to Embrace the Five Anuvratas and Rather the Five Mahavratas.

There is little talk about Shravak-aachaar (the conduct of a householder) and discussion of some householders who can serve as role models. Yes, the life of a sadhu is the highest living role model for us, to which we must aspire when we become renunciates, but first we must concentrate on becoming good shravaks. The five Mahavratas are for sadhus and not for householders. Unfortunately, we talk about Mahavratas, but our daily way of life is not even close to the standard set by any anuvratas (minor vows).

This reminds me of an incident. A few years ago, as part of an interfaith movement, a group of some fifty non-Indian Jains (all Westerners) were coming to visit a Jain

temple in the US. Several prominent members of the Jain community were busy in making proper preparations to welcome the guests and also to show and share about our Jain tradition, philosophy, and history.

I asked one active Jain volunteer what he would talk about Jainism when it was his turn to share. He replied, “Uncle, I will talk about the five mahavrata.” I laughed and said to him, “Why not talk about the five anuvratas? The guests will know and realize that Jains are one of the most affluent and prigrahi people on earth are not celibate, and have no monopoly on truth and other virtues.” He understood my point.

The time has come that we should embrace the five anuvratas not as a slogan but in real practice. Acharya Tulsi-ji tried his very best sixty plus years ago to emphasize the five anuvratas, but after a few years, it just became a mere slogan.

3.6 Not many Volunteers and much Volunteerism.

Volunteers are the shoulders of an organization. Just like, if the shoulders are strong, body is strong. There is a significant volunteerism in the Western world. I am told Swami Narayan

Sanstha (much smaller in number than the Jains) has 55,000 volunteers. I don't know how many we Jains have.

3.7 Other Concerns and Issue

- Increasing levels of personality cults and hence excessive, praise and even Pooja and worship of some individuals.
- Study and understanding the impact of technology and social media
- Promotion of Packaged form of spirituality
- Too many sects and sub sects and more are being born
- Walk and talk are different
- Not much talk and debate about social issues of the day
- Preaching in languages that youths don't understand
- Anekantavada is found only in books and lectures but not in understanding and practice
- Much talk about Jain cosmology and other unrelated things
- Our gods are dividing us
- Other than Sammedshikhar Ji and Pavapuri, we know very little of Jain temples in Bihar, Bengal, U.P.

Uttarkhand, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

- There is not a comprehensive history of famous and visionary Jain saints and shravaks of all the Jain traditions
- Jains in general lack a central Global Apex Body like JAINA (North America) or a recognized authority or a mechanism to address inaccuracies in media and published books wrong and hurtful information about our precious heritage.
- Hindus have Gita, Christians have Bible and Muslims have Quran but we Jain Jack such a book of that stature. Saman Suttam was supposed to be such a book but I wonder how many Jains know and accept it as such.
- Jains of our generation have taken Jainism for granted and have made little or no effort to transmit Jain tradition and values. If there is no systematic system to do that, it only takes one to two generation to do a permanent and non-retrievable damage.
- Visionary media. Media plays a very important role in debating the issues and shaping the society. We have

hundreds of Jain magazines but their quality and readership needs much to be desired.

WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN TO US?

Jainism has the right message for the present time. Prof. John Koller of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute states, “Perhaps the greatest contributions to Indian life were made by Jain exemplars of moral virtue and careful reasoning. Their migration from the Ganges Valley to the southern tip and over the western borders of the subcontinent allowed them to spread the best of Indian culture to these parts of India through their exemplary lives. Jain adherents to the rule of non-injuring has been a major factor in the importance that this moral principle has assumed in Buddhist and Hindu life over the centuries. Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu saint whose adherence to non-injuring in his successful efforts to throw off the yokes of British colonial rule, bringing the principle of nonviolence to the admiring attention of the whole world, gratefully acknowledged the great impression made on him by the virtuous Jains he knew as a youth.”

On May 7, 2014, Professor Philip Clayton (former Dean and Provost at Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont California wrote;

“Dear Friends, In a few minutes I will be teaching this beautiful article on Jainism and Ecology, "views of nature, nonviolence, and vegetarianism," by Michael Tobias, first published in Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds., Worldviews and Ecology. I have attached the article here, although you probably already know it.

I write to you in part because I am moved by its description of the power of the Jain way of life and by the importance of this message in a world facing ecological catastrophe. I write to you even more because I am struck by how essential it is that this message of Applied Jainism be made available in American higher education. Future leaders do not need a "secular," post-religious worldview that tells everyone to "just get along." In the world's oldest religion, Jainism, there is such a depth of wisdom that we can never re-create it simply by inventing a new worldview or ethical code. And of course Jainism is not the only religion of depth; the messages of the other ancient wisdom traditions are also important.

I am moved to write you to encourage you not to give up the quest that first brought the four of us together. Our dream was right; our goals were noble; and what we sought to establish is just as needful today as before. I am convinced in

the depth of my being that it is crucial that graduate students, the future leaders of America, are exposed to these teachings. They will express them in different ways, no doubt. But without this guidance they will not have the wisdom to address the profound challenges that await their generation, in friendship, Philip.

Dr. Brianne Donaldson a noted Jain scholar and now a Bhagwan Mahavir Fellow in Jainism at Rice University in Houston, Texas, USA wrote “I want to hear everyone talking about Jainism. I want religion and philosophy departments teaching it. I want ecologists and agricultural technicians exploring its sustainability models. I want animal ethicists investigating it. I want metaphysicians engaging its textual and cosmological claims. I want economics departments examining its charitable giving and solvency. I want diplomats, nonviolent practitioners and just war theorists scrutinizing it as a viable political way of life. In short, I want it on the lips of every discipline, colliding with existing wisdom, challenging epistemological strongholds, and generally throwing a wrench into any sentiment that would dismiss as impractical the possibilities of humans living in a fundamentally different manner in our current and future worlds.” I hope and pray that we are listening to her.

LAKSHMI is the new Bhagwan in Jainism now:

In year 2017 I sent out an email to many Jains titled “Free Christmas Celebration from Commercialism says Pope Francis”. In the homily on Christmas Eve, Pope Francis said Christmas needs to be freed of materialism. He said that the message of Christmas was simplicity, humility and mystery but a world that is obsessed with gifts, feasting and self-centeredness needs more humility. At the service that was attended by around 10,000 people along with several cardinals, bishops, Francis said that many people who are wealthy need to be reminded that the message of Christmas was simplicity and humility”.

In response to my this email, many people just sent me emails thanking me and nothing beyond. However there were a few visionary Jain leaders in India and USA who were really touched by Pope Francis’s message and shared their views. Below is a sampling of juts a few “Yes, it is a timely call for us Jains to ponder over our own practices in the light of message of aparigraha. In India, all our religious celebrations have become opportunities to collect funds, all rituals have price tags, religion is monopolized by people with deep pockets & large majority feels deprived of active & intimate participation as they can't afford to join auction

process. Commercialization has become embarrassing and in the context of efforts to take our religion to international community, becoming increasingly indefensible. Guys like us have been totally marginalized & started distancing ourselves from day to day participation. Hope good sense dawns on our monks & followers to take corrective course. Best wishes”

“So interesting to read this post from you with your comments from Pope Francis about Jesus and how those comments of his align with your teachings about ahimsa. Well done!”

“Dear Jain sahib, greetings no one can agree with you more on this subject. In fact I am bit disenchanted, by the pomp and show encouraged by our maharaj, sadhus in name of religion”

“A very necessary warning to today's consumerist society, driven by market economy and its measure of success by GDP”.

“Thanks for your beautiful quoting the Message of pope Francis On the occasion of Christmas.

Jain should exhibit these virtuous qualities”.

“Yes sir very true. Jains along with others are becoming too materialistic & Hippocrates. They are not following the words they speak everyday on temples & preach they listen or make.

Many of the feedbacks are good but not a single person said that he or she will change. Emails and thanks are very easy and the matter stops there. Gandhi Ji said “Be the change that you want to see the change”

Conclusion

The Change is inevitable. As an affluent and highly educated Jain community, we need a healthy debate, action plan and road maps. These issues are not easy and similarly their answers and solutions are not easy. Collectively we need to take that first step now in the right direction.

With some frankness, I have attempted here to share my perception and concerns about the Jain community and the Jain literature. Our population is declining and we must invent some breaks for that. Knowledge is a treasure and must be made accessible freely, globally and 24/7. Today's, technology and means of communication make that happen. We Jains have to create think tanks, to plan and develop or present knowledge in the form and shape that meets today's needs. There is a crying need for change.

Frankly I feel that there is a big tsunami coming against the survival of Jainism and looks that we as a

community are not yet prepared to face it. When so much is at stake, we cannot be just spectators. If Rome were burning, we would not merely enjoy the show. We must take charge and start with action plans. The entire community must do brain storming. In general, Jainism can be described as 'The Right Faith in Wrong Hands'. As they do not know about their rich history, they have no futures. History repeats only if we know about it.

But I see a future if a large part of non-Jains take interest in Jainism, if the social composition of Jain community changes (i.e. the intellectuals replace traders). If we want to join with other religions on the same table and be treated as equal then we need to concentrate on areas that need to be addressed. We must all contemplate a clear vision and action plan. I want to close this paper with a clarion reminder from an American musician John Denver, who wrote,

“Yes there still is time to turn around

And make all hatred cease

Let's give another name to living

And we can call it peace.”