CHAPTER - 06

APPLIED ETHICS
JAIN MONASTICISM

Monasticism is one of the important contributions of the Indian culture, philosophy and religion. India may aptly be called the homeland of monachism and ascetic practices. Nowhere else, probably, as in India, the impulse of seclusion from the rest of the society, mortification of the body and flight from the world, in pursuit of a higher spiritual ideal, is revealed in a more bewildering variety so as to appear as an inherent element of human life. The result of this sort of tendency is generally that mode of life in which monks and nuns live away from society in perfect solitude. Monastic practices exert an appreciable and remarkable influence on the minds of people by their vows to a life of self-denial, discipline and poverty.

The words monachism and monasticism have a common source of origin. The word ‘monasticism’ is derived from the Greek word ὕωνος, ‘alone’, solitary, from which a whole family of words has been formed- monk, monastic, nun, monasticism, monachism. In Latin this word has given monachus and its derivatives monacha, monachatus, monachare, monachizare and a few other words. Two words frequently employed in Latin are monnus (monks) and monna (nun). Hence monachism may be said to denote that form of religious life led by those who having separated themselves entirely from the world live in solitude. The words equivalent to monachism in Sanskrit may be said to imply the same sense. Life in a monastery or in a forest on account of disgust for the world or for noble purpose of self-realization may, therefore, be said to be at the root of this mode of life.

The institution of monasticism is the by-product of an attitude of mind, which deprecates and denies all worldly craving and brings renunciation, to bear upon all human conducts. Everything is looked upon as impermanent and full of misery, and the people yearns to escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth. The aim of monastic life is not merely an escape, but an effort to achieve the highest state of human life, which is looked upon as a rare opportunity to have in the endless cycles of births and rebirths. The institution of asceticism initially, however, arose from the simple renunciation of worldly desire, but later developed into the most complicated system of rules and regulations pertaining to even the minutest detail as witnessed in Jainism also.
Jainism is an ascetic religion from the very beginning and it has retained its ascetic character till modern times with its special characteristics of monasticism. The monastic course begins with the renunciation of world and acceptance of the five great vows, and continues till the end of life without any break. There are rules of monastic life that are to be strictly followed and any breach of them is duly expiated. The monastic course is essentially unitary and single. But it can be distinguished in its aspect of intensiveness into several stages that are, from one viewpoint, four in number. These are known as (i) The Elder’s course (Sthavira-kalpa), (ii) the Victor’s course (jina-kalpa) (iii) the purificatory cooperative course (parihāra-visuddhi-kalpa), and (iv) the time-bound course (yathā-landaka-kalpa). Among other classes of Jain monks, Sthānanga makes a mention of the following types:

Pulāka – Who lacks a higher degree of mantle purity.
Bakuśa – Who is slightly attached to his possession.
Kuśīla – Who, though observing the primary rules of conduct, transgress the secondary rules.

But, as the present study analyzes the Jain monasticism in environmental perspective, I will focus my study on Jain monasticism as a unitary system in general and on the main sects or branches of Jainism i.e. Digambar and Śvetāmbar in particular.

Mūlācāra, the basic text for the conduct of Digambara monk, gives the following twenty-eight qualities of a monk. These qualities are known as Mulgūnas.

1-5 Five Great vows (Pañcamahāvratas)
6-10 Five fold path of vigilance (Pañcasamitis)
11-15 Control of five senses (Indriyajaya)
16-21 Six essential duties (Śadāvaśyakas)
22 Pulling out of hairs
23 Nudity
24 Non-bathing
25 Sleeping on the ground
26 Not cleaning the teeth
27 Taking food in standing posture
28 Eating only once in twenty four hours (Ekabhakta)
The Śvetambara tradition does not take nudity to be essential quality of a monk. Beside this, the last of two qualities also do not find a place amongst essentials of a monk in the Śvetambara tradition. Both the sects claim antiquity for their respective tradition. The Śvetambara tradition enumerates the following essentials for a monk. 12

1-5  Five Great vows
6  Not taking food in night
7-11  Controlling the five senses
12  Inner Purity
13  Purity of possession of a monk
14  Forgiveness
15  Detachment
16  Mental Goodness
17  Vocal goodness
18  Physical goodness
19-24  Protection of six types of living beings
25  Threefold discipline
26  Forbearance
27  Sallekhanāvṛata

Survey of Jain monasticism in general reveals that all the rules of monastic conduct seem to originate from the five great vows (pañcamahāvratās) that were expected of every Jain monk of both the sects. These five vows are to be followed in the thrice threefold way, inasmuch as, the monk is not to transgress himself or consent to somebody else transgressing these, either mentally (maññeta), vocally (vāṇa) or bodily (Kāṇa). 13 The following of these basic vows, which comprised the whole fabric of Jain monastic life, has led to the flowering up of numerous rules and conventions which have survived to this day. Numerous rules and regulations have arisen out of the necessity of the proper following of these great vows. These vows are as follows:

(1) **Great vow of non-violence (Savvāvo pāṇāīvāyo veramaṇaṁ):** The Jains believe in the equality of all life. Therefore, the vow of non-violence includes abstinence from taking the life of any superior or inferior being in any form. 14 In negative terms, it is complete abstention from violence of all types. The monks and nuns, since they stand on a
higher spiritual platform, can commit no act of violence, mild, moderate or intense, under any circumstances. They are supposed to observe this vow through mind, speech and body, and not to kill with ill intentions, purposely or in advertently any of the ten vitalities of a living being, movable or immovable (trasa or sthāvara), and even of an invisible (sūkṣma) living being, not to speak of a visible (bādara) living being. They observe the vow themselves. They should not ask anybody else to commit the slightest act of violence; nor do they approve or appreciate such an act of violence committed by someone else. This, in brief, is described as the vow of nonviolence for the monks. Friendship for all and subjugation of passions are also necessary for ahiṃsā mahāvrata. This vow is the mother of all other vows and rules and regulations, since all are practiced for the proper observance of nonviolence. This gives birth to numerous rules and regulation for monks and nuns of both sects.

(2) **Great vow of truthfulness** (Savvāṇo musāvāyāo veramaṇāṁ) – The monk leaves all worldly activities and, therefore, for him truth carries a deeper meaning than mere statement of facts. Truth means a considerate mode of expression, a thoughtful speech that is beneficial for all. Truth and all other vows as already stated, being subservient to cardinal virtue of nonviolence, a speech that may cause pain should be avoided even though it may be objectively true. The truth, therefore in its wider sense not only a negation of lie, but a negation of all which is injurious. Mūlaçāra ask a monk to avoid all words under influence of attachment, aversion, jest, fear, anger and greed. The intention behind this vow is nothing, but not to hurt any living being.

(3) **The vow of non-stealing** (Savvāṇo adiṇḍāṇāo veramaṇāṁ) : The principle of non-stealing is actually based on the foremost principle of non-violence. In Jainism, the principle of non-stealing is a moral principle only because it vindicates the principle of non-violence. According to Acarya Amrit Chandra, stealing is also violence, because it hurts both apparent (dravya) and real (bhāva) vitalities of the person whose wealth is stolen.
For the monks, this vow of non-stealing is more exhaustive. Whatever little possession a monk has, is acquired by him by begging of the householder. No object, howsoever small, should be acquired or used by the monk without an express permission of the owner.

The monk should refrain from taking anything without being offered, not only in a village or a town, but also in a forest. This goes to the extent that the Jaina monk or nun, even if starving, would never pick up even a wild fruit from the ground (of course it implies another sin of hurting the life existent in the vegetable or fruit, and thus, leading to the violation of the vow of nonviolence. Thus, this asteya mahāvrata states that monk is supposed to abstain completely through mind, speech, and body and for the whole life.

“Jāvajjīvā, tīvihāṃ tīviheṇām maṇeṇavāyāṃ kāyeṇ na Karemi na kāravēmi, karaṇṭaṃpiṇāṇāṃ nasamanṇujānāṃ”

The idea behind this vow is that one should have an attitude of detachment towards one’s possession.

(4) The vow of celibacy (Savvāo mehuṇa vervaṇaṇaṃ): Celibacy is a mantle state with control over all five senses. And in practical, it is the abstinence from the five-fold enjoyment of speech, taste, vision, smell and touch. The monks are to practice perfect celibacy. He has to keep under control all his five sense organs in narrow sense. The monk, being a celibate, should be absolutely free from any type of sexual desire. He is to abstain not only from intercourse, but also from bodily decoration, sense indulgence, exciting food, excessive food, song and dance, and association with women, exciting surroundings, passionate thinking, recalling past sexual enjoyment, and planning for future sexual enjoyment. This vow is also co-related with the observance of non-violence; since sexual desire can also cause violence of different types.

(5) The vow of non-possession (Savvāo parigghahāo vervaṇaṇaṃ): Parigraha has been defined as mūrcha or attachment
Attachment to anything is the cause of bondage and, therefore should be avoided. The fifth or the last vow of monks is abstention from all kinds of possession. That means the monk promises to give up even the slightest form of attachment to everything, whether it be a trivial lifeless thing or a human being. This mahāvrata pronounces that monks abstain from all kinds of possession, little in quantity or large in quantity, living or nonliving. They abstain from all these possession themselves, do not make others keep them, nor do they appreciate any such possessions kept by others. They abstain from then for the whole life with three instruments (yogas) and three performances (karanas). Thus, they are not supposed to be equipped with any kind of belongings. But in practice, both Śvetāmbara and Digambara monks do possess some requisites for their daily use. There is some difference regarding the objects, which are allowed for a monk between the two sects, which will be discussed later on. This vow promotes the complete detachment towards worldly things, which is very much relevant from present environmental perspective. In the era of consumerism, promotion of detachment towards worldly things presents a ideal in front of highly consumerist society.

These five basic vows are fundamental for each and every activity prescribed for Jain mendicants. All the rest of monastic jurisdiction emanate from the need of proper observance of five mahāvratas. For the proper following of these principles of morality (Mahāvratas) three guptis for self control and five samities for vigilance in conduct are prescribed for the Jain mendicants of both the sects which are mandatory to practice faultlessly.

Three ‘guptī’

The ‘guptī’ protect from the sin. It can be described as self-control, which is threefold: physical, mental and vocal. A monk is supposed to practice these three guptis consisted of control over mind (mana), speech (vāk) and body (kāya). Endowed with these, monks control their passion (kasaya) like anger, pride, deceit and greed, and put up with all sort of troubles. The root cause of present environmental dilemma lies in uncontrolled passion of mankind, out of which mankind is insensitively treating the very natural world. This system of guptis for
mendicants promotes control over senses and passion highly required to solve the prevailing problem.

**Five ‘Samitis’**

The word ‘Samiti’, means vigilance in behaviour. Negligence (*pramāda*) lies at the root of all sins and, therefore, constant vigilance is necessary to avoid them, and faultless practice of basic vows. Though, the best and perfect form of vigilance (from *niścaya* point of view) is the state of trance, where the self becomes identical with its own nature, but, from behavioral point of view, five-fold vigilance is prescribed for the mendicants.

(1) *Iryāsamiti* – According to this *samiti*, the monk should be vigilant while moving, waking etc. According to *Mūlācāra*, the monk should be careful about the following five points.

(i) He should traverse only that path which is free from ants, seeds, green vegetables, mud etc. The path, which repeatedly trodden by vehicles and by other people or which is scorched by like sun or which is ploughed, should be regarded fit for the movement.

(ii) He should move about only in daylight. Moonlight or artificial lights or lamps etc. are not capable of properly showing the small insects, which may be lying in the path.

(iii) The monk should abstain from the object of five senses and should devote his full attention towards his steps while moving, so that no living being is injured through carelessness.

(iv) The monk should not move about for purposes other than religious. He should move for a pilgrimage; for a visit to a teacher; for religious discussion and for preaching of dharma. This promotes the limited activity and avoidance of unwanted activity.

(v) The monk should move always looking forward on the ground to the extent of four cubits. He should not run, jump or look in other direction.

Thus, the idea of *iryāsamit* is to avoid all purposeless movements and to regulate all necessary movements in such a way, that no living being is injured through
carelessness. This *samiti* is the embodiment of non-violence, which preaches to treat sensitively even the small members of our natural environment. Each living being has equal importance in maintaining the eco-balance. We should respect, and care not to harm them.

(2) *Eṣaṇāsamiti* – Since the monk does not cook for himself, therefore he has to beg his food to keep the body and soul together. This *samiti* suggests monk to take only that food which is faultless as per their needed conduct. The food should be pure vegetarian and faultless. The monk should not take food if he finds only one of the following fourteen impurities: nails, hair, insects, bones, chaff, grain, particles, puns, skin, blood, flesh, seeds, fruits, bulb and roots.\(^3\) This leads to several regulations regarding acceptable food and begging for Jain mendicants, which will be discussed separately with rules for begging and food. In short, a staunch recommendation for vegetarian food and non-harm even to small insects arises from this *samiti*. Thousands of innocent animals are slaughtered and chopped for the sake of appetite daily throughout the world, creating biological imbalance. Such a minute care in food is inspiring to develop sensitiveness towards living being.

(3) *Ādānanikṣepanā Samiti* : It means that monk should carefully lift and put his articles so that no living being can be harmed. He should avoid injury to any living being in this way.\(^4\) For this they use *picchi* or *rajoharan* to remove insects.\(^5\)

(4) *Utsarga Samiti* – While answering the call of nature, throwing away excrements, urine, mucus or any other uncleanliness of the body, pieces of food, waste things, dead bodies, the monk should properly scrutinize the place and should throw away such wastes only in a place which is burnt, ploughed, used for cremation, unobjected, spacious, devoid of insects and seeds, not covered with grass or leaves, not perforated by holes, situated at a distance, neither frequented nor seen by other people and having an *acitta* (inanimate) surface layer.\(^6\) This *samiti* is very much relevant in the era when man-made wastages are polluting our water and land resources very much with the harmful expositions. Such wastes not only pollute water and land, but also cause severe diseases. In this reference, such carefulness of mendicants is highly appreciable.

(5) *Bhāṣāsamiti* – This is supplementary to the vow of truthfulness on one side, and to the *vācana-gupti* on the other. While following this *samiti*, mendicants
should avoid superfluous and harsh speech. Pride, greed, anger are to be avoided. 
Greed has been the root cause for present state of environment. Out of greed 
mankind is exploiting natural resources.

These items (gupti and samiti) were essentials not only for the maintenance of the 
basic vows, esp. the vow of non-injury to living beings, but also for the calmness 
of mind which was to be the essence of monachism. These samitis show with what 
exactness and solemnity a monk is required to be vigilant in the observance of 
moral virtues. In addition to these, according to Daśvakālika, a monk should 
cultivate ten cardinal virtues in him, which consist of forgiveness, modesty, 
straight forwardness, non-attachment, mortification, self-control, truth, purity, 
non-possession and celibacy. In these qualities, non-attachment and non- 
possession directly contribute in protection of environment if developed in 
one'self.

The monk with a calm, open and unworldly attitude had to avoid all unbecoming 
and sinful activities like singing, dancing, laughing with a wide open mouth, 
getting attached to fragrance or woodwork, painting, calligraphy, ivory work, leaf- 
cutting, wells, tanks, streamlets and lakes, watery regions, forests, group of 
various trees, mountains, horse fights, elephant fights or other animals fights. 
These above mentioned works in somehow cause injury and harm more or less to 
living beings both large and small. In present environmental perspective, these 
activities are harmful for natural environment also, thus such restraints for 
mendicants seems relevant.

**Six essentials (Śaḍavaśyakas)**— The word āvaśayaka means necessary, 
indispensable, and inevitable. This denotes the six essential daily duties for 
mendicants. In other word, if refers to spiritual observance which are obligatory 
for all Jains.

The traditional six āvaśayaka as enumerate in Mūlācāra and Uttarādhyayana are 
as follows:

(1) Sāmyika                 (4) Pratikramaṇa
(2) Catruviniśatistava     (5) Pratyākhyāna
(3) Vandanā                (6) Kāyotsarga
Sāmāyika is the first essential for the monks. It means equanimity of mind in life and death, profit and loss, happiness and misery etc. In short, monk is to live in a state of equanimity or detachment towards every situation whether favorable or non-favorable.

Second essential is Caturviṃśatistava, which includes offering prayers to twenty-four thirthankars.

Vandana, being the third essential, refers to paying respect to the preceptor, to superiors, images of Arhantas and siddhas, and those who are senior in austerity, the study of scriptures and knowledge. But, a monk is not to pay respect to those who do not observe vows.

Pratikramaṇa – One of the most important essential, pratikramana consists in self-criticism censuring before guru and confession of the moral transgression. It is repentance for faults attaching to the soul. It is the practice of asking forgiveness for past transgression from all living beings. It is to be performed twice a day for wrong attitude, absence of self-control, passion and inauspicious activity. This rite begins with the individual (monks) recognizing and seeking to absolve himself or herself from the karmic consequences of any form of harm caused to a wide array of live-forms, in bodies with from one to five senses including seeds, plants, insects, mold and spiders. In this rite, mendicants recite following prakritized verse.

“I want to make pratikarmana for injury on the path of my movement, in coming and in going, in treading on living things, in treading on seeds, in treading on green plants, in treading on dew, on beetles, or on mould, on moist earth and on cobwebs; whatever living organism with one or two or three or four or five sense have been injured by me or knocked over or crushed or squashed or touched or mangled or heat or affrighted or removed from one place to another or deprived of life – may all that evil have been done in vain (micchāmi dukkaḍaṁ).”

“I ask pardon of all living creatures, may all of them pardon me, may I have friendship with all beings and enmity with none.”

As a further part of this rite, the individual recites the following prakritized vernacular liturgy in which he or she enumerates all the possible bodily forms, with the assumption that one has willingly or unwillingly harmed them:
700,000  Earth bodies
700,000  Water bodies
700,000  Fire bodies
700,000  Air bodies
1,000,000  Separate plant bodies
1,400,000  Aggregate plant bodies
200,000  Two sensed beings
200,000  Three sensed beings
200,000  Four sensed beings
400,000  Divine five – sensed being
400,000  Plant and animal five sensed beings
1,400,000  Humans

In this way there are 8,400,000 forms of existence.

“Whatever harm I have done, caused to be done, or approved of by mind, speech or body against all of them: may that harm be without consequence.”

Most of the pratikramaṇa rite is recited in Prakrit or Sanskrit. But this particular part of the liturgy is recited in the vernacular, indicating it is intended to be clearly understood by the practitioner.

This rite of pratikramaṇa or confession can be regarded as direct environmental ritual, since it is rooted in compassion and responsibility towards all living being. This rite preaches to be sensitive and responsible for every small being. One of the significant causes of environmental degradation is the lack of sensitivity and a moral responsibility towards natural environment and its components. This part of Jain monasticism presents itself as a highly desirable in the context of environment ethics as it involves sensitivity and responsibility towards all living beings.

Pratyākhyān - Pratyākhyān means determination to avoid sinful activities. pratikramaṇa is convicted with the sinful activities of the past, whereas pratyakhyana is related to the activities of the future. This can be related with the determination, not to harm our natural environment more in future if we implement this essential with the prospect of environment.

Kāyotsarga – The last essential is kāyotsarga, which means devotion to the auspicious meditation.
These six essential are mandatory to all monks and nuns of both sects to perform daily faultless. Among there essential duties, *pratikramana* seems more relevant from environmental perspective.

In addition to above discussed moral discipline, there are several other rules and protocol of mendicant life style which they have to abide by. Many of them directly or indirectly contribute to either not harming environment or protecting it. These are being discussed under different headings.

**Touring**- Jain monks are supposed to lead a touring life throughout eight months of the year, i.e. except the rainy season. The reason behind this was the discipline of not getting attached to any particular place or family. Therefore, instead of staying at one place, they wander from village to village with a mission of preaching. “Gāmāṇugāmaṁ dāījamāne”. 56

While touring no attempt at killing living beings, deliberately or otherwise or harassing them are allowed. They have to avoid watery regions or shaky bridges or muddy places. They are not allowed to travel in water. Sometimes in emergency, when they have to cross shallow water, they wipe their whole body before entering water body so that living being on their body might not get hurt. 58

One of the important aspects of touring which shows their direct concern for not harming any living being is shown in their discipline of non touring during four months of rainy season. The reason for not undertaking any touring in the rainy season was that such a stationary mode of life is helpful in abstaining from inflicting injury to vegetation beings which grew up immensely in this season. It may be noted that for the same reason, no touring is to be done at night any time throughout the year. 60 This stay at one place begins when fifty days of the actual rainy season has elapsed. It ends on the fifth day of *Bhādrapada*. 61 They are allowed to prolong their stay for five to ten days after the rainy season if the road was still full of many living beings and was not yet free from mud. 62 Thus, through any of their touring activity, they take care not to harm a single and minutest living beings including vegetation. Prohibitions of water travel on one hand denote maintaining the purity of water bodies, on another hand it promotes not to harm living beings that live in water bodies.
Residence – The monk has to select a residence, which is free from small insect, living beings. Such places as contained scattered corn of different types or jars of wine or of water, where fire activity is carried on either at day or night, where there are scattered lump of flesh, or milk or curds, or butter or oil, or ghee or molasses, or where there are grass or which are full of cow webs are deemed unfit for the monks. These given reasons either will cause injury to living being and natural environment or any type of violence to living beings, thus harmful to natural environment also.

Nudity and Clothing – Regarding cloths and nudity, there exists much difference between Digambar and Śvetāmbar sects. The Digambara monk remains naked. It is considered to be one the essential of monkhood that a monk should remain devoid of clothing (accelakkam). In this respect they differ from the Śvetambaras. Clothing and other requisites are looked upon as property, the use of which disqualifies person to be a monk. But, Digambar nuns use clothes, but, not as possession but to cover the privities. Śvetāmber monks and nuns wear clothes. They use clothes for three reasons:

(i) To avoid shame
(ii) To avoid disregard from the people.
(iii) To put up with the various pariṣahas, but with the attitude of non-attachment.

The monks are allowed to use three clothes all together, two of which are of cotton and one of wool. Monks are allowed to accept cloths only, which are made of wool, silk, hemp, palm-leaves, and cotton. Generally, only those of cotton and wool are to be used. They are not allowed to use clothes which are bought, washed, dyed, cleaned or perfumed or those which are made of fur, fine ones, beautiful ones; prepared out of goat’s hair, of blue cotton, made of the skin of black, blue or white deer; golden plaids, plaids glittering like gold, interwoven with gold, tiger skins or ornamental clothes. Thus, they do not use such cloths, which somehow harm environment and are made of killing animals or animal stuff like fur, other skins of animals. Thousands of innocent animals and insects are killed for their skin, fur, etc. to prepare clothes. Monk do not use even dyed
clothes, since in process of dying cloths several pollutants are released, which further pollute water bodies, soil etc.

Even though the *Acārāṅga* and the *Nisītha Sūtra* do not allow the washing of clothes, the *Pīṇḍa* and the *Oghā-niryuktīs* give great detail about washing clothes. Before actually washing the cloths, there two upper clothes are kept apart for three days so that all the lice, etc. clung to the rest of the clothes or to the body; or all clothes are kept away for three days. Then the insects are carefully removed.

While washing the clothes they do not use plenty of water extravagantly. Instead, very less water is used for washing. If there are shortages of sufficient water, then they take rain water as fell down from the root. Then it is exposed to sun to make it lifeless. Water pollution and water scarcity are some major problems of environmental degradation today. Tones of water are wasted in washing etc. Limited use of water in washing clothes and other requisites give message of mindful and careful use of water. And the management of the use of rainwater is also very substantial.

**Other requisites** – Though Jain monks are entitled to follow *aparigraha mahāvrata*, yet some articles are allowed for a monk as necessity to live and to properly follow the vows. While touring or otherwise, the *Digambar* monks keep less requisites as compared with those of *Śvetāmbara* one. Their requisites are classified under three heads:

1. **Jñānopadhi** – or means of attaining knowledge. This includes *sāstras*.

2. **Saṁyamopāḍhi** - or means of observance of vows. This includes a broom of peacock feather. This broom helps in observing non-violence, because a monk can gently remove small insect with its help while handling something or while himself making movements. This peacock feather broom does not get soiled either with dust or with sweat; it is soft and non-injurious, handy and light.

3. **Saucopadhi** – or means of purity. It includes a *kamandala*. The monks do not use any bowl for begging food. Instead of that they accept food in the palms of their hand (*pañipātra*). *Kamandala* is used to carry lifeless water for the purpose of bodily cleanliness.
4. **Bedding** – The bedding of Digambar monk consists of either bare ground, or a slab of stone, or a plank of wood, or dry grass. Besides these, the monk possess nothing else and all other thing or valuables like pearls, conches, skins, ivory and kambala are deemed unfit for them.\(^{75}\)

In handling all the requisites permitted to him they have to become very careful, and wipe the places of occupation with the feather-broom to avoid injury to living beings.\(^{76}\)

In Śvetāmbara tradition, besides clothing monks use other articles like alms-bowl, blanket, broom, etc. for the sake of proper practice of self-control or out of a sense of shame. Ācārāṇgasūtra mentions four possessions—clothes, bowl, blanket and broom.\(^{77}\) Chedasūtra and Niriyukti furnish us with detail. Following are the articles prescribed for:

1. **Pāya (alms bowl)** – They are made either of gourd or of wood, or of clay.\(^{78}\) They do not take or use such pots which are bought for them only or those made of iron, tin, lead, silver, gold, brass, an alloy of gold, silver and copper, pearl, glass, shell, horn, ivory, cloth, stone or leather, or those which are specially polished,\(^{79}\) etc. Thus, they do not use any stuff, which is made by harming natural environment (including living beings) or can harm by any means viz. ivory, shell, horn etc.

2. **Kambala** – This is a blanket used by the monks to cover themselves either as a protection from cold, or as a cover while sleeping.\(^{80}\)

3. **Pāyapuṇchaṇa (Rajoharan)** – This is a broom similar to Digambar tradition used to wipe lightly the places over which the monks want to sit, stand or lay down, so that living beings may not get killed or harmed.\(^{81}\) Its bristles are made out of five kinds of material - either of the hairs of goat, or that of the camel, or of hemp, or of pounded grass, or of the pounded muṇja grass.\(^{82}\) Its handle is made of wood.\(^{83}\) Monks use it frequently and carefully to remove tiny insect. With regularity and a ritual gesture, they sweep the ground before seating themselves.
(4) **Muhapatti** – It is a piece of cloth tied over the mouth and nose by the monks to prevent small insects from entering their mouth and getting killed.  

(5) **Gocchaga** - This is a piece of cloth used in cleaning the alms-bowl. A small broom is also used in cleaning even the pot-clothes, which is made of wool.

(6) **Bedding** - Likewise of **Digambara** tradition the bedding or santhāra consists either of grass, or of a plank of wood or of a slab of stone. A piece of cloth called **abyantara-ṇiṣadyā pattaka** is spread over the blanket with a view to save lice, etc. from getting crushed in between the body and the kamabala. In addition to these articles, there are other miscellaneous articles mentioned in *Chedasūtras*, which a monk can use. Thus, there are very less items which monks of both the sect generally posses.

They lead a life of voluntarily poverty. Their almost all the requisites are such as promoting environmental protection by not harming it. **Muhpatti, rajoharan, gocchaga** are the embodiment of non-violence in practice, since they are to secure even smallest living begins. The motive of non-possession and observance of non-violence are highlighted from all the requisites.

**Begging and Food** - Out of many fundamental necessities of human life, food is most elementary. Even a monk cannot get rid of this necessity. But they are to constantly encourage the cultivation of distaste for food. Desire for food is considered the primary cause for all forms of *hiṃsā*, since food cannot be consumed without destroying another life form. Because life cannot be maintained without consuming some amount of food, the Jaina teachers have devised various means of minimizing this *hiṃsā* for the mendicants. This gives way to several rules and regulation regarding food and begging method. There exists quite difference between two sects, but here only those will be discussed which directly or indirectly relate with environmental protection somehow.

All the Jain ascetics are forbidden to prepare food (even cannot ignite the fire to cook it), and therefore ascetics must go on daily round for begging. Taking with him all the requisites, the monk go on the begging tour. While walking they take...
care not to trouble the living being at any time. They are to beg even food in such a way that householders are put to the least possible difficulties. The food is to be obtained in broad daylight only, so that any fault if there any, in food can be detected easily. No preservation of food is allowed.

**Fit and Unfit Food** - The survey of different rules reveal the ethical basis of the whole superstructure of rules. The sole aim of these rules is the non-injury to living beings and the non-attachment either to food or to a particular family and house.

The *Daśavaikalika* describes beautifully the mode to be adopted by the monk while begging. It is said that a monk should obtain food in the same way as the bees do without getting attached to a particular flower or without causing harm to it.

The principle category of unfit food is that which contain living beings, or which involved the killing of living being in its preparation. The technical phrase, denoting such category of food is ‘ādhākarmika’.

Such ādhākarmika food is prohibited. Along with that, any articles of food containing living beings, as for instance raw palm fruit or mango; raw sugarcane, root, bulbs, seeds etc. are not allowed. Even articles placed on live substratum are disallowed. In case the monk happen to accept food in which a living being fell, he tries to take it out, and then eats it or deposits it on a region free from living beings. If he obtains food devoid of living beings, but, otherwise unclean, then he has to give it to his disciple who is not till then ordained. But if there is no such person with him, then he deposits the food on a place devoid of any impurities.

Eating of stale food is not allowed, and a monk is not permitted to preserve food upto the fourth porisi of the day. Stale food generally gives rise to bacteria due to chemical action or fermentation, and hence the rule.

Water is to be drunk as is previously boiled and made lifeless by somebody else. Normally, the nine *vikṛtis* - milk, curd, butter, flesh, fat, oil, molasses, honey, and wine-are not to be eaten and their use is restricted. *Daśvaikālika* refers to forty-six faults pertaining to improper begging to food. They are divided into four categories, which are:
(i) **Udgama doṣas** – faults relating preparation of food.

(ii) **Utpādananadoṣa** – Fault in ways adopted in obtaining food.

(iii) **Esanādoṣa** – Pertaining to the method of accepting food.

(iv) **Paribhoga** – Faults in way of eating food, its quantity, etc.

Some of other faults, which are relevant, are as follows:

- Food given after upsetting the eatables or other things on the ground is unfit for the monk.
- Food given by the donor by crushing living beings under his or her feet is not fit for monks.
- Food given after pouring the articles in another pot or mixing them with *sacitta* (living) things or after taking both is not allowed.
- Food offered other plucking a lily or any other flower is not acceptable.
- Food given with a ladle, hand or pot soited with previous injurious activity or wet with water, or covered with dust, salt, hariyālā hingulā aṁjaṇa, red earth, yellow earth, *seṭiya*, *soratṭhiya* (these are various kind of earth) and *piltha* (floor) is not to be taken by a monk. \(^{95}\)

A list for uneatable food is also given in *Daśvaikālīka*. It follows as ‘blubs, roots, fruits, cut vegetables, fresh cucumber, jinger, barley powder, sesamum cake and treacle or such other kept for sale and covered with dust; various fruits, sugar cane, rice; lotus roots or any part of fresh lotus, sprouts of trees, green vegetables, sprouts of neem tree, rice cake, cold water or imperfectly boiled water, fruits like *kaviṭṭha*, *Māuluṅga* or citron, and such other raw articles. \(^{96}\)

Anything that is give after breaking the seal or lid covering it is not deemed fit for the monks as it involves injury to living beings. \(^{97}\) It cannot be taken as they do not accept packed or stored food.

In *Daśavaikālīka, Oghā, and Piṇḍā Niryūkti*, name of several unfit donors of food for monk has been mentioned. The principle underlying them was generally non-violence and purity of food. Monks do not accept food from a pregnant lady, or drunken person, or a lady taking meal, churning curds, frying something, pounding corn, cutting something etc. All these activities are said to involve injury to living beings, and monks are disallowed to accept food from persons indulging in such activities. \(^{98}\)
There are some other mentions of unfit donors like a lady whose hands are full of living beings, or who steps over living beings, or who brushing her limbs with other living bungs or who indulging in activities involving injury to living beings etc. All these activities involve *hiṃsā* and trouble to living being.

After having acquired the proper articles of food, the monk shows them to this *acārya* and then eats that which is allowed by *acārya*. The rule about the normal quantity of food consists of thirty-two morsels, each of the size of a hen’s egg.

The normal time of eating food is of course the day, and no night meal is allowed. The reason behind this rule is that it involves injury to living beings in darkness or after sunset. Not only that, but, a monk who praises night meal or appreciate somebody else doing so, has to undergo a punishment for that.

There exists some difference between Śvetambara and Digambar sects regarding begging and food methods.

Śvetambara monks consume food in the begging pot. He is not allowed to make use of the householder’s pots. While eating food, he is not to combine various articles for enriching its taste or eat only the good one, or shift the morsel from one side to another for extracting a better taste. He is to eat food only for the maintenance of his body.

While Digamber monks do not use alms-vessel. They eat the food in the cavity of their palms in a standing position. They do not speak or ask for anything while on begging tour, but simply suggest by their presence that they want food. They stand without taking shelter of anything like the wall, etc. Irrespective of the taste of food the monks consume as much is sufficient only to carry on the bodily activities.

If while begging, a crow happens to touch the monk, if his food is besmeared with dirt, if he vomits, if he happens to see his or others blood, or if eat some forbidden article or kill living being; if the food fell down on the ground from his hand, if he happens to see flesh, if any living being consist in between his feet etc. under any of these circumstances, he has to go without food on that day.

Rest of rule and regulations are almost similar for both the sects. Analysis of these rules reveal that the element of *ahimsā* and non-attachment are foremost in these rules, which make a monk forgo not only raw, powdered and vegetable food, but
also even that which is given with wet hand or pot. The rule of not taking food at night is also adopted due to these considerations. A keen foresight is shown regarding *ahimsā* in almost all the rules. It is indeed remarkable to note that, inspite of the prevalence of non-vegetarian practices of the contemporary society, Jain monks are advocating and practicing vegetarian habits. In this case, the instance of *Ariṣṭanemi*, who renounced the world knowing that several animals would be killed in the marriage feasts, would remain unique for all times to come. Lakhs of innocent animals are eaten away for food further resulting in demonic tendency in individual being and imbalance in a natural environment. Such a sensibility and keen observance of nonviolence towards even small living beings by Jain Monk is tremendously applicable.

**Daily Routine**

Beside the important item of begging food, the monk’s (of both the sect) daily routine is spent mostly in study and meditation. *Śvetamber* monk’s general programme of daily life is given in *Uttarādhayayana*.

After sunrise, during the first quarter (of the first porisī), he inspects and cleans his requisites and pays respect to the superiors. Then asking the acārya whether there is any work for him, the monk does the work, which his acārya asked him to do. Otherwise he gets indulge in studies.

In second porisī he does meditation, in the third he goes for begging and eat food, and in the fourth, he again studies. Then paying reverence to the elders, doing the pratikramaṇa he inspects the lodging. Then he does kāyotsarga and reflects upon the transgression he happened to do on that day.

In the first quarter of the night he studies, in the second he meditates, in the third he takes sleep and in the fourth he again studies. Thus, it seems that chief items of his daily routine are *padilehaṇa*, (scanning of requisites) study, āloyanā, (confession of faults) gocari (begging food), kāussagga and pratikramaṇa (condemnation of transgressions).

*Pratikramaṇa, Gocari, Kāyotsarga* has already been discussed. *Pratilekhana* is one of the important aspects, which proves its relevance in respect of protection of living beings. In this process he scans all articles, which a monk uses, in order to see whether there are any living being. He inspects first his alms-bowl, then
mouthpiece, and his duster. Taking the broom in his hand, he, then, scans his
clothes. Holding the clothes firmly and sitting in a squatting position, the whole
piece of clothe is scanned. The same process is again repeated by spreading the
clothe in a slanting fashion, and living beings, if any, were then gently and
carefully removed. The sole intention of this activity is to avoid harm to living
beings.

Ālocaṇā is the reporting of the faults to the superior. It is compulsory for all. This
confession is to be devoid of any deceit or hypocrisy, and insincerity in doing so,
makes a monk liable for increased punishment.

For Digambar monks, essentials for daily are almost same. At sunrise he gets up
and pays homage to the five dignitaries. Then, carrying on studies for some time,
he goes to ease nature, and washing his feet, and carefully scanning his requests,
he goes on to pay respect to the Jina. After that he goes on the begging tour, when
he is sure that the time of children’s meals is over. Then, visiting the families
irrespective of their economic position, he takes and eats food at a pure house in
the proper way. Then washing his hands, feet and mouth, and drinking water, he
leaves the place and goes to Jina Temple and confers the faults, if any, committed
by him. He takes no night meals and hence, sleeps after study and meditation.

This is, in short, the daily routine of the monk. But the most important and the
carefully attended items of it were the six essentials duties or avaśyakas for both
the sect: Śvetāmbara and Digambara.

Above survey of the rules of monastic conduct in the Śvetambara and the
Digambara text reveals a number of similarity and a few difference between these
two major sects of the Jainas. The basis of monachism consisting of the rules of
moral discipline, are identical for both of them, with the only difference of
practices of nudity by Digambars. In case of requisite also the same consideration
prevailed, and Digambar monk carries only a peacock feather broom and a
kamandal for water. They prefer to use a broom made of peacock feather than of
wooden one used by the Śvetambaras though the principle behind it viz.,
protection to and non-injury to living beings is the same. Moreover, unlike the
Śvetāmbaras, they consume food in the palm of their hand and hence go without
the begging bowl. The rules regarding proper food, purity of the donor and of the
food, the quantity of food and the time for it are the same for both of them. In
short, it may be said that the difference between the two sects, as revealed in their representative text pertained more to practice than to moral philosophy.

Analysis of Jain monasticism in light of environmental prism reveals their import of higher grade in the era of eco-crisis. The root causes of this prevailing situation and environmental degradation are lack of sensitivity towards living beings and other components of environment, moral degradation, underestimation of other inferior living beings, attachment towards worldly possessions, consumerism, anthropocentric attitude, over exploitation of resources, and other activities harming the natural environment directly and indirectly. The Jain monastic life style poses a possible way out of these factors. Since, the underlying moral ideas (values) in the rules and regulation prescribed are non-violence, non-possession, non-stealing etc. Non-violence, being the fundamental to remaining virtues and protocol, itself is based on acceptance of equality of all living beings. It is to be mentionable that air, water, land are also considered living in Jainism. It relies on the notion that no one wants pains; all love pleasure. Therefore, no one is to be treated inferior and exploited. All the rules are formulated such as to least harmful for any living being including air, water, earth beings etc. Their life style present itself as the embodiment of non-violence, non-possession/consumerism, which are the foremost requirement to establish a environmental friendly society and to formulate a practicable code of conduct which would be favorable to each and every element of environment. The code of conduct, Jain ascetics follows, on one hand cause least harm to natural environment, on the another one gives message to protect our mother land in all possible ways. They present not only the ideals to be cherished mentally, but also practice them as their daily life style.

Apropos discussion is the theoretical aspect of Jain monasticism. To review and explore the life style of Jain monks and nuns a study has been conducted. There are mainly two sects of Jainism: Śvetambara and Digambar. Though there are further several sub sects of these two main traditions of Jain religion. Yet keeping in consideration the conditions to study the Jain monasticism, limitation of time and resources, one sub sect of both traditions is studied.

In course of time observed the daily life style of the applied Jain monasticism and interviewed several nuns of Terapanth sect of Śvetambara tradition and one sect of Digambar tradition. The detail of the nuns of both sects is given below:
### Śvetāmbara Tradition: Sub Sect (Terapanth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period of Initiation</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sadhavi Pramukha Shri Kanak Prabhaji</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mukhya Niyojika Sadhvi Shri Vishrut Vibhaji</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Shubh Prabhaji</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Vivek Shriji</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Anushashan Shriji</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Chitradekha Shriji</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Sharda Shriji</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Swastik Prabhaji</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Sushma Shriji</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Shrutyashaji</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45-50</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Vandana Shriji</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shri Lakshya Prabhaji</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45-50</td>
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</table>

### Digambara Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period of Initiation</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Suparshwamati Mataji</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Gurumati Mataji</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Syadwadmati Mataji</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60-65</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Adarshmati Mataji</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40-42</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Dridmati Mataji</td>
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<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Parvanmati Mataji</td>
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<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Aaptmati Mataji</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Akampmati Mataji</td>
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<td>Aaryika 105 Shri Vishrutmati Mataji</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Aaryika 105 Viratmati Mataji</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37-39</td>
</tr>
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My observation and interviews were based on following points:

1. **Wake up time** – It includes the time of their waking up when the day starts normally.

2. **Use of water** – In comparison with the laities, how much water they consume on daily basis. It also includes the quantity, quality and process of their utilization of water in day-to-day life, and utilization of wastewater.

3. **Walking** – It include how do they walk as to least harm to any living being. What are the reasons behind their mode of walking, and what are the restrictions in their walking style, time of walking etc. Why do they not use any vehicle for transportation?

4. **Dressing** – It refers to their dress code. How much they require and how much they possess, and use and reuse it.

5. **Alms** – Since mendicants are not supposed to make their own food, they depend upon alms for their food requirements. Pertaining to my study; this point refers to the process, quality, quantity, and mode of alms. What are the rules and regulation they follow regarding their food? Which type of food, they are allowed to take on. And, what manner, they are supposed to accept alms, etc.

6. **Pratikraman** – Being a one of important and significant part of the daily routine, what does ‘Pratikraman’ stands for and what is the objective behind it. How many times it is performed in a day. How it can be proved to be relevant in the present crisis of environment.

7. **Pratilekhana** – What pratilekhana is, and what is the procedure and motive of this activity. How many time, it is done a day? How is it relevant in present times?

8. **Eatables and Non-eatables** – Usually for mendicants, a list of eatables and non-eatables is always prescribed. In Jain traditions what are those items, which are prohibited or allowed for eating for mendicants. In how much quantity, they can consume and what are the criteria of formulating the rules regarding eatables and non-eatables.
9. **Possession** – It points out the peripherals, which are allowed to a monk or nun to keep with e.g. utensils, *rajoharan, mukhvastrica*, etc. What are the reasons behind it, how do they manage these items?

To study the above-mentioned points two methods were applied i.e. observation and interview with some of nun of Terapanth order of Švetāmbara sect and some nuns of Digambara sect.

In interview with the nuns of Terapanth order, several aspect of their lifestyle in accordance with environmental conservation was elucidated. According to **Sadhvai Pramukha Shri Kanak Prabhaji**, senior most and head of Sadhvi Sangha, ‘they are living a life, which is full of environmental concern. Each element of their lifestyle is such, which prevent them from harming the living fraternity and natural environment. Since, air, water, fire, land and soil and plant are also considered living entities in Jainism, they try their best not to harm and disturb these as much as possible. **Sadhvi Shri Vishrut Vibhaji** said that nonviolence is the base of their religion, so they adhere and follow the practice of non-violence in their daily practices as much as they can. They try to avoid all deliberate practices of harming living beings.

They believe in unity of all living beings whether mobile or immobile. As we love pleasure and avoid pain, all living being want happiness and avoid pain. So they, aware of this fact do not harm any living being by their best.

**Sadhvi Shri Sardha Shriji** said that they live a life of abstinence. Apart from mobile living beings, they try to least disturb even immobile beings. Their all rules and regulations are formulated keeping in view this fact. To avoid harm to fire bodied living beings, they do not use even electricity. Tons of hazardous gasses are emitted in the atmosphere during the production of energy. By not using electricity on one hand they do not harm living beings present in fire, on the other hand they preserve resources by not wasting electricity. For the same reason they do not prepare food it of their own, because it involves the violence of fire bodied living beings and pollution of atmosphere also.

Telling about their daily routine, **Sadhvi Shubh Prabhaji** said that usually they get up one hour before sunrise. They start their day with self-study of their spiritual texts. Thereafter they do *pratikramaṇa* (as mentioned in theory part) in group. After doing *pratikramaṇa*, they inspect all their clothes whether any small
insect or living beings is not being harmed by them. This process is called
‘pratilekhana.’ Then they clean their living place and things to see properly
whether any living insects not are harmed. Then, they go to their preceptor to pay
regard.

(Picture-1: Pratilekhana)

They do not bath daily. They just clean their body with wet cloth. The reason
behind not using water is to avoid harm to water beings. After completing their
necessary work, they go for alms (called Gocari) for break fast and for water.
After having their breakfast, there is held a group preaching session. Then they
again go for alms for lunch. In after noontime, they usually teach and learn. Then,
again the time of pratilekhana comes. They again change their dress in order to
inspect and take care of small living beings. Since they have to do their super
before sunset, they again go for ‘Gocari’ and bring food for dinner. Finishing their
dinner before sunset, they again do pratikramaṇ with prayer to their ‘Tirthankars’
and for the welfare of all beings. Then they again go for study before it is time to
sleep. Thus, in general, their daily routine does not harm and exploit natural
environment and living beings.
We all are suffering from water crisis. Because of over consumption and wasting of water, ground water table and other resources of water is decreasing. Water is very valuable thing. Jain mendicants, considering the value of water living beings, use very less water in comparison to common man. Describing in detail the use of water by Jain mendicants Sadhvi Shri Lakshya Prabhaji and Sadhvi Shri Vandana Shriji told that they always use lifeless (Acitta) water for their works. To avoid injury to water bodied living beings, they consume water for the mandatory cause like drinking, cleaning their body and clothes etc. In these activities also, they do not use plenty of water. Extravagancy of water is strictly prohibited. Since they bring water by begging, they utilize it very carefully.

They never use rainwater directly, and water from flowing tap. After purifying it with limestone it can be consumed. They do not drink water after sunset, because there may be chance of harming living beings. For washing cloths, they use very less water and wash their cloths in bulk so that consumption of water in washing cloth could be minimized. Since, they do not keep hairs, they do not waste water in washing hairs. They do not throw water from upside in order to avoid harm to
water bodied beings. Their life style is such that they neither over consume nor pollute water.

(Picture-3: Minimal use of water in washing clothes)

Desire for more and more acquisition is one of the main causes of present degradation of environment and depletion of natural resource. Jain mendicants present an example of non-possession, a life that is based on satiation of basic needs. Their requirements are very less in comparison to a normal man and women. Telling about the requisites of a Jain mendicant, Sadhvi Shri Sushmaji and Chitralekha Shriji say that a Jain monk and nun keep very less possession with them. Their requisites include only those things, which are mandatory for maintaining their life. They keep only two pair of cloths with them. That cloth measurement is also very limited. Their style of wearing saree is such, which also cause least to small living beings. Their saree do not touch floor while walking as, while walking contraction of cloth and air can harm air bodied living beings. So they tie their saree four feet above the ankles. They do not make plates in saree so that no living being be injured in their grip. One of the important aspects of their dress is that they wear pure white cotton cloth. They do not make their cloths dye and use synthetic dress material. By doing this they prevent chemical pollution.
They also keep with them a special woolen made become which is called ‘rajoharn’, and a small broom that is called ‘punjani. The objectives of both are to protect living being while walking, sitting, sleeping etc. With the help of them they remove small insects etc., which can be injured while doing any activity. They also cover their mouth with mouth cover called ‘muhpatti’ to avoid harming of air bodied living being, which can be hurt through the air pressure.
Apart from these, for having food and water they have to keep limited utensils which are made of wood and a kind of plant called ‘Tumba’. They can keep two bowls for food and one water tumba. These are the only item they are entitled to keep them with. They do not use utensils made of any metal. Thus, unknowingly they preserve natural resources, and minimize the pollution results from mining and production of metal utensils. They do not use footwear made of leather. Leather involves cruel killing and harming of animals. They use tyre for preparing their footwear.

Sadhvishri Shrut Yashaji describes that there are five samitis (already discussed in theoretical part of Jain monasticism) prescribed mandatory for every Jain monk and nun. Practice of these samitis involves protection and conservation of natural environment and nonviolence to living beings in many ways. As per irdya samiti, they have to walk very carefully not harming any visible living being. They walk carefully inspecting whether any living being do not come across their way and harmed or killed. To escape from violating living being, they do not roam in four months of rainy days. Because in these days many small insects originate on the floor. They do not walk while raining because innumerable beings also live within water bodies. For the same reason, they refuse to come out in nights and walk after sunset, because after sunset many small beings are not easily visible, so can be harmed and killed. If for emergency work, they need to go somewhere they put cloth on their heads so that air bodied small beings could not be harmed. Bhāṣā samiti is to avoid vocal violence and noise pollution. As per Esana Samiti they
have to do their each activity carefully so that no living being could be harmed. To avoid violence, they keep themselves vigil so that, no violent activity can be done. While following ādānṅkšepaṇ samiti, they pick, keep and put every article very continuously to avoid violence to small less visible living beings.

While answering the call of nature, throwing away excrements, urine, mucus etc, they properly sanitize the place and throw away such wastes only in a place which is burnt, ploughed, used for cremation, devoid of insects and seed, and not covered with grass or leaver. By doing this they escape from polluting land and water. In comparison with common man who is polluting soil, land and water bodies, Jain monks and nuns present a admirable example of nature care.

Telling about their food protocols Sadhvi Anushashan Shriji and Vivek Shriji say that in the name of non-vegetarian food, lakhs of innocent animals are killed resulting in loss of biodiversity and ecological imbalance. They follow pure vegetarian life style. Nonviolence is quite visible in their food practices. They do not prepare food for them to escape from violence involving in the preparation of food. They obtain their food in broad daylight, and do not eat after sunset, because after sunset there could be chance of felling living beings into their food. The sole aim of their all regulations regarding food is that they do not take any food, which contain living beings or which involved the killing of living beings. Stale food is not allowed nor do they preserve food. (Details of eatable and non-eatable have been already discussed in theoretical part of this chapter.) They do not waste food. They consume as much as mandatory to live. Lavish, spicy, and stimulating food is also not allowed. Their strict vegetarian diet not only promotes preservation of natural resources and living beings, but also do not pollute environment.

Mendicants of Digambar tradition hold some difference with that of Śvetāmbar life style, but promote and preserve natural environment as well. The sole motive of their life style is also the higher projection of non-violence in day-to-day practices. Through the interview with Digambar nuns and observation of their life style, several aspects come into light, which pertain with environmental protection and eco-living.

Describing their daily routine Aryika 105 Shri Suparshvamati Mataji and Gurumati Matiji say that their day starts early in the morning at four. After getting up they do samayik and pratikramaṇ and apologies for any harm done by
them knowingly or unknowingly to living being, both mobile and immobile. Thereafter they go to their temple for offering their prayer to *Tirthankars*. Then, they do their necessary works, which include answering of call of nature. They do not use toilets; rather they choose an open place where there no living being can be harmed. They do not bath and clean their teeth. They never use soaps and detergent, thus do not pollute environment. After finishing their routine work, they leave for alms. Before going for alms, they go to the temple. Like *Śvetāmbar* mendicants, they also do not prepare food for themselves. The eat and drink only for once a day. That is usually before noon. Rest of the day they neither eat anything nor drink water or any other beverage. After having food, they devote their whole day in self-study, introspection, *pratikramāṇ*, and *samayik*.

(Picture-7: *Digambar* Temple)

According to *Aryika 105 Shri Dridmati Mataji* every aspects of their life style shows care for the environment, and all living beings. Since they believe in the existence of life in air, water, soil and fire also, so they try to live such a life as to least harm to living beings. Nonviolence is exhibited in every aspect of their activities. *Digambar* monks do wear any cloth on their body. They consider cloth a sign of possession. Nuns wear cloths. They put on single cloth of eight meter of white colour. They can keep three pair of saree with them. Both monk and nun keep only two articles with them. One is a kind of broom of peacock feather to gently remove small insect with its help while handling something or while making movements. The another requisite is *kamandala* to carry lifeless water for
the purpose of bodily cleanliness. Except these and religious texts, they do not carry anything with themselves. In the era of ever-growing desires and possession, their life of non-possessions put an adorable example of preservation of natural resources and restrained life style.

(Picture - 9 : Peacock-feather Broom)

(Picture-10 : Kamandala for Water)
Aryika 105 Shri Aaptmati Suparshawamati mataji said that their life is full of carefulness about not harming even small living beings and natural environment. Like Śvetāmbaras, they have to follow five samitis, which are embodiment of protection of environment.

They try to do each and every activity with precaution of not laming any living being. As told by Aryika 105 Shri Syadvadmati Mataji, they also have to follow five samitis. They live very continuously while walking, sitting, moving, eating, and handling any article, urinating, not to harm any being. By doing this, they support preservation of environment, and its member living and nonliving both.

(Picture – 11 : Walking Carefully)

They do least movement after sunset. While sleeping they maintain one posture, and try to maintain it till morning. Its all to avoid violence and harm to small and less visible living beings.

Optimum use of water is one of significant specialty of their life-style. Telling more about it, Aryika 105 Shri Adarshmati Mataji said that since, water is considered a living being, they use lifeless water for every purpose even for cleaning. They drink water only for one time at the time of their meal. Since Monks in Digambar sect do not wear cloth, they do not waste water in washing cloths, and nuns also do not wash their cloth themselves. Before taking alms from
householders, earth is purified not with lots of water, rather, with dipping finger. Water is spread on the earth. It is prohibited to scatter plenty of water all round the courtyard to ensure saving the water and water bodied living beings. While cleaning their feet also, they do not use bucketful water. Thus, they neither over consume water, nor pollute it by either ways.

Their food habits are such, which not only promote vegetarianism, but also restoration of natural resources and restrained life style. There are numerous rules and regulation about eating and seeking for alms. Describing those, Aryika 105 Shri Vijitmati Mataji, Akampmati Mataji and Gurumati Mataji say that they eat for once in which also they are entitled to take only sātvika (simple) food. There should be no harm or injury to living being while preparing their food. It is also in conformance to nature and health. There is a proper manner of food in which they are to accept food. They take their meal at a place where there is sufficient light and adequate flow of wind. The area should be thoroughly cleaned. They do not accept food if there is lit gas or stove or lamp, because in haste, some harm like fire etc may be caused, resulting in killing or injury to mobile creatures. The seat put for them should not be made of impure material and infected with insects. It should be environmentally clean. Eight material substance are allowed to be used for their worshiping (water, sandalwood, rice, flower, sweets, lamp, incense, fruit) all should be pure and free from germs.

(Picture – 12 : Taking alms from householder)
Aryika 105 Shri Vishrut Mati Mataji and Shri Nishkam Mati Mataji say that the plate containing food should be shown carefully and keeping all food articles in such way that all are distinctively visible. They do not accept food from the donor whose body is decorated with nail polish, lipstick, perfumes, and talc powder. By this, they show their disagreement to environment pollution. Offering of food and water should be carefully clarified and free from 14 types of impurity faults. Fourteen impurities are nail, hair, deadbody, bones, barley-wheat grain, husk of grain, pus, blood, flesh, whole fruit, bulbous roots, self roots, raw whole seeds and skin (leather). The food should be consumed within 48 minutes. They accept only suitable clarified germs free pure cereals and eatables, faultless, and beneficial medicines (only ayurvedic). They do not accept material substances which are cause of harm/injury to living beings such as land, knife, scissor, horse, gold, silver, money, cow, buffalo and all other living things which induce attachment, pride, misery, fear and sins, thus, they also promote nature preservations. To keep up the vow of non-violence and to keep away from the blemish of meat-eating, every article of food is inspected. Since they do not keep eating bowls, they eat food in their hands. To stop wasting food falls from their hand, household keep a bowl below their hands. Thus, they do not waste food also.
From interview with Jain mendicants and observation of their life style, it can be excluded that they are the embodiment of eco living, a life which is based on environmental restoration and preservation. Their rules and regulations are such formulated that they least harm natural environment and its vital components. They prove with their life style that eco-living is no more an utopian life-style. Environmental ethical values can be inculcated in our daily routine if not completely, but partially.
BISHNOI FAITH – A SOCIO CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Living in the some part of northwest India and mainly in western Rajasthan on the fringe of the Thar Desert, the Bishnoi, a community of Vaishnavite sect, is living phenomena of human beings living in harmony with nature. The Bishnois have, for centuries, been conserving the flora and fauna to the extent of sacrificing their lives to protect the environment. For these nature-loving people, protection of the environment, wildlife, and plants is a part and parcel of their sacred tradition. The name "Bishnoi" (twenty nine) represents the number of principles espoused by their prophet, Lord Jambheshwar.

![Bishnoi Population in South Asia](image)

Guru Jambheshwar, also known as Jambho ji was born to a *kshatriya* family in Pipasar village of Nagaur district of Rajasthan in year 1451 (*Vikrami Samvat* 1508, *Krishna*, 8th day of *bhadrapad* month).\(^{113}\) He was the only child of his parents i.e. father, Lohat ji Panwar and mother, Hansa Devi. For the first 7 years, he was a silent and introvert child. At the age of 34 after his parents death, he left his home and belongings, and started living and preaching at a sand dune called *Samrathal Dhora*.\(^{114}\) He was very keen in social welfare and helping others. He
was against all social and religious barriers. His close study of desert had made him realize the important role played by trees and other forms of vegetation and wildlife. He visited across the country for 51 years.

The story of origin of Bishnoi sect underlines the concern for protection of the environment. As narrated and documented in their literary texts in 1485 A.D., western Rajasthan was reeling under severe famine. The people predominantly Jats, were migrating to Malwa (Gujarat). At that time, kindhearted Jambhoji came to their rescue, enlightening them that it was not the nature taking a toll on human life, but human intervention in nature was the root cause of this destruction. He explained that human exploitation of nature, felling of trees and killing of animals on the pretext of civilization, were the causes of such natural calamities, which, in essence, were man made. He enshrined in his followers compassion towards nature and protection of life as the supreme religious goal.

He first enunciated three principles and said that, whosoever adhered to them shall be supplied with grains and fodder till the next crop harvest. These doctrines were:

1. Vegetarianism: prohibiting consumption of animal flesh
2. Daily ritual of bathing, and
3. Prohibition on the use of intoxicants.

After couples of months he introduced twenty-nine principles and then laid down the foundation of Bishnoi religion in year 1485 (Vikram Samvat 1542, Krishna 8th of Kartik month) on the sand dune (Samrathal Dhora) after performing havan by converting all those, who vowed to follow the enshrined principles. In the next 51 years he expounded his religious philosophy and the essence of these principles in the forms of verses, which Bishnoi refer to as the 'Sabadvani' and consider it as their most sacred text. Only 120 Shabads or poetic verses are available at present. It is claimed that these 120 Sabads are a source of great wisdom and sufficient for an individual to understand and follow his path. In his Jambhbani, Guru Jambheshwar has not only attached importance to nonviolence, truth, non-stealing and protection of animals, but has also ordained the principles of social, religious, economic, cultural and basic safety. Jambhoji passed away in Mukam in Bikaner district on November 7, 1536.
Bishnois refer to their community as a panth which is a community adhering to one single path defined by their Guru and bounded by the twenty nine dharma. Violation of a principle is believed to defile the entire sect, and the individual violating it cannot be called ‘Bishnoi’. They explained that identity of a Bishnoi is not ascribed by birth, but has to be acquired through good actions (karma), which have to be in accordance with twenty-nine religious principles.  

The castes, which embraced Bishnoi faith, were predominantly Jats. The rest belong to Rajputs, Brahmin, Bania, Kurmi, Ahir, Suthar, Sunar, Gayna, Kasbi, Nai, Meghwals and Muslims. The preponderance of Jats in Jambhojis followers is attributed to their predominance in the place of origin of Bishnoi faith. Guru Jambheshwar in his Sabadvani criticized the Brahmanical orthodoxy, caste hierarchy, idol worship and the complex ritual apparatus for worship. He emphasized on monotheism and simplicity in the ritual domain. By adhering to the principles ordered by Jambhoji and becoming Bishnoi, they earned a Guru and a distinct religious identity as a sect, which emphasized on good karma and showed them a simple and straight path to salvation.

**Philosophy**

In Bishnoi religious philosophy, the worldly existence is temporary, which implies the temporary displacement of peasants and their livestock to green pastures from drought affected homeland. Jambhoji has emphasized that in this impermanent existence human beings have to do good karma to go back to their permanent abode. The good karma entails compassion and mercy towards all life forms and preservation of nature. In this temporary abode, nature has salvific function. Its protection is the basis for attaining salvation in Bishnoi religion emphasizing upon preservation of all forms of existence and to the abidance of twenty-nine religious principles.

For Bishnois, the Supreme Being resides in all micro and macro life forms comprising nature. Killing these life forms is a denial of the very existence of the Supreme Being. Such actions are contrary to religion and linked to atheism. The sanctity of life in nature and its protection is the core ideology linking Bishnoi religious goal of salvation with ecological preservation. All beings are made of same flesh, blood and the divine essence or soul. They have an equal right to live; they cherish their lives and fear pain, injury and death. In this sense they all are
equal. Jambhoji preached that when human beings fear death, they do not have the right to kill other beings. The basic spiritual truth and service to God lie in showing compassion and mercy towards all life forms, which are a reflection of their creator.

The nature of treatment towards plants and animals decides good and bad karma. Cruelty, exploitation and killing of life forms out of greed for material gain results in bad karma in Bishnoi religion. Good actions are created from compassion, hard work, truth and contentment. Jambhoji emphasised a just and rightful living i.e. good action based on cognisance of the right of life, and protection against harm of all beings. In many of his sabads Jambhoji ordains protection of livestock, which are innocent, harmless and beneficent to human beings. They yield milk and wool, but their male counterparts are slaughtered for human consumption. Jambhoji says that slaughtering them is an unforgivable sin. Those, who kill these animals kill themselves for they shall be stuck in the cycle of birth and death and undergo recurring and painful death.

In his sabads addressing Muslim priest, lawmakers and butchers, Jambhoji decries them for consuming flesh. He says that only the Supreme Being, who creates life, has the right to destroy it. Those who cannot infuse life, have no right to kill animals. Since these mute, helpless beings are inferior to man they deserve mercy and compassion. Those who kill the helpless beings cannot attain salvation. This idea extends human emotions with their ecosystem comprising plants and animals. Bishnois lay emphasis on protecting the natural balance. They believe that nature generates, perishes and regenerate itself. The natural order should be reverentially protected. Thus, their religious philosophy is based on the concept of nature as a whole and, reinstates human beings as its part in harmony with plants and animals. It neglects the anthropocentric view in which humans are seen at the center of the universe.

The religious philosophy of Jambhoji contained in his sabads correlates religion and its supreme goal of salvation with the ecological goal, preserving life in all its form of nature. It serves to nurture and develop a distinct Bishnoi conscious. Twenty-nine principles prescribed by Jambhoji collectively lay down the path of action for consciously achieving these religious and ecological goals. These principles assert moral and rightful conduct not only towards human beings, but
also to the natural environment, plants and animals. About these principles it is said, "Untis Dharam ki aankri, Hridya dharey Joy; Jambheshwar aisey kahey, Pher janam nahi hoy. The Guru Jambheshwar sayeth. One who imbibes the twenty nine articles of faith; he liberated and shall not have to take birth again."

Out of the 29 principles, 10 are directed towards personal hygiene and maintain a good basic health, 7 for healthy social behaviour and 5 tenets to worship god, 8 tenets have been prescribed to preserve bio-diversity and encourage good animal husbandry. Those 29 principles are as follows:

**The 29 Principles:**

1. The first dharma: *Tis din-sūtak* - is that Bishnoi observe impurity (*Sutak*) for thirty days after childbirth. This principle is specific for women, but indirectly asks for the cooperation of male and other female household members. The mother and child are confined to a separate room as to prevent infection to the mother and the baby during a state when both are highly susceptible to outside infections. The woman is forbidden from all household work and religious duties. Bishnois say that she attains complete rest and is fed on energy foods. This principle is significant for the good health of mother, and the shield of mother's body temperature in a separate confinement prevents all environmental infections.

2. The second dharma: *Paṅc rituvati nyāro* - is again for women who have to seclude themselves during menstruation. They are considered impure and debarred from cooking, religious duties, conjugal relations and all physical contact with family members. Bishnois explain that during this phase her physical body is raw and impurities or infections are transferable through contact. Further, she undergoes pain and mental depression. The physical and mental states govern action. Both these principles are significant for preserving the health and purity of life and its environment.

3. The third Dharma: *sero karo snān* - is that Bishnoi should bathe daily, early in the morning, which is essential to preserve external purity. Bathing removes the bodily impurities of sweat, dust, dirt and discharge. Because of this Bishnois are referred as *snānī* (one who bathes regularly). Bishnois explain that Jambhoji ordered the time of bath as significantly before sunrise. They call it divine or devotional bath as it precedes the daily ritual worship of fire (*havan*) believed to
be the abode of Jambhoji. This principle is essential for maintaining individual body hygiene and purity. It enhances good thoughts and actions. This principle is adhered by all Bishnois although there is slight laxity in adhering to the ordained time. The environmental concern of Bishnois is staunchly supported by these three principles that insist on cleanliness.

4. The fourth principle says - śīl, santosh, sucipyāro. It says that Bishnoi be chaste, content and pure, both externally and internally. Chastity has reference to specific relations between men and women built on faith and dignity and underlying the social institution of marriage, parenthood, family and class. It serves to preserve social integration.

Bishnois explain that contentment implies a just and rightful living. It is contrary to greed and lust for material gains achieved through over exploitation of nature and other living beings. The lust for animal flesh, skin, horns, teeth, and timber from plants, mineral resources, and land for maximum profit has led man to endlessly exploit nature and kill its life form thereby denying their right to live, and protection against harm and pain. It has brought species to the verge of extinction. The root cause of present state of environmental degradation and ecological imbalance is consumerist life style in which man is running behind his insatiable wishes. This principle of Bishnoi proves itself very relevant. Bishnois say that we should take the bare minimum from nature that which is rightful, and fulfils our basic needs and not greed.

Religion and purity are synonymous. Jambhoji has prescribed the religious duty of all Bishnois to preserve external and internal purity. To reiterate, bathing daily preserves external purity. Internal purity is preserved by cherishing feeling of compassion and mercy towards nature and all living beings. In Sabad 40, the Guru says that the heart resides in the body and the sublime emotion of heart is compassion. The heart desires for worldly pleasures. But if it is compassionate, it gets detached from the worldly illusions for it experiences the divine presence in all beings and realizes that no being has a right over the life and happiness of others. Compassions is a divine feeling and the world appears to a reflection of the creator. These principles serve to preserve the social and natural environment.

5. The fifth Principle is to meditate twice a day i.e. morning and evening. Morning meditation to ponder over the proposed activities of day, whether my actions are
right and moral or am I going to something against my life values, also to pray the lord for directions and power to move ahead in the right life path. Evening meditation to take a stock of day's activities whether I made any mistake? Did I hurt somebody? Whether I spent day in constructive activities or just wasted this valuable time? This practice seems quite environmental friendly.  

6. The sixth dharma: *Tin kal ki navan, sānjh arti guṇ gāvo*  - is that Bishnoi pray thrice daily and sing devotional hymns in praise of Lord Vishnu and in remembrance of Jambhoji. It may be noted here that Guru Jambheshwar is regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Bishnois explain that prayers to the God create positive, spiritual vibrations in the atmosphere and reinforce feelings of compassion and mercy. The Supreme Being himself is compassionate. Bishnoi pray for the well-being of all living beings and love for nature. This principle serves to preserve the peace of the environment and all living beings.

7. The seventh dharma: *hom hit chit prīt su, vās vaikunth pāvo*  - is that Bishnois perform the ritual of fire sacrifice (*havan*) with love and devotion, to attain heaven. Bishnois say that this is their core ritual, which should be performed twice daily at sunrise and before sunset.

Bishnois explain that this principle is directly related to the purification of nature. The offerings in *havan* constitute coconut, dry wood of mango or khejari, pure ghee and fragrant mixture containing *gugal* and other ayurvedic items. This releases pure, fragrant particles in the atmosphere, cleansing it of impure, bad smelling, harmful gases, disease causing agents and air pollutants. The religious incantations produce spiritual vibrations. Bishnois perform *havan* on all life cycle ceremonies, sacred days of the month, festivals and on bi-annual religious fairs. This principle helps instrumentally in purification of environment.

8. The eight and ninth dharma: *pani, bani, indhani, dudh likh chhan*  - is that Bishnois sieve water, fuel and milk before use and be careful of their speech. Bishnoi explain that water, fuel used in villages (Such as cow dung, cakes, wood etc.) and milk contain numerous microbes invisible to naked eyes, but represent life and have to be preserved. Therefore, this principle asserts the preservation of life in all forms and embodies extreme mercy and compassion towards all living beings.
Carefulness in speech is explained by Bishnois as speaking the truth and that which entails the well being of all. Wrong speech, bad words and lies hurt feelings, and breed anger and violence. These feelings of hatred translate into actions that endanger life and disturb the environment.

10. The tenth dharma submits *Chamā sahanshīlta rakhnā* - that human being should pardon others. Forgiveness is a parameter of greatness. This virtue could uplift a normal person to the standard of great souls of the world. Guru Jambhaji said that every one should develop in oneself the capacity to tolerate and bear.

11. The eleventh dharma: *daya hirdye dharo, Guru Batayā Jan* - is that Bishnois cherish compassion and mercy in their heart. This is quintessential principle emphasized by Jambhaji in numerous Sabads. It is essential for attaining salvation and preservation of all life forms in nature. According to this principle, Bishnoi should be kind and approach all around them the floral and faunal world - softly, patiently and compassionately. When strong sentiments for living and nonliving beings have developed, then one would have good feelings for them and would serve as their guardian and vanguard. Bishnois say that one should be compassionate and merciful to inferior, helpless beings and liberal in pardoning sinners.

12-15. These four dharma: *corī, nindyā, jhoot, varjiyo vād na karno koṭi* are interdictions against stealing, speaking ill, lying and engaging in unnecessary and useless arguments. Speaking ill is not only confined to human relationships, but includes criticizing and denying the natural order. Human beings intervene to bring about changes in nature, thereby disturbing its balance. Human beings lie when they over-exploit nature for their ends, and try to justify it by deeming themselves superior over nature and its life forms. These principles are morals and ethics which govern not only human social relations, but can also be extended to the realm of relations of human beings with their natural ecosystem.

16. The sixteenth dharma: *Umāvas vrita Rakhnō* - is that Bishnois observe a fast on *Amāvasyā*, which is the dark moonless day of the dark fortnight of the lunar cycle, when moon superimposes the sun. Bishnois explain that on this day all living beings are deprived of the solar and lunar cycles, which give them their natural essence. Jambhaji ordered his followers to fast on this day. Bishnois believe that on this day their supreme God Vishnu created the entire universe and
nature's life forms. Since life originated on this day, Jambhoji instructed Bishnois to be extremely compassionate and merciful towards all forms of life. Killing of the minutest of organisms and even those harmful to man is considered sinful. In consonance with this principle, Bishnois avoid all activities that may cause pain or injury to living beings or their death. They abstain from ploughing their fields, digging the earth, destroying woods, churning milk as it kills bacteria spraying pesticides, picking grains and vegetables, threshing, using the tractor, construction work and even driving the bullocks. Thus, in Bishnoi religion the most sacred day of the month is also the day institutionalizing utmost compassion and mercy towards the entire nature and its life form, thereby its preservation.

17. The seventeenth dharma - *bhajan vishnu batāyo jai* is that Bishnoi recite the name of Vishnu (*vishnu mantra 'Om Visn u'*) daily during havan and evening prayers. Religious devotion is correlated with feelings of compassion and mercy and to direct man to perform good actions.

18-19, 28. These dharma - *jīv dayā pālī* combined with the twenty eight dharma - *Māns sir dūr hi bhāge* directly impose preservation of ecosystem, all plant and animal life. Eighteenth principle says that one must shower compassion on animal life (*prāṇi mātra par dayā rakhna*). For Bishnoi, it is directed to foster kindness and compassion for all beings, do not fell green trees and do not consume animal flesh (i.e. practice strict vegetarianism). These principles embody the ideology of non-violence and interrelatedness. Protection of wildlife entails protection of the forests, which is their natural habitat. Exploitation of one endangers the life of another.

These principles prohibit Bishnois from cutting green trees and killing animals. Bishnois are specifically devoted to the protection of khejri (prosopis cineraria) and the deer family, namely the Indian gazelle (*chinkara*) and the black buck, that are predominant in Rajasthan. Deforestation, desertification and loss of biodiversity are among major problem of present era. Such principles of Bishnois can be instrumental in stepping towards environmental conservation.

20. The twentieth dharma - *ajar jare jivat mare vās vaikuntha hi pāve* - is that Bishnois overcome lust, greed, anger, worldly illusions and egotism, which are deemed to persistent and undecaying. Those, who overcome these vices, can be free of all desires and they alone shall attain salvation.
Bishnois explain that these emotions are the underlying factors, which drive human beings towards bad actions entailing endless exploitation of nature and other inferior beings. The denigration of these emotions superimposes the ecocentric Bishnoi ideals of compassion and mercy towards all inferior life forms, non-violence and contentment, over the anthropocentric ideology. The former are based on a sense of detachment from the material world, by acknowledging the divine presence in all of nature's life forms, hence, their preservation.\(^{154}\)

21. The twenty-first dharma - *kāri rasoī hath sūn, Anna ko patto na chūvāve*\(^{155}\) - is that Bishnois cook their own food and avoid contact with food prepared by other castes. It implies commensal separation as a means to preserve the purity and integrity of the sect and its principles. It emphasizes vegetarianism in the purest sense. By doing so, they will be able to preserve the purity of their food. When soothers (especially those of other castes) cook for you, you cannot be sure whether they have cared for the mores of purity and cleanliness. If you wish to practice strict vegetarianism, then it is imperative that you cook your own food.\(^{156}\) Bishnoi consider it sinful even to look towards the shops selling animal flesh. In villages or towns where they are dominant, they forbid all other castes from consuming animal flesh or selling of animals and their flesh. The strong feelings of compassion and non-violence towards all beings lie behind practice of vegetarianism.

22 & 23. The next two dharma - *Amar rakhave thāt, Bail badhiyā nā karāve*\(^{157}\) - is that Bishnois immortalize flocks of he-goats by preserving them in shelter house and do not castrate the bull. Bishnoi explain that these principles prescribe compassion towards their domestic and beneficent livestock, and decries their slaughter or infliction of injury.

Bishnois say that these principles institutionalize the protection of male livestock against slaughter and harm. The cows, she-goats and sheep are preserved as they provide milk and wool, but the he-goats are sold in bulk either to traders from Arab who export them for slaughter or to the butcher caste. Both result in a mass slaughter of these animals for consumption of their flesh, and also in the loss of male progenitors on a large scale. Bishnois say that those who sell these animals are as much a part of this sinful destruction of life contrary to Bishnoi ideals of compassion and mercy.\(^{158}\)
Bishnois say that in order to save these animals from being slaughtered, and to prevent Bishnois from partaking in these sins, Jambhoji laid down these two clauses - (a) to abandon the practice of domestically goats and sheep's, (b) to preserve the present flocks of he-goats by immortalizing them that is making them immortal instead of selling them. This process implies offering live animals to the folk deities bans their slaughter or bloodshed, non-bishnoi dedicate these animals in the name of Jambhoji (Jambhani bakre). The animals are thus consecrated in the name of spiritual preceptor and their further use for material gain is forbidden. They are believed to be free from the bonds of nature and close to God. Bishnois further built shelter houses for these animals where they were fed and correct for and allowed to undergo their natural death. Bishnois claim that this principle extends the supreme religions ideal of salvation to the realm of animal beings of nature by freeing them from the bonds of the material world, yet preserving their life in the name of God.  

Bishnois explain that Jambhoji forbade them from castrating bull as it inflicts unbearable pain and injury to the animal. They say that inflicting pain to the offspring of mother cow, who is entitled to worship and whose milk they drink is an unforgivable sin. Jambhoji, in sabad eight, has considered the bullock to be dearer than a real brother. Bullock walks shoulder to shoulder with the peasant, ploughing his field day and night, whereas a real brother murders the man to possess his fields. They say that those who inflict pain and suffering on the benevolent beings shall undergo the same pain. By not castrating the bull, Bishnois not only avoid pain to the animal, which is foremost, but also preserve the seeds of life as the bull is the male progenitor of future generations. This principle heralds the virtue of compassion towards the male livestock.

24-27. The next four dharma - Amal, Tamakhu, Bhang, Mad su dur hi bhage - are that Bishnois should not consume intoxicants: opium, tobacco, cannabis, and alcohol. In sabad fourteen, Jambhoji says that the oppressors and intoxicated beings both have strayed from the right path; they kill life forms and eat the flesh of dead animals. They are devoid of compassion and mercy, hence are internally impure and cannot attain salvation.  

Bishnois explain that intoxicants make numb the human sense of good, and raise bad thoughts and actions. Such human beings easily succumb to greed, lust, anger.
and worldly illusions. They lose cognisance of the Supreme Being, and cannot abide by the principles ordered for them.\(^{163}\) This principle is also related to the Bishnoi ideal of nonviolence, compassion and preservation of life.

29. The last and twenty-nine dharma - *lil na lave ang, dekhta dur hi tyage*\(^{164}\) - is that Bishnois do not wear blue color on their body. Bishnoi explain that five centuries ago Jambhoji had calculated the harmful effect of blue color on human body and mind.\(^{165}\) They say that today science has proved him correct. Blue color, being a dark colour, absorbs maximum solar rays and heat including the harmful ultraviolet rays. Rajasthan is characterised by hot climate and sparse vegetation. In Rajasthan, this principle is very much useful. Bishnois say that all colors have their symbolic correlations with mental and emotional, which govern actions. Blue color is linked with oppression, violence, anger and cruelty. It encourages action based on these emotions. One another significant reason for prohibiting the use of this color is that in ancient India, the blue color used to be obtained from Indigo. Farming of Indigo harms the field and reduces its fertility.\(^{166}\) Thus, this principle is not only an adoption to the natural desert environment, but has a bearing on human temperament, emotions and action.

These twenty-nine principles give an identity to Bishnois. It is because of these that Bishnois have their specific name: the followers of the *bisnau* (meaning twenty-nine) *niyam* (principles). These 29 principles are life of all Bishnois. They follow these rules despite of facing hardship in the Thar Desert. Presently Bishnois are spread over the western part of Rajasthan. They are more prosperous than the other communities living in the Thar Desert, probably because of their eco-friendly life style. Even in their death rites, Bishnoi lead eco-friendly life style. They bury their dead bodies instead of cremating them. It is because the wood, which is used for cremation, is derived from cutting down green trees and it is against their consciousness. By doing so they let the earth take back what it to us in the form of body.\(^{167}\) Since cutting or lopping of green trees is strictly prohibited, they maintain groves, locally known as *Orāns*, for the animals to graze and bird to feed. *Orāns* serve as important recharges of rainwater. In the *Orāns*, a grain bank is maintained, for which every Bishnoi family contribute one tenth of the grains from their yearly crop. A corner of *Orān* is allotted to keep a big bowl of grains (bajra) and water for the wild birds like peacock, pigeons, partridges, crow, vultures, and wild animals like fox, jackals and antelopes. Some of the *Orāns* are
more than 400 years old in and around Bishnoi villages. The belief behind Orân is that animals are born along with human beings on the earth, therefore, the animal also have the right to share their food and water along with human beings. Thus, the community is a role model for protecting the natural wealth in the world history.\textsuperscript{168}

As earlier said, Bishnois revere khejari (prosopis cineraria), a hearty thick trunked tree that is native to northern Rajasthan. The Bishnois prune it carefully to supply dried twig from the upper part for fuel and building wood, beans and leaves to feed people and cattle.\textsuperscript{169} Jambhhoji recognized that cows love these leaves. Researches have proved that they contain a higher proportion of protein 11 to 14% by weight than any other leaf in Rajasthan. Cattle stay healthy fed on these leaves. The tree also enriches soil nitrogen.\textsuperscript{170}

The Bishnois breed their cattle selectively, and match their food to their use. The Bishnoi also monitor the foraging of many camels carefully, so that trees are cropped by the camels, but not damaged.\textsuperscript{171} They live in small communities, typically of about 100 families. They are settled pastoralist, and their food comes mainly from their livestock: milk, yoghurt and cheese. As vegetarians, they do not eat after dark or sunset to avoid the possibility of an insect getting into their food, and being accidentally eaten. Their houses are made of thatch, woven from imported sugarcane stalks on bushy material from the endemic algarroba beam tree, Prosopis Juliflora. They dry dung for their fuel instead of using wood as fuel. They do not use dung to enrich their fields to avoid harming seedlings with the dung acidity.\textsuperscript{172} The villages are easily distinguishable with plenty of trees and other vegetation, and herds of antelopes roaming freely near their homes. The fields are ploughed with simple ploughs using bullocks or camels, and this causes minimal damage to the fragile desert eco-system. The rainwater is stored in underground tanks called 'tankaras' which is used only for drinking water. They pay special attention to cleanliness in their houses.\textsuperscript{173}

A good understanding of biology is basic to the Bishnoi, whose spiritual identity is linked to the land and its capacity to support them. Probably there are three other communities in the world who may be similar - the Hadza of Tanzania, the Quolloyaha of northern Bolivia, and the Bimin kuskusmin of western Iran.\textsuperscript{174}
While the Thar Desert appears hostile, bereft of obvious food, with temperatures that typically exceed 50°C, the Bishnois have learnt to extract every morsel of nourishment without violating the reverence for all forms of life. There is no doubt that Bishnoi thought has made one of the greatest contributions to eco-generation, and in future it will be extremely significant for inspiring people to care for their habitat, their bio-diversity. Eco-care and eco-heal are the kernels of Bishnoi dharma. Bishnoi’s struggle towards this cause dates back to the fifteenth century, and can be traced in numerous incidents of Bishnoi sacrifices for the preservation of plants and animals. It is a movement in history, which continues till date.\(^{175}\)

The tales of sacrifice by Bishnoi for plants and animals can be traced in Bishnoi oral narratives, documentation in Bishnoi journals, their religious texts and news reports. Historical records of Jodhpur and Bikaner districts contain royal decrees and copies of copper inscriptions by various rulers prohibiting the felling of green tree and hunting of animals in Bishnoi dominated villages and districts. The "All India Jeev Raksha Bishnoi Sabha" is an inter-state organization established on 15 January 1976 working at the national level to further the cause of Bishnoi religion towards the protection of plants and animals and lobbying for adequate punishment of the offenders.\(^{176}\)

At the micro level, Bishnois continue to sacrifice their lives for the sake of protecting wildlife from being hunted and trees from being felled and cut. The incident concerning the wildlife and green trees involving Bishnois have been called “Saka” and the supreme sacrifices as "Khadana" in their scriptures. These incidents recorded in their scriptures, journals and narrated by environmentalists are enumerated below. Though there are many cases, some of them are being mentioned below and detail of rests will be given in annexure.

1. Mr. Ratna Rahar Bishnoi of village Jangloo, Bikaner, Rajasthan was coming with his wife from her father’s village when he saw a live black buck being taken for slaughtering under orders of the Thakur (owner of the village) of Labera. He requested the Thakur to take mercy on the animal and release it. The Thakur agreed to do so if, in exchange he was willing to hand over the ornaments of his wife and the camel he was mounted on. Mr. Ratna readily agreed, handed over the ornaments of his wife and his camel. The Thakur ordered his men to release the
black buck, who complied it promptly. When the mother of the Thakur came to know the incident, she rebuked her son and asked him to return the ornaments and the camel to Ratna. This incident took place in Sirsa, Haryana 1495 AD.\textsuperscript{177}

2. An English man fired at and killed a vulture in village Hakimpur, Moradabad, D.P., whereupon he was severely beaten by Pradhan Madho Singhji Panwar Bishnoi. Thereafter nobody dared to shoot at any bird in this village. This incident took place between 1935-40.\textsuperscript{178}

3. A nephew of the Nawab of Bahawalpur (now in Pakistan) planned for poaching antelopes in the fields of Mr. Kahna Ramji Bishnoi in the revenue estate of Muhanwali during nighttime so that the Bishnois may not be able to see them. Somehow, the scheme was leaked out to a Bishnoi of that village. He immediately conveyed this information to other Bishnois of the village. A large number of Bishnoi gathered with firearms or other indigenous arms available to them, marched to the field located at about 3 kilometers away from the locality in advance. The Bishnois somehow called them out that they were fully armed and prepared to retaliate if a single shot is fired at any antelope. Seeing the violent mood of the Bishnois, the poaching party returned empty handed. This incident took place in 1945.\textsuperscript{179}

4. Two brothers named Mr. Chimna Ram (35) and Mr. Pratap Ram (29), sons of Mr. Gorkha Ramji Bishnoi of village Barasan, Barmar, Rajasthan, made supreme sacrifice of their lives on 12-4-1947 while trying to save the antelopes. They were shot dead by the poachers as both the brothers had obstructed them from poaching the antelopes.\textsuperscript{180}

5. Two Bishnoi brothers of UP. Mr. Hori Singh (23) and Mr. Ram Gopal Singh (21) sons of Mr. Murli Singh Chauhan Bishnoi of village Mirpur Mohan Chak, Moradabad, UP, also made supreme sacrifice of their lives for saving the lives of fishes. Some Muslim anglers of the village were fishing when these two brothers snatched away the live fishes and dropped them in the water of the pond. This incident caused acrimony amongst the Muslims of the locality. As the matter could not be settled so the relations deteriorated from bad to worse. At about 8-9 p. m. on
the bright night of the fourteenth day of Kartika of the lunar calendar year of Samvat 2007 Vikrami corresponding to 1950 AD when both the brothers were returning to their village that they were ambushed by the Muslims near the bank of the rivulet in the territories of village Sherpur, about 5-6 km from their own village. Facing a number of hostile people, the elder brother was successful in running away. The younger brother being in a helpless condition asked his elder brother - “Bhaiya will you leave me alone?” On hearing these pathetic words the elder brother returned and joined the younger. They fought bravely, but the Muslims were in large numbers so both the brothers lost their lives - became martyrs for the cause of living beings. To commemorate the memories of these martyrs an annual fair is held in the village. 181

6. Bishnoi women did not lag behind their men folk in protecting the wildlife and green trees in compliance with the religious commandments of their faith. It will be evident from an incident of sirca, 1960 when a doe delivered two fawns in the field of Mr. Shiv Singhji Panwar Bishnoi of village Hakimpur, Moradabad, UP. A little later, some Muslim poachers of village Pakbada happened to reach there for hunting. On seeing the poachers the doe and one of the fawns ran away from there leaving behind the second fawn at the mercy of the Almighty. Mr. Shiv Singhji was working in his field at a distance at that time and when he saw the poachers roaming in his field, he rebuked them whereupon they hurriedly retracted leaving the newly born fawn there in the field. Mr. Shiv Singhji took the fawn to his house. His wife, Mrs. Chhoti Devi, a very kind hearted lady and a mother of three months old son named Phool Kumar Singh, gladly adopted the fawn as her son and named it Kalu. She fed her son with one breast and the fawn with the other. She took full care to bring it up. The fawn, when grown up, became a black buck, true to the name given to it by its foster mother. When Kalu was about three years old, one family relative, Mr. Jai Kumar Singh Bishnoi of village Gawari, happened to see it and requested Mr. Shiv Singhji to allow him to take the black buck to his house. Mrs. Chhoti Devi was not inclined to part with her adopted animal son but eventually had to agree, though reluctantly, on the insistence of her husband. Mr. Jai Kumar Singh allowed the black buck to roam freely in the village. Unfortunately, one day it fell prey to a
herd of stray dogs that mercilessly killed it. Mrs. Chhoti Devi wept bitterly for hours together when she came to know of the sad demise of her adopted animal son, Kalu. This incident highlights the involvement of Bishnoi women in the conservation of the environment.\textsuperscript{182}

7. Mr. Bhinya Ram (25) son of Mr. Lala Ram Godara Bishnoi of village Banar, Jodhpur, Rajasthan made a supreme sacrifice of his life on 17-5-1963 while saving a black buck from being poached by the hunters. He objected to the poaching of the black buck, which resulted into a quarrel. The poachers fired at and murdered him.\textsuperscript{183}

8. Mr. Raja Ram Nagpaul of Fazilka, the landlord of village Raipur, Ferozepur, Punjab, poached two black bucks and a doe on 9-1-1974. \textbf{All India Jeeva Raksha Bishnoi Sabha} started a campaign against landlord-poacher, whereupon he tendered an apology before the village gathering in the presence of the President, All India Bishnoi Mahasabha on 21-7-1974 and paid penalty of Rs. 151/-\textsuperscript{184}

9. Mrs. Rami Devi wife of Mr. Rameshwar Bishnoi of village Nadhori, Fatehabad, Haryana, went to her field on 10.5.1978 when she found an abandoned fawn, she waited for the return of its mother till evening and then she brought it to her house, and breast fed it along with her son, nursed it and brought it up. When the wild-animal grew up as a black buck it was left in the Deer Park near Hisar.\textsuperscript{185}

\textbf{Picture – 16 : Bishnoi Woman feeding a fawn}

10. Mrs. Parmeshwari Bishnoi was working in her father’s field in village Dhangar, Fatehabad, Haryana, on 22-4-1981 when she came across an abandoned fawn, brought it to her house, breast fed it and nursed it till it grew up as a black buck.\textsuperscript{186}
11. A truck driver named Hukam Singh had poached an antelope in the \textit{Orān} in village Deshnok, put the dead body in his truck, reached at Jodhpur, Rajasthan and parked his truck in the complex of Mandore Agricultural Market on 2-4-1994. Mr. Om Parkash Bishnoi and his other fellow youth Bishnois observed blood dripping from the truck. They checked the truck and saw the dead body of the antelope lying therein. Some of the Bishnoi youths went to Maha Mandir Police Station and reported the matter whereupon the police arrested the driver of the truck. The police immediately got the postmortem of the dead body of the antelope and thereafter handed it over to Bishnoi youths who took it to the Bishnoi Dharamshala at Ratanada and buried it in the vacant land in accordance with Bishnoi customs.\footnote{187}

12. Mr. Nihal Chand (30) son of Mr. Hanumanji Dharania Bishnoi of village Sanwatsar, Churu, Rajasthan made the supreme sacrifice of his life on 3-10-1996 following his great Guru’s commandment: “Save all beings even at own’s life”. Bawari poachers of the nearby village Badnu were poaching the black bucks. On hearing the gun shot Mr. Nihal Chand single-handed and unarmed reached at the spot when the poachers were collecting the dead bodies of the black buck. He engaged them while one of the poachers fired at and murdered him. Government of Rajasthan awarded him posthumously, Amrita Devi Smariti Puruskar
on 28-8-1997 and the President of India awarded Shaurya Chakra (Posthumously) on 22-9-1999.\textsuperscript{188} A film was made based on his sacrifice named “willing to sacrifice. This film, directed by B. Dayankar Rioo of Yamini Films, won the main award of environ Film Festival at the 5\textsuperscript{th} International festival of films, T.V. and Video programme Environ’ 99, Bratisalva Slovak Republic. This award was received by the Embassy of India on the 7\textsuperscript{th} May, 99 at award ceremony.\textsuperscript{189}

13. The Bishnoi community, which worships black bucks and chinkaras was primarily instrumental in pressing charges against Salman Khan the filmstar. On October 1, 1998 two black bucks were allegedly shot dead by Salman Khan, who was accompanied on a night hunt by the other filmstars. They were shooting in Jodhpur for the film ‘Hum Saath Saath Hain.’ Other accused in the chargesheet were Salman Khan’s personal assistant Dinesh Gavre and Dushyant Singh, manager of the Umed Bhavan Hotel. He reportedly killed black bucks and chinkaras for dinner. The Ghoda farmhouse case was registered against Salman Khan and others under Sections 143, 144, 148 and 201 read with Section 149 of IPC. Section 51 and 52 of the wildlife Protection Act and Section 27 of the Indian Arms Act at the Mathania police station on October 11, 1998. The charge sheet was filed in the court on May 14, 1999, and charges were framed on April 14, 2001.

Salman Khan was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment by Chief Judicial Magistrate Brijendra Kumar Jain in court, Jodhpur on Monday, April 10, 2006 and sent to the Central Jail after being held guilty of killing a chinkara, a protected species of gazette.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate, convicting Salman Khan under Section 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act on Monday, also sentenced co-accused Govardhan Singh, who was a guard at Ghoda farmhouse — to one years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5,000. Four other accused Bal Angre Pratap Singh, Om Singh and Dushvant Singh were acquitted.\textsuperscript{190}
14. Ban Bawari poachers of the village Badnu, Bikaner, Rajasthan had poached 40 black bucks and 4 peacocks in the territories of village Sanwatsar, Churu, Rajasthan on 27-10-1999. As no action was taken against the poachers by the administration, therefore, a large number of Bishnois and animal lovers sat in protest at Mahatma Gandhi Samadhi in the National Capital under the auspices of the All India Bishnoi Mahasabha, All India Jeeva Raksha Bishnoi Sabha and other animal lovers on 14-11-1999.\(^1\)

15. Mr. Ganga Ram son of Mr. Phoosa Ramji Isarwal Bishnoi of village Cheri (Aekal Khorri), Jodhpur, Rajasthan, made a supreme sacrifice of his life on 12-8-2000 while saving the lives of antelopes. He aggressively chased the poacher upto 5 km., when he was fired at and murdered by the poacher. He had been awarded ‘Amrita Devi Smariti Puraskar’ for 2001, posthumously by the Government of Rajasthan, Jeeva Jantu Kalyan Board of the Government of India had awarded him ‘Prani Mitra Award”, ‘Jeeva Daya Puraskar’ by the Government of Maharashtra and many N.G.Os have also honoured him posthumously.\(^2\)

16. Mr. Shri Ram Saran Rishnoi, a great environmentalist and winner of ‘Amrita Devi Bishnoi Paryavaran Purushkar’ instituted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh, is a resident of village Chaukari, Barda, Madhya Pradesh. He received an information on 19-9-2000 that some tribesmen had put up a net for catching peacocks (The National Bird of India) in the woods of Kharkian Tehsil. Mr. Saran rushed to the spot immediately and challenged the poachers whereupon they ran away. The peacock was untied and left to lead a free life.\(^3\)

**Supreme Sacrifice for Trees**

1. Three Bishnois named Mrs. Khiwani Khokhar, Mrs Netu Nain and Mr Motaji Khokhar of village Tilwasni, Jodhpur, Rajasthan had made the supreme sacrifice of their lives to save the green Khejari trees in sirsa 1593-98 AD.\(^4\)

2. Mrs. Karma Bishnoi and Mrs Goran Bishnoi of village Rewasri (Ramasri), Jodhpur, Rajasthan made the supreme sacrifice of their lives
on Saturday, the second day of the dark fortnight of the month of Jyestha of the lunar calendar year Samvat 1667 Vikrami corresponding to 1604 AD to save the green khejari trees.\textsuperscript{195}

(Picture – 18 : Chipko Technique to save trees)

3. Mr. Ram Dass of Nagore, Rajasthan had made the supreme sacrifice of his life in the 17th century AD at village Bantara to save the green trees from felling.\textsuperscript{196}

4. Mr. Boochoji Aechara Bishnoi of village Polawas, Nagore, Rajasthan had made the supreme sacrifice of his life on ‘Tuesday the third day of the dark fortnight of the month of Chaitra of the lunar calendar year Samvat 1700 Vikrami corresponding to 1643 AD.\textsuperscript{197}

5. The fifth incident recorded in Bishnoi scriptures relates to the great sacrifice known as “Khejarli Ke Khadana Kaa Saka”. This hair raising incident took place in village Khejarli situated 22 kilometer South of Jodhpur, Rajasthan during the reign of Maharaja Abhey Singh, the son and successor of the famous ruler of Marwar, Maharaja Ajeet Singh popularly called Ajmalji. In Samvat 1787 Vikrami, corresponding to 1730 AD when urgent need arose for fire-wood. Mr. Girdhar Dass Bhandari, an important functionary of the administration took the assignment. He was aware that Khejari trees were available in abundance in village Khejarli, a Bishnoi habitation. Led by Mr. Bhandari, a party armed with axes reached village Khejarli to fell green Khejari trees. The ‘Bishnois of the village, the friends and saviour of
the trees, requested Mr. Bhandari not to proceed with his ill-conceived plan but he was adamant and refused to oblige them. The valiant lady Mrs. Amrita Devi Bishnoi, wife of Ramuji Khod Bishnoi said “Sar sathe roonkh rahey to bhi sasto jan” (If head goes but tree remains, it is still a worth-while bargain) and hugged a Khejari tree. As soon as she hugged a Khejari tree a soldier beheaded her with his axe. She was followed by her three undaunted daughters named Asu Bai, Ratni Bai and Bhagu Bai. Immediately messages were sent to 84 Bishnoi villages to reach village Khejarli to save green trees from felling by state employees. The Bishnois of all ages and both sexes from 83 villages responded instantaneously and reached Khejarli without any delay.

(Picture – 19 : Khejari Movement)

(Picture – 20-21 : Khejari Movement)

The Khadana (supreme sacrifice of life) continued for about a week and ended on Tuesday, the 10th day of bright fortnight of the month of Bhadrapad of the” lunar calendar of the year Samvat 1787 Vikrami corresponding to the year 1730 AD when the soldiers refused to perform the ghastly act of killing innocent people any more. But, unfortunately by that time Bishnois belonging to 49 villages, 64 gotras (clans), 36 couples (both spouses), 217 families numbering 363 in total, 69 females (including minor females) and 294 males (including minor males) had
made the supreme sacrifice of their lives and, thus, attained martyrdom in the cause of saving green trees. A special mention is being made of a newly married couple. Mr. Peethoji Dhaka Bishnoi of village Dhaw was taking his wife Mrs. Bali Beniyal Bishnoi from her father’s, village Hoon to his own village for the first time after their marriage. When they were passing by the site where Khadana was going on, they came to know the cause, Mr. Peethoji instantly dismounted from his camel and straightaway hugged a Khejari tree. His wife did not lag behind, she too dismounted from the camel and hugged another Khejari tree. Both of them sacrificed their lives within no time. Another case deserves a special mention where 10 members covering three generations belonging to one family of Bhadu gotra (clan) from village Khejarli formed part of these great martyrs. Still one more incident deserves special mention. Two Meghwals (formerly, schedule caste) Bishnois from village Guda Bishnoian also made supreme sacrifice of their lives like their other co-religionists.

The Governor of Gujrat, Sar Buland Khan revolted against the Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah in 1730 AD and Maharaja Abhay Singh was assigned the job to subdue him. Before he left for Ahmedabad campaign with his force, the Maharaja made arrangements that he was kept informed daily of the events of the State. When this hair raising tragedy was conveyed to him, the Maharaja immediately rushed to Khejarli, tendered an apology to the Bishnois and issued a royal decree inscribed on a copper plate prohibiting felling of green trees and poaching of animals within the boundaries of Bishnoi villages in his State.

This incident of great sacrifice has no parallel in the world. An annual fair to commemorate the martyrdom of valiant Amrita Devi and 362 other martyrs is being held at village Khejarli since 1978. Due to the efforts of Mr. Jaswant Singh Bishnoi, Member of Parliament (Jodhpur); the Government of India has instituted ‘Amrita Devi Bishnoi’ Wild-Life Protection Award in February 2001. Earlier also, due to his efforts, the Government of Rajasthan, had instituted an award. Amrita Devi Smariti Puraskar’. Due to similar efforts made by another Legislator from Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Ajay Bishnoi, Jabalpur, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Digvijay Singh was pleased to announce the decisions of the State Cabinet:
(i) Shrimati Amrita Devi Bishnoi Vriksh Raksha Diwas shall be celebrated by Madhya Pradesh Government on the 8th September of each year.

(ii) Two cash awards of Rs. 50,000 each for every year have been instituted and,

(iii) A lesson shall be included in the book of history prescribed for the 8th class narrating this great sacrifice.\textsuperscript{198}

The government of India has also released stamps honouring the tree of khejri for which the Bishnoi have paramount love. Through these practices many religions, sects and cults have indirectly contributed to environmental preservation. The axiom of thrifty living utilizing only those resources and, only to that extent they are imperative for a bare survival is found in many religious system, and this assist a judicious use of the habitat. But quintessential to Bishnoi thought is that it makes the practices, which would lead to eco-preservation, explicit and attribute them with religious sanctity. All the twenty-nine principles enjoy an equal measure of sacrosanctity. For being a true-Bishnoi, one must adhere to them as punctiously as possible, even when the condition may be adverse to the actual practice of a principle. Their sacrifices offer a paradigm to environmental protection.

First, one should cultivate in oneself affection for all living beings, religiously abstaining from cutting green trees or slaying animals for food. Second, if some miscreant attempts to harm the living objects, one should stop him from doing that. If the villain of life is powerful, one should unhesitantly sacrifice one's life for the life of plants and animals, the mute bearers of human violence. It seems to us that while practicing the twenty-nine principles, Bishnois chanced upon the ideal of martyrdom for the well being of others. This would also explain several cases of martyrdom that Bishnoi history has recorded since the eighteenth century. Furthermore, martyrdom reinforces the Bishnoi commitment to their principles and the conviction they arouse in people.\textsuperscript{199}

Thus, in our opinion, although sacrificing one's life for the sake of plants and animals may not be an explicitly formulated Bishnoi principle, the actual practice of the principles of non-harming, compassion for others that support them directly or indirectly, has inculcated in them the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is not only their duty to subscribe to the principle of non-cutting of green trees and observing prohibition from meat eating, but also to save the environment and keep alive its
sustainability by protecting the life of plants and animals. Bishnoi dharma knows that imbalance is created when floral and or faunal life is depleted. It is, therefore, necessary that all beings have an equal chance to survive in a synergistic relationship. Sustainable development will result from a harmonious relationship between different species and it is the foremost duty of human beings to guarantee the survival of all. Why human beings are the most important partner in this relationship because being at the apex of technological development, they can rocket a reign of dread, killing the bio-diversity, and at the same time, they can direct their technology to the healthy development of the other species. A strict compliance with the twenty-nine principles, the concept of martyrdom, and political agendas and vigils for environmental works, make Bishnoi an ecologically aware and committed community of India. They constitute a community whose 'value preferences', should be studied in greater detail, for their religion sets an ideal example of the ways in which the tasks of eco-protection may be carried out.

1. The History of Jain Monachism, S.B. Deo, page 1
2. Asceticism in Ancient India, Dr. Yugal Kishore Mishra, page 1-2
4. Aspects of Jain Monasticism, Nathmal Tatia, Appendix
6. They are: maṭhavāsa, maṭhadhy
8. Asceticism in Ancient India, page 2
9. Aspects of Jain monasticism, page 41-42
10. Sthāṇaṇa, 5.3.445
11. Mūlācāra, 1.2-3 also Pravacansāra 3.8,9 Anāgāradharmamrta 9.84-85
12. Shri Jaina Siddhānta saṅgraha, Vol, vi, pp 228-230
14. Jain Ethics, page 152
15. The Concept of Pañcaśīla in Indian Thought, page 59
16. Jñanarnava 8.11
17. Jaina Ethics, page 152
18. Mūlācāra 5.141, Also Anāgardharmamrta, 4.45, Acārasara 5.41 and Bhagwati Arādha nā, 1207.
19. Purushārtha Siddhi Upāya, 102
20. Mūlācāra, 5.290
21 Bhagvati Sūtra, 16.2.4
22 Daśavaliṅka 4.9
24 Mālācāra 10.105.106, also Bhagvati Arādhanā 879-880
25 Daśavaliṅka 6.20
26 Mālācāra, 6.20
27 Daśavaliṅka 4.11
28 Daśavaliṅka 3, 10, Uttarādhayana, IX, 20-22, 34-40
29 Jayasena on Pravacanasāra, 3.40
30 Mālācāra 5.106, Bhagvati Arādhanā, 1191
31 Mālācāra 5.108-109
32 Uttrādhyayana 24.5, Mālācāra, 11
33 Aparājītāce on Bhagvati Aradhana, 1191
34 Ibid, 1191
36 Niyamsāra 61
37 Liṅgāpahuḍa, 15-16
38 Mālācāra, 6.65
39 Niyamsāra, 64 also Uttrādhyayana 26.35
40 Mālācāra 5.123
41 History of Jain Monachism, page 46
42 Daśavaliṅka Niruykti, 249, 349-50, Avaśyakā Niruykti 1076
43 Niśītha 5, 36-59
44 Ibid, 12, 16-28, 17, 134-151
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48 Ibid, 168
49 Mālācāra 1.26
50 Ibid 7.120
51 The Airyāpathiki Sūtra in Yoga Sastra 3.124, as translated by R.Willrams, Jain Yoga : A survey of Mediaeval Sravakacaras, page 203-204
52 Pratikramaṇa Sūtra 49, as translated by Williams, Jain Yoga, page 207
53 Translated from text in Sraddha pratikramaṇa Sūtra (Prabodh Tika), ed. Panuyas Bhad rankarivijayagani and Muni Kalyanprabhvijay, 2:120-121
54 Jain Ethics, page 170
55 Ibid
56 Acārāṅga, II, 3,16
57 Viyagasuya (Vivaga), Comm. Abhayadeva, Baroda, 5, 65
58 Ibid
59 The History of Jaina Monachism, page 157
60 Ibid
61 Samvāyāṅga page 81a Comm Abhayadeva
62 Acārānga, II 3.1.4-5
63 Br̥h. Kalp. 2, 1+12, 4, 28-31, 1, 6-34
64 Suttapāhuda, 10-13
65 Thān, page 138a
66 Acārānga, I, 7, 4,1, page 67-69
67 Br̥h. Kalp. 3,15-16
68 Acārānga II 5.1, 3-5, pp 157-158
69 Br̥h. Kalp. 3, 17-18, Niśith, 10.47
70 The History of Jaina Monachism, page 260
71 Jaina Ethics, page 156
72 Bhagavati Arādhana, 98
73 Mūlācāra, 9, 45-46
74 Mūlācāra Comm Part - I, page 19
75 Ibid, page 14
76 The History of Jain Monachism, page 3
77 Acārānga 1.2.5.3
78 Ibid, II, 6,1,1 (page 166, Than 138a)
79 Ibid, II, 6,1,1-3, Dasavakālika 6, 15-53
80 Than. Comm. Page 339a: But more that that it was an article with which the internal on external dirt is wiped. Internal in sense that with the rajoharana the monk shows kindne ss to beings and is thus free from the dirt of the thoughts of himsa.
81 Thān. Comm, page 305a
82 Thān. Page 338b
84 Bhagwati 139 a
85 Ibid, 374 b
86 Oghā. N. 694-696
87 Bhagwati 374 b
88 Ascetics and Kings in Jain Ritual Culture, A. Bobb Lawrace, page 58-59
89 Br̥h. Kalp. 1, 43
90 Niśith 11, 72-73
91 The history of Jain Monachism, page 23
92 Br̥h Kalp 1, 1, Niśith 10, 5-6; 12, 4, 15, 5-12, 16, 4-12
93  Ibid, 4,5,11,13
94  Niśāth 11,91
95  Daśakalika 5, 1, 28, 5, I, 29, 5, I, 32-34, 5,11,14-15
96  Ibid, 5,1, 70-75
97  Pīṇḍa Nīryākti, 347-356
98  Ibid, 572-604
99  Ibid
100 Niśāth 4, 20
101  Bhagwati 292a
102  Bṛh Kalp. 1, 43, 5, 6-9
103  Niśāth 11, 72-73
104  Ācārāṅga 1,7,6,2
105  Pravacansār III, 8, Mul 1, 54; 9, 51
106  Ibid, common 9, 53, 1, 34
107  Mūlācār 6, 76-82
108  Uttarādhyayana Chap. 22
109  History of Jain Monachism, page 179
110  Vicārsara, Pradyumnsūri, page 269-270
111  Niśāth 20, 1-20
112  Mūlācāra Comm. Part-I, page 261-262
113  Guru Jambheshwar evam Bishnoi panth ka Itahas, Dr. Krishan Lal Bishnoi, page 48-50
114  Messiah of the Thar desert, M.S. Chandla, page 72-73
115  Jambheshwar ki Amar Kahani, Ram Ratan Bishnoi, page 27-28
116  Paryavaran Sanrakshan aur Akhil Bharati Jeev Raksha Bishnoi Sabha, Ram Ratan Bishnoi, 2009, page 9-17
117  Guru Jambheshwar evam Bishnoi panth ka Itahas, page 59-60
118  Bishnois An Eco friendly Religion In Religion, Vandana Bishnoi and N.R. Bishnoi, and Environment (Eds. K.R. and N.R. Bishnoi), page 322
120  Guru Jambheshwar evam Bishnoi panth ka Itahas, page 68-70
121  Ibid, page 78-80
122  Messiah of the Thar Desert, page 23
123  Sabad 18.1 Ja Ja Jiv Na Joti Ta Ta Mokh Na Mukti, Jambhavani, page 70
124  Sabad 18.1, Ja Ja Daya Na Dharma, Ta Ta Vikram Karmu, page 71
125  Sabad 28.8, Un Kyon Bhalo Je Aap N Mariya, Kyon Aura Maran Dhaiya, page 123
126  Bishnoi Religion and Nature, Meera Amhed, page 48-49
128 Sabad 7.1

_Suni Re Kaji, Suni Re Mulla,
Suni Re Bakar Kasai
Kinri Tharpi Chali Roso Kinri Gadar Gai
Kandhe Bhage Karak Duhelhi Jayo Jivna_

Jambhavani - Mulsanjivn Vyakhya, Dr. Krishna Ram Bishnoi, Page 27

129 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 48
130 Jambhji Ki. Sabadvani, page 12
131 Guru Jambhoji evam Bishnoi panth ka Itihas, page 92-93
132 Ibid
133 Jambhavani, Sabad, 100.1, page 371
134 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 51
135 Jambhoji Messiah of Thar Desert, page 100
137 Jambhvani, Sabad 40.2, page 159-160
138 Jambhoji-Messiah of Thar Desert, page 99
139 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 52
140 Guru Jambhoji evam Bishnoi Panth ka Itihas, page 94-95
141 Yagya and its scientific Authenticity, Satyendra Chauhan. The divine shoppe, Sunday, 22 Nov., 2009.
142 Jambhsagar, Shabadvani, page 247
143 Jambhvani - Sabad Sagar, Krishnand Acharya Bishnoi Mandir, Rishikesh, 2003, page 102
144 Jambhsagar, Shabadvani, page 247
145 Ibid, page 248
146 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 55-56
147 Jambhsagar Sabadvani, page 250
149 Shri Jambhghita, Swami Sacchidanand Yogiraj, page 329
150 Guru Jambhoji evam Bishnoi Panth ka Itihas, page 92
151 Shri Jambhghita, Sacchidanand, Sabad, 7
152 Ibid
153 Jambhasager Sabadvani, page 253
154 Jambhoji : Masiah of the Thar Desert, page 106-107
155 Ibid, 107
156 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 58
157 Jambhasager : Sabadvani, page 254
158 Jambhoji : Massiah of Thar Desert, page 108
159 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 58-59
160 Sabad 8.1
Bhai Nau Balad Pyaro
Tihke Gale Karad Kyon Saro, page 30
161 Verse 113.3 (Jambhvani) page 398
Aur Ku Jibah Kari Aap Ku Pakhna
Jaki Ravahe Dijsi Daur Ghup Andharu
Tanibe Taniba, Chanibe Chaniba,
Toribe Toriba, Kukibe Pukariba,
Taki Koi Na Kariba Saru
i.e. Those who kill other living beings to feed their stomach, their soul shall undergo pain and suffering in the darkness of hell. Those who inflict pain on other beings shall undergo the same pain. Those who piece and cut other beings, shall themselves be pierced, and those who destroy life shall be destroyed themselves. Their cries shall not be heard. No one shall come to save them.

162 Jambhvani, Sabad, 14, page
163 Jambhoji : Messiah of Thar Desert, page 109-110
164 Jambhsagar, Sabadvani, page 257
165 Guru Jambhoji evam Vishnoi panth ka Itihas, page 102-103
166 Jambhoji : Messiah of Thar Desert, page 111
167 Guru Jambhoji evam Bishnoi panth ka Itihas, page 132-133
168 Ibid, page 134-135
169 Religion and Environment : Same Thoughts, by Vinay Kumar Srivastava, In Religion and Environment, page 242-244
171 Guru Jambhoji and Bishnoi Panth ka Itihsa, page 125-126
172 New Scientist, 17 Dec., 1968, Reed Business Information
173 Bishnoi Religion and Nature, page 60-61
174 New Scientist, 17 Dec., 1988
175 Ibid
176 Paryavaran Sanrakshan aur Akhil Bharatiya Jeev Raksha Bishnoi Sabha, page 44
179 Amar Jyoti, ibid.
180 Amar Jyoti Journal, February -March, 2001 issue
181 Amar Jyoti Journal, July, 2001 issue and the narrative received from Mr. Ram Avtar Singh Bharadwaj of this village on 8-11-2001
182 Narrative received from a young environmentalist, Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Bishnoi, son of Bhagat Bir Singh Bishnoi of village Khalilpur Qaddim, Moradabad, UP, a grand son of Mrs. Chhoti Devi
183 Amar Jyoti, Feb.-March, 2001 issue)
185  Amar Jyoti, ibid
186  Amar Jyoti, ibid
188  Amar Jyoti, ibid
189  www.indiaexpress.net/news/entertainment/1990511-0.html, 11 May, 1999
193  Jambh Jyoti fortnightly, Jodhpur, date 19-9-2001
194  Amar Jyoti Monthly Hindi Journal, Hisar, February - March 2001 issue
195  Amar Jyoti, ibid
196  Jambhøji, Dr. Hira Lal Maheshwari, page 689
197  Amar Jyoti Journal, February - March 2001 issue