Chapter- 5 Non Violence in Jainism

“Religion is the most auspicious thing in human life and it consists of nonviolence, self-restraint and austerity.”\textsuperscript{144}

Jainism is the religion of compassion and ecology. Religions in India have always respected the sanctity of life. Hence the importance of concept of non-violence. In Jainism, non-violence is not just a moral precept but has practical applicability. It is regarded as a protector of the universe. Jainism believes in the principle of ‘Reverence for life’. Non-violence is a way of life and as a way of life it produces an attitude of tolerance and non-hatred, amity and fearlessness. The Jain code of conduct has implications for giving up the culture of violence. In \textit{Ācārāṅga Sūtra}, it has been said that \textit{Ahimsā} is pure undefeatable and eternal religion.\textsuperscript{145} So non-violence is regarded as the crux of wisdom. Though non-violence means not to kill, it positively implies love and goodwill. Jainism has explained the principle of nonviolence systematically.

In the Indian traditions, Jainism is more often known as the \textit{Sramaṇa} tradition. In \textit{Prākṛta}, the tradition is called \textit{Srman}, which comes from root word \textit{Shr̥ma} means effort, constraint, restraint or self-control. The word \textit{Sramaṇa} is still in use as suggestive of labour, equanimity and subdued passions.\textsuperscript{146} The \textit{Sramaṇa Dharma} is based on self-effort, equality of \textit{Jīva}s and equanimity of mind. Such a person is called \textit{Sramaṇa}.

\textsuperscript{144} ॥ श्रमोमाणलमुड्धिक्ष्यतासांज्ञमोत्त्वयोः ॥ देवाचवितंसंस्कृतविज्ञासङ्गमेवसंयमणी ॥ Dasvaiktlikā Sutra 1.1

\textsuperscript{145} ॥ आचार्युग सूत्र 4.1.133

The palm of a hand with the wheel chakras is a symbol used by interfaith organizations to depict non-violence and to represent Jainism. The palm signifies the assurance, ‘Do not be afraid’ and the wheel of the dharma with 24 spokes represents the religion preached by 24 Trithankars consisting of non-violence, compassion, Anekantavade, Aparigraha and equality of all souls.

5.1. Jainism as one of the Oldest Living Religions in The World

Jainism is one of the oldest living religions of the world. The term Jain means the devotee of Jinas who are spiritual victors. Jinas are those who have won victory over passions of attachment, aversion, etc. As a result, they have attained omniscience and pure bliss. They are enlightened human teachers also called Tirthankaras.

The essence of Jainism lies in an intuitive apprehension of the purity of consciousness. According to Jainism, the love of truth is inherent in each self, but it requires spiritual exercise for its manifestation. The conduct of the self cannot be isolated from one’s way of this spiritual manifestation. For a true Jain, truth and values are inseparable. This is where right knowledge comes in.

The values of Jainism are based on the five vows— non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-possession. The entire lifestyle of the Jain
*Shrawak* and the Jain monks are based on these vows in which non-violence is one of the basic vows. That is the special and exclusive feature of Jainism.

The concept of non-violence has evolved from logical thinking and experience. It has an almost empirical basis. According to Jainism, it has emerged from the doctrine of equality of all souls. Everyone wants to live, nobody likes to die. Violence enters first in thought, it then manifests itself in speech and then in deed. That is why they say that war is always born in the minds of men. Religion has offered recourse to its code of ethical life, where it insist on no harm to other living creations. Such a description of non-violence is described in the Jain Philosophy as:- “Nothing is higher than the Meru mountain; nothing is vaster than the sky. Similarly, there is no better religion than non-violence.”

**a. Place of Jainism in a Religious World as the Religion of Non-Violence**

Religion can be the most powerful influence on the values, attitudes, motivations, decisions, and behavior of individuals, groups and societies, for better or for worse. Religions are alternative ways of upholding nature. Religion describes cultural, moral, and spiritual aspects. It also defines the place of human beings in nature in which it includes how human beings should act towards non-human beings and others. All religions are grounded on the idea that nature as a whole is sacred.

All the religions of the world have traditionally expressed some ethical concern for the environment and its creatures. These shared ethical concerns are found in all religious practices. Throughout history, the world’s religions have understood the Earth to have some kind of

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religious significance. Religions always give some moral importance to other creatures. Humans have some religious obligations to care for these creatures. These are the ethical responsibilities which are imposed on humans.

According to all religions, greed and destructiveness should be condemned by human beings. While restraint and protection are affirmed by most religious traditions, sometimes they are complex, controversial, and poorly understood. These religious concerns for the environment have faded with the rise of modern society. The development of modern, scientific, economic and political institutions have taken this religious approach wrongly.

Traditional religious attitudes towards nature have largely disappeared in modern societies. Over the past few decades, however, some leaders of every religion in the world have returned to their origins to study their pre-modern religious environmental teachings and help the world presenting them as religious environmental ethics. Jainism is one of the ancient religions of India. Its antiquity has been accepted by scholars.

Religions teach us to practise non-violence, to speak the truth, to practise celibacy and to limit one’s possessions. However, the Jain scriptures provide a systematic analysis of non-violence. The scriptures say that untruth, cheating, thievery, limitless desires for possessions, etc. are aspects of mental violence. In many instances, these lead to physical violence as well. Moreover, Jainism recognizes that the universe is full of microscopic and macroscopic living beings. Thus violence cannot be avoided completely. The Jain religion expects us to avoid intentional physical violence and to minimize the mental violence - the violence of feelings and emotions.
b. Religion and Morality in Jainism

Jainism permits no distinction between religion and morality. According to Jainism, both are connected with the well-being of an individual in the world. The interconnection between religion and morality imparts Jainism as a world religion. The word ‘Jain’ is derived from root $\sqrt{j}$ which means winning over internal and external enemies like delusion, violence, internal and external conflicts and method to subjugate them for better physical and spiritual life of individual, society and now nation and globe. ¹⁴⁸ The ethical code of Jainism is the most beautiful blend of conduct and reflection. Almost all the usual group of virtues which are propounded in various religions finally owe their immense importance to Jainism. Jainism encourages these virtues in its followers through a very wise and practical hierarchical scale of Anu-Vratas and Maha-Vratas.

The contribution of Jainism to world as a philosophy and religion is significant. Compassion in the Jain religion means one should feel some agony in the heart, with the experience that one is suffering. It advocates empathy. One should have the same affectionate feelings for the souls of others, as one would have for one’s own soul. Thus the Jain religion tries to achieve the feeling of oneness with the smallest of living organisms. The life and soul of every other living being is as valuable as the life and soul of oneself. Hence man should have intense feelings of consideration and companionship for every creature on this earth.

The Jain religion describes the ideology which emphasises that every organism possesses the inborn craving for sustained existence. There is natural love and affection for its own life. Thus what one detests for

oneself should be considered detestful for others by him. So true non-violence is one which inspires to make ceaseless effort for seeking the happiness of the whole universe through deeds, thoughts and words.

5.2. Spiritual Practices of Lord Mahāvīra

According to the Jain tradition Rsabha was the founder of Jainism, and Vardhamana was the last Tirthankara. He was born in 599 B.C. and died in 522 B.C. The Jain scriptures are founded on his teachings. 149 Lord Mahāvīra was the 24.' and the last Tirthankara of Jainism. According to Jain philosophy, all Tirthankaras are born as human beings. They have to attain a state of perfection through meditation and self-realization. They are the Gods of the Jains. Tirthankaras are also known as Arihants or Jinas. Arihant is one who destroys his inner enemies like anger, greed, passion, ego, etc. The followers of Jina are known as Jains.

Mahāvīra was quite successful in eradicating in the human intellect the conception of God as the creator, protector and destroyer. He also denounced the worship of Gods as a means of salvation. He taught the idea of supremacy of human life and stressed the importance of the positive attitude of life.

Life should not be destroyed by pains and troubles and it should not be enjoyed by worldly pleasures. To attain passionless state of mind eternal truth is the supreme purpose of life. A spiritual aspirant strives for the fulfillment of this aim.

In the inner mind of Mahāvīra, there was a strong desire for this very thing. His inner mind persisted the readiness to renounce everything for procuring it. He felt worldly pleasures could not give permanent and

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passionless bliss. So there was no sense in running after them with closed eyes. In the depth of Mahāvīra’s heart, a strong desire to achieve this supreme truth and bliss was awakened, which was not satisfied with the superficial happiness and amenities.

The enjoyment of worldly pleasures only will not be able to give the eternal solution to life in the direction of achieving this aim. If there is no movement in this direction in one’s life, then that is nothing but a waylaid and vagabond life. In the absence of an aim, life gets cut into pieces. Aimlessness gives birth to meaninglessness and bewilderment. This position was quite obvious in the mind of Mahāvīra.

Attainment of ‘soul and a ‘search for the self-based bliss’ was the aim of Mahāvīra. This was the motivation that compelled him to change his traditional path of life. He got this motivation neither from any person nor from a so called religious preacher. The motivation had emerged from the depth of his own heart. This innate internal motivation of Mahāvīra was the basis of all his future attainments.

Trīthāṅkara contributes to the development of total humanity as well as the individual. In Mahāvīra, such an all-round auspicious light was to shine. The main reason behind his leaving his home was to awaken the endless consciousness in respect of ‘self and ‘other’. That opened the floodgates to stream in endless bliss. There is a difference between ‘doing’ and ‘being done’. ‘Being done’ is natural and non-obstinate, but in ‘doing’ there is a tinge of obstinacy and persistence. So Mahāvīra’s renouncing home was natural and inner motivation. The main reason of his accepting ascetic life was his strong desire to endure the life of the common people with the stream of endless bliss.
Lord Mahāvīra was an apostle of peace and non-violence. His life may inspire people and his legacy may guide us when there is a total collapse of values in all spheres. Non-violence stands for compassion, vegetarianism, sympathetic understanding and peaceful coexistence. Non-violence is positive quality implying love for all and oneness of all living beings. The implication of the precept of non-violence is manifold. It is against wars and violence in the name of religions. It is against hatred and intolerance towards other person’s views. More importantly, it implies the practice of a sustainable way of living. Violence is born in the mind of man therefore, a change at the spiritual level is of crucial importance.

Lord Mahāvīra also preached about the gospel of universal love where he emphasized that all human beings, irrespective of their size, shape and form, however spiritually developed and underdeveloped, are equal. So we should love and respect them.

The life of Lord Mahāvīra is depicted in Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Kalpasutra, Avasyaka Nirukti etc. Mahāvīra was a great hero, the conqueror of passions. His goal was that of helping the people suffering from their miserable lot. When he was observing austerities for twelve and a half years he faced many adversities and calamities. He proved to be an incarnation of forbearance and forgiveness. His life was filled with equanimity, compassion and fearlessness. The ninth chapter of Ācārāṅga Sūtra describes spiritual practices of Sramana Mahāvīra. Every moment of the ascetic life of Mahāvīra was devoted to the practice of non-violence and compassion. When he went door to door begging for alms, he always cared that no person, animal or bird was disturbed. He never gave a chance to foster hatred or enmity for anybody. With supreme conduct he proceeded on the path of liberation which was the fruit of truthfulness, restraint and good conduct. In Kalpa Sūtra it is mentioned
as: “With supreme knowledge, supreme faith and supreme conduct, in stainless lodgings and blameless wanderings, with extreme valour, extreme uprightness, extreme mildness, extreme dexterity and extreme patience, with utmost caution and utmost satisfaction, with the highest intelligence and the highest truth, restraint and penance, Sramana Mahāvīra passed 12 years in meditation on self on the road to liberation, which was the duty earned outcome of a right conduct.”

Mahāvīra propagated the non-violence culture for the benefit of humanity. He was not only a great scientist, philosopher and seer but a great environmentalist also. He discussed the problems of human existence, conduct, how man should live, and how he is connected to the nature and other creatures. According to him, the basic principle of Jainism is non-violence. This basic principle is necessary for the preservation of nature, ecology and harmony to maintain biodiversity. Nonviolence is discussed in detail by Lord Mahāvīra for the protection of environment.

Mahāvīra brought a synthesis between religion and philosophy. The present form of Jainism as is available to us was inspired by the teachings of Mahāvīra. It is his religious code that is in vogue today. It is the harmony between knowledge, faith and conduct that can lead man towards liberation from misery. Action without knowledge or knowledge without action are both futile.

The principle of interdependence is the hail mark of Jainism. To understand the Jain concept of non-violence, it is necessary to know the Jain concept of violence also which will be helpful to understand Jainism’s real meaning of non-violence according to Jainism.

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5.3. The Jain Concept of Violence

According to Jainism, violence includes physical violence, verbal, visual and mental violence. The acts of violence that we see in society today are being committed out of intense feelings of hatred, possessiveness, jealousy, carnality. Violence first arises in thought and is poured out verbally i.e. in words. When the passion grows uncontrollable, it leads to ghastly physical violence.

Definition of Violence

To define violence, it is necessary to understand, what is actually meant by violence. Examples of physical violence need not be explained as they are known forms of violence universally. These examples describe just one aspect of violence. The noted Jain scholar Umāsvāti has defined violence in the Tattvārtha Sūtra as obstruction of the life processes of self or other worldly beings affected by negligence and indolence.¹⁵¹

Passion includes the powerful emotions of anger, pride and greed. In other words, it is said that an injury to a life motivated with passion is violence. If an injury is caused without deliberate intention, it does not by itself constitute an evil act because it is not accompanied by any feeling of attachment or hatred. As a social being it is not possible to escape violence in its totality. So the Jain scriptures advise the Shravaks to at least refrain from unnecessary violence. They can follow Anuvrata that is known as small basic vows.

¹⁵¹ विषयमाख्यात्मकां ज्ञात सत्त्वार्थम् Tattvārtha Sūtra 7.13
Life Processes and Violence

Life processes are of two kinds:

- Dravya Praan - gross life processes such as breathing, eating, and, subtle life processes
- Bhaav Praan - such as thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Violence is of two kinds:

- Dravya Himsa - Physical violence
- Bhaav Himsa -Mental violence

Physical violence is killing or causing bodily injury to a living being. It is gross violence. Mental violence is the violence of thoughts, feelings and emotions. It is subtle, abstract, and intangible. It consists of causing anxiety, suspicion, fear, etc. Anger, pride, intrigue and greed constitute abstract violence. Fear, suspicion, hatred, lies, thievery, cheating, subversion, possessiveness and taking more than one’s fair share involve violence of thoughts, feelings and emotions of self and of other individuals.

Types of Violence

In Jain religious books violence has been classified as follows: 152

- Sankalpi- Himsa or Intentional Violence — which is the intentional killing or hurting of self and of others. Examples are - killing for hunting, amusement or decoration, or sacrifice or killing or hurting out of enmity, malice or mischief.
- Virodhi-Himsa or Self-defence— which is the violence involved dealing with undesirable elements of society. A householder tries
to avoid *himsa* at all cost, but in such cases it may be unavoidable. So it is non-vindicative and kept to the barest minimum.

- *Arambhi Himsa* or domestic or household violence — which is violence involved in cooking, cleaning etc. This violence is unavoidably committed in the course of preparing food, household cleanliness, washing, construction of houses, wells, etc.
- *Udyogi Himsa* or Occupational Violence — which is the violence involved in pursuing agriculture, industry, business and profession.

While *Sankalpi Himsa* has to be avoided at all costs, the other three types of *himsa* although unavoidable in some cases, should not exceed the strict requirements off fulfilling the duties of a householder. Furthermore, he should not be influenced by passions like anger, greed, pride and deceit.

**Ways of Committing Violence**

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that *Ahimsā* only prohibits physical violence. An early Jain text explain says: we shall not injure living beings. With the three means of punishment — thoughts, words and deeds. In fact, violence can be committed by a combination of the following four factors:

1. The instrumentality of our actions; we can commit violence through either -
   - Body i.e. physical action,
   - Speech i.e. verbal action, or
   - Mind i.e. mental actions

2. The process of committing violence includes whether we -
   - only decide or plan to act,
- make preparations for the act e.g. like collecting necessary materials or weapons, or
- actually begin the action

3. The modality of our action, including if we

- we ourselves commit violence,
- we instigate others to carry out the violence, or
- we give our silent approval for the violence

4. The motivation for action includes which of the following negative emotions that the violence is motivated by –

- Anger
- Greed
- Pride
- Manipulation or deceit

Causes of violence

In Ācārāṅga Sūtra, causes of violence are described as – when a person employs various means of oppression to accomplish various achievements like strength of the body, strength of the kin, strength of friendship, supernatural power, divine power, support to the state or the king, support of thieves, support of guests, support of guests, support of the destitute and support of Shramana.¹⁵³

So violence includes much more than killing. In a nutshell, indulging in passions of attachment and aversion is violence.

¹⁵³ सेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽसेवायमानेऽ
5. 4. Philosophical Understanding of Non-violence in Jainism

In Jain Philosophy, non-violence is said to be the supreme religion. Non-violence is not limited to harming human beings only, it also extends to all other living beings. This philosophy believes in the unity of life. It regards all living beings as equal. Jainism believes that the one who can be cruel to animals, can be also cruel to human beings. According to Jainism, cruelty is not only an aspect of external behaviour, but is an inner evil tendency.

Jainism is a practical philosophy, embracing both the worldly and the spiritual. -\textsuperscript{154}

- The first fundamental principle of Jainism is that human personality is dual — material and spiritual.
- Human beings are imperfect.
- Human beings are capable of controlling their material nature, even though they are imperfect, they can control their nature through spiritual efforts.
- Human beings are solely responsible for their futures all can separate their own souls from the karmic matter attached to them.

The Jain philosophy thus presents an explanation of the life events and their relevance, and the nature of the universe clearly and logically so as to remove all miseries and attain permanent bliss.

The Vow of Non-violence

Jainism prescribes a strict and in fact, an extremely sever ethical discipline for the householder and ascetic, the \textit{Sravaka} and the \textit{Sramana},

it lays equal emphasis on faith, knowledge and conduct which together constitute the way to individual freedom.\footnote{N. K. Singhi — Ideal, Ideology and Practice, Printwell Publishers, Jaipur, 1987. P 26}

The Jain vow of non-violence is symbolized in a hand with a wheel. The word in the middle is “\textit{Ahimsā}”. The wheel represents the \textit{Dharmacakra} which stands for the resolve to halt the cycle of reincarnation through relentless pursuit of truth and non-violence.

Non-violence is formalized into the Jain doctrine as the first major vow of the ascetics and first minor vow of the householders.

**The Vow of Ascetics**

The Jain monks and the nuns undertake five major vows known as Mahāvratas at the time of their ordination to monkhood, out of which non-violence is the first and foremost. Jain monks and nuns must rank among the most “non-violent” people in the world. A Jain ascetic is expected to uphold the vow of non-violence to the highest standard, even at the cost of his own life. The other four major vows — truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy are in fact, extensions of the first vow of complete non-violence.

**The Vow of the Householder**

A Jain household is unable to adhere to the five major vows of the ascetics. Hence he observes \textit{Anuvrata} a or minor vows which although are similar to the major vows of the ascetics, are difficult to avoid as there is always some violence by a lay person to single-sensed immobile beings in the process of occupation, cooking, self-defense etc. That is why he vows not to kill a moving sentient being, when it is innocent, without a necessary purpose and determined intention.
Tying up, injuring, mutilating, burdening with heavy load and depriving from food and drinks any animal or human being with a mind, polluted by anger and other passions are the five *Aśīcāra* or transgressions of the vow of non-violence.

**5.5. Non-violence in Practice**

Jainism enjoins observance of total non-violence by the ascetics. But it is often seen that the man is constantly obliged to engage in destructive activities which includes eating, drinking, breathing and surviving in order to support his own body. Jainism insists that life is omnipresent with infinite beings including microorganisms pervading each and every part of the universe. So it may still be possible to avoid the killing of gross animals, but it is impossible to avoid the killing of subtle microorganisms in air and water, plant life. The continual likelihood of destroying living organisms by man would create an in excusable burden. Then the question arises - is it possible to follow the Jain path of total renunciation and non-violence?

For this, a proper understanding of the concept of non-violence is necessary. However, the Jain conception of non-violence is quite different than what is commonly understood by non-violence. Violence in Jainism is defined more by the motives and the consequences to the self rather than by the act itself. According to Jain Scriptures, destruction of the less-developed organism brings about lesser *Karmas* than the destruction of developed animals. The *Karmas* generated in the observance of religious duties faultlessly disappears almost immediately. Hence, it is possible to observe complete non-violence with the right knowledge. Even when some outward violence occurs to living beings, it can be controlled with pure mental disposition without any attachment.
Knowledge Necessary for Practice of Non-violence

Jainism encourages rational thinking. This is encompassed in the fundamental concept of the ‘three jewels’, which are ‘right faith, right knowledge and right conduct’. They are listed in this sequence on purpose: 156

- First, there has to be an initial act of believing in a system of values and a global apprehension of it.
- Second is the detailed analysis of these values and concepts, and then the application of these values. Having both the intuition or awareness and the intellectual knowledge are necessary prerequisites to act properly.
- Only if we accept and know what life is, can we put into practice the virtue of non-violence in our daily life.

The Jain also considered that right knowledge is needed for practicing nonviolence. It is necessary to know what is living and what is non-living to practice non-violence faultlessly. A person who is confused between what is living and non-living can never observe non-violence. *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* declared: “First knowledge, then compassion. Thus does one remain in full control. How can an ignorant person be compassionate, when he cannot distinguish between the good and the evil?” 157

It further declares that it is knowledge of the living and non-living alone that will help one to become more compassionate towards all human being. With this awareness, all those aspiring move towards the eternal

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156 * सम्म्यदशस्तिज्ञानसत्यायिनिकोशार्थम् | *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1.1
157 * पक्षपानायत्नोपज्ञेयस्तिद्विजस्तवमंजः | *अभ्राणीमिकाहीकिब्याहिद्विक्षेपः* *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* 4. 23.10
questions of what the ignorant can do and the difference between what is noble and evil.

This knowledge is also necessary to destroy *Karmas*. This goes along with *Saman Suttam* declarations that the wise can destroy their *Karmas* by their inactions, but the ignorant cannot even do so by their actions. The wise control their thought and action as they are free from greed, passion and the thirst to commit sins as they are contented.

**Knowledge of *Anekantavada* as the Intellectual Non-violence**

*Anekantavada* is the principle of relativity of truth. It is also known as the doctrine of multiple aspects of a thing. Jainism hold that truth is multifaceted and has multiple sides that cannot be completely comprehended by anyone. *Anekantavada* describes the world as multifaceted and an ever-changing reality. With this infinity it is relative to the time, place, nature and state of one who is the viewer and that which is viewed. Etymologically, *Anekantavada* can be explained in two ways.\(^{158}\)

- **Un+ eka+anta+ vade** i.e. not a one-sided viewpoint, theory or philosophic position
- **Un+ekanta+ vada** i.e not a one sided theory

What is true from one point of view is open to question from another. Absolute truth cannot be grasped from any particular viewpoint alone. According to Jainism, the absolute truth is the sum total of all different viewpoints that make up the universe. So Jainism cannot exclusively uphold the views of any individual, community, nation, or species. It recognises inherently that other views are valid for other peoples, and for

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\(^{158}\) Jagdish Prasad Jain Sadhak— Fundamentals of Jainism, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 2005. P 113
other life-forms. This perception leads to the doctrine of Syadvada or sevenfold predication stating the truth from different viewpoints.

Anekantvada is the doctrine and Syadvada is its verbal expression. According to Jaina philosophers, all important philosophical statements should be expressed in this sevenfold way. It removes the danger of dogmatism in philosophy. The concept of Syadvada allows the Jains to accept the truth in other philosophies from their perspectives which inculcates a tolerance for other viewpoints.

Anekantvada is non-absolutism and stands firmly against all dogmatisms. It is thus intellectual non-violence or non-violence of the mind. In Anekantvada, there is no battle of ideas, because then it is considered to be a form of intellectual himsa which will lead quite logically to physical violence and war.

The real point of view of even the highest knowledge is that this vast world is limited, imperfect and one-sided. It is not possible for any person to comprehend the infinite qualities of an object simultaneously. One expression of any knowledge is far more difficult. The inadequacy of language and the limitations of the meaning of words create conflicts and disputes. The ego of man further accentuates the matter. The doctrine of Anekanta paves the way for harmony and removal of conflicts. In the world of thought, Anekanta is the tangible form of Ahimsā. Whoever is non-violent shall be the possessor of the Anekanta view and whoever possesses the Anekanta view of life shall be non-violent in thought and in action.
Non-violence and non-possession, along with the doctrine of manifold aspects are frequently viewed as cornerstone of Jain world view.  

_Anekantavada_ is generally known as _Syadavada_. _Syat_ means little known or partially known. Yet, much more to be known is remaining. _Anekantavada_ is the principle and the way to implement this principle is _Syadavada_. He who is in the light of _Syadavada_ believes that:-

- From the standpoint of _Atmatva_, the soul is one.
- From the standpoint of individual entities, there are a number of souls.
- From the standpoint of substance, soul is eternal.
- From the standpoint of form, it is changing.
- From the standpoint of _Niscaya Naya_, it is unchained or not bound.
- From the standpoint of _Vyavahara Naya_ it is changing.
- From the standpoint of matter, it is unreal.
- From the standpoint of its own nature, it is real.

_Syadavada_ has a close relationship with the concept of relativity. It has a specific significance with the logic of statistic inference. The earliest reference of _Syadavada_ in the writings of _Bhadrabahu_, where he gives the explanation of _Syat_-may be and _Vada_- assertion which means assertion of possibilities.

The doctrine of Indefiniteness of Being is upheld by a very strange dialectical method called _Syadavada_, to which the Jain attach so much importance that this name frequently is used as synonyms for the Jain system itself.  

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159 Edited By Peter Flugel — Studies in Jain History And Culture Dispute And Dialogues, Routledge Taylor And Francis Group New York 2006 P 438  
Syadavada which literally signifies assertion of possibilities seeks to ascertain the meaning of things from all possible standpoints. All objects are multi-form. According to Jainism, all judgments are absolutely true. Therefore, the word ‘perhaps’ or ‘from a point of view’ must be added to all judgments to indicate their conditional character. This is known as Syadavada. It is also known as a doctrine of relativity of judgments.

Non-violence and Non-Absolutism

The basic tenets of Jainism can be summarized in two words- Non-violence and no absolutism. These two tenets are principles of peaceful co-existence based on the concept of respect for life. Non-absolutism signifies open-mindedness. The concept of non-violence in Jainism is not passive and negative. Non-violence is not only for the individual’s personal salvation, but it can be used as an instrument of socio-cultural revolution. The positive values implied by non-violence are friendliness, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, reconciliation, etc.

According relativism, an object has an infinite number of characteristics. One cannot grasp all of them. According to the doctrine of non-absolutism, to understand truth completely, one must consider all its aspects. It is indicated that one must follow non-violence in speech and thought. One must respect others points of view. If we insist on truth we must understand the beauty of compromise. This is the philosophy of relativism.

We have to develop a non-absolutistic standpoint-attitude on almost all problems. One has to adopt this kind of outlook to realize the truth in its varied aspects. It helps us to understand the viewpoints of others. It also helps to cultivate the spirit of tolerance and understanding. This will
increase goodwill and harmony. One has to practices generosity of spirit and avoid fundamentalism. Thus, problems can be resolved not by quarrels but by communication and understanding. It is the principle of co-operation and co-existence. This indicates toleration, which is the main characteristic of Jain ideology. It is an ideal for successfully managing personal or interpersonal, national or international conflicts. It is the doctrine of open-mindedness which is the expression of a fundamental non-violent attitude. It has got a wonderful power of assimilation.

Jainism emphasizes individual, social and spiritual values. It is necessary for the upliftment of the soul and the welfare of the universe. These values can provide a civilized basis for peaceful co-existence. The law given by Jainism gives all happiness. It is based on noble ideals which can be solid foundations of society leading society to a better social order. Jain principles can be used to facilitate and establish peace on the globe.

**Anekantavada and Non-violence**

*Anekantavada* means non-violence in thoughts because *Anekantavada* means to look at the opposite view respectfully. “*Anekant* means the manifestation of two mutually opposed power”, i.e. the power of form “the same and not the same”. \(^{161}\) It analyses one’s own view judiciously and neutrally with the curiosity of truth. It also accepts what is right in it and sheds one’s own views which are incorrect and correct.

Mahāvīra adopted *Anekantavada* as a tool for the growth of character. Love and hatred diminishes on adopting *Anekantavada*. Controversy decreases and samabhava increases, friendship increases, peace established. *Anekantavada* plays a major role in establishing peace.

\(^{161}\) Jagdish Prasad Jain – Fundamentals Of Jainism, Radiant Publishers New Delhi 2005 P 116
Knowledge of Vegetarianism for a Non-violent Life Style

Jainism follows non-violence with greatest emphasis on the respect for life. Every kind of life must be respected. One must carry out all the activities with utmost care. According to Jainism, doing harm to others is like harming one’s own self. So the practice of non-violence requires the practice of vegetarianism.

Every living being has a body, which requires nourishment and energy. Jain seers considered that while it is impossible for a living being to exist without food, one should obtain this with minimum possible violence even to the one-sensed being of the plant world. The objective of human life is happiness, bliss and liberation. One should nourish the body with food, which produces minimum passions. So Jain seers have advised humans to live on vegetarian food with a minimum of violence to plants. Taking a vegetarian diet is in accordance with the natural law. The disturbance to the environment is less here.

The Jain philosophy and thinking of a vegetarian diet has its roots in the practice of non-violence. Diet is closely connected with our mind and its processes. Our food habits have a great impact on our mind and thought. So Jainism asks us to keep a vigilant eye on it. It has thrown significant light on the benefits of fasting and on simple food habits. Their importance has now been accepted even in the sphere of health and physical fitness.

There are eight basic restraints known as Mulagunas. These 8 restraints are — meat, alcohol honey and five kinds of figs fruits - umbaro, black umbaro, banyan, peepal and plaksa. Meat, alcohol and honey involve maximum violence by harming mobile beings and the remaining five involve extensive violence to the one-sensed creatures and some mobile
beings. Meat eating should be avoided because it will not be beneficial to animal rights. A Jain diet consists of simple, nutritious, freshly cooked vegetarian food that maintains good health and motivates the person towards the spiritual path.

In the mind, vegetarianism is the first essential feature of a culture of non-violence. Vegetarianism not only helps us eliminate intentional and avoidable physical violence of animals but also the violence of the self. Poor health and illness lead to mental violence. It has been established by many researchers that a non-vegetarian diet is not good for our health. Thus vegetarianism is essential for minimizing physical as well as mental violence.

All of us know that alcohol, tobacco and drugs are the roots of considerable violence, physical as well as mental. Alcohol and drugs impair our ability to think and discriminate between undesirable and desirable actions. This is simply violence of our subtle life processes, which may lead to violence of others as well.

As Le Valley has noted, ‘Jain scriptures emphasize non-violence and toleration of multiple viewpoints Jain today emphasize those same two points’. 162 Whenever there is talk of violence and non-violence, it is always in direction of thinking of killing or torturing or saving living beings from others only. Most people believe that non-violence is not only killing or harming others. Very few people understand that these are also related to the self. Nobody understands the innermost meaning of non-violence. Very few people know that the rise of attachment and aversion in the inner self is also violence.

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162 Edited By Purushottam Bilimoria, Joseph Prabhu And Renuka Sharma — Indian Ethics, Published By Oxford University, New Delhi, 2007. P 146
5.6. Culture of Non-violence

In the culture of non-violence, an individual’s thoughts and actions originate from a rational mind and pure heart. These thoughts are ego, pride, fear, intrigue or greed. The culture of non-violence is the process of improving and refining our lives through practice of non-violence.

All religions teach us to practice non-violence, to speak the truth, to practice celibacy and to limit one’s possessions. Jain scriptures say that untruth, cheating, thievery, limitless desires for possessions, etc. are aspects of mental violence. In many instances, these lead to physical violence as well. Moreover, Jainism recognizes that the universe is full of microscopic and macroscopic living beings. Violence cannot be avoided completely. The Jain religion expects us to avoid intentional physical violence. At the same time, it tells us to minimize the mental violence - the violence in thoughts.

We need to learn the meanings of culture and non-violence first in order to understand the meaning of non-violence. According to the Dictionary meaning, culture can be defined as the development, improvement or refinement of the mind, emotions, interests, manners, taste, etc., and, the result of this, or refined ways of thinking, talking, acting, etc., or ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc. of a given people in a given period or civilization.

The foundation of the culture of non-violence is laid on the basis of following five vows:

1. Non-violence which consists of not obstructing the life processes of self or of any other living being - this embodies the principle of freedom and equality of all living beings.
2. Truth which means always speaking the truth and supporting what is true, according to the individuals’ own perception and experience

3. Non-stealing which entails not taking anything that does not belong to us, accepting only our fair share, and, being honest in business dealings

4. Purity of body and mind, which entails total celibacy for monks and nuns - in partial celibacy, no pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activity for lay persons.

5. Non-possessiveness which entails limiting individuals’ material possessions and desires

These vows help us minimize all violence such as physical and mental, direct and indirect, intentional and unintentional which is committed through the man’s activities of body, speech and mind.

**Non-violence as an Ethical Doctrine in Jainism**

Non-violence is required for the transformation of the individual through, moral and religious practices. Moral virtue and all other virtues spring from it.

- It literally means not to kill or injure anyone.
- In its wider connotation, it includes the abandonment of the will to harm i.e. harmlessness.
- Positively, it implies love, goodwill and friendliness and humanity.

In Jainism, violence is explained as an injury caused due to carelessness which is actuated by passion like pride, anger etc. It is said in Jain scriptures that ‘all misery springs up from violence’. Non-violence is the crux of wisdom. Mahāvīra proclaimed ‘there is no quality of soul more
subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life’. The five observances of non-violence are as follows:

- Self-control of speech.
- Self-control of thought
- Conscientiousness in walking
- Conscientiousness in picking up and placing objects
- Conscientiously minimizing violence in procuring and preparing food and drinks

Thus, the principle of non-violence naturally implies purity of thought, word and deed. It is a positive virtue implying love for all. It stands for environmental protection, vegetarianism, sympathetic understanding and peaceful co-existence. This noble principle applies to the non-killing of humans, animals and other living beings. Life is dear to all creatures. This has got far-reaching implications.

Jainism generally addresses individual ethics. Prescriptions are for the monk, the nun, and the householders to conduct their lives. It is to achieve spiritual progress and ultimately, final liberation. Thus one gains individual peace. Collective ethics of the society is not explicitly addressed. In fact, it is based on the idea that all beings are interdependent and so the progress of everyone results in the progress of all. If non-violence is practised individually in all its aspects, it produces a general improvement which has consequences on everyone.

The aim of Jain ethics is to favor a calm and peaceful state of mind where benevolence and sympathy can replace anger, ego, deceit and greed, which are the four main passions. This, in fact, is a development of what is already provided for in the traditional ethical system. Men convinced of the value of non-violence in all its aspects will promote the values of
fraternity, dignity, brotherhood and humanity. This training is part of Jain ethics at the root and is done with reference to behaviors in daily contexts. This ethical teaching will become a trend that will pervade through all of society and may prevail at all levels. So the Jain ethic is a global ethic. The aim of this global ethics is to build a non-violent society and to promote positive values.

**Non-Violence is the Supreme Law**

Non-violence is not the passive behavior of people satisfied in observing what is happening around them. But it is the positive and constructive behavior aiming at promoting others’ lives and well-being through gentleness, friendship, and peace. Hence it is based on the form of compassion that is *Karunā* or *dayā*. The central duty of all Jains is that of *Pratikramana*. The keynote of this ritual is that the mind is pervaded by the feeling of non-violence. To minimize violence we should forget and forgive. Such mental state serves as an effective stimulus for the practice of five vows. It is probably one of those best explanations of the positive concept of non-violence. It is a combination of various attitudes which are as follows.\(^{163}\)

- Maitri—friendship, the non-infliction of suffering,
- Pramoda—joy, affection combined with respect for the virtuous,
- Kārunya—compassion resulting in help procured to those who are in need of it,
- Mādhyasthāya—impartiality that is neither repulsion nor anger in regard to those who are devoid of virtues

Such a state of mind is considered as the best protection against evil. For instance, Jainism recognizes six types of living beings depending on the

\(^{163}\) *मैत्रीप्रमोदायकअश्रमस्थानित तत्त्वप्राप्तिकस्तत्त्वमानविनेते || Tattvārtha Sūtra 7.11*
number of sense-organs they possess, and classified them accordingly - from plants to animal species and human beings, or have devised other types of classifications as well. So Mahāvīra advises his ascetics to be careful and vigilant.

The Doctrine of Six Kinds of Living Beings

Lord Mahāvīra has classified Jīvas on this planet into six categories. According to him, the entire planet is nothing but a mass of living organisms. His theory of Jīvas is called Shadjivnikaya. The six forms of life includes prthvīkāya(earth), apakāya(water), askaya(fire), vāyukāya(air), vanaspatikāya(vegetation) and trasakāya(mobile living organisms).\textsuperscript{164}

Mahāvīra advises one should not cause any injury to earth-bodies, fire-bodies, water-bodies and air-bodies. A Jain ascetic and householders are supposed to refrain from indulging in violence. The Jain principle of non-violence and ecology is directed towards all six kinds of diverse forms of life on this planet. Mahāvīra’s principle of Shadjivanikaya is unique. In a way we can even call it something transcendental.

Classification of Jīvas by Jainism

\textsuperscript{164} शादिविवृत्तिः महत्वपूर्णसाधनाः विद्वानानिविद्याधिकृताः || दसवैक्तिक श्रवण 8.2
Truly Mahāvīra’s spiritual perfection and the dawn of Ahimsā in him enabled him to attain cosmic vision. Mahāvīra’s Ahimsā is all encompassing and recognizes the right of existence for all Jīvas or souls. All Jīvas means life forms are equal. If a householder finds it impossible to refrain from himsa in its totality for his survival, then he should be absolutely clear in his mind that he is doing himsa. So he should ask for the forgiveness of the Jīvas being killed for his sustenance. According to Jainism, all Jīvas can become gods provided they tread the path of purification and practice equanimity of mind. Their elevation is determined by their deeds.

Hierarchy of Living Beings on the Basis of Senses

Jainism divides living beings on the basis of their sensory organs and vitalities or life force meaning prana. Accordingly, the higher the number of senses and vitalities a being has, the more capacity there is to suffer and feel pain. Hence according to Jainism, violence to higher-sensed beings who have five senses and the capacity to think and feel pain attracts more Karma than violence to lesser-sensed beings like microbes and plants. So Jainism insists on complete avoidance of violence to higher-sensed beings and as far as possible, minimize violence to the lower-sensed.

No Tirthankara can send any Jīvas either to heaven or to hell. But one can attain moksa or liberation by the path shown by them. So the equality and true democracy are the pillars of Jainism.

Non-violent Society

To solve the present-day life problems which cause conflict and violence in human relations, man needs a government which has complete faith in non-violence. In order to achieve it, a relative and balanced
transformation of the three constituents as individual, economic management and social order is required. Only then can it be established as a healthy and non-violent society. Organizational changes in the society are one aspect. But for this, there should be a change in the individual’s state of mind and attitude towards others and life.

In Jainism, *Ahimsā* has been proclaimed in the following words:

- Injurious activities inspired by self-interest lead to evil and darkness.
- To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself.
- We corrupt ourselves as soon as we intend to corrupt others.
- We kill ourselves when we intend to kill others.

*Ahimsā* sprouts from a person’s inner awakening. It conveys many things simultaneously whereas the word ‘non-violence’ only indicates abstinence from physical violence. The Jain principle of *Ahimsā* cannot be understood in its right perspective unless it has a clear insight into the Jain concepts of *Jīva-Ajīva*. Jainism believes that the world is full of suffering and the cause of suffering is *himsa* which is causing injury to *Jīvas* meaning all forms of life. This includes causing actual physical injury to *Jīvas* or causing injury through unpleasant and violent words or thoughts.

As a result of violence in thought, word and deed, there is an influx of karmic matter. It adds the misery and suffering to the *Jīvas* which indulge in the present life and life hereafter. It causes karmic bondage leading *Ajīva* to be born in different species, in accordance with the nature of his crime and criminality. So the observance of complete non-violence and equanimity of mind is needed. This undergoing rigorous forms of self-suffering will ultimately help to attain non-violent society.
To understand the basic principle of non-violence one need to understand the concept of Jīvas. Only then can one can practice this principle because this principle includes causing ‘actual physical injury to Jīvas or causing injury through unpleasant and violent words or thoughts leading to suffering. The very discussion on the Jain concept of Ahimsā will be meaningless unless one perceives the most subtle and complex structure of living organisms on this planet. For that purpose, it is necessary to understand Jain concept of Jīva.

5.7. Non-violence and Ecology

Non-violence itself is an ecological ethic. Once a human being realizes that every living being wants to live it is unethical and sinful to kill. Non-killing is the greatest religion. It enjoins people to live and let live. In the Jain concept of nonviolence, mental and verbal forms of violence are more dangerous than the forms of physical violence. The idea of killing and doing harm to others first originate in the human mind. It stirs the four major passions i.e. attachment, hatred, pride and deceit. As a result, man not only behaves unethically towards his own fellow humans but also towards the environment. Thus the firm belief of Jainism in the doctrine that earth, water, air, fire and vegetable paved a way for the protection of ecological balance.  

Ecological imbalance can be controlled or prevented by various methods such as recycling of waste, minimizing use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides etc. and thus pollution can be prevented.

The modern eco-philosopher Prof. Arne Naess has rightly stated that the ecological crisis emanates from man’s unrestrained violent attitude towards non-humans. Ecological harmony demands that both humans and

165 Prof Sagamal Jam — An Introduction to Jam Sadhana, Parasvanatha Vidyapith, Varanasi, 1995. P 82
non-humans should flourish together. It is possible only when man
observes non-violence in his day today life. Complete abstinence from
violence is impossible. Essential violence relates to man’s survival and
inessential violence is what man indulges in for his comfort, and to
satisfy his greed.

If a human being decides that he will refrain from indulging in inessential
violence and will do the least harm to environment, it will result in
sustainable ecological harmony.

Relevance of the Jain concept of non-violence for sustainable
development and a safe environment needs to be realized. In practical
life, non-violence implies vegetarianism, protection of animals, self-
restraint etc. Non-violence needs to be seen in the wider perspective.

Lord Mahâvîra showed his deep concern for nature when he described
there is no higher religion than non-violence. He propagated non-violent
way of life natural ecological balance for peace and harmony in the
nature. Lord Mahâvîra’s compassion is extended beyond humanity to all
forms of life. For Mahâvîra’s Ahimsâ is not limited only to humankind, it
extends to all living beings.¹⁶⁶

Jainism insists on not causing unnecessary harm to others. The Jain
ecological view of life is dependent upon two basic laws of nature:

➢ Interconnectedness
➢ Nature has life

These two basic principles of Jainism which revolve around the concept
of nonviolence is based on the philosophy of preservation of nature,
ecological harmony and environmental protection.

Nature is treated reverently in Jainism, which asks us to shape our actions with a more care for their environmental consequences. ‘Conserve ecology or perish’ is the message of Jainism to modern world. In Jainism, non-violence is not merely a ritual but discipline for all at all time. It provides earth ethics, which would be help humanity to live harmony with nature. Jainism teaches not to exploit nature in our greed for wealth and power. If we practice non-violent life style, we can prevent ourselves from disturbing ecological balance.

Lord Mahāvīra rightly observed that non-violence is wholesome for all living beings. It is abundantly clear that non-violent life style is imperative to save mankind. A careful study of Jain scriptures reveals evidence for the concern of Jainism for universal welfare. The ethical principles of Jainism prescribe a code of conduct, which requires an individual to be an ideal person with non-violence as the foundation of his life.

The simplest meaning of non-violence is not to hurt self or any other soul by mind, speech and body ‘Live and let live’ should be the guiding principle. According to Jainism one must have equanimity of mind and one must be friendly towards all living beings. Hence no wonder, Jains proclaim, ‘Religion consists in protection of all life forms, which is real non-violence’.