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## Niyativāda vis-a-vis Doctrine of Karma

Atmarpit Devang (Devang Shah) and Dr. Jayshreeben Desai\*

### Abstract

In today's world, it is confusing that one should follow *Niyativāda* or doctrine of karma. It is because wrong interpretation of spiritual books (*śāstras*). If one can't find the solution then he/she may lead to wrong conclusions and start believing that truth is very much complicated and beyond our capacity, but the fact is : truth is not at all complicated but right understanding from an enlightened being (*sadguru*) and Spiritual Gathering (*Satsaṅg*) is necessary.

People, who believe in *Niyativāda*, think that everything happens at the destined time and our endeavoring is of no use. There is strict chronological order and it is not possible to change or modify the order, while Doctrine of Karma preaches that only right endeavor is in our hand out of five elements for anything to materialize. So instead of waiting for time to come, one should do right endeavor (*puruṣārthā*) for desired result.

The purpose of this paper is to make utmost clarity of both the ideology. Both are right at their place but clear understanding of both the ideology is important. One should clear when to rely on *Niyativāda* and when to implement Karma theory (doctrine of karma). In order to present comprehensive understanding, author has studied both the ideology and intends to present right essence of *Niyativāda* and Doctrine of karma.

It is hoped that one should be able to develop a great deal of discrimination power to implement right ideology, at right time.

There are two ideologies having different concepts. Both have important roles to play in our lives but to pick the right one at the right time is paramount. These are *Niyativāda* and the Doctrine of karma. In this paper, we are going to discuss the truthfulness of both of these ideologies from different perspectives. Jainism defines the principle of *Anekāntavāda* or many-sidedness, which states that the ultimate truth or reality is complex, - and has multiple aspects. Let us first look at each ideology separately.

### *Niyativāda*

People - who believe in this theory, think that everything happens at the destined time, and our endeavoring is of no use. There is strict chronological order and it is not possible to change or modify the order. They do not believe in right endeavor (*puruṣārtha*). Believer in this ideology become pessimistic and lethargic as they wait for the right time for destiny to blossom. People believing in this ideology, sometimes, blame God or karma for any undesirable occurrences, but they don't do anything to come out of this miserable state as according to them, endeavor brings no result.

Just believing in time and not doing the right endeavor is like assuming, - the crocodile as a wood plank that can take one across the river. Followers of this ideology behave very innocent but they are challenging their own concept! They are putting in effort in business and other material causes as they strongly believe that without earning, how could one sustain, that is, they believe in *puruṣārtha* in worldly things but when it comes to religion, they become lethargic and wait for the right time to come. This contradicts their belief of *Niyativāda*. If they truly believe in *Niyativāda*, they should follow this in any endeavor, in social or spiritual pursuits.

Jainism strictly believes in the doctrine of karma. According to Jainism, there are five factors necessary for something to happen. 1. Nature, 2. Right endeavor, 3. Instrumental factors, 4. Time, and 5. Destiny. These are also called the five *samavāy*. It says that nature, Instrumental factors, time and destiny are not in our hand; only right endeavor is. So instead of waiting for the right time to come, one should do right endeavor (*puruṣārtha*), - for the desired result to materialize. There is a beautiful combination of both the ideologies. One should do right endeavor (*puruṣārtha*), without thinking about destiny and as destiny unfolds, one needs to forget that he has done any *puruṣārtha* for that, as it was fixed as in “*Niyati (kramabaddha paryāy)*”

Jain Saint and self-realized Master, Shrimad Rajchandraji beautifully said, “*Strive real hard if you want to attain absolute truth; do not forsake the quest for truth in the name of destiny, fate etc.*” (Doshi, 2012, p. 231) Karma theory is pure science; one should not put their hands in fire, if he/she doesn't want to get burnt. Abstinence from indulging in activities that cause harm is also called endeavor. He also told that “*The seeker of truth would everywhere accept whatever is appropriate, and he would act accordingly in every situation.*”<sup>2</sup> It means, - that one should do one's share of effort, and not think or worry about the future or destiny, and when results come, either favorable or unfavorable, accept them with great reverence as it is not the result of your *puruṣārtha*; after all, the five *samavāy* would determine the result. Shrimadji also said that, “*Scriptures show the way of living and liberation but one true essence lies within the heart of the spiritual master, called sadguru.*”<sup>3</sup> This is very relevant in today's life because we interpret, the meanings of scriptures according to our likes-dislikes, and not what the scriptures actually explained; but in

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1. *Rajgeeta*, (English translation with Commentary of *Shri Atmasiddhi Shstra*) – verse 130, Page 231
  2. *Rajgeeta*, (English translation with Commentary of *Shri Atmasiddhi Shstra*) – verse 8, Page 14
  3. *Shrimad Rajchandra*, Tenth Edition, letter 58 page 184.

the presence of the living master, there is no such scope of misinterpreting or delusion.

It is true that destiny plays a vital role in our life but to create destiny, one must do right endeavor. One cannot give all the power to time or destiny, as these are invisible things. Through right perception, right knowledge and right conduct, one should strive to materialize the dreams. One must take charge of one's destiny by doing right endeavor called *puruṣārtha*. One needs to understand which ideology is important at any given point of time, and it is understood with the help of the Enlightened being only because both are right but application of right thing at the right time is paramount; there are high chances that with our limited and impure intelligence, we will take it wrongly.

It is true that everything happens according to destiny, but here the question is - what decides destiny? If we think in detail, then it would come to surface that, - our endeavor (*puruṣārtha*) only creates our destiny. Only thing we need to understand is: past endeavor or present endeavor. Past endeavor creates our destiny for this birth and present endeavor creates destiny for our future lives and liberation too.

In history, there are many examples that support the doctrine of Karma, of which; - we will study two. The first example is of Swami Vivekanandji's life. Once a fortuneteller told Him that you can't earn fame as there is no line of fame on your palm, - He took a knife and immediately drew a line on His palm, and surely earned name and fame. The moral behind this story is, don't give too much importance to destiny because with a strong intention, we could write our destiny. The second example is of Mahatma Gandhiji; once He was told by Mr. Kripalani that there is no example in history where a war was won through Non-violence. He immediately replied, “If there is no

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1. *Inspiring Thoughts by Mahatma Gandhiji* : <https://quotes.thefamouspeople.com/mahatma-gandhi-55.php>

such history, then we will create history.”<sup>24</sup> He could have left the movement but instead, he fought with the weapon of non-violence only and brought freedom for India. Same thing applies to karma theory, - though destiny is fixed, we don't know what is there in our destiny, so through right endeavor, we need to unfold the mystery called destiny.

In every religion, religious gathering (*satsaṅg*) by an enlightened being has been applauded. We will understand the importance of religious gathering, - in perspective of *Niyativāda* and Doctrine of karma. As we know, every being behaves according to their instincts. Animals are behaving according to their instinct. Human beings have both the instincts, animal instinct and divine instinct. We have instinct of laziness, cowardliness, lust etc. and at the same time we have instincts of friendliness, steadfastness etc. It is very natural that we tend to follow sensual pleasures because it is easy, as we have practiced these through innumerable lives. *Satsaṅg* works on our belief system, as it nourishes our divine instinct and helps us eradicate our old bad habits. Therefore, it is called divine instinct building process. Here animal instinct means our rigidity to any one ideology; only *Satsaṅg* can eradicate our animal instinct and transform it into divine instinct called discrimination, love, passion and so on. The Enlighten being preaches that respect for all ideologies is good, but rigidity to any one ideology is the worst, as it doesn't allow you to think broad and reason for one remains in his/her own shell. One must transcend rigidity state of mind, as it is utmost necessary to perceive the knowledge of any principle, either *Niyativāda* or the doctrine of Karma.

It is very clear that religious gathering is one type of endeavor only but it is very necessary to uplift our lives. If we stick to *Niyativāda*, then changes are not possible, but through the lives of great spiritual beings, we see one thing very obvious that in the beginning or starting of their lives, they may have been full of animal instincts but as time went by, divine instincts replaced the animal instincts, and the

Enlightened Master emerged. Due to right endeavor, the thief ‘*vāliya*’ became the great sage ‘*vālmiki*’ through the *satsaṅg* of saint *Nārada* (*Nāradmuni*).

Shrimad Rajchandraji very beautifully explained the six philosophical tenets<sup>5</sup> of the soul, in which He clearly mentioned that, soul is the doer and enjoyer of karma. We can justify both the ideologies by considering two stages, *Niyativāda* means witnessing mode, whatever the Omniscient Lord sees, it happens accordingly, - this is the ultimate form of *sādhanā*; witnessing alone and no doing; but one can reach that level only by right endeavor (*puruṣārtha*). We cannot neglect *puruṣārtha* in our spiritual practices. Indeed, our goal is not to remain occupied in endeavors, - our goal is witnessing mode alone, and in that witnessing mode, the concept of *-Niyativāda* manifests.

In other words, to be more precise, *Niyativāda* says that God/Godliness manifests by itself, there is no *purusharth* for manifestation. It is true but where does God manifest? Obviously it is not going to manifest in our turbulent *citta*. So it is very necessary to clean our *citta* for manifestation of God. -Cleaning or calming our *citta* again requires the right endeavor or *puruṣārtha*. Jainism says that it is very true that, whatever happens is according to the Omniscient. But having faith in *Dharma* or the Omniscient One again demands a lot of *puruṣārtha*.

It is tragic that we betray ourselves by following the scriptural principles at the wrong time. *Krama baddha paryāy* (*Niyativāda*) and *puruṣārtha*, both are deceiving when not applied at the right time. If you have a tendency to change the external circumstances, then it's better to do *puruṣārtha* to change the inner state, and when you reach a great spiritual state, - where you don't have the tendency to change others or circumstances for your benefit anymore, at that time *Niyativāda* would be the best thing to observe. If your belief system is so strong that you strictly adhere to the principle laid by *Shri Jina* that one substance, either living or non-living, cannot change or modify

another substance, then you are ready for the witnessing stage. At this stage you are just the observer, your peace and happiness don't come from outside or by changing substances outside, then you are ready for *Niyativāda* or *kramabaddha paryāy* but one should understand that having faith in *Niyativāda* requires a lot of *puruṣārtha*, right perception to correct your belief system. So instead of debating on which is true, one should understand that these are two stages of life. In the beginning, you need to do a lot of *puruṣārtha* and at the end, it is a sign of victory that you don't need to change anything for your happiness, and whatever comes according to destiny is acceptable and enjoyable for you. It is called firm understanding of *Niyativāda*. The Enlightened Ones are in the *Samādhi* state always, but what had made them to remain in *Samādhi* state always. The answer is - a lot of *puruṣārtha*. *Samādhi* state means just observe what is happening, that is, *Niyativāda*, but one important thing that has made them reach that state is tremendous spiritual endeavor.

One other aspect of using right philosophy at the right time (*Niyativāda* or *puruṣārtha*) is, by the example of our legs. We are free to lift one leg but after lifting one leg, we are bound to face the consequences. Like we are free to do karma, here *puruṣārtha*, either right or wrong, but once you do karma; you have to bear the fruits of that action. Here the understanding is, ***puruṣārtha* dictates *Niyativāda***.

According to *Niyativāda*, everything happens at the destined time and our endeavoring is of no use, which in turn is called fate, but here the question is, what decides our fate? Here two options would emerge.

1. God writes our fate.
2. We alone write our fate, but in the past.

We will deal with both the options in detail.

1. According to Jainism, Omnipotent God doesn't write our destiny, He remains in His pure state

2. This option is explained in Jainism as well both the theories, as in present, it is seen that everything is predetermined and events are piled up, coming to us without even consulting us!! This is fate. So we need to believe that every action would be determined by our past karmas, which is fate. *Niyativāda* itself promotes *puruṣārtha*, but it is not clearly seen because *puruṣārtha* has been done in our previous lives or in past and we shall reap fruits later (may be in this birth or next birth).

External events are not in our hands but the internal state is in our hand. External events are pre determined, and one not able to change or modify, but at the same time, not to have attachment with external circumstances - is *puruṣārtha* in itself. We are not identifying the preacher's real intention. Lord Mahavira showed karmic theory to the world, external events would occur as per the theory of karma (strict chronological order), and we need to be unaffected in any circumstances, either favorable or unfavorable, is *puruṣārtha*.

*Jina's* preaching is full of many view-points. Absolute view-point and relative or practical view point. It is true that everything happens at its stipulated time and with a strict chronological order. *Jina* also preached that while our karmas are in dormant state (*satta*), one can destroy majority of karmas by penance, which is kind of *puruṣārtha* only. So in any way, we cannot omit *puruṣārtha* in our spiritual practices, though it is true that everything is pre determined. In short, everything is destined but *puruṣārtha* is a key to unveil the destiny.

To sum up, a great saint and founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, Pujya Gurudev Shree Rakeshbhai told that, consider our life like a book, in which God has written chapters called destiny, but in that book God left some pages blank, expecting us to fill these pages through right endeavor (*puruṣārtha*). It is great learning from both

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1. Dr. U.K.Pungalia, *Philosophy and Spirituality of Shrimad Rajchandra*, Jaipur, Prakrit Bharati, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1996, Preface

the ideologies. Principles of Jainism propounded by Bhagwan Mahāvīra or principles of Buddhism laid by Gautam Buddha are equally applicable for determining *Niyativāda* or *puruṣārtha*, but one needs a spiritual mentor, who can unfold the mystery of Bhagwan's teachings.<sup>6</sup> Only through right endeavor, we can reach the witnessing state which in turn is called Niyati. *puruṣārtha* would fuel *Niyativāda* and *Niyativāda* blossoms in the presence of *puruṣārtha*. It is like two sides of a coin, one cannot neglect any part, as both ideologies have their own standpoint.

(Most of the part of this paper is taken from Discourses of Pujya Gurudevshree Rakeshbhai)

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## Socio-Economic Change in the Jain Community of Bundelkhand

Prof. Prakash C. Jain\*

This article summarises economic, educational, socio-cultural and religious changes in the Jain community of Bundelkhand that occurred within a span of two-three generations. As detailed in the methodological section below, it is based on a larger sociological study on the same theme. How, why and to what extent these changes have affected the contemporary Jain community of Bundelkhand is the focus of this study. In order to do that the data obtained through a survey in the region are “compared” to two sets of past/historical referents: (i) Autobiography “*Meri Jeevan Gatha*” (*My Life Saga*) of Kshullak Ganesh Prasad Varni (1874-1961) which was written some time during the mid-1940s and first published in 1949. It details in narrative style the socio-economic and educational condition of the Bundelkhand Jain community of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and (ii) author’s lived experiences and observations as an adolescent and later on as a sociologist who was born and brought up in Saidpur village of the then Jhansi district, and subsequently studied for matriculation examination at Shri Varni Jain Inter College, Lalitpur during 1960-62. Since then although the author has been living outside the Bundelkhand region, scores of visits had been made during the past half a century to the various parts of the

region in order to meet family members, relatives and friends, and attend marriage and death ceremonies, etc.

- Bundelkhand is a culturally-homogeneous sub-region in central India. Officially it consists of seven districts of Uttar Pradesh and six districts of Madhya Pradesh. However the greater or cultural Bundelkhand extends to more than two dozen districts, mostly in Madhya Pradesh. Economically the region is highly dependent on agriculture and mining with very little development in educational, industrial and infrastructural sectors. Consequently, the region is characterised by high level of poverty and out-migration. With about 20 million population (18.5 million in 2011), the social composition of Bundelkhand is dominated by OBC and SC & ST communities. The level of urbanisation is relatively low and other demographic indicators about status of women, child mortality rate, education and healthcare facilities, etc. are not very encouraging. Bundelkhand has been home to Digambar Jainism since about the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The successive ruling dynasties of the region such as Maurya, Gupta, Pratihara, Parmar, Kachchhap, Kalchuri, Chandela and Bundela had given royal patronage in varying degrees and at different points of time to Jainism with the result that the Jain community has been flourishing in Bundelkhand ever since, and continues to do so even today. The Jains have been vitally integrated into the economic structure and socio-cultural life of the region. The great temples built by them at Khajuraho, Devgarh, Gwalior, Chanderi, Nainagiri and a large number of other places are eloquent testimony to the prosperity of the Jain community in the region. And this has been so in spite of the fact that in modern times they have always constituted a miniscule community in Bundelkhand. In 2011 census

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their population was enumerated at 148,612 persons, that is, about 0.8% of the region's total population.

Historically, Jains have constituted a unique economic niche for themselves in the Bundelkhand region which has been underdeveloped since the British colonial days. Uncertain climatic conditions, frequent famines, lack of irrigation facilities, un-egalitarian social structure, increasing population pressure on agricultural land have further added to the economic woes of Bundelkhand. Not surprisingly, until about a couple of generations ago the Jain community of Bundelkhand also suffered from some of these socio-economic characteristics of the region. Compared to the Jains of other parts of the country, a majority of Jains of Bundelkhand were relatively less affluent and progressive. The vast majority of them were involved in small-time trading and commercial activities. Their socio-religious attitude was characterised by conservatism and religious orthodoxy. However during the past couple of decades this over-all situation of the community has been changing for the better. The Jains of the region have been showing significant amount of predisposition to social change and modernisation, particularly in regard to education and occupational aspects. And this was precisely the focus of this study. Before we summarize our findings of the study, a brief account of research methodology would be in order.

### Research Methodology

The study was designed as an exploratory sociological study as there are very few such studies on the Jain community in India. Data for the study were collected during February and March 2014 through a questionnaire in the four core districts of Bundelkhand, namely Lalitpur, Jhansi, Sagar and Tikamgarh. The first two of them are located in U.P.-Bundelkhand

and last two in M.P.-Bundelkhand. Data were collected not only from the above mentioned four cities, but also from two tehsil (sub-district) towns (Mahroni and Madawara) and three villages (Saidpur, Sadumal and Birdha – all of them located in Lalitpur district). Additionally, the data were also collected from about twenty Bundelkhandi Jain respondents who have been living in different towns and cities of India outside the region. These places include Delhi, Jaipur, Varanasi, Nagpur, Pune, Bhopal, Indore, Ratlam, Badot, Morena, Shivpuri, etc. In all, 210 questionnaires were sent by mail/personally distributed to the respondents, of which 180 were found to be in order.

As per our survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents were male (96.1%), married (95.0%), Terapanthi Digambar Jains belonging to mainly *Parwar* (70%), and *Golapurv* (20%) castes. The rural-urban break-up of respondents was 31% and 69% respectively. A majority of respondents were highly educated with 23% of them having studied at Jain Sanskrit *vidyalayas*. Employment-wise 55% were employed in various kinds of services while the rest were engaged in family business and other activities. The income distribution was as follows: about 49% were earning Rs. 5 Lakhs or less, 28% between Rs. 5-10 lakhs, 11% between Rs. 10-15 lakhs and the rest were earning more than Rs. 15 lakhs – a few of them earning even Crores of Rupees.

### Demographic Changes

As per 2011 census the total population of Jains in Bundelkhand was 148.612 which is about 3.5% of the total Jain population in India. Of these 52% were male and 48% female. The level of urbanisation is 66% which is significantly lower than the Jain national average of 80%. The Jain sex ratio in Bundelkhand is 917 which is lower than the Jain national figure of 954 females per 1000 males. Data from our study also suggest the small size family norm of 4-5 members. Age of marriage also appears

to have gone up by a few years in recent decades. Our field work data also suggest a considerable number of boys beyond marriageable age remaining unmarried, particularly in villages and towns due to skewed sex ratio and other sociological factors. Among other demographic changes literacy (94.18%) and education among the Jains of Bundelkhand have certainly gone up which is reflected in increased number of them working/getting employed as professionals in public as well as private sectors within the region and outside it.

There appears to be a fair amount of out-migration of Jains, particularly of highly educated professionals from Bundelkhand as many of them happen to be getting education outside the region and thereby easily getting suitable jobs there itself. Even if they are willing to come back to their native places, the region is not developed enough to provide them suitable employment. A number of Bundelkhandi Jains have also settled abroad, particularly in North America.

### **Economic and Educational Changes**

In the economy of Bundelkhand Jains are more or less exclusively associated with whole sale as well as retail trade for centuries. While they still continue to dominate these sectors, newer economic and occupational opportunities have also been opened up for them during the past few decades. To begin with, trade and commercial activities have expanded to include newer products and services related to construction and housing, mechanisation of agriculture, irrigation, information technology, processed and fast food, etc. Thus quite a number of Jains have shifted to wholesale and retail sale of hardware, water pumps, tractor parts, photocopiers, mobiles, TV sets, ACs, washing machines, motor cycles parts and so on. In the textile sector readymade garments have emerged as major items of trade in both rural and urban areas. Thus trading activities have gone beyond supplying only household and provision goods, and in the

Bundelkhand region the Jains appear to have taken full advantage of this transformation.

Besides expanding and consolidating their class position as traders, some of the Jains have moved to entrepreneurship in areas like flour, rice and dal mills, saw mills, manufacturing of readymade garments and school uniforms, operation of petrol pumps, buses and trucks, etc. A few of them have also gone into taking up contracts for construction of bridges, roads and housing colonies.

Crystallisation and consolidation as a class segment of highly educated professionals is another development that has taken place among the Jains of Bundelkhand during the past three-four decades. Earlier, this class segment was confined to only male school and college teachers, village land record-keepers (*lekhpāls*), middle-ranked government servants, and a minuscule number of engineers, doctors and lawyers. Today however, it has not only expanded multi-fold but also includes university professors, information technology personnel, business management and banking professionals, etc. As already mentioned, about 55% of our respondents were working as professionals and in service sector. During the past one hundred years or so the role of Jain Sanskrit *vidyālayas* in raising three or four generations of traditional Jain scholars (*Paṇḍits*) and in contributing towards the growth of college and university teachers of Jain Philosophy and Religion, Indology, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Hindi languages has been remarkably significant.

Income levels of Jains in Bundelkhand have gone up during the past couple of decades. This is clearly reflected in better living standards, increased use of home appliances and consumer goods such as refrigerators, cooking gas cylinders, washing machines, motor cycles, etc., better diet and better housing facilities in rural as well as urban areas. A vast majority of Jains in

Bundelkhand now have their own *pucca* houses equipped with in-house toilet facilities.

### Social Structural Changes

The changes in economic and occupational structures logically takes us to consider the social and economic stratification systems in the Jain community of Bundelkhand. Although social stratification within the community continues to remain more or less intact as a three-tier hierarchical system consisting of *dhanikvarga* (affluent class), *tyāgivargā* (class of renouncers) and *janasadhāranā* (ordinary people), the economic stratification of the community is increasingly acquiring the form of a modern class system. This is obviously based on modern education, occupations, income/wealth and the attendant life style and the patterns of consumption. In the process the traditional hierarchy of Shrimant Seth, Seth, Singhai, etc. no longer correspond with the emerging economic stratification system and therefore losing its relevance. The community has never been economically homogeneous; it has been quite stratified and continues to be so in spite of undergoing modernisation and social change, and becoming relatively affluent by local Bundelkhand standards.

In spite of practising a distinct religion for centuries Jain community has so much affinity with the wider Hindu society that the Jains are often considered as upper caste Hindus. Until about a century ago a large majority of Jains themselves believed in this. This self-perception began to change with the activities of Shri Bharatvarshiya Digambar Jain Mahasabha (1895) and other regional and caste associations established during early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then the change was further strengthened over the decades by the consistent efforts of the Jain community leaders, *Paṇḍits*, ethnic press as well as *munis* and *tyāgis* with the result that today a great majority of Jains consider themselves as distinct and separate religious minority – something which the British Indian

government had recognised by enumerating the Jains as a distinct religious minority since the 1881 census, and which the Government of India confirmed by eventually granting them the minority status in January 2014. Although the Jains being a relatively affluent community do not require economic benefits or reservations in government jobs, the minority status accorded to them would certainly go a long way in protecting the Jain cultural heritage.

Increased education, occupational mobility and associated out-migration of Jains from Bundelkhand have deeply affected their key social structural institutions such as family, kinship and marriage, caste and class. In Bundelkhand, as in other parts of India, not only the kinship system has weakened, the structure and functions of family have also undergone changes which can be summarised as follows: small size, assertion of individuality in regard to choice of education and career and choice of marriage partner, democratisation of family relations, decrease in discrimination against girl child, etc. An ever increasing number of Jains have begun to realize that daughters are more dependable and reliable than sons, particularly in times of healthcare emergency. Even otherwise, unlike their Hindu counterparts, the Jains were not required to have a son for any religious or spiritual purpose.

Of all the social institutions, perhaps the marriage has undergone the most changes in the Jain community of Bundelkhand. To begin with, “poisonous” or “bad” marriages (*viṣavivāha*) in the form of child marriage, polygamy and age-incompatible marriages that were prevalent until about the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have almost disappeared. Among other changes mention must be made of significant increase in the number of inter-religion and inter-caste marriages, acceptance of widow and divorcee remarriages and decrease in dowry demand. The duration of marriage ceremonies has been reduced from three-four days to about 24 hours or even less

over a period of about two generations. An increasing number of marriages are now solemnised by Jain *pandits*, and often during day time.

The system of arranged marriage has also undergone changes. Instead of marriage being arranged on one-to-one basis by family friends or relatives, most marriages today are arranged either through newspaper advertisements or increasingly by professional marriage agencies or marriage bureaus. Perhaps more radical change has occurred in regard to the customary bride groom's party going to bride's place for the marriage to get solemnised. In most cases this is no longer so; instead marriage now takes place at a mutually-agreed-upon place which often happens to be the groom's town or city. Depending on the mutual negotiations, the financial implications of this arrangement for both the parties vary accordingly. In most marriages expenditure on decoration and food has gone up many-folds in recent decades. In the process the specificity of Bundelkhandi style of Jain marriage has given way to Indian "filmi" style of marriage with the accompanying dance, music and multi-cuisine food, etc.

The social status of Jain women has undergone significant changes over the decades. Only two generations ago a large majority of women were either illiterate or were poorly educated. There was no question of their employment. Patriarchy as a social order prevailed and girls were routinely discriminated against in the Jain community; some of them were also subjected to "bad" marriages. Fortunately, all of this has now significantly changed for the better. Today Jain women are relatively free to have their say in the family, and to have choice in education, vocation and marriage. Not surprisingly, most Jain women have emerged as individuals capable of performing roles befitting a modern society. The problematic aspects of Jain women's life in Bundelkhand include skewed sex ratio (917 females per 1,000 males), lower work participation (about 11%), and practically

non-existent political participation, except voting exercise during national, regional or local elections. Notwithstanding the increased use of kitchen appliances and other gadgets, their share in the burden of household chores has also not lessened significantly.

### **Jain Way of Life**

Most Jains of Bundelkhand are the followers of *Terāpanthi* Digambar Jainism which is more conservative than its *Biṣapanthi* counterpart. In spite of challenges to Terapanth orthodoxy by the emergent Kanjii panthic ideology, religious orthodoxy continues to prevail in the Jain community of Bundelkhand. Complete devotion to Jindeva, scriptures and ascetics is the hall mark of this orthodoxy. Not surprisingly, almost all the respondents (97%) believe that Jainism is the best of all religions. With the spread of education neo-orthodoxy is also gaining ground among the new generation of scholars and lay Jains who often interpret Jainism as a scientific religion. Thus as per our sample, about 84% of the followers of Jainism are orthodox/neo-orthodox; only about 15% of them can be considered as heterodox – simultaneously having faith in mainly Hindu gods and goddesses and/or worshiping family deities.

Our study suggests both continuity and change in various aspects of the Jain way of life in the region. One aspect of Jain way of life that has shown remarkable stability and continuity over perhaps the centuries is the routine of daily life (*dincharya*). This involves morning and early night visits to a Jain temple, meditation, contemplation and/or self-study of scriptures while inside the temple, use of cloth-strained water for drinking and cooking and taking dinner before sunset. These practices are widespread in the region. So much so that this daily routine is considered the very identity of a Jain. A daily visit to temple even for a few minutes is a must for Jains in the region; only in exceptional circumstances such as sickness it is avoided.

Celebrating Jain festivals, observing fast on auspicious occasions and visiting pilgrimage places are important indicators of Jain religiosity and the way of life. Thus almost all the Jains in Bundelkhand celebrate the 10-day Paryushanparva and a vast majority of them varyingly keep fast on this occasion. Again, almost all the Jains of Bundelkhand pay visits to both local/regional and national pilgrimage places. Every individual Jain aspires to visit some of the national pilgrimage centres like Sammedshikharji, Mahavirji and Girnarji at least once in their life-time.

Last but not the least, diet and dietary regulations on the day-to-day basis are very strictly observed by Jains of Bundelkhand. Apart from all non-vegetarian items including eggs, a number of vegetables such as garlic, onion, potato, *arvi*, brinjal, etc. are also not eaten by most of them. The overwhelming majority of Jains are not only teetotalers, they also do not consume any kinds of intoxicants. Honey is also avoided by many. Most Jain families in the region avoid taking food in market place, hotels and restaurants; instead they prefer to prepare most food items at home for reasons of purity, cleanliness and cloth-strained water.

Typical of a generational gap, the elders of the Jain community of Bundelkhand do not consider the younger generation as much religious and even socially responsible as they would have liked. A majority of our respondents echo this viewpoint and agree with the idea that the younger generation is generally indifferent towards religion which is reflected in their daily routine, food habits, attitude towards ascetics, etc. Reportedly, a very small number of youth all over the region have clandestinely taken to consuming alcohol and non-vegetarian food. Lack of care of the elderly members of the family, on the part of male youth is also regarded as the proof of this indifference. Their preoccupation with television, mobile phones and inter-net is mentioned as additional cause of concern. Not

surprisingly, a large majority of our respondents support the idea of strengthening moral education and training for youngsters through schools, moral educational/spiritual camps, etc.

To sum up, a comparative account of socio-economic change in various aspects of the Jain community of Bundelkhand clearly brings out the uneven nature of social change and development. Thus, economic, educational and occupational aspects have changed relatively much faster than socio-cultural and religious aspects. Needless to say, a few more systematic studies would be required in order to fully understand the course of social change in the Bundelkhand Jain community.

(This article is the summary and conclusion of a research project report on the same topic submitted to the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi by the author who worked as a Senior Research Fellow of the Council during 2013-15).

## Early Epigraphic Records of the Jains

Nirmal Baid\*

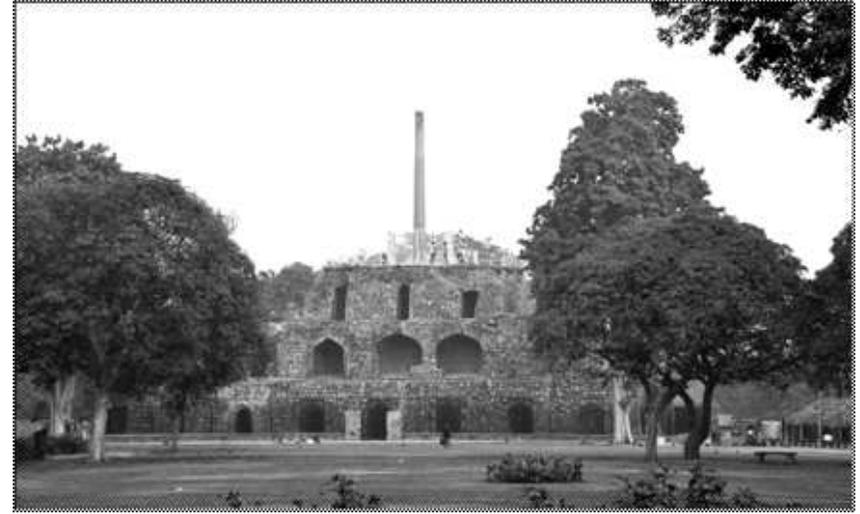
Mahavir attained nirvana in 527 BCE at the peak of his popularity, leaving behind a growing community of monks, nuns and followers as described in *Kalpa Sūtra*<sup>1</sup>. His disciples spread his teachings beyond Magadha, patronized by the kings of northern India including the Nandas and their successors, the Mauryas. At the end of second century BCE, a large number of Jain monks and lay people migrated from Magadha to other parts of India. This was perhaps fearing persecution from the Suṅgas who came to power after the Mauryas. Then, in the Khārvela period (172 BCE<sup>2</sup>), Jains enjoyed patronage of king Khārvela in Kalinga. In Kuṣāna period of first and second century CE, Jain community flourished in Mathura<sup>3</sup>.

I have been interested in researching the earliest epigraphical evidence that mentions some of the important Jain terms. First, I wanted to find the earliest written mention of the Jains. Second was to identify earliest epigraphical evidence of Mahāvīra, and lastly, wanted to find the oldest written *Namokar Mantra*, the most important prayer of the Jains. This paper presents a summary of the research.

### **The Nigganthas :**

Mauryan ruler Ashoka, 273-232 BCE, was a patron of the Buddhist doctrine, or *Dharma*. Ashoka's pillar edicts assert his desire to support spread of the *Dharma* throughout his kingdom. One of Ashoka's pillars is currently found in Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi, India.

The pillar is installed on a three story pyramidal building, which was specially commissioned for this purpose by Feroz Shah, the ruler of Delhi Sultanate in 14th century AD. Feroz Shah had the pillar transported from Topra, a town near present day Ambala. This 13-meter tall monolithic pillar is made of polished sandstone and has inscriptions in Brahmi script.

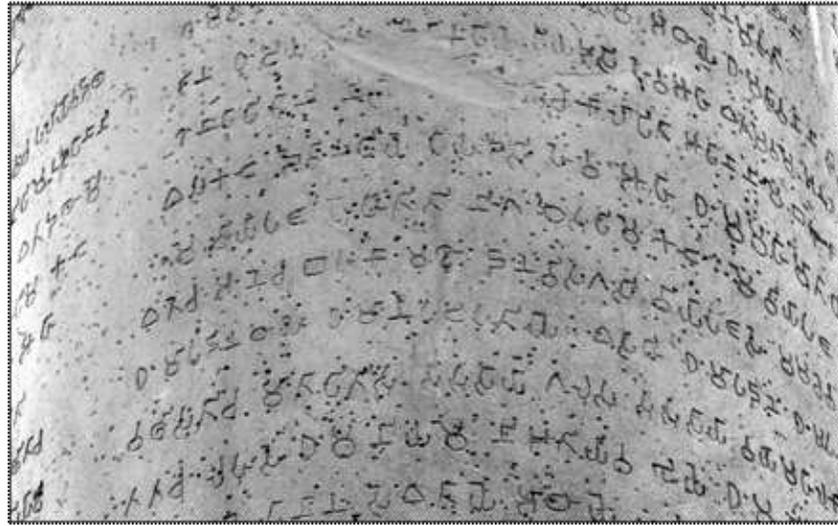


Ashokan Topra pillar © Nirmal Baid

Ashoka's pillars have six edicts describing his governing principles inscribed on them. In addition to the six edicts, the Topra pillar also has a seventh edict. The peculiar seventh edict, which is only found on this pillar, is inscribed around the pillar. It specifies the practicalities by which Ashoka promoted the *Dharma*.

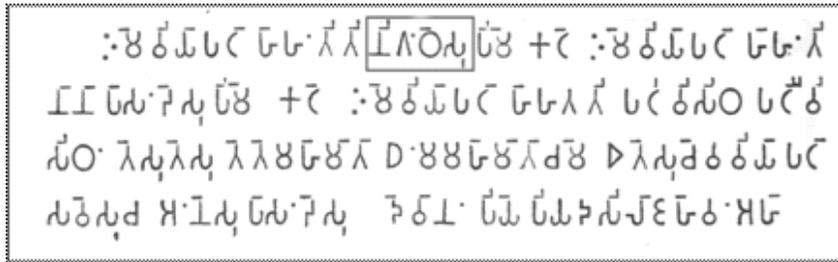
According to the seventh edict, Ashoka planted fruit trees, built water sheds and constructed rest houses along the high roads, to provide people the opportunity to practice Dharma. Ashoka appointed wisemen (*Mahāmātras*) to preach the Dharma. He also appointed Mahamatras to penetrate followers of major doctrines of the time – Brahmins, *Nigganthas* and Ajivikas.

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Inscriptions on the Topra pillar © Nirmal Baid

The line five of the seventh edict makes a mention of the Nigghanthas.

Line 5 of VII Ashokan Edict in Brahmi with the word Nigghantha in box<sup>4</sup>

A transliteration of this line in Roman script is as follows<sup>5</sup>:

*ime viyāpatā hohantiti; niganthesu pime kate, ime viyāpatā hohantiti : nān pāsandesu pime kate, ime viyāpatā hohantiti: pativisitha pativisitham tesu tesu te te mahāmātā dhammā mahāmātā cha me eteṣu cheva viyāpatā, saveṣu cha anesu pāsandesu. Devānāmpiye Piyadasi lājā hevam āhā:*

A partial translation of text in Line 4 and 5 roughly reads <sup>6</sup>,

*...those Dharma-Mahāmātras of mine are occupied with*

*various kinds of activities which are beneficial both to ascetics and to householders. ...Similarly I have arranged that some of them (Mahāmātras) to engage with the Nigghanthas ...*

Buddhist scriptures refer to Jains as *Nigghanthas*. Jacobi first arrived at this conclusion, and that the person mentioned as *Nigghantha Nāputta* in the Buddhist texts is the same personage as Mahāvīra<sup>7</sup>.

According to the sixth pillar edict, Ashoka began to issue edicts in twelve years after his coronation making these edicts to be dated about 257BC<sup>8</sup>. This makes appearance of word *Nigghanthesu* in line five of the seventh Ashokan edict, the oldest written mention of the Jains. The term *Nigghanthesu* is used as a vocative plural, indicative of Jain monastics.

#### The Navakāra Mantra :

After the Mauryas, Jains continued to flourish into the second century BC, as evidenced by the existence of the Jain caves in Udayagiri and Khandagiri outside Bhuvneshwara in Odisha. These caves were excavated as monasteries for Jain monks. Two of these caves known as Hathigumpha or the Elephant cave are of importance to the Jain archeology as they bear important inscriptions on their walls.



Inscriptions inside the Hathigumpha caves. © manishjaishree.com



of the Kusanas Mathura became the most important city of northern India. In Mathura, a large prosperous Jain community existed during the first and second century of the common era. Most of the evidence for this comes from an archeological site known as Kaṅkali Tilā.

Many Jain relics were found at the Kankali Tila including one Jain stupa, two temples, and many Āyāgapatas (Image below<sup>17</sup>), or tablets of homage with inscriptions recording dedication to the Arhats. Some of these inscriptions bear dates between year 5 and year 98 of the Kusana era<sup>18</sup>. Since there is no agreement on the year in which the Kushan era started, these Mathura relics can only be approximated to be from first two centuries of the common era.



An Āyāgapata from the Kaṅkali Tilā, Mathura.<sup>17</sup>

It is also worth noting that in his report, Growse, who excavated the Kaṅkali Tilā, mentioned that the mound was also called Jaini Tila, though without any additional reference<sup>19</sup>.

Almost 90 Jain inscriptions have been found from the Mathura excavations. Many bear names of the Tīrthaṅkaras as well as references to terms like Jina, Arhat etc. Almost 13 of these mention Vardhamāna or Mahāvīra<sup>20</sup>. From around first century these tablet and stone inscriptions begin with “Adorations to Arhat Vardhamāna” or “Adorations to Arhat Mahāvīra”.

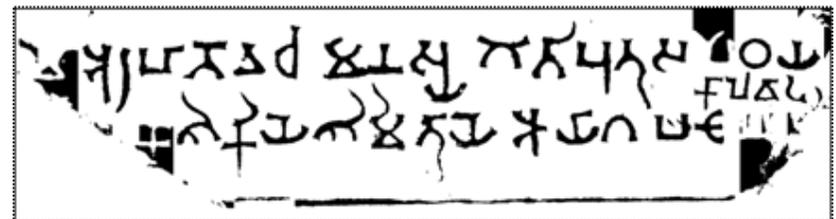
Following are two images<sup>21</sup> of inscriptions from Sculpted tone slabs, now located in Lucknow Museum, that mention name of Mahāvīra. Transliteration<sup>20</sup> and translations follows the images.



inscriptions on stone slab from Kaṅkali Tilā with mention of Mahāvīra<sup>21</sup>

*namo arahato mahāvīrasa mathuraka ... lavaadasa [sa] ... bhayaye ... va ... itaye [ayaagapato]*<sup>22</sup>.

*Adorations to the Arhat Mahāvīra. A tablet of homage (ayagapata the gift) of ...ita, wife of ..lavada(?), an inhabitant of Mathura*<sup>22</sup>.



Inscriptions on stone slab from Kaṅkali Tilā with mention of Vardhamāna<sup>21</sup>

*namo arahato vardhamānasya gotiputrasa pothaya-saka ... alavalsa... Kosikiye Simitraye aayagapato prati(thapito)*<sup>23</sup>

Adorations to the Arhat Vardhamāna! A tablet of homage was set up by Sivamitra (of) the Kausika (family) (wife) of Gotiputra, a black serpent for the Pothayas and Sakas<sup>23</sup>.

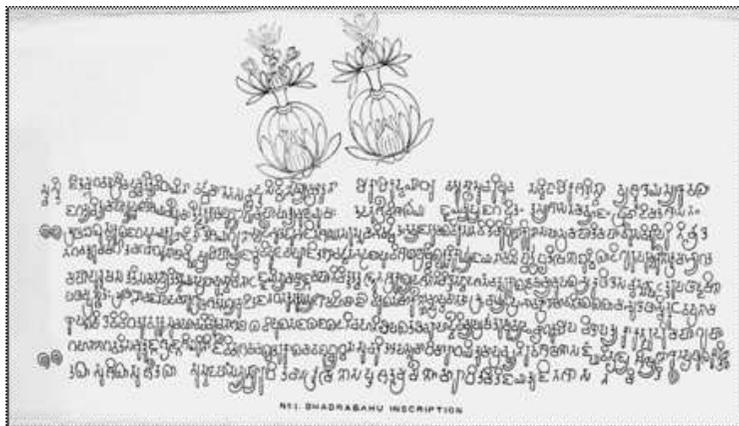
These first century CE inscriptions make the oldest written mention of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the 24th Tīrthaṅkar of Jains.

### The Last Word :

The third century BCE mention of the Jains, the second century BCE cave writing of the Navakāra Mantra, and the first century CE mention of Mahāvīra, represent some of the oldest and most important extant epigraphical records of the Jains.

I highly relied on the epigraphical work, including the transliterations and translations from the last two centuries to substantiate this work,. However, I did not come across work that directly stated that these epigraphs were the oldest mention of the important Jain terms.

I feel this article will not be complete without a reference to the Bhadrabāhu inscription found at Chandragiri in Shravanabelgola. The inscriptions are dated to be no later than 400AD<sup>25</sup>.



Bhadrabāhu inscriptions at Chandragiri in Shravanabelgola.<sup>24</sup>

A partial translation of the Bhadrabāhu inscription is as below<sup>26</sup>.

*...after Mahāvīra, (the succession of disciples was) Gautama gaṇadhara, his personal disciple Lohārya, Jambu, Viṣṇu-deva, Aparājita, Govardhana, Bhadrabāhu, Viśākha, Proshthila, Kṣatrikarya, Jayanama, Siddhārtha, Dhritshena, Buddhila and other gurus. Bhadrabāhu... had acquired the essence of knowledge, having, by power of discovering the past, present and future, foretold in Ujjayini a period of twelve-year of famine. - the whole of Sangha, leaving the northern regions, took their way to the South (Dakṣiṇapatha) ...*

In conclusion, these epigraphs are important records of the Jain history as they represent the oldest mention of the Jains, Mahāvīra, the Navakāra Mantra, a listing of the lineage of disciples after Mahāvīra's nirvana as well as a record of the migration of Jains to the South.

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## ***Anekântavâda* : Some observations**

*Dr Anupam Jash*

*anekântavâda* is the distinctive feature of the Jaina philosophy. Some scholars have tried to trace the doctrine in some of the speculations of the Vedic or the Buddhists systems. But we have shown in this study that the *anekântavâda* is chronologically underivable from the principles of any other system. It is thus, as Harisatyâ Bhattacharyya says, 'a unique doctrine of the Jaina philosophy and it is its original contribution to the course of the world thought'<sup>1</sup>.

We may briefly examine the standpoint of *anekântavâda* and *syâdvâda* in the perspective of some Indian philosophical theories as follows:

With regard to the nature and status of ultimate reality the Vedânta proposes monistic theory; the Sâmkhya, dualistic theory; and the Bauddha and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika are in favour of pluralistic theory from their own ontological standpoints. One may accept the Vedântic view that the substance or reality as the basis of all phenomena in ultimately one and eternal. But one cannot ignore the fundamental difference between the conscious and the unconscious in the phenomena, so he may also accepts that the substance or reality is not one, but two. Again if he closely looks at the phenomenal world he may realize the exclusive difference the souls, the material bodies, mind, time, space etc. as a result he may accepts that the reality or substance is neither one nor two, but many. The differences among the three views about the ultimate reality are thus the difference of ontological standpoints only. The different schools of philosophy oppose

each other only because as the Jainas points out that each of them regards its own ontological standpoint as the only possible standpoint and forgets that there may be other standpoints as well. So the Jaina philosopher does not hesitate to propose from the standpoint of their relativistic ontology and dialectical logic of *syâdvâda*: 1. The ultimate reality is one (*Vedânta*) in some respect; 2. It is dual (*Sâmkhya*) in some respect; 3. It is many-fold (*Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*) in some respect. In the Jaina *anekântavâda-syâdvâda* 'the validity-to-some-extent', to which each of above schools can rightly lay claim, is acknowledged while their mutual oppositions are avoided. From such review it may be upheld that different philosophical systems taking their absolutist position may leap back from it and take a course essentially on the line of *anekântavâda-syâdvâda* in order to make their theories understandable.

'The Jainas hold' as S. N. dasgupta<sup>2</sup> opines, 'that the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, the *Vedânta*, the *Sâmkhya* and the Buddhists have each tried to interpret and systematize experience from one of the above points of view, and each regards the interpretations from his point of view as being absolutely true to the exclusion of all other points of view. This is their error (*nayâbhâsa*), for each standpoint represents only one of the many points of view from which a thing can be looked at. The affirmations from any point of view are thus true in a limited sense and under limited conditions. Infinite numbers of affirmations may be made of things from infinite points of view. Affirmations or judgments according to any *naya* or standpoint cannot therefore be absolute, for even contrary affirmations of the very self same things may be held to be true from other point of view. The truth of each affirmation is thus only conditional, and inconceivable from the absolute point of view. To guarantee correctness therefore each affirmation should be preceded by the phrase '*syât*'.'

The Jaina philosophers, in a remote past, developed a new logic and ontology to solve the problem of the rivalry of all philosophical systems. 'In their *nayavâda*', says Sibajiban Bhattacharyya<sup>3</sup>, 'they presented their

solutions of the metaphysical problem by showing how different philosophical systems can all be seen to be valid from their own points of view. Recently K. C. Bhattacharyya developed the idea further to establish his theory of alternative forms of absolute — a theory which Kalidas Bhattacharyya called ‘*anekāntavedānta*’.

It is a matter of high appreciation that the logic of *anekānta* based *syādvāda* is so influential in the area of philosophical logic as according to some modern Indian scholars this logic can be translated in the language of modal logic and some other forms of modern western logic. In fact, being, non-being and indefinite or indescribable — the three categories of western logic are equally available in some sense or other in all the Jaina formulations of any and every kind of judgment following the theory of *syāt*. There is no universal and absolute position or negation, and all judgments are valid only conditionally. ‘The relation of the *naya* doctrine with the *syādvāda* doctrine’ S. N. Dasgupta<sup>4</sup> says, ‘therefore this, that for any judgment according to any every *naya* there are as many alternatives as are indicated by *syādvāda*. The validity of such a judgment is therefore only conditional’.

That is why we find that B. K. Matilal’s approach to *syāt* statements involving the use of truth-functional propositional logic and the logic of quantification is strictly conditional. Although we have examined Matilal’s conditional interpretation of a *syāt*-predication in the *saptabhaṅgīnaya* and commented after the view of Gokhale that of interpretation were right, its consequences would be devastating for the Jaina philosophy as a whole.

Yet we cannot forget Matilal’s sincere attempts to convert the ancient logic of the Jaina into some form of modern symbolic logic of the west.

We have found that the *anekāntavāda* is still relevant in modern times and if we may make a sincere survey of the applications of this theory in various sphere of ones practical life. So it may rightly be said that the Jaina philosophy of *anekānta* has surpassed its theoretical boundary and reached our practical life to enlighten and enliven it with humanism. We

may see that each and every burning problem in the social, political, and religious domain either in a nation or in the world can be solved by the application of *anekāntavāda*. There is not a single field where *anekāntavāda* cannot be applicable. So, *anekāntavāda* is the best way of life. It is the supreme technique for management of quality of life.

Dr. Satkari Mookherjee says, ‘*anekānta* affirms the possibility of diverse attributes in a unitary entity. Strictly speaking, a thing is neither an absolute unity nor split up into an irreconcilable plurality. It is both unity and plurality of aspects’<sup>5</sup>. To add the words of Dayananda Bhargava to Dr. Mookherjee sayings: ‘this wider outlook of *anekānta* “avoids quarrels, which lead to marital conflicts and confrontations”<sup>6</sup>.

It is good to survey how Indian tradition, from *Ṛgveda* to Ramakrishna, have looked at this problem. The *Ṛgveda* has a well-known verse: ‘It is called *Indra*, *Mitra*, *Varuṇa* and *Agni*, and also *Garurātman*, the lovely-winged in heaven. The real is one, though known by different names (*ekamśadviprāvahudhāvadanti*)’<sup>7</sup>. The mystic saint Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), who had tried successively Hindu, Muslim and Christian symbols as means of his *sādhanā*, and compared in a parable the various religions to the *ghāts* (banks or bathing places) around the same tank<sup>8</sup>. The Muslims take water from one *ghāt* and call it ‘*pāni*’, while the Hindus taking water from another *ghāt*, call it ‘*jal*’, and the Christians use a third *ghāt* and take what they call ‘water’. Though names are different, it is the same water. Swami Vivekananda spreads this doctrine of the equality of all religions and expected a universal religion all-over the world. Religions are like various rivers all leading to the sea. He said: ‘there never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never existed many religions, there is only the one. One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this religion is expressing itself in various ways’<sup>9</sup>. like ‘so many rivers, having their source in different mountains, roll down, crooked or straight, and at last come to the ocean – so all these various creeds and religions, taking their start from different standpoints at last come unto thee’<sup>10</sup>. This

is the concept of tolerance embodied in Indian culture. Jaina doctrine of non-onesidedness (*anekānta*) provides a strong philosophical support to the concept of tolerance.

Ethical principles of tolerance in various forms found in the *Veda* and *Upanisads*, in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, in the *Dharmaśāstras*, in the philosophical literatures, in the teachings of Kabir, Guru Nanak, Sri Caitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and others in the history of Indian culture. This unique trend is as old as the Vedas and undoubtedly forms an integral part of Indian culture from time immemorial. The famous Vedic saying we repeat, '*ekamsadviprābahudhāvadanti*' (one and the same reality is called by various names by the wise) provides the basis for universal tolerance and catholicity of outlook of Indian culture in general. And this attitude of 'tolerance', says N. Subrahmanian<sup>11</sup>, stands for 'an attitude of mind and indicates a virtue bordering on graceful acceptance of the different and even the hostile; but in ordinary usage it also slightly smacks of supercilious condescension'. Viewing tolerance as the culture of peace, we may say that Jaina theory of *anekānta* is also a culture of peace, which contributes to the co-existence of diverse points of view and the tolerance of the value systems of others, and in this way it acts as the very root of the Indian tradition.

Tolerance, according to Jamal Khawaja<sup>12</sup>, is a basic attitude towards others or as a moral value, usually develops under the following conditions: (a) awareness of plural truth-claims, (b) experience of existential perplexity, (c) spiritual autonomy or inner freedom, (d) awareness of distinction between subjective and objective truth, (e) awareness of man's cultural contingency, (f) respect for other minds or persons (g) capacity for empathy. We can, therefore, say without hesitation that the Jaina *anekāntavāda* is that very philosophical thought which truly represents the spirit of tolerance pervading the wide cultural outlook of Indian tradition and which appears to provide a strong philosophical support to the ideology of tolerance.

In fine following A. N. Upadhye we may say that the Jaina philosophers have taken the fullest advantage of *anekāntavāda* not only in building the system by a judicious search and balance of various viewpoints, but also in understanding sympathetically the views of others from which they differs and appreciating why there is difference between the two. This analytical approach to reality has saved the mankind from extremism, dogmatism and fanaticism and has further bred in him remarkable intellectual tolerance a rare virtue indeed<sup>13</sup>. *Anekānta* view is not skepticism, because it is not based on doubt and distrust, it is not solipsism, because it is based on an objective determination of things. It presents a catholic approach to the problems of life, T. G. Kalghatgi<sup>14</sup> says. Following Ramakant Sinari<sup>15</sup>, we may say that, the Jaina theory of *anekānta* provides the culture of peace as a norm of conduct, an ideology at work. It can be the basis of the highest democratic and liberal values, viz., the coexistence of the diverse points of view, the habit of understanding and tolerance in one concerning the other paradigm and value scheme, the unconditional rejection of force in all inter-subjective, inter-communal and inter-national dealings, and the brotherhood among all without any injury by one to the dignity of the other. The humanistic message of Jainism thus may come to our life in the philosophical framework of a simple, easily understandable ever-living theory- *anekāntavāda*.

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### “Jaina relativism and relativity physics”

by Jayant Burde : A Review

Dr Bikash Chakraborty\*

The book “Jaina relativism and relativity physics” by Jayant Burde is one of the pioneering work to find the basis of Jaina philosophy particularly *anekāntavāda* and *syādvāda* in the realm of modern science. He proposed the book by firmly pin pointing our misconception about the way general people relates jaina relativism with Einstein relativity of physics. Then he firmly establishes the connection of jaina relativism called *anekāntavāda* and *syādvāda* which are the main pillars of jaina philosophy and religion with the modern science like Einstein’s relativity, quantum theory, and uncertainty principle.

He divided the book in fourteen chapters and in each chapter he beautifully explains the various aspects of jaina philosophy in a lucid way by giving interesting examples and also explains the hard core theory of physics without using mathematics with the help of simple diagrams and examples keeping in mind the general readers.

In the introductory chapter he correctly explains the original meaning of ‘absolutism’ and ‘non-absolutism’ philosophy of *anekāntavāda* and *syādvāda* and then the concept of absoluteness in the realm of Einstein theory of special relativity.

Then a brief history of Jainism, the religion and the philosophy is given to understand a general people to feel the culture, socio economic

background of Jainism. The fundamental philosophy of Jainism like *ahimsā*, meaning of soul, *nirvāṇa* etc. is also beautifully explained.

In the third chapter what is meant by eternal mind and knowledge from the point of view of jaina philosophy is given in a very lucid way. The meaning of ‘identity’, ‘the law of contradiction’, and ‘the law of excluded’ in the context of *anekāntavāda* of jaina philosophy is well explained.

The Jains believes in non-absolutism, and how *anekāntavāda* a sevenfold prediction called *saptabhaṅgī*, gives a complete meaning of non-absolutism in reality is well explained by giving thoughtful examples for each sevenfold prediction in the fourth chapter. Here also the interpretation of the word *avaktavya* following the philosophy of *saptabhaṅgī* is given in a thoughtful way.

The doctrine of syadvada and *nayavāda* is discussed in the fifth chapter with some criticism of *syādvāda*. The seven points of *nayavada* is also well illustrated here.

The Jainism and Buddhism and their close relationship is discussed in the sixth chapter of this book. The similarities of *anekāntavāda* of Jainism and also their core difference i.e. buddhist’s quartet and jaina’s septet, are well mentioned in this chapter.

What kind of logic is the doctrine of *anekānta* or *syādvāda* of jaina’s philosophy, is beautifully explained in this book by taking reference of some eminent scholars. Whether it is justified or not to say *syādvāda* or *nayavada* as a many valued logic system is explained in great detail. To explain the philosophy of *sapatbhaṅgī* by modal logic or conditional statement or model of existential quantifier by various researchers are also presented here. He also showed that *sapatbhaṅgī* may be explained by pure mathematics of relational calculus in a very promising way.

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The journey of physics from Galilean relativity of physics to Einstein relativity of physics is discussed in chapter eight and nine. The foundation of Einstein special theory of relativity by gradually making the concept of electromagnetic waves, field, Newton's laws, and ether drag hypothesis for a lay man is done in a very simple way. He illustrates the hard core concepts of Einstein special theory of relativity such as time dialation, length contraction, minkowski's space-time, light cone, addition of velocity and Poincare motion by using some very simple diagrams in most convincing way. Then he develops the interrelationship of the philosophy of *anekāntavāda* with the Einstein special theory of relativity and also general theory of relativity. From the concept of modern science he undoubtedly established the philosophy of non-absolutism of jaina philosophy. The philosophy of non-absolutism is also seen in nature and established by modern science in the form of Heisenberg uncertainty principle, existence of elementary particles, virtual particles like neutrino etc.

At last he rightly said that the core philosophy of *anekanta* or *syādvāda*, by making a true philosophical analysis of *saptabhaṅgī* with some beautiful practical examples, is consistent with modern scientific thought. The main philosophy of Jainism, *ahimsā* is also very relevant in the recent socio economic status of the world in a multi-dimensional way.

## JAIN BHAWAN : ITS AIMS AND OBJECTS

Since the establishment of the Jain Bhawan in 1945 in the Burra Bazar area of Calcutta by eminent members of Jain Community, the Jain Bhawan has kept the stream of Jain philosophy and religion flowing steadily in eastern India for the last over fiftyeight years. The objectives of this institution are the following:

1. To establish the greatness of Jainism in the world rationally and to spread its glory in the light of new knowledge.
2. To develop intellectual, moral and literary pursuits in the society.
3. To impart lessons on Jainism among the people of the country.
4. To encourage research on Jain Religion and Philosophy.

To achieve these goals, the Jain Bhawan runs the following programmes in various fields.

### 1. School:

To spread the light of education the Bhawan runs a school, the Jain Shikshalaya, which imparts education to students in accordance with the syllabi prescribed by the West Bengal Board. Moral education forms a necessary part of the curricula followed by the school. It has on its roll about 550 students and 25 teachers.

### 2. Vocational and Physical Classes:

Accepting the demands of the modern times and the need to equip the students to face the world suitably, it conducts vocational and physical activity classes. Classes on traditional crafts like tailoring, stitching and embroidery and other fine arts along with Judo, Karate and Yoga are run throughout the year, not just for its own students, but for outsiders as well. They are very popular amongst the ladies of Burra Bazar of Calcutta.

### 3. Library:

“Education and knowledge are at the core of all round the development of an individual. Hence the pursuit of these should be the sole aim of life”. Keeping this philosophy in mind a library was established on the premises of the Bhawan, with more than 10,000 books on Jainism, its literature and philosophy and about 3,000 rare manuscripts, the library is truly a treasure trove. A list of such books and manuscripts can be obtained from the library.

### 4. Periodicals and Journals:

To keep the members abreast of contemporary thinking in the field of religion the library subscribes to about 100 (one hundred) quarterly, monthly and weekly periodicals from different parts of the world. These can be issued to members interested in the study of Jainism.

### 5. Journals:

Realising that there is a need for reasearch on Jainism and that scholarly knowledge needs to be made public, the Bhawan in its role as a research institution brings out three periodicals: *Jain Journal* in English, *Titthayara* in Hindi and *Śramaṇa* in Bengali. In 37 years of its publication, the Jain Journal has carved out a *niche* for itself in the field and has received universal acclaim. The Bengali journal *Śramaṇa*, which is being published for thirty year, has become a prominent channel for the sbvgftr54pread of Jain philosophy in West Bengal. This is the only Journal in Bengali which deals exclusively with

matters concerning any aspects of Jainism. Both the Journals are edited by a renowned scholar Professor Dr Satya Ranjan Banerjee of Calcutta University. The *Jain Journal* and *Śramaṇa* for over thirty seven and thirty years respectively have proved beyond doubt that these Journals are in great demand for its quality and contents. The *Jain Journal* is highly acclaimed by foreign scholars. The same can be said about the Hindi journal *Titthayara* which is edited by Mrs Lata Bothra. In April this year it entered its 25th year of publication. Needless to say that these journals have played a key-role in propagating Jain literature and philosophy. Progressive in nature, these have crossed many milestones and are poised to cross many more.

#### 6. Seminars and Symposia :

The Bhawan organises seminars and symposia on Jain philosophy, literature and the Jain way of life, from time to time. Eminent scholars, laureates, professors etc. are invited to enlighten the audience with their discourse. Exchange of ideas, news and views are the integral parts of such programmes.

#### 7. Scholarships to researchers :

The Bhawan also grants scholarships to the researchers of Jain philosophy apart from the above mentioned academic and scholastic activities.

#### 8. Publications:

The Bhawan also publishes books and papers on Jainism and Jain philosophy. Some of its prestigious publications are :

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- Praśnottare Jaina-dharma (in Bengali) (Jain religion by questions and answers).
- Weber's Sacred Literature of the Jains.
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#### 9. A Computer Centre :

To achieve a self-reliance in the field of education, a Computer training centre was opened at the Jain Bhawan in February 1998. This important and welcome step will enable us to establish links with the best educational and cultural organisations of the world. With the help of e-mail, internet and website, we can help propagate Jainism throughout the world. Communications with other similar organisations will enrich our own knowledge. Besides the knowledge of programming and graphics, this computer training will equip our students to shape their tomorrows.

#### 10. Research :

It is, in fact, a premiere institution for research in Prakrit and Jainism, and it satisfies the thirst of many researchers. To promote the study of Jainism in this country, the Jain Bhawan runs a research centre in the name of *Jainology and Prakrit Research Institute* and encourages students to do research on any aspects of Jainism.

In a society infested with contradictions and violence, the Jain Bhawan acts as a philosopher and guide and shows the right path.

Friends, you are now aware of the functions of this prestigious institution and its noble intentions. We, therefore, request you to encourage us heartily in our creative and scholastic endeavours. We do hope that you will continue to lend us your generous support as you have been doing for a long time.

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