

JAINISM'S SPECIAL  
GIFT  
TO MANKIND

*HH Acharyadeo*  
*Shri Vijay Bhuvanbhanusoorishwarji*

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## **Acharya Shri Bhuvanbhanu Surishwarji :** **A LIFE-SKETCH**

Born as Shri Kantibhai on the 6th day of the dark fortnight of **Chaitra** in Vikram Era 1968, in a highly cultured and distinguished family in Ahmedabad, the great acharya was the second son of Shri Chimanbhai and Smt. Bhuriben. He received academic education and passed, with distinction, a banking examination of England of those days and thus showed his in-born intellectual brilliance.

When he was a buoyant and brilliant youth of 23 years, overflowing with tremendous intellectual potentialities, he, alongwith his younger brother Popatlal, renounced the splendor of the worldly life and received initiation into the **Charitra Dharma** or monkhood at the holy feet of the venerable **Acharya Shri Prem Sûrîshwarji** on the 12th day of Poush Sud (the bright fortnight) in the year 1991 of the Vikram Era, in Chanasma, in Gujarat, and became **Muni Bhanu Vijayji**. His younger brother became **Muni Padma Vijayji**. Later, another younger brother of his became a Muni under the name of **Tarun Vijayji**, and his younger sister received the **Deeksha** and became Sadhvi **Hanskirtishriji**.

Muni Bhanu Vijayji made an indepth study of the Jain Agamas and the various sytems of Western philosophies; and he attained mastery over them. He also attained mastery over such branches of knowledge as logic (Nyâya Shâstra) and the like. While he was carrying out scriptural studies and teaching the scriptures, his innate talent for delivering elevating discourses also began to blossom forth into blissful dimensions; and a large number of educated youngsters became his disciples. He organized training camps (Shibirs) and through them he showed the way of discipline, culture and noble conduct to thousands of youngsters and inspired in them lofty spiritual ideals.

Besides carrying out such lofty tasks as scriptural studies and meditation, he established a permanent

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record by carrying out a special Jain spiritual austerity called **The Vardhaman Ayambil Tap**.

It was a unique experience to hear him singing devotional songs with his sweet but lofty voice, swaying with devotion, taking its origin from the depths of his poetic genius; or to see him writing out his reflections late into the night in the dim moonlight.

He was the spiritual head of nearly 200 disciples who are Sadhus or Monks; and he has written 100 books. Bhuvanbhanu Sûrishwarji became an **Āchārya** on the second day of Mrigashirsh Sud (bright fortnight) in the year 2029 of the Vikram Era. He carried out Padayatra in Bihar, Bangal, Gujarat, Maharashtra and U.P., walking thounds of miles and even at the age of 83 he had been showing the right path to thousands of people to attain serinity and falicity. His writings used to appear regularly in the columns of **Divya Darshan**, a Gujarati Weekly and thus the mighty stream of his lofty contemplation kept flowing ceaslessly. Acharya Shri Bhuvanbhanu Sûrishwarji blended in his personality the true qualities of a great monk, a great scholar, a great philosopher, a great author and a great preacher and lived a life totally dedicated to spirituality and the welfare of the community. Total devotion, dedication, austerities and absolute mental and physical tolerance were the qualities that marked his life as a Monk and as an Acharya. As a result of his principles of plain living and high thinking, he was completely in control of his faculties till the last moment of his life of 83 years and was mentally very agile till he breathed his last. The great sage left his mortal frame in Ahmedabad on the 19th of April 1993 - the same day on which he was born in Ahmedabad in 1911 (i.e. 19/4/1911). Though his physical frame turned to ashes on this day, the great Acharya remains and will remain alive in the memories of his devotees forever through his works, wisdom and through the inspiring as well as lofty vision of his life.

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## **Jainism's Special Gift to Mankind**

(His holiness Rev. Āchārya Shri Vijay Bhuvanabhanu Sūrishwaraji Mahārāja (who was then called Rev. Shri Bhanuvijayji Gānivarya) was proceeding to Calcutta from Jaipur, when, on his way, he was invited to give a lecture in the specious Lecture Hall of the Banaras Sanskrit University. This request was made to him on the 15th February 1970 by no less a person than the Vice-Chancellor of the Varanasi Sanskrit University. It was here, in the course of his lecture, that HH Acharya Shri Bhuvanabhānusūrishwaraji spoke about the gifts given to mankind by Jainism. It may be mentioned here that this lecture was attended by the then Vice-Chancellor of the above University as also by Pandit Badrinathji Shukla, Nyāya Vedantāchārya, M.A., the then Director of the Research Section, along with several scholars and Budhdhist monks and others. In short, the meeting was well-attended. The research director Pandit B.N. Shukla said, while introducing the speaker, that the Rev. Āchārya had attempted a deep study in the field of Navyanyāya, ancient Indian logic as well as Indian Philosophies and he was a well known philosopher and thinker himself. The monk had also studied the various phlosophies of the west and tried to synthesize the knowledge of philosophy from a scientific point of view. The Rev. monk would tell the gathering as to what special gift the Jain Religion has given to the world over and above what the other philosophies have given. It was interesting to mention that about 25 to 30

disciples of the Rev. seer were engaged in composing valuable literature in the form of thousands of verses on the philosophy of Karm at a place called Pindwada. He then requested the Rev. seer to deliver his lecture.

**A gist of the lecture given by the rev. saint on that day is given herebelow and this gist was prepared by Rev. saint Pannayas Shri Padmasen Vijayji (Maharaj)**

\* The great philosopher saint and an authority on ancient Indian logic, Rev. Mahopadhyay Shri Yashovijayji Maharaj says, towards the end of his well known work "Updesha Rahasya" as to what a man should do through his mind, speech, and body: "Taha Taha Payattiyavvam Jaha Jaha Ragaddosa Vilijjanti"(Prakrit)

**तह तह पयट्टियव्वं जह जह रागदोसा विलिज्जन्ति ।**

i.e. A man should indulge in such activities of the mind, of the speech and of the body that will help reduce and finally remove the passions of attachment and hatred which permeate and cling to his soul. The sage addresses humanity in these words specifically, because, the special gift of intelligence and the power of discrimination which man possesses, is not possessed by animals and birds, much less by insects like ants etc. Man is gifted with the ability to achieve the upliftment and sublimation of his soul and thus by virtue of the good use to which he can put his special intelligence, he can become the supreme soul from a mere individual soul. In other words, a man can



become a totally detached soul by radically destroying his attachments and hatred.

Now a question arises as to why the sages preached that we should gradually go on diminishing our attachments and distaste. Now, even horses and elephants can be taught or trained to do something and, in circuses, even dogs are taught and trained to attempt certain acts. Now a days, a great deal of clamour is heard for education -but which education, which training ? No one knows which education or training can be termed realistic and proper. It is very well said by a Western writer that man has changed this earth physically, chemically... and in many other ways, but the sorrowful thing is that he is himself utterly ignorant of the ultimate goal, as to why all this.

It is true that man has changed our earth in many ways as mentioned above but it is to be regretted that man does not know the ultimate purpose for which all this is done. This is the pitiable condition of our education in physical sciences. So why should we give such an education? What is to be achieved at the end? We have no idea, no thought at all about this. On the other hand, the spiritual teaching that the great sages and seers of the past have given is meant to achieve a definite purpose, a goal and this goal is to make man truly happy in this world and liberate him from the cycle of births and deaths through which he has been passing from endless ages. How can a man be happy ? Can wealth and sensual pleasures bring happiness ? Can he become happy by just filling his belly ? American Psychologists say that man is not a belly but a brain. This means

that it is not necessary that a man will be happy just because his belly is alright but the invariable rule is that a man will be happy if his mind is free from diseases. Today we see that a large number of wealthy people, who fill their bellies to their utmost satisfaction, are still miserable because of several problems, worries and agonies which pertain to their mind. This happens because their minds are not healthy. So it is settled that man's mind is the key to his happiness. It is the mind of the man which makes him special and which distinguishes him from the other animals.

It is quite true that what is beneficial for man is a mind which is free from mental diseases, which is balanced and which is engrossed in thinking of the ultimate goal. Man can achieve happiness both in this life and the life hereafter if his mind possesses the above characteristics. Interestingly, western thinkers have also given a thought as to how the mind of man can be made healthy. An American gentleman has written a book called "RETURN TO RELIGION" in which he tries to tell us why he returned to religion or spirituality. As per his statement made in this book, he used to go to a church upto the age of 20 years on account of his father's guidance and goodness; but he was filled with displeasure by the priest's rather monotonous recitation of the same words repeated in the same tone. He wondered how totally different this monotonous repetition of the priest was from the sweet musical melodies of the orchestra in a cinema ? This was enough to stop him from going to the church any more. But today he says, he has

started going to the church again after almost 25 years.

### **Why did the American writer decide to return to the Church?**

The American writer says the people might suspect that he must have decided to return to the Church because -

(1) He had grown old; hence, there was nothing else he could do except to go to the church. But as a matter of fact, he is 45 years old and remains young and energetic. (2) People may also wonder that he may be suffering from an ailment which cannot be cured so he might have started going to the church to reassure himself. But he tells us that this is not the case, for he is fully healthy. He has a physique which is hale and hearty. The people may think that (3) he may not be doing very well in his business, so what else could he do? Therefore, he started going to the church again but this is not true; for, he has a steady income from a successful business which can sustain him and his family very well. One may finally argue that (4) there may be internal quarrels and tensions prevailing in his house, so he went back to the church with a view to achieve peace of mind; but this is also not the case. In fact, his wife and his three sons have always added to his pleasure. Then why did he return to the church and the religion?

The American writer now reveals that he is a psychiatrist by profession and he has treated about 4000 cases of people who had severe problems that bothered their minds. In some cases, the wife complained that her husband did

not love her inspite of the fact that she served him to the best of her capacity. In another case, the owner of the big business had this complain that his manager behaved in a perverse way inspite of the fact that he was drawing a fat salary. Thus the doctor had to tackle so many complaints from his mentally ill patients. While examining these patients, the doctor took care to find out about the nature of the patient, about his ego, about his sympathies, about his selfishness and munificence. He also tried to figure out whether his patients appreciated the good qualities of others and rewarded others for their good work and so on. Thus, the doctor used to find out so many things about his patients and thus, understanding their nature, he would advise them to behave in a specific way. Thus for example, he pointed out that (1) Everyone is more interested in himself than in others, so in order to please people we should show more interest in others; (2) Each individual likes to hear about his good points and he is happy when you appreciate him. The doctor, therefore, advised that we should learn to appreciate the good qualities and good work of others; (3) Each one of us desires that the services that he has rendered should be appreciated, may be, by just two words of approval and affection or gratefulness. So, the doctor advised the patient that one should always use such words of appreciation for the work and service rendered by others as are appropriate on that occasion; (4) Every one of us feels happy when someone renders service to him. So we should always render services

from time to time in such a way that the persons served may become happy.

The doctor thus gave valuable advice to the patients and insisted that they should put this advice into practice with immediate effect. He also appealed to the patients that they should cultivate the qualities of softness, sweetness, care, kindness, simplicity, tolerance and justness.

### **The Psychiatrist's Ego**

The doctor adds that his patients, when they followed his tips regarding their nature and behaviour, achieved miraculous benefits and most of their complaints disappeared. Such patients would come again to thank the doctor. Thus, the doctor says, he succeeded in most of the cases but this resulted in the doctor developing an undesirable kind of ego that made him think that he had made tremendous progress in the science of mind and that he was gifted with a mind which readily suggested solutions to the problems of other people. That is to say, he suffered from a complex that he had a fertile brain. The result of this was that he always thought that other people rarely had such intuitions and insights so far as the problems of patients were concerned. He also held that in ages goneby, no one possessed such miraculous ability of the mind as he did. Thus, The doctor was overwhelmed by his own arrogance. But, on one occasion, it so happened that while he was sitting in his office, without any work, he started reading a page from the Bible which was lying on his table.

## **Mind Is The Dwelling Place of the Devil**

It is usual for a man to start reading anything that comes handy to him when he has no other work to do. He may even try to read from a waste paper or a scrap of newspaper thrown away after use when he has no one else to talk to. The kind of mind that man has got is such that if you do not give good, nutritious food to him he will be inclined towards eating junk. If he does not get to see something good, to speak something good, to hear something good or to do something good, then, he will indulge in seeing or speaking or hearing or thinking even the most undesirable things.

It is for this reason that the addage "An idle mind is devil's house" has gained currency.

Realising this characteristic of our mind, we should never leave our mind idle but we should always have something good to speak, something good to hear and something good to think of.

### **How did the Psychiatrist get rid of his pride ?**

The American writer has mentioned that when he read only one page of the Bible as he had nothing else to do, lo and behold, a micaculous thought dawned in his mind, instantly. He realised that what he had read in that single page of the Bible was precisely the kind of advice that he had been giving to his patients all the time. Then he read another page of the Bible and found similar advice. Thus, as he went on turning page after page of the Bible, he saw that the tips and bits of advice that he used to give to his patients as his

own, independent, intuitive thoughts and for which he was priding himself, the same invaluable tips and bits of advice were found stuffed in the bible - a religious scripture which was about 2000 years old. Now, the American doctor wondered how he could claim that what he had been giving by way of advice to his patients was his independent creation and also as to how far he was justified in his pride that the tips and advice were his own intuitive thoughts. This introspection on the part of the doctor resulted in making him realise that all his arrogance and pride were pointless and futile. From that moment onwards, a great deal of respect for the scriptures and the church, where these scriptures were recited, arose in his mind and he realised that this unique instrument of giving mankind peace should be assiduously cultivated and learnt.

### **Writer's Sorrow**

The American writer was filled with remorse because he had stopped listening to the scriptures which had prescribed ways and means for leading a happy and fulfilled life. He really believed that he was a great fool to have stopped going to the church which was a place of religion and a visit to which could make his life happy and his mind healthy. Moved by this deep sense of regret he immediately decided to visit the church regularly and to hear what the scriptures has to say. From the very next day, he started going to the Church. Not only this but he also narrated his own experience after listening to the speech given by the priest and explained to the people with the help of the cases of patients who had come to him

for treatment as to how wisely he had started going to the church and how unfailing was the advice of the Bible to make one's life really happy. This resulted in increasing the faith of the people both in the scripture and in the religion.

The American writer thus explains how, after a period of 25 years, he was motivated to return to religion on account of this reason. There was also another reason and that was that it is only people who run away from religion that are the ones who have complaints and miseries which they take for solution to another person. For, a really religious man generally does not have to shed tears before outsiders about his personal grievances. A really religious man is always bent upon giving justice to the opposite person and thus rests satisfied. For this reason he has no reason to complain against the other fellow.

### **Religious man reconciles his own mind in the following way**

(1) He will consider everything from the point of view of the other party.

(2) He will concede the right to the other person to have self-respect, personal interest and good reputation, like himself.

(3) If the other person is devoted to you and has been rendering service to you, then why should you not tolerate a slight disagreement or unfavourable behaviour from him? If profit is the aim in your commerce, then you must be prepared to give a little amount by way of commission....

(4) The treatment we get from others will be commensurate with what we deserve and as per



our destiny. If the balance of our merit and the earnings in the form of our pious deeds are very limited, how can we expect to get more comforts, love or rewards?

(5) The scripture teaches us that we should learn tolerance (which is a great virtue) as well as forbearance. It also teaches us that we should keep our love intact for mankind.

### **Why does the Christian faith not contemplate a world hereafter?**

It is true that the western scriptures and works on psychology have given sufficient thought for the happiness of mankind. However, this is limited to the present life only. In other words, there is no consideration for the infinite future life of an eternal soul. We are given to understand that Lord Jesus Christ had visited India and come into close contact with the religions and philosophy of India. Finding that there was much weighty material in Indian teachings, Lord Jesus Christ had started preaching the virtues of humanitarianism, human brotherhood and love, tolerance etc. His teachings might have contained some impressions about the soul, the world hereafter, etc., but about 400 years after Christ, a conference of the religious leaders and thinkers of the Western countries was held and there, perhaps, they thought that in the matter of thinking about the soul, the next life etc. they may not be able to compete with the cultures of India, or for some other reasons, it was decided in that conference that they should not entertain thoughts about an eternal soul transmigrating from one kind

of birth to another kind of birth, merit and demerit, passage to the other life etc. Thus in the Western religious literature the talk about the above subjects came to be closed. Hence there only remained the subjects of human brotherhood, love, tolerance etc. about which the western philosophers could talk.

This is what we have been given to understand and this information seems to be correct because the Western Philosophy deals with only these aspects but does not deal with the fact that the objects of senses and passions such as anger etc. are responsible for spoiling innumerable future lives of the soul and, therefore, they should be discarded. For this reason it is that, like in India, there is no discussion in western works, about character, ethical behaviour, continence etc. and there is no insistence on a life in which renunciation, penance etc. are practised vigorously. Also there is no thought regarding non-violence, truth etc. in terms of the life hereafter.

A question may arise that, although, there is no consideration of the above personal practices, in the Western Works, yet, there is definitely a good deal of emphasis placed on humanism, brotherhood, love, friendship etc. which are all very good virtues. In reply to this line of thought, we must state that, the western thinkers, who have totally dropped matters which concern spiritual upliftment, the life hereafter and such other aspects, have, undoubtedly limited the range of human achievement to a very petty level. They have encouraged the thought that the greatest height

that a man can scale consists in cultivating perfection in showing love, sympathy and tolerance towards other human beings. By limiting the range in this way, the western thinkers have closed mankind's eyes to the many noble and meritorius things which a man alone can do. This is, indeed, a great deficiency in their thinking which has resulted in very big shortcomings for mankind.

### **The gifts of Indian Religions**

On the other hand, the Indian religions believe in the transmigration of the soul in different states and, therefore, they are called Aryan religions. The root 'R' in sanskrit means 'to go' and 'A' + 'R' means 'to come'. The word Aryan has been derived from this root. It means that he is an Aryan who believes in the transmigration of the soul from one state/life to another state/life. The Aryan religions have recognised an eternal soul, a life hereafter, merit and demerit, a succession of life and birth as well as final liberation, and has opened up high horizons for the development of human life by accepting these concepts. By virtue of this it has become natural and easy for us to follow the principals of non-violence, truth, morality etc. This is the gift that the Indian religions have given. Indian religions have shown that it is because of the senseless slavery of the objects of the senses that a man forgets love, brotherhood, sympathy etc. for another man and for this reason he spoils his next life and continues to wander from existence to existence.

**Unhappiness and misery in this life is only because of our attachment for the objects of our senses.**

It is for this reason that a Jain saint has said that if there were no objects of senses in the world, there would have been no unhappiness for the soul. It is because of its likes and dislikes for the objects of senses such as sound, form, taste etc. that the soul attempts to do what it should not do, speaks what it should not speak and thinks and believes what it should not think and believe and consequently become unhappy. However, we should realise that so long as the world is there, the objects of the senses are bound to remain there. This cannot be helped. But what is within the power of man to do is that he should stop considering those objects as good or bad because of his likes and dislikes for those objects. It is for this reason that it was stated at the outset that one should carry on only such activities as would lead to a gradual reduction and destruction of attachment and hatred. The more you reduce your activities pertaining to the objects of the senses, the more your attachments and hatred will be reduced and to that extent your misery will be less and your happiness will increase. The Indian religions have taught mankind detachment from and aversion to the objects of the senses because they are evil. They teach us that, as far as possible, one should get rid of these objects of senses and try to acquire victory over the six internal enemies, namely desire, anger, greed, pride, ego and joy which arise from our coming into contact with the objects of senses. The people in India were happy and incidents of theft, robbery, murder, violence etc. were few and far between so long as they placed emphasis on detachment and renunciation. It was

because of this that the life of our people was characterised by actions which were calculated to do good to others, by service, by sympathy as well as by contentment. This resulted in the spread of renunciation and penance, devotion and prayer, the service of the saint, intense study of the scriptures etc. which were all very beneficial activities. All this was the result of our distaste for the objects of the senses. When one is fed up with the objects of the senses, he, naturally attempts to practice continence to the extent it is possible for him and, if that is not possible, he will at least remain morally upright by remaining satisfied with his own wife. What is more, he will consider licentious and permissive behaviour as a great sin.

The Western religions, no doubt, taught us to have fellow feeling for other human beings as well as tolerance and fair play. However, they did not go beyond this because they did not teach us the philosophy of the soul and detachment from the objects of the senses. The climax was reached in western philosophy when the famous philosopher and thinker Bertrand Russel suggested that "man" should be free in his sexual relationship, implying thereby that any man can have sexual relationship with any women if both consent. This suggestion was first greeted with joy by the college going youth - both boys and girls. A very grave result of this permissiveness appeared very soon. Although Bertrand Russel himself felt sorry about his own suggestion and modified his teaching considerably but the evil trend that had started among the people could hardly be contained. When sexual indulgence and obsession with enjoyment of the

objects of the senses is not considered a sin in the western religion and when excessive indulgence of senses is not considered a downfall for man, there is no wonder that these activities should go on unrestrained.

On the other hand Indian religions discribed the objects of the senses as evil and taught mankind the philosophy of the soul and preached the renunciation of the objects of the senses from the very start. Our religions, in fact, have proved to us the independent existence and status of the soul and given us the notion of a world hereafter. They have shown that we can achieve a good or bad reward in the next world on account of our good or bad actions in this life and pointed out that one had to bear the good or bad consequences of one's actions. Our philosophies declare that the present life of a human being is not the only life possible but there are other lives, both, past and future. We are taught that for our present happiness and misery, our good and evil actions of the past are responsible and, therefore, we should not fall pray to vices such as false happiness and regret, pride and helplessness, likes, dislikes, jealousy etc. We are taught to create a series of future good or bad rewards by virtue of our present deeds pertaining to the mind, the speech and the body. We should not tarnish our lives with vices and virtueless actions, but, we should learn to make our life beautiful by means of virtues, good thoughts and good actions.

The result of this teaching of the Indian religions about the life hereafter was that it could stop criminal activities and inspire virtues and

good deeds which our law and the police cannot either stop or inspire. The degeneration which we see today in India is largely because of the fact that the Western education has made us oblivious of spirituality and of the sense of a future life. Because of this indifference, there is all pervasive increase in thefts, dishonesty, corruption, permissiveness, immodesty, violence, falsehood etc., inspite of the fact that we have got a very effective system of Law and the courts of Law. So, if you want to inculcate the virtues of happiness and goodness in mankind, there is only one way and that is to adopt, at the earliest, the spirituality and the concept of life hereafter as taught by our Indian religions. Not only this, we should undertake to propogate and spread this message of our religions.

The amount of violence that has spread all around us is simply staggering. Giant slaughter houses have come up in our holy land of India and millions of animals are slaughtered everyday because of this. It is because of this that natural calamities such as excessive rains, famines, floods, accidents, fierceness of the seasons etc. are befalling mankind. As the western religions do not accept the existence of the spirituality, how can they teach us kindness towards animals, birds and insects ?

Once, in a History conference, held in Nagpur, a discussion started as to who could be considered the most important and the greatest personality whose birth centenary should be celebrated by the whole world. In the course of the discussion, a certain gentleman who was a christian

himself, suggested that the birth centenary of Jesus Christ should be celebrated because Jesus Christ has taught us about the wellbeing of the whole mankind by advising us that we should have love and sympathy for all the men in the world. But a Hindu scholar suggested that if the birth centenary is to be celebrated on the basis of who has thought about the welfare of the greatest number, then, it is Lord Krishna whose birth centenary should be celebrated; for Lord Krishna has not only taught us to be kind to men but also to animals such as the cow and others and have love, in equal measure, for them. At this Mr. Rushabhdasji Jain got up from his sit and suggested that if the criterion for celebrating the birth centenary of someone is to select a personality who has thought about the well being of the most number of creatures, then, we should select Lord Mahavir for this because he has taught us love and kindness not only for men, animals, birds and insects which are sentient beings but also for trees and vegetables which have only one sense and which are also living beings.

From this we realize the importance of the special gift that Jainism has given to mankind. And with this background information, it will be easier for us to follow the nature and the character of the special gift that the Jainist faith has given to mankind.

It is well-known that compassion, love and non-violence are beneficial to the creatures. The western religions have confined the field of these virtues only upto the human beings, whereas the Indian religions have held that the field of the above



virtues extends upto animals and other creatures over and above human beings. But it is Jainism which goes a step ahead and makes all beings right upto the beings that possess only one sense, namely, trees and vegetables, to be the objects of compassion, love and non-violence. In order to promote this thought, Jainism has given us a special kind of biology or the science of life, which is found in all creatures. Thus Jainism has shown us a peculiar as well as striking aspect or nature of all beings. The propogators or founders of Jainism who were free from passions such as attachment etc., who were omniscient and who are known as holy Tīrthaṅkaras, have admitted the existence of beings ranging from those having five senses right upto the lowest creatures which have only one sense. And this can be proved logically and empirically. Just as we are beings with five senses, similarly there are insects like the fly, the bee, the mosquito, the scorpion etc. that have four senses because they do not have the sense of hearing. In the same way, the ant etc. have three senses, because, they do not have eyes as well as ears.

Further on, there are beings like worms etc. which have only two senses because they lack not only the above two senses, namely, eyes and ears, but also the sense of smelling. Finally we come to those beings that have only one sense.

### **A Unique Science of Life: The Gift of Jainism**

We must bear in mind that sensual ability is possessed by living beings only and not by

non-living beings. Hence, when life has gone out from our body, our eyes, our ears as well as the various other parts of the body remain, but they do not have any sensual power. Because the power of senses belonged to the conscious self and when that conscious self has left the body, the power of the senses have also gone with it. Now, the beings that have only two senses, namely, the sense of touch and the sense of taste, they rank fourth from the beings that have five senses. Therefore, it is natural that those beings that have the sense of touch alone should rank fifth. Now, if we admit that there can be those beings who do not have the sense of hearing but have the other four senses and similarly if there are beings that do not have either ears or eyes and in the same way if beings having only two senses but lacking in eyes, ears and the sense of hearing can have existence, then, why should we not admit those beings which do not have the other four senses but have the sense of touch alone to be beings which can be included in the category of living beings? Jainism admits that the beings that have the earth for their body, water for their body, life for their body, wind for their body and vegetation for their body, which have only one sense, that is, the sense of touch, are all beings. Thus, Jainism has gifted us with a unique science of life. And having done so, it has taught us a unique kind of compassion, love and non-violence for **all beings**.

While all the Indian religions believe in non-violence but the conception of non-violence in Jainism is very subtle and unique. This is a great gift of Jainism to mankind.

Here a question may arise as to how this subtle compassion for tiny creatures can be useful in life? And how such a compassion can become possible ?

To explain this it must be mentioned that the feeling of compassion, tenderness and love are very essential in a man's life, without which man will become like a wild animal on account of his tendencies of cruelty, insensitivity and fierceness. With such human beings around us, our social life will become dangerous and frightful on the maxim that a big fish eats a small fish and the law of the jungle prevails. For, if we do not show compassion for the tiniest creatures, then, we will be filled with a sense of cruelty and harshness for such creatures and as per the dictum of psychology, man will become cruel and harsh towards his fellow human beings as well, especially when his selfishness will use his cruelty and harshness indiscriminately. A big fire arises from a mere spark. In the same way, big faults arise from small mistakes. A child who commits small thefts in his childhood will unfaillingly become a thief who steals bigger things when he grows up. In the same way, the slight cruel attitudes which develop from our cruelty for small beings will result in a greater cruelty for the bigger beings when the occasion arises. It is for this reason that Jainism teaches compassion and love even for the tiniest of beings with a view to keep the flow of compassion and love flowing towards other human beings who are the highest form of living beings. The knowledge of these tiny creatures as well as the virtues of compassion, love and non-violence constitute a

very valuable gift of Jainism. It can be said quite confidently that Jainism has provided mankind with an unparalleled and a very high ideal of life by developing the institution of Jain monks who practice the great vow of non-violence, by resolving - (a) not to kill beings which possess the form of the earth, the water, etc. and which are very subtle, (b) not to cause any injury to these (c) and not to encourage or support such injury. This can also be considered to be a gift given by Jainism. Even today, people become overwhelmed by sympathy and respect when they hear about the difficult vows and hard life of a Jain monk and for this reason, they listen to their religious speeches with special affection and undertake vows to renounce sinful activities to the best of their capacity.

The idealistic practice of this subtle non-violence which Jainism has taught us implies that, though, admittedly, a man living the life of a householder cannot practice this subtle violence, yet he can certainly cultivate compassion so that he will use in a very limited way the earth, the water, the fire etc. and that, too, with a trembling heart and he will observe non-violence in the form of the protection of the rest of them shining in his own life. Consequently such a householder will not be a source of trouble to other human beings because of the fact that there will be restraint in his commercial activities as well as in his enjoyment of life. This too is a gift of Jainism to mankind.

Jainism has shown us an unfailing means of reaching the ideal of a totally innocent life by providing for a unique arrangement of the **twelve**

**vows** meant for a householder which consist of (a) the five partial vows such as non-violence etc. which are called ANUVRATAS, (b) the three vows meant to restrict the movements of a householder to avoid violence and reduce greed, viz. Digvirata etc. which are called GUNAVRATAS and (c) the four vows meant to educate the householder for the higher life of total renunciation, viz. SÀMÀYIKA etc. known as the S'IKSÀVRATAS. Particularly the concept of the three GUNAVRATAS which is made up of the vows of (1) Limiting the extent of territory as well as the objects of senses (Digvirata) and (2) Limiting the use of objects of enjoyment so as to lessen attachments to them (Bhogopabhoga Parimàna) and (3) Abstaining from harmful activities that do no good to us (Anarthadandaviramana/ Parimàna), is calculated to protect and strengthen the five partial vows of non-violence etc.

If there is no restriction as to territory in our life, then, it will result in freedom to visit any country; similarly if there is no restriction as to enjoyment of food, luxury etc. there will be total lack of restraint in eating anything, whether permitted or not permitted, and drinking anything, whether allowed or not allowed. Similarly there will be a total lack of restriction in regard to many other enjoyments and in regard to vocations that result in killing living beings such as the use of fire in one's activity as also the use of machines to crush etc. In the same way, if there is no regulation for avoiding undesirable activities, then there will be total freedom to indulge in vices such as gambling, card playing, cinema, visits to swimming pools,

keeping pet animals by way of hobby and indulging in non-vigilant action, evil thoughts, bad advice as also in giving weapons of violence and such other evil activities and sinful acts. When these things are practised, there is no scope for preserving the ideal of non-violence etc. Moreover, without observing the vows of self-discipline such as prayers (Sàmàyika), etc. there can be no training or practice to reach the high ideals in the form of non-violence etc.

By giving this gift of the twelve vows meant for a householder, the Jain religion has given an opportunity to the human soul to rise to the level of the Supreme Soul; for these twelve vows are to be observed for the purpose of practising non-violence etc. of the subtlest kind and when these vows are observed in the prescribed manner, our souls are filled with such enthusiasm and joy that one can accept a totally sinless life of a monk, which is marked by total non-violence, etc. by renouncing the world which is characterised by delusion and attachments. In this state, one has to undertake the path of SAMVARA (stopping of the inflow of the Karmic matter) which consists of three Guptis (threefold self-control), five Samitis (fivefold vigilance), forbearance (Parisahajaya) and forgiveness etc. which are the ten-fold moral qualities of a monk as well as the path of NIRJARÀ which consists of the twelvefold internal as well as external austerities. The soul of a monk who advances in the practice of this spirituality, ultimately, becomes a totally detached and passionless, omniscient, supreme soul and gradually becomes liberated.

Jainism has presented mankind with this unique gift in the form of SAMVARA and NIRJARÀ (explained above) and this gift means the gift of the pathway to become the supreme self from an individual self. I will just narrate an instance of how some western writers have been extremely attracted towards and fascinated by this gift of Jainism. This story was published in the Hindustan Times several years ago.

We have all heard about Bernard Shaw, the famous author and playwright of the English language. Once it so happened that Sri Devdas Gandhi, the son of Mahatma Gandhi, was paying a visit to him. During his visit, in the course of a casual discussion, Shri Devdas Gandhi asked Bernard Shaw if he believed in rebirth. To this, Shaw replied that he found it worth believing in. Thereupon, Shri Devdas Gandhi wanted to know if Shaw believed in the next birth, and if he did, then, in that case, what he would like to become in the next birth. Bernard Shaw replied by saying that he wanted to become a Jain in the next birth. Devdas Gandhi was surprised and sought a clarification from Shaw as to why he chose to become a Jain who constitute only a tiny minority among the 30 crores of Hindus of India who all believed in rebirth. Bernard Shaw explained that while the other Hindus have attributed the status of the Supreme Soul to one God only, Jainism has allowed every single soul to become the supreme soul. Jainism declares that till now numberless supreme souls have taken place and still innumerable supreme souls will take place. One

can easily aim at becoming a supreme soul according to Jainism.

Besides, Jainism prescribes an unfailing, gradual path for the upliftment of the soul so that man can understand as to how much exertion will lead to what height and how much more exertion can lead to so much more height. Thus, Jainism prescribes the gradual stages or steps for the evolution and upliftment of the soul -right upto the highest stage where he becomes the highest, supreme, omniscient soul. The biology, the philosophy, the practical ethics of asceticism, the religious doctrines etc. of Jainism are perfectly scientific. As a result of this, Western Scholars such as Bernard Shaw, Herman Jacobi and many others were attracted towards Jainism and they had continued to practice Jainism in their lives.

So far as Bernard Shaw is concerned, he was not only a pure vegetarian, out of his compassion for the living beings that have five senses; but he was also full of compassions even for those living beings that have only one sense-organ. Once he was attending a dinner party where non-vegetarian food was being served. Mr. Shaw, therefore, sat quite without eating. One of his neighbours asked him, " Mr. Shaw, why do you not eat anything? ". Mr. Shaw replied by saying, " Please, excuse me, but you should remember that my stomach is not a graveyard for dead animals."

The same Bernard Shaw was favoured by a visit by a lady. When the lady saw that an empty flower vase was lying on the table of Mr. Bernard Shaw, she asked Mr. Shaw if he did not like flowers.



But when Shaw told her that flowers were very dear to him, the lady asked him as to why no flowers were kept in the flower vase. To this query, Shaw gave a thought-provoking reply. He said, "It is because I like the flowers so much that I do not like to pluck them from the bushes on which they grow and where they lead a very joyful life and put them here in the flower vase instead." This incident shows that western scholars too have tremendous compassion for living beings that have only one sense as Jainism points out.

We have just now touched on the various stages described by Jainism for the upliftment and evolution of the soul. Jainism prescribes fourteen stages or steps (gunasthànas) by which the soul makes spiritual progress. This gift of the fourteen stages given to mankind by Jainism is such a systematic arrangement that our soul finds a way of gradually evolving to the highest spiritual state. This arrangement is highly logical because the faulty factors on account of which our worldly existence becomes possible, (these faulty factors) are considered to be the defects of the soul or the deficiencies of the soul. For instance, the first factor is false belief or false faith (Mithyàtva) which is due to a false understanding. This can be justifiably called a defect of the soul. When these factors are gradually destroyed by a proper understanding and exertion, then, it is natural that our soul will gradually mount towards the corresponding higher stages of spiritual ascent.

Our soul gets bound by the Karmas on account of wrong-belief (Mithyàdarshana), vowlessness (Avirati), passions (Kasàyas),

negligence (Pràmàda) and activities (Yoga). Here (1) Wrong-belief means considering truth as non-truth and non-truth as truth. Thus, dislike for the true things of the world and a liking for the false things of the world is a wrong-belief. Thus, wrong attitude, wrong taste, ignoble actions that cause lack of interest and faith in the doctrines preached by the Jain masters are ruled out. (2) Vowlessness means lack of compassion for the six kinds of embodied soul through lack of self-control or pledge. (3) Anger, pride, deception, greed, attachment, dislike, desire, laughing etc. are called passions. (4) Negligence means forgetting the reality of the self, doubt, lack of enthusiasm in regard to religion etc. (5) An activity means the psychophysical activity of the mind, the speech, the body and the sense organs. Thus, the internal causes of bondage are fivefold.

The more you give up the above five causes of bondage of the soul, the more manifest become the virtues such as true faith etc. which belong to the soul, and the higher our soul goes by different stages as described above. Thus, for example, when the cause of bondage called wrong-belief is given up, our soul reaches the fourth stage of spiritual development consisting of right faith (Samyak Darshan) and when the sins of violence etc. are partially given up through a pledge, the cause of bondage called 'Vowlessness' is removed, and our soul reaches the fifth stage (Deshavirati) of spiritual evolution which consists in putting a limit to place in which one can move. Further on, when our soul gives up the above sins completely or subtly, he reaches the sixth stage of spiritual

evolution (Sarva Virati) which consists in totally discarding the fivefold sins of violence etc. When he gives up the cause of bondage called 'negligence', he reaches the seventh stage of spiritual evolution (Apramatta Sàmyàma) which consists in self-restraint without distraction. Thereafter, when the soul exhibits an unprecedented inner strength and destroys the passions extremely subtly it goes on to reach the other stages (viz. the eighth stage and so on called APÛRVAKARANA and so on) and while at the end of the tenth stage ( Ksina Moha) of spiritual development, the soul becomes passionless because its delusions and distractions have become extinct. These stages are the 11th and the 12th stages of evolution. Thereafter, he reaches the 13th stage of evolution when the veils of the Karmas which veil the soul's endless knowledge and which destroy all the good and bad qualities of the Karmas of the soul, are destroyed. Then it becomes omniscient and obtains the four infinities. Thereafter, at the time of the destruction of the effects of the Karma pertaining to length of life, when the soul totally stops its activities, it mounts on to the 14th stage of the supreme soul or (Ayogi -Kevali) and while it is there, within the space of the utterance of five simple vowels, the soul destroys its remaining Karmas and becomes entirely liberated from any and every Karma and remains pure, awakened and free and attains to salvation by becoming absolved from the World.

This system as devised by Jainism suggests that, as the different substances in the universe have certain peculiarities or a special nature, in the

same way, right faith, infinite knowledge, aversion to attachment and infinite endeavour etc. are the nature of the substance called the soul. However, the soul is enveloped by Karmas. Good efforts and pious exertions are a must if we are to remove these Karmas and to reveal this nature or these characteristics of the soul, the gradual removal of the defects such as wrong-belief etc., by means of exertions, leads to the increase and manifestation of the above fourteen virtues and the impact of this development is very remarkable, both, on the individual life as well as the social life of the soul itself.

Today the monstrous onslaught of materialism on mankind has created such a strange climate that people ask "Why do you go on talking about religion all the time?" They argue that a man, above all, needs to become a man and he must be taught to become a man, because, lakhs of people are starving and the capitalist class is indulging in unrestricted exploitation of the other men. Man should cultivate a feeling of brotherhood for another man but in the name of religion man has totally forgotten his human nature. Thus the new generation is being provoked against religion by means of false allegations against religion. This results in a rise of contempt, disgust and distaste for religion in the minds of the younger generation.

But the important thing to be remembered is that we are unable to bring about any good results by disregarding religion. On the contrary, mankind is becoming more and more miserable and vices such as immorality, cruelty, dishonesty etc. are

increasing in social life. While trying to restrain the capitalists class, we should not forget that the horrible exploitation perpetrated by the officer class is ever on an increase. While the capitalists give some reliefs to the general public by starting several big works, beneficial to the people, the officers who have become rich overnight through dishonest and corrupt activities have nothing to show in the matter of common good in their lives. The result is that our people are being recklessly exploited and millions of rupees are illegally eaten up from plans and projects run by the money provided by our people. As per Jainism, life proceeds along the path of corruption mainly because we have forgotten spirituality and the sense of a life hereafter as a result of an aversion to religion, created among us. Jainism has prescribed thirtyfive qualities of a life that proceeds along the path of salvation in which are included the virtues of lawfulness, service of and hospitality towards guests, monks and the poor and the needy, compassion, doing good to others, mildness in one's nature etc. which result in the proper performance of duty, the removal of vices and the acceptance of merits. If these qualities are taught to the people even today, I am sure, many of the miseries, the exploitation and the vices which are rampant today, will be greatly reduced.

But when can a man adopt these qualities? Jainism says that a life of the householder should be guided by the importance of a life hereinafter and if a householder lives in accordance with this belief, then he will remain ever alert and think that, although falsehood, dishonesty, cruelty,

sensuality etc. may give him momentary happiness in this life, yet, a very horrible consequence of all these vices will befall him in the next world and, therefore, he should not fall a prey to those vices, because, though the present life is very short, yet, the life hereafter has a very long duration. One should not, therefore, spoil one's next life for the sake of the petty happiness of this life. Thus life can become pure and sacred if we keep the next world uppermost in our mind and sincerely guard against sin. This will definitely reduce the horrible miseries which afflict human life because of the sins and the vices. A man who lives a life in accordance with the tenets of Jainism will definitely have the idea of a life hereafter uppermost in his mind and will always fear sin. Thus Jainism teaches these basic traits of a life that is on the approach road to liberations and along with this, it also imparts many other virtues by means of which, a lot of benefit accrues to the family, society and the country at large.

This directly concerns the basic matter of human welfare. But Jainism goes one step further and points out the various duties to be performed in man's spiritual progress, the practices conducive to right faith, the activities of the householder who has undertaken the vows, in so far as they concern his external and internal attitudes, as also, the pure behaviours and acts that characterise a Jain monk. This path is so gradual and so constructive that it enables a man to know for sure as to how he can spiritually advance by first measuring his own ability. Thus man is able to know with confidence that he has

made so much progress on the path of spiritual advancement.

Just as Jainism deals with spiritual progress from the point of view of the fourteen stages of progress and from the point of view of the observance of the correct path, similarly it also shows a remarkable process of development from several points of views, such as, from the point of view of the eight classes of souls, such as, *Mitrà*, *Tarà* etc (Yog Dristies) and the other five Yogas such as spirituality, reflection, meditation, equanimity and loss of desires and the four levels of spiritual endeavour consisting of affection, devotion, speech and non- attachment.

Jainism shows the path of salvation through right knowledge, right faith and right conduct and also provide us with a special kind of conceptual terminology of right faith and right conduct (*Samyak Jnàna*, *Darshan* and *Chāritra*). Jainism asserts that right faith means total faith in the basic tenets of Jainism and suggests that, although philosophical knowledge is essential for salvation, yet, it becomes an efficient means of salvation when that philosophical knowledge becomes the right knowledge, because it is preceded by our deep and unswerving faith in the preaching of Jainism. In the basic principle of living beings and non-living beings etc. there are three divisions which are known as (1) fit to be known (2) fit to be discarded and (3) worth using or accepting. Now if the attitude of our mind is amenable to the fact that (1) living beings and non-living beings are merely fit to be known only with a neutral attitude, so that the feelings of like

and dislike or good and bad do not arise in regard to them and that (2) The causes of our bondage in the form of the Karmic inflow as well as that bondage itself are both fit to be discarded; so, naturally, our mind should have a feeling of aversion towards it. But on the other hand because the stoppage of the inflow (Samvara) and the purging of the effect of the Karmas (Nirjarā) and, finally, the ultimate salvation are highly useful hence our mind should have fascination for them. It is only in this context that the resultant knowledge becomes right knowledge (Samyak Darshan) and leads to final beatitude.

The corollary is that if one has acquired knowledge of philosophy or of religions tenets and mastery of the scriptures only with a view to get worldly glory and if it is preserved and used with that intention, then, it cannot be a means of salvation. But on the contrary, it will become a source of bondage and prove illusive. It is very well said that: "Dhaninam Putradārādi Yatha Samsāravrdhaye/ Tathā Pāndityādātānām S'āstrām Adhyatmavarjitam" (Sanskrit)

धनिनां पुत्रदारादि यथा संसारवृद्धये ।

तथा पांडित्यदातानां शास्त्रमध्यात्मवर्जितम् ॥

i.e. Just as the sons, wives etc. of a very wealthy man who is attached to his wealth with pride become a source of bondage in this life and increase his worldly activities, similarly, the knowledge of the scriptures in a person who is proud of his learning becomes a source of bondage because it is devoid of spirituality.



This spirituality consists in this that your knowledge of the Shastra results in your faith in the tenets of Jainism. and because of this, any fascination for worldly activities disappears and the highest object of the well being of the soul becomes established in one's mind. It is said that "Gatamohadhikàrànam Atmànam Adhikrutya yà/Pravartate Kriyā S'uddha Tad Adhyatmam Jagur Jinàh" (Sanskrit)

गतमोहाधिकारणामात्मानमधिकृत्य या ।

प्रवर्तते क्रिया शुद्धा तदध्यात्मं जगुर्जिनाः ॥

i.e the Rev. founders of Jainism, namely, the Jinas, call it a pure conduct which proceeds with regard to the soul and which is non- attachment or illusion regarding the worldly life. The faith in tenets or substances which are either to be discarded or to be accepted brings about a state of mind which is appropriate to it and it is in such a mind that the well-being of the self becomes well established. Such an attitude towards the Jain tenets and substances is known as right faith. In such a case, even if the knowledge of the books may be scanty, yet, if there is right faith (Samayak Darshana) then such a soul is qualified for salvation and not otherwise.

Similarly while explaining conduct, Jainism says that there is no doubt that good conduct in the form of non-violence, truth, etc is essential for salavation, but, at the same time, it should be accompnyed by our pledge to renounce sins such as violence etc. Then only it is called right conduct. Normally people think that 'he who sows has to

pay.' In other words, one who performs evil deeds such as violence, etc, will earn sin on the maxim that as you sow, so shall you reap. But Jainism goes one step ahead and says that even if a man may not be indulging in the practice of killing the living beings at the present moment but if he is intent on it then also sin accrues to him. Intent on it means that he has not pledged to give up violence etc. totally, that is, he has not stopped being affected by the thought of violence, etc, but has a mind that is free to practice it. Such a man cannot be said to have vowed to shed violence. This is a sin.

Now the question arises as to why a man, who, although he does not practice violence etc, yet he has not taken a pledge to cease from it should be said to be earning sins ?

The resolution of this question is that if he does not practice violence etc, then why does he not pledge to give up violence altogether ? It can be said that the man in question does not take a pledge in regard to violence etc, to keep himself free to practice it, if the occasion arises, although he does not practice it, at the present moment. Now this attitude of non-committment is evil and it is affected by an evil tendency. Hence his soul is bound by sin and guilt to that extent. To escape this tendency one should be pledged or committed to renounce sinful activities altogether. Thus for example, although the living beings such as the trees and vegetables do not indulge in sin, yet, they are not considered great souls as they do not attain salvation. This is simply because they have not

decided to totally abjure sinful activities. Hence they do not get salvation.

It is because this total cessation from sinful activities is exceedingly important that the Jain monks have to take a pledge that they will not indulge in such as violence etc., nor will they cause it to be done, and will also not support or condone such violent, sinful activities to be proper throughout their life and they will remain free from this sin through mind, through speech and through their body. Thus, their pledge to renounce sinful activities totally is threefold. It is thus, that, such a conduct is called right conduct on the part of a Jain monk. It is because of this great pledge - an irrevocable vow that Jain monks can never return to wordly life. They are also forbidden to cook food but depend upon what they collect by way of alms. Even in this alms begging, they do not accept any food which is specifically prepared for them, because in accepting such food they see the endorsement of violence which results in distroying and harming their gret pledge not to commit any sin. The upshot of this discussion is that right conduct means total cessation from sinful activities which is accompanied by right faith. This certainly enhances the upward march of the soul. However, so far as the householder is concerned, he has to practice the above vow of cesation from sins in a limited way in order to achieve such upliftment.

How beneficial and full of blessings it would be to the human society at large if the world were to proceed in accordance with the principles of

partial cessation from harmful and violent activities

Jainism has not only given us a special gift with regard to practical conduct but it has also given special gifts in regard to philosophical doctrines. The chief philosophical doctrine among these is the theory of relativity or SYÀDVÀDA or ANEKÀNTAVÀDA. According to this doctrine many mutually contradictory or contrary attributes of a thing can be admitted when looking at it from different stand points. Therefore, this is known as the theory of relativity. The speciality of this doctrine is that it gives justice to the views of all philosophies. For example, Buddhism holds that the soul is totally momentary whereas Nyàya and other philosophies hold or maintain that Atmà (soul) is absolutely eternal but in this matter Jainism holds that from the point of view of its modifications the soul is momentary or transitory or impermanent but the same soul is permanent when it is considered as a substance. In this way, because the soul is both permanent and impermanent, it cannot be said to be entirely permanent or entirely impermanent. But it is both. This is called ANEKÀNTA OR SYÀDVÀDA. Thus Jainism brings about a synthesis so far as the different view points of the different philosophies are concerned.

In each and everything so many mutually opposite, contradictory or even exclusive attributes find a place from different points of view. Just as a glass of water which is half filled with water can be described as both - half filled and half empty and both these descriptions are apt

from two different points of view. This method of knowing things or this perspective of looking at things was posited and expanded by Jainism several centuries ago. Prof. Albert Einstein, a modern scientist, has presented - nay he has totally accepted the theory of relativity at the end of long and arduous research. This theory of relativity is so practical that it has a bearing on our life. Once the wife of Prof. Albert Einstein asked him as to what the theory of relativity meant and how ordinary people like her could understand it.

Einstein said that it was quite simple to understand Relativity. He pointed out that sometimes when you go out for a stroll with your friends and nearly an hour and a half passes by, yet, because of the enjoyable company and jovial atmosphere you feel as if only half an hour has passed. On the other hand, when you have to work in the kitchen in intense summer, you feel that your activity, lasting over only half an hour, appears to you as if it spreads over an hour and a half ! Why this difference ? This is, it may be pointed out, due to the angle from which you look at reality and this is caused by different stand points. This, then, is the doctrine of relativity or Syàdvàda.

If this theory of relativity, as taught by Jainism, is sincerely put into practice in our actual life then I am sure, a number of conflicts which beset our life today will come to an end. Because the root of any conflict lies in man's inflexible attitude towards reality as he wants what is favourable to him and opposes what is not favourable to him. But when one tries to do justice to the point of view of the

other man and brings about a synthesis between what is favourable and non-favourable in his views, then, there will be no scope for any conflict. On several occasions many incidents happen which agitate our minds and give us pain. However, when those incidents are considered from the stand point of relativity, our agitation comes to an end and we achieve peace of mind. For example, a man becomes unhappy because his income is less and this unhappiness springs from the fact that he has been comparing his income with the larger income of other people. But he should realise that what he gets will be in accordance with his destiny. So, when this same person considers his own income from the point of view of some other people whose incomes are less, he will undoubtedly feel reassured.

By bestowing this stand point of relativity on the mankind, Jainism has supplied mankind with a unique opportunity not only to make life free from conflict but also to make it proceed along the path of higher progress and flow in a quiet manner. Jainism also brings about a marvellous synthesis of the mutually opposed opinions of the other systems of philosophy.

Jainism has also given us a unique philosophy of KARMA. The bondage of Karma accrues to the soul on account of its false belief and these Karmas are basically of eight types and they are known as (1) the Karmas that veil knowledge (2) the Karmas that veil our faith etc. These eight fold Karmas shroud those qualities of knowledge and faith which are inherent in our soul. These Karmas are particles of matter and it is for this reason that the

incidence of transference, rise, fall, steadiness, destruction and prevention etc. can take place with reference to them. Jainism has also pointed out many sub-varieties of these eightfold Karmas. The Karma literature of Jainism extensively deals with the nature, position, essence, region, etc. of the Karmas which cause prevention, rise, promotion, increase, transference, status, etc. of these Karmas. In accordance with the Jainist philosophical tenets, a study of the Karma philosophy in detail provides mankind with total peace of mind and freedom from anxieties in this age of conflict and tension. Not only this, it also shows the correct direction to us to escape the bondage of Karma in future.

The gift of the science of life which enables us to identify life at large, the doctrine of relativity, the theory of Karma, the path of total cessation from violence etc., the fourteen stages of spiritual progress and such other specialities of Jainism are, indeed, great, beneficial gifts to mankind. May mankind achieve infinite happiness by putting these is great gifts to good use. GOOD LUCK.

## Post-Script

It is interesting to note by way of a foot note that as soon as the Rev. Acharya had finished his above speech, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Banaras Sanskrit University, Dr. Sampurnanand, who, it will be recalled, had become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh afterwards, was very much impressed by the importance of the five vows of cessation from various activities known in Jainism as Virati Dharma and hence he himself went over to the Rev. Acharya and requested him to give him a small pledge whereby he could observe the vow of cessation and when the Acharya administered the oath to him, Dr. Sampurnanand profusely thanked the great Acharya.

Dr. Sampurnanand also said in the course of his vote of thanks that the most important thing that the Rev. Acharya had pointed out in his speech was about the vows of cessation from various activities. Besides, Dr. Sampurnanand went on to narrate an incident from his personal life which in short is like this :

It so happened that Dr. Sampurnanand was confined to bed with a short illness and the doctor examined him and gave him a few tablets to be swallowed. But, as the patient, i.e., Dr. Sampurnanand, had not taken a pledge to avoid taking medicines made from living beings or animals, so he did not inquire, before taking the tablets, as to the substance from which the tablets had been made. However, Dr. Sampurnanand adds that if at that time he had taken a pledge or vow to cease from taking anything made from living beings or animals, he would surely have first inquired about the ingredients from which the tablets had been made and then only he would have taken the tablets.



## **Translator's Note**

*It was indeed a privilege to be called upon to render into English, a classical speech given by His Holiness Acharya Shri Vijaya Bhuvanabhanu Sūrīshwaraji Maharaja Saheb (who, alas is no more in our midst today and whose sacred memory we all cherish today), at a special meeting held at Banaras Sanskrit University, way, back in 1970. This memorable speech deserves to be read by all lovers of Indian culture - nay, by lovers of culture all over the World. The late Rev. Acharya Shri Vijaya Bhuvanabhanu Sūrīshwaraji M.S. tells us, in this speech, in his very characteristic way, as to how Indian religions in general and Jainism in particular have presented mankind with some of the most precious and timeless gifts in the form of its unique philosophical and spiritual discoveries which can prove to be of immense value to mankind at the present juncture. There is no doubt that the speech given above represents the late Acharya's highest philosophical wisdom, noblest spiritual insight and wisest ethical advice to mankind and I am sure that it will be appreciated by all who value and cherish the evolution of mankind from its present materialistic level to the higher, nobler and happier spiritual height.*

*I wish to be forgiven if there is any lapse on my part in rendering correctly the holy sage's philosophy or spiritual idea from Gujarati into English. I want to express my sense of fulfilment for having got this opportunity of presenting the late Acharya's thoughts into English for a wider appreciation - both in India and abroad.*

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