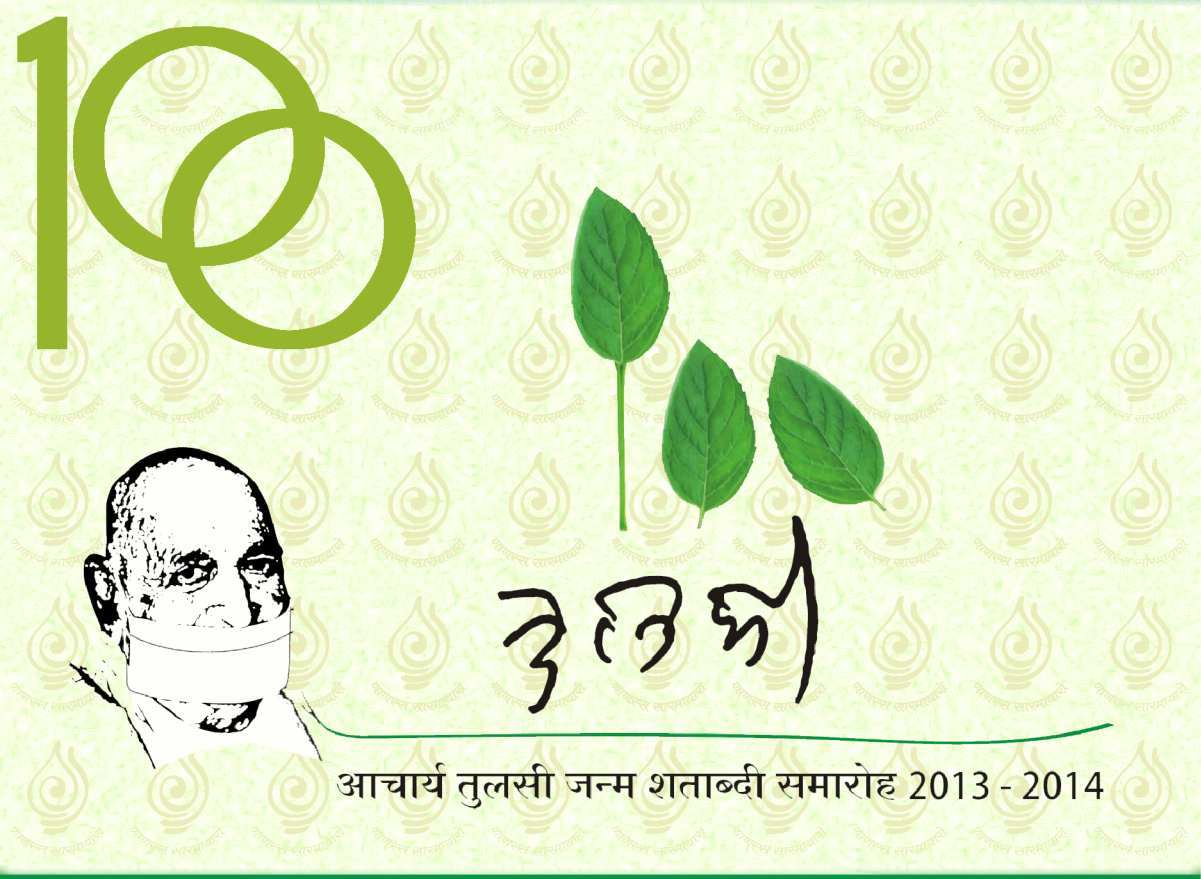
ISSN 0974-8857

तुलसी प्रज्ञा

TULSÍ PRAJÑÁ

वर्ष 40 • अंक 158-159 • जुलाई-दिसम्बर, 2013

A Peer Reviewed Research Quarterly



जैन विश्वभारती संस्थान
लाडनूँ - 341 306 (राजस्थान) भारत
JAIN VISHVA BHARATI INSTITUTE
Ladnun - 341 306, Rajasthan, India

Role of Acharya Tulsi in Modernizing Jainism

Prof. Samani Chaitanya Prajna

Time and tide wait for none. Similarly, the great men wait for none. They do not wait even for time. Acharya Tulsi, a revolutionary and internationally known scholar-saint of 20th century, was one of the great men. He never waited for time. What he wanted to do he did before the time.

Time flows like a stream of water. With the change of time everything gets changed. That which does not change becomes outdated. Change is inevitable and keeps things ever dynamic and relevant. Acharya Tulsi wanted to keep Jainism ever dynamic and relevant and therefore he wanted to bring some innovations in the existing traditions.

With the starting of post-modern era he saw that traditional values and long narratives are losing their grip on people. So-called materialistic values and small narratives are gradually entering into society. Looking at the emerging valueless hybrid society with the slogan of globalization he felt dire need to modernize Jainism.

He saw that it is not the time to keep Jainism confined to one particular group of people, space and time. It must be known to the whole world. He also felt that the universal principles of Jainism are meant for all. They are not only for the salvation of people but also to dissolve the problems the world is facing today.

To fulfill his dream he felt great need to rearticulate traditional values as global values and present Jain principles in modern jargons. His modernized Jainism not at the coast of the fundamental concepts which are eternal and unchangeable. His story of modernizing Jainism starts with the beautiful combination of the old and new traditions. He preserved what was good and useful and changed what is outdated and irrelevant. He modernized Jainism in the following areas:

- Introducing the Significance of Spirituality
- Blending Spirituality with Science
- Socialization of Jain Tenets

1. Introducing the Significance of Spirituality

In Indian perspective, spirituality and religiosity have never been two separate concepts. To be spiritual means to be religious and vice versa. But from last few decades the world-view has changed. In current age, religion and spirituality are treated as two separate phenomena. Acharya Tulsi heeded to this problem of misconception regarding the religion and spirituality and at the same time gave paramount importance to spirituality in his mass movements.

1.1 Religion and Rituals: Religion, which is the means of spiritual growth, is mistaken at present as mere rituals. It happened so because over the last many centuries the religion has been projected more as rituals rather than morality and spirituality. To remove the misconception regarding the true nature of religion Acharya Tulsi discussed three components of it: Rituals, Morality and Spirituality. He regarded spirituality as the core of religion and morality as the necessary condition to be religious. Rituals, in his view, are symbolic in nature and have peripheral values. According to him, one who lives a good life is religious whether he performs rituals or not.

Religion is meant for the purification of the self and therefore one who lives ethical life is religious and can grow spiritually. One's spiritual growth is not affected by this that whether one performs *puja*, recites scriptures or not. If one is compassionate enough and does not harm other then he is more religious than one who performs *puja* of some deity regularly and does not hesitate to harm others.[1]

1.2 Religion and Sect: Acharya Tulsi tried to remove another misconception regarding the concept of religion. At present religion is

introduced as a sect to propagate particular dogma rather than a path to search of truth and purification of soul. This has created many cultural issues. One of them is fundamentalism. At present religion has become another name of fundamentalism or fanaticism. As sect religion has divided mankind into many antagonistic groups. The thing becomes more serious when as sect religion divides people into many antagonistic groups within the tradition. The division leads to religious hatred and cultural conflicts among the people of different and same cultures. In such a situation, people, who are seeking for peaceful co-existence and humanity, keep distance from such sectarian religions.

To dissolve the problem of sectarian religion Acharya Tulsi distinguished the concept of religion from that of sect. Generally people mistake religion as a sect. He said that sect is like the cover and religion is like the inner part of the fruit. Sect or tradition is to preserve, protect and disseminate the truth found in the particular tradition, but it does not mean that truth is confined to only that particular sect. It also does not mean that everything said in that sect is absolutely true. It does not need any verification or further inquiry. No doubt, space is in one's house, but it is not confined to the house only. It is also outside of the house. To mistake religion as sect is to limit space in one's house which is neither possible nor good for humanity.

1.3 Religion and Morality: Acharya Tulsi was a saint of pragmatism. He was interested in results rather than belief. The general belief about the religion is that it is for individual transformation and helps making next life happy. Acharya Tulsi said, if religion does not work in the present life then it cannot work for the next too. It can work for the next only when it works in the present. If one is not happy in his present life by following religion, how can he be happy by it in next life? Thus, religion is meant for both the present and future.[2]

Acharya Tulsi also tried to clearly define the purpose of religion. Religion is not to please God or any deity, but to live a good life. Rituals are useful to connect people with religion but as said above it is spirituality which is the core of religion and morality is pre-requisite of being religious. To be religious and not to be moral is unimaginable. But it is happening because of taking religion as rituals. People think that they can be free from all sins just by performing prayer, worship and other rituals. This is the reason why they say

themselves religious inspite of involving in so many immoral acts. Acharya Tulsi heeded to this problem and it is not rituals but moral values which make man religious. In this regard, he followed the Jain teachings *"carittam khalu dhammo"* i.e. right conduct is religion.

1.4 Religion and Spirituality: Acharya Tulsi's emphasis was on the spiritual and universal aspects of religion. He did not want to see religion imprisoned in temples and scriptures but wanted to see it in all walks of life. He, therefore, applied universal principles of religion in education, economics, politics, society and humanity. In his speech and mass movements, he laid stress more on morality and spirituality. Defining the concept of religion he writes, "Religion is the means of purifying self".[3] It is purity and means of purity of the self which is religion.

Acharya Tulsi saw spirituality as a most effective tool and uniting force. In spirituality, there is no distinction between one human being and another. Even the distinction between humans and animals loses its meaning in the eye of the spiritual man. On the other hand, he found religion as a religious tradition/ sect separates one human from another since each sect differs from other in many respects. This difference causes distinction and discrimination even among the people of same religion. The distinction and discrimination lead to religious hatred and cultural conflicts.

Spirituality breaks all physical boundaries of cast, colour, creed and country. This realization led Acharya Tulsi to work beyond all sorts of limits. He used spirituality as an effective tool to unite all humans and to bring individual, social, national and global change. To serve the purpose he launched socio-ethical mass movements as Anuvrat, Preksha Meditation and Science of Living. Through them he brought people of same and different religions and cultures at one platform to work together.

Spirituality is a universal truth. It is not confined to any particular group of people, country and period. It is meant for the welfare of all. It has been the central and peripheral teaching of Jainism over the centuries. Acharya Tulsi revitalized the spiritual approach of Jainism in his time.

2. Blending Spirituality with Science

The modern era is well known for blending spirituality with science. Swami Vivekananda thought to reconcile religion and science. Acharya Tulsi

not only thought of the reconciliation but he did it successfully. Following are his unique contributions in bringing science close to religion:

- **Preksha Meditation (PM)**
- **Science of Living (SOL)**
- **Use of Scientific Method and Study in Editing of the Jain Canons**

2.1 Preksha Meditation: PM is a meditational technique introduced by Acharya Mahapragya, the successor of Acharya Tulsi. It is based on scriptural and scientific researches done especially in the field of Physiology, Psychology and Para-Psychology. The main goal of PM is self-realization. But from social point of view it aims at release of physical, mental and emotional tension. For self-realization, mental peace and emotional control it emphasizes on the uses of the power of perception which is innate quality of soul.

2.2 Science of Living: Acharya Tulsi was looking for the social reformation through moral development of an individual. He saw education as the most effective system to inculcate morality in an individual and through the individual in society, nation and world. Till the character building movements start from student life the dream of healthy society cannot be fulfilled. He also realized that just teaching of moral values cannot bring desirable change in the society. The teaching has been going on from centuries in India and abroad yet, the ratio of corruptions, crimes and indiscipline all over the world is increasing day by day. It shows that there is something missing in our educational policies. The missing part, in his view, was the practical part. Until and unless what is taught in the name of moral values is put into practice, it cannot serve the purpose. For practical part Acharya Tulsi envisioned a new education which must imbibe both spiritual and scientific study and help to develop an integrated personality. The new education developed by him with the help of Acharya Mahaprajna, his successor, has got recognition and started by the name of Jeevan Vigyan i.e. Science of Living.

2.3 Use of Scientific Method and Study in Editing of the Jain Canons: In the age of science and technology, people are inclined more towards scientific study of all phenomena, whether it is physical, psychological or spiritual. This has created challenge to the people of religion. Some of the religious traditions were looking science as anti-religious venture. Their view towards science is that it has destroyed religion. Contrary to it, Acharya Tulsi

saw science as boon to religion. In his view, science is complementary and not opposite to religion.

Due to the lack of details some of the scriptural truths were not clear. The truths which are subtle and subject of extra-sensory perception have now become very clear by scientific researches. For example, it was the problem how the person, who is endowed with extra-sensory perception, can see the subtle, distant and obstructed events? But with the discovery of TV and internet it is no more problem today. This is the reason why Acharya Tulsi included scientific study wherever needed in his commentary of the Jain canons and scriptures. He successfully blended spiritual findings with scientific researches.

3. Socialization of Jain Tenets

World is currently undergoing a period of social, economic and cultural transformation. Though the effects of University Education on humanity, theology, economic progress, technology and social sciences are widely recognized, there is little understanding regarding how to create best culture, foster ideas and promote social innovations to solve the current-age problems. Acharya Tulsi paid attention to the dilema and brought social innovations in different fields of life. Following are some of the innovations done by him.

3.1 Anuvrat : A Moral Movement : Jainism as a religion has been very much confined to India because of its strict practice of non-violence, vegetarianism and spiritual outlook towards life. The main motive behind the prescription of Anuvrat i.e. small vows by Bhagawan Mahavir in 6th century BCE, was mainly concerned with the individual transformation and spiritual excellence. Acharya Tulsi set a new paradigm as Anuvrat movement in 1949. Through it he said, individual is not separate from society. Both are inter-connected and influence each other. Hence, individual transformation and social transformation must go together. Moreover, he saw the spiritual values and social values are not separate phenomena. One and the same value can be applied to spiritual as well as social sphere. In social sphere, the application can be with limit but not altogether different. In result, he developed ethics in every walk of life. He presented global, social, environmental ethics and talked of total transformation and holistic growth of the society.

3.2 Four-fold Global Ethics: To combat with the problem of moral crisis Acharya Tulsi gave four-fold global ethics. According to him some

universal ethical code of conduct which can be practiced everywhere; we can surely avert moral crises facing the humanity. He tried to evolve a four-fold simple code for global ethics as follows:[4]

a. Man should not indulge in cruel actions which may deteriorate mutual relations with other human beings. Such mutual human actions will solve the problem of economic disparity.
b. Man should not be cruel even to the sub-human species, so that the problems of ecology may not become intricate.
c. Man should also avoid cruelty towards the immobile living beings: earth etc to avoid destruction of natural resources. By doing so we can save the environment from being polluted and future generation from the dearth of natural resources.
d. Man must observe proper restraint towards insentient world so that the harmony between the sentient and insentient worlds may be properly maintained.

3.3 Environmental Ethics: In regard to environmental ethics he said that the real crisis is rooted in consumerist trends in modern man. Unless we change this life-style rooted in consumerism, no solution to the environmental crisis is possible. He said to develop restraint life-style.[5]

3.4 Religious and Cultural Diversities: In the view of Acharya Tulsi, religious and cultural diversities are no problems in themselves. Difference in thoughts helps freedom of thought and creativity. Problems arise when we become one-sided and obstinate, and insist only one's own thought. Hence, the best solution is to adopt the attitude of non-absolutism. Let us adopt and assimilate the thoughts of other religions and cultures as alternative standpoints.[6]

3.5 Global Transformation: He talked of global transformation, transformation at both individual and social level. Individual and social transformations are concomitant. One without other is difficult to attain. But Acharya Tulsi believed that individual change is possible only by changing the heart and not by pressure. For social change he gave the concept of exploitation-free social structure.

3.6 Exploitation-free Society: He presented a clear picture of the exploitation-free society through his moral movement Anuvrat. Following are the features of the society of his dream[7] :

a. **Reduced Wants**: He firmly believed that uncontrolled wants lead to acquisition which, in turn, results in exploitation. Acharya Tulsi firmly believed that it is only through restraint that man can lead a peaceful life. The exploitation-free society can be built essentially through restraint.

b. **Decentralization of Economic and Political Powers**: Centralization of the powers breeds acquisition and exploitation.

c. **Dignity of Labour and Self-reliance:** In exploitation-free society, every effort must ensure that individually people are self-reliant and socially the dignity of labour is recognized.

d. **Accumulation Divested Prestige**: In their craze for prestige, people are prepared to practice all kinds of deception, fraud and conspiracy for earning more money. If money is divested of prestige, acquisition will die its own death.

e. **Nonviolent Resistance**: The society will have people full of the conviction that the real solution of a problem lies in non-violence alone. [8]

Undoubtedly non-violence is one of the many factors which are responsible for building a society free from exploitation. It is true that non-violence cannot be operationalized in totality in society since the society is based on fear and acquisition. On the other hand, non-violence cannot reconcile with fear and acquisition. In such a condition, to think of society free from exploitation had no relevance. In this regard, Acharya Tulsi talked of two concepts of non-violence: [9]

- **Practical**
- **Complete Nonviolence**

Practical non-violence means solving problems by some pressure. Satyagrah, sit-ins, fasting come under practical non-violence. Complete non-violence means solving all problems through mutual agreement and goodwill. In regard to society free from exploitation, Acharya Tulsi was in favour of non-violent resistance. In his view, the essential prerequisites for non-violent resistance are:[10]

- Training in non-violence
- Acquaintance with Circumstances before Taking Action
- Detachment and Modesty

Thus, there is lot to discuss about how Acharya Tulsi modernized Jainism and presented it as a scientific, realistic and rationalistic religion to people of modern times. Preserving all traditional values how he shifted his emphasis from tradition to religion, from religion to spirituality, from blind faith to experimental study and, from individual to social reformation.

References :

1. *Dasaveāliyam* 1.1
2. *Dasaveāliyam* 2.5
3. *Illuminator of Jaina Tenets*, 8.3
4. *A New Light On Global Crisis*, P. 2
5. Ibid, P. 3
6. Ibid, P. 11
7. *Acharya Tulsi On Contemporary Problems*, p.5-7
8. Ibid, p. 12-15
9. Ibid, p. 13
10. Ibid, p.13-15

Dept. of Jainology and
Comparative Religion and Philosophy,
Jain Vishva Bharti Institute, Ladnun

जैन विश्वभारती संस्थान, लाडनूँ
प्रकाशन सूची

क्र.	पुस्तक का नाम	लेखक/सम्पादक	मूल्य
01.	Anekant: Reflection & Clarification	Acharya Mahaprajna	30
02.	Anekant: Views & Issues	Acharya Mahaprajna	30
03.	Shraman Bhagwan Mahavir Life & Doctrine	Shri S.C. Rampuria	300
04.	Anekanta- The Third Eye	Acharya Mahaprajna	195
05.	Science in Jainism	Prof. M.R. Gelra	200
06.	The Quest for Truth	Acharya Mahaprajna	195
07.	Sound of Silence	Acharya Mahaprajna	140
08.	Journey into Jainism	Sadhvi Vishrut Vibha	39
09.	Jain Studies & Science	Prof (Dr.) M.R. Gelra	400
10.	Non-violence Relative Economics and A New Social Order	Prof. B.R. Dugar/Dr. Satya Prajna/ Dr. Samani Ritu Prajna	500
11.	Jain Biology	Late Shri Jetha Lal S. Zaveri/ Prof. Muni Mahendra Kumar	200
12.	Samayasara	Late Shri Jetha Lal S. Zaveri/ Prof. Muni Mahendra Kumar	450
13.	Jain Paribhasika Sabdakosa	Mukhya Niyojika Sadhavi Vishrutavibha	1125
14.	Bhagavai-2	Acharya Mahaprajna Eng. Trans. by Prof. Muni Mahendra Kumar & Late Dr. N. Tatia	1695
15.	JVB & JVBU Research Work	Samani Agam Prajna/Dr. Vandana Mehta	100
16.	Bibliography of Jain Text in Tamil	Shri K.P. Aravaanan	50
17.	The Enigma of the Universe	Prof. Muni Mahendra Kumar	500
18.	Preksha Meditation and Human Health	Prof. J.P.N. Mishra and Dr. P.S. Shekhawat	500
19.	आचार्य महाप्रज्ञ का संस्कृत साहित्य	डॉ. हरिशंकर पाण्डेय	550
20.	युग को आचार्य महाप्रज्ञ का योगदान	डॉ. हरिशंकर पाण्डेय/डॉ. जे.पी.एन. मिश्रा	100
21.	अंगुत्तर निकाय भाग-1	श्री श्रीचंद रामपुरिया	50
22.	अंगुतर निकाय भाग-2	श्री श्रीचंद रामपुरिया	60
23.	महाभारत परिक्रमा	श्री श्रीचंद रामपुरिया	60
24.	श्रमण सूक्त	श्री श्रीचंद रामपुरिया	150
25.	तीर्थंकर वर्द्धमान जीवन प्रसंग	श्री श्रीचंद रामपुरिया	80
26.	आवश्यक निर्युक्ति खण्ड-1	डॉ. समणी कुसुम प्रज्ञा	400
27.	आचारांग और महावीर	साध्वी शुभ्रयशा	150
28.	सम्बोधि का समीक्षात्मक अनुशीलन	समणी स्थित प्रज्ञा	100
29.	रत्नपालचरितम	डॉ. हरिशंकर पाण्डेय	100
30.	दूरस्थ शिक्षा की उपयोगिता	डॉ. आनन्दप्रकाश त्रिपाठी	100
31.	नई सुबह	डॉ. आनन्दप्रकाश त्रिपाठी	100
32.	जैन संस्कृति और जीवन मूल्य भाग-1,2,3	डॉ. समणी ऋजु प्रज्ञा	75
33.	भिक्षु न्यायकर्णिका	पं. विश्वनाथ मिश्र	120
34.	जीवन विज्ञान और स्वास्थ्य	डॉ. समणी ऋजु प्रज्ञा/समणी श्रेयस प्रज्ञा	120
35.	योग वैशिष्ट्य	डॉ. जे.पी.एन. मिश्रा	400
36.	अर्द्धमागधी साहित्य में गणित	डॉ. अनुपम जैन	200
37.	जैन पारिभाषिक शब्दकोश	मुख्य नियोजिका साध्वी विश्रुतविभा	995
38.	जैन दर्शन के प्रमुख सिद्धान्त	डॉ. समणी ऋजु प्रज्ञा	110
39.	शिक्षा दर्शन एवं मूल्य विकास	डॉ. समणी मल्लि प्रज्ञा/डॉ. हेमलता जोशी	160
40.	प्रेक्षाध्यान और योग	डॉ. समणी ऋजु प्रज्ञा	150

प्रकाशक - सम्पादक - डॉ. अनिल धर द्वारा जैन विश्वभारती संस्थान
लाडनूँ के लिए प्रकाशित एवं गिरधर ऑफसेट प्रिन्टर्स, लाडनूं द्वारा मुद्रित