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JAIN ETHICS AND ITS SOCIAL APPLICATION

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Abstract

Jain Ethics are the core part of life, that is to say teach us how to lead a life. It emphasis on the preservation of traditional nature as reflected in social customs. Non-violence and truth are the focal indicators of word peace and harmony and imbibe good relationship. Jain Ethics bring realization to man's duty to himself and the society. It teaches us to follow society order and discipline in all walks of life. Attachment-detachment are part and parcel of human life. Jain Ethics are totally centered on non-absolutism. It brings correlatively in spirituality and righteousness. Faith, knowledge and conduct are very essential it lead a hygienic life. It is based on equality of life. Soul, especially voice of soul need to hear and apply to self. Jain philosophy had been following *Anuvrat Achar Sahimta*. Wrong instruction, divulging secrets, forging documents and misappropriating funds head to be avoided.

The Paper answers the questions like - What is *Satya*? What is *Astey*? What is *Brahmcharya*? How can we lead a pious and pose life? How can we readapt from sins? Jain literature

Since the inception of social order, certain norms (do and don't) were laid down. In the due course of time, these norms turned in mature thoughts deriving many aspects, values, and ethics.

The word Ethics is derived from '*Ethos'*, meaning character, custom, or habit. The term 'moral' closely is associated with ethics, comes from the *Latin* word 'mores', which primarily stands for 'custom' or habit and secondarily means 'character'[i]. In India also, ethics is explained by the word *'dharma*[ii]*',* which has been explained in two ways. On the one hand, it stands for preservation of traditional natures as reflected in social customs; on the other hand, it means moral qualities of universal nature, like nonviolence and truth. The former view is emphasized in *Brahminical* school of thought who defines *dharma* as rules and regulations laid down by the *Vedas*[iii], which are repositories of the traditional social virtues. The latter view is emphasized by Jainism, which says, that *dharma* is made up of nonviolence, self-control and austerity.[iv] In the West, ethics has been precisely defined 'as the study of what is right or good in conduct'.[v]

Jain View

Jain Ethics is considered as the most glorious part of Jainism. That is why some authors have described Jainism as ethical realism. In this thought there is no conflict between man's duty to himself and the society. Here the highest good of society is the highest good of the individual. As Lord Mahaveer know the fact that the social good in its ultimate analysis depends upon the perfection achieved by individual. There is no opposition between the good of the community and the individual, the guarantee to maintain the social ethical depends upon the ethical characteristics of an individual, and the *Anuvratas* (small vows) are enough potent for the same and can prove the light become in this era of chaos.

The existence of misery and suffering is as much recognized by Jainism as by "the world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct and without discrimination",[vi] says the *Acarangasutra. Silanka,* a

commentator of *Acarangasutra* begins his commentary with the following words: All creatures, overcome by attachment, aversion and delusion, tormented by various, excessively bitter physical and mental miseries should try to know what is good and what is bad for the removal of that misery, and this is not possible without a peculiar type of discrimination.[vii] The *Uttaradhyayana* says that all worldly pleasure is suffering in the ultimate analysis. All "singing is but prattle, all dancing is but mocking, as ornaments are but a burden, all pleasures produce but pain."[viii] The same eternal question haunts the mind of the thinker again and again: "By what acts can I escape a sorrowful lot in this unstable, internal *sansara*, which is full of misery?"[ix] "Birth is misery, old age is misery, and so are disease and death."[x] The main attraction 'is a safe place in view of all, but difficult of approach, where there is no old age nor death, no pain nor disease."[xi] Thus, we can say that -

Jain ethics is based on the fundamental doctrine of non-absolutism. (*Anekantavada).* This has saved Jain-ethics from being one-sided. Jain ethics always takes into account all the different views and tries to reconcile them.

Jain ethics does not confuse the science of spirituality with science of social righteousness. It has thus been able to distinguish the essential nature of dharma from its non-essential beliefs, which change from time to time and place to place. Jain ethics lays emphasis on the unity of faith, knowledge, and conduct. Thus, Jain ethics is not merely a system giving certain code of morality, but it is a religion to be lived in practice.

Jain ethics is based neither on oneness of life as in *Vedanta,* nor on momentary nature of self as in Buddhism. It is based on equality of life. Basically, all souls are equal. Therefore, no wonder that such precepts as non-violence in Jainism take into account not only the human beings or animals or insects but even plant-life or one-sensed elemental life, like water etc. The social organization as anticipated by Jain ethics does not make any distinction on the basis of caste, creed or color. Jain ethics assigns primary place to the life of a monk and the life of a householder occupies only a secondary place. It is due to this fact that Jain ethics lays more emphasis on individual and ascetic virtues than on social and positive virtues. The ultimate aim of life being liberation, nothing short of complete renunciation of the mundane life could satisfy Jain *acaryas.* But, social order is particurly related with common man, householders etc. and *Mahaveer* laid down certain code of conduct for them also, denown as *Anuvrats*.

***Anuvratas* (Code of Conduct for Laities)**

The laity is the observer of the small vows. In *Upasakdasa, Avasyaka Sutra etc.* canonical literature, we get the detailed description of twelve types of small vows. In Digambara Tradition, there are several books pertaining to small vows namely *Ratnakarandasravakacara, Sagardharmamrt, Purusartha Sidhyupaya, Vasunandi Sravakacara etc.* The twelve *anuvratas* meant for the laymen are as follows :

(i) *Ahimsa (Sthula Pranatipata Virmana)*

As complete observance of non-violence is not possible for the householders, they are advised to refrain from gross violence. The Jainism belives that the laity observing this vow should desist from intended act of violence. The observer should avoid injury to mobile beings, which possesses two or more senses. A householder should be alert in follow acne of the vows and should refrain from five transgressions of *Ahimsa Anuvrata.*[xii]

(ii) Satya* (*Sthula Mrsavada-Viranana)

Gross falsehood means the utterance of false words out of passion or the utterance of any word, which causes great sufferings of pains to others to the speaker. The householder cannot always refrain from all forms of falsehood in his practical life but he is prohibited to speak such a truth, which causes the death, great sufferings to any being.[xiii]

There are five transgressions of the small vow to abstain from falsehood[xiv] i.e. wrong instruction, divulging secrets, forging documents, misappropriating funds entrusted to ones care, and disclosing confidential deliberations.

(iii) Asteya* (*Sthula Adattadana Viramana)

A layman is forbidden to commit such a stealing i.e. to take anything belonging to others either in a house, or on the way, or on a hill. He should refrain from taking anything without the owner's consent, including something which has been abandoned by another person and may lead to punishment by the law or censure by the people. The *aticaras* of asteya anuvrata are abetting theft, dealing in stolen goods, evading customs in foreign lands, misapprehending the weight of goods one is buying or selling, and dealing in counterfeit goods.[xv]

(iv) Brahmacharya (Svadara Santosa Vrata)

It means contentment with ones own wife or *svapati santosa* i.e. contentment with ones own husband.[xvi] Sexual intercourse is always condemned in Jainism but yet a laymen is allowed to indulge in sexual intercourse in a limited way with his own wife, if he cannot resist the sex-urge. *Tattvartha Sutra* lists the five transgressions of the small vow of abstain from carnality i.e. match making, promiscuity, sex with whores, unnatural sexual practices and intense sexual passion.[xvii]

(v) Aparigraha* (Parigraha *Iccha Parimana)

This vow prohibits a layman or householder to limit voluntarily the possession of amasses land, money, gold, etc. beyond a certain limit. Now as it is necessary to restrict desires for the restriction of possession, this vow is, that all forms of possession involve violence, and accordingly, if possession is limited, violence will be reduced automatically. *Tattvartha Sutra* lists the five transgressions of the small vow to abstain from possessiveness, i.e. the failure to keep with in the set limits of tillable land and buildings, silver and gold, livestock and grain, male and female slaves and of base metals, earthenware and woolen furniture.[xviii]

(vi) *Dig-vrata* (Confinement to a Limited Area)

This vow says that a person should confine his range of movement until death, with a view to reducing minorisms. It is held that if the range of movement of a person is greater, the violence to living beings will also be greater. The more the movements of a laity are restricted, the less will be the violence. "Going beyond the limits of the set area upwards, downwards, horizontally, adding to the set area, and forgetting the limitations made, are the five transgressions of *digvrata* and should be avoided by laity."[xix]

(vii) *Anartha Danda Viramana* (Abstinence from Purposeless Sin)

This vow ordains that one should abstain form such acts that serves no purpose. Acts of this kind are of five kinds :

(i) *Paropadesa* - preaching of sins.

(ii) *Himsa pradhana* - supplying destuctive things like poison, weapons etc.

(iii) *Apadhyana* - evil thought in the form of wishing defeat, punishment, mutilation for others.

(iv) Dush-sruti- hearing of evil *sastras* apt to make the mind impure by giving rise to attachment, aversion etc.

(v) Pramada carita - negligent actions like cutting trees while walking, digging the water, sprinkling water etc. and so on, without any purpose.[xx]

Tattvartha Sutra enumerates the five transgressions of this vow, i.e. erotic talk, erotic gesture, garrulity, unlimited deeds beyond the set limit, and excessive use of consumer goods.[xxi]

(viii) *Desavakasika (*Limitationof the Area of Dwelling and Occupation)

This vow enjoins that one should limit the field of activity having reference to short periods, generally covering the period from dusk to dawn. This vow's commitment grants fearlessness of him to all beings outside that area. This vow should be observed bereft of five transgressions i.e. importing from beyond the limits of the set area, deputing a servant to bring something from beyond these limits, calling another beyond the limits, gesturing to another beyond the limits, exporting beyond the limits.[xxii]

(ix) *Bhogopabhoga Parimana* (Limitation over Consumption)

This is nothing but moderation in eating, clothing etc. This vow enjoins the layman to lead a moderate life by delimiting his objects of enjoyment. It ordains first, the moderation of *bhoga* or enjoyment of things capable of being used only once, like food, betel nut, cooking, paste etc. and secondly *upabhoga* or enjoyment of things capable of being used again and again, such as houses, furniture, cloths etc. which are meant for external purposes. This vow also forbids pursuing cruel trades which are of 15 kinds. Thus this vow limits our use of consumable and non-consumable goods. This vow lists the five transgressions namely, eating animate food, eating things in contact with animate ford, eating things mixed with animate food, drinking alcohol and eating half-cooked food.[xxiii]

(x) *Samayika Vrata* (Vow of Equality)

Samayika is nothing but keeping aloof from sinful conduct for a set period i.e. forty-eight minutes (*muhurt*) and desisting form all injurious activities during that time. *Samantabhadra* defines *samayika,* as relinquishing the five types of sins to the furthest extreme. During the period of *samayika a laity* practices meditation, contemplation, scriptural recitation and bhajans highlighting glory etc., due to these activities of mind, body and speech, the self inhibits the incoming new *karmas* and thereby tries to shed off the earlier gained *karmic* bondage. This vow helps in the equanimity of mind. *Tattvartha* enumerates to refrain from 5 transgressions of *samayika,* while performing it, i.e. improper physical activity, improper speech, improper thought, lack of enthusiasm for the vow and an unmindful attitude to the vow.[xxiv]

(xi) *Pausadhopavasa* (Vow of Fasting with Spiritual Practice)

This vow prohibits (i) taking of meals, (ii) body adornment with garlands, perfumes, ornaments etc. (iii) sexual intercourse and (iv) performance of worldly duties on particular holy days. The sacred days for fasting are prescribed as the eighth, fourteenth or fifteenth day of the fortnight. During the fast period, the householder refrain from violence, remains constantly in holy thoughts, and by reading religious literature and remains aware of his vows for a day and night. In *Tttvartha Sutra, Umasvati* says

of five transgressions possible during the practice of this vow, namely, evacuating excreta in uninfected and upswept places, picking up things or leaving them in undisputed and upswept places, picking up things or leaving them in undisputed and upswept places, spreading mats in un-inspected and upswept places, disregard for the vow, and an unmindful attitude towards the vow.[xxv]

(xii) *Atithi Samvibhaga* (Vow of Care and Share)

It is obligatory for the householders to offer food, implements, medicines and shelter to the ascetics, offering alms to ascetics must be undertaken with care to follow the strict prescriptions of the scriptures. The ascetics should be offered suitable food and drink with devotion and humility befitting the custom and etiquette of the place and occasion. If any laity offers food to a restrained monk or a nun full heartedly he sheds many *karmas.* But a laity should be alert while offering food and try to avoid the following 5 transgressions i.e. placing alms on animate object (such as green leaves), covering alms animate objects, pretending that the food belong to others, offering competitively against other donors, and untimely offering of food.[xxvi]

Social Problems :

A social problem has been defined as "a situation confronting a group of a section of society which inflicts injurious consequences on a significant number of society's population that can be handled only collectively. (Reinhardt, 1952: 14) That's why Walsh and Fur fey (1961:1) have defined a social problem as a "deviation from the social ideal remediable by group effort." Jain philosophy is in many respects is well-suited to the problems and complexities of a diverse modern society. With this in mind, attempt is made to address several dye questions of social dilemmas from a standpoint rooted in Jain principles. The list is by no means exhaustive, and aims to be accessible to all regardless of faith, background or position on political spectrum. It invites the reader to think, reflect and act with care. Although, there are many problems disturbing the social order and putting individual to unrest but I will focus on some major issues only.

Business Ethics and Environmental Protection :

More than 2600 years ago, *Mahaveera* revived Jainism and declared that all beings of the natural world have equal potential for progress in the cycle of transmigration. All are dependent upon one another for their mutual survival, but partial doom occurs when this inter-dependence is disturbed. It has been noted in the *Acaranga* that air, water, fire, earth and plants have comparatively unman fest feelings, however plants feel pain when harm is done to them or feel pleasure when they are taken care and loved, this has now been scientifically verified.

Business ethics is one of the most important, yet perhaps the most misunderstood, concern in the world of business today. The field of business ethics deals with questions about the acceptance of specific types of business practices. By its very nature, the field of business ethics is controversial, and there is no universally accepted approach for resolving it's questions. It is incorrect ot say that ethics, and religion are only concerned with individual personal lives. Lord *Mahaveera* said that good of society is inherent in the good of individual. The twelve small vows prescribed for the householders can help in the environmental protection, economic equality, and social harmony. The three *vratas* propounded by Lord *Mahaveera* are *iccha parimana vrata, ahimsa* vrata and *bhogopabhoga pariman vrata*. These three vratas are so interrelated with each other that we cannot explain Jain business ethics by negating any one of the above *vratas*. Lord *Mahaveera* restricted 15 such professions technically known as 15

Karmadana[xxvii] i.e. *Angal* karma, *Vana* karma, *Sakata* karma etc. because such professions initiate tremendous violence. Jainism asserts, 'Non-violence as a highest virtue'. Lord *Mahaveera* discusses very minutely the vow of Non-violence. The basic reason behind the restriction of fifteen professions was that Jainism assert the eternal truth that all the six classes of living beings i.e. five immobile beings i.e. earth, water, air, fire and plant bodied beings and mobile beings possess equal consciousness, Each and every living beings whether they are one sensed, two, three, four or five sensed, they play an important role in the ecological sustainable development of the world as a whole.

Modern scientific researches have shown that following of the fifteen professions involve environmental pollution and generate several diseases amongst human beings, They are :

1. *Angara Karma :* (Livelihood From Char-coal)
2. *Vana* Karma : (livelihood From Destroying Plants)
3. *Sakata* Karma and *Bhataka* karma (livelihood by driving all Types of Transport, and through Transport Fee, Hiring Vehicles).
4. *Phodi* karma : (Livelihood From Digging)
5. *Danta Vanijya :* (Trade in Animal Byproducts)
6. *Rasa Vanijya :* (Trade in alcohol and forbidden food stuff like milk, curd, butter, meat etc.)
7. *Lkkha vanijya*
8. *Visa Vanijya : (*Trade in raw-metals arsenic etc. poisonous items as well as destructive articles like arms and armaments).
9. *Kesa Vanijya :* (Trade of animals like carmari cows, horses, elephants as well as wool etc.)
10. *Yantra Pilana* Karma :
11. *Nirlanchana karma* : (Work Involving Mutilation)
12. *Davagni Dana* : (Work involving the use of fire either to burn fields or meadows etc. in order to make the land clean and setting fire to forest.)
13. *Sarah-Sosana* karma : (Work involving the sue of drying up streams, rivers, lakes etc.)
14. *Asati Posana* karma : (Work involving breeding, nourishing birds, animal etc.)

Economists believe in "Quick short term gains" disregarding ecological consequences. Rapid economic development programmes do more harm to environment, where as ecologist want to maximize long term benefits, slow but sustainable. The ecological impacts of one sided economic development can be seen in the form of five D's syndrome i.e. drought, deforestation, desertification, deluge and disease.

Jain *Acaryas* possessed farsighted and prescribed business ethics for the householders, which cannot only solve the problems of ecology and economics but also simultaneously can give solution to the ever-increasing problems of L.P.G. i.e. Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization. *Acaranga Sutra,* the Jain canonical text in which Lord *Mahaveera* emphasized, *"Je logam abbhahikkhai, se attanam abbahikkai"*[xxviii] i.e. the denial of the existence of the six classes of beings will be tantamount to the denial of the existence of the self." One cannot safeguard ones own existence by obliteration the existence of others. The Jain view asserts the principle of interdependence. So the fifteen professions

restricted by Lord *Mahaveera* has a social relevance in the context of Global environment preservation and ecological balance but also for the better human health and thereby social health as a whole.

Corruption :

Corruption is a disease with roots and branches so inter-twined and wide spread that it is difficult to trance out its source or evaluate its extent. It is an evil from every point of view. It hinders economic progress; it brutalizes all concerned it spreads like cancer. In the society as every where priority is give to financial concept.

Research declares India's place is thirteenth in the world corruption rate. We must become strong from within and strengthen our democratic institutions. In the Jain view, all the cases of scams, corruption etc. occurs due to greedy urge, and attachment towards luxurious way of life. To establish corruption free society first of all change of attitude is needed. Once belief in change of this attitude occurs, and restrain towards unnecessary desires is attained, corruption can be eradicated. In the words of *Mahatma Gandhi* sleepless vigilance on the part of citizen is the only and the most effective course of action to fight corruption.

The vow of limiting the quantity of things one will use (*upabhoga-paribhoga parimana vrata*) is a device to control consumerism. Digvrata or the vow of limiting the area of traveling in all direction is a device to control hedonism. Parigraha *parimana* or the vow of limiting the desire of possessions controls the tendency to acquire. Thus, consumerism is the adopted child of riches. Epicureanism or hedonism is a branch of that very poisonous tree. Acquisitiveness is a source of its nourishment. So in this present scenario socialism and communism can establish themselves in the state of unlimited consumption, unlimited comfort, and unlimited acquisition of wealth. A new society cannot be created without practicing the *mantra* for bringing about the change of heart and without developing a spirit of *vrata.*

Conflict :

In modern India, we come across a large number of conflicts between various communities in the name of religions, communal riots, in the name of language, cultural difference so on and so forth. A man of *anekantic* perspective ponders upon each and every issue open-mindedly. He believes in the maxim, "The human race is one" so he never discriminates between humans in the name of caste, creed, richness, whiteness etc. He believes in the unity of all the religions and this enables its followers to respect, admire, and assimilate whatever may be good in other faiths. Every country has its own culture and tradition. Problems erupt when one tries to impose it on the other. History tells us that events of this nature were commonplace.

Peace is something which the world eagerly wants but which we don't know to secure. Peace needs a new civilization, a new culture and a new philosophy, where there is no narrowness and no partiality. Huxley is correct to a great extent when he says that 'war exists because people wish it to exist'. We cannot check violence by remaining violent. But non-violence must precede non-violence on thought. Prof. R. Prasad also holds that *syadvada* is an extension of *Ahimsa* in epistemology. Unless we resolve our differences, we are bound to face Tension. Analyzing the ultimate causes of war and terrorism, we had come to the conclusion that it is ultimately our divergent and conflicting ideologies that comes in the way. Prof. Tatia also holds that only intellectual clarity will resolve all conflict and

revelry. Today one man or one country fights with the other because their views are different. Views are bound to differ because we are guided by different conditions, thoughts, modes and attitudes, Hence it is wrong to think oneself right and rest others wrong. No perspective is final or absolute unless it is understood in terms of relativity. Diversity and understanding of different religions, cultures and values systems can also help significantly in cultivating respect and tolerance among young people. Therefore, even *anekant* is also subject to *anekant.* Thus *anekant* go in tune with the exposition of the principle of 'comprehensive perspectives', which leads to harmonious peaceful society.

Conclusion :

Two and a half millennia ago, *Mahaveera* recognized that non-violence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself. This ancient insight is a message for our time. The present problems of terrorism, increasing threat of environmental degradation, continuous deterioration of renewable and non-renewable resources, economic recession, over-consumerism, violence leading towards animal testing for cosmetic usage, testing for safe food items and medicines etc. can be resolved through the application of Jain Doctrines. Jainism's contribution to social cohesion is to offer an alternative new way of honking based on inter connectedness and inter-dependence. It propounds pious life-style for the laity, which proves to be instrumental for a harmonious life to over self, society and nation global level and to the nature. This social-ecological continuum recognized by Jains makes their thinking especially relevant to a society, trying to rethink its attitude to the environment and create a kind of awareness the materialism doesn't satisfy us ultimately, but does social and psychic harm.

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