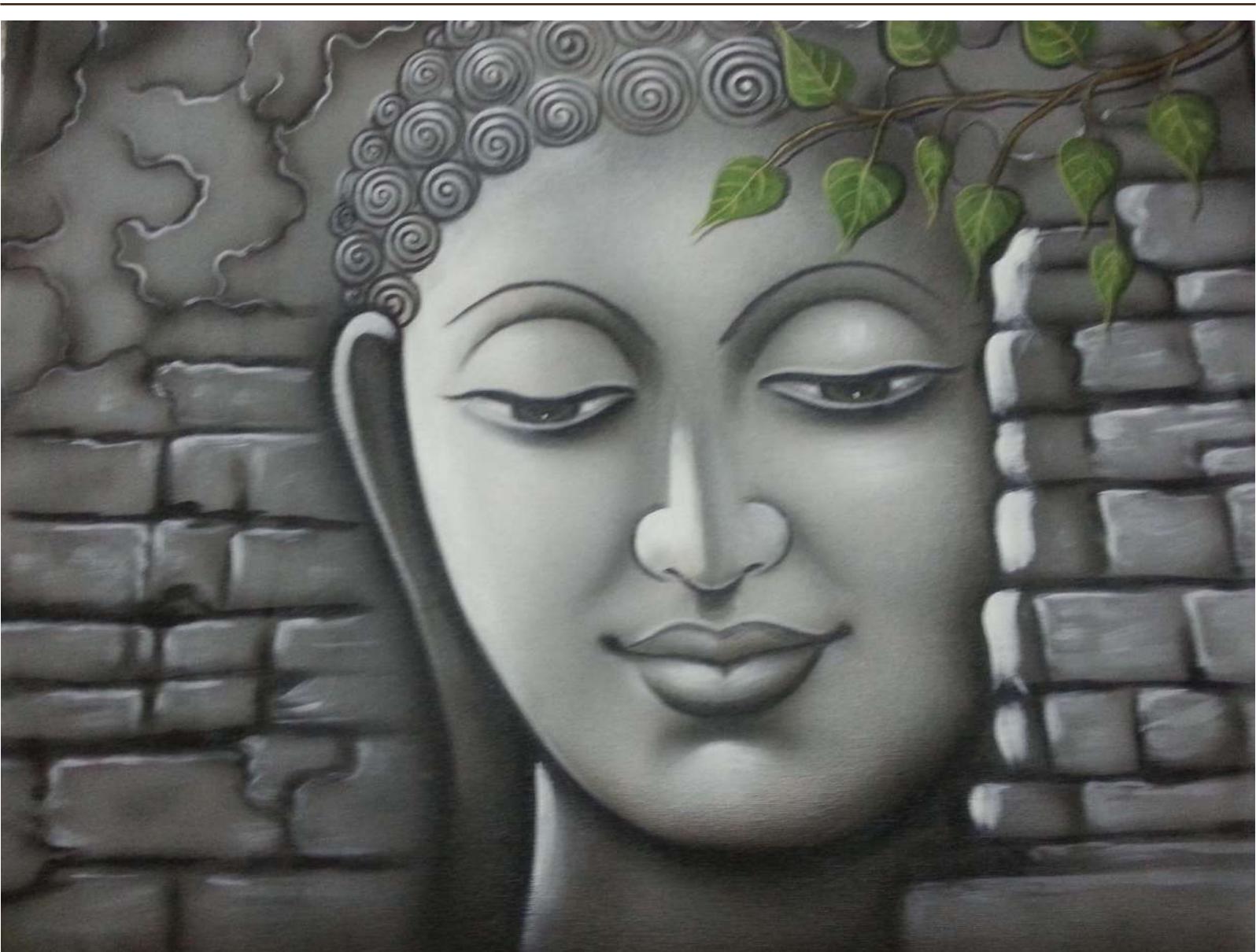




BHAGWAN MAHAVEER FOUNDATION

MAHAVEER AWARD FOR ESSAYS



LIVING IN HARMONY WITH OUR ECOSYSTEM



Teachings of Bhagwan Mahaveer have magical remedies to pandemics. Jainism as a religion, consists of beliefs and practices that not only guide an individual's way of life but also is rooted in scientific theories.

Within the daily practices of a Jain, every action considers the existence of microbes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has currently affected our nation, most of the health officials recommend wearing a cloth covering face and mouth when we go out in public. The coverings are a way to mitigate the spread of the disease, which is airborne.

The Jain monks have been wearing a "Muhapatti" across their face for centuries to prevent the inhalation of small insects and microbes. Jains believe that during the inhalation process small organisms are killed and therefore, the coverings are meant to exercise ahimsa and protect all forms of life.

Jainism preaches that life exists in various forms everywhere in the universe, with their own spiritual paths to follow. We have a moral duty not to disturb that spiritual path. It insists every individual to eat vegetarian meals and to even avoid roots and tubers. This is because uprooting roots and tubers disrupts the lifestyle of insects and microorganisms that live beneath the ground. As a result, we may harm them.

During the current pandemic, we have witnessed the spread of the zoonotic disease Covid-19 in six continents of the world. Let us try to understand the impact of human being's disruption on the natural environment of the world with a simple example.

When we encounter a cockroach inside the house, the first instinct, after screaming is to use bug spray to kill it. However, the principle of Ahimsa teaches us not to destroy any living beings. Each organism has a role to play in this vast ecosystem and if we co-exist respectfully, there will be balance in this world. The cockroach is fulfilling its role in the world and we the humans cannot be responsible for the destruction of that role.

The universe, the earth, and everything in it has always existed. In order for everything to function in equilibrium, we must live in harmony within this ecosystem. In simple terms this means instead of destroying we must preserve, instead of harming we must strengthen, and instead of extracting we must nourish.

Humans are constantly disrupting the ecosystem by invading tropical forests that provides homes to so many species of animals, plants, and microbes. As we disrupt that environment, we are shaking viruses loose from their natural hosts and target a new host such as humans.

Similarly, climate change also causes disruption in habitats of animals and plants and thus plays a role in the occurrence of diseases. So if we change the climate on earth, it will affect our partnership with animals and plants in this ecosystem. In order to reduce the risk of infectious diseases, we must protect our environment.

The lessons human beings learned from Covid-19 will encourage us to, once again, preserve, strengthen, and nourish the ecosystem. As a result, we will do our part to practice ahimsa and live in peace and harmony with all organisms.

To understand Ahimsa and peaceful harmonious co-existence, let us know more about Bhagwan Mahaveer, his life and his teachings.

INTRODUCTION TO JAINISM

Jainism is an ancient Indian religion. Followers of Jainism are called "Jains". The word Jain is derived from the Sanskrit word Jina which means victor, thus referring to the path of victory. A human being who has conquered all inner passions like attachment, desire, anger, pride, greed, etc. is called Jina.

According to Jainism, Tirthankars are the enlightened souls who have conquered all worldly emotions and feelings. They preach true dharma to the common people to follow. This will help them to attain liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Bhagwan Rishabhanath (Adhi Bhagwan) was the first Tirthankar. The following are the names of the 24 Tirthankars

Tirthan kara	Name	Symbol	Place of Birth	Father	Mother	Place of Nirvana
1st	Rishabhadev/ Adinath	Bull	Ayodhya - Uttar Pradesh	Shri Nabhiraiji	Marudevi	Kailash Parwat
2nd	Ajitnath	Elephant	Ayodhya - Uttar Pradesh	Jita Satru	Vijaya-Devi	Mount Parasnath
3rd	Sambhavanath	Horse	Sravasti – Uttar Pradesh	Jitari	Sena	Samet Sikhar
4th	Abhinandannath	Monkey	Ayodhya – Uttar Pradesh	Samvara	Siddhartha	
5th	Sumatinath	Red Goose	Ayodhya – Uttar Pradesh	Megh-Prabha	Sumangala	
6th	Padmaprabha	Lotus	Kausambhi – Uttar Pradesh	Dharana (Sidhara)	Susima	
7th	Suparshvanath	Swastika	Kasi - Uttar Pradesh	Supratishtha	Prithvi	
8th	Chandraprabha	Moon	Chandrapuri – Uttarakhand	Mahasena	Lakshmana	
9th	Pushpadanta/ Suvidhinath	Crocodile	Kakandi – Bihar	Sugriva	Rama (Supriya)	
10th	Sheetalnath	Kalpavriksha	Bhadrikapuri – Bihar	Dridharatha	Sunanda	
11th	Shreyansanath	Rhinoceros	Simhapuri	Vishnu	Vishnudri (Vishna)	

Tirthankara	Name	Symbol	Place of Birth	Father	Mother	Place of Nirvana
12th	Vasupujya	Female buffalo	Champapuri-Bihar	Vasupujya	Vijaya	Champapuri Mandargiri
13th	Vimalnath	Pig	Kampilya-Uttar Pradesh	Kritvarman	Suramya (Syama)	Mount Parasnath
14th	Anantnath	Porcupine	Ayodhya - Uttar Pradesh	Simhasena	Sarvavasa	
15th	Dharmanath	Vajra	Ratnapuri Uttar Pradesh	Bhanu	Suvrata	
16th	Shantinath	Deer	Hastinapura-Uttar Pradesh	Visvasena	Acira	
17th	Kunthunath	Goat	Hastinapura-Uttar Pradesh	Surya(Sura)	Sri-Devi	
18th	Aranath	Fish	Hastinapura - Uttar Pradesh	Sudarsana	Mitra Devi	
19th	Mallinath	Kalasa	Mithilapuri – Bihar	Kumbha	Rakshita	
20th	Munisuvrata	Tortoise	Kusagranagara	Sumitra	Padmavati	
21st	Nami Natha	Blue-Water Lily	Mithilapuri (Mathura) - Bihar	Vijaya	Vapra (Vipra)	
22nd	Neminatha	Conch	Sauripura (Dvaraka) - Uttar Pradesh	Samudra vijaya	Sivadevi	
23rd	Parshvanath	Snake	Kasi (Banaras) -Uttar Pradesh	Ashwasen	Vama	Mount Parasnath
24th	Bhagwan Mahaveer/ Vardhaman/ Ativeer	Lion	Kundalpur-Bihar	Siddharatha	Priyakaruni (Trishala)	Pawapuri

Bhagwan Parswanath was the 23rd Tirthankar who lived nearly 250 years before Mahaveer.

LIFE OF BHAGWAN MAHAVEER

EARLY LIFE



Queen Trisala had 14 auspicious dreams of the greatness of child Vardhaman

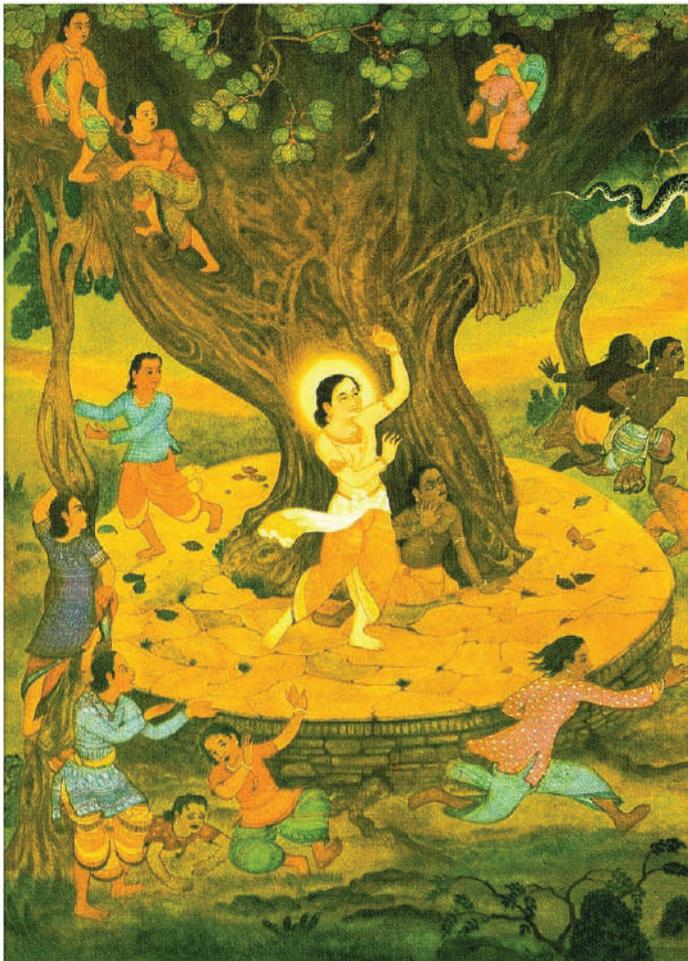
Vardhaman Mahaveer is the 24th and last Tirthankar of Jainism. His father Siddhartha was the head of a clan called the Jantrikas and his mother Trisala was a Lichchhavi Princess.

He was born on the thirteenth day of the rising moon during the Tamil month of Chithirai, in Kundalgrama, a suburb of Vaisali (modern Muzaffarpur district in Bihar) in 599 B.C. According to Gregorian calendar, Vardhaman was born during the corresponding month of either March or April. His birthday is celebrated as Mahaveer Jayanthi.

King Siddhartha had two sons and Vardhaman was the youngest of the two.

It is said that when the queen conceived Mahaveer, she had fourteen auspicious dreams that were a premonition of the greatness of the child that was to be born. The prosperity of the King grew day by day. The king attributed his success to his new born child and named him Vardhaman, which means "ever increasing". Vardhaman had a lavish childhood and lived like a proper prince.

He was a very learned person and received education in all branches of knowledge. Vardhaman led the life of a house holder. He married to Yasodhara and had a daughter named



Priyadarshini who was married to Jamali. Later, Jamali became the first disciple of Mahaveer.

He did many great things in his childhood like saving his friend from a poisonous snake, fighting a monster, etc. that proved that he was no ordinary child.

There are numerous incidences of courage and forgiveness throughout Vardhaman's life as a child and an adult. One day, prince Vardhaman, a young boy of eight, was playing with his friends on the outskirts of the city. At that very moment, Indra, the King of heaven, started praising the courage and fearlessness of prince Vardhaman. Another heavenly god decided to test Vardhaman's courage. He assumed the form of a frightening cobra and slithered near the children.

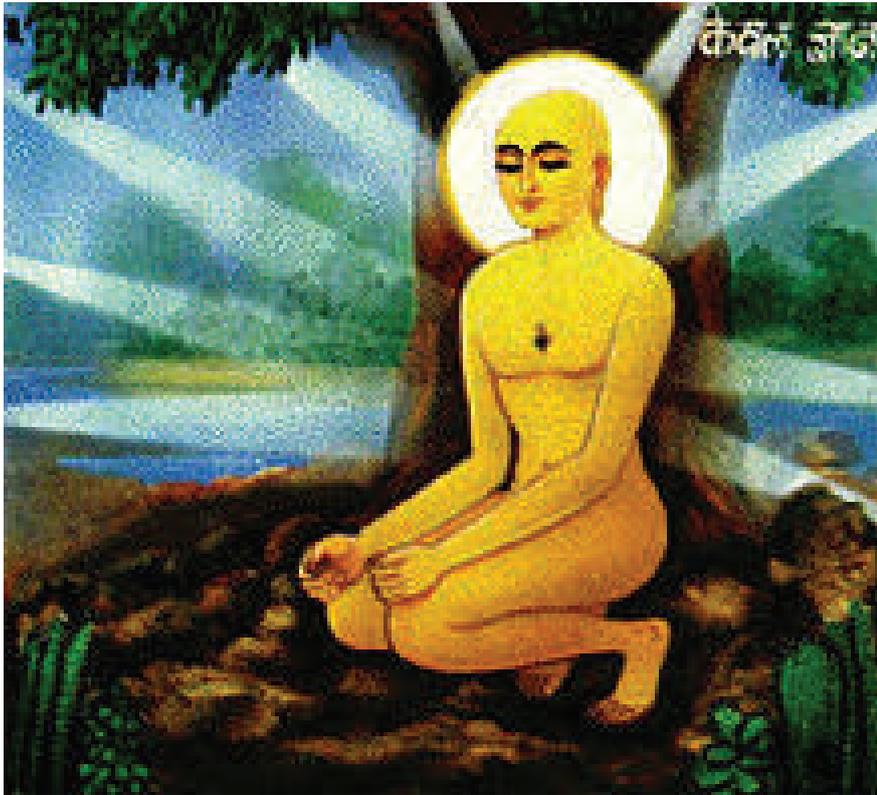
All of the boys started screaming, but Mahaveer stood there calmly and fearlessly. He gently caught the cobra with his hands and placed it in the grass on the side. The god, who had failed to frighten prince Vardhaman in the form of a cobra, decided to test his bravery once more. Assuming the form of an ordinary child, he joined the group of children and suggested racing to a target tree. The winner was to get a piggyback ride on one of the losers and return to the base.

The heavenly god lost the game to prince Vardhaman and offered to carry him on his shoulders. However, as soon as he had the prince on his shoulders, the god assumed a gigantic form. Without any fear, Prince Vardhaman gave a mighty blow to his shoulders with clenched fists. The god could not withstand the blow and, assuming his original form, bowed to the prince and returned to heaven. Indra and all the other heavenly gods exclaimed that he was "Mahaveer", meaning "The Great Hero."

The parents of Mahaveer were the followers of Parsva Nath, and Mahaveer was greatly influenced by the teachings of Parsva Nath. He was attracted towards meditation while he was a child.

He was born with all worldly pleasures and luxuries but somehow he was never attracted by them. He decided to leave the worldly life and become a monk. At the age of 30, he left all his worldly possessions including clothing and went into seclusion to become a monk.

KEVALGNANA



Bhagwan Mahaveer attained Keval Gnana while meditating under Sal tree on the bank of river Rijjupalika

After 12 years of strict meditation and ascetic lifestyle, he finally gained enlightenment (Keval Gnana). He attained this spiritual knowledge at the age of 42, while meditating under a Sal tree beside the river Rijjupalika (currently known as river Barakar) on the tenth day of Vaisakha, outside the town of Jimbhikgram.

He gave up food and learnt to control his desires and wants. After gaining enlightenment (keval gyan), he preached what he had learnt to all those who needed it. He spent the next thirty years travelling on bare feet around India (Bihar, western and north Bengal, parts of Orissa and Uttar Pradesh) preaching to the people the eternal truth he realized.

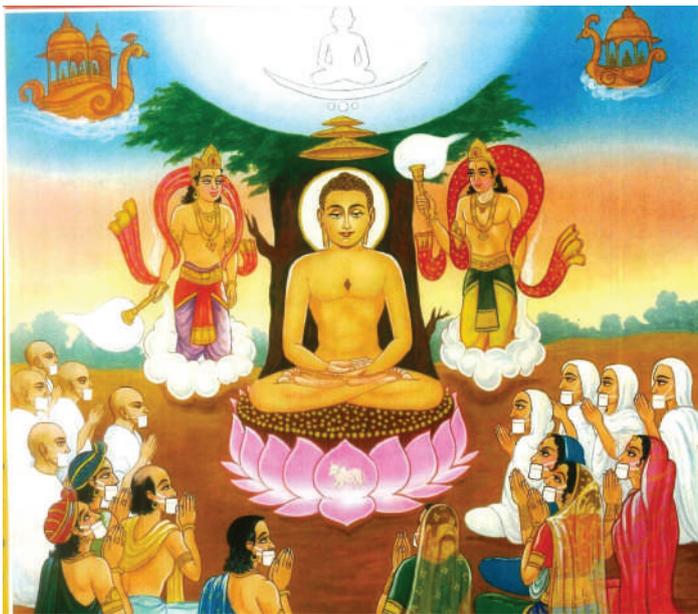
He attracted people from all walks of life, rich and poor, kings and commoners, men and women, princes and priests. Numerous people were inspired by him and converted to Jainism. He preached Jainism in Champa, Vaisali, Rajagriha, Mithila and Sravasti.

His followers or disciples were known as 'Nirgranthas' (free from fetters or bonds). Mahaveer received patronage from the royal families. Rulers like Bimbsara of Magadha, Pradyota of Avanti, Dadhivardhan of Champa rendered him considerable help in spreading his message.

Other kings who were his followers included King Chetaka of Vaishali, King Shrenik, Ajatshatru of Rajagriha, King Udayana, King Chandrapadyot, Nine Licchavis Kings of Koshal and Nine Kings of Kashi.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Mahaveer established assembly halls called “Samavasarana” to spread his knowledge among the common people. Eleven well learned ascetics became his chief disciples known as Ganadharas. He propounded a religion that preaches the welfare of all living beings called the “Sarvodaya’ Third”.



ORGANISATION

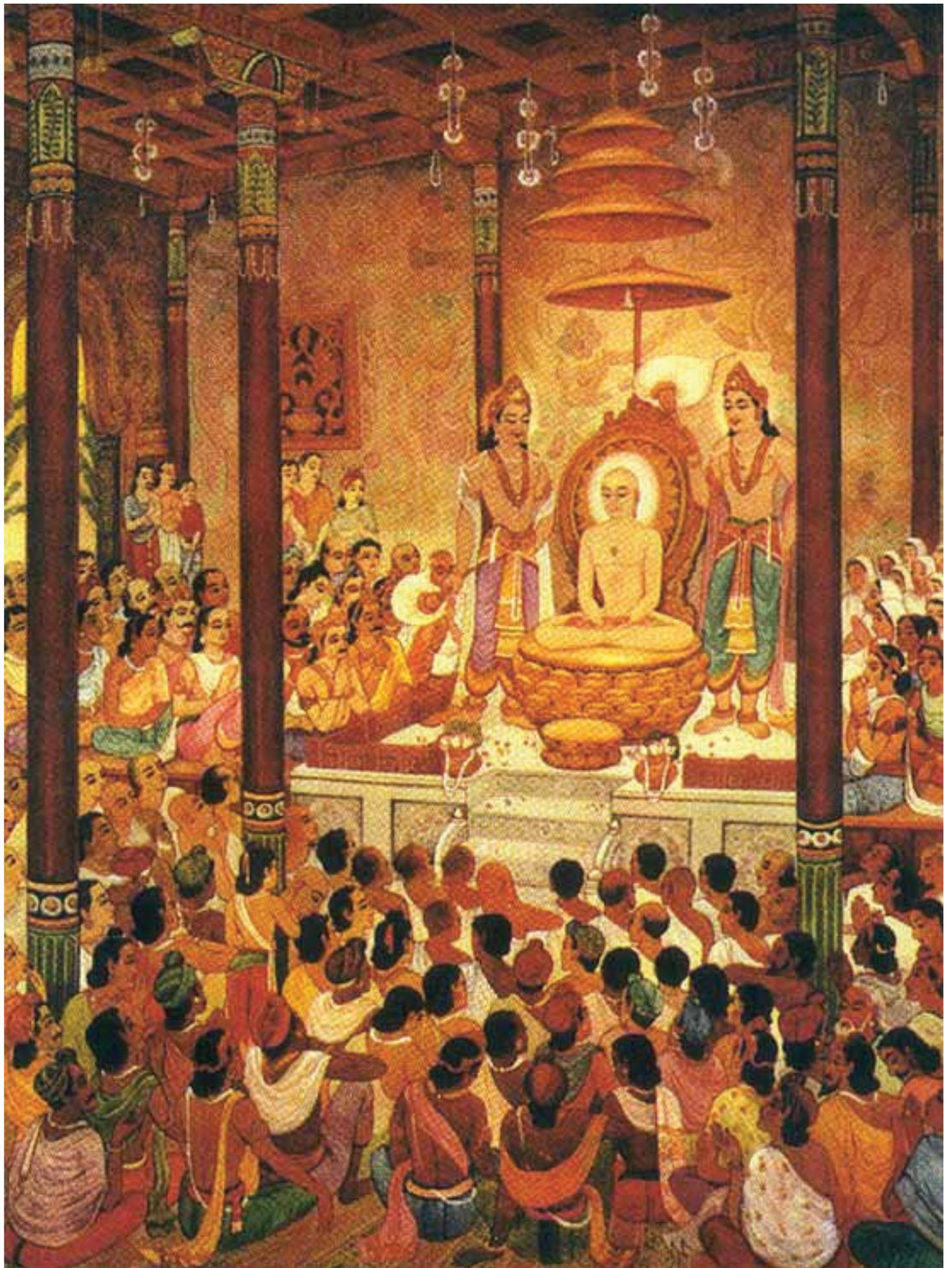
Several thousands of people became the followers of Mahaveer. He organized his followers into four orders/ federations called “Sanghas”. They are as follows:

1. Male ascetics/monks (Sadhu)
2. Female ascetics / nuns (Sadhvi)
3. Male householder /layman (Shravak)
4. Female householder/laywoman (Shravika).

NIRVANA

Mahaveer devoted his life towards spreading the message of Ahimsa among people and gave discourses in local languages.

He preached eight months in a year and spent four months of rainy season in some town. His final discourse was at Pawapuri which lasted for 48 hours. At the age of 72, in 527 B.C., he attained liberation from birth and death in Pawapuri.



SPREAD OF JAINISM IN SOUTH INDIA

Jainism played an important role in the history of south India. The Jain monks helped in the spread of Jainism. They visited several places, held scholastic discussions and exhibited personal examples of simplicity that greatly influenced the people.

Jaina Saint Bhadrabahu spread Jainism in South India in 4th century B.C. He had accompanied Emperor Chandragupta Maurya to Sravanvelgola in Karnataka. He predicted severe famine in the north India. Hence a large number of Jains migrated to Karnataka. They stayed in Karnataka for 12 years. When they returned to Patliputra after the famine, they found that the sacred texts had been amended and prepared in their absence.

Many of these amended points were not accepted to these returned monks. The most significant amendment was the use of clothing. The group returned to south and called themselves Digambaras. The monks in the northern parts of India started wearing white clothes and called themselves Shwethambaras. These two are the important sects of Jainism.

The Digambaras insisted that Mahaveera gave up all possessions, including his clothing, at the time of his great renunciation. Hence the male ascetics of this Sky-clad sect shun all property and wear no clothes. The Shvetambaras believe that Mahaveer was given a divine garment of white cloth, which he wore until it caught on

a thorn bush and fell from his body. He did not pick it up again.

The royal Kadamba family had a few kings who were devout Jainas, and who were responsible for the gradual progress of Jaina religion in Karnataka. The Chalukya Rulers of Badami, Ganga Rulers of Talakada, the Hoysalas patronized Jaina religion in Karnataka.

Jainism flourished in Tamil Nadu from the times of Sangam literature. After the death of Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu, their disciples moved south to the Chola and Pandya kingdoms in the beginning of the 3rd century BC. Jaina epigraphs have been discovered in Anantapur, Bellary, Cuddapah, Guntur, Krishna, Kurnool, Nellore, North Arcot, South Kanara, and Vizagapattam districts of former Madras Province.

There are many natural caverns in Tamilnadu which once served as the abodes of Jaina monks. Some of the main Jain caves found in and around Madurai are Mangulam, Anaimalai, Arittapatti, Alagarmalai, Keelavalavu, Thiruvathavur, Varichiyur, Karungalakudi, Thirupparankundram, Muthupatti, Kongarpuliangulam, Mettupatti, and Vikramangalam. All these caves had natural springs of water which catered to the basic needs of the ascetics.

The biggest statue of Mahaveer in South India is at Settipodavu cave in Keelakuilkudi village, in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu.



Kondakunda is one the earliest philosophers and was great writer in Prakrit. He is considered having established a Jaina learning center in Tiruparuttikunram near Kanchipuram. He is associated with the Dravida Sangha. His writings are highly respected by the South Indian Jains. Kanchipuram and Madurai were important Jaina towns.

The Jains have made rich and vast contributions in almost all fields of Tamil literature. Many of the rich Tamil literature works such as the Naladiyar, the Silappatikaram, the Manimekalai and the Civaka Cintamani were written by Tamil Jains. The most ancient Tamil grammar 'Tholkappiyam' was written by a Jain author 'Tholkappiyar'.

TEACHINGS OF BHAGWAN MAHAVEER

KARMA THEORY

Bhagwan Mahaveer considered men and women to be spiritual equals. According to him, every living being has the capacity to attain eternal bliss. However a person may enjoy happiness or miseries as a result of his/her thoughts, speech and deeds. People seek pleasure in materialistic possessions that result in self-centeredness, greed, anger and violence. Such attitudes bring bad karmas. To overcome the bad karmas Bhagwan Mahaveer preached three great principles:

- Ahimsa - Non-violence
- Anekanta - Consideration of view points of others
- Aparigraha - Non-possession/Non-attachment (or) Parimithaparigraha-limited possession

As you sow, so you reap-sums up the karma theory.

TRIRATNAS

Mahaveer laid great stress on a pure and austere mode of living. He prescribed a threefold path for leading a pure and austere life namely,

- Right Belief
- Right Knowledge
- Right Conduct.

This threefold path is called as Tri-Ratna (three jewels). By following this threefold path a man could attain liberation from karma and from the cycle of birth and death. These three jewels were elaborated by the disciples of Bhagwan Mahaveer in holy scriptures called Agamas.

1. Right faith – Samyak darshan

Right faith means not believing what we are told. It means seeing things properly, and avoiding preconceptions and superstitions that get in the way of seeing clearly.

2. Right knowledge – Samyak jnana

Right knowledge means having an accurate and sufficient knowledge of the real universe –and having that knowledge with the right mental attitude.

3. Right conduct – Samyak charitra

Right conduct means living our life according to Jain ethical rules, to avoid doing harm to living things and freeing ourselves from attachment, impure attitudes and thoughts.

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL VOWS

Since the supreme goal of life is the attainment of salvation, one has to avoid all kinds of bad deeds or karmas. These vows help to improve a person's quality of life, achieve spiritual peace and liberation.

Mahaveer prescribed some ethical codes both for a house holder and a monk. When the fundamental 5 vows are followed by householders with certain limitations (less rigidity) they are called **Anuvrathas** (smaller vows). The same, when followed by ascetics strictly without any flexibility they are known as **Mahavrathas** (greater vows).

The 5 fundamental vows are as follows:

1. Ahimsa – Non Violence
2. Satya - Speaking truth
3. Asteya - Non-stealing,
4. Aparigraha - Non-possession/
Non attachment,
5. Brahmacharya - Chastity

AHIMSA – Vow of Non-violence

Ahimsa parmo dharma–Non- violence is the top most principle preached by Bhagwan Mahaveer. Bhagwan Mahaveer taught that ahimsa covers all living beings, and injuring any being in any form creates bad karma.

The meaning of Ahimsa is not to injure, abuse, oppress, insult, torture, or kill any creature or living being by thought, body and speech. Ahimsa is meant for the protection of life in all forms. According to Bhagwan Mahaveer, no living being is

superior or inferior to the other, regardless of its size and shape etc. Hence no living creature has the right to harm, injure, or kill any other living being, including animals, insects, and plants. Harsh words causing mental torture or thinking evil of someone is also considered violence.

Ahimsa or Non-Violence is the first major vow taken by the Jains, that is to cause no harm to any living being on this planet, whether it is a human being or animal or plants or tiny microorganisms.

Furthermore, non-violence is not constrained to physical violence. Bhagwan Mahaveer also emphasises non-violence in speech and in thought.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "No religion in the World has explained the principle of Ahimsa so deeply and systematically as is discussed with its applicability in every human life in Jainism. Bhagwan Mahaveer is respected as the greatest authority on Ahimsa."

Vegetarianism in Jainism:

Do you think it is impossible to live without killing or injuring some of the tiniest living organisms?

Some lives are killed even when we breathe, drink water or eat food!

All living beings are categorised according to the five senses that are touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. Jainism believes that for survival, killing is not needed. So it allows common people to use only vegetables (one sense) as their food.

Since all non-vegetarian food is made by killing life forms with two or more senses, therefore the killing of any life form with more than one sense is prohibited. That's why Jains are strict vegetarians.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH



Is there any link between meat and the coronavirus?

As the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) grips the world, we should know about the health risks associated with eating meat. Raising animals for food in filthy conditions is a breeding ground for diseases that can be transmitted to humans.

We should stay away from animal-derived foods because of the risk of contracting foodborne pathogens such as coli and salmonella. Also the use of antibiotics in animals reared for food contributes to the emergence of superbugs and antibiotic resistance in humans.

Approximately 75 percent of recent emerging infectious diseases come from animals.

SATYA - Vow of Truthfulness.

The second vow taught by Bhagwan Mahaveer says always speak the truth, neither lie nor speak what is not true.

Speaking the truth all the time is not an easy task to do. One who is free from anger, greed, fear, jealousy and ego can only speak truth in every situation.

Bhagwan Mahaveer preaches truth should be wholesome and pleasant. It must not hurt anybody feelings. Therefore one should remain silent if truth causes pain, anger or death of any living being. Silence is preferred in situation where violence has to be prevented.

Even encouraging of an untruth is considered as bad and as untruth itself. Any feeling of love, hatred, anger or desire should not prompt one to tell lie or even to hide truth.

Thiruvalluvar devotes an entire chapter in Thirukkural to clarify the definition of Truth. He defines truth as words which do not hurt and which are evilfree.

*In the words of Thiruvalluvar,
“A man who always speaks the truth wholeheartedly is greater than those who do penance and deeds of charity”*

ACHURYA OR ASTHEYA -Vow of Non-stealing

The third vow Achurya or Astheya is the virtue of non-stealing. One should not desire for or should not touch or pick the things that belong to others. Stealing is taking someone else's property without his consent by immoral methods. Even the very thought of appropriating other's property is considered stealing.

One should not take anything which may be lying unattended or unclaimed. This vow should be observed very strictly, even for a worthless thing, which does not belong to them. Also, when accepting alms or help or aid, one should refrain from taking more than what is needed. Even taking more than one's need is considered theft.

There are five sins of this vow which are as follows:

1. Prompting someone to steal
2. Receiving stolen goods from someone or buying it unlawfully.
3. An attempt to buy precious things very cheaply.
4. Using false weights and measures to get more profit.
5. Deceiving other with artificial or imitation goods.

Satya" and 'ahinsa' were the Jain doctrines which Gandhiji used as his weapons in his quest to gain independence for India from the mighty British.

APARIGRAHA OR PARIMITHAPARIGRAHA -Vow of non-possession or limited possession of worldly things

Aparigraha is the virtue of non-possessiveness and non-greediness of worldly things. It means taking only what is necessary for survival and no more. This vow is the principle of limiting one's possessions and limiting one's desires.

Mahaveer warns that when a person accumulates or desires in worldly wealth & possessions, he may resort to sin in order to acquire this wealth. Ascetics take this vow strictly and renounce all possessions, the house holder takes this vow to establish limitation on possession of items such as land, houses, money, clothing, furniture, cattle etc.

Monks must observe this by giving up all attachments to things such as:

1. Relationships – with their father, mother, spouse, children, brother, sister, relatives, friends etc.
2. Material things – wealth, power, property etc.
3. The pleasure of five senses – touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing.
4. Feelings

According to Jainism, one should not be possessive or attached to things or people. One should eat for survival and not for taste.

For householders, one should have only that much amount of wealth which is necessary for their survival and not for showing off or satisfying ego. Desires and attachments are the root cause of all the

suffering in this world. It makes a person greedy, jealous, egoistic, selfish and angry. A person who is full of desires would never feel contentment and satisfaction in life.

As students, you can also follow Aparigraha. You don't have to make dramatic changes in your life, take small steps towards reducing possessions and simplify your needs. Ask simple questions to yourself like

- *Can't my tennis shoes be my running shoes? Can I use the same for a hike?*
 - *Do we need a coffee maker, can't we just heat water and make coffee?*
 - *Do we need so many clothes? Can't we wear the same stuff for different occasions?*
- Try to have a self-imposed limit on the number of clothes you possess, or the number of footwear that you own, and so on.*

BRAHMACHARYA - Vow of celibacy

For lay people this principle expects a person to restrict his relationship to his wife only; coveting other women brings disrepute and invariably ends up in wickedness and shame; for an ascetic 'Brahmacharyam' means deep philosophical association with his self; and avoid any kind of lustful feelings.

The first four vows were preached by the earlier Thirthankars. The vow of celibacy was proclaimed by Bhagwan Mahaveer.

IMPORTANT JAIN FESTIVALS

MAHAVEER JAYANTI

The birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahaveer is celebrated as Mahaveer Jayanti every year. Mahaveer Jayanti falls on the 13th day of the rising moon in the month of Chaitra (March-April) according to the Jain and Hindu lunar calendar. It is a day to remember and worship Bhagwan Mahaveer and all other Tirthankars. This festival is celebrated quietly by making visits to temples, prayers and worship, visiting pilgrimage places.

Temples are decorated to express devotion and joy for the occasion of Bhagawan's birthday.

PARYUSHAN

During the months of August- September, Paryushan is celebrated for 8 days. Paryushan is an important festival of Forgiveness and atonement. Paryushan means staying close to your soul.

The last day of Paryushan is **Samvatsari**. The day is celebrated by seeking forgiveness from all friends, family and living creatures for the actions that might have hurt them.

As people we ignore our own faults and magnify the faults of others. And our pride makes it difficult to admit our faults. Paryushan teaches to have humility to say '**Michchhami Dukkadam**', and ask for forgiveness for our faults. At the same time truly forgive others who have hurt us in any way.

Why do we need to forgive others?

We should learn to forgive not because they need our forgiveness. It is because we need to release ourselves from the rage, hostility and resentment we carry within us when we don't forgive. Forgiveness not only makes us complete, but also energizes us and makes our world more beautiful.

Forgiveness keeps human relationships smooth and comfortable. Many situations may cause unhappy feelings towards others, such as:

1. Disagreements - When other people do not agree with our way of thinking, WE do not like them.
2. Misunderstanding - When we do not understand somebody's intention, WE get angry with him or her.
3. Wrong Expectations – When we want more than the other person can give, WE get disappointed.
4. Hurt feelings knowingly or unknowingly – All of us have an ego and when someone

humiliates or insults us, WE get upset.

5. Jealousy – Jealousy creates hate and WE lose our thinking ability.

When we wash away the subtle grains of anger, resentment and hatred with forgiveness; then the radiant soul within shines and we gain joy and peace.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore,

“Go not to the temple to ask for forgiveness for your sins, first forgive from your heart those who have sinned against you”.

FAMOUS JAIN MONKS

DIGAMBAR MONKS

Some of the prominent monks of Digambars are Guptisagar, Kshamasagar, Pragyasagar, Pramansagar, Pranamsagar, Pulaksagar, Sudhasagar, Tarun Sagar

SHWETHAMBAR MONKS AND NUNS

Acharya Mahashraman is the eleventh Acharya, supreme head of Jain Śvetambara Terapanth sect. Mahashraman ji heads all activities functioning under Terapanth organisation, most notably Anuvrat, Preksha Meditation, Jeevan Vigyan.

Other monks are Buddhisagarsuri, Chandrashekhar Vijay, Jambuvijaya, Mahaprajna, Mahashraman, Prem Suri, Ramchandrasuri, Rajendrasuri, Ratnasundarsuri, Tulsi, Vijayanandsuri, Vallabhsuri

Acharya Chandana, also known as Tai Maharaj, is the first Jain Sadhvi to receive the title of Acharya.

MAHAVEER'S VIRTUES TO ERADICATE VICIES

Mahaveer taught that all weaknesses of humans can be overcome by following certain virtues.

- Anger through forgiveness
- Ego through Humility
- Deceit through Honesty
- Greed through Contentment

HOW TO APPLY MAHAVEER'S VIRTUES TO DAILY LIFE

ANGER/ FORGIVENESS

Anger (Krodha) is one of our most common weaknesses. We feel angry when we do not get what we want or when we are hurt because of what someone said or did.

Can anger be eliminated?

Anger can be difficult to eliminate, however its expression can be controlled.

For example, As a child you may complain about another child who takes away your toy or pencil and you may fight with that child. But if you are called to the Principal's office would you get angry and fight with the child there, or would you talk politely to the Principal?

We tend to get angry in many unwarranted situations and with people who care about us. If we become sensitive to this we can avoid fights and not hurt family and friends. According to Jain philosophy, the way to eliminate anger is by replacing it with "forgiveness".

STORY TIME:

A kindergarten teacher once told the children in the class to bring along a plastic bag containing a few apples. Each apple will be given a name of a person that the child hates. Every child brought some apples with the name of the people he/she hated. Some had 2 apples, some 3 while some up to 5 apples.

The teacher then told the children to carry the apples in the plastic bag with them wherever they go for 1 week. As days passed the children started to complain the unpleasant smell of the rotten apples. Besides, those having 5 apples also had to carry heavier bags. After 1 week, the children were relieved because the game had finally ended.

Then the teacher told them the hidden meaning behind the game. The teacher said: "This is exactly the situation when you carry your hatred for somebody inside your heart. The stench of hatred will contaminate your heart"

Moral: Throw away any hatred for anyone from your heart so that you will not carry burden for a lifetime. Forgiving others is the best attitude to take.

**Go not to the temple to put flowers upon the feet of God,
First fill your own house with the fragrance of Love.
Go not to the temple to light candles before the altar of God,
First remove the darkness of sin from your heart.
Go not to the temple to bow down your head in prayer,
First learn to bow in humility before your fellowmen.
Go not to the temple to pray on bended knees,
First bend down to lift someone who is down trodden.
Go not to the temple to ask for forgiveness for your sins,
First forgive from your heart those who have sinned against you.**

- Tagore



Peace and harmony in society comes from the feeling of love and equality of all living beings. This is Mahaveer's concept of nonviolence and forgiveness.

STORY OF CHANDKAUSHIK:

There is a popular story about Bhagwan Mahaveer when he was a monk. He used to meditate, fast and perform penance. He travelled from place to place and from village to village. Once, Bhagwan Mahaveer decided to go to the village of Vachala. On his way there lived a poisonous cobra named Chandkaushik. It was rumored that Chandkaushik could kill just by casting his evil glance upon a person. The villagers requested him to use another route. Bhagwan Mahaveer had no fear and practiced supreme nonviolence and compassion. He had no hatred towards anyone and considered fear and hatred as violence of the self.

Once when he was in the land of the poisonous cobra. He stopped there to meditate. Chandkaushik came out of his burrow. He became furious and angry, came closer to Bhagwan Mahaveer, and swayed his head, ready to strike. He blew poisonous venom towards Mahaveer several times. The venom did not affect Bhagwan Mahaveer nor did it disturb his meditation. Chandkaushik was astonished to see the calmness on Bhagwan Mahaveer's face. He saw pure, white milk flowing from his toe instead of red blood.

Chandkaushik became calm and he felt as if he had seen such a person before. Suddenly, a miracle occurred and he visualized incidences from his previous lives. In the past life he was a very angry person and because of his anger he became a cobra in this life. Chandkaushik realized the truth of life. He peacefully retreated to his hole. There he spent the rest of his life in physical and mental peace.

EGO/HUMILITY

According to Bhagwan Mahaveer, Ego (Māna) has no place in our lives. The Jain aphorism, 'Parasparopagraho Jivanam' means 'All life forms are interdependent for their existence'. The belief, 'I deliver a great speech therefore I am a great speaker', is an arrogant way of looking at things. The correct way of looking at this should be, 'You are the listener, which is why I am the speaker'; 'I am because you are'. Less importance should be given to I, ME, and MYSELF.

This type of thinking reflects humility and cooperation. Humility is true respect towards all. Humility is easily achieved if one stays away from ego and pride.

Popular sayings like "Pride comes before a fall", "One who bows is liked by all", show that ego and pride are liked by nobody. In contrast, humility is welcomed everywhere as a great virtue. Just as trees rich in fruits hang low to provide fruit to the passerby and monsoon clouds full of water come down towards earth as rain, we should develop a natural tendency for benevolence.

STORY OF BHARAT AND BAHUBALI:

Bhagwan Rishabhadev, the first Tirthankar had 100 children. Bharat was the oldest son and Bahubali was the second. Rishabhadev renounced the world and handed over the kingdom of Ayodhya to Bharat. Bharat wanted to be the sovereign of all kings. Hence, he conquered all kingdoms of India. However, he realized that his younger brother Bahubali was not under his rule. Bahubali was not prepared to accept his brother as a sovereign king. Thus, war between brothers became unavoidable.

The armies of both brothers were strong and war between the two was sure to result in a large-scale bloodshed. The ministers on both sides suggested that they should engage in a straight duel and whoever was found superior would be declared as the victor. Bharat and Bahubali both agreed.

Accordingly, the duel took place in which Bharat tried to beat Bahubali by using different types of equipment. Bharat, however, was not successful in beating his brother.

Bahubali thought of smashing the elder brother with his mighty fist. As he raised his hand for that purpose, he thought, 'What am I doing? Am I going to kill my elder brother for the

sake of some worldly possessions? My father willingly abandoned these possessions and attained liberation.”

At that moment he changed his mind. Bahubali decided to seek enlightenment and left for forest. He stood under the sky with nothing covering his body. He stood day and night without moving. Creepers wound around his legs. Bahubali stood like a rock. He was full of peace. He was full of loving compassion. Not a trace of anger, jealousy, ego or pride could be found in him. He became liberated.



Do you know?

About the statue of Bahubali

- *Also known as Gommateshwara statue*
- *57 feet tall monolithic statue*
- *Located in Shravanbelagola, Karnataka*
- *Built in 983 A.D by Chavundaraya of Ganga Dynasty*
- *The Gommateshwara statue is anointed with milk, saffron, ghee etc once in 12 years, the event is known as Mahamastakabhisheka*
- *Tallest monolithic statue symbolizing Peace, Non violence, sacrifice worldly affairs, and simple living.*

DECEIT/ HONESTY

Honesty means always speaking the truth and not taking things that do not belong to us. There is a feeling of shame and sadness in dishonesty. We should always

- a. Always have good and happy thoughts.
- b. Forgive the faults of others and remember that no one is perfect, including us.
- c. Never think one thing and say something else. Do what you say. Keep your words.
- d. While speaking the truth always remember to say it in a polite manner without hurting anyone.
- e. Prefer to remain quiet if our speech may hurt others.

A person who speaks the truth is trusted and loved by others. Honesty and truthfulness give us strength and peace. Deceit creates weakness and fear. Telling a lie weakens the mind because each time we lie we get an uneasy, sick feeling within us. When the truth is spoken the conscience and the mind are together. That makes us strong and peaceful within.

Story – The Honest wood cutter

Once, there lived a woodcutter named Ramu. He lived a very simple life. He was poor but he was a good man and worked hard. One day while chopping down a branch, Ramu's axe slipped and fell into the river. He tried searching for his axe but all in vain.

He sat down and started weeping. Hearing his cries, an angel appeared and promised to help him find his axe. She dove into the water and retrieved an axe completely made of gold. Ramu said that this wasn't his axe and refused to accept it. The angel dove again and returned with a silver axe, Ramu refused again and said that his axe was made of steel. The angel went into the water and returned with Ramu's axe. Ramu thanked the angel profusely.

Impressed by his simplicity and honesty, the angel decided to give Ramu the gold and silver axe too. Ramu went home happily. He sang happily as he thought of all the good things he would be able to do because of his honesty. He and his family

Story of King Hansa

In the city of Rajpur, there was a king named Hansa. He was known for his truth and nonviolence. Once the king decided to visit a temple. He gave control of his kingdom temporarily to his council of ministers and left with few courtiers on a spiritual mission.

After a few days, another king Arjuna attacked Rajpur and defeated the army of King Hansa. King Hansa heard the story of this defeat but continued his journey to the temple. The courtiers were unhappy and worried about the safety of their families at home. One by one they all dropped out.

Hansa heard a gang of robbers planning to rob the monks who would pass through that way in next two days. While the king was thinking what he can do, few policemen approached him and asked if he had seen any robbers.

The king was in dilemma whether to tell the truth. His truth will harm the robbers and his silence will harm the monks. He thought, "By telling the truth if someone is going to get harmed then telling that truth is not the truth. Truth is supposed to protect and not harm anyone."

He said to the policemen, "My friends, you are asked to guard the monks. Why don't you search for those monks and protect them". The policemen felt better and left to join the monks. The robbers, hiding in the bush, were amazed by the mercy shown by this stranger. They came out and thanked him for saving their lives. The king advised them to give up fugitive life and be good citizens.

A group of soldiers of King Arjuna came to the forest in search of Hansa. Arjuna asked his soldiers to find Hansa and kill him. The soldiers found King Hansa in the forest. He said, "I am King Hansa. Carry on your duty as told by your king." He closed his eyes and stood in meditation.

An angel appeared and said, "Oh, king! I am overwhelmed by your truthfulness and compassion. I have captured King Arjun and returned your kingdom to your ministers. You can sit on my chariot and reach the temple". The king was overwhelmed. The angel escorted him to his kingdom after visiting the temple. King Hansa, once again, ruled the city of Rajpur, and the people lived happily thereafter.

GREED/ CONTENTMENT

Greed (Lobha) is the cause of many of our problems. We want more and more. There is no end to greed of possession. No matter how much we have – we still want more! Striving for more or doing better is not bad or wrong so long as it is done for the right reasons. If greed is not balanced with contentment it gives rise to dissatisfaction.

Story – A busy life

A young businessman went to a village. He was drawn to a shepherd, sitting under a tree playing a flute. There were a couple of cows grazing in the field nearby. The businessman asked the shepherd how long he spent grazing cows. The shepherd replied that he just did this for a few hours every day.

The businessman asked why he did not buy more cows. The shepherd replied, "I have enough to support my family's needs. I go home, spend time with my wife, play with the children and relax and play flute. I have a full and busy life, Sir."

The businessman scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and I can help you. You should bring the whole village's cows for grazing and charge money for it. With this money you should buy more cows and supply milk to the neighboring villages. Eventually you can start your own dairy and supply to the whole state. You would need to leave this small village and move to a city."

The shepherd asked, "But sir, how long will this all take?"

The businessman laughed and said, "15-20 years. When the time is right you would sell your company stocks to the public. You'll become very rich, you would make millions!"

"Millions, Sir?" questioned the shepherd. "Then what?"

The businessman said, "Then you would retire. Move to a quiet place and play your flute, eat lunch with your wife, play with your kids, spend time on religion."

The shepherd smiled and inquired, "How is it any different from what I am doing now?"

One has to stand back and think of what one would like to do with life. True happiness comes not from having more but being content with what one has.

Story – Kapil Muni

In ancient times king Jitshatru was the king of Kaushambi, India. Kashyap Shastri, a learned man was the royal Priest and was held in great reverence. He and his wife, Shridevi, had a son named Kapil. Kapil lived a careless and luxurious life and did not pay much attention to his studies. Consequently, when his father died the king appointed another learned person as the royal Priest.

Shridevi was very disappointed that her son could not achieve the status of the royal Priest. Once Kapil saw tears in his mother's eyes and promised to continue his studies and be as learned as his father. Kapil's mother requested Indradatt to educate Kapil.

As a student Kapil had to get his food by going for alms. However, this took too much time and that affected his studies. So, the school arranged with Manorama, a Brahmin widow, to provide for Kapil's boarding and food.

Manorama was young and attractive. Over a period of time they fell in love with each other. Kapil spent most of his time with her. As they badly needed money to eat and live Manorama told him that the king of Shravasti gave two grains of gold to the first person who blesses him everyday. Kapil agreed to go to the palace early in the morning and bless the king.

Kapil could not sleep at night. He started dreaming of all the things he could do with two grains of gold! Deep in thought he lost track of time and started walking towards the palace. A guard saw him walking around at midnight and arrested him thinking he was a thief.

In the morning Kapil was presented to the royal court. Kapil explained that he was very poor and hoped the gold would help to buy food. In order to get him out of his miserable condition the king offered to grant him whatever he desired.

Kapil began to think about what he should ask for so that he can live happily. He thought that he should ask for enough so he will never have to worry about earning money. His thoughts took him from 2 grains of gold to a point where he wanted to ask for the whole kingdom and still wanted more.

But this last idea virtually shook him. He thought, “I came here to get two grains of gold and the kindness of the king has led me to the idea of turning him into a beggar. No, this is not fair!”

He came to his senses and realized that his desires and greed were out of control. He realized that the more a person gets the more he desires. The sense of accumulation knows no limits.

He saw a vulture carrying a piece of food in its beak. All the vultures chased and attacked it. Weakened by the attack the vulture dropped the food from its beak. The other vultures stopped chasing him and rushed to the fallen food. He thus realized that desire and attachment do not lead to happiness. He also realized that even though desires are insatiable, they could be controlled by a sense of detachment. He fully realized that the right way of gaining enduring happiness is to stay detached.

He decided that he would not ask for anything from the king. The king was very surprised and asked him the reason for that. Kapil narrated how his mind had gone to the extent of asking for the entire kingdom. Kapil left the court with a feeling of detachment that later led him to omniscience. He is known as Kapil Kevali.

PRINCIPLE OF ANEKANTVADA

Mahaveer considered Anekantvad, i.e. non-absolutism or relativity or doctrine of multiplicity of viewpoints the best antidote to vague debates, wars, conflicts, hatred, deceit, anger, pride and greed. It sends a message that try to understand the viewpoints of others and not to look at subjects from one angle.

Let us understand this from an example: A person writes all his degrees or awards he has received after his name. Seeing this one may think that he is a proud man, while another person who sees it, thinks that the person has certified his knowledge to that level. Both perspectives may be true. It also means, think positively about what others have to say and avoid negative thinking.

Anekantvad solves many problems of this contemporary society. Mahaveer never forced his views and principles upon anyone because these may become the cause of quarrels, wars, conflicts and unhealthy relationships.

Anekantvad teaches us the following:

- Never insist your own ideas are the best or correct
- Become patient and polite in nature
- Always accept truth to avoid conflicts
- No interfering, absolutely no use of phrase “in my days.” “if I were in your place.”
- Choose your words very wisely.
- Don't be proud.
- Create strong necessity to search for truth.
- Be a trustworthy person and accept the truth even from enemies.
- Create universal brotherhood, friendship and equanimity towards everyone.

An English proverb teaches us “think twice before you speak” and “an arrow released from bow never returns.” So always think before you speak or act.

All these virtues provide important guidelines to solve present day problems either at individual level, family level, society level or at national and international level.

SYNERGY OF PHILOSOPHIES OF BHAGWAN MAHAVEER AND SCIENCE CAN LEAD TO AN ENLIGHTENED WORLD

The present world has been facing numerous problems such as global warming, climate change, and economic crisis due to human thrust for unlimited wants and in course of that globalization has posed many challenges. People have been looking eagerly for some major solution for all these problems. And that solutions must be nature oriented and eco-friendly and must follow non-violence. The philosophies of Bhagwan Mahaveer fits in that format as it believes in truth and non-violence(compassion and humanity) and interdependence.

Growing stress among human beings due to modern work environment and human conflicts could be solved by meditation, fasting and social harmony and recognising that we all are interdependent and interlinked (aparigraha-detachment from some worldly affairs for harmony).

THE PROBLEM OF ARMAMENT

Humanity is facing the problem of armament and race for weapons today. The sole cause of armament and race for weapons is the sense of fear and insecurity.

According to Bhagwan Mahaveer the sense of insecurity causes fear and vice a versa. Insecurity results in the accumulation of weapons. So it is our prime duty to develop the sense of security among fellow beings. The virtue of fearlessness is supreme. It is two-fold

- (1) one should not fear from others and
- (2) one should not cause fear to others.

When the fear vanishes and enmity dissolves there is no need for armaments. Though arms and weapons are considered as means of security yet these, instead of giving security, generate fear and a sense of insecurity in the opposite party and thus a mad race for accumulation of superior weapon starts.

Bhagwan Mahaveer proclaimed "Atthi satham parenaparam, Natthi asattham parenaparam " i.e. There are weapons superior to each other, but nothing is superior to disarmament or non-violence. Hence only through non-violence humanity can get rid of nuclear weapons and thus can solve the problem of its survival.

THE PROBLEM OF WAR AND VIOLENCE

The feeling of discontentment as well as the will for power and possession is the root cause of all types of wars and violence. But now-a-days economic inequality, over population, sense of insecurity and unequal treatment on the basis of caste, creed and colour may be added to the causes of wars.

The teachings of Bhagwan Mahaveer say "If you want to fight, fight against your passions. One who has got victory over one's own self is greater than the one who conquers thousand and thousand of warriors". Eradication of war and violence is not possible as long as we are attached to material and non-material possessions, small or great.

There are persons and nations who believe in the dictum 'might is right'. Also, there are people who have a social obligation to protect others life and property. They are unable to dispense with defensive war and violence. However, aggressive and unjust war and violence is not acceptable. Ignorant and innocent persons should not be killed in wars. Violence gives no solution, it only aggravates the problem.

PROBLEM OF DISINTEGRATION OF HUMAN SOCIETY

The discrimination of human race on the basis of caste, creed, colour nationalities etc, is one of the basic problems, humanity is facing today. Due to these man made divisions, we all are spreading hatred and hostility instead living in harmony.

Bhagwan Mahaveer declared that "Human race is one. There is nothing like inferiority and superiority among them. All men are equal in their potentiality. None is superior and inferior as such. The purification of self, a good conduct and respecting each others rights leads to harmonious living and peace".

Class- conflicts are becoming furious day by day globally and thus disturbing the peace and harmony of human society. Only through mutual faith, co-operation and unity we can pave the way to prosperity and peace of mankind.

PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND CONSUMER CULTURE :

Economic inequality and vast differences in the mode of consumption are the two curses of our age. These disturb our social harmony and cause class-conflicts and wars. Among the causes of economic inequality, the will for possession, occupation or hoarding are the prime. Accumulation of wealth and the desire for worldly enjoyment

are responsible for the present-day materialistic consumer culture.

A tremendous advancement of the amenities of life has made us crazy for them, even at the cost of health and wealth. The vast differences in material possession as well as in the modes of consumption have divided the human race into two categories of 'Haves' and 'Have Nots'.

One should consider wealth as a means to lead a life and not a destination. Wealth should be a means to the welfare of human society and not for one's own enjoyment. The accumulation of wealth in itself is not an evil but it is the attachment towards its hoarding and lust for the enjoyment of it, which makes it an evil. If we want to save the humanity from class-conflicts we will have to accept self imposed limitation on our possessions and modes of consumption.

That is why Bhagwan Mahaveer has propounded the vow of complete non-possession for monks and nuns and vow of limitation of possession for laities.

Bhagwan Mahaveer also prescribed the vow of limitation in consumption. The property and wealth should be used for the welfare of humanity and to serve the needy. This is the vow of charity. He teaches that charity is not an obligation towards the monks and weaker sections of society but through charity we give them what is their right.

Hence it is the pious duty of a house-holder to fix a limit to his possessions as well as for his consumption and to use his extra money for the service of man-kind. It is through the observation of these vows that we can restore peace and harmony in human society and eradicate economic inequality and class conflicts.

PROBLEM OF CONFLICTS IN IDEOLOGIES AND FAITHS

Bhagwan Mahaveer holds that reality is complex. It can be looked at and understood from various view-points or angles. For example, we can have hundreds of photographs of one tree from different angles. Though all of them give a true picture of it from a certain angle, yet they differ from each-other. Not only this but neither each of them, nor the whole of them can give us a complete picture of that tree. They, individually as well as jointly, will give only a partial picture of it. So is the case with human knowledge and understanding.

The theory of Anekantavada emphasises that all the approaches to understand the

reality give partial but true picture of reality, and hence we should have regard for other's ideologies and faiths. One who knows only partial truth or has a one-sided picture of reality, has no right to discard the views of his opponents. We must accept that the views of our opponents may also be true from some other angles.

The Anekantvada forbids to be dogmatic and one-sided in our approach. This virtue of tolerance i.e. regard for others ideologies and faiths preaches us a broader outlook and greater open mindedness, which is more essential to solve the conflicts taking place due to the differences in ideologies and faiths.

~~The basic problems of present society are mental tensions, violence and the conflicts of ideologies and faiths. The teachings of Bhagwan Mahaveer can solve these problems of mankind through the three basic tenets of non-attachment (Aprigraha), non-violence (Ahimsa) and non-absolutism (Anekanta). If mankind observes these three principles, peace and harmony can certainly be established in the world.~~

PROBLEM OF ECOLOGICAL IMBALANCE

The most crucial problem of our age is ecological imbalance that is challenging the very survival of human race. It indicates lack of equilibrium of nature and pollution of air, water etc. The solution to this ecological problem is the theory of non-violence.

Mahaveer holds that not only human and animal beings, but earth, water, air, fire and vegetable kingdom are also sentient and living beings. Hence any action to pollute, to disturb, to hurt and to destroy them means committing violence against them.

He insists seeking forgiveness and repentance for disturbing or hurting earth, water, air and vegetation. According to him hunting is one of the seven serious offences or vices. He explains similarity between plant-life and human life. According to him, hurting the plant life is as sinful act as hurting human life.. The Jaina monks and nuns are allowed to drink only boiled water or lifeless water. They can eat only ripe fruits, if their seeds taken out. Monks and nuns place a piece of cloth on their mouth. Not only monks but in Jaina community some house-holders also observe these rules.

The use of pesticides in the agriculture is against this theory of non-violence, because its use not only kills the insects but pollutes the atmosphere. Thus the ecological problems can be overcome by following the principle of non-violence.

QUOTES OF BHAGWAN MAHAVEER

- **Silence and Self-control is non-violence.**
- **Every soul is in itself absolutely omniscient and blissful.
The bliss does not come from outside.**
- **Have compassion towards all living beings. Hatred leads destruction.**
- **Respect for all living beings is non violence.**
- **Fight with yourself, why fight with external foes?
He, who conquers himself through himself, will obtain happiness.**
- **It is better to win over self than to win over a million enemies.**
- **The soul comes alone and goes alone, no one companies it and no one becomes its mate.**
- **Kill not, cause no pain. Nonviolence is the greatest religion.**
- **In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief,
we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self**
- **The greatest mistake of a soul is non-recognition of its real self and can only be corrected by recognizing itself.**

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