

WHAT JAINISM CAN DO FOR THE WORLD ?

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In the Jaina system, philosophy and religion and ethics are inter-related and are conjointly conducive to the well being of the soul by directing the human energy to achieve the final state of perfection. The goal of every individual soul is self-realization, the attainment of its true nature. That is described as everlasting bliss from which there can be no further relapse. But the task of attaining the perfect and pure condition of the soul demands ceaseless endeavor, firm faith and true knowledge. Mere striving cannot ensure success unless it be scientific, and hence ethics, the science of conduct, is of the utmost importance in achieving victory." Besides religion, which gives man his highest and universal ideal, there must be science that teaches him the ideal choice amid all the varying circumstances of life." A sound system of ethics cannot be built up unless it is founded on sound metaphysics and there can be no firm faith without true knowledge.

In certain respects the truths revealed by Jainism go beyond the sciences and they are the boldest and truest ever offered to the mankind. Jainism does not believe in a personal Creator or a personal God. The universe is without beginning and end, whereas even the boldest scientists postulate dissolution at some remote future. While admitting that the universe existed from eternity, the existence of change is not denied. Marvin in his Introduction to Systematic Philosophy expresses a similar viewpoint. "The problem of creation is synonymous with asking what are the laws of creation, the laws of occurrence" The universe consists of matter and spirit, and though they are found in combination to a large extent, they are distinguished by their special characteristics. Consciousness which is the attribute of the soul is absent in matter.

Spirit and matter are absolutely different from one another. Their natures are poles apart. One cannot be changed into another. So according to Jainism monism is untenable. Both have independent existence, both are real, and no subtlety of reasoning can establish the extreme view of monism. To say that spirit is all-inclusive is sophistry and such a conclusion is derogatory to the spirit too. The distinction between spirit and matter is fundamental, and no purpose is served by ignoring it. To say that material objects are illusion and deny reality to them cannot carry conviction to any dispassionate mind.

It is true that we do not meet with souls in their unembodied condition, though we come across forms of matter in their pure condition unmixed with spirit. The souls are completely freed from material bodies only when they attain liberation, and then immediately reach the top of the universe. Thus our experience of the spirit is only in its embodied condition. Still the distinction between the spiritual soul and the material body is clear. We realize that one cannot be changed into the other. Nor we have so far seen evidence of the possibility of such a change. But the Advaita system is based on the doctrine of an all-pervading Brahman.

The souls in the universe are infinite and are distinct from one another. They are always found in embodied condition till they attain the final state of perfection, from which time the pure souls continue to remain forever at the top of the universe. They are the gods worthy of reverence adoration, and all the pure souls are alike in every respect, endowed with omniscience and enjoying perfect bliss. The attainment of the final state at different times makes no difference as far as their inherent characteristics are concerned.

Jainism is also boldest in considering man, the most highly developed among living beings, to have been in existence from eternity, R'1d as the latest and comparatively recent development as is considered by evolutionists. Of course, a system of classification is found in Jaina works, arranging the forms of life in a scale of gradual progression. Variation need not be ruled out. But because the difference between any two successive states resembling each other closely are very slight, we have no justification in assuming that all the higher forms of life ha\ve evolved out of the lower. According to Jainism there have always been innumerable varieties of beings, and the difference of one kind of being from another nearest to it in the scale are necessarily slight; but this does not warrant the conclusion that in every case the more developed being has arisen out of the less developed. Such a conclusion would be valid if the process had been universal, if all the lower forms of life had developed without exception into the higher forms. But the lower forms are still numerically greater than the higher ones, which offers insuperable difficulties to our acceptance of the theory of evolution. Its chief contribution is that of classification in a scale graduated into small divisions.

The criticisms leveled against the other systems, viz., why god should have created living beings and plunged them in suffering and misery, and why should death, evil and sin have been created by a benevolent God, do not arise at all in the case of Jainism. The Universe and the souls exist from eternity and they are self-existent. The souls have been bound up with impurities (viz. Karmic matter, which produces pleasure and pain according to their nature and intensity) and endowed with bodies made up of particles of matter. In this stage, the souls are in a kind of bondage and their natural gifts of the knowledge and bliss are obliterated more or less in various degrees according to the potency of the karmic matter in combination with the souls; but the inherent qualities of the souls cannot be completely wiped out by any force, not even by the devil. No eternal damnation is possible according to Jainism.

It is possible for the souls to free themselves from bondage and attain perfection, by annulling the previous causes by calm and patient endurance of their effects, and simultaneously warding off fresh causes by the attitude of dispassion and the contemplation of their true nature.

Action causes the inflow of karma, which leads to bondage, and to cease from action obstructs any further inflow. To be immersed in one's self is the best way to wipe out the accumulated karma and attain complete liberation.

Jainism is the embodiment of truth -of pure, unmixed truth. It is this characteristic that distinguishes Jainism from the other religions of the world. It is unique in this sense that it is completely free from half-truths, untruths and fabulous ideas, whose presence in most religious systems have undermined religious faith in the majority of the present generation all the world over. It is free from inconsistencies and contradictions, the prime test of truth. Only disentangling the noble principles from erroneous, strange, irrational and crude beliefs, which are found, mixed up in many of the great religious systems, can check religious skepticism. Rationalism, on the other hand, is subject to another limitation. It confuses things, which contradict experience, and those, which are beyond the powers of the senses. Jainism steers clear of these two evils. While appealing to the rationalist by its conformity with reason, Jainism does not ignore what is beyond the ken of the Rationalist. It goes beyond the limits of human experience. The revelation admitted by Jainism is not arbitrary and without significance as in other instances.

The unique nature of this religion is not yet realized by the world. It is scientific in this respect that the methods advocated by it are unerring in producing the universally desired results of deriving happiness and avoiding pain. Some of the most complex problems, which have baffled the world, have been explained in a convincing manner. Hence it is not easy to understand the spirit and significance of the all-embracing teachings of this system. Those who have made a superficial study (probably with prejudiced minds) of some of the tenets have hastily condemned them as absurd without taking the trouble to have even a glimpse of their grandeur and the noble principles underlying them. Unclouded reason and dispassionate inquiry are essential for understanding and estimating the grand principles of Jainism.

Detachment, purity of thought, purity of conduct, selflessness, consideration for others, forgiveness even under extreme provocation, patient and cheerful endurance of inevitable sufferings, kindness to all living beings, and absolute sincerity are some of the noblest principles that form the corner-stone of this system. It goes to the root of the matter and it does not delude us with false hopes and equivocation. In matters of faith experimental proof is not possible. Some of the teachings may be beyond our comprehension, some of the courses recommended beyond our capacity. But that is no reason why we should underestimate them. The miraculous powers of matter cannot but make credible the extraordinary powers of the soul as described in this system. The rigorous self-discipline necessary for realizing the potentialities of the soul is no doubt beyond the powers of the average man or woman. But on that score we should not brush it aside as impracticable and impossible. Great benefits cannot be attained without great effort. Great ideals can be realized only by undaunted and ceaseless striving. It may take a long time and superhuman effort is needed to achieve the goal. But the end contemplated is worth it.

The teachers of Jainism (here I mean the ancient sages who composed the extant works on Jainism) were completely disinterested and their sole object was to contribute to the real happiness of mankind. They were men of great learning and insight, who were specially fitted to the great task of teaching the noblest truth ever taught in the world. They were also great thinkers, famous for their wisdom and knowledge. They were very different from the authors of modern times in many important respects. They were rigorous self-critics, and they took care in composing their works lest they should unconsciously swerve even a little from the truth and thus lead mankind astray. Truth was their ideal, the search for truth, their life work. Sweeping criticisms have no place here. Those truths can be understood in their full significance only by reverent, keen, intelligent and dispassionate study.

According to Jainism the end cannot justify the means. Good cannot come out of evil. Violence cannot pave the way for happiness. Some of the principles are emphasized by Mr. Aldous Huxley in his book "Ends and means." "Violence cannot lead to real progress unless, by way of compensation and reparation, it is followed by non-violence, by acts of justice and goodwill. In such cases, however, it is the compensatory behavior that achieves the progress, not the violence which that behavior was intended to compensate." "Good ends can be achieved only by the employment of appropriate means. The end cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced". The Jains long ago realized these truths, and naturally they based their teachings on the most important principle of non-violence (of all kinds) and practiced the principle of toleration as the followers of no other system in the world have done. Mr. Huxley also emphasizes the Jaina doctrine of Non-attachment. "The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily

sensation and lusts. Non-attached to his carving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred; non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these."

But it can not be denied that the world is definitely tending in the opposite direction. It is believed rather rashly that peace and happiness can be established in this world by force, violence and revolutionary methods and by stirring the passions of hatred, envy and anger. Real happiness cannot be achieved easily and speedily by adopting what they believe to be short cuts. To believe that we can liberate ourselves from hardships and sufferings by perpetrating cruelties on those, whom we wrongly consider to be the authors of our woes, is the most irrational thing that is being committed by the modern generation. The arduous nature of the task is not realized. Mr. Huxley pertinently asks, "Is it possible to achieve progress in charity by means that are essentially uncharitable? If we dispassionately consider our personal experience and the records of history, we must conclude that it is not possible. But so strong is our desire to believe that there is a short cut to Utopia, so deeply prejudiced are we in favor of people of similar opinions to our own, that we are rarely able to command the necessary dispassion".

The world clings to another delusion that by material progress alone mankind can become happy. At least the horrors of the world war must have disillusioned us of our futile hopes. I have no hesitation in affirming that real and lasting happiness can be established only when the heart of man changes, and the evil in human nature is eradicated by patient and constant endeavour. Without this necessary preliminary condition, mere material progress can only pave the way for suffering, misery and ruin. "Technological advance is rapid. But without progress in charity, technological advance is useless. Indeed, it is worse than useless. Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards." But we don't seem to have realized this hard truth. Nations still devote their attention and energy merely to economic planning and scientific progress. The more important task of improving man's nature is silently ignored. The spiritual aspect, which held a dominant place in the ancient world, is relegated to an insignificant position. The few that think of it are considered dreamers and visionaries. Even among these few, very many are insincere in their professions and do merely lip service to it, without deep-rooted conviction. This one-sidedness and insincerity are the gravest drawbacks of the modern generation.

The problem of improving human nature is no doubt the most baffling of all modern problems. The teachers of Jainism have realized this. It is also a delicate one. This concerns the important principle of the freedom of the individual. This is also a thorny problem on which not even tolerable agreement of opinion, much less unanimity is possible. The opinions regarding each of the several aspects of this problem will be bewildering in their diversity. Thus there are really insuperable difficulties in tackling this problem. It is also an extraordinary slow process. Human nature is intractable and is not passive like machines. So patience and ceaseless efforts are essential in this field. Progress will be infinitesimal even with the best effort. There are various limiting factors too.

Some of the noblest principles are beyond the capacity of average humanity. Only the very greatest in spiritual development can practice some of these ideals to perfection. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, we should try to banish from the world strife and discord and must promote sweetness and light. But we must not forget to take cognizance of the adverse limiting factors, which will at least check

miscalculation and rash and unbounded hopes. Now let us direct our attention to a few of the noblest teachings, which are common to the great religions of the world. "Resist not Evil." "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and prey for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." The law of causation underlies some of the other teachings. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled". "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy". "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". Though these are the words of Jesus Christ, the teachings they embody are far older and the Tirthankaras taught them long ago.

The golden rule " Do unto others as you would have them to unto you, " if put into practice will contribute to happiness of society. But it seems doubtful whether we sincerely believe in such doctrines at the present day. Nations as well as individuals are influenced by expediency and not by principles of justice and humanity in their dealings with the rest of the world. There is no denying the fact that our professions and doings are poles apart. We comfortably ignore our lapses and we complacently build moonshine theories of making this world into a lovely place, nay, we try to justify them by employing sophistry. While we think we are thus deluding the world, we do not realize that we are deluding, and working harm to,- ourselves. This is deliberate willfulness and human weakness ought not to be pressed into account for this miserable plight. It must, of course, be admitted that practice always lags behind precept. "The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak". But this truth applies only to those who sincerely make ceaseless efforts to live up to their ideals and yet fail because of their weakness or insurmountable obstacles in a hostile environment.

Thus the perfectibility of mankind, in spite of the life work of several reformers and religious teachers, still appears to be unattainable. The passions, the hatred, the evil in us have not been subdued and from time to time they are displayed with such great force that we appear to be mere slaves to them. The ideal of 'conquer thyself seems as impossible of attainment as it ever was. All thinking men are not only dissatisfied with our lot, but also with our beliefs, our convictions and the tendencies of modern times. We are steeped in gross materialism and the noblest, ancient ideals do not make even the slightest appeal to the vast majority of the present generation. Spiritual values appear to have disappeared altogether from the world. The change in this direction has been very rapid. Expediency and not principle seem to be the determining force of every thing we do. We are lost in our feverish pursuit of things not worth striving for and for sake spiritual progress entirely. But without inner development, we cannot attain happiness. There is no use of deluding ourselves with false hopes. We must face boldly hard facts. We have not really shaken off unreason. Right thinking is still in theory only. Errors, illusions, misconceptions, prejudices still hold sway over us. Enlightenment and Emancipation are unfulfilled dreams.

Faith in soul is rapidly diminishing, and the world is growing out and out materialistic. This is not a healthy change, and no one knows wither this downward march will lead us. Without faith in the imperishable soul outliving the body, and life beyond death, there is no incentive for us to do good and to avoid evil, especially when we are stricken with the disproportion of world, as described by Shakespeare in the sonnet.

Tire'd with all these for restful death I cry
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity

And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And guilded honor shamefully misplaced,
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection promptly disgraced,
 And strength by limping sway disabled,
 And art may tongue-tied by authority,
 And folly -doctor like -controlling skill,
 And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
 And captive good attending captain ill:
 Tire'd with all these, from these would begone...

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The counsels of perfection do not attract us; on the other hand they repel us. I do admit that some of the ideals may appear to be impossible of attainment in the present day world. But it must be remembered that nothing worth achieving has ever been achieved without great effort. Moreover Jainism recognizes the difficulties, the weakness of every man and women, the diversity of human nature and ability, and naturally it does not make impossible demands. It expects every one to do his best according to his capacity. The limiting factors are not lost sight of. Of course, weakness or ignorance is no excuse.

Still there is hope even for the most depraved and wicked, though they can not escape the consequences of their actions, Jainism does not admit eternal damnation and man's life is not confined to one birth alone. The entire future is open to us. The past course of action does not entirely do away with future possibilities. No doubt it acts as clog on progress, but this effect can be surmounted by man's effort. The antagonism between man's effort and destiny, between free will and fate, are reconciled in this system. Jainism rejects extreme views on these problems.

The poor and miserable man is told that he must endure his sufferings patiently, when there is no chance of his freeing himself from them by righteous methods or unstinted effort. In modern times, we are told that passive resistance is no good and that we must fight the evil. The ideal of patient endurance does not appeal to the present generation. This teaching is misunderstood for the most part. Cobbett writes, " I despise the man that is poor and contended; for such content is a certain proof of a disposition, a disposition which is the enemy of all industry, all exertion, all love of independence". Here the real truth is not understood. The writer loses the sight of the other aspect- the case of the man who is poor and miserable in spite of his industry and exertion. In such a case, would it be better for him to harbor hatred against others, who, he thinks, are solely responsible for his sufferings or to endure his sufferings patiently? Jainism and some of the greatest religions of the world advocate the latter course.

After all, those whom we consider wrongly to be the begetters of our woes are merely instruments and the entire blame does not rest on them. Nor are they free for their part in causing misery to others. It is this twofold nature of an action or deed that is not realized and this leads to one-sided views, which do not annihilate misery, but which increase misery tenfold.

If a man after all his effort continues to be miserable and poor, Jainism says, he has to attribute it to his own destiny, which is not an external force, which takes pleasure in teasing humanity, but which is the sum-total or the resultant force of his own previous actions. If this truth be admitted, then he has to blame himself only or his sufferings, for, according to this view, he is the ultimate cause of his own lot in life, whether good or bad. According to Jainism, living beings are found

in impure state from immemorial times. The choice of their becoming pure rests with them. Till purity is attained, the cycle of births and deaths is inevitable.

It is a postulate of the Jaina system that the living beings are self-existent, eternal, and are found originally in impure condition, with the potentiality of purifying themselves. Once they become pure, they are free from further stain forever. The people who are responsible for their sufferings are only instruments and they act as instruments of their own free will prompted by their own evil nature. This attitude is in no way detrimental to the miserable man. He loses nothing by this attitude. On the other hand, there is positive gain. By this attitude, that evil effect by which he suffers comes to an end, and he does not pave way for further misery. But any hatred towards his tormentors acts as cause for further misery. The latter course of action while doing no good to the man does positive evil. The foregoing discussion will make it clear that effort is not discouraged by this noble, healthy and ideal attitude, but this attitude itself is expected to operate only when legitimate and unobjectionable attempts fail.

Jainism does not approve of the other modern doctrine- that the end justifies the means. So if a man can get rid of his misery by murdering another, still it should not be resorted to, as the wicked deed will only pave the way for further miseries. If detected, he will be punished immediately. Even otherwise, the man will have to suffer on account of his misdeed at some time in the future. So from the Jaina standpoint the revolutionary methods of communism are not justifiable.

On the other hand, Jainism does not spare the tyrants and tyranny, The tyrants in this world need not deem themselves to be the instruments of God and thus justify their ways, deluding themselves that God brings about punishment through them. They ill-treat others and take pleasure in such things because of their evil nature and callousness to others' feelings, and not out of their zeal for establishing justice, peace and amity. They may seem to flourish awhile by their wickedness and unscrupulous methods, by heaping misery on the noble and the innocent, but they cannot escape the consequences of their evil deeds, which will surely overtake them sometime or other. They have no business to tell their victims that they suffer for their own sins. No doubt it is the truth, but that is the attitude recommended to such victims to save them from further sufferings and not to justify the wickedness of the tyrants. Let them not forget what applies to them. Christ put this in strong terms.

"The son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of the man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born ".

So the tyrants must not forget what is in store for them. The crux of the problem is this. He who suffers can not escape from the sufferings, because he himself is responsible for them and they are merely the consequences of his past deeds. Nevertheless the authors of his woes (viz., those who inflict sufferings on him and cause him misery) cannot absolve themselves from what they themselves do, and thus they pave the way for their own future miseries. According to Jainism there can be no undeserved suffering, if we take in to view the entire past history of the soul. In some cases the fruit of an action can be delayed even by hundreds of years. That depends on number of factors, and laws govern it.

Naturally, Jainism admonishes the rich and the powerful. They should not misuse their position to cause sufferings to the others. Righteousness should be their ideal too. Without righteousness they cannot continue to be happy for long. Human life is full of surprises rise and fall succeed one another. The great are brought low, and the humble exalted. That is the nature of this world. Therefore,

as long as we are powerful and rich, we must hasten to do good to others and actively show our benevolence to mankind. We may not continue to be powerful and rich for long, so we are warned not to waste time, but to make the best of our opportunities. Jainism is so persuasively eloquent to save us against ourselves. As the farmer, who first reserves a part of his yield for the seed to be grown in the future, and enjoys only the rest, so also the fortunate rich should set apart a part of their riches for charitable purposes and utilize only the rest for their use. This is the method by which we can perpetuate our happiness, though this is very little realized if we are to judge from experience. Position must not make one proud or insolent, which are the attributes of ignorance; on the other hand genuine humility is the emblem of true wisdom.

In another important respect, Jainism had anticipated the most modern findings concerning the evil effects of the excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, on the rest of the human race. One must fix limits to one's possessions, power and sphere of activity. This is one of the five cardinal principles of Jainism. And those who are fortunate in amassing wealth are specially exhorted to be generous in acts of goodwill and charity. Power and position should in no case be misused to spread the coils of misery over humanity, inflicting ruin and desolation over the greater part of the world. On the other hand, it is their duty to look to the welfare of the less fortunate. And it is stressed in Jaina works that the giver and as well as the recipient are both benefited. To share the yield with the rest and ensure the well being of all is extolled by the author of the Kural as the best of all teachings imparted to mankind.

It is interesting to note that in the paradise (Bhogabhumi) described in Jaina works, there is no personal property. But we should not overlook the fact that, in such a paradise, the people have no need to work in order to secure their needs, which are got without any effort. Hence to seek the principle of communism in Jaina teachings would be unwarranted, far-fetched and unconvincing. In a world where everything is got by labor and where the supply is limited and is not commensurate with the wants and desires of mankind, competition and inequalities are bound to exist. Jainism will not pin its faith on any system, however good it may be, irrespective of practical considerations. Much depends upon the working of any system and the human agents who work it. But the cut-throat competition and the race for the monopoly of the good things in the world, the sheer exploitation of the masses by the few, the ordinate desire to accumulate and preserve wealth and power, which prevail all over the world, and which sow the seeds of discontent and discord among the nations, ultimately resulting in disastrous wars which well-nigh threaten to consume the entire world, find no parallels in the past history of the world and will not be countenanced by Jainism.

Jainism differs from Buddhism in many important respects. Nirvana, the final goal of the Buddhists, sounds like extinction. It is sometimes described as the void. But the Jaina conception of the ultimate stage is positive and not merely negative. It denotes not merely freedom from ignorance and misery, but also omniscience and inexpressible bliss. This is a fundamental distinction between the two systems, whose similarities have often given room to confusion of thought. From the standpoint of Jainism, extinction as the goal of human endeavor is unsatisfying and incomprehensible. Such a view cuts at the very root of spiritual progress. Nor can such a belief act as a powerful incentive to spiritual efforts. Would any one court extinction by privation and voluntary suffering?

Allied with the doctrine of Buddhism is the other one of incessant and ceaseless change. It is difficult to conceive of continuity and permanence in such a system.

Here again Jainism avoids extreme views. Jainism denies neither change nor permanence. It adopts the golden mean and reconciles the two extreme views. Permanence in the midst of change of is the all-pervading principle, which govern the phenomenon of the universe. Everything in this world changes from one form into another, but nothing is totally annihilated. This is the doctrine of permanence in change, which is peculiar to Jainism alone. While one mode changes into another, the underlying substance maintains its identity.

The ethical principles of Christianity are similar to those of Jainism. But the fate of a man or woman is decided irrevocably by what he or she does in one lifetime, and hence the Christian has a very limited choice. And Christianity does not admit transmigration. It sounds incongruous to hold the original sin of Adam and Eve responsible for the sufferings of the entire humanity. Nor does this view account for the inequalities prevailing in the world, which well nigh baffle explanation? Jainism does not preach eternal damnation. The worst sinner is not precluded from attaining eternal bliss at some remote time in the future, though everyone has to reap the consequences of his deeds. The consolation is that one is not beyond the hope of redemption forever however wicked he may be at present. But that does not mean that Jainism countenances evil. On the other hand, the pernicious effects of evil are insisted on again and again to dissuade mankind from sinning.

Thus in most cases there are two aspects, neither of which gives the whole truth. For instance the benefactor must not parade the good he has done to another, because to do so will diminish the potency of the virtuous deed. He must be humble, and must do good as a matter of duty in a silent and disinterested manner. That does not however mean that the recipient should not feel his kindness and express his gratitude to his benefactor. The attitude of the one should be diametrically opposed to that of the other. The benefactor ought to feel that he has done nothing, but the recipient ought to attribute everything to the kindness of the other. Truth is midway between these two attitudes and is the harmonious reconciliation of the two views. It is this secret that is not yet clearly understood by the world. These two aspects are thoroughly discussed in Jaina works on logic. Thus man's effort alone is not powerful, nor his destiny the only factor which contributes to success. Similarly we cannot say whether it is free will alone or fate alone that is at work in many of the happenings. The truth is both are indubitable forces and the resultant of these two forces decides the issue in almost all cases. It is quite possible; however, that in some instances one of these forces may be dominant, and the other so weak as to be imperceptible. The ultimate victory, of course, rests with man. Man's effort can overcome evil.

Jainism only demands each man to practice the ideals to the best of his ability, to be critical towards himself to overcome his weakness, to repent for his lapses and to attain perfect control over himself. Faith and sincerity are the important conditions essential for spiritual progress. He has to be pure in thought, in word and in deed, and should always be vigilant, over himself. Even the contemplation of the noble ideals helps him to realize them in course of time. So failure need not daunt anybody. Ceaseless effort in spite of failure is sure to succeed in the end. Man's attitude and his earnest endeavor are of greater importance than his actual achievement. Unflagging zest, ceaseless activity in the right direction, the spirit of cheerfulness in the midst of gloom, firm determination, strong hopes which successive disappointments cannot dispel, patient endurance, firm faith under all circumstances in the invincibility of goodness and untiring energy are the attributes of the true Jain. If the ideals of Jainism be practiced widely, they will pave the way for universal love and sympathy and ensure the happiness of mankind.

Jainism deals with universal and eternal truths. Because of this enduring characteristic its value is still the same, in spite of its being very ancient. It does not admit artificial and conventional distinctions based on birth, rank, wealth or position, which are irrational and meaningless. Nor does it fall into the error of denying all distinctions and proclaiming equality. Merit is the only criterion. Goodness, merit and fitness are the distinguishing marks of real greatness. Sober truth is never violated and naturally while admitting potential spiritual equality, Jainism makes it clear that the ideal of equality is unattainable in this world, which abounds in inequalities of various kinds. Hard facts are not as pleasing to the modern generation as rosy theories, with the result insincerity and hypocrisy are extending their sway over humanity. We seem to be in the position of the lady, who merely professing the doctrine of equality, never forgave Dr. Johnson when he proposed to her as a test that they might dine with her footman. Of course, no injustice committed by the greater is justifiable. On the other hand, greater responsibilities are laid on the shoulders of the spiritually developed; and it is a grave crime on their part to use religion to silence those whom they exploit, involving them in inhuman suffering and misery.

Perfect equality is possible only in the ultimate state of perfection, the unembodied pure state, where all the individual liberated souls are omniscient and enjoy eternal bliss. I will describe at the end of the portrait of a Jain. The Jain is the sanest person in the world, because he is completely free from illusions which the rest of the world suffers. Though it may sound as a paradox, nevertheless it is true that he is also the greatest optimist in the world. He may be poor, miserable, and wretched. He may be subjected to the most unjust persecutions. He may be slandered, he may be calumniated, he may be insulted, and even tormented. These things are possible in spite of his being a good, just and noble man. It may even be that he may suffer because of his very goodness. He may see righteousness trampled under foot and injustice and wickedness flourishing.

But he never gives himself up to despair, nor does he harbor bitterness or malice towards his tormentors, Never will he become a misanthropist under any circumstances. Even in the darkest moments he has; a ray of hope. He knows that patient endurance without a tinge of anger advocated by his religion under such circumstances, cannot be practiced by him weak as he is. He is aware that he is unable to act up to his ideals in many respects. In this sense he is one with the weak humanity. But the great thing about him is that he neither reproaches God nor gives up hope of redemption. He may fail a thousand times, but he sincerely repents for his weakness and continues to make ceaseless effort till the end. Herein does he differ from the masses? The most important thing is he is sincere to the core. He neither deceives the world, nor deludes himself. He is plain and detests hypocrisy. He is the severest self-critic.

The Jain knows that the world is full of violence and iniquity and wickedness. Righteousness is rare and strait and narrow is the path of goodness. To be beset with difficulties does not daunt him, and the rosy path of dalliance cannot tempt him from his rectitude. He does not welcome misery, but when it is inevitable, he is not cowed down and he does not shrink from facing it. This is possible for him because of his faith in the inherent goodness of such conduct, which is the outcome of sound and thorough knowledge. Such conduct is considered neither conventional nor arbitrarily imposed on him. He has not the least doubt that this is the best and only method of attaining true and everlasting happiness. Though this attitude is discounted in modern times, it is surprising to note that all the greatest religious systems agree in attaching the utmost importance to this course of action.

This is the stoic ideal, the Christian ideal is the same. and this is emphasized in several Hindu Scriptures. That perfect state is the goal and 2500 years ago the last Tirthankaras, Lord Mahavira preached to the world the method by which perfection can be attained. The greatest amount of happiness that this world is capable of affording can easily be secured by the same means. The only difference is that the latter objective requires less rigorous discipline and therefore it can be more easily attained and by exceedingly large number of people, who may not be equal to the more arduous task of attaining perfection.

May this noble and true path of Jina engage the attention of the vast multitudes all over the world and rescue them from the slough of despond, the doubts and fears and miseries, which harass mankind!

May the word of Lord Mahavira impart to us fortitude and strength of spirit that we may keep to the path of rectitude and act up to the noblest ideals of Jainism!

May we succeed in the noblest task of propagating the eternal truths propounded by Jina and thus contribute to the happiness and peace of the bewildered and restless humanity!

Jain Heritage Centres