

# Models of Conflict - resolution and Peace in Jain Tradition\*

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## **INTRODUCTION :**

In spite of using the word ‘Jainism’, the title of the paper contends the word ‘Jain Tradition’ which is very significant. If we try to search the models of Conflict-resolution and Peace in Jain environment, we see that these models are pervaded in the Jain way of conduct, in Jain society, in their pattern of observing religious practices, festivals and celebrations, in their history, in their Socio-political reactions, in Jain Art and Sculpture and in Jain Literature. All these aspects put together suggest that Jainism is not a mere philosophical system but a full-fledged tradition flourished in India, long back before the advent of Buddhism.

## **THREE INHERITED MODELS IN REPRESENTING JAINISM :**

In the first model, Jainism is re-presented as a negligible sister-system of Buddhism, as an essentially marginal unimportant heterodox group. This model is best seen in the countless references to the Jainas in the compound, “Buddhists and Jainas” and so on. The assumption is that by understanding something of the Buddhists, one know all one needs to know about their ‘darker reflection’ - the phrase used by Louis Renou.<sup>1</sup>

In the second model, Jainism is represented as a minority ascetic tradition; it is incapable of influencing political institutions or developing a mass popular following. The Jain tradition is characterized as boringly ascetic, austere, unimaginative and so forth.

In the third model, ‘pure’ Jainism is defined as

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conservative and unchanging and all innovations are portrayed as degenerations. Original Jainism is the essence and historical Jainism consists in falling away from that essence. In this model, all innovation is ascribed to Hinduism, which is a dynamic and changing tradition. According to this model, influence moves in only one direction, from active Hinduism to passive Jains.

Thorough study of 'Pure Jainism' and 'Historical Jainism' reveals a different picture. Jainism is one of the most ancient of India's indigenous traditions and the oldest of the surviving non-Vedic schools. It is quite evident that though Jains are in minority from the ancient period till today, still they have not lost their identity. They stick to their fundamental tenets, doctrines and ethics but they are not 'fundamentalists' in the modern sense of this word.

In this paper, an attempt is made to enumerate the models of conflict-resolution and peace which have helped the Jains in surviving without losing their identity.

### **THE COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF ANEKĀNTAVĀDA :**

When we start thinking in the direction of model creation in Jaina Tradition, we easily come to know that Jains never exerted or strive for creating these models externally or superficially because the theory of non-absolutism is the very base, essence or crux in Jain thought. The chief, guiding model is already present which is gradually developed in the course of time. Whatever remains is the method of application of this comprehensive model in the various fields of human endeavor. The various models which we are going to discuss have sprung from the very core of crux of Jainism. Anekāntavāda, the Jain theory of multiple facets of reality and truth is so fundamental and central to Jain Metaphysics, Epistemology and Logic that the entire Jain system is known as Anekānta-darśana.

Though we find the particular name 'Anekāntavāda' from 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and onwards, we can trace back the starting

points from Bhagavati Sūtra<sup>2</sup>, a canonical text in Ardhamāgadhi. The gradual progress of Nayavāda, Syādvāda and Anekāntavāda is seen chronologically with the help of the treatises written by Kundakunda, Umāsvāti, Mallavādi, Siddhasena Divākara, Samantabhadra, Akalaṅka, Haribhadra, Hemacandra, Vādideva and so on up to Yaśovijaya, of 18th century.

The Ontological, Epistemological, Logical, Ethical and Spiritual implications of Anekāntavāda are elaborately explored by many eminent scholars of Jainism. Jaina thinkers assert that reality is many-sided; it has manifold aspects and infinite characters. It is both existent and non-existent, permanent and transient, one and many etc. The conflict among the contradictory characters is resolved by creating the model of fourfold Nyāsa or Nikṣepa.<sup>3</sup> A thing is existent from the standpoint of its own substance (dravya), place (kṣetra), time (kāla) and quality, state or form (bhāva). The thing is non-existing from the fourfold standpoints of another thing.

Thus we can conclude that the non-violent, peace-loving attitude in Jain Tradition containing reconciliation, adjustment and adoption is the natural outcome of the doctrine of non-absolutism. When we go through the long history of Jain Tradition, with its religio-social ups and downs, we come to know that earnest attempts are made to reconcile by changing the outer expressions (viz. modes) and protecting the soul of non-violence and peace intact in spite of the charges of cowardice and surrender. The canonical literature of Jainas is almost free from the sarcastic, satirical and hostile remarks against their opponents. On the other hand Lord Buddha uses these weapons freely towards Niggaṅṭha Nātaputta. In one of the Jataka tale Buddha depicts himself as a peacock and Mahāvira as a crow.<sup>4</sup>

Now, we will discuss the further sub-models which are in congruence with the chief model of non-absolutism.

### **A : The Model of Suitable Languages.**

The capacity of Jainas to adopt various languages is unparalleled. This multilingual attitude is handed down to them by Lord Mahāvīra and further prominent Jain Ācāryas. Mahāvīra delivered his preaching in Ardhamāgadhī.<sup>5</sup> Further Jain Ācāryas used Śauraseni and Mahāraṣṭri. Nearly ten centuries after Mahāvīra, Jain Ācāryas stuck to the regional languages viz. Prakrits. From the fifth century A.D. and onwards we see that Jain authors were interacting with others as intellectuals in terms of pan. Indian scholarly genre of Śāstra. Jainas transformed their tradition into a school of learning by presenting their writings in the pan. Indian scholarly language of Sanskrit.<sup>6</sup> But Jaina authors re-defined Sanskrit treating it not as a sacred institution but a natural phenomenon. Jainas, such as Hemcandra wrote their own Sanskrit grammars to replace Brahmanical system canonized by Pāṇini and Patañjali. Side by side, the Jain authors continued their writings in Mahāraṣṭri and various Apabhraṅśas, up till 15th and 16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Even today, the Sādhus and Sādhvis can address people in three or four languages very comfortably. This inherited model of acquiring suitable languages is proved to be beneficial even to the laity, which mostly owe to merchant class.

### **B : The Model of Choosing Less Harmful.**

Though Jainism gives utmost importance to non-violence, Jain thinkers are aware of the fact that for a normal person, it is impossible to avoid violence completely in his daily routine activities. The whole animate world is divided into five groups according to the possession of sense organs.<sup>7</sup> When Jainas choose vegetarian diet and avoid meat, the model of accepting less harmful is exercised. Vegetable-bodied and water-bodied beings possess only one sense-organ. All other animates like shells, worms, insect, fish, serpents and four-legged animals possess two to five sense-organs. Among vegetables also the roots like potato, sweet potato etc. having Sādhāraṇa Śarira<sup>8</sup> are avoided. It is advised that as far as possible the fruits containing

many seeds like custard apple should be avoided. Vigilance in selecting the food inculcates them to accept food that causes the least possible violence.

While choosing clothes, cotton-clothes are preferable than silk. Leather-articles are avoided. A guideline is provided to a businessman by giving a list of fifteen prohibited businesses (Karmādānās) so that one can choose a business which incurs less harm.

In Jain mythologies, it is depicted that when Bharata and Bāhubali, the sons of first Tirthamkara, enter into a war, they decided to engage a duel (dvandva-yuddha) in order to avoid a huge warfare causing death of thousands of warriors.<sup>9</sup> For kings, Virodhi Hirhsa is somehow permitted but Saṃkalpi Himśā is highly condemned. Lord Mahāvira preached the kings who were his lay disciples that they should avoid aggressive wars and showing off their military strength. While defending oneself, one's neighbour, one's country and one's belongings, violence is inevitable.<sup>10</sup> These sinful acts create Karmic bondage and one has to observe penance for lessening the bad effects. The proclamation of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Gitā, i.e. 'अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः' has no scope in Jaina ideology of Himśā and Ahimśā.

In the freedom movement of India against British rule, the Jaina freedom fighters naturally preferred the non-violent way of Gāndhiji than the way of Krāntikārins. In fact, it is evident from Gāndhiji's biography that he was actually influenced by the Jaina way of life.

### **C : The Model of Peaceful Interaction with Rulers.**

When we examine the Jaina History from this point of view, we come to know that in the Ancient, Medieval and Modern period, Jainas are successful in keeping peaceful and creative interaction with the Rulers. There are few kings who themselves belong to Jaina faith. It is mentioned in the prakrit inscriptions

of Hāthīgumphā (Kalinga, Mod. Orissa) that this Jaina king Kharavela (200 B.C.) belongs to Cedi dynasty. Though Vanarāja Cāvaḍā who was a Śaiva king of Gujrat in the eighth century, it is evident that he was a Jainized King. He was assisted by important Jaina laymen in ruling the kingdom. He was a devotee of a Jaina mendicant and received spiritual guidance to rule his kingdom. Kumārapāla (12<sup>th</sup> Cen. A.D.) was one king in the Coulukya dynasty who personally became a Jaina. Hemacandra, the most renowned Jaina Ācārya was his Guru. Animal slaughter, meat, liquor, hunting and dice were strictly prohibited in his kingdom. The dynasties like Kadamba, Gaṅga, Rāṣtrakūṭa, Cālukya and Hoyasala were quite co-operative towards the Jaina monks and laymen. It is of course the outcome of keeping good relations with the rulers.

On the advent of Mughal kings, mendicants of both the Tapā and Kharatara Gaccha attempted successfully to established peaceful relations with them. Muni Jinaprabhasuri was a contemporary of Mahammad Taghlak (14th Cen.). He influenced the Mughal Emperor with his occult yogic powers. Due to this relationship, Jinaprabha became successful in keeping the Jaina Saṁgha and Jaina temples intact. With the royal support, Jinaprabha produced remarkable literary works.<sup>11</sup> In the 16th Century, Ācārya Hiravijayasūri was honoured in the court of Emperor Akbar. As a result it is said that the Emperor enforced non-harm in his kingdom on certain holy days and had taken a vow to forego hunting. Jaina narratives portray Jahāngir in a similar fashion.

In the early twentieth century Tapāgaccha Ācārya Buddhisāgarasūri had influenced Sayājirao Gaikwad of Baroda.

The interaction between the Jainas and Europeans is very complex and even less studied than between the Jainas and Muslims.<sup>12</sup> This has been an interaction at the socio-economic level, as Jainas were among the Indian merchants with whom Europeans had their earliest dealings. The British were the

colonial overlords, the relationship in which the social position of Jainas as bankers, traders, merchants etc. brought them into close association with the economic side of the British Rāj.

A later wave of Jaina migration begins in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With economic opportunities becoming available in British colonial territories, many Jaina families moved abroad, mainly in Africa. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jainas migrated to the 'West'. Jainas are seeking to widen their activities through the creation of 'Inter-faith-links' such as Jaina-Christian Association, the Jaina-Jewish Association and the Leicestershire Ahimsā Society for the care of Nature. In U.S.A. and Canada Jainas have established many Jaina Societies and Jaina Centers. Some include temples, religio- social activities involving lectures and discussions for the spread of vegetarianism, non-violence and peace.<sup>13</sup>

This brief account of Jaina history suggests that Jainas are very adaptive in the changing circumstances. 'The Model of peaceful interactions with non-Jainas' is observed for the last two millenniums by Jainas but one cannot overlook the fact that the divide between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras and the number of lawsuits and public quarrels in recent years, shows that this is a powerful generator of a sense of otherness between Jaina Communities. During last two hundred years, there are many further divisions created, sometimes sharp and sometimes soft.

### **D : The Model of Categorization.**

When the Jaina thinkers select any aspect or important point for further elaboration, they divide it into various kinds, varieties and sub-varieties until they reach the logical end of the thought. They adjust and accommodate the non-Jaina views, objects or personalities among these categories. For instance, (i) Jainas present the ladder of spiritual progress with the help of 14 Guṇasthānas. They place persons having wrong world view (Mithyātvin) on the first step of the ladder and name it as

Mithyātva-guṇsthāna. (ii) While explaining Siddhahood, Uttarādhyayana mentions, ‘स्त्रीलिंगसिद्ध --- स्वलिंगसिद्ध --- अन्यलिंगसिद्धा’.<sup>14</sup> The gender and sectarian bias is thus overcome by this categorization, (iii) In the early centuries of Christian era, Jainas develop a format or model of 54 Mahāpuruṣas or 63 Śālākāpuruṣas. They categorized the influential or illustrious personalities into Tirthaṅkaras, Vāsudevas, Baladevas, Cakravartins etc.<sup>15</sup> The famous Hindu Purāṇic personalities like Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Balarama, Jarāsaṁdha, Bharata Cakravarti etc. got their ‘space’ in Jaina environment. This all-inclusive tendency must have created a harmony with the Hindu brethren.

### **E : The Model to Remove Social Injustice.**

This model emerges rightly from the philosophical concept of ‘Jīva’ in Jainism. Jīvas or individual souls are infinite<sup>16</sup>, each separate from the other. The transmigratory souls go through the cycle of births and deaths according to their own Karmans. The Jainas do not believe in any creator God, so the classes and castes are created by human beings and not by God. Basically all Jīvas possess same status and are equally eligible for one’s spiritual progress. On this philosophical ground Jainas tried to remove the class-barriers and caste-conflicts. The views on Āśramas and Jātis are reflected in many texts like Uttarādhyayana.<sup>17</sup> In Jaina tradition, Śvetāmbaras have conferred the same religious and spiritual status to woman folk. In Jaina Saṁgha, right from Rṣabhanātha, Sādhus, Sadhvis, Śravakas and Śrāvikas are enjoying equal rights.<sup>18</sup> Jainas give equal status to women but in practice, even today, Sādhvis enjoy inferior status than Sādhus. A reform is taking place, but the pace of the reform is very slow.

One more observation is very noteworthy under this model that the literacy rate in Jain women is comparatively very high.

### **F : The Model of Gupti (Guarding or Protective actions).**

In Jaina History, there is a very little scope for rebels, reforms, attacks or eccentric actions. The attitude of guarding and protective actions is directly connected to the ethical tenets of Āśrava and Śaṁvara.<sup>19</sup> Gupti and Samiti means guarding and careful movements. Due to this mild attitude, Buddhism has oppressed Jainism for some time quite strongly to such an extent that it had to bear the retreat before Buddhism in many areas. Around tenth century the might of Buddhism in India declined completely. It could not resist the Jaina faith in the west and in the south. The activities of Kumārila and Śaṅkara, the revival of Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivaite sects proved to be the dangerous opponents and they did severe damage to Jainism particularly in the Deccan and South. The Śaivite sect of Liṅgāyatas proceeded against Jainas extremely fanatically. It is said that the Hoysala King Biṭṭideva ordered that Jainas, compatriots in his early religion be thrown in an oil-mill and crushed, if they did not want to get converted.<sup>20</sup>

The Jaina responses to all these kind of oppressions was surprisingly humble and retreating. The growing might of Hinduism was not revealed to Jainism only in its loosing followers. In spite of adopting some revengeful and fanatic steps against Bhakti cults, as far as possible Jainas adopt their language, deities and Pūjā rituals.

This attitude of adoption is clearly reflected in Jain Art and Sculpture. Jainas have enriched the country's art-treasure with numerous and diverse specimens of art and architecture. In the representation of the many lesser deities of the Jaina pantheon, such as Indra and Indrāṇi, Yakṣa and Yakṣi as attendants of the Tirthaṅkaras, the goddess Sarasvati, the Kṣetrapālas in the depiction of scenes from the life-stories of the Tirthaṅkaras, it seems that the artist was not restrained by any rigidly prescribed formulae and had greater freedom. He could also give play to his genius in carving and painting natural

objects and secular scenes from contemporary life. In their temple-architecture, the Jainas while adopting the styles prevalent in the places and times where and when they built their temples also introduced certain characteristic features in keeping with their own culture and ideology.

Thus the model of Golden Middle is found in Jaina expression of Art and Sculpture.

### **CONCLUSIVE REMARKS :**

The Jainas possess a distinct religion, a separate philosophy, a different ethical code, a set of particular beliefs, practices, customs and manners and a vast literature of their own. The Jainas form a small minority at present and also in the past. Due to this fact, Jainas struggled a lot for identity crisis. Fortunately their sound monitory position and inclination towards charity and donation helped them a lot. They have adopted and still adopting various models of conflict-resolution and peace.

As we have seen above, the chief model of non-absolutism was already available for them as a central doctrine. The above mentioned six models are just some examples of the application of the theory of non-absolutism and Ahimsā. There is a vast scope for formulating more models on the same line. Due to various reasons the attention is not attracted towards the Jaina theories in spite of its tremendous capacity to give solutions on many problems in future.

Aidan Rankin quotes Albert Einstein in his book titled 'The Jain Path : Ancient Wisdom for an Age of Anxiety'. The father of the theory of relativity says, "I do not know if there is rebirth or not or life after death. But if it is true, then I would like to be born in India as a Jain".

It is very noteworthy that a scientist like Einstein has reflected a lot on the Jaina theory of multiples facets of Reality and Truth.

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